

The Middle West Says: "No Retreat!" by A. B. Magil

NEW MASSES

DECEMBER 7, 1937 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY

IN TWO SECTIONS OF WHICH THIS IS SECTION ONE

Included with this Issue: A Twenty-Four-Page

LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Notes on the Cultural Front by Michael Gold
Back to Work A Story by Leane Zugsmith
A 'Nation' Divided by Granville Hicks
Poetry in 1937 by Horace Gregory
Literary Fascism in Brazil . by Samuel Putnam
Madrid to Manhattan A Story by Hyde Partnow
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Other Verse by Hugh Macdiarmid, John W. Gassner and Irene Hendry

Is Latin America Going Fascist?

THE SECOND ARTICLE OF A SERIES

Argentina: Democracy in Extremis

By Ricardo M. Setaro

Norman Thomas on the Side Lines

By Robert Forsythe

Spain's Shirt-Sleeve General

By Edwin Rolfe

Book Reviews by Henry Hart, Joseph Freeman, Samuel Sillen, Theodore Draper

BETWEEN OURSELVES

PLANNING has come into Robert Forsythe's life in a big way, and from now on he will write an article for us every single week. We have made the neat heading which adorns page 12 in this issue partly for its decorative effect and partly as a reminder to Forsythe of his weekly chore. Next week he writes on his trip to the Soviet Union.

Bruce Minton, co-author with John Stuart of *Men Who Lead Labor*, the best seller on Modern Age's list, has just returned from Spain, and rejoined our staff as labor editor. William B. Smith has been handling labor coverage for us during Minton's absence.

We are informed by the editors of the *Nation* that because of lack of time they are not able to send us their comment on Granville Hicks's article "A 'Nation' Divided" (in the Literary Supplement), for inclusion in this issue. They intend to publish an answer in the next issue of the *Nation*; apropos of which we shall probably have something further to say on the matter ourselves.

We wonder how the author of the following letter will like the idea of Forsythe's weekly page:

"Re Mike Gold's query in the *Daily Worker* on how many of the sympathizers read the *New Masses* and the *New Republic* and *Nation*, I've gotten the *New Masses* for so many years that I feel old when I think of it, and I've got the others only occasionally. I will say, however, that many times I've got the *New Masses* as I take medicine, because I thought it was good for me. Boudin's article on the Constitution was swell. Many of the other things, particularly some of the fiction, give me a pain in the neck. I'm probably old-fashioned, but I still like stories to have a kick and to read like I'm used to seeing life. I want more cartoons and especially strips; possibly never got out of my childhood, but I still read the Sunday funnies first and I never got over the idea that Bob Minor was a helluva lot more use to the movement as a cartoonist than a writer. We run schools for writers and speakers, but we still treat cartooning like most of the comrades in the 1920's did unions. We give it all the moral support one could ask, and that's all. Speakers, columnists, and dancers are fine, but one good cartoonist like Del or Ellis is worth more to the workers' movement than a hundred of the others. Might say I haven't read the *Sunday Worker* for months, mainly because it didn't put in the comic strips it was going to specialize in. I read the *Daily* because I want the news.

"Maybe we work our writers too hard and pay too little, but we haven't a single columnist who can stack up with Heywood Brown—or am I being hard on the boys? Time after time a column is a rehash of what is in the news for days and with mighty little seasoning.

"Good luck, **BILL.**"
Our Readers' Forum gets results:
"On behalf of my four daughters and myself will you please accept thanks for the publication of my let-

ter of 10/10/37? We would also like to thank all those who have replied. In all, we have had twenty-six replies; Joan has had twelve, Bessie three, Mary two, Peggy one, and myself eight.

"To those who have not received replies from us: we have not forgotten you, comrades, but owing to economic circumstances, we are afraid that you will have to await your turns. You will all get replies eventually. We find that we have as many as we can manage at present—especially the girls who have to find the cost of stamps out of their meager pocket-money allowance.

"My friend, who is the Secretary of our local Labor Party, and also his daughter, Muriel, aged thirteen, would also like one or two corre-

spondents. The address is: Ralph Beech, 46 Markham Road, Edlington, Nr. Doncaster, England.

"Yours fraternally,
G. W. HOLLOWAY."

What's What

LAST call for the *NEW MASSES* Ball! Friday evening, December 3, Webster Hall in New York! New Yorkers, we'll be seeing you!

Meanwhile, make an entry in your date-book. The *NEW MASSES* has taken the whole house for *Pins & Needles* (reviewed in this issue) for the night of Wednesday, January 12. The *New York Times* and the *NEW MASSES* agree in giving it rave notices.

Michael S. Quill, head of the Transport Workers' Union and

American Labor Party city councilman-elect from the Bronx; Jacob Baker, president of the United Federal Workers of America; A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping-Car Porters; Richard Hale, baritone; and Robert Reinhart, newspaperman and magician, will be on the program at the annual dinner of the League for Mutual Aid, which will be held at seven p.m., Wednesday, December 8, at the Roger Smith Grill, 40 East 41st St., New York.

A dance for the benefit of the Brooklyn *Eagle* strikers will be held Saturday, December 4, at the Livingston, 301 Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn.

The *NEW MASSES* business department wants it known that the office is open Saturdays till five p.m.

Who's Who

A. B. MAGIL, who has contributed frequently to our pages, is on the staff of the *Daily Worker*. . . . Ricardo M. Setaro is director of the Argentinian newspaper *Nueva España*. . . . Edwin Rolfe, formerly of our staff, is editor of the *Volunteer for Liberty*, organ of the English-speaking members of the international anti-fascist brigades in Spain. . . . Jay Peterson, who makes his debut in this issue, is an art critic by profession. . . . Henry Hart edited the recent *The Writer in a Changing World*. . . . Joseph Freeman, a contributing editor of the *NEW MASSES*, is at work on a forthcoming book. . . . Michael Sayers, play editor for Norman Bel Geddes, is an Irishman who has done dramatic criticism for *Life and Letters Today*, the *New English Weekly*, and the *Criterion*. His short stories have appeared in *Left Review*, and the latest issue of *O'Brien's Best British Short Stories* contained one of his short fictional pieces and was dedicated to him. . . . Notes on the contributors to the Literary Supplement are contained on page 23 thereof.

Flashbacks

JAMES B. MCNAMARA, who has been a political prisoner longer than any other man in the world, was sentenced to life on December 5, 1911. A union officer, he was found guilty on charges growing out of the war of the Los Angeles employers for an open-shop town. Most of McNamara's twenty-six-year stint has been done at San Quentin, but recently he was transferred to Folsom prison as a disciplinary measure. "Uncle Jim," as the other prisoners call him, has grown far too popular as an entertainer. He writes, sending news of his continued affection for the International Labor Defense: "Greetings to all the branches—and twigs and leaves, and may it blossom!" . . . And speaking of California's class war prisoners—December 8 is a day on which the world sends greetings to Tom Mooney. It is his birthday. . . . On Dec. 2, 1859, the trap dropped from under the feet of John Brown, and he was hanged for his efforts to help Virginia slaves find freedom.

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Crockett Johnson

The Middle West Says: No Retreat

By A. B. Magil

FROM reading certain newspapers I learn that "the country" is demanding the repeal of the taxes on undistributed corporation profits and capital gains. According to these same unimpeachable sources, "the country" is positively clamoring for an end to government spending and insists on nothing less than a balanced budget. And it seems that quite a number of devoted representatives of the people in Congress are determined to be "independent," to cease being "rubber stamps," and to heed "the country's" wishes.

Not being Walter Lippmann or Dorothy Thompson, I don't profess to be in "the country's" confidence. But I recently spent several weeks in the industrial and farm regions of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, and I can testify (though Senator Vandenberg would no doubt break a lance with me concerning Michigan) that the flaming national desire for "caution" and curtailment of "government extravagance," which the clairvoyant Miss Thompson deduced from the results of the recent elections, is hardly a flicker in those parts.

Get out of New York, go west, young man or woman, and feel down to your very roots the marvelous fluidity of American life. The people are in ferment. Old values, old political loyalties are in the process of being cashiered. There is no sure footing, no peace, no content for those who are compelled to drag and cajole a livelihood out of this old capitalist system. "The country" wants less taxes for the rich? "The country" wants less relief, no fixing of minimum wages and maximum hours, no government efforts to provide cheap electric power?

Minnesota says they lie. Wisconsin says they lie. Michigan says they lie.

In the course of my trip I interviewed labor leaders (both C.I.O. and A. F. of L.), farm leaders, high government officials such as Governor Benson of Minnesota, Commissioner of Agriculture Charles Ommodt of

Minnesota, and Attorney-General Orland S. Loomis of Wisconsin, and talked to all sorts of average people—shopkeepers, farmers, factory workers, people on relief, barbers, bootblacks, bartenders, cab drivers, and Western Union girls. I don't pretend to have done any exhaustive research, but I think I got some idea of the sentiment in that part of the country.

First, one general observation. President Roosevelt, as even some of the tory newspapers have been compelled to admit, is as popular as he was in November 1936, if not more so. Roosevelt is popular not because he has an engaging personality or a good radio voice—though these help—but because to the masses of the people he symbolizes the hope of a better life, of lifting themselves out of the pit of poverty and despair. This is what they voted for in November 1936. This is what the President pledged himself to fight for in his famous Madison Square Garden speech. The fear of a new depression—and that fear is a keen and living thing among the average folk of the Midwest—has merely sharpened the desire for economic reforms. The mood of retreat, which the tory gentlemen in Congress are trying so raucously to drum up, is not the mood of the plain people that I met on my trip.

Minnesota. I sat in the home of Farmer H. in Pine County, about eighty miles north of the Twin Cities. Farmer H. has two hundred acres of land and is milking twenty-two cows. Sounds pretty good, doesn't it? But Farmer H.'s house has neither running water nor sanitary plumbing nor electric lights nor gas. And one month after my visit, Farmer H. was due to lose the farm on which he had sweated away twenty-odd years of his life, because he couldn't keep up the payments on the mortgage.

Lots of farmers in Pine County are in the same boat or worse. This is dairy country,

and the sap of life goes up or down with the price of butter fat—a price that is set not in Minnesota, but in New York and Chicago, where a handful of well-larded men decide the fate of a million Farmers H.'s with the stroke of a pen. But when I got back to Minneapolis, I was told that I had been visiting the "kulaks." "You ought to go to western Minnesota or to North Dakota and see what real poverty looks like."

There's one great asset, however, that the mortgage companies can't take away from the Minnesota farmers. That's their Farmer-Labor state government. And it's an asset that looms larger all the time. I arrived in Minnesota on the eve of a state-wide farm conference called at the request of Governor Benson. One of the reasons the farmers get it in the neck so much of the time is that they are so poorly organized—much more poorly than are the workers—and such farm organizations as there are seem to find it difficult to get together on any question.

The great achievement of Governor Benson's conference was that it really united the farmers of Minnesota on a common program of state and federal legislative action. Every farm and coöperative organization in the state, from the most conservative to the most radical, was represented. And it was a thoroughly democratic conference. The big shots of the various organizations were not allowed to hog the limelight. A blanket invitation had been extended to all the dirt farmers in the state, whether they belonged to an organization or not. And quite a number of them came.

The conference not only drew up a program designed to aid the rank and file of the farmers, but showed its understanding of the broader problems facing the American people when it held out its hand to labor. In fact, the most applauded speech, next to the welcoming address of Governor Benson, was that of E. L. Oliver, executive vice-president of

Labor's Non-Partisan League, who called on labor and the farmers to champion each other's interests and unite for political action.

During my stay in Minnesota and Wisconsin, I found abundant evidence of this rising sentiment for coöperation of workers and farmers. Evidently this sentiment is growing nationally; witness the action of the recent national convention of the Farmers' Union in voting to invite representatives of both the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. to meet with the organization's board of directors for a discussion of common problems.

The Minnesota farm conference was important in another respect: it has served to strengthen the support of the Farmer-Labor administration among that section of the population that is likely to be most vulnerable to reactionary propaganda.

The economic royalists of Minnesota have no more accepted the verdict of last year's state elections than have the economic royalists of the country the outcome of the national balloting. They hate Benson for even more reasons than they hate Roosevelt. And there is a ferocity in their hatred such as Minnesota has not known since the days when the Non-Partisan Leaguers were mobbed and hunted like wild beasts for opposing the war.

Class war rules the political arena in Minnesota. The executive departments of the state government are in the hands of the Farmer-Labor Party. In the lower house a coalition of Farmer-Laborites and liberal Democrats gives Governor Benson a working majority. But the Senate is nothing but a branch of the steel trust, the banks, the railroads, and the insurance companies. In other words, what Dorothy Thompson and Walter Lippmann would call "independent." It is a rich man's heaven, with the lobbyists as angels, and deserving Tories of both Republican and Democratic persuasions getting the rewards.

The Senate nearly wrecked Governor Benson's entire program, particularly its comprehensive tax proposals designed to shift the burden of taxation from levies on property, which bear down heavily on farmers and small home-owners, to taxes on high income. No wonder that, when I asked the governor what his program for the future was, he said grimly: "To convert the reactionary Senate majority into a liberal majority. If I can't do that, I don't want to be reëlected."

Nor are all the reactionaries in the Republican and Democratic Parties. That would make things comparatively easy. The Farmer-Labor Party is a going concern, and it has its share of careerists and right-wingers who would like to make peace with big business and make war on the Communists and progressives. Some of them, like Hjalmar Petersen, former lieutenant-governor and now railroad and warehouse commissioner, fight Benson more or less openly. In the columns of the tory press Petersen has already assumed the stature of a major statesman, and he has become a favorite speaker at businessmen's clubs. Others, like certain job-holders

and top leaders of the A. F. of L., profess to support Benson in the hope of driving him to the right.

Then there are the Trotskyites. If you want to see a microcosm of world Trotskyism in action, go to the only American city where the Trotskyites have any influence among the workers, Minneapolis. Communists are sometimes accused of exaggerating in regard to Trotskyism. But the doings of the Trotskyist Dunne brothers, who control the Truck Drivers' Union in Minneapolis, speak for themselves. These disciples of the Führer of Coyoacan are hand in glove with the most unsavory A. F. of L. reactionaries and underworld racketeers, and fight the C.I.O. tooth and nail. And they are among the chief enemies of the Farmer-Labor Party and the Benson administration, doing for the Republicans what the Republicans cannot do for themselves.

Wisconsin. Cross the state line into Wisconsin, and you feel as if you've come from a strange land back to your own stamping ground. That is, if you happen to be an easterner. In Minnesota one hears of "eastern bankers," "eastern industrialists," eastern this and that. The sense of sectional separateness is strong. Actually, this is merely the external form of a deep-rooted class feeling; it is the struggle of the poor farmers of the Midwest against the Wall Street monopolies—the struggle that created the old Farmers' Alliance and Populist movements of the eighties and nineties, that found rebirth in the Non-Partisan League of the war and post-war period, and that today fertilizes the Farmer-Labor Party.

Minnesota is still predominantly agrarian and most of the industrial life is concerned more or less directly with the processing of farm products. In Wisconsin, however, fac-

tory and farm are on a more equal footing, and the weight of heavy industry lies over the state.

The farm regions of Wisconsin, as of other states, have in recent months been flooded with reactionary anti-labor propaganda. Among the chief sources of this propaganda are certain so-called farm papers and magazines, some of them undoubtedly directly subsidized by big business. Perhaps you've heard of *Rural Progress*, edited by that tinfoil liberal of Madison, Wis., Dr. Glenn Frank, who has vast, and thus far unrequited, yearnings for the Republican nomination for President. There's nothing of the hick magazine about *Rural Progress*. It's a streamlined monthly, and it opposes wages-and-hours legislation, Supreme Court reform, government development of electric power, and other such invasions of the sacred rights of corporate greed, with sophisticated fervor and candid camera élan. The magazine claims a circulation of two million, and there's no reason to discount that figure. Though it is supposed to sell at ten cents a copy, I didn't come across a single person in either Minnesota or Wisconsin who had ever bought one or seen it for sale. The secret of its circulation lies in the fact that it is distributed free in every mailbox in every community with a population of one thousand or less throughout the Midwest and Northwest. "*Rural Progress* gives every indication of being subsidized by big business interests," Attorney-General Loomis of Wisconsin told me. "Gives every indication," is probably an understatement.

The tradition of Wisconsin progressivism is real, though it is taken too much for granted and is in danger of going smug. There is a magic in the name LaFollette, and the memory of Old Bob is like a vestal flame in his native state. Some of that glamour today envelops his two sons, Governor Phil and Senator Bob, Jr. But unfortunately, glamour and tradition and even political office will not suffice these days when reaction fights with new and powerful weapons.

While I was in Wisconsin, plans were announced for a conference of tory Republicans and Democrats to form a coalition with the avowed purpose of fighting the LaFollette administration. The chief inspirer of the coalition move is the ultra-reactionary Milwaukee *Journal*, the most powerful newspaper in the state. Whether or not the coalition jells at this time, it is symptomatic of the regrouping of political forces that is developing nationally, and constitutes a potential threat to the LaFollette administration and the progressive organizations of the state. Yet I found among leading Progressives and Socialists a surprising complacency regarding these maneuvers and even a tendency to regard the emergence of a reactionary coalition as something of a blessing.

What Wisconsin needs is another kind of coalition, a coalition of progressives—a people's front—to short-circuit the schemings of big business and give the state's progressivism the backbone of an organized mass movement.



Peter Verdi



Peter Verdi



Herb Kruckman

"We'll teach the country to have faith in its business leaders, Montmorency. Fire another couple of thousand men!"

The lack of such a movement is the LaFollette Progressive Party's Achilles heel.

Toward the end of 1935 an effort was made to create such a coalition, the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation. This was founded by nine organizations: the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor, the Railroad Brotherhoods, the Farmers' Union, the Wisconsin Coöperative Milk Pool, the Farm Holiday Association, the Socialist Party, the Progressive Party, the Workers' Alliance, and the Farmer-Labor Progressive League. In the 1936 elections the Federation ran candidates in the Progressive Party primaries, and succeeded in electing the attorney-general, the secretary of state, twenty-seven out of the forty Progressives in the Assembly, and eight out of fifteen in the Senate.

Yet after this initial success, the Federation settled down to being just another organization, with a few thousand members who exercise little influence on the political life of the state. The trouble is that the Federation hasn't federated. Instead of consisting of affiliated groups, in addition to individual members, as is the case with the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party, it has been limited entirely to the latter type of membership. And sectarian Socialists on the state executive board have joined with old-line A. F. of L. leaders to keep it stewing in its own juice.

Old Henry Ohl, president of the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor, sat in his office and told me that it would be a bad thing to change the organizational structure of the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation because the C.I.O. and the Communists would attempt to "seize control." Apparently old Henry isn't at all worried about the reactionaries seizing control of the state government

and cracking down on his own A. F. of L. unions. Ohl is one of those people who have played around with progressivism for quite a long time. At the 1936 convention of the A. F. of L. he was sort of on the fence on the C.I.O. question, but soon Bill Green put a hoop in front of him, and he lost no time in jumping off the fence and through the hoop. In fact, he jumped so hard that he jumped out of the Socialist Party of which he had been a member for years.

But twenty-nine-year-old Emil Costello, president of the C.I.O. State Industrial Council and an assemblyman from Kenosha, represents a new type of progressivism. The C.I.O. stands ready to bring ninety-two thousand organized workers into the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation if it will permit group affiliation, and it has made an official proposal to that effect. The Communist Party has long been urging this change. And the tide among the rank and file of the Federation seems to be turning against the Henry Ohls and their stale rancors and puny fears.

I might add that one of the outstanding impressions of my trip is the vigor, clarity, and skill of the work of the Communist Party in the states that I visited. The party's prestige and influence in progressive circles is something of a revelation to those who knew the days when it was an isolated vanguard, a lone voice in what seemed an impenetrable wilderness.

Detroit. Detroit is a city risen from the dead.

Three and a half years ago I sat in the office of Brigadier-General Heinrich Pickert, police commissioner of Detroit. I was there by request. The police commissioner is a large, beefy, hatchet-faced man with the re-

fined sensibilities of a Goering. In 1913 he won his spurs as commander of the National Guards who smashed the copper strike in Upper Michigan. Since then he has been a great success. Under his regime the police have committed more murders, clubbings, and all-around mayhem than under four or five of his predecessors put together.

Police Commissioner Pickert leaned over toward me. "I'm waiting for the day when there's going to be a showdown with you people. I mean a showdown—the works." He paused. "And when it comes, I hope you're opposite me."

"I expect to be on the opposite side of you," I said.

"I mean *you* personally." And, with a sneer, "Only you wouldn't be enough for me. I could handle a half dozen like *you*."

Subsequently I left Detroit and deprived Herr Pickert of the deep joy of dealing with me personally when *der Tag* arrives.

Two and a half years later I returned to Detroit in the midst of preparations for another kind of showdown: the people of Detroit were in the thick of a campaign to elect a candidate for mayor who had pledged that his first public act would be to fire Pickert.

And so, when I say that Detroit is a city risen from the dead, I am trying to express the miraculous, breath-taking difference between the Detroit that I knew from 1933 to 1935—a city buried in the grave of the open shop—and the Detroit of today, throbbing with the life-blood of unionism.

Detroit is the largest one-industry city in the world, and until the rise of the C.I.O. United Automobile Workers, it had all the oppressiveness of a company town. The sense of terror was palpable, and behind each face lurked a possible spy.

The transformation that has taken place has left its imprint on every phase of the social, political, and cultural life of the city. It is an eloquent testimony of the indestructible vigor and deep creativeness of the working class—and a guarantee of its ultimate victory.

As I was leaving a street-car only a few days before the Detroit election, the conductor spotted the "Vote Labor" button I was wearing. He leaned over and said: "Do you think we'll win?"

My blood tingled at that "we." No, "we" didn't win. The mistakes that were made, the narrowness of the labor campaign, the failure to pursue a broad people's-front policy have already been analyzed in the *NEW MASSES*, and I won't take the space to discuss them here. But in that defeat are the seeds of coming victory. And when more of the people—not only the workers—learn to speak and act in terms of "we," then "they"—the Pickerts and their ilk—will get that showdown they so richly deserve.

As for the Wall Street hatchet men who are trying to get away with legislative murder in Congress, they, too, are reckoning without their host. The American people have yet to say the last word.

IS LATIN AMERICA GOING FASCIST? — II

Argentina: Democracy in Extremis

By Ricardo M. Setaro

THE political distance between Argentina and Brazil lies in the difference between two elections. In Argentina there recently occurred an election which was expected to decide whether the republic would survive or yield to the bluster and barbarism of fascism. That day of reckoning was postponed; but the democratic and fascist choices before the country were placed in sharper focus than before. In Brazil, an election contested on similar grounds would shortly have been held had not the would-be Hitler, Getulio Vargas, staged a cold coup precisely in order to prevent any such option.

Argentina, then, still permits what has been forbidden in Brazil. The struggle still takes legal forms. Argentine fascism has not yet found it possible to outlaw the opposition parties. But the democratic parties still lack the strength and unity sufficient to secure themselves against any such attempt.

ARGENTINA, unlike Brazil, has developed political parties with more or less identifiable programs, which are not wholly dependent upon "strong men" for their existence. Indeed, there is a multiplicity of groupings, ranging from extreme anarchist to outright fascist. On the left this diversity tends to make unity more difficult. Equally notable is the fact that the Argentine bourgeoisie has for many years been divided along progressive and reactionary lines. This too has tended to make the country's politics far more complex than anything found within its huge neighbor to the north.

There exists only one party, the Unión Cívica Radical, with any widespread popular support. The "radicalism" of *Radicalismo* in Argentina may roughly be likened to that of middle-of-the-road Democrats in the United States. This party tasted but could not hold onto power. It first came into office back in 1916 with Dr. Hipólito Irigoyen as president-elect. Irigoyen, a man of the *caudillo* type, was an ardent advocate and defender of national interests in his resistance to imperialist encroachments.

Irigoyen was succeeded in 1922 by another Radical, Dr. Marcelo de Alvear. Unfortunately, this regime permitted the reactionaries to regain a good deal of the influence lost under Irigoyen, who was returned for a second term in 1928, but this time under circumstances far less favorable than those prior to his retirement. Against Irigoyen and *Radicalismo* was arrayed a concentration on the right which still finds it advisable to operate under different names in various provinces. Its most frequent designation is that of Partido Demócrata Nacional. Most people recog-



Roberto M. Ortiz of Argentina

nize the identity of purpose behind the various provincial incarnations by lumping them all together under the single head, Concordancia. The main backing for this movement comes from the most reactionary landholders combined with the larger banking and business interests.

Irigoyen resisted manfully but without plan. Against a determined reactionary bid for power, both he and his supporters committed so many mistakes that the Concordancia actually discredited *Radicalismo* in the name of that national interest which was Irigoyen's strongest appeal. On September 6, 1930, Irigoyen was overthrown by a coup which set up General José Uriburu as its fascist-minded dictator.

Uriburu's road to power was greased with oil. In the bitter conflict between American and British interests, he sided with the latter. But the new regime lacked stability, and soon popular sentiment veered back to *Radicalismo*. The tide against Uriburu could not be stemmed, so the dictatorship sought to hide its nakedness behind "democratic" drapery. A pitiful farce of an election was stage-managed in the latter part of 1931, and General Agustín P. Justo, who posed as a "moderate" against the intransigent Uriburu, came into office. The Radicals were outraged at the patent injustice of the maneuver. They declared that politics was a disgusting spectacle with

which they no longer intended to be contaminated. Indeed, this Radical abstinence had to be overcome before Justo could feel his position secure.

GENERAL JUSTO has occupied the presidency for the past five years. Throughout this period, he has pursued two principal objectives. First, he strove to "legalize" the fraud by which he had been elected. In practical terms, this meant that he had to woo the Radicals back into politics. So long as they stayed aloof, his claim on the presidency might at any time be challenged by the very methods which had hoisted him into office. Secondly, in pursuance of the Uriburu policy, he intended to assure the domination of British capital over every aspect of Argentina's economic life.

Justo succeeded fairly well both ways. The Radicals did return to the polls. They voted for deputies and senators, and even attained a slim majority in the Chamber of Deputies as time rolled on. British interests likewise continued ascendant over all others. For instance, a law establishing a transportation monopoly permitted the British to purchase lines previously controlled by competing foreign capital.

The expiration of Justo's term confronted the people with a choice not unlike that of 1928 when Irigoyen came in for his fateful second administration. The standard-bearer of the Concordancia or rightist coalition was Dr. Roberto M. Ortiz, the finance minister of the Justo cabinet, a renegade from *Radicalismo* which he had supported until the 1930 coup, and an attorney for British-owned railways. The Radicals supported Dr. Alvear whose previous term in office had been extremely instructive to him. The Communist Party favored the formation of a people's front against Ortiz in support of the Radical candidate. The Socialist Party split in two on the issue. One group, newly organized as the Partido Socialista Obrero (Socialist Workers Party), supported the popular-front position in favor of Dr. Alvear. The other group, still known as the Socialist Party, made a futile attempt at presenting its own candidate, Dr. Nicolás Repetto, a reformist leader.

But this time, a new element entered into the already complex politics of Argentina. Italian and German fascism played an active role in the campaign. One phase of this activity may be cited. No less a personage than Luigi Federzoni, the president of the Italian Senate, arrived in Buenos Aires for a pre-election speaking tour. He harangued the electorate no end against the "Communist menace" and the "people's-front danger." The population of Argentina is overwhelmingly European, principally Italian and Spanish

in origin. Thus when Federzoni called upon all Italians to organize against the "Communist menace," his intentions escaped no one. There are in Argentina organized groups of Italian-born, German-born, and Spanish-born fascists, besides those of native vintage. All attended the Federzoni meetings in full regalia.

THE ELECTION was held under circumstances that made an honest vote impossible. At the head of the government was a man whose career had been a *mésalliance* with fraud and deceit. The extreme reactionaries, avowedly fascist, scoffed at the election and felt that the situation could be properly met only by another military dictatorship with General Juan Bautista Molina at its head. In the two leading provinces, Buenos Aires and Santa Fé, which controlled one-fourth of the total votes, armed intervention of the national government deposed the local governments in order to prevent the opposition from balloting.

That election day, early in September, came with unprecedented forebodings of serious

clashes, and the possibility of armed dictatorship. Large placards virtually announced a fascist uprising by General Juan Bautista Molina. Another general with the same surname, General Ramón Molina, announced that he would stand by Alvear in defense of the popular will. His words were interpreted as the challenge of revolt should a coup be attempted.

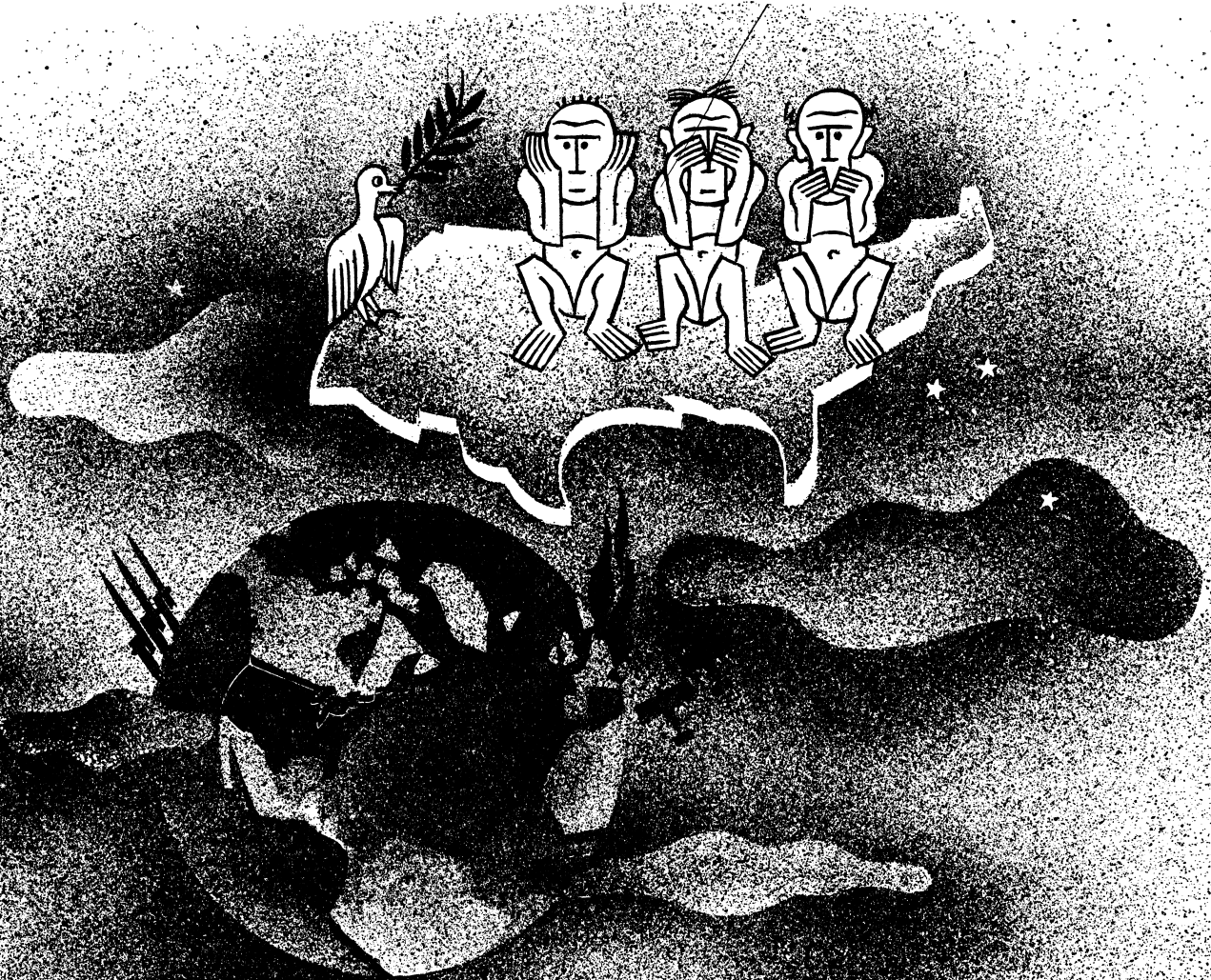
The Justo government was less demonstrative but more shrewd than Bautista Molina's fascists. Votes cast for Alvear were converted into votes for Ortiz through the alchemy of plain swindle. In towns of the Buenos Aires, Santa Fé, and Mendoza provinces, Alvear adherents had to fight arms in hand for the right to vote. In Buenos Aires proper, after the election the people poured into the streets to take power by any available means, for the intended fraud was apparent to all. Alvear counseled prudence. This in itself was the result of trickery. The Posts and Telegraph Department held up all messages from the interior which might indicate Alvear's defeat. Only favorable reports

were allowed to reach him. This actually caused Dr. Alvear to believe that he was going to be permitted to take office.

Without question, 70 percent of the voters favored Alvear. But the official tabulations gave him only 815,053 against 1,093,928 for Ortiz. In the city of Buenos Aires itself, however, Alvear was credited with 250,000 votes against 120,000 for Ortiz. No doubt this proportion was maintained throughout the country. But the election was not held under a government committed to legality. On the contrary, reaction was determined to win, by fraud if possible, by force if necessary.

Ortiz, the new president, will not find it easy sailing when he takes office in 1938. He does not have a majority in the Chamber of Deputies. A new election for the chamber is scheduled for March 1938. To win this, the Concordancia will have to perpetrate a fraud greater even than that of last September.

Whether Argentina is to go all the way along the path already taken in Brazil may be decided on that March day of next year when the people go to the polls once again.



REINHARDT



Gropper

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ESTABLISHED 1911

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Proposing a Miracle

THERE is no doubt that the spending of twelve to sixteen billion dollars on new housing in the next five years would help "recovery" and ameliorate to a substantial extent the situation in which one-third of the people are ill-housed. By the proposal just made by Mr. Roosevelt, however, it would accomplish these objectives at the expense of labor. In making the reduction of wage rates for building workers an integral and heavily emphasized part of his housing proposal, President Roosevelt has taken over bodily the main program of finance capital, which is now, as it has been since 1929, to make the workers pay for the depression.

This is to be a privately financed (but government-insured) housing program. According to the President's proposal, capital and labor will now sit down together and sharpen up the knife with which labor will then proceed to cut its throat. The seasonal character of building construction is one of the chief reasons for the hourly rates for union building workers being what they are. In any construction program this seasonal factor will remain. For more than half a century building workers have known that since they can't work when it rains, snows, or freezes they must eke out their income in working weather. The employers have known it, too, but that has not prevented them from fighting every advance in wages, and conceding raises only when forced to. President Roosevelt's proposal for capital-labor collaboration on wages indicates that he has faith in the possibility of a major miracle. Union men do not believe in miracles. One of the first comments on President Roosevelt's proposal for this most sweeping wage cut—the 1930 census reported more than 2,500,000 building industry workers—comes from the ultra-conservative secretary-treasurer of the building trades department of the A. F. of L., Michael J. McDonough, who said:

We are not in accord with the proposal for labor to reduce its hourly wages to help promote a building boom. Similar proposals following the 1929 crash proved unsuccessful because when

union officials had reduced wages to the maximum, building contractors held off in the hopes that wages could be forced even lower.

When an A. F. of L. top official—who speaks of "union officials" reducing wages, not the rank and file—has learned this obvious lesson, that there is no way of inducing a capitalist to take less profit than he thinks he can get, it is time the President, who put a wages-and-hours bill high up on his "must" list for the special session, should become aware of it, too.

Lynch-Law Lady

TYPICAL of the tactics of the anti-New Deal bloc in Congress is the use of the Gavagan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill as a political football. Dixie Bibb Graves, senator from Alabama—the state with the highest percentage of lynchings—in her maiden speech invoked the specter of states' rights. Mrs. Graves warned Congress that "only a compelling emergency should cause this body to strike down the sovereignty of indestructible states." To the lady from Alabama, twenty-seven lynchings in 1935 (of which six occurred in Alabama), eighteen lynchings in 1936 (one in Alabama), and at least nine lynchings so far in 1937 (one in Alabama), do not represent an emergency.

The filibuster against the Anti-Lynching Bill, so ably abetted by Mrs. Graves, is engineered by the leaders of what Congressman Maverick of Texas has labeled "the revolution of big money." Its object is to woo New Deal supporters from the administration on the false issue of North versus South. No legislator dares openly defend lynching as such, hence the concern for states' rights. Mrs. Graves's tearful plea, "You should seek the truth, know the truth, and the truth will make you free," would aid greatly in making the Anti-Lynching Bill the law of the land if the truth that the great majority of American people abhor lynching and desire realistic action to stamp it out were sufficiently impressed on members of Congress.

Labor in the City Council

THE results of New York's proportional representation elections for the City Council demonstrate again labor's newly found political power and clearly point the way for a broad people's front. Although Democrats have retained a bare majority, with eleven or twelve of the twenty-six seats going to Tammany men and two others filled by anti-Tammany Democrats, the election of five out of seven

American Labor Party candidates and the strong showing of Communist entries plainly mark the end of the old machine-rule in America's largest city. By comparison with the Board of Aldermen, which had only one anti-Tammany member, the new Council represents a startling change.

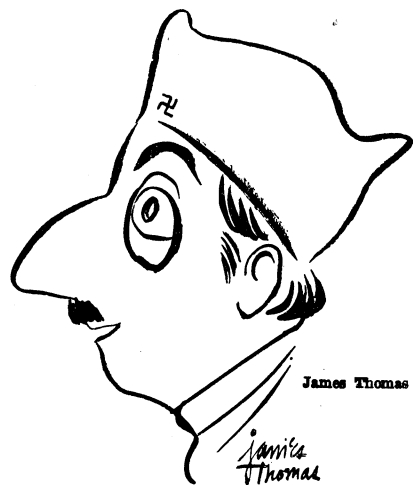
The total Communist vote, approximately 74,000 first-choice ballots, is an absolute gain of about 15 percent over the 1936 total cast for Israel Amter for president of the Board of Aldermen. In Brooklyn Peter V. Cacchione with more than 30,000 first-choice votes, failed of election by only 245 ballots on the fifty-eighth subsequent count. But even these important gains do not fully reflect the added strength of the Communist Party. In 1936 Amter received only 2.25 percent of the total valid votes, while this year's 74,000 amount to almost 4 percent. By contrast, the Socialist Party again lost ground, dropping from 1.9 percent of the total in 1936 to 1.6 in 1937.

Impressive as these gains are, they signify only a successful *beginning*. Thus the total first choice ballots for American Labor Party candidates was only about half the number cast for Mayor LaGuardia under the Labor emblem. And the very considerable shifts that resulted from the subsequent counts (second, third, etc., choice-ballots) indicated that the lack of a fuller labor slate and an intensive city-wide drive to elect Council members proved costly in the final tabulations. With this lesson behind them and a strong minority block in the present Council, progressive elements in New York City can rally more determinedly than ever for a united front.

Propaganda for Franco

GENERAL FRANCO has announced that he can no longer spare Spain the horrors of war. It seems that Franco has been withholding an irresistible offensive just because he hates bloodshed. Meanwhile he has despatched bombers over small unprotected towns near Madrid, and in one raid alone killed fifty women and children. Franco says he is consumed by a passion for peace—on terms of unconditional surrender. Failing to obtain a capitulation, he will attack.

This threat of a great military push coincides with the return of Lord Halifax, lord president of the council of the British cabinet, from a heart-to-heart talk with Hitler. Lord Halifax discussed with Hitler the advisability of Great Britain's granting Franco belligerent rights without delay, thus giving the Spanish fascists the formal right to buy arms and to blockade the Spanish coast. In essence, the non-intervention policies of England and France, as well as the



Franco—"peace crusader"

direct aid of Germany and Italy, have already granted these rights. Yet Franco is angling for even greater support from his German and Italian allies in addition to English approval of a complete naval blockade of Spain, possible only with the assistance of the Italian and German navies.

For Franco realizes that the trained army and strengthened fortifications of loyalist Spain can withstand any attack, however severe, that he can launch with the forces now at his disposal. He must persuade England to give him even greater leeway than "neutrality" has already offered. The "armistice" and "peace talks" provide the English Tories with propaganda they can use to present Franco as a humane crusader longing for peace. The Spanish premier, Juan Negrín, has pointed out that Franco's peace is nothing more than a demand that the Spanish government surrender unconditionally to invasion. His reply was that only an unconditional victory over Franco, the front for the fascist powers that seek complete domination of Spain, can form a basis for a peace acceptable to the Spanish people.

Censoring Stokowski

THE world's best music, as everybody knows, comes to you weekly through the courtesy of Henry Ford, Alfred P. Sloan, and the gentlemen of the Chase National Bank and twenty affiliated financial institutions. In addition to the music, Alfred dispenses sales talk for his automobiles, Henry dispenses homespun homilies, and the boys of the Chase National Bank dispense good will.

Of late, however, there has not been very much good will between the Chase gang and Leopold Stokowski, the conductor of their Monday-night symphonic programs. Apparently fearful that when the revolution comes it may be preceded by a good marching song, the Chase boys are keeping an eye on Mr. Stokowski's programs. Recently they refused

to permit the conductor to play the First Symphony of Shostakovich, simply because it was Soviet music and hence likely to incite to riot, revolution, and the downfall of our most sacred institutions, such as the Chase Bank.

We only wish it were as easy as that, and that the men who write the world's music were more powerful than the men who control the world's moneybags. But this has no bearing on such flagrant censorship as has obviously been imposed here. Mr. Stokowski, we know, believes in spreading music to the masses, and we are with him in that worthy endeavor. But who is to judge what music the masses shall hear? The Chase National Bank? If so, aren't we at least entitled to a song-sheet with our monthly reminder that our balance is overdrawn?

Free (Poisoned) Air

BUT while censorship cracks down on anything even indirectly suggesting cultural communion with that friendly power, the Soviet Union, direct political propaganda goes on unhindered from those self-proclaimed enemies of democracy, the Nazis. For some time now there have been recurrent complaints that such propaganda was being aired over "German hours" broadcast by various stations. The source seemed difficult to discover, and the responsibility hard to fix, but last week William Leick of the Cleveland *Press* exposed a well-organized network through which Nazi propaganda was being smuggled out into the American ether.

Ernst Kotz, short-wave broadcaster for the National Broadcasting Co., was named the head man of the Nazi radio propaganda machine here. He, the exposé stated, had charge of distribution of recorded programs, ostensibly merely musical, which contained, interlarded between the musical numbers, such stuff as: "A new spirit prevails in Germany, infused by the Fuehrer, whose untiring efforts for a new and united Germany should inspire every German at home and abroad," or "the Fuehrer maps the course;

we follow." Snug in his N.B.C. berth, Kotz worked through regional offices in Chicago, Cleveland, St. Louis, and San Francisco.

The Rev. John Foisel, Cleveland representative of the German Educational Service (as the radio propagand machine is called), also told Leick in an interview that motion pictures are on the bill of fare, and that these will be released through "private groups" in the near future. The Federal Communications Commission should act at once to put a stop to the importation of these anti-democratic blurbs from Hitler's propaganda ministry.

Elixir of Death

NINETY-THREE persons have died after taking "elixir sulfanilamide" and of these seventy-three are known to have lost their lives "as a direct result." So Congress was informed last week in a full report on the case furnished by Secretary Wallace. It is clear from the report that all these deaths could have been avoided if the manufacturers had curbed their greed just enough to make a few simple experiments.

The fatal elixir was rushed onto the market without adequate tests to determine whether or not diethylene glycol may be safely used as a solvent for sulfanilamide deposit, previously published reports in scientific literature showing that diethylene glycol might be dangerous when taken internally [the report said]. A few simple and inexpensive tests on experimental animals would have quickly demonstrated the toxic properties of both diethylene glycol and the "elixir."

Having saved the money involved in making such tests, the S. E. Massengill Co. sent out its elixir of death. For weeks afterward government agents raced back and forth, burrowed through mountains of records, exerted enormous efforts to recall the poison. The report to Congress, in detailing the gigantic efforts made to seize all the elixir, spares no words in condemning the manufacturers, even reproducing the telegrams the concern sent out in order to show that these "were not calculated to impress receivers with the emergency character of

FACTS ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION—IV

VICTORY OF COLLECTIVE FARM SYSTEM

	1918	1929	1930	1934	1937
Number of collective farms (in thousands)	1.6	57.0	85.9	233.3	243.7
Number of households in collective farms (in millions).....	0.02	1.0	6.0	15.7	18.5
Percentage of collectivization:					
In number of peasant households:	0.1	3.9	23.6	71.4	93.0
In area under crops.....	no data	4.9	33.6	87.4	99.1

the call for returning the goods." The Federal Food and Drugs Act is inadequate to cope with such situations in advance, Congress is informed. And given a legal loop-hole, the urge for profits did the rest.

More Fascist Feelers

FOLLOWING the line laid down by Germany and Italy, Brazil recently began banning the "Bolshevik" arts. After accusing *Tom Sawyer* of being a Red, they barred the United Artists-Fritz Lang production, *You Only Live Once*. That was before Brazil became an official fascist state.

Since then, according to *Variety*, the censors in Brazil have banned *The Road Back* and *They Gave Him a Gun*. *The Road Back* is described by the fascist press as a film "written by a man, enemy of the nationalist government of his country, and therefore a Jew and a communist." *They Gave Him a Gun*, which was a bad film with a good idea, was condemned because it "hampered the development of a sound patriotic mind."

No doubt some fascist-minded big shots in Hollywood will attempt to make this the excuse for a general ban on all progressive action by writers, directors, and actors in the picture industry. We recently pointed

out one such effort: a news story in the *Hollywood Reporter* alleging that the anti-fascist stand of many stars might bring serious losses in foreign business. This feeler produced no results, so a variation was tried the other day on the air, in a radio gossip column conducted by Lloyd Pantages. Mr. Pantages conceded that private individuals were entitled to work for their own political beliefs, but that producers could not allow these beliefs to "hurt business." This suggestion drew quick protests from the Motion Picture Artists' Committee, and now *Variety* announces that Mr. Pantages is off the air.

For a Warless and Democratic America

THE Pittsburgh congress of the American League Against War and Fascism summed up one period and began another. Its future course is entirely predicated on the substantial achievements and rich experience of the past. But the interval since the last congress has been a fateful one. Problems arose which the League had never before fully encountered. It had to take time for the solvent of experience and education to break down deeply-rooted illusions and prejudices. At Pittsburgh, the leaders of the American League, more than one thousand in number, took stock of what had been done, considered what remained to be done, and made those adjustments in policy and organizational set-up necessary to realize a warless and democratic America—and world.

Superficially, the dividing line has been marked by a change in name. Henceforth the League will be known as the American League for Peace and Democracy. This change was made in response to widespread sentiment in favor of positive rather than negative goals. The new name was always implicit in the old. Peace and democracy are of course the only alternatives to fascism and war. Nevertheless, the change in name is symbolic of a fuller and more fruitful conception of the League's purpose.

Nor does the voluntary and amicable withdrawal of the Communist Party—until now, the only affiliated political party—imply any sharp break with the past. The new constitution declares that political parties shall be eligible for membership when a number of them signify their willingness to join. The affiliation of several parties would automatically absolve the League of any charge or suspicion of partiality or domination. "But," as Earl Browder, the spokesman for the Communist Party, explained, "inasmuch as the great majority of you have to face enemies who cry out that this is party politics and

attack the League on this ground, we of the Communist Party took the initiative to propose that until we bring a substantial number of parties into the League, we shall put this question aside and have no political party represented at all." Communists will continue as before to serve and support the League with the utmost devotion. But in common with the adherents of other parties, they will be represented only when elected as the representatives of non-party organizations in recognition of their services therein.

A more profound adjustment had to be made in respect to neutrality. The American League has grappled with this critical issue for more than two years. Any quick and easy solution was out of the question, for a diversity of viewpoint exists within the League. This diversity underlies the League's fundamental purpose to bring unity into the peace movement for the sake of common action. At the same time, it makes impossible the adoption of any policy too far in advance or out of line with the opinions of the majority in the organization.

The previous congress, held in Cleveland in 1936, found the advocates of neutrality with sufficient influence to swing the League in their direction. That congress went on record as favoring mandatory neutrality. But then came the Spanish war. The proponents of neutrality could no longer escape the logic of their position. It was clear that neutrality served the interests of the fascist insurgents and their Italo-German backers. The victory of peace could no longer be separated from the victory for democracy; fascist success plainly meant another and bloodier aggression for even greater stakes. Thus, a shift in sentiment took place within the League in favor of concerted democratic action to hinder the aggressor and help the victim of aggression. This sentiment was further enforced by the Sino-Japanese war.

The Pittsburgh congress acknowledged the new course upon which events had irresistibly driven the organization. The new "program for 1938" explicitly states that the foreign policy demanded by the League must be based on "the distinction between the aggressors and victims." This is implemented by an assertion of "the necessity of denying our economic resources to the war-making, treaty-breaking aggressors and opening them up to victims under conditions designed to remove the risk of our being drawn into war." Thirdly, "the necessity of concerted action to quarantine aggressors" is affirmed.

This progress toward clarity was equalled only by the organizational accomplishment. For the first time in its existence, the American League rests on a large and genuine trade-union foundation. Of the 1302 delegates, 405 represented trade unions, both C.I.O. and A. F. of L. Indeed, it is likely that the Pittsburgh congress witnessed a greater degree of unified effort by unions belonging to both wings of the labor movement than any enterprise since the expulsion of the ten C.I.O. internationals. The trade-union representation at the Pittsburgh congress was at least twice as great as that at the Cleveland congress. In the case of New York City, three quarters of the entire municipal trade-union movement, or 650,000 members, were directly represented at the congress, embracing the A. F. of L., C.I.O., and railway trainmen. Of the 4,406,408 persons represented at the congress, 1,647,250 were bona-fide trade-unionists.

The American League for Peace and Democracy now has a firm footing in American life. Its tasks are immense, but so is the loyalty, the passion, the devotion at its command. Its chief problem is that of making good the promise of this Congress. And in the fulfillment of this promise lies our hope and our safety.

F O R S Y T H E ' S P A G E

Norman Thomas on the Sidelines

TO the best of my knowledge I have only seen Norman Thomas once. On that occasion he was making a speech in Union Square before a microphone, and it was a bit embarrassing to me because he had just been preceded by a Communist who may have been a great soul but who was most assuredly a bad talker. By contrast Norman Thomas resembled the younger Pitt addressing the noble judges in the treason trial of Warren Hastings. I remember that the contrast gave me a severe twinge because I was accompanied by a gentleman who took some pains to point out the difference in the speakers.

What prompts me to this memory is the news that Mr. Thomas was making a speech recently in Boston at the weekly meeting of the Community Church of Boston (non-sectarian) in Symphony Hall. The Rev. Donald G. Lothrop, leader of the church, presided. The session took place simultaneously with the world celebrations on the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet Union, and Mr. Thomas took advantage of the occasion to charge that the policies of the Soviet Union violated socialist principles. According to the news report, Mr. Thomas then added that "Russia was a poor nation mainly because one fifth of its national income must be spent on the army on which the power of the government rests."

Only occasionally am I seized by a physical compulsion which would make it a great pleasure to bash in the countenance of an utter stranger, but I must confess that the reading of those few words changed the nature of an otherwise gentle soul. "Russia was a poor nation MAINLY because one fifth of its national income must be spent on the army on which the power of the government rests." It is a sentence so inherently dishonest and delicately vicious that one despairs of answering it. On its face it is a sentiment dear to any decent person. We all hate militarism, we all hate war. So, if we hate these things, we must hate the Russian army, which, according to Norman Thomas, has not only the faults of every army, but which in addition keeps the nation in poverty. And which not only keeps it in poverty, but does so merely for the sake of suppressing the people of the Soviet Union.

Nowhere does Norman Thomas suggest that there may be a need in the outside world,

which might call for the presence of an army in Russia. Nowhere does he mention that from its earliest days the Soviet Union called for complete disarmament of all nations. So far as the dispatch stated, he made no mention of the menace of Germany-Japan-Italy as necessitating the army of the Soviet Union. The army, Mr. Thomas infers, is merely a device by which the present government of the Soviet Union maintains itself in power.

The bitterest part of this dishonest statement is that the threat of war has been a cruel thing for the Russian people. It is uncontestedly true that if it were not for the fear of war and the need of preparing to protect the Soviet Union, the people could have the consumers' goods they need. Never in all my life have I realized what war meant until I visited Moscow in September. One who believes in socialism as I do can only grit his teeth in rage when he thinks that if it were not for the menace of the fascist powers, these brave people could have the clothes they need, could have better houses, could have joy and a sense of relief. The marks of the struggle are in their faces, and one wants to weep as one thinks that they may now be faced with that battle all over again. They have fought the revolution, the civil war, the intervention of foreign powers, and famine; they have carried on a majestic struggle for industrialization and collectivization of the farms—and just when their triumph has made it possible for them to reap the rewards of their efforts, they must gird themselves again to face the hatred of a mad world.

Can even the most mendacious believe that the government deliberately altered the First Five-Year Plan to provide provisions for the Far Eastern Army at the time Japan took Manchuria? Does anybody in his right mind believe that the authorities wanted to increase the military budget at a time when it strained every nerve to keep the country alive? If all that Stalin craves is power, why in the name of all sense does he bother with industrialization and collectivization? Why wouldn't he be content to be another Pilsudski in a land of poverty and dirt and misery?

Just what is it that Norman Thomas seeks to prove by such statements? Would he be better satisfied if the Soviet Union were another China? Would he like Russia to disband its army and turn its interest solely to the production of consumers' goods? Would

he trust the good intentions of such men as Araki and Hitler? What is this new fifth column of the intellect which poses such questions about Russia at a moment like this? If Mr. Thomas will recall, there was once a country known as the German republic which was so gentle with its enemies, so given to freedom of speech and freedom of action (for all except Communists, of course) that it found itself shortly surrendering the keys of Berlin to a group of men in brown shirts. Is that the sort of socialist land he wants the Soviet Union to be?

One lesson I learned in Russia this summer was that it matters very little what the Norman Thomases feel about the Soviet Union. The liberals have always been prompt to desert Russia in a crisis, and the Russians have learned not to depend upon them. At a time when the longshoremen of Seattle were refusing to load cargoes consigned to Kolchak in Siberia, the liberals were giving their entire time to a condemnation of Bolshevik Russia for failing to institute the beautiful, perfect parliamentary system which has worked so miraculously in Great Britain and the United States. A liberal is one who wastes no word of sympathy over the assassination of Kirov but who later keeps the cables hot with demands that his murderers go unpunished. The Soviet people do not understand such fine distinctions of freedom and justice. The righteous arrogance of these critics of the Soviet Union is almost more than can be borne. The pure and simple truth is that we can do nothing much for Russia, but that the Soviet

Union is almost *our* sole hope. It is upon the backs of those courageous and ill-clad Russian workers that our own sweet civilization rests. In that great world conflict which is inevitable, the Norman Thomases will be on the sidelines, crying for peace and strict democracy. If his words should happen to please the powers then ruling America, he will be allowed to speak. His mellifluous voice will



Scott Johnston
Norman Thomas

be raised to the peak of its sweetness. I can hear it now. . . . A Nazi spy has been caught behind the Soviet lines and shot . . . (hum-hum-hum, goes the voice). . . . This is an outrage. . . . That such things should be done in a country which calls itself socialist. . . . Why wasn't a parliamentary commission appointed to look into the matter? . . . And why wasn't the spy spared, given the benefits of education, turned into an honorable citizen, and returned to his family in Germany, where his example would be so effective as to shame Herr Hitler and his followers out of their ruthlessness? . . . hum-hum-hum. . . .

ROBERT FORSYTHE.

Spain's Shirt-Sleeve General

By Edwin Rolfe

THERE isn't a person in Spain who hasn't heard the name of "el Campesino." When one hears that a certain position is being held by men under el Campesino's command, one smiles, says "That's good," and goes off feeling very safe, very secure. Or, when el Campesino's men are attacking on a certain front, the Spaniards know that the attack will be successful, if it is humanly or militarily possible.

Who is el Campesino? Beyond the fact that, with Enrique Lister, Modesto, Duran, Ortega, and a few others, he has been referred to as one of republican Spain's young "shirt-sleeve generals," little is known about him outside of Spain. His real name is Valentin Gonzales—"el Campesino," meaning "the peasant," is what his soldiers call him, what the people call him, and what he likes to call himself. And, in a land where the people have an uncanny knack of hitting upon the exact nickname, his is the most exact, the most appropriate.

He is by birth a peasant. At the outbreak of the rebellion in July 1936, he hastily formed a battalion of peasants from all parts of Spain. With these men he fought the fascists in the Guadarramas—fought them so well, in fact, that an English correspondent, Geoffrey Cox, quotes the fascists as having said that "this must be a trained group of professional soldiers opposing us." Similar battalions, made up of Spaniards who had never held rifles before in their lives, were resisting the rebels in every part of Spain. But Campesino's men were in the center of things, in the thick of it, on the Madrid front. Badly clothed, hastily armed, the Campesino battalion soon earned the respect, and the fear, of its well-trained enemies. This peasant soldier, who had served his military apprenticeship in Morocco, had the ability and the personality to evoke discipline and selfless effort from the men he commanded. But slowly the normal casualties of intensive warfare thinned down his ranks. It was at Somosierra that the original battalion made its last great effort; after terrific fighting, under which few soldiers could stand up, the survivors of his original band withdrew to Madrid. The story goes that less than ten men returned—among them were Campesino himself, and a Cuban-American named Policarpo Candon. Candon is now commander of the First Mobile Shock Brigade of the 46th Division under Campesino. And Campesino himself is now division commander.

After Somosierra, Campesino enlisted the services of other loyal young Spaniards, formed a new battalion, and with them held the trenches at Carabanchel and at the outskirts of Madrid. During the critical days of



Bertrando Valloton

El Campesino

last November and December—just before and just after the first international columns arrived—battalions like that of Campesino, composed wholly of native workers and peasants, held the fascists at bay, stopped them at the gates of the city, and thus changed the whole course of the war.

And this great division commander, with a wealth of diverse and dangerous experience behind him, is only thirty-three years old! Although he is of medium height—about five feet eight inches tall at the most—his large, black-bearded face and massive shoulders and powerful arms make him appear huge. He cannot enter any hall in which a mass meeting is in progress without being recognized, without the people drowning the voice of the speaker in applause and great shouts of "El Campesino! We want el Campesino!" Only after he has made his appearance on the platform and spoken a few words of greeting is the meeting permitted to proceed. How he taught his raw recruits to become the skilled and experienced soldiers that they are today can best be illustrated by the following example.

IN THE EARLY DAYS of the war, the non-mechanically-minded Spanish peasant soldiers feared, more than anything else, the enemy tanks. A battle might be progressing perfectly, fulfilling every point in its previously drawn-up strategic plan; but the appearance of tanks would demoralize the peasant soldiers, some of whom had never even seen an automobile before, throwing them into panicky retreat. Which is not strange—there is something about an enemy tank approaching, its machine guns spitting uninterrupted death, which

throws fear into the heart of any, even the most experienced, soldier. Talk and explain as they might, the officers of the young republican army could do nothing to dispel this panic, this fear of tanks on the part of the men. But Campesino did not talk. When his lines on the Jarama front, early last March, spied the rebel tanks approaching, Campesino himself shouted at his men, told them to hold their lines and watch him. Quickly he fastened a number of primitive can-grenades of dynamite to his ample belt; stooping low in the hastily dug front-line trenches, he lighted a cigar (it was a Corona Corona, taken from one of Madrid's ritziest tobacconists for distribution to the soldiers—no cheaper brands were available at the moment). Then, slowly, he lifted himself through a sap, a large slanted tunnel in the parapet. From their peep-holes, his men watched, silently, breathing heavily, as he crawled along the broken earth; they watched him, breathless, as he crept into a foxhole not fifty yards away; watched him and the approaching tanks. In other foxholes between the fascist and government lines were three other courageous officers of the Campesino battalion. Finally the moment came; the tanks were almost upon him; he had not yet been seen. Suddenly he raised his right arm—the men saw the rapid arc it formed as he hurled the first of the sticks of dynamite at the nearest tank-track, and another at the tank-guns. Simultaneously, the other officers let loose their dynamite and hand grenades. In three minutes it was all over. Seven enemy tanks were out of commission, the others were in hasty and lumbering retreat. And Campesino had himself disabled three of the seven tanks. From that point on the soldiers got the idea. Campesino had showed them. If tanks were not, as they had thought, invincible, then they too could and would have a crack at them. Today, when it comes to tank-warfare, the far-famed Asturian miners have nothing on Campesino's youthful battalion of *dinamiteros*, the anti-tank battalion of the 46th Division.

Because of deeds such as this, the figure of Campesino has assumed almost mythic proportions in Spain. And his own soldiers love him.

His violent language [says Geoffrey Cox in his excellent book, *Defense of Madrid*], his capacity for sleep at any moment, his ability to secure food and supplies for his men from empty regimental store-rooms are proverbial. He curses his men with the vocabulary which, in former days, he used for his plow-team. But they take it cheerily enough, because they trust him as a leader, and they know he looks after them as few other Spanish commanders do. When he enters a depot the supply clerks imme-

diately say: "No; it is impossible," but el Campesino goes out with the remaining ham and the two bags of potatoes for his column. He can sleep, too, while waiting for a meeting, even in a trench during a bombardment. Once his men had to wake him to watch an air fight overhead in which the government chasers were driving off rebel bombers. The only man he is said to fear is his daredevil chauffeur, who goes by the enigmatic name of Chocolate, and who, el Campesino says, has brought him nearer death than any rebel. One of the great things about this natural fighter is that he is willing to accept discipline. He argues in staff meetings with the utmost fury. But once a decision is taken he sticks to it. . . .

When I last saw el Campesino, his division was stationed near a little town not far from Madrid. This was just after his men had been recalled for a rest after their strenuous efforts in the July offensive west of Madrid and the subsequent insurgent counter-attacks. Entering the town, we saw numerous young soldiers strolling in the streets. It was a Sunday, and a festival was in progress. The men of the 2nd Brigade had organized a dance, to which the girls from one of Madrid's large factories—a factory which manufactures clothes and shirts for the soldiers—had been invited. And they had responded *en masse*. The political commissar of the *dinamiteros*—a nineteen-year-old veteran named Miguel Bascuñana—ushered a group of us into the large and sunny patio where the dance was in progress. Another young soldier—a Cuban-American whom I had known in the United States, who spoke excellent English, and who was now adjutant political commissar of the 46th Division—showed us around, doing the introductions. The seven-piece band alternated its tunes—first a flamenco, then "I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby!," then a vivacious Spanish waltz, which was followed by "Tiger Rag" and other popular American dance-tunes. What surprised me most was the quality of the musicians' performance—they improvised as well as the best bands I had ever heard, not barring even Benny Goodman's. Their leader was a stocky, dark-faced, smiling man who played the cornet. And what a cornet! He left his band during every number to mingle with the dancers, blowing his notes into the dancers' ears, twisting and turning, his cornet held upward, his large pistol in its even larger holster banging against the men and women among whom he made his tortuous way. "Who's that?" I asked my Cuban friend. "Don't you know him?" he replied. "That's Cueva, the hottest cornetist in Cuba." Now, in addition to his musical duties, Cueva has military responsibilities. He is a captain, in command of one of the companies in Campesino's 2nd Brigade. We would have remained for a dance or two, but we wanted to see Campesino. Before we got to him, however, our thorough Cuban commissar and friend and guide led us a merry chase through all the departments of the division, through every brigade and battalion, through dusty archives in the one-thousand-year-old city hall, and through an ancient library, found hidden in the vaults of an old castle. The parchment-bound books, our guide

told us, were being packed for shipment to the bomb-proof storages in which the great art treasures of Spain are being safeguarded for the duration of the war.

We were to have lunch with Campesino, and then accompany him to the soccer-field, where two battalion teams were to play off the finals of an elimination contest, the winning team to receive a loving-cup trophy. During the meal, I had a chance to see those qualities in the man which have endeared him to his soldiers and to all of republican Spain. He sat at the head of the long, forty-foot table, exchanging quips and jests with everyone. His voice, even when he addressed his neighbor—who, incidentally had been a colonel in the Ethiopian army during the Italian invasion—his voice boomed out so sharply and clearly that it could be heard from one end to the other of the large dining room. Never quiet for a moment, always talking and gesticulating, it was surprising to see how, at the same time, he managed to empty his plate of bean-soup, of two large helpings of stew, of several small loaves of bread, and a huge cluster of grapes. The guide, seated next to me, read my thoughts. "Like magic," he said, "isn't it?"

Campesino's bronzed face glowed all through the meal. One strand of his thick black hair fell over his forehead as he talked and waved his ham-like arms in the air to illustrate a story about an airplane dog-fight. His heavy snub nose expanded and became even more snubbed when his face widened in laughter. His brown eyes laughed even when his mouth was serious. But they took in everything around him. And they became soft as a woman's when he looked upon the two young men whom he calls "my sons"—the trusted commanders of his first and second brigades, Candon and Merino.

A messenger came in while Campesino was putting away the last of his second portion of stew. "The girls from the factory want you to speak to them," he said. Campesino hastily swallowed a mouthful, rose from his chair, and followed the messenger into another huge dining hall, where the girls were eating. After a few minutes of cheering, of "Viva Campesino," he was permitted to speak.

"My dear comrades," he said to them, "I am sorry I cannot be with you longer. But

you know I have many duties, even here, where such duties are pleasurable, unlike the front, where they are often tragic. You have come here to give life and courage to our brothers, our soldiers. For this I am deeply grateful. I want you to know what a great satisfaction it is to me, and doubtless to you, that you have come here to impart aid and spirit and gayety to our soldiers—our soldiers who in turn will be enabled to give so many headaches to the fascists. And it is you who, when you talk with us, mingle with us, dance and are joyful with us, give us the courage to continue. The knowledge that you do this should be, for the moment, your reward. We are made happier and more determined, we become better soldiers and better men because of your presence here. For all of this I am grateful. *Salud!*"

We squeezed our way through the crowd, the cheers, the cries of *Salud!* And in the courtyard, on the way back to our dining hall, another, smaller group of girls accosted Campesino. "You didn't talk to us because we are ugly," said one of the girls. She was, to be truthful, unusually homely. But Campesino answered quickly, and very gravely, although his eyes twinkled as he said it: "For me," he told them, "there are neither beautiful women nor ugly women. What matters is that you are all anti-fascists. Therefore I hold you all dearest in my heart." The girls went off, smiling.

And Campesino, the man who until two years ago was illiterate, returned to the table, having uttered, in beautiful Spanish, one of those perfectly appropriate, short speeches which are so rare in this land of long and flowery orations.

As he lifted another large chunk of bread to his mouth, the woman who was serving us cautioned him: "Ten cuidado a tu linea!" ("Be careful of your [waist] line!") "No tengo miedo," Campesino punned. "Yo miro mi linea—y siempre voy adelante." ("Don't worry—I take good care of my line—I always go forward!")

To tell the story of the soccer game, of Campesino's beautiful kick-off, of the beer drunk and the speeches made, the organized cheers and the irrepressible band, would require another article. I want to tell you of one last incident, a courtesy on Campesino's part that few could equal, a courtesy which has its own humorous angle.

As the group of us—all Americans—rose to salute the soccer-teams, Campesino beckoned one of the soldiers, scribbled a few words on a pad of paper, tore off the sheet, and told him to give it to the band-leader. I watched the messenger, saw him hand the paper to Captain Cueva. I saw Cueva smile and talk to his musicians. There was a rustling of pages as the musicians dug down deep among their music for the next number. Then, as my gaze returned to the soccer field, the cymbals crashed, and the band blared forth into a deafening but familiar tune—they were saluting us by playing John Philip Sousa's "The Stars and Stripes Forever."



A. Ajay

Daumier: 19th Century Revolutionist

By Jay Peterson

HONORÉ DAUMIER (1808-1879) was the greatest revolutionary artist of nineteenth-century France. This is the inescapable conclusion of a visit to the large three-room show which the Pennsylvania Museum of Art is now devoting to his work in lithography, drawings, oils, sculpture, and book-illustration. Even the æsthete should be convinced by the handsome demonstration which Henry P. McIlhenny, curator of painting, has arranged at the Philadelphia institution.

While the museum has emphasized Daumier's painting by devoting much of the space in the first two rooms to his work in this medium, it will be more to our purpose to approach the unflinching Frenchman as a lithographer. His work in this medium began officially in 1829, when the fiery Charles Philipon, proprietor of the republican weekly *Caricature*, saw two of his drawings. Daumier at the time was twenty-one years old. He had been brought to Paris by his father, a poor glazier, and had learned the trade of lithography soon after he had gone out to work as a young boy. Philipon, a tireless opponent of Charles X, felt that this young cartoonist was one who would help overthrow the man he hated. He promptly gave him employment.

Charles was overthrown in July of the following year, and no doubt Daumier's first cartoons had something to do with this. But inasmuch as France had merely exchanged the Bourbon Charles for the bourgeois Louis-Philippe, there was still work for the young cartoonist to do. In the earliest examples exhibited at the museum we therefore see him attacking the reactionary politicians, notably Dupin as a dog-like man in spectacles, with carpet-slippers and moneybag as coat-of-arms, and Joquin-Godard as a pear-shaped head with a barking slit for a mouth. The technique in these two suggests the engraving, yet they were not without their power, as the state was soon to demonstrate. When Daumier portrayed Louis-Philippe as Gargantua devouring the people's money, he was put in jail. Six months later he was released. Unrelenting, he had found his powers by 1834.

In that year he did the well-nigh annihilating *You Can Set Him Free Now* in which he pictured the body of a young man, powerful but wounded, on a bed. One arm hangs down at the side, a chain attached to it. The other is held by a brutal politico-physician, who is taking his pulse. A nearby lawyer stares at him. Other figures, seemingly resigned, peer from the background. Here the handling and idea alike are powerful, and the skill of one supports the conviction of the other. The same is true of *Rue Transnonain*, sometimes considered Daumier's



"La Soupe," by Daumier

greatest lithograph. This work depicts a workman or poor householder murdered by his bedside. He has dragged down the sheet and crushed his child under him. Foreshortened, he lies there in monumental death. To his right is another murdered person, while farther back, almost in the darkness, his wife is also spread out in death. The remorseless black at this point is relieved, and then re-fortified, as it were, by the fine, clear whites across the bed and central figures. *Le Ventre Législatif*, also done in that year, is equally well known. It presents the legislators on their semi-circular benches in the Chamber of Deputies, all pear-shaped, cunning, greedy, and corrupt. This work is still a kind of constant reference, both as an exposé of legislative corruption and as an example of power in the lithographic medium. Subsequent cartoonists have recognized this by basing their own legislative types upon his. Incidentally, the show contains a number of the sculptured heads which Daumier modeled in order to get greater force into his interpretation of the politicians. They suggest that the sculptural quality of the final black-and-white was as much responsible for the final effect as the distasteful and fundamentally sordid nature of his original subject-matter.

Another cartoon of that same year might be by a contemporary American. It relates

to "freedom of the press." Here this democratic right is represented by an island, where stands a stalwart pressman. His fists are clenched. A bourgeois with umbrella raised, a cleric who is encouraging him, and a lackey who cautions both, skulk to the left, as if in a deterred offensive against that great central figure. To the other side, collapsed royalty in epaulettes and boots is being succored by a general. A second general is guarding bags of gold. Such, then, were Daumier's first political cartoons. It should be noted that they coincided with the revolutionary wave of the early eighteen-thirties.

Shortly afterwards, *Caricature* was suppressed. It was considered dangerous to the state. Thereupon Daumier's indefatigable employer asked him to portray the social foibles of the lawyers, bankers, priests, and merchants. (Some interpreters have argued that this shift indicated a weakening in Daumier's revolutionary spirit, but this is not true. He was merely forced to work obliquely.) Accordingly, in a new journal, *Charivari*, he soon developed his legalistic Macaire, the first of his great social archetypes. Also, he continued to experiment in this medium and to gain greater freedom in it. We have only to follow him through the following five years, 1835 to 1840, to see how, finally, in *Les Badauds*, the black figures on the bridge have a retiring, soft vibra-



“La Soupe,” by Daumier

tion, while the drawing is inexpressibly delicate throughout.

In the forties he amplified his lithographic means still further. Whether lampooning the bourgeois in the rain, in the theater, in the swimming-pool, or in unhappy marital relations, he obtains greater economy, force, and variety in the medium. A growing source of his power was that more and more Daumier seemed to be bigger than the subjects he satirized: he did not see them bitterly, he saw them with a noble humor. They were ridiculous figures struggling with ridiculous pre-occupations. He saw them as men who did not approach any high human standard. But they had pretensions. Therefore they doubled their own littleness. This explains how he seems to crush with ease. In this sense, Daumier was always objective.

IN 1848 HE RALLIED to another revolution. His *They Pretend to Support the State*, of the next year, is a veritable trumpet-call to all those who would stand up for liberty. Here Liberty, serene and strong, stands alone while bankers, pedants, brokers, and lawyers pretend to support the pedestal on which she rests. Daumier never championed liberty more powerfully than when it was endangered. Similarly, he never lashed the grasping ones more savagely than when they were threatening the rights which he valued. Hence the *Retired Hardware Merchant*, of this same period, in which two petty tradesmen rest under the trees, seeming to reduce the landscape to a desolate accompaniment of their own emptiness.

In the fifties he continued to hammer at rulers as well as at pretentious little men who thought that they were kings in their own spheres. One whole series of this time was called *Idylles Parlementaires*. At this time, too, he created that priceless, foolish old fellow, Ratapoil, the tatterdemalion Bonapartist who supported the king despite an empty stomach (just as the poor of today come out to see a coronation). The finest of his sculptures in the present show is a rough bronze of this figure. In the mid-fifties he also directed a fierce cartoon against the injustices of czarist Russia. He directed others, seemingly countless, against the manners of those who were profiting from the current regime in France. In one, he pictured a prosperous housewife trembling as an enormous butcher, hand on cleaver, demands, "Is your bourgeois for freedom for the butchers?" In one of the most memorable of all, a fat profiteer sits in a bathtub at the theater. He can bathe and see the spectacle at the same time!

Then sometimes Daumier does a cartoon which deepens everything that he has said before, in which he seems to pour out his very depths. Such a work is the immortal *Ass and Two Thieves* in which a traveler is set upon, beaten to death, and his horse stolen. Here, in this dark defile where an innocent man is being murdered, is the universal tragedy of man as Daumier saw it in the nineteenth century. This was a summation of his period.

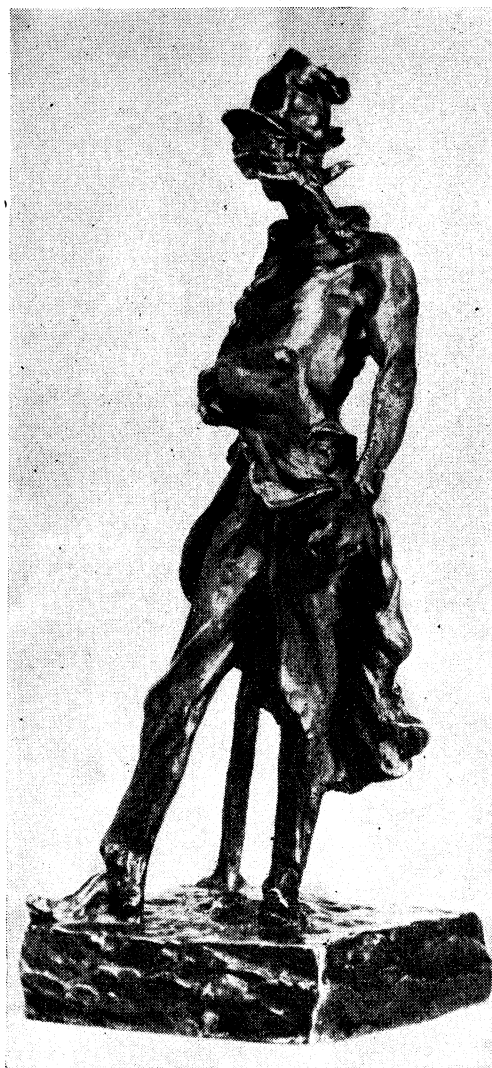
It was, indeed, the summation of all periods when the vicious, the greedy, the merciless prey upon those who wish only to live peacefully (as the people in Spain today). When Daumier did these supreme works, there is a seemingly limitless space behind his figures, as if they were set in the midst of the world; and the figures themselves have a monumentality that towers, spreads, or seems to stand higher than they do as figures. Such works justify Balzac's comment that "Daumier had Michelangelo under the skin." A good inverse example of this is *The Convinced Bourgeois Family*, in which a merchant and his wife, like overgrown dolls, dominate a landscape. Everything has been reduced to their littleness. True, Daumier makes them large; but we know that the largeness exists only in their minds. Hence we hear a giant laughing at them. The film *The New Gulliver* at times suggested a similar satire. But most of the time during the late sixties and seventies—that period of successive German aggressions in Denmark and Austria and France—Daumier is hitting out directly. Frequently he portrays the fearsome god of war. Sometimes he depicts a bound young giant, blinded, who might well be the oppressed French working classes. These, his supreme works to the present observer, are not cartoons; they are sculpture which merely hap-

pened to be done in the medium of the black-and-white. As before, they coincide with a period of revolutionary crisis. It is no accident that the final lithograph in this show, dated 1872, pictures the French workers storming the barricades.

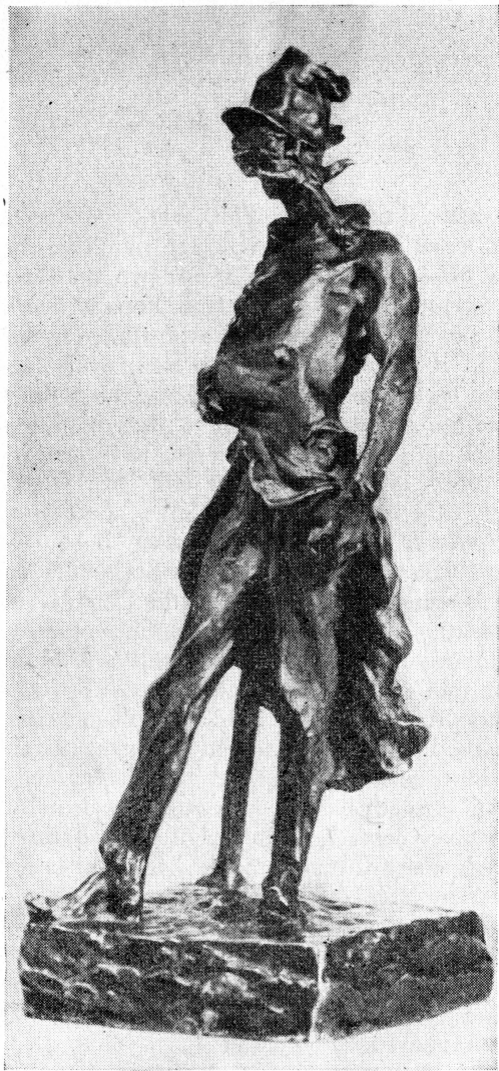
But it should not be forgotten that Daumier, the revolutionary, could be quite as tender as he was angry. The famous drawing, *La Soupe*, for example, portrays a mother suckling her child, even as she hurries down her own few mouthfuls of nourishment. This is poverty indeed. It is likewise one of the finest drawings the master ever did. Here plastic and social content are one, as they must be for social art to be of permanent importance. Another example, equally touching, is *Mother and Child*, which has a Chinese subtlety of drawing. The darker areas of wash in crib, babe, and mother caress in the same manner as the mother does her child. In such works, as well as in the famous Don Quixote series, the artist's hand seems almost careless. He is in a reverie as he draws. On these occasions he approaches the Chinese masters of the past. At other times, his drawing delineates an indefinable margin, an image as it were of the lines which our eyes make in space as we attempt to follow an elusively moving object. This same negligent quality is discernible in another, where a clown is constructed by a series of connected whorls, which looks very easy, but which in fact is a distillment of a life's practice.

Daumier's clowns, by the way, suffer as they laugh. They shake and they cry out. A reason may be suggested for this. Daumier, who did almost four thousand lithographs during his lifetime, had always wanted to paint. He felt that cartooning was a frustration. Another reason, of course, is that Daumier had a great comic spirit. The depths in him wept, even as he made merry. Pity ruled him. Pity for the millions, for the weary, for the oppressed, for the homeless, for the aged, for the helpless, for all those who could not stand up and fight for themselves. The drag of the world is in Daumier, and that is why men love him. As Forain said, "Daumier wasn't like us—he was generous."

Related depths are to be found in his painting. Most notably there is *The Laundress* from the Louvre, *Third-Class Carriage* from the Metropolitan, *The Street-Singers*, and *The Drunkards*. In each of these the fundamental preoccupation was the same. Everything that he did sprang from social feeling. He cried out from anger, and underlying the anger was endless pity. This he conveyed with a depth that seldom varied, with a modeling that was sculptural, with a unity between figure and background which was not to be realized again until Cézanne. Thus, though Daumier regretted that he painted so little, we need not. Whatever his medium—even sculpture—he communicated that great order which he saw and which, in time, was to wear down that other, seemingly omnipotent order which oppressed men in his own time.



Sculpture by Daumier



Sculpture by Daumier

READERS' FORUM

Orchids for Dorothy Parker

TO THE NEW MASSES:

CONGRATULATIONS to you and Dorothy Parker for the most moving piece yet on the Spanish war. Not only moving and beautiful. But true and dig-ingly deep. Perhaps the essence of the entire struggle in Spain is in her observation that "I don't think there will be any lost generation after this war" . . . because "they are fighting for more than their lives. They are fighting for the chance to live them."

We in Hollywood are so happy for Dorothy Parker. So happy for her gallant desertion of the lost generation. Happy for her joining in the leadership against the fascist bloodsuckers. Her pioneering in the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, the Motion Picture Artists' Committee for Spain (about to initiate an international drive for Christmas toys and milk for Spanish children) excite us and cheer us forward.

We are proud of Dorothy Parker. And proud of the NEW MASSES which gives her highest talents such ready forum.

Hollywood, Cal.

JOHN BRIGHT.

The Silk Boycott

TO THE NEW MASSES:

AT least one error occurred in the anti-silk article by Mississippi Johnson and myself last week. To my knowledge, the vogue which arose from the play *Getting Gertie's Garter* was not net hose, but a revival of fancy garters. Perhaps there were also net stockings in it; I didn't see them. So far as we know, this was one of the widespread properties which became popular.

I am now more certain than ever that this is a movement that will click—what with the yeoman work of the students especially. Personally, in a little undercover test, I sold seventy-five boycott-Japanese-goods buttons in two days, using only incidental time. I can scarcely keep one on my lapel.

If the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. implement their resolutions (say with a slogan on their quarterly dues buttons), lisle should soon be marching across the country the way denim and corduroy did in 1920!

I especially like that Washington University resolution against dating up silk wearers. There is the true glory and arrogance of youth.

LEONARD SPARKS.

New York City.

Hearst Not Welcome in Hawaii

TO THE NEW MASSES:

THE Honolulu papers have announced the coming to Hawaii of William Randolph Hearst. He is to arrive in Honolulu on December 16 with a party that includes Marion Davies and that was to include the Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

Mr. Hearst and his party, should they come to Hawaii, will occupy the Waikiki beach residence of the rich playboy C. R. Holmes. Mr. Holmes's mother, the well known Betty Fleischmann Holmes of New York, one of the wealthiest women in America, was one of the most active members of the fascist American Liberty League during the last presidential election campaign.

We, as lovers of liberty and truth, protest the coming to Hawaii of a man who has always opposed everything that stands for human decency, justice, freedom, and intellectual honesty; a man who has viciously and mercilessly attacked the right of American workers to organize and unionize and build a better America.

We do not want in our midst a man of whom

America's foremost historian, Dr. Charles A. Beard, declared at the fifty-sixth annual convention of the National Education Association held at Atlantic City, N. J., on February 24, 1935: "There is not a cesspool of vice and crime which Hearst has not raked and exploited for money-making purposes. No person with intellectual honesty or moral integrity will touch him with a ten-foot pole for any purpose or to gain any end. Unless those who represent American scholarship, science, and the right of free peoples to discuss public questions freely stand together against his insidious influences he will assassinate them individually by every method known to yellow journalism—only cowards can be intimidated by Hearst."

We call on the progressive workers and anti-fascist fighters of America to sound a storm of protest that would resound even to the gates of San Simeon and thus halt the invasion of Hawaii by the arch-enemy of truth, progress, and labor. We do not want fascist Hearst and his kind to pollute our shores.

Honolulu, Hawaii.

K. HIROKAWA,
JUN OKANO.

Walt Whitman to the Russians

TO THE NEW MASSES:

AT this time when so many Americans have sent warm expressions of friendship to the Soviet Union on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary, you might like to reprint the following letter written by Walt Whitman to the peoples of Russia. The letter was written from Camden on December 20, 1881:

"Dear Sir:

"Your letter asking definite endorsement to your translation of my *Leaves of Grass* into Russian is just received, and I hasten to answer it. Most warmly and willingly I consent to the translation, and wait a prayerful God-speed to the enterprise.

"You Russians and we Americans! Our countries so distant, so unlike at first glance—such a difference in social and political conditions, and our respective methods of moral and practical development the last hundred years—and yet in certain features, and vastest ones, so resembling each other. The variety of stock-elements and tongues, to be resolutely fused in a common identity and union at all hazards—the idea, perennial through the ages, that they both have their historic and divine mission—the fervent element of manly friendship throughout the whole people, surpass'd by no other races—the grand expanse of territorial limits and boundaries—the unformed and nebulous state of many things, not yet permanently settled, but agreed on all hands to be the preparations of an infinitely

greater future—the fact that both peoples have their independent and leading positions to hold, keep, and if necessary, fight for, against the rest of the world—the deathless aspirations at the inmost center of each great community, so vehement, so mysterious, so abysmic—are certainly features you Russians and we Americans possess in common.

"As my dearest dream is for internationality of poems and poets, binding the lands of the earth closer than all treaties and diplomacy—as the purpose beneath the rest in my book is such hearty comradeship, for individuals to begin with, and for all the nations of the earth as a result—how happy I should be to get the hearing and emotional contact of the great Russian peoples.

"To whom, now and here (addressing you for Russia and Russians, and empowering you, should you see fit, to print the present letter, in your book, as a preface) I waft affectionate salutation from these shores in America's name.

"WALT WHITMAN."

At a time when the inner and real meaning of democracy so concerns the progressive minds of the world, I think this word from the author of *Democratic Vistas* to the peoples of Russia, so penetrating, so prophetic, and so relevant today, deserves republication.

New York.

MILLEN BRAND.

Appeal from the South

TO THE NEW MASSES:

SHARECROPPERS' children are likely to miss out on Christmas this year. Thirteen dollars a month doesn't go very far in supplying a family's essential needs, let alone its urge for Christmas toys.

The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union has been making a valiant struggle to raise the standard of living for the industry. Christmas affords us a special opportunity to help them by sending toys to be distributed through their locals. It is not just a way of cheering up a crowd of unfortunate youngsters. It's a way of affording to the union an opportunity to cement its members more firmly.

This job is being undertaken for the second year by Pioneer Youth of America. Your readers are invited to join in helping. Packages of toys and nice clothing should be mailed or expressed postpaid to the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, 2527 Broad Avenue, Memphis, Tenn.

New York City.

AGNES SAILER,
Extension Director.

Ignoble Prizes

TO THE NEW MASSES:

FOR a long time I have had an idea that I wanted to pass on to you. It's a skeleton idea, and you would have to put the flesh on it.

We have heard a lot about the Nobel prizes. I suggest the NEW MASSES initiate annual "Ignoble prizes" in the fields of art, science, medicine, literature, peace, etc. It could be your own enumeration of persons distinguished for outstanding acts of disservice to humanity in various fields, or it could be in the form of a contest, with nominations presented by readers—or it could be some other variation.

In any event, why not have distinct public recognition of those who hinder progress, by making them the recipients of "Ignoble prizes"?

You can be sure of one thing: there will be plenty of competition in such a contest.

Detroit, Mich.

MAURICE SUGAR.

[Thanks to labor-lawyer and labor-candidate Sugar for a good idea. Next week the NEW MASSES will name an all-American "ignoble prize" football team.—THE EDITORS.]



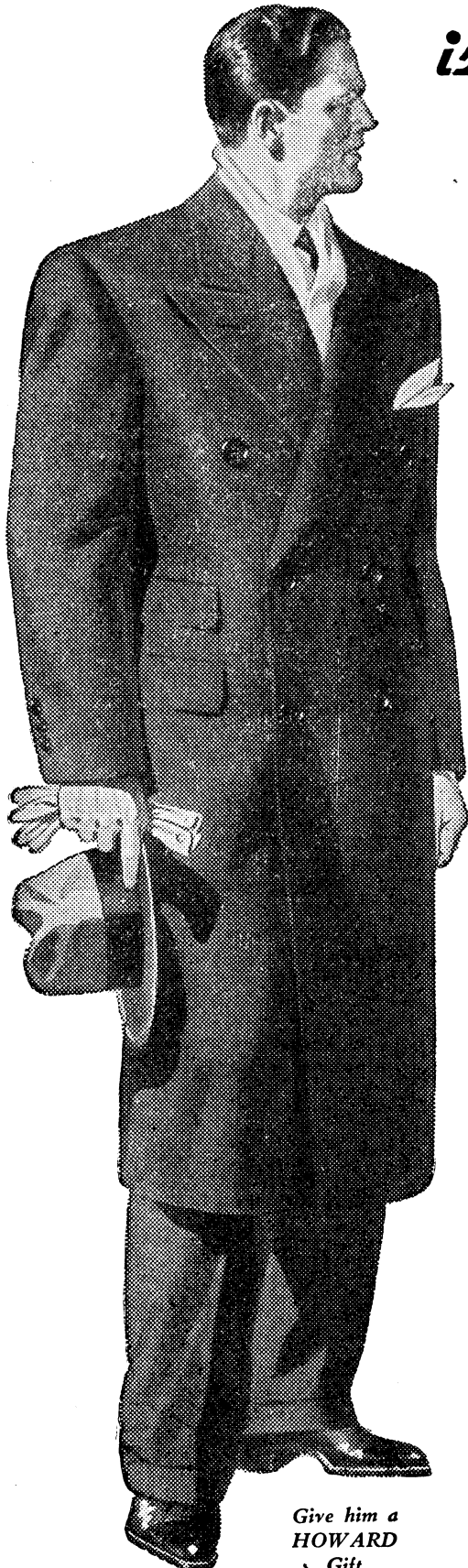
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BOOK REVIEWS

Elmer Rice's Debut As a Novelist

IMPERIAL CITY, by Elmer Rice, Coward-McCann, Inc. \$3.

IN his valorous attempt to portray the life of as complicated a city as New York, Mr. Rice has manipulated the tricks of a skillful playwright with an old-fashioned Dreiserian hand. The result, for myself, is an interesting self-portrait of the author, but there will be many who will enjoy the melodrama of this novel for its own sake.

As Mr. Rice has undoubtedly discovered, since his declaration a few years ago that he would never again write a play, a novel discloses more of the personality of its creator than does any other literary form. A novel of the magnitude of *Imperial City* is an arena in which the author, at the end, can stand quite naked. When a piece of work doesn't quite come off, the infirmities of the poor human being out of whom it came are pitilessly exposed to view. It is the fear of such exposure, of course, which deters so many from ever setting pen and brush to paper and canvas, and paralyzes many painters and writers in the midst of their careers and in the very midst of a piece of work. Mr. Rice has *not* been deterred, and his attempted portrayal of his native city is far from inconsiderable.

The primary structure of this novel is the one employed most successfully in our own day by Dos Passos, *i.e.*, the selection of types from different strata in the population, and hence from different geographical areas of the city. After depicting each person on his native heath, engaged in a pursuit characteristic of his social position and his psyche, these people are mingled together in accordance with the complications of a plot which bears more or less similitude to life. This structure imposes one inescapable burden upon the reader. He must start the novel a half dozen or more times, familiarizing himself with new people in new situations, unrelated to the people of the preceding chapter. It is not until the reader is well along that the characters begin to meet and their lives to merge.

The way in which Mr. Rice has selected his types of different strata of population is interesting. He has selected them from the newspapers, very often the tabloids. They are all melodramatic people. It can be argued that they *ipso facto* fail to typify; but this need not necessarily be so. The range of his selection is definitely representative—Wall Street, Park and Fifth Avenues, the upper East Side, Greenwich Village, Times Square, Central Park West, Morningside Heights, Harlem, the Bronx, the lower East Side, Brooklyn, Queens, and Coney Island.

It is inevitable that Mr. Rice would be more

at home in some quarters than in others and that certain characters would suffer. For me the central characters suffer—the Coleman family, through which Mr. Rice portrays the plutocracy that exerts the dominant power in the imperialist city of New York. I found them given names they would not have in life; speaking as Dreiser might have them speak, and as they most certainly do not speak today; and with the tags of their prototypes plainly in view. They are presented to the reader with delicacy and envy, and it is as though Mr. Rice had never met them except in the tabloids and the society columns.

The love affair of Gaillard Coleman is one of the dreariest examples of unintended anemia in current fiction. Mr. Rice is never very happy in his depiction of the tender passion. It is noteworthy that almost all of the coition in this novel—and there is a good deal of it—is achieved through supplication by the male. This feminine quality may account for the over-idealization of Gaillard Coleman. His prototype in real life is incomparably a finer, stronger, and better person.

And it is this Gaillard Coleman whom Mr. Rice prefers. His intrusion of his preference is artistically wrong and intellectually telltale, and the utilization of such a two-legged, pre-war futility for the keystone of his novel is an irreparable structural flaw. With such a keystone the edifice is artistically unsound, for no such childish building blocks are at the core of the ruthless and dynamic city of New York.

How and why did Mr. Rice perpetrate this fatal mistake? By accepting and nurturing such intellectual naïveté as the following: "There's nothing like a social point of view for taking the joy out of life"; the troubles of mankind "can be traced to biological and psychological causes—and just to the plain inexplicable"; "not one in a thousand takes an abstract interest in good government or is animated by a definite social philosophy"; "returning travelers tell me that every year thousands of pilgrims visit the shrine in Red Square where the body of St. Ilyich lies miraculously preserved." The last phrase is uttered by "a noble old man"—the father, incidentally, of the girl Gaillard Coleman is woo-woo-wooing. Some of these phrases are author interpolations, and there is interior evidence that all of them meet with Mr. Rice's approval.



Woodcut by H. A. Blumenstiel

Were Mr. Rice free of his predisposition toward half-truths, which seems to have persisted from his pre-war adolescence, he might have treated the Coleman family with a strength that is frequently visible in other parts of the novel. The satire he achieved in dissecting a play imported from England, for example, is strong and effective. So are his characterizations of those people to whom he feels superior. He is capable of great skill, as in the first indication of the homosexuality of Christopher's mistress; and capable of some god-awful plopping clichés, as in the rape of Miriam, and in the ham melodrama of Christopher Coleman, Fanny Coleman, and Ruby the tramp. It is curious how little universal sympathy for the human being there is in this book.

The manipulation of a hundred different characters in order to produce overlapping of lives, so that the same people stand in different relationships to as many of the other characters as possible, has entailed considerable agility and some drawing of the long bow of coincidence. For the most part, Mr. Rice has managed this contriving well. Some of the tricks, through repetition, become quite mechanical, such as ending chapters with a blackout just before the couple gets into bed. The dishonesty of the trick with which Mr. Rice ends the book (borrowed from Frank Stockton) can only be considered a residue from his years in the theater. It is a piece of press agency of which Mr. Rice should be ashamed.

This novel is about contemporary New York. Yet a large slice of the plot is the Harry Thaw case; the politics are those of a Clarence Darrow liberal; the writing is like Dreiser. All that is closest to the person of the author seems to belong to the immediate past. He has done his best, and he has neither altogether succeeded nor altogether failed. It was a major effort, and he may want to try again, reinvigorated, perhaps, with a knowledge that, for the artist, faith and participation in the struggle of humanity must never cease.

HENRY HART.

Scientific Socialism: A Source Document

ENGELS ON CAPITAL, translated and edited by Leonard E. Mins. International Publishers. \$1.25.

THE most authoritative introduction to Marx's *Capital* can now be obtained in a book just published under the title *Engels on Capital*. Leonard Mins is to be congratulated for his translation and editing, and International Publishers for issuing this unusual collection of papers by Marx's closest friend and life-long collaborator; it makes available to the public explanations of Marx's ideas by



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STEEL

A grim and mighty drama rushes to its climax. . . . Flames from the blast furnaces, leaping against the sky, etch gigantic shapes locked in relentless combat. . . . America awaits the outcome . . . as in the steel cities the tread of marching men brings the beat of the future . . . as the first national convention of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee opens in Pittsburgh on December 14. . . . For its special issue of December 12, the Sunday Worker has assembled the full story of STEEL from all the steel regions of the country . . . and presents the raw, seething drama of the conditions and conflict in STEEL . . . the graphic story of men who labor and those who profit thereby.

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one who participated in their elaboration as the co-founder of scientific socialism.

This book contains Engels's synopsis of the first volume of *Capital* and his supplement to the third volume, giving further details on the development of surplus value. It further contains letters, articles, and reviews of *Capital* written by Engels at various times. One of these he wrote in English for the *Fortnightly Review*, then edited by John Morley. To facilitate its acceptance, he had one of his English friends sign it, but Morley turned it down anyway and it has never been printed until now. What the famous liberal editor rejected was a lucid exposition of ideas that were to revolutionize the world.

One of the simplest expositions which Engels did was the one which appeared in Wilhelm Liebknecht's Leipzig paper and which opens the Mins collection. Written for workers, it outlines with brief and beautiful clarity the theory of surplus value. When this is grasped, it becomes easier to understand the central conflict of capitalist society.

The surplus labor of the worker, over and above the time necessary to replace his wages, is the source of surplus value, of profit, of the continually growing accumulation of labor [Engels explains. Therefore] it is to the capitalist's interest to make the working day as long as possible. The longer it is, the more surplus value he obtains. The worker correctly feels that every hour of labor which he performs over and above the replacement of the wage is unjustly extorted from him; he experiences in his own person what it means to work excessive hours. The capitalist fights for his profit, the worker for his health, for a few hours of daily rest, to be able to occupy himself as a human being as well, in other ways besides working, sleeping, and eating.

The strike is thus an inevitable product of capitalist society, and not, as Westbrook Pegler seems to think, a villainous conspiracy of the C.I.O.

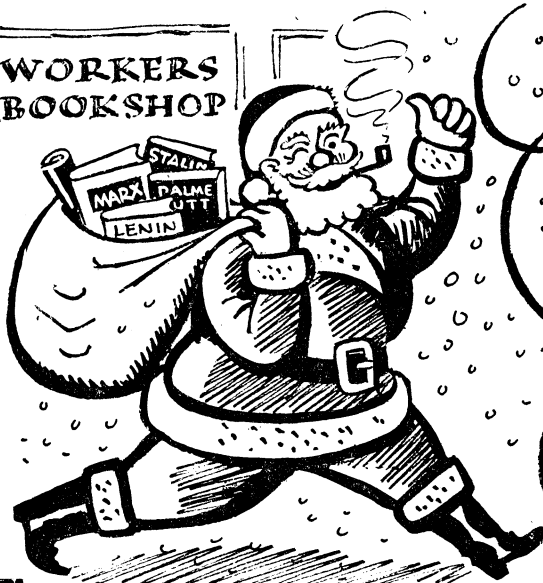
Two ideas of *Capital* which Engels emphasized in his review for the Leipzig workers are worth noting here. One dealt with the possibilities of improving the conditions of labor under capitalism. The struggle for fixing the working day, he pointed out, has lasted from the first historic appearance of free workers to the present day. But only where the law fixed the working day and supervised its observance could one really say that there existed a normal working day. So far this was the case almost solely in England. There the ten-hour law had been won by the workers "through years of endurance, through the most persistent, stubborn struggle with the factory owners, through freedom of the press, the right of association and assembly, as well as through adroit utilization of the divisions within the ruling class itself."

Marx's *Capital* contains the most exhaustive material on the history of this struggle; it tells how the English workers obtained legislative regulation of the working day in their favor. The forthcoming North German Reichstag was going to discuss the regulation of factory labor, and the workers had an opportunity to elect deputies to that Reichstag. Engels urged such deputies to study Marx's



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book thoroughly, adding in his own italics:

There is much to be achieved there. The divisions within the ruling classes are more favorable to the workers than they ever were in England, because universal suffrage compels the ruling classes to court the favor of the workers. Under these circumstances, four or five representatives of the proletariat are a *power*, if they know how to use their position, if above all they know what is at issue, which the bourgeois do not know. And for this purpose, Marx's book gives them all the material in ready form.

After explaining how accumulation of capital results in an increase of the proletariat, Engels makes his final point explaining how capitalism gives birth to socialism:

Just as sharply as Marx stresses the bad sides of capitalist production, does he also clearly prove that this social form was necessary to develop the productive forces of society to a level which will make possible an equal development, worthy of human beings, for *all* members of society. All earlier forms of society were too poor for this. Capitalist production for the first time creates the wealth and the productive forces necessary for this, but at the same time it also creates in the mass of oppressed workers the social class which is more and more compelled to claim the utilization of this wealth and these productive forces for the whole of society—instead of as today for a monopolistic class.

JOSEPH FREEMAN.

Obituary of Europe And Gertrude Stein

EVERYBODY'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY, by Gertrude Stein. Random House. \$3.

THE mama of dada is going gaga. The dark Cassandra of the hamburgered word foretells the collapse of Europe, the "orientalization" of the western mind, and the decay of literature. The only novels which are possible today are detective stories, "where the only person of any importance is dead." The war in Spain "obtrudes itself" in one's consciousness, but one is comforted by the reflection that many art treasures were destroyed in ancient Greece and Rome and there are, after all, plenty left for people who visit in museums. It's a sour world where everybody is a father: "there is father Mussolini and father Hitler and father Roosevelt and father Stalin and father Lewis and father Blum and father Franco." Only England is cheerful, because the blessed English have no "fathering." The other bright hope for the world is Gertrude Stein, who admits that "I am the most important writer writing today" and brags that "my writing is clear as mud. . . ."

Self-confessedly "the creative literary mind of the century," Miss Stein is at least consistent in the bankruptcy of her values. What distinguishes man from animals, she has discovered, is money: "money is purely a human conception and that is very important to know very very important." The trouble with Roosevelt is that he spends so much money it soon won't exist. The trouble with Communists is that they "try to live without money"

and become animals. Gertrude knows better, so she follows up one best-seller autobiography with another potboiler. Her passion at present is avarice, she informs us with the disarming candor of the House of Morgan.

On her American trip she lectured at leading universities, met Dashiell Hammett and Mary Pickford, skidded through the air with Alice B. Toklas. But she didn't get to see America. She was too busy worrying about Basket—her French poodle. She loves French poodles. Unlike Spanish revolutions, they don't obtrude.

Miss Stein's passion, as she confides to us, is moving around in the bathtub water. She likes to drum the Chopin funeral march on the side of the bathtub while she worries about "identity and memory and eternity." Splashing in the metaphysical surf she concludes that "Anything is a superstition and anybody rightly believes in superstition." As the dripping goddess emerges, brandishing towel and brush, she dictates to handmaiden Toklas the shattering news that "it is not at all interesting to take working men so seriously if by working men one means only those who work in a factory."

SAMUEL SILLEN.

Fact and Guesswork: Two Studies of Japan

JAPAN IN AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION, by Eleanor Tupper and George E. McReynolds. The Macmillan Co. \$3.75.

ALIENS IN THE EAST, by Harry Emerson Wildes. University of Pennsylvania Press. \$3.

THE measurement and evaluation of public opinion has mushroomed as a minor industry in this country. It seems almost as though elections are held nowadays in order to confirm or contradict the forecasts made by various agencies engaged in sampling public sentiment. At least one very scholarly journal, the *Public Opinion Quarterly*, published by the School of Public Affairs, Princeton University, is entirely devoted to the theory involved in these enterprises. And one formerly influential magazine, the *Literary Digest*, found that circulation collapses when election returns contradict predictions.

Drs. Tupper and McReynolds have gone to public opinion in order to understand the past rather than to anticipate the future. Theirs was much the more difficult of the two jobs. There are no doorbells to ring and no neighborhoods to canvas and no average citizens to interview. The historian is confronted with the stale remains of newspapers, government documents, congressional debates. It is hard enough to organize such data around problems that lend themselves to relatively objective results. It is immeasurably harder to reconstruct the drift of public opinion.

The book's validity rests on the methodology employed. The authors have put their faith in the newspapers of the period as reliable barometers of public opinion. In our own day, this is a highly questionable premise. The

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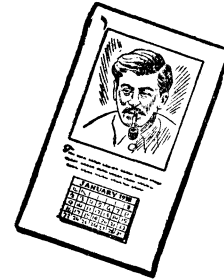
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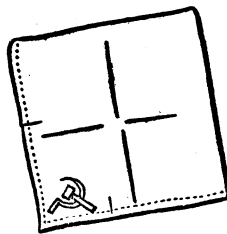
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overwhelming majority of newspapers in the United States opposed the reelection of Franklin D. Roosevelt. A merely quantitative method of evaluating editorial opinion is obviously inadequate. Newspaper praise or criticism must itself be interpreted critically. That is just what Drs. Tupper and McReynolds fail to do.

The historical summary used to hold the book together is taken from well-known secondary works. Thus we are told some true but familiar fact, such as the opposition in America to the Twenty-One Points presented to China by Japan in 1905. Then follows a string of newspaper names intended to corroborate this information, sometimes without a single quotation. In this particular case, thirty-two newspapers are cited in one long sentence. Whenever a division of opinion existed on some question, the authors supply two such lists.

The sampling method of analysis has broken much new ground not only in the social but in the physical sciences. But it cannot be used so uncritically. It requires the utmost caution and the use of many safeguards. Foremost among these is the necessity of giving due weight and relevance to the samples themselves. Quantitative methods are possible only after a thorough qualitative analysis. Drs. Tupper and McReynolds violate this simple rule throughout their book. They have collected a mass of data but they forgot to give it significance.

They group the papers together as though each were of identical importance. They never go behind the name for the financial or other influences involved in the paper's decision. They assume that the papers speak for the "public," that vague and elusive delight of people with an ax to grind. Sometimes, it appears as though they started with some well-known fact and then went in search of "opinion" to confirm it. They could not have pursued their problem the other way round without a much sounder critical apparatus than that employed. *Japan in American Public Opinion* serves to confirm an old Marxian principle that you cannot write history without a historical theory.

Mr. Wildes has written the first exhaustive study of the westerner in Japan up to the coming of Commodore Perry in 1853. He had access to materials not hitherto available, and these permitted him to cover the subject with admirable thoroughness. A number of studies have been written of Japan's "foreign intercourse" after Perry but this, to my knowledge, is the first full treatment of the three hundred years before Perry.

The sub-title of the book, "a new history of Japan's foreign intercourse," is, nevertheless, somewhat deceptive. What Mr. Wildes has actually written is a painstaking and elaborate account of western penetration into Japan before there was anything like what might fairly be called "foreign intercourse." It is true, as Mr. Wildes insists, that Japan was introduced to western ways before Commodore Perry arrived. But the fact remains, and *Aliens in the East* confirms it, that Japan

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was sufficiently successful in keeping out western influences to make it possible for the ruling shoguns to deal with individuals rather than with powers. That is why Mr. Wildes's book is so largely the story of individuals, of adventurers, sailors, missionaries, traders, and only toward the end, diplomats and admirals. In any event, any book that ends with Perry is not fairly described by the sub-title in question.

THEODORE DRAPER.

Brief Reviews

WALDEN AND OTHER WRITINGS OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, edited by Brooks Atkinson. Modern Library. 95c.

THE WORKS OF THOREAU, edited by Henry S. Canby. Houghton Mifflin Co. \$5.

The revival of interest in Thoreau is a hopeful sign of the times. His significant position in American letters was for a long time obscured by the tradition, politely cultivated in the schools, that Thoreau was the crank of Concord, a kind of talented freak who communed with the birds and beasts near Walden Pond. Informed readers, of course, far from accepting this distortion, have recognized in Thoreau a courageous and thoughtful rebel against the social injustice of his time, especially as it was manifested in slavery, a friend of the common man, and a master of English prose. The publication of these two volumes will help popularize this truer conception, even though Mr. Canby occasionally persuades Thoreau to pull his punches.

The Modern Library edition contains most of the essential material included in the more expensive volume. In addition to *Walden, Cape Cod*, and *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers*, Mr. Atkinson has included the two remarkable speeches on "Slavery in Massachusetts" and "A Plea for Captain John Brown." The most valuable additions in the volume edited by Mr. Canby are selections from the *Journals* which are unavailable in other one-volume editions.

S. S.

THE SELECTED WRITINGS OF DEQUINCEY, edited by Philip Van Doren Stern. Random House. \$3.50.

A valuable addition to the growing list of Random House one-volume editions. Like its companion volumes on Donne, Swift, Hazlitt, Coleridge, Blake, and Pushkin, this edition of DeQuincey is attractive in format and thoughtfully edited with a fine introduction. It includes *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, other autobiographical sketches, and the better known essays.

G. T.



Recently Recommended Books

Volunteer in Spain, by John Sommerfield. Knopf. \$1.50.

Counter-Attack in Spain, by Ramon Sender. Houghton Mifflin. \$3.

From Spanish Trenches, edited by Marcel Aciér. Modern Age. 35c.

When Labor Organizes, by Robert R. Brooks. Yale University Press. \$3.

The Trial, by Franz Kafka. Knopf. \$2.50.

The Chute, by Albert Halper. Viking. \$2.50.

The Writer in a Changing World, edited by Henry Hart. Equinox. \$2.

I Met a Man, by Michael Blankfort, Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.

Socialized Medicine in the Soviet Union, by Henry E. Sigerist. Norton. \$3.50.

The Romance of Russian Medicine, by Michael L. Ravitch. Liveright. \$3.

Russian Medicine, by W. Horsley Gantt. Harper. \$2.50.

LaGuardia, by Jay Franklin. Modern Age. 35c.

To Have and Have Not, by Ernest Hemingway. Scribner's. \$2.50.

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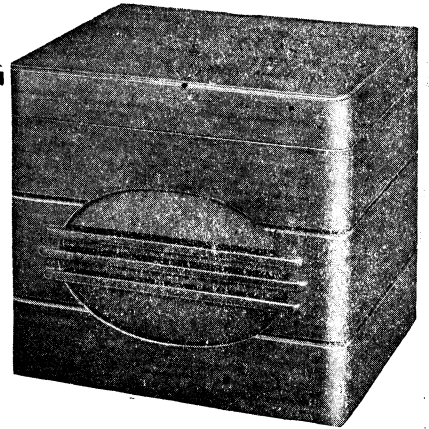
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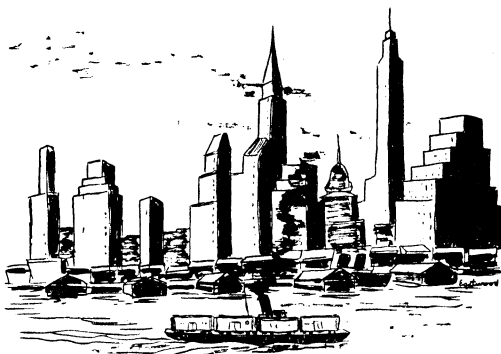
SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

New Plays by Messrs. Howard, Steinbeck, et al.

THE Theatre Guild's fourth production of the season is Mr. Sidney Howard's *The Ghost of Yankee Doodle*, which might not unfairly be described as the glorification of a family of liberals who do not choose to die with or for their ideals, but prefer to remain snug within the bosom of capital and hope for better times. According to Mr. Howard, this family of liberals is representative of American gentility: they are the last of the old stock, the dry seed of the old breed, the true and only inheritors of the noble tradition of American republican liberalism upon which the foundations of this glorious democracy have been set. Like the Theatre Guild (now picketed by its workers), the Garrison family believe in free speech, free politics, and free art—and, of course, free business. When they are faced with the necessity to choose between freedom and their interests, however, they find themselves forced to abandon the first and lugubriously console themselves with the whiskeyed reflection that their ideals are much too good for the wickedness of this world. It's a play, in short, written by a liberal dramatist and produced by a liberal theater, about the wishywashiest set of self-conscious fence-straddlers that ever cluttered a stage; and I assure you they are as ineffectual in the theater as they are irresolute in life. The head of Mr. Howard's family of liberals conveniently happens to be a retired actress of great charm and beauty. I say "conveniently" because Miss Ethel Barrymore is thus enabled to bring her own great charm and beauty to the playing of the part, which she does so well and with such sweet and ethereal queenliness that no one forgets for a moment that she represents the ghost of Yankee Doodle's wife (especially when her old beau turns up in the transparent disguise of Mr. Hearst). Well, Miss Barrymore, or Mrs. Garrison, is naturally a bit put out when a new world war begins and she learns from her brother-in-law, the head of the family business of liberalism and dye-working, that America's neutrality policy threatens the business with bankruptcy. Opportunely Mr. Dudley Digges, as the former beau press-lord, drops out of the sky and brightens the proceedings by (a) proposing marriage to her, and (b) plunging America into the war. The dye-works are saved and liberalism goes down with the curtain. But there is a sub-plot. The daughter of the Garrison household is in love with a young college professor who has been fired for teaching Marxism to his students. When the press-lord's illegitimate aviator-son makes a pass at her, the daughter succumbs and the young college professor gets quite red and talks good sense for a few lines—after

which the Garrisons (and the audience, unfortunately) see no more of him. The amorous aviator goes off to fight in the war his father has helped to start and crashes en route. This ties up with the main plot by helping to expose the rottenness of the press-lord, who promptly sets about publicizing his son's death to help his war propaganda. Here Mr. Howard has done well, and Mr. Digges even better. Between them, at any rate, they contrive to stage a rounded portrait of a modern plutocrat: powerful, childish, crass, gross, oleaginous, and treacherous—and absolutely disgusting in his ideas and personality. Even Mrs. Garrison realizes this at last, and refuses to marry him.

Clearly there is sufficient here to have made a really interesting play. Mr. Howard must be complimented upon his recognition of the abomination of capitalism and his exposure, in spite of his obvious sympathy, of the futility of liberalism. His success at these static themes leaves him little excuse in his failure to write a conclusive play. He is not incapable. Simply he has not taken the pains to penetrate his own material to its root. He fumbles like an amateur, which he is not, and glosses it over with the cheapest of professional stage tricks, gags, sentimentalisms, and salacities. The play is poorly constructed; the dialogue is thin; there is a note of monotony and an incessant lack of suspense, the reason being that Mr. Howard consistently deviates from his conflict through a refusal to face it. He feels that liberal ideals are right and good: but, as he cannot admit any other basis of society than the bourgeois individual, he is forced to avoid the conflict which such ideals necessarily set up within a capitalist framework. In drama, as in science, after all, the truth holds that only in motion do bodies reveal themselves. As Mr. Howard's characters never *move*, really never do or effect anything at all, they cannot be said to obey the first law of dramatic characterization, which is *development*. The result is unmitigated dullness, a little alleviated by the efforts of Miss Barrymore and Mr. Digges, and by Miss Barbara Robbins as the daughter, and Messrs. Martin Holme, Russel Andrews, Don Costello, and Donald Mack. The remainder of the cast was distinguished mainly by inaudibility.

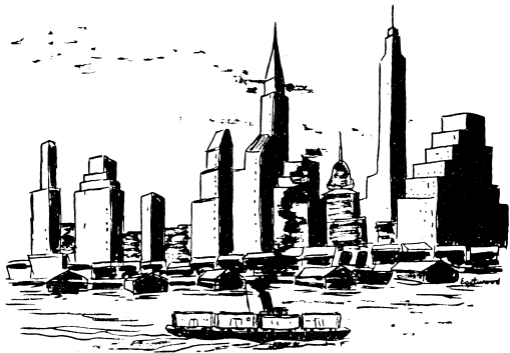


One of the notable characteristics of bourgeois existence is the complete stultification within it of all spontaneous human emotion. This is clearly observable in bourgeois drama wherein the heights of passion are reached when a man wins a mistress and the depth of feeling plumbed when a man loses a mistress. Apart from sex and whatever interferes with its free play, the bourgeois dramatist has no topic about which he can express himself in heartfelt terms. The whole field of human loyalties and struggles outside of the stuffy bed-sitting-room is a wasteland to him inhabited by nonconformists and children. Even friendship, that simplest of human fidelities, is something alien to the bourgeois theater. Friendship is conceivable between schoolboys: but between bourgeois adults? It is for this reason that one would not be overstating the virtue of Mr. Steinbeck's novella, *Of Mice and Men*, if one should call it a worker's myth. Its theme is friendship: the friendship of one worker for another; and in its prose form it was a tender and lyric story. The stage play, produced by Sam Harris and directed by George Kaufman, follows the story almost word for word. It is directed with decent reticence and extremely well acted by Wallace Ford as the bright-witted George, and Broderick Crawford as his dim-witted friend, Lennie. There is a superb piece of acting by John F. Hamilton, looking like a Picasso old down-and-out of the "blue" period, in the part of an aged worker who has lost his hand on his job and has nothing to look forward to but the poorhouse. And the other players, Miss Claire Luce, Messrs. Will Geer, Charles Slattery, Thomas Findlay, Walter Baldwin, Leigh Whipper, and Sam Byrd, are all good in their roles. Finally, the scenery by Donald Onslaeger is natural without being naturalistic, and far better than the usual run of Broadway sets. Nevertheless, in its translation from book to theater, Steinbeck's story has replaced tenderness with sentimentality, realism with smuttiness, and the lyric quality has been quite lost. The voice is the voice of John Steinbeck, but the hands are the hands of Mr. George Kaufman.

The Abbey Players from Dublin have produced *In the Train*, a new play in one act adapted by Hugh Hunt from a short story by Frank O'Connor. It is a fair study of various Irish provincial types returning on a train from a murder trial at Dublin. Attempting no point, it has none. The same program (Ambassador, N. Y.) saw a very bad revival of Synge's imperishable CEdipean satire, *The Playboy of the Western World*.

MICHAEL SAYERS.

THE "CONVERSION ENDING" is one of the aspects of left-wing literature which have drawn adverse criticism from bourgeois reviewers, who have by and large taken the posi-



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tion that life doesn't work quite that way. The answer has been in part that art frequently distills a meaning from life and presents that distillation in a form not always to be encountered on every highway and byway. Another part of the answer has been that the "conversion ending" in a strike play, let us say, has to do with a phase of life not particularly familiar to dramatic reviewers (but, let us hope, more familiar since Arthur Pollock of the Brooklyn *Eagle* took to the picket line), and which, hence, may seem more artificial than the realities warrant. A third part of the answer, deriving in some sense from the second, is that bourgeois criticism tends to be hostile to the aspirations of the labor movement.


How far bourgeois criticism may object to the conversion ending as such, regardless of who is being converted to what, may be measured by the acclaim with which most of the press greeted *Father Malachy's Miracle*, in which an agnostic is finally converted to the Catholic faith. I do not recall any carping on the ground that life doesn't happen quite that way. At the same time, I doubt that any reviewer except a dyed-in-the-wool Catholic mystic would argue that there was the slightest chance of life happening that way, i.e., that two miracles could be deliberately performed and so make possible the conversion. Which would seem to indicate that the decisive question for bourgeois reviewers is less the conversion ending as such and more who is being converted to what. Which is what left-wingers have contended all along.

But that isn't the whole story. The fact is that *Father Malachy's Miracle* is a skillful piece of dramaturgy, splendidly acted. It is very shrewd, genial, and human—so much so, indeed, that the trade gossip that it has the sanction of the Roman church seems at times incredible. For the cardinal who arrives to suppress Father Malachy's miracle-working seems an almost malicious portrait of a slick worldly politician—introduced by the Scottish Catholic parlor-maid as a "priest all dressed up in red, and sort of slinky-looking." Elsewhere the Roman hierarchy is referred to by another Catholic as "them Eyetalians," and there are a dozen other unanswered slights on revered symbolisms, as when the Scottish Catholic bishop, peeved at Rome's anti-miracle-working attitude, asks the cardinal to relay the information to Rome that when the Scottish branch of the church undertakes miracles, it won't go in for "any tomfoolery about cockerels laying golden eggs on altars"—a recent embarrassing miracle cited by the cardinal. This touch and go, as well as the common substance of love-story comedy, give the play a lively interest—an interest too keen for some of the devout, apparently, because members of the audience were seen to develop definite huffs and leave after the first act.

But about the conversion ending: it's not a violation of dramatic logic in this play for it to take place; certainly it would be too odd if a pair of authentic miracles done before the characters' eyes could not accomplish a con-

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version. And apparently Rome thinks it has some value as a propaganda play. How much more hope, therefore, is there for the conversion ending in a labor play or a peace play, where the factors leading up to the conversion can seem convincing not only to the characters but also (because the factors are not miracles, but can be drawn from the life known to the audience) can convince the spectators. The moral seems to be that a social propaganda play as human and skillful as *Father Malachy's Miracle* can pack a propaganda punch ten times as heavy—and who knows, perhaps seem real even to bourgeois critics.

ALEXANDER TAYLOR.

A PROMINENT LABOR LAWYER watching the I.L.G.W.U. players in *Pins and Needles* remarked, "This Garment Workers' Union dates back before the Triangle fire." Seen from that long perspective, the sparkling revue presented by Labor Stage takes on added brilliance. As the opening number points out in catchy rhythm, the actors are "plain, common, ordinary, everyday men and women who work hard for a living." All are members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, eleven locals being represented in the large cast.

But *Pins and Needles* is no everyday show, far from it. The words and music are big time, starting with an intriguing number, "Sing me a song with social significance," and carrying through twenty clever sketches. They'd rather be left, these I.L.G.W.U. players, and so there is plenty of keen satire in the lyrics. National and international sacred cows come in for hilarious treatment. Harold J. Rome, responsible for most of the music and lyrics, has contrived to put his "social significance" into highly entertaining packages. This reviewer hasn't laughed as much since seeing Chaplin's *Modern Times*.

Because there are almost no let-downs, it is hard to single out particular sketches for special mention. Some of them have been seen and heard before. "We'd Rather Be Right" is top-notch entertainment that scores off the Tories' patriotic camouflage in a song which disposes of all progressive ideas with the chant "Call them un-American." "Sunday in the Park" is a skillfully presented "idyll" that underlines the grotesque congestion of our cities, while "Economics I," a sketch by Charles Friedman, has borrowed most amusingly from Rube Goldberg's mad inventions to show the economic cycle. It begins when the banker shoots the manufacturer who climbs a step-ladder to blackjack the wholesaler who swats the retailer who squirts seltzer at the consumer who sits and takes it with a clash of cymbals and an idiotic expression.

"A Lesson in Etiquette" follows the intermission, "It's not cricket to picket" being the theme song of an elegantly gowned socialite who finally breaks down and curses the strikers who get in her way. "One Big Union for Two" introduces haunting music and the provocative line, "Fifty Million Union Men Can't Be Wrong."

Because they are well trained (I noticed only one missed cue) and have such good sketches to work in, the entire cast not only turn in a smooth performance but obviously have a swell time doing it. The acting, dancing and singing seem quite professional. Though Al Eben, Ruth Rubenstein and Paul Seymour might be singled out for praise, they are only three of many who help to make *Pins and Needles* distinctly a smash-hit review.

Until January first the show will be put on only Friday and Saturday, after that time Labor Stage expects it to run six nights a week for at least three months. With tickets at fifty cents to \$1.50, *Pins and Needles* shapes up as the amusement of the month. Don't miss it. WILLIAM B. SMITH.

Anna Sokolow and Other Dancers


IT is a matter of record now that Anna Sokolow made her "official" debut at the Guild Theatre under the auspices of the NEW MASSES and took the Guild definitely by storm. It shouldn't be difficult to lose oneself in the rush of emotional acclaim with which the young dancer was received. I went into a bit of a rapture on the young artist myself. Her work calls for it. It has all the qualities that make for the warm emotional response. It is simple, human, direct.

Her concert was devoted principally to works that have been seen in and about New York these past four years: *Speaker*; *Strange American Funeral*, set to Mike Gold's poem; *Ballade*; her anti-fascist *War Poem*; a more sharply pointed *Case History*; and the light, satiric *Four Little Salon Pieces*. Of the new dances, *Opening Dance* is a stylized treatment of what might have been called "walking in the streets," a sympathetic portrait in urban gestures. It was evidently in the nature of a manifesto. Opening dances are usually that—it has become something of a tradition. They are the dancer's statement on her approach to her art. Anna Sokolow's *Opening Dance* declared her kinship with the people, urban people, their "walks" in life, the simplicity of their gestures, the honesty of their emotions and action. These people are her material, the source and substance of her dancing. *Opening Dance* is a warm and simple demonstration of the dancer's allegiance.

Slaughter of the Innocents, the only other new work on the program, derives from Spain, from the struggles of a people against the fascist invasion. It is emotionally tense, a characterization reminiscent in its movement of the women you saw in *Heart of Spain* (after the slaughter of the innocent) and as taut. Powerful in its simple gesture, in its simple statement, it projects through tortured understatement a profound sympathy and understanding.

Heart of Spain was inclined to choke one with an emotional rage. *Slaughter of the Innocent* moves in the more tender human

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phases. It is quiet, restrained, too much so I thought; it has the quieting effect of great sorrow rather than the invocative qualities such a portrait might have aroused, the qualities that dynamically move out of her poignant anti-fascist blasts. Anna Sokolow unquestionably is always the master of the situation. She works beautifully, moves delicately through the most difficult subtleties in composition and meaning. Her compositions, sensitively reticent, are rich in sentiment and keenly pointed. For a young dancer she has developed at a surprising swift pace, and her art is a mature and telling one. She undoubtedly leads the way for proletarian dancers.

There is no question that Alex North, whose excellent music she uses almost exclusively, ranks among the best of the composers of music for the modern dance.

Other of our young revolutionary dancers have been active, and at the last Ninety-second Street (N. Y.) Y.M.H.A. concert (this "Y" has been presenting some rather good programs) under the aegis of the American Dance Association, Lily Mehlman, Jane Dudley, Sophie Maslow, and José Limon and his group appeared in a performance of considerable note. While it can't be said that any of these young choreographers has reached a completely mature and personal idiom, each draws concretely and abundantly from the living struggles of the people, and their dances have the impact that derives from such substance.

Lily Mehlman's *Harvest Song* (which last year won a dance award), lyric and delicately turned, grows out of a sympathy for the workers in the fields. Her *Lullaby for a Dead Child*, which compares with Anna Sokolow's *Slaughter of the Innocents*, also moves out of Spain, a simple character study, stirring and poignant with grief. From Spain, too, is the *Evacuacion* of Jane Dudley and Sophie Maslow, in small tableaux and stylized figures—the moving story of the abandoning of homes and the villages after the slaughter of the innocents and the lullaby for a dead child. It recalls the retreat from Málaga. It has the keen quality and force of a dirge and protest.

They are not angry pieces that these young dancers have done, but pieces touched with the passion and warmth of woman's (and man's) fraternal and human compassion for and understanding of the people.

José Limon's *Danza de la Muerte* is also called forth by the Franco-Mussolini-Hitler invasion (as was reported from Bennington), a dance in protest and condemnation. Unfortunately, it is considerably cramped by a pre-occupation with intellectual concepts. A more human and less ideal treatment of his subject matter should enliven and point his work much.

Of the other dances on the program, there were Sophie Maslow's lyric *Two Songs for Lenin*, which have already won much acclaim for their simplicity and warmth; Jane Dudley's grotesque and broadly satiric *Four Por-*

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traits from the world of the petty bourgeoisie, her still-to-be-clarified anti-Nazi *Cult of Blood*; and José Limon's moving Mexican *Hymn* and his amusing Stravinsky *Suite*.

All these have been previously presented. The new works, in addition to *Evacuacion*, were Lily Mehlman's *Girl*, Jane Dudley's naïve *Fantasy* (After *Images of a Movie*) done with benefit of a chair, and Sophie Maslow's *Ragged Hungry Blues* and *Runaway Rag*. In *Girl*, whatever Lily Mehlman intended, the composition founders on the rocks of abstract thinking. The conflict, the girl developing through adolescence to a knowledge that "the world [is] her home," is built on psychological introspective planes, and while the dance itself is not without the sensitivity of the dancer, it never fully emerges in concrete terms.

Sophie Maslow is evidently experimenting with new syncopations, attempting to translate a "song by Aunt Molly Jackson" and the story of the Negro pursued by a lynch mob into contemporary jazz rhythms. It is a logical development for the dancer, but as yet these compositions remain experimental.

Jane Dudley's *Fantasy* is her first venture into sympathetic studies, and she has made a good job of it. The dance is infused with considerable warmth, and while it is not her most ambitious work, it is highly gratifying.

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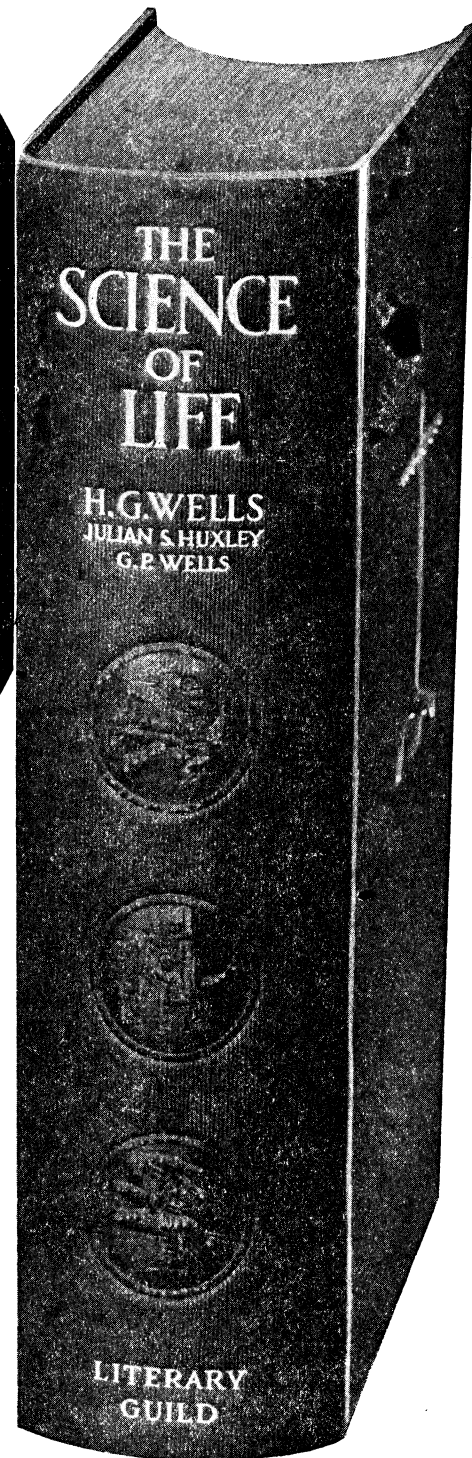
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NEW MASSES, DECEMBER 7, 1937, VOL. XXV, NO. II, NEW YORK, N. Y.; IN TWO SECTIONS, OF WHICH THIS IS SECTION TWO

Notes on the Cultural Front

By Michael Gold

THIS YEAR I crossed the continent in an automobile. I talked to California longshoremen and fruit-pickers, to Wyoming oil workers and Pennsylvania miners, to waiters, gas-station attendants, and little shopkeepers.

Roosevelt is their symbol of the new, and the C.I.O. stirs them as Columbus and his subjective geography must have affected the Spanish court. The spirit is: we don't know exactly where we're going, but we must be on our way. When the people sleep, it is as if the sun were not shining; pessimism and cynicism darken the mind. But now this American people is in motion, as never since the Civil War. It is possible to breathe again. Destiny and hope hover over the great continent.

NEW YORK, too, had felt the spirit that walks America. Renewing old friendships here in the unions of the garment workers, the food workers, the waterfront workers, and those of other trades, I found a remarkable change. The whole struggle has debouched on a new and higher plane. Communist trade unionists, a few years ago still affected by the sectarianism of any unpopular minority, have learned the difficult art of the united front. Now they think and act like labor statesmen, instead of isolated soap-boxers. They have acquired a sense of power and responsibility, and a deep-rooted importance in the very heart of the class-strategy. The recent New York elections, in which the Labor Party emerged as a national force, and in which the Communist Party first made itself felt as an effective political group, demonstrated this great change abundantly. Yes, the nation is on the march.

It is true that fascism has become bolder all over the world. It is on the offensive, as all gamblers down to their last chips must be. The democracies seem weak and divided. An international class war is in the making, and the Fifth Columns are busily preparing it in every nation, betraying their own people in the process.

Gulliver can always sweep off the feverish midgets of fascist capitalism by merely stirring his limbs in one mighty coordinated gesture.

The people's front is Gulliver's first sortie. Experi-

mental and clumsy, it has already checked fascism in Spain and France and put a spine into the Chinese resistance to fascism. England has been the weakest link in the chain of democracies, but a people's front is slowly emerging there too, against all the sabotage of the sordid labor Tories.

And now, by some powerful working of the instinct of self-preservation, we behold the American masses groping their own way toward a people's front—for if these C.I.O. and labor-party movements mean anything in the international scene, it is just that.

So is it not a great hour in American history, a time for confidence, for optimism and heightened action, a time to sink all petty partisan quarrels into a vast united effort? It seems so to millions of Americans; this is the mood of the country, I believe. In New York, however, it appears there is also a group of mourners. They think the country is going to hell, and it is all the fault of the emerging people's front. No, I am not talking about the Wall Street section of Franco's international; I am referring to the Trotskyfied intellectuals.

THEY ARE a small band, working in a small milieu, but what energy, what remarkable ingenuity and persistence they display! Some of them called themselves Communists two or three years ago; but they were rather faint-hearted then, passive fellow-travelers with little passion. Now they overflow with enthusiasm against the people's front, against the Communist Party, against the Soviet Union, against loyalist Spain, and China, and proletarian literature, the labor party, the C.I.O., virtually the whole of Gulliver, the awakening people.

They fill the intellectual and literary journals of the bourgeoisie with their hymns of hate. A few years ago they seriously questioned whether the creative writer would not be injured if he entered the political arena and allowed the working class to lay demands on him. This was when they were "Communists"; now, when they are Trotskyites, they are intensely political, and cannot write a line of poetry or a short fiction sketch without allowing their political feelings to overcome them, and to distort their talents.

It is all strange, until one regards it also as a psycho-

logical, as well as a political, phenomenon. In most people, love and solidarity are the passions that drive them to action; in others, the malice and hate of warped personality can be as strong a motivating force. Shakespeare knew this, and his Iago, a genius of malice, is certainly shrewder, more active and inspired than the noble Othello.

Intellectuals are peculiarly susceptible to Trotskyism, a nay-saying trend. The intellectual under capitalism is not a full man, since capitalism has little use for a culture that brings no immediate dollar-profit. The "intellectual" is rather a stepchild at the capitalist feast. The great and small fiction of the western intellectuals during the latter part of the nineteenth century and up to the present is permeated with the bitter poison of frustration, and the malice and pessimism that accompany frustration. Suspicion of life reached a point among the western intellectuals where, as Nietzsche pointed out, it became a form of biological inferiority.

This suspicion of life, so organic with the intellectuals, has made them the peculiar prey of Trotskyism, which at present denies the whole current movement of the people's history.

Trotskyism has no mass following. It finds its only strength in this isolated world of those intellectuals who, with the frustrate, negative psychology capitalism has implanted in them, were never really at home in the Communist working-class movement. The workers, however oppressed under capitalism, still knew themselves vital to the functioning of capitalism. Every strike was a demonstration of this. If they did not work, the wheels of society would stop. But intellectuals never knew this class feeling of being functionally important enough to be dangerous.

So those intellectuals, who had numberless reservations when they were fellow-travelers in "communism," now have no reservations in Trotskyism. Trotskyism is merely an extension of their previous distrust of the positive working-class philosophy and reaction to life. Now they are at home again with Iago.

We can, therefore, discard all the new "Marxist" jargon these people have learned in the past five years and pierce to the spiritual and psychological core of their new-found energy. It is the simple malice of the Joycean intellectual, hating life. Iago has found a new mask to assume in a new situation.

I CAN REMEMBER these same people only a decade ago. It was Christmas Eve in the harem, and all the eunuchs were there. Santa Claus asked them what they wanted in their stockings, and they shouted—but you know the answer.

The ivory tower, once a hermit's refuge and revolt against a vulgar, commercialized world, had become vulgarized into a bedroom. The eunuchs pranced and frisked merrily; sex, sex, sex (God knows some of them needed it badly) was the chief preoccupation of these intellectuals; the Coolidge boom was on; and James Branch Cabell, an aristocratic panderer from Virginia, told them "naughty" stories. He was their chief "artist," as Mencken was their "critic," for ten futile years!

Bah! It was a sordid and contemptible time, and I want to spit whenever I think of it. In that period of

the triumphant *nouveaux riches*, when even stockbrokers went in for literature, because literature meant "feelthy peectures," only a handful of us remained loyal to the old-fashioned doctrine that literature was more than an aphrodisiac or entertainment.

We were isolated; and perhaps we ranted a little, and sneered, and made mistakes. We must have seemed as one-ideaed as hairy Jeremiahs to those fat revelers at the Coolidge banquet into whose ears we yelled: "Your prosperity is a fraud! You have forgotten the American people! Your literature is no more representative of American life than a French *capote!* To hell with you fakers, wait till your stock market crashes!"

Yes, I was one of the Jeremiahs, and I remember that once that most unfortunate and charming man of talent, Clarence Day, said to me from his "mattress-grave," "You fellows must be awfully lonesome." I answered, "It would be a lot more lonesome among the liars."

I have no apologies to offer snooty young "proletarian" critics who, like Dr. Dryasdust, read the past without imagination and tell us now our manners were bad, and our æsthetics faulty. They didn't happen to be there. They are living in a time when proletarian literature has become important enough for Thomas Lamont's *Saturday Review of Literature* to "demolish" week after week.

Then we were not noticed at all—we were jokes and freaks. If I hadn't read Marx and Lenin, and learned some economics, and learned to trust the people, I might have felt like a freak, perhaps. But I knew enough to know that the fashions of intellectuals are only froth on a mighty wave, and that the real ocean of reality is where the people earn their daily bread.

Well, the stock market did crash, and the "literary" criticism of the "political" Jeremiahs in literature proved correct; the ensuing depression swept away all the gilded, phrase-mongering, bedroom heroics of the Menckens and the Cabells, all that seasonal fashion.

The market quotations went down, and proletarian literature went up. Unemployment brought thousands of intellectuals into our ranks. Overnight, almost like Byron, the concept of "proletarian literature" became famous. Even the dizziest Cabellists stopped contemplating their you-know-what, and turned their eyes outward, on the class struggle. Hunger came through the door, and Eros scrambled through the window. It was a real "boom."

But some of the old guard, like Mencken, austere unmovable by the cry of twenty million jobless Americans, cast a fishy gaze on this novel sight. "This is just a new bandwagon," Mencken sneered in the *Saturday Review*, "a new seasonal fashion among the intellectuals."

The stern old Baltimore Babbitt was partly right. A swarm of piffling paste-pots, dilettantes, cynics, frustrates, and bourgeois Iagos were among us. For a time they threatened to swamp even us with their alien ideology, their bourgeois zeal to distort Marx and to direct the working class. But in the end, they could not "adapt"; they were only Menckens at heart, after all; old Father Babbitt had shrewdly estimated his own children.

Then, the class struggle sharpened. At the first critical moment, a large group of the "converts" began deserting the proletarian "bandwagon" in a scramble back to their native own. I must confess I was never alarmed. I believe evacuation of the bowels is necessary to a healthy body. This is a purge of unhealthy stuff without any effort on our part.

Yes, they had their fling at "revolution," and they hated it. But they learned something in the process; how to fight with new and more skilled weapons the Communism they had previously feared and distrusted. Now in the name of Marx himself they fight the Marxists; in the name of the revolution, they sabotage the revolution; in the name of the people, they try to confuse, slander, and destroy the people's front. They call themselves "Communists," and the chief enemy they seek to destroy in every land is the Communist Party.

THE PROCESS is becoming clearer every day on the political front. Here is a little incident, one of many:

The other day I attended a Communist mass meeting at Madison Square Garden to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Russian revolution.

In the rain, on all the streets around the great hall, groups of earnest young men paraded with signs. They were Catholic students from nearby seminaries and col-

leges. Their fascist elders had sent them forth to battle for God and the Liberty League. Their signs pleaded with New Yorkers to boycott the Communist meeting. They handed out various leaflets. The one reproduced on this page is typical.

There it is in a nutshell. Franco's chief supporters in New York employ Max Eastman, Eugene Lyons, and Emma Goldman as their final argument against the first workers' state. This has become the function of Trotskyism in the present period. Even when an honest man falls into this peculiar camp, innocent, perhaps, and pure in heart as those young Catholic students, he cannot avoid finishing in the camp of the enemy. The Madison Square incident is being repeated a hundred times every day in every land, including Spain; but the Trotskyites see no shame in being used in this manner. They even go on calling themselves "Communists," for it is as "disillusioned Communists" that they are chiefly valuable to the capitalist press.

The whole Dostoyevskian story of the degeneration of these people was told by themselves in the Moscow trials. In America, these trials have been slandered as frame-ups, as if there were no Soviet justice. But the Bolsheviks educated an illiterate nation, and lifted one-sixth of the world out of ancient poverty and superstition into a new historic stage of evolution. The Soviet system is indivisible, and if Soviet nurseries, libraries, and schools are a sound development, Soviet justice must be as sound, for it comes from the same source as the Soviet cultural renaissance.

The Moscow trials are horrible, but they are horrible only because they reveal the malicious depths of the Iago-Trotskyist soul.

ON THE CULTURAL FRONT in America, the Trotskyites are being used by the bourgeois press in the same manner; as "disillusioned" intellectual witnesses to the alleged narrowness and decay of proletarian culture.

The *Saturday Review of Literature*, which, as you know, is subsidized by Thomas Lamont, has been conducting a veritable campaign against our literature. The *Nation*, as Granville Hicks shows in a documented study in this issue, has been second in the campaign, and from time to time *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, and the slick-paper magazines for the middle class join the refined Red-hunt.

The renegade Trotskyites supply them with their ammunition. When did these magazines ever print an essay by any intellectual who takes a positive position toward the Soviet Union or proletarian culture, even when the intellectual is more distinguished in achievement than a Eugene Lyons or a V. F. Calverton; Romain Rolland, perhaps, or Maxim Gorky. This is obviously not a non-partisan search for truth, but a war on the "Reds."

Why do these magazines need to conduct such a campaign? That, too, is obvious. The depression drove thousands of the American middle class into the left camp, and it has become necessary to bring them back. But tory authors would not be believed; only Trotskyist authors, renegades who have learned the left phraseology, are effective. In Chicago, the head of the Red Squad is a Russian Jew who was once a 1905 revolu-

Why Do We Picket?

Because We are for Americanism and Against Communism

America Stands for:	Russia Stands for:
1) Freedom of religion	1) No religious toleration
2) Freedom of minorities	2) No minority rights
3) Freedom of ballot	3) No party choice
4) Freedom of ownership	4) No property rights
5) Freedom of speech, assembly and press	5) No civil liberties
6) Freedom of the arts.	6) Prostitution of the arts.

"Russian freedom is applesauce"..... Max Eastman

"In Russia, revenge is being wreaked on the very masses that were to be saved by that cause."..... Eugene Lyons

"The fundamental characteristic of Russia's Bolshevik psychology is distrust of the masses."..... Emma Goldman

"Many more have been sent to die in Siberia under Stalin than under the Czars. In fact the Stalin government is the most cruel, the most brutal class government and lower class government the world has ever known."..... Emma Goldman

"Once more the toiling masses have taken arms and died for equal liberty and once more they have received a more efficient system of class exploitation."..... Max Eastman

"A Socialism that offers to fill the bellies of its people but retains the privilege of slitting those bellies at will, is reactionary."
—Eugene Lyons

Printed courtesy of Pottham Ram

A Catholic anti-communist leaflet cites as its authorities three self-styled "revolutionists."

tionist. He has built his police career on his special knowledge of how the revolutionary movement functions. In our American literary world, similar careers are being made by a group of Trotskyist authors. It is significant that few of them were ever published as freely, or reviewed as cordially, when they wrote on the working-class side. Have they taken such a sudden leap forward in the technique of their art or the clarity of their thought?

Of course not. It is a Red-hunt that is going on, a political battle, and they are valuable to the enemies of communism.

I HAD INTENDED to write some sort of essay that would try to answer all the recent criticisms they have been bringing, and inspiring in others, against proletarian literature. To prepare myself, I read through some of the renegade essays and found that they weren't literary criticism at all, and that it was impossible to answer them except in political terms.

Their arguments always boil down to one basic slander: *viz.*, proletarian literature is dead in America, and it was murdered by the Communist Party which practiced a rigid political dictatorship on it.

The Catholic-fascist circular said: "Russia stands for prostitution of the arts." They learned this from Max Eastman, no doubt, a man who did not scruple to call Maxim Gorky a prostitute and an "artist in uniform." But Eastman's stale thesis has been made the foundation of the whole Trotskyist "line" on proletarian literature in America, I have found.

They have spread this legend of party dictatorship far and wide among the intellectuals. And how can one answer a vague myth? The liars cannot cite a single example of party dictation over literature, or a single extract from the writings of a Communist critic advocating such dictatorship. They have no facts, only a common myth of slander.

In several notable speeches at writers' congresses, Earl Browder, secretary of the Communist Party, made it sufficiently plain that the party policy on literature was one of complete freedom.

There is no fixed "party line" by which works of art can be separated automatically into sheep and goats [said Browder in 1935]. Our work in this field cannot be one of party resolutions giving judgment upon æsthetic questions.

Within the camp of the working class, in struggle against the camp of capitalism, we find our best atmosphere in the free give-and-take of a writers' and critics' democracy, which is controlled only by its audience, the masses of its readers, who constitute the final authority.

We believe that fine literature must arise directly out of life, expressing not only its problems, but, at the same time, all the richness and complexity of detail of life itself. The party wants to help, as we believe it already has to a considerable degree, to bring to writers a great new wealth of material, to open up new worlds to them. Our party interests are not narrow; they are broad enough to encompass the interests of all toiling humanity. We want literature to be as broad.

Is this the edict of a dictator? Is this the language of "politicians" who would "control" literature?

For a few years, accompanying the fiercest moments

of the depression, there was a wave of proletarian literature in this country. Its authors were close to the Communist Party. They found nothing in the Communist Party that hampered their expression, or how were all those novels and poems ever produced?

True, some of the works had a narrowness of theme and some lack of imagination in style. Some were too heavily weighted with the slogans of politics. Might not this have been the fault of the authors, immature experimenters in a new field, rather than the fault of the bogymen, Stalin?

But a galaxy of fine books came out of the movement, along with the lesser work. American literature is permanently richer, I believe, for the advent of such poets and spokesmen of new areas of American life as Jack Conroy, Grace Lumpkin, Fielding Burke, Leane Zugsmith, Erskine Caldwell, Clifford Odets, Albert Maltz, William Rollins, John L. Spivak, Alfred Hayes, Kenneth Fearing, Edwin Rolfe, Isidor Schneider, Langston Hughes, Edwin Seaver, and many others who managed to retain their individual souls under the so-called "dictatorship."

But now the political situation has altered. Stark misery and brutal oppression of the workers marked the period then; now the working class has climbed to a higher stage, and is fighting not only for bread, but for political power. This has been a sudden and revolutionary change, of the sort that can happen only in great historic periods such as ours. The American proletarian writers haven't quite caught up with it; literature needs time to mellow and digest the daily fact. Our American writers, I believe, are experiencing a little of the problem faced by the Russian writers who had to pass from the Civil War into the construction period.

It isn't easy. And it will take a deeper study of working-class life than was demanded in the more primitive period, just as the people's front demands of Communists more integrity and wisdom than ever before. The class struggle is more complex than it was five years ago. This means that a richer and more complex approach will be demanded in our proletarian literature.

So there is a lull, perhaps, while the authors prepare themselves for the new tasks. Meanwhile what has been accomplished is that the work of the proletarian pioneers has already become an influence on the whole national literature. When Hollywood presents plays like *Dead End*, it is unconsciously acknowledging the national victory of literary ideas whose champions ten years ago could be found only in the pages of the *MASSES*.

But proletarian literature is dead, say the renegades. It was killed by the Communist Party dictators. If it is dead, why fear it so much? Why do they write so many obituaries, why are the bourgeois journals so eager to print over and over those slanderous stale epitaphs?

I SAY AGAIN that we have ended one period and are about to enter another in proletarian literature.

What Mencken did not know, and could never know, is that the bandwagon rush brought us good as well as evil. Thousands and thousands of white-collar workers and professionals were permanently proletarianized

during the worst years of the depression. They will never be the same again. They cannot desert, like the Trotskyist renegades, because they have all their roots in some organization, and in the trade-union movement. These masses of members in the Newspaper Guild, the Lawyers' Guild, and the trade unions of the social workers, architects, and technicians, the teachers, actors, and musicians, authors, and the rest, are new species of "intellectuals." They are dwelling in no ivory tower, but in the real world, where ideas must mirror objective truth.

They are serious, constructive, skilled people, who have learned to think and work in groups. No longer susceptible to the Freudian, bohemian, and phrasemongering egotism of the previous generation, they aren't Hamlets, or Iagos, or Napoleons—but practical trade unionists. Deep in the American people, their approach to the labor problem is surer and more intimate than that of the preceding generation of white-collars.

Renegades, Red-baiters, Trotskyites, who daily bury the Soviet Union, Spain, China, the people's front, proletarian literature, and what have you in the bourgeois press, have never made any dent on this new generation. These people have had to fight against Red-baiting. The bosses have invariably used it against their own unions. They have been on picket-lines and in jails; they have had to do the things workers do, and

make the same mistakes. Nobody can fool them about the realities.

Out of them, I believe, will come a new wave of proletarian literature, different and more complex than the last, more at home in the working-class world. For every white-collar renegade, there are thousands of these "new people." In the factories, mines, and mills are thousands of other lads whose whole outlook is being shaped by the C.I.O. The future of proletarian literature is in these hands. Labor is on the march. The farmers, professionals, small businessmen are stirring. Several thousand young American Communists and liberals are fighting in Spain. A labor party is being born. The American people are in motion.

Who can doubt that all this new historic experience and collective aspiration will not be expressed in our literature, so that the Communist Party, which plays a great role in this political ferment, will not also inspire with clarity and courage the new generation of writers, as it did the preceding one? Where else can such writers go for a philosophic key to the turmoil they are in? Can they go to the nihilists and saboteurs who deny that anything new has happened, or that the people are awakening? Proletarian literature carved a road despite the Menckens and Cabells and Max Eastmans of yesterday. It will go on widening that road despite the new crop of ivory-tower Iagos, Communist-haters, and nay-sayers to life.

Back to Work

By Leane Zugsmith

BREAKFAST was special with two eggs for him and Mildred barely able to nibble her toast for watching him. Each time she cleared her throat, he knew it was not because of what she found hard to say but because of what she wanted to avoid saying. With a bread-crust he mopped his plate clean of egg, at the same time keeping a sharp watch on the alarm clock beside him. Then he held out his cup for more coffee and, as she poured from the dented pot, he noticed once more how thin her arms were and how the bones at the base of her throat stood out like a little boy's bones. But she wasn't a little boy—she was a young woman, his wife, who had been faring on anxiety for more than three years. Only it was all over now. He would fatten her up and buy her new clothes and take her places. It was all over now. There would be no more relief jobs. He had handed in his resignation. This morning he would begin—his eyes reverted hastily to the clock—back with a private firm for the first time in over three years. The solemnity of the occasion suddenly caused his hand to shake; some coffee slopped onto the saucer.

Instantly Mildred spoke. "It's so perfectly marvelous, Seth," she said, her voice high and rattling. "I keep thinking, it's like a painter getting his brushes back

and his easel and, oh, you know, everything. Isn't it? Don't you think so?"

"Hey, how do you get that way?" His voice was teasing. "I'm no artist. Nixon, maybe he calls himself an artist; but I'm just an operator, don't you forget it." He grinned. "And a damned good one, don't you forget that, either."

No one could deny that, he thought, no one who had ever done studio work with him. On the relief job, he might not have been so hot, taking censuses, taking everything but pictures. He knew, all right, what she had meant when she talked about getting the brushes back; she meant that he hadn't even had his portable camera to practice with, having had to sell it a couple of years back. And he also knew what she hadn't said but what had really been in her mind. Well, Jesus God, the breaks had been bad, that was all. If they had been good, he might have been running his own studio by now, like Nixon, and signing his name to his photographs. He'd be damned, though, if he would have gone in for the kind of soft-focus work that Nixon had showed him when he decided to give him the job. Not that he couldn't handle a soft-focus lens; he could handle any lens ever produced. And not that he had anything against Nixon; far from it; in fact, it had been

all he could do to keep, from kissing him, almost, when Nixon had singled him out of the applicants. He looked again at the clock. He didn't want to get there too early and make it look as if he was anxious. On the other hand, he *had* to be there on time. He felt Mildred's hand upon his own.

"I think you're an artist," she said. "I think you used to take—you take marvelous pictures." She squeezed his hand. "Look at your fingers, aren't they artist's fingers? And they'll be all brown again, like old times, from that stuff, what do you call it now?"

"The pyro?" he said airily. "Only, say, when were they brown?" He pretended to be injured. "They were never brown when I got home. I always used the stain-remover."

"Oh, that time I came up to the studio, they certainly *were* brown."

He burst into laughter. "We're nuts, aren't we?" he said fondly. "If any one could have peeked through the windows last night!"

Mildred laughed with him, recalling the scene the night before when, knowing for sure that he had the job, Seth had removed the shades from the standing lamps and arranged the glaring bulbs around her. Then he had moved the imaginary camera stand, while she posed as a bored society matron, and then a flibbertigibbet, and then an embarrassed young man. He had said he wanted the feel of getting the perspective or, as he put it more loftily, the angle of view. He had even peered through an imaginary camera. *Wet your lips a little, please. That's good. Now just raise your head a little. Keep your eyes at the height my hand is. Just hold that, please.* He had even pressed a mythical bulb and removed a mythical plate-holder and pretty soon they had been fooling round like a couple of kids.

"Gee, we acted like a couple of kids," she said, still laughing.

Seth's face became sober. That was what she had always wanted: real kids, not them playing at it. She'll have them, too. It's the turn of the tide, all right; no more relief jobs, no more fear of the pink slip. "Jesus God!" he yelled. "Look at the time." He rushed for his hat and coat and made for the door. Mildred ran after him and pulled at his arm.

"Just for luck," she said and traced a big horseshoe on his back.

He kissed her and raced down the stairs. He was fortunate, making good connections in the subway, and arrived on time at the studio. Nixon's wife showed him where to put his outer garments and took him right into the studio. He was glad Nixon was still upstairs where they lived. It gave him more time to get the feel of things. After three years of doing God knows what, only it wasn't photography, you had to get your hand in again. With the knob he racked the bellows of the big camera, moving first the ground glass and then the lens, focusing on all the objects in the room. He operated the horizontal swing and the vertical; then he examined the lights. They were honeys, not like the lights he had been accustomed to, three years ago. These were big babies with two-thousand-watt bulbs, sweet diffusing screens, and reflectors that were wonderfully designed. They looked like auto headlights. Those

old reflectors, familiar to him, had always let the light spread too much. It was going to be a pleasure to work with these.

The equipment in this studio was neat; up-to-date and neat. The only thing that had had him buffaloed, when he had encountered it yesterday, had been the oblong of green glass in the dark-room safelight. He had been smart enough to keep his mouth shut, though, not telling Nixon that he had almost always worked with color-blind films under a red safelight. Of course, he had developed a few pan films; just enough of them to know how hard it was to judge density under the pale glow of the green. But that was all there was to it. Consequently, there was nothing he was unable to do here, except, maybe to retouch and Nixon was bugs on doing his own retouching. That was why he had decided to hire an operator. At the sound of Nixon's voice, he wheeled around and started to hold out his hand. He could feel it shaking and hastily let it fall, just saying in an over-hearty voice: "Good morning, Mr. Nixon."

Most of the morning, he just watched the boss who wanted him to get the hang of his style. In the mid-afternoon, he got his first sitting, a woman with a large face and minute, indistinct features. Seth fussed over her more than he would have; he had a paralyzing feeling that if he didn't get the first one perfect, he might never be any good. He knew how to handle the soft-focus lens, all right. There was nothing to it much, he kept telling himself, except to focus with the lens stopped down, instead of focusing first and stopping it down afterward. Only he had an alarmed feeling that Nixon might be watching him from some hiding-place, and that would slow up anyone. Also, every time he looked, his head hidden under the black cloth, at the woman's image in the ground glass, it seemed as if the highlights in her eyes wouldn't sharpen up. They looked fuzzy; too fuzzy even for portraits. Several times he had to stop and wipe the palms of his hands on his trousers. If he could only sneak out and have a smoke, he knew it would ease him up. For a while he fooled with the lights and moved the camera stand to cover up his indetermination. Then he realized that, although this might fox her, it wouldn't put anything over on Nixon, provided he was watching him. So he knew he had to press the bulb. Once he had done it, the next moves seemed to come easier.

After he had finished, he had to mop his face. "These lights get you pretty warm," he said in apology.

As soon as she left, he went into the dark-room with the films. Nixon wouldn't be able to have a peephole in there. He took the first one at hand out of its holder and inserted it into a hanger. If his hand was unsteady, dipping the film into the tank of developer, it wasn't because he was nervous any longer, it was just that the green light bothered him a little. After you've always worked under a red light, naturally, it takes a little time to get accustomed to the comparative gloom of the green; that was all. If Nixon thought he was going to be a boy wonder right off the bat, he had another think coming. As he continued to dip the film and inspect it against the green light coming through the oblong in the wall, he became a little sore at Nixon. Anybody

ought to know it took a little while to get used to a new job. Then he wondered what in hell kind of formula Nixon used for his developer, because the film just wasn't getting to look right. That big face of hers was as black as night, a dense black blob. Either Nixon's developer was too contrasty or he'd been fooled by those trick lights and had overexposed. Well, he could still juggle a fair print out of the negative, anyway. He jerked the negative hastily from the developer, rinsed it briefly, and put it in the hypo to fix. Developing the rest of the films, he took a lesson from the first one and didn't waste much time on them. The density was fair, even though they were all kind of flat.

When he had them all in the hypo, he went outside to light a cigarette. Nixon looked up from his magazine and stared at him, he thought, rather strangely. Thinks I take too long, he told himself and puffed at his cigarette before speaking. "Nothing like getting back into harness," he said. Nixon nodded his head and returned to the magazine, so it was easy to saunter into the print-room where he could be alone. It was neat, all right, in there, with an up-to-date contact printer and a sweetheart of an enlarger. Everything your heart could ask for, from the print drier to the print flattener.

He made numerous trips to the dark-room, taking the films from the fixing bath, washing them, and waiting impatiently while they dried in front of a fan. He couldn't wait to make proofs. Presently, finding the films dry, he took them into the lab and prepared for the first test print. When the platen contacted the negative, it was marvelous, a snap, to have a reflecting mirror automatically thrown into position, with the light automatic, too. But the negative worried him; he kept adjusting the light, thinking maybe the paper wasn't fast enough. That big face of hers just didn't have any features, and for all the juggling of contrast papers he did, he knew he couldn't keep on kidding himself that it would come out right. Even an amateur could tell from the chalkiness of the whites alone that he had overexposed it. It would be a waste of time to develop the print. He moved on to the next film.

In about an hour and a half, he left the print-room. He was sweating again; and his face had a bad, sickly color to it. He had overexposed every single one of them. It must have been the lights, he told himself, he didn't know how to use them. Nixon had gone upstairs. He wouldn't have to explain anything till tomorrow. He put on his hat and coat and left. Thinking it over, he got it: these new lights were supposed to take only about one-fifth of a second, even with the lens at f. 11, for an exposure. He had just gone calmly ahead and exposed for one second, the way he had always done under the old lights. Well, once you knew, there was nothing to it. And he couldn't make that mistake again. Tomorrow, he would come right out and freely admit to Nixon that it had been caused by ignorance. Talking to himself this way, as he rode home, he got to feeling better. But when he saw the radiant, expectant expression on Mildred's face, he suddenly felt cold.

She reacted at once, scared, as she used to be when she was afraid he had got a pink slip. Although he hadn't wanted to talk about it, the change in her ex-

pression, with her eyes going hollow that way, finally caused him to say: "Hey, what do you want to pull a long face for? I miscalculated the time of the exposure, that's all. Anybody could do that. Nixon could do it. It isn't a crime."

To keep from losing his temper, he read the catalogues he had got from a supply-house, during supper and afterward. You could learn a lot about the new equipment that way. He even picked out a speed camera that he could save up to get, now that he had a real job. Only, after he went to bed, he lay for a long time, wide awake in the dark; and he knew that Mildred, she wasn't sleeping, either.

Nixon was good and sore about it, the next day, ranting about how his reputation was going to be ruined if all his clients had to come back for second sittings. Fortunately, there were plenty of appointments for both of them, a steady rush that didn't give Nixon much time to go on belly-aching. Otherwise, it was just more pressure on Seth, although one thing he made sure of was to avoid overexposures this time. The lights in the camera room were under control, all right, but the green light in the dark-room still disturbed him. He just couldn't trust his judgment of the films against that light. It gave him the willies, waiting for the damned things to fix, having to hope, instead of being sure, that they'd print better than they looked in the negative. Later, when he was working on the contact printer, Nixon came out and watched him a couple of times, saying once: "You're quite a demon for dodging."

Seth hadn't answered him because he didn't want to get sore. But when he saw finally how poorly most of the prints developed, he forgot to be sore. He was afraid. At home that night, he tried not to give himself away, rather than have Mildred get into a state. The first thing she said to him was: "How did it work out today, Seth?"

"O.K. We were busy as hell," he told her. "I'm going to turn in as soon as I give those catalogues another look."

The next day was supposed to be a half day, being Saturday. Seth didn't like the idea of its being the end of the week. He wished he had started in on a Monday, instead of a Thursday. Still, maybe it was a good thing to have some time off to brush up; he could go to the library and read some books on photography. Mrs. Nixon met him when he came in and told him her husband was staying in bed with a cold and expected Seth to take over his one appointment for the morning. The subject turned out to be a good-looking girl who came late and announced she could give only fifteen minutes to the sitting. Seth put out everything he had, but he knew he could have done even better if she hadn't rattled him, reminding him all the time that she was in a rush. He let his mind wander too much, he knew, trying to figure out if Nixon really was upstairs in bed or watching, making this a kind of final exam.

After the girl left, Mrs. Nixon popped in to ask if he minded staying overtime to develop the prints because Mr. Nixon wanted to see them before he left. He said "sure" and went into the dark-room, seeing a warning in the request. To his relief, the first film looked sweet and he felt that he was getting onto the green light. It

bothered him hardly at all. But he hadn't watched the next film for more than a few seconds than he ripped out a curse. He had double-exposed. How in God's name could he have taken a double exposure? A child, a beginner would know better than that. Then he thought, if Nixon really stayed upstairs, if he really wasn't watching me, I'll tell him she was in such a hurry, she wouldn't let me take many. It would hardly be a lie, I only did get time to expose six films.

When he came to the next double exposure, he didn't curse. He knew now what he had done. That damned chippy made me rush so, he told himself, that I used exposed films. Only he couldn't blame it on the girl. The first thing *anyone* learned was to put the black rim out so that, with a glance at the holder, it could be seen that the film had been exposed. He must have slipped them back without thinking to keep the white rim inside, the black out. The greenest amateur knew enough to be careful about that. This wasn't a mistake, made out of ignorance, that you wouldn't let happen again, once you knew.

In the dark-room, when he left it, there were only three films hanging up to dry. He had double-exposed the other three. He went right out to Mrs. Nixon and said in a hard voice:

"You can tell him right now that I double-exposed three of them."

Not giving her time to answer him, he went into the print-room and stared at the enlarger, thinking: he may not even want me to stay to make the prints. Afraid I might ball up something else on the job. He'd be a God-damned fool to think there's anything left I haven't balled up already. How would he like it, if he hadn't had a camera in his hands for a couple of years?

Presently he heard Mrs. Nixon's high heels clacking toward him. He rested his hand on the contact printer to steady himself before facing her. When he saw the embarrassment in her face, he felt no more surprise, just heaviness.

She spoke in a low voice and tried not to look at him. "Of course, Mr. Nixon isn't feeling well, so he's more upset than he might be. About the double exposures, I mean. I understand *perfectly* how it is. Even he'll recognize it when he feels better, how it takes some

time to get used to a new position, particularly after—after . . ." she halted, flushing.

"After working at something else. For three years. On a relief job," he said grimly.

"It isn't that I don't understand, but Mr. Nixon says he can't afford—he can only afford to have an operator who, well, as you said yourself, has been operating and so on, perhaps more recently." Still without looking directly at him, she held out a little envelope.

He took it from her; there were bills inside. "He makes up his mind good and quick, doesn't he?" His voice was bitter. "After only two and a half days."

"I know it must seem that way to you," she said in distress. "Really, he can't afford it. Why don't you go to a big studio, like Blye's, where they have so many operators, it wouldn't matter so much. I mean—you know what I mean."

"Sure. I know what you mean," he said levelly.

Then he moved to get his hat and coat. There wasn't any use to eat dirt trying to get it back, because he wouldn't get it back anyway. There wasn't any use in kicking about being let out after two and a half days, because he might not be any good after two and a half months. You learned a trade and thought you were pretty damned good at it and then there was no place where you could use what you had learned. Get a load of Blye's putting up with anybody for a couple of months while he learned it all over again and also had to learn not to be afraid that it wouldn't all come back to him. If you ever could learn not to be afraid of that. *What are they doing to me?* Putting me back on a relief job, putting me back to taking censuses, putting me back to waiting for the pink slip.

It wasn't just his hand shaking, it was all of him now. All right, think of the high-school kids who never get a crack at whatever trade they want to go in for. You were lucky, you had a few years at it, a while back. He made a face, trying to stop trembling. Then he held out his hands before him, as though to hypnotize them into steadiness. His fingers were stained with pyro. He had forgotten to use the remover. I'll go home with them like that, he thought, so Mildred can see them brown, once more, last time.

A 'Nation' Divided

By Granville Hicks

THE *NATION* recently celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet Union with an editorial, an article, and a book review. The article, by Maxwell S. Stewart, commented upon the industrial growth of the U.S.S.R., the rise in living standards, the progress in agriculture, "the extension of protection against the risks of modern society," the increase in democratic rights and civil liberties, and the beneficent role of the Soviet Union in world affairs. The editorial

hailed Russia as the bulwark of western civilization against the onslaught of fascist barbarism. The book review talked about starvation, torture, slave psychology, the correctness of "Trotsky's thesis of the impossibility of building socialism in one country," and the movement of the U.S.S.R. "in the direction of fascism."

To casual readers of the *Nation* this difference of opinion may seem surprising but not significant. To the

regular reader, however, it will seem very significant—and not in the least surprising. Some four years ago the book-review section seceded from the rest of the magazine, and it still exists in a state of rebellion. On the whole, the *Nation* has remained true to its traditions. It has been a liberal magazine, providing a forum for the various points of view the editors regarded as progressive. It has published articles for and against the Soviet Union, for and against the people's front in France, for and against the loyalist government in Spain, for and against the Communist Party. From our point of view, it has often been open to criticism, but it has taken the right side on many issues, and it has always tried to be fair.

The book-review section, on the other hand, has taken the wrong side on most issues, and it has not been fair. About what is the right and what the wrong side there can be infinite argument. About the lack of fairness there can be no argument at all. The bias of the *Nation's* book-review section can be proved.

Let us look, for example, at recent books on the Soviet Union. What is generally conceded to be the most important of recent studies, the Webbs' *Soviet Communism*, was given by the *Nation* to Abram Harris. Of the quality of the review, Louis Fischer, the *Nation's* own Moscow correspondent, has said all that needs saying. "He uses the review," Mr. Fischer wrote in a letter to the editors, "to air his own threadbare, shopworn, and uninteresting prejudices against the Soviet Union, which, I think, he has never seen. . . . What I miss is an evaluation of the service which the Webbs have performed in giving us a rich, comprehensive account of the workings of the Soviet system. . . . Where the Webbs fall down miserably—in their criticism of the Third International—Harris finds them 'more realistic.'"

Albert Rhys Williams's *The Soviets* and Anna Louise Strong's *The New Soviet Constitution* have not, so far as I can discover, been reviewed at all. On the other hand, when André Gide reported unfavorably on his visit to the U.S.S.R., the *Nation* could not wait for the book to be translated and published in this country, but brought out immediately a special and laudatory article by M. E. Ravage, its Paris correspondent.

And now, in this issue with the article and editorial commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Soviets, we find a three-page review by Edmund Wilson. Seven books were given to Mr. Wilson, two of them pro-Soviet, five opposed. One of the pro-Soviet books, Dr. Gantt's *Medical Review of Soviet Russia* [issued in the United States as *Russian Medicine*] is judiciously described as containing some important facts. The other, which is dismissed in a contemptuous paragraph, is Lion Feuchtwanger's *Moscow, 1937*, published four months ago. Feuchtwanger, you know, was impressed by what he saw in the U.S.S.R., and therefore his book—instead of being hailed in a special article—is belatedly and maliciously reviewed by Mr. Wilson. The five anti-Soviet books, according to Mr. Wilson, "fill in a picture as appalling as it is convincing."

Within the past year, so far as I can discover, only one book on the Soviet Union was assigned to a pro-Soviet reviewer. That was Trotsky's *The Revolution*

Betrayed, which was given to Louis Fischer—and also to Ben Stolberg. Repeatedly enemies of the Soviet Union have been allowed to voice their opinions, to damn books like the Webbs' and Feuchtwanger's, to praise books like André Gide's, Eugene Lyons's, and Victor Serge's. When, however, Trotsky's book is criticized by Louis Fischer, his criticism is paired with a fulsome eulogy by Stolberg!

Nor is it only with books on the Soviet Union that the bias becomes apparent. In 1936 Earl Browder, general secretary of the Communist Party, published a book called *What Is Communism?* The *Nation* assigned it to Louis M. Hacker. From any point of view, the choice was not a happy one, for Mr. Hacker, as a historian, concentrated his attention on Browder's discussion of the American past, and thus devoted most of his review to one chapter out of Browder's twenty-one. But, apart from the question of proportions and the relevance of the review, the significant point is that the literary editor of the *Nation* knew in advance that Mr. Hacker's review would be a bitter denunciation of the Communist Party and all its works.

James S. Allen's *The Negro Question in the United States* was assigned to Sterling D. Spero, whose quarrel with the position Mr. Allen takes was familiar to most well-informed persons. Maurice Thorez's *France Today* and Ralph Fox's *France Faces the Future* were reviewed by Suzanne LaFollette, who had hitherto not been known as an authority on either France or politics, but who, as a disciple, at least so far as the people's front is concerned, of Leon Trotsky, could be depended on to attack the Communist International and to question the integrity of Fox and Thorez. *Spain in Revolt*, by Harry Gannes and Theodore Repard, was given to Anita Brenner, who devoted her entire review—entitled "Let's Call It Fiction"—to attacking the authors and denouncing the people's front in Spain.

During the same period, I hasten to say, five books that are, in various ways, sympathetic to the views of the Communist Party were given favorable reviews: my *John Reed*, Spivak's *Europe Under the Terror*, Anna Rochester's *Rulers of America*, Joseph Freeman's *An American Testament*, and Angelo Herndon's *Let Me Live*, reviewed by Max Lerner, Frederick L. Schuman, George Marshall, Louis Kronenberger, and Horace Gregory. So far as I can disengage myself from the political convictions that are involved in my estimate of all the books, and the personal prejudices involved in my estimate of one, I think the reviews were, from the liberal point of view that the *Nation* is supposed to represent, more adequate than the reviews by Hacker, Spero, Miss LaFollette, and Miss Brenner. I also think it is worth pointing out that these books do not raise very sharply the issues at stake between the Communist Party and the Trotskyites. Finally, it is obvious that not one of the five reviewers can be regarded as a spokesman of the Communist Party, and some of them are, as a matter of fact, critical of its policies. However, I want it on the record that these five books received favorable reviews in the *Nation*.

Does this disprove my charge that the literary section of the *Nation* is biased? I am afraid not. It only indicates that the bias does not operate all the time—

perhaps because it would be too easily discovered if it did. I have spoken of the way books on the Soviet Union have been reviewed, books on the policies of the Communist Party in the United States, books on the people's front in France, a book in defense of the loyalist government of Spain. I have said that the *Nation* neglected two important books on the U.S.S.R., and I might add that it also failed to review Dutt's *World Politics* and William Z. Foster's *From Bryan to Stalin*.

But what reveals the bias of the literary section beyond any question is that the Communist Party is never allowed to speak for itself. It is at least four years since there appeared in the *Nation* a review by a person who could by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as the party's spokesman. A few sympathizers have reviewed for the magazine, it is true, but for the most part books far removed from the struggle over communism. Books opposed to the Communist Party have been given to reviewers opposed to the Communist Party. Who reviewed James Rorty's *Where Life Is Better?* Anita Brenner. Who reviewed Charles Rumford Walker's *American City?* James Rorty. Who reviewed Fred Beal's *Proletarian Journey?* Rorty reviewed it, and then Edmund Wilson reviewed it again. Did it occur to the literary editor that, in the interests of the forum principle, Beal's book might be given to someone who held different opinions of the Soviet Union? No, it was reviewed twice, and both times by persons who, everyone knew, would endorse Beal's attack.

When Mr. Wilson's *Travels in Two Democracies* appeared, it was conceivable that *Nation* readers might be interested in hearing the other side, but the book was reviewed by Margaret Marshall. Philip Rahv was given Céline's *Mea Culpa*, and, though he could not praise the book, he took the occasion to approve Céline's disapproval of "the present Soviet leaders." Sidney Hook disagreed with Albert Weisbord's *Conquest of Power*, but he used his review to attack "the opportunist leadership of the Communist Party."

It becomes perfectly apparent that the policy of the book section of the *Nation* is not the policy of an open forum. I can remember a time when Communists were asked to review for the *Nation*, but that has not happened since the end of 1933, when Joseph Wood Krutch became literary editor. With his arrival, the Communists went out and the anti-Communists came in. Anita Brenner attacked Hugo Gellert's *Capital*. Edna Kenton praised Tchernavin's *Escape from the Soviets*. Reinhold Niebuhr was given a page in which to praise the pamphlet, *Socialism's New Beginning*. James Burnham devoted a review of Palme Dutt's *Fascism and Social Revolution* to the thesis that "acceptance of the line of the Communist International means political blindness."

Meanwhile it became reasonably certain that any left-wing novel would be damned in the *Nation*. Cool indifference or forthright condemnation met Albert Halper's *The Foundry*, Josephine Herbst's *The Executioner Waits*, Waldo Frank's *Death and Birth of David Markand*, Edward Newhouse's *You Can't Sleep Here*, Thomas Boyd's *In Time of Peace*, Erskine Caldwell's *Kneel to the Rising Sun*, Clara Weather-

wax's *Marching, Marching!*, and Isidor Schneider's *From the Kingdom of Necessity*. Nobody argues that they are all masterpieces, but the unanimity of Mr. Krutch's reviewers is a little suspicious. Only last spring he handed three left-wing novels to James T. Farrell for exactly the kind of strong-arm job for which Mr. Farrell is notorious.

During these four years Mr. Krutch's own war against communism has been conducted in his dramatic criticism, in essays on literature, and even in political articles. No Communist has been allowed to talk back. When Mr. Krutch's series of articles, *Was Europe a Success?*, was published in book form, it was assigned, not to a Communist, but to Harry Elmer Barnes, a Scripps-Howard liberal. And Mr. Krutch has protected his friends: parts of Farrell's *A Note on Literary Criticism* had appeared in the *Nation*, and therefore the policy of the good controversy would have suggested that the book's reviewer should be chosen from the many critics Farrell attacked, but it was given to Edmund Wilson, who was chiefly concerned to add a few criticisms of the Marxists that Farrell had been unable to think of.

Dr. Krutch's anti-Communist obsession reached its height when he joined the American Committee for the Defense of Trotsky. Criticized for his action, Mr. Krutch insisted that his interest in Trotsky "was exclusively an interest in fair play." To most of us that interest had seemed quite dormant during the past decade, as one case after another of injustice failed to rouse him to protest. Nevertheless, no one suspected him of being a Trotskyite. We merely felt that he joined the Trotsky Committee for the sake of attacking the Communist Party, just as, for three years, he had been using only too eager Trotskyist reviewers to attack Communist books.

Dr. Krutch has given up the literary editorship to return to the academic life, but the situation on the magazine does not seem to have improved under his successor, Margaret Marshall. Those who were present at the second American Writers' Congress will recall a little group of individuals whose purpose in attending seemed to be to prevent the congress from accomplishing the ends for which it was convened. Chief among the disrupters were Dwight MacDonald, Mary McCarthy, Philip Rahv, and William Phillips. All of them have been contributing to the *Nation*, and it is apparent that Miss Marshall, in her new position, counts on this little coterie, in addition to the larger group of enemies of the Communist Party assembled by her predecessor.

In the relatively short time since Dr. Krutch's retirement, Rahv has been the most active, and it is interesting to trace his career. Prior to the Writers' Congress, his attacks on communism had been cautious. After the congress, reviewing Ostrovski's *The Making of a Hero*, he virtually announced his open anti-communist campaign with a characteristically cheap innuendo: "Marxists, being fond of discerning contradictions in the social process, ought to apply their analytic prowess to investigating the discrepancy between the prodigious dimensions and meanings of the October revolution and the feeble records of it recently produced

on its home grounds by writers seemingly most devoted to its progress."

Mr. Rahv's next gesture was a review, pretentious and sneering and rather childish, of a book of short stories by Leane Zugsmith. It was quite inevitable that Miss Marshall should assign him Walter Duranty's *One Life, One Kopeck* and Robert Briffault's *Europa in Limbo*, and equally inevitable that he should seize upon literary weaknesses, not unrecognized by other reviewers, to prosecute his attack on communism and the Soviet Union. To date, however, his most revealing review is that of Ilf and Petrov's *Little Golden America*, which gives the impression—wholly false, it is needless to say—that the Soviet humorists were so impressed by American machines that they failed to say a word in criticism of the capitalist system that controls those machines.

Miss Marshall's reliance upon this particular turncoat, despite his general incompetence as a literary critic and his peculiar unfitness to review books on the Soviet Union, does not promise well for her regime as literary editor. It seems possible, indeed, that, even more fully than Dr. Krutch, she will make the book section of the *Nation* an organ of the Trotskyites. I do not care whether these persons call themselves Trotskyites or not. I know that they are opposed to the Communist Party, to the Soviet Union, and to the people's front, and that they use exactly the same arguments as Trotsky uses. They are united, I suspect, by a common hatred rather than by a positive policy, but that does not alter the role they play.

It appears to me that readers of the *Nation* are being deceived. The NEW MASSES takes a definite position,

and its book-review section is edited according to a stated policy. By no means are all the contributors Communists, but it is not our intention to publish reviews by persons who are hostile to the Soviet Union or are unwilling to work in the people's front against fascism. The *Nation* has no such clear-cut policy. In the body of the magazine, as I have said, it tries to be fair. In the book section, however, it discriminates against one point of view and favors another. And this is never stated.

I presume that most readers of the *Nation* are what we call, not very precisely these days, liberals. I suspect that many of them are friendly to the Soviet Union and would not willingly aid its enemies. Almost all, certainly, are opposed to fascism and are eager to find effective ways of fighting it. They know that the people's front is the strongest barrier against fascism and at the same time a positive force for progress. I should like to convince these people that, all questions of sincerity to one side, the Trotskyites do in effect injure the Soviet Union and hamper the fight against fascism. I think that, if they happened to belong to trade unions or other organizations in which Trotskyites were active, they would see this for themselves.

But even if these liberal *Nation* readers do not share my opinions, I wonder if they really like the fare that is being served them. Do they subscribe to the *Nation* to listen to the notions of a little clique of anti-Communists, or do they want the opinions of representative authorities? Have they not the right to demand that, in its book reviews as elsewhere, the *Nation* should follow the principles it avows? And should they not, if necessary, take steps to enforce their demands?

Poetry in 1937

By Horace Gregory

IT WOULD BE possible to view this season's poetry* with a wearied sickly eye, to see failure everywhere. It would be possible to see nothing in E. A. Robinson's *Collected Poems* except an old man writing his "dime novels in verse," and to read in Sara Teasdale nothing but her last retreat in finding wisdom only in utter silence. One could then wish that Mr. Jeffers had not followed his long road downward, declining very like Spengler's *Decline of the West* into melo-

* COLLECTED POEMS, by E. A. Robinson. The Macmillan Co. \$3.

COLLECTED POEMS, by Sara Teasdale. The Macmillan Co. \$2.50.

SUCH COUNSELS YOU GAVE TO ME, by Robinson Jeffers. Random House. \$2.

SELECTED POEMS, by Allen Tate. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50.

THE MAN WITH A BLUE GUITAR, by Wallace Stevens. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.

POEMS, 1929-1936, by Dudley Fitts. New Directions. \$2.

NOT ALONE LOST, by Robert McAlmon. New Directions. \$2.

TWELVE POETS OF THE PACIFIC, edited by Yvor Winters. New Directions. \$2.50.

TOMORROW'S PHOENIX, by Ruth Lechlitner. Alcestis Press. \$3.

drama, until he now sees all his men and women as less than human and far inferior to hawks, eagles, certain breeds of horses, and Pacific seascapes. One could regret that Allen Tate's preface to his selected poems is insufferably pretentious and in dubious taste. One could also complain that Mr. Stevens has taken a symbol for his art which is not inevitable and which too often remains a fanciful "blue guitar." One could say that the younger writers in this group should be far better: one could ask far more of everyone here and at the end conclude that in this year, 1937, a quarter century after the accepted date of a "poetic renaissance," American poetry has gone down the drain and the less said of it the better.

But to arrive at this conclusion would be contrary to my belief, for I believe this moment affords us time to take stock of what has happened in poetry, what is happening now, and what seems now fairly certain to happen within the next few years. Because the early hopes of 1912 were not sustained in 1930, some critics of both

left and right persuasion were led to think that the streams of poetry in America had narrowed to a single trail of a sunken river-bed in a once fertile valley. But since that time a group of new names have appeared and the prominence of other names have diminished. The poets of *New Letters in America* and of the NEW MASSES represent the majority of the influences now at work in changing the picture from one of a single "waste-land" generalization to another that promises to be a new phase in American poetry.

The *Collected Poems* of E. A. Robinson offers us the opportunity to say a few words in reevaluation of a poet whose figure now seems to fill the empty spaces of the decade before 1912. That figure seems far more secure today than it was ten years ago. The Robinson to be rediscovered by our generation is the poet who looked deeply into the world of his young manhood, a world of insecure prosperity, commanded by "robber barons." At its heart he saw the broken Bewick Finzers, the drunken Eben Floods, and as he wrote of literary heroes, even Shakespeare became the uneasy man of property who had built a house to hide his bones in Stratford. The E. A. Robinson, who in the first decade of the present century foresaw disaster where others read endless perpetuation of American success, had learned the technique of making his verse move with conversational directness. This art, so I suspect, was learned from Crabbe and Hardy and today it seems a Robinsonian irony that his method was once regarded as too obscure and too elliptical for critical understanding. He was most assuredly not using the poetic diction of his fellow poets in America, and because his work was too often praised or rejected for the wrong reasons, as he grew older he delighted in confusing his critics by leading them from one sublimated detective story to the next, and there were times when he deliberately recreated modern men and women in the disguise of Arthurian heroes and heroines.

Sara Teasdale's love songs were the contrasting echoes of another voice to Robinson's. She was, I think, more nearly a transitional poet than many who have earned that title in the present generation. Her verse forms, her diction, her desires to create a "mood" rather than to convey precise emotion stemmed directly from the conventions of lyric poetry of the later nineteenth century. Christina Rossetti was her model, and many of her love songs which were popular twenty years ago seem now to be latter-day versions of "A Daughter of Eve." Yet by speaking her poems in a frankly plaintive or joyous note, she was to anticipate the so-called personal qualities of Miss Millay's lyricism: she had created a minor heroine in verse, a young woman, who, if kissed or unloved, promptly told the world and made the telling seem to express a new era of nascent feminism. The epigrammatic turn of her short stanzas was sharpened by a touch of urban smartness, as though the heroine thus created knew her own way through a city of men who sat on tops of Fifth Avenue buses or who gazed at her over white linen gleaming from the round surfaces of restaurant tables. The city lights were written of in terms of bright beads or jewels worn at evening. The young woman seemed like a good child released for a short moment from the

comforts of a stolid middle-class home. At the hour of Sara Teasdale's death in 1933, the phenomenon of her popularity had passed its meridian: other heroines had arrived who were bolder and who spoke a language influenced by imagism, or the seventeenth-century lyricists, or Emily Dickinson, or Yeats, or Hopkins.

Among the changes in public consciousness that had caused Sara Teasdale's world to seem less certain and more trivial was another phenomenon in poetry which appeared in 1926 under the title of *Roan Stallion, Tamar, and Other Poems*. Today that phenomenon seems less important as it reëmerges in Mr. Jeffers's new book which contains one narrative poem and a group of shorter pieces. It now seems unlikely that Mr. Jeffers will ever again approximate the quality of authentic tragic meaning which entered his "Tower Beyond Tragedy," for he has reiterated his familiar story of incest, and on this occasion his study in human pathology opens with sexual madness only to close with homicidal insanity. And here I am convinced that the real reasons why Mr. Jeffers's men and women go insane must be sought out in the poet's rejection of human consciousness. Mr. Jeffers's premise of Wordsworthian pantheism (which was clearly evident in *California*, the book written before *Roan Stallion*) has made it impossible for him to accept man or god, or any mode of conduct here on earth. The political poems in the present volume reiterate his passionate longing for a golden age, a pastoral age, now far behind us: he stands squarely against civilization in all its forms and yet knows well that man cannot live sanely if placed on the same level with animals. The vicious circle he has created closes around him in darkness, saving only for the moment a quality of savage wit in his shorter poems which did not appear in his earlier work.

The distance between Allen Tate and Robinson Jeffers is much shorter than one might at first suppose. Again a defeated passion for a pastoral society plays its role, and Mr. Tate remarks with the curious force of a pathetic fallacy, "We are the eyelids of defeated caves." His present book includes everything that he wishes to save from the three books he has written, and though a few of the poems convey the impression of dignity in the presence of death, the weighted language that Mr. Tate employs more often leaves one feeling that all he says is pretentious rather than deeply felt or realized. Yet Mr. Tate and his work still represent the desire of younger southern writers (who after contact with post-war Europe came home to native soil) to build a cultural movement on the ruins of the old South. Mr. Tate's preoccupation with past glory and its ruins is no less significant in its failure than Mr. Jeffers's concern with the loss of faith in human consciousness.

From these we turn to Wallace Stevens, of whom I once wrote, "He is not merely a connoisseur of fine rhythms and the precise nuances of the lyrical line, but a trained observer who gazes with an intelligent eye upon the decadence that follows the rapid acquisition of power." This was not to say, however, that the poet himself was "left" in sympathy or that his primary intention was to write political poetry. This was to

say that Wallace Stevens's sensibilities in writing verse had made it possible for him to view the world about him with singular acuteness. Today his vision has the same qualities of sharpness, but is now dimmed by the effort to explain his "position" in a medium ill-suited to the demands of exposition. His man with the blue guitar—the blue guitar his art, the man the artist—is a symbol that lacks the power of inevitable choice; other instruments or another color could have been chosen, and it would seem that Mr. Stevens by his choice confuses the functions of fancy and imagination. His defense is a defense of the artist in a world where the things he looks at seem to be intractable materials for his art and are therefore less real than his "blue guitar." Throughout the first half of his book, its title poem, in thirty-three sections, weaves its way and is convincing only when Mr. Stevens recreates what he would call the "anti-poetic" image in such lines as

Through Oxidia, banal suburb,
One-half of all its installments paid

And it is only when his real ability in writing satire appears, as in "The Mechanical Optimist," a portrait of a lady at the radio, that his present work equals the quality of his earlier verse. Yet, in contrast to Mr. Tate's irony, Mr. Stevens's satire is far more felicitous whenever it finds a target; and unlike Mr. Tate's verse, the images within it never fail to flow, one from the other, in emotional progression.

Of the three books of poems issued by New Directions, of Norfolk, Conn., Dudley Fitts's *Poems, 1929-1936* is by far the most impressive. All three books have one characteristic in common, for Robert McAlmon's book as well as Mr. Fitts's and Yvor Winters's collection of *Twelve Poets of the Pacific* represent the influences and styles of verse written since 1925. It would be easy to dismiss Mr. Fitts's book as a mere reflection in technique of Pound, Eliot, Cummings, and MacLeish: these immediate influences are so obvious that one meets them squarely on each page, and among them familiar attitudes of rejection, prayer, blasphemy, and irony are reintroduced within the formal patterns so well established by their originators. Yet Mr. Fitts's verse has a quality of gayety and wit that is quite its own. If he may be regarded as a transitional poet between the period from which he has borrowed his attitudes and the present date, he appears as the forerunner of a kind of wit that is beginning to take form in the work of younger poets.

Robert McAlmon is far less fortunate than Mr. Fitts in his application of the techniques which were developed during the last ten years. Each poem in his collection has little means of guiding a brilliant opening to its conclusion; quite like the verse with which Amy Lowell once experimented, it remains "free" and a sharp image is frequently clouded by an uncertain or merely descriptive close. Of the poems in this book, only the bull-fight scenes in Spain convey something of the physical reality which seems to lie behind their imagery.

Mr. Winters's twelve poets, himself included, are in immediate reaction against the schools of verse repre-

sented by Mr. Fitts and Mr. McAlmon. And of these twelve Janet Lewis alone seems to have converted her reaction into a positive virtue. The chief difficulty that Mr. Winters and his group of poets have encountered is in their naïve conception of a rigid verse form. Mr. Winters's seriousness of intention has long been his single virtue. And as he states his program of "clarity" and of "feeling in terms of the motive," there is every reason to agree with him. But the results of this statement, if verse can ever be called the result of any critical commentary, echo the sententious quality of Mr. Tate's verse to which are added the horrors of Victorian platitude in word and texture. I quote one stanza of a poem which sounds very like a translation from the German as it might have been written by a young woman in an English seminary at the close of the last century:

How could I praise thee
Loved I not wisdom much?
How could I love thee
Were I not praising such?

Contrast the mechanical uses of "form" in this quotation with the genuine clarity of Miss Lewis's

Mild and slow and young,
She moves about the room,
And stirs the summer dust
With her wide broom.

But Miss Lewis's poems in the collection are all too few and her good work is placed among such college classroom curiosities as "To Miss Evelyn C. Johnson on Her Examination for the Doctorate in English," which closes with the discovery:

For you have learned, not what to say,
But how the saying must be said.

Miss Lechlitner's first book *Tomorrow's Phoenix* is in distinct contrast to *Twelve Poets of the Pacific*: there is here far greater variety of texture and feeling and more frequent attempts to master the complex forms of contemporary verse. The book errs on the side of attempting to move in too many directions at once, yet the intention behind it (if I read it rightly) shows an active, if at times too hasty, appreciation of the color and movement in contemporary life. In that sense Miss Lechlitner's work exhibits many signs of promise and in contrast to other books in the selection I have made (Mr. Fitts excepted), it has greater speed and little repetition. Yet her political verse which shows an awareness of events today is less controlled and less effective than her "Song of Starlings" which is far removed from the other poems in the book. And as I read her book, I thought of the essay on political poetry published in No. 9 of *International Literature*, which brings me to a generalization concerning American poetry in 1937.

The essay in *International Literature* reminded its readers that political poetry as such cannot be divorced from other kinds of poetry, no more than we here in

America can ask a poet to be political one moment and non-political the next. If his convictions are secure and contrary to ours, we may deplore the fact, but if his work is mature and centered in our culture, we, as critics, should be able to interpret from it the character of the society in which the poet lives. I for one would rather study certain warnings of disaster in American middle-class society through the early poetry of E. A. Robinson than in the work of many of his contemporaries in prose. Mr. Jeffers's inability to adjust his sense of loss to any sane solution is a warning of another kind, less important than E. A. Robinson's in proportion to his ability as a poet. Some few poems by Mr. Tate are visible proof of the inadequate nature of his longing to recreate a kind of aristocracy in the South, which no longer exists but whose irony has been far more brilliantly revealed by John Crowe Ransom. Even Mr. Stevens's desire to restate his relationship to a "blue guitar" throws light upon matters of concern to writers in existing society, and the books published by the New Directions press as well as Miss Lechlitner's first book show the complex of literary influence at work upon the latest generation of American poets. If

confusion or serious conflict between word and intention exists among younger writers, we may be fairly certain of two things: one, a lack of organic meaning in the poetry they write, which may be traced to the conflicts in their environment; and two, a failure to master the techniques they have chosen for their medium.

Meanwhile it is evident that whatever failures may be recorded against this season's poetry in America there is adequate proof that much of it is neither stagnant nor dull. If the reputations of the period between 1928 and the present seem less secure than they appeared to be as recently as 1933, I think we can be well assured that no single destructive influence will long prevail in contemporary verse. The desert, which seemed impassable in 1930 because some critics saw Robinson Jeffers alone within it, has now given way to another prospect of the future in American poetry. Whatever that future may be, it will contain within it younger poets who are more aware of conflict than defeat, and the sources of their work, as in the past, will be the contrasting influences which have given American poetry its singular ability to surmount its many failures.

Literary Fascism in Brazil

By Samuel Putnam

THE STORY of what fascism does to literature is an old one by this time. It would be pointless to relate once again the burning of the books. We now know that this is a characteristic occurrence; and we are not surprised to learn that Franco, upon entering the city of Tolosa, ordered a bonfire of "Marxist" works like the one that was kindled in front of the Berlin Opera House. As Ilya Ehrenbourg has remarked, when Herr Doktor Goebbels—whatever his local name and habitation—sets foot in a library, he instinctively reaches for a match box. There is, frequently, an element of personal literary frustration involved, as in Goebbels's own case, with a resulting intense hatred of decent writing and writers; for the triumph of fascism is at once followed by an upward surge of tenth-raters of the Hans Heinz Ewers brand. This, too, is a fairly constant phenomenon. Accordingly, when we hear that the Brazilian Integralistas have banned *Tom Sawyer* as being a "Red" and "subversive" production, it merely strikes us as being the height of something or other.

Which is to say, literary fascism in Brazil is in general following the stupid line laid down by the Nazi "regenerators," with, naturally, certain variations due to nationality, race, traditions, geographic situation, and the like. It is these more or less distinctive variations that interest us chiefly. The period of the cultural transition to fascism has not been properly studied in connection with either Italy or Germany; and by this time many of the first sharp vivid edges have been

glossed over for the outside world. In Brazil, the process is not as yet completed; there is still left at least the remnant of an intelligent opposition, and what is happening at the moment is exciting to watch. Exciting and instructive; since it is from the study of such a period that we in North America, with the signs of an incipient cultural fascism all about us, have most to learn.

Nowhere, for one thing, is fascism's quick stifling of creative effort more startlingly brought out than by a contrast of Brazilian writing for the year 1935 with that of 1936, the year in which the Vargas régime came into power. It is part of the present writer's job, as editor of the Brazilian literature section of the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* (Harvard University Press), to inspect every item that comes from the presses of Brazil in the course of the year which may possibly be of literary significance. In 1934, this writer had observed the rise of a literature possessed of true social depth and consciousness, and often with a revolutionary-proletarian orientation. This, for example, was the year that saw the publication of Jorge Amado's *Cacáu* (Cocoa), a novel by one who had been a worker on the great cocoa plantations, and the same author's *Suór* (Sweat), the story of a Bahian tenement. In 1935, Brazilian letters appeared to have achieved a promise which had been maturing for a number of years past. There was a baker's dozen of first-rate novels, and among them at least one masterpiece in Erico Verissimo's *Caminhos Cruzados* (Crossroads), which was

revolutionary at once in content and in technique. There were also several outstanding volumes of poetry; and the impression to be derived from the scene as a whole was one of great creative activity and vitality.

The next year, 1936—after Vargas had been in for a year—it was all one could do to find three or four novels that were really deserving of notice. These were the work of writers who had made their reputations during the past few years of free and socially inspired creativeness. In most cases they represented a slackening of effort on the part of their authors, with a pronounced tendency to deviate from the social to the genre theme (as in the case of Amado), or in the direction of the semi-social sex novel (as in the case of Verissimo). Sex, indeed, has come to be the all-absorbing subject of literary controversy, and the most discussed novel of the year (1936) was, probably, Luis Martins's *Lapa* (the name of a red-light district), which deals with prostitution. At the same time, it is very largely upon the subject of sex that the literary reactionaries are concentrating their fire, in the form of attacks on the Freudian influence, that of D. H. Lawrence, etc., while the intellectuals, in place of fighting out the major life-and-death issue, feel obliged to defend themselves against charges of "pornography."

If the novel in 1935 showed a dismal falling off, poetry practically expired; what one finds is merely a collected volume or two by well-known men. On the other hand, 1936 is marked by a plethora of critical articles and books of criticism. There is an inordinate amount of literary stock-taking, crystallized in the form of evaluations of the 1935 output. Brazilian writers at the present time would appear to be almost exclusively engaged in writing about one another's past performances. This is what commonly happens under fascism: in place of books, endless books about books, an incessant critical rehashing, as in Italy, a thumbing over of the masterpieces of a past year.

But perhaps we may let a Brazilian critic sum it up for us. In the introduction to his 1936 anthology, *Á nova literatura brasileira* (The New Brazilian Literature), Andrade Muricy declares that the present-day writing of his countrymen exhibits an "opulence without roots," a "paradoxical Byzantism." He ascribes this to the intrusion of the political, "to the exclusion of an art based upon pure humanity and the human spirit." He sees in it all a *trahison des clercs*, with propaganda usurping the place of literature, and deploring the tendency to a rigid oversimplification, leading to an inevitable aridity. But whose is the propaganda?

Muricy goes on to point out the existence of a "literary fascism" (the phrase is his), which may be traced back to the futuristic disportings, reminiscent of Marinetti's, of Brazilian writers in the early twenties; in other words, he sees this "literary fascism" as the offshoot of an exacerbated "modernism."

There is, however, even in the Brazil of the Integralistas, a criticism that cuts a little deeper than this, and which amounts to a profound questioning of life's realities, social, political, and economic. This saving criticism, the last stand of the Brazilian intelligence, is coming from the anthropologists and ethnologists, a number of whom are semi-literary figures; and the

scientists in turn are accused of corrupting the novelists by upsetting traditions of race, Catholic morality, and sexual decency. Most distinguished of the anthropologists is Professor Gilberto Freyre, of international reputation, who is dubbed an "agitator," while his scientific masterpiece, *Casa Grande & Senzala* (the title is not readily translatable), is described in a Catholic-monarchist organ as being "a pernicious book, subversively anti-national, anti-Catholic, anarchistic, communistic," the reviewer adding that "book and author are deserving of purification by a nationalistic and Christian *auto da fé*."

This last indicates only too plainly the fate in store for the courageous Brazilian intellectual who stands by his guns. The reactionaries are not sparing of their threats. Not only do they find a scientific work like *Casa Grande & Senzala* "shamelessly pornographic . . . watercloset literature"; they also tell us what they mean to do about Freud and D. H. Lawrence, as witness the following from the monthly, *Fronteiras*: "Freud and Lawrence, ah! Once Brazil shall have come mentally of age, she will settle accounts with you."

For an understanding of the contemporary scene, certain peculiarities of Brazilian fascism are to be kept in mind. One is the heavy Catholic complexion of the Integralistas movement, which differentiates it sharply from a "neo-Gothic," anti-religious Hitlerism, and which is characteristic of South American fascism in general. As for the Catholic monarchists, corresponding to the Action Française in France, they would bring back a descendant of the nineteenth-century emperors. Enforcement of the church's precepts with regard to sex and all other matters thereby becomes an offensive tactic and is employed as such. Hence all the fuss over the "pornography" of the few good writers that Brazil has left.

With respect to race, anti-Semitism is by now rampant, as is evidenced by a volume that has just come to this desk, *Nacionalismo; o problema judaico e o nacional-socialismo* (Nationalism; the Jewish Question and National Socialism), by Anor Butler Maciel who, incidentally, is half British by birth. Anti-Semitism, however, has not yet reached the stage of viciousness that it has in the Argentine, in the writings of a Hugo Wast. It is quite vicious enough, for all of that; and we find Señor Maciel making use of the same sources as Señor Wast, namely, the "Protocols of Zion" and the Dearborn *Independent*. The Dutch are hated even more than the Jews in certain provinces.

The Negro fares the best of all. He is the object of a great deal of scientific and literary interest just now, and a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters is to be heard admitting that Cruz e Souza, a Negro and the son of a slave, was "the major poet of modern Brazil." The Negro has also been the subject of a number of recent novels; but in them he is treated as a curiosity rather than as a social being. The truth of the matter is that the brown-skinned native of Brazil is hardly likely to start inquiring too closely into his blood-stream on this side.

This about gives the picture of Brazilian literature at the present hour. Add a few terrible treatises by the pushing tenth-raters, and you will have it all.

Two Poems

THE DISEASE

This is a lung disease. Silicate dust makes it.
The dust causing the growth of

This is the X-ray picture taken last April.
I would point out to you: these are the ribs;
this is the region of the breastbone;
this is the heart (a wide white shadow filled with blood).
In here of course is the swallowing tube, esophagus.
The windpipe. Spaces between the lungs.

Between the ribs?

Between the ribs. These are the collar bones.
Now, this lung's mottled, beginning, in these areas.
You'd say a snowstorm had struck the fellow's lungs.
About alike, that side and this side, top and bottom.
The first stage in this period in this case.

Let us have the second.

Come to the window again. Here is the heart.
More numerous nodules, thicker, see, in the upper lobes.
You will notice the increase: here, streaked fibrous tissue—

Indicating?

That indicates the progress in ten months' time.
And now, this year—short breathing, solid scars
even over the ribs, thick on both sides.
Blood vessels shut. Model conglomeration.

What stage?

Third stage. Each time I place my pencil point:
There and there and there, there, there.

"It is growing worse every day. At night
I get up to catch my breath. If I remained
flat on my back I believe I would die."

It gradually chokes off the air cells in the lungs?
I am trying to say it the best I can.
That is what happens, isn't it?
A choking-off in the air cells?

Yes.

There is difficulty in breathing.

Yes.

And a painful cough?

Yes.

Does silicosis cause death?

Yes, sir.

THE CORNFIELD

Error, disease, snow, sudden weather.
For those given to contemplation: this house,
wading in snow, its cracks are sealed with clay,
walls papered with print, newsprint repeating,
in-focus gray across the room, and squared
ads for a book: *Heaven's My Destination*,
Heaven's My . . . Heaven . . . Thornton Wilder.
The long-faced man rises long-handed jams the door
tight against snow, long-boned, he shivers.
Contemplate.

Swear by the corn,
the found-land corn, those who like ritual. *He*
rides in a good car, they say blind corpses rode
with him in front, knees broken into angles,
head clamped ahead. Overalls. Affidavits.
He signs all papers. His office: where he sits,
feet on the stove, loaded trestles through door,
satin-lined, silk-lined, unlined, cheap.
The papers in the drawer. On the desk, photograph
H. C. White, Funeral Services (new car and eldest son);
tells about Negroes who got wet at work,
shot craps, drank and took cold, pneumonia, died.
Shows the sworn papers. Swear by the corn.
Pneumonia, pneumonia, pleurisy, t.b.

For those given to voyages: these roads
discover gullies, invade, Where does it go now?
Now turn upstream twenty-five yards. Now road again.
Ask the man on the road. Saying, That cornfield?
Over the second hill, through the gate,
watch for the dogs. Buried, five at a time,
pine boxes, Rinehart & Dennis paid him fifty-five dollars
a head for burying those men in plain pine boxes.
George Robinson: I knew a man
who died at four in the morning at the camp.
At seven his wife took clothes to dress her dead
husband, and at the undertaker's
they told her the husband was already buried.
—Tell me this, the men with whom you are acquainted,
the men who have this disease
have been told that sooner or later they are going to die?
—Yes, sir.
—How does that seem to affect the majority of the
people?
—It don't work on anything but their wind.
—Do they seem to be living in fear
or do they wish to die?
—They are getting to breathe a little faster.

For those given to keeping their own garden:
Here is the cornfield, white and wired by thorns,
old cornstalks, snow, the planted home.
Stands bare against a line of farther field,
unmarked except for wood stakes, charred at tip,
few scratched and named (pencil or nail).
Washed-off. Under the mounds,
all the anonymous.
Abel America, calling from under the corn,
Earth, uncover my blood!
Did the undertaker know the man was married?
Uncover.
Do they seem to fear death?
Contemplate.
Does Mellon's ghost walk, povertied at last,
walking in furrows of corn, still sowing,
do apparitions come?
Voyage.
Think of your gardens. But here is corn to keep.
Marked pointed sticks to name the crop beneath.
Sowing is over, harvest is coming ripe.
—No, sir; they want to go on.
They want to live as long as they can.

MURIEL RUKEYSER.

Madrid to Manhattan

By Hyde Partnow

A FEW HOURS before Hilda's pains came we were seeing Chris off.

The night had dawned into good-by. We were standing on the cracked sidewalk. Chris had the mandolin and guitar strapped around his shoulders and the big cracked suitcase in his tough fist. His stocky wife, Sylvia, was next to him in her nurse's cape. A warm wind was sketching Hilda's belly as she leaned against me.

"So long, Chris," I said.

"Salud," he said. "Remember, Hilda. You two can have this kid for yourselves and no worry. Me fighting over in Spain and you over here having your baby like you want to. It goes together. I'm just sorry we couldn't see it before we got away."

"Why not wait then?" asked Hilda.

"We can't now. Anyway, something comes over you and you can't wait. You've got to do something." He planted his suitcase on the sidewalk. "That's why I ripped the swastika off the *Bremen*. That's why, when pals of mine were kicked out of their homes, I used to come over and put back their furniture. That's why, when some stiffs weren't getting regular eats, I'd chain myself to an elevator post and yell my head off."

"Really Chris, we need more of your kind," I said.

He grinned. "Then somebody's got to make more. Like you and Hilda. I'm glad it's you two who are doing it." He became bashful and clumsy. "I never saw a pair like you. You're matched. Like two birds. Sylvia and me are matched pretty good too. But it's different with us. I don't know, we're always living from hand to mouth. I'm too hot-headed, I guess, and she can't hold her tongue on a job. But if we could do it, we'd throw up babies all right, too. We'd say to those bastards over there, you can't wipe us out. Try and stop us. No matter how many of us you knock over, we'll have more coming." He picked up the big suitcase. "So if they knock me over . . ."

"They won't, Chris."

He grinned. "I'm not wearing a bullet-proof vest, am I, Vincent? What if they do knock me over? It won't matter much. I'll know you're putting up somebody else over here to take my place." He started off. Sylvia was still talking to Hilda.

I said, "Can't I see you off at the pier, Chris?"

"Oh, no."

"Why not?"

"You might get us in trouble. They don't want our people to go to Spain. You know, we're neutral. We've got to sneak off, see? Well, good luck." He waved his free hand. Sylvia kissed Hilda in a hurry and caught up with Chris.

We watched them go down the street. The street lamps were still on, but daylight was coming on. The two of them were solid and of the same height. Sylvia

with the bundles and cape—Chris with his suitcase, guitar, mandolin, his big feet. As they turned the corner, neither of them looked around.

Our house felt empty when we went back to it. We went to bed and talked quietly until sleep took us. The baby was getting ready for the big push and we were waiting for it calmly.

Toward morning it looked as if I were right. Nothing would help. The ergot and strychnine and castor oil were sickening slop.

"What will you do now?" I asked Hilda.

The steam-heat was down. The bedroom was cold and dull.

"I don't know," said Hilda. "Something. I must do something."

"You can't," I said. "What could you do? Nothing can help now."

She did not answer at once. Then she said roughly, "I'll get them to clean it out of me."

I said, "Hilda, you won't."

"I must," she said wildly. "It's no use. There's no way out. This time it's all going under. I can't do it. I won't."

The war in Madrid was weighing down both of us.

"Don't you want a baby, Hilda?"

"A baby with a number on its chest? Flies walking on its cheeks? No. No. No."

I could see photos of murdered babies stuck to her eyes.

That was in November. We argued birth or abortion for weeks afterward. Meanwhile we watched newspaper headlines. HITLER AND MUSSOLINI BACK FRANCO. REBELS ENTER MADRID. AIR RAIDS STIFFEN MORALE OF LOYALISTS.

Hilda made an appointment with the abortionist.

I was in agony. I argued. Her answer every day was no. "As long as one gun exists, Vincent, I'm not going to have a baby."

"But this war is different."

"How?"

"It's a war so the rest of us can have babies. We've got to believe in them over there."

During Christmas the headlines changed. REBELS ROUTED FROM UNIVERSITY CITY. DRIVE CRUSHED. She postponed her appointment.

New Year's Day she said, "I don't know, Vincent. I still see myself having a baby in a blown-up dugout. What shall I do?"

"We've got to have the courage to reproduce ourselves," I said.

She was silent. Next day I said, "Well, Hilda?"

I could see she was cornered. "After all, you're healthy. I'm working. We're married."

The day before her appointment with the abortion-

ist, she said: "All right, Vincent. I'll run up the white flag." We kissed.

In the months that followed Málaga and Guadalupe and Almería and Guernica and Bilbao were no longer headlines, no longer just newspaper print but organic impulses that went into our flesh and stayed there like wounds or rewards. Madrid to Manhattan was one lifeline. HANDS OFF SPAIN meant HANDS OFF OUR BABY to us.

Now July was here, and the big drive of the loyalists to break the siege of Madrid had started, and our baby was coming.

My eyes opened and I knew she was awake. I turned around. Hilda was lying on her back, her eyes open.

"Aren't you sleeping?" I said. "What's the matter?"

"I'm sorry I woke you, darling."

"What's the matter?"

"I think the pains are here. Take out your watch."

I took out the wrist-watch from under my pillow. It was only seven.

When a spasm came over her face, I looked at my watch. It was 7:10. Her eyes were serious, but I knew it was a relief for it to come. We were both smiling.

"I'm glad it came on a Sunday while you're home," she said.

Another spasm came into her face while she was talking. It was then 7:22. We smiled some more and I held her hand this time. At 7:34 another spasm came along.

Hilda said, "This must be it."

"We'll wait once more."

Her bag was on the table by our bed. There was everything in it. Hilda had packed it three weeks back. There were the nightgowns and bed jackets she had made, and some toilet articles.

At a quarter of eight it came again. "All right," I said. I got out of bed. "I'll call the doctor." I dressed.

She got out too and took off her nightgown. There were spots on her belly and a big brown line down the middle of it. I helped her on with her shoes so she would not have to bend.

Then I rushed out to phone and rushed back. It was hot in the street.

"The doctor said for us to pack and go over," I told her. "He said we can take our time. There's no hurry."

I shaved and dressed and then we ate breakfast slowly.

Hilda was calm and I kept timing her pains all along. They were coming every ten minutes when we left the house. That was about ten o'clock.

We walked to the hospital. We were both tall, only she was huskier, and it was pleasant to walk with her. The streets were quiet. Everybody was indoors or away. There were no crowds and no trucks and no peddlers and the stores were shut.

We walked along slowly. The hospital was near a park and we could see it between the trees from a long way off. Once Hilda stopped short in the park. She

If I Was Not a Soldier

If I wasn't a soldier, a soldier said,
What would I be?—I wouldn't be,
It's hardly likely it seems to me,
A money lord or armament maker,
Territorial magnate or business chief.
I'd probably be just a working man,
The slave of a licensed thief—
One of the criminals I'm shielding now!

If I wasn't a soldier, a soldier said,
I'd be down and out as likely as not
And suffering the horrible starving lot
Of hundreds of thousands of my kind,
And that would make me a Red as well
Till I rose with the rest and was batoned or shot
By some cowardly brute—such as I am now!

HUGH MACDIARMID.



was having a pain. I put my arm around her and she looked at me with her bold eyes. She had had her black hair laundered and the sun was on it.

"Why are pregnant women so damned beautiful?" I said.

She kissed me. We were happy and neither of us was nervous.

At the hospital reception desk a nurse was reading a paper. I said, "Good morning."

She put her paper aside and got up.

"Good morning," she said. "What is your name please?"

I told her. She got Hilda's card out of the files.

"Is it your first?" asked the nurse.

"Yes."

"You aren't scared, are you?"

"No."

"You don't look scared."

Hilda was looking at the headlines of the paper on the desk. REBELS ROUTED AT BRUNETE.

An orderly took Hilda's bag from me. We faced each other in the little white office. I patted her shoulder.

"So long," I said.

She smiled. "I'll try very hard, Vincent."

I watched her follow the nurse to the elevator. It was the first time we had been apart for the nine months. She looked slender from the back and her long legs were shapely and unswollen. She had never had a hard time really. It was going to be easy. I had this unbreakable feeling that it was going to be easy for her.

I waited in the office awhile, then went into the waiting room. Two other men were there. One was reading and wagging his foot. The other was snoring. I sat in a leather chair under the electric fan. The nurse came in.

"Your wife is in the labor room," she said. "There won't be news for some time. I suggest you take a walk or go to the movies."

I went outside. There were kids tearing around in

swim-suits searching for a puddle. There were housewives with wet cloths around their heads at the open windows. There were men in shirt-sleeves playing cards on the shady side of the streets. I might have relaxed too, but I kept thinking how for Hilda there was no escaping the heat. I walked.

When I got back to the hospital I asked quietly: "How is my wife?"

The nurse at the switchboard said, "Mrs. Paul is doing nicely."

"Thank you," I said. "Is my doctor in?"

"Not now. He'll be back at five though."

I had lunch in an air-cooled cafeteria, then went to the park. I put on my sun-glasses and sat under a maple and read the Sunday paper. Next to me a lady in a print dress was rocking her baby. Herbert L. Matthews was writing about Brunete. About the Americans under fire. How hot it was for them under the Spanish sun, fighting. It was hard to read. My heart kept jumping. I got up. The sun had dropped and was shining on the face of the hospital. Before going in, I examined all the windows. . . . Behind one of them was Hilda.

Inside there was a light over the switchboard.

I asked, "How is my wife?"

The nurse said, "Mrs. Paul is doing nicely."

I said, "What do you mean?"

"Your wife's doing nicely."

"Nothing more than that?"

"I'm sorry, sir. She's doing nicely."

"Let me talk to the doctor."

"One moment, sir. I'll call the labor room."

He came down smiling. We shook hands. A stethoscope bulged in his pocket.

"How is she doing?" I asked.

"How are you doing?"

"Never mind," I said. "How is she?"

"She's doing nicely."

"Tell me what's wrong."

"Nothing's wrong."

"The hell with your rules. Tell me what's . . ."

"Easy, young feller," he said, still smiling. "We're waiting for your wife to get real sick but she's taking her time."

"How are the pains?"

"They're coming every five minutes."

"Is it going easy?"

"Yes. She's sitting in a wicker chair reading a magazine. It's sunny and she's all right."

I was under control again. "I knew it," I said. "It was easy while she was carrying it too."

"Of course," said the doctor. "She'll come through all right."

"I know she will."

"Why don't you go out and get yourself a drink somewhere?"

"I don't drink."

"There won't be any news before twelve. That's a long time."

I decided to go home and lie down. I tuned in on Spain over the short-wave. Except for the radio light I kept the room dark.

"Hello. Hello. This is Madrid calling. Station

ÉAQ. The voice of Spain." The speaker appealed to the democracies of the world to help drive Germany and Italy out of the infant Spanish republic.

I could not lie down or sit down or stand up or walk. I went down again. All the corners were packed with men waiting for a breeze. All the doorways were crowded with ladies with babies in their arms taking the air long after bedtime.

Soon Hilda would be relaxing too. The baby would be out of her, it would all be over, we would sit up and talk, and I would rush a letter to Chris.

I looked around for a florist, but they were all closed. I went down to a subway station. I bought some gardenias and a bunch of yellow roses from the flower-vendor there. Then I walked to the hospital.

The doors were locked. I rang the night bell.

"I'm Mr. Paul," I said to the nurse who let me in.

"Yes, sir," she said.

I was pushing down hard on myself. "Is my wife . . . ?"

"Your wife is still the same, sir. Your doctor left word that there'll be nothing tonight."

My hands got cold and a cold dizziness went over me. There was one wooden bench in the hall under one dull light. I sat down.

I said, "Is my wife up?"

"Yes, sir," I heard her say. I was staring at the EXIT door. Behind it were the steps up to Hilda. Rush up! Then: control.

I got myself up. "I brought my wife these flowers. Would you give them to her, please?" The nurse took the green package out of my hands. I got myself out.

At home the bedclothes stuck to my skin. My pores were clogged. After a warm shower I could not sleep. It was three o'clock. I dressed and walked to the park.

People were sleeping in their street-clothes all over



Out of the Ivory Tower

Rooms are sarcophagi where walls
Of granite and sharp empty halls
Bark the breathy whispers back,
Repulsing all our timid clack,
Teaching the dead his place of shade
And silence, and benumbed charade.

In vain we chafe the mortuary seal,
Despair is acid rust we feel
Abrasive to each finger wound
Around the keys and knobs. And round
Black bars the casement bands, and brick
Each pane—square and cemented thick.

Then suddenly the gates groan full.
Like archæologists we pull
Open from outside, we shout
Our find, we take the mummy out,
And wonder, without talking, how
The lips and eyes are human now!

JOHN W. GASSNER.

the park. Some had their own cots and others were sleeping on the benches or on blankets on the grass. A lot of them were married and slept together. They all looked exhausted. Beside some of them baby carriages were standing. One baby was crying.

I lay down next to a group of men over near the railing. The grass was patchy there and most of it was gravel. I spread a newspaper. Putting my hands under my head, I looked up through the maple trees overhead to a row of lights in the big hospital.

What were they doing to Hilda there, what was it like? She knew. From now on Hilda would know everything. Like these people here. Was there anything they didn't know, these women? They had all gone through it. These men, too. They had waited for it until it was over and now they were waiting for something else. They always waited. For the heat, for the cold, for their dinner, for health, for sleep. Some of them had begun waiting the minute they were born. They were trained for the waiting. They were trained for everything except the big troubles. The wars and the dying and being born and for nothing in the belly. Yet, when the big troubles came they got through them all right. And afterwards they grinned and got hard in the softer places. All over this American earth they were getting hard. All over the Spanish earth they were hard already. . . . Sixteen hours of labor. . . . But it would come out all right. I had placed my faith in it. Tie up with people like these and it would all come out right. Nothing would get us. Nothing would get Hilda. They might cut her and hack at her but they wouldn't get her. They wouldn't get any of us. . . . They wouldn't choke us. . . . They weren't choking us in the mouth and they wouldn't choke us where it was meant for more of us to come out of. . . . It was hard, that's all. Everything came hard today. Think of Madrid. Bombs. Babies. Beds. Bombed in babies. Hitler in bed with the lights on. Babies dead. . . . But not Hilda. Not us. Not any of us. They couldn't get you. . . . Like the heat. If you knew what to do about it, it wouldn't get you. No. As long as you knew what to do and had people behind you nothing would get you. . . .

I got myself up as soon as it was light. My back was stiff. People all around me were getting up too and brushing their wrinkled clothes. It was going to be hot again. I could see that.

As soon as the hospital doors opened I went inside.

The nurse at the switchboard told me, "Your wife is still the same."

She offered me a morning paper and I went into the waiting room. I sat under the fan reading. Herbert L. Matthews was saying that the Spaniards had commemorated the first year of their resistance to fascism with a great battle. Twenty-three planes had been downed. Tonight at Madison Square Garden, another article said, there was going to be a big celebration in honor of the loyalists.

I washed my face in the bathroom and wet my hair. I had no comb and I brushed it back with my fingers. The nurse told me again that Hilda was still the same. About ten o'clock my doctor came into the waiting room.

"How's my wife?"

He said, "Why didn't you shave?"

"How's my wife?"

"The dilatation is better. She's three fingers open. But the pains are lazy."

I said, "Doctor, I can't understand it. I can't. I can't get it."

"You don't have to," he said. "Go home and shave."

"I can't."

"Well, walk around."

"I can't do that either."

"You should have gone to work today."

I said, "Can I phone my wife?"

He hesitated. Then he went to the nurse at the switchboard.

"Will you connect Mr. Paul with the labor room?"

Then, to me: "Go into that room over there."

I went in and closed the door. My heart was going like a telegraph key. I lifted the receiver from the hook.

"Go ahead," I heard the nurse say. I said, "Hello."

"Hello, dear." Hilda was making her voice jolly.

I said, "It was lonely without you. The house."

She did not answer.

"Did you sleep, dear?" I asked her.

She said, "O, yes. I had a real eight-hour sleep, darling. I'm feeling good."

"That's good," I said. "Did you eat too?" She said yes.

Then she said, "Darling, I'm trying awfully hard."

"Yes?"

"It's like pushing a telephone pole out of you. But it won't come out."

"It'll come out," I said. "And afterward we'll make you president of the Labor Party."

She laughed weakly. Then she said, "Do you hear it, dear?" I asked, "What?" She said, "The women here. They do scream."

"But you don't, do you?"

The answer was too long in coming. I said, "Hello." Then again: "Hello." Then it came: "No, darling, not me." Weak.

"Hold the fort," I said. "The Spanish bullthrowers won another one today."

"That's fine."

"Did you get my flowers?"

"Yes." Pause. "They were lovely." Pause. "I cried a little."

"Good-by, dear," I said. After she hung up I held onto the receiver and listened to the empty hum. When I came out the doctor was no longer there. I went into the street.

I kept phoning the hospital every half hour from wherever I happened to be. The answer was the same. "She's doing nicely." I was getting to touching things to prove they were really there. At five I phoned the doctor.

"Meet me right away at the hospital," he said.

I rushed over, sweat coming out all over me. I found him in the waiting room.

"That's a plucky kid you've got up there," he said as I came in.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"She's getting very tired."

"Oh," I said.

"The pains are too slow and they are wearing her out now."

"Oh," I said. I could not say any more.

"We're giving her something to hurry them up." He snapped his fingers several times fast. "They should be coming like that."

"Why the hell did you wait so long?" I shouted.

"Take it easy," he said. He cupped his palms. "Here's the womb," he said. "The walls squeeze down like this. Several kinds of muscle put forty pounds of pressure down on that baby. It drives them out usually. But this case is different. Something's holding it back. Instead of coming down as it should, it's staying up there—like that." He went on talking. But I had heard enough. *Something's holding it back.*

"If somebody else must be called in, I'll do it of course," I heard him saying. "Come back around eight."

I walked around a path in the park through the unemployed crowds. Why did I let her do it? It was my fault. When she said she wanted it cleaned out of her, why didn't I listen to her? Now Hilda was getting tired, tired, tired, and the confidence quitting her—the baby getting blocked. As if, yes, Hitler and Mussolini were at her womb, holding up the entrance with their cannon and saying *you can't*. You can't come out. We don't want any more like you out here to fight us. . . . And me thinking the Spaniards were making it all right for her. That the Duce and Führer would never be able to get to it with the Spaniards stopping them. And all the time there were the Spaniards getting the same thing. . . . I must have been dizzy all right. . . . With thousands of them dropped off roofs and peddled on the streets and abandoned in alleys and bombed in their cribs before they were old enough to have measles. . . .

I walked over to the hospital. There were kids in a round fountain kicking up the water.

"Mrs. Paul is still in the labor room," said the nurse.

In the waiting room I looked out the window over the park where the moon was rising. It was red like a sun, and heavy.

The doctor came in in his shirtsleeves. He looked tired this time. "I got somebody else in," he said. "The biggest in the field. There ought to be news for you tonight. Your wife's trying very hard and she's helping a lot. I've been feeling for the baby's heart and it's all right."

I said, "Can't I help?"

"One patient is all we can handle right now."

"When shall I come back?"

"Not before twelve."

"All right," I said. I turned away. He called me back. "Listen," he said, "you've got to be brave about this. She's getting the best we can give her."

"Yes?" I said.

"We're waiting for a normal delivery. But if it becomes necessary we will use the high forceps. Or . . ."

"Yes? All right," I said.

The streets were blurred. I found myself outside Madison Square Garden looking at a stripe of electric-lit letters across the marquee. ONE YEAR OF WAR IN SPAIN. I could feel my feet shoving through torn and

Surburbia

Beyond the umbrella tree on the lawn,
Beyond the commuters' train at eight,
The console radio and Monday bridge,
And the Republican editorial:
Beyond the quarterly dividend check:
Beyond the lecture on rock gardening,
The game of golf on Sunday afternoon
And the immoderate passion for hooked rugs:

Look up beyond the stuccoed suburb sky
And see, one day, all roads ahead cut off:
The clubhouse dark, and gleam of bayonets
Along the tennis court: behold the world
An Indian skull turned up on a fairway—
The world kicked crumbling in the trampled drive.

IRENE HENDRY.



dirty leaflets on the sidewalks. More leaflets were pushed into my hands by figures on the corners. As my feet climbed the stairs to the top balcony I got to thinking, *they're writing a leaflet out of my wife's tissues tonight*. I entered a doorway. From the roof down to the floor people were humming. Searchlights from overhead lighted everybody up. I sat myself down. My eyes dropped down the cliffs of the balconies below me. Blur of summer colors—reds, yellows, greens. Long streamers with sharp letters: FIGHT WAR AND FASCISM. TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC WORLD. The stage was lit and speakers moved onto it and sat down. Then a figure came up before the microphone, and the hum came down and a solo voice came up. I stared at the cluster of big horns. The hands of the people banged together.

The voice kept saying, "I must ask you to shorten your applause, my dear friends. I must ask you to shorten your speeches, dear speakers. There is no time. There is so little time. I must ask you . . ."

But the speeches and applause came on, tide on tide. The white hands banging, the people's mouths pleading. And the Garden from roof to floor loud with encouragement.

Mr. Chairman, I found myself begging, add my wife to this program. Let the sounds of her pain come over these horns from the labor room. Let her screams mix with the sounds of the pain in Spain and go sounding through this Garden.

The white hands banged together.

I want this applause to be broadcast to my wife in the labor room. She needs encouragement tonight. Please help her, Mr. Chairman.

I kept looking at the cluster of horns until they became mouths. Until the mouths became the mouths of the wounded in Spain with the blood in their throats, became the opened mouths of the fallen, saying to me, *Tell her to go ahead with the baby. Tell her no faltering. Tell her there will never be bombs in her baby's crib. Tell her there will be the singing of lullabies, not dirges. Tell her to go ahead and have as many babies as she wants. We over here are making it safe for the*

babies for a long time to come. Some day, tell her, the babies will come out laughing.

Someone then made an appeal for money and the pledges came in. I could hear them coming in from all sides, there was no stopping them. I got out a piece of leaflet and wrote down on the back, *Tonight I pledge to the democratic people of the world one infant.*

Then I was walking out with the thousands of others. The streets were bulging with us tonight. There were a lot of us. And we'd multiply. We were multiplying. . . . I rushed to a phone booth.

"Mrs. Paul is still in the labor room. I'm sorry, sir. Will you call again?"

I leaned against the tin wall of the booth staring at the mouthpiece. Shiny dark whirlpool into that my voice and all dropping. . . .

I phoned again. The ring of the coin and the hum. Ring . . . ring. . . .

"Your wife is still in the labor room. Will you call again?"

The ring of the coin and the hum and . . . ring . . . ring. . . .

"Your wife is still in the labor room."

Ring of the coin and the hum and . . . ring . . . ring. . . .

"Your wife is still in the labor room."

Please, Hilda, please—don't get tired now.

Ring of the coin and the hum and . . . ring . . . ring. . . .

"Your wife is still in the labor room."

Please let her have morphine, cocaine, please, caffeine, procaine.

Ring of the coin and the hum and . . . ring . . . ring. . . .

"Your wife is still in the labor room."

Thirty-nine hours. *Pain from Madrid to Manhattan.*

Ring of the coin and the hum and . . . ring . . . ring. . . .

"Please is my wife in the labor room?"

"No, sir."

Please, please, please.

"Mrs. Paul is in the delivery room now, sir. She was just wheeled in."

The muscles of my heart were cracking. I hung up. I talked to the mouthpiece of the phone. Help, help. Everyone that's brave and clean come help my wife. Everyone who ever marched with me and picketed with me and fought against the guff with me come help her now. This baby is dedicated to democracy. Get it to live. You who were hanged, starved, sweated, gassed, jailed, cheated by the lira, the mark, the peseta, the yen, help her come through. Everything you can do you must do now, now. . . .

I lifted the phone. I dropped the coin. I dialed. I dialed. I dialed. I dialed. . . . Then ring . . . ring . . . ring . . . ri . . .

"Hello. This is the New York Maternity Hospital. Good morning."

"I'm Mr. Paul. I . . ."

Please, please, please, please, please.

"Mrs. Paul gave birth to a baby girl at 2:05, sir. She weighs seven pounds ten ounces. Mother and baby are well."

"Thank you," I said.

"You're welcome, sir. Goo——"

"Hold on," I said. "I want to thank you. I mean I want to thank. I mean thank. I want . . ."

"Yes, sir. One moment, The doctor would like to talk to you!"

"Doctor," I said, "how is she?"

"She? Which one?" asked the doctor.

"Hah, hah, hah, hah, hah, hah, hah."

"You sound happy."

I said, "I mean how are *they*?"

"The baby's the image of your wife."

"That's good. How is my wife?"

"She's tired."

"I'll be right over."

"No, you won't, young feller. She doesn't want you or anybody else right now. She's sleeping." The doctor chuckled. "Come around tomorrow."

"When?"

"About seven—if you're up that early. And now, young feller, let me go home. I'm all in. One more thing, though. I don't know what you've got to thank. But you better thank something."

I said seriously, "I will."

I went into the street. There was a small breeze on my face and the moon was bright. I gulped a lot of water from one of the public park fountains. Then I began walking along the empty blocks where the people lived whom I had to thank. The blocks were dark and the houses were plain or rotting. But here they lived—the men and women who quarreled about rent and food. The kids who hollered . . . the intellectuals who dreamt . . . the rooming-house out-of-work home-relief people who waited . . . the workers on drawn-out picket lines who slept between strikes. I walked from house to house and thanked them all.

It was day when I got home. I showered, shaved, got into a pressed suit, and by six I was out.

The sun was on top of the trees in the park near the hospital. The sparrows were cheeping.

As I came in, the nurse at the switchboard was putting out the light.

"Good morning," I called out loudly.

"Good morning, Mr. Paul." She smiled. "You can go right up."

I shoved open the EXIT door with my foot.

In the peaceful corridor upstairs I passed the private rooms—white walls, flowers, mothers in lacy clothes, white beds, sunlight. When I came to my wife's ward I did not halt. I rushed in. She looked up. I got past a blur of beds. She lifted her head. It dropped back on the pillow. Then I was kissing her.

Fumes of ether rose out of her bed and covered our kiss.

I let go and sat down. I sat as close to the bed as I could.

We looked at one another in a new way.

Then we asked one another quiet questions.

"How do you feel, darling?"

"Sleepy."

"Sleep," I said.

"I can't. . . . Are you sorry it's a girl?"

"No. Why?"

"I thought maybe you wanted a fighter. You know. Like Chris.

"Girls can fight pretty good."

"Thank you, darling. . . . Did you write to Chris?"

"Not yet. . . . Did the baby cry much . . . ?"

"I don't remember. I just knew it was all over. Then I slept."

"We'll make a clean place for her won't we, girl?" I said.

She nodded.

"Go ahead. Sleep." I said.

She tried to make a turn. Her eyes shut. Sweat came out on her face.

I jumped up. "What is it?" I asked.

"Nothing. The ether's gone off."

A nurse came in. She helped Hilda. Then she asked would I see the baby. I looked at Hilda. She nodded.

I followed the nurse into the elevator and up to the white nursery. She pointed out my daughter and left.

I looked at her.

The basket she was lying in was like the hundred others. She was bound in pink to the shoulders. Only her face showed. Not a sound or a motion came out. Like her mother, she seemed to be resting after a great shock.

Her head was ugly and blue and her face was grey.

On each cheek was the brand where the forceps had stabbed her.

Marks of labor. Violence. But life.

Contributors

MICHAEL GOLD, who has been an editor of the *New Masses* for many years, conducts a column in the *Daily Worker* entitled "Change the World."

LEANE ZUGSMITH is the author of *A Time to Remember* and *Home Is Where You Hang Your Childhood*. She is at present completing her new novel.

GRANVILLE HICKS has recently finished the editing of Lincoln Steffens's letters together with Ella Winter, and is now at work on a study of modern English literature.

HORACE GREGORY is at work on *Makers and Ancestors*, a collection of critical essays showing the traditions now alive in contemporary literature. The book will be published shortly by Covici-Friede.

SAMUEL PUTNAM edits the Brazilian section of the *Handbook of Latin American Studies*, issued yearly by the Harvard University Press.

MURIEL RUKEYSER is the author of a volume of poems called *U. S. No. 1*, which Covici-Friede is releasing on December 12.

HYDE PARTNOW tells us that he has in turn been a playwright, actor, editor, and musician, and that he has traveled extensively through America, Europe, and the Near East, and seen fascism at first hand.

HUGH MACDIARMID's poem on page 18 is from *Second Hymn to Lenin and Other Poems*, published in London by Stanley Nott. A volume of Macdiarmid's selected poems, edited by Horace Gregory, will be published here shortly under the Covici-Friede imprint.

JOHN W. GASSNER is in charge of the play-reading department of the Theatre Guild. He teaches drama at Hunter College and the New Theatre School, and is co-editor, with Burns Mantle, of *A Treasury of the Theatre*. He, recently joined the editorial board of *Theatre Workshop*.

IRENE HENDRY is a student at the Washington Square College of New York University.

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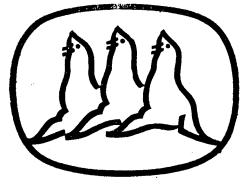
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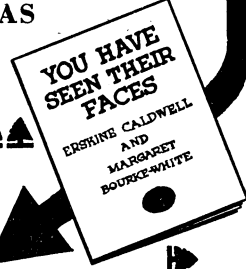
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