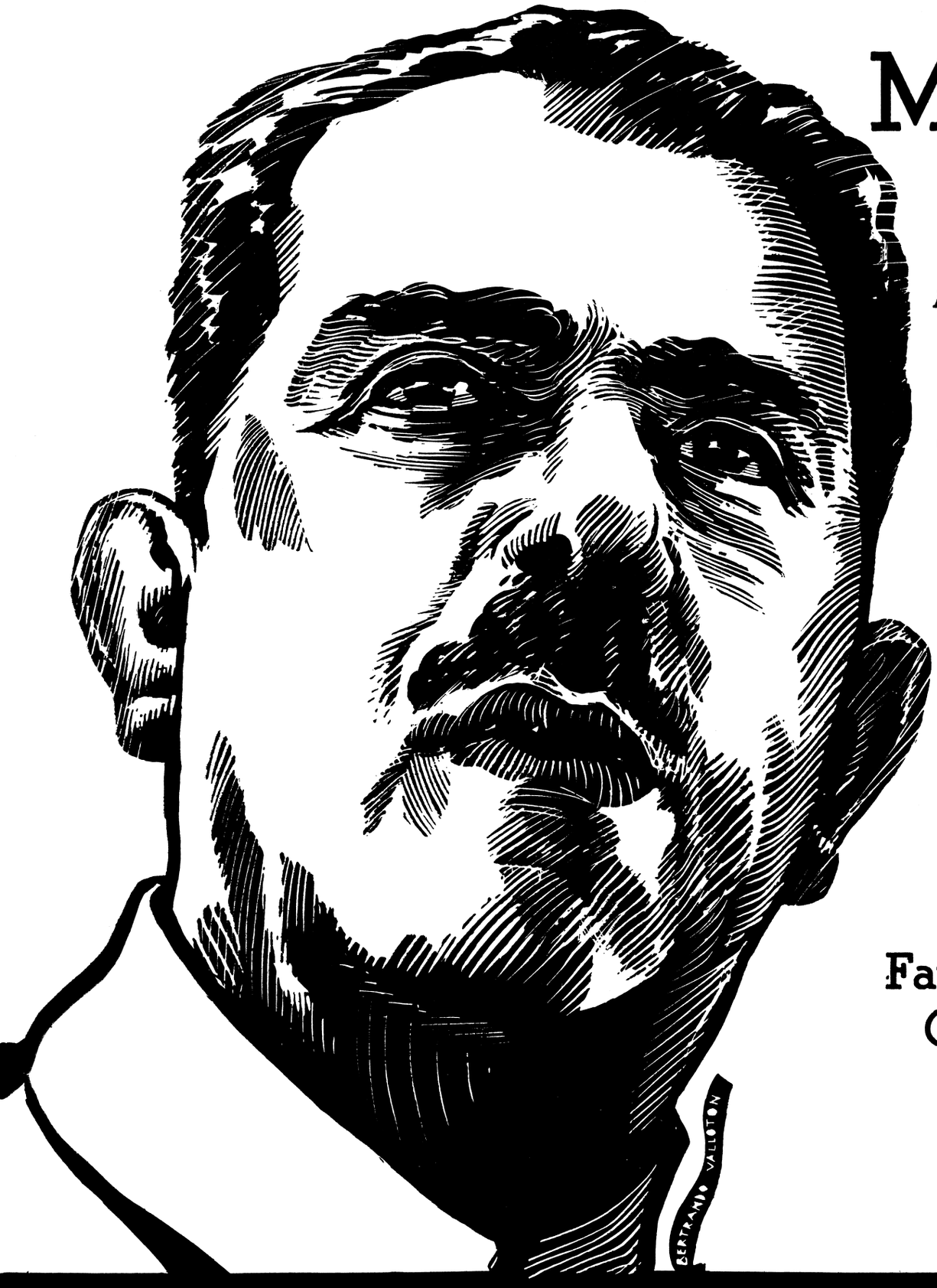
NEW MASSES

MARCH 2, 1937 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY



Mexico's Goal

AN INTERVIEW WITH

PRESIDENT CÁRDENAS

BY

Joseph Freeman

★

Can Father Coughlin Come Back?

Dale Kramer

ROBERT FORSYTHE HENRY ROTH FIELDING BURKE

BETWEEN OURSELVES

THROUGH the haze of reports and counter-reports, the news has finally cleared about the coming to this country of André Malraux, French author and NEW MASSES contributor, who of late has been commanding a foreign anti-fascist volunteer air squadron in the Madrid defense zone. At

first, U. S. consular officers abroad denied him a visa to visit this country; then the State Department let it be known that if he applied again a visa would be issued; then the United Press cabled that he was coming here but would not be permitted to write or lecture. The real story appears to be that he will have arrived here by Feb. 24 or 25, and that he will be free to speak or write except for the customary guarantee that foreigners must give on entry: that they will not advocate the overthrow of the United States government. We trust that his speaking and writing against war and fascism will not be construed as an attack on American institutions. Those who attempt to make that construction must stand convicted of declaring that war and fascism are their ideal for America.

It is with special pride that we present in this issue what we believe to be the first extensive interview with President Cárdenas of Mexico published in this country. In a letter to the staff describing his scurrying hither and yon before he finally caught up with Cárdenas, editor Joseph Freeman commented on the extent to which the present regime in Mexico seemed to be a government which made an attempt to keep closely in touch with the people and their needs. Drawing a contrast with the scenes at our own national capital, Freeman remarked on the fact that wherever he went through government buildings, there was always a knot of bare-footed peasants or roughly dressed workmen waiting to take up some problem with the responsible official.

The comments by Cárdenas on the question of a people's front and a people's-front government in Mexico are among the significant points covered in the interview. And in this connection, we should like to make a reminder and an announcement. The reminder is that in our issue of February 2 we published an article by Vicente Lombardo Toledano, leader of the Mexican trade unions, which discussed the people's front in Mexico and the relation to that question of the matter of granting "political asylum" to Trotsky there. The announcement is this, and we believe every reader will be greatly interested: beginning in an early issue we will publish a series of articles on the people's-front question in a number of countries where there is as yet no fully developed people's front: in Mexico, a country still struggling for liberation from the shackles of foreign imperialism; in Germany, a country under the heel of fascism; in England, a constitutional monarchy with a numerically strong labor party which is still under conservative leadership; and in the United States, a country whose national administration was elected by a people's mandate for progressivism but is not fully living up to that mandate and where the trade-union movement is the scene of a struggle between a conservative bureaucratic leadership and a powerful progressive bloc organized into the C.I.O. This will be a series of historic significance, to which thinkers of international reputation will contribute. Watch for the announcement of the start of this series.

One interesting question which has national implications for the farmer-labor party which will be the American expression of the people's front, is the proposal that Fiorello H. LaGuardia be the American Labor Party's candidate for mayor of New York City in the coming elections. While that question is by no means settled, it is being widely mooted. We will publish in our issue of next week a political profile of Mayor LaGuardia which will provide valuable background on that question.

Next week we will also publish an article by H. C. Engelbrecht, author of *Merchants of Death,* on the War Department's mobilization plan, and an analysis by a Far East expert of the present relationship of forces on the Japanese internal political scene.

What's What

FULLY conscious that we are not omniscient, and trusting that our readers will quickly correct us if we are wrong, we nevertheless confidently assert that for the first time in history living wild creatures have been made part of an æsthetic form in the current show at the A.C.A. Gallery in New York. There, in the American Artists' Congress show of caricatures, *Framed and Hung,* there is a three-dimensional commentary on Surrealist Salvador Dali which employs as one element of the composition live members of the phylum *Arthropoda,* class *Insecta,* order *Hymenoptera,* family *Formicidae,* genus *?,* species *?*—but, at any rate, the plain black kind. The artist is NEW MASSES contributor Eugene Morley (see p. 16). Perhaps we were a little hasty in declaring his creation to be three-dimensional; the live element moves about constantly, so that time, the fourth dimension, must be taken into consideration in assessing the æsthetic effect of the composition at any given moment. Many of the other compositions are by NEW MASSES contributors, including Robert Cronbach, A. Harriton, William Gropper, Sid Gotcliffe, Bennett Buck, Maurice Becker, Russell T. Limbach, Anton Refregier, Aline Fruhauf, Adolf Dehn, William Sanderson (see p. 10) and others. The subjects range from Wally Simpson and Trotsky to Beatrice Lillie and Yourself (it's done with mirrors). Readers in New York or within commuting distance shouldn't miss it.

As we go to press, we receive news that the first issue of *New Theatre and Film,* the successor of the reorganized *New Theatre* magazine, has gone to press and should be on sale by the end of the week. We relay the comment of Playwright John Howard Lawson that this first issue under the new dispensation contains some important and lively material. It was prepared under the editorship of George Redfield. Herbert Kline, ex-editor, is in Spain.

Who's Who

HENRY ROTH is the author of the well-known novel of New York childhood, *Call It Sleep.* He has just completed another novel.

H. B. Ucello is a teacher in the New York City system; he makes his NEW MASSES debut in this issue.

Edwin Rolfe has recently joined the editorial staff of the NEW MASSES.

Dale Kramer has contributed to our pages on numerous occasions.

Maxwell Bodenheim's poetry is well-known to our readers, as is his work in prose, which includes several novels.

Carolyn Corbin is a Detroit journalist who appears in our pages for the first time in this issue.

Horace Gregory's critical essays have been a feature of this magazine for some years.

Pearl Binder's lithograph on page 24 is one of the illustrations from her book of Soviet biographies, *Misha and Masha,* just published in England.

Flashbacks

FOR those crying "unpatriotic" to Americans going to the aid of beleaguered Spanish freedom, we recommend study of the crusade which certain Americans began March 1, 1856. On that day a company of emigrants, determined to keep Kansas free of slavery, left New Haven. They were liberally supplied with the best Sharps rifles — or "Beecher's Bibles" as they were called because they were supplied by the congregation of Henry Ward Beecher's church. . . . On March 3,

1917, the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk—in accordance with the views of Lenin and Stalin, but contrary to the wishes of Trotsky—signed peace terms with the Gemans. . . . The current rising of the Ethiopian people against Mussolini's rule of blood and steel recalls that modern white imperialism received its first serious defeat at the hands of a native people when Ethiopians crushed an invading Italian army at Adowa, March 1, 1896.

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NEW MASSES
MARCH 2, 1937

Woodcut by A. Morado

A Talk with Cárdenas

The president of Mexico, in an exclusive interview, answers some questions as to government policy on property relations and as to the people's-front outlook

By Joseph Freeman

SITTING out of doors under a group of mango trees, in an austere semi-military camp on the tropic shore of Acapulco, President Lázaro Cárdenas of Mexico spoke with me for nearly an hour and a half in an exclusive interview for the NEW MASSES. He discussed, among other things, the fundamental aims of his regime; where he will next distribute land to the peasants; the government's policy in regard to labor; plans for the emancipation of the Mexican woman; why he will continue to assist the Spanish people; the possibility of a new world war.

A popular American weekly recently described Cárdenas as probably the most popular and conscientious chief executive Mexico has ever had. This is the general opinion here among peasants, organized workers, and those nationally minded propertied groups which are at present opposed to imperialism. The extreme Reaction is, of course, against him. So are various conservative papers in the United States, which paint him, on the one hand, as a wild-eyed Anarchist bent upon the wholesale confiscation of property without rhyme or reason; and on the other, as quite a sensible fellow, whom Yankee imperialism can trust in the long run because he is steadily moving to the right.

Mexican Communists, who recently held their sixth annual congress in the capital, consider Cárdenas progressive under the semi-feudal, semi-colonial conditions in which he works. They have criticized him for prohibiting certain strikes, for compensating expropriated landlords, and for permitting Trotsky to use Mexico as a base from which to attack the Soviet Union and to split the ranks of labor. But they feel that in spite of such actions, he is fundamentally carrying forward the agrarian and democratic revolution of 1910, which the Calles group betrayed to foreign investors and the Mexican reactionaries.

The best-meaning Mexican president has no easy task on his hands. From the auto which rushed us for ten hours from the capital to the Pacific port of Acapulco, where General Cárdenas was staying, I could see some of the changes which have taken place in recent years, side by side with the most ancient modes of life. The machine age has begun to enter these savage, majestic mountains, studded at great distances with the palm-thatched adobe huts of the Indians and the baroque cathedrals of the Spanish conquerors. Along the new highway looping up and down the mountains of Guererro, Chevrolets shot past ads for Coca-Cola, Goodrich tires, and *Valiant Is the Word for Carrie*. But far more frequently, you saw primitive villages; cows, horses, and goats calmly browsing by the roadside; and entire families crawling slowly on burros.

Tired, dusty, sweating with the tropic heat, we arrived in Acapulco at night, drove to the waterfront, saw the cruiser *Guanajuato,* her decks lit under immense stars. The president was back from his trip to Oaxaca. Next day, waiting for an appointment with him, we drove around the town, a small port fantastic in its tropic beauty. We watched natives—chiefly a mixture of Indian, Negro, and Chinese—fish the enormous mantaraya from the bright blue bay, drill the dusty side of a high hill, sell guaraches and serapes to the American tourists and to the bluejackets of a British cruiser anchored at the entrance to the harbor. Native poverty was violently evident. Children ran naked along the hot cobbled streets; their parents were thin, poorly dressed.

Near the beach, huge pelicans flew low, now and then silently diving into the rippled bay. The incredibly still air, the merciless tropic sun beating down on the bare brown rocks primordial in their vastness, lent the scene a touch of exciting unreality. Yet here were native boys driving new taxis wildly down the shore, soliciting passengers in broken English; and there, standing on the steps of the crude wooden hotel, preface to the expensive hotel which General Almazan plans to build, was Joe Jones, radical St. Louis painter, shooting movies with a small Kodak. The world was growing smaller.

Next morning, accompanied by my interpreter, the German photographer Enrique

Woodcut by A. Morado

Gutmann, I went to the camp of the federal highway department at Manzanillo, where President Cárdenas was staying. Captain Sánchez opened the gate that led through the wire enclosure into the open camp along the shore. Surrounded by mango trees, a solitary figure was seated at a small wooden table, writing. The figure rose as we approached, turned toward us.

I recognized President Cárdenas from his pictures. The large face, with its stubbly black mustache and full, sensitive mouth, was bronzed by the sun; a clear light shone in the wide, hazel eyes. As he greeted us, asking us to take seats, the grave voice revealed assurance. General Cárdenas sat with his back to the sea, my translator and I opposite him. Looking beyond him, I noticed two young Indian boys swimming naked in the bay. I noticed, too, the extreme simplicity of the camp—a couple of large canvas tents, and two or three screened bungalows. The president's clothes were simple, too: a light-tan tunic with ordinary white bone buttons and epaulettes that bore no decoration of any kind; light pongee trousers; black square-toed shoes.

The president courteously said he was familiar with the NEW MASSES and would be glad to answer any questions. One of my questions touched on the recent national congress of writers and artists convoked by the L. E. A. R.

"This congress," I said, "has proposed the convocation of a continental congress of intellectuals to be held some time this fall. It seemed to us that Mexico City would be an ideal meeting place for such a conference. No spot is at present better suited for a gathering of liberal and revolutionary writers, artists, and scientists from Canada, the United States, Mexico, and the Central and South American republics. Certain outstanding European intellectuals would also be invited. The congress could speak effectively in defense of peace, democratic rights, and culture against the threat of Reaction. What do you think of this proposal, Mr. President?"

"I followed the L. E. A. R. congress very closely," General Cárdenas said, "and am more than sympathetic to the idea of a continental congress of intellectuals. I am enthusiastic about it. You may tell the artists, writers, and scientists of the United States that my government will do everything in its power to make such a congress a success."

"Is there danger of a reaction in Mexico? And if so, where does it come from?"

"When you are chief magistrate," General Cárdenas said smiling, "you cannot possibly please everybody. There are reactionary elements here, but there is no real danger of their coming into power. These people," he added quietly, "are politically bankrupt. They have no popular support whatever, because the Mexican people see that for the first time we have a government which carries out its promises."

"What is the basic aim of your government? What are the chief purposes of the Six Year Plan, for instance?"

"The Six Year Plan seeks primarily to improve the living standards of the majority of the people," General Cárdenas replied. "You know how immense Mexico is. Parts of our country are mountainous and arid; other parts are very rich, very fruitful. Properly developed, Mexico could comfortably support three or four times its present population. Yet eighty to ninety percent of our people live in misery; they produce, but do not participate in or enjoy, the riches of the land. The Six Year Plan is an attempt to integrate the people with the economic growth of the country."

Maurice Becker

General Cárdenas accompanied his remarks with a steady upward and downward motion of his right hand, his elbow resting on the little wooden table. The hand was large and firm; the thumb stood up rigidly.

"We must develop not only economically and socially," he continued, "but culturally, too. A large percentage of our people is wholly without education. It cannot participate in the cultural wealth of Mexico or of the world. The Mexican people must be freed of the bonds of illiteracy and superstition. That is why so large a part of our government's budget is devoted to education and to the struggle against illiteracy. For this purpose, we are spending 60,000,000 pesos this year."

"Mr. President, there is considerable interest in the United States in your land-distribution policy. Where do you next propose to distribute land to peasants?"

"In the region of the Yaqui Indians, in the State of Sonora."

I recalled that previous administrations, in order to recruit troops for the civil wars, had parceled out tracts of land to the Yaquis, but later returned these tracts to the landowners.

"In order to make progress," President Cárdenas continued, "our people must take direct part in the production processes of the country. In Mexico, which has many foreign landowners, we must go forward slowly."

"We have heard a great deal about the Laguna region in the state of Coahuila. Could you tell me why it is considered so significant at present?"

"The Laguna region is the outstanding example of our new land policy," General Cárdenas replied. "The government found it necessary to intervene there for good reasons. It is one of the richest zones in Mexico, yet the peasants there lived in the most terrible misery and squalor. They labored unendurably to produce cotton, yet could not enjoy the fruits of that labor. Land distribution has created a new life for thousands of peasants in that area."

"What prompts you to distribute land in the state of Sonora?"

"We hope to do for the Yaquis what we have done for the peasants of La Laguna. There, also, we have a very rich agricultural zone; yet the people who work it have no share in the fruits of the land. In distributing tracts of land among the Yaquis, we shall of course respect what must be respected; but we shall above all protect the interests of the Mexican people."

"What is the basis of your land-distribution policy, Mr. President?"

"There is an agrarian code in our national law which prescribes land distribution. We shall continue to distribute land on the basis of that code."

At this point, I recalled that under previous administrations, land distribution often failed because the peasant had no means for cultivating his parcel. Without money, machinery, or technical knowledge, the peon found his newly acquired land a terrifying burden. He therefore sold it back to his former master for a few pesos and once more resumed his status as peon. With this in mind, I asked:

"By what methods does your government aid peasants to work the land they receive, Mr. President?"

"Before proceeding to distribute land in La Laguna, I founded the Banco Nacional de Credito Ejidal. This bank gives the peasant every facility for cultivating the land he receives. The bank furnishes him with credit and machinery; it sends engineers and agronomists to direct the peasant in the primary principles of modern agriculture."

"I plan to visit the Laguna region next week," I said.

"Muy bien. Then you will be able to see for yourself the difference between those peasants who have already received land and those who are living under the old conditions. You can compare the two modes of life, the remains of the widespread agony which existed previously, and the enthusiasm of those for whom a new life has opened."

"Have you a program for Mexican labor?"

"Mexico's labor laws," General Cárdenas said, "are designed to protect certain rights for the worker. These laws provide for minimum wages, tolerable working hours, sickness and death benefits, compensation for occupational injuries, improved living quarters, and so on. Industrial enterprises are supposed to meet these conditions, but many of them fail to do so. In such cases, the law obliges the government to intervene."

"Is there for the workers any equivalent for the land distribution to the peasants?"

"We are interested in giving the worker,

Maurice Becker

too, an opportunity to participate in production on a higher level. Here, of course, our government cannot intervene directly. But we do support workers' coöperatives, in which the workers themselves undertake to run an industrial enterprise. This has been the case with our salt mines and with the chicle plantations in Quintana Roo. This policy will be carried forward slowly, step by step. And here again we propose to respect certain rights where such rights exist, but our first consideration must be to protect the people's interest."

The president's voice was quiet in the tropic afternoon. From the rippling bay came the chatter of the naked Indian boys ducking each other under the water.

"There is an impression in my country," I said, "that Mexico's women occupy a very low place in the social scale. What is your government doing to emancipate them?"

"We want to give the women of Mexico every opportunity to participate in social life on an equal footing with men. Then, gradually, they will be able to enter political life on a plane of equality. This problem is not at all simple. Our men have been taking part in economic, social, and political life for many years; our women have not. Consequently, the Mexican woman is far more superstitious and fanatical than the man. We propose to cope with this problem not by attacking superstition directly. From experience, we have found that this leads to a terrible waste of time and energy. It also diverts attention from more fundamental problems. But we also know from experience that woman's outlook begins to change when she enters the economic process. Here the propagators of superstition have no power over her. They do not dare say that they oppose trade unions, higher wages, shorter hours. Yet it is by struggling for these very things that our women begin to tread the road to freedom."

"All progressive people in the United States have been greatly moved by the consistency with which Mexico has helped the Spanish people in their fight against fascism. And recently, when I arrived in Mexico, I read your statement to the effect that you would continue to aid the Spanish people. What makes you do this?"

President Cárdenas replied with a simple phrase: *"Deber y sympatia"*—duty and sympathy. Then, after a brief pause, he said: "It is clear to every honest man and woman that a constitutional government chosen by the vast majority of the people must be supported against those who are against the people."

"What is your opinion, Mr. President, of the people's-front idea? Do you think a future Mexican government may be elected by a people's front in your country?"

"The present Mexican government," General Cárdenas said, "is without question a popular government. There was no people's front here when we came into office, but we sought unity with the people. As a result, the government is based on the broad popular masses. I believe that a future Mexican government will not only have to take the people's front into account, but that the people's front will actually maintain that government."

"Do you think there is a possibility of another world war in the near future?"

"I do not believe there will be a world war," General Cárdenas said. "No matter what form of government a country may have —fascist or democratic—that government must today reckon with the will of the people. Even in the most belligerent countries, the people are against war, and they can do something to prevent it."

"In Germany," Interpreter Gutmann interposed, "the workers filled bombs intended for Franco's troops with straw."

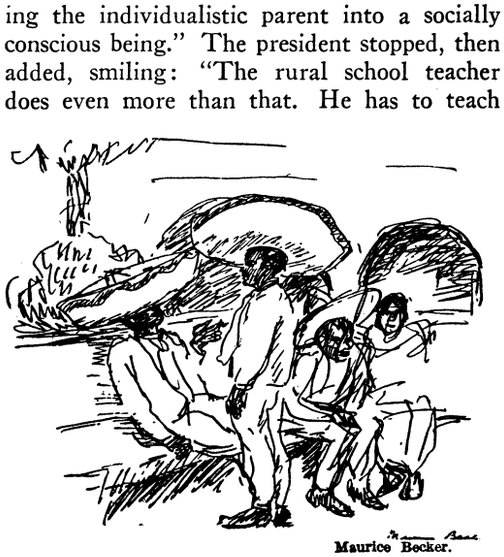
"Exactly. One sees that the people do not want war; and more and more, destiny begins to lie not in the hands of governments, but in the hands of the people."

"Mr. President," I said, "several collections of drawings by Mexican children have been shown in New York. These aroused considerable interest as indicating a new type of instruction. What is your government doing for the Mexican child today?"

"Education is more than reading and writing," he replied. "The child must learn the secrets of labor so that he can meet the modern world when he grows up. Unfortunately, many of our people do not yet understand this. For his own happiness, as well as for the growth of the republic, the child must be taught a sense of the collective. Reading and writing are sterile if they are not used socially. We try to give our children a deep social sense as well as the elements of knowledge."

"Isn't your problem complicated by the fact that more than three fourths of your population is illiterate?"

"Indeed it is. In most instances, the child's parents are both illiterate and individualistic. Our problem is to teach the child what he does not learn at home. Here the rural school teacher plays an extremely important role. He does more than teach the ABCs to parent and child; he enlightens the people in the countryside; he actually reorganizes the village. In giving the child what the parents lack, the rural teacher is compelled to transmit a social sense to the parents, so that the home may not destroy the work of the school. One of the ways in which the teacher adjusts the child to the changing modern world is by transforming the individualistic parent into a socially conscious being." The president stopped, then added, smiling: "The rural school teacher does even more than that. He has to teach the peasant family the elements of modern hygiene, and in many cases has to act as the family doctor. He becomes the center of all social life in the village. In this way, he influences the parents through the children and the children through the parents. Furthermore, our teachers are beginning to acquaint the child with modern technique. The child learns that the machine is not an enemy, but an aid, an instrument for the improvement of life. The child is taught technical as well as social concepts so that he may learn to master the tools and the scientific ideas which he will need as an adult."



Maurice Becker.

While President Cárdenas was speaking, we heard a wild commotion in the bay. All three of us at the table leaped to our feet and looked toward the end of the beach. One of the Indian boys seemed to be drowning. He disappeared under the water; his companion struggled to get at him, screaming at the top of his voice. President Cárdenas began to unbutton his tunic and ran swiftly toward the gate which led to the beach. Several officers came trotting out of the screened bungalows. Suddenly, from the far end of the beach, two boyish voices shouted: "It's all right!" Both swimmers, safe, began walking toward the shore. President Cárdenas came back to his seat. His face was rather pale as he calmly buttoned his tunic.

"I like to swim," he said with a shy smile. That was his only reference to the episode. We resumed our interview. I asked him why he traveled around the country so much.

"Before I became president," he said, "I announced my program and promised the people that I would carry it out. I did not think this would be easy, but it turned out to be more difficult than I even imagined. I am now carrying out my program, but in order to do so, I must be intimately acquainted with the needs and requirements of the people. I cannot bring the people to me, so I must go to them. In the United States there are many ways of doing this. Your means of communication are very highly developed. You have a nationwide network of highways, telephones, telegraphs, radio stations, films. Our communications are still in an elementary stage. I therefore make these personal trips to various parts of the country in order to learn what the people need, what the various regions can produce. There is another purpose, too, which I hope my journeys will accomplish. Many of our people have strange ideas as to what a president is. They do not think of him as a man who happens to occupy a specific government post; they imagine he is a supernatural being. Our peasants still kiss the hand of a city mayor; you can imagine how they feel toward a president. I want to destroy this servility, left over from centuries of oppression. This slavish attitude is frightfully depressing. I want to meet peasants and workers throughout the republic, man to man, to shake them by the hand, to break down the illusory barrier between us. It would be a fine thing if the Mexican peasant lost his sense of inferiority and looked everyone straight in the face as an equal."

Maurice Becker.

Propaganda in the Pulps

The cheap fiction magazines grind the reactionary political ax in a way the slick-paper periodicals would never dare attempt

By H. B. Ucello

A NEW, distinctive type of story, with a passionate quality unknown in the field of the pulp-paper magazines, made its appearance in 1934 and has grown since then to book-length proportions. There were giants in the old days, too; but, as many writers can recall, none dared break that firm editorial rule: *Keep your political opinions out of your stories!* Today, that has changed—the editors want stories with a certain implied slant on economic intrigue.

Thirty thousand dollars a year, although that sum is exceptional, can be earned by the writer who will produce stories that fall into a set political formula. The pulps are run on short budgets, as a rule; and it may surprise old, retired writers to learn that the half-cent-a-word rate has become two cents, with three cents a word for the top-notchers. A good head man, with the help of two or three stenographers, can pound out a million words a year.

Three of the more prominent pulps are really complete, book-length novels. They appear each month, and depict the same disguised figure in a new *political* adventure. They are *Secret Agent "X"* ("The Man of a Thousand Faces") *Magazine, Spider* ("The Master of Men!") *Magazine,* and *Secret Service Operator No. 5* ("America's Undercover Ace") *Magazine.* They have a wide circulation. Just how many readers they reach can't be learned, for there is a standing rule in pulp fiction offices that no information regarding circulation is to be given out.

The *Operator No. 5* stories, a bit more extreme than the others, have their chief emphasis on the wholesale sabotage which threatens the rulers of America. The hero, James Christopher, is a member of an army of undercover men. "The President listens to him," says the author, "and you may well do the same."

In "Legions of Starvation," the reader can get a typical insight into the career of Operator No. 5. Rudolph Borik is the sworn foe of existing social systems, and the leader of the New Populists, an organization labeled as the most dangerous radicals that ever existed. Because of a devastating drought, there is growing unrest among the farmers. The country is tinder—"ready to blaze up into revolution at the spark dropped by the hand of a man like Rudolph Borik." Operator No. 5 succeeds in proving that the New Populists are the cause for the food shortage—they are *saboteurs!*

As millions go hungry, revolt spreads from coast to coast. The New Populists offer to feed the starving. But Operator No. 5 checkmates it. "The inexorable power of hunger will make us all the slaves of the new Dictator!" he exclaims. He brings forth records of certain operations of a closely-knit system of dummy corporations and holding-companies, an extremely complex organization formed for the purpose of cornering certain vital food supplies, and at the same time hiding the identity of the man in control. "Our clerk shows," says Operator No. 5, "that enormous stores of condensed milk have, somehow, mysteriously vanished from the market." He gives out an order to double the watch on every alien suspected of membership in the New Populists. Radio cars patrol the streets, while armed mounted policemen prevent the looting of food shops. News reaches the President that destructive insects have begun to swarm over the country. Operator No. 5 explains to him, "They are nurtured and released by the New Populists, so that their control over our food supply will be absolute."

Operator No. 5 defeats the enemy. He seizes the hidden food supply and distributes it among the people. Operator No. 5's logic consists of a straight-armed blow to the chins of his opponents. "He wears a strange ring," says the author, "that has a death's-head against a black background." In the dim light of the battle, it flashes with a significant symbolism. The fascists of Italy and the Nazi followers in Germany also copy the black shako of the Death's-Head Hussars.

In every country where fascism has established itself, one of its preliminary practices is to break the strikes of the labor movement, and to protect the employer class by the use of force. If attacking the freedom of labor is one of the tests of fascism, it has made considerable headway in this country through the stories that appear in *Operator No. 5 Magazine.* That fascism will come to this country has been the theme of this pulp for the past year. Each month there are described possible ways in which it may operate in such stories as: "Legions of Starvation" (Dec. 1934), "The Red Invader" (January), "The League of the War Monsters" (February), "March of the Flame Marauders" (April), "Legions of the Death Master" (July), "Hosts of the Flaming Death" (August), "Invasion of the Dark Legions" (October), "Scourge of the Invisible Death" (November). These yarns are of the very essence of fascism, whatever additional and incidental vagaries may accompany them.

In each of them, the author, who has chosen the name of Curtis Steele, depicts the life of the nation hanging in suspense, as workingmen—called "skilled saboteurs"—paralyze its industry. Their aim seems to be to wipe the United States government out of existence, to create a new form in its stead, which will be ruled by an organization that comes from abroad. Each month, Operator No. 5 saves the nation from the subversive doctrine of men with Russian names, like Leon Maxinoff, who is sent by the Commissars of the Soviet. Operator No. 5's keynote throughout is: *We must not under-estimate their power.*

IT BECOMES a gripping economic warfare. The stories stress that a secret struggle is going on to control the nation. Chapter headings read, "While the Nation Sleeps," "The Fate of a Nation," "Doom Over New York."

A few of the novels, like "Blood Reign of the Dictator" (May), lay a pall of terror over the United States with unusual repercussions. Operator No. 5, the only man capable of stemming the tide of destruction, bears the brunt of it. It is the most exciting, and by far the most realistic, story that has appeared in the series. Of interest for the scholar of the future may be the fact that the story preceded Sinclair Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here* by six months.

Ursus Young's orators claim that as governor he abolished poverty in his own state. The United States can save itself from complete economic destruction only when President Young takes supreme command! He uses the "Soviet terror in our country" as his telling-point. The radio booms with bombastic phrases: "President Young . . . the saviour of the people . . . the leader of millions . . . the friend of all!"

While governor of New Cornwall, Ursus Young enforced rigid health control regulations. Those who did not have his certificates of health could not rent rooms, were subject to instant arrest, deportation, or imprisonment in a state institution; they were not permitted to enter a polling-place and vote in the national presidential election. His troopers, wearing black arm-bands to identify them as members of the various state agencies, patrolled the streets.

Young seizes the reins of government, and he rides roughshod over the constitution. When he is sworn in as President, Young dispenses with the Bible oath, and insists that he will not raise his hand to defend the constitution, "which is the cause of the widespread suffering in the country." He enlarges the Supreme Court from nine members to twenty-one; his twelve new appointees override any decision of the true Justices. A new proclamation secures for him vast sums from the treasury, to finance his gigantic system of

Blood and Thunder is Cleverly Mixed with Propaganda on Pulp Covers

patronage dummies. He throttles the press, declaring a war-time censorship. His terrorists begin stamping out the "plague."

An attempt is made to assassinate Young. He orders all broadcasting and newspaper agencies: "News has to go out all over the country at once. The story is to say that the assassin was hired by a capitalistic organization which we are going to break up. You are to say that I struck the man down and took the gun away from him with my own hands. This is a chance to strike at the big-money men and to make a martyr—you know how to handle it. Get it out at once!"

When the Intelligence Service of the United States is wiped out by Young, Operator No. 5 reorganizes a new under-cover agency. The latter finds himself in an ironical position, as he addresses his men: "Now we find ourselves in the very position of those we have, in the past, fought. We have battled revolutionists, and now we ourselves are revolutionists. We have stamped out plotters against the government, and now we are ourselves plotting against the government—of the tyrant Young." Operator No. 5 sounds the tocsin. His followers dress in black robes and hoods, with a white death's-head on the standards they bear. Their symbol is similar to that of the Fascists and the Nazis. They call themselves the Secret Sentinels. Led by officers in black hoods, they march upon the nation's capital.

IN ALL the stories that appear in *Operator No. 5 Magazine,* the saviors of the nation wear black, while the enemies are associated with red. A woman spy will be called Radi Havara (The Red Invader); a foreign foe will have a Russian-sounding name, and will be described as coming from Urakia (Ukraine). Those who serve the nation best have names like Carleton Victor, which is adopted by Operator No. 5.

Sabotage is the basis for each story. "It is one of the incendiary machines which the New Populists are using," says the Chief to Operator No. 5. "Others exactly like this are responsible for the fires that broke out in the Baralee Mills in St. Joseph, the Chicago stockyards, and elsewhere . . . the New Populists have been striking at us in secret over a long period." Incendiary fires, dynamited freight trains, sabotage aboard ocean freighters —they reoccur, again and again, until the reader anticipates who is behind all the mischief.

Exhaustive footnotes by the author reënforce the story and help break down whatever scepticism the reader may have. These are based on items that appear in newspapers (especially on Monday mornings, when there is no news), which begin, "It has been re-

Blood and Thunder is Cleverly Mixed with Propaganda on Pulp Covers

ported that—" and which subsequently prove to have been unfounded rumors. Thus the author can quote in his footnotes an Associated Press despatch: "Honolulu, June 7.—A possibility that attempts at sabotage were to blame for the fire at sea on the Dollar liner *President Lincoln* was expressed by Captain George Yardly today after the ship had raced into Honolulu with her lifeboats swinging from the davits and with many of the passengers wearing life preservers." Other rumors that are presented in the footnotes run as follows: that the manhole covers that disappeared shortly before the opening of the Eighth Avenue Subway, New York, were stolen by saboteurs; that the presence of Filipino mess boys aboard U. S. Navy airships had something to do with the destruction of the U. S. Navy airships, the *Macon* and *Akron;* that the epidemic of amœbic dysentery which broke out at the World's Fair last summer might conceivably be the work of hidden enemies; that strange circumstances surrounded the death of President Wilson, hinting of a plot to administer a slow poison or to give him the influenza in ice!

A pleasant contrast to reactionary tendencies in pulp fiction was the story "Spain Gone Mad" in the February 1937 issue of *Adventure Novels,* which was definitely "angled," reportedly at the instruction of the editors, to favor the loyalist cause. The following quotation will indicate the story's bias:

> I am not of your people [says the wine dealer's daughter to the young aristocrat]. My people—the working people—are fighting for liberty. We won it at the polls. But your people won't let us keep it. You own everything, now you want our lives! We want a new Spain—liberty!

But this is exceptional.

A favorite device used by recent pulp writers is that of building up a directed attitude in the reader. It is salesmanship of a kind—it breaks down sales resistance. Here is a sample: "You know as well as I, Chief," says Operator No. 5, "that the foreign-financed, revolutionary organizations within the U. S. are stronger than the people suspect, a force to be seriously reckoned with." In the other magazine, *Spider,* owned by the same publishing firm, and having the same policy, understatement is used shrewdly. In "Builders of the Dark Empire," a character says: "It sounds like a chapter out of some penny dreadful magazine—the old Nick Carter and Dead-Eye Dick stuff we read in the hay-loft as kids."

"It's much worse than that," the hero assures him, "worse because everyone regards it, just as you say, as purest fiction."

For those historically inclined, the spirit of our times will be conveyed through our pulp magazines. Library cataloguers of the future may see them as significant for their mass psychology, and class them with the old Beadle dime-novels, which dealt with wilderness and strange journeys. But the technique surpasses that of the old dime-novels, which had no studied art. The covers have a dramatic quality: vividly, the artists depict a pall of horror that hangs over the nation's capital, and the illustrations resemble photographs. There are war maneuvers on the lawn of the White House. Many pages in the pulps are given over solely to black scream-newspaper headlines; they are effective. There is a realistic use of telegrams dated from Washington, D. C., and the names of many political figures are distorted slightly. The pulp magazines are related to newsprint, not to the novel, swinging with the weathervane of headlines.

It is evident that the killing of redskins once had romantic possibilities. The old Beadle dime-novels carried a symbol on their salmon-colored covers. It was the stamp of a ten-cent piece, the price of the novel. Today, *Operator No. 5 Magazine* carries the "cut" of a black shako of the Death's-Head Hussars on every other page, and the aborigines from the U.S.S.R. are pursued relentlessly.

The pulp magazines have always carried special departments dealing with such problems as: How to Solve Cipher Codes, How to Read Faces, Jujutsu Grips for Self-Defense. But now one of their number, *All Detective Magazine,* has made justice its own personal problem by forming a National Vigilance Association. It believes: "That a single shot, fired with a .36 Colt Cap and Ball Navy revolver, did more to purify California than all the laws and reformers ever hatched." And *Popular Publications,* through *Spider Magazine* and *Operator No. 5 Magazine,* have widened the field still further. Their departments advertise openly for membership in an undercover organization á la Hitler. Curtis Steel is the secretary of a great group of readers who are nourished by his flaming tales, and induced to join an organization that proclaims:

> Now, as never before, everyone can do his part; there are military and naval units once more open to general enlistment; there are law-makers in Washington who are fighting to see that we take our rightful place in maintaining our strength on land, sea, and air. For younger patriots there are junior Naval Reserve and other training units.
>
> And—there is the great and growing organization of Secret Sentinels of America—pledged to patriotism and fair play. When the time comes, they, too, may be counted on to live up to their promise when they first became wearers of the mystic skull ring.

Members of the Secret Sentinels of America are ordered to report foreign espionage and sabotage, to be on the alert for subversive propaganda, especially of Communists. Many Sentinels are now operating out of their own sub-headquarters, and divisional units are being organized from coast to coast. Curtis Steele has appended to his office the initials: *S.S.A.* He has a natural genius of contriving names and titles that have a familiar ring. It is not coincidental (as one can see by reading his fascist stories), that the initials are similar to those used abroad for the *Schutz Staffel* and *Sturm Abteilung.* This fact is significant of the whole drift.

★ ★ ★

The Nine

Who will be masters of our land tomorrow?
These boys, playing baseball on the wide lawn
surrounding the Washington obelisk, run fleetly
from base to base. Far from the white home plate
the monument's shadow cuts the field in two
before the falling sun. No rebels, they know merely
the sure clear flight of the batted ball,
the gasping chase, the thud in the leather
when the ball's caught, the enemy team retired.
Umpires are enemies too: the caller of strikes
is careful: the scorn of children is deadly as gunfire.

Every day, at sun-summit, the two teams toss
the bat from hand to hand, choosing sides.
Nine spread out, dotting the field; nine others
huddle on sidelines and the game begins.
Inning by inning it is played, replayed;
disputes interrupt but never end it;
teams change, the power shifts, bats split
like hewn logs with the grain, but the game continues.

Not far away, their fathers and grandfathers,
ex-batters and fielders of baseballs, quarrel
in a white-domed building. Sides change.
Age erodes their brain cells. Men die, many
leave to return. Others stay to summon
quorums of quarrelers: whenever the quorum gathers
it sleeps; and a team of nine aged great-grandfathers
wakens them, scolds whether scolding's in order or not,
spares not the ignorant rod—these umpires appointed
by god in fat jowls and goldpiece for stickpin—
like the caller of strikes on the ball grounds.

EDWIN ROLFE.

Where My Sympathy Lies

The author of "Call It Sleep" makes clear his views on a public question

By Henry Roth

PROBABLY in common with a good many writers, my political development has not reached as high a level as it might—many of my beliefs seem the product more of intuition than of analysis. Nevertheless, I hold, however arrived at, that any writer who longs for justice and brotherhood among men must hate the exploitation of men, the sordidness that rears itself on such exploitation, and the twin pinnacles that cap it, fascism and war. Whoever hungers for justice must ally himself, if only in sympathy, with all those forces that struggle to liberate humanity from slavery and want. Any organization, any impulse of men that honestly and by its acts strives in the direction of such liberation, should enlist a writer's sympathy in direct proportion as there is a struggle for these aims. The recent trials of the Trotskyites in the U.S.S.R. therefore raises this question: to what extent does Trotskyism deserve the sympathy of a writer?

There are several things about this trial about which I am confused. Nevertheless, enough and more than enough has been revealed to convince me of the guilt of the accused; and by guilt, I mean that all their efforts were calculated to nullify or destroy the very growth of the safeguards that would ensure the freedom and fraternity of millions of men. But if I had any remnant of a doubt of this, it has vanished before the steps taken by the Trotskyites in this country to defend their leader. I refer to the libel suit contemplated by the Committee for the Defense of Trotsky against certain Communist leaders and publications in this country.

The Committee intends also to form an "impartial commission" and justifies this act by stating that:

> The Communist Party cannot legitimately oppose the creation of such a commission, if only because of the fact that they themselves inspired the so-called counter-trial in London set up to deal with the so-called Leipzig trial of Dimitroff and his friends. If they have the so-called overwhelming proof against Trotsky they claim to have, let them confront Trotsky with it.—[N. Y. Times, Feb. 1.]

The more one studies this quotation, the clearer becomes the picture of the Trotskyite mentality. The elementary differences between the trial of Dimitroff in Germany and the trial of the Trotskyites in the Soviet Union are apparently no more important to Trotskyites than are facts. Dimitroff was a Communist in a Nazi court, a spokesman and a champion of the working class. In the very shadow of the ax, he maintained the justice of his cause; he enunciated his principles and announced his adherence to them. He maintained his innocence. Before the trial was over, and in the den of Hitlerism itself, he became the accuser of Naziism, the exposer of fascist barbarity wherever it existed, the symbol of heroic struggle against it. He was acquitted.

In what way were the principals in the recent Soviet trials similar? None maintained his innocence there, none became the accuser; no matter how brilliant, none was backed by a principle, all confessed their guilt. Some wept at the loathsome company and the bleakness and obscurity of the pass their historical steps had led them to, some bragged and some jeered, but they all stood convicted, their sentences sustained by demonstrations of Russian workers. I do not believe together with the Hearst press that these men were under the influence of mesmerism or mysterious narcotics; therefore, I believe them to be, as they themselves acknowledged, guilty.

Not only does Trotsky propose to prove the innocence of himself and his associates by a trial of the Soviet Union in which he becomes the accuser, but also by a libel suit against working-class leaders and against working-class publications in a bourgeois court. It is by what such a step aims to accomplish that one can judge what Trotskyism is. Trotskyism becomes the barren woman in the fable of Solomon, the fable in which the king had to choose between the legitimate mother of a child and the spurious one. Solomon decided that the woman who was willing to let the infant live despite its being fostered by another, was indeed the mother of it. I am not Solomon. But Trotskyism seems to me more an expression of that monstrous kind of ego that, unwilling or unable to go through the pains of bearing and nurturing the growing spirit of liberation throughout the world, would rather see it severed by the sword than not possess it.

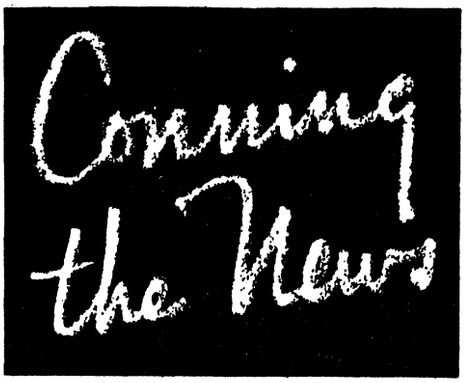
As a writer, more than ever involved in the growth of enlightenment and freedom, I can see only one way of accomplishing this, the united front against fascism—and one way sure to paralyze all our efforts, Trotskyism.

Hans.

"For years I thought Mr. Trotsky was just as bad as Lenin."

William Sanderson

TRADITIONAL AMERICANISM?



Covering the events of the week ending February 22, 1937

LETTERS and telegrams by the thousand continued to pour in on an embattled Washington in the struggle over President Roosevelt's proposal for reforms in the federal judiciary. The end of the second week of the struggle found the President opposed to any compromise in his plan to rejuvenate the Supreme Court by adding a new judge for each present member over the age of seventy who refuses to retire. After passing through the first great wave of reactionary opposition, administrative forces appeared to feel that the worst was over and that there would be no need for any real concessions.

Good ground for the attitude came in the form of strongly expressed support from several important quarters. Labor's Non-Partisan League, under the direction of Major George L. Berry, Sidney Hillman, and John L. Lewis, addressed letters to congressmen, calling upon "every man who, in soliciting votes at the last election sincerely claimed to be a supporter of the President," to back to the full the President's Court proposal. Attacking those liberals who oppose the Roosevelt plan and insist instead on a constitutional amendment, the League declared: "By the time the amendment could be adopted, the damage of unrestricted industrial autocracy would have been done. . . . It would be a bitter paradox if unscrupulous reactionaries might now rely upon the overscrupulousness of progressives to aid in the destruction of our democracy." Endorsement of the President's course came also from the executive committee of the A.F. of L., from the newly formed Lawyers' Guild, from farm organizations, and from a large group of progressive teachers attending the convention of the National Education Association at New Orleans. As for letters to congressmen, Representative Maverick of Texas reported that the trend in his mail had shifted from three-to-one against the proposal to two-to-one in favor. The President's hand was further strengthened by the statement of the organized liberal bloc in the House of Representatives urging all progressives to "united action" in support of the plan.

THIS same bloc won further distinction during the week by taking the first concrete step toward wiping out the affront to the Spanish government implied in the so-called "neutrality" embargo which was rushed through in the first week of the present session of Congress. With the support of five independent liberals, the thirteen members of the bloc introduced a joint resolution to apply the same arms embargo against Germany, Italy, and Portugal, since those countries "have invaded the territory of Spain . . . with which the government of the United States continues to maintain friendly relations."

The chances that any such legislation would get by the conservative House Foreign Affairs Committee were admittedly slim. To make matters worse, the equally conservative Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted during the week to recommend to the Senate the Pittman resolution, which would amend the present Neutrality Law still further in the direction of an isolated foreign policy. And the Senate Military Affairs Committee began hearings on the Sheppard-Hill bill, which embraces the notorious war mobilization plan. Testifying before the last-named committee, James Waterman Wise, representing the American League Against War and Fascism, urged rejection of the bill as a "fascist measure." The plan, he pointed out, would enable the President to establish a military dictatorship even in peace time by the simple declaration that an emergency exists. Labor conscription at wages fixed by the government, cancellation of the right to strike, and military discipline in industry were among the evils of the plan which Wise denounced to the committee.

ALTHOUGH almost completely absorbed in directing the campaign for his Court plan, President Roosevelt found time during the week to direct some attention to the problems of the American farmer. Turning over to Congress the report on farm tenancy which his committee had submitted the week before, the President recommended a four-point program calling for federal loans to tenants, aid to present owners to help them avoid loss of their farmsteads, loans for rehabilitation of tenants "not ready for ownership," and retirement of sub-marginal lands. The President made no suggestion concerning the amount of money to be appropriated, but although conceding that the "agricultural ladder" for many American citizens had become a "treadmill," he made it clear that he wanted only a modest beginning. While the Bankhead bill, now under consideration, calls for only $50,000,000 annually in loans to tenants, the progressive National Farm Holiday Association announced that a bill will soon be introduced in Congress calling for an appropriation of $500,000,000 for the first year alone. A minority report from the President's investigating committee asked that supervision of the program be taken out of the hands of the Department of Agriculture, which it found unable "to remove itself from domination by the rich and large-land-owning class of farmers and their political pressure lobbies."

Having no choice, the President also found time to receive a delegation from the American Youth Congress, 4500 of whose members staged one of the most colorful processions in the history of Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue. When police seized upon the sitting down of a few of the marchers during a brief halt as excuse for breaking up the parade, the entire line staged a "sit-down" at the gates of the White House, for which two of the leaders of the demonstration were arrested. The President told a delegation of seven that the Congress should continue its "good work," but he gave no assurance that he would support the American Youth Act for which the Youth Congress is fighting.

THE LaFollette subcommittee investigating labor espionage continued to uncover an astounding network of spy activities in the automobile industry. At one time, testified one of the witnesses, all five officers of the Lansing local of the Auto Workers' Union were Pinkerton men, employed expressly to destroy the union. Other sensational testimony of the week included revelations of how files in the office of Alfred P. Sloan had been ransacked and relevant material destroyed after a subpœna had been issued for its delivery to the committee. "In the light of the testimony that this committee has taken, the evidence is overwhelming," LaFollette declared, "that the use of labor espionage is demonstrated and proved to be one of the most effective weapons in destroying genuine labor collective bargaining activities on the part of the workers."

While representatives of the victorious automobile workers entered into discussions with General Motors officials on specific agreements concerning hours, wages, speed-up, etc., following the forty-four-day strike, labor throughout the country was far from inactive. Heartened by the maritime and auto victories, a score of smaller but no less significant strikes were in progress. A number of them used the sit-down method: in Waukegan, Ill., more than 100 workers remained in two plants of the Fansteel Metallurgical Corp. to force recognition of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, & Tin Workers. Neither tear gas nor injunction dislodged them. Seven New York building service workers used a boiler room as the scene of their sit-down, but were ejected, arrested, found guilty of "disorderly conduct," and given suspended sentences.

Most besieged town in the country was Anderson, Ind., where 1000 National Guardsmen were still enforcing martial law against union members and strikers of the General Motors guide-lamp plant, following the shooting, two weeks ago, of fourteen union workers by town police and company-hired thugs. National Guard Commander Albert Whitcomb was on record with the statement that "provisions of the federal constitution mean nothing under martial law." Responsibility for the shootings and the flouting of all civil liberties was placed on General Motors by B. J. Widdick, local organizer of the United Automobile Workers: "Undoubtedly Anderson is the beginning of their national assault on the strike agreement," he said.

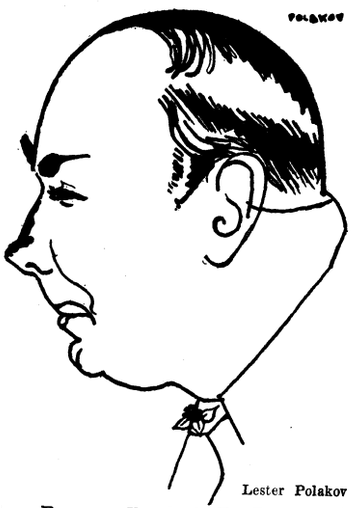
Angered by C.I.O. successes elsewhere,

Governor Hoffman (R.), of New Jersey, threatened bloodshed against C.I.O. unionization activities in his state, especially against sit-down strikers (see editorial, page 20). But state labor organizers, undeterred by the threat, pushed plans for the organization of New Jersey's industrial workers, calling attention to Hoffman's long anti-labor record, his complete domination by the New Jersey Standard Oil Company, his tolerance of gangsters, thugs, the white-slave trade, and his assaults on civil liberties. Both the C.I.O. and civil liberties groups in the state prepared to defend the rights of labor against Hoffman's threatened repressive measures.

MEETING in New York City, representatives of the United Mine Workers of America and bituminous operators from eight states failed to agree on the terms of a new collective agreement to take the place of the present contract, which expires March 31. Union heads, representing 400,000 miners, asked for a two-year agreement, demanding 200 days' work a year, a six-dollar daily wage, a thirty-hour week, and a two-weeks' vacation each year with pay. Operators balked at all proposals except the two-year agreement, offering instead a forty-hour week with no pay increase. With operators' spokesman Charles P. O'Neill declaring that the wage demands of the union were "utterly impossible," conferences seemed likely to be protracted over a long period of time. John L. Lewis, miners' president, and Philip Murray, spokesman for the union at the meeting, headed the union delegates. "The miners demand living wages," said Mr. Murray, "and the right to live."

Earlier in the week, A.F. of L. President William Green was raked over the coals by the United Mine Workers' policy committee. His role in, and public statements on, the General Motors strike were characterized as "treason and betrayal of labor" by the committee, which charged and empowered the union's international officers to expel him. President John P. Frey, of the metal trades department of the A.F. of L., was also condemned. Green, a member of the miners' union for forty-seven years, turned to several Chicago friends to forestall the possibility of a Federation president being unattached to any Federation union, and again there were rumors of a possible member's berth for Green in the Chicago musicians' local. Miners scoffed at Green's pianistic pretensions, offering grave doubts as to his ability to perform creditably in any repertory not confined to variations of "Chopsticks."

DISCRIMINATION against Negroes in the government's naval academy at Annapolis, Md., was revealed when a presidential investigation was ordered in the case of James L. Johnson, Jr., recently dismissed on a series of counts all declared to be false. Johnson, the first Negro to be appointed to the academy in sixty-two years, is waiting on the naval school's campus pending the outcome of the investigation. His dismissal was all the more open to question in the light of his preparatory record, which was high enough to permit his entrance into Annapolis without examination.



Lester Polakov

Major Berry—Backed F. D. on Court

Also involving the navy, but in a far different sense, was the battle between the United States Steel Corp. and the Navy Department over the Walsh-Healy Act. U. S. Steel, after months of refusing to bid on contracts for new battleships under the terms of the act (which provides for a forty-hour week with overtime for all workers engaged in production for government needs), finally agreed to supply steel to the T.V.A. under Walsh-Healy act terms. This was seen as a break in the steel corporation's stand against both the government and the union demands, but leaders of the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee (S.W.O.C.) placed no great faith in its significance. Pushing their steel organization drive, C.I.O. leaders predicted that the biggest corporation in America would bring all of its gigantic financial resources into the fight against unionization of the industry. Despite this, the S.W.O.C., equally determined to bring about a closed shop in steel, pressed its campaign to achieve 200,000 members and 250 lodges by March 15.

OUT of China came news of the most far-reaching importance: immediate possibility of internal unity, precondition for successful resistance against Japan, as a result of decisions at the extraordinary plenary session of the Kuomintang (Nationalist) Party. According to an interview with Chou En-lai, vice-chairman of the Chinese Soviets, five Communist demands were presented to the Nanking government, controlled by the Kuomintang: unity of China against Japan; freedom of speech, press, and assembly; political amnesty; convocation of a national congress including all parties, armies, and trade unions; national defense against Japan; and betterment of the living conditions of the Chinese masses. In return, the Communists were reported ready to cease opposition to the Nanking government; cease confiscation of property and wealth; include the Soviet regions in a new democratic set-up as the most advanced regions; rename the Chinese Red Army the Chinese Revolutionary Army. Early reports stated that the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang had substantially granted the Communist demands, publicly emphasizing Red concessions but not refusing the main proposals. As for the Chinese Communist Party, "We will never change the name of our party nor alter our fundamental aims," said Vice-Chairman Chou.

Japan was expected to pursue a more "conciliatory" policy respecting China, as a result of internal disaffection and stiffened Chinese resistance. The reconvened Diet leveled a fierce verbal fire against the make-up of the new cabinet, first to omit members of the political parties. Yukio Ozaki, seventy-eight-year-old "moderate" leader, attacked the pact with Germany and called for a non-aggression agreement with the U.S.S.R. Premier Hayashi did not yield on the anti-Soviet pact, but he indicated that Japan might mark time in China while Kuomintang policy tended leftwards. Another anti-imperialist advance in the East was registered in India, where the Indian National Congress emerged with predominant strength in six of the eight provinces holding elections under the new "self-government" act. The Congress is opposed to the act on the grounds that it strengthens British rule under the illusion of partial independence, but participated in the election to bring its policy to the people.

WHILE the loyalist army on the Madrid front held fast to all essential positions after terrific fascist onslaughts, the rebel command launched their long-awaited drive on the Aragon front, gateway to Catalonia and the Mediterranean. Results of the early fighting were reported definitely unfavorable to the rebels, who suffered 1000 killed; but some observers suggested that the Aragon attack was a diversion to sidetrack Catalan reënforcements for Madrid. The Jarama River front, southeast of Madrid, was the scene of attack and counter-attack in which positions remained substantially unchanged; some observers, however, believed that the rebels have again exhausted man-power and munitions to a point where they must mark time before trying another major assault.

Mussolini, during the week, had to turn his attention to Ethiopia, where 2000 natives were rounded up for extreme "punishment" after a bomb explosion in Addis Ababa injured Marshal Rodolfo Graziani and seriously wounded Chief of Air Force General Aurelio Liotta. Some 300 persons were reported to have been shot at once. Although Rome tried to deprecate the episode as a "criminal" act, the large number of Ethiopians seized indicated the revival of large-scale resistance to the Italian conquest.

In the Soviet Union, 750,000 persons marched to show their grief over the untimely death of fifty-year-old Gregory K. Orjonikidze, Commissar for Heavy Industry. An Old Bolshevik, Orjonikidze died in harness from overwork.

Can Father Coughlin Come Back?

The Detroit priest's radio awakening from voluntary retirement draws attention to a revival of activity by the National Union

By Dale Kramer

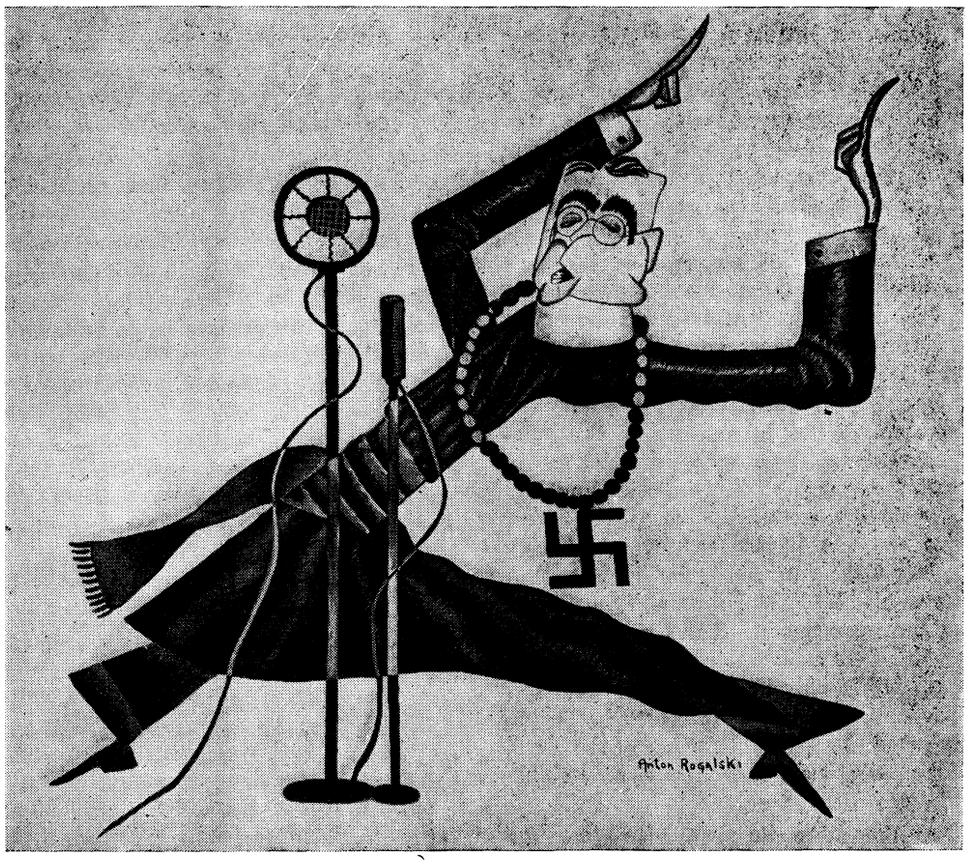
THE radio priest has heard the call again, he is back on the air to save the people from communism—this time from the Red ogre, John L. Lewis. Finding that his periods of sleep get him nowhere, he has billed himself on a two-a-Sunday basis for fifty-two consecutive weeks.

Can he regain his lost strength? Any number of prophets were ready to state, and did state, flatly, that Father Coughlin was through. He promised to deliver 9,000,000 votes to Brother William Lemke, the North Dakota Hurricane, or else retire from the air. This promise he seemed to be carrying out when he ordered the National Union for Social Justice to bed, hedging only to the effect that it would awaken at the moment of "need." Naturally, everyone laughed uproariously at the idea, and chose to believe the good father's sleeping watchdog only a rug.

The newspaper *Social Justice* would continue to inform the beast at those odd moments when it awakened from a cat-nap, however. Father Coughlin set off for Bermuda, leaving in charge Alan Blackburn and Philip Johnson, the two Harvard boys who joined Huey P. Long, then switched to Coughlin upon Long's death. While the priest posed for photographs in moonlight and shadows of the palms, these young men tried their own hand at the radio, starting up a youth program on a Toledo station, and filled the paper full of Mr. Hitler's and Mr. Franco's praise. The latter once had the honor of being compared with our own George Washington.

How the expensive sixteen-page tabloid newspaper kept afloat is as much a mystery as Coughlin's manner of financing his huge radio broadcasts, unless the bicycle contest did the work. Or young Johnson was able to come to the rescue. Logically he, or his family, should have made up the deficit if possible. Father Coughlin stands for big armies and navies and against pacifism ("On this Armistice day, I proclaim that I am no pacifist," he bellowed to the nation in 1935), and Johnson is of the bandage-and-iodine Johnson & Johnson family.

However, for some time it has been apparent that the soundness of Father Coughlin's sleep has been much exaggerated. Even a superficial checkup of *Social Justice's* newsstand sales showed that. Several newsdealers informed me that sales had dropped only about 25 percent since the heat of election. Minneapolis street corner dealers were selling from fifty to 200 weekly. Furthermore, National Union for Social Justice units refused to remain asleep. Either on Coughlin's private orders or on their own hook, they were quietly organizing.



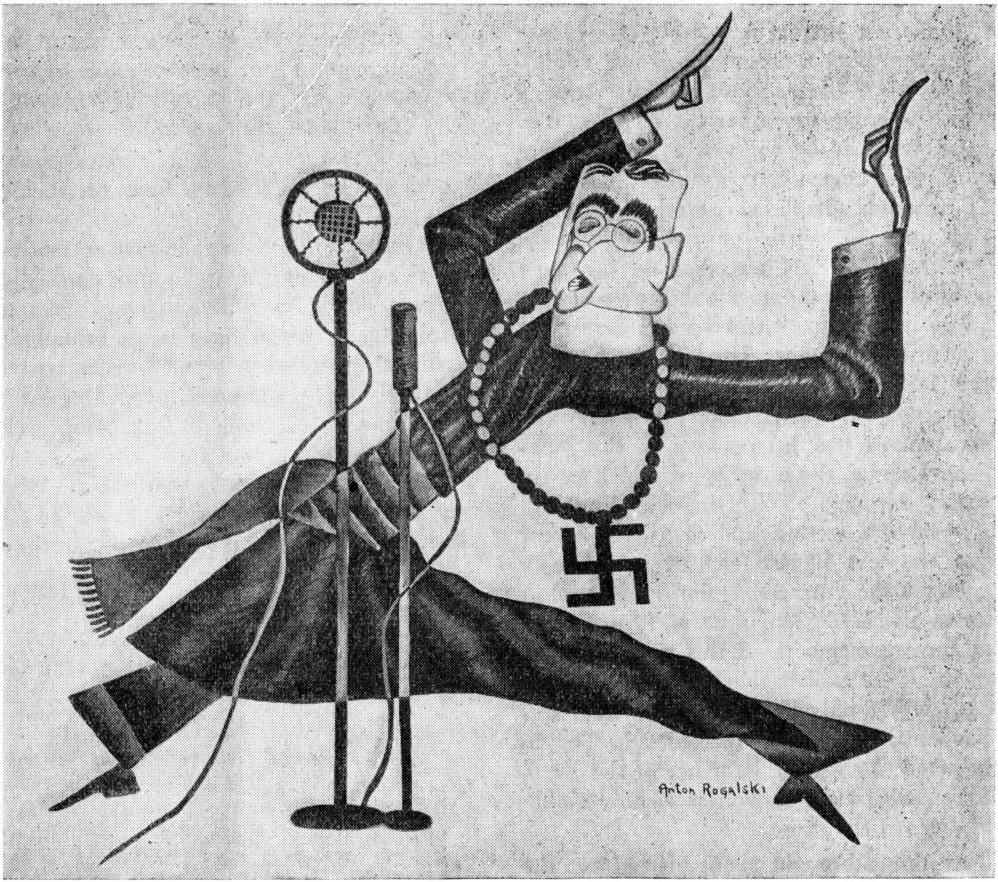
Back at the Old Stand Anton Rogalski

It is extremely doubtful that the priest was much discouraged by Mr. Lemke's poor showing. Actually, he ditched the North Dakotan some time before the election and is probably of the opinion, no doubt correct, that if he had really tried, it would have been possible to have delivered at least another million votes to the Union Party. No one is more aware of this than Brother Lemke himself, and consequently a certain coolness between the two messiahs is not surprising. Soon after election, rumors began to circulate through sources close to the two men that Lemke was boiling mad. He could hardly be blamed.

Coughlin had the habit of going about the country announcing that Lemke had not a ghost of a chance of election, while on the other hand the North Dakotan maintained to the bitter end that the White House was in the bag. Lemke became very tired of the implication that he merely acted as a stooge for the priest. I was able to be present on a couple of occasions when he hit the ceiling after a few questions concerning what Coughlin had said or had not said. At first he called them misquotations of the "kept press," but finally he informed his tormentors (both were bothered by reporters, but only Coughlin took occasion to push eyeglasses) that what Coughlin said was his own business; he, Lemke, was the candidate.

Father Coughlin failed to attend a recent convention of the Union Party, or even to send a message. Several weeks after the event, his paper printed a press release issued by the party's manager; otherwise no mention was made. Nor did the convention mention the priest; Lemke was hailed as the "founder." Emil Holmes, manager of the Minnesota party, called upon Coughlin for an accounting of the money, and declared the priest "branded with a cross of gold for having cost Congressman Lemke several million votes."

It is simple and pleasant to brand Coughlin as a fool and let it go at that. Or even to make out a fairly good case against him because of the Union Party debacle. But once you have proved him a fool, it makes no particular difference; Olson and Johnson, the comedians, throw pictures of Hitler and Mus-



Back at the Old Stand

Anton Rogalski

solini on the screen to the vast amusement of the audience. Several dozens of writers have even stated that refusal of German liberals to take Hitler seriously greatly aided in his rise to power. And while Coughlin is a madman, of course, affected with egomania of some sort, it is therein that his danger lies. He has not one tenth the brains of the late Huey P. Long, while having as much urge to power; and again the danger lies in that direction.

Actually, had he not been forced by unforeseen but powerful circumstances to trim his sails, the priest might have come out of the 1936 election with a personal party of a minimum of two million followers. His strategy was good enough, or rather his actions—it is doubtful whether he follows a plan. There again is the danger. He got the blessing of Dr. Townsend, who, he very well knew, could hold his lines but a little longer. Probably the Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith had to be taken along with Townsend as a liability; certainly Coughlin hated him. Lemke was a better bet than is usually thought. His bill, the Frazier-Lemke farm refinancing measure, was immensely popular with poor farmers, and Lemke himself had been active in the Non-Partisan League, the memory of which vastly influences farmers. With Lemke, Coughlin thought he was getting, and to a large extent did get, the next biggest farm organization in the country, the Farmers' Union. He couldn't expect to reach the top layer of farmers, the Farm Bureau members, at this time, anyhow, although it may be there that his rural strength will finally lie. Milo Reno was still alive when the party was formed, and Coughlin expected to turn the influence of the Farm Holiday Association, as well as Reno's stumping ability, to the cause.

Three things brought about his failure: the attitude of the Catholic church; the necessity, probably financial, for attacking Roosevelt more bitterly than Landon; and his own indiscretions. When Bishop Gallagher lunched with the President, then later announced his vote would be cast for Roosevelt, it became plain that the church's criticism of Coughlin's actions had taken effect. The priest's speeches became watery, he actually praised the President, and he mentioned Lemke only in an offhand and not too helpful manner. Probably a million votes would have switched from Roosevelt and Landon had he held the line.

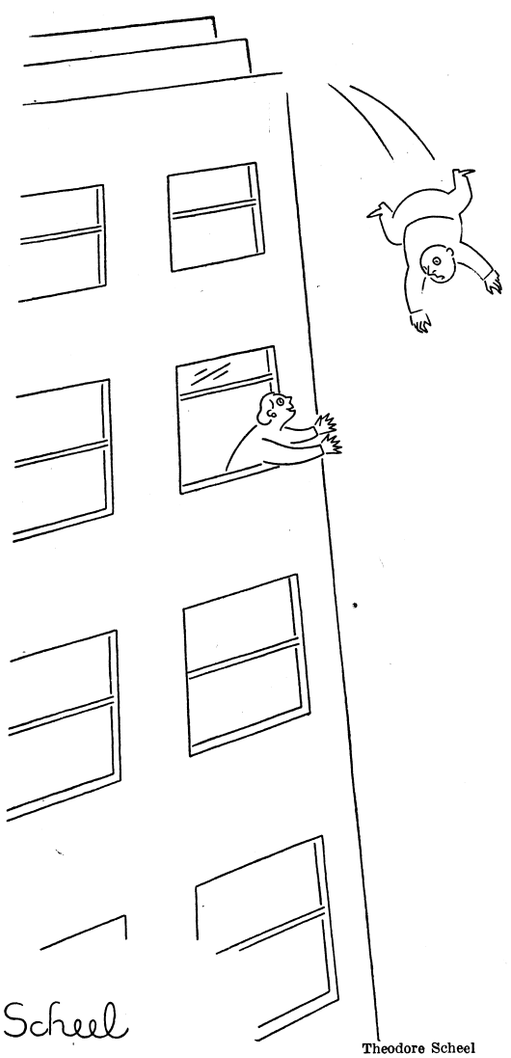
The bitter attacks on Roosevelt, and the letdown at the end undoubtedly allowed a quarter to half a million votes to swing to the Republican candidate. These he could have held to his own party had not forces pushed him in another direction. It was not uncommon before the election, on inquiring of a man from a country community how Lemke's vote would go in his neighborhood, to receive the reply that it would be pretty good if voters were not afraid it would take strength away from Landon. However, most of the potential Lemke votes switched to Roosevelt.

There can be no doubt that Coughlin's indiscreet remarks, as well as his paper's wild statements, resulted in a tremendous loss of strength. These remarks were of two kinds: indiscriminate and vicious attacks on President Roosevelt, and allusions to "bullets instead of ballots." The "bullets" statements began in Des Moines and continued until he began pushing reporters around. It was good copy, and they insisted that he say it over and over again, even though the Vatican's organ was hot after him.

I happened to be present in Des Moines when he let down his hair and looked into the future. Whether he thought his words would go no further it is hard to say; at least he made no mention of off-the-record remarks, and consequently the press took occasion to quote him. But since no notes were taken during an hour in which he waited between broadcasts, he might have considered it all in fun.

But his remark, "I take the road to fascism," was picked up by the radio program *March of Time,* and given wide currency. Secretary Harold Ickes, a few days later, brought the statement up a notch when he declared the priest had made the statement in a Des Moines speech, and before long it was being quoted as part of his program.

He *did* make himself pretty clear. Whenever I read in his paper an attack on "the politicians," I recall his outline of the correct fascist agitation in America. The politicians and the stock market are best. He can bring 'em out of their seats by an attack on "the politicians." He experiments with it sometimes. In 1926, he had predicted Hitler's rise to power, he said, and had been a close student of fascism all the while. Hitler would have gotten nowhere without the radio, he pointed out significantly. But in fitting fascism to America, he finds that Jew-baiting will not work, finally concluding that it is a personal thing with Herr Hitler.



Theodore Scheel

"Oh, Mr. Cromwell! It wasn't Mr. Lewis, it was Mr. Green who called."

An hour with him and a good many hours with his intimates and with reporters who have observed his actions closely make it plain that he is the first man who has built up a large following willing to obey his every wish. Today he is Leader to at least two million persons. Huey Long had no such control, nor have Dr. Townsend or the Reverend Smith. Theodore Roosevelt, Bryan, and others built a large personal following, but they were not organized into the machine which Coughlin has built. Those men and women who fought to touch the Father's hem at Cleveland are not bothered by failure in an election. They are the humble, the ones used to being in the minority. One more doesn't bother them.

Nevertheless, Father Coughlin has been whipped out of the working class and out of a large section of his original following in the farm areas. Liberals who dared not mention him during the election campaign took occasion to speak harshly of him during the Bermuda rest. His support of Hitler and the Spanish fascists contributed to his decline among these groups, and the attacks on John L. Lewis which have filled most of his speeches and his newspaper will aid in the consolidation against him of what might roughly be termed the proletariat. One of his staunchest supporters, a noted contributor to open-forum columns, who makes a habit of sending letters to newspapers accusing me of being in the "pay of the Federal Reserve System"—which is the customary charge lodged against the priest's detractors—nevertheless informed me, in apologizing for the Lewis attacks, "the best of men can make a mistake."

On the other hand, Father Coughlin must still be considered a friend by members of the Flint Alliance, General Motors' private fink organization, and the esteem in which he is held by Mr. Sloan and Mr. Knudsen, not to mention the duPonts and other large stockholders, must be more than a little. If he can show a hindering effect on unionization in auto, the hopeful Leader should not lack funds.

The Lemke debacle, despite some excuses with which Coughlin can console himself, nevertheless must have shown the undependability of labor-union members and thinking farmers. Quite possibly he is now consciously moving toward the traditionally anti-labor, anti-radical elements. In other words, after a certain amount of experimenting, he has found his role. How important the role will be in our future depends upon a number of things, but anyone who believes Father Coughlin is "through" is capable of great self-delusion.

First Steps

The problem of a new dress, and of danger to life while working in a copper mine, haunted Glory Lee

By Fielding Burke

I, Glory Lee Bates, was having my sixth birthday. Not celebrating, just having it. My seat for most of the day was the top of a sparse woodpile. It was November, and my naked feet seemed warmer when not in contact with the clammy ground. I tried to tuck them under my short skirt, and the effort left me looking with horror on another and more erratic rent in the garment. This was my only dress, and on the following Monday I was to begin trotting two and a half miles to school behind Minnie Brock, the long-legged daughter of a neighbor. Minnie had asked me point-blank what I was going to wear, and I had spoken hopefully of the new "goods" that my big half-brother, Benjie, would bring me from Ducktown on Saturday night.

"But the next day's Sunday," said Minnie. "Your mother can't sew on Sunday."

"My mother sews awful fast. She can make it Saturday night."

"She'd better not take nary stitch after midnight. She'll have to take ever' one of 'em out with her teeth after she dies. In hell, too."

I didn't want to bring such a terrible fate on my mother, but I would have risked the most dreadful punishment for myself if I could have a new dress. It was on Monday that Minnie had given me her last word. By Wednesday, my birthday, I was without hope, condemned to rags, already feeling my skin prickle under the sly scorn of my unknown schoolmates.

I got off the woodpile and began to fill a basket with small chips. The old women in the house, "dipping" and whispering around the hearth, would be wanting them. Granny Brock had said that we mustn't have a peart fire with a dead body in the room, but it wouldn't hurt none to feed it with leetle chips.

The body, stretched on planks laid between two wooden saw-horses, was the body of my half-brother, Benjie. He hadn't waited until Saturday night to come in. The big rock had fallen on him Tuesday when he was deep in a Ducktown copper mine, and that night the body had been sent home. So I wouldn't get the dress.

As I put down the basket by the hearth, my tears were falling into it. "The gal's takin' it hard," said one of the women. And my sobs burst forth for the dress that I would never see.

"They were goosy about each other," said my mother, who was Benjie's young stepmother. "He always called her Pet. He was goin' to bring her stuff for a new dress Saturday. She'll have to wear her rags to school now."

Miner's Kids

Lithograph by Ida Abelman

"I won't! I won't!" I shouted, shocking the subdued house and running back to the woodpile, my heart burning up with the nameless persecution that can pursue a child.

I kept my seat stubbornly, indifferent to all who came and went. But when a stranger drove up in a horse and buggy I gave him my attention. He got out and didn't go into the house. He came straight to me.

"I reckon you're Pet," he said.

I nodded resentfully. What right had *he* to call me that?

"This yorn, belike?" He held out something wrapped in brown paper. "I'm the man Benjie boarded with, an' my woman found this under the mattress this mornin'. She looked inter it an' said there was jest enough stuff to make a leetle gal's dress. It's marked 'Pet.' You can see it is, but you kaint read yit, I reckon."

I grabbed the package, wishing he would not grin so much. It was a solemn moment. "I'm going to school Monday," I called to him as he went into the house. Already I was a scholar. Bare feet didn't matter. There would be other children who would have to wait until Christmas for their shoes.

Slowly I opened the package. The revelation must be gradual if I were to bear it. First I saw something black. Then a red flower. Black with red flowers. Oh, it would be pretty! Black with red—

Suddenly I was seeing a picture out of the Sunday before, when Benjie had been at home. My mother had made him two black handkerchiefs from a sateen petticoat that was outworn all but one width. As he stood by the fire, every few minutes he would wipe his nose. When he did that, there would be blood on his handkerchief.

"The acid is gettin' you, son," my father had said.

"I can stand it awhile. Some of the fellers have got the whole inside o' their noses rotted out, but they're holdin' on. 'We got to eat at our house,' they says, an' it don't kill till it gets to the lungs."

"What about them filters an' things they were goin' to put in to clear the air so humans can breathe it?"

"Toad-squirt! They'll take the acid out of the air when they can make a profit on it. They've got a lot o' men to kill 'fore that."

"I can remember when all that copper country was growin' big trees like over in

Miner's Kids

Lithograph by Ida Abelman

Coweeta. Now it's et down to the rocks."

"If there's a tree on it now I'll bring it home on my shoulder."

I clapped my hands. "You could do it, Benjie!"

He grinned at me. "Sure, I'm big John Henry, hired out to the copper company, just for fun." Then he turned to my father. "They cut and sold the forest. Now they are guttin' the earth. What's gonna be left?"

"Well, son, somebody's got to make money, er we wouldn't have any work."

"There's something gets me worse than the acid. It's the smell of the men's clo's when they get hot down under the ground an' we're workin' jam together. Some of the men sleep in the same bed with their younguns. A whole family'll rent a room an' pile in. The men sleep in their clo's an' the younguns wet 'em. Boy, when it gets hot down there I mighty nigh choke."

"Well," said my father, "childern's got to pee, I reckon." He used the mild word in deference to my presence. Sometimes he told me that my ears were too long, and taking out his knife would make a jovial threat to trim them.

"Course they have," said Benjie, "but they don't have to do it on their daddy's clo's. That's mixin' up nature with what ain't nature. A man don't have to sleep in his sweat rags with his younguns, five in a bed. *That* ain't nature. Not for men. It's for pigs an' such."

"You get a dollar and a half a day," said my father, his voice low with shame. "We couldn't do without it, Benjie."

Epitaph for Gorki

Here lies
The ambassador from the boroughs of want
Who wrote of them that tormented the people
Who made war upon them
Reared in the universities of the highways
The lowlyborn
Who rose to crash the pyramid of high and low
The teacher of the people
By the people taught.

BERTHOLD BRECHT.

★

"A dollar and a half! That's a price to give a man for ever' thing that's in him! I'd like to throw it in their faces! Only they haven't got any faces. I'd like to throw it right back into the slag!" He flung up his head until his thick hair touched the rough beam above him. "They'll never get me! I'll not hold on till it's too late, like some o' the fellers. Naw, they'll not get me!"

They! they! The they-thing that surrounded my life like an invisible pressure, making me older than my years. If I asked my father what it was, he would say, "The company, I reckon." When I asked him who the company was, he usually said "Shut up, pester-box!" But once he was more friendly and answered, "Maybe the Lord knows. Nobody 'round here ever found out."

Benjie stood by the fire, his back to it, and his eyes staring towards the open door. He could see out to blue mountains with their backs stretched in the sun. But the mountains and the sun were not giving him back anything. His eyes were not like Benjie's. They were coated with dull pain, and desperately inquisitive. I understood that look years afterward, when I could gaze into a mirror and meet it in my own eyes. A fatigued grappling with something that never stood out clear, yet was real enough to prey on every hour of life and keep it stripped and mean.

Benjie wiped his nose again, and looked at the blood on the black rag. I ran to him and caught him around the knees. "You'll quit soon as you buy me a dress?"

"Yes. I'll quit. They'll never get me."

And on Tuesday the rock fell. It struck him between the shoulders and nearly cut his neck in two. His head had been fixed back, and the women said he looked fine. "Jest like himself." Once when my mother lifted the sheet to show his face to a neighbor, I took a swift look. Yes, that was Benjie's nose and mouth. That was his brown hair waved back from his forehead. I felt better after I had looked. He wasn't all gone yet.

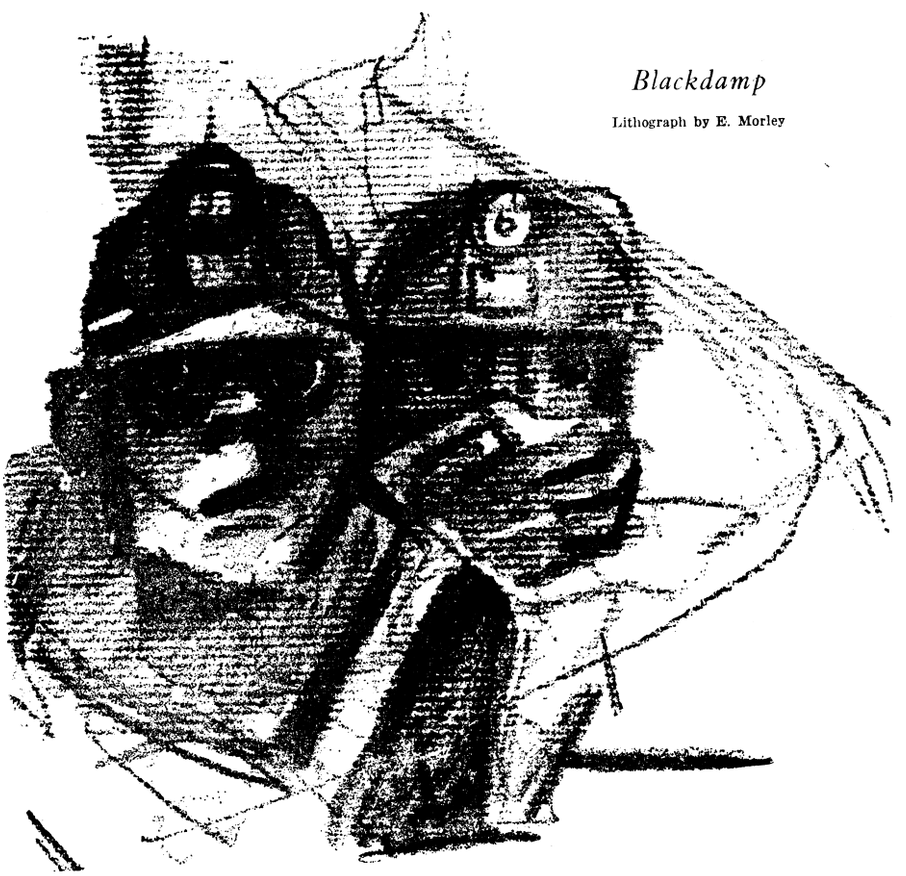
I sat on the woodpile with the piece of print in my lap. It seemed to dissolve and fade away. I saw only Benjie. "They'll never get me!" He had looked so big and strong as he said it. But they got him. Without knowing what my hands were doing, I wrapped the goods again and tied the string in a clumsy knot. Would they get me too? Again there was pressure all about me. I was smothering. I must do something quickly.

Looking back through the perspective of thirty-five years, each with its enlarging window of light, I am doubtless giving that moment more of the future than belonged to it. But I know what I did. I rose and walked into the house, holding the package high, my arm outstretched. "I'd like to throw it back into the slag!" Oh, wouldn't he like to do that? More than ever now, when he could do nothing, he would like to do that. But I had no dollar and a half. I had only the dress.

My mother smiled towards me as I entered. The women had begun to sing. The man who had brought the goods was singing with them. He poked out a foolish finger at me.

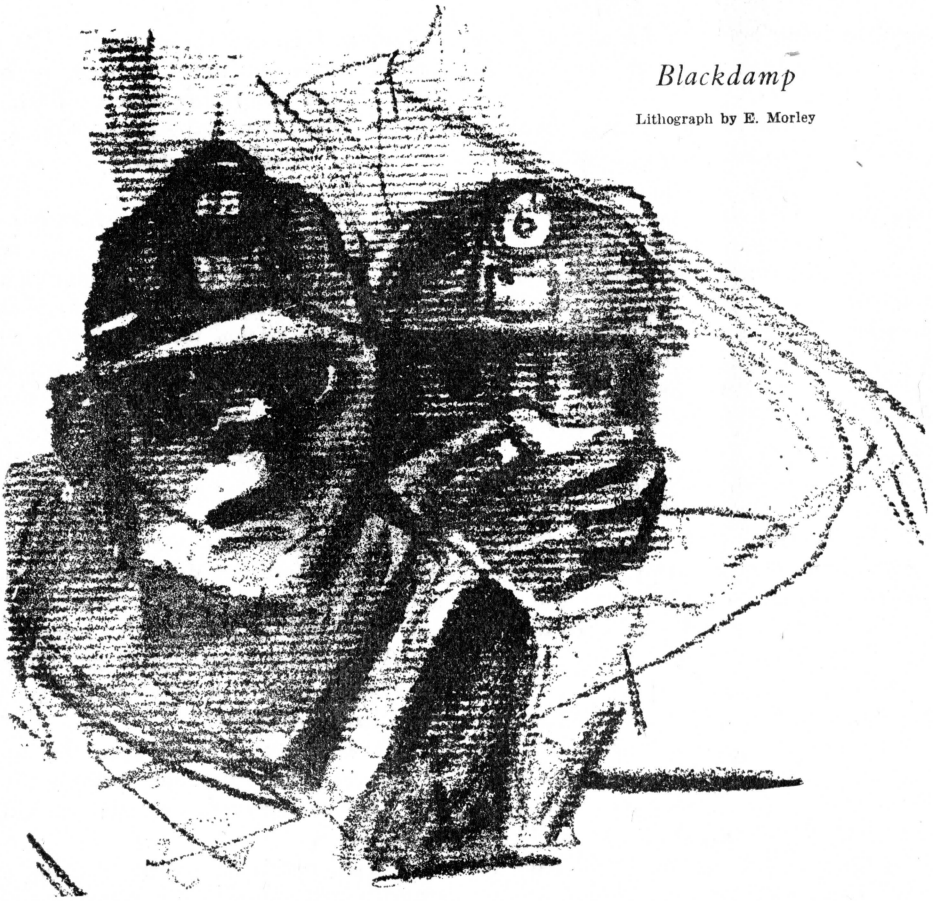
In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore. . . .

I made my way to the fireplace and flung the package on the blazing chips. My mother cried, "She's crazy!" and snatched at the package. She got it out and smothered it in her apron. "Crazy!" she cried, and struck me on the jaw. I toppled, but I didn't cry. I picked up my little stool, crossed the room with it, and sat down by Benjie. We were feeling fine.



Blackdamp

Lithograph by E. Morley



Blackdamp

Lithograph by E. Morley

A Letter to Anthony Eden

The elegant young chief of the British Foreign Office receives some well-earned congratulations

By Robert Forsythe

DEAR ANTHONY EDEN: I don't believe I've heard where you are spending your vacation, but I think everybody is agreed that you have won a rest by your splendid work on the Spanish crisis. The chance that the conflagration might spread to all of Europe was very great, and it was a pleasure to see how you have confined it to the Iberian Peninsula. Your technique of pinning the arms of the loyalists while the rebels pounded them about the face was remarkably thoughtful, but it was always my opinion that you made it perfect by your repeated cries of "Stop the fight! Stop the fight!"

Some people are prone to think that you did your best work in organizing the Neutrality Commission, and I suppose I am taking that part of your work lightly, but if I were left to choose from among your achievements, I think I should say that nothing you have ever done compared with your invention of dear Lord Plymouth. Where on earth did you ever get such a droll idea? We have been hearing less and less about Lord Plymouth, but I will never forget those autumn days when he was asking the Portuguese to search their consciences and let him know whether they were doing anything to assist the rebels. The great moment in these interchanges was the look of relief on Lord Plymouth's face when the Portuguese reported that they had searched their souls and couldn't think of a single encouraging thought they had for General Franco.

That was amusing, but I hold to my own opinion that when it came to humor, Lord Plymouth did not at all surpass your own words on Portugal. You must have been gratified by the general response to your sally that Portugal was a free nation which could not be expected to surrender its freedom of action to any power. I am told that the long hard days of vigil were broken for the British Fleet as it rode the waves off Portugal and heard these words over the wireless from London.

BUT even more effective, it seems to me, was your doctrine that a legally elected democratic government had no rights which needed consideration from another democratic power. I know that international law has always maintained that a government in power has the privilege of trading with countries to which it is accredited, but I insist on holding it as a testimonial to your level-headedness that you never once allowed such muddled reasoning to influence your actions in the matter of

Mayervitch

Anthony Eden

Spain. Democracy is all very well, as you probably reasoned to yourself, but there is a time for everything, and too much of anything is not so much justice as license. The fact that the loyal government of Spain was able to pay for its purchases surely had no bearing on the matter. Never let it be said that the British would sacrifice their ideals for commercial gain.

I can remember also the stern refusals which you gave the loyal ships which came into Gibraltar early in the war and wanted to buy oil, and the warnings which you gave them about venturing too close to British shipping. It is of a piece with your later admonitions to the rebel ships and rebel planes which dropped bombs in the vicinity of your fleet. Properly enough, the warnings had tapered off into remonstrances after a few months of fighting, and it is an indication of the sanity of your approach to the problem that you handled one group in one way and another group in another way. To the charge that you were polite to the rebels because they might by chance have been German or Italian ships and planes, I can only say that in such a case your discretion was all the more called for. Anybody can be brave—I mean, there is a form in such matters and what fits one case may not at all fit another.

THERE were casual observers who felt that your handling of the negotiations with Signor Mussolini were slightly short of perfect, but I find that they base their opinions upon the fact that the reports emanating from London at that time gave the impression that, as a requirement of your compact with Italy, you were insisting on the strict letter of neutrality in Spain. Naturally, you had nothing to do with press comment from London, as it is well known that the newspapers of your country cannot be bribed into withholding news which might be of public interest. If the newspapers and correspondents wanted to feel that you had asked concessions of Signor Mussolini at a time when he was landing 6000 additional troops at Cadiz, I should say that what the press thinks is no business of yours. If there were 6000 Italians who were so concerned in the fate of Spain that they wished to desert the Italian army, uniforms, arms, and all, and proceed to the defense of General Franco, I don't see how you could have done more in the circumstances than turn the matter over to Lord Plymouth.

The further thought that you may have been content with victory for General Franco and the fascists in Spain because of arrangements with the general that England would be well protected in that event, does not do your detractors credit. The history of England is too well known to allow such conjectures. It is far more believable that you and your country are actuated by humane considerations. In a fight between two adversaries, it is obviously the duty of the bystanders to lynch one of the fighters and thus end the bloody struggle. The action of the English in speaking to Mussolini about Ethiopia should be indication enough of what the great empire does to protect weaker states.

Your negotiations with Adolf Hitler have been on the highest plane and will be so regarded by history. Never since the days of the Younger Pitt have such speeches been directed at another nation, speeches which have been so powerfully declarative and yet so diplomatic that Herr Hitler has never once felt it necessary to be annoyed by them. The fact that France has been between England and Germany in this crisis has obviously been an important factor in considering Spain, and I think posterity will regard your statements

of strict neutrality as being less threatening to France than they have appeared on the surface. Nothing is so comforting as a friend behind one's back, if one is certain it *is* a friend, as France undoubtedly is in this case. But all these actions on your part pale before the final one where you have so definitely capped your policy of neutrality by forbidding volunteers of any sort from entering Spain after March 6. It might seem at first glance that the date had been delayed until Signor Mussolini and Herr Hitler had introduced as many troops as they felt were needed, but this would be a serious misjudgment. After all, good actions must begin some time, and there is surely no better time than after the fall of Malaga, when it became apparent that it would be the sheerest kindness to halt the Spanish struggle on the side which seemed strongest at that moment.

If you are taking your vacation in southern France, you may be able to hear the women and children of loyalist Spain asking for death so that peace might the sooner come to their troubled land. I know you will join with them, because the thought of war is repugnant to all sane men, and you have done your part in keeping the flames from spreading. You may even be near Rome, and in that case you will hear the pleased cries of the ailing Pope, who has been practically rejuvenated by the conquest of Malaga and the smell of blood. The Holy Father who represents the Prince of Peace on earth undoubtedly shares your views on the virtues of contentment. *Peace on earth, good will to men. . . .* Were there ever nobler, grander words! The world can be grateful to you, Anthony Eden. Pay no attention to those who call you a scoundrel, a hypocrite, a double-crosser of a fine race of men. Pay no attention to those who pray for the day when the British empire will be ground into a fine powder, the residue of a great commercial people who would sell their honor every moment of day for the sake of their possessions. You have done a great work and your reward will be equally great. You will be loved by the godly and the clean and fine and noble. What profiteth it a man to gain his soul and lose the earth? For the British own the earth and cherish it, and you are the chosen of the lord.

May I say again that I hope you are having a very pleasant holiday?

★ ★ ★

Gray Rivers

You couldn't call them rivers, much.
Just overgrown, old, lazy creeks,
The willow moss could almost touch
The muskrats swimming on their cheeks.
Upon their banks the rotted logs
Hid tiger-lilies, toadstool beds;
At night the weird persistent frogs
Echoed our broken fancies, dreads
And where they met, a mile above
The swamp a village raised its sheath,
Brown shacks that looked as though a shove
Could tumble them, brown men beneath.
The knife-grass, mustard-flowers choked
The rusty well-pumps and the crows
Rasped through the prostrate air, or poked
The okra, stunted corn-stalk rows.
The village ground was mostly clay,
But one mile off the cotton sprawled
Where sunlight changed to scalding gray,
Where fingers sped and heart-beats crawled.
For every hundred pounds we picked,
We earned a quarter, and the boss
Short-weighed, fed liquor when we kicked,
To make us laugh, forget the loss.
His eyes were harder than rock chips
With moonshine on them, and his black
Mustache hung down into his lips
Moist with tobacco juice, and slack.
He had three sons, they drove the trucks
That hauled the cotton to the gin—
Big, yelling, careless, loose-haired bucks,
Mouths twisted to a shotgun grin,
A likkered frown. One night they raped
My brother's girl—frail as a cloud,
Almost a deaf-mute, she escaped
On hands and knees, face twisted, cowed.
We glared . . . became one maniac.
Only our shaking, tearful wives
Kept us from running to attack
The dog-men gnawing at our lives.
Afterwards we were smoldering, bound
With grumbling, plodding lack of hope.

Lithograph by J. Vogel

They had the guns, they owned the ground,
The sheriff, judge, the lynching rope.

Two years before, my cousin Jake
Had tramped off, singing: "Watch my so-oul,
O Lo-o-rd, but please don' chain this a-a-ache.
O li-ift me out of my-y dee-eep ho-o-ole."
One day he trudged back and the change
Within him made us gape and blink.
He smiled, talked low, explaining strange
Ideas that forced our minds to think.
His long split features seemed to test
A Christ whom we had never known,
Who said: "Your god is in your chest,
Too brave to scream, and jump, and moan.
He wants your heaven on the land,
The place that holds your heart, your shanks.
Upstairs, you may find some harp-band.
Here, you can't even gather thanks.

Those white men picking down the road,
They wind up every year in debt,
They tote the same pra-aise glo-ory load
And call us niggers to forget
The same snake thrashing. Let's be bold,
Let's come and say: "That row of stones,
That graveyard dust don't seem to hold
No jim-crow line for sleeping *bones.*"

Half listening, praying, old men strained,
And youngsters cursed him with hard pride.
Some women scorned him and complained
That he was preaching suicide.
But others slowly called him right,
Cried: "We're all frying in that grease.
That cotton don't know black from white.
White pickers, black, we can't find peace.
But they won't strike with us. They frown,
They nibble at that poison bait.
White boss say: 'Keep those black skunks down.'
White boss, he fills us both with hate."
Jake slipped away, behind our backs,
Told the white pickers what we craved:
Showed up, his face all bloody cracks,
Just smiling when we stamped and raved.
Three Sundays running, he walked out,
Asked them once more to organize:
Returned and quieted our shout
And wiped the blood from lips and eyes.
And then it happened—as we looked
It came just like a quick earthquake.
There, walking friendly-like, arms hooked
With two white pickers—there was Jake. . . .
Three of us, black and white, were killed
This morning, falling cheek to cheek.
Our blood ran down the bank and spilled
Into the lazy, gray old creek.
But where I'm hiding in the cane,
I know one thing and know it clear.
They hang and burn, their bullets rain
Because they know—the day is near.

MAXWELL BODENHEIM.

Lithograph by J. Vogel

Detroit's Mrs. Dilling

The author of "The Red Network" has nothing on this self-elected champion of Americanism

By Carolyn Corbin

BLANCHE WINTERS likes to describe herself as "just a little war widow." I had the pleasure of making her acquaintance after receiving a frenzied letter from "The Young Americans, Inc.," warning that there was no time to lose, that "Communism is an established fact in America, no longer a nightmarish possibility. . . . For the past four years the Communist agents have centered their recruiting activities among our schools and colleges, with this result: they proudly assert in their official publications that over a *million and a half youth* were subverted to the cause of communism last year. Is it a wonder when they spend annually over $6,000,000 in the United States on subversive programs, that they own 300 newspapers and magazines, have gained control of 122 national labor unions, with 610 affiliated organizations of which 36 are Communist youth organizations?"

The letter ended with an appeal for funds to aid the organization to "publish a complete set of pamphlets setting forth the evils and the fallacy of the communistic doctrine, which appears under many sugar-coated forms not readily recognizable by the pupils." The letterhead, with its decoration of American flags, advertised an anti-Communist lending library. I might have paid no further attention to the letter, thinking it too obviously foolish for anyone to take seriously, had I not found an acquaintance who was preparing to answer the call for funds.

When I walked into the office of "The Young Americans, Inc.," in the Hotel Barlum, Blanche Winters, herself, met me at the door and with patriotic enthusiasm dragged me to a chair. "You're just the type we want," she exclaimed. "We're against communism. It's just about time you girls stopped playing bridge long enough to realize that your world is toppling around you." From that time on it was Blanche's show.

The office is an ex-Western Union office. Blanche receives her visitors in front of the counter, while in back several anæmic youths work with patriotic fervor, never even looking up when Blanche shoots off her most violent verbal fireworks. On the counter is spread an array of Liberty League pamphlets, and on the few spaces on the walls not taken up by the stars and stripes are pictures of blond youths in uniforms.

"Do you realize, young lady," stormed the little war widow, "that 99 percent of our congressmen are Communists?"

"My goodness, no, I didn't realize that," I replied.

"You didn't! Well, where have you been all this time? What did you think the depression was?"

She told me about "The Young Americans, Inc." and said that they have 80,000 youth organized in Michigan alone to fight communism. "And such nice young people they are, too," she said with tears in her voice. She showed me pictures of their summer camp at Walled Lake, which fortunately looked like rather small quarters for 80,000 fervent youngsters. I asked what their activities are and how they carry out their crusade against the Demon Communism. She replied that there were many activities, but the most recent one, and the one that appealed to her most, occurred in Lansing. Her small eyes behind pince-nez glasses closed to slits as she said: "There is a minister in Lansing who had been preaching"—a pause while her face became red and I thought she would at least say anarchy—"pacifism," she hissed. "Well, some of my boys at Michigan State College listened to him preach, and they took him out and gave him the best ducking in the lake *you* ever saw." She beamed all over.

I asked her how the organization was financed, as she had just told me that there were no dues, and she said that the Board of Commerce had been financing it for six years. "Have you had any support from any of the wealthy people in Detroit?" I inquired.

"We're just beginning to get some now," she replied, "because we're putting on a big campaign. Heinrich Pickert [Detroit's superreactionary police chief] has given us his support, and so has Mr. Brucker [Republican ex-governor of Michigan who defeated the late Senator Couzens in the primaries and was defeated by Prentiss Brown on November third]." The list went on to include many of the first families of the automobile city. Alvin Macauley, the president of Packard, had contributed generously, according to Mrs. Winters. I asked about Henry B. Joy, who used to be president of Packard, and who, since his retirement, has occupied himself by writing frequent letters to everyone he knows, warning them of liberal movements and dangerous pacifists. She had had an interview with Mrs. Joy [perennial candidate for the presidency of the D.A.R.] in her "lovely, refined living room."

Scott Johnston

It wasn't until she launched the conversation into communism and art that Blanche really cut loose. A good half hour was taken up with how she, with the aid of the Board of Commerce, was going to get those Diego Rivera ["Dago I call them—ha ha"] murals off the walls of the art museum if she has to take them off herself.

"Do you know that there are twenty-nine Communist camps around Washington, D. C., and thirteen surrounding Detroit?" I said that I hadn't known that before. "You're a funny girl, you don't seem to know anything. Well, every one of those camps is a nudist camp."

The stream of invective had been going on so long that I started to get dizzy. All I can remember of the last half of the interview are snatches to the effect that the school board is "communistic" because it won't do anything about the radical high school teachers, which puts it up to her and the Board of Commerce to deal with them; that Mr. Hearst owns a magnificent chain of newspapers, but is not as smart as Blanche because he couldn't see in 1932 that Roosevelt was a dangerous radical; and that "Mind you, I'm not a member of the Black Legion myself, because I can do more without a hood than they can with all their regalia, but they do a fine work." A few minutes later she added: "I stand for everything that is conservative." She produced a stack of the NEW MASSES, one with a picture of Lenin, whom she neatly disposed of as "Blockhead No. 1." "Now look at this so-called literature," and she produced an armful of pamphlets. Here's all about Soviet China, and here is one that shows what they do to your soul under communism. The Reds don't even let you have a soul. They take a knife and cut it right out." I looked at the gray-bound pamphlet in question and found that it was *Soul Surgery,* published by the Oxford Group.

I went back to see Mrs. Winters after six days had elapsed. I wanted to find out what kind of a response she had had to her appeal for funds. I was met with even more enthusiasm than before and treated like a real convert. She said that she had sent out fifty letters and so far had received $1500, which she didn't think was very good.

She had just come from a tea that she had given at the Book-Cadillac for the women who were the heads of the leading "conservative" organizations in town; the D.A.R., the League of Catholic Women, the Daughters of Isabella, etc. According to Blanche, they are going to form a Women's Auxiliary and send a lobbyist to Lansing and see that the right kind of legislation goes through. She thinks the wealthy Catholics are going to be very important in the fight against un-Americanism, and she likes Father Coughlin, too.

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A Time for Stiffening

THOSE who have tried to draw analogies between the Russian Revolution and the war in Spain have missed the best one of all. It was a regular thing, from 1918 until at least 1921, to open almost any American capitalist paper and read about the final victory of the counter-revolution. For variety, that final victory was sometimes just around the corner. Nothing of the sort happened, of course. These prophecies of doom were invariably based upon the real difficulties encountered by the Russian people during long years of bitter struggle; but (and this is more to the point) they were equally based upon a total disregard for their tremendous powers of recuperation and improvement. So long as the vast masses of people were solidly behind the revolution, so long as crises arose only because the power of the masses was not yet sufficiently channelized and coördinated, such reports were put to shame by events.

The true relationship of forces in Spain today is likewise and persistently confused by inspired reports, generally from London, of imminent collapse of the loyalist cause. Every time the government forces give up a position, the end of the war is announced. Until now, these reports about Spain in 1936-7 have been no more trustworthy than the reports about Russia in 1918-21. The basic reason behind this consistent failure to gauge the situation correctly is the failure to see that every temporary reversal inspires the popular forces to greater endeavors against those causes which made the reversals possible, so that they shall not be repeated. This was true after the loyalist withdrawal at Toledo. It will be true of the reversal at Malaga, also.

London has been the regular source of venomous "inside" information against the People's Front cause in Spain. Soon after the reversal at Malaga, from London came the information that the "leftists" were "cracking," that the Soviet Union was "abandoning" the Spanish people, and that a "ban" on "volunteers" was at last decided despite the refusal of Portugal to participate in any such international action. The date-line is the essence of the matter. The Baldwin government has been and today remains the chief obstacle to successful international action against fascist intervention in Spain. The chief obstacle to British befuddlement of the issues has been the Soviet spokesman in the Non-Intervention Committee. Portugal is a virtual colony of British imperialism. The "news" reports from London are of a piece with British policy in the Spanish situation: they are calculated to deceive, and to cover a pro-fascist orientation.

Immediately after the Malaga reversal, a unified command was established for the whole central front for the first time. The loyalists withstood a savage rebel offensive against the Madrid-Valencia road and then took the offensive against the rebels for the first time. The negotiations between the two great trade union federations, C.N.T. and U.G.T., for unification are hastening toward a favorable conclusion.

The greatest reversal of all would be any weakening, any lessening of ardor and vigor on the part of all the friends and supporters of the Spanish people. This war would have been a short one had the fascist powers not intervened. So long as the masses in the democratic countries are not powerful enough to exert sufficient pressure to put a stop to German and Italian invasion of Spain, the war will drag out. It has truly been said that the Spanish government forces have already beaten the Spanish fascists; now, they are fighting against the whole fascist international, against Italian and German mercenaries.

Far from wavering, this is the time to stiffen and extend the ranks of those in this country who are giving material and moral support to the Spanish people. Our covenant with Spain for the complete liberation of Spain is not fulfilled until the war is over—and won. The North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, 381 Fourth Ave., N. Y., is still collecting food, clothing, money, and medical supplies for Spain. The American Society for Technical Aid to Spanish Democracy, 245 Fifth Ave., N. Y., is still calling for volunteers of engineers, technicians, metal, and electrical workers to Spain.

We have a covenant with Spain which nothing but victory for democracy can fulfill.

Cue in New Jersey

THE C.I.O. is just now beginning in earnest its drive for unionization in New Jersey. But plans and objectives for a widespread campaign among the 375,000 industrial workers of the state have been in readiness for some time. Duly impressed by these plans, and fearful of a powerfully organized labor movement in his state, Republican Governor Hoffman has made the first move in his effort to protect New Jersey's open shoppers by threatening "bloodshed" if workers affiliated with the C.I.O. attempt militant strike action, specifically if the sit-down tactic is employed.

"A labor union," says Standard Oil puppet Hoffman, "has no more right to take possession of a factory than a band of gangsters has to take possession of a bank." The governor ought to know about gangsters: within the boundaries of his state, and unhampered by gubernatorial action of any kind, exist (to mention a few): the white-slave traffic and prostitution industry of Atlantic City, the foul-smelling Jersey City regime of Mayor Hague, the friendly haven of gangsters and other criminals hiding from the court warrants of other states. At present Hoffman extends his protection to the Parkers, wanted for a kidnaping trial in New York. And not so long ago, there was the little matter of the Hauptmann trial, in the course of which the governor acquired a reputation of the sort that will remain unsavory in the annals of his state for many a gubernatorial generation.

But this time the governor's threat of bloodshed was a bit premature: New Jersey labor is forewarned and against official violence. And the forces defending civil liberties have been placed on guard far in advance of actual industrial conflict. So unveiled a threat is an acknowledgment on the part of New Jersey industrialists of the effectiveness of the C.I.O drive elsewhere. And it is New Jersey labor's cue for full steam ahead.

READERS' FORUM

An open letter to Columnist Ernest L. Meyer—William Saroyan comments

● Dear Mr. Meyer: Your column [in the New York *Post*] has been of special interest to me because the justice and freedom which you have so frequently defended from reactionary aggression you have defended from the point of view of a practical, realistic man. It is clear vision and not merely sentimental concern for a seeming "underdog" that led you, I think, to distinguish between the cases of Professor Jerome Davis and President Glenn Frank. In this respect your liberalism has been far-sighted.

I write this by way of introduction to suggest the depth of my disappointment when I heard your name announced, Tuesday, February 9, at the Hippodrome meeting called by the "American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky," as having joined that committee.

Since I have seen no signed statement of yours explaining your stand, I can only assume that you joined the committee because you subscribed to the ideas emblazoned on two banners displayed at the Hippodrome: "Let the Truth Be Known" and "For the Creation of an Impartial Commission." May I say with earnestness that I too want the whole truth to be known, that I too want Trotsky to have his hearing, his day in court? But in opposing the activities of this committee, now *your* committee, I should like to submit to your reflection two matters of fact and one proposed line of conduct for Trotsky.

In the speech read for him by Mr. Max Schachtman last Tuesday, Trotsky cited the assertion of his secretary, of his Norwegian host, and of an Oslo aerodrome official to "disprove" the statement made by Piatakov at the Moscow trials that he had visited Trotsky in Oslo by coming in a plane from Berlin in December 1935. Counterposed, the following statement from the *Daily Worker* of January 30 is relevant:

"OSLO, Jan. 29.—The *Tidans Tegu,* Norwegian newspaper published here, in its issue of day before yesterday confirmed that Gregory Piatakov had visited Oslo in December 1935.

"The paper states that 'the American Spector' visited Norway in February and had an interview with Trotsky at that time, as a representative of American Trotskyites. Simultaneously, 'the American Paine' also visited Trotsky, the paper declared.

"A large number of other persons visited Trotsky, it was further stated, until the moment he was interned.

"The publication of these facts in the Norwegian newspaper will be of especial interest to the readers of the *Daily Worker,* as it confirms the statement of Arnold Johnson as to the Spector-Paine visit, published in our issue of January 19.

"The *Tidans Tegu* is a leading conservative newspaper in Oslo, we have been advised by the Norwegian consulate. . . ."

Does this not dispose of that Trotskyist "refutation"?

Secondly, Trotsky in his speech maintained that the accused Holtzman could not have visited him in Copenhagen in the Bristol Hotel in 1932 because the Bristol Hotel had been burned down in 1917! Counterposed to this is the following item from the *Daily Worker* of February 11, which reports an article in the *Arbejderbladet,* Danish Communist paper, by Martin Nielson, editor-in-chief:

"COPENHAGEN, Feb. 10.—The 'Bristol' is a Viennese café, situated directly next to the 'Grand Hotel Kobenhavn.' At the time Holtzman declared he had his rendezvous with Sedov, there was a common entrance for both the Café Bristol and the Grand Hotel Kobenhavn.

"As a matter of fact, the name 'Bristol' is still blazoned in neon lights above the entrance to the Hotel Kobenhavn, as in 1932. There is hence no difficulty in understanding why Holtzman stated that he went across the street to the Hotel Bristol. . . ."

In short, in such hearing as Trotsky is having in the public press, his counter-evidence seems to be unreliable.

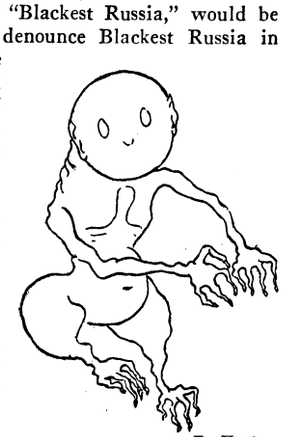
But now to come to the main point. If Trotsky wants a hearing (and you and I both want him to have it), *why does he not go to the Soviet Union to stand trial in the Soviet court? Am* I preposterous in proposing this? Consider: why doesn't Angelo Herndon, a young American Bolshevik being persecuted in a thoroughly prejudiced Georgia court, jump his $8000 bail (as Schuyler of the Pittsburgh *Courier* suggested he should do), flee to Canada or to Mexico, and there clamor for an impartial commission to investigate his case, with the additional prize offer that he will give himself up to Georgia justice if this commission finds him guilty? Instead, this boy goes again and again to the Georgia courts to denounce his accuser and to clear his party's name, thus winning hundreds of thousands of supporters.

Consider again: Tom Mooney, not a party Bolshevik at all, has been found innocent by an impartial commission (the Wickersham), and yet *refuses a parole* because a parole would imply his guilt. He prefers to indict California capitalist justice from prison, and from prison organizes masses to fight not for parole but for complete exoneration.

Consider still farther: when the Nazi radio blared forth the slander that Communists had fired the Reichstag, did not the Communists Thaelmann and Torgler themselves go to the *Nazi* police to demand they stand trial in order to clear their party's name of the charge of arson? Hitler, after four years, still does not dare bring Thaelmann to trial, possibly because he knows that Old Bolsheviks would indict Nazism in the court-room.

Consider lastly: when Dimitroff in Leipzig was putting Hitler on trial by his vigorous, unquenchable denunciation of Nazi justice, Goering in his raving called Dimitroff a "Bulgarian traitor." Did not Dimitroff, in reply, offer to allow himself to be deported to Bulgaria (terrorized Bulgaria!) to stand trial there to prove that the Bulgarian Communist Party was not a party of traitors, but a mass, political, revolutionary party?

In view of all these considerations, why doesn't Trotsky go to the Soviet Union "to try the Soviet Union," as he would put it? Surely Trotsky has everything to gain. Think of the sensation that would be caused if he were to announce that he is going to defy the "Stalinist terror" in his native land. Why, the whole of world public opinion would rush to his support. All liberal opinion would be aghast at "such heroism" just as it gasped at the mighty Dimitroff. The New York *Herald Tribune,* which would like to see Trotsky come to the United States to tell us about "Blackest Russia," would be thrilled to have him denounce Blackest Russia in Blackest Russia. The Hearst press would continue its espousal of world revolution. The Manchester *Guardian* would continue to be the Cerberus of Justice.



T. Hunt.

Really, why doesn't Trotsky go? *He* wouldn't plead guilty! He would bring his archives and documents to court (making sure that photostatic copies are left outside Russia with his friends so that if the G.P.U. steals them and destroys them he will be able to denounce that, too). And isn't his bringing his archives to Russia more sensible than his asking a government of 170,000,000 people to send its documents to Mexico or the United States? And than he would stand up in court and instead of cringingly relating a "rehearsed tale in a monotonous voice," he would let the truth be known in his mighty forensic manner. The world press would be there at this public trial. The entire diplomatic corps would attend to check on Soviet justice.

But the brute Vyshinsky might not let him talk, might not let him give his evidence? Well, here a little "impartial commission" might help. These friends with whom Trotsky would be so careful to leave authentic copies of all documents would be prepared on an hour's notice to publish in the world press any document that the Soviet court prevented him from using.

To conclude: this is not a taunt, nor a dare. It is a simple thing which any professed Old Bolshevik should not hesitate to do. He would have his day in court, and the truth would be known to the listening world. And the truth would free us.

In the meantime, until the Soviet government is proved guilty, I shall accept the evidence that it is innocent. Not merely innocent; we should be very grateful that the Soviet government, by exposing the plotting of Germany and Japan, has probably thwarted the plans that were to mature in 1937 for world war. This is not the first time the Soviet Union has made peace more enduring for the whole world.

Will you think it impertinent if I suggest that you could do more to get Trotsky his hearing and the truth an outlet by resigning from the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, and by joining with those who urge him to stand trial on his indictment in the Soviet Union?

MORRIS U. SCHAPPES.

From Author Saroyan

● One day in April or May, 1935, I told a New York Communist that one of my favorite American magazines was the NEW MASSES. He believed me, but discussed my preference at great length and proved with some bitterness that the *Atlantic Monthly* was a much better magazine.

At the time he was picketing the *American Mercury,* sitting down.

One of my favorite American magazines is still the NEW MASSES, and one of my favorite indoor activities is hoping for better conditions for people. In a quiet way, usually over drink and without argument, I hope for the same things good Communists hope for, and resent the same things they resent. Except in a very small and personal way, I do nothing more. When I have money I give money to those I know who seem to want and need money, and when I have no money, which is often, I give anything else I have which those I know seem to want and need. It's ridiculous, but I don't know what else to do.

I am very grateful to the NEW MASSES for reviewing my latest book, *Three Times Three.* I do not feel that the review should have been anything other than what it was. I read the review three times and was able to understand only one thing: that inasmuch as I have no use for Communists, Communists in turn have no use for me. I think this is an honorable and honest state of affairs. If any reader of the review, or if the reviewer himself, or if any editor of the magazine, understands anything more than this from the review, I would like to know in very simple language what it is. It is impossible for me any longer to have any literary hard feelings. Either way, I can't be bothered. If I am as lousy as numerous reviewers say, that's so, and to hell with it, and if I am as great as I say, that's so, and to hell with that too. With my usual kindest regards,

WILLIAM SAROYAN.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

Yvor Winters on American poetry—Jews around the world—Aaron Burr and H. G. Wells

IT would be easy to underestimate Yvor Winters's first collection of literary essays* presented as "a study of American experimental poetry." It would be easy to say that any critic who uses the adjective, "great," excessively and recklessly (as Mr. Winters does) is already teetering on the verge of paranoia. It would be easy to say that any man who has the arrogance to quote an undistinguished poem by Robert Bridges's daughter and then compare it favorably with work by Shakespeare, Jonson, Donne, Gascoigne, and Herbert, all grouped together in fantastic company, presupposes unusual ignorance on the part of his readers. And it would be still easier to say that Mr. Winters's pretensions to literary scholorship are so large, and at every step so ill-supported (note his confusion of early Tudor with Elizabethan verse) that one's pity is aroused.

Yet it would be better, I think, not to pity Mr. Winters, nor get angry at him, nor conclude good-naturedly that he needs treatment in a psychiatric ward. It requires some little patience to read all he has written, to note its abnormal contradictions in full panorama, but at the end, one is rewarded by the exhibition of an American phenomenon.

In 1928, Mr. Winters published an extraordinary book of poems, *The Bare Hills,* which even today remains one of the few examples of Imagist verse well worth remembering. He possessed an excellent, if limited, tactile and visual imagination—and it is his misfortune that few critics recognized its potential value. Then, suddenly, something happened to the verse, something that was neither growth nor retrogression, but violent change, as though the poet's psyche had been torn from its roots and then replaced by an organism that was vastly inferior. Whatever happened (and I am not interested in Mr. Winters's life aside from his published work) resembles the operation of a quack, who poses as a psychiatrist and who "unravels" the mind of his patient only to find himself quite unable to put it together again. The verse became distinctly "literary" in the bad sense of the term, and in it, curiously abstracted imitations of Landor and Bridges began to appear. And after this work was in print, Mr. Winters published an angry satire in heroic couplets (which was at best an unskilled use of Pope's rhetoric)—and the entire poem was as trivial in its object as Wyndham Lewis's *Apes of God* or Roy Campbell's attacks on Bloomsbury. Mr. Winters had neglected to learn that the author of a satire must be as careful in his selection of dramatis personæ as the author of a tragedy, which among other reasons accounts for his failures and W. H. Auden's successes in the writing of satirical verse. As a reviewer for *Hound & Horn,* Mr. Winters was one of a small group who represented an interesting and important tendency in American criticism—R. P. Blackmur was by far the ablest critic in that magazine, and in *Poetry* (Chicago) Morton D. Zabel wrote and published criticism of like quality. It was a moment when bright young men, instructors as well as graduate students, were no longer eager to leave the colleges: panic in Wall Street had made jobs outside the universities very scarce, and there was less and less incentive to abandon the security of speaking to a class-room audience for livelihood. Meanwhile, there was growing assurance that pioneer bourgeois prejudice against college education had broken down; it had become a social and economic asset to go to college, and for a short time, the young college instructor identified his destiny with the members of the ruling class, subtly confusing intellectual aristocracy with the power derived from great wealth.

It was either Mr. Winters or a member of his clique who praised some remarkably bad verse by Allen Tate because he "floundered like a gentleman." And the learning exhibited by many contributors to *Hound & Horn* was as newly acquired and as awkward as the wealth of a depression millionaire. Yet, thanks chiefly to Mr. Blackmur (who never went to college) and Mr. Zabel (who never contributed to *Hound & Horn*), the standards of academic criticism rose perceptibly—and with Granville Hicks in open attack upon the philosophy of its critics and they upon him, class lines became taut and self-conscious. Dogmatic Mr. Winters and agile Mr. Tate ruled the critical section of the magazine and influenced the selection of some of the most insipid verse I have ever read—which, however, did not exclude certain vivid exceptions to the rule.

Jo Gans

The essays in *Primitivism and Decadence* are in one sense a memorial to those days of *Hound & Horn,* many of them, if not all, rewritten and brought up to date for the present emergency of book form. The essays are so arranged as to resemble an ambitious attack upon the Symbolist tradition in modern literature: I say resemble, because the attack is never clearly focused, but is, for the most part, a thinly veiled attempt to discredit the poetry of Hart Crane at its source. The ghost of Crane's poetry rides Mr. Winters's shoulders throughout the course of a loosely organized book, as though he were forced to prove: (1) that Crane's verse tended toward an escapist philosophy and was, therefore, bad; (2) that Crane's verse had bad literary associates, including Rimbaud, Laforgue, Corbiere, T. S. Eliot, E. E. Cummings, Marianne Moore, James Joyce, Thomas Lovell Beddoes, D. H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound, Gerard Manley Hopkins, W. B. Yeats, Robinson Jeffers, Kenneth Burke, and Walt Whitman; (3) that Crane defied the conventions of Robert Bridges's verse and was, therefore, wrong; and (4) an attempt to prove that T. Sturge Moore's ("that sheep in sheep's clothing," as an English critic happily remarked) "spirituality" is superior to Crane's "mysticism."

Though Mr. Winters's manner is stern and didactic, one encounters such loose statements as the following throughout his book: "The major Greek divinities exist for us chiefly as allegorical embodiments of more or less Platonic ideas." This illustrates clearly enough why Mr. Winters lacks conviction when he attempts to speak of the myth in relation to Crane's verse or to enter into philosophic controversy with Kenneth Burke, for I have yet to hear of any idea that was *more or less* Platonic, nor can the mythical significance of Greek divinities be dismissed as "embodiments" of something that is more or less an entire system of Greek thought. The same shy manner attends Mr. Winters's references to thirteenth century verse, which is, of course, verse in Middle English, and often admirable, but since it is even more fragmentary, as it is handed down to us in manuscript, than the work of Hart Crane, Mr. Winters does not risk direct quotation.

Mr. Winters reaches the climax of his argument by declaring that Mr. Joyce must be dismissed because he endangers "the literature of our time by rendering decay attractive," and he then replies with a hierarchy of values which places Robert Bridges at the very top, and the inept satire of Allen Tate in "Causerie" as superior to *The Waste Land.* It should be admitted at once that Robert Bridges possessed a sensitive ear, but it was attuned solely to the sterile remains of Eliza-

* PRIMITIVISM AND DECADENCE, *by Yvor Winters. Arrow Editions.* $2.50.

Microphonies John Mackey

bethan music as it was transmuted through the verse of the later nineteenth century. Both his intellect and emotional understanding of human forces at work in his generation were mole-like in character: witness his refusal to answer Hopkins's letter concerning the Paris Commune. It is characteristic of Mr. Winters's method to offer us as touchstone, Robert Bridges's "Eros," in which clichés of meaning, rhyme, cadence, and language are uppermost:

> Why hast thou nothing in thy face?
> Thou idol of the human race,
> Thou tyrant of the human heart
> The flower of lovely youth that art . . .
> With thy exuberant flesh so fair
> That only Pheidias might compare,
> Ere from his chaste marmoreal form
> Time had decayed the colors warm

which has precisely the same æsthetic qualities that one encounters in a canvas signed by Bouguereau. In short, if one were to apply Paul Valery's standards of use in literature, the poetry of Robert Bridges tends toward a complete and final nullity; its convention was already bankrupt at the close of the nineteenth century, and since Mr. Winters would agree with me that there can be no divorce between the content of a poem and its convention of language and imagery, let me repeat that its convention for our time is dead, and that its usefulness is zero—and further that it is irrational to speak of a convention that is already dead and overthrown by a Symbolist tradition as containing "moral" or "spiritual" purpose. It is like cohabitation with a corpse.

But, as I was saying a short time ago, Mr. Winters is an American phenomenon, not English—though some of this deficiency might have been repaired earlier in his career by a short term at Oxford or Cambridge. Like Bayard Taylor or Thomas Bailey Aldrich, who admired the shallowest sources of a tradition they conceived to be "English," it is, I suppose, natural that he should mistake the pallid sunset of Victorian romanticism for the classic dawn of early morning in English poetry. And, I believe, it is a significant fact that Robert Bridges wasted the last years of his life in amateur and sterile literary experiment.

These days, the cry of "decadence," accompanied by irrational thinking, didactic mannerisms, high talk of moral purpose, as well as the attempted revival of outworn conventions, has a familiar sound. Perhaps Mr. Winters is merely unfortunate in his use of terms, which seem to echo so plainly the voice of Goebbels ordering the "decadent" literature of Thomas Mann to the Nazi bonfires. Perhaps not, but read his quotation of "great" verse written by Robert Bridges's daughter, the verse that Mr. Winters admires above all other examples of her work:

> Anger lay by me all night long,
> His breath was hot upon my brow,
> He told me of my burning wrong,
> All night he talked and would not go.
>
> And can I cast him from my couch?
> And can I lock him from my room?
> Ah no, his honest words are such
> That he's my true lord and my doom.

It is not bad, and I believe that Mr. Winters could scan its lines with greater ease than his attempts to scan Miss Moore's verse, or to rewrite Hart Crane's poetry, or to show that it is nearly impossible to paraphrase the least fortunate of Allen Tate's satires. It merely lacks what R. P. Blackmur would call knowledge of craft, and if one would measure its quality to find its equal, there are reproductions of Adolph Hitler's paintings in a recent issue of *Life*. They are not "decadent," they are mediocre.

HORACE GREGORY.

The Jew in the Modern World

SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE JEWS, *by Robert Gessner. Farrar and Rinehart. $3.*

THIS is an immensely important book. Coming, as it does, at a time when Jewish issues are of prime interest because of the conduct of the Nazis, the confused situation in Palestine, the program for the ending of Jewish life in Poland, and the general rise of anti-Semitism throughout the world, what Mr. Gessner reports of his recent trip through these areas takes on added significance. In this reader's opinion, this is one of the most helpful books that have been written about Jews. To be sure, this last is faint praise, because books on Jewish life, with the exception of the exaggerated falsehoods of anti-Semitic literature, are generally of such a vulgar, cheap, and sentimental nature that they serve neither to aid the Jews nor to clarify the issues for non-Jews. In contrast, this book is virile and strong and honest. It is full of deep sympathy for the Jews because that sympathy is born out of a deep sympathy for all people who suffer; it is scrupulously exacting in its research and careful in its analysis and conclusion. Whatever judgments are proposed are so amply supported by proof and so convincingly documented, that their truth cannot be contradicted by any fair means.

That does not mean that the author will find a welcoming listener everywhere. So much truth hurts, and those that are hurt do not hesitate to strike back. No one expects this more than Mr. Gessner. His journeyings abroad, and his conversations with both Jews and non-Jews at home and elsewhere, have taught him that there are sharp issues here, and it is no thankful task to expose the weakness, duplicity, cunning, and stupidity for which prejudice is created and by which it is capitalized and supported. To unmask the class interests, chauvinist propaganda, and national imperialism that lie behind the high-sounding phrases and philanthropic deeds is not considered sporting by those who exploit and profit by exploitation. It is to be expected that Mr. Gessner will receive no hearing among the royal dispensers of Jewish salvation; it *is* to be hoped that he will gain many readers among those Jewish and non-

Jewish masses for whom his words will have significance and timeliness.

This book had its origin in Mr. Gessner's own problem. Born in the Middle West, he had little occasion to be concerned with his Jewish ancestry. Parents were something he could not do without, and the mere fact that his were Jewish seemed to have no more significance than if they were of any other stock. He had, like most Jews, never received an adequate explanation of what Jewish life should be in these days, nor did he see why his healthy desire to live should bear fruit in anti-Semitism. Not that he was unaware of certain achievements of merit in Jewish literary and social tradition. But, fortunately for us, Mr. Gessner was not satisfied with mere lip-service to these achievements. Lip-service to the past, no matter how important it was, did not satisfy the needs of the present or supply the guide for the future.

With camera and pen, Mr. Gessner set out on his odyssey. England, France, Germany, Poland, Palestine, the Soviet Union, and back to the United States—wherever he found Jews, or prejudice against Jews, he sought information that would help him with his answer. The pictures in this book tell a stirring story in themselves. The text tells the meaning of the pictures. How do the Jews live in London's ghetto and what do they look like? What are English West End Jews thinking during these troubled days? Are the French Jews at home in Paris? Why are the Nazis anti-Semitic? What is bothering the Jews of Poland, and what do they propose to relieve their misery? Is Palestine the solution? Are the Jews within the Soviet Union losing themselves in assimilation?

Mr. Gessner's meetings and conversations and observations are alive, stinging, provocative, and informative. Why did some Jews share the opinions of anti-Semites with regard to other Jews? Who were good Jews, and by whom and on what standards were they considered good? Mr. Gessner questioned many, and when he received an answer, he shot another question until there were no more answers or until he was convinced. He found:

(1) Anti-Semitism is to be expected in capitalist competitive societies, because, whether they call themselves democracies or not, they support exploitation by whatever means attained; (2) class interests create prejudice, and class interests mislead and sell out the victims of prejudice; (3) our world is a madhouse of national imperialisms, and national imperialism is destructive of human happiness whether it is carried on in the vulgarly obvious manner of German Nazis or Italian Fascists, with the gentlemanly politeness of "perfidious Albion," or with the weak sentimentality of the Zionists; (4) the new society in the Soviet Union offers ample proof that prejudice can be eradicated; (5) cultural groups can exist and create only in a competitive socialist society, not in a capitalist one; (6) our immediate need is a unified front of exploited peoples—native and foreign, Jew and non-Jew, worker and intellectual—to resist the increased efforts which are being made to "divide and rule" in a crumbling order.

Lithograph by Pearl Binder
Civil War

With this information in his bag, Mr. Gessner left Europe. What he found on his return only supported these conclusions and made their realization more urgent. And what he had discovered about the Jews and for them was equally true about other minority groups. It was true about the mass of men and women who toil and are exploited. The capital structure was breaking up everywhere; as it crumbled, its full weight would fall on all who were under it. The thing to do was to get out and get on top. Some Jews and many others would help. Others would not. Mr. Gessner had found his answer.

BENJAMIN B. GOLDSTEIN.

Aaron Burr

AARON BURR: THE PROUD PRETENDER, *by Holmes Alexander. Harper's.* $3.50.

BURR, it appears from the present book, was a precocious child who was spoiled because the rod was spared. The talent which made his grandfather, Jonathan Edwards, into New England's greatest divine, was in his genes; so, apparently, was the taint which produced idiots, lunatics, and suicides in the Edwards family.

At the beginning of the American Revolution, the diminutive Burr served as a captain under Col. Benedict Arnold. It was in such ill-starred company that he got off early to his career of defection. He deserted even such a colonel as Arnold. At least three other times he committed breeches of military discipline that were far from minor, and long before the end of the struggle for national liberation, he left the army to recover from a nervous breakdown and to enjoy a love affair.

With peace, Burr became a lawyer. He thrived, often collaborating with Alexander Hamilton, though Hamilton frowned on his shady methods, and in the end denounced him to the world because of them. Ultimately, the thirst for power and the spotlight led Burr into politics via the secret Society of St. Tammany, and after a rapid rise, he tied with Jefferson in the contest of 1800 for the presidency. He might well have won that election when the tie was run off in Congress, had not Hamilton decided that an honest radical like Jefferson was better than a dishonest man—even though he passed for a conservative. Burr had to accept merely the vice-presidency, and he fretted. Before the end of his first year in office he had changed political parties with the same facility he showed in sloughing off military obligations during the war. This about-face encouraged his critics, including Hamilton, to new attacks. Burr, finding that words failed him, turned to more material weapons. He was an expert pistol shot and maneuvered Hamilton into a duel—and killed him.

Congressional immunity saved him from the ensuing murder charges, but Burr knew that with the end of his term in office he faced ostracism; so, acting on the logic of such affairs, he sought to escape political annihilation by becoming a political annihilator. While still vice-president he made elaborate traitorous plans. Backed by his wealthy son-in-law, he was going to set up in business as Emperor Aaron I, ruler over the Mississippi valley and Mexico. Always an opportunist, he had shifted his political affiliations whenever immediate personal interest dictated and without reference to broad fundamental social movements. He had no firm ties with any strategic political or economic group, and thus lacked, of course, any genuine historic justification for fomenting the counter-revolution involved in setting up an empire on republican soil. A few fellow-adventurers joined him as he gathered a small fleet for his trip down the Mississippi to take over New Orleans. His choice of such would-be robber barons for companions reflected Burr's whole reversion to feudal patterns of intrigue and ambition. Young America—commercial, petty bourgeois—had ample vitality with which to crush efforts at reviving an outmoded social order, and Burr failed without even the desired drama of a single battle. His own accomplices, sensing his weakness, betrayed him. With this fiasco, he slunk into exile and debauchery and ceased to exist as a force in American history.

These facts appear in the present biography, high-lighted and semi-psychologically explained, and shorn of their social significance. Holmes Alexander even archly deletes society as a legitimate source of values, by pronouncing: "It is no measure of a man to submit him to standards not his own." Rather say, submitted to any standards not his own, Burr was a man whose measure was minus.

What then leads an author to write a build-up for such an anti-social charlatan? And why does he scorn Jefferson? And sniff at what he likes to call the mob? Why, in this present world, torn as it is in the struggle between fascism and democracy, does a writer find that aristocratic, degenerate Burr fires his imagination?

The answer lies in the preface to the book, which takes the whimsical form of an intimate, cocky letter to Burr. Author Alexander, who, it may be noted, is a southern gentleman

by birth and avocation, writes to the man who failed to Napoleon-it on a democratic stage: "Personally, I'm very sorry you lost. Remember a young fellow named Alexander who was one of your confederates. . . . He would have been at least a baron had your empire succeeded, and I might have been wearing the title now." C. ELWELL.

Political Allegory, with Spooks

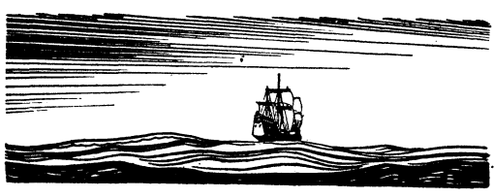
THE CROQUET PLAYER, *by H. G. Wells. The Viking Press.* $1.25.

THIS novelette is to be welcomed in the spirit in which anti-fascists everywhere welcomed Sinclair Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here.* In each book, an established and widely read writer turned to the problem of contemporary political reaction. Each writer has treated this problem in the manner for which he has become famous, and while neither has a deep or clear understanding of the roots of fascism, it is well that such writers are at least pointing out the danger to the many who might not otherwise see it.

This comparison is not to imply that *The Croquet Player* even approaches Lewis's novel in the qualities of vividness and immediacy. The present book is a sketch (and a mighty spare one) for a study of world reaction, whereas Lewis's work was a minutely painted canvas which did not try to include more than one country. For just this reason, Lewis left himself open to much criticism of details. Wells, on the other hand, has not given us any details to criticize. He has, instead, given us a fleeting glimpse of the menace, cried a loud but not very militant "Boo!," and left those of us who have not already found something better to do, to wonder and to admire his prose style, which is, as always, faultless.

The gentleman of the title is one of those placid and well-insulated bourgeois souls who get a certain amount of pleasure out of being scared, but never let it interfere with their games. The redoubtable Mr. Frobisher could (if he were to stoop to anything so low as an official championship) be known as the world's greatest croquet player, and he is no dub at the bridge table or on the tennis court. Into his patrician ear is poured the terrible story of the return of man's savage ancestors, of old dead hates returning to disrupt the patterns of our civilization. This, at any rate, is the way it looks to Dr. Finchatton, who waylays Frobisher at a French Spa. Finchatton couches his alarming message in terms of a microcosm called Cainsmarsh, but it is not long before Finchatton is himself explained to Frobisher by the psychiatrist Norbert. Norbert says the tale of Cainsmarsh is an imaginary one, invented by Finchatton so that he may reduce his fear to dimensions with which he is able to cope. But Norbert sees things as they really are, knows that the ghosts of Cainsmarsh are haunting the whole world. He tells all this to Frobisher, who ponders it for half a day and then goes unperturbedly back to his croquet.

Many of Wells's readers will likewise return to their croquet after they have finished this book, but some will not, and that is all to the good. If this seems a singularly indirect and playful way in which to point out the threat of world fascism, we must remember that this is the only way in which Mr. Wells is capable of pointing out anything, however terrible. And we may be glad that Mr. Wells is still capable of making excellent fun of the bourgeoisie. RICHARD GREENLEAF.



Rockwell Kent

Brief Reviews

ROSE DEEPROSE, *by Sheila Kaye-Smith. Harper & Brothers.* $2.50.

Sheila Kaye-Smith writes of lonely women, and their conflicts with father, husband, lover, child, and self, with warmth, sincerity, and the earnest conviction that these conflicts are woman's unalterable fate. She is well-established as the delineator of rural England and feminine emotions, and each of her twenty-five novels has been hailed by the Sunday book-praisers as the best of the lot. *Rose Deeprose* is another book in this backwater tradition; it is rural Sussex, smelling of the earth, with scones and tea, and Rose nobly fighting struggles born of domestic inequality, introversion, and neurosis in the belief that life was ever thus and ever will be so long as there is a crumpet left in Merrie England. D. B. E.

COLLECTED POEMS OF JAMES JOYCE. *The Black Sun Press. Limited Edition.* $5.

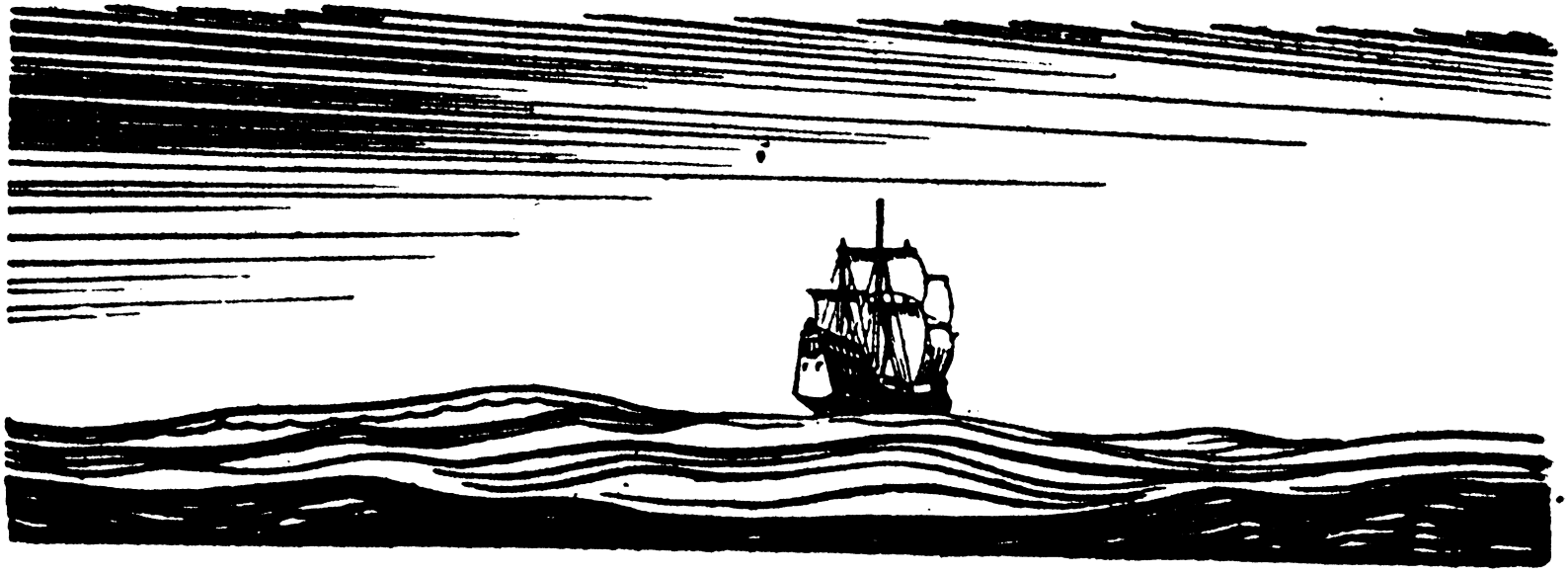
James Joyce's formal poetry is distinguished, as might be expected of him, by careful craftsmanship based upon traditional lyric models. The imitation in the earlier poems extends to mood and subject matter, and results in frequent artificiality. It is in the later poems, formerly contained in the pamphlet *Pomes Pennyeach* and in *Ecce Puer* that he approaches the power of the greater poetry imbedded in "Ulysses" and "Work in Progress."

THE BOUNTY TRILOGY, *by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall. Little, Brown, & Co.* $3.

This one volume includes *Mutiny on the Bounty, Men Against the Sea,* and *Pitcairn Island.* An excellent piece of adventure writing, it has additional social interest as a good description, carefully based on document, of the oppressive conditions of sailors in the eighteenth century; of the early relations of Europeans with the natives of Oceania, and of the character of a mixed stock, isolated by chance, on Pitcairn Island, from the rest of the world and its race prejudices.

THE STRUGGLE FOR POPULATION, *by D. V. Glass, with an Introduction by A. M. Carr-Saunders. New York: Oxford University Press.* $2.75.

Two years ago, in a provocative essay, "The Invention of Sterility" (included in the volume entiled *The Frustration of Science*), an able British student of medico-social problems, Dr. Enid Charles, wrote that "A society which relies on the incentive of private profit discourages reproduction." In the present brief but authoritative monograph sponsored by the Council of the (British) Eugenics Society, Mr. Glass presents an imposing array of first-hand factual material which eloquently confirms the correctness of Dr Charles's thesis. Six countries are selected for detailed analysis: England and Wales, Germany, Italy, France, and Belgium. Emphasis is laid upon the following points: the declining trend of population, its measurement, characteristics, prob-



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able causes and results; various state-controlled incentives to population growth, including family allowance systems; abortion and birth control laws; the actual—for the most part extremely disappointing—outcome of all arbitrary and artificial "plans" designed to make two (or ten) blades of human grass grow where it is obvious to all responsible observers that not even one can freely develop. An elaborate statistical apparatus is brought into play to demonstrate such conclusions as the following: "It is evident that the small family of today has been created largely from economic motives"; "parents are affected by the fear of war in the near future"; "there is a difference in the birth-rate between social and economic classes"; "private and even public enterprise has intensified the small family movement, and helped to make conditions more difficult for the large family." And few who take the trouble to study Mr. Glass's admirable survey can withhold assent from his final conclusion that "no action is likely to have a permanent influence unless it provides conditions in which the working class is able to bring up children without thereby suffering from economic and social hardship." It is a real misfortune that so enlightened an attitude could not have found a further, and very concrete, expression in contrasting the population "problem" in two fascist and four bourgeois-democratic countries with the current situation in the Soviet Union, whose curves for birth rates and social progress are alike the highest in the world. J. S.

THIS ENGLAND, *by Mary Ellen Chase. Macmillan.* $2.50.

One of America's most popular novelists has collected in one volume thirteen short essays about the English people and their countryside, written during the last few months of a two years' visit to the mother country. Miss Chase is at her best dealing with inanimate or vegetable matter—with trees, landscapes, and seasons. Concerning the people, she has little to say, and when that little is not stale, it is inaccurate. That she did not choose to visit the distressed areas, the armament factories, Lombard Street, or any of the more characteristic sections of modern England, is her privilege as an artist; that she finds the London *Times* more important than the *Daily Telegraph* among the educated classes with whom she spent most of her time, that she reports her hosts as regarding all humanity as falling into two categories—foreigners and Englishmen—and makes no mention of the third category of "colonials"; that she swallowed all the guff about "this royal throne of Kings" on the eve of the Simpson affair—these lapses suggest that she did not keep more than one eye and one ear open in the course of her limited wanderings. If this is the best that Britannia's best American friends can say of her, she need no longer fear, as she did in Shakespeare's day, "the envy of less happier lands." Q. H.

CITIES OF REFUGE, *by Philip Gibbs. Doubleday, Doran & Co.* $2.50.

Whoosh!—and another novel squirts from Sir Philip's pen. Each year two books, each one a best-seller. The latest narrates the wanderings of a group of White Russians from the time of Wrangel's defeat to that of Roosevelt's victory. Repeating his old formula, Sir Philip arranges the headline clippings of the last twenty years: the Interventionists, Mustapha Kemal, the inflation-ruin in Austria, bankrupt Germany, the NEP, Paris of the mid-twenties, Stalin, New York during the Hoover fireworks and the long fizzle following, world depression, l'affaire Stavisky, Hitler, the February tragedy in Vienna, Mussolini in Ethiopia. He then drags his White Russians out of stock and uses them to paste one news event to another and to syrup history with a few love affairs.

What raises Gibbs's stuff a notch above his rivals on the drugstore counter is his liberal outlook. He hates war and poverty and dirt, but his thinking about their causes is so shallow and confused that most readers are able to pass undisturbed over the advertisements for good will and equality posted here and there in the book. His sentimental pleading is more a sedative than a stimulant. M. M.

THE BASIS OF JAPANESE FOREIGN POLICY, *by Albert E. Hindmarsh. Harvard University Press.* $2.50.

This is a carefully documented survey of Japan's economic position and the international complications arising from it. Aside from the instructive historical material, which outlines the feudal elements exploited to promote a peculiarly Japanese **variety of fascism, Mr. Hindmarsh** goes thoroughly into such questions as population pressure, its causes and possible cures; the fatal inadequacy of Japanese agriculture: the contradictions between an immensely efficient industrial apparatus working overtime to dominate world markets, and the serious deficiency in raw materials which leads to strained international relations.

The data point clearly to three conclusions: first, the ominous commercial rivalry among three world Powers in the imperialist line-up; second, the equally ominous convergence of these and other Powers in a hostile front against the Soviet Union; and third, the existence within Japan and her mercilessly exploited colonies of a mass discontent which, under revolutionary guidance, may yet split wide open the whole of Asia.

But these conclusions, particularly the last, are for the reader to make out for himself on the basis of Mr. Hindmarsh's material. The author, though he writes of labor, considers it merely one of the elements in the Japanese imperialist machine. And as for the Soviet Union, he is surely mistaken when he says that Manchuria is not only "a link in Japan's program of industrialization" but also "a strategic area in the path of an ambitious and militarized Russia." This is a variant of the old bogy of "Red Imperialism."

SINGING FLESH, *by Thomas Del Vecchio. Henry Harrison.* $1.50.

Mr. Del Vecchio is fairly competent when he turns out the traditional, sweet little lyric. When he tries to get down to earth, tries to write about tugboats, New York City, and working people, he labors. And so he is another one who proves that it is difficult to mould a necessarily new technique to a revolutionary philosophy, no matter how deeply the poet accepts that philosophy. D. S.

★

Recently Recommended Books

On This Island, by W. H. Auden. Random House. $1.50.

Are You a Stockholder? by Alden Winthrop. Covici, Friede. $2.50.

Unemployment Relief in Periods of Depression, by Leah H. Feder. Russell Sage Foundation. $2.50.

America Today, a book of 100 prints chosen and exhibited by the American Artists' Congress. Equinox. $5.

Idaho: A Guide in Word and Picture, prepared by the Federal Writers' Projects of the Works Progress Administration. Caxton. $3.

This Is Your Day, by Edward Newhouse. Lee Furman. $2.50.

Revolt on the Clyde, an Autobiography by William Gallacher. International. $2.50.

Anti-Semitism, by Hugo Valentin. Viking. $2.

Fine Prints Old and New, by Carl Zigrosser. Covici, Friede. $1.

The Tenements of Chicago, 1908-1935, by Edith Abbott, assisted by Sophonisba P. Breckinridge and other associates. U. of Chicago Press. $5.

Tom Paine: Friend of Mankind. by Hesketh Pearson. Harper's. $3.

Almanac for New Yorkers: 1937, compiled by Workers of the Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration in the City of New York. Simon & Schuster. 50c.

Change the World! by Michael Gold. International Publishers. $1.39.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The Theatre Union's "Marching Song" and Ibsen—New phonograph recordings—Notes on the dance

THE range and power of John Howard Lawson's *Marching Song* make it tower head and shoulders above any drama of social forces seen on the New York stage this season—or, for that matter, for some time past. It is the eloquently told story of how two successive auto strikes, the first unsuccessful, the second successful, draw the class lines clearly in a middle-size town, and, in drawing them clearly, wipe out certain unreal inner conflicts within the working class and thus lay the basis for working-class victory. It is a play rich in social and psychological detail, in keen humor, and in swift, sharp dramatic conflict. Anyone interested in the American theater or in the movement of American social forces cannot afford to miss it.

Moreover, it is a further tribute to the play's vitality that it plumbs to the depths the sources of our æsthetic judgment on the social theater. Playwright Lawson has issued no declaration of principle in connection with *Marching Song,* and so we are on our own making the discrimination between what was intentional and what was inadvertent—apart from having to decide the more basic question of the play's objective effect. Lacking, for the moment, a more reliable laboratory method, I will take myself for what I may be worth as a guinea-pig, and attempt to give a verbal report of my (by no means typical, necessarily) reactions. The outstanding fact about my response to the play is a curious paradox: while the curtain was up I was held in an iron grip of interest and suspense that transcended my normal interest in a good play; as soon as the curtain went down I began to be assailed by a dozen doubts and queries as to the utility of this element, the advisability of that, the convincingness of still another. I do not pretend to be able to make a definitive analysis of this paradox; I merely report it as a fact. At the same time, I think it can be explained partly on this basis: first, the extraordinary grip the play exerted on me can be traced to the twin facts that I am more than ordinarily interested in the subject matter and that the handling of it was frequently marked by more than ordinary skill; second, there was such a wealth of corollary ideas and situations in the class-struggle *milieu,* each of which was automatically subjected in my mind to the perfection-anxiety that is at its height in the left-wing propagandist in the people's-front era, that the swarming of doubts and queries may well be assessed against the mere volume of ideas. But one man's view is a poor instrument for a scientific æsthetic judgment of this play—or, for that matter, for any æsthetic judgment. This department has long been of the opinion that laboratory techniques should be used in standardizing æsthetic criteria and in assessing æsthetic values. Now, one of the charges leveled against *Marching Song* by the bourgeois press is that it is not a play, but merely a huge compendium of social conflicts of various sorts, all brought together on one stage by a sort of shotgun wedding. Well, the important question is not whether it is play or compendium, but whether it interests or bores its audiences, whether it moves a relatively backward auditor to a relatively progressive position (as the action in the play moved Russell), etc. This is a matter for research. To that end, the NEW MASSES will carry in its next issue a report on reactions to the play gathered from a varied group of auditors, who will be selected at random as they emerge from the theater, who will be classified in terms of their play-going experience, their economic position, their vocational status, their political views, etc.

Meanwhile, if you want to see a stirring play on a topical American theme, acted by a quick-witted, accomplished cast under careful direction before a magnificent set, this Theatre Union production is what you want.

AND by way of contrast in the drama of social reform, is still a vigorous and witty *of the People,* Ibsen's play of liberalism and social reform, is still a vigorous and witty play, even if the protagonist's ideology does ride the merry-go-round from socialism to technocracy to fascism to anarchism to—well, to almost anything. Mr. Hampden has been mentioned in some quarters as a ham; in this play he is nothing of the sort. On the contrary, he does a very shrewd and expert job of the courageous and rather futile Dr. Stockman. And if any of the readers of this department have never seen how a meeting can be disrupted by the authorities and "respectable citizens," Ibsen shows how in a hilarious act in this play. The engagement ends Saturday, February 27. ALEXANDER TAYLOR.

I. Marantz

RECORDED MUSIC

SO many records have been issued in the last two months that we cannot begin to review them all. Consequently, we will concentrate on the violin disks that have been appearing on recent lists.

Charles Martin Loeffler makes his record début as composer with his violin sonata, played by Jacques Gordon and Lee Pattison (Columbia Set 275). It is certainly not one of his great works, for it reveals no sign of contact with contemporary life. The American Columbia studio does not reproduce violin tone faithfully, nor is the ensemble work in any way distinguished.

Heifetz fares much better in the Victor studios, as one can see in his recent interpretation of Faure's A-major sonata (Victor Set M-328), in which he is assisted by Emanuel Bay. The music is vapid and formless, but the playing is mellifluous to the point of *Schmaltz.* This would be as good a time as any to complain of the miserable explanatory notes which Victor issues with its albums, chock-full of cheap descriptive adjectives and plugs for Victor "higher fidelity," but devoid of any thematic explanation or pertinent information about composer, composition, or artist. Columbia, at least, can point with pride to its Bach notes written by Harvey Grace, and to Lee Pattison's brief, intelligent comments about the Loeffler work.

One of Bach's greatest works for the violin, the partita in D-minor, which includes the chaconne, has been recorded complete by Nathan Milstein (Columbia Set 276). Milstein is typical of many twentieth-century virtuosi: magnificent technique, sensuous tone, almost perfect intonation, and almost no taste or depth. For an artist of his talent, the playing in the first movements is shocking, for there is no feeling for the phrase and no understanding of Bach's emotion and intellect. Curiously, he puts more into the chaconne than into the other movements. Columbia had a great opportunity in bringing us a definitive reading of this partita, for the only other recorded versions—Menuhin's on H.M.V., immature and dull, and Busch's, far better, but dry in tone—are less than satisfactory. The recording, incidentally, does not do justice to Milstein.

Even Szigeti, who is usually at his best on records, does not do himself justice in his new transcription of Peter Warlock's *Capriol Suite* (Columbia). The work itself, a collection of seventeenth-century English dances, is irresistible in its original scoring for string orchestra, but the present transcription voids the charm with intellectualizing that is wholly out

I. Marantz

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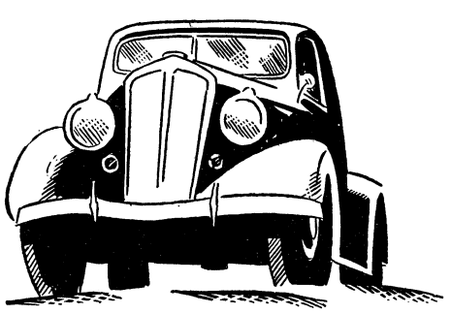
Divided into three price classifications under $1,000, over twenty-five leading models of 1937 automobiles are rated in the forthcoming March issue of *Consumers Union Reports* (ready for mailing about February 25). Some of them are rated as "Best Buys," some as "Not Acceptable," and others as "Also Acceptable" in the estimated order of their merit. Based on such factors as economy, comparative safety of operation, general performance and other engineering features, these ratings were made by competent automotive engineers after thorough examinations and actual performance tests. Such features as hypoid gears, automatic choke, frame durability, driver-visibility, and others are discussed at length. Tables on comparative gas consumption are also given. This report—which should be read by everyone contemplating the purchase of a new car—will be followed in an early issue by ratings of cars in higher-priced groups. Previous issues of the REPORTS (still available) have analyzed and rated tires, gasolines, motor oils, and anti-freeze solutions.

Also discussed in the March issue are the following products: RADIO SETS, FLOUR, SHEETS, CAN OPENERS, BAKED BEANS, CANNED ASPARAGUS AND CHERRIES.



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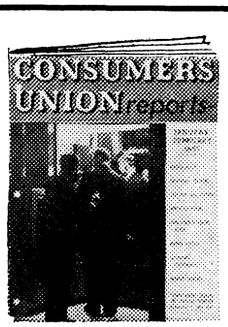

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of place. Szigeti has even gone so far as to alter the harmony in a few places, for which Warlock's admirers will undoubtedly roundly curse him. But with all these reservations, I do not know of another violinist who could play the transcription half so well, excepting possibly Enesco.

Swing records have been holding their own. The greatest of the new ones, to my mind, is the coupling of "Shoe-Shine Boy" and "Evenin' " by a properly anonymous group named Jones-Smith, Inc. (Vocalion 3441). Sleuthing on my part has resulted in the discovery that at least four of the five musicians are members of Basie's orchestra, and the singer is the same James Rushing who does such a grand job with Benny Goodman on "He Ain't Got Rhythm." I have never heard a rhythm section with quite the suppressed power of this three-man group. All are completely relaxed, without requiring the drive one feels in the bands of Benny Goodman and Chick Webb, providing a miraculous background for the tenor saxophone playing of Lester Young, who is one of the most exciting and original artists in jazz. "Evenin' " is a great tune, entirely deserving of the two and a half choruses, by the inspired Rushing, and superlative orchestral support. "Shoe-Shine Boy" does not resemble the song of that name, for this is a wild and wooly stomp with terrific piano playing, drum breaks, bass solos, etc. Vocalion records are not always easy to get from retailers, so I suggest readers interested in these and other swing records try the Commodore Music Shop at 144 East 42nd St., N. Y., which has an enormous stock of them.

Count Basie's full orchestra makes its record début for Decca in three magnificent sides and one good commercial one. The better is the coupling of "Honeysuckle Rose" and "The Count and Lester" (1141), in which Basie's piano playing and Young's saxophone, plus that same insinuating rhythm section, are the features. On "Swinging at the Daisy Chain" (1121), Buck Clayton plays some captivating muted trumpet choruses. The other side contains a burlesque of Fats Waller's piano clichés which compensates for the banality of the tune "Pennies from Heaven."

Before closing, we cannot help but call your attention to the greatest Negro blues singer who has cropped up in recent years, Robert Johnson. Recording them in deepest Mississippi, Vocalion has certainly done right by us in the tunes "Last Fair Deal Gone Down" and "Terraplane Blues," to mention only two of the four sides already released, sung to his own guitar accompaniment. Johnson makes Leadbelly sound like an accomplished poseur.

HENRY JOHNSON.

THE DANCE

WHATEVER the relation of music to dance, it is significant of the development in the field that the Federal Music Project series of concerts, Music and the Dance, began not on a note of obscure æsthetics, but with comment on the social and the economic nature of the arts. "Art must

have value in active living," Mr. John Martin of the New York *Times* said, introducing the first of the fortnightly programs, else, art is worthless. To which Postley Sinclair, commentator for the W.P.A. presentations, added, lending the official touch, art must be utilitarian, else it has no meaning. The importance of these statements does not lie in their originality, nor in their profundity; and it must be remembered there are more directions than one, that the fascist apologist Marinetti has outlined a thoroughly utilitarian program for the modern dancer. What is significant is the evidence of the departure of the music-dance controversy from its hen-egg-which-came-first stage and of the beginnings of a basically sound socio-economic approach to a fundamental æsthetic problem.

There is likely to be introduced a good deal of half-baked and confusing viewpoint; even John Martin, who should know better, can say that there will be no art in an ideal state, because there will be nothing for which to "compensate"—a rather unhappy approach to the value of the arts; but certainly the Federal Project series should go far toward clarifying the dancer's problem with relation to music—and perhaps give the composer a more sympathetic understanding of the dancer's art.

The dancers participating in this first concert were Chief White Feather, who did a couple of American Indian dances to what sounded like sentimental, simulated American Indian music, and the *Bassa Moona* dance group, which did several of the rhythmic native Nigerian dances from the African Negro dance-drama. (*Bassa Moona* is at Daly's in New York.) While there might have been more dance material (instead of the singing of spirituals), there was a sufficient, if scant, indication of the utilitarian (instructional, principally) purpose of primitive dance forms.

A second series of dance concerts, the third of the annual series of modern dance recitals at the New School for Social Research in New York, opened on an unusually promising note. Bill Matons, who arranged the dance pageant for the Madison Square Lenin Memorial Meeting, presented his familiar *Mad Figure* to Kenneth Fearing's "Escape," and, with Ailes Gilmour and Suzanne Remos, a satiric *Adam and Eve on an Apple,* an Adam and Eve who discover triumph comes from a "working together." Matons has an eye for themes of social importance; his trick of plagiarizing himself should pass with work.

Ailes Gilmour indicated a promising technique in the search for "liberty" in the north, south, east, and west of her *Labyrinth.* Mattie Heim exhibits an excellent ease in her yet equivocal compositions. The Bernice Van Gelder group performed an entertaining satiric *Rumor* of unusual choreographic distortions; and the Ray Moses Dance Group, considerably improved since their last appearance, did exceptionally well with their anti-war *Paths of Glory,* massed movements in retreat which approached the intensity of the music.

Considering the nature of the first of the series of the modern recitals with their proclivity for abstract forms, this third, beginning

with its definite awareness of the social scene, is an encouraging indication of the state of health of the art and of its artists.

In another recent recital, Elna Lillback presented a developing facility of movement, and her choreography for both solo and group figures indicated an ability to develop mechanically, yet logically, patterns in a variety of pleasing rhythms. Meaning, however, in her dancing is limited to the conscious effort of her program notes at a vague sort of social ideology. The choreography is equally self-conscious; involved much with "abstract" movement, it attains a rather bloodless balance and rarely moves beyond the footlights.

The two horns of her *Dancer's Dilemma* are comedy and tragedy, the forms and not the substance of them. A point of view is lacking, and the lack obviously and seriously cripples her development as a dancer of definite importance. There is much the "finished" concert dancer may learn from the younger, cruder perhaps, but certainly more vigorous choreographers. OWEN BURKE.

★

Forthcoming Broadcasts

(Times given are Eastern Standard, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups)

National Education Association Convention. Résumé of the proceedings. Thurs., Feb. 25, 3:30 p. m., Columbia.

Education for Peace. The school child in relation to this problem; speakers, Dr. Lyman Bryson, Teachers College, Columbia University, and Dr. Frank Aydelotte, president, Swathmore College. Sat., Feb. 27, 2 p.m., N.B.C. red.

Supreme Court. Results of the Gallup public-opinion poll: Mon., March 1, Wed., March 3, and Fri., March 5, 6:35 p.m., N.B.C. red and blue (except WJZ).

Civil Liberties. The second U. S. government education-office program in its "Let Freedom Ring" series, dramatizing the struggle for the right of trial by jury. Mon., March 1, 10:30 p.m., Columbia.

Debate. U. of Pittsburgh vs. U. of Washington on "Resolved: that Congress be empowered to pass maximum-hour and minimum-wage legislation for industry." Sat., March 13, 2 p.m., N.B.C. red.

Recent Recommendations

MOVIES

You Only Live Once. Sylvia Sidney and Henry Fonda doing a good job under the direction of Fritz Lang, who saves a sour scenario.

The Good Earth. Hollywood's first honest approach to the Chinese people, through a screening of Pearl Buck's novel, with Paul Muni and Luise Rainer in the leading roles.

The Plough and the Stars. Pretty satisfactory cinematizing of Sean O'Casey's play.

Camille. The old yarn, worth seeing only because it has Garbo.

PLAYS

Yes, My Darling Daughter (Playhouse, N. Y.). A pleasant comedy about a former-free-loving mother's unavailing efforts to prevent her daughter from following her example.

Steel (Labor Stage, N. Y., opening Mon., March 1). Reviving John Wexley's drama of union men and company thugs.

Richard II. (St. James, N. Y.). Superlative production of a good but seldom-produced Shakespeare item, with exceptional performances by Maurice Evans and Augustin Duncan.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

By the Circulation Department

WHAT DOES a circulation manager know about books? you may well ask. Well, at least, we know what our readers like. They like these four books. They've been sending for them, in conjunction with subscriptions to NEW MASSES. We've read the reviews of these books in our editorial pages. We're reviewing those briefly here. We're also reviewing the Special Combination Offers which are still in force, so you may make your own choice. If you feel you must have all (and how can you help it?), have the magazine sent to friends, and the books sent to you. Can you think of a more economical way to build up your own library, and educate your friends on important current issues?

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Mr. Strachey is not here writing for that portion of the bourgeoisie, of the middle class, of the intelligentsia, which has preceded or followed him into the ranks of the revolutionary class. Nor is he writing for that portion which, for one reason or another, will never ally itself with the proletariat. He addresses himself rather to those middle-class people who are interested, but still hesitant. . . . It will be difficult for this group to resist his appeal. He puts his case honestly and clearly. He makes obscure things plain. He never uses weasel words to befuddle the issue. And he tackles exactly those questions which have worried them.

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By R. Palme Dutt

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