

New Masses

FEBRUARY 28, 1939

Fifteen Cents

J. B. S. Haldane

HITLER WOKE ME UP!

Erskine Caldwell

A NAZI AGENT AT WORK

When Franco Comes to Town

An Eye-Witness Tells What Happens

CENSORED!

Two Banned Films Privately Reviewed by

JAMES DUGAN

Albert Maltz, Millen Brand, Ruth McKenney,

Granville Hicks, Bruce Minton

BETWEEN OURSELVES

BEFORE you read on, please turn to page 9 . . .

As just one more proof that NM is recognized by its enemies as well as its friends as an integral part of the democratic front struggle—and one more reason why support of NM in our fund-raising drive is a contribution to the fight against fascism—we publish the following letter from Edwin P. Banta, the stoolpigeon who lied to the Dies committee about the WPA and the Communist Party and whose macabre glee over the WPA cuts was described by Will Rivers in our February 14 issue. Writes Mr. Banta:

"Well, at last America is waking up to the dirty scum that constitutes left movements. This old American with twelve generations behind him, and four living inclusive, put your dirty work before America and aroused the slumbering tornado that will sweep you off the Western hemisphere before the United Christian movement stops. What filth I observed in my two and a half years behind the scenes of Communism. And you need \$30,000, ha, ha! Yours to the death."

This is the last mention we can make of the dance concert by Anna Sokolow and her unit at the Alvin Theater, February 26, under the auspices of NM. Seats for this special annual event in the dance world are still available to last-minute callers.

The first speech by Simon Gerson since the big Red scare was heard by a good-sized audience at the Keynote

Forum last Thursday night. Mr. Gerson spoke intimately on New York City politics, and later participated in a lively discussion chairmanned by Sender Garlin. The enthusiastic crowd indicated that more such events are needed on the Keynote Thursday nights and you can be sure we will arrange more of them.

Thursday, February 23, the Keynote Forum will present a group of contemporary versifiers on the subject *Living Poetry*. They include Kenneth Fearing, Genevieve Taggard, Alfred Hayes, James Neugass, Muriel Rukcyser, Joy Davidman, Willard Maas, Norman Rosten, and David Wolff. This brilliant collection of modern poets will invite the questions of the audience. Admission will be thirty-five cents.

On March 2, NM's Keynote Forum will bring to its audience Francis Doublier, the first newsreel cameraman, who in 1895 left the photographic shop of the brothers Lumiere in Lyons, France, to tour the world, taking movies of its scenic beauties. He photographed, among other things, the death of four thousand people at the coronation of Czar Nicholas, and will show these pictures at the forum. The original camera, so precious that early possessors slept with it, was at once a camera, projector, and dark-room in a box weighing less than five pounds. It will be exhibited in working order at the forum. M. Doublier, forty-four years in the film industry, will show his three-reel history of the movies, from devices leading up to the motion picture, through the first movies ever taken by Lumiere in 1893-96, by Melies, the trick photographer, in 1897, an early film with Sarah Bernhardt, Nazimova's *Salome* (which would still make Will Hays blush), early American films by Edison, the original comedies of Arbuckle, Mabel Normand, Ben Turpin, and Chaplin, up to the early twenties.

In this comprehensive history he has included the greatest rarity in the motion picture—the first *synchronized sound on film, made in 1906*, by the master inventor of sound, Eugene Lauste. M. Doublier, still as spirited and witty as he was when he rode his bicycle through the gates of the Lumiere factory in the *first movie ever made*, will garnish his film with an eye-witness account of the first forty-four years of the movie. He will exhibit original cameras, projectors, and souvenirs of the infancy of cinema, and answer any and all questions put to him. This extraordinary event will cost you 50 cents at the Keynote Forum, 201 West 52nd St., Thursday, March 2, at 8:30 p.m. Due to the interest of professional film people in this forum offering, seats will be at a premium. Call Tiba Garlin at CAledonia 5-3076 for insurance against missing M. Doublier and his film.

Twenty-three devilishly handsome young men and ravishing young ladies were rehearsing at the Keynote

Club every afternoon last week on the first edition of *Keynote Varieties* which will have its big gala world premiere Sunday, March 5. NM's plunge into revue production will bring the populace a gay passel of wit, song, and dance. *Keynote Variety* talent is distinguished by its youth and ebullience: here are Nat Lichtman, director, Bill Matons, choreographer, John La Touche, lyrics, Bernice Kazounoff, music, and those frolicsome sketch writers, David Gregory and Sam Locke. The stellar tots in the company, spurred on by the clowning of Danny Kaye, comprise the orneriest ensemble of effervescent urchins since the Dead End kids were young. Tickets for the first blast of this satirical typhoon, March 5, can be had at 75 cents and \$1 at New MASSES office.

A lot has been written lately of the American composer Charles Ives—but in the days when very little was said of this composer, when his music was almost universally neglected, Mordecai Bauman sang his songs, and was responsible for introducing Ives' music to innumerable persons. This progressiveness is typical of Bauman in his choice of music, and naturally American music will find a place on his program of March 19 along with four songs of Ives: *Evening, The Greatest Man, Two Little Flowers*, and *Charlie Rutlage*.

Tickets for Mordecai Bauman's Town Hall concert (sponsored by NM) are available now. For details see the ad on page 24.

Who's Who

J. B. S. HALDANE's article in this issue is the second of his regular contributions to NM. He has a world-wide reputation as a scientist and Marxist. . . . Lene Reiner is a young Czech working girl living in Prague. Her article was translated from the German by Keene Wallis. . . . Roberto Miro is a Basque refugee now in Paris; he escaped from Bilbao, his former residence, some months after Franco's occupation of the town. . . . Paul G. McManus has written frequently for NM on economic and political subjects. . . . Albert Maltz won the O. Henry Memorial Award for the best short story published in 1938, and is also included in the O'Brien anthology of 1938. His "Man on a Road," which appeared in NM in 1935, has been reprinted in more trade-union and labor papers in the United States, Canada, and England than any other American story. . . . David Ramsey has contributed several articles and book reviews to NM. . . . Prudencio de Pereda was one of the contributors to *Salud!* the recently published booklet of sketches, stories, and poems about Spain.



Margaret Bourke-White

Caldwell and Bourke-White

The famous writer and photographer, authors of "You Have Seen Their Faces." Caldwell's article in this issue and the accompanying illustration by Bourke-White are from his forthcoming book, "North of the Danube," which will be published by Viking Press, March 20.

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Hitler Woke Me Up

Prof. J. B. S. Haldane shows how and why a scientist and patriot must defend his people. A stimulus for better scientific work. The scholar must know politics.

We recently asked a wide group of the world's intellectual, professional, and social leaders to tell us what they are doing to defeat fascism. The response was most heartening. Despite their personal business, occupational tasks, and free contributions to the fight for democratic and intellectual freedom, they wrote to us enclosing articles of hope and confidence. Some are so overburdened with work now that they asked for time to submit their articles.

We commence their presentation with this article of Prof. J. B. S. Haldane. Not many, like him, are Marxists; but they all join in the struggle against barbarism as did the scholars and scientists of Spain and China. NEW MASSES is proud to print their statements.—THE EDITORS.

SIX years ago I was a liberal. I had a nice academic job which I supplemented by writing essays that were a little advanced without being troublesome to anyone of importance. I was a mild socialist in the sense that I thought it would be a good thing if the state took over some of our more grossly monopolistic industries. But I did not take politics very seriously.

Then Hitler woke me up. I had known and liked republican Germany, and had made friends there with a fairly clear conscience because I had protested against the treaty of Versailles in 1919. When I saw what was happening in the German universities I began to realize that even if professors leave politics alone, politics won't leave professors alone. So I found jobs for a number of Jewish academic refugees, confining myself mainly to people under thirty.

I soon found myself on platforms appealing for money not only for Jews but for political victims of Hitler. Sometimes I found myself speaking with a Mr. Harry Pollitt, and discovered that he talked sense, which rather surprised me, for he was a Communist. I have since discovered, by the way, that most of the people who had previously put me off Communism were not Communist Party members at all, but intellectuals who thought Marxism was a nice theory.

Most of my "advanced" academic colleagues are still at this stage. They are quite ready to give money and time to help the victims of fascism. But when it comes to actually fighting it, that is another matter. I sympathize with them. Most of us had enough fighting in 1914-18 for a lifetime, and realize that the aims for which we thought we were fighting were not gained. Anyway a middle-aged pro-



Acme

fessor is very apt to adopt Housman's profoundly ignoble slogan: "Let us endure an hour and see injustice done."

EVIL MEANS FASCISM

I might have done so but for a bit of luck. I happen to know a little about war gases, so in December 1936 I was asked some questions about them by the people in London who were supporting the International Brigades. They were elementary questions. I said, "If you haven't got anyone there who knows even that, I had better go out." I went. We do not yet know what the immediate outcome of the defense of Madrid will be. We do know that it is one of the great events in world history. It is going to leave a mark like the death of Christ. I have been a citizen of Madrid during the siege. That experience gives one a

clear choice. One can be hardboiled about it. No doubt plenty of people were hardboiled about Christ's death. Or one can realize that at the present stage of world history, evil means fascism, and act on that realization.

Yes, but how? We had plenty of methods to try out in Spain. There were the Anarchists. If I want to be complimentary, I say someone is as brave as an Anarchist or as kind as an Anarchist. But if I want to be rude I say they are as inefficient as a bunch of Anarchists. The liberals (Izquierda Republicana) and Socialists were better organized than the Anarchists. But they could not see very far in front of their noses. They actually thought that the British government might keep its word. Indeed, it was Mr. Chamberlain's resolute refusal to put the interests of his country before those of his class which finally convinced me

of the truth of the Marxist principle that the state is the expression of the class struggle, a key principle for the understanding of contemporary events. The Communists on the other hand, as I soon found, had a theory which saved them a vast number of mistakes, not only in big but in little things. In fact, I soon found that in order to get anything done I had to adopt the Communist Party line both in Spain and in England. This does not necessarily mean being a Communist. Most of the British and French fighters in Spain were not Communists, but simply militant anti-fascists. So were a number of their best officers. But they soon learned that the Communists, though by no means infallible, were more often correct than anyone else.

I spent about three months in Spain altogether. I was of very little value to Spain while there, since gas has not been used, and I found several people in Madrid who knew as much as I about gas war. But I should not be much use in England except for what I learned in Spain. I did not become a Marxist because I was convinced by abstract arguments for Marxism. I did so because I not merely found that Marxist theory worked, but that I had to adopt it if I wanted to get practical results.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

At the present time my political activities are as follows. I addressed 102 meetings on various public affairs during 1938. These meetings were mostly concerned with collecting money for Spain, for the dependents of the British Battalion there, or with air-raid

protection. I am not a natural speaker, though I have a powerful voice which sounds rather like that of Donald Duck when recorded on a sound track. I have, however, realized that public speech has a technique which can be learned. I also found that people like facts.

I wrote three books. *Heredity and Politics* deals, among other things, with the Nazi race theories, though it is not primarily concerned with criticizing them. It is probably more valuable in the long run to state what is actually known than to give lists of lies.

A.R.P. deals with air-raid protection for England. I pointed out that the Spanish loyalists have discovered how to give about 90 percent protection to civilians during air raids. I worked out a draft scheme for England, some parts of which are very gradually being adopted. However, our government obstinately refuses to produce bomb-proof shelters. I point out that this is largely due to corruption and treachery within our government. There have been quite a number of cases of deliberate wrecking which cannot, I think, be explained by mere inefficiency. In particular, American visitors to London should look at the trenches in our parks, which are designed with long, straight stretches calculated to enable a bomb falling in them to kill as many people as possible.

The Marxist Philosophy and the Sciences is an attempt to do for modern science what Engels and Lenin did for the science of their day. I am not concerned with the social function of science, but with the actual facts of nature and our theories about them. I claim that Marxism helps me in my scientific work.

For example, I am investigating the genetical structure of human and animal populations. Until I became a Marxist I could not design my experiments properly. I did not see that what I had described as an equilibrium was really in many cases a struggle which was transforming the species. I believe that we cannot hope to beat fascism unless we adopt Marxist practice, and the practice certainly needs theory.

WRITES FOR WORKERS

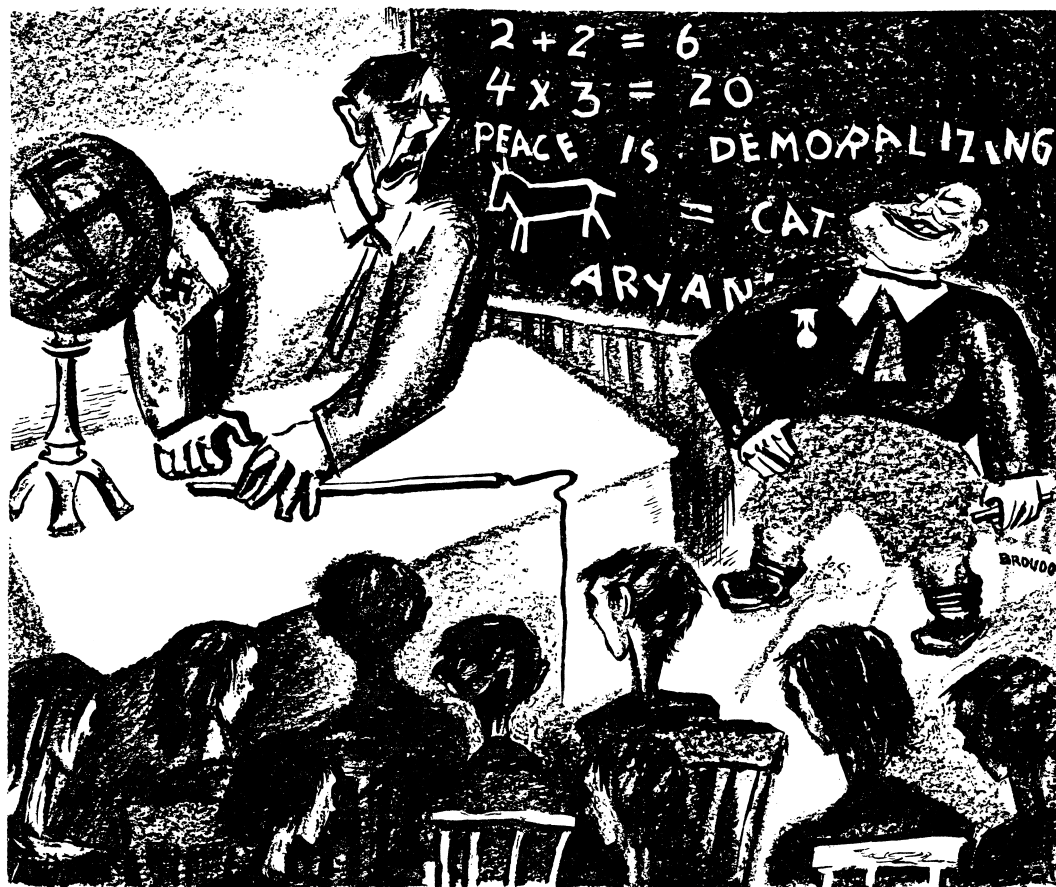
I have also written a weekly article for the British *Daily Worker*, on science. My main object was to boost the *Worker*, because, where I can check upon it, it is far nearer to the truth than any other newspaper, especially on foreign policy. In particular, it predicted Chamberlain's foreign policy, at Munich and elsewhere, with startling accuracy. If we are to have a chance against fascism we must get the truth over. I don't know how much my readers learn from these articles, but I learn a very great deal. I have to put science across to the plain man, and so I have to work out the social meaning of scientific practice and theory, which is not always the same as its laboratory meaning.

I have also written a number of other articles and one twenty-thousand-word pamphlet.

Besides this I serve on a number of committees, for example, the Labor Party's committee on air-raid protection. I have given a course of biological lectures at Marx House, where we have the nucleus of a Workers University. I have even become interested in the drama, and am a supporter of our workers' Unity Theater. In fact, I don't have a great deal of spare time.

Now comes the funniest thing of all. So far from all this activity having affected my scientific work, I have published more papers (only posterity can decide on their quality) during the past academic year than in any former year. A professor who neglected his job because he became an anti-fascist would be a very poor advertisement. And I am actually more interested in science, because I see how it fits in with other human activities. I gained the time for my political work by scrapping inessential activities. For example, I had a small country home where I potted about in the garden, and indeed, I was settling down to be a respectable, middle-aged professor till Hitler woke me up.

To sum up, I am trying to convince my countrymen that every patriot must be an anti-fascist, and that every efficient anti-fascist must be a Marxist. J. B. S. HALDANE.



"Any questions?"

Marcella Broude

Note Verbal

THERE is a story circulating in Paris to the effect that those firm speeches recently delivered by Georges Bonnet, the French foreign minister, against Mussolini, fascism, and Nazi aggression can only be explained on the supposition that he has been bought out by his own government this time.

A Nazi Agent at Work

Erskine Caldwell takes us through a Sudeten propaganda office. Prague before Munich. An attempt at conversion. Illustrated by Margaret Bourke-White.

WE WALKED up one flight of stairs, pushed a button, and opened the door. A sign at the entrance had indicated that this was the office of a German-language newspaper; otherwise there was nothing to set the entrance apart from any other along the main business street of Prague.

When we opened the door, a bell on the wall over the information desk clanged until we shut it behind us.

It was still not quite eight o'clock in the morning, but even at that hour there was a crowd in the reception room. Twelve or fifteen men, mostly in dark gray chauffeur's uniforms, sat on the hard wooden benches around the walls. Three or four of the men wore over-sized knickerbockers and white socks. All of the men were German.

There were numerous Sudeten German Party posters on the walls, and a crayon portrait of Konrad Henlein.

"Heil!" the man at the information desk shouted.

He raised his right arm, palm outward and hand extended, but did not look in our direction. He was standing behind the desk and reading some papers. He was dressed in dark gray chauffeur's uniform with brightly polished boots.

He still did not look up from the papers on his desk.

"Hallo," we said.

If we had said "police," the instantaneous burst of excitement could hardly have been greater. Everybody in the room jumped to his feet, shouting: "Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!"

The information clerk looked up, raised his arm in salute, and shouted: "Heil!" There was no chair at the desk. He never sat down. It would have been a sign of weakness to sit while engaged in his work.

Everyone, including ourselves, waited to see what would happen next. "Hallo" was an all-purpose Czech word that had no standing whatever in the Nazi propaganda headquarters. Our use of the word, following our failure to return the Nazi salute, had added insult to injury.

"Advance!" the reception clerk ordered.

We walked across the room to the desk.

"Business?" he asked authoritatively.

From the corners of our eyes we could detect a movement in the crowd behind us. Some of the men were between us and the door, while others were moving closer to us.

"Journalists," we replied.

A murmur of relief could be heard passing through the crowd. One or two faces relaxed.

"English?" the clerk asked.

"No," we said, "Americans."

A warm smile bathed the clerk's features. He leaned forward over his desk and greeted us friendly. As soon as we had shaken hands, he came from behind the desk and bowed. We were entirely forgiven for having uttered a Czech word on the premises.

"Americans," he said again.

Then, as though suddenly remembering to correct an oversight, he came to attention, clicked his heels, and saluted the crowd in the room.

"Heil!" he shouted. "Americans!"

The men around us nodded and turned back to their seats on the benches.

"What is your pleasure?" the clerk asked.

"We would like to see the director," we told him.

He shook his head, still smiling.

"The director is a busy man," he said. "It will be necessary to make an appointment with him. He is engaged all day and all night with important matters."

"Tell him we are American journalists," we insisted.

"Of course," he said. "Please be seated while I make the arrangements for an audience."

We sat down on one of the hard, straight-backed wooden benches while he picked up the telephone. When he got the director on the wire, he clicked his heels and drew himself to attention. He spoke with a Berlin accent.

"There are some American journalists here that it may be well to see," he said into the phone. "Journalists from America."

He nodded and smiled while he listened to the director's reply. Then he put the phone down and bowed.

"The director says it will be a pleasure to see you," he said. "Please make yourselves comfortable for a moment."

While he was speaking, the bell on the wall clanged, and another man in a chauffeur's uniform entered. He closed the door behind him, saluted, and shouted: "Heil!"

After the heiling was completed, the man strode to the information desk and handed the clerk an envelope. Then the two exchanged salutes and heils, and the messenger went to one of the benches and sat down to wait. Creases around the waist of his jacket indicated that he had been wearing a Sam Browne belt. He had taken it off when he entered Prague. The laws of the First Republic forbade the use of uniforms to distinguish members of a political party. Members of the Sudeten German Party stayed within the technical limits by wearing knickerbockers and white socks or dark gray chauffeur's uniforms. The military shoulder-strap belt was worn in secret.

We had waited only a few minutes when a door to one of the inner offices opened and a slight-built, blond-haired young man strode into the room. He came directly to us unerringly. He walked in long strides and shook the building with the hard heels of his shoes. Unlike the others in the building, he wore a sack suit.

When he approached us, he was giving a good demonstration of the goosestep.

"How do you do?" he said in English. There was a pronounced Oxford accent in his speech. "I am glad to meet you. I am the director."

He bowed from the waist, shook hands, and led us across the reception room and into his office. As we entered, a fairly stout young man got to his feet.

"Let me introduce one of your fellow countrymen," the director said. "He is a journalist like yourselves. Mr. Conway."

Conway shook hands and sat down.

"I am from Pennsylvania," he said.

"Marvelous country—America," the director said.

Conway seemed to feel that he should be self-defensive.

"I am here on business," he said.

"Representing a press service?" we asked.

He shook his head. Before anything else could be said, the director changed the subject. Conway began folding some papers and put them into his pocket.

"I like to talk to Americans," the director said. "We speak the same language, if you know what I mean."

He rubbed his hands, beamed, and nodded to all of us. Carefully selecting a finger from his right hand, he pointed it at us.

"I hope to have the pleasure of converting you," he said, still smiling. "That is my business, you know. I shall be very pleased to convert you to our movement."

Conway squirmed a little in his chair.

We tried once again to talk about press services and newspapers, but neither Conway nor the director could be interested in the matter.

"What newspaper do you publish in this office?" we asked in spite of discouragement.

"That is a long story, and a rather dull one," the director said, smiling. "I want to tell you something about our movement."

He had a fairly good supply of six-months-old American slang which he sprinkled on his conversation as though he were seasoning an omelet with salt and pepper.

"Our movement is coming down the highway like a steamroller. I could easily have converted Conway, here, if he had not already seen the light."

Conway moved uneasily in his chair. Ap-

parently he could not sit still any longer. He got up and reached for his hat.

"I'm late for another appointment," he said as he went through the door.

The director sat down and offered us German cigarettes. He was a young man of thirty-five who spoke several languages well. He had been a Nazi agent abroad for several years, having entered propaganda work for the duration of his life. He said it was much more interesting than any of the other professions.

"I shall wind up my work here in a short time," he said, "and after that my schedule calls for me to work in a number of countries. As quickly as I can complete my work in one country, I will take up the next one on my schedule. It is a fascinating profession."

He had been in Czechoslovakia for only six months, but during that time, according to him, he had succeeded in bringing the Nazi movement within sight of fulfillment. He was very proud of his ability to bring a foreign nation to the point of accepting the Nazi philosophy of life. He pointed back to the Nazi victories in Austria and Czechoslovakia as proof of the power in the movement. He said there was no nation in the world that could stop the victorious march that was under way.

"Now we shall see with our own eyes some examples of German culture and so-called Czech culture," he said.

"We would like to see the paper you publish here before we go out," we insisted.

"My dear people," he laughed, "I assure

you that it is an exceedingly dull story. I have many interesting things to show you in the streets."

"We have seen Prague from top to bottom," we stated. "What we want to see now is the paper you publish."

"You may have seen the city, as you say, but you did not have anyone with you to point out the instances of German culture, and the stupid Czech imitations of culture."

He pushed us along a corridor until we came to a stairway that led down to the street. It was not the same stairs we had used in entering the building.

We walked out on the street. There was a taxi stand on the other side, but the director guided us to another stand several blocks away. He explained that the drivers at the first stand were Czechs, and consequently none of them would appreciate the cultural advantages of the tour we were about to take. He selected a Sudeten German driver and we rode off to visit a Sudeten German elementary school.

As we entered, the corridors of the building were being filled with small children. The director shouted: "Heil!" and saluted. Several hundred children immediately shouted: "Heil!" and saluted. Once started, they did not stop. They chanted "Sieg Heil!" for the next few minutes.

The principal of the school took us into his office and showed us maps of Czechoslovakia which were printed in German and shaded to represent the growth of the Nazi movement in the First Republic.

"No German child shall ever be subjected to the stupid teaching of the Czechs," the director said. "All German children in Czechoslovakia will have the benefit of German culture."

The director smiled, the principal saluted, and they shouted "Heil!" in unison.

We left the building and rode off in the taxi.

"Now we shall expose our eyes to a horrible sight," the director said. The taxi stopped and we got out. "This is the sort of thing the silly Czechs are notorious for. They have degraded the world with their prostitution of architecture. And this is what their culture looks like."

He pointed at the large workers' apartment building covering several square blocks. The building had pleasing modern lines, large windows with balconies, and glass-brick walls facing the court. It looked like a palace in comparison with American and British tenements.

"A workers' union built that and called it a cooperative apartment house for workers," the director said. "The silly Czechs designed it with straight lines, glass-brick walls, and stupid balconies with the mistaken idea that it expressed culture."

The director looked at the building with mounting scorn.

"Give a Czech permission to design and erect a building," he said, "and the stupid chap tries to prove that Czechs have culture.



Margaret Bourke-White

SMILE BEFORE MUNICH. *Will this little girl grow up under fascism or democracy? She is one of millions who were betrayed at Munich.*

We will do away with all that showoff, because everybody knows the Czechs have no culture. That is such a horrible sight that the German people will not even look at it when they pass for fear of contaminating their own culture. We will do away with things like that. They cannot exist where the German people live. We shall erect buildings of our own design that represent the culture of the German people."

We drove through Prague until we reached the Bourse. It was a newly erected Czech-designed building in the center of the city. It was situated on a wide avenue facing a public park. It was constructed of light gray stone, and it was three stories high.

The director stopped the taxi and we got out and walked up and down the avenue in front of the building. After that he guided us to the west end of the building and pointed at a small balcony with his stick.

"Look what the stupid Czechs did to that building," he said, laughing. "They tacked on a little frill up there that looks like a balcony, but it is so small nobody could stand on it. And even if you could stand on it, there is no means of reaching it, because the silly Czechs did not make a door in the wall of the building."

He threw back his head and laughed.

When we came back, he had finished laughing. While waiting for us to return, he was pointing to the balcony with his stick and attracting the attention of some of the people passing along the street. Nobody stopped to laugh with him.

"This was a beautiful city before the Czechs got the upper hand," he said, "but they have violated it. It is a disgrace. They let their workers' unions build apartment houses in the most valuable districts. They just do not know any better. But the change will come, and German culture will be given the task of wiping out these eyesores. Then we will begin building structures for German eyes."

He walked up and down the avenue several times before he could pull himself away from the Bourse.

"It is an atrocity," he said. He looked at it once more. "It is a disgrace to the German people!" he shouted.

We walked back to the taxi.

"Let us force ourselves by sheer strength of character to go from the sight of this contamination," he said. "The stupid Czechs will succeed in contaminating us if we are not strong."

We rode away.

Just before reaching the building where the director's office was located, we asked once more to be shown the newspaper we had come there to see. He did not say anything until we stopped in front of the entrance.

"My dear people," he said with a smile, "I find it very difficult to instruct you in German culture and to convert you to our movement. But I shall try again, and after our next meeting I hope to have the honor of calling you my converts."

He got out of the taxi and stood on the

sidewalk with his head framed in the door of the cab.

"Surely you must know by now that our newspaper is purely a fiction," he said, smiling broadly. "The nature of our work calls for the erection of a front."

He let it go at that.

"Before you go," he said quickly, "I want to thank you for this opportunity to convert you to our movement. In the end I shall succeed."

He restrained himself from saluting in a

public place, but he stuck his head into the cab and breathed "Heil!" into our faces. A moment later he had disappeared into the building.

It was almost noon by the clock in the square when we drove away from the propaganda office. The Sudeten German driver turned around and offered to show us more examples of what he called the Czech's stupid culture, but we said we had seen enough and got out at the next traffic light.

ERSKINE CALDWELL.

Dear American Citizen

A private letter to you from Czechoslovakia. About a *still* democratic people who keep their humane ideals under a reign of terror. The tradition of Masaryk.

Prague.

DEAR AMERICAN CITIZEN: It is not easy to explain this to you. You live very far away from Czechoslovakia. There is an ocean between us. There are many countries between us, too, and nowadays when one crosses a boundary line in Europe one may go back many centuries. A letter from here has to make a long journey to reach you. Not many weeks ago I wrote to you, "There may be war very soon." While the letter was on the way, war came closer and closer, and when the letter was in your hands we had the "peace" which means another war. Under the circumstances it will not be easy to make you understand that we are *still democratic*. It will be very hard, but I must.

Do you not realize, over there, that Czechoslovakians died to establish our nation? That the fathers, the brothers, of many of us gave their lives for independence? Can anyone think that we have forgotten our debt to those who fell a few short years ago? Do not let anyone speak of us as if we had surrendered all sense of the sanctity of human life and human rights. Every day, now, we shall have to fight harder and harder to preserve humane ideas. For that very reason we will never give up.

You will understand better if I show you a few concrete examples. All over the republic, from the German Asch to the Rumanian Jasina, in every schoolroom and public building, in the humblest workrooms and the most pretentious offices, one used to see on the wall, invariably, the picture of an earnest man with calm, penetrating eyes, the liberator president, T. G. Masaryk. Recently the super-patriots decreed that the pictures of the two presidents (Beneš and Masaryk) must be removed from all schoolrooms—after classes, so as not to attract much attention. In one small Czech city the children did not look at the conspicuous vacant spots where the familiar pictures had hung. Each child had pasted a tiny photograph of Masaryk or Beneš on his desk. A Czech woman's magazine, *Eva*, pub-

lished under the title "Young Girl 1938" a letter from a reader:

I know that many things will be taken away from me, but one thing I will never surrender. I will never forget that I grew up in the childhood of the First Republic, in the time of Masaryk. So, whatever conditions arise, I shall never lose the humane attitude of respect for my fellow human beings.

It did not take long to put an end to the disgraceful attempts to desecrate the tradition of Masaryk. Dr. Hácha, the new president of the Czechoslovak republic, went to Laňy, near Prague, two days after his inauguration, to lay a wreath on Masaryk's grave. This quiet demonstration could not be ignored. In the first parliamentary debate under the new regime, Dr. Nečas, former minister of welfare, now member of the Executive Committee of the second most important power in government, the National Labor Party, pronounced a solemn warning. The memory of Masaryk must be venerated, "else we cannot protest that we of Czechoslovakia do not deserve to have the world turn its back on us."

One more instance will suffice to complete the picture. The great democratic Czech newspaper, *Lidové Noviny*, conducts an annual poll on the question "What do you consider the most important book of the past year?" This year a vast majority voted for the works of Masaryk. The Czech reading public had utilized the opportunity to testify that we know the importance of our national history, which is an inspiring expression of the will to be free, that we have not forgotten it, and that we want to prove to the world "We are *still democratic*."

A familiar symptom of the wrong kind of patriotism ran its course here as a passing fad. The Czech language must be "purged" of all foreign words. They were dangerous! The crusade was furious while it lasted. Signs were painted over at a great rate, as business firms, stores, cafes, movie theaters changed their names. "Foreign" expressions were re-

placed by newly coined Czech phrases which sounded much more foreign. Of course there was a little bit of sense in it. In order to be ultra-fashionable, tailors, milliners, and barbers had had to sport such signs as "Modes-robres," "Chapeaux," "Coiffeurs." But the craze went to incredible extremes. It did not last long. Intelligent persons—and wits especially—pointed out the most conspicuous examples of twisting the language and not enriching it. There was even a hint that a sign-painting concern had started the fad to get some much needed business. Who knows?

DEMAND FOR FREEDOM

Another little incident illustrates the fact that the Czech people will not and cannot live without freedom. A movie theater in Prague was showing the American film *If I Were King*. The action takes place at a time when Paris was besieged by an overwhelming force of Burgundians. In one scene a Burgundian envoy, with saber rattling and armor jingling, strides into the throne room of King Louis. The Burgundian delivers the ultimatum: if Paris does not surrender within twenty-four hours, the Duke of Burgundy will march his army into the city, burning, plundering, slaying. The King of France is silent. The courtiers shrink back. Then one man laughs. Laughing, he taps the blustering envoy's sword and asks: suppose there were resistance—successful resistance in spite of the odds? What would the Duke of Burgundy have the Parisians do then? A woman laughs, and the whole court, as if freed from a spell, laughs

with her. What actually happened, in that Prague movie theater, was that everybody began whispering, then there was a laugh, then people were saying out loud, "We will resist, one of these days. We love peace and we have perfect confidence in those who give us good advice, but we will defend ourselves, if we have nothing but our fists to do it with!" In that crowded theater there was not one who said that we ought to keep on good terms with our neighbor or that self-defense was impossible.

Let this be clearly understood: it is *the people* I mean when I speak of democratic Czechoslovakia. Make no mistake. It is *the people* who fight to keep their democracy and make it strong. Dear American citizen, take a map. Look at the boundaries of the new republic. Trace the great automobile highway which Germany is cutting straight through Czechoslovakia. You will learn to respect a people who are struggling in such a terrible predicament. The "mighty neighbor" to which "natural ties" have recently "associated" us has its hands on Czechoslovakia's throat, ready to squeeze unless the people prevent it.

NO BREAD, NO JOBS

What is more dangerous, threat of violence from without or insidious poison within? Do not forget that thousands of refugees, of German, Czech, and Jewish origin, have fled to this reduced country, offering the race persecutors and breeders of national hatreds a golden opportunity. There is not enough bread

for the Czechoslovak people. There is no coal. Thousands of workers stand around in enforced idleness for lack of jobs. The timber of the logger, the shaft of the miner, the field of the peasant are in foreign territory now. The country, torn in pieces, cannot feed its own plundered children. Remember this, dear American citizen, and realize what fortitude is necessary for the homeless in the refugee camps, the unemployed in the labor camps, to keep resolutely from paying any attention to the poison propaganda and be true to the watchword: "*Still democratic!*"

"War was averted. We were saved." Many people in England and France, many in America too, really believe this. Visiting the National Hospital for the Insane in Prague, I saw a man who went crazy last September, during the unsuccessful Henlein insurrection when caches of arms and explosives were being found everywhere. He thought there were bombs in his head. I saw a woman in agonies of terror darting around a room looking for a corner in which to hide from an air raid. A Jewish refugee from the Sudeten area thought he was Hitler and ordered everybody he saw to be hanged. He became insane from hearing constantly, "When Der Tag comes, we'll string you up to that tree." One man, very quiet, jumped up at the slightest sound, rushed to the window, gave the Nazi salute, and let out a blood-curdling yell, "*Heil Hitler!*"

ANTI-SEMITISM

Less than six months ago it would have been impossible to deny the fundamental rights of any Czechoslovak citizen. Now there are elements which try to draw a line between those who are human beings and those who are Jews: human beings may study medicine and law, Jews may not; human beings may go into business or civil service, Jews may not; human beings may be authors or actors, Jews may not. A few miles away, in Czech Chodenland, which is now a part of the German Reich, these proposals are bitter reality. They are not in Czechoslovakia. Some regrettable facts must be admitted, but there is a mighty protest against anti-Semitism here, and it is voiced by Jew and non-Jew alike. I do not see how this powerful current can be turned aside. In Parliament, December 17, Dr. Rašín, then a representative of the right-radical National Industrial Party, said, "Do not shame us in the eyes of the world. We are *still democratic.*"

Dear American citizen, I now post this letter to you. It will travel many days, through many hands, and when you read it, it will be old. Much will happen in the meantime, much that will seem incredible. But I want to impress on you this message: Come what may (and perhaps in spite of appearances, perhaps in spite of what seems possible), the people of Czechoslovakia are true to an ideal which they have always held and will always maintain. Do not forget the watchword of the Czechoslovak people: We are *still democratic.*

LENE REINER.

Spring Song Before Its Season

Now, with fire surrounding these cities
and sky controlled by accurate planes,
of flags taken and lost on the tragic hills:

Now, when bleeding runners arrive
desperately from the coast's bombardment:
now, beginning this intimate year

(whose Spring the lovers await)
we must be sure of our hope and the
line of our faith must not waver.

Let dreamers of peace go to the woods
and trust quietly the leaves' armor.
I cannot believe that although I have tried.

Peace has shown me dangerous symptoms,
destroying forever my imagined landscape
where I kissed you lying in the tall flowers . . .

My love, we can never survive
in the safety of our bed: only in the
burnt fields where they wait calmly in trenches,
dreamers of the love and beauty we wish for,
preservers of our hope and bread.

NORMAN ROSTEN.

Hitler Isn't Waiting

FOUR WEEKS have passed since we made our first financial appeal.

Thirty days have gone by; thirty days in which we were harassed by the printer, the engraver, the rent man. We haven't gone into detail about these things; they are inherent in the job of publishing a magazine such as ours. We did not even mention the need of paying wages to our staff; that comes last.

But the financial deadline draws perilously near. As we explained the first week a paper like ours runs into a deficit of about thirty thousand dollars a year.

We've got to meet some of these major debts now.

We have been able to get out these weeks with the regular circulation income.

But now we must come to you for help. Immediate help.

Our drive for funds must start in real earnest today. We have kept the need for funds in back of our heads while we were moving full speed ahead making changes in the magazine, lining up new writers, getting new projects started we felt had to be started to meet the stepped-up drive of our enemies—the enemies of the people—yours as well as ours.

Reaction isn't creeping up on us any more; it is galloping toward us.

We have to step on it, too. And we have, as thousands of our readers have indicated to us since they saw the last two issues.

Now we've got to settle the financial bugaboos. They are right on top of us now. And we let you know this because we know you want to know. You feel it is your concern as much as ours.

Loans have come due; the printer must have his payments; the engraver his. Our writers and

our artists have been working nobly; the stories, the articles, the cartoons you have seen in these issues have been done by men who contributed their time—their services—while their pocket-books grew slim and they needed to pay the rent as all of us do.

When you realize that, you will want to match their contributions with whatever you can send **NEW MASSES**.

"You are our angel," we said two weeks ago.

Hitler is angeling many of the pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic papers now threatening your welfare—and don't fool yourselves—your lives.

As Max Lerner said recently, "It Is Later than You Think."

Hitler isn't waiting; we can't afford to mark time.

Not for the sake of freedom, for the sake of our families.

NEW MASSES is out in front—soldiering for progress. Front-line fighters depend upon the people back home for the wherewithal to fight; Today's wars are fought by whole populations, not by a few on the firing line.

You're in the war too. And we ask your help.

Thirty thousand dollars sounds like a lot of money. A dollar apiece from all of you will practically make it. If you can send five, or ten, it will make up for those who can only send half a buck, or a quarter. And there are many in the latter category.

Before you put this issue away, take a dollar bill out of your pocket, or write us a check and send it to **NEW MASSES**, 31 East 27th St., New York City.

We need help.

We need it now.

We have nobody to turn to but you.

The Editors

When Franco Comes to Town

An eye-witness tells the story reporters can't write. "Franco's Justice" and "The Two Million List" in action. Death by telephone. Why the people flee.

WE HAVE been looking at pictures in the newspapers showing Franco's entrance into Barcelona, Tarragona, and other Catalan cities. These illustrations consist of two photographs showing (1) a field mass and (2) distribution of bread to the starving people.

Some gentle readers may thus be led to think that when Franco occupies a town, he enters with an army composed of priests and bakers alone, to satisfy immediately the spiritual and material wants of the population. But these same gentle readers would not be able to see either the field mass or the bread distribution if the troops of occupation were not accompanied by another motorized service which complements the portable altars and the breadwagons—namely, the photographers. For bread and masses are only propaganda stunts, a symbolic gesture which is quickly exposed by reality.

FRANCO IN BILBAO

I, for one, have no need for propaganda photos, copyrighted by Franco, to know exactly what the entry of fascists into a Spanish town means. I've been there.

Let me tell you about his entrance into Bilbao.

At two o'clock that Saturday afternoon the "fifth column" fascists, who had lived in freedom under the Basque government, ran out into the streets with banners, shouting fascist slogans.

At three-thirty the columns of invading troops started to file into the city. There were thousands upon thousands of soldiers. An Italian newspaper man, Sendro Sandri (who, ironically, has since been killed by Japanese bombs, on board the *USS Panay*) hoisted the rebel flag on one of the Basque government buildings.

With fascist shouts and slogans the invading soldiers attempted to provoke some reaction from the civil population that would give them an excuse for indulging in reprisals, but the city appeared to be a cemetery invaded by demons. The vast part of the population had fled and the rest remained hidden. On the streets only a few small boys curiously looked on; a few women ventured out to beg some bread from the invaders.

The military photographers, led by a sergeant, began taking pictures after posing a dozen women and children with outstretched arms giving the fascist salute ("The population of Bilbao receives its liberators with great enthusiasm"). Other shots were made of outstretched arms—these lifted suppliantly towards the breadwagon ("The troops of General Franco distributing abundant food to the famished population").

But on the photographers' plates certain



Woodcut by Sanchez Felipe

details were not shown which might give the lie to the humanitarian generosity of Generalissimo Franco, the author of the food blockade. True, the invaders did distribute some bread and foodstuffs, *but they sold it exclusively in exchange for silver money*. Instead of a humanitarian gesture it was strictly a financial transaction. Franco had no interest in relieving the famine which he had made, if he could not extract silver which he supposed to be hidden in many of the houses.

The next day was Sunday. This holiday was turned into that brand of tourist excursion which follows every Francoist occupation. From other parts of the country fascists came to enjoy the misery of the population

and to strut about defiantly. A Basque Jesuit was insulted by Falangists in the middle of one of the main streets of Bilbao. Naturally, such scenes are not recorded by the military photographers.

But besides the photographers, the fascist invasion introduced a new, interesting service which we have never seen on any picture: "Motorized Justice." This consists of a full battalion of judges, prosecutors, and informers who, after having waited impatiently for the progress of the military, now entered triumphantly with the first troops, smiling expectantly at the human slaughter which awaited them. They are the ones who carry with them the lists of the "two million crimi-

nals" which Franco described to the United Press.

Three days after the occupation of Bilbao there appeared an official newspaper called *Boletín de Bilbao*. In its first as well as subsequent numbers there appeared a well displayed and prominently placed front-page notice announcing "the unmasking of all the Reds hidden in Biscay." Now it was no longer a question of appropriating money for Franco's finances, but human beings for his prisons.

FASCIST TRIBUNALS

Finally there appeared this advice: "Denunciations may be either signed, anonymous, or given over the telephone." Given such extraordinary facilities, all moral corruption, some of which may be found everywhere, and all the low instincts which are harbored by certain individuals were now openly emptied into Franco's judicial tribunals. Some went to satisfy their own vengeance, others went to cash in on whatever rewards there might be, while still others came in order to ingratiate themselves with the invaders—to be more fascist than the fascists themselves.

It was necessary to improvise a half-dozen large prisons to accommodate the harvest of denunciations and the fruit of the "two million list." Business men denounced their partners in order to get full possession of their firms; creditors got rid of their debtors by sending them to jail; old feuds were revived, family squabbles avenged; and even people with simple caprices, such as a desire to change their living quarters, or a scheme to appropriate their neighbors' furniture, made use of "Franco's Justice."

In this manner a family could be evicted by simply phoning "Franco's Justice" and reporting that so-and-so had cursed the fascists after the bombardment of September 25—or that another individual, on learning of General Mola's death, did not hide his joy over the demise of that rebel general, who had vowed to raze Biscay.

An inhabitant of Guernica named Briñas had gone mad upon receiving the news that his son had been killed at the front. Demented, he wandered about the streets of Bilbao cursing the fascists who had taken his son's life. After the fall of Bilbao he was arrested on the charge of "having desired the death of fascists." His sentence was "death and immediate execution."

To have collaborated in any manner whatsoever in maintaining the Basque government was considered a very grave crime. A certain Dr. Obieta who had been assigned by the Basque government to give medical care to the prisoners in Larrinaga Jail, and who showed great humanitarian solicitude for them in his work, was likewise shot.

Señor Garay, an official in the Public Works Department of the province of Biscay, was condemned to death along with his two sons. These latter escaped but the father was shot.

Death sentences were handed out with such speed that of the 119 people who were in

Larrinaga Jail sixty were immediately shot, and "Franco Justice" careened on.

A man was denounced for having taught Basque dances to children. Concretely, his indictment read "teacher of espatadantza." The prosecutor, who knew nothing of the dances and folk customs of the country in which he had just arrived, thought that "espatadantza" (sword dancing) was a town and that the accused was a teacher in the local school. He spoke about the terrible responsibility which rested upon the teachers who were corrupting the youth and putting their tiny feet upon the paths of Communism and separatism. After this introduction he officially accused

the prisoner of having perverted "the youth of the village of Espatadantza."

Sabino Ruiz was the music critic of the newspaper *El Liberal*. This man, whom everyone knew to be an inoffensive fellow, was the author of a musical composition which was first played under the auspices of the Basque government during an amateur composers' festival. The work was entitled *The Duchess* and was modern in style. After the fall of Bilbao he was imprisoned because "there had been found Marxist influences in his composition."

A Carmelite priest was jailed for having given a certain sermon on the Sunday follow-

Fascist Lament

THERE'S one thing about these devils that I can never stand. There's one thing that gets me hard! Always! That's their complete, mocking abandon before a firing squad.

God curse them! They should cringe and cry and whimper, and even go down on their knees sometimes, but the swine just stand there and stare haughtily at the guns. They smoke! They even talk; they yell defiance to the end. *Canalla!*

We had one pig out in Asturias in 1934 that we shot on a very cold day. The men in the squad had been up late the night before on some looting or at some party—I don't remember which—and so they were very late. While we were waiting for them in the yard, this guy was feeling the cold more than any of us. He only had on a jacket. So instead of just standing there or sitting down and letting himself be numbed by the cold, or just get a little bit frozen so that when the squad came to shoot him he would be half dead and would not feel it very much, the fool walks about very quickly, moving his arms and legs up and down, and doing everything possible to keep in good shape. Finally, when the boys did come, he was a little tired but still bright-eyed and clear-headed, and he stood up there straight as you please and even made one of those stupid speeches about the brotherhood of man and the necessity of sacrifice and more crap like that before they shot him.

I don't get it! I don't understand it at all! These men are brutes. They are Reds! Godless barbarians! They are bloodthirsty believers in the madness of Marxism, and yet they die like newly baptized Christians! As if they were going immediately into the arms of heaven!

I have been told that many of them are truly Catholics and good Catholics at that, but we never ask them if they want the last rites. That would be just a little bit too much—to give them this wonderful chance of attaining forgiveness for their accursed sins, and let them really go straight into heaven. Hell!

But there was one little jackass that we shot yesterday who was really a Catholic. He killed a Moor who was defiling the altar in his church, he said. He was probably correct, too. What can one do about that, though? Well, anyway, the point of the story is that we let him have his rosary beads up till the end. Then, after he had finished saying them, and was just about to be shot, he throws the beads over his head and lets the crucifix stand exposed on his chest. Well, then, the men wouldn't shoot. They were Spaniards.

We ordered the men. We threatened and we pleaded with them, but they wouldn't shoot. We called them filthy names, threatened them with death. Still they would not shoot! Then we tried to induce the little coward to take off the cross. We had to use somewhat forceful means! But it was no go. He was as stubborn and defiant as any Red. Finally we ordered out a squad of Moors and they shot the idiot with pleasure. They come in pretty handy at times.

PRUDENCIO DE PEREDA.

ing the entrance of the fascist troops in Bilbao. What offensive remarks had he made? He had said that, after so much suffering, the city of Bilbao should earnestly hope for a permanent peace and that all should consecrate themselves to making a strong Basque country in a strong Spain, a hard-working Basque people in a hard-working Spain, and particularly a Catholic Basque people in a Catholic Spain. This priest was denounced, his words were viciously misquoted, and he was imprisoned in Larrinaga Jail. He was tried in the midst of a great propaganda demonstration and was condemned to six months and a day in prison, which he served in Carmel Prison.

These are some of the details concerning the entrance of Franco into Bilbao. We all know the subsequent events. Executions by the hundreds, thousands upon thousands of Basques imprisoned or condemned to hard labor, priests and women condemned to several years in jail or deported to Castile, the children forced to enroll in *Ballila* (children's military brigade) under the threat of imprisonment for their parents.

The photographs of the entry of Franco into Barcelona remind me of the photographs that Franco took in Bilbao. But this is only the entrance of the fascists. I know, tragically, what the occupation is like.

ROBERTO MIRO.

Iron for Islam

Why Mussolini, the Caliph of Capri, has his eye on Egypt.

A PART from its strategic control of the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, Egypt has grown to be a large apple in the fascist eye.

One important reason for this is the 1917 discovery, in Aswan Province, of enormous beds of hematite, an iron ore in much the same form as in our own Mesabi Range. Egypt's minister of commerce, Saba Habishi Bey, now reports that these Aswan deposits cover over five hundred square miles and may prove the richest in the world.

Geological surveyors estimate these beds as containing over six billion tons of ore; or more than Britain's one billion tons, Germany's two billion tons, France's billion and a half tons, the United States' one billion tons, and Sweden's half-billion tons all put together.

The ore lies within seven feet of the surface, making it possible to mine it with open-cut methods, the cheapest known.

Archeologists have long known that the ancient Egyptians used to mine iron ore from this province, but because of a shift of population centuries back the mine workings became covered with sand and obliterated.

Fascist agents dream that after Mussolini has forced his umbrella-boy Chamberlain into a deal on France's Tunis, the Duce may wangle a deal with Daladier on England's Egypt. But the Egyptians may have something to say about that.

Thou Shall Not Bear False Witness

Self-made Martyr Coughlin, the mad parson of Detroit, runs afoul of the libel laws . . . and brings up the whole question of radio censorship.

FATHER CHARLES E. COUGHLIN's fulminations on the radio have had, at an estimated one-shot maximum, ten million listeners.* While this isn't as much as the fifty million his followers claim for him, it is a tribute to radio's casual delivery of a potentially astronomical audience for almost anything. And this power which radio has is not a thing that the broadcasting industry treats lightly. Though there is nothing in either the Constitution or the Communications Act of 1934 to prevent Father Coughlin from saying just what he wants on the air, whether he gets it free or pays for it, and whether he goes on one of the four established coast-to-coast networks or rents his own Class-B lines from the American Telephone & Telegraph Co. and makes his own network by running them from station to station.

COUGHLIN'S CONTRACTS

Just now he has a self-made network of forty-four stations, over which he broadcasts on Sundays. His contracts with the station managers waive censorship rights, and run for fifty-two weeks with a two-week cancellation clause. It's up to the station managers whether they want the Coughlin revenue or not. If they don't take Coughlin, they have to put something on instead, at their own expense. This is an economic consideration of no small consequence, particularly on a Sunday, when sponsored business is usually at an ebb. The famous American system of privately owned competitive radio means in effect that AT&T line charges are subsidized by advertisers, rather than by the government. The sole legal right behind a station manager's refusal to sell (or give) time to any person is the right to protect himself against libel. This goes for stations that aren't network affiliates. For the networks, the situation is more complex.

In December the presidents of four independent stations on Coughlin's network took the unwritten privilege of asking for scripts in advance. Not only is there nothing in the Communications Act allowing them to do this, but their Coughlin contracts specifically forbid them this recourse. When Coughlin refused to submit scripts in advance, the four

* A recent Gallup poll shows that, during December, 3,500,000 people heard Coughlin regularly, and fifteen million at least once. Of the regular listeners, about 67 percent were in full agreement with Coughlin; of those who listened only once or twice, about 51 percent concurred. Among the non-listeners, about seven out of ten gave disapproval as their reason. The regular listeners were lower-income-group city-dwellers, and less than half were Catholics; there were more Democrats than Republicans.

stations broke their contracts, refused to air his next broadcast, and made themselves liable for suit. Coughlin has not sued.

FREE SPEECH PUBLICITY

The reason, it would seem, why Father Coughlin (who, according to Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago, is not authorized to speak for the Catholic Church and does not express its doctrine and sentiments) will not sue these four stations is that he is pretty pleased about the whole thing.

The presidents of the four stations (Donald Flamm of WMCA, New York; Ralph Atlas of WIND and WJJD, Chicago, and Alexander W. Dannenbaum of WDAS, Philadelphia) happen to be Jews. The broadcast that jolted them into action was unequivocally anti-Semitic and was based on material drawn in large part from Nazi sources. To the three stationmen, who didn't want to be boxed into any libel suits by members of their own race, and who didn't like this sort of talk much anyway, the speech seemed to necessitate a look at what the Reverend Father was going to say next. And when that was refused, they stood on their unwritten rights and did what they did.

Their action precipitated a blizzard of organized protest by Coughlinites and flung Martyr Coughlin back into the nation's headlines after a considerable absence. More than that, it gave rise in Manhattan to a federation of pressure groups calling itself the Committee for the Defense of Americans' Constitutional Rights. This group organized a Monster Protest Mass Meeting at the Manhattan Opera House, attended by about five thousand budding "Aryan" fascists and a few not entirely disinterested observers of the opposite persuasion, and there a series of speakers unburdened themselves.

The general tenor of their remarks was that American Christian civilization was going to the dogs. "Eternal vigilance," they parroted, "is the price of liberty." The Hon. Herbert A. O'Brien, justice of the Domestic Relations Court of Queens County, N. Y., was heard to remark that radio in this country was a threefold monopoly run, in effect, by President Roosevelt for his own purposes. He backed himself up by stating that Father Coughlin, Boake Carter, and Rep. Martin Dies had been banned from the air; the American people had not, in any of the three instances, been consulted. "Who's responsible for it?" he asked. A group of balcony hotheads sprang to their feet and shouted, "The Jews."

Now the facts, briefly, are these: Roosevelt does appoint the seven-man Federal Communications Commission, but it has no power of cen-

sorship; what it does have (which is a matter of being able to hold up station licenses on ground of "public interest, convenience, and necessity") radio's trade association, the National Assn. of Broadcasters, already considers too much and will tell you so if you ask. This doesn't exactly clear up the censorship matter, but neither does it deliver the corpse to Roosevelt. Boake Carter's audience may not have "been consulted" but his sponsors (first Philco and then General Foods) certainly consulted their research data on just how popular he was and just how his messages were affecting their sales. If he gets another sponsor, he'll be back on the air. Martin Dies, whose un-American smear campaign is good headline stuff right now, has by his own admission never been refused free radio time when he asked for it; he's been on NBC coast-to-coast seven times, on CBS thrice. But O'Brien's audience was hearing what it wanted to hear: that the nation's most outspoken reactionary headliners were snatched off the air, and that Communist Earl Browder could broadcast any time he felt like it. The fact is that Browder asked NBC several weeks ago for a chance to appear on its famous National Farm & Home Hour, and was refused.

ENTER MR. ZOLL

Another leading crusader for führer Coughlin is Allen Zoll, national commander of American Patriots, Inc., and chairman of the Committee for the Defense of Americans' Constitutional Rights. Zoll, who appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee to oppose confirmation of Felix Frankfurter as

a Supreme Court justice, is well known as a professional promoter. Among other things, he has promoted at least two clubs for sales executives which met regularly at certain Manhattan hotels and for which he received due bills. He has been paid to wax fervent at salesmen's meetings about subjects like direct mail campaigns, and has from all reports acquitted himself well. He's a genial, ubiquitous soul. His acquaintance with Fritz Kuhn of the German-American Bund has occasionally led him to accept Kuhn's offer of having the Bund distribute pamphlets for meetings of American Patriots but Zoll apparently didn't expect quite so many Bund members to attend his meetings.

Since the Monster Protest Mass Meeting, Station WMCA has been picketed every Sunday by a loyal band of Coughlinites and assorted Jew-baiters, and attempts have been made to organize a boycott against WMCA advertisers. The advertisers, however, have paid little attention; Mrs. Wagner's Pies pulled its account, but President Donald Flamm reports that he has received congratulatory letters from a few national advertisers whose programs, if he had them, would net him more than he now gets from such local accounts as the pie company. The other stations report no loss of advertising revenue.

The Committee for the Defense of Americans' Constitutional Rights has set up permanent headquarters in Manhattan's Governor Clinton Hotel and is there currently beating the drum for its fledgling American Federation Against Communism, Inc., which claims to have offices at 49 West 44th Street. The

picketing activities have kept up steadily. The networks have also been dragged into the picture, beginning with CBS, the reasoning being that CBS reputedly has more Jews on its staff than NBC. Typical signs and slogans carried by picketers go like this: "Forward Christian America!" "Down with alien-dominated radio and press!" "Export all Communists!" "No more lying propoganda from the Spanish embassy!" "We want free speech for Americans only!" "Send the refugees to Russia!" Picketers have carried pictures of Coughlin and caricatures of President Roosevelt and Felix Frankfurter.

The Coughlin episode has served once more to focus attention on the issue of radio censorship. The broadcasting companies and big business generally look hard in the direction of government whenever that issue is brought up. But there is no need to have fears from that end. Radio censorship is a fact today, and it is exercised not by the government, but by the privately owned radio industry dominated by NBC and CBS, the former a Morgan-Rockefeller corporation. Owen D. Young of General Electric, who helped organize NBC, put it this way in a speech at Rollins College, Florida, on Feb. 24, 1936:

Freedom of speech for the man whose voice can be heard a few hundred feet is one thing. Freedom of speech for the man whose voice may be heard around the world is another.

And it is the broadcasting companies that determine how much and what kind of freedom of speech shall be permitted over the air waves. This despite the fact that the ether is regarded as public property and the broadcasting companies merely receive licenses from the Federal Communications Commission.

Only a couple of months ago Frank R. McNinch, straitlaced chairman of the FCC, who landed with both feet on the NBC affiliates that broadcast some groaning innuendoes by Mae West last year, stated: "Should there ever be an attempt . . . to debase radio . . . as an instrument of racial or religious persecution, the . . . commission would employ every resource it has to prevent any such shocking offense." But in l'affaire Coughlin, McNinch has kept mum. Radio's trade association, however, has not. Its president, Neville Miller, fired the first gun.

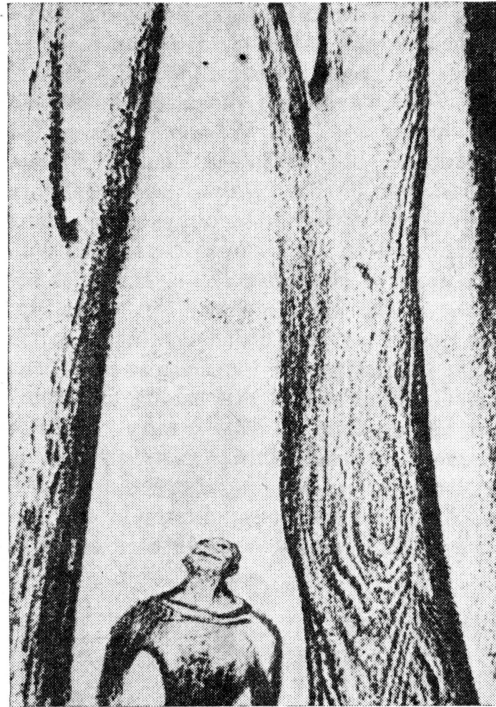
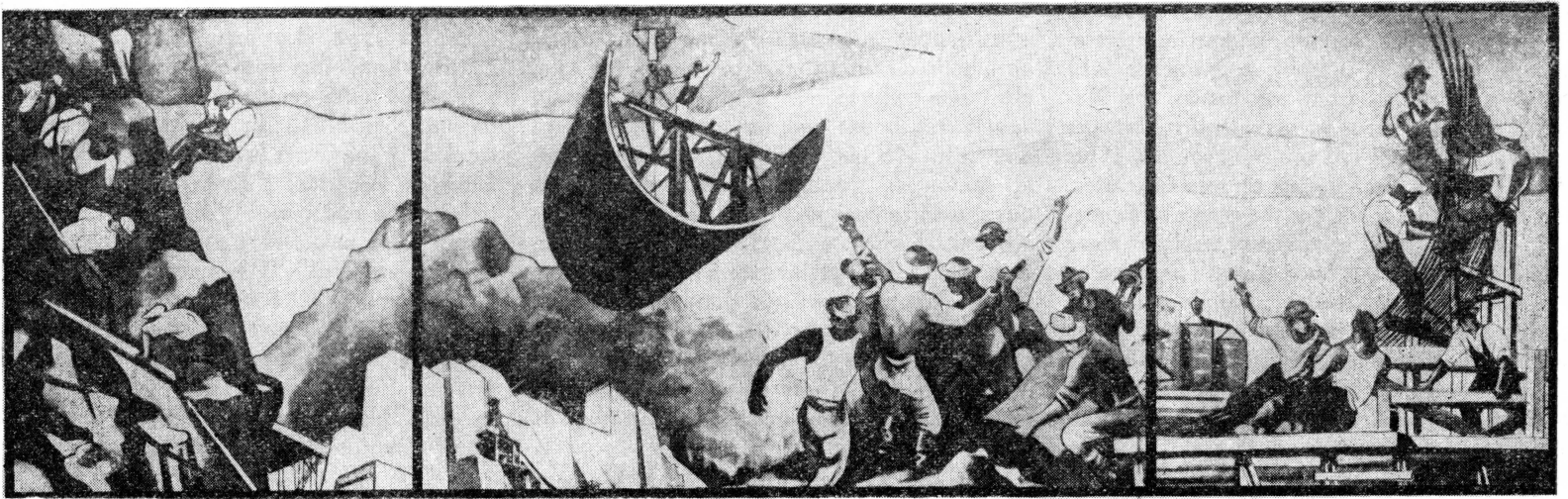
Broadcasts inciting racial and religious hatred [he said on December 23] are not to be tolerated . . . The right of free speech . . . is a right which broadcasters interpret as one requiring that equal opportunity may be available for . . . honest divergence of opinion. But . . . there is no obligation to broadcast a speech which stirs up religious or racial prejudice or hatred . . . [the broadcaster] is well within his rights to refuse to broadcast a speech plainly calculated or likely to stir up . . . strife.

This statement, by implication, gives every stationman the right to ask for scripts in advance and to put the quietus on anti-Semitic propoganda. Despite this, no other stations have thus far followed the example of the four that originally banned Coughlin. Money can still send poison through the air.

D. R. TAFT.



FASCISTS ON BROADWAY. A picket line led by "Liverpool" Smyth, "Patriot" Zoll, assorted Bundists, Shirters, and other political gangsters in support of Coughlin's anti-Semitic broadcasts.



A Mural and a Show

A note on William Gropper's Washington mural and his current exhibition

LAST week was a busy one for Gropper. He spent the better part of it supervising the hanging of his three-panel mural in the new Department of the Interior Building in Washington and then hopped back to New York for the opening of his one-man show of oils, watercolors, and drawings at the ACA Gallery.

The top reproduction on this page is a photograph of the early rendering of the design of which the finished mural is an almost exact enlargement. The colors are warm and bright. Its position in the huge lobby of the building lets it be seen for almost the length of a city block. The mural itself carries on this distance with its striking illusion of depth.

The three drawings and the painting are part of a series on John Bunyan, the legendary figure of the American lumber camps. These are included in the exhibition of twenty-four new works at the ACA Gallery, which is on public view until March 11.



Bill Green's Boomerang

Amending the NLRA is no cinch; Pacific Coast AFL is "unalterably opposed to any changes in the Wagner act"; the storm grows.

Washington

THAT deceptive new strategy in anti-labor ball-carrying, Girdler to Green and through the right side of the congressional lineup, is not working so well.

What happened, following the AFL's Houston convention in October, is now history, although of comparatively recent vintage. To a batch of convention-approved amendments to the National Labor Relations Act (adopted after vitriolic debate and what amounted to a convention split), Willie Green gratuitously added two, more vicious than the rest, for which the National Association of Manufacturers has long been clamoring. He then handed the lot to Sen. David Ignatius Walsh of Massachusetts to throw in the legislative hopper.

Those amendments would, among other things, open all Labor Board decisions to court review (and not all courts are judiciously unprejudiced toward labor); compel all NLRB elections for collective bargaining to be held strictly on a craft basis; legalize contracts collusively made with minority groups of employees by employers bent on heading off organization by bona fide unions; narrow the existing definition of company unions, thus simplifying their creation and maintenance by employers who might perchance prefer them to the AFL or CIO; allow employers to call for NLRB elections in the early stages of organization, before the organizing union has succeeded in getting a majority; and open the way for employers to subpoena union files, including the names of all members, as well as the confidential files of the board.

MRS. NORTON DECLINES

The AFL leadership, when it first contemplated these amendments, approached Rep. Mary Norton, chairman of the House Labor Committee, and urged her to introduce them. Mrs. Norton declined.

It is common congressional rumor that Senator Walsh now wishes he had been as judicious. The first reaction to his sponsorship of the Green amendments was a slap in the face from labor in his own state. Walsh had been invited to address the Massachusetts State Convention of the CIO on February 10. When he decided to align himself with Green and the NAM, that invitation was promptly and publicly withdrawn. Since then, vehement protests have cascaded upon him from all sides.

And the AFL itself is in the forefront of the opinion. A three-man delegation representing the AFL on the Pacific Coast recently told the Senate Education and Labor Committee, before which the amendments now lie, that it was "unalterably opposed to any

changes in the Wagner act." In the past few months, three AFL international conventions—the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders (fourth largest in the federation), the International Typographical Union, and the American Federation of Teachers—have passed resolutions condemning "any curtailment of, or any strangling amendments to, the National Labor Relations Act." The printing pressmen, the teamsters, the brewery workers, the hatter and millinery workers, the machinists and papermakers and molders have spoken, either through their international officers or their official organs, in determined opposition to the amendments. The list goes on into state federations—Illinois, Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa—and down the line to trades and labor councils and individual locals.

Louis Waldman, New York Socialist and attorney for several AFL unions, including the Electrical Workers, the Amalgamated Butchers, and the Cap and Millinery Department of the United Hatters, Cap, and Millinery Workers, recently addressed an urgent plea to Green to "carefully consider" his action in pressing the NLRB amendments, for they "carry with them great danger to the labor movement."

After analyzing the amendments one by one, Waldman summarized that "of the nine proposed amendments, six are definitely harmful to labor, one harmless, and two are fair but will not materially alter the situation." "These," he wrote, "would not establish the 'fair and equitable administration of the board,' the avowed object of the proposed amendments. On the contrary, they would weaken the administration and destroy the power of the board."

Besides the AFL, the railroad brotherhoods have unanimously voiced their opposition. The CIO has risen as a single body. The friends of labor, the American League for Peace and Democracy and others, have spoken out.

EFFECT ON CONGRESS

This outcry has been felt in two directions. First, in the halls of Congress. Walsh is now admittedly hesitant about pushing on; the Senate Committee on Education and Labor is inclined to act slowly and cautiously in the matter. Rep. Reuben Wood of Missouri, former head of the Missouri State Federation of Labor, and the AFL's recognized spokesman in the House, has commented that he is "pretty well satisfied with the way the board has functioned in the past and I'd be wholly opposed to any attempt to amend the law that would cripple its functioning." And Mrs. Norton revealed that she has just three communications, one of them from Bill Green, supporting the amendments while her office

is cluttered with "thousands" opposing them.

"The general feeling is that to attempt even good corrective amendments at this time might make the law open to complete destruction by those less friendly to labor," she observed. "I'm inclined to agree."

Her fears are more than substantiated by two bills recently introduced by Senator Burke and Representative Anderson aimed at direct repeal of the Wagner act, and by the more subtle expression of sentiment by Vice-President Garner when, on January 30, he pushed the electric button setting in motion the new presses for Hearst's Chicago *Herald & Examiner*, where the American Newspaper Guild has been on strike for eleven weeks.

GREEN-GIRDLER

The second result of the popular outcry against the amendments has come from Willie Green and his henchmen. Met in conclave at Miami, Fla., last week, the AFL Executive Council decided they might have gone a step too far. So they drew up a new plan—an amendment to replace the present three administrators of the NLRB with a five-man board. To save face, the new proposal will not replace the Walsh amendments, but will be introduced in the House. But in the acrobatics of saving face, the Executive Council will thus find itself sponsoring two separate plans which in certain details are mutually exclusive. To rally support for its new proposals, the council turned this time openly to the U. S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers. For, concurrent with the adoption of the new plan it passed a resolution—a resolution previously howled off the Houston convention floor—in which it lashed at the New Deal with the words of Tom Girdler.

"Fear, lack of confidence, and distrust in governmental, social, and economic procedure," the council said, "should be removed." A political and economic state of mind should be created which would enable all financiers and the owners and management of industry to face the future with confidence, willing to risk the expenditure of funds.

And at a subsequent press conference, Green said: "There has been strong complaint against the excess-profits tax, for one thing. We believe its repeal would help."

But the very desperation of the AFL council, their flustered seeking for new means to their end, their frantic appeals—no longer to their own union members but openly now to arch reaction—show which way the wind is blowing. Should this wind continue growing to tornado strength, there will be no changes in the Wagner act.

PAUL G. McMANUS.

Moving

A short short story by Millen Brand, author of "The Outward Room."

AS CAL COOK walked slowly along Bridge Street, he was thinking over what to do. He was behind in his room rent—some room, he thought—and he had been told, straight, that he could pay today or get out. He knew two or three dollars would get him by. Well, maybe the time had come to cash in on that little favor he had done Ed Johansson; Ed was careful, he always had money. Yes, the thing to do was see Ed.

It was early, though, and he passed the town hall and thought, as it was early, he would go in and see Jake—he went around back and knocked on the door of the jail.

Red Reilly, the jailer, came to the door and said, "Evening, Cal. Want to see somebody?"

"Yeah, I'd like to see Jake."

"Oh, I guess y' didn't hear. Jake just got out."

"Is that right? Well, I guess I'll see him around, then."

"Sure. But why don't you come in anyhow as long as you're here? The boys'd like to see you."

"Might as well."

Red opened the screen door of the jail for Cal and said, "Most of the boys is upstairs now. This rainy weather has made it damp downstairs." They went up a steep flight of stairs and at the second-floor landing Red unlocked a large barred door. Not bothering to close the door, he walked with Cal into a room about twenty-by-thirty feet, along one side of which was a row of barred cells. All the cell doors were open; a few of the occupants were resting in their bunks but most of them were sitting or standing around the room. Cal saw Harry and said, "Hello, Harry. Didn't know you was in."

"Got thirty days, let's see, last Tuesday."

"Some man," Cal said.

"Some thirst—only out five days," Joe said.

"Ain't they kind of severe on you, Harry?" Cal said.

"Severe is no word," Pete said. "Worst of it is, it was an accident this time—he was puttin' tonic on his hair and it soaked through. Ain't that right, Harry?"

"Yeah, that's right."

Red said, "Well, I'll leave you to the boys, Cal," and went back outside.

The radio was playing *That Old Feeling*. Over the radio, out the window, some fine lawns could be seen. Feeling a cool evening breeze coming in the window, Cal said to Bill Cohoes, "Cool, ain't it?"

"Yeah, been cool all day," Bill said.

Cal's own room looked out on a driveway between two tenements where there was no air at all. The frame tenements seemed to hold in the heat; it was impossible to sleep at night. Here it was cool and it was quiet. After

"lights out" at nine, the boys soon dropped off to sleep.

"What y' doin', Cal?"

"Nothin'."

"Rainy weather's kind of hard on you, ain't it?"

"Yeah. Ain't no paintin' to get anyway."

"Ain't nobody wants nothin' done. Pete here can't get no roofin', had one job in two months. Harry here—best plasterer in town—can't get no plasterin'."

"If the ceilin's fell all over town," Harry said, "they'd let 'em fall."

"Trouble is nobody's got money."

"That's a fact."

Harry said, "Cal, why don't you come in here for a while? By September, there'll be better weather and maybe things'll pick up."

"I dunno," he said.

"Come on in," Bill said.

"Well, I dunno."

"Food's good lately," Bill said.

Cal noticed Joe eating a plate of beans off the top of a radiator. "Still gettin' plenty of beans, ain't y'?" he said.

"That's just tonight. You shoulda seen what we had for dinner, hey, Bill?"

"Yeah, you shoulda seen."

Cal looked around again. "All the lower berths is taken," he said. "If I come in now, all I get is an upper berth."

Harry said, "Tom's gettin' out in a couple of days. Then there'll be a lower berth."

"That right, Tom?"

"Yeah, that's right."

"How about smokes—?"

"We got plenty of smokes."

"Cal," Pete said, "we ain't told you the best—"

"How's that?"

"Y' ain't heard?"

"What?"

Pete looked around at the others, then, impressively, he said, "They put in a shower."

"You're kiddin'."

"Am I kiddin'?"

"It's the truth, Cal."

"It's a fact."

"Honest to God, Cal."

Cal still hesitated.

Harry said, "What's the matter, Cal, ain't you got the price of a drunk?"

"I could get a dollar or two."

"A dollar would do it."

"Hell—what's the matter with you, Harry? Cal don't want no accident like you. He wants the real thing."

"He's got to make it worthwhile."

"He's got to do a real job," Pete said.

At that moment Red came back and said, "Well, Cal, seen enough of the boys?"

"I guess so," he said.

Red stood in the door while he went out. Then he locked it.

Leaving the jail, Cal went on down Main Street, and he was still thinking. Yes, they had the idea. Be happy tonight and tomorrow be safe.

At the small frame house on West Street where Ed Johansson lived, he found the hall door open as usual and went upstairs and knocked on Ed's door. Ed opened it and said, "'Lo, Cal."

"Hello, Ed," Cal said. "How's things?"

"Aw, fine."

"Say, Ed, I got to ask you something."

"Hah?"

"I got you that job, remember?"

"Yah."

"Well, Ed, can you spare me a coupla dollars?"

"Yah. What you want for?"

"I'm moving."

"Moving?"

"Yeah."

Ed got him two dollar-bills.

MILLEN BRAND.

Hicks Nails a Lie

Allan Nevins was taken in by a notorious Red-baiter

IN ALLAN NEVINS' *The Gateway to History*, published early last fall, there appeared this statement: "We need only think of the writer on John Reed who, glorifying him as a staunch revolutionary, was informed before publishing his book of the existence of letters that John Reed had written from Russia shortly before his death expressing a keen disillusionment with the Bolshevik Revolution. To include them would have injured the portrait of Reed as a revolutionary hero, and they were ignored."

It may now be stated categorically that no writer on John Reed ignored these accounts of disillusionment, for the simple reason that there are no such letters in existence. Professor Nevins admits this in a letter to the *New York Times Book Review* of Feb. 12, 1939. The passage, he says, "was founded upon statements made by two men whose authority seemed to me adequate; one of the foremost literary critics and editors of the country, and one of its best known historians, holder of a chair in a great New England university. I have been convinced that they are mistaken and that the statement is unjust to John Reed." It will be withdrawn, he goes on to say, from the next edition of *The Gateway to History*.

Mr. Nevins insists that his statement "referred to no particular writer," but his readers very generally assumed that he was speaking of my *John Reed: The Making of a Revolutionary*. For this reason I undertook to demonstrate to Mr. Nevins that the statement was absolutely without foundation, and finally, as his letter testifies, I succeeded.

It is rather ironic that this error should

have appeared in a book devoted to the discussion of truth in history. For example, in discussing evidence, Mr. Nevins writes, "All the witnesses available must be summoned." Yet he made no attempt to communicate either with the supposed owner of the letters or with the person who was alleged to have ignored them. "Mere hearsay testimony," he goes on, "must be given a low valuation." Yet he repeated a story told him at third-hand. "All witnesses," he continues, "should be cross-examined for evidence of bias." Yet one of the two men he cites as authorities has written virulent attacks on the left movement.

This subject of bias is one to which Professor Nevins very properly devotes considerable attention in his book, and he is well aware that prejudices often operate unconsciously. The reader of *The Gateway to History* will discover that the author has no great liking for Marxist historians. Is it conceivable that that is why, in this particular instance, Mr. Nevins forgot his own rules of evidence?

Now that Professor Nevins has acknowledged his mistake, and we can hope that the denial will some day catch up with the original misstatement, there would be little need for comment, were it not that similar charges have often been made against the left, and usually with less excuse than Mr. Nevins had. Professor Nevins' eminence as an historian serves, therefore, to dramatize a situation of some importance. I believe that in this case he was the victim of the unscrupulous mendacity of a notorious Red-baiter. But the fact that he could be so victimized is evidence of either unconscionable carelessness or unconscious prejudice. GRANVILLE HICKS.

Anti-Fascist Arkansans

THE State Legislature of Arkansas has, in a joint resolution, called upon Congress to amend the Neutrality Act so that the United States can sell munitions and make loans to anti-fascist nations. This country should be "relieved of all restrictions in conflict with the interest of world peace," says the resolution. It asks that both the Johnson act, forbidding loans to any foreign country whose debts have been defaulted, and the Neutrality Act be altered.

"I think we should support President Roosevelt in his defense program," said State Sen. R. L. Gordon. "The Nazi Bund in the United States has four million people under its flag. We've got to protect ourselves."

American Artists, Notice

AUGUSTUS JOHN has painted a portrait. He painted it under a project sponsored by the Artists International Association in conjunction with England's Spanish Medical Aid Committee whereby famous artists volunteered to paint portraits and give the fee to Spain. Augustus John's fee was \$2,500.

Night of Freedom

(for Tom Mooney)

Now out of darkness, from orchard, hill, and swamp,
Charting its path along a phosphorescent map,
The night plane approaches:
Banks southward with the moon-struck, gun-metal bay
Over San Quentin, flickering like a bivouac fire,
Over the death-ray beacons of The Rock; The Bridge,
A bright and amber snake, winding toward the red mist,
The many-windowed city, burning with joy.

It's a taller world, Mooney; a deeper city,
More of everything: necropolis of perjurers
(Out of corruption, old ghosts sprout living forms);
Terror made a science, organized;
Resistance to terror organized.
Those who fought you richer;
Those who loved you wiser.
Light and shadow, unity, division;
Awakened conscience, doped oblivion.
All the predicted poles and fulfilled contradictions.

ONE YEAR

the war the frothing mouths the blood betrayal

NEW TRIAL DENIED

THREE YEARS

the red scare—other lovers of peace were silenced

PERJURY ADMITTED

NINE YEARS

the flush and giddy time the frenzied dance millennium

PARDON DENIED

THIRTEEN YEARS

the burst bubble the fallen tower the stripped mask

ALL PLEAS DENIED

TWENTY YEARS

courage no compromise a wind is rising

APPEAL DENIED

DENIED REJECTED DENIED

NO PARDON NO PARDON

NO NO NO

TWENTY-TWO YEARS

the weight of time is lifted suddenly

And a sea change sweeps the fog-chained city clean.

Wider than shadow on this half-planet,
Brighter than the thousand neon signs of Market Street,
Louder than the night plane, roars our hope tonight.
As in Catalonia, the lines break,
Re-form, hold, whispers of "Strength, comrade,"
So any derelict can pull his cap down, cocky,
Hold up his head, a chip on his shoulder,
Stand on the curb laughing at the tycoon's limousine:
"O.K., money-bags. He's free. What next?"

MICHAEL WILSON.



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Intrigue Over Spain

THE Spanish people, led by their government, are fighting on against their enemies of two and a half years as well as against new and powerful self-appointed helpmates from Britain and France. The military situation remains much the same. In Central Spain the government forces are well organized and ready for anything Franco has to offer. The civil population continues to support them. The lines are holding, and Franco's announced drive on Valencia and Madrid makes little headway.

Outside Spain, in the area around Perpignan, is what is probably the most heart-rending aspect of the present stage of the war. There thirty thousand of the refugees from Franco terror are battered and ill in French concentration camps. All of them suffer from disease and virtual starvation and only a small minority receive the necessary care.

It is the fast and loose political intrigue, however, which must be watched and fought by friends of Spain. Chamberlain and Bonnet—through their agents, Sir Robert Hodges and Sen. Léon Berard—tried to facilitate and muscle in on a possible Franco victory, thereby hoping to whittle down German and Italian influence. They are conscious of the dynamite inherent in a Franco triumph sponsored by the two fascist governments and are doing everything within their powers to make certain that if Franco wins, he will have them to thank, in part at least. The attempt to force recognition of the Franco regime and to manipulate weak-sister Manuel Azaña into urging the Spanish government to surrender are two steps in the process. Just how Franco is reacting to all this is not too clear, but two important papers in territory controlled by him, *Fe* and *Diario Vasco*, have printed statements to the effect that Franco still appreciates the support the dictators have given him and will probably

have nothing to do with French and British attempts to insinuate themselves in his regime. Berard has already left Paris—in despair, according to the press. Further indication of the trend is found in the stories of an impending meeting between Hitler, Mussolini, and the rebel generalissimo.

In England and in France, the people are showing themselves more and more conscious of what is being attempted. In London metal workers have struck in protest, and there are reports of more labor opposition to come. The American people's part remains one of protest against the embargo and of shipment of all possible aid to the suffering Spanish people, who are daily giving the lie to the statements that they have abandoned what has become the fight of all of us.

Congressional Lineup

THE house of Democracy (with a capital D) is divided against itself. This is not new, but the gains of the Republicans in the last election make the division in the Democratic ranks all the more serious for the New Deal and for the American people. Nor does the recent caucus of House Democrats seem to have persuaded the tory wing to cease and desist from its illicit alliance with the Republicans.

It had been the hope of the administration that emphasis on foreign policy and national defense would serve to smooth over the differences and not only create a solid front in the Democratic Party, but win considerable support from the Republicans as well. But then came the hue and cry over the sale of planes to France and over President Roosevelt's conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee. Isolationist politics of both the Republican and Democratic persuasion vied with each other in their effort to discredit the President. It is thus increasingly evident that the cleavage in our political life is a fundamental one.

If the question of who will win over whom in this struggle—and this means eventually what forces will triumph in 1940—is viewed solely in terms of the present voting lineup in Congress, the outlook is none too hopeful for the New Deal. However, it remains to be seen whether President Roosevelt and the progressive forces of the country are wrong in their estimate of the temper of the people despite the Republican electoral gains. The possibility that they might be right has begun to dawn on even so inveterate a critic of the New Deal as Arthur Krock of the *New York Times*. In an article in which he attempts to show that the last election represented a trend away from the policies of the New Deal, he adds:

If Townsendism has actually been responsible

for the greatly increased size—and therefore effectiveness in coalition with Democratic moderates [Krock's euphemism for Democratic Tories]—of the Republican opposition, then the President may not be wholly wrong. The solution may be found, not in a congressional break with the White House, but in following Mr. Roosevelt in some scheme to win back the elderly vote through one of those ingenious subsidies native to the New Deal.

Adding our own postscript to Krock's statement: the present relation of forces in Congress and in the struggle for the presidential succession can be changed. The democratic front of the masses of the people, based on a united labor movement, can give effective expression to the real desires of the people and assure the defeat of the Hoover-Garner camarilla now and in 1940.

No Military Secrets

NOW that some of the dust kicked up by isolationist stalking-horses is beginning to lift, these facts emerge from the strenuous stage-whispering in regard to the sale of American planes to France:

1. The transaction was entirely legal.
2. The order authorizing demonstration of the Douglas 7-B attack bomber to the French air mission came from President Roosevelt, who acted with the support of the State, War, and Treasury Departments.
3. Major Gen. H. H. Arnold, chief of the army air corps, opposed this step as in conflict with the release policy of the Aeronautical Board.
4. General Arnold was not "overruled" by the President. Under the Constitution, the President is commander-in-chief of the army, navy, and the state militia. He alone could authorize demonstration of the bomber, and in doing so, he merely exercised the discretion vested in any commander-in-chief. General Arnold, whatever his private opinion, obeyed orders as any subordinate must.

5. The plane viewed by the French embodied manufacturing secrets, but no military secrets. General Arnold himself, testifying before the Senate Military Affairs Committee, placed in the record a telegram from Major J. B. Wolfe of the air corps which stated that "Inasmuch as this plane was not an air-corps contract plane, it contained no War Department secrets or restricted items of equipment." This was confirmed by the testimony of Captain Kraus, who escorted the French experts to the Douglas plant to inspect the plane.

What is involved in this whole dispute over 515 planes is, of course, something more fundamental: foreign policy. It is not the sale of planes to a foreign country that the reactionary isolationists object to, but sale to a *democracy* for defense against possible fascist aggression. No wonder Drew Pearson and Robert Allen are able to write in their

"Washington Merry-Go-Round" column: "Nazi-fascists have been particularly encouraged lately by the speeches of Senators Clark, Reynolds, and Hiram Johnson [all isolationists], whom they regard as their great friends."

Log Cabin Syrup

JOHAN WILKES BOOTH killed Lincoln once, but the Republican Party seems determined to assassinate him over and over again. Crueler than bullets were the unctuous tributes paid this great commoner by those who have betrayed everything for which he stood, who today speak and act for the new slaveocracy of Wall Street. And it was fitting that the principal speech should have been made by the real leader of the Republican Party, Herbert Hoover, whose opinions on foreign and domestic questions have recently won him the praise of the Lincolnians in Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo. An appropriate anti-Semitic obligato was performed by Gov. Julius Heil of Wisconsin, who emphasized the presence in the audience of "Christian ladies and Christian gentlemen."

Hoover—or was it Hoover's ghost?—used the occasion of the birthday of the great American who gave this nation a new deal in 1861-65 to assault the New Deal of today. He has, of course, made this speech before, yet one must eternally marvel at the gall of the man. He whose name was ignominiously immortalized in the Hooverilles that once dotted the country actually pointed to his administration as a model in the organization of relief.

We should, however, feel grateful to Hoover for making it clear that the doctrines which he advocated in his address at the Lincoln Day dinner of the National Republican Club represented not his sentiments alone, but those of the entire Republican leadership. "I can say at once," he declared, "there has never been a time in the history of the party when in major questions there is such unity as there is today." And symbolic of that unity between the mock liberals and the frank reactionaries was the seating of Hoover and Thomas E. Dewey side by side.

But the spiritual heirs of Lincoln and of Washington, whose heroic vision at Valley Forge has become a caricature at the hands of the Hoovers and Garners, were not present at the National Republican Club. They can be found among the rank and file of the people.

Way Behind the Cables

LUDWIG LORE, who writes a syndicated column called "Behind the Cables," is often a good many months behind the cables.

One of Mr. Lore's favorite carps is Soviet trade with Germany, which he claims is increasing.

The most recent figures available show Russia last in a list of seven countries exporting oil to Germany. As reported in the *New York Times* of Thursday, February 16, Soviet oil trade with Germany dropped 73.9 percent in 1938. This, says the *Times*, is in line with all Russo-German trade. "German imports from Russia dropped from 65,100,000 marks in 1937 to 47,400,000 marks in 1938. German exports to Russia dropped from 117,400,000 marks in 1937 to 31,800,000 in 1938."

Reaction Blesses Green

WHEN the *New York Herald Tribune* lays its hands on in blessing, it behooves the people to take a look at the blessed. Mr. Ogden Reid's organ suddenly broke into hallelujahs over the Executive Council session of the AFL at Miami. It heard an expression of "common sense" from among the palms. And what was this wisdom? An attack upon the New Deal by William Green and his colleagues. Of course the AFL executives did not put it in so many words; they learned that lesson at the Houston convention when John P. Frey and Matthew Woll had their ears pinned back by the delegates for their resolution excoriating the New Deal.

The attack today is smother: an attack upon "government spending"; a plea to "enable all financiers and the owners and management of industry to face the future with confidence." It was, baldly, a rehash of the declarations of Herbert Hoover and Tom Girdler.

As the *Herald Tribune* put it, "we have, in other words, a demand from labor's most powerful spokesmen that the New Deal reverse itself . . ." The *Wall Street* spokesman thereupon asks if it "exaggerates" the significance of the AFL statement as a "most important sign of the times." "We miss our guess," the *Tribune* editorial declares, "if it is not considered so at the White House." *

We can only reply that we miss our guess if the AFL membership does not react to this treachery in the same way it did at the Houston convention when Messrs. Woll and Frey were literally howled down.

Amending Neutrality

EXPERIENCE has proved that the present Neutrality Act defeats the purpose which it was originally intended to serve. The act was designed to keep America out of war by keeping America impartial. Actually, it has brought us closer to war because it has favored the aggressors.

The need for a policy more consistent with our national interests was stressed by President Roosevelt in his opening message to Congress. In calling for a distinction between the warmakers and the victims of their aggression, the President echoed the growing sentiment of the country for revision of the Neutrality Act. Last week, Sen. Elbert D. Thomas, Democrat of Utah, introduced the first bill in this session of Congress to carry out the intent of the President's message. It is a first step in the right direction. It has evoked the displeasure of the *Wall Street Journal*, but this is to be expected of the American friends of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis.

Senator Thomas' bill would amend the Neutrality Act by giving the President power to distinguish between the treaty-breaking nations and those which faithfully observe treaties. An aggressor nation is defined as one which deliberately goes to war contrary to a treaty to which the United States is a party. This definition would put teeth in the Nine-Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand pact. The President, under the amendment, could exempt victims of aggression from his neutrality proclamation with the approval of a majority in each house of Congress.

While this bill is only a first step, it represents an important gain for the peace forces in this country. For whatever bill is finally adopted, it must include the major principle of Senator Thomas' amendment: the distinction between aggressor and peaceful nations.

The New Cabal

NAZIS know well that free elections are the death of fascism. Terror and threats are the only politics that gangsters know. With brass knuckles, bombs, and castor oil they have made their way into Italy, Germany, Austria, Spain, Czechoslovakia.

Now they are putting the arm on the Vatican.

Dr. Carl-Ludwig Diego von Bergen, the Nazi envoy to the Holy See and dean of the diplomatic corps there, used his position, while delivering the corps' condolences on the death of Pius XI, to wave the Nazi steel whip.

"We are assisting at the elaboration of a new world," proclaimed von Bergen, "which wants to raise itself on the ruins of the past that in many things has no longer any reason to exist. We want this evolution to be peaceful, and the Papacy without any doubt has an essential role."

That role, according to Hitler and Mussolini, is to elect a Pope who will give the fascist salute; to change Catholic doctrine so that human redemption shall be limited to

100 percent Aryans; to replace the Catechism with *Mein Kampf*. And since fascism is facing bankruptcy, there is also the question of Catholic Church wealth and revenues.

Mussolini's press has already suggested the election of a septuagenarian or some venerable cardinal whose mind may be enfeebled by age—the better to intimidate him. His agents operate their cabal inside the Vatican walls. Il Duce himself is waiting with his veto to guide their consciences. The prisoner of the Vatican must be stooge for fascism, he proclaims.

Or else—

Well, there are several billion dollars' worth of property all inventoried in fascist-dominated countries. We know what happened to Catholic trade unions in Germany, Italy, and Austria; and what is happening to Catholic Action in those countries; and what happened to Cardinals Faulhaber and Innitzer when they put Christ before Hitler.

Meanwhile, the cardinals prepare to elect the new Pope from among their number as the fascist threat hangs over them.

Japan and the USSR

JAPAN is once more making faces at the Soviet Union over alleged fishing rights off Soviet Kamchatka. The Japanese Diet has passed a unanimous resolution calling for "swift, appropriate action, not stopping at the use of force, to protect Japanese rights and interests." And the Japanese ambassador to Moscow has been instructed to threaten thus and so unless Japan's demands are granted. All of which is excellent for home consumption, particularly when the war against China isn't going so well and Japanese prestige needs bolstering. The loud talk against the USSR and the maneuvers on the Soviet border also serve as a diversion, under cover of which the fascist axis strikes blows—real ones—not at the Soviet Union but at the capitalist democracies. For example, the Japanese seizure of Hainan, which menaces the vital interests of France, Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States.

This is not to say that the Japanese militarist cabal and its partners in the anti-Comintern pact are not preparing for ultimate war against the land of socialism. But the fascist bully governments have shown no eagerness to tackle strong opponents. Even in striking down small countries like Austria and Czechoslovakia they require the aid of the reactionary ruling circles of Britain and France. The memory of what happened at Changkufeng last summer, when the flower of the Japanese army was given a beating by the Soviet Red Army, is still fresh in the minds of even the most reckless of Tokyo's fire-eaters. It may be taken as axiomatic that Japan will not seriously move

against the Soviet Union until Hitler is ready to move in Eastern Europe. And before Hitler is able to do that, he has a number of hurdles to cross, notably Poland, Rumania, and the Baltic states, where resistance to Nazi pressure has grown since the Munich betrayal. And Hitler must likewise give some satisfaction to his partner, Mussolini, whose gaze is westward rather than toward the east. While a sudden shift in the direction of the fascist drive is not precluded, present signs indicate that France is to be the victim of the second Munich which Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain, and Bonnet are hatching. And after France, can Britain and the USA be far behind?

We Called the Shot

IN THE January 31 issue of *NEW MASSES*, in an article entitled "Where Murder Is Safe," attention was called to the political corruption then being aired in the Brooklyn, N. Y., courts, and to the labor side of the story which had not at that time broken.

Last week the New York newspapers told the story of Magistrate Mark Rudich, now being held in the Amen investigation. Rudich was the judge whose unfair decision in the case of the Brooklyn Jewish Hospital strike was described by the authors of the article.

First credit, however, should go to the Brooklyn Labor and Citizens Committee, which is busy exposing Brooklyn corruption, particularly as it manifests itself in labor cases. The Rudich case, we hope, will be the first of many to be prosecuted by the officials.

That Sales Tax Again

THE sales tax is the only kind the tory approves. Placing equal burdens on unequal incomes is the easiest way around the democratic method of giving the greatest burdens to those best able to pay.

New York State's reactionaries are back at their old game of trying to saddle the people with a sales tax. This time Senator McNaboe wants to revive a bill proposed in 1934 by a tory Republican, George Fearon. The bill provides for a 2 percent tax on all business transactions down to and including five cents. Food, which has heretofore evaded even the New York City tax, would be included under the McNaboe measure. Transactions with doctors, dentists, lawyers, and other professionals would be taxable. Indeed, the incongruous exceptions are more notable than the items included. Salaries, banking services, fertilizers, real estate, dairy feed, and motor fuel—for unaccountable, or at least unaccounted for, reasons—are among the few things that would not come within the bill's scope.

McNaboe has revived the state sales tax as an alternative to Governor Lehman's new tax proposals. Lehman's proposals are themselves less than adequate, but McNaboe's must first be brushed aside. New Yorkers should protest to Abbot Low Moffat of the State Ways and Means Committee in Albany.

New Deal Trends in Cuba

WHEN Col. Fulgencio Batista, head of the Cuban army, returned from his trip to Washington, the "upper classes" in Havana shook their heads dubiously but turned out to greet him. The recent trend in Cuban politics had been too New Dealish to suit them. The sequel came as an even greater shock. Batista soon left for Mexico, conferred with President Cárdenas, traveled widely, and publicly approved of what he saw. When he returned this time, there was another cannon salute, the workers together with assorted government officials were out in force, but the "upper classes" stayed away in droves.

The second reception was symbolic of the transformation in Cuba's "strong man." When he represented reaction, reaction supported him. Now that he has taken some large steps in a progressive direction, reaction is sore. There is even good reason to believe that an anti-Batista coup may be attempted if and when the island reactionaries consider themselves ready.

One of the most heartening signs of Batista's transition is his frank avowal of past mistakes. In a farewell speech in Mexico City, Batista said: "We have made a revolution but we have not been sanctioned by the vote of the people. This is still what we have been regretting most. For we have not, like the government of Lazáro Cárdenas, a constitutional base. . . . This, I repeat, I am regretting. I am young and the conditions were difficult." If all goes well, Cuba will soon have a constitutional government, elected directly by the masses of people. The labor movement is strong and growing stronger with full freedom of action and government encouragement.

Pan-American unity could have no better expression than this. The New Deal in Mexico and the United States could not fail to have a profound effect upon Central and South America. Cuba and Chile are in advance of their neighbors but everywhere there is ferment, as Brazil's Foreign Minister Aranha demonstrated in Washington last week. No country can afford to ignore the weight of this democratic bloc of nations in the Western hemisphere, even if the sincerity of some is still open to question. A beginning has been made but the price of progress remains eternal vigilance.

Reader's Forum

Old South Not Feudal

TO NEW MASSES: The editor of your "Flashbacks" column referred in the issue of February 7 to the ante-bellum "feudalistic South."

This is a serious and all too frequent error and one that is at the base of a misconception of American Negro slavery. That slavery was, on the whole, in the words of Marx, "a commercial system of exploitation." True, the Old South and feudalism had certain superficial characteristics in common, as "chivalry" and dueling, and it is also true that both were predominantly agricultural. But, and here is the crux of the matter, the types of agricultural production were fundamentally different.

Feudalism meant non-commercial, small-scale farming. Feudalism meant a restricted local market. But American slavery, in 90 percent of the area it blighted and through 90 percent of its lifetime, meant commercial large-scale planting for a world market. American slavery was capitalistic agriculture with, on the whole, absentee landlords and hired overseers whose income was proportioned to the amount of the crops they drove out of the slaves. The crops—sugar, rice, tobacco, cotton—were raised for export, and the necessities—tools, animals, clothes, much of the food, and, in large part, its workers—had to be imported.

Therefore, American slavery, as any productive system for a world market based upon private profit, was subject to business cycles, periods of so-called "prosperity," depression, and panic. And therefore, at all times, the income of the workers, the slaves, was proportioned to their productivity, and was, during economic distress, subject to severe curtailment. It is this that, essentially, explains why periods of great unrest among the slaves were periods of acute depression. And it is this, the capitalistic nature of American slavery, that accounts for the fact that it was systematized cruelty.

Mint-julep and moonlight were enjoyed by a very restricted class in the Old South. The mass of the population, Negro and white, was subject to incessant labor with painfully inadequate recompense. For the bulk of the population the slave South was a land of continual and frightful oppression.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

Answering Forsythe

TO NEW MASSES: Robert Forsythe asks, "Is the theater a waste of time?" and answers that, more or less, it is, because it is practically limited to "sabled audiences" in Manhattan. When someone so gifted with optimism and good sense writes an article which leaves creative theater people out on a limb, I can't help feeling that we ought to start taking theater problems a little more seriously. Only a lack of thorough and consistent critical discussion in this field would lead someone like Forsythe, who loves the theater, into such a state of gloom.

Just to get some matters straight: the American theater is not, and never has been, confined to Manhattan Island. In addition to touring companies, stock companies, community theaters, college theaters, and workers' theaters there are Federal Theater units across the whole country. I don't have the statistics at the moment, but there is no doubt that next to Soviet Russia no country in the world has so much theater activity as the United States. Sinclair Lewis' play *It Can't Happen Here*, put on by the Federal Theater about two years ago, appeared before popular audiences in twenty-three simul-

taneous productions throughout the country. Under the auspices of the New Theater League Clifford Odets' *Waiting for Lefty* has played to an estimated audience of one million people in the United States. Even in New York the "carriage trade" element of theater audiences is probably in the minority.

Forsythe's article has the implication that the so-called "legitimate" theater is dead by comparison with the movies. Some twenty years ago not a few commentators predicted that the movies were going to kill off the stage. Instead the stage reached gigantic new audiences in the Soviet Union, greatly increased audiences in the United States (by way of the Federal Theater). Stage audiences are still increasing all through Europe, even in the fascist states, where such regimented organizations as the *Strength through Joy* are being herded into the Nazified playhouses to get dosed with poisoned treacle. (Italy also has dramatic propaganda troupes known as the Cars of Thespis.)

Furthermore, it is becoming clear that no hard and fast line separates the work of the stage from that of the motion picture. Both are theatrical forms, and the achievements of one have their effect on the other. The still newer dramatic form of radio (with television to come) is finding world audiences, and will eventually reach every man, woman, and child on this planet. Powerful and important as these new mediums are, they do not replace the stage, even though they already have, proportionately, far larger audiences.

It would be a mistake, also, not to see the indirect influence of the stage on cinema and radio. The front line of advance toward a better theater is still largely within the "legitimate" stage. It is surely going too far to say, "Never mind reviewing the pictures of Goya, the man in the street never saw any of them," or "Why discuss Malraux? The only fiction that reaches the man in the street is the pulp magazine!"

Of course the entire nation ought to be getting its opportunity to see *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* right away. This is impossible, unfortunately: the Playwrights Producing Company is not a Utopian organization which can be expected to injure itself financially by giving away a piece of valuable property as a gift to the American people. The ideal setup would be to have a permanent national and democratic theater which would carry on and enlarge the work of the present Federal Theater—one which would have funds for the production of plays like Sherwood's *Abe Lincoln* and make them available at once over a great circuit of playhouses. That is a program for which Forsythe could well stand up and cheer.

Forsythe is further unclear when he says, "The theater in Russia is exciting because it gets to the people . . . but aside from *Pygmalion* at the Old Vic in London and *Julius Caesar* and *Heartbreak House* by the Mercury Theater here, I have seen nothing in several years that did not leave me with a dull feeling." If a certain play gets to a lot of people, does that of itself make the play exciting? Millions go to see some of Hollywood's Class-B tripe, without on that account making such pictures any better. Again, excitement in itself is no guarantee of valid meaning in a production.

On the other hand, it is not a bad thing that Forsythe has had the courage to look beyond the amenities of recent dramatic reviewing and to say frankly that he is bored. Dramatic production as known to Broadway today (a type of production imitated by the progressive section of the theater in everything except the intention of the playscript) has become very stale indeed. It is bound to leave any honest person frustrated if he sees nothing else on the horizon.

However, that is not the whole picture. About ten years ago the technique of the Broadway theater entered a long period of decline, the end of which is not yet in sight. When the economic crisis hit this country the professional theater refused to deal with the consequent social and political upheaval. It became necessary for a whole new theater movement, led by amateur dramatic groups of workers,

to bring modern "social" playscripts into the American theater. The new movement won this point, which is now ancient history: even such conservative critics as Brooks Atkinson and John Mason Brown now agree that social plays have a place in the theater.

But this was only the first engagement of a long campaign. It is not enough to suppose that new scripts automatically make a new theater. Playscripts are only a part of production; not only new plays but a whole new production form is required. A new "message" does not automatically create a new form. The new form has to be created, carved out, and fought for—as the Soviet theater found out. Having once started on the road toward a new theater, we cannot stop with the script, we have to remake acting, directing, scene and costume design, playhouse design, and dramatic criticism. If the new message does not attain its own new form, it begins to be swallowed up again by the existing clichés. To my mind this is one important reason why there has been a letdown recently in progressive dramatic writing.

Progress in the theater, we may be sure, will not end at this point. The present Broadway technique continues to weaken, while the necessity for a new form grows more and more apparent. Broadway's outdated technique of attenuated *Naturalism* will be replaced. Two new experimental forms have already passed beyond it in Europe—the technique of *Socialist Realism* in the Soviet Union and that of *Epic* in pre-Hitler Germany. It is a complex job to explain what the Broadway technique consists of, just how it is deteriorating in its various departments, and what the future technique proposes to put in its place. I myself have been at work on such an explanation, which I hope to have ready as a book by next fall. For those who can see them, the prospects for dramatic production in the future are fascinating—exciting, if you will—and enough to convince almost anybody that Theater itself is not a waste of time. Only a certain kind of outdated theater is a waste of time.

New York City.

MORDECAI GORELIK.

They Like "New Masses"

TO NEW MASSES: I saw a copy of the first issue of *NEW MASSES* in its new form and manner of handling present-day questions, last week while in Cleveland. I became absorbed at once in the striking coverage of Spain and did not let up until the entire issue had been finished. A splendid job! It is alive, interesting, and a fine political document. You know the problems of my people, the Negro people, are close to my heart and I am sure that as in the past *NEW MASSES* will continue to reflect its extreme sensitiveness to these problems. Please allow me to congratulate the entire editorial board and staff on the new form of the magazine and its fine handling of present-day questions that face the entire American people.

New York City.

JAMES W. FORD.

TO NEW MASSES: I like the new format, and I love the contents. Your articles for the coming weeks sound most interesting. I am eager to read the article by Aragon and those on the national health program and the Catholics.

I am sorry that I did not see any announcement of articles on workers in various industries and professions. For a long time I have thought that you should give the "inside dope" on the activities of department-store workers, waiters, policemen, telephone operators, factory workers, or more of teachers, social workers, newspapermen, doctors, lawyers, etc. Your story about the workers at *Time* magazine gave some of this and, believe me, we all liked it.

I am a white-collar worker in one of the big utility companies. What we have to put up with to get our jobs in this outfit, and keep them, always sounds incredible to outsiders. We are always interested in reading about the conditions of others.

New York City.

CATHERINE WATSON.

Ruth McKenney's "Industrial Valley"

Albert Maltz tells about this remarkable book. A new form in literature. How to write industrial history. Organizing the rubber industry.

WHAT a remarkable book this is! It has the forward-moving momentum of a good novel, yet it is not a novel; it has the excitement and verity of historic fact, yet it is more than reporting. I think, actually, that Ruth McKenney has invented a new form in literature. Scholars could, with accuracy, point to her literary antecedents. That is all right, since nothing so good as this comes out of thin air; the author is properly part of the whole surge and achievement and tradition of social writing. Thus there is an organic link between her method and the sort of reportage which *NEW MASSES* has been running for years. Yet reportage as a method for a short article, and reportage as applied to the story of a town, of its people, of an industry, of an era, in a full-length book, are very different things.

This is the achievement: Miss McKenney wished to tell the story of Akron, of its industry, rubber, of the lives and final unionization of the rubber workers during the years 1932-36. It is a vast, complex history. Traditionally one might tell it in novel form, in play form, or as factual reporting. Each one of these methods has its own integrity, its own virtues, its own limitations. A play provides impact, but loses richness; a novel retains richness but remains fiction, whether persuasive or not. The author has invented a form of reportage-novel, to coin a phrase, or a form of living-newspaper-in-prose, to offer another, which seems to me as unique as any one of the other forms, self-justified from now on in taking its place among all the others.

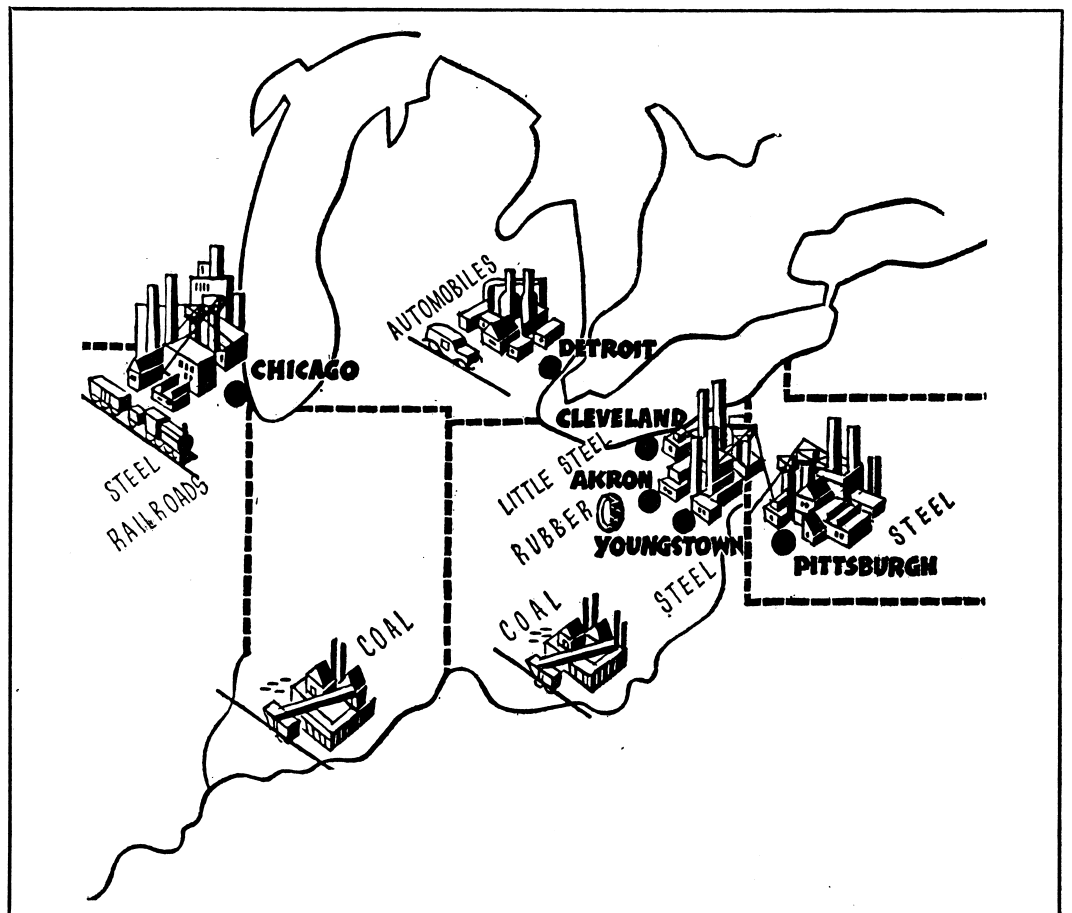
First of all, her story of Akron carries the feel of *Ten Days that Shook the World*, namely, of an historical period of great moment, told as such. The story of Akron is not, of course, one of social upheaval on the scale of the Russian Revolution. Yet, in its own way, it meant a good deal of that for industrial America. It involved the upsurge of hitherto unorganized and frightfully exploited workers in a basic industry; it involved the first mass use of the sitdown strike; it signaled the emergence of the CIO in strike struggle; and it lit a beacon light for auto and for steel, which were to come later. This feel of vital events in the making, with all of the exciting throb of living history, is the basic pattern of the book. One reads the record, speaking for itself, with the verity and hot challenge that sheer fact can provide above any fiction. The author has not invented her story, she has portrayed a story already invented by life.

Second, there is a departure from cold,

historical recording into the method of purposeful selection. A thousand other histories could have been written around Akron in this period. One could tell it from the point of view of a young industrialist, Bud Firestone, of an individual rubber worker at the Firestone plant, of the widowed lady who owns a drygoods store on a forgotten street. Or one could tell it as Beard records the history of a region. The author has chosen still another method, which is more profound than the former and more selectively dramatic than the latter, that of writing the social history of Akron in order to illuminate the final events of her story (which are at the same time the major historical phenomena of the town), namely, the emergence and victory of the rubber workers' union. Through this selection, buttressed by fact, comes, not biased history but an objective story, since it is only through selection, interpretation, and understanding that intelligent history, history that really explains events and illuminates trends, can come. Thus the author spends some pages, at one point, in reporting the coming of the Oxford religious movement to

Akron. One might question, offhand, the relevancy of giving any space at all to Dr. Buchman and his coterie of dress-shirt Holy Rollers. In the author's story, however, it provides the most profound illumination of the psychology of a depressed, desperate owning class; the better citizens of Akron, the tire pontiffs, the Chamber of Commerce gentlemen and their wives, go on a weekend jag with God, hoping—and how pitiful it becomes—that Monday morning, after oblivion, prosperity will arrive in the mail. Previously they had tried whistling, grinning with Herbie Hoover, running cheer-up, spend-now, Boost-Akron campaigns, cutting wages, and laying off workers (of course)—what else was left for a blind class to do? This is reporting with a purpose; it is fact selected to provide illumination, not fact reported as a record of rainfall, and the result is brilliant history.

One finds this selection again in the very frequent use of newspaper reports. The author rarely quotes directly from the papers, but rather paraphrases, often with fine, sardonic wit; she juxtaposes, she selects for



Ad Reinhardt

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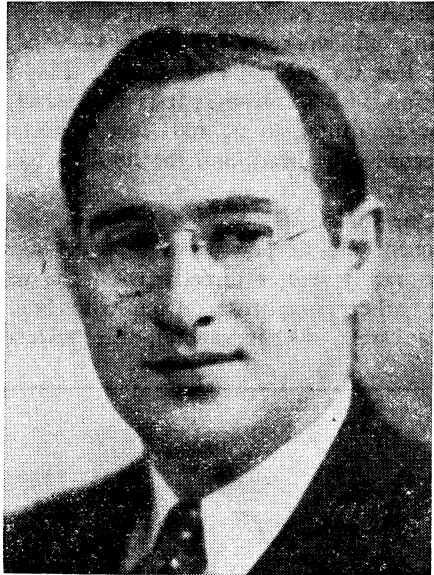


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dramatic or meaningful effect. Again the result is heightened interest and illumination. One commences to see and feel and understand the nature and effects of a bank crash as never before.

Third, there is the use of artistic emphasis, of packing, of selection on a total scale, as used in a play or novel. This is very different from straight, factual reporting, even to the degree that John Reed employed it. Miss McKenney has fused reports from the press, reportage, individual character delineation, and direct author comment; she has weighed them all, handled one at length and others briefly, all to the final purpose of history made more meaningful by being told with the art of drama. For the most part the author has succeeded brilliantly with her technique, although here I personally would ask for more development of certain sections, for cutting and greater selectivity in the portion given to the depression years, for more reportage and less from the newspapers, for a greater emphasis upon individual character. Such modifications, I think, could be of profit in any subsequent use of the method. They do not for a moment, however, mar the achievement of this book. The wonder is that the author has succeeded so thoroughly in a very difficult task, for which she had no single precedent. It could have been so dull, the method has so many pitfalls, but instead it compels attention like a Dashiell Hammett story.

This brings me finally to remark on the final effect of the book (Harcourt, Brace & Co., \$3), which still has me backing off in admiration: it is history so wrought as to provide the gripping effect and suspense of a novel. Indeed it is more dramatic than a good many first-rate novels. One doesn't read Beard and feel like cheering when Cornwallis surrenders to Washington; but when the abominably exploited rubber workers, whom the author has traced through years of starvation and relief, finally explode into the first mass sitdown strike in American history, I almost leaped out of bed at one in the morning. I was so glad and happy for them I really wanted to cheer. And I knew all the time that it was true, it had happened, it was not just a "story." Later, during the long, savage period of strike, the events are like the last scenes of *Stevedore* or *Chapayev*—one is literally on the edge of one's seat watching superb theater told superbly. But still, history. And anyone who wishes to challenge that history, as the author tells it, had better marshal his facts, because Miss McKenney has most certainly marshaled hers.

I don't know whether the author deserves more credit for the intrinsic merit of this record—a record of a whole time and of a whole nation rather than just a single city—or whether she should be more commended for the successful invention of a literary technique which opens up a broad new horizon for other writers. Since she has done both, perhaps we should not attempt to decide, but rather offer her all the bouquets she can

carry. *Industrial Valley* is the Book Union choice for February; it has never made a better one.

ALBERT MALTZ.

Gedye's Report

Theodore Draper praises "Betrayal in Central Europe"

WITH disturbing frequency I have heard people say that they were tired of reading about Europe's interminable crises. These were no ordinary people, because they gave superior reasons. They stopped reading out of infinite compassion. They were weary of the brutality and senselessness of it all. Some of them even confessed that they no longer read the news from Spain. "It is too horrible. I look at the headlines and I skip the rest. Why should I torture myself?" So Spain, even Spain, is wiped out of their consciousness by the gentle method of just not reading about it.

What could one say to people like these in behalf of G. E. R. Gedye's book (Harper & Bros., \$3.50)? About five-sixths of it deals with Austria of the recent past. Its betrayal took place last March, almost a year ago. Mr. Gedye concludes his book with the betrayal of Czechoslovakia. That happened in September, less than five months ago. But neither country is any longer in the center of the crisis. The papers no longer carry long daily dispatches from Prague and Vienna. The news out of there is fitful, meager, and dull. They are even farther away than Spain.

For anybody who would like to forget that there is systematic death in Barcelona and sudden death in Shanghai, misery in Vienna and unknown terrors in Prague, Mr. Gedye's book will be a nightmare. It is worse, far worse, than anything anybody read in the newspapers before and after Munich. Here, as far as it can be told today, is the full, foul story of a nation's strangulation. It is drenched in passion and bitterness. It is unforgettable and maddening. Gedye, the most profound of the foreign correspondents writing for an American paper, outdoes himself. There was so much that he knew but could not put into his daily dispatches or so much that his papers, the *New York Times* and the *London Daily Telegraph*, would not print. Now it can be told.

There is the story which captures the very essence of toryism. Wenzel Jaksch, the former German Social Democratic leader in Czechoslovakia, flew to London, after Munich, to plead for British visas for some of his associates. He called on Lord Runciman and reminded him of the time, in Prague, when Runciman had assured him that he came as "friend of all and the enemy of none." Jaksch informed Runciman how desperate was the peril of the working-class leaders in Czechoslovakia. He who had done so much for the Henleinists, could he not do this little bit for

democrats? To which Lord Runciman replied: "I believe that the lord mayor is opening a fund for you all, and if so, you will certainly find my name on the list of contributors." Jaksch picked up his hat and crutches and left.

There is the incident which captures the very essence of the fascist accession to power. The vengeance they take goes far into the right. Schuschnigg relented somewhat just before his fall and received a workers' delegation, come to promise conditional support if he would agree to certain demands, such as the reorganization of the free unions. Confronted with the immediate Nazi danger, Schuschnigg agreed and sent them off to negotiate the details with Herr Staud, head of the state-controlled "unions." Staud, however, refused to budge and the negotiations came to nothing. Ten days later the wife of one member of the delegation to Schuschnigg came to see Gedye. The Nazis, now in power, had thrown him into prison. Had he been beaten? asked Gedye. "Not up till yesterday," she replied, "when I got a message smuggled out from him. But the man who was in his cell when he got there was in a shocking state—beaten almost to a jelly." Who was the other man? "Staud," she said, "head of the old government's fake trade union."

Many more incidents like these are sprinkled throughout the book but they only give it warmth and humanity. The depth is achieved by uncanny detail and remarkable insight. In effect, Gedye has done a clinical study of a typical fascist aggression. He traces the disintegration and overthrow of a sovereign nation from the first symptoms to the final gasp. In this case the nation is Austria, because the Czech part of the book does not pretend to anything like the same thoroughness. The beginning is placed at the bloody 15th of July 1927, when police massacred peaceful Socialist demonstrators whose leaders refused to use the arms they had saved for just such a crisis. At some length, he describes the events, circumstances, and personalities in the February 1934 counter-revolution under Dollfuss and Fey. The body of the book is devoted to Schuschnigg's regime. There are magnificent sections on the underground, working-class movement, the Nazi conspiracy, above all, Schuschnigg's fateful meeting with Hitler at Berchtesgaden at which Austria was finally sacrificed. According to Gedye, Schuschnigg was a courageous man who could not rise above his social and clerical derivations. He could have escaped when the Nazis took power, but deliberately refused. He could have fought back had he trusted the people, but refused until too late.

In the section on Czechoslovakia, Gedye affirms that the Czechs could have had the aid of the Soviets for the asking, but pressure from their own "fifth column" prevented President Beneš from so doing. On the Sunday before the Czech collapse, Dr. Beneš called the Soviet minister, Alexandrovsky, and put two questions to him about Soviet aid, jointly with France or jointly with the League of

Nations. Alexandrovsky answered to his full satisfaction but the Russian diplomat knew that Beneš had not spoken his full mind. After a long silence, Alexandrovsky asked: "M. le President, is there not another question you wish to ask me regarding Russia's action should an appeal to the League be made impossible by some trickery or other?" Beneš did not answer and Alexandrovsky departed. Gedye's comment is: "Thus did the man whom the Goebbels propaganda machine was denouncing daily as a 'Red' refrain from calling in the direct aid of Russia which he knew was available for him and which might have saved his country's independence."

The highest praise that I can give this book is that it is the work of a completely honest man, who happens to be a newspaper correspondent. He has told what he knew, which is plenty, when others would not have dared or cared. For the fainthearts his book will be something to skip, like any touch of reality. It is not the sort of thing which makes you sleep any sounder. Its burning rage is infectious. But for those who have made up their minds to resist fascism in the spirit of Madrid, it is invaluable because it is the best case-study of a fascist aggression that I know of and you can always substitute a number of other countries for Austria and get the same result. In final effect it is like Thomas Mann's *This Peace* only its plea lies implicit in its story.

THEODORE DRAPER.


Labor Relations

Bruce Minton reviews book by Robert R. R. Brooks

IN *Unions of Their Own Choosing* (Yale University Press, \$3), Robert R. R. Brooks has written a valuable and impressive analysis of the National Labor Relations Board and its work. Today, when the NLRB is under attack from the employers and the top leadership of the AFL, the last chapter of Brooks' book, "The NLRB and Democracy," should be reprinted as a pamphlet and distributed as widely as possible. The achievements of the board go unreported in the press—or are tucked carefully away in the back sections of those papers which keep up a semblance of impartiality. At the same time, editorial after editorial has been devoted to misrepresenting the board, to attacking it, to giving the impression that it is biased, dictatorial, inefficient, a menace to the Constitution.

Mr. Brooks has convincingly set forth the record of the NLRB, and has examined objectively the charges made against it. The conclusion he reaches is one of primary importance to the whole progressive movement in America. Mr. Brooks writes:

... the reason for the existence of the board is to encourage the development of unionism by removing the anti-union obstacles in its path. To just the extent that unionism is encouraged, the means of

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democratic control over the federal government are enhanced. Although the board is a federal agency, its task is to hasten the advance of local industrial democracy and democratic political checks upon federal power. . . . [My italics—B. M.]

And in addition, Mr. Brooks finds:

The chief danger of group-pressure politics is that the better-organized minority groups may exercise greater pressure upon government policy than the looser organizations of majority interests. . . . Organized pressure groups of bankers, public-utility managements, stock traders, and large taxpayers, for example, although representing a small minority of the total population, may outweigh the pressures of workers, farmers, professionals, and small business men. . . . To just the extent that the National Labor Relations Act promotes the organization of workers, it serves to prevent the capture of governmental machinery by minority interests.

These summations follow a thorough examination of the history of the board, its methods of work, and the criticisms leveled against it. Mr. Brooks points out that between October 1935 and January 1938 the board conducted 966 elections, of which 80.4 percent were held with the full consent of all parties concerned, and in only 19.6 percent of the cases was the board forced to call hearings and, despite opposition, to order elections. In three years the board has settled 1,293 strikes out of 1,724 handled, an average of 76 percent successfully. It averted, during this time, 593 strikes. Whatever complaint the AFL Executive Council may have, it cannot accuse the board of unfairness or prejudice in favor of the CIO, because the board merely registers the preference of workers for one or the other organization in collective bargaining. As Mr. Brooks comments, William Green's accusations of bias are tantamount to denouncing a voting machine for registering a victory for the party that receives the majority of votes. And he adds, "If an arithmetic test be applied, the board has leaned slightly, if at all, toward the AFL."

In Congress today, the anti-New Deal forces threaten to amend the Wagner act. The amendments do not seek to improve the act, but are intended instead to rob it of just those powers that aid workers in attaining collective bargaining and protection against unjust and arbitrary dismissals, discrimination, company unions, spies and intimidation, and anti-union offensives. The amendments are further designed to limit labor's ability to exercise independent political power. The "charges" against the act leveled by employers and reactionaries in Congress are based on a few cases, ballyhooed by the press, supposedly showing injustice on the part of the board. But an examination of even the handful of cases deliberately winnowed out of thousands to "prove" the wrongdoings sanctioned by the act shows that far from endangering free speech or exercising a dictatorship, the board has been instrumental in guarding the liberties of the majority. Its greatest stumbling block has been the determination of certain powerful industrialists not to respect laws passed by Congress and upheld by the Supreme Court.

Mr. Brooks' *Unions of Their Own Choos-*

ing is valuable equipment for every worker and labor leader, as well as for all persons anxious to ensure a progressive America. It should be used widely as a handbook for discussions, for debates in forums, for education. The NLRB is part of labor's Bill of Rights. Its destruction by amendments that on the surface may appear harmless is an attempt by the minority to recapture the good old days of the open shop, the days of unrestricted exploitation of the majority for the greater profit of the few.

BRUCE MINTON.

Fascist Apologia

"Fascist Economic Policy" reviewed
by David Ramsey

ECONOMIC instability is the driving wheel of the fascist war machine, leading to ever more insolent aggression, and the looting of industrialized countries and colonies. Mussolini revealed the truth about fascist economy when he said that the Italian people cannot afford the luxury of eating more than once a day. The people living under the fascist dictatorships have a rendezvous with death; hence cannons must substitute for butter.

There is nothing "miraculous" about fascist economics; our Tories simply use the term because they envy this example of "self-rule" by big business. The miracle consists in squeezing the people to the very limit of human endurance in order to supply the needs of the war machine. It extracts increasingly more work for less income so that the entire economy will not collapse from the growing strains imposed by undeclared wars.

For some time now evidence has piled up indicating that the fascist miracle is approaching the extreme limit of sacrifice which the population, especially the workers, can endure. That is why the war tempo of the fascist axis is constantly mounting; that is why the process of expropriation, beginning with the middle classes, was extended to the Jews, then to the Catholics, and will be further extended in the immediate future to the non-armaments capitalists. The economies are strained to the breaking point; the specter of inflation haunts them all; they are still kept going by the bluffs of the dictators and the connivance and support of the Chamberlains in the bourgeois democracies.

These facts are pretty generally known; even the financial press discusses them openly. Consequently, we should expect a book dealing with fascist economic policy at least to take them into account. But with the exception of a surprised footnote, which tells of Mussolini's suddenly acquired anti-Semitism, there is nothing in the study under review (by William G. Welk, Harvard University Press, \$4) indicating that fascist economy is in chronic crisis.

Professor Welk does not discuss the dynamics of the economic crisis of fascism; instead, he accepts the "unbiased" reports of

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the Italian propaganda ministry at their face value. He solemnly assures us that the motive behind Mussolini's program is "an attempt at reform." But the character of this reform is shown even in the doctored statistics which he quotes from the fascist propaganda mills. They cannot conceal the degradation of living standards to a level lower than in the nineteenth century, nor can they hide the critical condition of the entire economy.

Now, curiously enough, Professor Welk cautiously admits that fascism "is being paid for by the mass of the Italians through a lowered standard of living." Furthermore, he indicts the regime, its motives and its results, when he says: "Our general conclusion about the condition of Italian labor under fascism as measured by prevailing wage and employment conditions must be that on the whole it has not only failed of improvement, but has been made worse."

Yet, despite his own conclusions, which obviously he cannot discount as distorted, he makes the ridiculous claim that fascism seeks "the creation of a better social order, the realization of a new scheme for the social and economic advancement of the people."

Professor Welk cannot be accused of consciously propagandizing for fascism. He criticizes some of its repugnant features from the bourgeois democratic angle. But he is manifestly its dupe out of a false regard for the official pap given him, because apparently he believes that figures do not lie. He needs to be reminded that fascists make three kinds of propaganda statements: they give out lies, damn lies, and statistics. Perhaps the explanation for his acceptance of the fascist bluff about a non-existent corporate state lies in his naive trust in official documents. He himself points out that "economic life in Italy has been managed fundamentally as it is being managed in other Western European countries," for the convenience and profits of big business. Incidentally, he gives no profit figures although there are many statistical tables in the book.

The economic policy of fascism is geared for death and profits. It has nothing to offer the people except increasing sacrifices. In omitting this central detail, Professor Welk has failed to give us "a fair and accurate picture of the fascist phenomenon in Italy."

DAVID RAMSEY.



Fred Ellis

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The Scissorbills Swoop Down

New York's censors ban Liam O'Flaherty's French film, "The Puritan," then smother the American-made "Yes, My Darling Daughter." James Dugan describes both pictures.

A SUPERB French film laid in Ireland, *The Puritan*, and a mediocre American film laid in suburbia, *Yes, My Darling Daughter*, have been forbidden showings in the state of New York on the grounds that they are either (take your choice) "obscene, indecent, immoral, inhuman, sacrilegious, or of such a character that exhibition would tend to corrupt morals or incite to crime."

The State Board of Censors has honored *The Puritan* with the extra designation "indeed immoral." O'Flaherty's film tells the story of one Francis Ferriter, an Irish fanatic, member of the Vigilance League, whose object is the chastening of immoral books, thoughts, and people. Mr. Ferriter murders a loose young lady in quite premeditated fashion with the thought that he is erasing evil. But society, in the form of a wise cop, hunts him down with the very wiles that he scorns. In telling the tale, which Mr. O'Flaherty asserts is "very moral," it is necessary to mention some facts of life that do not cross polite screens: prostitution, bigotry, the destructive fanaticism that is the mover of fascism, and the human decency that opposes the Francis Ferriters and Adolf Hitler. The censors, when queried by Arthur Garfield Hays, were unable to find a single sequence that was objectionable in itself: mere cuts would not make the film acceptable. The whole thing was out. Censors tend to dislike films about censors.

The Puritan is the finest French picture since *Grand Illusion*. Artistically it belongs with the great psychological movies. A new director, Jeff Musso, working with Mr. O'Flaherty, makes a stunning debut, and the acting of Jean-Louis Berrault as Ferriter has not been surpassed, even by Pierre Blanchar, his compeer in this type of characterization.

WILL HAYS BLESSED IT

Warner Brothers' *Yes, My Darling Daughter* is a horse of different artistic color. That this fair-to-middling comedy of family problems on Long Island should be proscribed by our moral betters is an event that has me gaping. The frères Warner deloused a rousing stage farce by Mark Reed of every hint that babies are made in bed. They went so circumspect as to put a house between the boy and girl on their adventurous weekend by the lake. It was so chastely devised that Brother Will Hays blessed it without a burp. But the Warners did not reckon with the imaginations of the New York censors, who can spot an unblest event through six thicknesses of chastity belts. Again the scissorbills

could find no sequences to hack out. The whole thing goes.

Here are two pictures that are non-political. The New York State Board of Censors considers them too combustible for the public weal. What the scissorbills can do to films of an anti-fascist nature, what they can do to such a film as the Warners' *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, is the prospect that concerns us all.

The New York board is one of six such state censorships in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kansas, and Maryland. *Yes, My Darling Daughter* is the first Hollywood film to be banned in toto since 1930, the year Will Hays' Code came into an unappreciative world. Of course, they have smothered and hacked up Soviet and pro-loyalist films all along, but they don't knock off Hollywood and France every day. These reactionary scissorbills constitute the final control over the movie fare of the American people. In most cases there is no appeal from their arbitrary decisions. The noble flock in Ohio, for instance, prohibited Professor Mamlock on the sole ground that it was "harmful." The nest in Pennsylvania is captained by the relict of for-

mer Attorney General Palmer, author of the anti-labor terror following the World War. This lady sees Reds with cigars following her in the streets, according to her emergency calls to the Pennsylvania *guardia civil*.

BOXOFFICE BLUES

Elder William Hays himself is only an office boy employed to keep the premises clean. He is bought and paid for by the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, and as such is sensitive to the moods of the bosses—the boxoffice blues. Will is quietly pulling in his Adam's apple in these days of an unprecedented audience stay-away strike. Like the Supreme Court, Will follows the elections, and ballot box is spelled "box-office" in Hollywood. The state boards are the inflexible enemies of both boxoffice and audience and the first big push of a campaign to free the American film will have to roll right over the scissorbills.

The two films squashed in New York, *The Puritan* and *Yes, My Darling Daughter*, are the rallying point of producers, exhibitors, and the downtrodden audience. Before a camera turns, screenwriters and directors have



SEX! This is the climax of the white-hot goings on that moved the censors of New York State to ban "Yes, My Darling Daughter." The bed shown is outside the house.



SEX! This is the climax of the white-hot goings on that moved the censors of New York State to ban "Yes, My Darling Daughter." The bed shown is outside the house.

their efforts reduced to the lowest common denominator by the weird and unpredictable whims of the state boards. These creatures of privilege are the heart of what's wrong with the American movie. Will Hays can be thrown out on his ear any time the moguls elect to do so, but audiences must destroy the regal powers of the state scissorbills before they can tie the can on Hays. Fight for *The Puritan* and *Yes, My Darling Daughter* as the first move. The State Board of Regents at Albany, the final appeal outside of prolonged legal action, is considering the two films now. They have never reversed a ruling of the censors. Give them a couple of thousand hints in the morning mail that they'd better begin now.

JAMES DUGAN.

"The Little Foxes"

Ruth McKenney hails the new play by Lillian Hellman.

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BIRTH OF A FORTUNE

The sight isn't pretty. On the contrary. It is completely devastating. *The Little Foxes* is played to audiences who feel sick in the pits of their stomachs, watching the rich make their money. But if the birth of a fortune is not pleasant, it is exceedingly instructive. Miss Hellman suggests that the way to riches is paved with a little impolite thievery at the expense of one's nearest and dearest, buttered up with a slight touch of knavery, cheating Negroes, playing on race hate, paying sure-fire starvation wages, and government corruption.

This is the story, the theme of *The Little Foxes*. Around this central idea revolves one of the most fascinating stories I have seen in the American theater. Two brothers and their beautiful, vicious sister, whom Miss Tallulah Bankhead plays to horrible perfection, hover on the brink of a fortune as the play opens. A runaway Northern textile mill owner offers them a controlling interest in a new mill to be built in the little Southern town. But the sister's invalid husband, who is despised by his wife and loathes her in return, puts a snag in the family's plans. His

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wife lets him die when she might have saved him with the medicine he could not reach.

Miss Hellman's play is no cynical, polite description of the rich and their parlor tricks. The play is savage—and yet it ends with hope. For the young daughter and the proud, dignified Negro servant take their stand against the corruption—significantly, together. It is only a gesture, as the play ends—a touch of the servant's hand on the daughter's shoulder. But it is exactly the right gesture.

This is the theater at its contemporary best, this new play of Lillian Hellman's. Here is a story of America which burns with indignant, fierce passion. A story told with wit, and understanding, and hope.

The casting and production for the play are very nearly perfect—with the word used in its exact sense. Miss Bankhead fairly exudes the atmosphere of corruption. Her astonishing beauty only makes her magnificent performance more pointed. Patricia Collinge, as the pathetically decayed Southern gentlewoman who drinks a little on the sly to overcome the awful boredom and misery of her life, runs Miss Bankhead a close second for acting honors. Frank Conroy, Abbie Mitchell, Florence Williams, Carl Benton Reid, and Dan Duryea make the play rich with fine performances.

Lillian Hellman's career as a playwright began with the impact of *The Children's Hour*. She has written some of the few good movies to come out of Hollywood. And now, with *The Little Foxes*, she comes into her own as one of America's most vigorous and exciting playwrights, a writer for the theater who has brave and honest things to say.

The Little Foxes is one of the great events of this or any season on Broadway. It is an absolute must; buy your balcony seats early.

"STARS IN YOUR EYES"

I am a natural sucker for Ethel Merman and Jimmie Durante. They are both better than ever, really better, in *Stars in Your Eyes*. Miss Merman appears as a slinky movie star out to get her man and she sings appropriate ditties just to prove it.

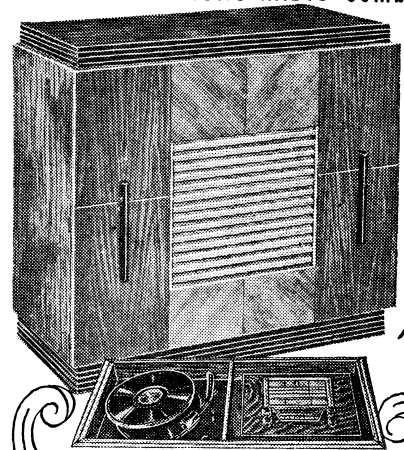
Mr. Durante, on the other hand, plays an idea man in Hollywood. One of his finest ideas—"weenies," he called them—is a scenario with miners in it. Lots of miners. Maybe 200,000 miners. Maybe 300,000. Lots of miners. Mr. Durante also sings.

At this point I feel slightly helpless. Many writers—my betters—have tried to get down on paper what makes people fall into awful, uncontrollable laughter at the incredible sight of Mr. Durante just standing on a stage saying things. Any things. I sat next to an old sour-puss who kept leaning over to a lady—a dame, as Mr. Durante would say—and groaning, "What on earth makes these fools laugh?" It was mutiny. Was I mortified!

Mr. Durante is terrific. He's colossal. Also Miss Merman. There's some singing and dancing and other things in *Stars in Your Eyes*, all better than average. It's a nice evening. A very nice evening. Loudly recommended.

RUTH MCKENNEY.

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GOINGS ON

ANALYSIS OF THE NEWS of the Week every Sunday evening at 8:30 p.m. at the Workers School, 35 East 12 Street, 2nd floor. Admission 20 cents.

ANNA SOKOLOV AND DANCE UNIT. First full length recital of season. Alvin Theater, 250 W. 52d St. Sunday evening, February 26th. Tickets 83c-\$2.20. Reserve your tickets now and avoid being disappointed. Call CAledonia 5-3076. Sponsored by New Masses.

"LIVING AMERICAN POETRY," with Joy Davidman, Kenneth Fearing, Alfred Hayes, Willard Maas, James Neugass, Norman Rosten, Muriel Rukeysner, Genevieve Taggard, David Wolf. Thursday, Feb. 23rd, 8:30 p.m., at Keynote Club, 201 West 52nd St. Admission 35c.

"LOST REELS in Movie History," compiled and described by Francis Doublier, first newsreel cameraman, Thursday, Mar. 2, at 8:30 p.m., at Keynote Club, 201 West 52nd St. Admission 50c.

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Negro Revue

Talent of performers wasted in "Blackbirds of 1939"

Blackbirds of 1939, a Negro revue produced by Lew Leslie and owned by "Ebony Productions, Inc.," came to town last week. From beginning to end it bears the imprint of the mind that chose these titles. In fact nothing short of Mr. Leslie's genius could fritter away the efforts of a stageful of sincere and talented Negro performers. No fewer than a dozen of these people possess such unusual talent that it peeps through the labyrinth of misconception and misdirection in which Mr. Leslie has encased them.

For a few minutes during a ballet called "Swing Struck," the show breaks free from the Leslie touch to burst into one of the most vital and furious dance routines seen on Broadway for many years. After this one scene the show falters, then collapses. Under more inspired direction these same performers might easily have given a really first-rate evening of entertainment. GARRET CONARTY.

Political Operetta

"Maid in Japan" has good music but mediocre script

THE high standards set by such plays as *Waiting for Lefty*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, *Bury the Dead*, and *Plant in the Sun*, all New Theater League prize-winners, put the latest winner, *Maid in Japan*, in an embarrassing position. Certainly there is no gain for a progressive theater to add to its repertoire a script which depends for its punch on mediocre puns, Yiddish interpolations à la vaudeville, and a plot which has the tempo and situation of a typical high-school operetta. Elie Siegmeister has used his talents to provide very good music for some most inconsequential words. Indeed, the impressive musical opening which preludes the beginning of action on the stage promises a much better theatrical evening than ever materializes once the characters begin to speak their lines. Some of Siegmeister's songs will be very welcome in concert halls and, in general, the music for *Maid in Japan* will save the title from complete oblivion.

DIFFICULT THEME

One can sympathize with Maurice Stoller, the author, in even attempting a play on Japan, whose society, politics, and imperialistic convulsions are exceedingly complex and many-sided. There are (not by actual count) perhaps a handful of authorities on the subject and very little on it has appeared in print. *Maid in Japan* suffers from casual politicalizing, poor playwriting, and a gentle confusion about where Chinese characteristics end and Japanese mannerisms begin.

JOHN SEBASTIAN.



Albert Ammons and Meade "Lux" Lewis

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This is helpful

IT'S HELPFUL, in many ways, to have the fascists calling themselves by the right name these days. Note the way three American fascist papers boldly emblazon the swastika, adding it, fittingly enough, to their emblems. Get a look at the way the one in the center weighs down the American eagle with Adolf Hitler's calling card.

The boldness of the American fascists is as great, if not as obvious, as the boldness of their masters in Berlin. It should inspire a similar audacity in all democrats.

New Masses is as avowedly and as strongly on the people's side as are the Pelleys and the Edmondsons on their side. But our cause is their anathema.

We're out for a democratic America and a democratic world. We want to maintain democ-

racy and to extend it. We want political *and* economic democracy; they want neither.

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