WHAT RUDOLPH HESS WAS AFTER *By Oscar Mannheimer*

NEW MASSES

MAY 27, 1941
FIFTEEN CENTS

FDR's EMERGENCY

Why Washington has the jitters. Next steps toward war.

By Bruce Minton

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An Editorial

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MAIL FROM MAIN STREET

Main Street has been talking up lately. It wants peace and is doing something about it. One of the things it is doing is helping keep New Masses alive. Our readers and friends live not only in the large metropolitan centers, but in the small towns and villages that dot every state in the Union. In response to Ruth McKenney's appeal, published in the May 13 issue, readers in sixty-eight small towns in thirty states sent in contributions. We confess that most of these towns were not even on the map. Our heartfelt thanks to the men and women of Main Street.

This brings us to a problem that our readers can help solve. In New York members of our staff have been personally visiting readers who have not yet contributed. In practically every case those visited gladly contributed. We wish we could visit the homes of our readers outside of New York, in big towns and little, but this is physically impossible. But every reader is really a representative of New Masses. Don't let your magazine go under because of neglect. We want to end this drive quickly, but our situation remains critical. Last week contributions fell off alarmingly—only $655 was received. We are still $7,895 short of the $25,000 goal that we must reach to assure the magazine's existence for the rest of the year. Don't put it off—send your donation today. Collect among your friends. Whether you live on Main Street or in the great roaring cities, New Masses counts on you.

THE EDITORS

(PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 30)

NEXT week we shall publish an article by A. B. Magil which discusses Harold Laski and the evolution of his ideas. We also have in type and will print in the near future an article from London by the well known British critic, Edgell Rickword, on the subject of poetry and war.

NM writers will be well represented at the Fourth Congress of the League of American Writers, opening in New York City Friday, June 6, and continuing through the eighth. The program of the Congress includes a public meeting at Manhattan Center the evening of June 6, at which the following artists and writers will speak against war and in defense of culture: Art Young, Richard Wright, Vito Marcantonio, Genevieve Taggard, Samuel Putnam, Edgar Snow, Rockwell Kent, Dashiell Hammett, and Robert K. Speer. The special sessions and panel discussions will cover a great variety of cultural subjects of general and particular interest. Led by some of the most prominent figures on the American cultural front, these sessions will include discussion of fiction, art, radio, literary criticism, screen writing, labor journalism, text books, drama, poetry, folk song, and Latin American cultural relations. An award to the American writer who has performed the most "distinguished service for culture and peace" will be presented by the Congress as a memorial to Randolph Bourne.

Who's Who

ELIZABETH RODNEY works in a New York publishing house.... Norman Garth is an expert in insurance statistics. . . . Samuel Putnam is a noted authority on Latin-American affairs. He is the author and translator of many books. . . . Martin Ross is a graduate student in art in an eastern college.

THIS WEEK

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WASHINGTON HAS THE JITTERS

The next steps in the President's war moves. Hillman, Hillman, why aren't you a Bevin? The picket line before the White House. A report by Bruce Minton.

Washington.

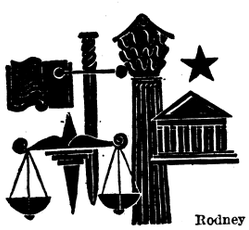
AFTER the intense buildup by the administration's war claque, the postponement of the President's speech last week—in which he was expected to call for American convoys and for this country's fullest participation in the war—is generally accepted as a serious defeat. Everywhere throughout Washington—factory of gossip and rumor—one hears "authentic" explanation of what happened to change the President's plans. It is impossible, at least so it seems, to find a person in all this uneasy, overcrowded, self-important city who is not secretly in the "know," or unable to hand out an "inside tip," or not reliably informed of some unpublished "dope" emanating from personages of utmost influence in the very highest diplomatic circles.

No one, of course, accepts the official excuse that President Roosevelt was too sick to speak. It is taken for granted that his indisposition was diplomatically prolonged, that his reception of White House callers and his activity on important questions of policy certainly indicated that if he had dared, he was physically capable of delivering the address. In addition no one dreams that the delay shows any change of heart on Roosevelt's part, any weakening in his mania to thrust the country deeper into war. Yet he pulled up short at what was for him an embarrassing moment; and the next two weeks must be devoted to whipping up the war frenzy all over again.

Moreover, at his May 16 press conference, the President hinted a change in tactics—or, more accurately, a return to the pattern relegated for the moment to the background. The campaign of direct incitement had proved about the worst flop of his career. He had marshalled all the administration's fire eaters, but their impassioned oratory, their heated warnings, their straight-from-the-shoulder bombast had aroused only the deepest apathy. The President, always sensitive to public reaction, had in true Roosevelt tradition, wisely enough taken a powder instead of attempting to save a day already lost. Obviously, for all the stage setting of the past year, the American people still refused to whoop it up for war or to be stampeded by baleful official handouts. The administration perhaps should have sensed that the Knox-Stimson-Hull-Little Flower rantings would not come off. Its test propaganda medium, the newspaper *PM*, lost circulation during the two-week hysterics designed to persuade readers that now was the time to send the marines, the navy, the army, and the air force to the battlefields of Europe and Asia, and to dispatch Mr. Ingersoll, America's most loquacious editor, to some dramatic and safe spot where he could watch the whole thing with a sense of indomitable importance.

It is well known that the President does not like to be gainsaid. He is a stubborn man, intent on getting his own way. If fireworks won't do the trick, he'll jockey about to find some other method. At his recent press conference, he cited early American history as precedent for what he has in mind: he spoke glowingly of former actions in the Mediterranean against Barbary pirates, and in the Caribbean against French and Spanish marauders. This excursion into history—if I am "using my head" as the President urged reporters to do in interpreting his remarks—seems clear enough indication that American war vessels have been dispatched to the combat zone. The chance that one or more will be sunk does not seem too remote; then the administration will have the justification it is seeking to drag the United States into open hostilities—as Joseph Starobin pointed out in these columns last week. If the people won't get excited one way, the loss of American lives at sea ought to assure the desired effect.

For when Franklin Roosevelt talks of "freedom of the seas," he is merely using a circumlocution for convoys across the Atlantic. Nor is there any pretense that convoys mean anything less than full armed warfare. It is generally accepted that the President intends to seize the Azores and Dakar at the earliest possible moment: but then, he is also anxious to be "provoked" into such extreme action. Meanwhile, persistent rumors circulate—and *persistent* rumors, even in Washington, cannot be too readily dismissed—that the lighter craft, usually considered part of the Pacific Fleet, are arriving in the Atlantic, ready for action as patrols, convoys, and eventually as escorts to troop ships. The cruisers, destroyers, and other auxiliary craft are sailing, so the story goes, around the Cape of Good Hope; the ostensible reason for taking this roundabout course is to guard the fleet's whereabouts from hostile observers; but there is the added consideration that the American people might more readily learn what is up if the ships came through the Panama Canal. Naturally, serious withdrawals from the Pacific Fleet, while oil and other war materials continue to flow to Japan, lead to guesses that a mighty appeasement is either completed or being arranged in the Far East, a Munich to make the first Munich look like peanuts. This in all likelihood is what *Pravda* referred to, when on May 18 it reported that Japan had asked the United States to mediate in China as part of a proposed Japanese-American accord.



Rodney

FURTHERMORE, giving added weight to this ugly forecast, relations between the United States and the USSR grow steadily worse. In one sense, this statement is an exaggeration: actually relations cannot possibly worsen without a complete diplomatic break. The State Department systematically and maliciously insults the Soviet government. The latest confiscation of a cargo of wool and hides being trans-shipped via San Francisco from Uruguay to the Soviet Union was accompanied by the lame excuse that these goods were needed for "defense" reserves. But present stores of wool and hides in this country are enormous, even burdensome. When Secretary Hull met with Mr. Oumansky, the Soviet ambassador protested this country's unprecedented behavior. Trade relations with the USSR are virtually non-existent; the recent report in the press that the State Department just issued licenses for the export to Russia of one million dollars' worth of machine tools, appears to be made out of whole cloth, without any truth to it. If the above mentioned license did not go through, then since the first of the year less than one million dollars in machine tools have been allowed out of this country to the Soviets.

What is ominous about this bitter hostility which the administration does everything to augment and publicize, what is clearly indicated by present American policy in the Far East, is that these attitudes only make sense if they pave the way for the administration to give full attention to the war in Europe. It is interesting in this connection to recall that in 1917 Secretary of State Lansing entered into negotiations with the Japanese Foreign Minister. The resultant Isii-Lansing agreement acknowledged that Japan, because of its propinquity to the mainland, possessed a special interest in China. As the United

States plunged into the European conflict, Japan enjoyed a free hand to strengthen its hold on Manchuria and Shantung.

Just as the President was primed to pull out all the stops, everything seemed to go wrong. The widespread public apathy was a major consideration, but it was by no means the extent of his headache. The question of Great Britain was enough to engender giddiness in the coolest conspirator: the immediate military situation of the British was certainly not one to inspire cheers; in addition, hints from abroad intimated that perhaps the British Tories were losing enthusiasm for a war they didn't want in the first place. President Roosevelt's task is by no means simple. On the one hand, they say down here, he must keep the war going by supplying the British with sufficient materiel without which they may very well seek to get out from under. On the other, he realizes the need to tread cautiously so as not to involve this nation in the war too completely if there remains any chance of the British suddenly sitting back and letting the United States hold the bag. Certainly a difficult dilemma. Because one way or the other, the President must take immense risks. The stakes are large. A slip, to say the least, would be mighty costly.

To complicate matters, the Hess mess came along. Perhaps the administration knows the answer to this most fantastic filip of the war. There are literally hundreds of rumors floating about, and the press has given each one all the space that could be stretched out of it. However, no matter what the final verdict of Rudolph's strange flight may be, his arrival in England immediately gave new impetus to peace talk already so prevalent. At this time, the kind of peace talk indulged in by the English people can hardly be less welcome to the British ruling class, or to Mr. Roosevelt.

SUCH TRIBULATIONS only lead to even more pressing administration worries. Ever since the war started, the problem has been —what to do about labor? The tip-off came from England. There the ruling class smiled on Ernest Bevin and he not only smiled back, but turned himself inside out with joy at being able to serve the imperialists. So Churchill put him in the Cabinet, along with his stanch rivals at turning inside out, Herbert Morrison and Clement Attlee. Among them, they have more or less held the unions in line.

In this country, Sidney Hillman was as willing as a man could be to take on the job. Accordingly, he was knighted at the White House and honors were heaped upon his subservient brow. And Sidney Hillman, "labor's representative" in matters political, sociological, and demagogic, was presented to the American working man in all his glorious poltroonry. Was ever a man more happily placed to aspire to bourgeois immortality?

But the bubble that was Hillman burst all too immediately. It was not that poor Sidney did not strain himself. The high-placed

Gropper

in government privately admit that he strained, all right, but the more he put into it, the worse things went. He raced neck and neck with William Green to anticipate and accede to the employers' wishes. He talked no-strike, conciliation, sacrifice, capitulation, and above all, war. He got nowhere. When labor answered speedup and higher living costs with strikes, Sidney Hillman showed himself impotent to forestall or betray the militancy of the working class. So abysmal was his failure that even Sidney was downcast. In fact, when the coal miners' committee, with John L. Lewis at its head, came to the OPM offices in Washington, Hillman used the rear office exit at lunchtime so as not to pass through the anteroom where sat his "dear friend John."

And then, through the dark clouds, burst the sun, shining squarely on the persevering Sidney. He wangled a master contract for shipyard workers, tying them to a no-strike agreement, refusing even the employers' willingness to grant double pay for overtime work. For some hours, Hillman was a man reborn —until the news of the West Coast shipyard strike electrified Washington and spoiled the whole thing for Hillman by repudiating the contract negotiated without the workers' consent or participation. Their walkout added no glamour to Sidney's record.

In other words, the administration, in search of a Bevin, is still searching. Hillman—who always sees and agrees with the employers' side of an argument—is decidedly not "it." Yet a Bevin is a vital need. Those around Washington who follow closely the labor movement remark that the administration, planning to take this nation into war, must be as sure as possible of the domestic rear. If labor continues to insist on its rights, they add, the administration is fearful that the future may bring immense difficulties. Labor, strongly organized, endangers the conduct of a war using democracy as window dressing to conceal imperialist aims. Suppose, when war comes, workers take the window dressing seriously?

Yes, the general opinion is, the administration badly needs a Bevin. Instead of finding one, it has been tormented by labor's consistent and growing militancy. Worse still, the initiative for labor action rests solidly in the rank and file. Whatever vacillation some labor leaders express is negated by the consistent militancy of the union membership. Walter Reuther of the United Automobile Workers is cited as an example. Reuther, a devoted Hillman disciple, was unable for all his maneuvering to sell out in the General Motors dispute. Finally auto workers balked at Reuther's involved stalling, refusing to delay longer. At Flint and elsewhere, they walked out of plants without further ado. Immediately, the company agreed to wage increases.

The alternative to a Bevin, it is pointed out, is for the administration to demolish the labor movement by a head-on assault. The White House has so far shied away from such a course, not because of any lurking sympathy for the unions, but because it shudders at the thought of what could happen if the attack didn't work. There is good reason to fear such a failure. The mass production industries are organized and the working class is on the move, with no predisposition to take kindly to troops or police brutality or legalistic funny business or repressive legislation. Tentative moves in these directions already hazarded have been angrily repulsed.

At the apex of the strike actions, the men around the President—Knudsen, Knox, Stimson, the army and navy chiefs (and, who knows, perhaps Sidney Hillman?)—urged the use of force against strikers. *The CIO knew very well that troops were being held in readiness to seize the coal mines.* Those who cried for blood dismissed the question of how the mines, once seized, could be operated, by clamoring still louder for attack and be damned. The President alone hesitated, acutely conscious of the temper of the people, and aware, moreover, that his most dreaded enemy, John L. Lewis, was watching him, as a cat watches a mouse, for just one misstep. The President is no softie; but in this case he saw the need for discretion.

IN DESPERATION, the government created elaborate mediation machinery, while Congress played around with repressive legislation. Everyone knows that the administration is afraid. True, it might well rush the legislation through—and give the show away. The Vinson "cooling-off" bill, designed to deliver the *coup de grace,* is held menacingly over labor's head. The unions unitedly oppose its passage. It is now up to the big shots in government to decide what becomes of the "democratic" trappings intended to make the war more presentable, if the Vinson bill does go through.

What most irks the war party is the failure of the National Defense Mediation Board. John L. Lewis and great sections of the labor movement (even Philip Murray, to the surprise of many who did not realize the strength of the rank and file), opposed its formation. The workers showed awareness of danger *ahead of time.* Once the Board was established, labor watched its maneuvers with extreme suspicion. The unions, jealous of

their rights, resisted the slightest incursion on their independence. Because of this vigilance, the Mediation Board could not turn the trick. The administration had to search for still another formula. Observers warn that just here is where the Social Democrats come in. Hillman's isolation in no way ends the menace of the soft-voiced, deceivingly "pro-labor" fifth columnists within and on the periphery of the labor movement.

THE FAILURE of the Mediation Board—and the desperation caused by this reverse—was expressed backhandedly last week before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor. William H. Davis, vice-chairman of the Mediation Board, made a fine, broadminded witness, with his brave opposition to the passage of legislation forcing arbitration of labor disputes and making cooling-off periods mandatory. What Mr. Davis really suggested was a far more subtle scheme to achieve the ends desired by Congress. He blamed the Board's lack of success up to now on "pressure put on the Secretary [of Labor] in individual cases—and this is no criticism of Dr. Steelman or the Secretary. . . ." Political and economic pressure, stated Mr. Davis, had caused certification of all sorts of disputes which put the Mediation Board on the spot. He proposed that the Board be allowed to decide "if we want to take a case up from the conciliation service we can, and if we do not want to we do not have to." Then the Board could step into a dispute at the strategic moment, force delay, hold interminable hearings, and generally stall along. Actually such procedure would establish an efficient cooling-off period without new legislation. Mr. Davis did not add in so many words that such maneuverings could be expected to break strikes. An exceedingly clever and dangerous man, Mr. Davis seldom talks too much. He knows how to sap labor's strength without going about it too obviously.

THESE DAYS the President can look out of his White House window at any hour of the day or night and watch the pickets of the American Peace Mobilization keep their vigil. But those closely in touch with the labor movement stress that it would be wrong to overestimate the present strength of the anti-war drive. Moreover, they further insist there is great danger from the fascists at the head of the America First Committee, most vociferous mouthers of peace slogans today. Because this false-faced Committee claims to be for peace, it attracts important sections of the people; in Washington, there are many who fear that the widespread passion for peace can well be misled (as the widespread search for security was utilized by Huey Long and Father Coughlin) for the benefit of the American appeasers, the homegrown imperialists who seek an understanding with ferocious Hitlerism for the glory of big business, who wish to turn the war against the Soviet Union, who yearn for the fascization of America on their own terms. Today, only the American Peace Mobilization, with its demand for a people's peace and the protection of democracy by the defense of civil rights here and now, can be called the reservoir of the true American peace front. Too often one hears laments that the APM is weak, far too weak. The answer, of course, is to build the APM at a far speedier rate, to dig it deep into the union movement. There dare be no delay.

The strikes that have swept America have been directed, in one sense, against the war makers. Nevertheless, the all-important struggle for peace by the labor unions in no way approaches adequacy. The unions have frustrated the President to a certain degree; they have undoubtedly worried him. But until organized labor with all strength demands the maintenance of democracy and the preservation of peace, America is in peril. Today in Washington all sides wonder if labor will respond in time. On May 27, the President is scheduled to make the speech he was forced to postpone a few days ago. Will he call for convoys, which mean armed warfare? Or it would be no surprise to find him, even before this is read, proclaiming a complete national emergency which would allow the Chief Executive to put this country once and for all in the war without the people having the slightest say about it.

There is much hope in the fact that the unions have begun to fight politically, on specific issues, on legislation, in support of Harry Bridges, in opposition to the attacks on civil liberties. In some states, labor has started to prepare for the 1942 congressional and local elections. Therein lies the great promise—and in the consistent courage of organized labor which refuses to capitulate to threats or demagogy. Yet the labor and progressive movement must acknowledge that the main issue of peace is still to be faced foursquare. The American people are in no way safe until this most vital need has been recognized, until they act with every ounce of strength in defense of peace.

BRUCE MINTON.

"Slacker!"

WHAT RUDOLPH HESS WAS AFTER

The career of Hitler's crony. "A killer if there ever was one." Possible explanations of the flight to Scotland. Political issues involved. The method in the madness.

NEW MASSES *invited a refugee from Hitler's Germany to give us the background of Rudolph Hess' career, plus his opinion on the Hess affair. For obvious reasons, Oscar Mannheimer is not his real name.*—THE EDITORS.

NOBODY knows exactly what the Rudolph Hess flight to Scotland means, at least nobody who is willing to do any talking. Herr Hitler was going to make a public speech on the question, but that was called off; Mr. Churchill has similarly declined to inform his public on the grounds that it is not in the public interest to do so, and Mr. Roosevelt, your President, seems also to prefer a judicious silence. It is necessary, moreover, to doubt whether the newspapers have given us any information except what the German and British governments desire to be given. For us German exiles, this bewilderment of the news is not at all new. In this case, it complicates enormously the problem of making a judgment about the Hess affair. But if no one knows precisely what it means, at least there is no excuse for ignorance about the character and career of Rudolph Hess himself.

The best word to describe him is your American word: "killer." Hess is one of the original Nazi killers, a gangster if there ever was one. Tall, broad-shouldered, with very deep-set, greenish-hued eyes, Rudolph Hess was the originator of the *Saalschlacht,* the technique which the Nazis developed of breaking up their opponent's meetings, or disrupting even the gatherings at which Hitler spoke when embarrassing questions were asked. It was Nov. 4, 1921, in Munich that the first such *Saalschlacht* took place. Some 800 persons were assembled in a little hall in the southern end of the town when someone queried "der fuehrer" a little too sharply. Thereupon, a group of fifty thugs, armed with chairs, beer mugs, and revolvers smashed into the innocent crowd, cracking heads open, breaking arms and jaws, sending people to the hospitals, and at the head of this crew, the first *Sturmabteilung* was, as Hitler himself described it, "my brave Maurice, my present private secretary, Hess."

HESS was born in Alexandria, Egypt, of German parents engaged in the import business, April 26, 1896—just about forty-five years ago. He received a somewhat more substantial education than most of the men who subsequently became Nazi leaders. His upbringing in the heart of the British colonial empire probably accounts for that dual aspect of his character, namely, a deep respect for the power and technique of British imperialism, and a profound jealousy of it: a desire to inherit, or at least share in its wealth. This is, of course, a motif which runs very deep in the whole Nazi ideology.

Some two years before the World War, in which he served at Verdun and in the East, Rudolph Hess found himself in the great seaport of Hamburg. And in mentioning Hamburg, I cannot help but think of three other men who were living there at the time, men whose lives suffered so much on Hess' account. One of them was Carl von Ossietsky, the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1936, one of Germany's outstanding editors and journalists, who suffered torture in the concentration camps and died just after his release. The second was Edgar Andre, a hero of the underground opposition, a Communist who went to his death under the axe with words of contempt and defiance on his lips, such as will never be forgotten wherever German workers breathe. And the third was Ernst Thaelmann, the leader of the Hamburg longshoremen, general secretary of the KPD, the Communist Party of Germany, who since the day after Hitler's seizure of power has been incarcerated in the fascist dungeon.

RUDOLPH HESS' political career begins shortly after he was demobilized in the terrible chaos which followed the defeat of the German Imperial Army. In 1919 he was implicated in the many conspiracies against the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic. He was an officer in the *Leibregiment* which carried through the cowardly assassination of Kurt Eisner, the chairman of that republic. A few months later, he is found a member of the Munich section of the *Thulegesellschaft,* an ultra-reactionary conspiratorial group, anti-Semitic to the core, which made a practice of forging credentials, worming its way into working class organizations and government bodies for the purpose of sabotaging the new regime. Several of these forgers were discovered and shot. Hess, unfortunately, managed to evade his death—which might have been his greatest contribution to the "salvation" of humanity.

Later in the same year, he is found as a member of the *Freikorps,* organized by former officers of the Imperial Army, whose main purpose was to quench the workers' revolution in blood. As a *Freikorps* officer, Hess participated in the assassination of Gustav Landauer, the writer and Minister of Education in the Bavarian Republic. Landauer was miserably mistreated, the soles of his feet tortured, the crown of his head lacerated, and finally his life-blood flowed out under the charge of rifle fire. The assassins stole Landauer's belongings, unrobed the body, and threw it into a lime-pit where it was discovered two days after.

Who knows whether this was the second or sixty-second of the murders in which Hess participated that year! Everywhere bodies of working men and women were found throughout southern Germany, tortured at the soles, lacerated in the scalp, the distinctive mark of the *Freikorps'* work. With this kind of preparatory training, Rudolph Hess gravitated to the Nazis, and in January 1923, addressing a meeting at the Cirque Krohne in Munich, he declared: "Let the blood of the criminals of November (those who took power from the Kaiser in 1918), let their blood flow in the streets. Blood and more blood, and always blood. We shall proclaim a dictatorship, and defeating the whole world, we shall march forward though the blood runs as high as our ankles."

That November the "beer-hall *putsch*" takes place, but Hess is not at Hitler's side. It was his assignment to kidnap the ministers Schweyer and Wutzelhofer, whom he forced from their automobiles at the pain of death and spirited to a nearby forest. Evidently, however, he got "cold feet" as you Americans say, and hesitated to do away with the ministers for fear that were the *putsch* unsuccessful, he might be held directly responsible for the crime. For months he wandered through the hills and forests. Finally he gave himself up and was sent to the Landsberg fortress in which Hitler was confined. There he collaborated in the writing of *Mein Kampf,* and became Hitler's intimate.

From then on, Hess plays an important but peculiar role in the Nazi movement. He becomes the private secretary, the administrative and executive figure in Hitler's entourage. He is never the policy-maker or "idea man," in the sense, for example, of Gottfried Feder, who developed most of the demagogic "socialist" aspects of Hitler's program. But he is a contact man, and responsible for example, in bringing Hitler together with Dr. Karl Haushofer, the theoretician of "living space," the philosopher of "geo-politics." Hitler and Hess and Haushofer spent many a Sunday afternoon together. It was Hess' influence, rather than his participation in the formulation of ideas, which gained Haushofer the eminent place he occupies in Nazi affairs. So also, it was Hess' influence with Hitler that gave him control over the *Auslandsorganization,* of which Ernst Bohle is the chief. This is the agency which controls the network of Germans abroad, which means that Hess has always had the closest connections with Germans and German agents and pro-Germans of other nationalities outside the Reich.

IT IS NOT accidental also that Hess was in charge of the negotiations with the Trotskyist-Bukharinist bloc, the Nazi fifth column within the Soviet Union. It was not only his own anti-Communist convictions, but his trustworthiness and abilities as negotiator which merited him the job of meeting with Trotsky in Stockholm and elsewhere. At the second

Moscow trials, for example, from Jan. 23-30, 1937, Sokolnikov, one of the defendants, admits that Pyatakov, another defendant, told him that "Trotsky had been negotiating with Hess." And "in these negotiations, Hess was empowered to put forward demands which concerned not only German interests, but also the interests of another country," evidently referring to Japan, where Rudolph Hess has always been highly regarded. Pyatakov, on pages 64 and 65 of the published record of the trial, relates in detail how the Trotskyist bloc was parleying with Hess, anticipating a German attack on the Soviet Ukraine. In preparation for this attack, the Trotskyists were actively engaged in sabotaging the great socialist construction and planning the murder of leading Soviet statesmen.

Hess was not exactly the builder of the Nazi party: he was its boss and administrator and the executor of Hitler's will, especially after the purge of the Roehm group in 1934. He was not the leader of a faction, like Strasser, nor did he have the intimate contacts with the Junkers and big industrialists like Goering, nor the control of powerful newspapers like Goebbels, nor was he in the public eye like these latter two gentlemen. Hess' strength is derived from his association with Hitler, who does not represent a faction among the Nazis, but is rather the arbiter of different factions and always goes with the more powerful

ANGLES ON THE HESS AFFAIR

NEW MASSES does not have a very much different explanation of the Hess affair than is given by Oscar Mannheimer in these pages. We are inclined to agree with him that Hess was not escaping from personal difficulties, nor was he protesting against decisions about the future course of the war. We believe there are deeper political issues involved which the British censors are concealing. It seems most probable that Hess was instrumental in an effort to negotiate some kind of peace between Britain and Germany, an effort which has momentarily failed.

Several other aspects of the Hess affair are worth comment. It strikes us as interesting how both belligerents have tried to make the most of the situation. On the British side, Hess' dramatic arrival in Scotland was treated like the Second Coming. Admiration and even idolatry were developed in the British newspapers. Hess was at first made out to be a "good Nazi." He was going to tell all the secrets of the German High Command, and it seemed for a while, he might even be the candidate to lead a German government-in-exile! The Nazis, at the beginning, tried to minimize the event. They attributed it to hallucinations growing out of physical disease, evidently trying to cushion the shock among the Nazi rank and file when their No. 3 hero turned up on enemy soil.

But once the idea of a truce with Germany had been well circulated, the British government began to encourage increasing expressions of disgust in the press. Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labor, was permitted to make a statement, implicitly rejecting the idea of a peace with these gangsters. By the end of the week, the British government was trying to extract a certain patriotic advantage from the whole affair, whipping up enthusiasm for a continuation of the war. At the same time, Herr Goebbels also began to change his line. Hess was no longer represented as a lunatic but as a misguided "idealist." It seems that he hoped to convince Britain of peace, which is of course deeply desired among the German masses, but was rejected by the warmongers, by Churchill. Thereby the Nazis also tried to extract a certain patriotic advantage from the incident. Hess was portrayed as a hero who had sacrificed himself in the interests of Anglo-German amity, but had been rejected on the other side.

And then there was another interesting thing: for almost two years now, the capitalist press, liberals included, have tried to present Soviet foreign policy as an enigma, a riddle, and a mystery. And yet in the last ten days, the whole capitalist world has been standing on its head trying to figure out the riddle, enigma, and mystery of what the British and German governments are up to. And it is clear that there was just as much, if not more, mystery on the British than the German side. The truth is that the peoples of the democratic world so-called, are absolutely in the dark about the policies of their governments. Who knows, for example, all the graft and corruption that goes on in the "defense program"? Who knows all the back-alley intrigue in London, or in Washington, all the diplomatic finagling that goes on behind the scenes?

In actual fact, the commentators dare not explore those mysteries; they are compelled therefore, to project their own inability to understand, or to explain, their own world whenever they try to describe the socialist world. They are so bound up in concealing the truth from the people that they just can't comprehend a straightforward, direct diplomacy which is perfectly explicit to sensible people, a strong diplomacy which gains in strength and is not hamstrung by conflicting interests of class and personalities.

What is it, after all, that produces such specimens as Rudolph Hess? What is it, fundamentally, which lies at the basis of the accumulating mysteries of the world in which we live? Obviously, it is not enough to say that the Nazis are all psychopaths or neurotics. It is impossible to explain fascism in psychiatric terms. One reason is that similar symptoms are appearing in the so-called democratic world. For example, take the case of the Duke of Hamilton. We now discover that this paragon of British civilization suffers from a split personality: by night he flies over Germany to bomb its railway junctions; by day he corresponds with the leaders of the German Reich. Obviously, neuroses are very relative; it says very little to say that many Nazis are neurotics. The real question is what is producing an increase of fantastic men like Hess in the world in which we live?

The answer lies in the contradictions which are tearing society apart, and which manifested themselves with especial acuteness in Germany. German capitalism, earlier than capitalism elsewhere, was faced with the most profound inner and external alternatives: its only way out was to smash the organizations of the working class, to enslave entire nations, to raise up from medieval times the symbols of race and blood in order to prepare a whole people for a war for the redivision of the imperialist world. To accomplish such things, only the most brutal, fantastic leadership would suffice, and they were brought forward from the dregs of German life—men like Hess, and Goering and Hitler. The same effort to find symbols of blood and race has been proceeding in France, in Britain, and now—in the USA.

And why? Because the productive forces of our society have outgrown the shell of its social relations. Society has reached a point where it cries out for rational management in the interests of the whole people. Science and technique have reached a stage where peace and plenty are possible for the entire human race, and many hundreds of millions more. But the *property relations* in our society are holding the *productive possibilities* back. The property relations—of a small number of monopolists—have caught the productive possibilities in a grip of death, trying to hold humanity back from a rational, peaceful evolution toward higher forms of civilization.

It is this fact which has brought fascism to Germany, and is bringing it to the rest of the capitalist world, and it is this which causes the devastation and horror of recurrent warfare.

It is this which lies at the basis of the psychological upheaval that is wracking human affairs. It is this which produces men like Rudolph Hess and their hallucinations. Socialism, which the working men must achieve because they are the protagonists of new social relations, means not only economic and political and national salvation. It is the restoration of reason for humankind.

faction. Hess is the deputy, the proxy—and in every crucial situation and every important decision, Hess is to be found on the spot. For example, in December 1933 he was appointed Hitler's personal representative in all party matters, and the following June participated directly in "solving" the crisis between the storm troopers and the army in which Roehm and several hundred others lost their lives, and after which the storm troopers were partially dissolved. Hitler faced the decision of whether the SA, on whose shoulders he had come to power, was going to absorb the army —or whether, by compromising with the army he would advance his strategy in foreign policy. The decision was made at the expense of the SA, on June 30, and it was Hess who carried out the decision.

Hess was directly responsible for the organization and functioning of the concentration camps, particularly Dachau. He was charged with carrying through the first big wave of atrocities against Hitler's opponents in 1933 and 1934. It is Hess who knows most about the horrible night of Nov. 11, 1938, when all of Germany was wracked with the terrible persecution of the Jews, the burning of the synagogues, the imposition of billions of marks of fines on the Jewish communities. It is well to recall, while Herr Hess is treated with such consideration in Britain, with all the delicacies such as chicken, fish, and fresh eggs at his disposal, some of the tortures, the floggings, the murders for which this man is responsible.

How can I possibly recall them! the fifty strokes of the rod across the naked flesh . . . being forced to run up and down a stairway twenty times between rows of Nazis with whips in their hands, striking wildly across the naked body . . . the blows to the jaw from the hairy hands torn of brutish guards . . . the fingernails torn out with pincers . . . the pregnant women, the men, young and old, savagely assaulted . . . the lips of prisoners who would not betray their comrades burned to livid blisters . . . the injections of camphor in the *Harnrohre.*

It is well to remember the scandal of August 1932, when a gang of Nazis captured the Silesian worker, Pieczuch at Potempa. They pinned him on his bed, beating him in the presence of his mother, and then while strangling him, finished it off with the slash of the dagger. And when the assassins were condemned to death by the courts, it was Hess who telegraphed Hitler's greeting: "My comrades, I am bound to you by boundless faith. Your freedom is now a question of my honor."

It is well to remember that Rudolph Hess, one of those two or three Nazis whom Hitler calls *du,* who is known throughout Germany as *der Fraulein,* a sexual degenerate if there ever was one, with his toenails all manicured and polished—it was this same Hess who in the first three years of the terror was responsible for the 225,000 political arrests, the 10,000 assassinations, the sixty-three instances of capital punishment by the axe.

I have been asked what the Hess affair means. I reply that in the absence of verifiable information it is impossible to give a simple, all-inclusive explanation. It must be obvious even to the most unsophisticated person that the German government is doing little talking at all, while the British government is permitting only the most deliberately controlled information to come out. It is obvious that there is a time-lag between the hour that Hess is supposed to have arrived in Scotland and the time—almost forty-eight hours later—when the story became news. Although Hess was certainly powerful enough to go up from any German airport in a plane of his own choosing, it is not likely at all that he could have navigated his way across Germany and France and the Channel to within a few miles of his destination on the Duke of Hamilton's estate without either prior arrangements, or without an escort. So it is likely that at the bottom of this incident lies a most involved story of such proportions that the whole truth might rock the British empire.

But as of this moment, as I write, it is possible only to consider *aspects* of the question.

In general, there are two types of reasonable explanations: one, that Hess' arrival in Scotland represents a flight from something, motivated either by fear or by protest. The other is that Hess had a *mission,* a purpose, which was not personal, but involved other individuals and groups on both sides of the English channel.

TAKING the first assumption first: Is this a rift with his former friends? Is it a protest against decisions which are about to be made, or have already been made? Is it escape for fear of personal harm, on the supposition that Hess was on the wrong side of a faction? Or, can it be, as I have heard people suggest that Hess was slated to take over Hitler's post?

When one raises these questions and thinks about them for a while, they become less important. For knowing what we do about this man's past, it is more and more unlikely that Hess would protest decisions taken by Hitler or the Nazi party or the army. On the contrary, he has always been the kind of man who carries out decisions, his personal opinions remaining unexpressed. Nor has he ever been identified with factions within Germany—he is always the figure who has smoothed over rifts, straightened out discords, and enforced Hitler's decision against dissenters. Without ruling out the personal forms which political disagreements sometimes assume, especially among the Nazis, the most primary fact is that there are *deep political issues* at the bottom of the Hess affair.

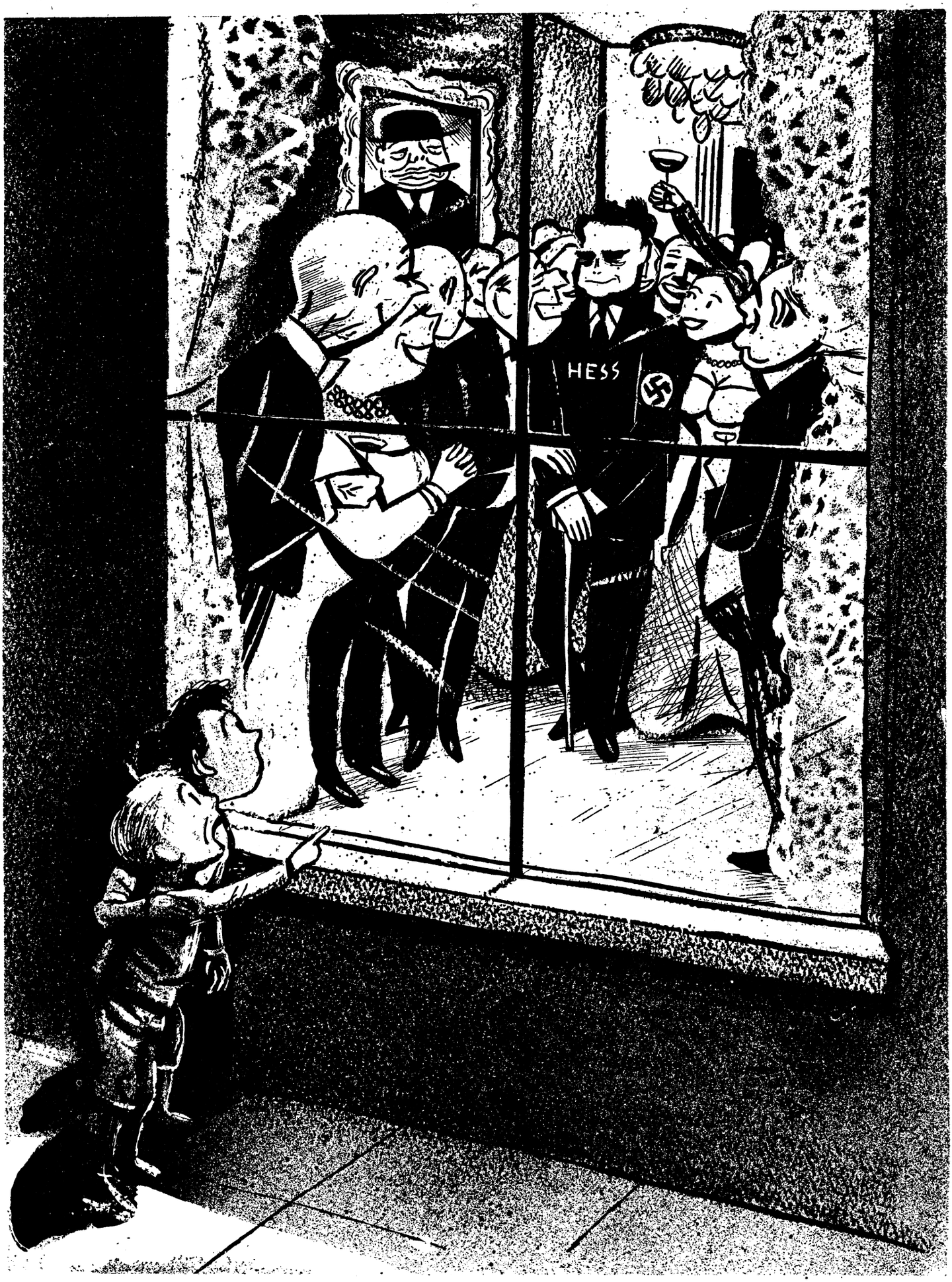
Our second possible explanation is that Hess came to Scotland with a purpose, that he had a mission to perform, either for some groups within Germany, including Hitler himself, or for groups without Hitler's knowledge. In any case, *the likelihood of a purpose is the main thing.* This fits in with Hess' career as a contact man, or confidence man for the inner circles of the Nazi regime. But the moment we recognize one flight, with a purpose, we have the right to assume any number of such flights—or to put it another way, we have a right to assume that serious discussions have been continuing over a period of time between important figures of the Nazi government and important official, or semi-official figures of the British government. Even if the governments were themselves unaware of these discussions, their purpose was ultimately to make the governments aware, and to influence governmental policy. Such discussions could of course take place in any capital—in Stockholm, or in Madrid, or in London or in Tokyo. But Hess' participation indicates a certain urgency, a crucial and highly authoritative character to these discussions, and that is the important thing.

What can they possibly be about? The details are unimportant. The main thing is that they involve the future course of the war. Germany's relations with Britain, mutual relations with the Soviet Union, the influence of the United States—all this is necessarily involved. It is even possible to go further. Germany has reached a stage in the war which was foreseen in *Mein Kampf.* France has been defeated as a result of the six-year cooperation with Britain and the military campaign of the past year. Now the time has come to decide upon relations with the British: to continue the war means a long war most likely, with the United States playing an increasingly decisive role on the British side, and with the Soviet Union gaining in strength both relatively and absolutely. To halt the war, which the German people so deeply desire, is not easy to accomplish: there is a question of terms, there is a question of how to sell the idea to the British people without losing control of them altogether. To continue the war means to continue neutral relations with the Soviet Union and perhaps, relatively speaking, it means to lose a certain independence of policy toward the Soviet Union; to stop the war involves a defeat for the British empire, which can be compensated only by a very strong tension with the Soviet Union, if not actually a war against the Soviet Union. And in such a war, Germany might succeed in losing what her army has gained. She could never be sure what kind of support she would get from Britain or the United States.

Unquestionably, these extremely difficult alternatives, both within Germany and within Britain—with the influence of American and Soviet positions playing its part—all this created the most profound tensions, indecisions, differences of opinion, efforts at agreement, conspiracies, behind-the-scenes arrangements not only for the rulers of the Wilhelmstrasse but for the lords and ladies who control the British empire.

I would say therefore that the discovery of Hess in Scotland does not mean primarily a rift among the Nazis. It is an expression of the difficulties which the Nazis face. It is a reflection of a deep inner struggle to come to some agreement with Britain, and it means that the effort to reach this agreement has temporarily failed.

OSCAR MANNHEIMER.



Michaels

"That's the enemy."

SERMONS OF SACRIFICE

The laureates of pessimism call for a more endearing portrait of life as we know it. Van Wyck Brooks repudiates himself. The goals of a creative literature discussed by Samuel Sillen.

VAN WYCK BROOKS has just published an essay *On Literature Today* which raises a pertinent topic for discussion on the eve of the Fourth Congress of American Writers. Mr. Brooks will not be present at this Congress, for he has seen fit to dissociate himself from its position against the war and in defense of a free culture. Having lent his support to the expansionist aspirations of Mr. Roosevelt, he has repudiated not only his political stand in 1917, when he was a co-worker of Randolph Bourne on *The Seven Arts,* but the literary attitudes which were linked with his opposition to monopoly and reaction. To an earlier generation his work was a challenge to remake America in the interests of a truly creative life—"On the economic plane," he wrote, "this implies socialism." To the youth of our own day, again facing the agony of an unwanted and unjust war, he reads a sermon of sacrifice reminiscent of Lewis Mumford's ironically titled *Faith for Living.*

Mr. Mumford is one of the two contemporary writers cited by Mr. Brooks (the other is Robert Frost) in whose work "one feels a joyous confidence in human nature, an abounding faith in the will, a sense of the heroic in the human adventure, good will, the leaven of existence." Mr. Mumford, it will be recalled, has joyously and heroically proclaimed the need for labor camps to toughen up our cynical youth. He has celebrated the values of unemployment and domestic drudgery. He has declared that "Our new economy must assume that hardship, difficulty, and poverty are normal aspects of life," and that "Poverty, hardships, wounds, and death will be our daily pay." It seems incredible that Van Wyck Brooks should accept this faith for dying, this profoundly cynical outlook for humanity, as a token of good will and the leaven of existence. But the war has gone far enough, it has turned enough good minds, to accustom us to the incredible.

WHAT is more notable is that the author of *Wine of the Puritans* and *Letters and Leadership,* once the leading critical spokesman against complacency, shallow optimism, and provincialism as the besetting vices of our literature, is now devoting himself to a campaign against pessimism. Mr. Brooks is concerned over the mood of doubt and despair which he feels has dominated literature in the last two decades. Joyce, Eliot, O'Neill, and Dreiser, he says, were bent on proving that life is a dark little pocket. Most of our books since the last war have been written by "adolescent minds" like Mencken, Hemingway, and Thomas Wolfe. Great numbers of American writers are cynical and fatalistic. They see only the ugly in life. The literature of negation which they have created represents a "death-wish" whose influence is disintegrating the national morale.

With much of what Mr. Brooks has to say regarding pessimism there is no quarrel. One agrees wholeheartedly, for example, that Faulkner, Dos Passos, and Farrell "seem to delight in kicking their world to pieces, as if civilization were all a pretense and everything noble a humbug." One agrees that their nihilism has become increasingly sterile as a creative force. One appreciates the quotation from Chekhov's letters to the effect that the best writers "are realists and paint life as it is, but, through every line's being soaked in the consciousness of an object, you feel, besides life as it is, the life which ought to be, and that captivates you."

But several questions press on the reader as he notes the cumulative evidence that so much of our literature is shot through with pessimism. Why is it that, as Chekhov said of himself, so many contemporary writers have neither immediate nor remote aims but only a great empty space in their souls? Is it not true that an even vaster body of writing in this country is blatantly and offensively optimistic? Is there no trend in American letters (outside of Frost and Mumford!) which includes in its realism a perception of a hopeful direction in human affairs? And, finally, why has Van Wyck Brooks, whose own work was once to some extent a complaint against capitalist society, decided to call for a more endearing portrait of civilization as we know it? And what basis in reality does he offer the writer whom he exhorts to faith, joy, and courage?

MR. BROOKS very properly says that the public has a right to expect from its poets and thinkers "some light on the causes of our problems and the way to a better future." He does not himself live up to this expectation. In attempting to explain the causes of the pessimism which he deplores, he does not take us very far. "Thirty years ago, when I began to write," he tells us, "the future was an exciting and hopeful vista." That vista was destroyed by the first world war, which gave writers a sense of disillusionment and betrayal. More recently we have been getting reports of the "excluded," children of immigrants who have lived in slums and known only slights and indignities. There has been a loss of attachment to the family and the soil. The solution projected is purely rhetorical. It is not opposition to a new imperialist war, not struggle against the conditions which have embittered "the children of immigrants," but a return to the region. The basis for hope rests in the writers who are settling down in remotest regions. "They are cultivating their roots where the seeds were sown, and where they are sure to yield their flowers and fruit."

But this pathetically empty rhetoric could be advanced as a program only by a writer who has failed profoundly to explore the roots of modern pessimism. For the truth is that the pessimistic mood, far from being limited to the period since 1917, has more and more deeply defined an important section of bourgeois literature for a century. "We fight rather to keep something alive than in the expectation that anything will triumph," declares T. S. Eliot, and in that statement he has summed up a process of decadence which did not begin yesterday. Proust and Joyce are not postwar phenomena. They reflect, from the differing approaches of the aristocrat and the petit bourgeois, a disappointment which goes back to Flaubert and Gautier, to Hardy and Huysmans, to Dostoevsky and James, to de Vigny and Housman. Their absorption in pessimism and incredulity was not necessarily reprehensible. The past, Gorky once said, is not irreproachable, but there is no sense in reproaching it. Rather, we should understand that it was because they were sensitive and in large measure honest to their experience that they wrote as they did. For the days of youthful vigor were drawing to a close, and capitalism was expropriating not only wealth but human dignity. What source of hope or faith existed for the writer who could not break through the framework of social relations which at every point restricted creative effort? And given the illusion that these relations were eternal, what answer can one make to Dostoevsky's morally brutalized hero of *Notes from the Underground?*

"The ideas of the ruling class," observes Plekhanov in his *Art and Society,* "lose their intrinsic value at the rate at which that class approaches extinction, and the art created in the spirit of that class decays at the same rate." One deep source of modern literary pessimism is the alienation of bourgeois writers from the ideas of the ruling class at the same time that they are hostile to anyone who seriously challenges existing class relations. Flaubert, for example, heaped scorn on the bourgeoisie of France, but he resisted with fury the only movement which could overthrow the greed, hypocrisy, and banality which he detested, the movement of the working class. The same is true in large measure of Dostoevsky, James, Proust, and Joyce. Dozens of distinguished writers in this epoch, particularly in moments of crisis, assiduously defend institutions and values in which they cannot deeply believe. Indeed, their best work, their most realistic work, has necessarily exposed the carcass which they try to shield from the gravediggers of a new class. They lack belief in one social order which has

produced endless sufferings and frustrations and they lack belief in any alternative social order. Hope is therefore impossible for them. It is a "delusion" and they scorn it.

In the history of literature such pessimism has had its value. It has tended to foster realism as against the Pollyannish insistence that we inhabit the best of all possible worlds. It has, in ripping aside the veils, revealed the misery, duplicity, and terror which have so largely dominated capitalist society. At the same time, this literature of discontent and despair has had the effect very often of undermining confidence not merely in a specific arrangement of society but in "human nature," "life in general," and so on. It has engendered moods of mysticism, suicide, cynicism, and fatalism. By its generalized attitude, it has imperiled a positive belief in the power of people to remold the world. It has encouraged attitudes of resignation and inaction. In short, the pessimistic writer tended to succumb to the atmosphere of decay and degeneration which he described; he was morally defeated by a reality which he only incompletely grasped.

But the opposite trend in bourgeois writing, sentimental optimism, has been more sterile. The overwhelming bulk of books and magazines produced in this country today is an effort to whitewash reality. There was a time when Van Wyck Brooks was peculiarly sensitive to the soft, pretty, slick falsifications turned out by a Booth Tarkington, a Kathleen Norris, or a Ruth Comfort Mitchell. Tarkington defends big business, as one critic has put it, "with the confident touch of a man unconfused by speculations." Miss Norris' novels have been called "morally undisturbing." The presses are choked with literature designed to extol the *status quo,* written by dexterous and trivial "good bourgeois." They reinforce the effort of the movies, which by and large seek to conceal decay and depression and death. For every *The Grapes of Wrath* there are a thousand *Plums of Plenty*. Mr. Brooks once mocked the philistine belief of Meredith Nicholson that "if there is any manifestation on earth of a divine ordering of things, it is here in America." Now he ignores the existence of these sick weeds of American culture which the publishers and producers cherish as orchids.

There is a good reason why Mr. Brooks has shifted his emphasis as a critic. His admiration for the "joyous confidence" of Lewis Mumford, his failure to mention books like *The Grapes of Wrath* or *Native Son* or *The Underground Stream* in his discussion of literature today, reflects a point of view which Archibald MacLeish made familiar in his attacks on anti-war novels. The time for "destructive criticism" is over, and it appears that we must somehow find faith. But this cry for moral affirmations is singularly hollow and ineffectual. It does no good to tell young writers to go back to their roots in Iowa or Montana when they are being drafted into army camps a thousand miles from home or when the censor hovers over their desk with his war scissors. You cannot obtain optimism by fiat or by rhetorical exhortations. You cannot make a man feel good about the future by telling him he must feel good in the interests of national defense or of a literary renascence. The dilemma in which Mr. MacLeish and Mr. Brooks find themselves is this: they want a literature of assurance as a bulwark of national policy, but the policy which they support is precisely that which undermines the assurance of people. It is fantastic to call for a literature of hope and a program of hopelessness at the same moment.

Between bleak pessimism and shrill optimism there is little choice for the creative writer. But there is, distinctly, a third current in the literature of our time. Its origins too may be traced far beyond the postwar decades. In two essays "On Cynicism," written in 1908 and 1931, Maxim Gorky analyzed the phenomenon of pessimism in modern society and pointed the road to a future toward which the best energies of our world are aspiring. Cynicism has developed like a leprosy in the organism of the bourgeoisie, he wrote. Anticipating the first world war in 1908 and the second world war in 1931, he noted that the illusory facades were falling apart and two truths were revealing themselves with inescapable logic. One was decrepit, toothless, half blind, thriving on rubbish which it had itself created. The other was young, enthusiastic, inexhaustible, pushing ahead toward the goal of universal freedom, even though it sometimes fell in pits dug by the slaves of outworn truth. Gorky described the lightning of anger which flashes everywhere and illuminates the clouds of stupidity and mistakes, prejudices and lies, accumulated through the ages. In the dark period of reaction (1908) in Russia, he felt the rebellious throb everywhere, the increasing tempo of life, the mighty turbulence of an awakening spring in which the people were becoming conscious of their creative power.

S. Wald

Family

"Lucky are those," wrote Gorky, "who know that the people are an inexhaustible source of energy and can transform all the possible into the necessary, all dreams into reality. For such persons always have a live creative feeling of their organic connection with the people. And now this feeling must grow and fill their hearts with great joy and a thirst for creating new forms for a new culture. . . ." This joy in creation, this thirst for the new, this disciplined confidence in the future of humanity is the spirit with which Soviet literature is thoroughly infused. And this is true not because of a decree or a sermon, but because it is the inevitable reflection of a way of life in which the toothless and mean-spirited crone has been swept away. The deepest truth which Van Wyck Brooks developed in his earlier work was the idea that the spirit of a literature can only be as great as the social soil from which it springs. Splenetic attacks on the Soviet Union cannot undo this truth.

The inexhaustible creative power of the people is the only genuine source of hope in a world which the enemies of the people have slashed and scarred with wars, hatred, and unutterable agony. The most honest and farsighted writers have linked their destiny with the struggles of common humanity for self-emancipation, and through self-emancipation the liberation of culture. In our own land we have witnessed the steady growth of a literature which carries on, in the spirit of Zola and Gorky and Nexo, of Shelley and Whitman and Thoreau, the struggle against human oppression. This literature refuses to ignore reality, however sordid and distasteful; it refuses to whitewash. But instead of being morally defeated by reality, it points the way to the conquest of evil by understanding and reflecting the positive, progressive forces in contemporary life. The unhealthy present does not blind it to the healthy future by which it must and will be replaced. It is a purposive literature and it will not yield to the coercion or calumny which may be used to silence it. The hopeful spirit of this literature will assert itself at the forthcoming Congress of American Writers. True, as Van Wyck Brooks says, there is on all sides "a hunger for affirmations, for a world without confusion, waste or groping, a world that is full of order and purpose, and for ourselves, in America, a chance to build it." True, and therefore a pity that Mr. Brooks robs himself of the opportunity to participate in a Congress where such affirmations will be made with a genuineness and passion and realism which the war laureates are utterly impotent to evoke among themselves.

SAMUEL SILLEN.

S. Wald

Family

SO YOU THINK YOU'RE INSURED

The TNEC's extensive analysis of the insurance monopoly. Where all the money goes. Fraudulent elections and interlocking directorates. Millions in profits out of antiquated mortality tables.

THOUGH the national income fluctuates annually, the income of insurance companies unfailingly rises from year to year. Moreover, the increase comes directly from the people. For testimony before the Temporary National Economic Committee showed that policy holders, no matter how desperate their financial plight, make every possible effort to meet their insurance obligations. They will go hungry, they will live sordidly, they will wear clothing to the last shred rather than let their premiums go unpaid.

And always the income of the companies mounts. In 1880, they enjoyed an income of $80,000,000, 1.1 percent of the national income; by 1937 this had swelled to $5,257,000,000, about 7.5 percent of the national income. Through their ownership of this wealth, the companies have become the landlords of American economy, possessing:

17% of all railroad bonds
15% of all urban mortgages
12% of all farm mortgages
11% of the guaranteed debt of the United States
10% of all municipal bonds

Even more significant, the companies help themselves to larger portions every year. Ten companies took sixty-two percent of new corporate bonds and notes in 1937; in 1930 they were able to take only 10.9 percent.

Statistical data introduced at the TNEC hearings give the reason. It is all explained by "reserve accounts" set up by the companies. The justification for reserve accounts is that they constitute a backlog which the companies can draw against to meet enormous expenditures. But the total income of 308 insurance companies in 1918-37 exceeded total expenditures by $20.9 billion. These billions were credited to large reserve accounts ostensibly for the purpose of meeting claims—but throughout the twenty-year period the companies paid all claims out of the total income; they were never forced to draw upon reserves. What, then, happened to the billions? The answer is that this capital was used to purchase a substantial slice of American assets.

As long ago as 1906, when the aggregate assets of 138 companies totalled $2.9 billion as compared to $26.2 billion for 308 companies at the end of 1937, a joint New York State Senate and Assembly Committee investigating insurance companies stated:

> The business of the Mutual, the Equitable, and the New York Life has grown beyond reasonable limits. Notwithstanding the fact that they have long since passed the point where further enlargement can benefit their policyholders, they have resorted to every effort to obtain new business, regardless of the expense which is reflected in diminishing dividends. Extravagant commissions have been paid and these have been supplemented by liberal bonuses and prizes. The huge accumulations of the companies and the great responsibilities involved in their management have furnished pretexts for increased salaries and extravagant administration. *The growth of the three companies has long been a matter of grave concern. No useful purpose will be served by their becoming larger.*

Among the first to feel the stranglehold of insurance companies in the national economy were the farmers. The companies own twelve percent of all farm mortgages. Farm mortgage holdings of forty-nine companies since 1925 decreased from $1,892,000,000 to $800,000,000 in 1938. The first impression from such figures is that farmers have been releasing themselves from the domination of mortgage-holding companies. Nothing of the sort happened. Actually farmers were released from their farms; the reduction in farm mortgages is accounted for by the foreclosure of mortgages, which means (on the company's books) that the asset is transferred from the farm mortgage account to the real estate account. Testimony by Mr. Ernest Howe before the TNEC bears this out:

> MR. GESELL: Is the diminishing of the farm mortgage line and the increase of the real estate line connected in any way?
> MR. HOWE: Of course. Whenever a mortgage is foreclosed, an asset is transferred from the form of a mortgage into the form of real estate.

Thus are the farmers liquidated and their holdings taken over. For further information read *The Grapes of Wrath.*

Hand in hand with economic power go monopolistic practices. Simultaneously with the relatively new practice of writing group policies to cover corporation employees, a number of companies banded together to decide on standard contracts and minimum rates. Although actual promulgation of rates in New York, for example, is a function of the state's Life Insurance Department, it was admitted before the TNEC that without exception, the department followed advice given by the Group Association, representing the life insurance companies. Was it this that Mr. Ecker of Metropolitan Life had in mind when he expressed his "faith in the regulatory power of publicity and the work of the New York Superintendent of Insurance"? Senator O'Mahoney, chairman of the TNEC, stated: "The public protection consisted solely of the good faith of the association."

The following letter from Vice-President Alfred Hurrell of Prudential to Vice-President William Brosmith, regarding the Group Association's adoption of a constitution, speaks for itself:

> To an insurance commissioner looking for matter of criticism I am afraid the formal constitution of the proposed Group Life Association would be found only too satisfactory as evidence that the companies were combining to prevent freedom of competition.

Through their immense resources the insurance companies have become a vast monied trust. In addition they are lending organizations, reluctant to engage in competition—as Mr. Howe's testimony reveals:

> Whereas the insurance companies have freely advanced money to corporations to refund issues outstanding on the public market, there is no case on record of an insurance company having advanced money to a corporation for the purpose of refunding obligations held exclusively by another insurance company.

Asked the chairman of the TNEC: "Then the borrower is suffering because he is not likely to get any bids for his business?"

> MR. HOWE: That is right.
> CHAIRMAN: And he will have to pay what the lender, whose field is recognized by every other lender, chooses to levy against him.
> MR. HOWE: That is right.

It is a short step—and often no step at all—from monopolistic practices to unethical practices. The question might be asked whether interlocking directorates are unethical. On the Board of Directors of the New York Life Insurance Co. are representatives of 131 other companies, many of whom are receiving preferential treatment. Fully half the banks having New York Life deposits in excess of $1,000,000 were connected with New York Life through a common director. Since $63,000,000 were on deposit at the time for the account of this one company, it can be seen that the possibilities for preferential treatment were enormous. Director Mortimer N. Buckner, especially, must often have occasion to ponder where his loyalty is due—he is connected with at least twenty-three corporations, two of which are insurance companies. Along these lines the TNEC read an interesting letter sent to Pres. David F. Houston of Mutual Life by Trustee James M. Beck on behalf of a brother-in-law associated with a brokerage house:

> At present he [the brother-in-law] is not having an easy time in bringing sufficient business to that brokerage house to justify his continuance.—If at this time you can have our treasurer drift a little business toward Mitchell—I will regard it as a favor done to me.

The letter was dated Oct. 19, 1931. Below is a schedule of business transactions between


SELECTIVE SERVICE BLANK


SELECTIVE SERVICE BLANK

Mutual and Abott Hoppin & Co., the brokerage house involved:

Amount of Business Transacted Before 1931	None
Amount of Business Transacted During 1931	$405,361.64
Amount of Business Transacted During 1932	10,675.00
Amount of Business Transacted 1933-1937	None

It was further disclosed that funds of Mutual Life, like those of New York Life, tended to drift to those banks with which the Mutual Life was connected through directors. Thus the Guaranty Trust Co., with whom five Mutual trustees were associated, held over $23,000,000 of Mutual deposits. Asked Mr. Gesell: "Do you still wish me to understand that the deposits in these banks are entirely a matter of coincidence?" Asked Thurman Arnold, also of TNEC: "The fact that a director representing a bank and having control of the bank joins with a company which has control of a large amount of funds does not mean the joining together of two powerful interests, does it?" Answered Mutual President Houston: "In appearance, yes."

The recital of abuses could continue. Just how widespread such abuses are may never be learned. For they are invariably enshrouded in the deepest secrecy, and leave in their wake nothing more tangible than oral agreements. Only occasionally something is let out of the bag: even then it is difficult to determine whether a discovered abuse is representative or trifling compared to what remains undetected.

In this light, it is important to strike at the conditions making for abusive practices. The very fact that in 1937 insurance companies purchased 62.1 percent of all corporate issues is another way of saying that a handful of men can dictate the economic life of the country. They dictate the labor policies of a corporation, dictate legislation, make or break institutions.

Such power can be cut down only by restricting the power of the already over-large insurance companies. To do so means to understand clearly from whence this power stems. There is the curious truth that the poorest people pay the most for insurance. The TNEC disclosed that industrial insurance, though distributed primarily to low-income families, was the most expensive form of life insurance sold. Said Mr. Gesell in his monograph, "Families and their Life Insurance":

> As a result of many factors, including selling pressure and high cost, it was revealed that a large percentage of industrial insurance lapsed. It further appeared that the high-pressure selling method frequently resulted in an unwise distribution of industrial policies on the various members of the family group.

Insurance premiums are based on a mortality table originally drawn up in 1866 when life expectancy was much less than at present. By using this antiquated table, twenty-six insurance companies over a period of ten years profited to the extent of $3,500,000,000, with the annual gain, even over that short period, rising from $308,000,000 in 1929 to $439,000,000 in 1938. Had rates been calculated on a mortality table accurately reflecting the present average life expectancy, these millions would have been returned to the policyholder in the form of lower premium rates.

The issuance of policies combining features of investment, insurance, and savings has made participation in an insurance program tantamount to participation in a lottery. For example a man at the age of thirty-five takes out a twenty-year endowment policy for $1,000; he assumes that he is simultaneously purchasing protection and saving. But this is untrue. At the end of ten years, after a net cost in premium of $444, his policy has a cash value of $383, though it is presumably insured for $1,000. He bought to save, but should he die at this time he has paid a $1,000 protection rate for $617 worth of protection, because the insurance company is liable to his beneficiary for $383 worth of savings and $617 worth of protection. Had the same person taken out Renewable Term Insurance, he could have been insured for $1,000 over the ten-year period at a cost of less than $100. To what extent insurance companies profit through this type of gambling with death is not definitely ascertainable, because such records are not maintained. There can be no doubt that profits are considerable.

MOST INSURANCE COMPANIES are mutual companies, meaning that the policy holders have the right to share in the profits through dividends, and supposedly have a voice in the management of the company by voting for the board of directors. Actually elections are frauds. Life insurance agents forge signatures of mutual company policy holders on the ballots at election time. One agent testified at the TNEC hearing that the practice of forging signatures was done "in a more or less kidding spirit." Further testimony revealed that the men were compelled to do such work to get their pay. The TNEC committee listened incredulously. Chairman O'Mahoney expressed his conviction that company officials regard the elections of officers as a "pure formality."

Said the then SEC Chairman William O. Douglas: "Evidence presented on the self-perpetuation of management and the practical impossibility of putting up a rival non-managerial slate, clearly demonstrates that as far as the election of officers is concerned, mutuality is a sheer myth—the whole purpose of collecting ballots is window-dressing for the management's self-election. . . ."

Kapp

A more subtle form of window dressing is the business of distributing dividends to holders of participating policies in mutual companies. The records show that dividend distribution, so called, is often pure fiction: the companies overcharge on the premium and refund the difference as a "dividend." The net cost of a $1,000 ordinary life insurance policy with the Aetna Life Insurance Co. is an illustration. Below are rates for participating and non-participating policies.

	Participating	*Non-Participating*
Twenty Annual Premiums..	$409.60	$315.60
Twenty Years' Dividends..	90.87	000.00
Twenty Years' Net Cost...	318.73	315.60

When we consider further that the interest on the excess premium has not been included, that dividend payments are not guaranteed, and that the rate of dividend distribution in recent years has shown a marked decline, we can see that the holder of a participating policy does very little participating.

The insurance companies sell policies at a wide variety of prices. It is possible for a man of twenty-five to purchase $1,000 worth of insurance at a first-year cost of eight dollars or pay as high a premium as fifty dollars on a twenty-year endowment. To justify the expensive policies the insurance companies point to the cash reserves that may be built up by taking out such policies. But purchase of these policies has already been compared to participation in a lottery. For most holders of industrial insurance it is worse than that. From 1928 to 1937 over 193,000,000 new industrial policies were written. Of these only 7,000,000 survived through 1937. Seventy percent of the terminations were the result of lapse. Where were the savings? Yet the three largest mutual insurance companies profited to the extent of $36,000,000 in 1938 as a result of lapsed policies.

Cash reserves, supposedly guaranteed by high-priced policies, are maintained so that the reserves can be realized in time of stress. But when a policyholder draws upon cash reserves held for him by an insurance company, he pays interest—an average of 5.79 percent. The National City Bank of New York charges only 3.33 percent on loans, while insurance companies earn their income on loans to policyholders—loans of the investor's own money.

The above merely summarizes a small part of the testimony presented before the TNEC. If these facts are new, it is because the testimony has been neglected by most of the press.

NORMAN GARTH.

Strictly Personal
by RUTH McKENNEY

KATHIE'S BLUE HEAVEN

KATHLEEN is going to be married next week, white veil, satin dress, gardenias on the prayer book, wedding cake, and the works. Being an incurable old sentimentalist, I sat down with the invitation when it came in the mail the other day, and felt the tears trickle around the general direction of my nose. "Mr. and Mrs. Michael James Farrell request the pleasure of your presence at the marriage of their daughter, Kathleen Mary. . . ."

I've known Kathie since the day she was born. I was eleven years old on that momentous occasion, and I remember distinctly that I was sullenly washing dishes while my aunts wept in the parlor when Uncle Mike's telephone call turned the premature wake into a wild rejoicing. For Kathie all but killed her mother, and only a pulmotor saved her own delicate life. Kathie was famous at the age of one day—the Cleveland *News* carried her picture on the front page and all the Farrells practically burst with pride.

That pulmotor, however, was about the only spectacular thing in Kathie's entire life. She was a sweet baby, but nothing remarkable. She did well enough in school, but she was no whiz. Aunt Maggie and Uncle Mike didn't care, though. Kathie was their only child, the veritable apple of their eyes, and they went without new coats and drove nine-year-old rattle traps to send her to business college. Uncle Mike was a bookkeeper, a steady worker, but the victim of so many pay cuts that he had a tough time keeping up the mortgage payments on the old house.

Kathie did quite well at business college. She had a neat little mind, and she brooded long hours every night over her shorthand lessons. After the proper length of time, she graduated with a diploma and got a job at $17.50 a week in a law office. Aunt Maggie was awfully proud of Kathleen, and Uncle Mike boasted—gently—of his clever daughter.

And then, triumphantly, Kathie met Ben Hotza. Ben wasn't Irish, and he wasn't too handsome, and he wasn't rich, or even terribly clever. But the whole family knew he was meant for Kathie the moment they saw him. For Kathie, from earliest childhood, had had but one real interest, one great talent. As a little girl, her collection of dolls was famous. At twelve, she was the self-selected, foster mother of every baby in her neighborhood. In high school, a gentle, sweet-faced little girl, she studied domestic science and sewing and interior decorating. Kathie, in short, has always her whole life long, waited for the moment when she would fall in love, and marry, and have a home, and bring up a large assortment of children.

And two years ago, she went to a high school alumni dance, and there was Ben Hotza. Kathie isn't the adventurous type. She didn't elope. She went on working and saving up her money. She started a hope chest, the kind you buy in a furniture store, made out of cedar. The changing fortunes of our family have made Kathie seem rather a lavender and old lace type. Of my nine young girl cousins, she was the only one to have a proper engagement ring, a cedar hope chest, and embroidered pillow cases. Ben bought the engagement ring, a diamond solitaire, on the installment plan. Kathie's female cousins heard of this development, via letters from Cleveland, with rather too much hilarity. And yet, I think we all felt a lump in our collective throats and a faint, if only temporary nostalgia for life as we used to know it back home.

I know, at least, that we all wished Kathie the best of good luck, for she surely deserved it. She wanted so little, compared to her footloose cousins, with their jobs in China and New York and Washington, their total (so far) of one Mexican and three Reno divorces, their published books, and their clever friends. Kathie only wanted her blue heaven, complete as in the song, with no fancy business attached. A five-room house in a Cleveland suburb, near the street car line for Ben's morning trip to the office; furniture on the time payment plan, and of course, lace curtains.

Well, as you have probably guessed, Kathie doesn't get her house and her lace curtains. Her blue heaven is nicely shot to hell. For Ben, back in his poverty-stricken youth, once joined the Naval Reserve. He was a kid working his way through college, and they paid ten dollars a week or something like that, and free food, during summer vacations. As Kathie's mother wrote me the other day, Ben just didn't have any idea that the free grub stake he discovered for his summers between the job he had waiting on table at the fraternity house in the winter, would ever deeply affect his life.

Stevenson

But it did. Kathie tries to keep a stiff upper lip, Aunt Maggie wrote, but it's very difficult. The money they had saved up in a joint bank account for the furniture, they're spending on a big wedding. Why not? What else would they spend it for? Kathie still has her hope chest, but Uncle Mike moved it up to the attic the other day. Seeing it made Kathie so bitter.

Ben has ten days' leave, for the wedding. They'll go to Niagara Falls, after the reception. One of my snifty cousins who's been modeling in a New York dress shop for some years, between marriages anyway, sent me a postcard the other day, reporting the Niagara Falls item. I do not, however, agree with her that it is simply too priceless. After all, they'll only have nine days before Ben is due back, and Niagara Falls is near and beautiful.

After Ben goes back, Kathie will return to Cleveland, and wait for letters. That is, she can wait for letters, provided war doesn't break out in the Red Sea or Greenland or at some other place that suits the convenience of the President. She can wait for letters. Unless . . . until. . . . She can wait for letters. A poor substitute for the song, the modest little blue heaven she had in mind so many years ago.

"Mr. and Mrs. Michael James Farrell request the pleasure of your presence. . . ."

The pleasure of your presence! Kathleen's wedding day! It was to have been the great moment, the climax to her life. Aunt Maggie had expected to shed a few happy tears of sheer joy as Kathie walked down the aisle, her face shining and her eyes all on fire. The pleasure of your presence! And the bride wore—a stiff upper lip.

When will it end? When will they stop tormenting my little cousin Kathie? It was only yesterday my Uncle Mike was a surprised and bewildered dough-boy wandering around in the stench of dried blood on the fields of France. And today his dear daughter, the mainspring of his life, today she turns an agonized face in a great question: what have they done to me? Why? When will they stop?

I think they will stop now, at this moment. Not because they want to, but because they must. I believe we shall have peace, peace really in our time, in time for Kathie, in time for her blue heaven. For the American people want peace, they demand it, and if they find their strength, they will stop the war schemers, they will smash the plot against their future.

And Kathie will have her lace curtains. After all, she deserves them.

LETTER TO ATLANTA

DEAR EARL BROWDER:

It is two months since they took you to Atlanta, locked you in the penitentiary that once before was honored by another fearless American, one Gene Debs, a mid-westerner like yourself. Our hearts traveled with you and, upon your fiftieth birthday this week, we join with the millions here and all over the world, who send you their deepest love. You have just reached the prime of life and we pledge that we shall do everything within our power for your liberation.

We have been reading the messages sent you from all over America, from the disinherited of Mexico and Venezuela, from the dispossessed of our own South, from the working men in mine, shop and office. We know that there will be birthday parties in your honor in thousands of homes: strange parties and yet not so strange. The guest of honor will not be in the room, there will be no cake, no candles. Yet those who will come to honor you will know that steel and granite cannot take you from them.

They will honor you at a time when the authorities who sent you to prison seek to make of our America a vast penitentiary. The trumpets are blaring, the drums are rolling. The authorities are straining to whip the people into the frenzy of war: but those who do you honor will keep their heads in the tumult. You have taught them well. Your words, your counsel will be there. Your books, your pamphlets will continue to guide them through the storm. For all across the nation, millions are thinking the thoughts that you were first to enunciate so clearly, so ably, and they are coming to recognize what many of us have said: that you are in jail for thinking straight—and those who sent you to jail do not dare to admit that.

Many of them have come to know you for what you are—a plain, simple man like them. Your teachings have borne fruit, dear friend. They know you have earned the right to judge, the right to lead. They know that this is not the first time you have suffered for the truth, for the plain people of America. They know that the war-lords put you behind bars in the first world war: and you came through the ordeal to explain that war to millions. We know you are confident that once again the people will set you free.

Yes, many know you now who did not know you when you walked out of the prison after the last war. Many, many more will know you when you are freed this time. You, the Kansas bookkeeper who had a way of adding the figures up straight. We know that you totaled up the history of our times and the men who run the Big Business of this country could never forgive that crime. For they are swindling America of peace, robbing it of prosperity, stealing the dearly won rights obtained over a century and a half. And your books reveal the gigantic embezzlement.

It is fitting that your latest book, *The Way Out,* appears upon your birthday. Like thousands more, we have just finished reading it. It was as though we heard you speaking again, at one of the heartening meetings in Madison Square Garden, at all the places where laboring men and women came by the thousands to hear what you had to say. Those who read this latest book of yours understand more clearly than ever why your jailers could not brook your freedom in days like these. Nobody else in America has put the truth of our times down with such force and clarity: nobody else is so embarrassing to an administration that is wheedling, coaxing, bamboozling, coercing a people into a war they hate.

You have earned your passport to the leadership of the American people. That is the real passport charge which sent you to prison. Not the flimsy, tortured charge that ostensibly was the reason. You speak for millions, however, when you say, "There are some false passports which do great injury." And you tell of a man "who got his passport" to the Presidency by deceiving a whole people. That man is Franklin D. Roosevelt who promised to keep America out of war, and today the overwhelming majority of the people are coming to understand that he has violated his pledges—has broken faith. Yours was the first voice to warn them, the first counsel to guide them. Your book is the most damning, most penetrating analysis of these times that has been published. And we know it is for that—and for telling America what to do about it—that you are today in Atlanta Penitentiary.

You taught thousands how to interpret the politics of today. This book is a key to that interpretation. For you put the finger on those who are to blame: that ruling class which "has long outlived its history." You were first to warn America that these people were bringing "war, conscription, dictatorship." Today they see it coming full-tilt at them. You warned America to be on guard lest "catastrophe, famine, pestilence, and chaos" that are spreading rapidly over the face of the earth "draw closer to these shores." You warned that unless America remained neutral, it was bound to slide into one of the warring camps. For telling these truths they snatched you from your family, your friends, your people, put a mask over your face on the way to prison, and buried you within stone walls for four years.

Yet in a very real sense you have not been taken from the people. Your words, your precepts, your example of unflinching courage have taught them more than the authorities will ever dare admit.

It is all there in your book, all the hard, bitter truth that must be known. And all the heartening facts which help men bear the truth. Yes, dear Earl Browder, it is hard indeed that they have taken you away from the people for four, long years. But as you have pointed out, they have solved nothing by your imprisonment. The ideas for which you stand have taken root, they cannot be burned out by fire or destroyed by sword. You said at the anniversary meeting of John Reed, "They did not begin the job quickly enough." You showed how already the people have learned so much, that "there is such a growing opinion, knowledge, culture, understanding, intellectual power in the masses of America that the most powerful reactionary regime can never cut it out." You have contributed greatly to that culture and we deeply appreciate that.

So, dear friend, we pledge you on this day, your birthday, that we shall never falter in the march: that we shall carry on in your tradition, the tradition of Jefferson, Lincoln, John Brown, Debs, Reed. We shall yet make this land a land of riches for the millions instead of the few.

Yes, Earl Browder. The drums are rolling, the trumpets blaring, they think they are leading the American people to slaughter. We know you hear the clamor even there in Atlanta behind those thick walls. But we hope you hear too a song that rises within the turmoil and imperial cacophony. It is the song of the people and they are singing the words you taught them.

THE EDITORS.

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Business Manager

CARL BRISTEL

★

Duel in the Near East

THE decision of the Vichy government to collaborate more closely with Germany is really a ratification of the decision which the French ruling class made last June, when, out of fear of its own people, it literally welcomed the German armies into Paris. Even if Vichy will now pay less for the German occupation, and even if some prisoners are released from the concentration camps, the plight of the French people has not changed. The nation is still divided. It is still in the grip of the conqueror. The problem of the French people remains the same.

The real and important significance of the "collaboration" lies in its many-sided effects on the war as a whole. To begin with, even if she does not formally adhere to the tripartite alliance, France has become a major power in the European Axis. Italian imperialism has been largely displaced, while General Franco is rapidly losing some of the bargaining advantages he has held in the past. All during the fall and winter a certain struggle was taking place among the three Mediterranean powers —France, Italy, and Spain—over the question of which was to complement Germany's dominant position on the continent. Mussolini was greatly weakened by the loss of Ethiopia and all of East Africa, and by his very poor showing in Albania and Libya. Spain continued her delicate balance, relying on British sea power for supplies but under the shadow of German land power nevertheless. Hitler was in a position to wait, to bide his time, for in the final analysis, Admiral Darlan was even a stronger pal than Pierre Laval. Of course, Hitler kept an eye on the Anglo-American flirtations in Vichy, but with the conclusion of the Balkan campaign, he knew that France would have to make up her mind. That has now happened. No formal changes have taken place in German-Italian relations and Mussolini will even get a slice of Dalmatia while an Italian Duke takes over the crown of unhappy Croatia. But in actual fact, France has become the real partner to Germany. Economically, the integration of French and German industry will go forward at an accelerated rate. Strategically, Hitler can now penetrate the Near East via Syria, and retains the opportunity of coming down the west coast of Africa as far south as Dakar.

In the second place, France's decision represents a considerable defeat for the Anglo-American bloc, and a real setback for the President's diplomacy. It will be remembered that when the former Ambassador William Bullitt returned from France last summer, he assured us that Marshal Petain was not a fascist, nor should France be criticized too sharply for the armistice. While the British sought to impress General Weygand with their military successes in Ethiopia and Libya, the White House went into a most lyrical interlude in the hope of persuading the French ruling class to reconsider its decision of last June and carry the war on again, on Britain's side, from North Africa.

In the American press, Petain was treated as something of a cross between patriarch and saint. Official emissaries like Robert Murphy, the counsellor of the American embassy at Vichy, were dispatched to North Africa while Admiral Leahy was shipped over to Vichy itself; unofficial emissaries like Colonel Donovan and Jay Allen were delegated to determine how things were going. The policy of shipping food to France, it is obvious now, had nothing to do with humanitarian motives: it was simply a form of bribery and not a very successful bribery at that. Mr. Roosevelt is now compelled to cover up his fiasco, and he conceals it from the American people by pronunciamentos to France, which smell strongly of sour grapes. The press obliges by fulminating against the same Petain whom only yesterday they treated with such consideration. And William Bullitt probably sulks somewhere in the fashionable resorts.

The United States may pick up bits and scraps of the French empire within reach, such as the St. Pierre and Miquelon islands off Newfoundland (by arrangement with Canada, of course) and the island of Martinique in the Caribbean. But the body of the French empire remains in the German orbit—unless otherwise determined by force of arms. An active struggle now sets in for the islands like the Azores, the Canary and the Madeira group which flank the passages from Europe to South America. The minor powers like Spain and Portugal to whom these islands belong face the prospect of yielding to the major imperialisms. More and more the war assumes the character of a struggle of vast continental blocs, neither of which can get at the other easily, and neither of which, despite feverish efforts, can find any basis for cooperation.

Berger

Military Perspectives

THUS the war has moved into the Near East and last week, German planes and technicians were reported in Syria, while the Royal Air Force was already carrying out counter-bombardments of Syrian ports and airdromes. It is too early to estimate the military perspectives. Because of Turkey's firm insistence on neutrality, supported by the Soviet Union, Hitler has been compelled to swing below Turkey along an extended line of communications which are especially vulnerable to British sea power. The British have taken the initiative in Iraq; they are the older and more entrenched imperialism in this region although, of course, the resistance of the Arab peoples is therefore directed against them. The Nazis hope to gain control of Syria, and move down the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates to the Persian gulf. At the same time, they will undoubtedly begin their pincer movement through Palestine and from Libya for the Suez Canal. Politically, the most important issues hang on the outcome of the fighting. Should Hitler win, he may try to force a reconsideration of his peace terms this autumn; as Churchill indicated in his last speech, the loss of this region would be among "the heaviest blows" Britain could sustain. On the other hand, it is on the Near Eastern issues—as well as the North Atlantic—that Mr. Roosevelt will try desperately to get into the war, in the hope of keeping it going into next year. Intense diplomatic activity is therefore inextricably combined with military developments this summer.

Palestine

ONE of the most damnable aspects of the new theater of the war is the plight of the 400,000 Jewish settlers in Palestine. By its supine reliance on British imperialism, and by its discrimination against the Arab workers in the Jewish labor unions, the Zionist leadership has brought the whole project of a National Homeland face to face with a truly terrible dilemma. On the one hand Britain will certainly be making every effort to win Arab support, even by concessions at the expense of the Jewish settlers; on the other hand, the Jewish colonization lies in the direct path of the Nazi offensive toward Suez. Thus the Jews have been brought to a horrible impasse, an impasse which represents a most scorching indictment of the whole theory and practice of Zionism. The only alternative would have been cooperation with the Arabs for a bi-national state, in opposition to imperialism. That was made difficult by the Zionist leadership itself, and is probably now just too late to achieve.

The Battle for Syria and Iraq

As it enters the Near East, the war encroaches on some of the most explosive soil in the whole imperialist world. Syria, for example, is a nation which is being traded between plunderers, but there is a powerful independence movement there, which can be manipulated for a while but never crushed, as the French discovered long ago. In Iraq, the resistance against the British is arousing the deepest sympathy among the Arab peoples: a fact which is not getting a real discussion in the capitalist press. No editor is in a position to explain why it is that British planes are bombing the Iraqi at the same time that German planes are bombing the British people: to really explain this phenomenon is to give away the imperialist character of the war.

The British charge that the Iraqi government is pro-German, but Marxists have the obligation of rejecting such explanations and investigating the facts from a totally different point of view. Undoubtedly, there are German agents in the Near East; it is axiomatic that wherever there are British agents there will be German agents, too. But that does not determine the character of Iraq's struggle. The truth is that it is the first *armed* resistance of a semi-colonial people in this war; and since the Arabs have experience with British imperialism, it is naturally against Britain that this resistance is directed. The leadership of the Iraq government is trying to gain control of the country's wealth—to force the complete recognition of independence from Britain, or else to force Germany to respect that independence and pay the highest possible price for whatever it is they want. The Iraqi are not especially impressed with the British offer to defend them against Hitler; they have the example of Syria, which the French bourgeoisie is simply handing over to Hitler. Rather shrewdly, the Iraq government appreciates a third factor in the picture, and has secured recognition from the Soviet Union, which will make it difficult for either imperialism to determine the outcome of the Near Eastern struggle without reckoning with the USSR. And proceeding from its established policy toward the colonial peoples, the USSR has normalized relations with Iraq. This is a very important achievement since it was Britain that always prevented the Arab countries from dealing with the USSR; Britain knows that under socialism millions of Mohammedan people have won economic development, political liberty, and national equality, precisely what Britain itself dares not give to the Arab world.

Unquestionably, Hitler speculates that his military might and his anti-Semitism will impress the Arab peoples and gain him empire. And his agents are undoubtedly working very hard. But the Arabs know what Mussolini did to their kinsmen in Libya and what the French have done in Syria. Before the tides of war have ebbed, the whole foundation of imperialism as a system will have been shaken in this strategic region, with repercussions deep into India. Only the imperialists have cause to fear this fact. All those who know that democracy and economic reconstruction are possible only by the elimination of imperialist conditions, in the colonial world as well as at home, will have every reason to rejoice.

Sylvia Wald

Wish and Fact

Secretary Hull's radio speech on the occasion of National Foreign Trade Week is another administration attempt to circumvent the question: what kind of world will this be if the present masters of Britain and the United States win the war? No one needs to be persuaded that a German victory would be disastrous. But the majority of Americans are still unconvinced that the triumph of Morgan's and Rockefeller's and Montagu Norman's way of life would usher in that era of peace, democracy, and abundance about which the Harold Laskis on both sides of the ocean chatter so incessantly. Several weeks ago Vice-President Wallace tried his hand at depicting, not too precisely, the economic arrangements of the postwar world. Now Secretary Hull, in his best noblest-Roman-of-them-all manner, offers us a five-point collection of professed hopes and wishes as a substitute for the hard truth about this war and its consequences.

Take, for example, the first of Hull's five principles: "Extreme nationalism must not again be permitted to express itself in excessive trade restrictions." What guarantees does he give that this will be the case? None whatsoever. He himself admits that "after the close of the World War, power fell into the hands of groups which advocated political and economic nationalism in their most extreme forms." The fact is that power was retained by the same Wall Street crowd that led the country into World War I. And it is to these same groups that Hull asks us to look for future salvation. Even the New York *Times* is constrained to admit editorially that this country has been "among the foremost violators of the principles he lays down," and is continuing to violate them.

Certainly, it is true that, as President Roosevelt said in inaugurating National Foreign Trade Week, "International commerce in a world dominated by totalitarianism would never be carried on for the mutual benefit of all." But this has always been true in a world dominated by imperialism in any form. The United States looting of Latin America and the Philippines and the British looting of India and Africa have been no more beneficial to the peoples of those countries than the Nazi spoliation of central and western Europe. If Germany wins the war, the trade positions of the United States will undoubtedly be threatened. And if the United States wins the war, the trade positions of Germany will be threatened. But it is arch-hypocrisy to pretend that in either event, the peoples of Germany or the United States will benefit. So long as one accepts the assumptions of a dog-eat-dog world, the common folk of all capitalist countries will pay a staggering price. Capitalism negates the international order that Hull speaks of, cancels out every possibility of genuine cooperation of peoples. The Soviet Union has shown that the profit-dictated struggle for trade, which leads to wars, disappears once that class which has brought the world to its present pass is supplanted at the economic and political controls by the workers and farmers who do the useful work of the world.

The Belts Tighten

Hitler's recent speech in which he demanded new sacrifices of the German people just had its grim epilogue in the announcement that beginning June 2 there will be a twenty percent reduction in meat rations in the Third Reich. "Normal consumers" will in the future be permitted only 400 grams per week instead of 500. "Heavy" and "heaviest" workers will have their rations cut from 1,200 and 1,000 grams respectively to 1,000 and 800 grams. Ration booklets have also been introduced in Hungary for all articles of common use. In England food allowances were recently curtailed, while in Italy rations are lower than in any belligerent country.

In the United States government control of food has not yet been instituted, but a no less effective raid on the family larder is being carried out by rising costs. The New York Department of Markets states: "Despite the fact that receipts of butter for 1941 to date in New York are about 4,000,000 pounds heavier than for the same period last year, and cold storage holdings 4,000,000 greater than they were at this date a year ago, the retail price is about eight cents a pound higher. Eggs also are six cents a dozen above the cost a year ago. Pork was about twenty-three percent cheaper last May than it is today."

This is the story in all parts of the country. Yet supplies are plentiful. Obviously, profiteering is having its way, and it isn't your corner grocer that is doing the grabbing. Between mid-March and mid-April food costs in the leading cities jumped 2.2 percent. If this rate of increase is maintained, it

will mean a twenty-five percent rise within a year. At the same time the cost of clothing and other necessities is also mounting.

What is the government doing about it? Nothing except figuring out more ways to whittle down the American standard of living. The administration's tax proposals, which would boost the levies on the low- and middle-income groups and on articles of consumption, is one such way. And President Roosevelt, who solemnly pledged that there would be no retreat from the social program of the New Deal, at a press conference last week tossed the ball to Congress on cutting about $1,000,000,000 in social expenditures. Evidences of the same trend were the two proclamations issued by one of the chief gauleiters of the dollar-a-year-men's Reich, W. L. Batt. Mr. Batt, formerly of SKF Industries, Inc., the international ball-bearing trust with an inside track in Germany, Sweden, England, and elsewhere, is now deputy director of the Office of Production Management's production division. His first announcement was to the effect that by 1942 there would be no aluminum for civilian use—thanks to the monopolistic practices of the Aluminum Corp. of America which have been encouraged by the OPM. Batt's second contribution was a radio address in which he called for longer hours and harder work by labor, and curtailment of civilian production. He discreetly made no mention of profits which for 1,019 industrial concerns in 1940 were higher than for any year since 1929.

Plain Talk

THE New York *World-Telegram* put it baldly. "AFL Leader Ready to Smash Ship Strike," is the headline that announced John P. Frey's threat personally to lead workers through West Coast picket lines. The strike issue is simple enough. To save face after repeated defeats, Sidney Hillman sent the estimable Mr. Frey, president of the AFL Metal Trades Council, to San Francisco. There, closeted with the employers, Frey signed a "master contract" pledging shipyard workers to a no-strike policy. The CIO, with no representatives at the negotiations, did not sign the contract. Local 68 of the AFL machinists, who were not even consulted, flatly rejected it.

Established base pay for machinists on the Pacific Coast is $1.15 an hour. Frey's agreement cut it to $1.12. Doubletime pay for overtime has been a standard provision for the past five years. Frey reduced it to time and a half. The machinists struck—AFL in San Francisco, CIO in Oakland. And no other shipyard worker would cross their picket line.

Now Mr. Frey promises to lead a foray that is intended to break the strike—and the union he supposedly represents.

Mr. Frey had better be careful. Joseph P. Ryan once came to the West Coast for the purpose of breaking a longshore strike. He left hurriedly. And he hasn't had a look in on the West Coast union movement since. Workers very seldom take kindly to strikebreaking, particularly when it is organized and led by a so-called union leader.

Take Your Choice

HERE is the story of two types of union leadership, two approaches to the same problem. And thereby hangs an important lesson. The needle-trades unions, with the exception of the fur workers, are led by the most craven Social Democrats in the American labor movement. David Dubinsky welched on the CIO to run hurriedly back to the AFL; he is president of the International Ladies Garment Workers. Sidney Hillman—the administration's Sidney Hillman—is no longer the active president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, but his word is still law in the conduct of union affairs.

During the last few months, while workers in mass production industry won wage increases, the ILGW and the ACW signed new contracts with employers. The contracts are pointed to with pride by the Social Democrats: See what we can do, they say; see how we can pledge ourselves not to strike, and to be good boys, while we are still able to sign labor contracts. Of course, the membership in neither union participated in negotiations. And the ILGW's contract provided for no increases in pay, for the forty-hour week instead of the thirty-five-hour week of the former contract, for an efficiency system that brings up memories of the old "B & O Plan."

Hillman's union, too, signed a contract. The union's membership, lowest paid in the industry, won no minimum scales, no overtime rates, no other forms of security. As a result, the wage increase granted on paper means nothing. The workers will never collect it. That is what Social Democracy brings.

In the same industry, the Fur Workers, led by Ben Gold, believe in union democracy, in rank-and-file participation in union affairs. The furriers, who have organized themselves 100 percent throughout the nation, have also just negotiated a new contract. It provides for minimum wages rates, three dollars to five dollars higher than the rates in the former contract. It provides for the thirty-five-hour week, for equal division of work, for complete abolition of the sweat shop. Furriers, highest paid workers in the needle-trades industry, *average* sixty-six dollars a week as cutters, fifty-eight dollars a week as operators, fifty dollars as finishers. Dubinsky's dressmakers average eighteen dollars a week in contracting shops, twenty-six dollars a week in manufacturing shops. Hillman's garment workers get much less, averaging under twenty dollars a week.

Ben Gold opposes the war. His union is a strong, militant, progressive organization devoted to the interests of its membership. For their part, Hillman and Dubinsky, all out for war, are afraid of union democracy.

Two types of union leadership. Take your choice.

Louis Lozowick

It Never Built a Union

THE bureaucracy of the American Federation of Teachers has complained long and bitterly that "political" discussions in the New York Teachers Union were causing its "downfall." The Federation expressed itself as horrified by the local's concern over democratic Spain, by its interest in the WPA Art and other cultural projects, and worst of all by its devotion to the cause of peace and civil rights.

But the May issue of the *American Teacher,* official organ of the AFT, is hardly non-political. In fact, it is entirely devoted to politics—and the politics are designed to deal the death blow against the New York locals.

The magazine will not accomplish its purpose. The Rapp-Coudert committee is discovering to its sorrow that progressive and organized teachers can't be crippled so easily. But at least the AFT must get credit for trying.

The *American Teacher* is surely an ambitious contribution to reaction. Of eighteen articles, eleven are highly falsified and hair-raising attacks on Communism. And the contributors are also interesting. There is Max Eastman, "radical" darling of the war camp; Sidney Hook, philosopher of anti-Soviet liberals; Max Nomad, renegade who has discovered Jan Valtin as the author of the new Bible. Two contributors, John Dewey and John Childs, long ago resigned from the American Federation of Teachers, and attempted to set up dual organizations whose purpose it was to split and so to break the union.

It is a fine job of smearing. Goebbels, of course, has been doing the job for years. When all is said and done, Red-baiting is neither original nor likely to inspire confidence in the bigwigs of the AFT. It has never built a trade union.

Florida Lynching Season

THE men who lynched A. C. Williams, twenty-two-year-old Florida Negro, had a grim motto: if at first you don't succeed, try, try again. They tried it first by dragging him from the jail, beating and shooting him. When that didn't succeed, they took him from the ambulance on the way to the hospital and finished the job. "Nobody knows" who did the lynching. It's a very familiar story—as old as the "rape" charge on which Williams was jailed. The deputy sheriff at the Gadsden County prison, who was "forced" to turn over the prisoner, just didn't recognize the lynchers. The ambulance driver happened not to know any of them. And Sheriff Luten made no attempt to find them when Williams came back to the jail after the first attempt on his life. The sheriff felt that he had done his duty by starting the wounded man off to Tallahassee in an ambulance; he didn't go so far as to provide any protection by law enforcement officials. And apparently he feels it is futile to make any search for the lynchers now. Nor is the sheriff likely to be moved by the delicate little reprimands in "respectable" editorial columns. The Anti-Lynching Bill, which those editorials do not mention, is still being firmly sat upon by congressional poll-taxers whose "white supremacy" the sheriff is hired to protect. He can trust them to protect him in turn. Senator Pepper of Florida is too busy furthering "war against fascism" to do anything about the fascists in his home state. Only the people's insistence will turn the Anti-Lynching Bill into law.

Who Is an American?

IT SEEMS that the administration deliberately chose the weekend of May 18, "I Am an American" Day, to nab 300 aliens suspected of violating the Registration Act. What could be more appropriate? While Roosevelt's big and little men were pointing the gun, his detectives were getting ready to steer immigrants back where they came from —back to Ellis Island, past the Statue of Liberty which invites "the homeless, the tempest-tossed" to these shores. Those not nabbed had been carefully registered, their names, addresses, and fingerprints filed away for future reference. Perhaps they attended the May 18 celebrations, curious to know just what is "an American" according to ruling class specifications. If so they found a representative collection in the speakers at least. For the important ones—the Knudsens, LaGuardias, Bishop Mannings—had practically all been in the headlines sometime very recently, and each had displayed his own brand of "Americanism": attacks on labor and on living standards, incitement toward war, the booting of civil rights.

Who *is* an American? We believe it is just as important to know as Mr. Roosevelt thinks it is, but much more important to test the definitions. Nor is it too difficult. We might even begin with the old text-book maxims, which stated simply that a good American was any one of the people of America who believed in those people's traditions of liberty and democracy. Going from there to definitions of liberty and democracy, we arrive at the test. Whoever will join with the people, organize and struggle with them for their rights to security and a fuller life; whoever will resist war which is not a people's war, and will cooperate with other peoples desirous of peace; whoever will fight to restore the reality of the Bill of Rights: that person is an American. They are many and their tribe increases.

For Telling the Truth

SIXTY-FOUR members of the House of Representatives feel that if you once traveled to the Soviet Union and wrote a favorable book about it, you are a Red—and off the government payroll with you! So Dr. Ruth Gruber is no longer with the Department of the Interior. A few years ago Dr. Gruber visited the Soviet Arctic, traveling on the Yardley Fellowship Foundation and as a correspondent for the New York *Herald Tribune*. She came back with a warm, human, objective report of the new world she found in Soviet life. *I Went to the Soviet Arctic* makes very plain the fact that the author is not a Communist, that her interest in the Soviet Arctic is that of a scientist and a journalist. For this, Representative Taber of New York declared that "any of us who vote to pay this woman a salary is not fit to sit here in the House of Representatives." Virtually none of the sixty-three members who voted with him had read the book. But Mr. Taber quoted the last paragraph, which records the author's desire to revisit the Soviet Arctic some day. That was enough for the brave congressman—the woman obviously was a menace to our free institutions and had better be gotten rid of immediately. Dr. Gruber was dismissed from her job. That is the price which Mr. Taber and his friends demand of people who insist on truth-telling about any aspect of socialism.

Where Next?

THE Dies committee has flung wider the dragnet of repression by seizing the membership list of the Cooperative Bookshop in Washington. As in Nazi Germany, an interest in books, particularly if they happen to contain any liberal ideas, is to be considered evidence of "subversive activity." This outrageous action menaces every bookshop and library in the country. Today a cooperative bookshop is attacked; tomorrow every private bookshop and public library which is suspected of having any progressive-minded readers will be subjected to inquisition. The Dies committee is apparently undeterred by the rebuffs which its high-handed seizures have received at the hands of the courts. Only the other day a federal judge ordered returned documents which the committee had seized in a raid on Communist Party headquarters in Baltimore. Last year it was compelled to return material taken from the office of the International Workers Order in Philadelphia.

The latest Dies raid comes shortly after an announcement that the committee has begun an investigation of the American Peace Mobilization. The Texas fuehrer thus underscores the reactionary war purposes of his committee. While a genuine peace movement is harassed, the committee has gone out of its way to ignore the fascist activities of Father Coughlin and the Ku Klux Klan, and has, in fact, merely made empty gestures at investigating fascist and anti-Semitic organizations. The committee is itself one of the foremost fascist agencies in the country. Its most recent activities, as well as those of the FBI, are further manifestations of that hostility to freedom of thought and expression which the Roosevelt war policy has encouraged. Believers in civil liberties dare not be silent in the face of these acts of political hooliganism.

Death of a Hero

ALEXANDER BERGMAN died last week in Montefiore Hospital, New York. He knew he was dying, had known it for four years; but that knowledge did not keep him from making those four years into a courageous fight against oppression, and his own pain. While he could still walk, he helped the hospital staff try to organize a union, and edited a shop paper. Later, confined to his bed, he put all his heroism into the poetry and reviews which he wrote for NEW MASSES. Shortly before his death, his lungs almost gone, he organized the raising of several dollars for NEW MASSES from patients in the hospital, in memory of another friend who had just died there. In a poem written only a few weeks ago and printed in these pages, Alex cried out against death—not his own death alone but the death which comes gilded and wrapped in fancy paper, the death handed out so generously by the warmakers. He himself never surrendered while he could breathe. His last, unfinished poem is a condemnation of those who hang back and let others do the work of bringing a better social order.

Alexander Bergman's fight was not a lonely one. Shut in a narrow room, cut off from mass activity, he nevertheless had the comradeship of all who read his poetry, and of all who never heard his name but shared in his struggle. Just before he died a group of writers wrote him:

> **We pledge that we will carry your words to the people—to the toiling and oppressed, who will take them for their own. Your words will live in their hearts.**
>
> **In the bright years ahead, when socialism has been won, you will stand in the ranks of victory, among those who helped to lead the world from the shadow of terror and slavery into the sun.**

This is the best epitaph for Alex and the one he would have wanted. He was an extremely talented poet and an unconquerable comrade; to those who knew him, a friend who cannot be replaced.

TWO HEARTS THAT BEAT AS ONE

Appeaser or interventionist, they still agree that the western hemisphere must be Washington's for keeps. Samuel Putnam reviews Messrs. Beals' and Wertenbaker's new books on Latin America.

PAN AMERICA, *by Carleton Beals. Houghton Mifflin. $3.*

A PROGRAM FOR THE AMERICAS, *by Charles Wertenbaker. Viking. $2.*

JUXTAPOSITION is sometimes very enlightening. It is so in the present instance. Here, in Mr. Beals' book and that of Mr. Wertenbaker, we have two in reality complementary statements regarding the aims of Yankee imperialism in Latin America. One writer (Mr. Beals) believes that the ruling class of the United States can best serve its own interests by staying out of the war, letting British imperialism go hang, and adjusting itself to a new *status quo* and balance of power, the "new economic order" of which Hitler speaks. In other words, his general position is what is commonly described as "appeasement," with remnants of a muddled isolationism. Mr. Wertenbaker, on the other hand, though he does not flatly say so, is obviously convinced that America must enter the war, or else, as he puts it, resign herself to becoming a third-rate power.

It is instructive to compare these two points of view and see how nicely they dovetail, bearing out the truth of the Marxist's assertion that the cleavage in the American bourgeoisie is more apparent than real, that it is at bottom no more than a disagreement over tactics. (One may note, in passing, that Mr. Wertenbaker is the foreign editor of *Time;* and his magazine—Mr. Wertenbaker himself?—praises Carleton Beals as "the best informed living writer on Latin America." There are, clearly, no hard feelings!) And it is in the sphere of inter-American relations that the real aims and essential at-oneness of the two schools of imperialist thought are most strikingly laid bare.

MR. BEALS needs no introduction to American readers. He is the author of a dozen or more books in this field, turning them out now at the rate of about two a year, and has gradually built himself up into an "authority," more or less accepted by all, it would seem—except the Latin-American specialist. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Beals is a journalist, and not a very reliable one at that; every book of his teems with second-hand inaccuracies.

Mr. Wertenbaker, by grateful contrast, makes no pretension to being anything other than a journalist. He impresses one as being a competent behind-the-scenes reporter, who gets just about all that is going on, though he may miss a larger implication now and then. His approach is in good part personal, with particular stress on the figures of Secretary Hull and Sumner Welles. This is not surprising in a newspaper man, but it is, as anyone can see, a method that has its limitations.

In the case of *Pan America* the book buyer who goes by titles runs the risk of being disappointed; for a relatively small number of its pages are devoted to Latin America, a subject which is incidental to the main theme: the struggle for world markets that is now going on, and the role which the United States must play. Mr. Beals has no illusions as to the nature of the war. It is not a "war for democracy," but a "brutal struggle . . . for raw materials, for trade and—power." It is true that Beals becomes almost as confused at times as a Lewis Mumford, when he refers to the conflict as "civil war" and "revolution" and as a "bastard form" of the "revolt of the masses"; but nevertheless he knows very well what it is all about, and he has made his choice. He hates Britain with a holy hatred—there are times, indeed, when he appears to be pretty much *anti*-everything—and he would agree with Mrs. Lindbergh that Hitler is "riding the wave of the future." The German Fuehrer is the apparent "man-god of destiny," etc. Following which we are prepared for an allusion to "the truly statesman-like utterances of Colonel Lindbergh"; or, speaking of Franco and Gibraltar: "which of course he should have."

From this it may be seen that Beals' position does not differ substantially from that of Lindbergh or Joseph Kennedy, or any of the other appeasers. And this applies not alone to questions of foreign policy, but to fundamental social outlook as well. They all feel very much the same about "the romantic hypocrisy of nineteenth century liberty and heroics," the "limbo of nineteenth century political romanticism," and things of that sort. These passages might have been translated from the speeches of Benito Mussolini or Getulio Vargas, but they happen to be by Mr. Beals. The latter praises Hitler's Germany for "solving the unemployment problem" and for having "achieved recovery" where the New Deal failed to do so. The author goes on to assert that "every man" has "greater economic security" in Germany than is enjoyed in England or the United States. He obviously admires this kind of "security" for the masses.

All of this must be kept in mind when one is considering any "program" that Mr. Beals may bring forward for Latin America. We know now what his ideals of government and popular welfare are.

Like all appeasers, however, he is not averse to driving the best imperialist bargain that may be had:

> If we do decide once more to fight England's battle, we must know where we stand and what we want. We should decide by mutual pledges either that there should be no British loot after the war, or, if there is to be loot, that we share in the spoils.

What most concerns Mr. Beals is the question as to how, in the "new economic order" which he sees as "inevitable," the United States is to assure itself of a supply of essential raw materials so that Washington may preserve its economic place in the sun. It is here that Latin America comes in. It is here, likewise, that all the soft-spoken, cautious-treading, glib-tongued hypocrisy comes out, whether it be pro-war or pro-appeasement. Such hypocrisy may be cynical enough, it may even parade and flaunt cynicism, as Mr. Beals especially is fond of doing, when dealing with the question of the war and the rivalries involved; but when it comes to Latin America—ah, that is something else again. Go easy, brother, go easy!

The thing has become a pattern by now. Beat your breast and bewail the past sins of the Dollar Diplomats with their "Manifest Destiny"; the crimes committed in the name of the Monroe Doctrine; the Platt Amendments; the marines in Haiti and Nicaragua, etc., etc. Repentance is cheap, cheap at the price if it works. It was all a terrible mistake. Things are going to be different from now on. This is to be a different kind of imperial-

Blashko

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ism, one that isn't imperialistic. We must merely assure ourselves of Latin America's resources and see to it that Latin Americans hate the same enemies that Washington hates to the point of surrendering, if needs be, their territorial integrity and national sovereignty.

What has happened is this: back in the latter 1920's, under Coolidge and Hoover, the Dollar Diplomats at long last began waking up to the fact that they had created against themselves in Latin America a truly formidable spirit of hatred. The old tricks and ruses would not work any more. Latin America was "wise." Accordingly the Dwight Morrows and the State Department's bright young men like Sumner Welles and Jefferson Caffery began trying to polish up their work a bit, in an effort to render it less crude. There is a sense in which it may be said that President Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy was a continuation of this tactic. That policy made a virtue of necessity—a necessity, if the State Department wished to keep up any pretense at hemisphere democracy.

Nevertheless, Latin Americans were decidedly reserved; pleased, one could see that, but suspending judgment. This was a rude shock, one which even the most obtuse of expansionists could not but feel. They might disdainfully have brushed it aside and gone back to their old tell-it-to-the-marines bluster, as a few of the die-hards like General Wood are still inclined to do; but the growing threat of the Axis, first economic and then military-political, was making Latin American good will more and more indispensable, if the hemisphere was to be "defended." This it is which accounts for the remarkable change in tune, a change that is especially evident in the writings of Mr. Beals. We all recall how, in *The Coming Struggle for Latin America* (1938), he damned and double-damned the Good Neighbor. But he's for it now, in a shamefaced sort of way.

As for Mr. Wertenbaker, his "New Doctrine for the Americas" is based upon the various declarations and acts of the Inter-American Conferences, from that of Montevideo in 1933 to the Havana Conference of last year. The chief point on which he differs from Mr. Beals lies in his expressed belief or fear that unless Germany is defeated, Washington may, out of sheer self-protection, be compelled to get tough with Latin America. What Beals and Wertenbaker naturally fail to see is that our present "hemisphere defense" measures, air base sites and the like, are but a continuation in another form of the old marines in Nicaragua policy. Mr. Wertenbaker does not understand that the declarations at Havana very largely cancel, render ineffective, those of the preceding conferences.

The short of the matter is that no imperialist policy, of whatever hue, bodes any good for the Latin-American peoples. We have heard Mr. Beals on the beauties of Hitlerism. And what are we to think when we hear Mr. Wertenbaker praising Getulio Vargas for having made "justice available to the poor man," when we hear him speaking of

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"good old Latin-American dictatorship," or going into ecstasies over Dwight Morrow, Calles, and Sumner Welles? What are all their promises and reservations worth in the light of such declarations as these? This is a question which Latin Americans must weigh and answer. Upon the answer depends their destiny, and ours.

SAMUEL PUTNAM.

Turkey Trot

TURKEY, *by Emil Lengyel. Random House. $3.75.*

THIS might be called a minor book on a major subject. It is the story of Turkey, an important place in today's headlines, one of those many countries of the Middle East which most of us have only begun to discover. Emil Lengyel's intention is to discuss the new Turkey, and yet most of it is in the old manner. It is largely the Sunday supplement "feature story" approach: the inscrutable East, with its indolent, picturesque, polygamous peasants, inured to pain and suffering, always brooding over their *kismet,* their fate.

This approach makes for a veneer of "charm," as it did in Lengyel's rather more substantial volume about the Danube: long passages take us back to the Hittites and the Sumerians, the ancestral peoples of Asia Minor; there are interesting asides on the Seljuk Turkish invasions; the author rambles among the whirling dervishes, the fabulous deeds of Mohammed; he threads his way through the unhappy story of the Armenians, and the long fight against the Byzantine autocracy among the Balkan peoples—all of which is interesting after a fashion.

But when he gets to modern times, this method fails him. The book is weakest as an interpretation of modern Turkey's national revolution in its economic and historical aspects, a revolution which is one phase of that great awakening of the peoples of China, India and Persia and the Arab world, so important for an understanding of the imperialist epoch. And because he muffs this aspect of matters, his treatment of Soviet-Turkish relations is at best contradictory. On the one hand the USSR is acknowledged as a "big brother"; on the other hand Lengyel indulges in occasional slanderous speculations about a "division of Turkey," "an attack from the Caucasus," etc. In a last minute postscript the author virtually blames the USSR for the Turkish-Bulgarian agreement of February 18, which paved the way for the Nazi occupation of Bulgaria. Had he held the presses another few days, he would have been forced to change his mind. On March 25 the USSR declared its understanding of Turkey's position should Turkey be forced to defend its integrity and independence by force of arms.

But the assiduous reader will find much that is valuable; above all, the story of imperialist intrigue in the Near East during the last war. By a series of secret treaties in 1916, the Allies had agreed to divide up the Turkish empire, including Turkey proper. The October Revolution frustrated the ambitions of

the czar. Italy was edged out of the picture by her stronger partners. Britain and France struggled for the spoils. But before long, fundamental changes matured within Turkey itself, and the French were satisfied to make a separate treaty with the revolutionary Turkey under Kemal Pasha.

In the fall of 1921 Lloyd George inspired a fatal adventure of Greek imperialism into Asia Minor. Through the Greek armies the British hoped to gain control of the Dardanelles, and realize their full ambitions at Turkey's expense. Halfway across the Anatolian plateau the Greeks were met by the Turkish revolutionary forces. With Soviet assistance in the form of supplies the Turks rallied to push the Greeks back practically into the Aegean Sea. It was so crushing a defeat for Lloyd George that he was forced to resign. Kemal was able to gain the only negotiated peace of the war at Lausanne, although not a full control of the Straits until 1936. Under the leadership of a single party, the National People's Party, Kemal set out to modernize the nation. The Islamic church was separated from the state; great strides were made toward the equality of women; the alphabet was Latinized; many steps were taken for Turkish industrialization and the improvement of agricultural methods. Turkey became an example of how far a revolutionary national bourgeoisie can go in a semi-colonial country. On the other hand the progress of the backward peoples starting from similar historical levels in the Soviet Union emphasizes how much further and faster the heritage of a thousand years can be cast off under the leadership of the working class.

Turkey's strategic importance is obvious, not only in terms of the Dardanelles but as a power which fronts the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, and the vital areas of Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Lengyel is weakest in appraising Turkish foreign policy since Lausanne: it has been a shifting diplomacy, reflecting the influence of both German and British imperialism on different sections of the ruling class. On the whole, relations with the Soviet Union have been good, with many periods in which the hesitations of the national bourgeoisie and the influence of other powers have caused real strains. Turkey has taken a certain leadership among the Arab world, although, with the exception of forcing the Hatay republic from France in 1939, there have been few signs that Turkey aspires to regain the hegemony of the Ottoman empire in the Near East.

There is much more to be said about her internal structure, the peculiar role of the new state in fostering economic development, and the participation of the People's Party leadership itself in the management of state affairs. There is much to be investigated in the conditions of the Turkish peasantry and the developing working class, whose problems have not begun to be solved. But that would take a more ambitious scholar than Lengyel. It would take another book.

JOSEPH STAROBIN.

Brief Reviews

LOUISIANA HAYRIDE, *by Harnett T. Kane. William Morrow & Co. $3.*

There is very little new material in this study of Huey P. Long and his political heirs. Unfortunately for Mr. Kane the antics and scandals that marked the Long regime made such unforgettable newspaper copy that a chronicle of them still sounds rather like yesterday's headlines. The author, a New Orleans newspaperman, has done a neat job of organizing his facts and presenting them swiftly yet easily, with color and humor. He has also tacked onto the book, fore and aft, some timely moralizing about the threat of dictatorship within a democracy itself. This would be more valuable if Mr. Kane had integrated it with his main story and had understood its implications better. It isn't enough to say that this fuehrer-demagogue grew, in Louisiana and nationally because of poverty and popular discontent. Huey was not supported only by "amoral Cajuns" and the dispossessed; much of his strength came from bankers and planters, who were not too alarmed by "Share the Wealth" slogans as long as their crimes against organized labor were backed by police force.

JOB'S HOUSE, *by Caroline Slade. Vanguard Press. $2.50.*

With considerable craftsmanship, Mrs. Slade tells a story of some of America's "little people," who come to the end of their road to find their savings eaten up, and relief and old age pensions appallingly inadequate and entangled in red tape. The Manns, Jobie and Katie, worked hard all their lives, built a small house, saved $496—and found themselves facing stark destitution. The story embraces other characters—the inhabitants of the decrepit Gradon's mansion, who pay exorbitant rents for cold, dirty, unsanitary apartments; a young girl forced to prostitution by scant work in a textile mill; a Polish woman who feeds her family by taking in washing and ironing; a collection of derelict, drunken, and half-starved humanity.

Mrs. Slade knows her facts. She knows the truth about relief and investigators and application files. She writes poignantly in terms of human characters. But in her widely assorted groups of characters, some crushed by misery, others doggedly courageous, there is not one with any degree of class consciousness, not even labor consciousness, union consciousness. They are either "lumpenproletariat," or individualists like Job Mann who end up as bitterly uncompromising to the idea of state aid or responsibility to the needy, as they started. You would never think, to read *Job's House,* that relief and old age pensions are *rights* which men have struggled to win, and must now fight to maintain. And we know now, surely, that pride and individual ambition and enterprise are not enough, for all the Job and Katie Manns of America, and the world.

VOLGA-VOLGA

The Soviets do a musical—and how. The merry village of Smelkovodsk where the waiters sing tenor. Some of the actors have whiskers, says Joy Davidman, but not their jokes.

DO THE Soviets *have* to come out on top in everything? They already have the best diplomats, the best kindergartens, the best economic system, the best life—but is that enough for them? No; they go and get the best musical comedies too. I turn green. I gnash my teeth with envy. It isn't fair.

America may have Sidney Hillman and Westbrook Pegler, but until now there was at least one thing we could be proud of; nobody made better musical films than the boys on the West Coast. Hollywood was fast, Hollywood was funny, the girlies were pretty and they put over some good tunes. Nobody could beat us. Anyhow, that's what we used to think; but, having just seen *Volga-Volga* at New York's Miami Theater, we are no longer sure. The only thing we are really sure of is that three glasses of water have not yet cured the hiccups we got from laughing at *Volga-Volga.*

The film has a laugh about every ten seconds, and good laughs too; none of your getting the audience to a point where it'll laugh at anything, and then palming off Joe Miller's Joke Book on it. Some of the Russians may have whiskers, but their jokes don't. And the gags are of all sorts, from irresistible slapstick to the sly touches of characterization in which Soviet films excel. You giggle at the dialogue, you snicker at the camera tricks, you roar your head off over the antics of a musical score that ranges from a tuba part out of *Tristan und Isolde* to a swing tune played on a row of bottles. Meanwhile all sorts of other lovely things are going on—delectable folk dances, a temperamental love story, a race down the Volga between a superannuated paddle-wheel steamer and what looks like a Viking dragon ship. There's a honey named Lubov Orlova to look at, and there's Igor Ilinsky to sum up all the stuffed shirts of the world in one round, ripe, glorious fathead.

It all begins in the merry village of Smelkovodsk, where the waiters sing tenor, the letter carrier's a soprano (and how!), and the main industry is making balalaikas. In command of the Balalaika Trust is Bivalov (Ilinsky), a great man—to himself and his secretary, poor girl. He is invited to lead a delegation of local talent to the Moscow music competition, and local talent starts popping on all sides of him like grasshoppers in July.

Strelka, the letter carrier, gathers her cohorts, who can sing, do sword-dancing, and play every instrument that exists—as well as some that don't. But Bivalov prefers the classical, if off-key, orchestra of Strelka's young man. The course of true love ties itself in knots, and the rival groups chase each other to Moscow, hitting every sandbank and snag the Volga can offer on the way. To keep things going, complications develop involving Strelka's *Song of the Volga,* which gets scattered all over the river and practically makes her a Heroine of the Soviet Union. Everything ends in triumph, kisses, and a swarm of candid-camera fiends who hop around like young frogs snapping shots of our heroes from the looniest possible angles.

The plot is fantastic, but it manages to be coherent and believable; revolutionary, these Russians, even when it comes to musical comedy tradition. The whole film is full of brilliant technical innovations. None of the stylized and lifeless Hollywood devices here; no revolving stages, no tinsel and ostrich feathers, no geometric designs made up of chorus girls doing the split, no romantic leads who suddenly moo lovesongs at each other at the most unlikely moments. Instead there is the great sweep of the Volga and a landscape full of fat cows and pigs and scenery; there is a story told clearly and swiftly in photographic terms, so that even without the abundant subtitles in English an American audience would not be confused. Rarely have the possibilities of the camera been so completely realized. That ticklish point in Russian films, the transition from one sequence to the next, has been handled with a dexterity equal to Hollywood's; the steamer's paddle-wheel measures off time; there are lap-dissolves and trick fadeouts, there is even an ingenious introduction of individual members of the cast at the beginning, complete with words and music. It is fun to watch Mosfilm beat Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer at its own game. Only one producer in Hollywood has ever succeeded in making his actors cavort with the joyous abandon of the *Volga-Volga* cast, and his name is Walt Disney.

But these are real people, and their gayety is a real gayety. From the long-bearded old doorman who does an incredibly agile dance, to the small boy who conducts an orchestra, they seem to be having a good time themselves. The fixed and painful smile of the professional entertainer is absent. In addition to the delightful and versatile Orlova and the endearing Ilinsky, there are solemnly comic performances by Olenev and Volodin —the latter, as the Baron Munchausen of river pilots, would have been a joy to Mark Twain.

A Stalin prize of 100,00 rubles has been awarded to Ilinsky, Orlova, Alexandrov (the director), and Dunayevsky (the composer) for this film. The music alone would have deserved it; no more charming score has ever been attached to a comedy. Broadly comic or lyrically lovely, it is superb writing and orchestration. But when all this has been said about *Volga-Volga,* the reviewer still feels inadequate. I hope I've conveyed the idea that it is good. With apologies to the boys on the West Coast . . . it's colossal.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

Puppy Love

Zoe Akins' adaptation of an adolescent French farce.

THE silly season is upon us with Miss Zoe Akins' adaptation of a French farce about adolescence called *The Happy Days.* Miss Akins previously wrote an excellent adaptation of Edith Wharton's *The Old Maid,* but that was some years ago. Why she adapted this one, by a gentleman named Claude-Andre Puget, and why the Brothers Hakim produced it, constitute two of Broadway's minor mysteries. For while M. Puget's unsound (that's a pun) drama of the golden age of youth is admirably suited for production by high school drama societies, it is scarcely adapted for an adult audience. The net effect of watching these young people on the stage is to make you wish you were twice as old as you are. This is not, you may be sure, because youth is not charming in itself, but because the young people in M. Puget's drama are not so much young people as they are ninnies.

The scene is set on one of the Thousand Islands in the St. Lawrence River. Living there, momentarily unescorted, are Francine and Marianne, and their brother Bernard; also Oliver and Pernette, brother and sister. Bernard puppy-loves Pernette; Oliver dittos Marianne. To make Oliver jealous and therefore properly respectful of his lady love, Pernette and Marianne conjure up the image of a non-existent aviator. Presto, the God from the Flying Machine immediately appears in the form of an archangel appropriately named Michael, who makes a forced landing on the island. He has a leather jacket, very broad shoulders, and a wonderful suntan. Also, he is A Man. Pernette, Marianne, and even Francine immediately fall for this vision and proceed to follow him around like puppy dogs, dancing on one leg in a most embarrassing fashion, and squirming as though their girdles did not fit.

The "conflict" therefore involves the disentanglement of this delicate situation, and it is just as dull as it sounds in type. Man of the World Michael proceeds to do this by (1) patting Pernette on the head to keep her quiet; (2) kissing Marianne *con amore* (profane, not sacred), thus revolting her; (3) leaving. Everything is hunky-dory; you must remember these are very sheltered youth, and not judge them too harshly.

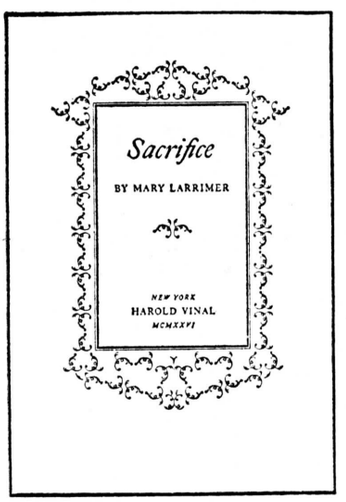
The unfortunate actor who played Michael (Edward Ashley) carried the thing off with understated charm and sophistication. As a particularly dimwitted youth, Peter Scott was excellent; as a particularly objectionable ditto, ditto Frederick Bradlee. Miss Joan Tetzel was the better of the two girls with misfit foundations; the other one was the daughter of John Barrymore.

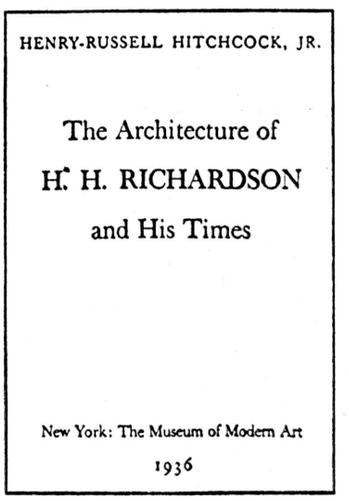
ALVAH BESSIE.

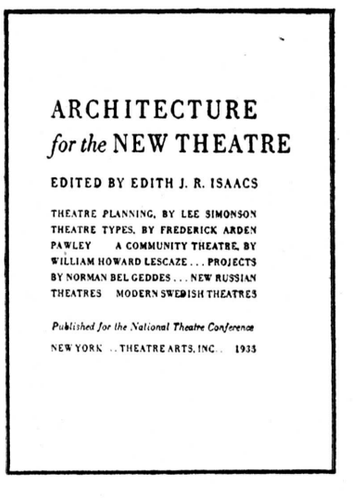
EXHIBITIONS

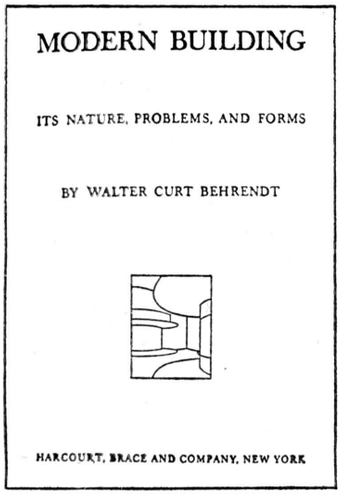
(Above) Joe Hirsch's painting "The Lunch Counter" *from his show in Philadelphia.*

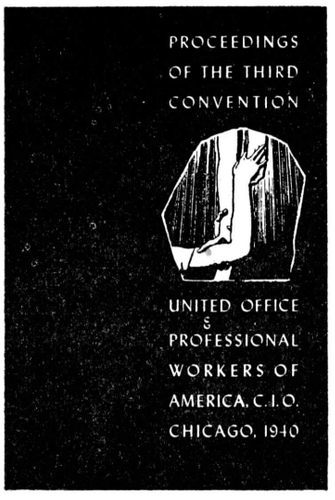
(Right and Below): Several title pages designed by Robert Josephy and now on exhibition at the Hudson Park Library, New York. "Sacrifice" *is an example of the ostentatious design popular in the gilded days of 1926. Since then Josephy has advanced to the brilliant craftsmanship displayed in the other page designs.*

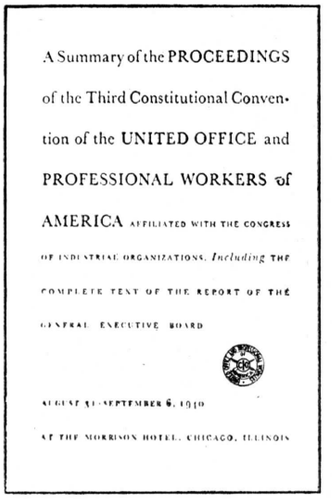


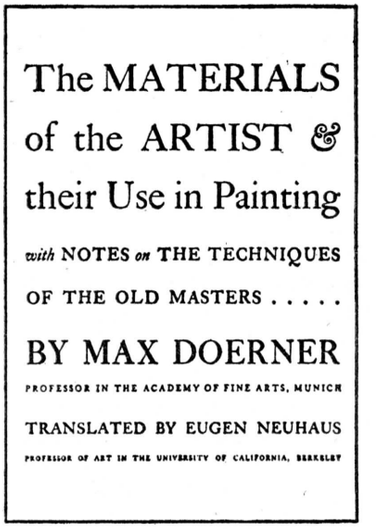












Book Design

Robert Josephy's twenty years of creative work in publishing.

RARELY does one encounter the sureness of the designer who is the conscious master of his craft and materials and knows how to adapt them to the uses of modern life. But one has the opportunity to see, at the Hudson Park Library in New York until the end of the month, an exhibition of some hundred books, title pages, and book jackets by Robert Josephy, representing twenty years of his work in the publishing industry. Here one is compelled to seek out the actual content of these designs and see them as an expression of a contemporary kind of thinking and its relation to other activity of our time.

When last month some professionals and trade union members in publishing gave a dinner for Bob Josephy, they paid a tribute to his accomplishments in the trade union movement as well as to his achievements in design. For these two activities are part of the same story. Josephy has been president of the Book and Magazine Guild, Local 18 of the United Office and Professional Workers, CIO, for four years. His fight to improve the physical appearance of books parallels his fight to better the conditions of the people employed in book publishing.

One cannot, at this exhibition, make the usual gestures of granting the competency, the ingenuity of the work, then relegating the designer to a "special" category and simultaneously dismissing him as an unimportant factor in day-to-day activity. For Bob Josephy's design challenges the whole structure of book publishing. The work is more than a mere arrangement or something accomplished by "mystic means." His profound interest in his craft, his respect for efficiency and economy of means, his scorn for shoddy workmanship imply his larger interest in human values, his wrath for shoddy treatment of human beings.

In his own words: "Almost any piece of design, if honestly conceived and competently executed, will reflect the social outlook of the designer. Whether house or bridge, sculpture or mural, vehicle or textile, cutlery or printing, his work will in some measure suggest the sort of world he wants to see around him. Today, humanity wants order—order in its economy and order in its government; order in its cities and order in its homes. A taste for frills and gingerbread, a yearning for period styles, is all too often the mark of the escapist and reactionary. The designer's first job today is to help bring order and repose into our physical world. Let him keep his eye on this ball, and the customers will respond with the proper aesthetic reactions."

Robert Josephy has always stood for the simple lines, clean surfaces, the straightforward statement, as against the elaborate, ornate, limited de luxe editions. Against the economics of snobbery, pretentiousness and pre-

ciousness, restricted production for profit and "conspicuous consumption," Bob Josephy has fought for wider education and increased purchasing power for the majority of the public so they could buy, among other things, more and better books. Almost alone, among designers in the book industry (the magazine and advertising field has been infinitely more fortunate), Josephy has abandoned the self-conscious "style" of working, for a more impersonal, more direct method, revealing a consciousness of the collective and anonymous character of his design and his interdependence with all other workers who help to prepare and manufacture books.

Here, in this show, is work executed for over fifty publishers. Here are some of the thirty-six volumes designed by him which have won "Fifty Best Books of the Year" prizes. He has been one of the directors of the American Institute of Graphic Arts for five years and has taught book production at Columbia University. But he has considered his trade union class even more important, and the Guild School, which he began, has given many people a better technical and creative understanding of their jobs.

ELIZABETH RODNEY.

Hirsch's Paintings

An exhibition of hopeful and realistic art.

NO ONE can mistake or miss the meaning of Joseph Hirsch's thirty paintings on exhibition at the Carlen Galleries in Philadelphia. Evidently Hirsch subscribes to Tolstoy's saying that any worthwhile idea can be told simply enough for any healthy twelve-year-old to get. This artist does not idle with his tools. Nor does he distort visible nature simply for sheer shock value. Instead his materials serve him best when least seen and his technique is like air—invisible but effective.

These pictures are portraits of workers of all occupations and nationalities. His "Welder" is strong, courageous, wise, and proud. There is also present a strong sense of the dignity of labor. And the exhibition is almost a complete picture of the American people. In the paintings titled "Hero" and "Warrior" are the people's hatred and fear and—more important—their understanding of this traders' war. The first is a wrecked veteran from the last war, peddling paper poppies. The other is a draftee to World War II—a scared boy huddled into his too-big overcoat, his eyes staring from a head which seems to become a skull before our very eyes.

"The Drink" is a simple picture in idea and form—a worker drinking from a milk bottle; the background bright blue-green, his sweatshirt tangerine, his skin tan, and the milk burningly white. It is a picture of food flowing directly into a man's body, and the total effect is of the powerful processes of human regeneration taking place before our eyes. A picture like this shows Joe Hirsch's

LOOKING FOR A REST?
See *CAMP UNITY* ad page 23

technical powers. He paints the drinker's sweatshirt the brightest of red-yellows, knowing that we have simple and direct and exciting associations with that color; it means sunlight, fire, oranges, and the crust of well-baked bread—it means warmth and nutrition.

Hirsch's singular talent is the way he looks at things and makes us look at them. In every issue he demands that we see the two sides that really exist—action and its reaction. The Negro, in the canvas "Winter," weakly resting his arm on the cold radiator to draw out its last glow, is not broken by his status, but brooding over it. Nor are the slum kids broken, who play stickball in a dump, in *Springtime;* they live—running and breathing—building for the future.

As a contrast to the World's Fair canvas "Two Men," now owned by the Museum of Modern Art, Hirsch has painted a sort of "Two Men II" called "The Senators." One man is pawing another, roaring with unfelt laughter—the second man is a fat, ugly monolith, so smug and self-contained that he can be moved by no amount of cajoling. Hirsch knows well how to contrast the two classes of our society. Compare these men with the two workers of "Two Men"—where the Negro, arguing, hammers home a point with full conviction and elicits the white's undivided attention.

Finally, perhaps the most important single work in this exhibition is the painting "Lunch Counter," which shows how daily, with less scorn and more regard, men now listen to each other's views of the world and the way out. The intensity of the faces drives home a sense of solidarity and organization that is a tribute to the social artist at his best.

MARTIN ROSS.

The Almanac Singers

Recordings of "The Ballad of October 16" and other songs.

AT APM's Peace Meeting in New York last month and at the AYC Town Meeting in Washington during the winter, the main entertainment was the songs sung by the Almanac Singers. Some of these tunes have now been recorded under the title *Songs for John Doe.*

The Almanac Singers are four young working men, from New Hampshire, West Virginia, Arkansas, and New York, who have lived all over the country and worked at all kinds of jobs. The words and music and ways of singing are all their own, though they lean heavily on the rich fund of American folk music. "Billy Boy" is such a song, giving new meanings to one of the fondest old answer-back ballads. In this Almanac version, one voice invites the other to go to war, using such old lures as silver medals, seeing the world, and uniforms girls will fall for. Modern American Billy, however, is a wise boy. He answers back that no desire does he feel to defend Republic Steel and that it wouldn't be much thrill to die for du Pont in Brazil.

Another example of an old song made more immediately meaningful is "Liza Jane," with lines like

> Cut the pay and raise the rents!
> —It's all for national defense!

and

> Dry your tears, get out your knittin'—
> I don't aim to be no bundle for Britain!

The words of all these songs are full of punch and easy to remember. So are the catchy tunes. And the singing and guitar- and banjo-playing are all technically brilliant, especially in the haunting, self-accompanied Pete Bowers solo, "The Strange Death of John Doe." A harmony of words and music that is pretty nearly perfect is achieved in the yodelled "C for Conscription."

The chiding tone of the patter-song "Washington Breakdown" is set by its opening phrases:

> Franklin D., you listen to me—
> You ain't a-goin' to send me across the sea.
> You may say it's for defense
> But it's that kind of talk that I'm against—
> That kind of talk ain't got no sense.

It then goes on to tell Lafayette that we are here and that we're staying right here. And in the same tune, judgments are passed on J. P. Morgan, Wendell Willkie, and FDR—the only relief being provided by one lone representative:

> Marcantonio is the best
> But I wouldn't give a nickel for all the rest!

But the two most exciting tunes are "The Ballad of October 16," the music for which appeared in last week's NEW MASSES, and "Plow Under." Here is the chorus of "The Ballad" and one verse from the other:

> Oh, Franklin Roosevelt
> Told the people how he felt
> (We damned near believed what he said!)
> He said, "I hate war,
> And so does Eleanor—
> But we won't be safe till everybody's dead!"

and:

> They said our system wouldn't work
> Until we killed the surplus off
> So now they look at us and say:
> "Plow the fourth one under!
> Plow under, plow under,
> Plow under every fourth American boy!"

These are the "Songs for John Doe." Too bad there aren't more. One record has a lot of unimpressed space on it. Maybe when the next batch of reprints are made, for the second edition, the Almanac Singers can fit in a gem like their famous, "Get Out and Stay Out of War." A final word must be said on the quality of the recordings themselves. Even though made by a small private company, they are perfect examples of the best modern sound recording.

HENRY DAVIS.

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