JAPAN'S DIPLOMATIC JIU-JITSU *By JOSEPH STAROBIN*

NEW MASSES

FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY DECEMBER 9, 1941

HATCHET MEN IN CONGRESS

How certain legislators are blackmailing the nation. The plot against price control and labor. By Bruce Minton

What Happened at Rostov

A military appraisal by Colonel T.

Belt-Line Houses

The story of prefabricated homes by Milton D. Ellis

Samuel Putnam, Ruth McKenney, Claude Cockburn, Samuel Sillen

Between Ourselves

THIS is the last call for NM's Artists and Writers Ball. It takes place this Saturday night, December 6, at Webster Hall. New Yorkers are traditionally blase, and there may be a few readers who don't get excited about our annual shindig. But every now and then one of our editors takes a trip to another city where he sees a good many friends of the magazine. And invariably in the course of conversation someone will mention the annual NM ball. You hardened New Yorkers should see the wistful look that comes into the eyes of these out-of-towners. "If only I could get to New York and attend that ball." Well, some of them do. This year the trains from Philadelphia, New Jersey, Westchester County, and other not too remote points will be carrying their delegations to the Artists and Writers Ball.

But of course it's the New Yorkers, from all five boroughs, that will make up the bulk of the crowd. One unique feature about these affairs is that you don't have to dance in order to have a good time. We know quite a number of non-dancers and anti-dancers, including several members of the NM staff, who would sooner suffer the pangs of purgatory than miss the ball. But if you insist on dancing—and most folks do—there's nothing like the best hot music you ever heard. Red Allen's all-star swing band will include some of the greatest names in jazz history—Sidney Bechet, J. C. Higginbotham, Jimmy Hoskins, Billy Taylor, and Billy Hall. And as an extra course for dancers and non-dancers alike there will be a new sprightly revue based on the theme of a model army camp. Songs and sketches are being supplied by Mike Stratton, Earl Robinson, Alex North, Joseph Darien, William Blake, George Kleinsinger, and others.

A. B. Magil, whose article on the CIO convention in last week's issue was liked by many readers, is back from Detroit with a briefcase full of facts and impressions about defense production in the auto industry. He promises to share them with you in the next issue. Magil once lived in Detroit, where he edited an auto workers' paper, so he knows the ropes. On his present trip he visited the new Chrysler tank arsenal and other defense plants, talked to union officials, rank and file workers, and representatives of the auto companies. Magil also met a great many old friends on this trip, among them the Old Timer, that grand veteran of the fight to organize Ford's whom Joe North described so eloquently in his articles on the Ford strike last May. The Old Timer is still in there pitching. But there are thousands of newcomers helping him and they have changed the face of Detroit.

Magil also ran across some news about another "friend" of his. In the Detroit *Free Press* of November 18 there appeared an item about promotions in the detective force. Among those promoted to senior detective was one Harry Mikuliak. Detroit progressives have reason to know that name well. In the days before the rise of the United Automobile Workers-CIO, Detective Mikuliak and his side-kick Detective Mazuziak, constituted what was politely known as the Red squad. Their chief function seemed to be to roam about the city and pick up trade unionists and progressives at meetings, in their homes and offices, and on the streets. Usually the persons picked up were not formally arrested, but simply held incommunicado while various devices were employed to intimidate them into betraying their fellow-workers. The Gold-Dust Twins, as Detectives Mikuliak and Mazuziak were popularly known, took their cue from their chief, Col. Heinrich Pickert, police commissioner, a beefy, hatchet-faced gentleman with a distinctly Nazi conception of his duties.

Detective Mikuliak, Magil recalls, is a tall, handsome fellow, as profile-conscious as John Barrymore. He was in the habit of getting very chummy with his victims and insisted on calling them by their first names. One day he and his buddy dropped into Magil's office and announced: "Inspector Hoffman wants to see you. Come along with us." Magil suggested that Inspector Hoffman phone him and make an appointment. Messrs. Mikuliak and Mazuziak were not impressed. They compelled our future editor to accompany them to the police department where he was held incommunicado for several hours, waiting for Inspector Hoffman. When that gentleman finally showed up, he merely ushered Magil into the presence of the great man himself. "Have you your press card with you?" said Colonel Pickert. Magil fished it out of his wallet. With a magisterial sweep of his arms Pickert tore it up. "That's all." When Magil wanted to know why he was being deprived of the police pass accorded to all newspapermen, Pickert said: "We don't tell everything we know. You've abused this privilege. That's all." The "abuse of privilege" seems to have been that, in company with other newspapermen, Magil had covered an unemployed demonstration a few days before. And all that ceremony and the time and energy of four men were required to tear up a press card!

When Edward Jeffries was elected mayor of Detroit in 1939 with the united support of labor, he kept a campaign pledge, fired Pickert, and disbanded the Red squad. But Detective Mikuliak seems to go on forever.

Some day one of the editors will write a piece about subscriptions—a humdrum subject, perhaps—but one that bears decisively upon the life or death of a magazine such as ours. Subscriptions are the blood-stream of NM. Without them this publication could not exist for even one issue. In a forthcoming issue we shall show the basis for this statement.

For this reason NM urges its best friends — its readers — to keep the word "sub" in mind. Now we have a proposition to make. At this given moment you are undoubtedly figuring up your list of Christmas gifts. What to give John, and what to get Mary. Right? How about solving your Christmas gift problems by getting your friends and relatives a subscription to this magazine?

On the back cover you have a list of special offers for the Christmas season. How about solving your holiday problems by sending NM subs as gifts—and at the same time helping solve NM problems? It would be a fine Christmas present all around, both for yourself and for your favorite magazine. Think it over, and let us hear from you by return mail

Who's Who

BRUCE MINTON is NM's Washington editor. . . . Colonel T is the pseudonym of a well known military expert. . . . Claude Cockburn was formerly editor of the newsletter *The Week* and was the Washington correspondent for the London *Times*. . . . Milton D. Ellis is an architect on the West Coast. . . . Samuel Putnam is an expert on Latin American affairs. . . . Sidney Alexander has contributed to NM before.

THIS WEEK

NEW MASSES, VOLUME XLI, NO. 10

December 9, 1941

Two weeks' notice is required for change of address. Notification sent to NEW MASSES rather than to the post office will give the best results.

Published weekly by WEEKLY MASSES CO., INC., at 461 Fourth Ave., New York City. Washington Office, 945 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W. Drawings and text may not be reprinted without permission. Entered as second-class matter, June 24, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies 15 cents. Subscriptions $5.00 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico. Six months $2.75; three months $1.50; Foreign $6.00 a year; six months $3.25; three months $1.75. In Canada, $5.50 a year, $3.00 for six months. Subscribers are notified that no change in address can be effected in less than two weeks. NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers and artists. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by stamped, addressed envelopes. NEW MASSES does not pay for contributions.

NEW MASSES
VOLUME XLI DECEMBER 9 NUMBER 10

WASHINGTON'S HOLDUP MEN

Bruce Minton reports on the House and Senate trigger experts who have shot the price-control bill full of holes. How they are also trying to lynch labor.

Washington, November 30.

"CONFIDENTIALLY," said the gentleman from up-state New York to the gentleman from Ohio, "the whole debate is a lot of baloney."

The congressmen sipped orange juice in the House dining room, their heads close together. Upstairs, their colleagues argued price-control legislation. But after three days of harangue, most of it contributing nothing to a very difficult problem, the members were conscious only of acute boredom.

Two weeks had passed since Congress approved revisions to the Neutrality Act. Since then, the reactionaries who tried to bargain with American security had by no means taken a back seat. In fact, they had high hopes for the immediate future. They rubbed their hands together gleefully as they looked forward to cutting price control to bits and to putting through in the next week or so a whole raft of anti-labor legislation "with teeth in it."

To their minds, the Neutrality Act vote was only the first skirmish in a larger offensive. They did better in the initial engagement than they had dared anticipate; their blackmail plot had come within an inch of hamstringing foreign policy. Now they were driving full steam ahead. Debate on price-control legislation was setting the stage for the third act. And, they hoped, the play would conclude with a triumphant and rewarding denouement—a crippled labor movement.

ONE THING must be granted Messrs. Cox, Dies, Howard Smith, Hoffman, Rich, and the rest of the nondescript gang of appeasers, poll-tax southerners, Republicans, and just plain tories. They were not hiding their lights under any bushel. They were standing up on their two feet and squawking at the top of their lungs for labor's life blood. They didn't like unions and they made no bones about it. They were alert to any signs of weakness on the part of the administration—and these signs were all too apparent. Therefore, said the House gang, either let us do our job on labor, or we won't let the administration carry on the fight against Hitlerism.

It takes a glimpse of the holdup men in action to grasp the full venality of the plot. The Rules Committee, gathered together supposedly to consider the order in which legislation would be presented to the House, suddenly summoned Bernard Baruch as an expert witness on price control. When Mr. Baruch arrived that Friday morning, November 21, the ineffable Cox of Georgia was in the chair. He made a pretty speech of welcome—without mentioning that the committee was exceeding its functions by summoning a witness to give advice on the contents of proposed legislation. In this case, the committee had decided to disregard precedent. Mr. Baruch adjusted his horn-rimmed glasses and read a prepared statement advocating "over-all control of prices," and pleading for a ceiling on wages. Mistaken and dangerous as were his views, Mr. Baruch at least believed in what he was saying. He sat dignified and smiling, expecting some sort of discussion of his opinions.

While Mr. Baruch read, Martin Dies tilted back his chair on two legs and combed his hair. Chairman Cox talked loudly to a stooge during most of the statement. Howard Smith adjusted his knitted necktie under the wing collar that is his badge of aristocracy (a self-assumed badge which sits uneasily on the wardheeler from Virginia), and kept his beady black eyes fixed on the opposite wall. Immediately Mr. Baruch had completed his opening remarks, Cox leaned forward and launched into a tirade against labor's "insurrection," and against the administration for tolerating any kind of a labor movement—neither of which sentiments had anything to do with the matter under consideration. Mr. Dies added a few similar words, undistinguished as to content or inspiration, followed by the Republican chorus of "Me, too!" And then, to keep up some semblance of concern with price-control legislation, the committee attacked Leon Henderson, denounced "socialistic schemes" for regulating prices, and pumped Mr. Baruch for more arguments in favor of wage ceilings.

At the conclusion of this edifying performance, the committee went into executive session. An hour or so later it reported out the administration bill—maimed almost beyond recognition during the months it had been kicked around in the Banking and Currency Committee—and gave equal precedence to last-minute legislation sponsored by young Albert Gore of Tennessee. The smooth-talking, oratorically dramatic Gore, promptly recognized by his poll-tax elders as "an up and comer," professed to be a follower of Baruch's plan for "over-all" price control, and, more important, for ceilings on wages.

It was all pretty tawdry. The Gore bill gave the southern trigger-men and all their supporters a chance to deplore the evils of labor. And all of this was by way of preparing the ground for the orgy of labor baiting.

VITO MARCANTONIO, the most vigorous progressive in the House and the one consistently outspoken champion of labor, sat through the price-control debate for a while, until he discovered himself no more immune to the vast boredom pervading Congress than the rest of the members. He strolled out of the chamber and down the corridor. "What is going on in there," he remarked, pointing over his shoulder, "makes an interesting sequence. This latest raid only carries on what that bunch started when Neutrality was up for action. Those fellows thought they saw a chance to wreck labor. By voting against revisions, they showed themselves more interested in defeating labor than in defeating Hitler."

He leaned against the marble balustrade. "The price-control bill gives them another chance to muster their forces. The talk about the Gore substitute bill is a sort of preview of what the anti-labor drive will be like next week. In this emergency price control is necessary to prevent the exploitation of the little guys—the consumers. It's really a defense measure, just as much as an appropriation to build tanks and guns. But the boys want to scuttle essential legislation by insisting on freezing wages and turning this into a free-for-all against the unions.

"Next week," he went on, "the anti-labor drive is going to be the big thing around here. I am going to fight these bills—in the House and on a nationwide radio hookup. And the way I'm going about it is to point out the deadly parallel between what that bunch in there is up to and what happened in France just before the German invasion. Over there Daladier and the Munichmen used their defense program as an excuse to destroy the French unions—and France fell because of it. The Cox-Smith-Hoffman lineup has learned that lesson. These boys adopted French methods. And the pattern they follow is more effective aid to Hitler than the plans worked out by the Nazi general staff."

Few of Vito Marcantonio's colleagues seem to have grasped what he realizes so clearly—that the huge problems of defense cannot be solved if the Republican-southern bourbon alliance has its way. One of the CIO representatives standing alongside Marcantonio stressed this: "The trouble is that the administration has reached a crisis in its fight against Hitlerism, but so far has done little about it. Up to now, the policy has been to rely on 100 or so votes from the southern bloc to put across the defense program. But that's a contradiction—trying to build a fight against fascism by depending on the proto-fascists. The price of the reactionaries goes up every day. It is time for the administration to stand up to them, to throw away retreating tactics which only egg on those who would rip the whole defense program to pieces. You can only have a real fight against Hitlerism by seeking support in labor and the progressives, not by trying to propitiate those who think like Hitler in this country."

BEFORE DISCUSSING the plans to shackle labor, it is worth glancing at what went on here over the price-control bill. Only a handful of the most hard-bitten Republicans dared argue against some sort of ceilings on basic consumer goods and defense commodities. But the bulk of the reactionaries, hating control and not having the courage to speak their minds too openly, sabotaged the purpose of the bill by striking out all provisions that would enforce regulation, and adding amendments that transformed the legislation into a travesty. The measures favored by the administration (inadequate and unsatisfactory as they were), seemed far too stringent to the majority of members.

The axemen and those they bulldozed into following them were not interested in principles. They slashed at the bill paragraph by paragraph, destroying it piecemeal. They eliminated licensing, which would have penalized producers or manufacturers who violated the established price ceiling by taking away their licenses to trade in a particular commodity. Once this ability to discipline offenders was removed, no means remained to enforce price control or make it more than a pious wish.

Even so, the junta was not content. It tried still again, after the Gore bill was defeated, to freeze wages. But labor opposition was too strong, and the House balked. To compensate for this reverse, those clauses allowing the government to buy and sell surpluses as a means of keeping prices within bounds were reworded; in the end buying and selling by the government was permitted only in cases where it helped marginal and high-cost producers—in other words, only if such buying and selling acted as a subsidy for those who complained of insufficient profits. Last year, prices on commodities of which there were huge surpluses—cotton, wheat, oats, corn, etc.—rose out of all proportion. These prices did not go up because demand exceeded supply; rather they skyrocketed because the monopolists who set prices and the speculators who made profits from sharp increases were able to extort more and more from the public for necessities. Only if government were able to place the surpluses it owned on the market could prices to some extent be kept within range. And this Congress ruled out.

Still those who beat their breasts decrying the dangers of imminent inflation remained unsatisfied. They rejected the plan to place responsibility for fixing ceilings in the hands of a single administrator; instead they demanded that the administrator's every act should be subject to review by a five-man board—and such machinery promised to be sufficiently unwieldy to obviate any chance that real control would be forthcoming. Congress "limited" farm prices—to the highest level attained by any one of three indexes: (1) the prices brought by farm commodities on Oct. 1, 1941; (2) or the average price reached in the period 1919-29; (3) or the price equaling 110 percent of parity (the relation between agricultural and other prices during the years 1909-14). This "limitation" meant nothing less than sanctioning a thirty percent rise in prices of agricultural commodities over and above presentday levels. The small farmer will suffer—because most people will be forced to buy less clothing and less food. Small producers will be plagued by a limited market; the large landholders, however, always sure of an outlet, will profit greatly at the expense of the majority.

These concessions were encouraged by the willingness of House administration leaders to retreat. Almost before the reactionaries made their desires known, the chairman of the Banking and Currency Committee, Henry Steagall of Alabama, capitulated. The bill finally passed was far from adequate price control; it gave carte blanche to monopoly to demand super-profits. Fortunately, the legislation must go to the Senate. Perhaps something can be done there.

THE VICTORY encouraged all the diehards. The House is seemingly in the mood to go hog-wild when it gets the chance to hit out at labor. The various committees are busy concocting some pretty foul proposals. Not to be outdone, the Senate committees have drawn up several bills equally evil smelling.

Yet there is no reason for despair. Labor has more than a fighting chance—it can actually force the baiters into empty-handed retreat. Already a score and more union representatives have arrived at the capital where they are talking turkey to the members. And already their presence has given pause to the majority; Congress abandoned the idea of freezing wages; the committees took the hint and eliminated compulsory arbitration from proposed legislation. The unions have anticipated the attack by Congress instead of waiting for it to be sprung on them. The CIO has been particularly active, calling attention to the unequivocal resolution passed by the Detroit convention against attempts to trammel labor and the whole effort to crush Hitler. President Murray has called a CIO legislative conference in W[redacted]shington. He has proposed to President Roo[redacted]t the administration "immediately co[redacted]a national conference of representatives of labor, industry, and government looking toward the voluntary acceptance of a plan which will assure the peaceful solution of industrial disputes and guarantee a maximum production for our nation's defense program." Rep. Marcantonio has already introduced a resolution in the House asking the President to call a meeting of labor, management and government "to agree upon policies which will guarantee the maximum production to meet the needs of the national emergency."

A similar demand for voluntary agreements and joint participation in defense production by labor, management, and government was urged by William Green for the AFL. The Railroad Brotherhoods are making sure that Congress hears about their objections to attacks on the unions.

So far, legislation under consideration is being altered almost by the minute. Some of it is frankly "extreme." The Senate's Connally bill, to quote a CIO bulletin, "is nothing but an attempt to freeze labor in its present condition and at the same time leave employers perfectly free to ever increase their mounting profits." The Bridges bill, also before a Senate committee, imposes "such governmental restrictions as to actually eliminate a free trade union movement." Even the presumably "mild" bills, like those sponsored by Ball in the Senate and Ramspeck in the House, would create more labor disputes than they could possibly settle or avoid. And if Cox and Dies, Howard Smith and Hoffman have their way, or Senators Tydings, Byrd, and "Cotton Ed" Smith are heeded, then, as one trade unionist remarked, "The only thing left to be done is for the government to provide barges to transport union men to the Pacific, where they can be dumped."

Labor is fortunately very much on the alert. Labor also recognizes that the problem goes beyond its own province to the needs and interests of the entire anti-fascist movement. There can be no defense program if the unions, which are the very core of the anti-fascist fight, are destroyed by our home-grown fascists, pushed into the background, forbidden participation in the race to build production. There can be no defense program with the enemies of progress in the saddle. The fate of price control in the House is testimony to the contempt in which these hatchet men hold the health of the country. Realizing what they are after, it is vital to remember that during the debate on Neutrality Act revisions, congressmen received mountains of mail from America Firsters and other appeaser groups, and far too few letters from the progressive majority throughout the country. When proposals to kill the unions come up, there will be no lack of pressure from labor-haters. What Congress needs is to be reminded of the existence of the American people.

BRUCE MINTON.


WAR
ULTIMATUM
DEMANDS
THREATS
DEMAND
APPEASEMENT
JAPAN
AGGRESSION


WAR
ULTIMATUM
DEMANDS
THREATS
DEMAND
APPEASEMENT
JAPAN
AGGRESSION

Japan's Diplomatic Jiu-Jitsu

The Mikado's men are playing a fancy game with the State Department. Joseph Starobin discusses the current negotiations in Washington. Behind the bluff and the threat.

IT WAS not easy last week to follow the development of our relations with Japan. The headlines seemed more untrustworthy than ever; the coming and going of public officials, the belligerent speeches on both sides seemed to be part of the negotiations themselves; it was hard to separate the element of fancy from the harsh reality. And so it seems best to get back to some fundamental propositions, to grasp the main ideas that must be kept in mind no matter what the news tickers say.

There was one obscure item from the United Press, datelined Tokyo, November 28, which gives us the clue to what has happened. "Unofficial quarters," says this item, "thought that Premier Hideki Tojo would endeavor to salvage from the current talks in Washington some basis for further talks that might last at least until Japan had had time to weigh its future course in the light of Germany's progress in Russia and North Africa."

Now this dispatch is not only prophetic in the light of the subsequent Japanese decision to continue negotiations, but it gives us some very substantial food for thought. This item says in effect that the Japanese consider themselves bound to the fortunes of the Axis; second, that the rulers of Japan do not feel themselves strong enough to act on their own initiative; third, that they are watching the events on the Eastern Front and in northern Africa closely because they realize the inseparable connection between the wars in Europe and Asia.

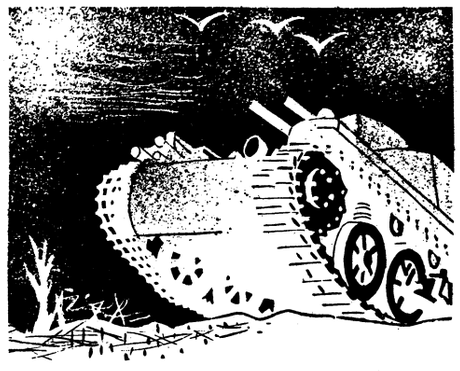
IT FOLLOWS, THEREFORE, that if we Americans are to pursue our national interest as diligently as the Japanese are trying to pursue their own, we must first of all see the war as a whole, as a world war. It follows that every effort to separate our national interests in the Far East from our interests in Europe can lead us astray, and perhaps into disaster. Undoubtedly, there are people in high places, both in London and Washington, who hesitate to draw all the conclusions from the dependence of British and American destinies on the outcome of the Soviet Union's defense. They bite their fingernails at the thought, and they resist its implications for the Far East. But the history and geography of our generation are merciless. It so happens (and what a great good fortune it is!) that whether we like the social system of the USSR or not, the USSR stretches from the heart of Europe to the shores of the Pacific. It is impossible to help the defenses of Soviet Russia in Europe and betray those defenses in Asia—and since the United States is defending its interests in Europe, it must, and I think it is going to, defend its national interests in the Pacific.

In Europe the United States has decided to help defend the Soviet Union because that defense conforms to the vital interests of the United States. Mr. Stimson and Mr. Hull have subordinated whatever their feelings about Finland may have been, and have attacked Finnish aggression against the Soviet Union because they realize that this aggression menaces the vital policies of American defense. Two weeks ago the President decided to extend lend-lease aid to the Free French; he also sent our troops into Dutch Guiana because he knows that the French North and West African littoral is of vital importance to Britain and ourselves for the eventual approach of American troops on the continent of Europe, without which we cannot participate in Hitler's defeat.

Now if the President knows what he is doing, and he unquestionably does, he cannot permit an arrangement with Japan at the expense of China. For such an agreement not only jeopardizes our interest in the integrity of China but would also work out at the expense of the Soviet Union. Whenever any group of appeasers in the State Department tries to do that, as it did last week, and when the President thinks into its implications, he realizes that such a policy would contradict our whole policy in Europe. The arrangement with Japan breaks down, and reveals itself as impossible.

CONSIDER, FOR EXAMPLE, the first phase of the discussions with Mr. Kurusu, which culminated in Cordell Hull's note to Japan, a note which reverted to the basic principles of American policy.

Until about Sunday, November 23, there was little news about the negotiations. Mr. Hull had had one conference with the British, Dutch, Australian, and Chinese ambassadors. By Monday something had happened,



and after another conference, these ambassadors began to visit our Secretary of State separately. On Tuesday morning the very alert Washington correspondent of the New York *Herald Tribune* reported that a "limited agreement" had been reached, a scheme in which the Japanese would presumably withdraw their troops from Indo-China in return for a relaxation of the American embargo and American assistance in getting access to the wealth of the Dutch East Indies. Limitations on Japan with reference to China or to Soviet Siberia were conspicuous by their absence.

In the next two days a number of things happened to demonstrate the worry, alarm, and indignation from China. For one thing, Mr. Hu Shih, the Chinese envoy, visited the President in the company of the prominent Chinese banker, T. V. Soong. On Tuesday Lin Yutang, the Chinese novelist, took the occasion of a literary luncheon to observe that the United States was "fiddling and trifling" with the idea of defeating Hitler. He remarked rather sharply that "Cordell Hull was walking around and around because he would like to avoid war, yet he does not know whether he can ever trust the Japanese." This is a war, said the author, and you Americans "cannot afford to be in it and behave as though you were not."

The next day, Adam Lapin, the *Daily Worker's* Washington correspondent, was writing a sensational dispatch in which he revealed that the State Department had been split wide open on a formula for appeasing Japan. This split revolved around such crucial matters, said Mr. Lapin, that the group which opposed the appeasement formula had gone to the lengths of circulating a round robin of protest, even offering to resign.

In the next day's newspapers came the announcement that Mr. Hull had given the Japanese an uncompromising proposal, based on first principles, a virtual ultimatum. As the *Herald Tribune* described this about-face development, it was *"particularly China's objection to the proposed limited agreement* (that) contributed to the sudden abandonment of the peace formula and Mr. Hull's reversion to his original position based on the fundamental American principles of policy. This shift came as a complete surprise to the British, Australian, and Netherlands envoys who had previously signified their willingness to accept the formula."

IT WILL BE FRUITFUL to analyze the attitude of the Chinese, and the reasons why the President heeded their protest against the "limited agreement." The attitude of the

Chinese was not at all selfish. They were not simply trying to prevent an American deal at their own expense. On the contrary. Wang Shih-chieh, the Chungking Publicity Minister, is reported by the United Press to have said that in case of a breakdown in the Washington conversations: "The most or worst that Japan could or would do is to intensify her attacks on China. . . . In fact, we should prefer to bear the brunt of intensified attacks than the certain result of any appeasement of Japan by any member of the ABCD front."

What does this mean? The Chinese are trying to tell us here that any further appeasement of Japan has implications which go beyond the issue of China; they involve basic attitudes of the whole war against fascism; they involve basic attitudes toward the defense of Soviet Siberia; they involve the essence of American national interests in the Pacific. Appeasement of Japan, through some formula which concerns only the South Pacific, would inevitably project in Japan's mind a line of action, not only for China but in Siberia. Such a formula would project in Japan's mind the possibility that the United States hesitates to pursue its war against Germany; it would not be surprising if the Nazis had actually tried to present their "peace offensive" in this country via Kurusu. In short the Chinese realize that this is one war. They ask us to realize that, too. They ask us not to cut off our nose to spite our face.

When the men who must decide policy added up the results of the discussions, when they read the dispatches of Soviet victories at Rostov, when they pondered over Petain's meeting with Hitler, when they saw *the war as a whole,* they knew that the appeasement proposals suggested by one group in the State Department were inacceptable. And that is how the appeasement effort broke down.

SO THE JAPANESE have decided to continue negotiations. This means they are worried about the military news; it means they need more time to concentrate their forces for an attack on the Burma road. But it also means *that they want to try for another kind of "limited agreement," figuring that if they were so close to it a week ago they might make it the next time.* Herein lies the real danger, the danger that American policy is not yet fully clarified in American minds, in the State Department, in the White House. For it is really an anamolous situation that thousands of Russian soldiers giving their lives at Rostov and Moscow, plus the insight and conscience of the Chinese, should have enabled the United States to avoid a fatal misstep in its Far Eastern policy.

It is not enough to say that Japan must make no further moves in any direction. It is not enough to put our troops in the Philippines on a war footing; it is not even enough to arm our ships in the Pacific, or to speed our lend-lease assistance to China. It is necessary for the United States to take the initiative, that is, to take whatever strategic positions and political commitments are needed to give us a superior position to Japan's, and we do not have those positions today.

The United States must change its negative policy into a positive policy. Today we are no longer trading with Japan—that is good, but it is negative, in the sense that we have stopped doing what we should never have been doing at all. Today we are at last sending supplies, missions, experts to China —that is good, but it is only beginning to cancel out the hypocrisy of our past attitude toward China, and as Vincent Sheean reports in his articles about the Far East, our supplies have only begun to get there because of the deplorable state of the Burma Road.

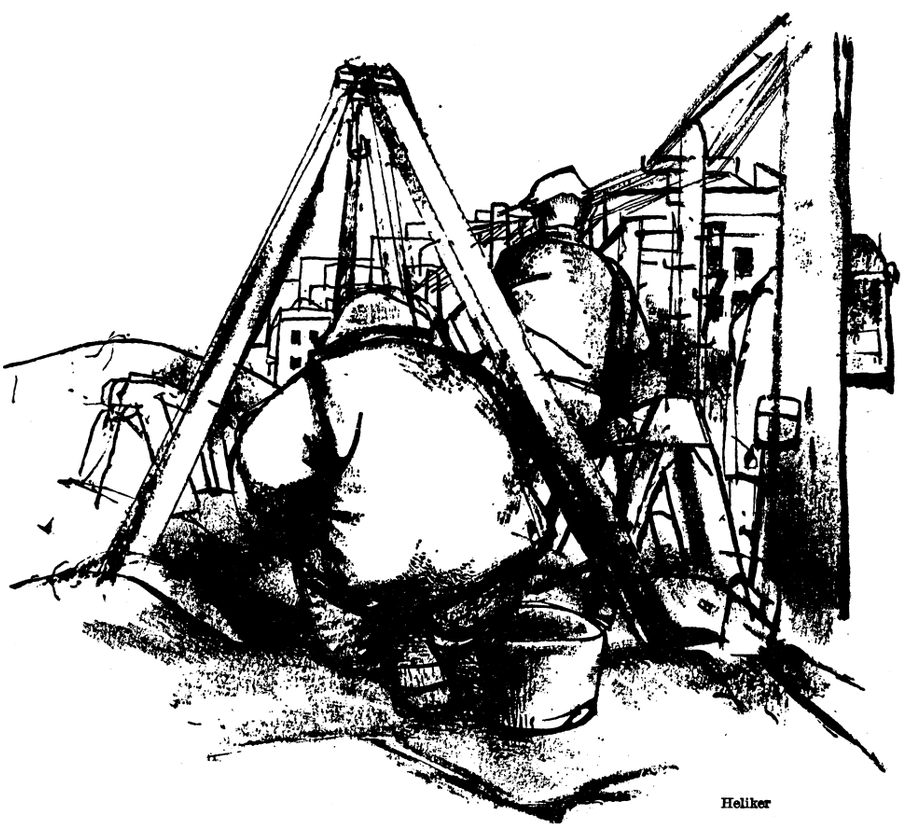
This is not enough, because it is not positive. So long as China is treated as a subordinate in American policy instead of a partner, so long will the Japanese confer with their hidden agents in Chungking, so long will the Nazis conspire and intrigue as they are now doing in Chungking. So long as the Japanese see that we hesitate to sign a full military alliance with China, they will draw the conclusions that we are hesitant, not only about China but about Soviet Siberia and many other matters. People hardly realize the extent to which the Nazis are intriguing today both in China and Japan against the vital interests of Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States.

A positive policy requires an agreement with Britain for the use of Singapore, an agreement which to my knowledge has not yet been consummated. A positive policy requires a military alliance with China; it requires, as the first step, the resumption of our normal trade with the Soviet Union via Vladivostok—indeed, the mere fact that this route was interrupted must have given the Japanese the idea that Mr. Kurusu might accomplish something by a trip to Washington. As of today, the United States, Japan, and the Soviet Union are at peace with one another; how then can we possibly agree to an interruption of trade between ourselves and a friendly nation simply because another nation does not like the idea? How can we agree to an interruption of this trade especially when that trade is vital to the defense of the United States, and when the people who don't like it have announced that they intend to "purge with vengeance" the vital interests of the United States in the Far East?

BUT, OF COURSE, the question will be asked: would not such a positive policy increase the chances of war with Japan? The answer is first, that *a negative policy will certainly lead us to war with Japan and under far more disastrous conditions than those of today.* And the second answer is that the question itself is no longer a legitimate one, because the whole world is at war and all the vital questions of national survival and independence for all peoples will be settled in our generation only by force of arms.

The issue therefore is no longer one of responsibility for the war; that was settled a long time ago when Japan marched into Manchuria. The issue today is to fight the war in such a way as to win it for the anti-Hitler side. To do that means to take up the best possible positions conforming to our national interest as allies of Britain, China, and the Soviet Union. This we have not done as yet, and that is why we still run the risks of fatal blunders in the Pacific.

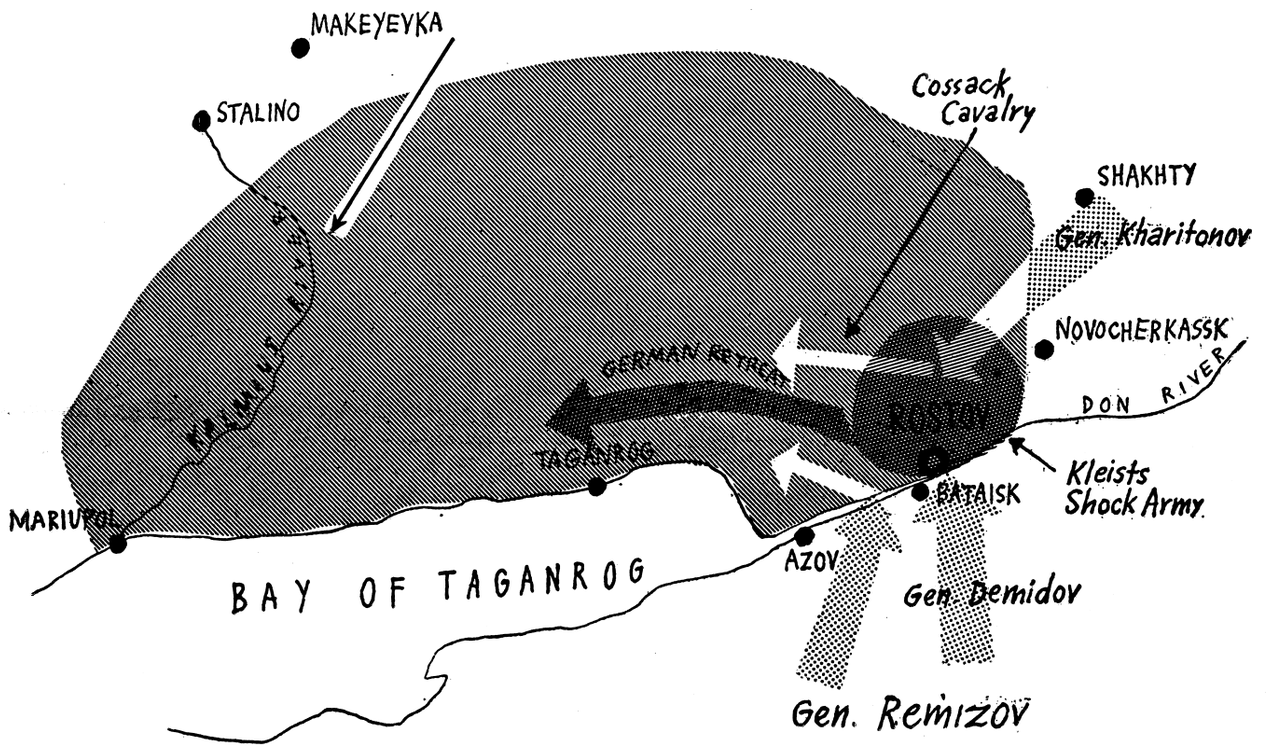
JOSEPH STAROBIN.



Heliker

HOW IT HAPPENED AT ROSTOV

The three moves which rolled the Nazis back and smashed five of their divisions. A Red Army counter-offensive that delights the eye of the professional soldier, writes Colonel T.



The Rostov Operation

WHILE we would be last in fostering undue optimism in viewing the general military situation as having taken a final turn toward victory over the forces of the "new order," we cannot refrain from saying that what happened on Friday, Nov. 28, 1941, has no precedent in the history of the current world war. What happened was that the Germans were forced to give up Rostov, the importance of which is too well known to require further elaboration. Rostov has been dubbed "the key to the Caucasus" with all that implies in a military sense.

Well, the Germans had it and have lost it. They say they evacuated it in order to "punish the inhabitants" who "violated all international laws" by daring to fight the German army. They might have offered the explanation that they were "too chivalrous to fight women and children," or any other old alibi. The lameness of the alibi serves to enhance the significance of the fact. *The modern German war machine had never yet been evicted from an important strategic center. Now it has.*

Now let us see how it was done. The Timoshenko counter-offensive had been going on for several days along the operative direction Millerovo-Voroshilovgrad-Stalino. Near the latter place this line merges with the headwaters of the Kalmius River (which the papers insist on calling the "Kalimi" River). This river flows into the Sea of Azov at Mariupol, some 120 miles west of Rostov. Timoshenko's armies, thrusting in that general direction judging by their reported ninety-five-mile progress, must have reached the region Stalino-Makeevka last week. This is when the Rostov blow was released.

On November 28 the troops under General Demidov crossed the Don from the city of Bataisk, and, under a withering German barrage, entered the southern part of Rostov. However, they were not able to progress much for a while. That very night troops under General Kharitonov pierced the northeastern defenses of Rostov from the Novocherkassk side and took the Germans on from the rear.

Seeing the hopelessness of his situation, the German commander in Rostov ordered a withdrawal to the southeast. But here another Soviet division which had crossed the Don below Rostov went into action and barred the Germans' line of retreat. There was nothing left for General von Kleist's troops but to retreat due west toward Taganrog, i.e., straight into the path of the Soviet troops coming down the Kalmius River.

THIS is a schematized and perhaps oversimplified description of the neat trap which was sprung on General von Kleist, whose entire spearhead (consisting of the Sixth, Fourteenth, and Sixteenth Panzer Divisions, the Sixtieth Motorized Division, and the "Viking" Elite Guard Division) was put out of action. Five thousand Germans were found dead; this means that at least 15,000 were wounded; allowing for another 5,000 prisoners, which is very conservative in the case of a trap like that, we see that 25,000 or one-half of the entire force was eliminated, which bears out the claim that the outfit has been put out of action for some time to come.

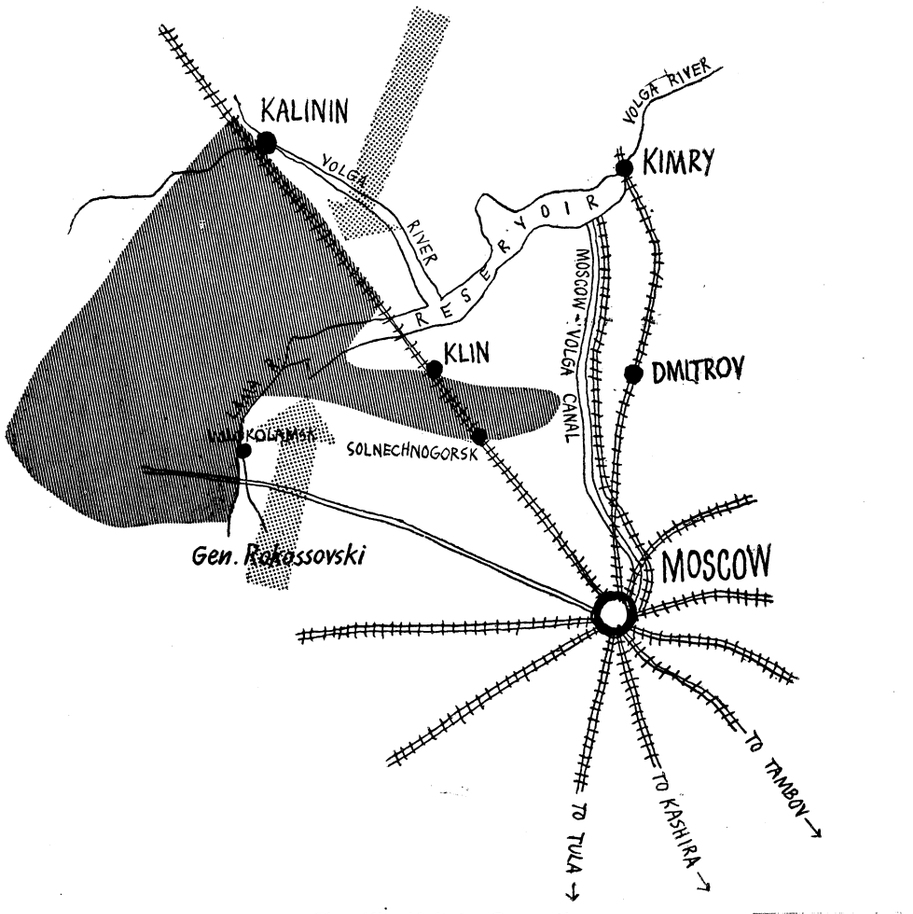
In order fully to appreciate the splendid coordination of Soviet operations, we must mention that at the very moment when Timoshenko was springing his trap at Rostov, some six or seven hundred miles away two other interesting operations were taking place. These had to do with the two spearheads of the German pincers closing in on Moscow—the one at Klin in the northwest and the other in the Tula region, south of the capital.

Two of the outstanding heroes of the Ger-

man-Soviet war, General Konev and Lieutenant-General Rokossovski, struck simultaneously with Timoshenko. Konev had been the adversary of the German panzer expert General Guderian almost from the beginning of the war. The great tank battles of Lepel, Smolensk, Rosslavl, Briansk, Tula had been fought between these two tank aces. Last week Guderian's spearhead was thrusting eastward from Tula, past Stalinogorsk, toward Skopin, threatening the junction of Ryazhsk on the Moscow-Tambov line.

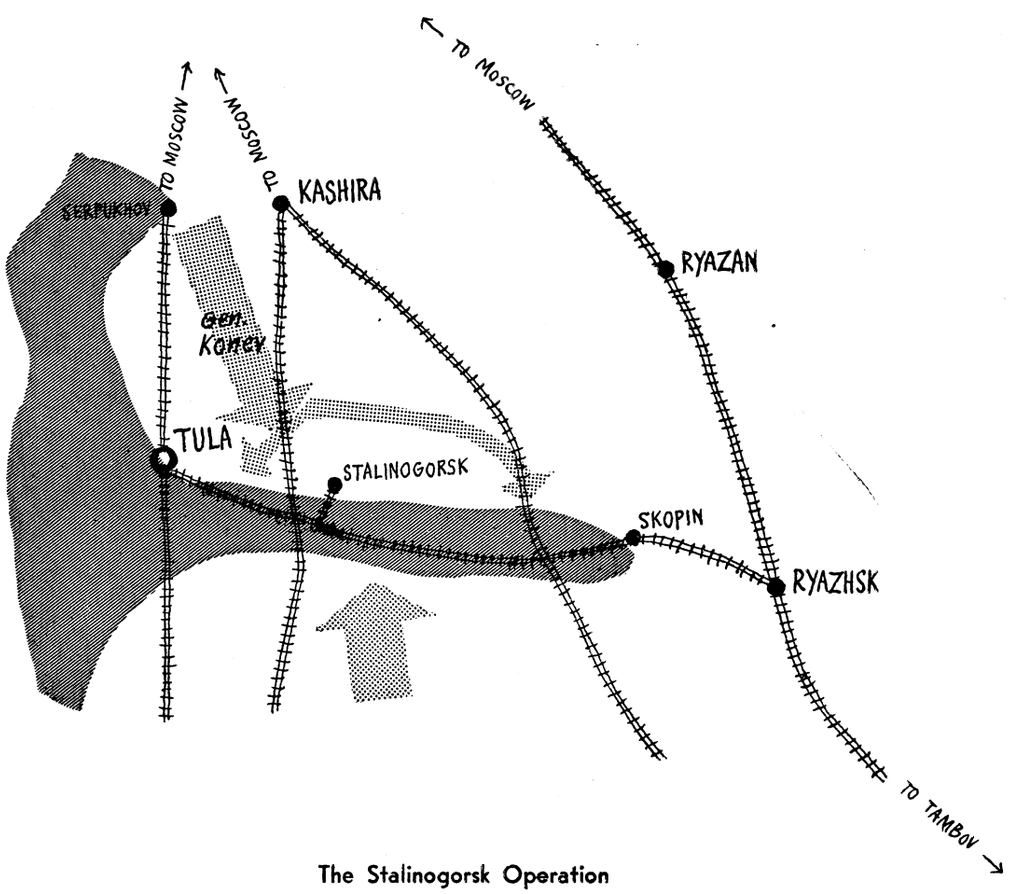
General Konev mustered his tank forces into a compact mass, flank-marched southeastward past Tula, and, when the Germans thought he had exposed his right flank to their blows, Konev wheeled, opened up, and sank the fangs of a pair of pincers into Guderian's moto-mechanized spearhead. Simultaneously another Soviet force was rushed up from the south to close the gap between Konev's wings and encircle the German force. This battle of encirclement and annihilation is still going on at this writing.

On the northern branch of the German pincers around Moscow, the Germans, having outflanked the Volga Reservoir position southeast of Kalinin, had reached Klin and Solnechnogorsk and were spreading eastwrd in the direction of the Volga Canal and the trunk railroad Moscow-Kashin. Thus the arc of envelopment of the capital had passed the critical angle of 180 degrees. This means that a line drawn between the points of the pincers was now passing east of Moscow.



The Klin-Kalinin Operation

At this moment General Rokossovski struck northward from Volokolamsk, cutting the "roots" of the German Klin spearhead while another Soviet force, crossing the ice of the Volga between Kalinin and the reservoir, struck south to meet Rokossovski's troops. The Germans tried to escape westward, but were forced back into the trap. The planning and timing of these three operations is a delight to the professional eye.



The Stalinogorsk Operation

BUT THIS is where our exuberance stops. It must be realized that while these operations had great initial success and that they show conclusively that the Red Army has not only retained its striking power, maneuverability, and inherently offensive spirit—the Germans will not take this lying down. The German divisions involved in all three battles do not exceed twenty-five at the most. All three spearheads have great reserves to back them up. The question of prestige is so deeply involved (on the German side) that the German High Command will sacrifice any number of men to retake Rostov and to continue the advance on Moscow.

Failure to take Moscow before winter sets in in earnest (and there are only a couple of weeks left) and the loss of the "key to the Caucasus" would really mean for Hitler the beginning of the downward grade to a new and inglorious Waterloo. But Moscow is still in deadly danger, and the Germans will do everything to retake Rostov or at least raze it from the air, if it takes half the Luftwaffe. But, whatever the outcome of the operations launched by Timoshenko and Zhukov last week, they demonstrate that the Red Army has lost nothing of its sting and that it will prove worthy of the arms which its Allies and friends are entrusting to it. These arms are sorely needed.

COLONEL T.

Britain's New Army Methods

Claude Cockburn comments on the criticism directed at London's military personnel. Abandoning Wellington's barrack drill traditions. The problem of distributing man- and woman-power.

London (by cable).

TO SUPPOSE that we have heard the last of Sir Roger Keyes' criticisms made in the House of Commons is to ignore the political background against which they were presented. The point about Keyes' attack is a double one. On the one hand, Keyes himself is a widely popular figure in the country and certainly cannot be accused of being "an armchair strategist." More important is the fact that Keyes, while refraining from suggesting any political motive for the policy to which he objects, concentrated on the declaration that there is something wrong with the machinery of the war effort. For a long time there has existed here a certain unfortunate division—or at least a gap—between those who appear to believe that only the machinery is at fault, and those who point out that, while there is undoubtedly plenty wrong with the machinery, nevertheless this is of secondary importance compared with the question of political direction. In fact, the two questions are inseparable. For it has long been clear that the attempts being made to strengthen the character and policy of the government, attempts which have had some considerable success as I have pointed out in past dispatches, cannot be solely directed against persons with bad political records. They must also be directed toward the clearing out of those who may have proved themselves administratively or otherwise incompetent, regardless of their political past.

AND AT THIS POINT the question of personnel merges into the question of a form of machinery which, as suggested by Keyes, frequently seems principally to offer protection to the incompetent and to prevent capable and vigorous men from exercising their full influence or carrying out their proper action. This may be said to be true even of the position of the Prime Minister himself. The same sort of question arises and is arising more sharply, not only in the military but also in the economic sphere. It is at the bottom of the various controversies existing on policy with relation to manpower, as between the claims of the army and the claims of the factories.

In connection with the military position it is significant that the military correspondent of the London *Evening Standard* noted a few days ago that already voices were being raised in certain quarters to suggest that in the event of a success in the present phase of the Libyan offensive, the offensive should be regarded as terminated and its objective limited to the defeat of the Axis forces in eastern Cyrenaica. The correspondent sharply criticized this conception, pointing out the necessity for very much wider objectives along the lines to which I referred last week. It is interesting to have this confirmation that, even after the opening of the Libyan offensive, such counsels were still to be heard. The fact does not, of course, alter the truth that despite such counsels the country welcomed the Libyan offensive as evidence that the forces favoring action were after all predominant in the government; and with the determination that the objectives should by no means be limited in such a way as to reduce the affair to a merely local effort without bearing on the total position in Europe and above all on the Eastern Front.

IN CONTRAST to the evidences of slowness and failure or unwillingness to grasp and exploit opportunities to the full are the remarkable disclosures recently made regarding the vitally important progress of new methods in the British army. The best account so far published appeared in the London *Times* from its special correspondent with the army. He wrote: "It is something new for the British soldier to drill at the double from dawn to dusk and like it. It is a new experience for him to hear live bullets whistling past his head in the normal course of training, to go out beagling or otter-hunting as the means of practicing infiltration or exciting little pincer movements, to think as an individual intent on becoming faster and tougher than the Germans. This, in short, is battle drill, a little known term that is likely to exert a profound influence on the whole of infantry training by infusing some of the realities on the modern battlefield into what many discerning commanders call the outworn pageantry of the parade ground. It has not a keener upholder than General Paget, the new commander-in-chief. Many skeptics have gone down to this divisional school of battle drill in the southeastern command, and as many have been converted. . . . If it be unorthodox in anything, it is in the realism imparted to the training manuals which were claimed to be the finest in the world, but which the mass of infantry, it is held, have been incapable of interpreting on the ground.

"It was emphasized by General Alexander after Dunkirk that British troops, for all their courage, were at a serious disadvantage in encountering German tactics for the first time. They could not, as in the last war, be inoculated in small doses before going into battle; they passed from conditions of total peace straight into total war. Moreover, it was not until 1937 that the war establishment was produced for a new infantry division, based on an adequate layout of modern weapons. Even then, the weapons did not come through in any numbers until shortly before the outbreak of war so that the body of regular infantry officers had not time to appreciate their possibilities or develop a sound fighting technique. . . .

"A whole series of drills, both offensive and defensive, has been evolved for sections and platoons to ensure that by constant repetition and true discipline, each man from the private upwards shall know automatically what part he has to play in battle. Nowadays it is a far more serious charge for a man to show himself on the skyline than to appear on parade unshaven.

"The present formal drill of the barrack square was, in fact, the battle drill of Waterloo. Modern warfare caused the mastering of a fundamental technique from which all sorts of improvisations are possible, just as a championship football team is able to exploit the element of surprise once each player has mastered the rudiments of the game. To pursue the sporting metaphor, these drills are something like the prearranged phases of American football, with rather greater scope for ability and initiative to develop an unorthodox attack. . . . There was an exhilaration in listening to the divisional commander talk on the subject. He has adopted the German doctrine that infantry is the principal arm and that all other arms support it, an assertion with a Napoleonic ring about it, but written in 1941. As a nation, he stated, we do not honor our infantry sufficiently, and, still hypnotized by the barrages of the last war, are in danger of coming under an equally unhealthy hypnotism exerted by the tank and dive bomber. That is his warning and battle drill in his vision."

It may, of course, be remarked that it is rather strange that we should only now be abandoning the type of drill which, in Wellington's day, was the battle drill of the period—that is to say, was the carrying out on the barrack square of exercises which were to be carried out exactly in battle itself. Since then, long, long since then, the barrack square drill has been almost totally divorced from actual operations in the field. It is, of course, strange that this tradition should have endured such an unconscionably long time. It is a dangerous fact, on a par with many other facts about our society and our war machines. But at least it is true that now the tradition is being abandoned, despite all the weight and influence of those who would rather pre-

serve a tradition than win a battle. As Galileo said, "Still, it does move."

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of the new government proposals for the extension of conscription as regards both men and women confirms the forecast made some weeks ago in this correspondence regarding new developments in tackling the problem of man- and woman-power. The importance of the proposals is obvious. It is, of course, true that under the emergency powers of May 1940 the government already had the legal power to "mobilize everybody and everything." That does not alter the fact that the new proposals represent a new advance toward the practical use of powers already in existence. Of still greater importance is the fact that if these proposals are to be carried into practical effect, as distinct from being merely accepted by the House of Commons, then the use of them must involve a new and thorough airing of the real problems which prevent or hinder the full mobilization and use of the man- and woman-power of the country.

Speaking very roughly, it can be said that as regards manpower the problem is above all one of how best to distribute the power available to the armed forces and to industry. As regards woman-power the problem is rather one of how to make possible at all the intake of a sufficient number of women. Reports being published here now from various parts of the country, particularly in the London *Daily Express,* confirm the points which I made some weeks ago. There is by and large a great desire on the part of women to play the most effective part possible in the war effort, but as yet very little advance has been made toward a radical solution of the real difficulties which to some extent make the theoretical conscription of women a dead letter: that is to say the question, as the *Daily Express* reporter puts it, of "Who's to mind the baby and who's to get dad's dinner?" These problems, together with the question of providing shopping time for women in general and housewives in particular, form the main obstacle to the effective conscription of women. There is also the obstacle raised by the fact that women receive relatively low pay.

It is therefore to be expected that the debate on the government motion for the extension of conscription will bring to the foreground both these problems and the still acute question of the distribution of manpower—a question which for a number of weeks has been a subject of acute discussion and divergence in the highest quarters. Inseparable from these questions is the wages issue which last week was forced into the very center of the political stage. Approximately 5,000,000 workers are involved in the various union wage claims which will come before the Arbitration Board during the next couple of weeks. The farm workers have already achieved, despite heavy opposition, their minimum plan for a basic minimum rate of three pounds (approximately twelve dollars) per week. The arguments on behalf of the shipyard workers, the engineers, and others at the arbitration hearings will show clearly how baseless is the charge that a majority of men in the war industries are cashing in while others are in the army. An attempt is being made —as it was in the last war—to sow dissension between the workers in the factories and those in uniform by suggesting that it is monstrous for the factory workers to be demanding higher wages while millions of others have to exist on army pay.

It is safe to say that this attempt, although it will get a considerable play in the newspapers, will be unsuccessful, as it was the last time. In reality, of course, the fact that huge numbers of men are living on less money than they earned before the war is one of the reasons why those numbers of working class families whose sons or brothers are in the army are in greater need of wage raises than would otherwise be the case. It is certain, however, that the wage issue will give rise immediately to serious and exceedingly sharp controversy around the whole question of British war finance and the policy of the treasury under Sir Kingsley Wood and Sir Horace Wilson. It has already been declared by the *Financial News* that the Treasury lives in such terror of inflation that it resents and opposes expenditure of the utmost importance for the war effort. And it is clear from articles in the conservative press that the same attitude is prevalent in many conservative circles in relation to wages throughout industry.

CLAUDE COCKBURN.

J. Turnbull

Lynching Party, 1941

STRICTLY PERSONAL

by Ruth McKenney

"Bread and a Stone"

I DON'T know what gets into literary critics. Sometimes I think the book page gentry must have been born deaf, dumb, blind as a bat, and equipped with a large hunk of granite where the heart should be.

For example. In the last month the New York critics' association has, with many a loud hosanna and chirp of joy, fallen afoul of a mediocre bit of a book called *Storm.* I know it's mediocre because, always a sucker for the printed word from on high, I snatched the book from the nearest lending library and struggled dismally through all 300 pages. After which I took to brooding. For the hero of this "novel" called *Storm,* is some meteorological data, and while weather might be okay in its place, it is definitely horrid when liberally mixed with some of the most awkward, foolishly sentimental, and generally stupid comments on "human nature" I have ever gnashed my teeth over.

Now the literary boys might be forgiven their earnest enthusiasm for the weather if *Storm* were the only book on a desert island, or even the only passable novel of the season. But while thousands cheered for the low pressure area over the Pacific, Alvah Bessie's new book, *Bread and a Stone,* was greeted with either thundering silence or half-hearted squeaks from harried second-string reviewers.

Frankly, my hackles rise. I have often wished I were a literary critic, and never more than at this moment. I wish I could get in the middle of the critics' association, and slam around with a bevy of selected barbs, full of scholarship and pointed literary allusions. Alvah Bessie's book deserves a passionate and logical and first-rate defense, and all I can do for it is to tell you that I read it in a great gulp, with my heart turning over under me as I finished the last pages. I simply can't understand how this book can be ignored, or passed over with polite phrases, or attacked. I believe, and I hope not mystically, in the fate of good books, and so I know that *Bread and a Stone* will survive the literary critics and live on to touch a thousand hearts, awaken a thousand blind men, strengthen the purpose and sharpen the direction of a thousand men working for a better society.

But I'm not satisfied with the eventual fate of *Bread and a Stone.* I hope people will find out about this novel and find out now, not in 1951. For we need this book; we need its affirmation of hope, we need its burning inquiry into American life, we need its power and passion and tenderness. We are all involved now in the great struggle to destroy world fascism. Day after day we burn with hope and struggle against despair as we read the morning headlines. We need to be reminded for what we fight; we need to be told over and over again that the purpose of the great sacrifice, the meaning of the Soviet blood staining hundreds and thousands of miles on the terrible battlefield, is the brotherhood of man. And *Bread and a Stone* says this simple truth, says it poignantly and directly, so that its readers can never forget it.

Alvah Bessie is a truly versatile writer. *Bread and a Stone* comes directly after *Men in Battle,* a remorseless, brutal, terrifying account of the fight in Spain. I think *Men in Battle* was one of the two great books written about the first act in the fight against fascism. It was a book that exploded with honesty. I know people who didn't like it. They shied away from the facts of life. They preferred to think of their friends in the Abraham Lincoln Battalion marching romantically off to the battlefield, flags flying, drums beating, and a lively song on every man's lips. But *Men in Battle* demands rereading today, for it tells the somber truth. War is never beautiful, not even for the men who go prepared to die for what they believe. To my mind, one of the most moving passages in modern literature is Alvah Bessie's description of the boys in Spain, hungry, homesick, standing all day and all night on Hill 666, invincible and austere, making one of the great chapters in history. *Men in Battle* is the story of human beings, not plaster saints, and I think it is a beautiful and heroic book.

Mr. Bessie's new book, published only two years after his bloody, fierce *Men in Battle,* is nearly the exact opposite in mood, color, and feeling. True, it centers around a murder, but the murder is an accident, and only serves to bring into strong relief the quiet, tender background of the New England hills, and the delicate relationship between the farmhand and his wife. *Bread and a Stone* is a study of the lower depths of American life, but Mr. Bessie uses understatement for his method. The book begins with the farmhand's fear. The police wait for him downstairs while he sits in his bedroom, feeling doom overtake him. The reader sees the farmhand first as the police must see him, a frightened, wretched, pitiful victim, stripped of dignity. And then gradually through the pages he is revealed in his unconscious strength, until in the last climax, his wife makes him understand his aborted, poisoned life. Running underneath the powerful narrative, is one of the most poignant modern love stories I have read, a relationship beginning in necessity and developing at last into that powerful intertwining of lives and emotions that spells the end of human loneliness.

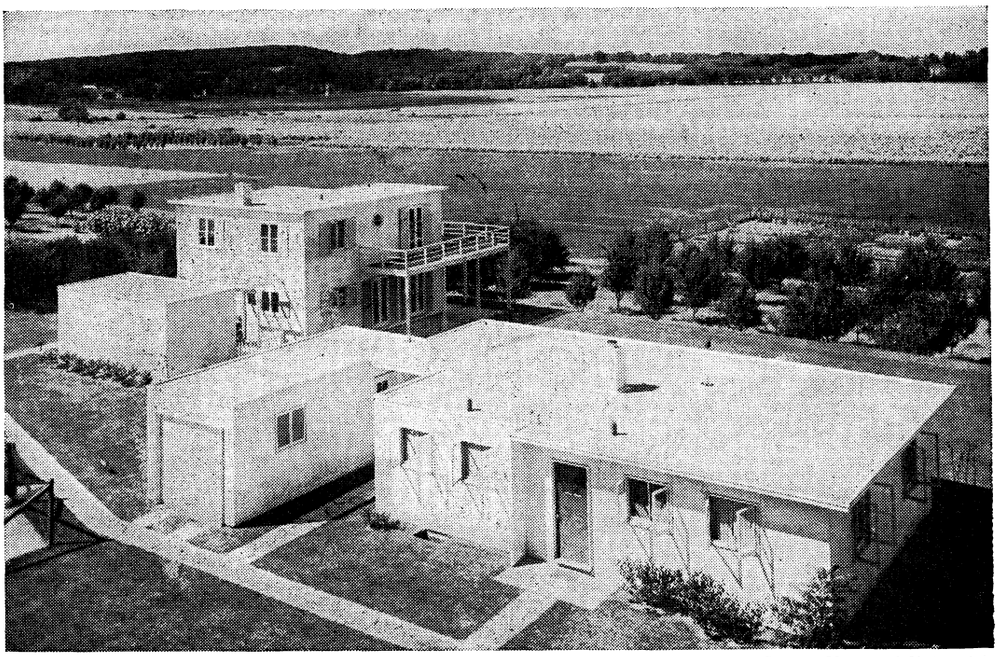
It is very difficult to put into words the almost blinding pain the reader must feel in the closing pages of *Bread and a Stone.* Mr. Bessie has put down so simply and so explicitly the origins of the farmhand's doom. He has revealed—through the man's late awakening to hope—the potentialities of this human being, so that when at last the state destroys his life, the reader feels a passionate protest at this waste, this terrible waste. I can think of no more powerful argument for socialism than this novel—to give every man his chance at life—every man, even the least of us. The waste of human life is the greatest charge against the society in which we live. Alvah Bessie's new novel writes that truth in words of fire.

Bread and a Stone demands reading. It is a call to arms that none of us can ignore, a weapon in our struggle that we cannot afford to leave unsheathed. I hope every one who reads this column will get a copy of Alvah Bessie's new book. It is a storm greater than the one the literary critics are writing about; it is a passionate protest against man's inhumanity to man.

MACHINE-TAILORED HOUSES

From belt-line to lot. The story of the prefabricated home. What it is and where it's going. Obstacles in the industry's development.

BURIED again and and by mortal enemy and disappointed friend, prefabricated housing is once more haunting the news —this time in connection with the nation's defense housing program. With the recent curfew on civilian building non-essential to defense, the government becomes the nation's biggest buyer of new building. The very nature of the defense program demands the speedy filling of large orders for similar or identical buildings. At the same time, the reduction of civilian building will mean the liquidation of many small entrepreneurs—contractors, architects, speculative builders, etc. Now these small producers are in the majority —and because of the loose and backward organization of the building field—constitute the biggest single barrier to industrialization. Government contracts for defense work will require larger organizations, more efficient production methods, and more capital than most of these independents can lay hands upon. Thus, superficially it would appear that all pre-conditions for a big prefabrication industry are here. Whether it will appear, however, depends upon the moves of the administration in a time of crisis.



Courtesy Museum of Modern Art

PREFABRICATED HOUSES *made of special plywood panels.*

WHAT IS PREFABRICATION? The term implies large-scale production of completely shop-fabricated and shop-assembled houses—like ready-made clothes which can be worn out of the store or radios which can be plugged in on delivery. For houses, this would imply that up to ninety-five percent of the labor had been moved from scattered building sites into central factories: only under such controlled conditions could house production be genuinely industrialized. There are many structural systems today which are called by their sponsors "prefabricated": few of them actually merit the term. For mass production of factory-made houses demands larger plant facilities and more capital than today's small independent "prefabricators" possess; and beyond this lie problems in transportation, retailing, and financing which only big industry could hope to solve.

Faced with this situation, most of our current producers have attempted a compromise which lies somewhat less than halfway between the prefab and the conventionally built house: the *packaged* house. Here conventional structural systems are rationalized so that floors, walls, ceilings, and roof can be fabricated as panels in a central shop and trucked to the site for assembly. In several current defense projects, this central shop is merely a huge circus tent raised in the center of the project itself. Such panel houses represent no particular technical advances: they are of conventional design and materials, and employ conventional techniques in assembly—carpentry, bricklaying, plumbing, etc.

Yet even this limited degree of rationalization can result in lower costs and improved quality. This is a very important result of the repetitive or serial production of any article, and holds for houses as for war planes or women's underwear. Thus, in a recent housing project in the southwest, thirty identical small houses were erected in quick succession. The structures were conventional in every respect (not even any panels) and the workmen all regular craftsmen. The first house required 1,250 man-hours to build; but by the time the crew got to the thirtieth house, they had rationalized their work to a point where only 560 man-hours were required. In repeating the operation only thirty times, they had reduced the necessary labor time by fifty-six percent!

It is incorrect to assume, however, that the only advantage of prefabrication is reduction in necessary labor time—and hence cost—per unit. Of even greater importance are potential improvements in quality. Prefabricated houses promise totally new standards in comfort, convenience, and healthfulness. Of course, to a certain degree, the benefits of prefabrication are to be found in even the most conventionally built house today. Most of the "raw materials" from which it is assembled are in fact industrially processed before they reach the site: cement, lumber, nails, brick, glass, roofing. And all typical house equipments—plumbing fixtures, oil burners, frigidaires, electric lights—are finished industrial products.

It is not the degree of processing of the individual components, however, but rather the level of their assembly into a finished product, which determines whether the house is a real prefab. Just as in the production of autos or planes, the decisive operation—both in lowering costs and improving quality—is that of final assembly. This stage is a limiting technological factor. Until it is fully industrialized, the spectacular potentials of prefabrication will not be released.

WHAT holds prefabrication back? A decade of disappointed speculation as to why prefabrication has "failed" cannot change the fact that the industrial production of houses is being held up by economic and not technical problems. The peculiar character of the building field, its backwardness relative to other areas of capitalist development, is basically due to the ownership of land by a large and disparate class of rentiers. The pervasive influence of the rentier cuts across every relationship in the building field and ultimately dictates its backwardness. Technical advance is more sporadic and uneven here than elsewhere for, by and large, mortgage and banking money is technically as well as socially conservative. Its opposition to large-scale planned operations is evident in the policies of the large banks, the insurance companies, even FHA and HOLC—government agencies which are frequently staffed and dominated by the "real estate interests."

Now it is obvious that the production of a house is not finished until arrangements are completed for a piece of land for it to stand upon. Each transaction, therefore, automatically involves the rentier, who wants his cut and is strongly enough organized to get it. Against this setup the small independent prefabricator is helpless. Support could only come from industrial capital—i.e., from the manu-

facturers of technically advanced building materials, whose sales volumes could be enormously increased by prefabrication on a large scale. It has, of course, been obvious to these big manufacturers that profits were theoretically to be found here; and there is scarcely a large corporation in the country which has not played around with the idea at one time or another. But industrial capital has its own connections with mortgage and banking money. In addition, most big companies have huge investments in existing wholesale and retail distribution setups which would be seriously threatened by prefabrication. So they too have been unwilling to move.

Caught between these two forces—rentier on one side resolutely opposing, industrialist on the other offering no assistance—prefabrication has remained nothing more than a good idea. The small producer is caught in a fatal paradox from which he can't escape: He can't get into quantity production unless he offers consumers lower costs and better quality; and he can't reduce costs or improve quality without a mass market. So he has tried to compromise, watering down the amount of shop fabrication to meet the competition of the status quo. This is much as though the auto manufacturers had, in the early days, tried to keep as much horse and as little motor in each car as possible to meet the competition of the buggy people. It is hardly necessary to point out that new industries are not built by such policies.

THOSE PREFABRICATORS who have—by hook or crook—managed to stay alive thus far, think they see in the defense program the chance for continued survival, if not expansion. They may be right. Certainly, in the battle for armaments production, the need for efficient, low-cost demountable housing units will grow rather than diminish. Housing conditions in the defense centers are already scandalous and will grow worse unless some comprehensive program is put into effect. But it does not follow automatically that the houses will be prefabs. The problem is very complicated. And without direct governmental intervention prefabrication won't get very far, as past experience proves.

The place of prefabrication in the defense effort remains largely an economic problem, not a technical one. Priorities on steel and copper, shortages in aluminum, need not delay the prefabs if the government wants them badly enough. Popular belief to the contrary, a prefabricated house does not *have* to be steel. One of the most promising of all materials for this purpose is plywood—not nailed into panels, as it is today, but *molded* into integral one-piece shells. The great strength, light weight, and structural simplicity of this method is being proved today in the so-called "plastic" planes. Here multiple layers of plywood and plastics are bonded under pressure and heat into units of relatively greater strength than steel. The result is water-, weather-, and fireproof. This is just one of many possibilities.

Whatever happens during the present emergency, it is obvious that prefabrication will be of paramount importance after the war is over. The housing shortage will be enormous in this country (not to mention the need in Europe); and as Barbara Giles indicated in these pages recently, about eighty percent of this demand will be for single, detached houses. Then there will be the huge productive capacity of the defense industries —especially aircraft, auto, and ship-building —which could be converted to prefabs with relative ease. Finally, the government will be faced with the task of economic adjustment, of putting men back to civilian production. Since building is normally our second largest industry, it is highly probable that a government-controlled prefabrication industry might be started. In any event, with so many barriers down, it is unlikely that building will return to its pre-war status of disorganized handicraft production.

SUBSIDIZED LARGELY by the status quo, there has been an unrelenting propaganda barrage against the prefabs. All sorts of popular misconceptions are exploited—often to good effect. Among these old saws are the following:

They rattle when you lean against the wall. This concept of shoddy, makeshift, or temporary construction is very widespread, and seems to be linked in the popular mind with the trailer. Some of the so-called prefabs may have warranted this verdict: but there is nothing in the process itself to merit such a charge. As a matter of fact, it is *only* through prefabrication that all the advances of modern science and industry can be brought to the housing consumer. It promises us infinitely stronger, more permanent, more weather-resistant, and more fireproof structures than were ever possible with conventional methods. In the last analysis, strength is not a matter of mass but of precision. The old field stone chimney which looks so sturdy can take but a fraction of the punishment to which a light aluminum airplane wing is subjected.

Regimentation: Americans won't have it! This is a strange cry from a nation which has never employed more than four or five basic house designs in its history. A strange cry from the very interests which have made the middle class suburbs and working class slums an absolute fantasy of monotonous repetition! Actually, Americans have always been aware of the values of standardization—in houses as in every other field. And at a higher level, prefabrication would be in this tradition. It would make possible for the first time a genuine specialization to meet social and geographic differences: houses designed to meet the needs of New York commuter or Arizona truck farmer; houses for Florida's heat and hurricanes, Duluth's long winters and short days. In houses thus "regimented" the nation has little to fear.

Too modernistic—they don't fit in with nature. This is a favorite, brought out when other arguments fail. It is true that the flat roof and corner window are too often taken by architectural enthusiasts as the hallmark of progress; and many prefabricators uncritically adopted these "modernistic" devices in their product. As a matter of fact, these are stylistic cliches with little or no bearing on scientific building design. A roof or a window must be judged first by its *performance,* not by its *looks.* If it works well, society will ultimately find it beautiful. This is what happened with the Crystal Palace, the Eiffel Tower, the skyscraper, and the airplane; it will happen also with the prefab.

Another and closely related criticism against modern houses in general and prefabs in particular is that they are "too boxy, too angular." Here again is irony compounded in a nation which has so enthusiastically endorsed the Old English, the Normandy cottage, and the French Mansard styles, with their excruciatingly sharp and arbitrary roof angles. The truth of the matter is that most of man's building has been "angular" for the simple reason that until very recently this was the only way in which he could resolve the horizontal and vertical forces of nature with the knowledge and materials at hand. Now we have a much more effective structural theory at our disposal—that of continuity. This is based upon the knowledge that loads move through structures in waves, like light or sound; that sharp angles set up "friction"; and that consequently loads are most efficiently resolved and absorbed in curved, continuous structures. Nature long ago perfected this theory in the eggshell, which remains the most efficient of all structures. Today we are applying it in plane design; tomorrow it should be the criterion for all structure.

The consumer has much to gain in prefabrication, and little besides obsolete prejudices to lose. With it we will be able to completely redesign the structural shell in the light of modern engineering. We will have access to all the magnificent new metals and synthetics—materials which can only be used industrially. All houses can be equipped with air conditioning, soundproofing, fluorescent lighting, built-in baths and radios, etc.—features which only the wealthy can afford today. There is no logical reason why such houses could not be delivered "furnished," even to such details as electrically heated blankets and germ-killing ultra-violet lamps.

These are, after all, things of today. They are commonplaces in industry, and appear as hair-raising novelties only to housing consumers. Beyond them lie even greater potentials—houses cooled and heated by the sun's energy, houses which open and close automatically in response to changing weather, whose walls admit the ultra-violet rays of the sun in daytime and fluoresce softly at night. Houses which will not blow over in a high wind or burn down while you sleep; with water which does not have to be "softened" with soap, dishes which don't have to be washed, garbage which doesn't have to be emptied. In short, houses which are engineered for the comfort and safety of their users.

MILTON D. ELLIS.

The Latin American Negro

Samuel Putnam traces the Negro's part in building an impressive segment of the hemisphere's culture. The saga of incredible suffering and the heroic emancipation movement.

"THE *common denominator of all the Americas.*"

Such is the description applied to the Negro by one of the greatest of living anthropologists, an outstanding authority on Negro history and backgrounds, Prof. Arthur Ramos, who at present holds the chair of social psychology in the Federal District University at Rio de Janeiro. (Professor Ramos is one of the handful of brilliant, liberal-minded scientists whom Vargas has not dared disturb.)

"The common denominator of all the Americas."

Just what is meant by this phrase? It means that Negro culture is the third great culture in this hemisphere, overlapping and serving to bind together the two dominant civilizations of the New World: the Iberic-American (Spanish-American and Portuguese-American) and the Anglo-Saxon. At the same time, in Haiti, French Guiana, and elsewhere, it has its roots deeply intertwined with Gallic civilization; while in countries like Mexico and Venezuela, the Negro, mingling his blood with that of Creole and Indian, has become absorbed in the population, and in this manner has unobtrusively contributed his own traits to the cultural physiognomy of the nation as a whole.

It is, however, in Brazil, the largest nation to the south of the equator, and in the United States that the Negro stands out as a *national* entity. In our own southern "Black Belt" he constitutes a nation in himself.

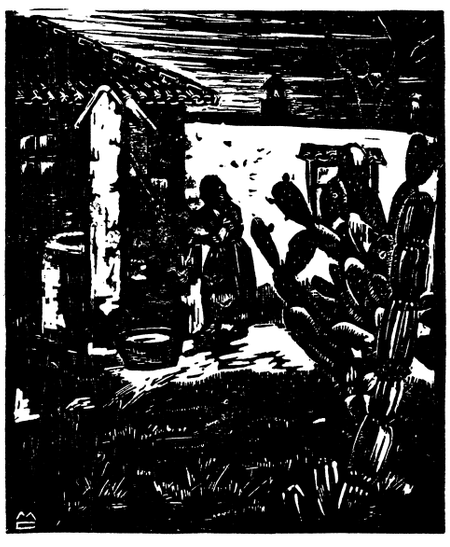
Figuratively, on the other hand, Brazil has been termed "the largest Negro nation" (largest in the world). Of the 43,000,000 inhabitants of Brazil, according to the latest census figures, 16,000,000, or over thirty-seven percent, are of Negro descent, in whole or in part. In the United States the approximately 13,000,000 Negroes make up about ten percent of the population.

In between these two great bodies of Negroes with a common ancestral culture lies the civilization of the Caribbean. Although the full-blooded Negro is still common as in Brazil, with 430,000 in Puerto Rico alone, here too a high degree of assimilation of Negroes with the white population has occurred. In Cuba, while thirty percent of the population is pure Negro, forty percent is of mixed blood, and ethnologists are to be heard telling us that a majority of the inhabitants have some Negro blood in their veins. This talk of "blood-stream" has an unpleasant Hitlerian echo, and, like an unscientific will-o'-the-wisp, readily leads to the fascist morass of racial "ideologies." As Professor Ramos splendidly puts it:

"The worth of a man is not determined by any theory of Aryan hemoglobin or hereditary pigmentation. He is to be judged, rather, as the representative of a cultural group, a social group, or a cycle in civilization."

The point remains, however, that the Negro has made a vital contribution to the Caribbean culture.

IT WAS EARLY in the sixteenth century, exactly eleven years after the discovery of America, that the first Negroes set foot in the Western Hemisphere. This, it is to be remembered, was the age of a nascent capitalism, marked by that "primitive accumulation" (or "primitive expropriation," as Marx preferred to call it) of which the slave trade was an integral expression. The infamous trans-Atlantic traffic in human flesh was begun by the Portuguese, in 1503, with the landing of the first boatload of Negro slaves at Santo Domingo. It proved a profitable venture, and the other maritime nations of Europe, chief among them the British, at once hastened to compete. By 1775, or about the time of the American Revolution, the English had succeeded in wresting from their rivals the major and more lucrative portion of this trade; certainly, by the middle of the eighteenth century they enjoyed a practical monopoly of it. Authorities disagree as to the approximate number of slaves that were brought over, in all, from the Dark Continent, down to the final outlawing of the traffic on an international scale, by the Quintuple Treaty of 1845; but there is no doubt that the figure runs into the millions.



DRAWING WATER FROM WELL. *A woodcut by M. C. Castro, Uruguayan artist.*

Brought to the New World to satisfy the demand for cheap labor on the plantations and in the mines, the Negro was found to suit the slave-master's purposes much better than did the Indian, who, ever since the time of Cortez and Pizarro, had been sporadically enslaved in Latin America. Commonly credited with greater physical strength and aggressiveness than the Indian, the Negro in any case proved to be a better worker. He certainly was not, as many have tried to make out, more "passive" than the aborigine; that myth has long since been exploded by the Latin American anthropologist as it has been by the North American historian; several centuries of slave revolts and uprisings all over the hemisphere are sufficient refutation. As Professor Ramos tells us, the Negro was "a good worker but a bad slave." The true explanation lies rather in the fact that the Negro represented a more highly socialized and, in a primitive sense, industrialized culture than did the native of the Americas: he was used to agriculture, cattle raising, weaving, and in some cases to mining (in the gold and silver mines of Africa). Furthermore, living as he did in settled communities, he was more easily captured.

The story of how the Negro was captured: the savage man hunts in the jungle; the horrors of the slave ship; and, after his arrival in this hemisphere, the slave marts and auction blocks which were set up from Richmond to Rio de Janeiro, cannot be told here. It is a saga of unbelievable suffering, to be gathered from the scholarly pages of Ronciere, Ortiz, Ramos, Frey, Buxton, Bancroft, Donnan, and others. The point is that through it all the Negro kept his spirit unbroken. Bound together in a "solidarity of suffering" and by a "mutual comprehension of their common lot," these black slaves were to form in the Americas, as the anthropologist Ramos puts it, "a new and primitive group conditioned by slavery," and it was slavery which was further to mold "their common attitudes, opinions, and behavior"; but they never lost that "associative spirit" which they had brought with them from their African home, and which, even in the slave ship's hold, had led them to call one another *"Malungo*—Comrade"!

IT WAS this same "associative spirit" which inspired the Negro's age-long and heroic struggle for emancipation. When finally achieved in the nineteenth century, liberation came principally as a result of his own untiring, skillfully organized efforts and his own courageous and intelligent leadership over a period of nearly 300 years. This fact is borne out by the un-

biased historian of North and South America alike. As Frederick Douglass in the United States led his people to freedom, so in Latin America we come upon such leaders as Toussaint L'Ouverture, Jean Jacques Dessalines, and Henri Christophe in Haiti, Cudjo and Quaco in Jamaica, Andresote in Venezuela, the semi-legendary Chico Rei in Brazil, etc. And it is to be noted that, both in Brazil and in the Spanish-speaking countries, the Negro's strivings for emancipation almost invariably tended to take on a *collective character.*

In Brazil, for example, the center of the organized emancipation movement, particularly in the seventeenth and again in the nineteenth century, was the *quilombo,* the runaway slave rendezvous or colony. The *quilombos* resisted capture by force, and from early colonial times gave the authorities no end of trouble. Moreover, they gave rise to an extremely interesting and historically important type of social-political organization: the *autonomous runaway-slave state,* which reached its full development in the Republic of Palmares, in the seventeenth century—"glorious Palmares," as Negroes call it to this day. Situated in the province of Alagoas, near the present city of Porto Calvo, this *quilombo* is described by Ramos as "a great Negro attempt to found a state, a state with African traditions, inside the state of Brazil." It lasted from 1630 to 1697, or more than half a century, and stood out as "an example of political and economic organization."

Similar attempts to set up autonomous Negro states, of one sort or another, were made in Mexico, Peru, the Antilles, and elsewhere. The political pattern followed was in general that of an elective monarchy, the king replacing the African chieftain of old, but with a distinct and highly significant admixture of New World democracy, along with remnants of a primitive tribal communism. Slave revolts flared in Mexico from 1526 to 1609, when they broke into open but unsuccessful revolution. In 1554 the Jamaican Maroons banded together under a king of their own and fought off their white masters for a protracted period. In Peru, in 1584, a Negro kingdom was established, and the last traces of it were not exterminated until more than 200 years later, in 1816. In Venezuela the fugitive slave Andresote led an ill-fated uprising, and Cubans had witnessed a number of struggles of the same kind, from as early as 1522.

Then, in 1791, shortly following the outbreak of the French Revolution, there occurred in the island of Haiti an event which, starting as a slave revolt, was quickly transformed, thanks to the outstanding military genius and incorruptible patriotism of Toussaint L'Ouverture, into a great war of national liberation, and which led to the founding of the first Negro republic in the world. (With the exception of Liberia, founded as a colonization project for freed slaves in 1847, it is still the only one in the world.) Historians are agreed that this was an event of prime importance, and that Toussaint L'Ouverture must rank as one of the leading military strategists of all time (in his employment, for example, of the "scorched earth" policy as a means of defeating the enemy). By his ability as an organizer and commander, he was able successfully to hold off the armies of France, England, and Napoleon, and was only, in the end, outwitted by treachery, to perish in a French dungeon.

It was the "Black Consul," as the Soviet biographer, Anatolii Vinogradov, calls him, who in reality laid the cornerstone of the Haitian republic, by his proclamation of a constitution, in 1801; the independence of the island was formally proclaimed by Toussaint's military associate and successor, Dessalines, in December 1803.

The founding of this Negro state in the New World had wide repercussions and consequences of deep historic significance. For one thing, it gave a tremendous impetus to the liberation movement on the continent of South America. It was to Haiti, in 1816, that Simon Bolivar, the Great Liberator, fled for refuge; and it was Haiti's President Petion who gave him munitions, money, arms, ships, and men, with one stipulation: that Venezuela's slaves should be freed. Long prior to this, in 1806, when the new republic was but three years old, another Venezuelan patriot, Francisco Miranda, had been warmly welcomed. Is it surprising, then, if today there stands, in the Place d'Armes in Caracas, a statue to the Negro statesman Petion?

As Haiti's present Minister of Education, the eloquent Dantes Bellegarde, has observed, there ought to be a statue of Toussaint L'Ouverture in Washington, D. C., since he it was who "definitely destroyed the Napoleonic dream of a French empire in the Mississippi Valley and thus contributed indirectly to the maintenance and development of the North American power."

In the early 1800's it was Napoleon. Today it is Hitler. And now as then, there is nowhere in all the hemisphere a people who hate tyranny and the foreign invader more than do the Haitians. Nowhere is there a people more devoted to the cause of racial equality and democratic solidarity. This is equivalent to saying there are no better anti-fascist fighters than the people of Haiti. Of mixed Negro, French, Indian, and Spanish blood, and culture, and steeped in the glorious tradition of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Petion, they hate Hitler and everything for which he stands.

WE ALL KNOW something about how much freedom and "social equality" the Negro possesses, and does not possess, in these United States. How does Latin America compare, in this respect, with our own struggling, as yet unfulfilled, democracy? The answer might, perhaps, be summarized by saying that while the Latin American Negro suffers far less from a Jim Crow racial discrimination—the "color line" as we know it being little in evidence, though by no means non-existent there —he on the other hand must endure, along with the Indian and the working class in general, an even more intense degree of economic exploitation and misery, as a result of the colonial or semi-colonial status of the countries in question. A new struggle awaits him now; or rather, his old struggle has passed over onto a higher plane. His quest is freedom still, but it is a freedom which can only be achieved by a collective struggle, along with the new group, the oppressed of which he finds himself a part: the wage earning proletariat. To this new struggle the Negro is bringing all that he learned from the old; not alone the high-hearted courage and indomitable spirit of the runaway slave days, but many of the techniques of struggle which he then mastered as well. This is particularly in evidence in Brazil, where for the past half century, ever since his emancipation, the Negro has been slowly but surely feeling his way toward trade union forms of organization, which in reality represent a prolongation, under the conditions of the competitive labor market of capitalism, a transformation, of the old religious confraternity and *quilombo.*

The position of the Negro in Brazil is a lengthy study in itself, and a most interesting one. Here we may rely upon the eyes of a native observer, the scientist who has already been quoted a number of times in this article:

"In religious groupings there is no discrimination between Negroes, whites, and mulattoes . . . and the same goes for political and cultural groups. The Negro has a part in the social and family life of Brazil. There is no need today for him to adopt attitudes of extreme self-defense, in absolute separation from the white community. In Brazil, cultural and racial contacts go together. We have no blood code with respect to intermarriage. Negroes, mulattoes, and whites participate in community life, with equal political rights." (Ramos.)

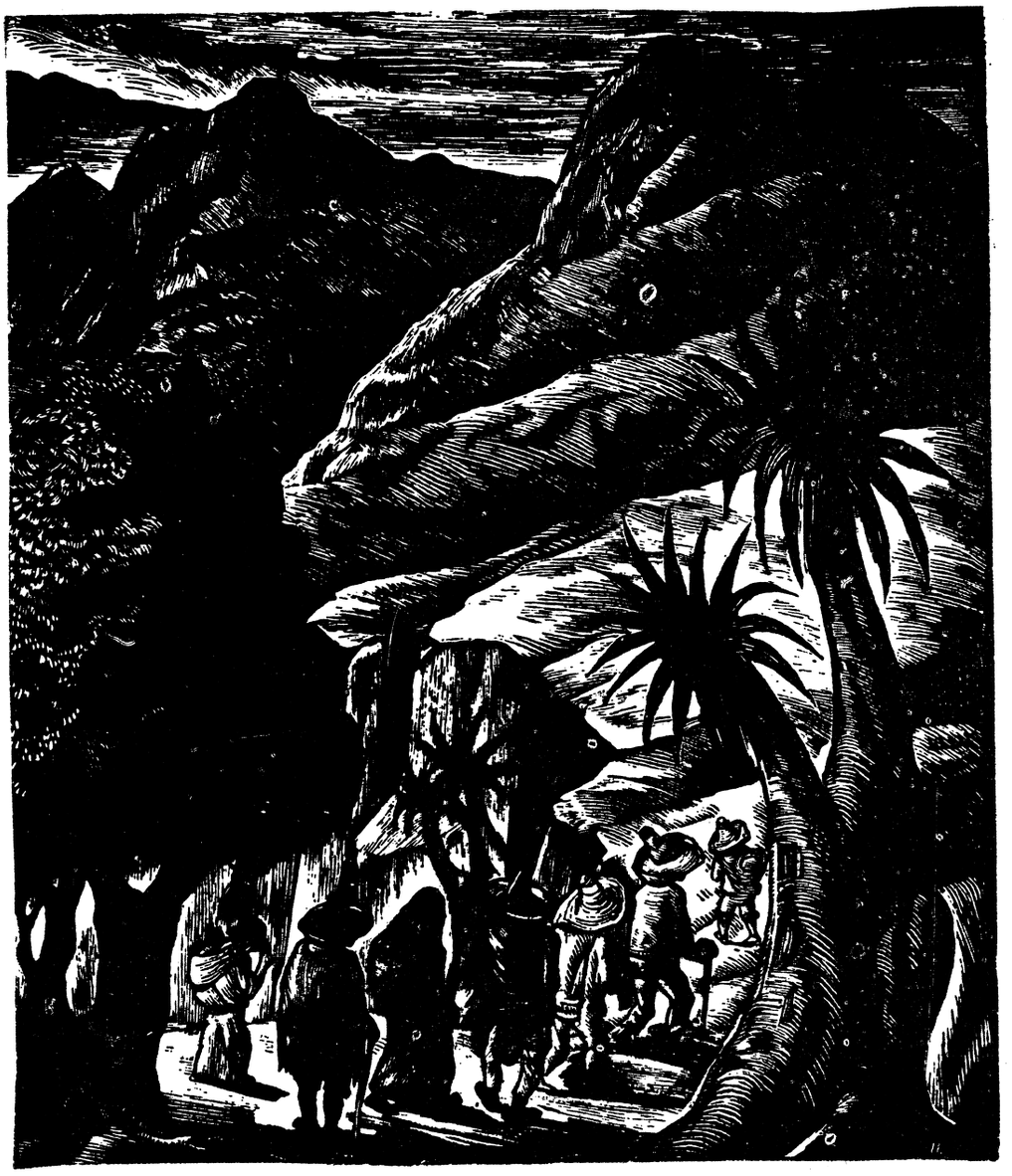
In the next breath, however, the writer is compelled to make an admission:

"There are, nevertheless, certain demands of an economic and cultural character which the Negro has to make. . . . He feels that certain opportunities are refused him."

It is in order to secure these "demands of an economic and cultural character" that the Brazilian Negro is compelled to go on struggling, under new forms. One of these new forms was the Brazilian Negro Front, organized in 1931, shortly after Vargas' initial seizure of power. Following the dictator's *coup d'etat* of Nov. 10, 1937, the Negro Front along with other political groups was dissolved; but its place was at once taken by the Brazilian Negro Union, with practically the same program, save for political demands. About the same time, an Afro-Brazilian Cultural Center was founded at Recife, with a program based upon the following declaration:

"We shall indulge in no inter-racial warfare, but rather shall teach our brother Negroes that there is no such thing as a superior or inferior race, but merely a difference in the level of cultural development."

This emphasis on the equality of men, no



PILGRIMS, *a woodcut from Mexico by Abelardo Avilo*

matter what their color, is characteristic in Latin America, and it contrasts strongly with the attitude of Lindbergh and those who inspire him. There is, for example, Hitler's well known opinion: "In each Negro, even one of the kindest disposition, is the latent brute and primitive man who can be tamed, neither by centuries of slavery nor by an external varnish of civilization. All assimilation, all education, is bound to fail on account of the racial inborn features of the blood. One can therefore understand why in the southern states [of America] sheer necessity compels the white race to act in an abhorrent, and perhaps even cruel, manner against Negroes. And of course most Negroes that are lynched do not merit any regret."

Contrast that with a statement in the first Latin American novel, *El Periquillo Sarniento,* by the Mexican Fernandez Lizardi (published in 1816), in which we find a striking condemnation of racial prejudice:

"I would have you know that the idea of a Negro's being in general the white man's inferior is one opposed to the principles of reason, humanity, and moral virtue. Let us look closely and see if there is any religious basis for it, or if it is not rather put forth by commercial greed, ambition, racial vanity, and despotism."

Compare also the attitude expressed by Jose Marti, the hero of Cuban independence: "The Negro as such is neither inferior nor superior to the white man." Marti knew whereof he spoke, for Cuban Negroes fought side by side with the whites in winning their country's freedom.

In short, it may be said that racial hatred is not a thing that is native to Latin Americans, any more than it is to other peoples. This is not to say, however, that it is wholly non-existent; but where it does exist, it has in good part been brought in by the foreign white imperialist of whatever nation, and is most prevalent in Central America and Panama and in the Caribbean area.

IN THE MEANWHILE, the Negro is coming to be recognized more and more as one of the great cultural forces in Latin American life. All over the Americas, scholars are engaged in an intensive and enthusiastic study of Negro origins and influences and the formative effect which the Negro has had upon family and social life and the modes of social intercourse among the various peoples. In 1934 a history-making First Afro-Brazilian Congress of specialists was held in Recife; and men like Arthur Ramos, Gilberto Freyre, Edison Carneiro, and others in Brazil; Fernando Oritz and Emilio Ballagas in Cuba; Idelfonso Pereda Valdes in Uruguay; Price Mars in Haiti; and Fernando Romero in Peru are pursuing the task of illuminating the Negro's heritage, one that grows more luminous every day.

Contrary to an impression sedulously cultivated by the ruling class, it was not as an "untutored savage" that the Negro came to this hemisphere. The fact of the matter is, he brought with him from his native Africa the rich and varying traditions of an organized communal life and an ancestral culture which was centuries old, and which, in certain branches, such as sculpture, painting, folk poetry, music, and the dance, had attained a high degree of development. The African Negro had even made progress in medicine and the natural sciences, and had been at one time the greatest of metal workers, being credited with the invention of smelting and the forge. As early as the twelfth century, he was an expert in cotton weaving. All of which flatly contradicts the myth of the Negro's "cultural inferiority," and leads to the conclusion stated by Ramos and shared by Frobenius and other anthropologists:

"When European explorers discovered the unknown lands of the Dark Continent, they discovered at the same time the 'inferiority' of the race which inhabited it. The idea of the 'Negro savage' was a European invention, to justify the slave trade and colonial exploitation."

A POINT TO BE NOTED, however, is that the Negro's cultural background was not a uniform one. The slaves were brought from different parts of Africa and came from various tribes, representing varying degrees of social and cultural development and different languages and religious practices. These specific tribal influences are sometimes clearly discernible, as in the historic Republic of Palmares, where the manners and customs were of Bantu origin; at other times, it will be another source that will show. In the Americas, in turn, the Negro slaves came into contact with a wide and varied range of new influences, national, social, religious, and linguistic, and this resulted in numerous dissimilar blendings. In Haiti, for instance, as Dantes Bellegarde observes, there has been an ideational fusion of French monarchism of the *ancien regime* with the egalitarian ideas of republican France and the native African heritage.

Religion is another case in point. In North America the Negro's religious impulses—with religion becoming a sublimated form of escape, of flight from his bondage—found an outlet chiefly in Protestantism and achieved a fusion

with Protestant forms, while in Latin America it was Catholicism that he encountered, with its impressive rites and liturgy, its frequently gaudy ceremonial. This led to a blend of religious forms that is known to anthropologists as "Afro-Christian syncretism"—in Latin America, an "Afro-Catholic syncretism," with often an admixture of Indian rites as well. In Haiti and other portions of the West Indies are to be found, in the form of voodoo, remnants of old tribal superstitions, witchcraft, etc., a subject which has been unduly exploited by the sensationalist, and which is now being studied scientifically by Dr. Price Mars and others. Here also is a fertile field for the study of Afric legends and folklore.

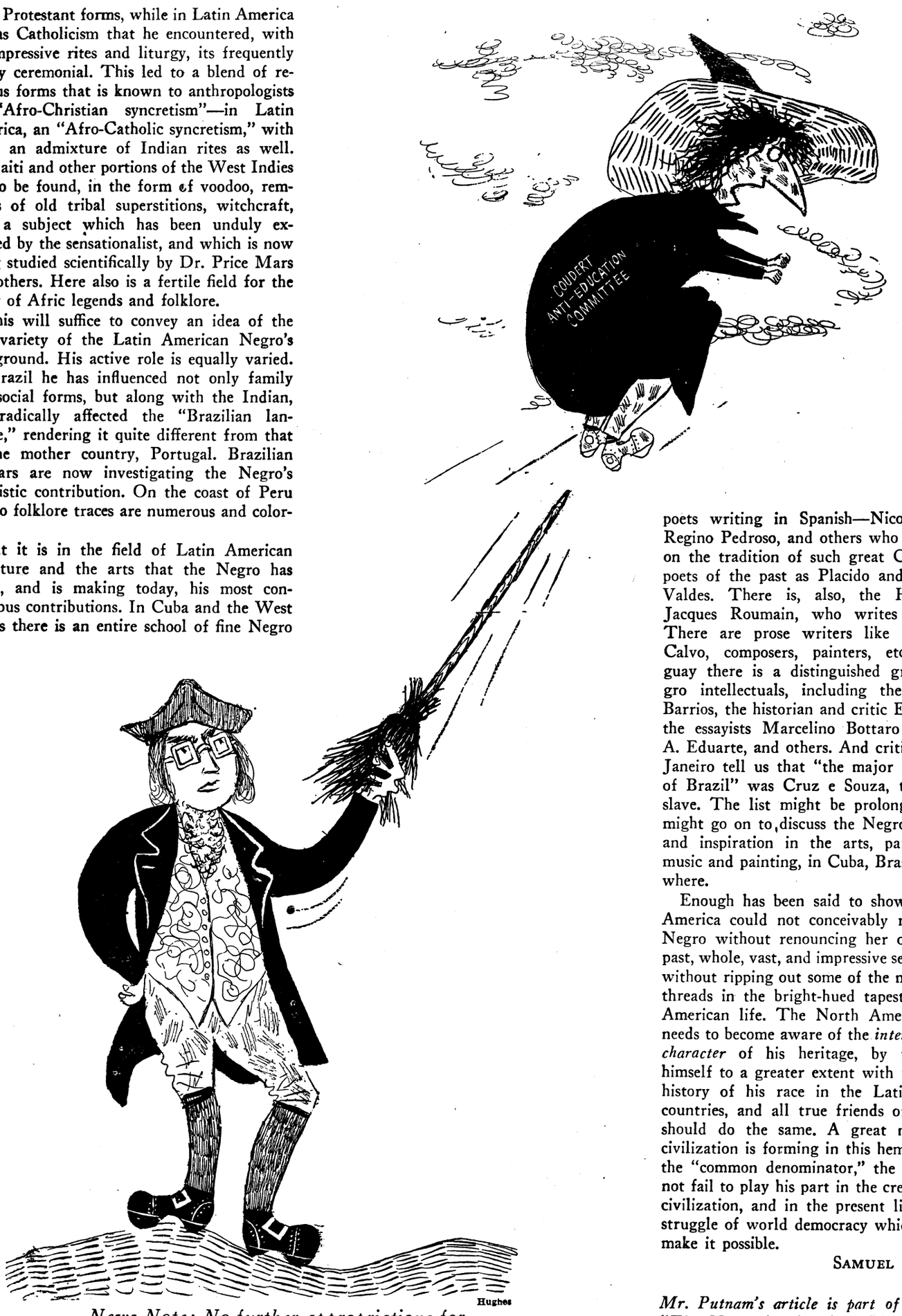
This will suffice to convey an idea of the rich variety of the Latin American Negro's background. His active role is equally varied. In Brazil he has influenced not only family and social forms, but along with the Indian, has radically affected the "Brazilian language," rendering it quite different from that of the mother country, Portugal. Brazilian scholars are now investigating the Negro's linguistic contribution. On the coast of Peru Negro folklore traces are numerous and colorful.

But it is in the field of Latin American literature and the arts that the Negro has made, and is making today, his most conspicuous contributions. In Cuba and the West Indies there is an entire school of fine Negro poets writing in Spanish—Nicolas Guillen, Regino Pedroso, and others who are carrying on the tradition of such great Cuban Negro poets of the past as Placido and Concepcion Valdes. There is, also, the Haitian poet Jacques Roumain, who writes in French. There are prose writers like Lino Novas Calvo, composers, painters, etc. In Uruguay there is a distinguished group of Negro intellectuals, including the poet Pilar Barrios, the historian and critic Eleno Cabral, the essayists Marcelino Bottaro and Mario A. Eduarte, and others. And critics in Rio de Janeiro tell us that "the major modern poet of Brazil" was Cruz e Souza, the son of a slave. The list might be prolonged and one might go on to discuss the Negro as a theme and inspiration in the arts, particularly in music and painting, in Cuba, Brazil, and elsewhere.

Enough has been said to show that Latin America could not conceivably renounce the Negro without renouncing her own cultural past, whole, vast, and impressive segments of it, without ripping out some of the most brilliant threads in the bright-hued tapestry of Latin American life. The North American Negro needs to become aware of the *inter-continental character* of his heritage, by familiarizing himself to a greater extent with the inspiring history of his race in the Latin American countries, and all true friends of the Negro should do the same. A great new people's civilization is forming in this hemisphere, and the "common denominator," the Negro, cannot fail to play his part in the creation of this civilization, and in the present life-and-death struggle of world democracy which alone can make it possible.

SAMUEL PUTNAM.

Mr. Putnam's article is part of a series on "The Negro in American Life" under the editorial direction of Herbert Aptheker.



News Note: No further appropriations for Coudert Committee.

NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

Editors
BARBARA GILES, A. B. MAGIL, RUTH McKENNEY, JOSEPH NORTH, JOSEPH STAROBIN, JOHN STUART.

Washington Editor
BRUCE MINTON

Business Manager
CARL BRISTEL

★

The Schneiderman Case

WENDELL WILLKIE'S decision to represent William Schneiderman, secretary of the Communist Party of California, before the United States Supreme Court in his fight to prevent revocation of his citizenship is heartening news for more reasons than one. Undoubtedly this will strengthen the chances of victory in what has become a test case involving basic constitutional rights. Two lower federal courts have ruled that Schneiderman's citizenship should be canceled on the ground that at the time he was naturalized in 1927 he "failed to divulge" membership in the Workers Party of America (which later became the Communist Party of the USA). In his defense Schneiderman contended that he was asked no question regarding Communist Party membership.

All lovers of civil liberties will applaud Willkie's action in representing Schneiderman before the highest court. The fact that a man of his prestige and conservative outlook undertakes the defense of a leading Communist undoubtedly reflects the changed political climate in the country during the past few months. It is a rebuke to the Red-baiters and to all those who attempt to subvert the law for purposes of political persecution.

Additional good news on the civil liberties front comes from California where that state's last remaining labor prisoners, Earl King, Frank Conner, and Ernest Ramsay, have been paroled after serving nearly five years of a twenty-year sentence on a framed-up charge of murder. Behind this decision was an intensive campaign waged by CIO unions and other progressive organizations, as well as leading liberals. Efforts will now be made to secure a complete pardon for the three men who were leaders of the Pacific Coast Marine Firemen, Oilers, Water Tenders and Wipers Association.

The Production Problem

HOW can strikes in defense industries be eliminated and the lag in production overcome? There are no simple answers, but one thing is certain: neither good labor relations nor all-out defense production can be achieved without the active participation of labor itself. This is an elementary proposition which the spokesmen for organized labor have insisted upon for months. Now with an anti-labor drive under way in Congress, and with the production machine still plodding along (as yet only fifteen percent of our productive capacity has been turned over to defense), cooperation among the forces involved in the battle to out-produce Hitler has become all the more urgent.

In a letter to CIO unions Pres. Philip Murray has proposed that "the President of the United States should immediately convene a national conference of representatives of labor, industry, and government looking toward the voluntary acceptance of a plan which will assure the peaceful solution of industrial disputes and guarantee a maximum production for our national defense program." Pres. William Green of the AFL, in testimony before the House Labor Committee, has made a similar proposal. And Rep. Vito Marcantonio has introduced a resolution requesting the President to call such a conference. The New York *Post,* in a leading editorial on December 1, likewise speaks up for a conference of this kind.

After months of bungling and mismanagement on the part of the business-as-usual crowd, the contribution which the American workers could make if only they were given half a chance is beginning to be appreciated in circles outside the labor movement. Senator Wagner, for example, in a recent broadcast said: "Labor should have a recognized status in the defense program on a par with industry—in planning, policy making, and actual administration." Wendell Willkie has called for the direct representation of labor in government. And Walter Lippmann, in his column of November 22, urged consideration of the Murray plan for industry councils and chided those who last year rejected the Reuther plan for enlisting the resources of the auto industry in the defense program. Increasingly it is being realized that these proposals are not a private affair of organized labor, but vitally concern the whole people and the defense of America. President Roosevelt should lose no time in convening the three-way conference suggested by Messrs. Murray and Green and Representative Marcantonio.

Ku Klux Governor

GOVERNOR TALMADGE of Georgia brings home to us once more that Nazi doctrines emanate not alone from Germany. At a hearing to consider pardons for six Ku Klux floggers the Georgia fuehrer boasted that he had himself once whipped a Negro. He cited the Apostle Paul in an effort to justify flogging and expressed sympathy for the six members of the fascist Klan who are serving sentences for lashing union workers in 1938.

No less shocking was the appearance of a Jew, Ike Wingrow, as attorney for the Klansmen. When Wingrow praised the Klan, he was sharply rebuked by Dr. Edward G. Mackay, superintendent of the Atlanta Methodist District, and Dr. Louis Newton, prominent Baptist leader. Dr. Mackay accurately described the Klan as "comparable only to the despicable Gestapo."

Talmadge's latest exposition of the Hitler ideology comes only a few months after he brought disgrace to his state by forcing the discharge of two prominent educators on the ground that they had failed to discriminate against Negroes. His antics are a reminder that in the American people's struggle to rid the world of Hitlerism there is also work to be done at home.

Herr Petain

AFTER the highly touted ceremonies in Berlin the week before, in which the vassals of the new order went through their obeisant paces, Hitler and his cronies got down to the real job that faces them in the West: what to do about the British drive in Libya, what to do about the control of the French North African colonies. This is the nub of the meeting between Goering and the men of Vichy, Petain and Darlan.

Hitler knows that the British also have ideas on the subject; control of the North African littoral forms one of the ultimate objectives in the British campaign. Already, the British have made some impressive gains in two weeks of fighting, and despite the continuing resistance from Italian and German units, the British have increased their chances of breaking into the western part of Libya and reaching the borders of Tunis.

For Hitler also knows that the American government's decision to extend lend-lease aid to the Free French means that the United States is making a direct bid for the loyalties of the 250,000 troops under the erstwhile control of General Weygand; Hitler has designs on Dakar, but he must move fast because the American occupation of Dutch Guiana indicates that the United States is fully aware of the threat that lies at Dakar.

Just what the Germans are offering Petain in return for the use of French merchant shipping and destroyers in the Mediterranean, and just what Petain is willing to give, therefore becomes secondary to the question of how the United States is going to react in the face of Germany's diplomatic offensive. It should be clear by now that the policy of appeasement is played out—that is evident in Petain's readiness to talk business with Hitler. What we have to do therefore is to take the initiative, take over the French colonies such as Martinique and the islands off Newfoundland, take over French Guiana, and prepare to move across, via the Azores, to Dakar itself.

But if we are to do this, the worst possible beginning was made in sending William Bullitt, the former ambassador to the Soviet Union and France, as a special representative in the Near East. Mr. Bullitt's mission obviously concerns relations with the French, rather than the Russians or the British. And unfortunately Bullitt is the man who held Paris for the Germans and it was he who elaborated the idea that Petain was not fascist, just a pal of America's in disguise. We

can never win this war with men like Bullitt around.

African Front

IN HIS article on the Libyan front in last week's issue our military expert, Colonel T., wrote that "it may be expected that the British will be able to match the tempo of von Rommel's march of April last and reach Bengazi in the first week of December." On November 30, less than two weeks after the opening of the British offensive, a British column was reported to have reached a point on the Gulf of Sidra directly below Bengazi. This cuts one of the most important Axis supply arteries, the road from Bengazi to Tripoli in western Libya. And it not only places the British in a position to advance to the port of Bengazi, but to cut off all escape for the Axis forces that are trying to break their way through the British encirclement in the Rezegh-Tobruk area, where the major fighting is taking place. By the time this issue of NEW MASSES is off press, it is possible that the battle of annihilation which British mechanized forces and infantry are waging in that area may be nearing its end. Assuming the capture of Bengazi, this would give the British control of half of Libya.

Though the Libyan battle is not yet won and there may be reverses as well as victories, the brilliant course of the campaign once more confirms the point made by Stalin in his speech of last July: that there are no invincible armies, that even the greatest military power the world has known can be beaten by superior quantities of equipment, superior manpower, superior morale. It remains for America, whose freedom and independence are so directly menaced, to safeguard its own and mankind's future by joining with Britain, the Soviet Union, and China in supplying all three with the indispensable elements of victory.

Crisis in Chile

ON NOVEMBER 17 Henry Luce's magazine *Time* published a contemptible personal attack upon Pedro Aguirre Cerda, then president of Chile. In the snide style affected by Mr. Luce's foreign editors, reflections were cast upon the reasons for President Cerda's poor health. Chilean resentment was instantaneous and President Roosevelt publicly branded the *Time* piece "a disgusting lie."

It so happened that the Chilean president was mortally ill during this episode; he died on November 25. His death has produced a crisis in his country. Pro-fascist groupings prompted by the Nazis sought to make capital of Chile's loss; an actual rightist coup d'etat was feared.

Sr. Cerda's last official act was to appoint Jeronimo Mendez, his Minister of Interior, to the post of acting President. The latter, head of the Radical Party, and a champion of the Popular Front, was greeted by a violent rightist-inspired clamor. The popular parties instantly made their position clear through demonstrations of loyalty to Mendez; their leaders visited him with condolences upon Cerda's death, and urged all possible unity in the crisis. The acting president replied with assurances that "all public institutions and democratic organizations will remain untouched," and that the army will continue "to honor the Republican view."

Chile's constitution provides for a presidential election within sixty days, a period in which reaction hopes to make hay. The Popular Front meanwhile is advancing its program, evidently with some success. In their desire "to implement without delay the program of the Popular Front," the people's leaders have agreed to push through Congress bills aimed at adjusting the most serious grievances of the masses. The principal one today is the rapidly rising cost of living. Price-control bills have been introduced, including one providing for a general thirty percent cut in rents. The rightist parties are resisting, of course, but they are in a dilemma inasmuch as the united people's parties hold a majority in both houses of Congress.

Considering Hitler's drive for power below the Rio Grande, it behooves this country to study and understand the complex problems confronting our southern neighbors. Such actions, therefore, as those of Mr. Luce's editors are more than reprehensible in this time of hemispheric emergency.

Reader's Indigestion

IF A FLEET of Nazi fliers were to come over and dump Goebbels' propaganda leaflets over St. Paul, Mobile, and Cheyenne there would be hell to pay. The sewers and incinerators of the land would be clogged in a hurry. Our army boys would clear the skies quicker than you could put your handkerchief to your nose. A fine business. The skunks. And yet we're not as alert as we like to think. The word of Goebbels circulates in the hundreds of thousands by grace of magazines like *Time* and *Readers Digest*. *Time's* brazen slander against the President of Chile was just what the doctor prescribed for breaking up good neighbor relations. Mr. Roosevelt is to be congratulated for publicly rebuking the Luce publication. And now comes *Readers Digest* with a ten-carat swastika for Max Eastman, who joins other RD immortals like Lindbergh and Valtin. Eastman's goebbelgoebbel against the Soviet Union appeared originally in Eugene Lyons' *American Mercury* as a kind of digest of Lyons' indigestible book. It is a miserably cheap attempt to throw dust into the eyes of the millions who at last see the Soviet Union with clarity. And no wonder. Everything is at stake for the typewriter twisters. Their confidence game is just about through, and they squeak and gibber in a frantic finale.

To Free Earl Browder

EARL BROWDER has been in Atlanta Penitentiary for nearly three-quarters of a year. During that time hundreds of thousands of Americans have learned the facts of his case, facts so compelling that great numbers of the American people have pressed forward, from every category of our national life, urging executive action on his behalf. For example, a clergy's petition points out that on Christmas Day Earl Browder will have served nine months in prison and that "the time he has already served exceeds that served in cases where criminal intent and consequences were charged and proved." "But," the petition continues, "the Attorney General stated that this case does not involve any question of moral turpitude on Mr. Browder's part." They requested that the President exercise his power of clemency and release Browder "during the approaching Christmas season when the spirit of good will is abroad in the land."

Simultaneously, the Citizens' Committee to Free Earl Browder announces that the crews of sixty ships have written the President urging executive action and that a representative group of descendants of 1776 has issued a call for a mass meeting in historic Cooper Union in New York to rectify "a shocking miscarriage of justice." "The framers of the Constitution," they said in announcing the meeting, "gave the President of the United States the power of clemency, providing relief for the victims of the rigors of the law without weakening the integrity of the law itself." The principal speaker at this meeting, which will be held Monday night, December 8, will be Francis Fisher Kane, former United States Attorney of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Josephine Truslow Adams, a direct descendant of John Adams and John Quincy Adams, will act as chairman.

Readers Forum

More on Copper

To New Masses: I have just read the article by Bruce Minton on "Copperheads and Bottlenecks" with great interest. Further investigation into the refusal of the copper trust to substantially improve working conditions in the mines, and the Anaconda Copper Mining Co.'s support of Senator Burton K. (Kwisling) Wheeler's appeasement policies should be very revealing.

The miners here in Butte are overwhelmingly in favor of the government's foreign policy and are rapidly seeing through Wheeler's aid to Hitler. A more loyal group of Americans would be hard to find. For years they have been demanding that hotboxes in the Butte mines be cooled off and fresh air be fanned into every working place. But the Anaconda Copper Mining Co. has stuck to its program of profits first, last, and only.

About a year ago one miner was killed and a score barely saved from the sulphur gases on one of the levels of the Steward Mine. Several days ago three miners and one shift boss were killed at the St. Lawrence Mine by dead air. Tuberculosis and silicosis are rampant. The large turnover of labor that Minton mentions is due more to heat and lack of air than anything else.

Of late, the Anaconda Copper Mining Co. has been pursuing a policy of eliminating day's pay men and forcing them to work as contractors. The result is that there are not enough day's pay men to give proper service to the contractors, who are the actual miners breaking the rock. This lowers the productivity of the individual miners. In addition, the failure of the management to supply sufficient timber and tools in many places also holds up the miner.

Further, the nature of the work in the mines here requires that the miner and his family have adequate health safeguards—medical care and hospitalization at price levels within their reach. The miners have been trying to secure adequate hospital contracts with the hospitals and the medical association, but they sure have to fight every inch of the way to get it.

There are always a large number of experienced miners trying to get jobs here. But the company rarely hires more than one out of ten. Any talk that there is a shortage of miners is just simply not true. During the last war the mines here used to employ more than 15,000 miners. Today there are about 7,000 employed, including the craftsmen and other employees besides the miners. The company's own figures are very interesting when compared to their figures of 1937's employment.

A little magazine called the *Anode,* published quarterly by the Bureau of Safety of the ACM (it used to be published monthly), gives figures of total shifts worked in the mines here during each quarter. During the quarter June-August 1937 the *Anode* states that 554,698 total shifts were worked. Since the miners worked six days a week then, we compute that 7,396 men were employed. That was before Japan invaded China and long before Hitler went into active aggression.

Since then the greatest number of total shifts worked was in the quarter June—August 1941 (the last quarter reported) when 473,615 total shifts were worked, about fifteen percent less than the 1937 quarter. That certainly should tell a story; a drop of fifteen percent in spite of the great need for copper by the government. In addition to that, since a great part of these shifts are worked on manganese mining at the Emma Mine, we can see that the drop in total shifts worked in copper mining is even greater.

One more point. The Anaconda Copper Mining Co. press here has consistently opposed and criticized all aid to the Soviet Union. Senator Wheeler undoubtedly has great influence with the ACM.

Leo Garnet.

Butte, Mont.

Books for Army Camps

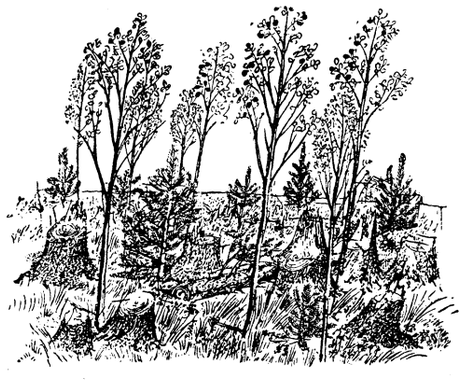
To New Masses: I think your magazine can perform a valuable service by carrying on a discussion of what the boys in the training camps are reading. Offhand, it might appear that the whole question of books is a pretty unimportant part of military training, but a moment's thought will convince anyone that reading for relaxation and study is not to be overlooked.

It would be interesting to have the following questions answered: Do all the camps have libraries, and if so how satisfactory are they? How are the books contributed? What books are most in demand? What can be done to improve the library facilities? Is there any opportunity for group discussion of books?

You will be interested to know that the Chicago Public Library recently collected 10,000 books to be sent to soldiers at camps in the Sixth Corps Area. Citizens of our city were asked to leave novels, biography, travel, and other popular non-fiction at the main library or any of the forty-six branches. Contributors were asked to bring in only the books that they themselves would want to read, not discards from cellars and attics. As a result, the library reports, only about ten percent of the donations had to be thrown out, in contrast to a book drive during World War I, which brought in old textbooks, sales catalogues, and outmoded juveniles. In the recent drive all the books were sorted, selected for the different camps, and prepared for immediate use by members of the Chicago library staff.

I wonder if the same practice is being followed in other cities. It has real merits. I am sure that many people would gladly turn over some of their books for such a fine cause.

At the same time, the method strikes me as being a little haphazard. Shouldn't it be combined with another method—that is, the direct purchase by the government of books? Surely, this is a necessary part of camp life, and money must be allotted for it. The books could be selected on two principles: (1) Requests from readers in the camps for certain books should be solicited and fulfilled. (2) A board of competent librarians could select books for the various camp libraries.



An article on the subject which I read the other day contains some interesting facts bearing on this problem. Two camp librarians report that half of the books soldiers read in the camps today are non-fiction. According to one Western Corps Area librarian, about half the men using the library are developing some new or existing interest: Spanish, television, philosophy, the techniques of poetry, radio, etc. Most of the men have serious interests. One complained because "The girls give me the *Red Book* and *Snappy Stories* till I'm bored stiff. I'd like an honest-to-God law book to snap my mind back into place." The story is told of an officer who fainted when he learned that a selectee went to the library to ask for a book on psychology that would help him adjust to camp life.

Another problem that would be worth investigating is the physical conditions of various libraries. Are they congenial, conducive to reading? Or are they mere store rooms without proper light or decent chairs? In the last war there weren't enough facilities. We learn that in one camp library men used to sit on the window sills or on the floor. The Fort Des Moines Library "was so jammed that some of the men called friends to answer fake telephone calls and then took their chairs."

We must see to it that similar conditions are not repeated today. It would be a good idea, I think, either to send someone to visit various camps to survey the library situation, or, if that is impossible, to get letters from the boys themselves in which they discuss their reading tastes and library problems.

Grace Perkins.

Chicago.

Unwanted Vacation

To New Masses: I thought that you might like to know something about the educational crisis in our town. The educational machinery of the city of Rockford came to an abrupt stop on November 6, as nearly 13,000 students and 475 teachers left the twenty-three public school buildings for a six-week economy vacation. The blackout of education was ordered by the school board last summer to forestall a threatened deficit of $150,000 in the budget.

Rockford isn't a poor city. Unemployment is at a minimum here, and profits are rolling in for local manufacturers. There are almost 300 factories, large and small, in the city, and at the moment an ammunition plant is being built, and over $3,000,000 is being spent by a local airplane governor company to build a larger factory. Including the suburbs, the population of the city is near 100,000 and is increasing daily with an influx of workers in defense industries here.

But the schools are closed, and as usual, the penalty for the inaction of the city fathers, who have been wringing their hands over the "tragic situation" since midsummer, is falling on the children of working class families. The only solution the good burghers can find is to increase the educational tax rate. This will, of course, place the burden on small taxpayers, who can ill afford it.

In the meantime, highly trained and underpaid teachers are trying to eke out a living by selling in department stores during the holidays or working in factories. The North Central association has threatened to withdraw the "accredited" rating from the schools, and a burglary epidemic in the city since the closing of the schools has been traced directly to teen-age boys.

V. R. Z.

Rockford, Ill.

"THE COPPERHEADS"

William Blake's novel about New York during the Civil War crackles with wit and learning. The fifth column rascals and the forces that defeated them. Reviewed by Samuel Sillen.

THE COPPERHEADS, *by William Blake. Dial Press. $3.*

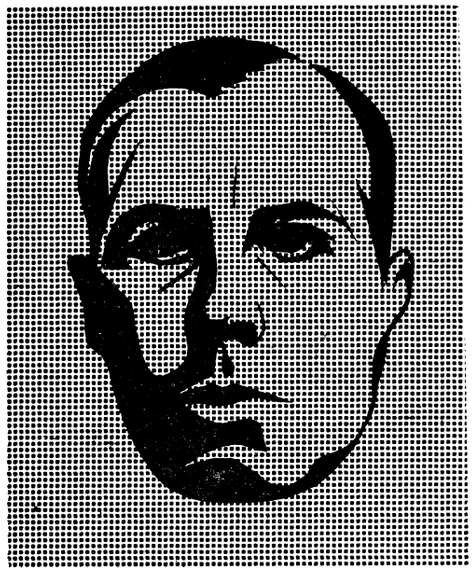
THERE are two good reasons why so many higher-ups in Washington are reading Blake's book today. One is that it crackles with learning and wit, an uncommonly absorbing tale of practiced villainy and shining patriotism. The other is that, with rare historical insight, it exposes the pretenses and designs of the fifth column mentality. Mr. Roosevelt has aptly revived the term Copperhead to describe traitors who connive with Hitler to poison American democracy from within. And William Blake has richly documented the Civil War crisis in which the republic was similarly imperiled, not only by the aggressions of a backward social order but by enemy collaborators in the North. Technically an "historical" novel, *The Copperheads* is anything but dated in theme. It has the urgency of a bulletin from the battlefront and it will be read with the same excited interest.

Not that *The Copperheads* was written to order for the present crisis. The book was conceived a few years ago. I recall a conversation with Blake at the end of the war in Spain in which he suggested the analogy between the Vallandinghams, Fernando Woods, and other Civil War traitors, and the fifth columnists of Republican Spain. But even at that time Blake did not intend any single analogy. The whole point was that in every critical historical situation, in the first American Revolution no less than in the Russian October Revolution, it had been necessary to crush Copperheads before progress could be fully won. And I stress this point because Blake's novel, unlike so many historical novels of our day, was not written opportunistically, in order to take advantage of an obvious and mechanical parallel. Rather, the strength of the analogy derives from the author's grasp of the underlying forces in the historical situation which he treats; his analysis remains valid whatever the turns and shifts of later events.

The basic approach to the war is that of Marx and Engels as developed in the articles and correspondence of *The Civil War in the United States.* Today we can say with assurance that the Union cause was the cause of freedom and progress; but, as Blake reminds us in a memorable scene, there was a sharp division over support of Lincoln on the part even of men who claimed to represent socialism and the interests of the working class. The scene is a meeting at Faulhaber's Hall on Second Avenue in New York. The small community of German political exiles has gathered to discuss the outbreak of war. Joseph Weydemeyer and Friedrich Sorge, Marx's correspondents in America, seek to enlist the exiles for the northern cause. But the "harmonist" Weitling argues pompously against them, mouthing the ultra-leftist rigmarole about Lincoln's being a friend of the rich, and denouncing the war as a trap for the workingman. The Marxists reply that the collapse of democracy in America would be a terrible blow to labor in the United States and the entire world. The plantation economy must give way to an industrial economy. The slave must be emancipated. "I want to turn this meeting from talk to action," declares Weydemeyer, and after volunteering himself he recruits over 300 refugees for Lincoln's army amidst enthusiastic cheering.

The myriad events and personalities depicted in *The Copperheads*—and it is a remarkably fertile book—are held together within this interpretive historical framework. Despite its episodic character and its tendency to fly off in too many directions, the novel has a basic unity derived from the intellectual analysis of the theme as a whole. The struggle is not one of abstract principles primarily. Money is at the center of an intricate web of social relations. And the chief reason why Jurgen Van Rensselaer is not merely a rascal, but a fascinating rascal, is that he is so disarmingly candid about the financial chicanery which lesser men smother with words.

Jurgen is really the kingpin of the story. A scion of New York's landed gentry he is by inheritance and taste—but even more, by economic design—a Copperhead leader. He works behind the scenes, using the Democratic politicians as tools. The progress of the war is neatly registered in Jurgen's agile brain; and there is no surer guarantee of northern success than his decision to hedge his bets in the stock exchange. With equal poise he can use a draft riot or a mistress to boost his shares. He has incredible cheek, and he can demolish an opponent with a bullet or an epigram as the occasion requires. Jurgen is the elegant figure on the book's jacket who watches the ticker tape intently, his back turned on a riot, a woman, and the Union flag. He is the chief character creation of the novel. It is through him that we meet a moral skinflint like Zachary Stringer, a cagey cotton converter like Mr. Royall Calhoun Blodgett, a crooked politico like Mayor Fernando Wood of New York. And it is largely through his eyes that we learn to despise the whole kit and caboodle of his Copperhead associates.



William Blake

The only sensitive spot in Van Rensselaer's tough moral hide is Maria Meinhardt, the lovely, rebellious creature who is the center of a romantic quadrangle. Maria, daughter of a German baker, is the protegee of the little socialist community. Weydemeyer, "Uncle Joseph," is a boarder at the Meinhardts, and Sorge is Maria's piano teacher. Co-suitors with the wealthy and diabolic Jurgen are the Yankee mechanic Frank Doughty and the conscientious but unimaginative Karl von der Weyde. By exploring this quadrangle, Blake introduces us to the world of the high tone patroon society, the native Yankee group, and the artistic, class-conscious German family. Maria is the key that unlocks many doors.

The complex romantic setup, convenient as a device, is always on the verge of losing its credibility, and I for one prefer Blake in the Congreve mood to Blake in the romantic manner. All the characters are excellent when they stop pretending to be in love and start going about their real business. Jurgen, for example, is exquisite in the dinner scene with his mistress Betty Carstairs and her cuckold husband; Jurgen boasts of the liaison with superb cleverness and divine impunity. Karl is fine as a secret service agent, and so is Frank as a daring young major. And Maria is worthy and true as an advocate of women's rights, as a nurse fighting to get privileged officers' wenches off the boat so that there will be room for nurses to tend the wounded, as a champion of the underdog. But all four, to this perhaps insufficiently sentimental soul, just don't gel as lovers in the grand manner. And the proof of the pudding is in the last pages with their echoes of Enoch Arden, in which Maria's presumably dead husband re-

turns to find his wife married to another, self-sacrificingly keeps his existence unknown, only to cause untold suffering, and so on for a few pages of totally un-Blakean and totally unnecessary bathos.

But if I get that off my chest it is only to return hastily to the richness of the book. Nobody has described so many facets of the Civil War period within the pages of one novel, a fact which is all the more remarkable since the action is necessarily confined largely to New York, the Copperhead stronghold. The scenes dealing with the German community are warm, alive, authentic. Blake here writes not only as a scholar who has mastered the newspapers and documents of the period, but as a descendant of this community who had absorbed as a child its traditions and memories. These German refugees of '48 come alive for the first time in fiction. One appreciates their earnest idealism, their songs, their democratic ideas. And, in another vein, Blake has told for the first time, with the proper social background and pageantry, the whirlwind story of New York's draft riots, the impression made by the Russian fleet upon its arrival in American waters, the political machinations of the Confederacy in supposedly neutral Canada, the extravagant monkey business of Wall Street.

Beyond that, an imposing number of minor figures, both real and fictitious, appear in the book to suggest the color and confusion of the times. There is Walt Whitman, the male nurse at Washington, and Fitz-James O'Brien, the tavern poet who had every experience short of genius. There is Goliath, the North Carolina man mountain, and Marcus Szabo, Hungarian patriot who avoided work with systematic beauty. And there is Father McGlynn, the parish priest who told his fellow-Irishmen that "they cannot divide the races in New York because there are none when it gets down to fundamentals. They never ask your creed when they collect rent, the gas bill, or taxes."

740 pages—and crammed with the specific and little known details which make a whole period come alive. The sparks fly in every one of the swift, brief chapters. A lively and inexhaustible intelligence is at work here communicating its own electric vitality to the reader. At his best, at his most characteristic expression, Blake forgets about the ordinary artifices of fiction and creates his own form; it is only when the artifices come into play that we get mad and clamor for the author to come out from under cover. And he comes out soon enough, enriching us with the historical data and understanding, the devastating epigram, the pageant scene, the lightning flash across the broker's office, the meeting at Faulhaber's Hall. Some critics called *The Copperheads* good history but so-so fiction. That isn't the point at all. It is superb Blake. And that is a delightful and exhilarating and informing compound that nobody can categorize with a textbook cliche. Read *The Copperheads* and I think you will see what I mean.

SAMUEL SILLEN.

A Story of Rotterdam

DAY OF THE TRUMPET, *by David Cornel De Jong. Harper & Bros. $2.50.*

THE murderous Nazi bombing of Rotterdam after the Dutch had already laid down their arms was a shock to the civilized world. Especially to those who have been in Holland—that nether land stretching flat and green as a billiard table, the inter-threading canals, the sleepy cattle, the windmills, the neat red-brick towns, the English-speaking policemen—the headlines of that unnecessary act of brutality seemed printed in the blood of a patient and betrayed people.

In his simple and moving novel Mr. De Jong tells the story. For three-quarters of its length his book winds like a lazy canal, reflecting the placid existence of a Dutch burgher family. In that August of 1939 in Daverham by the wheatfields reclaimed from the Zuider Zee, the Hamings run their general store, grandmother sleeps in her eighteenth century bed redolent of cheese and wine, the boy Dirkie meanders along the dikes. The provincial little town with its funny towers, the cast-iron woman chasing her cast-iron husband around the church clock, the earthy folk moving slowly in the pre-determined patterns of their stern Calvinist God—all this is presented like a series of Flemish genre pieces: smooth with color, lyrical rather than dramatic, true and yet limited by the understanding bred of the kitchen and the marriage bed.

But there are dissonances in this domestic symphony. Daily the old grandfather inspects the dikes and curses the complacency of the authorities. And his son, Renzel—in the one outburst of direct political speaking in the book—fears the imminent threat from Berlin and yet sees only defeatism and treachery in the Colijn government. Gifted with half an understanding, he realizes that only the Soviet Union will stop Hitler; and yet, hopelessly nihilistic, he condemns the Soviets as "just as barbarian and primitive" as the beasts across the frontier. And while the storm clouds gather, German "tourists" sit unruffled by the banks of the river and sketch plans of the new defense works.

Yet, despite these foreshadowings, Mr. De Jong's weakness is precisely that he has written a war and peace novel in which these two states are too discretely set apart. One suspects that the author, who left Holland at the age of ten and revisited but once in 1938, has looked back upon a boyhood landscape, and thus shaped his characters sentimentally and through a mist. Significantly his most lyrical passages are the broodings of the boy Dirkie, and although this lends a certain fairytale flavor to the writing (a fifth columnist, for example, like a Disney witch), it fails to add deeply to our understanding of why the invasion came and why it was as ruthlessly successful as it was. Today the novelist of intelligence must realize that the war was implicit in the peace, just as the nature of the peace-to-come is conditioned by the nature of the war. Had Mr. De Jong written his novel on more than one level, had he introduced several characters drawn from either the upper or lower millstones of modern society, his novel would have been just as warm-hearted but much more revealing.

Nevertheless, his account of the invasion—perhaps because of the pastoral that had preceded it—explodes with terrific force. While the Dutch clung to their unreal neutrality, the Nazis overran the land—so swiftly that the dikes could not be blown up and the lowlands flooded. Flowers of evil bloomed in the May sky. In one unforgettable scene Mr. De Jong shows us his peaceful old grandmother killing with an axe the young Nazi parachutist who had plummeted into her court, tangled in the shrouds. And his nightmarish description of the destruction of Rotterdam, especially considering that Mr. De Jong was not an eyewitness, reveals a gifted and vivid imagination.

Certainly this novel, though limited in scope, is a heartening contribution to the literature of this war. One's faith may be renewed in these placid people—the people who fought valiantly against their Inquisitors of an earlier day. They do not fear that their freedom is forever submerged. They reclaimed their lands from the sea.

SIDNEY ALEXANDER.

Mr. Cudahy's Excesses

THE ARMIES MARCH, *by John Cudahy. Chas. Scribner's Sons. $2.75.*

LAST year Mr. Cudahy, former ambassador to Poland and Belgium, joined that great humanitarian of the Bonus March, Herbert Hoover, in a plea to send food to Nazi-occupied Europe. They pretended to be embittered when their crocodile chorus met with suspicion—the suspicion that Hoover was trying to relieve Hitler of one of his most serious problems. Cudahy's book, written in a superpious, Father Coughlin style, is a slick piece of work in the service of fascism.

Heaven forbid that Mr. Cudahy should say directly what he means. He uses the interview technique. Let the other fellow talk for you. Ask any prominent Nazi a leading question. Give him two pages to answer. Object feebly. Then allow him three pages to overwhelm your objection. Finally, turn with a self-deprecating smile to your audience, and say, "There's no answering these terrible fellows." In der fuehrer's presence Mr. Cudahy is like Trilby before Svengali. He dreads but, alas, he can't resist. Don't be surprised if you read that "most Germans are bored by the thought of governing themselves," or that "it is difficult to recognize . . . any great difference between the self-imposed dictatorship of Britain and those of Germany, Italy, and Russia." Put it down partly to post-hypnotic suggestion.

But Mr. Cudahy's ears were already prepared for such music. In 1936 in Berlin he felt that a project for the economic appease-

ment of Germany which implied a lower standard of living for English and French workers "had possibilities" and he "dashed up the stairway three steps at a time" to tell Ambassador Dodd about it. The ambassador, ill in bed, preferred to discuss Thomas Jefferson, about whom he was reading at the moment. The scene is particularly amusing because Cudahy intends to convict Dodd of irrelevance, whereas one gets a clear impression of Dodd's contempt for this lackey of the Nazis and French traitors.

Mr. Cudahy's intention to use food as a political instrument becomes clear in his chapter on Spain. The hunger of the Spanish people leads him to reflect that "the resilience of the human system is an impressive exhibit in present-day Spain." He was led to this impressive exhibit of mental power by that old friend of Lindbergh, Dr. Alexis Carrel, sponsor of the elite man. We are told that Franco feels himself a commoner and has the common touch despite his conspicuous innate dignity. There is no evidence that he has ever used his great power in a dictatorial way. The Falange, far from being fascist, is openly leftist. It is a mistake to think that the foreign policy of Spain has been influenced by Italy's and Germany's help in the struggle against Communism.

When Mr. Cudahy speaks of Germany, it seems as though some Nazi Dybbuk had gotten hold of him. He tries to talk in his own unctuous voice, but the stronger spirit seizes him and makes him say more than he should. Only once is he coy about repeating what he heard. "I regret," he says, "that von Ribbentrop spoke off the record at this meeting, for what he said would have been of great interest to the American people." The sly Mr. Cudahy. Honor bound for once. Otherwise he is free to say that Hitler has no aggressive intentions whatsoever against the United States. That there was a strange gentleness and idealism about Hess, and that his mad trip was a great surprise to everyone in Nazidom. That there is an unaffected democratic spirit in the German army.

Mr. Cudahy warns us not to judge Hitlerism by its excesses. But we will judge Mr. Cudahy by his. They, as well as his credo, are outrageous.

CHARLES HUMBOLDT.

The New Siam

THAILAND, THE NEW SIAM, *by Virginia Thompson. The Macmillan Co. $5.*

WELL known for her researches in the history of southeast Asia, especially her fine work on Indo-China, Miss Thompson now gives us an impressively documented, authoritative work on the new Siam. It is one of the volumes in the research series of the Institute of Pacific Affairs. The details of this little-known nation's historical development, its fiscal problems, its economy based on rubber, tin, rice, and teakwood will naturally be of most interest for the specialist. But Siam is also increasingly in the day's news. It is located at the heart of Japanese antag-

onisms with the British and Dutch empires; it borders Burma and India to the west, China to the north, and across its Kra peninsula lies the back door route to Singapore, which is now the bastion of British, Australian, and American defenses in the south Pacific. Mr. Hull has made it clear that the United States has a stake in Siam's integrity; it is equally clear from Japan's blueprints for a "new order" in Asia that the Japanese consider Siam a logical arena for their expansion.

But Siam is not a mere puppet of foreign influences, despite the traditionally British control of its economy and the presence of Japanese troops at its borders. As Miss Thompson describes in detail, the Thailanders have been undergoing a national revolution of real proportions since the *coup d'etat* of 1932 and the abdication of the monarch in 1935. Siam's recent history is, in fact, a part of the great national struggle in Asia, stretching from Turkey in 1922 to China's war of liberation which is still going on. It is this national regeneration which best explains Siam's role in regaining Indo-Chinese territory in January 1941, the lands which imperialist France tore away in the last part of the nineteenth century. Miss Thompson's book helps explain the scope and limitations of the national rebirth and may help the layman understand the role that Siam will play as the Far Eastern crisis approaches its showdown.

JOSEPH STAROBIN.

Brief Reviews

CAESAR STAGG, *by George Cronyn. Greystone Press. $2.50.*

Caesar Stagg is the lurid tale of the life, murders, and death of the municipal Mussolini, a bad little man who tries to take over an American city and gets a slug of lead for his trouble. Mr. Cronyn has violated several of the inflexible rules of the murder thriller—this book includes no detective and the death of the unsavory hero does not occur until page 395. Furthermore, the reader is made privy to all the secrets of the story so that he watches the plot unfold over the author's shoulder, so to speak. As a result the carefully detailed plot lacks suspense toward its obvious conclusion. Despite the technical weaknesses, the book serves a worthwhile purpose.

Mr. Cronyn has not hesitated to expose the machinations of big city political machines; he reveals, too, how a petty boss may develop into a potentially dangerous native fascist.

POOR HARVEST

The new Theater Guild production grapples with serious material but fails to make the grade. . . . Joy Davidman casts a suspicious glance at Mr. Hitchcock. . . . New recordings.

IN HER new play, "Hope for a Harvest," which is being presented by the Theater Guild, Sophie Treadwell had a sound idea and sound material, and proceeded to worry both of them into the ground. So what started out to be a highly literate and frequently solid interpretation of one phase of American life became, in the end, a treacly comedy and material for inconsequential celluloid.

Carlotta Thatcher, born and bred in California, returns home from Europe for the first time in many years. Depressed by what she has seen abroad—the spread of the forces of reaction, the destruction of the finest in European culture—she had hoped to find healthy American life flourishing in the rich California valleys. Instead she finds her cousin, Elliott Martin, sunk in shabby-genteel poverty on lands that were once of the richest, the operator of a gas station who has let his ranch lands go to seed.

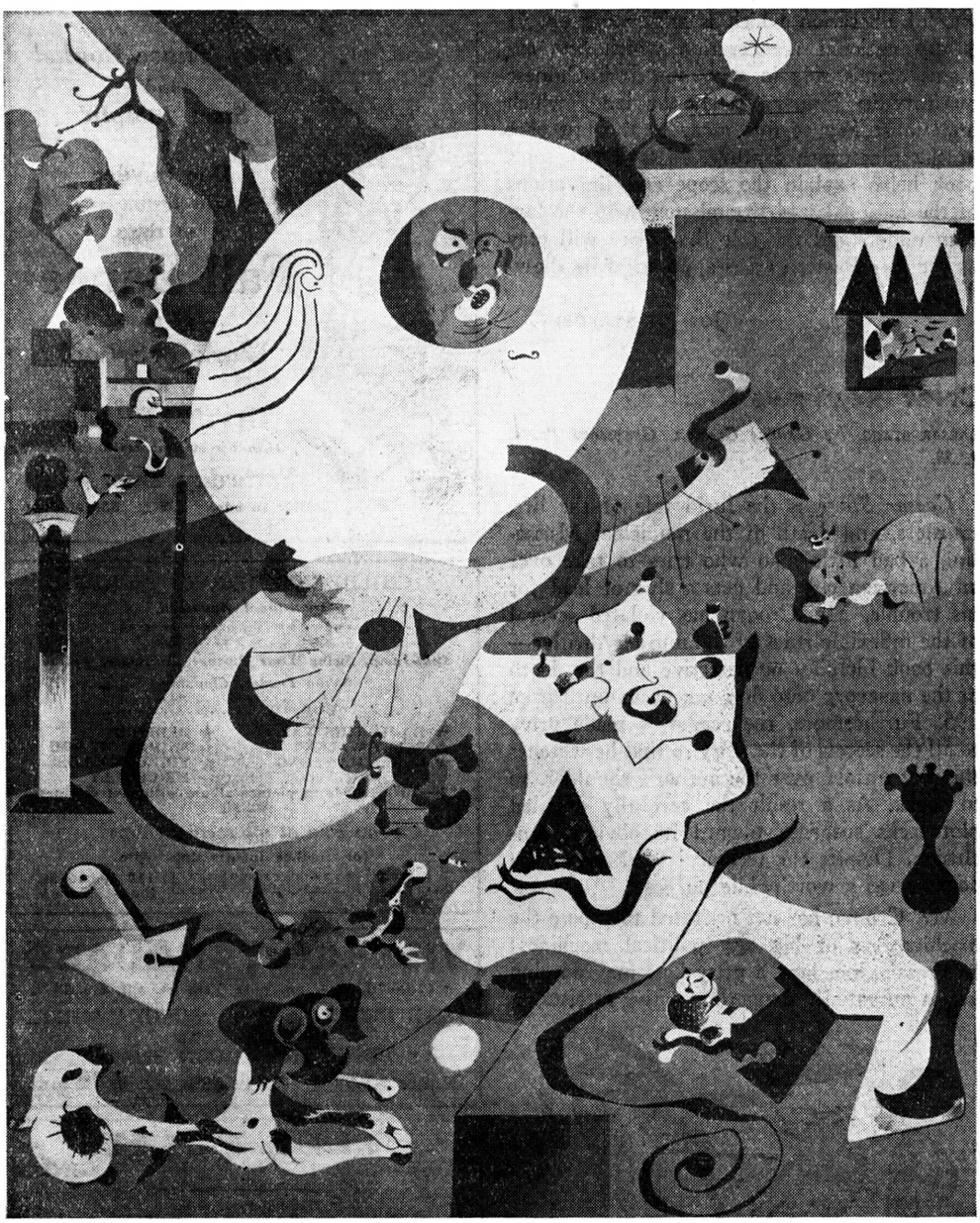
Elliott "explains" all this to Carlotta. He has lost his drive, his incentive. There's no sense in growing peaches; there is no price for them. There's no sense in growing wheat; there is too much of it. The old American stock has degenerated, he says. There's no point in working. He reveals intense chauvinistic hatred of the foreign born—Japanese and Italian—who have moved into California and "dispossessed" the original owners. These people thrive, he says, but they are of "inferior blood."

AS AN AMERICAN Carlotta instinctively feels that her cousin's attitude is wrong; she despises his chauvinism, is convinced she can make a go of the old homestead; make the desert bloom again. She cultivates the friendship of their Italian neighbor, Joe de Lucchi, sells him another piece of their land to get money for improvements on her own. Joe is the possessor of a deep urge for the earth; he loves it; he has worked it day and night. If there is no price for peaches, he says, grow wheat; if there is no price for wheat, grow potatoes; if there is no price for potatoes, grow tomatoes; if there is no price for anything, what the hell, there's so much more to eat!

That this is a naive solution of the problem of dispossessed farmers must be fairly obvious, yet Miss Treadwell goes no deeper in her analysis. She has failed, signally, to indicate *why* there is no price for wheat, for peaches, for anything; why, as Elliott Martin says, there is so much of everything that everybody is starving to death. Her solution seems to be, Work. Work without a frame of reference. Just work hard, as Joe de Lucchi works, and everything will be all right.

This is apparently as far as she can understand the problem, even though she can reflect it honestly. For additional proof of her incapacity, there is her gratuitous treatment of another class of dispossessed landworkers, the Okies, whom she introduced into her play purely for the obvious purpose of evoking a cheap and easy laugh. And in exactly the way William Saroyan introduced them into his play *Love's Sweet Song.*

The initial problem of the play is complicated by still another; the problem of Elliott Martin's young daughter, Tony. Tony is in love with Joe de Lucchi's boy; she is pregnant by another local boy, who deserts her and marries elsewhere. And so facile is Miss Treadwell's handling of this situation as well (intended to be somewhat symbolic), that she



DUTCH INTERIOR *by Joan Miro. A painting included in the first large survey of the artist's work, currently being shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.*

ties it all up neatly in the end, in a lovely little package. Tony marries Joe's boy; Joe and Elliott shake hands over a bottle of red wine; Elliott gets back his drive to work, is going to marry Carlotta, and the desert, it is implied, will blossom like the rose.

Only the Okies, driving by in their tin-can cars, are left to rot, the prey of the dust bowl, the banks, the vigilantes, the Associated Farmers, whose role in despoiling the American scene is never touched upon at all.

THE PLAY would not be worth this much space, despite its literate (and very talky) quality, were it not for the fact that the playwright shows definite ability to grasp serious material and transmute it into dramatic terms. This material, and a handful of good characterizations, could have been turned to more vital purpose had Miss Treadwell spent a little more time, a little more thought, on exactly what it was she meant to say, and examined more deeply the causes for the tragedy she portrays. Then she would have understood the basic reasons for Elliott's chauvinism; for the horrible, uprooted existence of the Okies; for the facts of starvation and demoralization in the face of plenty.

In the major roles, the Guild has cast a host of fine performers: Fredric March (as Elliott) offers one of his best characterizations; he is even better on the stage than on the screen. His wife, Florence Eldridge, has womanly charm and a fine sympathetic quality as Carlotta. I was particularly impressed by the performance of young Judy Parrish as Elliott's daughter, Tony. She was exactly right; she possesses vitality, intelligence, and a quality of intensity that is stirring to watch. Alan Reed (as Joe de Lucchi) was cut more in the conventional stage-Italian pattern, but had moments of real conviction, especially in his long speech about the land. The reliable Doro Merande was very amusing in an extraneous role of job-seeker.

ALVAH BESSIE.

A Rake Reforms

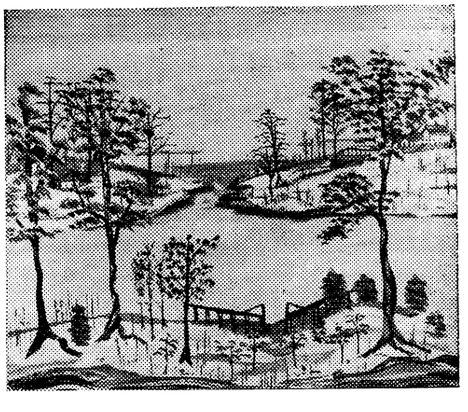
Alfred Hitchcock's production of "Suspicion". . . . A seasick elopement.

A FILM like *Suspicion* deserves serious consideration, although not serious praise. Here is an attempt at a screen translation of an authentic masterpiece. Francis Iles' *Before the Fact* is one of the few great murder mysteries of the world, excellent alike in characterization and in construction. A tale of a pleasant murderer and a woman born to be murdered, it moves to a supremely satisfactory conclusion—the heroine's sticky end. No book better deserved faithful reproduction; and none has been more grotesquely distorted by the movies. For, to make a Roman holiday and allow the girls to go on loving Cary Grant, Francis Iles' beautiful plot has been butchered. *Suspicion* moves grimly toward its inevitable climax—and then, in a shamefaced and hurried

ART TO AID THE DEFENSE IN OKLAHOMA BOOK TRIALS

(Above) Pictures by Peggy Bacon and Harry Stromberg, (left) by Edith Glazer, (right) by Ella Poll.

Four of the pictures included in the art sale and auction, which will be held at the Puma Gallery, 59 West 56th St., New York, from December 3 to 7. A long list of artists, whose work has been donated to aid the defendants in the trial (they were imprisoned for the possession of books), include Bacon, Biddle, Curry, Davis, Fiene, Gropper, Groth, Walkowitz, Young, Gellert, Ishikagi, Jones, Kent, Lozowick, Matisse, Richter, Refregier, Schreiber, Spivak, Tschachasov, and others.



two minutes, tacks on an innocent and quite impossible ending. It seems he really wasn't a murderer, only a thief, and he's now completely reformed anyway. And his droopy wife, far from dying of an undetectable poison, goes home to live happily forever after. Not all of Hitchcock's directional skill can make that ending hold water.

More's the pity. The rest of *Suspicion* is little short of magnificent. You believe in that murderer. You shudder when Cary Grant smirks at his wife; and when the delicate and wistful Joan Fontaine is terrified, your heart and lungs fairly wilt in sympathy. The study of a young girl impulsively falling in love with which the film begins is admirable. Never descending into sentimentality, Hitchcock and Miss Fontaine achieve the height of appealing helplessness. Poor Lina is a predestinate victim. And even so trite a matter as a first kiss becomes, in *Suspicion,* a brilliant stroke of characterization.

As usual, Hitchcock makes brief shots tell a great deal of story. An elopement is managed subtly in the heroine's unavailing attempt to say goodby to her cheerful and oblivious parents; a whole background of shiftlessness, in the hero's casual dismissal of a bill for his new house. Compelled to resort, for his silly ending, to a wild motor ride along the edge of the cliffs, the director has made something rather startling out of that old standby. Did you think a wild drive in a film could ever scare you again? It can.

The actors are admirable too; unnecessarily so. Fine performers need not be wasted on trivial parts, and Cedric Hardwicke, reduced to a mutter and a mustache, is practically thrown away. May Whitty, similarly, has about ten lines. On the other hand, Nigel Bruce comes into his own with the most lovable and fatuous Englishman he has yet portrayed, a caricature with a heart. Nor was it fair to Cary Grant, after so incisive a study of a murderer, to degrade him into just another reformed rake. Miss Fontaine's Lina, though perhaps too reminiscent of the nameless heroine of *Rebecca,* is an exquisite blend of love and shudders.

Frederick

MUSIC BY
Red Allen
ALL STAR
SWING BAND

SAT. DEC. 6th
WEBSTER HALL
119 E. 11th

AN
ORIGINAL
WARTIME REVUE
KICKIN'
THE
PANZER

NEW
MASSES
30th
ANNUAL
ARTISTS & WRITERS
BALL

Tickets $1.10, including tax, in advance. $1.50, including tax, at the door. On sale at Workers Bookshop, 50 East 13th St., Bookfair, 133 West 44th St., New Masses, 461 4th Ave. CA 5-3076

WITH SKYLARK, let me analyze its pretty story in relation to the life we all know and inhabit, the real problems and agonies of real human beings. Here is a film made from a successful play which was made from a successful story. A lovely lady has been married for five years to an advertising executive—grounds for divorce in itself, that. He works hard, he supports her in luxury with butlers, he is faithful and reasonably fond. But his wife has a tragedy. Not until the last minute does he remember their wedding anniversary. Worse yet, the wife has to cringe before nasty people, so that hubby can get another million dollars' worth of business.

So she gets a divorce, not without a bird in the hand in the shape of a lawyer-gigolo-yachtsman who wishes to marry her and take her out on the bounding wave. Unfortunately, her first taste of the bounding wave makes her seasick. In this condition she not unnaturally remembers the advertising man, cries out for him, and eventually follows him to South America.

Obviously, the only way to make such pap tolerable is to dress it up in so much erotic and comic excitement that the audience doesn't notice the story at all. *Skylark* is very nicely dressed indeed. Claudette Colbert is a honey and wears lovely clothes; Binnie Barnes portrays an amusing tramp and wears lovely clothes. Funny, or almost-funny, things are always happening. The gentlemen grit their teeth and grind out wise cracks like hamburger. Here and there you get a real belly laugh, as in the inspired non sequitur of the subway scene. The seasick episode, moreover, does much to redeem *Skylark*. In extended pantomime Miss Colbert goes through the agonies of a small lady in large oilskins trying to make coffee she doesn't want in the undersized cabin of a wildly tossing boat.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

"Peter and the Wolf"

Basil Rathbone as narrator. . . . Leadbelly's children's songs. . . .

SINCE its first performance in Moscow in 1936, Prokofieff's "Peter and the Wolf" has been performed with huge success in many languages throughout the world and has met a particularly enthusiastic response in the United States. This delightful and ingenious musical treat differs in one major respect from the tone poem; true enough, it is a musical reflection of a story, but in place of printed program notes it employs a spoken text, with the story—Prokofieff's own—told by the narrator to musical accompaniment.

Columbia now challenges Victor's popular Koussevitzky recording of this orchestral fairy tale with a release by Stokowski and the All American Orchestra, with Basil Rathbone as narrator. Rathbone, a gifted actor, speaks with considerable charm and captures the delicious humor and mock tragedy of the tale. The music receives a careful and sympathetic,

GOINGS ON

SAM DARCY SPEAKS on "THE WAR—THE RELATION OF FORCES," Saturday, Dec. 6th, at 2:30 P.M. Workers School, 50 East 13 Street. Admission 25 cents.

MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE WEEK'S NEWS by Si Gerson, Daily Worker Staff Writer, Sun., Dec. 7, 8:30 P.M. Workers School, 50 E. 13 Street. Admission 25 cents.

WILLIAM F. DUNNE, labor organizer, editor and author, speaks on two conventions—"The Main Task of American Labor—Unite to Smash Hitler, Destroy Fascism"—Sun., Dec. 7, 8 P.M. promptly, at 77 Fifth Ave. Admission 15 cents—Questions—Discussion.

although at times theatrical, treatment by Stokowski. The orchestra plays with obvious zest and relish but does not yet display the completely integrated coordination that we expect of a major musical organization. (Columbia $3.50)

When Leadbelly sings children's songs, that's news, and you can depend upon him to steer clear of "London Bridge" and "Farmer in the Dell." Leadbelly, whom Lomax has called a fabulous character of American balladry, was raised on a small farm near Mooringsport, La., where he frequently walked for miles to join other children in "play parties." There he learned these newly recorded children's songs, and improvised others, which have a natural charm and true folk quality. Even after the kids go to bed, you'll be singing and clapping your hands. (Asch Recordings $2.50) The same company has also released another delightful album for children, "Tree Top Tunes and Tales," which features animal imitations and bird calls. ($2.50)

Schumann's "Symphony No. 4 in D Minor" is undoubtedly his most passionate utterance in the symphonic form. The composer directed that it be played without pause—in one movement—and achieved unusual structural coherence by binding together the music with the device of thematic relationship. The resulted in a unified work of exceptional virility with themes magnificently developed in a broad and free style. The London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Bruno Walter, has just recorded it in an eminently satisfying performance. (Victor $3.50)

Harl McDonald leads the Philadelphia Orchestra in a first recording of his own composition "From Childhood," a gay, charming suite for harp and orchestra. The music is packed with English nursery tunes and skillfully weaves into symphonic texture such familiar lilting melodies as "The Jolly Miller" and "Three Blind Mice." Edna Phillips, the soloist, plays with ease and effectiveness and the recording definitely belongs on the credit side of the ledger. (Victor $3.50))

Richard Strauss' two tone poems "Don Juan" and "Till Eulenspiegel" are out this month. The former is played by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, with Fritz Reiner conducting, and "Till Eulenspiegel" is interpreted by Artur Rodzinski and the Cleveland Orchestra. The stories of both legendary rogues are fascinating; one is a libertine and prince of sensualists who, sick with disgust, finally permits himself to be killed in a duel—the other, a mischievous fellow much given to practical jokes and finally hanged as a public nuisance to the tune of gibbering woodwinds and wailing chromatics in the strings. Both readings are played with warmth and color. (Columbia $2.50 each)

We think you'll also enjoy Chabrier's brilliantly picturesque little piano pieces *"Trois Valses Romantiques"* which are afforded a flawlessly lightfooted reading by Robert and Gaby Casadesus (Columbia $2.00) as well as Beethoven's "Sonata No. 1 in F Major for Cello and Piano," as played by Horszowski and the greatest living cellist, Pablo Casals. (Victor $3.50) An unusual offering is Victor's presentation of Edna St. Vincent Millay in sensitive readings from her poems. Miss Millay has selected verses from such familiar volumes in contemporary literature as "Fatal Interview" and "The Harpweaver." (Victor $4.50)

MICHAEL AMES.

PROGRESSIVE'S ALMANAC

"PROGRESSIVE'S Almanac" is a calendar of meetings, dances, luncheons, and cultural activities within the progressive movement. This list is published in connection with NEW MASSES' Clearing Bureau, created for the purpose of avoiding conflicting dates for various affairs. Fraternal organizations, trade unions, political bodies, etc., are urged to notify NEW MASSES Clearing Bureau of events which they have scheduled. Service of the Clearing Bureau is free. A fee of one dollar per listing will be charged for all affairs listed in this column.

DECEMBER

3-7—Oklahoma Art Sale Committee, Art Auction and Sale, Puma Galleries.

6, 13—Sat. aft. lectures, "Main Perspectives of the War." Sam Darcy, Workers School, 2:30.

6-20—Saturday Forum Luncheon Group—lectures by Faculty members of Met. Colleges, Rogers Restaurant, 8th Ave. & 50th St., 12:30.

6—NEW MASSES, 30th Annual Artists and Writers Ball, Webster Hall.

7—Russian-American Comm. for Med. Aid to USSR. Concert, Manhattan Center.

8—Descendants of Amer. Revolution, Free Earl Browder Rally, Cooper Union.

13—Jewish Peoples Committee, East Side Cabaret, Floor Show & Dance, The Manhattan (66 E. 4th St.).

13—Workers School, Fall Dance, Irving Plaza.

13—Anna Sokolow and Group, Dance Recital, 92nd St., Y.M.H.A.

17—Committee of Jewish Writers and Artists in U. S., meeting, greeting to Jews in USSR—Madison Square Garden.

19—NEW MASSES—Interpretation Please No. 5, Webster Hall.

21—Spanish Anti-Fascists' Unity Committee—Entertainment and Rally—Medical Aid to USSR and Spanish Refugees (Mecca Temple, 7 P.M.).

24—(Christmas Eve) Veterans of the Lincoln Brigade, Ball, Manhattan Center.

25—(Christmas Night). Young Theatre Players—opening, "Emperor's New Clothes," Heckscher Theatre.

31—(New Year's Eve) Advertising Guild, Mad Arts Ball, Manhattan Center.

THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS GIFT

One Year of NEW MASSES plus
An Outstanding Book or A Timely Record Album

	Our Gift Combination Price	You Save
THE COPPERHEADS* by William Blake list price $3.00	$6.75	$1.25
BREAD AND A STONE* by Alvah Bessie list price $2.50	6.25	1.25
THE CENTURY WAS YOUNG* by Louis Aragon list price $2.75	6.75	1.00
MEN OF EUROPE by Andre Simone list price $2.50	6.25	1.25
THE DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT* Ed. by Bernard Smith list price $5.00	8.00	2.00
THE SILENT DON (Vols. I & II) by Mikhail Sholokhov list price $6.00	8.50	2.50
THIS IS MY OWN by Rockwell Kent list price $3.50	6.75	1.75
TWELVE MILLION BLACK VOICES* by Richard Wright list price $3.00	6.75	1.25
SENSATION FAIR* by Egon Erwin Kisch list price $3.00	6.75	1.25
DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL CHANGE by Harry F. Ward list price $2.50	6.25	1.25
WHAT MAKES SAMMY RUN by Budd Schulberg list price $2.50	6.25	1.25
"I MADE A MISTAKE—" HITLER* by Lucien Zacharoff list price $2.00	6.25	.75
ALBUMS OF RECORDINGS		
CHEE-LAI (Chinese Songs of Democracy with Paul Robeson) 3 Records: list price $2.75	6.50	1.25
RED ARMY SONGS 4 Records: list price $2.50	6.50	1.00
SOUTHERN EXPOSURE (Joshua White) 3 Records: list price $2.75	6.50	1.25
RICHARD DYER-BENNET (Lute-Singer (Ballads and Songs) 3 Records: $2.75	6.50	1.25
THE OLD CHISHOLM TRAIL (Tony Kraber) 3 Records: list price $2.75	6.50	1.25
TALKING UNION (The Almanac Singers) 3 Records: list price $2.50	6.50	1.00
SIX SONGS FOR DEMOCRACY 3 Records: list price $3.00	6.75	1.25
NO FOR AN ANSWER (Marc Blitzstein) 5 Records: list price $4.75	8.00	1.75
VICTORY CALENDAR (designed & illustrated by leading artists of the United American Artists)	5.00	

* Just published

NEW MASSES, 461 Fourth Ave., New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

I wish to take advantage of your combination offer.

Enclosed find $ . . . . . .

The book or recording (all records sent postage-collect) I desire is . . . . . .

Please send it to:

Name . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

City . . . . . .

State . . . . . .

The one-year subscription (or renewal) to NEW MASSES you may send to:

Name . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

City . . . . . .

State . . . . . .

12-9-41