

# **WHY CHURCHILL JAILED ME**

*by Jawaharlal Nehru*

# **NEW MASSES**

APRIL 22, 1941

FIFTEEN CENTS

## **THE PACT WITH TOKYO**

*Why Matsuoka Went to Moscow*

*by Joseph Starobin*

## **HOW THEY MADE FORD SIGN**

*by Joseph North*

## **WHAT WAR MEANS TO THE NEGRO**

*by Herbert Aptheker*

*Barbara Giles, Harry F. Ward, Ruth McKenney, Joy Davidman*

# Between Ourselves

IT ISN'T often that 106 people will sit for hours during a highly delectable first day of spring in order to hear a lecture. Yet that's just what happened last Saturday afternoon when Herbert Aptheker gave the first talk in his series on Rediscovering American History. Mr. Aptheker spoke on Jefferson, and he spoke for three hours—not enough for the audience, which finally and reluctantly agreed to go home. Whether or not these people had read *Oliver Wiswell* or any other cockeyed version of American history, they felt that they were getting the genuine stuff from Mr. Aptheker and they wanted all he could give them. Those who missed the first lecture will have a chance to get in on the remaining five. They're being held under the auspices of the NM Readers League, every Saturday afternoon at 2:30, at the Malin Studios, 135 West 44th St. This coming Saturday Mr. Aptheker will discuss Jackson and his era. The entire series covers the period from Jefferson to the development of American imperialism, and each historical phase is analyzed on the basis of rank-and-file movements and their effect on social developments. Admission to the individual lectures is twenty-five cents.

Speaking of history, we are pleased to see that our contemporary, the New York *Herald Tribune*, in celebrating its 100th birthday, has not failed to take notice of a former correspondent whose writings have also appeared in our pages—man by the name of Karl Marx. From 1848 to 1860, Marx covered the European scene for what was then the *Tribune*, under the editorship of Charles A. Dana. Mr. Dana, we learn from Mr. Ogden Reid's paper of this past Sunday, disagreed with the "poverty-stricken socialist" but kept him anyway for his "expert knowledge." In fact, the column-length write-up which the *Herald Tribune* has given the author of *Das Kapital* isn't bad. It's true you might get from it the impression that Marx founded the First International and wrote his monumental works just as a little extra-curricular activity after working for the *Tribune*. But on the whole, the tone of the article is one of modest pride in a *Tribune* "find" who never missed his deadline and whose writings "sometimes created quite a stir." More of a stir, we feel safe in saying, than any correspondent or columnist—not excepting the departed Miss Thompson—has created since. If the *Herald Tribune* is looking for another Euro-

pean correspondent with "expert knowledge," we can suggest one (quite likely as poverty-stricken too)—by the name of R. Palme Dutt. For samples of his writing, consult back issues of NM.

We were just as proud of our thirtieth birthday as the *Herald Tribune* was of its hundredth—a darn sight prouder, in fact, considering what our three-decade progress looks like besides a century's descent from Greeley to Reid. We're even prouder when we get letters, as we still do, on our thirtieth anniversary issue. And since we, also, belong to the distinguished circle of the poverty-stricken, we are not only proud but very happy and grateful when the letters include the concrete testimonial of a check or dollar bill. One such letter came from a young reader just an hour or two before this was written and with it three dollars—earned by spending three afternoons looking after the neighbor's baby. This really should have been included in the list on page 10 (which please be sure to read) but it came too late so we're printing it here as one more example of what our friends are doing to save this magazine from financial suppression.

The most moving letter we have received yet in regard to the fund drive comes from Alexander F. Bergman, NM poet who has been a patient in a Bronx hospital for several years. "Dear friends," the letter reads. "One of the patients, Joe Altman, died this week. We could think of no better memorial than to help New MASSES in its fund drive. So the rest of his fellow-patients dug up what they had at the time and we are very happy to be able to send the enclosed five dollars."

Ed Falkowski, whose firsthand report on the coal miners of Fairmont, W. Va., was published in our April 8 issue, writes us that he got a letter from a woman in New Jersey who offered to send a barrel of used but wearable clothing for the miners of the Fairmont coke-ovens. Mr. Falkowski is arranging for the sending and distribution of the clothing.

An old friend of the magazine, Marc Blitzstein, is being given a testimonial dinner on Friday, April 18, by the production committee and cast of *No for an Answer*, his latest opera. Sponsors of the dinner include Paul Robeson, Lee J. Cobb, Gene Kelly, Lincoln Kirstein, and John Henry Hammond. There will be an "all Blitzstein" program, that is, a review of the composer's music of the past six years, including pieces from *Parade* through *No for an An-*

*swer*. The dinner is a major feature of the campaign to raise money enough to produce Blitzstein's latest work independently on Broadway for at least six weeks.

We don't know how you will feel about it, but we think this number of NM hits a high of some sort. And believe us, with spring here and our favorites, the Dodgers, opening the season with the Giants, it was quite a job to get the issue out. But we did, we did. And forgive us if we take a holiday this afternoon to see how the Brooklyns make out. We get a chance to see one game a year. And this is it.

## Who's Who

HERBERT APTHEKER is the author of *The Negro in the Civil War*, *Negro Slave Revolts in the United States*, and *The Negro in the American Revolution*. . . . Dr. Harry F. Ward is a professor at Union Theological Seminary and the author of *Democracy and Social Change*. . . .

Joy Davidman is a well known poet whose verse and reviews have often appeared in these pages.

## Flashbacks

RIDING ahead to warn refugees John Hancock and Samuel Adams and the farmers along the way that hated British troops were approaching, Paul Revere made his midnight ride April 18, 1775. The following day the battle of Lexington began the first American Revolution. . . . "With some the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself and the product of his labor while for others the same word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men's labor. The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the wolf denounces him for the same act as the destroyer of liberty, especially as the sheep was a black one." Thus Abraham Lincoln spoke in Baltimore on April 18, 1864.

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## THE SOVIET-JAPANESE PACT

*Why Matsuoka went to Moscow. The USSR gains another victory for peace. Joseph Starobin writes about the big week just passed. The Balkans and Greenland.*

IT WAS a big week, this week that has passed. Things were happening in dozens of places all over the globe, many of them, as in Iraq, very obscure. Honest men were laying down their lives in Greek and Serbian villages: the names are hard to pronounce but heroism is intelligible in any language. In northern Africa, the film of last winter's British triumphs is now being unreeled with astonishing speed as German motorized columns force the British back into Egypt. One hundred and thirty million Americans woke one morning to find they were "protecting Greenland," and Mr. Roosevelt added a truly Passover touch to his diplomacy by opening the Red Sea for the passage of American ships. Across these venerable waters, it will be remembered, Moses once led a whole people out of their thralldom in Egypt. Judging from the events of this week and everything since the "lend-lease" bill, Mr. Roosevelt is leading a whole people back to Egypt, to a thralldom which the vast majority of Americans have only begun to suspect.

THE BIGGEST NEWS, though not surprising, was the pact between the Soviet Union and Japan. Both parties agree to respect each other's territory, to preserve neutrality toward one another for the duration of any conflict in which either may become involved. Both of them agree to mutual respect for the territory of Manchukuo and the Outer Mongolian People's Republic.

There is no evidence at all that this pact changes the relations of either party toward China. Japan's policy toward China is now so intimately connected with her existence as an imperialist state that Japan cannot change that policy: she can only try, as she has been doing since the occupation of Hainan in March 1939, to move toward new colonial areas in the hope of getting enough raw materials to continue her struggle with China. Simultaneously, Japan is working very hard to secure the capitulation of China from within. Her southward expansion has in fact a dual objective: first, to pick up the pieces of the French and Dutch empires now set adrift, that is, to gain new sources of materials and new markets; second, to do so in such a way that Britain and the United States will have to acknowledge her campaign for the dismemberment of China. The treaty with the USSR is therefore not the beginning of Japan's southward expansion. Nor can it be the cause for a further expansion to the south: that lies in Japan's nature as an imperialist state.

Soviet policy toward China has nothing in common with Japan's. It also is determined

by considerations which long antedate this particular agreement. It is based on the Leninist principle that the first socialist state must help the colonial peoples establish their independence from the grip of imperialist powers. Soviet help to China in the last four years is really a continuation of that help which a much-less-secure Soviet state gave to China in the 1924-27 period. Today, China's resistance is directed against Japan, but in a historical sense, that resistance is undermining the whole foundation of the imperialist world. So long as China remains united, so long as the present crisis in the United Front does not yet change the character of China's struggle, Soviet policy need not be expected to change. It is not Japan's wishes therefore which motivate the USSR. Especially, since it is Japan whose strength is being sapped in China.

Japanese imperialism has faced a certain dilemma in the South Pacific: the decisive sections of her oligarchy favor close collaboration with the Axis, but they are well aware that Hitler cannot give them direct assistance, much less Mussolini. Their attitude has been opportunist. If Germany succeeds in knocking Britain out, Japan intends to come in at the later stages of the process and pick up most of the French, Dutch, and British empires. But German imperialism also has Far Eastern ambitions. It is sometimes forgotten that before the last war, Germany was a major Pacific power, controlling China's Shantung province and islands which were later mandated to Japan. Hitler needs Japanese pressure on Britain and the United States, but he doesn't want Japan to appropriate the spoils and reach an independent position in eastern Asia.

There are still important sections of Japanese policy-makers who feel that cooperation with Britain and the United States has not exhausted its value. After all, it was by such cooperation that Japan carried forward her expansion of the last ten years. Moreover, they are impressed with British and American preparations for a showdown: the strengthening of the Singapore garrison, the arrival of American troops in Manila, the joint discussions among Dutch, British, and American officials, the parade of the American fleet in New Zealand and Australian waters. Even if Britain were ready to hand over the rich preserves of the South Pacific, the United States stands in the way, first because American imperialism hopes to inherit these regions, second because Japan would become uncontrollable if successful further south.

For some time, the Japanese ruling groups have tried to play the game both ways: move

closer to Germany in order to improve the chances of a deal with Britain and the United States; throw out feelers for an agreement with Britain for the dual purpose of worrying the United States and getting iron-bound guarantees from Germany. Matsuoka's visit to Berlin was motivated by a desire to gain a first-hand impression of Hitler's chances and intentions. It was a preliminary to decisions which will be made on Matsuoka's return to Tokyo.

In terms of Japanese diplomacy, therefore, last week's pact was a big, but not yet a conclusive step toward this decision. Toward Germany, Matsuoka makes it clear that the tripartite agreement does not bind Japan to warfare with the USSR, just in case Hitler may currently be dawdling with such fancies; toward Britain and the United States Matsuoka indicates that Japan will not undertake warfare with the USSR; Tokyo therefore gains a certain bargaining advantage in the effort to extract better terms from London and Washington.

For the Soviet Union, this agreement represents a powerful victory in the sense that those elements in Japan who still hanker for experimentation along the Soviet and Mongolian borders are now definitely relegated to a back seat. This is a defeat not only for Japanese anti-Soviet aspirations, but for the same aspirations in London and Washington. It would, however, be presumptive to work out the precise implications of this treaty for Soviet policy in Europe. Not every treaty need have world-shaking implications. But Hitler has the bleak satisfaction of knowing that Japan could not make up her mind on cooperation with the Axis without first settling her relations with the USSR. Evidently the tripartite alliance was not compelling enough. And without exaggerating German-Soviet tension, it can be said that the USSR now pursues her policies in Europe and the Near East without especial concern over her Pacific frontiers. The treaty is therefore a striking example of Soviet ability to carry forth her diplomacy of peace, even though surrounded by big powers at war, powers which only a while back were actively hostile. By now, every charge that the USSR pursues a course dictated by other powers falls to the ground. That is precisely the impression that Hitler would like to convey. And the dominant British and American statesmen are once again reminded that the world is round, and goes on spinning, even though the era of their world dominion has passed.

The final point that should be made is this: there is a big, powerful, resourceful nation

over there with whom a great many statesmen are finding it in their interests to be friendly. If our statesmen are the wise, far-seeing, agile fellows they pretend to be, if they are really concerned with the peace of the small nations, with freedom of all the oppressed, they forfeit the confidence of the American people unless they improve relations with the Soviet Union. Whoever fails to recognize that there will be no solutions for the world troubles without considering the weight and influence of the Soviet Union in both Pacific and European affairs is sacrificing the national interest of the American people to the narrow, reactionary class interests of the American oligarchy. This is not "the American century" at all: it is the most vain, self-injurious nonsense to think so.

IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT in the absence of reliable news to form a rounded judgment of the Balkan campaign. The Nazis had accomplished a good deal in the first week, and yet some elements of it were not overly impressive. The fall of Salonika was not surprising: the strip of Thrace between Bulgaria and the Aegean Sea was not defensible after the German occupation of Bulgaria. It was for this reason among others that the Turks could not seriously entertain suggestions to join the Greeks or Yugoslavs. In northern Yugoslavia, it has taken the Nazis a full week to enter Zagreb, equally long to enter Balgrade. These cities are only forty miles or so from Yugoslav borders, which points to a much stiffer resistance by Croat and Serb troops than the German high command would have us believe. On the other hand, the Nazis came through to southern Serbia quickly, and took the key town of Skolpje, thus cutting Yugoslav and Greek communications. Late reports speak of a joint Italian-German offensive in Albania, pushing down the Thessalonian plain. The odds in this war favor Hitler in terms of his available man-power, his air army, his many-sided approach to the battle. Yet it would be important to know the price he is paying for his successes.

One valuable fact, however, has come out in the wash, namely that the British had not landed anywhere nearly as many troops as they wanted the world to believe in the first days of the invasion. American correspondents spoke of 250,000 men, arriving since the first of March. Now the story is coming out that no more than 30,000 were landed in southern Greece, and they never got to Yugoslavia at all. Some correspondents speak of these troops as having had "political" rather than military significance. That is to say, they were sent as tokens of British esteem for the Greeks, calculated to impress the Turks. Yugoslavia has certainly found her soul, as Churchill put it, but the Yugoslavs have found nothing but spiritual assistance from Churchill. Yugoslav resistance therefore grows in stature and heroism, carried on as it is single-handed.

Meanwhile, things are moving quickly in North Africa. It took the British about six weeks to force Marshal Graziani deep into Libya; it seems to be taking half the time

for a few German motorized divisions to force the British back into Egypt, with the loss of some of their ace generals and plenty of troops. This raises once again the question of Nazi strategy with reference to Suez: do they expect to conquer it from the west by a single line of troops along the Mediterranean shore? Or must they have another line coming down through Turkey, Syria, and Palestine? Or is it possible that by controlling Greek naval and air bases in what Colonel Donovan has called the decisive Aegean littoral, the Nazis could make things hot for the British fleet, at the same time avoiding a physical encounter with Turkey? It is difficult to answer these questions off-hand. My own impression is that from Greek bases, plus the Dodecanese islands, the *Luftwaffe* could make things very dangerous for the British fleet at Haifa and Alexandria. But a full occupation of the Suez area would require many more troops and safer communication lines than those which now stretch down the Italian peninsula, across Sicily, and all through Libya. After all, the Nazis have primarily a land army; the assault on Turkey is clearly indicated. But it would be very surprising if the British had not converted this whole region into a vast armed camp. The conquest of Suez cannot be a pushover. Judging from Mr. Roosevelt's decision to send ships clear around the Cape of Good Hope up through the Red Sea, a journey which takes two months one way, Washington is figuring on a long drawn struggle in this region well into the summer.

AFTER THE DECISION to open the Red Sea, the big war move in the United States was the occupation of Greenland. This is the second step, after the establishment of a base in Newfoundland, toward the development of a system of convoys across the north Atlantic. Whether these shall be naval escorts, or a combination of air and naval patrols, at least there is no doubt that the administration is carrying forward its intention to convoy goods a considerable way across the Atlantic. Greenland is therefore only preliminary toward other Atlantic bases. Iceland is already in British and Canadian hands. The next measure clearly involves Ireland. Churchill has several times demanded the use of Irish bases, and is actually now blockading Ireland by way of pressure upon her. Last week the story came out that the Irish government sent a minister across to petition American help, but the State Department was insisting upon its price, namely that Ireland forego her neutrality. What the President wants is not simply bases for British use: he wants a depot for American supplies, a potential terminus for the ultimate transport of American troops.

But Ireland is only part of the story. The discussion about Greenland in the press was invariably accompanied by references to the Azores Islands, about two-thirds of the way across the Atlantic, a Portuguese possession. And there has been mention of the Canary Islands which belong to Spain, the Madeira

and the Cape Verde islands, which, as a glance at the map will show, control the passageways through the south Atlantic. It is even probable that the United States is negotiating for a port on the west coast of Africa—to offset Dakar. All this is of course justified in the name of defending the hemisphere. But what a hemisphere! From the shores of Manila Bay, 6,000 miles across the Pacific, to the icy fjords of Greenland, to the shores of west Africa, the Eagle is spreading its wings. It may be remembered that when a certain country asked a certain neighbor for modest bases a few miles from its second largest city, the whole world was outraged. Civilization itself was in danger. But American imperialism considered nothing less than a third of the globe its security zone. Two different concepts of security; two different social systems.

The Greenland business has even more interesting aspects from the moral point of view. It may be true that Roosevelt snatched the island from Nazi hands; certainly no one holds any brief for them. Yet it is worth considering what a quaint, land-grabbing job the treaty for Greenland was. The President must have known that an agreement with the Danish minister in Washington was sure to be repudiated in Copenhagen. The conclusion is therefore inescapable that *there was a prior agreement with the Danish minister*: he signed Greenland away, became a "free Dane" overnight, and with the treaty safely in his pocket, Mr. Roosevelt went off to church.

According to the usually well informed columnists, Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner, (April 14) the United States had *secretly established* a base at Greenland in advance of the shotgun treaty with the Danish minister. This would be confirmed by the fact that the very day the treaty was signed, the War Department established a censorship on the movements of American troops and ships to and from off-shore bases.

The instance of Greenland emphasizes still another aspect of the war, namely the way the big powers are liquidating the territorial holdings of the small powers. Germany is colonializing Europe itself, but Germany's enemies are dividing the colonial possessions of the small states. Britain, for example, has taken over the Faroes Islands and Iceland, now the United States steps in to take over Greenland. France has already lost a section of her Far Eastern colony to Japan; and only a few weeks back, General Weygand declared he would defend the rest of his empire against aggression *from either side*. Holland has virtually lost control of the Dutch East Indies to a condominium of Britain and the United States. Some day we may discover who has actually gained control of Belgian Congo. In East Africa, Mussolini has lost his empire to Britain, and Churchill made it clear in a recent speech that British troops would maintain a protective occupation of Ethiopia until after the war—which is what the peoples of Arabia, Syria, and Egypt heard a long time ago. It is the law of the jungle. Lenin had a word for it. JOSEPH STAROBIN.

# HOW THEY WON AT RIVER ROUGE

"It couldn't be done," the wiseacres said. Joseph North tells the story of the men who did it. "We began to organize here, in this attic, back in 1926. . . ."

Dearborn.

Two scabs climbed over the barbed wire fence into the hands of the pickets. They stood there in the dark, by the picket fire, trembling. "What are you shivering for?" the picket asked. "When are you going to give us the works, what are you waiting for?" one scab asked. The picket laughed. "What makes you think we're going to give you the works?" he asked. "That's what they told us inside," the scab said. The picket answered, "Don't believe everything they tell you inside that concentration camp." He handed the scabs coffee and sandwiches. The scabs ate twenty-one sandwiches. They asked what they had to do to join the union. "Pay the initiation fee and sign up," the picket said. "We came out without a cent," the scab said. The picket passed the hat. The nickels and pennies paid for the initiation fee. The scabs wrote their names down. The picket pinned a button on their coats. "Give me one of them signs," the scab said. He took the placard, began marching in the rain with the other pickets. "You're a union man, now," the picket said. "Yes, a union man," the ex-scab replied.—True Story, River Rouge.

THE strike had been called at 1:30 AM April 1, and everybody said Harry Bennett was the fool. He didn't think the union had the strength to pull the world's greatest factory. The good word flew across Detroit before dawn. All during the night telephones clamored with the message and union men piled into their cars, their overseas caps covered with union buttons. Before daylight if you stood on the chilly plains of Dearborn—on the overpass, say, at Gate Four—you could see the thousands of headlights converging through the gloom of River Rouge. The union men were speeding to the front by the thousands, most of them in the very V8's that Ford obliges his men to buy as tribute for their jobs. The vast caravans of cars jammed the sixteen roads leading to the factory where 91,000 men worked the day before. One of America's greatest industrial battles was on.

It is the day of the turbine and the air-wave, the Machine Age, and the workers fought the engagement like a modern mechanized army. My friend, the Old Timer, put it this way. "Hank organized his plant like a fortress for war. We had to match him." The proletarians had their "infantry": the pickets who closed the twenty-seven gates, trudging to and fro endlessly day and night. At first they took on four-hour shifts—later eight hours. "We work eight hours a day for Hank," the Old Timer said. "Now we'll work eight hours a day for the union." The strikers had their "tanks": the scout cars toured the great perimeter of River Rouge with unceasing vigilance. They had their

"fortifications": the strikers set up barricades on wheels—their cars, end to end, served to stop each road entrance. The strikers marched before the cars and at the gates. They had their quartermaster corps: the women prepared some 27,000 sandwiches daily for their men, hogsheads of coffee and vats of soup.

MOST IMPORTANT of all, they had the morale. They had come to know what "union" meant. It wasn't always so. Consider what the Ford working man had to overcome. Consider, too, how far he had come, how much he had learned—and had to unlearn—in the past decade. He was dealing with a man who knew every device of fascism as intimately as he knew the gadgets of his V8. As the Old Timer said, Ford had developed the idea of the storm trooper, of anti-Semitism, of anti-capitalist demagoguery before Hitler drank his first glass of lager in the Munich *bierhaus*. The most brutal of a brutal class, Ford had set up an industrial kingdom in the image of the Third Reich. "Hitler learned from Ford, not vice versa," the Old Timer insisted.

I saw the concentration camp which was River Rouge and the "Third Reich" which was Dearborn. Ford had unleashed the hosts of darkness throughout Michigan, expected them to overpower every progressive idea. There was the Ku Klux Klan, the Black Legion, the Knights of Dearborn, the Ford Brotherhood. There thundered the camarilla of gangster-preachers—Father Coughlin, Rev. Frank Norris, Rev. Gerald H. K. Smith. Harry Bennett's Negro agent, Donald Marshall, carried on in the Negro community. Inside the plant Bennett's army of storm troopers—3,000 strong—eyed the men, strong-armed them at a moment's notice, spied on them at the belt, at lunchtime, even in the toilet. William J. Cameron had the assignment of propaganda, over the air, in editorials,

preaching the Ford legend—that old Hank was the benefactor of labor, the friend of the Negro people, the bringer of prosperity. Did he not give America the first eight-hour day, the five-day week? The first five-dollar-a-day wage? Did he not give the Negro jobs equally with the white? And now the government itself was coming to Ford—there was the \$122,000,000 contract. Hank was engaged in "national defense." To strike against him was to strike against "democracy." To strike against Ford was proof of a Moscow plot, said I. A. Capizzi, Ford's brassy lawyer.

It is against this background that the significance of the Ford strike will be understood. It occurred among workers, the great majority of whom were inexperienced in trade unionism. Many of them had come up from the South, and in the early thirties were fertile soil for the preachings of race hatred, of anti-Semitism, of anti-unionism. Many others were just out of high school, unacquainted with the tradition of organization. Many failed to perceive the class nature of their grievances. Ford was a bad man—they did not see him as a typical, or rather, as the most crass, example of capitalism.

But since 1936 they had come to learn that the word "union" was not anathema. Their friends and relatives in General Motors and Chrysler *lived* better than they, *felt* better than they after the day's work. Why? They had pondered that question for the past half decade.

"Longer than that," my friend the Old Timer, one of the first Ford workers to join the United Automobile Workers—CIO, told me. "We began this fight many, many years ago. It was back in 1926. . . ." He had grown gray in the bitter effort to bring the tyrant to terms and he wanted to talk about it, wanted to tell everybody about it so they would know how the job was done, and why, and act accordingly. He was the modern proletarian—highly literate, deft with the machine, the planner as well as the worker. He knew the score. Short, spare, quiet-voiced but confident, he told me the story which an American Gorky must get down to inspire and guide the millions more who haven't yet learned the strength of their class.

I cannot name the street in Dearborn where this union man took me, the street with the frame house and the attic where the first secret conference of five men was held. We climbed the rickety wooden stairs and a pot-bellied stove stood in the middle of the room. We sat down at the table and he spread his hands. "It was here, at this table, where we got up the first leaflet. That was back in 1926. I had been working there for a couple of months. Alcatraz, I called it then." Fifteen years now, he had waited for this day. "Many a meeting we held here, in the night



or in the morning, between shifts, writing our leaflets, mapping the campaigns."

Indeed, the union was not born yesterday. It began as a dream in the hearts of men like this man. It came with fearful birth pangs. Men had lost their livelihood for it, had been blacklisted for the dream, men had died for it. There was young Joe York. . . .

The Old Timer and I had just come from Miller Road after the great march of the women. We had stood at Gate Four, mingled with the pickets, the state police, and the dour-faced Service Men who stood menacingly in their tight overcoats, just inside the gates, watching the women with banners come over the skyline on the bridge approaching the plant. Never had anyone foreseen such a march on Miller Road. Henry Ford had built his fortress of a plant with the wide highways on all sides to be able to circumvent any such march as this. And here they came. The gaily clad girls of Local 155's band, all dolled up in green and orange, led by a Polish-looking drum-majorette, stepping high. Then came the flag bearers—white and Negro—one of them a Slavic looking woman with a kerchief over her head, a kerchief of red, white, and blue. Some of the women carried their children, or led them by hand. Their banners told an eloquent, ageless story. "We stand by our husbands." Others: "Happy homes for our children." "The family will stick together—400,000 strong."

The procession stopped near Gate Three to give the older women in line a breathing spell. Some of the younger girls, ebullient, unable to mark time, burst into dance. They locked arms, and skipped about on Miller Road, while the multitude of pickets along the roadway beat time, clapping their hands. I glanced at the Old Timer, standing by my side, his face hard but his eyes gleaming. He caught my glance. "Here," he said in controlled excitement, "right here, where they're dancing. Here's where Bennett opened fire in 1932 during the Hunger March. Right here's where they got Joe York." Three others were killed at this spot near Gate Three in the first great demonstration against Henry Ford's tyranny. It shattered the great Ford myth. And now they were dancing on Miller Road where nine years ago the machine guns barked and the mortal blood of four young men flowed on the concrete eight-lane highway.

Between the dancers and the labyrinth of glittering machinery that constitutes the Ford plant rose the high, barbed wire fence. The women noticed the lugubrious figures that stood inside the fence watching them. "Come on out of the concentration camp," they yelled. The younger ones shouted, "We like men, not Service Men." Still others, the Croatian women in their kerchiefs, gestured shame with the forefingers of their two hands. A Ford doctor in white stood looking out with a sneer. "I'd like to have that doctor for my patient," one of the older women said. And the drum-majorette danced with the bugler. All this on the spot where Joe York died.

I thought, standing there, no man's life

is lost in the work for his fellow-men. I recalled the shock and despair many felt when the four lads were killed that bloody winter's day nine years ago. There were those who had said, "They can't do it. They'll never organize Ford. The machine guns won't let them." And now, here, today, I saw the repudiation of that despair. They were dancing where Joe York died.

"How was it done?" I asked my friend. We went down through Eagle Pass, past Gate Four, into Ford's company town, Dearborn, to the little frame house where he lived. "I'll tell you," he said in his kitchen, "but first let's have a cup of wine." His wife poured the wine and I noticed the little tapestry hanging over the sink with the legend "Home Sweet Home." I asked her how much rent they paid for this five-room frame house. The prices compared with New York's. Thirty-five dollars a month, she said. That was up from twenty-two dollars in 1937. "Electric's over four dollars a month." The cost of living had shot up over thirty-three percent in the past year and a half. "I paid thirty-six dollars for that suit of clothes the old man's wearing," she said. Other prices were remarkably high. "Bacon's thirty-eight cents a pound here," she said. "Up from twenty-eight cents a year ago." The house was heated by a coal stove. "Coal was \$8.75 a ton now, up from \$7.25 in 1937."

"She's giving you some more of the reasons we were able to organize now," the Old Timer said. "The women in the kitchen feel the pinch first. And the high cost of living today has organized thousands of the women who never had an idea of union before." But his woman was different, he said. She had known the value of unions almost as long as he had. She had gone out with him the first night of this strike, had stopped a carload of scabs who pulled a gun on them. She had slapped the scab across the face while the Old Timer and his friends pulled the gun from the strikebreaker's hand, shattered it on the pavement. "We talked nice to them, trying to explain and to convince them, and they pulled a 'heater,'" she said. She sat composed, quiet at the table while her husband told me the story. It was interrupted from time to time by friends who had just come off the picket line, stopped in for a good word.

"The men in the plant couldn't bear it any longer. They knew that the only way they could cope with the company's storm troopers was through organization. And they had decided that this was the time to put the skids on Harry Bennett and his army." He said they had the assurance of the UAW, they knew that John L. Lewis and the CIO were behind them. They knew that Detroit was a stronghold of more than a quarter of a million men who would throw their weight behind them. Last October the CIO put up \$50,000 for the "Organize Ford" drive. The UAW matched the amount. Michael F. Widman was sent in to direct the campaign and the big fight was on.

"But," the Old Timer (he is forty-six, no

more) said, "it was back in 1926 when I saw the campaign first start." He began at the beginning. "A few minutes after I started to work I said to the man next to me, 'What kind of a union have we got here?' In half an hour the foreman came around and said to me, 'You're the new man here, aren't you? Keep your goddamn mouth shut. We don't want no union talk around here.'" He felt suddenly the threat of the secret service in the plant. "I knew then that we'd have to do the job different here." He described his work. "I lift a ninety-five-pound cylinder all day long, put it on the belt, stoop, lift, stoop, lift. Here's what it does to you." He pulled a trouser leg above his knee. An ugly knot of blood vessels bulged out at the calf the size of a baseball. "Varicose veins," he said. "Nearly all the men have them." It is the principal occupational disease of the Ford worker.

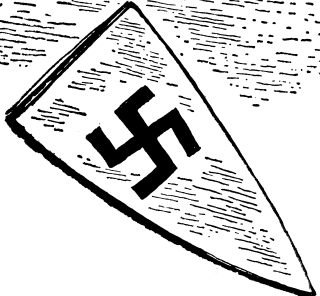
But the hard work wasn't all of it, not by a long shot. "Smoke? They fire you for it. No reason except that Hank doesn't smoke and doesn't like to see men smoking during the work day. When I first went to work there I didn't think I could stand it. I remember saying to myself for months afterward standing at that belt, 'I wish the goddamn thing breaks down. . . . I wish the goddamn thing breaks down. . . . won't it ever stop? Won't it ever stop?' I still feel that way about it. I don't think I'll ever get used to it, not at the pace it's going. Eight hours a day, stoop and lift, stoop and lift." He told how he even came to hate the words "River Rouge." When he came to the overpass in the morning entering the plant he felt like he "was going to a wake." He used to marvel how Ford, with diabolic ingenuity, ordered the River Rouge plant built without any woodwork inside so that the men could find no place to sit. If you wanted to rest during the twenty-minute lunch time you sat on cold cement or the colder steel of the machine. "I used to say to myself, well, it's only for eight hours. I have sixteen hours for myself. But I was kidding myself." It didn't work, this rationalization. The eight hours stuck with you the rest of the twenty-four. You couldn't shake them off. The eight hours were imprinted on your muscle and your brain and all else that happened to you happened inside that eight-hour framework. "Ford paid for eight hours of your life but owned all twenty-four."

"I know you know about these things. Lots of people do. But you can't really understand them unless you work for Henry. You can't," he said. He told me how the foreman often refused to let him go to the toilet all during the morning. "There were times when I could barely contain myself until lunch time, and I remember rushing from the belt to the men's room with the sandwiches under my arm and eating them while I was sitting on the toilet. I guess that's hard for you to believe, coming from New York. But that's the way it was."

Working in a nightmare such as he described



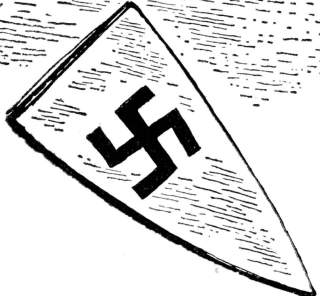
HUNGER  
IN  
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HUNGER  
IN  
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Grosz





FORD COULDN'T BELIEVE IT: *Nearly 100,000 strong, they closed all the gates.*

one begins to understand why the dream of organization never died. One could see why the millions Ford poured into propaganda were ineffective, why even the Bennett Gestapo proved inadequate. Like all of us, I have heard a lot about life in the Ford plant, but never did it come real to me as now, talking to this veteran. Refusing to concede that this slavery was the lot to which they were born, there were men who dreamed of altering this life. "We didn't dare to talk to just anybody around us. There was that spy scare. If a man got friendly and asked us where we lived, our first reaction was 'Spy.' We worked first only with those men we trusted and had known for a long time."

The humble leaflet, that Associated Press of the proletariat, did its overwhelming job. "We drew them up in the little attic upstairs, ran them off on a mimeograph there." The next question was how to distribute them without detection. "We would bring them in strapped to our waist or pinned on our shirt tails. Some of the boys who worked near the flywheel would stick them in there when the day's whistle blew. The next morning when the flyheel started again there was a shower of leaflets to the ceiling." They devised other ways. "Take the belt that carries the glass for polishing. We stuck the leaflets under the glass at the beginning of the line and as it went along all the men on the line could read them underneath the glass. It so happens you can't take that glass off until it reaches the end of the belt, and there were the leaflets, moving along, safe under the glass, and no way to get at them. I remember the bosses pulling their hair, running along after the leaflets, trying to chalk the glass above them

so you couldn't read, but more leaflets came along and there was no way to get at them. The men would just read them and stand aside as the bosses yelled running along. Oh, there were many ways like these which kept the feeling of organization alive during all those hard, dark years. We didn't even ignore the toilet. We often distributed the message inside the toilet paper so that you could really call Hank's toilets real libraries."

And all this time the men searched for a technique, a method to organize their plant. They knew others had been successful, they had the benefit of the experience of other unions. Many had come to Ford's from organized industry. Others talked with men who had ideas on just this score. "It was about this time that some of us heard of the Trade Union Unity League and we got the first idea of industrial unionism from William Z. Foster. We read his book on the Great Steel Strike and studied the technique they used there." They recognized early in the game that Ford could only be organized on an industrial basis. "No other way," the Old Timer said. "We tried, got several hundreds, as high as nearly 2,000, throughout the city in the industrial union. Then in 1936 the CIO came along, and the sitdowns in 1937, and the UAW went over."

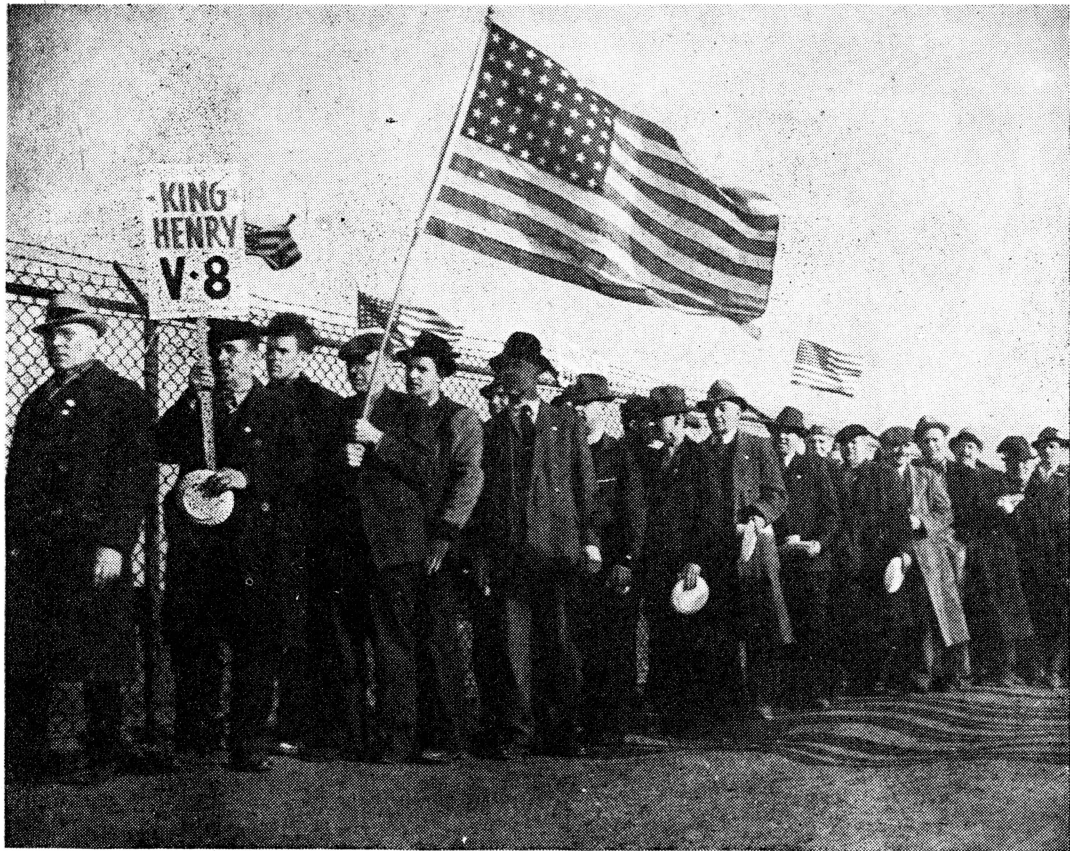
Ford, he said, understood that the union movement was expanding and he sank more millions in his Service Department with its network of spies and terrorists. "Back in 1926 he had brought Harry Bennett in, after he saw that his company union stuff—the gardens, the sweetness-and-light business wouldn't work." The Old Timer thought that Bennett was pretty smart, but not smart

enough. "He never gave us enough credit for brains. They never do, you know." Bennett thought that brute force would win out in the end. The head of the Ford Secret Service, however, was no old fogey, no stick-in-the-mud general. He tried new tactics, too, to bolster his primitive, fundamental one of force. "There was the Liberty Legion he organized when we began to get serious about organization. But we wrecked that by joining it and by bringing up economic demands on the floor. Then there was the Ford Brotherhood, the company union. We put that on the skids the same way, by moving that it affiliate with the CIO. Now they're bringing the AFL up to the front, but they pulled a boner in bringing Homer Martin out as head of it, and the workers just jeered that out of existence. Why they had less than a thousand—most of them Service Men—at the back-to-work meeting at the Fair Grounds. That was the night after we had had a meeting in the same hall with 20,000 there. No, they haven't got enough Service Men to run the plant. That's Ford's tragedy. You can't run an industry with storm troopers."

Thus we talked around the little table where the great anonymous "little men" had carried on the idea until the CIO had come into existence, had carried their ideas over the top, had brought their dream to reality. The Old Timer pulled the curtain on his window aside, pointed across the street to the neat little house at the end of the row, a house distinguished from those neighboring it by fresh paint and little doodads on the porch. "See that house there," he said. "That's a Service Man's. He's lived there about the same length of time I have here. They have Service Men living scattered through Dearborn keeping an eye on us. Lots of them sold their birthright for very little. That fellow there gets gasoline for his car and maybe five, ten dollars at the most, a week extra. That's the bonus a rat gets. And Ford's got the Dearborn police under his thumb. And a mayor, and a city council. Bennett's got 3,000 men scattered through the community. And we organized Ford's."

SO IT CLEARS UP. When the Ford organizing drive began there were several thousand key-men inside the plant who were chafing at the bit, waiting for it to come. These were men who had kept the union idea alive through the dark years. They had operated illegally, as though in Hitler's Germany, had distributed the leaflets, had whispered and explained, had taken the beatings, and come through the terror, had refused to say die. When the UAW began, it found these loyal lieutenants inside. They helped form the auto workers' union, and they carried its message to the tens of thousands through their knowledge of the plant.

These men had closely followed the UAW's organization in General Motors and Chrysler. They knew too that the slogan after the sit-downs was "Organize Ford." They were highly appreciative of the work the UAW



FORD COULDN'T BELIEVE IT: *Nearly 100,000 strong, they closed all the gates.*

had done in the other plants. They witnessed the beating of UAW organizers who tried to distribute leaflets at Gate Four back in 1937, and they remembered who had done the beating. They were happy when the St. Louis convention of the UAW rang with cries to "Organize Ford"—back in August 1940. Then came the big drive itself.

That can, roughly, be divided into three stages. The first, when the announcement was made, brought several thousand militants into the union, the men who could not be scared off or bought off. Then came a lull, during which the details of organization were carried on: the leaflets, the propaganda stage, the secret meetings. The men were thinking it over. They were joining, but not in overwhelming numbers. Then came the third stage when the economic, everyday needs of the men were stressed. Departmental demands were raised on the basis of the men's most urgent grievances. They demanded that the speedup be cut down: they wanted more wages: they asked for half an hour lunch instead of twenty minutes: they wanted the right to smoke: they asked for air ventilators, particularly in the foundry. Apparently small demands? But revolutionary for Ford. They cut right to the heart of the issue. Then came the departmental stoppages, in which thousands of men tested their strength and found it. Harry Bennett yielded in the first encounters and then, April 1, he reversed his tactics and fired eight men, representatives of the various departments. Word spread through the plant, runners brought the news from one end of the industrial empire to another, and the plant shut down, one department after the other.

It is apparent that Ford had decided to provoke what he thought would be a premature strike. He had been poorly advised. His great network of espionage fell short. Bennett underestimated the strength of the union—apparently did not believe that the departments would be closed down so solidly. The terror of the goons was broken. Capitalism again had made one of its fatal, inevitable errors, had underestimated the strength of the proletariat. Then came the other big mistake: the attempt to drive the men back to work via the AFL. That flopped after Homer Martin—a recognized Ford stooge by now—was named head of Bill Green's "union" in the plant. Then came the attempt to split the strikers on the black-white issue. The Service Men literally drove several hundred Negroes—most of them newly brought from the South, others of the lumpen-proletarian type—to attack the pickets. They were defeated, forced back. And what Ford had expected, race riots, failed to materialize. The working men had already arrived at the stage of development where they realized cleavage on this issue would be fatal. White and black stood shoulder to shoulder. Over 10,000 of the 12,000 Negroes in the plant came out on strike.

All this time Ford's lawyer, Capizzi, and Bennett thundered "Communist—Communist"—along the lines the President himself



VICTORY SONG: "They said we couldn't do it and we did."

had adopted—and that fell short too. The men refused to be Red-baited. They saw through this tactic. Thus every push of the enemy was halted, everywhere along the line.

The strikers knew one thing and knew it well. They kept their ranks before the plant solid. Day and night they kept the greatest factory in the world shut down tight. They knew that here lay victory or defeat: not in the federal court where Judge Tuttle (whose two lawyer-daughters fought compensation cases for Ford against maimed workers) handed down a temporary injunction against the union. Not in the newspapers that carried strikebreaking headlines. (I was with William Allan when pickets stopped us, asked what paper we were from. When Bill said, "The *Daily Worker*," they said, "Pass. If you were from one of those other papers we'd kick your ass off the line.") Not in Washington where a Mediation Board sought to break strikes as John L. Lewis had warned. The strike would be ultimately won or lost by their own efforts, here, on the picket line. Did they have the organized strength to keep the plant shut, to hold out the strikebreakers? They did.

They have not won the ultimate victory. That will mean more organization, more struggle, eternal vigilance. But they won the first great battle. Henry Ford, who had said he would shut his plant down rather than talk to a union, talked to a union. And the union's grievance committees will function on a departmental basis until the elections provided for by the National Labor Relations Act will come due within the next month and a half. Meanwhile the union will work to entrench itself in every department. All the

men will be back to work, under the agreement, by April 18. The union will check and double-check, by means of departmental meetings, to see that *all* the men are back on the job as stipulated. The goal is to have every man-jack in the "world's greatest plant" signed up in the union before the NLRB elections take place. The grievance committees will talk wage increase and that, it is said, will be the one of the first points under discussion when the chief bargaining committee meets with Harry Bennett.

No, it is clear the union men will not rest on their laurels until the NLRB elections. There is much work to be done—and eternal vigilance is the price of safety. Particularly when they are dealing with as brutal a setup as Ford's. For Hitler's American counterpart will stop at nothing to circumvent, to delay, to sabotage the agreement. And the union men know it.

Meanwhile an old bitter man with a billion dollars sits in his castle and broods. About him are his plug-uglies, his lawyers, his propagandists. For decades they had been riding high, digging their spurs to the blood. And they had come their first cropper. I can imagine a scene something like this; the billionaire to his chief lieutenant Harry Bennett: "Well, Harry, after all the money we put in the Service Department, this happens. How do you explain it, eh? You've got to explain it to me."

And Bennett, loosing his famous bow-tie: "Well, you see, chief, it was this way . . ."

I'll let it go at that. I really can't imagine how the Dearborn Himmler talked his way out.

JOSEPH NORTH.



VICTORY SONG: *"They said we couldn't do it and we did."*

## —AND YOU?

What are the readers and friends of New Masses doing to save the magazine from financial suppression? Here is what they did during the past week:

197 persons sent one-dollar bills . . . . .	\$197.00
3 branches of the International Workers Order in New York, Miami, and Cincinnati sent donations . .	127.00
2 union locals, one in Montana and the other in San Francisco, sent contributions . . . . .	76.00
9 persons ran house parties for New Masses . . . .	274.36
6 persons donated a day's pay . . . . .	37.00
a group in Chicago ran a forum and donated the proceeds . . . . .	17.50
a group of lawyers auctioned off an oil painting . .	48.00
11 persons pledged \$10 each, to be fulfilled at the rate of \$1 a week . . . . .	11.00
32 persons sent \$5 donations . . . . .	160.00
16 persons sent \$10 donations . . . . .	160.00
7 persons sent \$25 donations . . . . .	175.00
2 persons sent \$50 donations . . . . .	100.00
2 persons sent \$100 donations . . . . .	200.00
Total . . . . .	<u>\$1,582.86</u>

Our hearty thanks to all those who have contributed. It makes us feel good to know that thousands of ordinary people all over the country are fighting this battle to keep New Masses alive. They are the real owners of the magazine. And with their dollars they are voting life to New Masses, greater power to the cause of peace and freedom. We know many more readers will want to follow the example of those who contributed the past week. There must be no blackout of New Masses. We and all our friends are determined to carry on.

*The Editors*

*(Please fill out the coupon on page 29)*

# WHAT PRICE PRIORITIES?

*Barbara Giles tells what Mr. Stettinius' division of OPM means to the average American. Why Mrs. Roosevelt suggested you might "learn to do without." The "cannon not butter" days start.*

A CLOSE-UP view of the war program in Washington involves the risk of distortion. The scene is a little cluttered with glossy gentlemen and marble halls. Phrases like "another billion" and "1,000 more planes" are thrown around as casually as if they referred to items in a household budget. Apparently the men who utter them feel that it's all settled, there's to be no more discussion about it—we are on the way to war and the hell with the cost. It surprised me to hear occasionally in the "defense" offices that "We need a war psychology." One man said it impatiently, another wistfully. The latter explained: "When France fell, everything was fine. The people were scared then and Congress rushed the appropriations through without so much debate. Of course you have to have some debate in a democracy, but it just isn't possible to get things done that way in wartime. If we had a war psychology—"

Perhaps "we" are not so wistful now, with the billions zipping through Congress seven at a time and more promised. "We" may not even know that the people are still short on war psychology. The shortage was far greater then, and still is, than the men who dwell in marble halls could possibly realize. In Washington itself, away from the dollar-a-year headquarters, people jibed about Knudsen's Office of Production Management: "Know what OPM stands for? Other People's Money." Among the floating, uprooted population of the capital, drawn from all over the country, there is a good two-fisted band of progressives whom J. Edgar Hoover and his spy-men cannot frighten. They haven't let up, rather they have intensified their battle against the local Jim Crow, against Martin Dies, and for peace. They, and for that matter thousands of others not so alert politically but wryly aware of what OPM "stands for," make sharper the arrogance of the dollar-a-year pooh-bahs.

Of course these gentlemen realize that there do exist masses of people who must be "handled" properly. In every war setup, no matter how bristling, there have to be divisions marked Labor and The Consumer. A tremendous lot of citizens come in those two categories. They must be made to feel that they have representatives in "the defense effort"—well, one or two representatives, anyway.

THE ROLE of "labor's representative," Sidney Hillman, has been analyzed before in these pages and we won't go over it again here. I think it's fairly plain by now that Mr. Hillman's main duty was to sell the war to labor, after which his task of shoving the workers around would be relatively simple. At this highly difficult job he hasn't earned his dollar

a year but no one can say that he hasn't tried. As for representing labor, Mr. Hillman couldn't even put up a decent pretense. Covering up this little second-rate Bevin has been the mean chore of the cellophane-makers on once-liberal weeklies.

However, even if Hillman had ever wanted to protect labor's rights, he wouldn't have had a chance. Not in that setup. A dollar-a-year regime outfitted with some thirty billion dollars and driving toward war can't afford representatives of the people. If they tried to function efficiently, they would either be deprived of their powers or politely turned out of the joint. Miss Harriet Elliott, who heads the Consumers Division, is an illustration. When Miss Elliott left her post as dean of women at the University of North Carolina and came to Washington, it was with the earnest idea of holding down prices and preventing shortages. She was also, it seems, under the impression that there was a New Deal still in existence which would back her in waging the good fight. One of the first things Miss Elliott did, in line with what she supposed to be her duty, was to call the public's attention to the fact that millions of American consumers were already in extremely poor condition: "Forty-five million of us are living below the safety line right now because we are not getting the kinds and amounts of food necessary for strength and health."

It was evident that Miss Elliott herself was in need of some discreet "handling." How this was done I don't profess to know, but it seems to have been effective. Miss Elliott has made no more public statements about the deplorable effect of "democracy" on the majority of citizens. She still tries to do her job, in a way. There's probably more surveying, warning, urging, and advising from the Consumers Division than any other office in the Defense Commission. Meanwhile the prices go up and the shortages can't be hidden. (Since this was written Miss Elliott's office has been merged into the newly created office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, headed by Leon Henderson.)

The more ominous power so far as consumers are concerned lies in the Priorities Division of OPM, headed by Edward R. Stettinius, Jr. To this division has been given the authority to declare that a material or product needed for war shall be used first for war, with the consumer getting the leavings. This is a great deal of authority. Until recently the public did not pay much attention to Stettinius' division. There seemed to be no prospect of shortages—weren't we the world's richest nation in resources? The first shock came when aluminum was placed under an industry-wide priority system. The meaning of the word "priority" was brought home,

straight into the kitchen, with housewives recalling Mrs. Roosevelt's arch suggestion of a few days previous that they might "learn to do without" things like aluminum pots and pans.

IF THE STORY of priorities stopped with aluminum, or the story of aluminum with pots and pans, consumers wouldn't need to worry much. But it doesn't. On March 18 Mr. Stettinius announced a list of 200 "critical" items on which the Army and Navy may automatically assign priority ratings. Most of them, it is true, are purely military but they also include such things as cameras, fuel oil, chart paper, motorcycles, electric generators, tin, brass, and bronze. In addition to aluminum, five other materials—machine tools, neoprene (synthetic rubber), nickel, tungsten, and magnesium—have been given a priority status. However, the actual establishing of an industry-wide priority isn't the only symptom of a shortage. There are less spectacular uses of the priority system. Mr. Stettinius, for example, can obtain "cooperation" pledges from manufacturers to put war orders ahead of all other demands—as in the case of steel structural shapes.

If there's one thing the Defense Commission is shy about, it's the subject of shortages, existing or threatened. For one thing, these men don't like to admit that the war program, before it is half accomplished, is beginning to raid everyday, peacetime life. Besides, the obvious solution for shortages is to expand the industries, and this the manufacturers don't want to do. They will build up to a certain point (with the government paying the bills) but they won't run the risk of an "over-expansion" that might mean collapse later. That is why, with the exception of announced priorities, no word comes from Stettinius' office to indicate that stocks are running low in vital materials. Information on this trickles out from other sources. We find out from trade-journal news that the copper and zinc supplies are short. Recently the Maritime Commission quietly put imported hides and tanning materials on the shipping-priority list. They're needed for "defense" shoes: 8,000,000 pairs for the army, 600,000 for the Navy, 150,000 for the Marine Corps, and 3,000,000 for the reserve stockpile. A soldier wears out twice as many shoes as a civilian. The Forest Service is nervously begging the timber owners not to be so reckless about laying waste good woodland. War production has already raised wood demands twenty-five percent and "the situation abroad" has cut American imports of wood and pulp about seventy-five percent.

Don't be surprised to read in the near future that steel, for "non-defense" uses, has been severely rationed. I know—the Defense Commission and the President himself say there's

no reason to expand the steel industry. But just a few months ago, when anyone suggested an aluminum shortage the dollar-a-year men told him not to be silly. At this writing, the steel industry is producing at 99.8 percent capacity. Many weeks back, the question of steel priorities was raised in Washington, but the steel industrialists fought any such idea—for one thing, priorities would show the need for expansion. Naturally they were backed by Stettinius who, as former chairman of US Steel, was not going to put the industry under a priority system if he could help it. When the controversy got too hot, Stettinius suggested that an "impartial study" be made of steel capacity. He knew just the man for the job: Gano Dunn, senior production consultant of OPM. Of course the fact that Mr. Dunn is a director of Guaranty Trust, a Morgan bank, and US Steel is a Morgan corporation, had nothing to do with his selection. But I hardly imagine that Mr. Stettinius was surprised when Mr. Dunn reported to the President—who announced it to the public—that no expansion or priorities were required in steel. Meanwhile dentists, for example, are harried by the difficulty of obtaining certain steel instruments; deliveries are made months after the orders have been put through and the steel itself is of inferior quality.

IT MAY TAKE A WHILE for people to realize what it means for a nation to be short on things like aluminum, steel, nickel, machine tools. The aluminum priority stirred some alarm because there was an immediate, homely association with the metal. More than kitchenware is involved, however. The war drain on aluminum will affect the output of radios, phonograph records, and even the movies, since the metal is necessary for sound-recording. (We can't go back to the old wax-recording because it demands an element that can only be obtained from Germany.) Both aluminum and steel are used in washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and other household appliances. It's impossible even to enumerate the number of articles made wholly or in part of steel. Ask the Iron & Steel Institute for a figure and their publicity man will tell you proudly that "practically every damned thing there is" depends on their metal. In the home alone, it is required for ranges, refrigerators, mattress springs, heating and plumbing, window screens, and other things for which the steel will be more and more difficult to obtain as the industry devotes its energies to supplying the gigantic maw of "defense."

There is a lot of whooping up, both in Washington and the industries, for the use of plastics where aluminum and steel are required. These may stand up or they may turn out to be so much *Ersatz*—they haven't been tested yet. The only sure thing about them is that their use will add another course to the du Pont's war banquet, since du Pont, with Union Carbide & Carbon, holds most of the patents on plastics.

The most cockeyed aspect of this shortage situation is that it's unnecessary. We *are* the

richest nation in the world, in both resources and manpower. It's as absurd to talk of shortages in industrial materials as to speak of surpluses in food. The present aluminum "shortage" has been with us for years, ever since Mellon started carrying around the entire industry in his pocket. True, there was enough for peacetime needs—but only for those who could pay the price which the aluminum trust demanded. Steel is another example of an industry that has been taken over by a handful of men who push prices up by holding production down. And with all their dollar-a-year patriots, their backlog of war orders, their denial of shortages, these men hold up the government on the price of steel. According to a TNEC report, the government is charged the "base price," from which the steel industry usually allows deductions as high as fifty percent to other customers.

How can there be a shortage of machine tools when fifty percent of the machine tools in America aren't being used? They're in idle plants, the hundreds of small plants which aren't getting a drop of the war-order champagne. No amount of begging will soften the giant contractors into turning over a real portion of their war business to these smaller firms. There are people in the Defense Commission who preach the necessity for giving contracts to small business or the "farming out" of orders through subcontracts. So far the result of their campaign has been to bring hopeful Little Business men to Washington and send them home with nothing. It's the sentiment of the war industrialists that Little Business, instead of trying to use its idle machine tools, would be more sensible to hand them over to the men with surplus orders.

All of which will give you an idea of what Miss Elliott would be up against if she really tried to represent consumers. Back in January she put forth a sound and essentially simple idea on how to maintain adequate production. She suggested "the most efficient use of existing capacities and the expansion of such capacities as far as our resources will permit." In March the priority order was slapped on aluminum. Miss Elliott's office did not urge that "efficient use of capacities" or "expansion" be tried. Possibly she had heard the aluminum men lay down the conditions under which they would expand: that the government not only pay for the new plants but agree to demolish them (at its own expense) after the war was over—in order to cut down capacity! Miss Elliott fell back on the only procedure left her—she suggested to housewives that there were inferior but usable substitutes for aluminum ware. (A few weeks earlier she had suggested that households which found the prices of meat uncomfortable might try fish.)

I should hate to have to estimate what all this will ultimately cost the consumer. Leon Henderson, as chief of the Price Stabilization Division of the Defense Commission, let out an occasional roar at excessively greedy manufacturers, but no injuries have been recorded

so far. About two months ago Mr. Henderson roared at the lumber industry, and manufacturers confessed that they were so frightened they had asked the administration to permit collusion in low-cost bidding on government orders without interference from the anti-trust laws. Their request was granted. Several days ago President Roosevelt promoted Mr. Henderson by elevating his office to an agency described in the headlines as a "price-fixing setup." Its official title is "Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply" and Mr. Henderson, as its administrator, is empowered not only to fix prices but to regulate the flow of goods as between military and civilian requirements. How he will use this authority remains to be seen. His past performance as a Price Stabilizer is not likely to keep the monopolists awake nights worrying about the fate of their profits. Indeed, Mr. Henderson's authority, being broader now, can very well be that much more useful to them.

CURIOSLY, the worst price increases have been in goods that are most plentiful. This is particularly true of food. Every so often Miss Elliott announces that there is "no reason" for the rising prices of sugar, or meat, or other foods. We've been talking about "food surpluses" ever since the last world war. Yet food prices are jumping—five percent during the past year, with sharper rises expected. The packers, canners, and corporations like General Foods have grabbed the chance to run up prices under cover of "war conditions."

In clothing, some manufacturers have been more subtle: instead of raising prices they've thrown in a little more shoddy and "filler" that won't be discovered until your laundry comes back or you get caught in a rain. However, a direct price increase—sometimes in addition to the poorer quality—is beginning to show in many garments as well as in the textile goods. Consumers Union reports, in its weekly *Bread & Butter*, that the working man's overalls, dungarees, and work shirts have gone up on the wholesale market and retail prices will likely rise at least ten percent. Why? Not because of any cotton shortage, certainly. The cotton surplus in this country is the largest ever—export markets have been cut down by the war. But the very circumstance of war is used by the manufacturers as a flame which they can apply to the price thermometer. There are surpluses of wool, too, but the price of raw wool has risen fifty percent since the war and the increase is being reflected in blankets, sweaters, and so on.

And the squeeze has just begun. It will intensify with every additional billion authorized for war. Not half of the \$30,000,000,000 already appropriated has been spent, yet prices are on their way to the fantastic levels of the last world war, when food costs nearly doubled and clothing rose 181 percent. This is part of what the industrialists describe quite accurately as "making the people pay for the war." This is the reality of "sacrifice."

BARBARA GILES.

# NEGROES IN WARTIME

Herbert Aptheker tells the story of the cruel and shameful treatment of the Negro people during the Wilson regime. Discrimination, lynching, murder. Lessons to remember.

ATOP the dome of the United States capitol stands an heroic statue of a woman representing the Goddess of Liberty. It was produced in the Washington foundry shop of Clark Mills, and the forging was done by Negro slaves. No wonder, then, the lady's eyes are downcast—for bondsmen's blood is on America's Goddess.

Beneath the statue, men like Glass and Woodrum and Smith, Reynolds and Byrnes and Barkley, Cox and George and Dies, Bilbo and Harrison and Hobbs spout about "democracy," while from eighty to ninety percent of the adults in their states are disfranchised. These men prate about "equality" while from one-third to one-half the population of their region are treated, by law and custom, as outcasts and pariahs. They extol the glories of "freedom" while millions of their own fellow citizens are held in debt slavery.

This consummate hypocrisy, this tragic farce must sound fearfully familiar to the Goddess' ears, for the identical performance was given less than a generation ago. Some of the star performers of that time, like Glass of Virginia and Byrnes of South Carolina, are once more upon the stage.

The identity of the advocates exposes the viciousness of the cause. In this country there is no more certain indicator of the general role of an individual, organization, or party than its attitude toward the Negro people. If it is restrictive, chauvinistic, degrading, one may be certain that the individuals or groups are corrupt and reactionary. This is an un-

failing test. It provides us with an important guide for understanding the past and the present, and charting a plan for the future.

WHAT WAS THE POSITION of the Negro people during the years of Wilson's "New Freedom"? What did the slick salesmen of death promise the 10,000,000 Negro citizens during the first "war for democracy"? How did the reality compare with the promise? What were the Negro's demands and how did he go about trying to achieve them?

The wily Wilson let it be known, during his first presidential campaign, that his high humanitarianism encompassed the Negro people. On Oct. 16, 1912, he pledged: "Should I become President of the United States, they may count on me for absolute fair dealing and for everything by which I could assist in advancing the interests of their race in the United States." On the basis of promises like these and Wilson's alleged liberalism in general, 100,000 Negro voters, counseled by men like Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, shifted their vote from the Republican to the Democratic Party.

Wilson kept his promise in his inimitable manner. Segregation and Jim Crowism were firmly established in every department of the federal government. Offices hitherto traditionally filled by Negroes—such as Recorder of Deeds in the capitol—were given to deserving white Democrats. Scores of Negro federal employees, particularly those in the Post Office Department, were summarily dismissed.

Disfranchisement, peonage, and lynching (sixty-six instances of this barbarity were reported in 1916 alone) continued unabated, without comment from the White House.

The Negro people, true to their militant traditions, did not take these abominations lying down. Indeed, they fought back, in the years immediately preceding and during the Great Deceiver's first administration. A new exodus from the South beginning about 1903 reached flood proportions in 1915-19—about seven hundred and fifty thousand human beings picked themselves up (notwithstanding attempted legal and terroristic restraints) and sought a better life. This migration, unlike its predecessors, represented a movement from rural to urban areas, leading to the proletarianization of a considerable segment of the Negro population. This in turn produced a more profound and general economic and political development among the Negro people than had hitherto prevailed. There resulted a three-fold increase in the circulation of Negro newspapers and establishment of national Negro organizations such as the National Equal Rights League in 1907, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909, the National Race Congress in 1915, and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History the same year. There developed, too, a growing pressure by Negro workers to force the AFL hierarchy to discard its vicious policy of exclusion.

THE RULING CLASS displayed growing concern. During his second campaign Wilson trotted out the old promises togged in his lovely verbiage. One of his most ardent bright-young-men, Ray Stannard Baker (since become his official biographer), contributed an article to the June 1916 issue of *World's Work* entitled, "Gathering Clouds Along The Color Line," which concluded, with marked trepidation: "No one who is at all familiar with the conditions which confront the American Negroes at the present time can doubt that discontent and unrest among them have been spreading, particularly within the last two years."

But The Liberal was elected again by a united front that included Henry Ford and the *New Republic*. No sooner had he been safely returned to the White House than the *New Republic* editors made clear that the powers-that-be would take no nonsense from Negroes who found their appointed "place" uncomfortable, particularly in those days of the authoritarian challenge to the American way of liberty and justice. The *New Republic* of Nov. 18, 1916, ran an article by one Harrison Rhodes entitled, with the editors' typical concern for clarity, "Notes from Lao-



Disaster

Sylvia Wald



dicia on the Negro Problem," which ended as follows:

Now in these troubled days of the twentieth century, with clouded horizons and the social revolution like a mirage before us, we may still love humanity while we deny its freedom and only hope for its equality in some future day. Is it not possible, in the interests both of black man and of white, to leave unsettled the question of the black's equality and his destiny, and meanwhile to appreciate his suave good-natured contribution to our national tone? And not to become too enthusiastic about not giving him his chance?

When war was declared, enthusiastic promises were made the Negro people. Samuel Gompers swore that "emancipation from every vestige of wrong and injustice" would follow the holy crusade against kaiserism. Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels let himself go: "In this war we are establishing a new spirit of universal equality and brotherhood. Too long has America been enslaved, too long has caste been enthroned. Kings will be relics, thrones will be in museums, here and abroad." The chief himself, Mr. Wilson, told the Negro people: "With thousands of your sons in the camps and in France, out of this conflict you must expect nothing less than the enjoyment of full citizenship rights—the same as are enjoyed by every other citizen."

HOW TENDER and benign were the newspapers!—the very sheets which had never before noticed the Negro except to slander him. The New York *Sun* was certain that Negroes would "give a magnificent account of themselves in France. They may not be able to live amicably with Southern communities, but they know how to die in defense of the flag." Wherefore, Mr. Morgan's personal journal urged that the Negro soldiers be shipped abroad with as little delay—and as little preparation—as possible. The Lexington, Ky., *Times* bade "a heartfelt farewell" to the Negro men, who, in common with their white fellow citizens, were "rallying to the defense of our institutions." Irvin S. Cobb visited Negro troops, found them "wonderful," and concluded—in the *Saturday Evening Post*—"Yes, most assuredly n-i-g-g-e-r is going to have a different meaning when this war ends."

The respectable "leaders" of the Negro masses were ordered to perform their function of deception. Said the Salisbury, N. C., *Evening Post*: "Plans are now under way to give these men [Negro troops] a sendoff, a farewell that will be made appropriate by the leaders of the race in this city who send these men as their representatives to fight for America as becomes good Americans"—with the exception of the "leaders." The War Department issued special instructions, "for general information, not for publication," advising how best to engage the active cooperation of the "solid" citizens among the Negro people. Emmett J. Scott, private secretary to the late Booker T. Washington, was appointed special assistant to the Secretary of War to "look after" the darker tenth of the population.

As one of these eminently "solid" citizens, Robert R. Moton—whose solidity earned him the title of major—put it: "The educated Negroes, professional and business men, and educators generally . . . not only counseled their people to be loyal, but urged them to avoid loose expressions even in jest which might lead others to misunderstand." Said the honorable Dr. Scott, from behind his Washington desk: "This is not the time to discuss race problems. Our first duty is to fight, and to continue to fight until this war is won. Then we can adjust the problems that remain in the life of the colored man."

Evidence indicates, however, that notwithstanding the advice and promises of these eminent individuals, the infancy of the mass Negro organizations, and the weakness and disunity among radical groups there was considerable opposition to the war. Of course such opposition, whether from white or Negro, was not news "fit to print," so one rarely gets past the censorship to the seething unrest. But the casual references and occasional hints are revealing.

Early in April 1917, the month war was declared, Negroes were arrested "upon the charge of rebellion and treason" in Columbia, Tenn., and Birmingham, Ala. In West Point, Ga., a Dr. H. Pannkoke, described as "a German," was arrested for denouncing the war before assemblies of Negroes. The danger arose, as the town's mayor acknowledged, from the fact that "Pannkoke was having some success in arousing the Negroes."

The Macon, Ga., *Telegraph* feared these so-called "German plots" might succeed "among that small percentage of Southern Negroes who, poisoned by too much exploitation by well-meaning philanthropists in the North and East, have come to feel that the Negro's destiny in the South is best to be served by the overthrow in some fashion or other of peculiarly Southern institutions." The *Telegraph* thought there were "enough of them [Negroes] lending a willing ear to call for prompt and severe treatment."

This treatment, of course, was to be meted out to the Negro for his own good—it was all part of the idealism of the war for freedom. Said the Chicago *Tribune*: "Our observation goes to show that the Negro is happiest when the white race asserts its superiority. . . . Southerners insist that 'the nigger must be kept down.' They enforce the color line." At any rate, said the *New Republic* (Oct. 20, 1917): "The Negroes of the South, we may well believe, are better off than they would be in a black republic." The editors well understood, to use their own language, that "the assembling of large numbers of lusty young blacks" incident to the war effort "quite naturally gives occasion for concern."

Even President Wilson deigned to comment on the situation. In a letter written Apr. 19, 1917, he professed amazement that "many of the members of the colored race were not enthusiastic in their support of the Government in this crisis." He saw to it that one Negro, who showed a marked lack of en-

thusiasm and whose speeches denouncing the war makers were gaining increasing sympathy, was imprisoned and silenced. Thus it was that Ben Fletcher, a Negro official of the Industrial Workers of the World, was sent in 1918 to Leavenworth to make the acquaintance of a certain Mr. Browder.

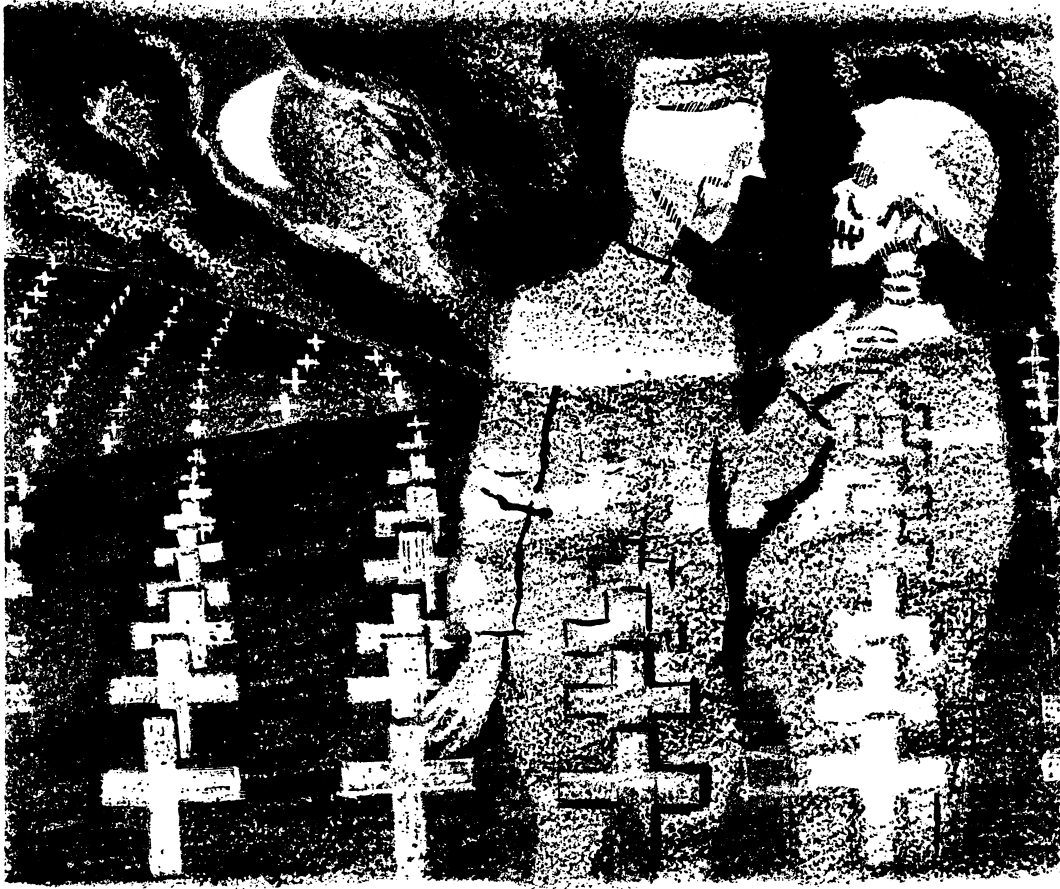
Three days after Wilson asked Congress to declare war, William G. Willcox, president of the New York City Board of Education and chairman of the Board of Trustees of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, was dispatched to the South as a "friend" of the Negroes in order to bolster their morale. He declared his certainty that the Negro people would gladly "prove their right to stand shoulder to shoulder with their white brothers in answer to their country's call, and, if the supreme test must come, prove that their blood is as red, their hearts as true, their courage as steadfast to do and die in its service."

A day later a reporter for the New York *Times* interviewed Dr. Hollis B. Frissell, principal of Hampton Institute in Virginia, and asked his opinion concerning reports that Negroes resented the fact that their citizenship was remembered only when there was dying to be done. The good doctor poo-pooed the reports, but admitted he was "interested to read some statements that indicate there are a large number of Negroes who are disloyal to the Government." The interest grew to the point where, on April 12, Dr. Frissell thought it necessary, according to the headlines, to "Call Negroes to Duty" and to assure them that "the colored man is going to secure recognition, not by demanding his rights, but by deserving them."

As I have stated, Woodrow Wilson had assured the Negro people upon America's entry into the war that they might "expect nothing less than the enjoyment of full citizenship rights—the same as are enjoyed by every other citizen." This certainly would be a logical expectation, assuming that Wilson's words about our fighting for democracy and the right of self-determination, and Josephus Daniels' about our fighting against caste segregation, tyranny, and injustice were sincere. Nothing was wrong but the assumption.

And there was then (as there is now) no clearer demonstration of the falsity of that assumption than the attitude and the manner in which the government dealt with the most oppressed segment of its citizenry. This attitude and this treatment were not (and are not) fortuitous, they were not extraneous from or foreign to the entire content of the war effort. They did not (and do not) represent a mere oversight or neglect or aberration. They were (and are) the deliberate and inevitable result of the anti-democratic, reactionary, imperialist content of the American government and its foreign policy.

In the ruling class "way of life," the policy is that the Negro shall get far less than his proportionate share—but not when it comes to forming battalions of death. Thirteen percent of the US Army in the last world war was Negro, although Negroes constituted ten



*"Vice-President Wallace says we now have our 'second opportunity to make the world safe for democracy.'"*

percent of the total population. Seventy-five percent of the Negroes examined for military service were accepted, as compared with seventy percent of the whites. Again, twenty-seven percent of the white registrants under the draft act were enrolled for full military service, while this "honor" was conferred upon thirty-two percent of the Negroes.

This "favoritism" was particularly rampant in the South, and in at least one case was so outrageous that even the War Department felt it necessary to dismiss an entire draft board. This occurred in Fulton County, Ga., where it was discovered that out of 815 white registrants, 526 were exempted, while out of 202 Negroes, only six were considered unfit.

Another interesting Southern racket was the "deserter"-catching game—the prize being the fifty dollars which the government offered for every apprehended "deserter." Negroes were not permitted to volunteer in the South. And it became common for draft boards to refrain from sending Negroes notices of their call and then arrest them as "deserters," forward them to Uncle Sam, and collect the reward.

THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY THOUSAND Negro men were mobilized for full military service, 200,000 were sent to France. Of the latter, 42,000 served as combat troops, the remainder as laborers, i.e., those who built and repaired roads, unloaded ships, dug trenches, cooked food, and buried corpses. These duties were performed under especially

chosen white officers who were supposed to "know how to handle" Negroes.

And in New York City Dr. Du Bois was writing (*The Crisis*, July 1918): "Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy. We make no ordinary sacrifice, but we make it gladly and willingly with our eyes lifted to the hills."

Negro women who offered to serve as nurses were not wanted. Black men could get no food and no cigarettes in a building that housed the Young Men's Christian Association. Clothing cartons for Negro soldiers were labeled for "current colored draft" and consisted of second-hand shoes and second-hand suits. Negroes in Camp McLellan down in Alabama, wore nothing but fatigue suits, for their underwear and overcoats, uniforms and shoes arrived months after they did. Drilling consisted of "marching to and from work with hoes, shovels, and picks." Influenza was rampant, tents old, mess halls indecent, toilets filthy. Even the Executive Committee of the General Wartime Commission of the Churches said conditions were so bad as to "make it more difficult to sustain among the colored people as a whole an adequate recognition of our democratic ideals in the war and the largest devotion to our cause."

After the twenty-fourth colored infantry had been transferred to a Southern post, it was disarmed even when on patrol duty, insulted, Jim Crowed, some of its members

beaten by local policemen. Lynchings kept recurring (forty-four were reported in 1917) and one took place in May at Waco, Texas, when Jesse Washington was burned alive in the public square. From July 1 to 3 a headline-crazed mob, which included many white soldiers and sailors, had let all hell loose in East St. Louis, destroying 300 Negro homes and murdering 125 Negro men, women, and children. In August a Houston policeman beat up another colored soldier. When the rumor reached the Negro infantrymen that a lynch mob was forming: they armed themselves and, on August 23, marched into the city and fought back. Two Negroes and seventeen whites, including five policemen, were killed. Ninety-nine Negroes were sentenced to prison for terms ranging from a few years to life (the last of them was pardoned in 1938); thirteen were hanged.

The Negroes sent abroad fought well—so well that it proved embarrassing. Four entire Negro infantry regiments, the 369th, 370th, 371st, and the 372nd, and the first battalion of the 367th were awarded the Croix de Guerre. The first American soldiers to be decorated for bravery under fire by the French were two Negro privates, Henry Johnson and Needham Roberts. This would never do. A deliberate campaign of slander was begun. Contradictory orders were given four Negro officers of the 368th infantry regiment and when they attempted to do the impossible—without maps, artillery support, grenades—they were relieved of their commands, amid great fanfare. A court-martial later exonerated them, but their vindication did not receive a tenth of the publicity that had been accorded their disgrace.

TWO AMERICAN GENERALS, Ervin and Horn, issued humiliating orders, the former forbidding Negro soldiers to associate with French women, the latter ordering them not to attend general social functions. This last order was matched in America by General Ballou's command to Negro troops to keep away from places where "they were not wanted." On Aug. 7, 1918, a circular called "Secret Information Concerning Black American Troops" was issued from the headquarters of General Pershing himself. It informed the French people and army that the Negro was really an "inferior" being, that familiarity or comradeship with him on the part of the white people was resented by the Americans, and that such actions would create serious complications for the government of the United States. A broad hint was also dropped that a little less notice of the gallantry and bravery of the black troops on the part of the French officers would be appreciated by the American Army Command. Though 1,300 of the crosses, row on row in Flanders Field, mark the graves of American Negro soldiers, those who survived were not permitted to take part in the great Paris Victory Parade of the "democratic" allies on Bastille Day, July 14, 1919.

At home, mass butcheries of Negroes, stimulated by a corrupt press and motion picture

industry (*The Birth of a Nation* was featured during the war years), occurred in other places than East St. Louis—in Youngstown, Ohio, and Chester, Pa., for example. Reported lynchings, which had reached the figure of forty-four in 1917, jumped to sixty-four the next year. And under the federal government's edict of "work or fight," forced labor for Negro men and women spread throughout the South.

That edict had directed all men up to the age of forty-five either to engage in productive labor or join the army. Southern states expanded this enactment, applying it with special ferocity against Negroes. Thus Louisiana and Kentucky raised the age limit to fifty-five and Georgia to sixty. Certain localities applied the measure to women as well as to men. Wrightsville, Ga., for example, decreed the arrest, on a vagrancy charge, of anyone within its borders from sixteen to fifty who did not have a card signed by his or her employer certifying that the individual was "actively and assiduously engaged in useful employment fifty hours or more per week." In Bainbridge, Ga., a city regulation specifically provided that *all Negro women*, single and married, were to get jobs or be fined fifteen dollars. A few women were arrested and fined but the law was defied by the Negroes, who held a mass meeting in the summer of 1918 and warned the city authorities that unless the act were repealed they would resist its enforcement "to the last drop of blood in their bodies." No further arrests were made.

IN THE RURAL AREAS peonage flourished, unrebuked by the federal authorities. The war years are the only period of the present century in which prosecution of violators of the anti-peonage laws is not so much as mentioned in the Attorney-General's reports.

In May 1918 a Negro in Brooks County, Ga., assassinated one Hampton Smith, a particularly bestial operator of a peonage plantation. As a result, during the week of May 17-24, ten of the more militant Negro workers were lynched in Brooks and Lowndes Counties. When the wife (she was in the eighth month of pregnancy) of one of these men denounced these outrages and threatened to expose the identities of the lynchers, she too was murdered. She was stripped, hanged with her head down, and her abdomen was split open.

The discontent of the Negro masses reached fever pitch. Their established organizations grew with great rapidity. The NAACP, for example, had in December 1917 eighty branches and 9,200 members, while the next year it had 165 branches, and 45,000 members, 12,000 of whom were in the South. Its journal, *The Crisis*, sold an average of 41,289 copies each month in 1917, and 75,187 in 1918. Other and more militant organs came to the fore, like the *Guardian* in Boston, the *Defender* in Chicago, and the *Messenger* and *Crusader* in New York. New organizations, short-lived but significant, appeared—the National Liberty Congress of Colored

Americans, the African Blood Brotherhood (which later affiliated itself with the Workers' Party of America), and the National Brotherhood Workers of America. The last-named fought for unionism, against lynching, Jim Crowism, and peonage. Its Washington convention in September 1919 hailed the Soviet Union as a beacon light for the workers of the entire world.

Negro membership in the Industrial Workers of the World grew mightily during the war years—according to Ben Fletcher, fully 100,000 Negroes carried IWW membership cards by 1919. Negro workers also intensified their efforts to break down discrimination within the AFL. Two anti-Jim Crow resolutions were presented at the 1917 AFL convention and six in each of the next two annual conventions. Typical was one put forward in 1918 by Negro railroad workers in the state of Washington asking that they be organized, since, "in the past . . . a lack of realization on the part of the organized white laborers that to keep the unorganized colored laborers out of the field of organization has only made it possible for the unscrupulous employer to exploit one against the other to the mutual disadvantage of each. . . ." The bureaucrats at the conventions succeeded in killing these proposals but they were indicative of the maturing class consciousness of the newly proletarianized Negro laborers.

The powers-that-be were duly informed of the brewing danger. Major Moton, on June 15, 1918, warned Wilson: "There is more genuine restlessness, and perhaps dissatisfaction, on the part of the colored people than I have ever known before. I have just recently returned from trips in Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina. It seems to me something ought to be done to change the attitude of these millions of black people." On July 1, 1918, War Secretary Baker called the same situation to the President's attention, and remarked that, though he had uniformly denied reports of unfair treatment, "there was still much unrest" among the Negroes. Both Moton and Baker urged Wilson to say something, if but a word, condemning lynching. His private secretary, Mr. Tumulty, and America's chief purveyor of misinformation, Mr. Creel, begged their chief to take the same action. More important than this prompting were the petitions, delegations (which rarely were permitted to see Mr. Wilson), and mass demonstrations. Tens of thousands of Negroes silently paraded in cities throughout the country. Finally, on July 26, 1918, Wilson was persuaded to issue a statement against lynching. He did nothing, however, to expedite the passage of two anti-lynching bills in Congress—they were never so much as reported out of committee.

At the close of hostilities Wilson sent Major Moton to France in order to prepare the American Negro troops for their return to the domestic way of life, since it was feared their months away from its influence might have "spoiled" them. They came home to be Jim Crowed by the American Legion, to meet a revived Ku Klux Klan,

to see seventy-seven Negroes lynched (eleven of them soldiers) within the year 1919, and to witness outbreaks against Negro people in twenty-eight cities during the same year, resulting in the deaths of at least 100 colored men and women. The most serious outbreaks occurred in Chicago, Washington, D. C., and Elaine, Ark. In Washington the city police generally sided with the rioters, who finally were dispersed by the militant, organized resistance of the Negroes themselves. Because the Negroes of Elaine had formed a union and hired lawyers in an attempt to fight peonage, they were attacked by armed planters. Five whites and twenty-five Negroes were killed, and later eleven Negroes were convicted and electrocuted by the state of Arkansas on charges of insurrection!

In Kansas City the young editor of the *Workers' World*, commenting on the American Negro's suffering, declared (July 4, 1919): "So it will be until the present anarchy of economic life has been replaced by a sane, orderly, socialist society." A mass meeting of Negroes held at the Harlem Casino in New York, the last day of November 1919, heard a young woman denounce the Elaine executions. That Kansas City editor was Earl Browder; the fiery young woman was Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. And among the young Negro men who had served in France and returned to reaction-ridden America, whom no Du Bois or Moton or Wilson could ever deceive, was James W. Ford.

The years since the first world war have produced tens of thousands of men and women like those three. The poet Langston Hughes has written of the Negro youngsters who lie shattered, still "somewhere in France." He says they "can't see and don't know" that the oppression of their people continues notwithstanding their sacrifice. But others—many, many others—do see and know. Again they see democracy and equality *preached*, segregation and Jim Crowism *practiced*. They hear their worst enemies, the Dixie demagogues, the Negro-hating, labor-hating, freedom-hating poll-tax congressmen, leading the cry for a war to defend "democracy." They know that a war conducted by such individuals, by the class which those individuals represent, can bring them only further misery and pain.

Today the forces of labor, of the common man, are infinitely stronger than they were a generation ago. This is overwhelmingly true on the international scene, with one-sixth of the world in the possession of the workers. It is true on the domestic scene, with a steeled radical vanguard, a powerful, broadly organized labor movement, a maturing people's anti-war organization, and a National Negro Congress uniting over 3,000,000 Negro men and women for peace. The historic role of the Negro in America has, from the earliest days, been to announce and fight for the most advanced demands of the people as a whole. His position as America's most exploited man has made him, and the position accorded him, the surest touchstone, the acid test, of American democracy.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

# WE SPEAK FOR INDIA

Nehru explains to the world why the British authorities have thrown him into prison for the eighth time. "My whole nature rebelled against fascism"—and yet. . . .

Jawaharlal Nehru is perhaps one of the best known representatives of the All-India National Congress in the western world, spokesman for India's millions in their long fight for independence. Last November 3 he was arrested by British authorities for speaking up against the war among the peasants of Gorakhpur province; he did so in following out Gandhi's tactic of individual resistance to British power. For the eighth time in two decades, the fifty-year-old Nehru is back in jail, this time on a four-year sentence. And since November, at least 15,000 lesser figures and local leaders have been incarcerated without trial in British dungeons. NEW MASSES presents Nehru's statement to the magistrate, slightly abridged. To our knowledge, it appears for the first time in an American publication.—THE EDITORS.

"I HAVE been told that the charge against me is based on the reports of three speeches I delivered in the Gorakhpur district early in October last. Copies of these reports and in one case a translation into English, have been given to me. I have read these and I cannot congratulate the persons who were responsible for the report-

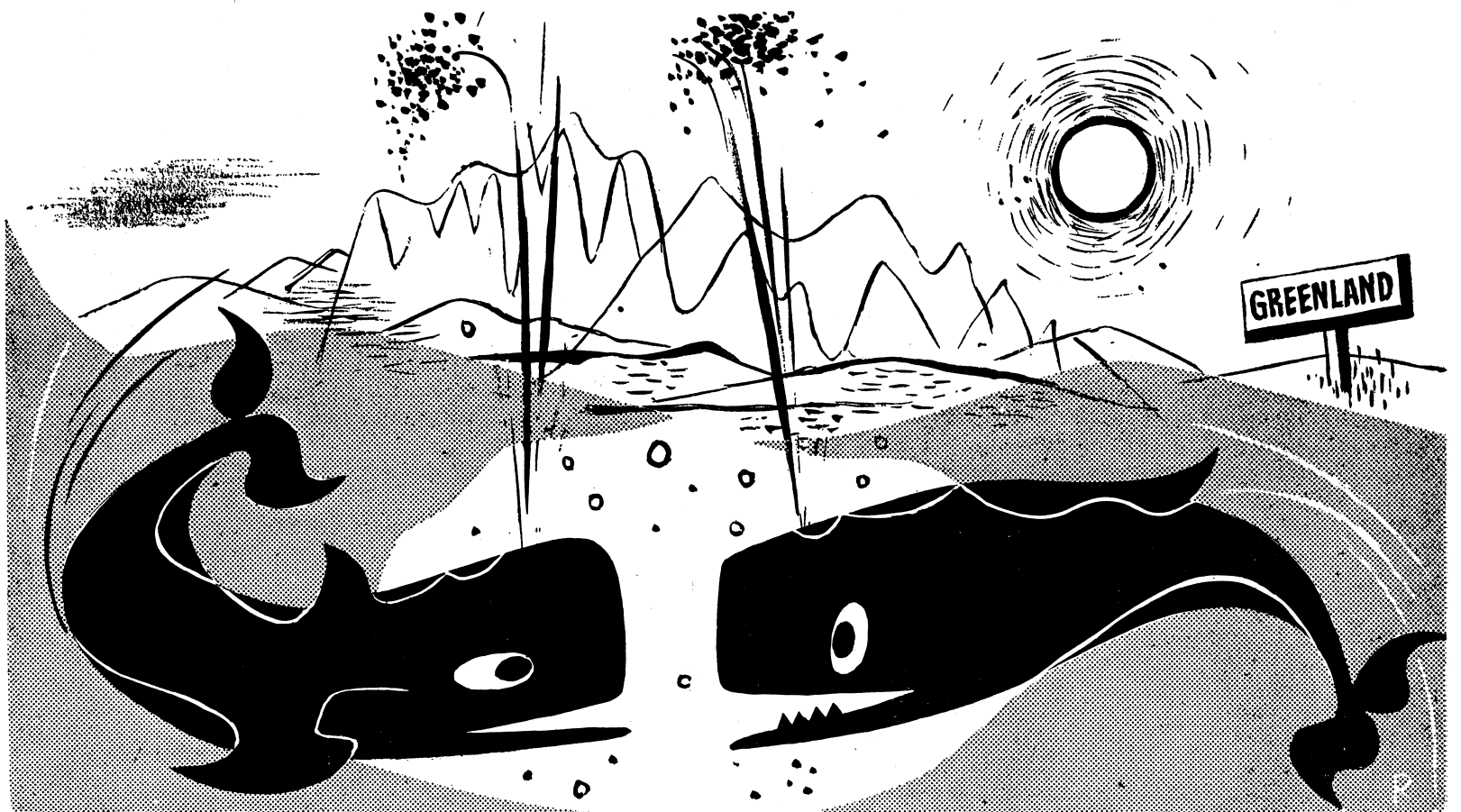
ing. These reports, though presumably taken down in shorthand, are scrappy and incomplete, confusing and often making little sense.

I am a lover of words and phrases and try to use them appropriately. Whatever my opinions might be, the words I use are meant to express them intelligently and in ordered sequence. A reader of these reports will find little intelligence or sequence in them, and is likely to obtain an entirely distorted impression of what I actually said. . . .

It is not my intention to give details of the many errors and mistakes in these reports. That would mean rewriting them completely. That would waste your time, sir, and mine, and would serve little purpose. I am not here to defend myself, and perhaps what I say in this statement will make your task easier. I do not yet know the exact nature of the charge against me. I gather that it has something to do with the Defense of India Rules and that it relates to my references to the war and to the attempts being made to compel the people of India to take part in the war effort. If that is so, I shall gladly admit the charge. It is not necessary to go to garbled reports to find out what I or other Congressmen say in regard to India and the war. The

Congress resolutions and statements, carefully and precisely worded, are there for all the world to know. By those resolutions and statements I stand, and I consider it my duty to take the message of the Congress to the people of India. . . .

IF I WAS CHOSEN . . . for this purpose, it was not to give expression to our individual views. We were symbols who spoke the mind of India in the name of India, or at any rate of a vast number of people in India. As individuals we may have counted for little, but as such symbols and representatives of the Indian people, we counted for a great deal. In the name of those people we asserted their right to freedom and to decide for themselves what they should do and what they would not do; we challenged the right of any other authority, by whomsoever constituted, to deprive them of this right and to enforce its will upon them. No individual or group of individuals, not deriving authority from the Indian people and not responsible to them in any way, should impose their will upon them and thrust the hundreds of millions of India, without any reference to them or their representatives, in a mighty war



"I hear Martin Dies is coming up to investigate our submersive activities."

which was none of their seeking. It was amazing and full of significance that this should be done in the name of freedom and self-determination and democracy, for which, it is alleged, the war was being waged. We were slow in coming to our final conclusions; we hesitated and parleyed; we sought a way out honorable to all parties concerned. We failed and the inevitable conclusion was forced upon us that so far as the British government or their representatives in India were concerned, we were still looked upon as chattels to do their will and to continue to be exploited in their imperialist structure. That was a position which we could never tolerate whatever the consequences.

There are very few persons in India, I suppose, whether they are Indians or Englishmen, who have for years past so consistently raised their voices against fascism and Nazism as I have done. My whole nature rebelled against them and, on many an occasion, I vehemently criticized the pro-fascist and appeasement policy of the British government. Ever since the invasion of Manchuria and subsequently in Abyssinia, Central Europe, Spain, and China, I saw with pain and anguish how country after country was betrayed in the name of this appeasement and the lamps of liberty were being put out. I realized that imperialism could only function in this way: it had to appease its rival imperialisms, or else its own ideological foundations were weakened. It had to choose between this and liquidating itself in favor of democratic freedom. There was no middle way.

So long as appeasement applied to Manchuria, Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Spain, and Albania, "to far-away countries about which few people had ever heard," as the then Prime Minister of England put it, it did not matter much and was faithfully pursued. But when it came nearer home and threatened the British empire itself, the clash came and war began.

AGAIN, there were two alternatives before the British government and each government engaged in the war—to continue to function in the old imperialist way or to end this in their domains and become the leaders of the urge for freedom and revolutionary change the world over. They chose the former, though they talked still in terms of freedom

and self-determination and democracy. But their conception of freedom was, even in words, limited to Europe, and evidently meant freedom to carry on with their empire in the old way. Not even peril and disaster have weakened their intention to hold on to their empire and to enforce their will upon subject peoples. In India we have had over a year of war government. The people's elected legislatures have been suspended and ignored and a greater and more widespread autocracy prevails here than anywhere else in the world. Recent measures have suppressed completely such limited freedom as the press possessed, to give facts and opinions. If this is the prelude to the freedom that is promised to us, or to the "new order" about which so much is said, then we can well imagine what the latter stages will be when England emerges as a full-blooded fascist state.

I am convinced that the largest majority of the people of England are weary of empire and hunger for a real new order. But we have to deal not with them but with their government, and we have no doubt in our minds as to what that government aims at. With that we have nothing in common and we shall resist it to the utmost. We have therefore decided to be no parties to this imposed war and to declare this to the world. This war has led already to widespread destruction and will lead to even greater horror and misery. With those who suffer we sympathize deeply and in all sincerity. But unless the war has a revolutionary aim of ending the present order and substituting something based on freedom and co-operation, it will lead to a continuation of wars and violence and utmost destruction.

That is why we must dissociate ourselves from this war and advise our people to do likewise and not help in any way with money or men. That is our bounden duty. But even apart from this, the treatment accorded to the Indian people during the past year by the British authorities, the latter's attempts to encourage every disruptive and reactionary tendency, their forcible realizations of money for the war from even the poor of India, and their repeated affronts to Indian nationalism are such that we can never forget them or ignore them. No self-respecting people can tolerate such behavior and the people of India have no intention of tolerating it.

I stand before you, sir, as an individual

being tried for certain offenses against the state. You are a symbol of that state. But I am also something more than an individual. I, too, am a symbol at the present moment, a symbol of Indian nationalism, resolved to break away from the British empire and achieve the independence of India. It is not me that you are seeking to judge and condemn, but rather the hundreds of millions of the people of India, and that is a large task even for a proud empire. Perhaps it may be that though I am standing before you on my trial, it is the British empire itself that is on its trial before the bar of the world. There are more powerful forces at work in the world today than courts of law; there are elemental urges for freedom and food security which are moving vast masses of people, and history is being molded by them. The future recorder of this history might well say that in the hour of supreme trial, the government of Britain and the British failed because they could not adapt themselves to a changing world. He may muse over the fate of empires which have always fallen because of this weakness and call it destiny. Certain causes inevitably produce certain results. We know the causes; the results are following inexorably in their train.

IT IS A SMALL MATTER what happens to me in this trial or subsequently. Individuals count for little; they come and go, as I shall go when my time is up. Seven times I have been tried and convicted by British authorities in India and many years of my life lie buried within prison walls. An eighth time or ninth, and a few more years, make little difference. But it is no small matter what happens to India and her millions of sons and daughters. That is the issue before me, and that ultimately is the issue before you, sir. If the British government imagines that it can continue to exploit them and play about with them against their will as it has done in the past, then it is grievously mistaken. It has misjudged their present temper and read history in vain. I should like to add that I am happy to be tried in Gorakhpur. The peasantry of Gorakhpur are the poorest and the most long-suffering in my province. I am glad that it was my visit to the Gorakhpur District, and my attempts to serve its people, that have led to this trial.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU.



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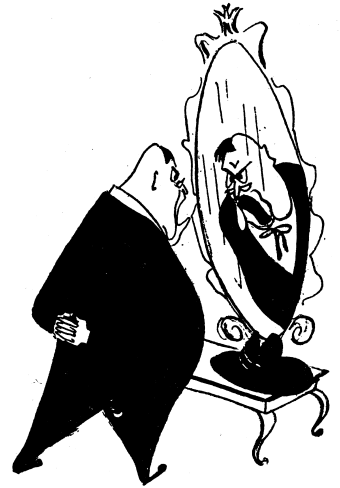
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April 22, 1941 NM



Clinton

1941: "Damned fifth columnist."

NM April 22, 1941

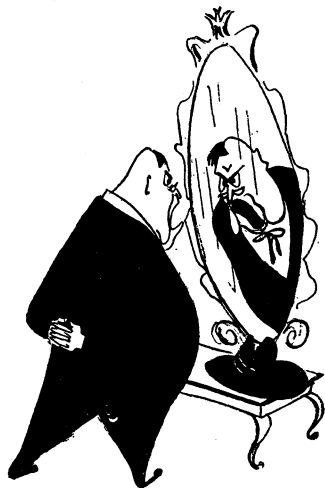
# Strictly Personal

by RUTH MCKENNEY

## IN "UNITY" THERE IS MACLEISH

DON'T mean to be too nasty, but I must say I got a good, loud, vulgar laugh out of the meeting of (get your teeth into this, now) The Common Council for American Unity. Maybe you read about it in the *New York Times*. It was one of those five-buck banquets at the Hotel Astor—Common as all get out—featuring Bird's Eye peas, half spring chicken, and plenty of high-toned talk. Mrs. Roosevelt was honorary chairman, Archie MacLeish favored the audience with some of his more obscure "thoughts," and Attorney General Jackson provided the main sensation of the evening when he came out for "firmer but more flexible alien control."

But before we get into the delights of last week's banquet, we ought to straighten out The Common Council for American Unity. In case you have skipped right past the columns of enthusiastic press accounts, I may pause to state that Ye Olde Commone Council is a brand new outfit, just stripping down for battle action. Rumor has it that Archie MacLeish thought up the Common Council all by his little self, and certainly the moniker on the organization smacks of someone on hire to the White House. Just the same, I rise to state that I don't believe Archie labored and brought forth the Council single-handed. Many of our best heads were put together before the wheels began to turn. You can just hear Frank saying to Eleanor: "Say, Ellie, what we need in this country is a little of the good old red hot unity, like they had in the last war. You know."



Clinton

1941: "Damned fifth columnist."

The nice thing about the Common Council is its select membership. There's hardly a whiff of the National Association of Manufacturers about the whole shebang. The Common Council specializes in reconstructed radicals and nice people who used to believe in housing and currently believe in war. In fact, there is even a little polite tut-tutting among the rank and file about war profits in steel and quite a few members of the Common Council believe there ought to be an "investigation" as soon as the German people are herded into small, powerless states owned by England and the United States.

Well, I don't have to go into the sordid details. It's all terribly efficient. There's a committee on labor, which, thank God, didn't meet. The Ford strike and the other labor "troubles" might have proved a spot embarrassing. Then there's a committee on the press, and the story is that MacLeish is getting up a committee on poets and heaven help the poet who refuses to be unified. And then, finally, there's the committee on the foreign born which had its innings at the big Astor banquet. The committee on foreign born is darned important in the Common Council. There have been all sorts of rumors that the foreign born didn't like to be fingerprinted.

So the Common Council got up this banquet and now you will be glad to know everything is ship-shape and simply swell. Bob Jackson started the ball rolling by speaking with becoming frankness. True, he did not explain why American visas are consistently denied any unfortunate who has been fool enough, in the past, to stick his neck out for democracy, while always, without fail, visas are granted to any refugee prince, fascist, millionaire, or similar lover of what Mr. Roosevelt miscalls "the American way of life." Mr. Jackson, in his delightful speech, also did not mention why the foreign born were forced to register their fingerprints like criminals, or did he go into vulgar details about the lack of political freedom enjoyed by local non-citizens. But then, you can't have unity if you go around stating facts. The foreign born in this country have the freedom to choose between the Democratic and the Republican party, although, of course, they can't vote; also, they have the freedom either to like President Roosevelt's war policy—or to like it. So far as the Common

Council is concerned, this is quite enough freedom for those who make the nation's steel and mine its coal and lay the railroad tracks and build the skyscrapers. Any more freedom, and you might have the foreign born participating in labor unions and/or fighting for peace. These offenses are punished by either jail or deportation or both, and it does no good to argue that American citizens are still legally free to choose their politics and their foreign policy. The Jackson-Roosevelt way to end this sad discrimination against the foreign born is to turn American citizens into jail-bait if they admit they don't like war.

But here we are, way off the subject of Bob Jackson's fine speech. I wouldn't want to give the wrong impression. Mr. Jackson didn't even mention political freedom for aliens, except by implication. You'll remember: "firmer but more flexible alien control." To a cynic like myself, this interesting statement centers around concentration camps for the foreign born who want peace. But the Common Council for American Unity cheered Mr. Jackson's speech, so I expect I am a pessimist.

But then again, I'm not so sure. For the rest of the speeches at the banquet never mentioned freedom for the foreign born or visas for democracy lovers, either. In fact, the rest of the speeches bore down rather heavily on the war problem. Several consuls—Poles, Italians, and so forth—stood up to say that they were encouraging their fellow countrymen in America to enlist in the army. The Common Council was unable to dragoon an Irishman for the occasion. Sometimes, in spite of everything, in spite of the New York police force, I'm downright proud of my landsmen. But the lack of an Irishman didn't spoil the party, for Mrs. Roosevelt wound up the evening with a stirring address entitled, "Americans all!" Mrs. Roosevelt didn't say anything about the Bridges case, either, but she mentioned the need for "mutual respect." All hands applauded furiously, and then went out into the pleasant spring night, pleased and encouraged by the unity among American foreign born for war and the starvation policy in Washington.

But I started this column by saying the Common Council gave me a good, loud laugh. For if I ever saw a pathetic case of the old King Canute disease, this was it. Even Madam Roosevelt can't talk the tides out of their business, and it gives me a certain vulgar pleasure to reflect that them four-bit words were just so much hog-wash. You can't sell an imperialist war even with slightly shopworn poetry.

Banquet away, dear old pals of the Common Council for American Unity, but don't forget that actions speak louder than, etc. Democracy, in the opinion of the foreign born, should begin right at home and fingerprinting is no nice way to convince people that this is a war for freedom. Unity! In my eye! Come again, friends, and this time come with something better than Archie MacLeish.

# NEW MASSES

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## Wallace Astrology

IN A moment of frankness during a recent speech before the Conservative Party Winston Churchill described as "pious platitudes" those billowy generalizations about war aims which he and President Roosevelt feed the public. The other day Vice-President Wallace tried his hand at the game of substituting pious platitudes for precise truth. Wallace is the philosopher and mystic of the Roosevelt administration, and the speech he made before the Foreign Policy Association is notable for the veil of religious mysticism which it draws over a thoroughly down-to-earth, cynical, imperialist creed. The Vice-President announced that "the essence of democracy is belief in the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the dignity of the individual soul." This attempt to make democracy identical with religion is alien to the American Constitution, which is based on the principle of the separation of church and state. It represents an effort to "Christianize" and "spiritualize" the crimes which men of wealth and power are committing *against* democracy.

Wallace followed the Roosevelt line of frankly linking the present war with the first imperialist conflict, however much this may pain the editors of the *Nation* and *New Republic*. "The United States now has her second opportunity to make the world safe for democracy," he said. For the failure of the first safe-making effort to stick, the Vice-President didn't hesitate to blame the American people. It was their curious addiction to peace which caused them "to refuse to accept the world responsibility which had been brought to them by World War No. 1." "World responsibility"—another mouth-filling phrase, successor to the once-popular "manifest destiny." Its real meaning is: world empire, world domination. Wallace tried to express his concept of "world responsibility" in more concrete terms by outlining several points of what he called a *pax democratica*. But this attempt to go beyond the generalizations of Roosevelt and Churchill revealed anew the fundamental dilemma of the imperialists on this subject of war aims. The *pax democratica* of Wallace is merely another collection of deceitful—if not deceptive—pious platitudes faintly redolent of pre-war mothballs.

Much more to the point was the Vice-President's plea for the formulation of a Bill of Duties to supplement the Bill of Rights.

(This is another idea which never occurred to the founding fathers.) "We are not working hard enough," he said. Several days later he denounced industrial sabotage, in a speech at Winston-Salem, N. C., intimating that one of the things he had in mind was labor's effort to win better conditions. In an interview with the press prior to this speech, Wallace was asked about slum clearance projects. They must wait till after the war, he said—though 10,000,000 families live in homes unfit for human habitation. The payoff in this interview with the apostle of toil and sacrifice is contained in the final sentence of the *New York Times* story: "Mr. Wallace spent the afternoon playing tennis with S. Clay Williams, chairman of the board of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. . . ." Williams, in case you've forgotten, is the old-school tie reactionary and labor-hater who, while head of the NRA board, fought every attempt to raise the pitiful wages of the nation's tobacco workers.

## "Cooling Off"

THERE are softer phrases than "no strike." Sidney Hillman calls it "cooperation," while Roosevelt, William S. Knudsen, Frances Perkins, and others say "cooling-off period." Right now the latter euphemism is the favorite. FDR endorsed it indirectly, in answer to questions at a recent press conference. Miss Perkins and Mr. Knudsen supported it in their testimony before the House Military Affairs Committee, which is "investigating" labor's role in the war program. So did William H. Davis, vice-chairman of the Defense Mediation Board. All three witnesses, as well as Hillman, opposed no-strike legislation, thus differing with the rasher reactionaries in Congress whose strategy is to "pass a law" and enforce it with guns. The administration's labor experts are more persuasive: all they ask is that labor cool off—for thirty days, or perhaps sixty—so that the freezing apparatus of compulsory mediation can be utilized most effectively. There's still a little disagreement among the experts as to whether the cooling-off should be mandatory or "voluntary." Mr. Knudsen professes to favor the latter. As an example of what he means by voluntary, one need only recall his proposal of a few weeks ago that (1) workers in "defense" plants give thirty days' notice before striking; (2) they must not give such notice until the Labor Department has attested that at least sixty percent of the employees wanted to strike; and (3) the notice

must be further withheld until an OPM committee has been given ten days in which to submit a fact-finding report.

However, the administration's experts did not entirely eschew the phrase "no strike" in their testimony. Mr. Davis suggested that no-strike clauses be written into collective bargaining contracts. And Hillman boasted of his part in securing a labor agreement covering 30,000 Pacific Coast shipyard workers that banned strikes for two years. Which is Mr. Hillman's idea of "cooperation." But not his only idea—for he used the word so much that the committee finally asked him for an example of what he meant and Hillman cited—Britain's labor conscription! This piece of candor was not widely publicized but organized labor isn't likely to overlook or forget it.

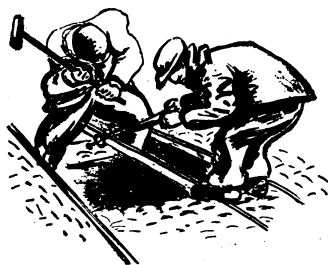
## Eyes on Spain

SUPPOSE one-tenth of the American population were in jail. That would mean 13,000,000 Americans. Suppose this one-tenth consisted of the staunchest opponents of fascism. And suppose most of the rest of the population were reduced to slow starvation under conditions of savage terrorism.

This is not a synthetic horror tale. It has happened—not in America, but in Spain. Two million Spanish republicans out of a population of 23,000,000 are in Franco's jails because they believed enough in democracy to fight for it. Among them are 350 members of the International Brigade, including forty American citizens. The best sons and daughters of the Spanish people rot while hunger and disease stalk the land. And their children too are starved by a government which dispenses relief only to the children of those who are politically "sound."

Are the governments which today profess to be fighting a war for democracy moving heaven and earth to secure the release of these victims of fascist terror? They are not. On the contrary, the British and American governments are pursuing toward Franco the policy which once was used to strengthen Hitler: appeasement. Last December the State Department began toying with the idea of an outright \$100,000,000 loan to Franco. When widespread protests scotched this proposal, the career boys turned to more indirect means; they arranged a \$110,000,000 loan to Argentina, part of which is being used to finance the shipment of Argentine wheat to Spain. For this not only Franco, but Hitler are no doubt grateful. For one of the reasons for the food shortage in Spain is that Franco has been exporting food products to Germany.

April 14 marked ten years since the founding of the Spanish republic. The friends of Spain in many parts of the world are utilizing this occasion to renew the struggle for the liberation of the republic's defenders. This week has been set aside as international amnesty week. In the United States and throughout the western hemisphere meetings and demonstrations are being held demanding





amnesty for all political prisoners in Spain and an end to the terror. Our own government must be made to understand that the American people want it to stop helping Franco and start helping his victims.

### The Duke Is Relieved

EVERY once in a while the *Nation* gets good and sick of the prosaic and indulges in a little moist-eyed sentiment. Last week was one of those occasions, when the British marched into Addis Ababa, and the vacating Italian viceroy of Ethiopia wrote a charming note thanking the victorious English general for the conduct of his troops. Their actions demonstrated, said the Duke of Aosta, "that strong bonds of humanity and race still exist between our nations."

The *Nation* thereupon pulled out all the stops. "These are not the words of a belligerent," they exulted. "They sound like the words of the Italian people. . . ." It seems a shame to interrupt the spring lyric, but the duke's sentiments strike us somewhat differently. We don't like the word "race," when banded back and forth between imperialists. It calls to mind the British (borrowed by the Italians) theory of white supremacy. Could the note of gratitude by the viceroy express his relief when the conquering British protected him and his coterie from the rage of the Ethiopian people? But just what else could the Duke of Aosta have meant by "bonds of race"?

While we're about it, perhaps the *Nation* editors will likewise answer the question: Since when does a duke, and a viceroy at that, speak for the Italian people? By the way, what happened to all the freedom promised to oppressed people when Britain was victorious? We've heard nothing about giving Ethiopia back to the Ethiopians. And please, dear *Nation*, don't answer that Gen. Alan G. Cunningham of his majesty's army is a man of the Ethiopian people.

### Free Thaelmann!

SHUT away in a Nazi dungeon, Ernst Thaelmann could not know of the workers' rallies, the cries of "Free Thaelmann!" that went up on April 16, his fifty-fifth birthday. Yet we think he must have guessed. For Ernst Thaelmann knows workers, knows them to a degree that eight years of Nazi imprisonment cannot lessen. He himself was a worker, a Hamburg longshoreman and trade unionist, who rose to the leadership of a great workers' party, the Communist Party of Germany. Hitler, soon after he came to power, flung him into a concentration camp but Ernst Thaelmann survived, even as the party he led has survived Nazi terror.

Some day Thaelmann will be free. But freedom will not come through the men who use "Nazi terror" only as a phrase to destroy workers in war. It will come from the workers themselves, the men and women who



Aime

will free Earl Browder, free Nehru in India, Luis Carlos Prestes in Brazil. For they, like Thaelmann, are not only the enemies of Hitler but of Hitlerism everywhere.

### Fiorello Fumes

THE labor contracts assumed by Mayor LaGuardia when New York City took over the transit system expire June 30. In consequence, the Transport Workers Union has given notice that it expects the contracts renewed—minus present abuses. The union has good cause to complain: the Board of Transportation has shown no regard for restrictions on the hours of work, has dismissed old and efficient employees without cause (or was it for unionism?), and has lowered wages while raising the pay of the board by thirty-three percent. But the union's assumption that collective bargaining would continue has thrown Mayor LaGuardia into one of his more spectacular tantrums. He has denounced in fiery if inaccurate terms the very thought of unionism among civil service employees (as New York City subway workers are classified); and he has run posthaste to the courts with the request that present labor contracts be declared void.

The mayor tried hard to crack the strike of TWU bus drivers last month. Having failed once, his anti-labor crusade is all the more intense. But the transport workers are not easily intimidated, particularly since organization brought them remarkable improvements in pay and working conditions. They have answered the Little Flower's bluster by setting up a special \$100,000 fund "to guarantee the contracts." CIO President Philip Murray also warned that LaGuardia's assumption of an inherent contradiction between collective bargaining and civil service was "unwarranted."

The mayor, of course, has more than one iron in the fire. While he tries his luck in the courts, he also has an eye on the state capital at Albany. There, in secrecy and frenzied haste, the legislature passed the Wicks bill just before adjourning. The bill would outlaw strikes in the transport industry, make strikers liable to twenty years' imprisonment.

The mayor, over the opposition of the CIO, wants Governor Lehman to sign the slave bill.

It is worth noting here that the cure-all of municipal ownership proves to be not the final answer to the needs of working men. First must come their strong organization. The TWU has that; in the recent bus strike it illustrated its unity and offensive power. The mayor has a hard nut to crack.

### Washington Notes

WITH the influx of 75,000 new residents in the last year, adequate housing, always lacking in Washington, has now become as bad as during the last war. The big boys and their friends have estates in Virginia (like Stettinius), homes with fourteen bathrooms in Maryland (like Sumner Welles), or cozy little \$800,000 mansions in Northwest Washington (like that acquired a number of years ago by Stimson). But rats have been seen scampering about the streets of Washington in broad daylight, while city hospital attendants have given up being shocked by rat-bitten, rat-chewed babies from Washington's sprawling slums. Rooming houses provide the only shelter for a large number of underpaid civil service workers. Rates are exorbitant. Twenty-dollar-a-week clerks pay as much as one-third that sum to share a bedroom on a dark court and contest with ten or twelve others the use of an ill-kept bath. Though ordinary mortals have to fight for the privilege of paying five dollars to ten dollars a day for two-dollar hotel rooms, the British Purchasing Commission has installed itself in a whole floor of the Hotel Willard. Incidentally, the members of the commission are being absorbed by various "defense" agencies in order to further the Roosevelt-Churchill war program.

NOW ON ITS WAY to the Senate is the \$67,000,000 appropriations bill for the Department of Justice—the biggest in history. J. Edgar Hoover's cut of this huge sum is well over \$16,000,000, also the biggest in history. Compare it with the \$500,000 which Congress gave the Bureau of Investigation in 1918 "on account of war conditions." One western Congressman—referring to Hoover's study of Spanish, establishment of agents in Mexico, and dispatch of men to the ends of South America—privately estimated that next year Hoover would ask for and get a billion.

Meanwhile the House has voted Hoover, in addition to his millions, a special fund of \$100,000 earmarked to investigate government employees, many of whom have already had to put up with continual snooping from their own agencies and from Civil Service. The FBI has been asking Washington landlords such questions as: "Have your tenants ever had any Communist or pro-labor visitors?" Now the FBI is suggesting that all federal pay checks be endorsed every two weeks under a sworn statement that the payee is not a "Fifth Columnist."

## Readers' Forum

### Gorelik to Lawson

**T**O NEW MASSES: I have read carefully John Howard Lawson's review of my book, *New Theatres for Old* (NEW MASSES, March 18.) Lawson has summed up my study as "one of the most important theatre books of recent years"; but just why he considers it important is not clear, since almost the whole review amplifies his disagreement with it.

When I wrote *New Theatres for Old* I was more aware of conflicting tendencies than of definitive achievements in stage and screen technique. The study was made in the hope of bringing about some constructive discussion at a time when many qualified theatre people feel that new stage techniques are around the corner. My interpretations are, of course, subject to criticism. I welcome all sincere objections, in the belief that they will help to clarify many of the issues which have been raised in the book.

In that spirit, may I point out a number of errors and misconceptions in the review? With these out of the way, the discussion should be more fruitful.

It seems to me that the reviewer misunderstands the scope of the book. A study of the sociological structure of the theatre remains to be written by one who has specialized in that field. My own book is an analysis of the styles and forms of the theatre, precisely that. It does, however, show that theatrical styles emerge in response to the needs of new audiences. I believe enough data is given in each case to make this point, and not only generally but concretely.

I do not assert that production is style. I do say that there are styles of production. Some of these make for healthy theatre, and some do not. Incidentally *New Theatres for Old* deals not only with "the design or arrangement of the stage," but with every element of production, including the play-script, acting, scene design, and directing—in other words with the whole art of the theatre.

Although the reviewer takes the position that stage technique, by itself, will not serve as a point of reference, he does not seem consistent about it. For example he conjectures that "electric lighting brought the girl show, with its exploitation of carefully illuminated flesh. On the other hand, it brought the incisive psychological analysis of Ibsen." This is going much further than I am prepared to follow. (*A Doll's House* was written three years before the first known electrified stage, while girl shows were popular in ancient Rome.)

I use the terms *illusion* and *convention* in a purely technical sense. The definitions are given on pages 26 and 27 and in the glossary, and in fact all of Chapter II compares illusory and conventional forms. As still another precaution I have taken care not to use either term in a non-technical sense anywhere in the text. My intention should be evident to someone like Lawson, who has been in the theatre professionally for at least twenty years. But for some reason he has insisted on attaching moral implications to these technical descriptions. For him, the word "illusion" has a derogatory sound, while "convention" implies rigidity and so on.

How naturalism and symbolism can both be illusory, or how symbolism can depend on illusion, are all theatrical, not ethical, questions. They are very fully treated in the book.

Lawson has taken out of context my statement that "some of the Soviet theatres have not been as Marxian as Marx." This comment occurs in connection with Soviet productions of Wagner, whom Marx and Engels detested. Not being a specialist in Marxism, I am unable to say exactly how Marxian the Soviet stage is. My data shows it has not averaged one hundred percent. I am not aware that even the Soviet critics believe their theatre to be infallibly Marxian.

Lawson visualizes romantic naturalism as a single, progressive technique, a humanist tradition from Goethe to Chekhov. My data shows that this is an unwarranted simplification. As regards the Soviet view of romantic technique, it may "celebrate" the humanism of a Goethe, Balzac, or Gorky, but to the best of my knowledge it does not accept the romantic naturalism of present-day Broadway and Hollywood. It seems critical, also, of similar tendencies in its own domain, to judge by statements which have appeared in Soviet newspapers, as quoted in my text.

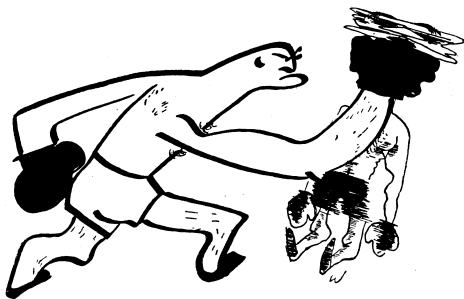
The reviewer has mistakenly used my description of epic settings as a summary of epic theory as a whole. The description applies only to the settings. He declares that "the role of people, the specific role of the actor is not stressed." I have included a whole section on epic acting. The place of human characters in the epic script is also carefully considered.

There is nothing in epic theory which makes human characters inferior to social, political, scientific, or technical processes. Epic theory, like all good dramatic theory, believes that personal dramas are significant only as they emerge out of larger circumstances. (If I am not mistaken, Lawson himself affirmed this belief in his *Theory and Technique of Playwriting*.) This principle is constantly violated by bad plays and films, where there is no real relationship of the characters to the supposed circumstances.

The choice of non-historic costuming for *The Three-Penny Opera* is called "unscientific" and "subjective" in the review. Since the *Opera* was not concerned with a documented historic period, it properly and scientifically ignored naturalistic costuming.

On the whole I regard Lawson's presentation of the epic chapter as strikingly inadequate. He does not point out that my analysis of epic theatre is a very discriminating one. I have stressed what I consider to be the errors in the views of Piscator and Brecht. I describe the epic productions of pre-Hitler Germany, and of the Living Newspaper in this country, as pioneer efforts in the direction of a future technique—and not the only efforts in that direction: "Epic looks upon itself as only one component of that new tendency in drama which moves to create 'scientific images of the world.'"

Neither in the epic chapter nor elsewhere, it seems to me, is there anything to justify the assertion that my sympathies "seem to lie with formalisms and abstractions." I do not sympathize with the formalisms and abstractions of Meyerhold, Tairov, Brecht,



Clinton

Piscator, Lawson, or anyone else. No doubt Lawson does not consider that he is abstract when he talks about "people" and "the stuff of life," but I think the point could be debated.

*New Theatres for Old* clearly expresses my viewpoint—which is that theatre must serve its audiences.  
New York City. MORDECAI GORELIK.

### Stepchildren of Steel

**T**O NEW MASSES: I drove east from Chicago, from the fringe of power and water, the lake front, down into Gary. There the furnaces, furiously blowing, announced the power drawn in from the flat country and the water—the real power, steel—torches that have built a new city there, out of the shadow of other cities across the country, Bethlehem, Pittsburgh, Youngstown.

And there I heard the story of steel in terms of its stepchildren, the Mexicans. No glory now and no torches celebrating this.

Mexicans in the Calumet area are segregated in two small slum sections. The one in Gary is a few flat square blocks running from Broadway to Madison and from Ninth to Fourteenth Streets. To see it properly, I took a Mexican along who knew the section and who could interpret Spanish for me. We walked along the streets first, and that wasn't so bad. Stores and political clubs, offices of religious organizations, eating places, with the paintless hulks of tenements between and over them. My guide said, "You want to see the alleys?"

And so we went through the alleys. Along both sides were cement garbage bins, broken open at the bottom and spilling fans of garbage into the roadway and yard ends. Dogs and children played in the filth. Out of the yards, filled with rotting automobiles and ashes, the house ends rose in a series of bleached wooden staircases. It wasn't different from many photographs you've seen of poverty, except it was real.

A boy poured garbage into a cement bin and the same garbage poured out at his feet.

I've been in the alley slums of Washington and in the desolate slums of many cities, but I don't believe that anywhere I've seen worse poverty. Children are born dumb and blind in these tenements, crying, stamping their feet as they grow up because they can't make their wants known. On Saturday nights the prostitutes fight for trade. The police have the record on robbery and murder—slums do what they have to do.

Thousands of Mexicans were brought in here by the steel companies when labor was scarce, towards the end of the World War. They were given promises of a good life and "work as long as you have the card." Then the promises petered out.

Now these people are being driven out. The technique is starvation, easy anywhere. Why such a special bias against the Mexicans? The steel companies have not found the Mexicans what they expected, a cheap, docile labor. Mexicans have been militant trade unionists, striking and picketing with "whites."

Now steel doesn't want Mexicans. Even though a few may be working, it doesn't want them.

But this is a tour of the Mexican sections. Identical replica of the "central district" of Gary is the Mexican section of Indiana Harbor, along Block and Pennsylvania Avenues up to the gates of Inland Steel. Here, as I did, you may want to go inside.

You go up a dark back stairway and enter a kitchen. A Mexican woman greets you and you

sit in one chair and your guide, the Mexican, sits in another, and the woman, a mother, sits in the remaining chair. The Mexican says, "This woman, her husband, and five children live in this kitchen and two small bedrooms." The woman talks. The Mexican interprets: "She says they get less than a dollar a day food allowance, fourteen cents apiece. . . . Now the clothes—if they fight when there are no more clothes, they get other clothes for their nakedness." The woman raises one of her children's feet. "Those are the shoes they have now. . . . She says that they have no happiness, nowhere to play and nowhere to go. There is the dark court—" All five children, with their quiet and innocent olive faces, look at us. They are United States citizens.

Only a few Mexicans in Indiana Harbor are citizens, a few hundred at most. Under the Alien Registration Act they had to register and give complete information about themselves as aliens. They are a people afraid of lawyers, ignorant of legal processes. My guide and interpreter told me that when they fill out the registration blank, some do not know when they were born and state their age as so many years since Lincoln was assassinated or since Juarez came to power—two strange names to go to the Department of Justice.

The Registration Act is ostensibly harmless. But what it really means can be seen in the attempt made by officials in locals of Youngstown Sheet and Tube, in Inland Steel, and in Steel Sheet and Tin to introduce resolutions calling for firing of the foreign-born. The resolutions were defeated by the rank and file but they show what the Alien Registration Act is aimed at.

In the Calumet area furnaces of steel are torches against noon and darkness. But they are not burning with any glory for the Mexicans who have stoked them for two decades. Nor for Americans either, lighting as they do the horrors of a segregated and misused neighboring people. Those who want democracy must build it strong: it is not so built in steel.

Barto, Pa.

MILLEN BRAND.

## Correction

TO NEW MASSES: Isidor Schneider's article, "Two Views of China" (NEW MASSES, April 1, 1941), reviewing Edgar Snow's new book on China and Mme. Chiang Kai-shek's latest collection of "New Life" effusions, is very interesting. There are, however, some passages which should be corrected, namely:

(1) "What such an alliance . . . could accomplish, had been shown by Sun Yat-sen's campaign (directed, after Sun's death, by Chiang Kai-shek) for the unification of China against the tuchuns, or war lords. . . ."

The Northern Punitive Expedition (1926-27) against Wu Pei-fu and other Northern warlords was headed by Chiang Kai-shek, but it must be remembered that the military strategy and tactics and all political propaganda, etc., were directed by Communists and members of the left wing Kuomintang. In fact, there were thousands of Chinese political agitators and propagandists in the National Revolutionary Armies. So Schneider's phrase "directed, after Sun's death, by Chiang Kai-shek" is an over-emphasis of General Chiang's role in that historic victorious national revolutionary march from Canton, on the Pearl River, to Wuhan on the mighty Yangtze River.

(2) "This historic and brilliant campaign fell short of complete success only because of the intervention of the foreign imperialists. . . ."

To write that the above campaign failed "only because of the intervention of the foreign imperialists" is incomplete. One must not forget the very important fact that, although the Chinese bourgeoisie was playing a prominent role in the national revolutionary united front, it was nevertheless sorely afraid that the Chinese proletariat would win the hegemony of the anti-imperialist, national revolutionary movement. As a matter of fact, it was this basic class fear of the weak national bourgeoisie for the young working class that finally led the former into the counter-revolutionary camp.

(3) "Chiang, himself of upper class origin and allied through marriage with a Chinese banking family, made a class-prompted decision."

On April 12, 1927, when Chiang carried out his counter-revolutionary *coup d'etat* in Shanghai, Nanking, Canton, etc., he was not yet "allied through marriage with a Chinese banking family." It was only on Dec. 1, 1927, that Chiang married Soong Mei-ling, whose elder brother, T. V. Soong, was then Finance Minister and today is still one of China's leading bankers. T. V. is at present in Washington.

Yours for a free, democratic, united China.

New York City.

LAU BANG-YEU.

TO NEW MASSES: I thought that my review had made clear both the decisive role of the Communists in the Northern Expedition so far as it succeeded, and the decisive role of the bourgeoisie in the failure to attain its objectives. But the additional emphasis provided in Mr. Lau's letter is welcome. I am sorry to have made the mistake of marrying off Chiang Kai-shek to the Soongs before the ceremony actually occurred but the banker element of the Soong influence had already begun.

New York City.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

## Browder and the Courts

TO NEW MASSES: Roger Baldwin has expressed the opinion that the Browder case involves no civil liberties issue. That, too, is the official position of the national office of the American Civil Liberties Union.

I dissent from this view only after careful consideration and with great reluctance. In the interests of freedom of speech, which an ACLU lawyer may invoke equally with other citizens, I reserve the right to voice my dissent from official views; in dissenting, obviously I speak for myself alone, not for the ACLU.

To Mr. Baldwin, "it is only a matter of speculation as to whether or not political animus" was behind the prosecution of Browder. I am satisfied that it was motivated by the Department of Justice's hostility to Browder's anti-administration political views. To the Department Browder is a "public enemy." Assistant United States Attorney General O. John Rogge said so. (At the New England Conference of Civil Liberties, called by the ACLU at the Boston City Club, Jan. 27, 1940.) "The Department believes in throwing the statute book at public enemies." (These are Mr. Rogge's words, not mine.)

The Department admits, as every prosecutor must, that not every inhabitant who violates every provision of the law is prosecuted to the full letter of the law—or prosecuted at all. "There is a certain amount of selection—of discrimination if you will—almost inherent in criminal prosecution," said Mr. Rogge.

I am satisfied from what Mr. Rogge said, and

from my observations of the current American scene, that Mr. Browder was "selected" for prosecution by the Department of Justice primarily, if not solely, because the Department had determined that Browder is now a "public enemy"; that if it were not for the present hysteria against Communists, Browder would, in all probability, not now be prosecuted.

If that is so, the prosecution against Browder may well be deemed a "persecution." And if such persecution is because of the unpopular political opinions of the victim, it raises a civil liberties issue with which the ACLU should be concerned.

But my discussion of the case (in the *Open Forum* for March 1), to which Mr. Baldwin took issue (in the *Open Forum* for March 15), was directed primarily at the US Supreme Court decision.

The federal law under which Browder was prosecuted does not make every use of a passport secured by false statements a crime; it penalizes only "wilful" use. It was conceded by the Justice Department and by the Court that Browder's use of a passport was not for an evil or fraudulent purpose. Browder used the passport for the purpose of securing re-entry into the United States. As a citizen of the United States, born in the United States, he needed no passport at all in order to gain re-entry.

To the plea of a Communist, in 1941, that the phrase "wilful" in the criminal law required a showing of a fraudulent or evil purpose, a unanimous Supreme Court turned a deaf ear.

In 1933, a "capitalist's". (I borrow the phrase, not from Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, but from Justice Brandeis in the Bedford Cut Stone Co. case) plea that his refusal to testify in connection with an investigation by the government of alleged false income tax returns was not "wilful" and hence not a violation of law, was granted by a unanimous Court. The Court reversed his conviction on the ground that there was no showing that such refusal was pursuant to an "evil motive." It ruled that the word "wilful," when used in a criminal statute ". . . generally means an act done with a bad purpose; without justifiable excuse . . . an *evil motive* is a constituent element of the crime."

As a "naive liberal," I have always wanted to believe that what is good law for the capitalist, should be good law for the Communist.

A re-reading of the United States Supreme Court decision in the Browder case leaves me with the conviction that if it were not in "the present times," the Court would never have affirmed Browder's sentence.

I adhere to the belief that Browder is a victim of the current and mounting hysteria against personal unpopular political opinions, an hysteria which the United States Supreme Court has done little, if anything, to halt or abate.

I think that the Court has departed from its role as the protector of the non-conforming, in not applying its own recent classic formula enunciated by Justice Black: "Under our constitutional system, courts stand against any winds that blow as havens of refuge for those who might otherwise suffer because they are helpless, weak, outnumbered, or because they are non-conforming victims of prejudice and public excitement. . . . No higher duty, no more solemn responsibility, rests upon this Court, than that of translating into living law and maintaining this constitutional shield deliberately planned and inscribed for the benefit of every human being subject to our Constitution—whatever race, creed, or persuasion."

Los Angeles, Calif.

A. L. WIRIN.

## THE CRIME OF THINKING

*Harry F. Ward urges liberals to beware lest they become the instruments of intellectual terrorism. How the Red scare is used to degrade the educational system.*

THE attack on the educational system of New York City and State has moved into its last stage. Its final objective is now revealed. The development has been natural and, under the given alignment of forces, inevitable. First of all was the projected slash in the educational budget. This required an assault upon the Teachers Union which stood in the way of budget cutting. This led to the raising of the Red Scare in order to discredit the Union before the public. Now comes the drive upon the right of Communists to teach, a right already denied by the Board of Higher Education and its legal advisor. But this denial involves the repression of the right to think. If one may not be a Communist and teach, most teachers and prospective teachers will stop thinking not only about Communism but about the things that are labeled Communist. Then, to repeat the lesson of Europe, what can be done to Communism can also be done to socialism, to liberalism, to pacifism. However it may be disguised behind charges of activities and conduct, the real objective of the attack upon Communism in the schools is the right and the freedom of the American people to think.

This attack upon the freedom to think, upon which all human progress depends, goes naturally with the current attack upon the right to act in accordance with one's thought in ways provided by our Constitution. The attempts to keep Communist candidates off the ballot, to deny Communists the right to form a political party and submit their proposals to the franchise of the American people, involve denying the American people the right to think upon those proposals. Both the attack upon the right to think and the attack upon the right of political action, are carried out by terroristic methods. Communists may not work on WPA, in the Civil Service, or in the vacancies in defense industries created by the draft, if the policy passed by Congress is carried out. This is the use of the weapon of starvation against the rank and file before prison sentences are handed out on technicalities to leaders. It is an economic form of terrorism natural to the land where economic monopoly has reached its strongest form, where thirteen families hold most of the economic power, instead of the 200 whose interests brought France to ruin.

THUS our political life, newer and cruder than that of Europe, moves on a lower level than that which obtains there, except where the Nazis have dragged it down to the standards of the underworld. Prior to that, even

under some of the czars, political opponents, when imprisoned, were given comforts and privileges. The American way, so proudly proclaimed on the billboards of the National Association of Manufacturers, is to starve them out. We could not behead them in public for all the world to see, like the Nazi barbarians, but we take away their jobs and leave them to starve out of our sight.

So in the intellectual realm we would not, like Japan, pass a law against dangerous thoughts, but we will make it so dangerous to think that many people will stay as far away from thinking as they would from smallpox. In the professional world, to be suspected of thinking on social change means no preference, to be called a fellow-traveler, or Communist, means that one's livelihood is in danger, and now to be a Communist is to be made ground for dismissal. In this atmosphere freedom to think is stifled, except for the few who are stronger and braver than most. Instead of a vital creative process, education becomes a standardized mechanical chorus. The end result of the intellectual terrorism now being developed in this land of the free, is the regimentation and the goose-stepping of the mind.

THE APPEARANCE of the intellectual terror is a recognized feature of the end of a period in social history. It is a necessary weapon of reaction. As the old order becomes increasingly inefficient and intolerable, the creative intellectuals analyze and expose its defects. At the same time they proclaim the organizing principles and methods of the next stage in human development. Consequently all whose interests are threatened by the coming change strike back with a counter-attack on the cultural front. Controversy descends to its lowest level, where its only weapons are falsehood and invective. As these fail, physical repression is used and the intellectual terror launches its blitzkrieg in full force. A pall of fear descends upon the intellectual world so that most of its inhabitants are afraid to write or to speak what they know and believe. Thus they lose the capacity to think. Many of them turn their coats and start to attack, and some of them betray their former associates.

That liberals who have never broken with capitalism should take the side of the *status quo* as the conflict sharpens between the passing capitalist society and the coming socialist society, is natural. That those of them who do not wake up in time to see what is happening should become consciously or unconsciously the servants of reaction is inevitable. The job

that was done in Italy with castor oil, and in Germany with blackjacks and pistols, is now being begun here by liberals in the name of defense of democracy. They are leading purges in organizations they belong to, which are timed to aid the reactionaries to destroy the democratic rights which the liberals assert their desire to defend.

The treatment of socialism in the academic world has from the beginning been an intellectual scandal and a complete nullification of the principles of liberalism. The present attitude toward Communism and Communists is the diseased fruit on this poisoned flower. If those who edit and write for our liberal journals were really in the tradition of Milton and Jefferson, they would now be insisting that the issues raised by Communism and Communists be settled by free discussion and free franchise. Instead of that they lose no opportunity to snipe with venomous words at those who are under the heaviest fire from reaction, both because they are most feared and because it is easier to use their unpopularity for the destruction of all freedom of thought. When professed liberals accept the statements of investigating committees and purgers, whose bias they know, when they assume the guilt of accused persons before the evidence is all in, they are of course violating the basic principles of even legal justice, to say nothing of intellectual decency. They are no longer liberals, they have become agents of the intellectual terror.

IN OUR SITUATION there is still time and opportunity to check and defeat the forces of reaction. The possibility lies in a concrete realization of the old adage, in union there is strength. This means today a close alliance between those who are facing the intellectual terror, and the workers who are bearing the brunt of the assault upon the lives and liberties of the people. The counter offensive begins by using the facts to open the eyes of all who are in danger. The physical terror long used against the workers, and the intellectual terror now being developed against the professionals, can be defeated by the weapon of truth. In the end it does prevail. Remember Galileo and Pasteur, and all who like them suffered persecution for some truth by which we now order our lives! Those who fight for the freedom of the human mind are fighting for something bigger and more enduring than their own rights. They are fighting for the future of mankind, for something which no terror can defeat.

HARRY F. WARD.

## Fourth Writers' Congress

THE central issues confronting American writers today are stated clearly and urgently in the call to the Fourth Congress of American Writers which will be held early in June. To those who looked for startling departures, whether by way of a sudden shift of policy or a trimming of sails in the face of the war storm, the call will doubtless prove a disappointment. It lays no claim to novelty. It is essentially, and properly, a reaffirmation of beliefs which the League of American Writers has supported since its formation in 1935. Throughout the past six years, the League has steadily opposed war and fascism as the twin enemies of culture. With increased militancy and numbers the League remains committed to the same purpose and program in 1941.

But the call is far more than a mere re-statement of principles. Its historic significance transcends that of any previous call. For the issues which once seemed relatively remote have become a matter of life or death, and convictions are being put to the most exacting test. What truly counts, as Randolph Bourne discovered in 1917, is not the fine anti-war declarations which men make before war has come, not the generous democratic ideas expressed before reaction is in the saddle, but the sober determination to stand by the people in the heat and hysteria of actual crisis. The paramount fact is that in these times of war and intensifying fascist trends more American writers have signed the call than in times of comparative stability. For every Archibald MacLeish or Malcolm Cowley who has deserted, there are a dozen fresher and more courageous spirits who have enlisted in the defense of culture.

The *New York Times*, in an editorial this week, seeks to rub out the score. It gloats over the fact that a handful of war intellectuals are trying to undo the work of the thirties, and with characteristic benevolence it assures these writers that they have no need to "humiliate" themselves. After all, despite their unhappy flirtation with the common men and women of this earth, "They have produced some pleasant volumes, especially of poetry and travel." Only an editor of the *New York Times* could describe *The Grapes of Wrath* as a pleasant travelogue.

The war laureates must turn back the clock. They are driven to a furious attack on the decade of social discovery; they must do everything in their power to frustrate its continuation. For, as Michael Gold demonstrates in *The Hollow Men* (International Publishers, 25c), literature in the thirties was "alive and dangerous, a social factor in the national life such as it had not been since the Civil War days of Emerson, Walt Whitman, and Harriet Beecher Stowe." The best work of the period, its characteristic product, was in direct opposition to the mysticism, obscurantism, and hypocrisy which the literary camp-followers of war and reaction now glorify.

## In Defense of Culture

(The following is the Call to the Fourth Congress of the League of American Writers, June 6-8, in New York City)

IN THIS hour of crisis, conscious of our responsibility as writers and our pledge to help preserve the American heritage of freedom and democratic culture, we issue this Call to the Fourth Congress of the League of American Writers.

We are gathering to reaffirm the aims of our three previous Congresses.

In 1935, in 1937, and again in 1939, we declared our indissoluble ties with the American people. We proclaimed our unalterable conviction that reaction and its wars are the greatest enemies of a free and flourishing culture. We resolved to promote an atmosphere in which the literary crafts could be discussed cooperatively without compulsion or fear. We expressed our solidarity with the other progressive writers of this hemisphere and of the world.

In 1941, the values by which we have lived are facing unprecedented attacks. Half of the world is at war and the other half is endangered by attempts to draw it into war. We had warned of the consequences of "non-intervention" in Spain, of aid to the aggressor in China, of appeasement at Munich. Today, these consequences are tragically apparent. We have warned that America must be defended not by involvement in this war, or by steps toward dictatorship, or by pursuing a course of imperialist expansion, but by preserving peace and expanding democracy on the economic, political, and cultural levels. Today, we must ask whether the present policy of the administration and the program of big business are not leading us toward war and fascism in the name of resistance to war and fascism.

Our lives and our work, as craftsmen and as human beings, are at stake. We have special problems to meet: censorship and diversion of art to further a war the people do not want; diminishing outlets for the expression of our honest convictions; disregard for the needs of anti-fascist writers who seek asylum in the Americas. Wherever the right to speak is lost, we too are the losers. Wherever civil liberties are abridged, our stories, poems, plays, essays, and books are abridged. The attacks on trade unions, political minorities, and education are attacks on our basic convictions as writers and as citizens.

We know that our existence as free writers, spokesmen of a free people, depends on our continued loyalty to the principles which govern the work of the League of American Writers. We therefore call our fellow writers, and our associates in the related cultural crafts, to the Fourth Biennial Congress to consider the following questions:

How best as writers can we resist the drive toward war and reaction which threatens our democratic culture?

What can we do to extend further help to persecuted writers of other lands?

What can we do to restore the WPA cultural projects and to transform them into permanent People's Art Projects vital to the nation's strength?

What new technical developments in the various forms of writing need to be analyzed and evaluated?

What measures can we take to combat and surmount the growing restrictions on our work as honest craftsmen?

How can we contribute to a genuine cultural interchange between the peoples of the Americas?

How can we enrich America's imperishable democratic literature and extend its audience?

Initial Signers: Katharine Anthony, Benjamin Appel, Leopold Atlas, Helen Bergovoy, Alvah Bessie, Ivan Black, William Blake, Marc Blitzstein, Millen Brand, Dorothy Brewster, Edwin Berry Burgum, Fielding Burke.

Harry Carlisle, Robert Carse, Vera Caspary, Molly Castle, Haakon Chevalier, Edward Chodorov, Jerome Chodorov, Lester Cole, Jack Conroy, Alexander L. Crosby, H. W. L. Dana, Joy Davidman.

Frank Marshall Davis, Martha Dodd, William E. Dodd, Jr., Pietro di Donato, Muriel Draper, Theodore Dreiser, James Dugan, Robert W. Dunn, Arnaud d'Usseau, Edward Eliscu, Ralph Ellison, Ben Field.

Frederick V. Field, Sarah Bard Field, Joseph Fields, Sender Garlin, Lillian Barnard Gilkes, Michael Gold, Morton Grant, Dashiell Hammett, Henry Hart, Lillian Hellman, Eugene C. Holmes, Langston Hughes.

Paul Jarrico, Gordon Kahn, Jean Karsavina, Rockwell Kent, Jerome Klein, Arthur Kober, Lester Koenig, Alfred Kreymborg, Joshua Kunitz, Corliss Lamont, John Howard Lawson, Meridel LeSueur.

Robert Morss Lovett, Helen Merrell Lynd, Ruth McKenney, May McNeer, Carey McWilliams, A. B. Magil, Albert Maltz, Dexter Masters, Robert Meltzer, Leonard E. Mins, Bruce Minton, Dudley Nichols.

Joseph North, Harvey O'Connor, Sam Ornitz, Myra Page, Phelps Putnam, Samuel Putnam, Mike Quin, Maurice Rapp, Walter Rautenstrauch, W. L. River, Earl Robinson, Wellington Roe.

Harold J. Rome, Robert Rossen, Jerry Sackheim, Harold J. Salemsen, Waldo Salt, John Sanford, Margaret Schlauch, Isidor Schneider, Vida D. Scudder, Frank Scully, George Seldes, Viola Brothers Shore.

Samuel Sillen, George Sklar, Isobel Walker Soule, Marian Spitzer, Christina Stead, Bernhard J. Stern, Philip Stevenson, Donald Ogden Stewart, Hans Otto Storm, Anna Louise Strong, Genevieve Taggard, Ethel Turner.

Charles A. Wagner, Eda Lou Walton, Harry F. Ward, Orson Welles, Chandler Whipple, Maurine Whipple, Charles Erskine Scott Wood, Richard Wright, Victor A. Yakhontoff, Louis Zara.

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But the truly representative writers of the American people are holding firm. In an atmosphere that has become charged with suspicion and fear, they proclaim their decision to fight for truth in literature. No honest writer can do less. An America in which *The Grapes of Wrath* or *Native Son* or *The People, Yes* will have become treasonable is not the sort of America that can be contemplated with serenity. Day in and day out the League of American Writers has fought stubbornly in the interests of exiles from other countries. The forthcoming Congress will be a mighty demonstration of the fact that American writers will not submit to those forces which are striving to drive our own literature into exile. They will not be content with writing travel books, whether pleasant or grim.

SAMUEL SILLEN.

**Wish and Fact**

HOW TO WIN THE WAR, by an Englishman. Alfred A. Knopf. \$1.50.

BRITAIN has suffered such moral and intellectual setbacks in the last decade, its Liddell Hart school of military theorists are so discredited, its strategic situation so bad, that it is not surprising to find many Englishmen seeking some new-fangled way to win the war. This particular arm-chair general prefers to remain anonymous, but he is clearly a Sir Stafford Cripps kind of British radical. His formula is simple. His secret weapon is the English language. Britain need only take Hitler's techniques away from Hitler and victory is assured. Hitler's success is due less to mechanized divisions, our author feels, than it is due to a revolutionary dynamism. Early in the game Hitler recognized that the nation-state has become superfluous: he therefore promises a "new order," a fascist international, which has appeal beyond German borders. His propaganda is based less on reason, more on emotion—and our author is envious. Hitler's fifth column has had a signal success in western Europe—our author would borrow this weapon.

It should not be difficult. All Britain needs to do is raise revolts among the peoples of Europe. She must watch the Nazi fifth column within England, of course, especially in the Civil Service, but the big job is to organize a fifth column behind Hitler's back. In fact, the best passages in the book are an indictment of the scandalous way in which the British government has treated European anti-fascist refugees. Our author would not have imprisoned them; he would have made them his European general staff. Such tactics abroad must of course be supplemented by a reasonable treatment of the people at home. The workers mustn't be pushed around as they were in France. And plans must be formulated pronto for a brand new order in which Britain will treat all nations as equals, India included.

This is quite valiant stuff, and unlike other pamphlets of its genre, it is strongly written. The only trouble, as the Tass communique



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say, is that it doesn't correspond with the facts. The rulers of Britain are not fighting for a new social order: they are fighting to restore the balance, and prevent the collapse of the old order. If they were fighting for anything else, they would not be what they are, and this war would never have taken place. A whole slew of "free governments" in Europe under British auspices would get no closer to real independence for the smaller nations of Europe than it did after the last war—so long as their economic foundations bound them to Britain these could not be bonds of equals. And when one European nation grew more powerful than all others, it would step forth to challenge British economic hegemony, as did Germany. Assuming you could just turn the clock back, you'd have the alarm ringing again within a generation.

The fact is that our author is a technocratic utopian: he spins exciting projects for the edification of the powers-that-be. But so long as they remain in power, these projects won't be realized. When the workers of Britain give them the only possible content they can have in our century, namely socialism, our anonymous Englishman will be the first one to express disillusion. The function of honest intellectuals is not to advise our rulers how to retain their sway over their swag. The function of honest intellectuals is to recognize and explain that fundamental change will be cheaper than for humanity than the cost of the moral and material disintegration which this war is bringing on all its participants. Our function is to organize for that change.

JOSEPH STAROBIN.

### Brief Review

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE, by James Street. *The Dial Press*. \$2.50.

James Street is a Mississippian. His hero, Hob Abernathy, is a stetson-hatted Mississippi farmer who kills a neighbor's son for seducing his daughter. The novel is a character study and a defense, written in very "natchal" Southern speech rhythms. Hob is shown to us as a hard-working, thrifty, solid citizen, friendly and condescending to the "black folk." Just why the murder is so "natchal" is a little obscure, especially since the girl's lover most honorably intended marriage. The payoff seems rather severe. Yet Mr. Street is at pains to emphasize that this is not Tobacco Road. And presumably there are no Tobacco Roads. This southern Mississippi is the snug abode of God-fearing, independent farmers who generally beat the weevil, stay out of debt and favor all-out aid to Britain. Mr. Street's lively character study is isolated in a fantastic South without chain gangs or lynchings or poll taxes.



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## SOVIET LOVE STORY

The new Russian film about a boy and his girl leaps with the joy of life. Joy Davidman also sees "That Hamilton Woman" and tries to interview Gargantua.

"THE New Teacher," at the Miami, in New York, is rather a lovely thing. Not one of the Soviet's major movie masterpieces, it nevertheless possesses remarkable charm, achieved not so much through the gentle little plot and the engaging cast as through the evasive means of atmosphere. It is hard to put into words just why *The New Teacher* is delightful; all one can say is that the picture dances and leaps with the joy of life.

Coming from Hollywood films, you are hit in the face by this Russian comedy as by a blast of fresh air. You find the joy of life a little hard to understand. You are

used to enameled wisecracks and painted faces brightly snarling at each other; you are used to a morbid straining for laughter. And suddenly you are shown a village full of ordinary people, not especially beautiful or elaborately adorned, going about the ordinary affairs of life—and enjoying themselves.

The people who made this Soviet film, and the Soviet people it was made for, say that life is sweet, life has a future. As for the story, it deals with a young man's struggle to marry his girl, build a new school. It is not a very hard struggle, and the film rises to few peaks of intensity; it is content to present a bit of ordinary experience. But

it never becomes insignificant. In contrast to the overworked sensationalist approach in which characters exist merely to have typhoons and earthquakes crowded into their lives, this film emphasizes not events but people.

Its portrayal of young love is tender. Done without smirks or false eyelashes, this young love is blundering, naive, self-dramatizing, often a little silly, but thoroughly genuine and healthy, and evolving naturally into marriage. Meanwhile the film develops its other lines, Ivan Lautin's conquest of his community's respect and his father's prejudices. The new school is built, Ivan is nominated to the Supreme Soviet, his father yells proudly,



(Above)  
A drawing by Picasso  
at the Buckholz Gal-  
lery.

### EXHIBITIONS IN NEW YORK

(Left)  
Rouault's "Self Por-  
trait" at the Marie  
Harriman Gallery.

(Right)  
Ben Yomen's "Front  
Porch" at the Academy  
of Allied Arts.





"That's my boy!", and his Grunya comes out of the sulks and agrees to marry him. The young man, too excited to sleep, walks out to watch the moon setting over the fields. He stretches his arms over his head. "My life!" he says. "My sweet life!"

This lyrical ending crystallizes the whole meaning of the picture. Lacking the heroic size of *Chapayev* or *Baltic Deputy*, the poignance of the Gorky films, the dignity of such a study of girls as *Three Women*, it nevertheless succeeds for what it is, a story of happy people. Let us add that it is also very funny, most of the comedy being contributed by Ivan's impish sister and irascible father. Reviewers on the commercial press, their heads full of the mythical Soviet film censorship, were astonished to see the film poking fun at Father, president of a farm collective, who has a weakness for exploding in skyrockets of misdirected Marxist oratory. In contrast, there is Telegina's moving portrayal of a dazed household drudge slowly discovering her status as a human being. Boris Chirkov and Makarova, as the young couple, are gay and effective. The photography helps sustain the lyrical mood with lovely shots of wheatfields and brooks; there is a lilting musical score; the direction, by Gerasimov, is adroit except for the usual Soviet trick of abrupt cutting from sequence to sequence. Some day someone in Lenfilm Studios is going to discover the lap-dissolve, and then Lord help Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

FILMS like *That Hamilton Woman* take one's breath away. Before such sumptuous English country houses; such enchanting Neapolitan balconies; such pretty people as Laurence and Vivien; such lavish expenditure of cash and camera angles; such gowns, my dear! and such innumerable shots of the British flag waving merrily in the breeze, only a strong-lunged reviewer can step forth and say loudly, "Hooley!"

Hooley it is, or perhaps a duller word would do *That Hamilton Woman* more justice. Nelson's historic romance with a blowsy wench was an unhappy, untidy affair, but whatever it was it was probably not dull. Alexander Korda has changed all that. The film is a long series of philosophic debates: shall we give each other up? Needless to say, they never do; Emma sticks to Horatio like glue; not even the British Admiralty can cut their love in two. In between times, Horatio goes fishing and catches a couple of French fleets for supper. At stated intervals one of the characters drops all pretense of acting, fixes a grim eye on the audience, and declares that Britain must always be helped to save Europe from itself. This is what is known as Propaganda, Not Art. At long last we have Trafalgar, a lot of painted ships upon a painted ocean, and Nelson rolls his good eye up and dies with his mouth open.

Besides its tediousness and its interminable tootlings of Rule Britannia, the film suffers from an offensive British upper-class attitude to all "nasty foreigners." The Italian people

is abused in gutter terms. The royal family of Naples, household of slobbering degenerates, however, is defended by Nelson against a revolution of the tortured Neapolitans; one can't abandon royalty to the rabble, you know!

There is a merry performance by Sara Allgood as Emma's vulgar mother, and Alan Mowbray does his best with the impossible part of Lady Hamilton's husband, a gentleman who seems to have given his all to British diplomacy. Miss Leigh and Mr. Olivier are lovely to look at; their acting is less so. Emma is played with a brittle insincerity that makes you wonder if, after all, she isn't twotiming Horatio with the French Ambassador, and Olivier, except for a couple of thrillingly love scenes, would make his flagship a good figurehead. The picture's real intention, of course, is propagandist; when Nelson appeals for ships the United States Navy is supposed to jump to its feet and say, "Horatio, we are here!" Don't anybody show *That Hamilton Woman* to Mr. Roosevelt.

AT THE CIRCUS I looked for signs of Mr. Bel Geddes' streamlining, but to me the circus still was a circus. It began with a procession; it went on with some more processions. The sawdust really was red, white, and blue, but the animals didn't seem to mind. People came flying through the air at me, with or without ropes. A juggler threw me a ball, and I threw it back; he caught it on his nose. Men walked up to the ceiling on strands of cobweb, and skied down again, while I held my breath hoping cheerfully someone would fall. No one did. But girls let elephants sit on them; girls slithered from horse to horse (very nice horses, too); acrobats built themselves into pyramids; riders galloped around with horses on their backs; some more horses danced to music; an elephant did the conga, much better than I can; lights went out, and there was the juggler tossing a lot of burning torches around; the steam calliope tootled; the whips cracked; more elephants came in bearing howdahs, each one containing a gorgeous girl dressed as Marie Antoinette. The Bel Geddes touch, no doubt. I tried to interview Gargantua and his brfde, Toto, but couldn't get to them. The management says that I will have to make an appointment. Boy, what an evening. I was never so exhausted in my life.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

## "The Night Before Christmas"

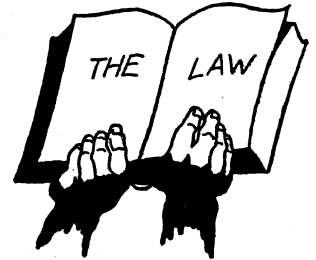
*The daffy Perelmans open a luggage shop for gangsters*

S. J. PERELMAN once had himself photographed sitting on a high stool tenderly sniffing a long-stemmed flower. In his back pocket was an enormous revolver. This famous portrait study might well serve as a touchstone for the daffy sort of humor that

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S. J. has made his own. Some of it came across in the newest play he has authored (together with his wife Laura), as presented at the Morosco. But most of it got lost somewhere.

So far as screwball humor is concerned, the Perelmans got hold of what might be called an "idea." The idea was to take a small luggage shop on Sixth Avenue in New York, have a pair of gangsters buy it with legitimate cash, and then attempt to carry on trade as a blind for a drilling operation into an adjoining bank. From this point on, you scramble up your situations and characters—scores of them—and end in utter chaos. Somehow it didn't come off; it didn't come off, most likely because the two Perelmans haven't studied the craft of dramatic construction as carefully as they have found ways to make people laugh in print.

Yet it should have been terribly funny. There was the gentle old guy who originally owned the store; there were two of his neighbors, a melancholy storekeeper and an overstuffed *modiste* on the prowl. There was a red-headed gun-moll and her doting drug clerk admirer; there were the two gangsters, one a con-man and one a gorilla. There was a gent who rushed in to have his zipper repaired; there was a magician who performed tricks with a trunk, and assorted customers who couldn't manage to buy anything, truckmen, policemen (real and phony), escaped jailbirds, bankers, movie stars and autograph fiends, luggage salesmen, window-shoppers—all of them rushing on and off-stage at inappropriate moments, making purely irrelevant remarks. Sometimes these remarks struck fire; more often they fizzled like duds.

There were a few fine performances, by Louis Sorin, George Matthews, Phyllis Brooks, Ruth Weston, John Ravold, Forrest Orr, and especially Harry Bratsburg. You ought to hear Mr. Bratsburg talk; if he really shouted, the roof would come down. But for all the talking, the running, falling, screaming, arguing, blasts of nitro-glycerine, the drilling and hammering, the pleading and gagging, the Perelmans are left holding the bag with something less than the hare-brained farce they intended when they put paper to typewriter.

They should come again. Possibly with a dramatization of S. J.'s epic novel, *Dawn Ginsberg*.  
ALVAH BESSIE.



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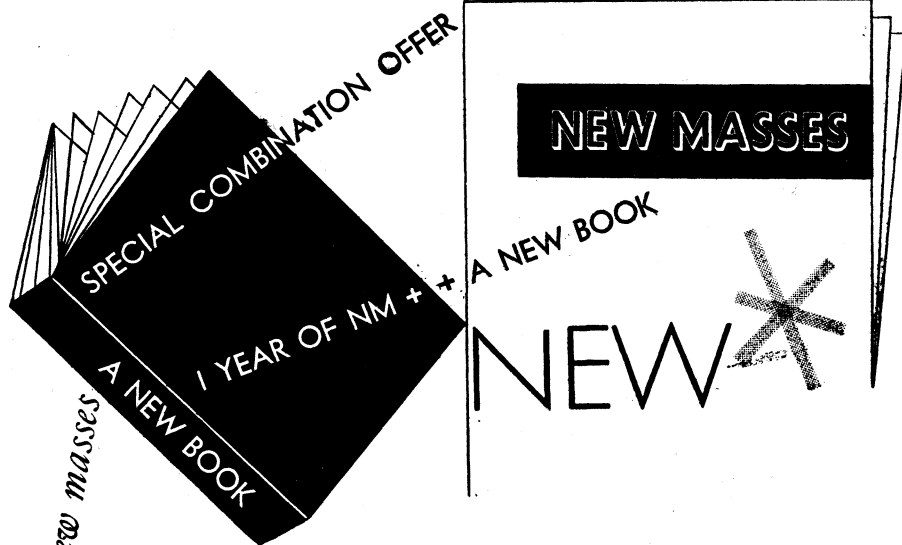
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