

# NEW MASSES

*May 23, 1939*



*Fifteen Cents*

## Sadism in China

AGNES SMEDLEY

New York's 'Post' and Philly's 'Record'

ROBERT TERRALL

The Miners Knew What They Wanted

ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN

Where Is Britain Going?

ALLEN HUTT

Shaping P.E.N. Into a Sword

SAMUEL SILLEN

Cartoons by William Gropper, A. Redfield, Ad Reinhardt

# BETWEEN OURSELVES

**T**HIS week the most novel of our varied typographical designs on the cover of NM comes from a reader in Kowloom, China, whose name and address must remain anonymous. Here is his accompanying letter:

"Herewith I send you a cover design by me for your magazine which is not only America's but the world's indispensable journal. Most of the articles as well as verses in NM have been translated into Chinese for the progressive readers of China. I congratulate you for your incomparable great work. The first character in my design means 'New,' the other two mean 'Masses.' This is NM's name in Chinese."

A. B. Magil has just finished an article replying to Archibald MacLeish's piece in the current *Survey Graphic* which was entitled "Liberalism and the Anti-Fascist Front." Magil's article will appear in a forthcoming issue. NM got a big hand from the youth at the Young Communist League convention at Hotel Center, in New York; Joseph North spoke on the press, outlining the tasks of progressive journalism in a time when 80 to 90 percent of the commercial press in this nation is anti-New Deal. The chairman of the

panel on Publications, at which North spoke, lauded NM as an organ which plays a big part in enlightening the youth, particularly in America's colleges, on the programs of progress and of reaction.

While we're at it we want to give the YCL a big red orchid for the magnificent show they put on at Madison Square Garden last week, at the opening session of their convention. "Swing America" they called it, and never was a better balanced affair put on. The verve of American youth, its life and its intelligence, swept the audience of twenty thousand off its forty thousand feet. From the jitterbug dancing to the speech of Johnny Gates, political commissar of the Fifteenth Brigade—it all reflected the magnificent life of young America. All there felt it and many oldsters of thirty wept at their years, wished they could hark back a decade once again. The editors of NM who thought they were pretty youthful, as editors go, left the Garden lamenting their lost years. Ah, to be young once again, and a member of the YCL. Oh, to dance as the jitterbugs danced, or to speak as Lieut. Col. Johnny Gates spoke. Father Time, turn back the clock!

The pen drawing by Abraham Tobias reproduced on page 24 is on exhibition with his other drawings and paintings until May 21 at the Delphic Studios in New York City.

From Mrs. Elliot Paul, wife of the NM contributor and author of the best-selling novel, *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, comes a contribution of \$15 from Paris.

A comment from R. T. M. of New York City:

"I wish to congratulate you on your articles in recent issues treating the American scene. I refer specifically to the articles about *Time*, the *Satevepost*, the plight of young doctors, the Spanish-American workers, and the *Herald Tribune* article.

"I am confident that your magazine must succeed, if you will continue to give your attention to such topics."

For their spring season, the Labor Poets of America have established a Poetry Workshop led by guest poets every Wednesday night at the Ten Eyck Studio, 116 West 21st St., N. Y. C. The guest poets for the remainder of May and June are: Eli Siegel (May 24, 31); Joy Davidman (June 7, 14); and S. Funaroff (June 21, 28).

The suspects of Sofina in America have written us letters asking for more lowdown on this international octopus, such as appeared in our May

9 issue, by Oronzo Marginati, Jr. We are looking about for the American representatives of this International Trust and when we find them, we shall introduce you to them.

## Who's Who

**F**OR more than thirty years Elizabeth Gurley Flynn has been active in the labor movement in this country. She is a member of the National Committee of the Communist Party of the USA. . . . With this issue, we publish Robert Terrall's third article in his series on large newspapers. . . . David Richards is the author of a recently published pamphlet, *Your Taxes*, and of other pamphlets on economic subjects. . . . Allen Hutt's *Post-War History of the British Working Class* was published in this country last year. . . . Sanora Babb is a member of the League of American Writers, now living in California. . . . Harry Slochower is the author of *Three Ways of Modern Man* and a critical study of Thomas Mann. . . . Marc Blitzstein is a composer and playwright, whose best known work is *The Cradle Will Rock*.

## Flashbacks

**M**EMO to the victorious mine workers: Just three years ago, the United States Supreme Court, to the great pleasure of Wall Street, declared the Guffey Coal Control Act unconstitutional. Discussing this decision, which severely limited the power of government over big business, John L. Lewis said: "It is a sad commentary upon our form of government when every decision of the Supreme Court seems designed to fatten capital and starve and destroy labor." . . . The gentlemen who determined our form of government (without mention of the Supreme Court's veto power) met May 20, 1787, in Philadelphia, opening the deliberations of the Constitutional Convention. . . . John Brown, no believer in appeasing the slave owners, resisted their aggressions against his family on May 24, 1856, at Pottawatomie in Kansas. . . . Not far from there, at Wichita, Earl Browder was born May 20, 1891. . . . Bill Haywood, American Communist Party member, died May 18, 1928, in Moscow.

## This Week

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Agnes Smedley

Since the beginning of the Japanese invasion of China this famous American journalist and author has been on the scene of operations, first with the Eighth Route Army and at present with the New Fourth Army. Her colorful descriptions of China today have been published in periodicals and books, the most recent of which is "China Fights Back." She is also the author of "China's Red Army Marches" and an autobiography, "Daughter of Earth." Miss Smedley was formerly the China correspondent of the "Frankfurter Zeitung."



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## Sadism in China

The horror of the Japanese invasion. Murder, rape, enforced prostitution. Agnes Smedley calls upon the world to halt the Genghis Khans of today.

I AM not trying to write an article, but I am moved to add a few opinions and facts to a number of editorials and articles which have appeared in some newspapers in the past few months about the cause of the wholesale slaughter, looting, and rape in which the Japanese army has engaged in China since it began invading this country. The civilized mind stands paralyzed before such actions, and people in other countries who have not been on the scene here cannot conceive that such things can be true.

One paper tells how Japanese prisons have been emptied and the prisoners put in the Japanese army and sent to China. It asks if this is not an explanation of Japanese sadism in China.

No, that is not the cause. Even if all the prisoners of Japan were concentrated in one force, they never could be held responsible for the conduct of the Japanese army. There are not enough of them, for one thing, and they are not concentrated in one force alone. Furthermore, not all prisoners are criminals. In this age, the majority of crimes are not murders nor are they primarily sexual. Most offenses in this age are due to poverty. Also, thousands of Japanese prisoners are politicals, that is, men who have struggled against the present feudal and reactionary social and political system in Japan.

The real murderers, the real criminals of Japan, have never been in prison, but sit in the highest ranks of the government, army, navy, and air force. It is they and their brutal feudal mentality, which they perpetuate and organize into a system, who are the real criminals, and it is they who are responsible for the conduct of the Japanese army in China. In fact, we have proof enough now that the high command of the Japanese army deliberately brutalizes the soldiers. If they did not do so, this war could not continue, for most of the common soldiers in the Japanese army are men worried about the poverty of their families at home.

### REWARDS TO SOLDIERS

Japanese army commanders not only offer their men cities to do with as they wish as a reward if they capture them, but many officers lead and command their troops in burning, looting, raping, and slaughtering civilians. In Nanking the Japanese high command forced each Japanese soldier to kill captives with his own hands.

The pictures taken from the photograph albums of Japanese officers, mentioned by Miss Smedley in the accompanying article, are so revolting that NM is not printing them. They prove her argument only too horribly. Also, we do not want to be banned from the United States mails.

THE EDITORS

If you study captured Japanese letters and diaries, particularly the diaries, you can see the steady brutalization of the Japanese army. The authors of these diaries begin as ordinary men from ordinary families in Japan; then they come to China and are taken in units to the brothels which the Japanese call "Comfort Houses of the Imperial Army." Some of the diaries show the revulsion these ordinary men at first have with these houses and their rules. Then you can trace the thread of brutalization through drunken brawls, for the men are provided with liquor.

Some of the diaries record official orders of high commanders to slaughter the entire populations of villages. One diary which I helped translate into English, of a Corporal Nakamura (killed by the New Fourth Army near Mulinkwan, southwest of Nanking, on the morning of October 1), speaks of the revulsion of new Japanese recruits who witness for the first time the maltreatment of captive civilians. Corporal Nakamura laconically remarks that the new recruits are raw men and will get used to it in time.

This same Nakamura writes of himself and his company descending upon the village of Lukuochen and running through the town for two hours hunting down girls. One of his colleagues murders a captive girl "because it was her first time and she was so ugly that all the rest of us scorned her." This same diary tells how this Japanese company captured three Chinese civilians, tortured them until they went insane, then killed them. An entry in the diary shortly after this tells of a drunken brawl to which girls from the "comfort houses" were brought, and Nakamura writes next day that it would be wonderful if one could be drunk like that all the time.

Corporal Nakamura began his trip to China with the regrets of a decent man. He was

turned into a beast in China by the high command of the Japanese army. His diary, and others like it, are records that mankind must study to learn again and again that culture and civilization must be protected and guarded, and that men cannot be fed on murder, arson, and rape without being turned into dogs.

### WOMEN CAPTIVES

In one of the published articles, appearing in the *China Weekly Review*, "Conditions in Soochow," the anonymous author made a statement like this: "The Japanese soldiers there now seldom assault Chinese women, but satisfy themselves with Chinese prostitutes." I must seriously contest this statement. The New Fourth Army, where I am at present, fights in the Nanking-Chinking area, and in that entire region the one occupation of Japanese soldiers, when they are not killing, is hunting for women in the villages. In August the New Fourth Army took a town in which the Wei Chih Hwei, or local puppet government, guarded by some two hundred Chinese ruffians and ignorant men known as the "Self Defense Corps," was preparing to welcome an advancing column of Japanese who were to garrison the place. The New Fourth captured the entire Wei Chih Hwei, disarmed the "Self Defense Corps," and captured its commanders. All the puppet government and these commanders were brought to a big public trial where they were condemned to death and shot immediately afterwards. Among the witnesses against them were thirty girls and young married women—wives of poor men of the town—who had been captured by the local puppets and locked up in a house to be presented to the Japanese.

Therefore, to state that only Chinese prostitutes are being used by the Japanese troops is untrue. There are not enough prostitutes in all China to fill the Japanese brothels in the Hongkew district of Shanghai alone. Most of the girls and women in the "comfort houses" are captives. While I was in Hankow, just before its fall, a Chinese lawyer from Shanghai came there with his insane wife. She had been captured and put in one of the Hongkew brothels. This lawyer made friends with a Japanese and the two of them spent weeks searching the brothels in Hongkew. He found his wife. It cost him \$10,000 to bribe the Japanese before he could get her out.



Around the end of August a unit of thirty men of the New Fourth Army investigated the railway town of Sinfeng, on the Shanghai-Nanking railway, and found that the Japanese garrison consisted of fifty Japanese who used the railway station as barracks. In the upper floor of that station were ten captive Chinese girls from the town. On the night of September 1 the New Fourth attacked the station with hand grenades. The Japanese fought with machine guns at first, then retreated to the upper floor in which they kept the girl prisoners. At last, there was no alternative but to burn down the entire station, and this the New Fourth unit did. The fate of the girls tormented them but it was either this or leaving fifty Japanese alive.

#### VICTIMS ARE NOT HARLOTS

Let no civilized man today "wash his hands" by saying that the women used by the Japanese are prostitutes. It is not true. What is happening to the women of China today will happen to the women of other countries if the Japanese are victorious.

Of course I agree with the statement that Americans simply cannot conceive of the atrocities being perpetrated by the Japanese army, and so do not always believe them. The American people generally like happy endings; they do not like to be shocked. Some people may question the pictures and wonder how any human being can photograph his fellow soldiers in the act of slaughtering and raping. Here in the New Fourth Army we have many captured trophies. Among them are whole camera outfits, with photograph albums which seem to have belonged to officers, because the same officers' pictures appear in many poses throughout. Other photographs are in lots of ten or twenty copies each, which shows that photographers were sending back pictures to men in the army according to order, or to sell generally. Many of these photographs show Japanese in the act of killing civilians. Often the whole scene is shown in a number of snaps—the victim and the Japanese, the man being put to his knees and prepared for the sword, then the head being severed, and then the Japanese standing, bloody sword in hand, looking at the camera proudly.

These photographs are not kept secret by the Japanese: they can even be bought in the Japanese section of every occupied city. The Japanese are proud of them. In the headquarters of the New Fourth Army there are also hundreds of letters, captured in battle. Many of them are from friends or sisters in Japan, acknowledging receipt of such photographs. One sister writes to her brother that she received his photograph of a Chinese "mutilated by your sword," and then adds, "We do not know whether to feel sorry for the victims, or to hate them."

#### FOLLOWS MONGOL TRADITION

I am certain that Genghis Khan's hordes would also have taken pictures of themselves in the act of wiping out whole populations and raping women had they had cameras in

those days. The Japanese are in about the same stage of intellectual and spiritual development as were Genghis Khan's hordes a few centuries ago, though they have added a few frills, externally. In fact, the Japanese campaign in China is fashioned much after that of the barbarous Mongols of that time, and when a Japanese force enters a Chinese town or village today it does just about what the Mongol hordes would have done.

We cannot be deceived by Japanese "political strategy" in Hankow and other big places in the past few weeks. The Japanese have not killed so many people in Hankow as in other places, but this is because foreign countries have become revolted by their conduct in China. The anti-Japanese boycott movement and the inability of the Japanese government to secure loans in England or America is the cause of this Japanese "political strategy." The nature of the beast has not changed in the least; it is merely turning a slightly different face to the world, temporarily, until it can get enough funds to continue its conquest of China. There is another reason: Japanese "political strategy" has been adopted in order to make things easier for

Wang Ching-wei and his clique to betray and go over to their country's enemy.

I would like to ask you to publish all the pictures you have of Japanese slaughter, burning, and rape. While other magazines may hesitate to publish pictures of rape, surely you can be courageous enough. If Chinese girls and women can endure the agony that is being inflicted upon them, surely we others can at least face this fact. To hide these photographs is to protect Japanese imperialism. People all over the world must be informed of every phase of Japanese actions in China. Not that this will affect Germany and Italy, for they have done or are doing the same as the Japanese though they do not photograph themselves in the act. Japanese, German, and Italian conduct is much the same, and it is being let loose upon the entire world. It is fascism we are witnessing, for fascism is a reversion to barbarism generally.

What is happening in China today will happen to other countries tomorrow. The Japanese will merely use China as a base for the continuation of their deprivations of all Asia and then of other countries.

AGNES SMEDLEY.

### "The World Was Always Yours"

Speak now O lovers in the name of all  
men brave enough to live: speak if you can  
before the tongue, time's pendulum, is still

before the mouth of the last tortured stiffens, the wrists  
freeze motionless, the last tall city shatters,  
the last child's scream aches in the ears of space:

This day's destroyers lecherous with her lie  
licking the lips that fester under maggots  
kissing the breast's grey cancerous crust. . . .

Speak!—do not crawl to the soft bed, private  
with night's poor ghost where animal fear alone  
unwarmed by anger breeds

(Nor cry peace, peace! to the deaf trees  
the beaded woodfern's anæsthetic green  
the violets like music under alders)

Speak the creative word: yield flesh and bone  
to a clean birth, though the hard knots of grief  
narrow the desperate throat,

Say that the love of common man for man  
shall rise beyond our death, the burning flame  
in the bright channels of the blood's defenders:

Speak of this love, the one truth set in time  
to bear the sun's heat and the winter snow  
alike upon it shining, and the stars.

RUTH LECHLITNER.

# The Miners Knew What They Wanted

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn wishes Mother Jones could have seen it. A strike story from West Virginia's coal fields.

"EVERYBODY talkin' about heaven ain't goin' there!" Ideas of heaven differ. Mine is the state of West Virginia during a complete coal stoppage, under the control of the United Mine Workers of America. I wish Mother Jones could have seen it, and Bill Haywood too. Bill got arrested once in Colorado for saying, "The union is in peaceful possession of the mines!" I saw it the other day. Union mine guards at every tippie. No disturbances, no violence, no gunmen. It was not a strike. It was "a stoppage." The miners' slogan: "No contract, no coal." In other places, it may be routine. But this is West Virginia, a beautiful state with a bad reputation for feuds, killings, bloodshed.

The mining companies, mostly absentee owners, were responsible for the lawlessness. For years they hired brutal killers, to keep the union out. The people here fought in self-defense. Logan, Mingo, McDowell Counties were scenes of pitched battles and tent colonies; union organizers and sympathizers were slain. The famous *Songs of the Paint Creek Miner* by Ralph Chaplin included "When the Leaves Come Out," first published in the *Liberator*, predecessor of *NEW MASSES*. "Oh, Buddy, how I'm longing for the spring!" he sang, not as a lover of nature but because he wanted a screen of green foliage for his rifle. At Matewan the mayor, a druggist, was killed by gunmen. The chief of police, Sid Hatfield, and his deputy, Ed Chambers, were taken to Welch for trial on a riot charge. They were promised protection by the governor. As they walked unarmed up the courthouse steps, they were shot to death by Baldwin-Feltz detectives. Their wives walking beside them escaped by a miracle. Not chivalry but emptied guns saved them. One fled. One stood guard beside her dead husband. Grief-stricken and exhausted, Mrs. Chambers was finally persuaded to leave—"So the bodies can be moved!" they told her. Guns were placed around the dead men. She told me how she found her husband's gun in the closet when she returned home that night—alone. She identified five killers and insisted on their arrest. This brave and beautiful young woman, daughter of a miner and sister of miners, testified as an eye-witness. The men were acquitted on a plea of "self-defense."

## MINERS' TRADITIONS

West Virginia miners have great militant traditions. They tell you of the siege of Blair Mount—a natural fortress; of the miners' march on Logan; of murder and treason trials of union officials; of how Mother Jones was court-martialed in 1913 and sentenced to twenty years. I saw Paint Creek

where she stood in the water, like John the Baptist, to speak. She was held off company property by guns. The miners had to go in the water to join the union! If Harold Houston, who was chief counsel of the United Mine Workers of America for many years, and his highly intelligent wife (who was Mrs. Chambers) would write their recollections of West Virginia's labor struggles, it would be a further great service. A younger generation should hear at what price labor organizations were built. This union was baptized in the blood of miners. It is precious. You will understand now what a wonderful sight a complete and peaceful stoppage is in West Virginia.

The United Mine Workers of America is 100 percent strong here. In District No. 17, the Southern field, there are 105,000; the Northern field, District No. 31, has 35,000. This is a large percentage of the population of the state, which is only 1,865,000. All other workers solidly supported the miners. Not a mine was working; not a car loading or moving; even the baskets, which carry coal over the river in the Kanawha Valley, hung empty and idle—a symbol of the stoppage. The miners watched the mines. No one could go near them to work or do damage, to discredit the union. Eternal vigilance is the price of unionism for coal diggers in West Virginia. I spoke at an enthusiastic rally of a thousand miners in Scott's Run. M. A. Teti reported as vice-president of District No. 31. They wholeheartedly backed their officers, and sent encouraging telegrams to John L. Lewis daily. The miners here take a lively interest in their affairs. They enjoy being union men. They are cheerful and happy about it. It's like young love or going up in an airplane—too good to be true!

## "PROGRESSIVE MINERS"

The *New York Times*, the coal operators, or Bill Green to the contrary, *there are no Progressive Miners of America in West Virginia*. Joe Ozanic, president of this stooge outfit, injected it into the negotiations, against the UMWA and for the operators. I found no Progressive Miners in the Anthracite, in East Ohio, in West Pennsylvania, or in West Virginia. It's like following a will-o'-the-wisp! Finally I found them, a few scattered remnants of dual unionism in southern Illinois, engaged in a fight against Ozanic. Apparently he joined them to the AFL without their knowledge and consent. Many are anarchists, syndicalists, ex-IWW's. Much confusion prevails. They cling to leftist phrases of yesterday regardless of great forward strides of the labor movement. Their unreasoning hangover hatred of John L. Lewis, due to past

differences, blinds them to his present progressive leadership. Their national organization is a union-smashing tool for the operators. It disgraces the word "progressive." For 3,500 Southern Illinois irreconcilables to discuss "unity" as if the UMWA of 613,000 must join them is nonsense. Joseph Stalin's apt remark on Carpatho-Ukraine proposing to annex Soviet Ukraine fits here—the gnat swallowing the elephant.

## GREEN'S DEAD CAT

Expulsion of the UMWA (coal) and the Mine, Mill, and Smeltermen (ores) left the AFL minus 650,000 miners and Bill Green minus his union card. They picked up their ancient enemy, "the Progressives," and dressed it up as the Mining Department of the AFL. Financial blood transfusions sent Progressive "organizers" scurrying around the country. They met a hot reception in West Virginia, demonstrating the spontaneous resentment of the miners. Three attempts to hold meetings failed. It was like going to Valley Forge to honor Benedict Arnold. They departed under the sheriff's protection. To distribute leaflets they hire an airplane. They don't dare put their feet on the ground of Logan County. Their office in Charleston, paid for by Green, is empty. The AFL members resent their presence. The State Federation of Labor planned a 1939 convention at Morgantown. They were notified that AFL people are welcome, but not PMA. No other place has been found. The AFL local people are sorely embarrassed by Green's odoriferous dead cat which they must drag around. Their sympathy is with the UMWA.

The miners of West Virginia have full confidence in their union and in John L. Lewis. They liked the firm stand he took, and enjoyed his witty jabs at the operators. Now that they have a new great victory under their belts, they will build their union stronger than ever.

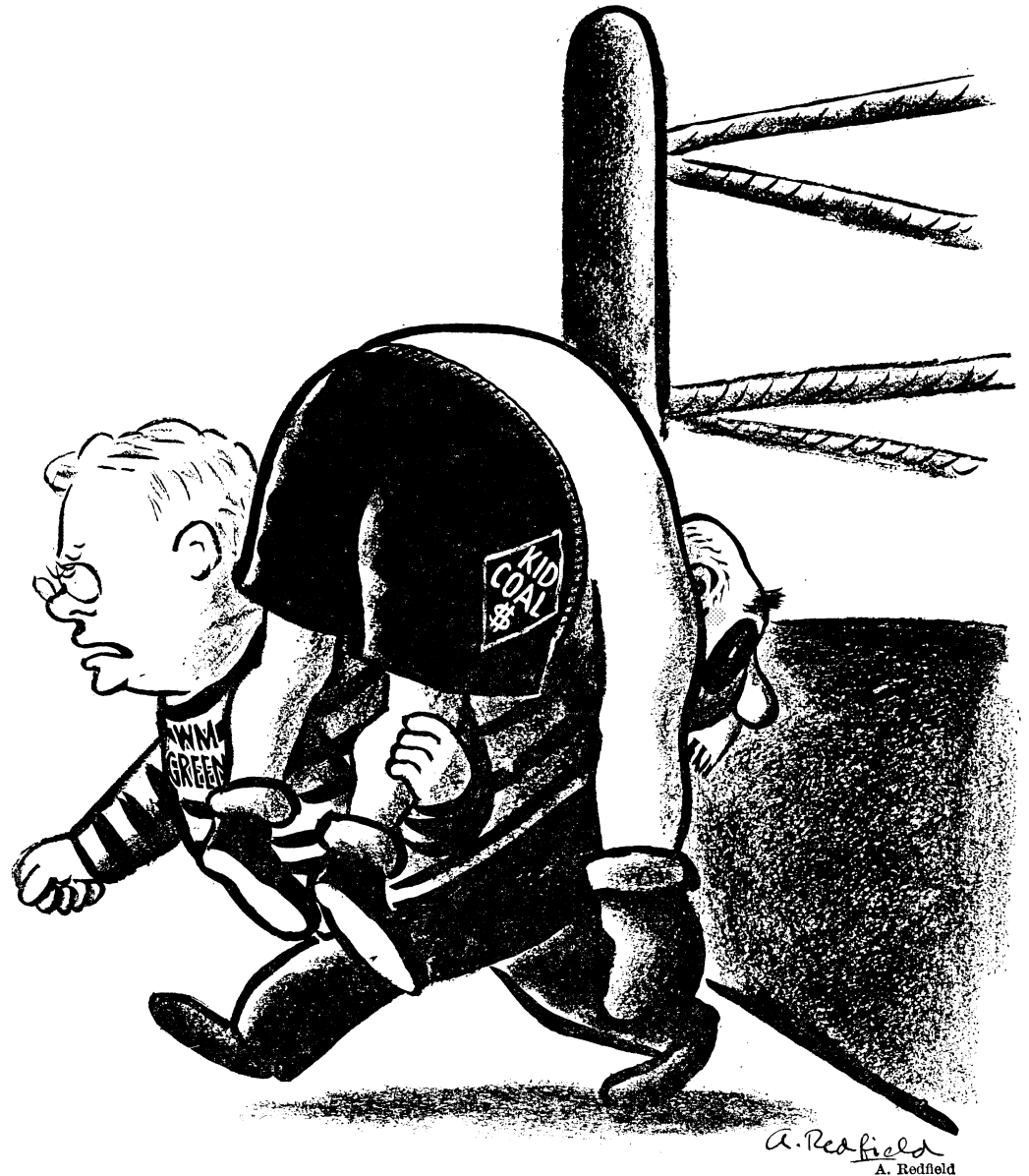
West Virginia is an inspiration because of its past; a satisfaction in the present and an education on the future potentialities of coal. Charleston and just south of Charleston is a futuristic panorama of the chemical industry, the new frontier of coal. There is a tendency even in labor circles to regard coal as a "sick industry." In competition with natural gas, oil, and hydroelectric, coal still provides half the country's total energy. Railroads, steel, electric power, and gas manufacturing plants need coal. It is a basic natural resource. The United States is second after Great Britain in the number of men employed. The Soviet Union is third, with the advantage of nationalization and planned production and distribution.

Capitalism holds waste and mismanagement. The owners mechanize for profit. Mines shut down; miners are laid off. The mines are not worked out. The demand for coal is not exhausted. The use of cutting, loading, conveying machines increases output, decreases the number of mines and eliminates the older skilled miners. If mechanization is pathological, all industry is sick. The new strip steel mills are a serious labor displacement. Mines are stationary. They can't "run away" like mills. If coal has no future, would the operators build a powerful monopoly, invest new fortunes in mechanization, resist all regulation by state and national control? Their tenacious grip indicates there are still fabulous fortunes in the deep earth. Coal is much more than fuel. Nature, after millions of years, turns black coal into sparkling white diamonds. Science is developing myriads of by-products of coal, utilizing its chemical contents. Aspirin, saccharin, paraffin, perfumes, dyes, face creams are well known. District No. 50, the "coal processing workers," organized in Boston, Mass., in 1936, includes "Gas, Coke, and Chemical." Miners joke about controlling beauty parlor supplies. It's not to be sneezed at; American women spend \$300,000,000 annually on beauty aids with a coal tar base. District No. 50 is a pioneer in ever larger fields. Du Pont de Nemours, Union Carbide & Carbon, Allied Chemical & Dye, and Cyanamid corporations have million-dollar plants here and elsewhere—Delaware, Connecticut, Texas, Niagara Falls. West Virginia is a natural reservoir of gas, coal, and salt water wells. At Belle (du Pont) three thousand are employed. The Carbide plant (Mellon) employs 3,200. Coal, water, and air are united to produce heavy industrial acids, alkalines, salts; alcohol, ammonia, gases, explosives, plastics, etc.

The du Pont company announces: "Soon we shall be wearing clothing derived from coal; already we eat food from plants that subsist on coal-derived fertilizers; and not at all fantastic is the idea that we might be sheltered in houses of coal plastics." This is no dream. These are business men. C. M. A. Stine, vice-president of du Pont, announces that "Nylon," their latest synthetic fiber, "is as strong as steel, as fine as a spider's web, yet more elastic than any common fabric and possessing a beautiful luster." A new \$7,000,000 plant at Seaford, Del., will compete with Japan's \$100,000,000 silk business. Nylon is fabricated from coal, water, and air. My advice to pessimists is to study what the du Ponts and Mellons are doing with coal. Don't be surprised if District No. 50 claims the hosiery industry as a by-product of coal!

#### THE UNION GROWS

Here in West Virginia this youngest district of the miners' union is organizing rapidly. Eleven thousand chemical workers will soon be added to the UMWA. Company unions are dissolved by Labor Board orders. Hearings will soon be set. The union will gain collective bargaining rights and recognition in



"We Wuz Robbed!"

the Kanawha Valley. In Standard Ultramarine Works at Huntington, an excellent agreement was won by Local No. 12039 last July. The rest will follow. Watch District No. 50 grow, here and around the country.

I'd like to tell you a lot more about West Virginia—of the ambulances and money sent to Spain; of the three volunteers who did not return. Housing and health projects are needed. Old company shacks must be cleared away. Silicosis at Gauley Bridge here shocked the nation—hundreds died. The miners are eager to hear of the CIO and the New Deal. "Talk as long as you like," they said. "We don't hear much down here!" The country is beautiful except where strip mining cuts deep gashes in the breast of the earth. South of Charleston the mountains become wilder and more rugged, the valleys narrower and deeper, the towns compressed between. The little creeks, "forks," are raging torrents in spring or after rains. The Monongahela River rises here. Part of Pittsburgh's floods start in West Virginia's mountains. Flood control must include source waters here.

The people are forthright and soft-spoken, courageous and courteous, gentle but deadly if their rights are threatened. The shadows of

fierce struggles are in their eyes. Labor's Non-Partisan League is being built for the 1939-40 elections. They are dissatisfied with Gov. Homer A. Holt, an anti-New Dealer who denied them unemployment security during the stoppage. They despise Sen. Rush Holt, friend of Weir, whom Washington newspapermen voted "the most useless senator in Washington." The Socialist Party has dissolved into the Communist Party, which is a healthy, growing organization, known and accepted by the workers. All the conditions are now ripe in West Virginia to build the democratic front. Watch this beautiful, spirited mountain state step up into the vanguard of progress.

ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN.

#### It Looks Now

"IT LOOKS now as though Joseph Stalin were ready to come to terms with the Reich."—LUDWIG LORE, *New York Post*, May 8.

"It looks now as if the British government would have to come to terms with the Kremlin."—LUDWIG LORE, *New York Post*, May 12.

# Nobody Appreciates Mr. Stern

The New York "Post": pro-New Dealers read it to get cheap phonograph records; anti-New Dealers never read it in the first place.

CYRUS H. K. CURTIS had been dead several months, and J. David Stern, of Philadelphia and Camden, was screwing up his courage to buy the New York *Post*. If he bought it he would have to change it a little. The *Post* was such a respectable paper that newsboys used to say they wouldn't sell it to anybody who couldn't produce a copy of the *Social Register*. The society editor never gave any publicity to *nouveaux riches* like the Rockefellers. John C. Martin, Curtis' stepson-in-law, jazzed it up and turned it into a tabloid, but the public was wary. One day in December 1933 Mr. Stern was up from Philadelphia. He dropped into Mr. Martin's office and found him staring moodily at a check for \$250,000 which the other evening papers had scraped together to get the *Post* off the newsstands. That so shocked Mr. Stern that he put in a few calls to Philadelphia and hustled Mr. Martin over to the office of a character named Alfred M. Greenfield and drew up an agreement to buy the *Post*.

People who have been following the irresolute course of the *Post* in the last year will remember the staggering effect, in 1934, of a New York paper with editorials on its front page headed "Okay, Mr. President!" The tone of most New York papers at the time was "For God's sake, Mr. President!" Dave Stern (he didn't like the name Julius) was something new in depression journalism. "A newspaper doesn't wait for news to happen," he said; "it creates news." The *Post* gave a taxi strike the respectful attention which newspapers usually reserve for weddings of minor European royalty. It denounced Tammany Hall and the milk monopoly. It supported Roosevelt and the New Deal with enthusiasm, almost with jubilation. The press run of the *Post* on the last day under Mr. John C. Martin was precisely 17,500; but it didn't take many "Okay, Mr. President!" editorials to put the fear of God into the *World-Telegram* and the *Sun*.

The *Post* was a marvelous place to work, a real newspaperman's paper. Mr. Stern, who shortly before had hired a highly paid press agent, walked through the plant in his shirtsleeves, chewing a cigar, calling people by their first names, only refraining with difficulty from patting rewrite men on the head.

## REJOICING, TEMPERED WITH SKEPTICISM

The *Post* might not live up to its first impression; meanwhile everyone gave it the benefit of the doubt. It looked as though New York at last had a liberal paper. But the few people who were acquainted with Mr. Stern's publishing record were skeptical. He always liked to refer to himself as a "practical

liberal"; he had been a practical liberal all his life. When he was twenty-six he used some money his father had left him to buy the New Brunswick (N. J.) *Times*. He ran contests, cut advertising rates, and gave away free copies. In editorials and news columns he stormed against Johnson & Johnson (proprietary drugs), the town's big corporation. "I will never sell out," he said, and a few months later he sold out to the treasurer of Johnson & Johnson, who killed the paper. He moved to Ohio, bought the *Springfield News*, ran contests, cut advertising rates, and made himself a nuisance to the local politicians and the morning papers. In 1919 the morning papers bought him out. By 1933, when he bought the *Post*, he owned the *Philadelphia Record* and two papers in Camden. The *Record* was his first Democratic paper. One day in 1928 his Camden papers said, "What this country needs is a great engineer to keep us on the prosperity path: Herbert Hoover." The same day, across the river in Philadelphia, the *Record* was saying, "What this country needs is not just a great engineer, but an engineer of men: Alfred E. Smith."

In the course of his career Mr. Stern acquired some influential associates, notably Alfred M. Greenfield, who is occasionally described as the real owner of the *Post*. Mr. Greenfield was one of the biggest real-estate men in the United States. He handled most of the real-estate business of the Catholic Church in Pennsylvania, as a result of which he was the only Jewish Papal Knight in America. He controlled department stores, including Lit Bros. (Mr. Stern's wife was the daughter and the niece of the Lits). He was a banker, president of the Philadelphia Bankers Trust Co., which crashed in 1930. His Bankers Securities Corp. underwrote Mr. Stern for \$1,250,000 in 1928 when he bought the *Record*. Politically he was the principal backer of the well known Vare brothers, and in 1928 he maneuvered the Pennsylvania Republican delegation around to Herbert Hoover. In his Philadelphia office he has an autographed picture of Hoover on the desk and an autographed picture of Roosevelt on the wall.

From the beginning, in New York, Mr. Stern gave the pessimists plenty of material. Ernest Gruening, the *Post's* first editor, was fired after two or three months when, the story goes, he wrote an editorial about Vincent Astor's tenement houses. Once the *Post* ran a two-column story about the enterprises of William Fox ("an influence for good"), with a long editorial on his patent difficulties entitled "David and Goliath." (William Fox at the time was a large stockholder in the *Post*.) A *Post* reporter quoted William Knud-

sen of General Motors as saying, "The idea that the employees of a corporation are in any sense partners in the business is just plain bunk." The next day General Motors canceled a \$3,000 advertising contract and Harry Saylor, editor of all the Stern papers, had to compose a synthetic front-page story to fix things up. Mr. Knudsen, said Mr. Saylor, "warmed the hearts with whom he came in contact."

Paul Tierney and Walter Lister, news editor and city editor on the old *Post*, were kept on by Mr. Stern because they had no political opinions. They were fine on crime stories, the "best cops-and-robbers editors in the country." But they didn't like the new editorial writers. Lister called the third floor "Moscow." Harry Nason, the managing editor, pretended that he couldn't understand the editorials. And when the Spanish war started, it developed that Paul Tierney was pro-Franco. He used to mislay George Seldes' dispatches from Spain. One story about religious services in loyalist Spain he mislaid for three editions. On Oct. 5, 1937, President Roosevelt gave his "Quarantine the Aggressors" speech in Chicago. Robert S. Allen sent in a signed dispatch saying, "He mentioned no names, but his targets could not be mistaken—Japan, Germany, Italy." Paul Tierney took a deep breath and added, "and Russia." On page 3 he printed pictures of Hitler, Mussolini, Hirohito, and Stalin. Nobody upstairs happened to notice. In the next few days so many astonished letters came in that Paul Tierney was almost, not quite, fired. (The *Record* carried the Allen dispatch as written, with only three pictures.) For the first three weeks after the start of the Franco rebellion in Spain the Stern papers ran editorials pointing out simply that loyalist Spain was not the twelfth Soviet republic, but a capitalist democracy like the United States. Thereupon the Catholic hierarchy in Philadelphia began to preach a crusade against the *Record*, and the *Record* ran an editorial called "Now the Spanish Regime Loses Its Head." Mr. Stern wrote a penitent letter to Cardinal Daugherty.

## MILK & HONEY TO GALL & WORMWOOD

For three years the *Post's* circulation went up. For one giddy moment in 1936 it had 390,000 readers. When the CIO was organized Mr. Stern asked John L. Lewis to make the *Post* its official daily. Mr. Lewis refused. It would have meant handing Mr. Stern the largest circulation in the world, without any guarantee that he wouldn't double-cross it. He was polite, however; there was no reason why the *Post* couldn't be the *unofficial* CIO daily. If Mr. Stern, in his travail in the last two months, had repeated

# Report to our Stockholders

THE MORNING NEWSPAPERS reported the other day that the supposedly solid *Scribner's* magazine has announced that it is compelled to suspend publication. Reasons given were insufficient capital and inability to face the customary summer slump.

Our purpose in bringing the story of *Scribner's* flop to your attention is to point out that NEW MASSES' revenue from advertising, etc., starts to fall with a bang just about the time the summer's first posies begin to wilt. To put the facts bluntly, NEW MASSES will not be able to carry through the summer, unless we can raise the \$9,132 still needed to cover our \$30,000 operating deficit.

*Scribner's* stockholders probably held a little conference around a mahogany table where they said, in effect, "no profits, okay, no magazine!" If there's anything remotely like a stockholder of NEW MASSES, you, the reader, are it. Your loyalty and your devotion constitute our gilt-edged security. Your warm-hearted and generous response to our financial drive has already yielded \$20,868! Help us wind up the "Save NEW MASSES" campaign by sending us your contribution now. Let us turn this page back to the editors for more of the kind of swell material you've been getting in the last few issues.

No NEW MASSES blurbs are necessary to convince you of the improved quality of NEW MASSES' contents. You read the magazine. You know. Newsstand sales and subscriptions are on the upgrade. New readers are conning NEW MASSES. Old readers who left us for a while are coming back. In short, NEW MASSES is going places. Our recent expose of "General Krivitsky," Robert Terrall's exciting series on metropolitan

newspapers, Richard Goodman's cables from European capitals, James Dugan on movies, Robert Forsythe's weekly page, Bill Gropper, and a host of current features make NEW MASSES an impelling instrument for progress.

All of this, however, is threatened if we are unable to secure the vitally needed minimum sum of \$30,000 which alone can enable us to continue publication for the year. You've helped us before. Help us again. We're not talking about large amounts. Anything you can spare will help, and help mightily. We're sure you'll enjoy your summer vacation all the more if you know NEW MASSES is out there in the front lines plugging for you and for progress.

We think this is a good time to announce that if we're successful in underwriting that \$9,132 anti-summer slump insurance policy (and we know we will be), this appeal will be the last of its kind. We're about to embark on a nationwide crusade for new readers. We're aiming at self-sufficiency, financially speaking. More details later.

Please save NEW MASSES from *Scribner's* fate. Put whatever you can spare into an envelope now, and help us get that \$9,132. Prevent a summer obituary notice on NEW MASSES publication.

NEW MASSES, 461 FOURTH AVE., N.Y.C.

Enclosed is my contribution toward the drive for \$30,000 which will guarantee another year of your fight against fascism.

Name . . . . .

Address . . . . .

. . . . .



his offer, Mr. Lewis would have thrown him out on his ear. Sometime in 1937 a management memo went to the *Post* copy desk, saying that from then on labor was to be treated with more "objectivity." On Dec. 2, 1937, there was an editorial on "The Right to Picket—and Its Abuse." "There are strikes," said the *Post*, "—and strikes." In 1934, *Post* editorials went like this: "A strongly organized labor movement is essential as a counter-check to strongly organized capital." In 1937: "Labor, for labor's own good, should call upon Congress for legislation to regulate unions." It was one of the most abrupt shifts in journalistic history. In less than two months the *Post* changed from a New Deal paper to a sort of New Deal paper. Mr. Stern once shouted during a negotiation with the Newspaper Guild, "Stop quoting my editorials at me!"

The only reporter writing labor news was Edward Levinson, who used to be publicity agent for Norman Thomas. When the *Post* was liberal, Levinson was liberal. Sam Grafton and I. F. Stone, the *Post's* editorial writers, had once written editorials about the way fascism uses attacks on Communism to camouflage attacks on the standard of living. Mr. Stern's personal position on Communists had always been: they are an insignificant group, why make a fuss about them? When he started making a fuss about them it was on the simple assumption that they were no longer an insignificant group. So he looked on with a kindly smile while Levinson used the *Post* to discover mysterious rank-and-file organizations carrying on gallant fights against the Communist leadership of certain unions (using the word Communist in the Dies committee sense). While Levinson was doing his best to split the Painters and the National Maritime Union, the *Post* was speaking out with editorial firmness about labor unity. Sometimes Mr. Stern says he is against Communists as a matter of principle. Other times he says his change of heart was pure opportunism—his middle-class readers demanded it. "Cost me plenty of circulation, too," he says.

Harry Saylor, who wrote most of the editorials on Russia (in Philadelphia there was a definite rule: one anti-Soviet editorial for every editorial on Spain), a year ago wrote what was probably his most successful to date: "Stalin Takes Off His Mask." The *Post's* circulation had been going up steadily for five years. Now it suddenly started to go down. To a large section of the *Post's* readership the person who was taking off his mask was J. David Stern.

MR. STERN RUNS CONTESTS

After he bought the *Post* in 1933, Mr. Stern bought an organization called Publishers Service, Inc., and immediately started running contests and giving away millions of Dickens novels, Van Gogh prints, Philharmonic records—for virtually nothing, just enough to make Publishers Service a profit of about \$20,000 a year. In 1937, editorials in the *Post* were holding William Randolph Hearst up to execration and Publishers Ser-

vice was selling contest ideas to Hearst papers when the *Post* was done with them, which is what is meant by being a practical liberal. After Stalin Took Off His Mask, Mr. Stern's backbiters said that all the *Post* had left was contest circulation. In his early days in New York he had sent a questionnaire to the 150,000 people who were enrolled in his contests, asking them why they read the *Post*. Thirty percent said for the editorials, about the same for the columnists, and only 5 percent for the news. Two months of Mr. Stern's fickle editorial policy were enough to blot out the first 30 percent. He must have uneasy moments now and then when he wonders what would become of him without Van Gogh and Leonard Lyons. As a kind of final expression of the *Post's* new point of view, the contest editor remarked recently: "Perhaps I am a poor student of human nature, but I know of no Socialist or Communist who would make better use of his money than the Rockefellers, the Morgans, Henry Ford, or Barbara Hutton."

WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN?

For all this some people blame the Newspaper Guild. Mr. Stern loved unions till he discovered that the guild, made up of his loyal employees, wanted higher wages and more security. He would give them a guild shop but, "Remember," he said, "it mustn't cost me any money." In negotiations he used all the arguments of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, from which he had belligerently withdrawn a few years before. Tommy Stern (J. David, 3rd), general manager of the *Record*, once said, "A newspaper's management is like a ship's captain; we have to throw men overboard when the going gets rough." (A ship's captain, of course, does not throw men overboard.) "I made the guild," said Mr. Stern in 1936, "and I can break it." In Camden he fought it openly. He telephoned Captain Patterson of the *Daily News* (who, he once said bitterly, had given the guild everything but love—in short, raised wages) and suggested a common anti-guild front; Patterson turned him down. Last year when the guild was organizing the *Post's* business departments, twenty people were fired, among them the guild organizers. The guild brought Mr. Stern up before the Labor Board. On his editorial page he has a number of little suggestions to make about the Wagner act.

Just before Mr. Stern came to New York he wrote an editorial about freedom of the press: "The sad truth is that many newspapers have not shown courage in serving sincerely and intelligently the new army of serious readers, because of wholly imaginary inhibitions. The average newspaper is twice as free as it ever dares to be." He is now persuaded that this interesting theory was a little unsophisticated. But he could never have believed it very strongly in the first place; he was a fearless, gallant publisher till somebody said boo.

No doubt advertisers have told Mr. Stern

that the *Post* is a God damn Communist paper. But his way of denouncing the Communists to prove he isn't a Communist has certainly not worked: the advertisers have stayed out of the *Post*. They call the *Daily News* a Communist paper too, and still they advertise in it. They are interested in circulation, and not much else. They would have a hard time resisting the *Daily Worker* itself if it had a million circulation. Advertisers are not treated badly in the *Post*. Above your ad for H-B Cough Drops, say, you may be surprised to find a learned article about the worthlessness of Vitamin A in cough drops (Vitamin A is present in the Smith Bros. product), and somewhere else on the page a straight news story telling why workers in the H-B factory don't have colds. Mr. Saylor has had surveys taken to show that readers of the *Post* are not so proletarian—that some of them, in fact, are rich. Still advertisers stay out. For one thing, they want to know how many readers they are buying and the *Post's* circulation has fluctuated like a roller-coaster. At the end of 1936, on the breezy assumption that prosperity had come at last, Mr. Stern raised his rates and recklessly guaranteed 300,000. (*Post* editorials were predicting that the WPA cuts would put the country back in the depression, but Mr. Stern didn't believe them.) The rates were finally cut last winter—after the Christmas rush instead of before. Jacob Omansky, business manager of all Stern's enterprises, died last November and Mr. Stern now goes out soliciting ads himself. He has become increasingly desperate, financially and editorially. Whenever he has heard about a prominent man out of work he has got on the telephone to ask him to become the *Post's* editor. (Mr. Saylor has been going to Philadelphia almost every day lately.) Mr. Stern has offered jobs to Claude Bowers and O. K. Bovard, formerly of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. He is responsible for the rumor that President Roosevelt isn't going to run for a third term, but is going to be editor of the *Post*.

MONEY, MONEY

Alexander Hamilton founded the *Post* in 1801 for \$10,000, which is about what it is losing now every ten days. Big-city publishing is big business. Mr. Stern put up a note for probably \$750,000 to get the *Post*, and he has been publishing it for five years on a shoestring. Whenever he needed money he borrowed from the *Record* or the *Courier-Post* or sold a piece of the paper to business men like Louis J. Kolb (Bond Bread) or Samuel Fels (soap) or Democratic politicians like George Earle, Sen. Joseph Guffey, and Matt McCloskey. In last year's primary the *Record* had to choose between Earle and McCloskey. It chose Earle. McCloskey yanked out \$200,000 last summer when the *Record* needed it most, and now his wing of the Democratic party reads the *Inquirer*. Moe Annenberg, who runs the *Inquirer*, hates Mr. Stern's guts: something about Philadelphia society—should Mr. Annenberg, who

conducted circulation wars in Chicago and makes his money from overcharging people for tips on horses, be admitted? The generous Mr. Annenberg has given away American flags, electric clocks, and bicycles; Mr. Stern has been forced to give away sets of Balzac and free accident insurance. The *Record*, as a result, is down from 325,000 to 270,000 and instead of making \$250,000 as it usually does, last year it lost about \$30,000, which means it had no profits to hand on to the *Post*. Last August Mr. Stern needed some ready cash. The *Record* borrowed \$1,000,000 from the Federal Reserve, putting up everything it had as collateral, and loaned the *Post* \$200,000. The *Post* borrowed \$1,800,000 more. But you can raise just so much on a shoe-string in a pawnshop, and no more. Here would be a test of how free a paper can be, for some of the people who supplied the money were pretty reactionary. And they didn't insist that Mr. Stern immediately attack Roosevelt, which, after all, the rest of the evening papers were already doing, but that he cut wages. So Mr. Stern cut wages.

#### SHARE-THE-LOSSES

He took the occasion to get rid of the entire financial page, which a while earlier had persisted in referring to the "sitdown strike of capital" when his editorials were saying, "Capital is only sitting down waiting for business." Then 10 percent of every salary over \$22.50 was kept back as a loan till the *Post* made money (which has happened only once or twice since 1801). "You would loan money to your grandmother," said Mr. Stern, "why not to your boss?" But out of the \$2,000,000 subscribed on the strength of the employees' loan only \$180,000 went for current expenses, about \$250,000 was not paid in at all, and the rest went to pay old debts, including Mr. McCloskey's \$200,000 and \$500,000 to Mr. Greenfield's Bankers Securities, which may or may not have been a dirty trick on the employees.

The paper was safe for another year—but after about seven months it was out of money again. Mr. Greenfield came up from Philadelphia (he has been coming up from Philadelphia quite a bit in the last year) and proposed to the six unions in the plant that they loan the *Post* another 15 percent. This loan would apply to everyone, even those getting less than \$22.50. "That would be the most democratic way," said Mr. Greenfield. He ended up with: "It's the last call for breakfast. We cannot find any other way of saving this grand institution." The unions told Mr. Greenfield to go back to Philadelphia. Mr. Stern said if they didn't get the money the *Post* would fold. The guild, at least, had heard that argument before. (Last August, when the other unions had unhappily accepted the 10 percent loan and the guild was still holding out, Mr. Stern had a box set up in the composing room announcing the suspension of the *Post*.) He then appealed to the unions' love of liberalism. Mr. Greenfield said they couldn't get the money from anyone who wasn't inter-

ested in the survival of the *Post* as a liberal paper. That was another old argument. In a New York elevator strike several years ago Mr. Stern asked the Building Service Employees not to strike the *Post* building, which would interfere with the publication of a liberal paper. Once he wanted trucks when all Philadelphia was tied up.

In 1934 Mr. Stern's employees would have loaned him the money cheerfully; last August they did it grudgingly; this time they didn't do it at all. If 250,000 people still thought the *Post* was a liberal paper, it was a delusion not shared by the staff. There was still some difference between the *World-Telegram* and the *Post*, but not enough to justify a 25 percent wage cut. The unions expressed themselves with such determination that Mr. Stern not only withdrew the 15 percent proposal, but after two or three weeks of griping, withdrew last August's 10 percent too.

#### MR. STERN KILLED COCK ROBIN

The employees of the *Post* don't blame the depression, or the advertisers, or, more generally, the interests for the sad financial state of the *Post*. They blame Mr. Stern. They depend on the *Post* for a living; they have a bigger interest in its survival than Mr. Stern, for if Mr. Stern is licked in New York he may be through as a big-time publisher, but the *Courier-Post* will go on making money, and the *Record* will be all right again when Moe Annenberg sobers up and stops giving away electric clocks.

Perhaps Mr. Stern ought to follow his employees' advice on how to run his business, since he has been asking them for the last year or so to help finance it. They wish he would stop being scared of his own shadow. If after the Hague series last year Hague put the screws on Bamberger's and Bamberger's put the screws on Macy's, Mr. Stern won't get Macy's back in the paper by laying off Hague. The appeasement policy doesn't work with department stores any more than with dictators.

A lot of people besides the *Post's* employees are dismayed to see Mr. Stern, more and more whole-heartedly, making common cause with the enemies of Roosevelt. If you oppose Roosevelt's foreign policy and look under the bed for Reds, you find yourself in curious, if prosperous, company. Once you get in the habit of denouncing Roosevelt it is hard to find a convenient place to stop. In the last few months the *Post's* isolationism has led it to adopt methods previously associated only with Hearst; it has printed letters taken at random from congressmen's mailbags, proving that the people back home want to leave Hitler alone. The congressmen whose mailbags it has had access to are staunchly anti-New Deal.

There has never been any secret about the fact that Mr. Greenfield is dead against the drainage system of the Stern papers, Camden and Philadelphia to New York. In the last few months the *Post* has found support in an unexpected place—department stores, who are scared it will fold and the other evening

papers will raise their rates. But ever since the *Post's* loyal workers were so recalcitrant in February, Mr. Stern has been looking for a buyer. Just now he seems to have found one—George Backer, son-in-law of the banking Schiffs, American Labor Party member of the City Council. Negotiations have been going on for months. At first Mr. Stern wanted Mr. Backer to put up the money and leave him in control, but evidently Mr. Backer insisted that Mr. Stern and Mr. Greenfield spend most of their time in Philadelphia. Mr. Stern has agreed, more or less ruefully. He has heard gossip that Moe Annenberg intends to turn Democratic, just the kind of dirty trick he has come to expect of Moe Annenberg. Also, he has naturally heard gossip about the new afternoon paper which begins publication in the fall; and though he knows no more about it than the next man, he has cause to fear that it may be a liberal paper, aimed at the *Post* and the *Telegram*. Mr. Backer is going to come in for a few headaches.

One fact, however, is clear: on the newsstands there is a hole between the *World-Telegram* and the *Daily Worker* that you could drive a Mack truck through. There were more than two million people in New York who voted for Roosevelt in 1936. There is money to be made from the New Deal. Mr. Roosevelt wrote Mr. Stern in 1933, "There is a great field there for the right kind of newspaper." If Mr. Stern and Mr. Backer decide that practical liberalism is uncompromising liberalism, they will make money.

ROBERT TERRALL.

## Yes and No

THERE seems to be the usual Nazi system of lies issuing from Bolivia, just as they have been issuing from Spain since the start of the fascist invasion. We offer:

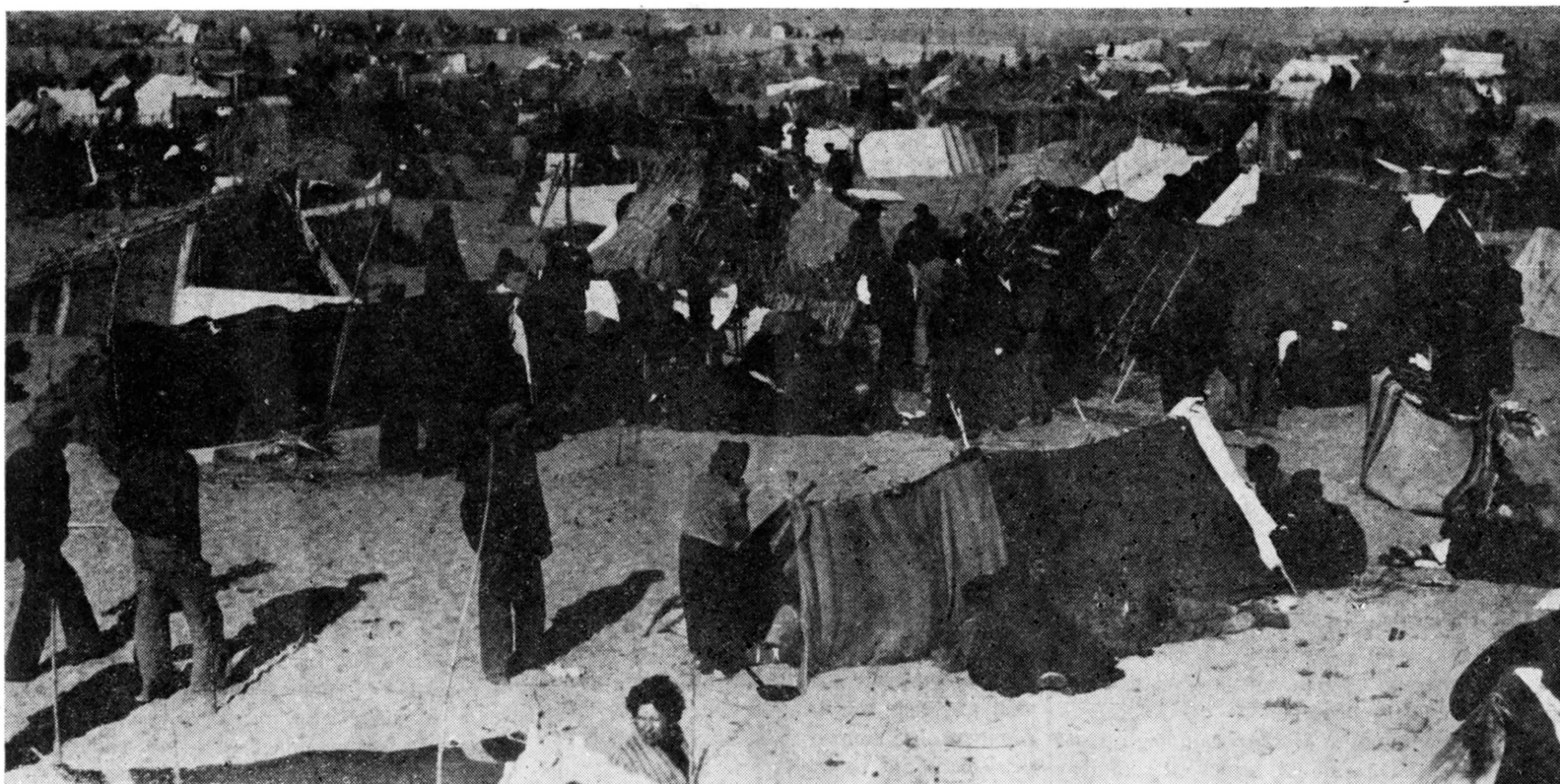
La Paz, April 25, 1939—The president of Bolivia, Senor Busch, announced to the representatives of the press that in order to accommodate the needs and development of the country, it had become necessary to substitute a totalitarian government for the parliamentary regime hitherto in force. [A dispatch from the *Deutsches Nachrichten Bureau* published in all the Franco newspapers.]

The following handout was issued from the Paris legation of the Bolivian government:

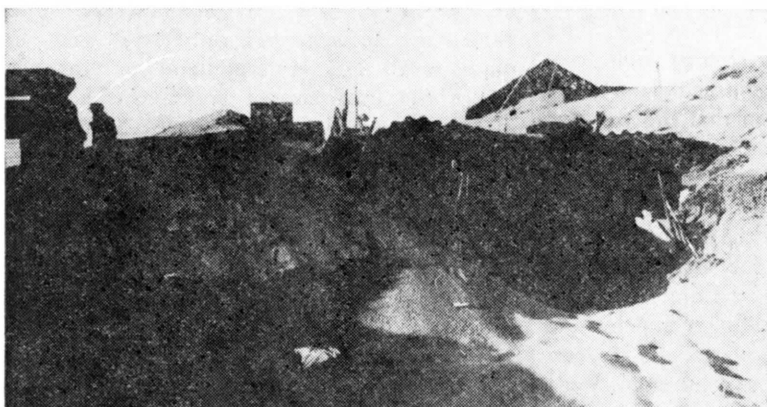
Following information received from its government, the Bolivian legation at Paris announces that, contrary to certain news published, the decision taken by the president of the Bolivian republic to dissolve parliament and assume full governing powers himself is an act without any hint of extremism and, particularly, without any semblance of totalitarianism.

The New York *Times* man in Buenos Aires wired on April 25:

The first totalitarian state of the Western Hemisphere was established in Bolivia today by the president, Lieut. Col. German Busch.



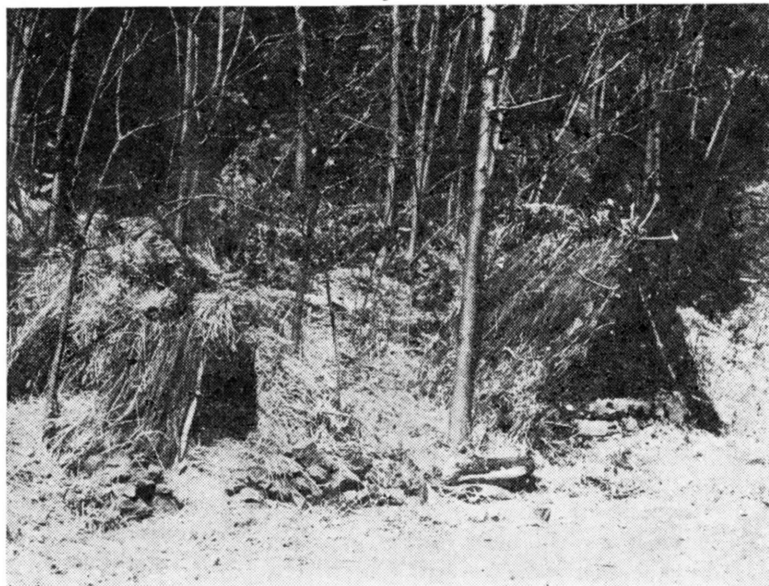
HOMELESS HEROES. A small section of the 400,000 refugees from Franco's slaughter. These humans, some wounded, many sick, have been living for months on the sands of Argeles Beach without the most elementary accessories of existence.



HOLE IN THE SAND. Like a homeless crab, this refugee burrows in the sand of Argeles Beach refugee camp.



THEIR ONLY HOPE. The truck of the Centrale Sanitaire Internationale which brings the refugees at Barcares food and clothing.



LIKE BEASTS. The refugees at Prats de Mollo build little burrows in the woods to keep from dying of exposure.

## Refugee Heroes

THE 400,000 people of Spain who are waging a fight against death by starvation or exposure in the concentration camps of southern France are being helped from the United States by the Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign of the Medical Bureau and North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy.

Under the honorary chairmanship of the Hon. Harold L. Ickes, the lives of these homeless men, women, and children are being saved and some are being emigrated to Latin America, where the Spanish-speaking countries are welcoming them. These photos are from a motion picture soon to be released by the committee.

These refugees, tempered in the blast furnace of fascism, are 400,000 living witnesses to the crimes of Franco. They are the most important refugees in the world.



# Are Taxes Preventing Recovery?

That's Wall Street's story and it's sticking to it. But here are the facts. Figure it out for yourself. What the big tax dodgers cost the nation.

**I**N RECENT months the country has been deluged with propaganda that oppressive taxes are destroying "business confidence" and retarding recovery. We are being told that the repeal or drastic modification of these taxes would automatically produce a spurt in production and profits and, far from reducing government revenue, would actually increase it. There are certain administration officials, notably Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau and Undersecretary John W. Hanes, who have been disposed to lend a receptive ear to the tax-reform pleas emanating from Wall Street.

Can we regain prosperity by the simple device of altering or repealing a few taxes to which the wealthy object?

Only a year ago a similar campaign was conducted, as a result of which the undistributed-profits tax and capital-gains tax were repealed in all but name. The prosperity that was to follow blew up in thin air. Disregarding minor movements during this period, conditions are as bad as they were before these taxes were reduced.

But the press is silent about the past. It faces the future, with more promises for prosperity if more tax concessions are made.

Let us consider the two major contentions of the advocates of this kind of tax reform: (1) Prosperity will return if tax concessions are made to business; (2) business and the wealthy are being taxed too heavily.

The wealthy argue that business refuses to expand in the face of high taxes. In expanding they must risk their investments—and should their judgment be correct, their profits would go only to the government. Business expansion, they say, is a one-way losing proposition.

Now what *are* the main factors impeding business expansion and recovery? Objectively, the main domestic factor impeding business recovery is the chronic narrowness of the market—the limited purchasing power of the American people. Existing purchasing power is being buoyed up by the New Deal's spending policy—for PWA, WPA, the farm program, unemployment insurance, old age assistance, etc. What business needs for recovery is more and better customers. The reduction of taxes on big business and the wealthy can only involve: (1) the shifting of their tax burden onto the people as a whole, through sales and consumer taxes, thus still further restricting the national purchasing power; and/or (2) the drastic curtailment of the social program of the New Deal, which will eliminate the WPA worker, the public works employee, etc., from the market as exercisers of effective demand. Either course, or a combination of both, would be destructive of chances for re-

covery and expansion, and would initiate a headlong plunge downward into acute crisis.

An additional factor impeding recovery is the sitdown strike of big business—the refusal of the railroads to buy new rails and other necessary equipment, the hand-to-mouth basis on which the steel and auto industries are producing, the refusal of the banks to extend credit to small business men, and so on. And it is perfectly true that one—just one—of the "demands" of the sitdown strike is the reduction of taxes on big business and the wealthy. The sitdown strike of capital is not *caused* by New Deal taxes—it is caused by the inordinate greed and reactionary outlook of the corporate overlords. Tax appeasement will prove as futile in curbing the aggressive sabotage of recovery as Chamberlain's appeasement did in curbing Hitler's aggression.

Are the wealthy being overtaxed? Most small taxpayers are impressed by the fact that the income-tax rates go up to 79 percent for all personal incomes over \$5,000,000. They imagine that the wealthy actually pay these high rates. Frequent news reports about tremendous taxes paid by movie actors on their salaries create the impression that the wealthy industrialist pays the same rate on his income.

True, the small taxpayer has to pay his income tax at the scheduled rate—and so does the movie star. But not the industrialist—he is different. He evades the "human being" taxes that the actor pays, by filing as a corporation, a trust, or a holding company—or as an incorporated stable or yacht. He can even file as two trusts—or two hundred. Very few men of wealth pay taxes on their entire incomes as individuals; they pay a personal income tax only on the money they need for living expenses, and minor items they cannot otherwise hide.

This tax evasion by the wealthy is no trifling matter. It runs up to more than \$1,300,000,000 a year, as President Roosevelt pointed out in his message to Congress in 1936.

## THE CORPORATION'S METHODS

Senator La Follette's explanation of the corporation's method is concise. He said:

There is today in our tax system great inequality. It arises from the fact that there is a great difference between the taxes paid upon corporate earnings by corporations and taxes paid by individuals in the individual income-tax brackets. It is decidedly to the interests of individual corporate stockholders in the high income-tax brackets not to receive their share of the annual corporate profits in their individual incomes. They prefer that the corporations pay a flat corporate tax, whether that rate be 15 or 18 percent, and retain the profits in the corporate treasury, rather than have the profits distributed to these individuals, where they would be compelled to pay an individual tax rate of from 50 percent

to 75 percent of the profits. [*Congressional Record*, page 8526, June 1, 1936.]

Under these circumstances, Messrs. Rockefeller, Ford, et al, naturally prefer to keep their profits in the numerous corporations they control. Why declare dividends which the government can tax, when the corporation can reinvest their profits for them?

When the corporations actually do declare dividends, these wealthy gentlemen protect themselves by setting up an intermediary corporation, trust, or holding company to receive their dividends for them. These intermediary "incorporated pocketbooks" invest for them, save for them, protect them from the income-tax collector—and often, as in the case of Judge Manton, serve to conceal business transactions which could not stand public scrutiny. Use of the personal holding company is widespread among the wealthy; a listing of the tax avoiders would comprise a *Who's Who* of American commerce and industry. Often these personal holding companies are incorporated on foreign soil, in places such as Newfoundland or Jamaica where the incorporated pocketbook is completely exempt from the United States corporation income tax.

Public memory still recalls the reciprocal—and false—losses on stock transactions established by Pierre du Pont and John J. Raskob, which enabled them to evade millions of dollars of taxes. It is not so generally known that this same device was used by hundreds of other large tax dodgers. For several years, under the Hoover administration, the Morgan partners were able to establish sufficient fictitious losses to show that they received absolutely no net taxable income. No wonder that J. P. Morgan could say, "If the government doesn't know enough to collect its taxes, a man is a fool to pay them."

The objection of the ruling families to the New Deal is that it *does* know how to collect its taxes. The secretary of the treasury, on June 17, 1937, referring to the types of tax evasion listed above, declared: "Practically all of these devices would look absurd if applied to persons of small incomes whose activities were necessarily restricted. They are important tax-dodging devices only for the very rich." And the taxes which big business wants repealed are those measures introduced to curb this wholesale tax evasion.

The clamor for tax revision is primarily directed at the last vestiges of the undistributed-profits tax and the capital-gains tax. The undistributed-profits tax was passed on the insistence of President Roosevelt in 1936. Its aim was to force corporations to distribute their profits to their stockholders, so that the government could then tax them in the ap-

propriate personal-income bracket. As originally designed by the President, 90 percent of the smaller corporations would have been exempted from the provisions of the bill.

After one year of operation, the Treasury Department announced that the wealthy were still evading payment of taxes on their personal incomes. Then followed the big-business assault on the tax in November 1937, as a result of which it was destroyed in all but name. Now the wealthy want it killed and buried, name and all. They want the last obstacle removed that blocks unlimited evasion of personal income taxes through use of the corporation and the corporate pocketbook.

Revision of the capital-gains tax is even less tenable. "Capital gains" is a euphemism for speculative profits—mainly stock market profits. Prior to the New Deal, profits on stocks held more than a year were taxed at the low rate of 12½ percent, and the wealthy were given the privilege of subtracting unlimited fictitious losses from real income—as Raskob and du Pont did.

The Roosevelt administration struck a blow at profiteering and tax evasion by substituting for the 12½ percent rate, a graduated tax ranging from 30 to 100 percent, and by strictly limiting the amount of capital loss that could be deducted from income. When the undistributed-profits tax was all but destroyed early in 1938, the capital-gains tax was also emasculated. The rate was reduced to a flat 15 percent on stocks held for at least eighteen months. Not only were the speculators given new opportunities to deduct capital losses from real income, but they were even able to carry over such losses from one year to reduce their income tax in the following year. Obviously, the complete removal of any restriction on the reduction of capital losses can only invite further du Pont-Raskob rigging of reciprocal losses. It can only encourage further evasion.

Despite the efforts of the New Deal in the direction of progressive taxation, the wealthy are wealthier today than ever before, but their wealth lies unused in the banks, as

sterile as the famous Fort Knox gold. An extension of progressive taxation to put this wealth to work can only prove beneficial to recovery.

It is important to keep in mind that the campaign to evade and shift taxes is not confined to a frontal attack on the undistributed-profits and capital-gains taxes. There are more devious approaches aimed at reaching the same results.

Every reduction in WPA, for instance, involves an increase in local relief expenditures—an increase which reactionary state governments are attempting to finance through sales taxes and other levies on consumption. The enthusiasm of the Tories for turning various aspects of the New Deal's social program over to the states is chiefly based on the fact that the states find it much more difficult than the federal government to finance such programs through progressive taxation. New York, for instance, is the wealthiest state in the Union—and New York City has an outstandingly progressive administration. Yet only 25 percent of the combined city and state taxes of New York are derived from taxation on the basis of ability to pay, whereas almost 50 percent of federal revenue is raised on this basis.

Senator Vandenberg's "incentive taxation" is another example of the indirect approach. Vandenberg is proposing to tax at a lower rate those corporate profits which are plowed back into the business. Obviously, the first effect of this would be to give positive encouragement to evasion of personal income taxes through refusal to pay out corporation profits. But such a tax would also give an important advantage to the large corporation with immense reserves for reinvestment; it would tax such a corporation at a lower rate than a small corporation, while the latter would be confronted with the credit monopoly of Wall Street and would not be able to obtain money for expansion. Vandenberg's tax proposal would provide an incentive not only for tax evasion, but also for the consolidation of monopoly and the squeezing out of small business.

There must not be a taxation Munich. Tax appeasement would have results reaching far beyond the immediate undermining of purchasing power and a narrowing of the American market. It would inevitably result in heavier levies on the consumer, the small home owner, the small business man, the professional, the farmer.

The road to recovery lies not through the appeasement of big business, but through such measures as the nationalization of banking and credit in order to break the stranglehold of Wall Street on the small business man and the farmer; the nationalization of the railroads, which would not only benefit the farmer who is victimized by high freight rates, but also provide a stimulus to heavy industry through the needed replacement of wornout equipment; and the launching of a large-scale housing program, providing a similar stimulus to heavy industry.

DAVID RICHARDS.



"Unbearable!"

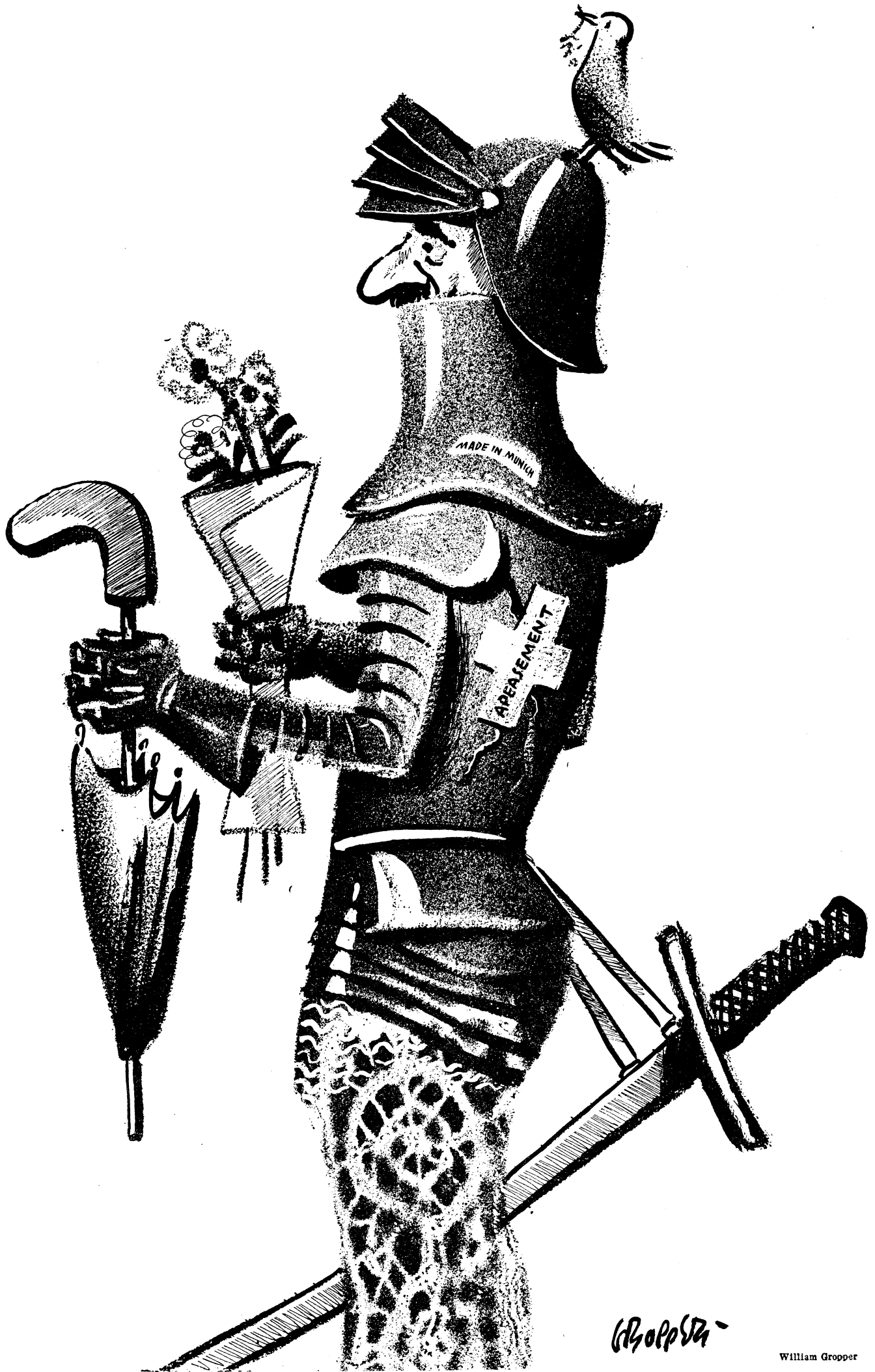
Ad Reinhardt



REINHARDT

*"Unbearable!"*

Ad Reinhardt



# Where Is Britain Going?

“War or Peace,” Allen Hutt says, “is a problem of British internal politics.” Will Chamberlain be displaced by a popular lineup?

London.

**A**N ITALIAN fascist newspaper, the Turin *Gazzetta del Popolo*, recently let slip a profoundly true remark: “At bottom the question of war or peace is a problem of British internal politics.” Or, we might add, the future of democracy and civilization, at least in Europe, is a problem of British internal politics. And what is that problem? Simply whether the sinister Chamberlain government—a pre-fascist regime, as it has been aptly labeled—is to continue or whether it is to be replaced by a progressive democratic government of the people, pledged to collective peace action side by side with the other great democracies against the fascist aggressors. Under British conditions such a progressive government can only be realized by some sort of People’s Front led by the powerful Labor Party, based on the nearly five million organized workers grouped in the Trades Union Congress, and constituting the largest and most solid opposition bloc in the country.

Will the British Labor Party step forward as the leader of a People’s Front to oust Chamberlain? That is the key question of politics for us in Britain today; and it has been brought spectacularly to the front since the turn of the year through the campaign waged by Sir Stafford Cripps.

## CRIPPS’ RECORD

Cripps is an aristocrat of the law, one of the half-dozen most eminent and wealthy barristers in the country. He was solicitor general in the Labor government of 1929, and has been for a number of years a prominent figure in the Labor Party and one of their outstanding parliamentarians. Unlike most eminent lawyers who come to the fore in labor movements, Cripps bears no trace of careerism. He is a keen, modest fellow of fifty, widely respected for his selfless devotion to the socialist cause, and for long a tireless protagonist within the Labor Party of working-class unity (bringing the Communists in) and of a more militant policy. His stand for unity and a change from the standpat apathy of the party Executive secured his election to that body, as a representative of the constituency parties, when Executive representation was first granted to them at the party conference in Bournemouth in October 1937.

The shock of the Nazi rape of Austria in March of last year aroused a wide demand throughout the labor movement for united action of all working-class and democratic forces against the pro-Hitler Chamberlain government. That demand reached its high point in the campaign of *Reynolds News*, the Cooperative Sunday newspaper, for what was called a United Peace Alliance of Labor,

Communists, Liberals, and any other democratic forces that could be drawn in. Reflected in the Labor Party, this demand was exacerbated by the fact that the date of the party conference had been changed from the traditional October to early June, and the next conference fixed for June 1939, a decision which the party Executive doggedly adhered to despite a general understanding that the conference date would be advanced if circumstances warranted.

The high command of the Labor Party contrived, even in face of the tremendous events of 1938, to clamp down on the normal constitutional expression of rank-and-file opinion in open conference. But the issue of four successive official statements during the year testified to their uneasiness over the pertinacity of this specter of united action.

Within a few days of the publication of the second statement the fruits of Munich were seen in the launching of Franco’s final grand offensive against Catalonia. The Executive’s bourbon attitude was becoming more and more out of touch with reality. When Vernon Bartlett, ace foreign affairs commentator and pillar of the *Liberal News-Chronicle*, put up as an Independent Progressive in the sleepy rural constituency of Bridgwater, routing the government candidate in the most sensational by-election contest in a generation, no less than thirty-nine Labor MP’s collectively supported him and received only a mild reproof from the party authorities.

Clearly the situation was ripe for a sharpening of the whole discussion. And so early in January of this year Sir Stafford Cripps presented a considered memorandum to his colleagues on the Labor Party Executive. This was a lengthy document analyzing the situation at home and abroad, stressing its “extreme urgency and desperately critical nature,” and urging the Labor Party “to come out boldly as the leader of a combined opposition to the National government,” whose continuance in office would be “fatal to democracy and to any prospects for a Socialist Party for another generation.”

Cripps noted that “a great volume of anti-government feeling has grown up all over the country, even in the least expected quarters.” He warned that nevertheless “the strength of the Labor Party has not increased in anything like the same proportion as the intensity of anti-government feeling” and that this “indeterminate opposition is liable to be swung over to support of the government by some international event . . . or by an appeal to national unity if the crisis deepens.”

Remarking that the Spain, China, and similar campaigns had brought into being “a

very large body of agitation for some form of combined opposition,” Cripps introduced an electoral calculation which he did not claim to be more than an approximation but which is of the first significance. Even if, he said, Labor and Liberals hold all their present seats and win every seat now held by the government against either party, with a majority of three thousand or less, they will have only 266 seats, well below a majority of the House of Commons. But assuming that Labor, Liberals, Communists, and other opposition forces concentrate on single candidates in those constituencies now held by the government because the opposition vote is split, then a total of 331 seats, providing a clear working majority, is possible.

## TWELVE-POINT PROGRAM

Throughout, Cripps stressed the need to strengthen the Labor Party, to make clear its fundamental adhesion to Socialism as the only final solution of all our problems, and to have the Labor Party take the initiative in rallying all opposition forces round a program which it should propose. Accordingly Cripps outlined a twelve-point program for “a progressive government with wide popular support, led by the Labor Party.” His program was such that outside political observers did not cavil at his claim that a purely Labor government would hardly accomplish so much in a single term of office. It may be presented to the American reader in the simplified six-point version which was issued later:

We ask for a government that will:

1. Defend democracy, protect our democratic rights and liberties against attack at home and from abroad.
2. Plan for plenty, multiply the wealth of the nation by employing the unemployed on useful work; increase old age pensions, ensure a higher standard of life, education, and leisure for old and young.
3. Secure our Britain, organize a peace alliance with France and Russia that will rally the support of the United States and every other peace-loving nation, and end the shameful policy which makes us accomplices in the betrayal of the Spanish and Chinese people to fascist aggression.
4. Protect the people’s interest, control armaments and the vital industries, agriculture, transport, mining, and finance.
5. Defend the people, provide effective protection for the common people against air attack and starvation in the event of war.
6. Build for peace and justice, end the exploitation of subject races and lay the foundations of a lasting peace through equality of opportunity for all nations.

However, the Executive rejected the Cripps memorandum by seventeen votes to three (Ellen Wilkinson, MP, and lawyer D.

N. Pritt, MP, voting with Cripps). Its author thereupon sought to plead his case before the rank and file by circulating the memorandum to all local party organizations. The volume of support he immediately received by letter and wire suggested that his views were widely endorsed. But on the Executive there was fury and alarm. A subcommittee was given the task of drawing up a report which was in effect a formal indictment of Cripps; and at the Executive meeting on January 25, this was presented.

The Executive peremptorily demanded that Cripps "reaffirm his allegiance to the Labor Party" in terms of its constitution, program, principles, and so forth, and that he withdraw his memorandum, on pain of expulsion. Cripps stood to his guns and was accordingly cast out. Newspaper offices got the flash on the tape "Labor Executive Expels Sir S. Cripps" almost simultaneously with another flash—"Moors Enter Barcelona Suburbs."

Since the time of the expulsion certain things about the setup have been very plain. Cripps has not ceased, in propagating his views at the most remarkable series of mass meetings seen in this country for years, to urge the need for strengthening the Labor Party. He always appeals publicly for recruits to the party, getting hundreds at every one of his major meetings. At Glasgow, for instance, he brought in 770 new members for the party, whereas a previous official recruiting meeting secured only 245. Yet the party high command has circularized all its organizations "warning" them to be wary of these recruits; and at the same time the most shameless distortions of Cripps' position have been broadcast by the official *Daily Herald* to its two million readership.

#### TORY UNION BOSSES

Behind the party Executive stood the reactionary union bosses, notably Ernest Bevin of the Transport Workers and John Marchbank of the Railwaymen. They were said to have threatened withdrawal of their unions from the Labor Party unless Cripps was firmly dealt with. Marchbank proclaimed that "we must preserve our political organization from the creeping paralysis that would result from its inoculation with the Cripps germ of defeatism."

Live opinion both inside and outside the party holds that "creeping paralysis" and "defeatism" are words more accurately applied to the policy of the party high command, a policy which, under cover of keeping its socialism unsullied, always manages to fail in its opposition to Premier Chamberlain at the most critical moments. When Chamberlain is caught out and in a jam, the Labor Party leaders can be relied on to pay a visit to the Cabinet office, hear an "explanation" from the Old Man of Munich, and decide to do nothing, during which time the rising anti-Chamberlain wave recedes. This happened in March 1938 (crisis over invasion of Austria) and it has happened again in March 1939 (crisis over invasion of Czechoslovakia).

So it seems that, while the Executive nails to the mast its banner emblazoned with the slogan "Socialism or Surrender," the real truth is that this "socialism" in-the-sky-when-you-die means surrender right now. "Many younger party members," writes prominent Labor intellectual R. H. S. Crossman, a young Oxford don and parliamentary candidate, "suspect that the Executive's 'pure socialism' means not the determination to achieve power, but the determination to wait until the millennium arrives according to pre-war rules," which "looks to us like suicidal mania in the present international crisis." And, on the contrary, as the Communist Party has pointed out, the Cripps proposals "are in no way an abandonment of socialism but, in the conditions of the moment, are the immediate stage in the advance to any future conquest of power and the establishment of socialism."

Meantime, while Cripps has developed his campaign around a National Petition to the Labor, Liberal, and Cooperative Parties, embodying the six-point program reproduced above, it becomes clear that the issue in the Labor Party now transcends, in a sense, the question of the People's Front. The feeling aroused by the expulsion of Cripps, representing the desire of the party Executive to stifle

all discussion of the People's Front, extends far beyond the ranks of the People's Fronters.

Thus, while 242 local Labor parties had by the middle of March gone on record in favor of the Cripps memorandum, a further eighty-seven had protested the expulsion, many of them at the same time avowing their neutrality toward, or even opposition to the People's Front policy. Of 120 chairmen and secretaries of local Labor parties who were asked to sign a letter of protest against Cripps' expulsion, no fewer than sixty-eight replied in the affirmative. On the agenda for the party conference, meeting in Southport in June, there are twenty-five resolutions on the People's Front, of which six support the Executive. On the Cripps expulsion there are twenty resolutions; two support the Executive.

Much depends on what happens between now and June; but the miners, with their massive block vote, are in favor of the conference's hearing Cripps, and the division is likely to be very close, with a chance of a tip in the direction of Cripps' reinstatement. That in itself will be a signal defeat for the party Executive's bourbons and will clear the ground for further urgent propaganda of the People's Front policy within the Labor Party.

ALLEN HUTT.



## The Goebbels Touch

ABOVE is a photo of the front page of an "office copy" of the struck Chicago *American*, Hearst scab sheet, showing the new order, "Office Copies. Not to be sold or criticized." On Chicago's *American* and *Herald & Examiner* it's "Heil Hearst" till the strike is over.

According to Media Records, Inc., im-

partial advertisers' service, the two struck Chicago Hearst papers have lost 2,826,798 agate lines since the strike began. Stretched end to end they would extend 89,229 miles, or \$1,130,719 in revenue loss. The strike could have been averted by Hearst for a few hundred dollars. This is what is known as "good business."



# Dealing in Major Catastrophes

San Joaquin Valley hasn't enough troubles. Now the grasshoppers go on a rampage. Billions strong, eating up the countryside—and the laborer's wages.

**D**OWN here in the San Joaquin Valley it is very quiet. But something big and terrible is happening in the quiet. Something big and terrible is always happening: the lives of the migratory workers—malnutrition, starvation, unemployment, low wages, tough looking men standing around watching for union organizers, sickness, no-shoes-no-school, living from place to place. This is just one of the big valleys on the West Coast; they're all the same, Imperial Valley is worse. But something new now, added. As I was walking through the peaceful little park surrounding the County Courthouse in Fresno, I heard about it in another way than I was thinking. A young American boy was sitting on a bench. A Filipino crossed the lawn and sat down by him.

"What you say, kid?" he asked in his best imitation of our speech.

"Not much. I'm just thinkin'."

"Thinkin'?"

"Yeah. I don't know what the hell I'm thinkin' about." I walked slowly and listened. The Filipino listened. "I'm settin' here on my can waitin' for a major catastrophe." He pronounced the last words in quotes. "That's my trade nowadays, boy. *Major catastrophes*. Forest fires, earthquakes, floods. Only get a job when one of 'em happens. I'm settin' on my can again, waitin' for the grasshoppers to get goin'. I hope they eat up the whole goddamn country. I'm gettin' tough, boy, dealin' in major catastrophes. I'll get me a few squares and I'm on the bum again till somepen happens."

## GRASSHOPPER HUNGER MARCH

The insect invasion is in the back pages now, like an old murder, but the victim is still dead, the grasshoppers are still marching. And next fall workers will be talking about them when they're hungry. It was Saturday afternoon. The courthouse was deserted except for the scrubwomen and the state entomologists in the agriculture office. They were exhausted and sleepy, but we were going to drive seventy miles into the Coalinga district, scene of the worst infestation.

Past the green meadows with the great White Valley oaks and the Balm of Gilead poplars, we came into the desert—a low, dry floor covered with brown grass and loco weeds. The pavement showed black with the squashed remains of the 'hoppers. The car skidded. Fields of new cotton, barley near harvest, and flax in blue flower. Grain on small, dry-land farms is half as tall as that on the big irrigated places. The fields are like islands in the wild lands. Grasshoppers kept crossing the road, going into the grass, toward the fields. The battle of the farmers

grows more serious. Grasshoppers breed but once a year; they live a long time if there's sun and food. They are on a hunger march.

Poison bran is the most effective weapon against them, but the bran is running out, and it will be days before more comes from the Midwest. We stopped many times and walked in the grass, through the fields. At four o'clock the morning before I had watched a plane dusting poison over this area. Poison has to be broadcast before the temperature reaches 80 degrees. A few of the 'hoppers were dead or sick. Not many. It takes about five days to see results. Live ones were thick, crawling, hopping. It was like the earth moving underfoot as far as you could see in the short grass. They jumped up and covered our clothes.

## THE WORKERS' COURAGE

On a big farm of thousands of acres, men were mixing poison bran. The crop owner was down from Berkeley in new overalls and leather jacket, city complexion. Two Rockefeller-Standard Oil men came into the fields with us. They were all asking if the state planned to send out free airplanes for broadcasting poison.

"You could do that on our taxes alone," one of the oil men said. A carload of Filipinos drove up and said they had come from Sacramento to see the housewives fighting the 'hoppers off with brooms while their husbands worked! The workers mixing the poison bran smiled at me and winked. "If we ain't too dad-blamed tired, we'll study up somepen better'n that tonight," one of them whispered. This in no way means that they are unmindful of the serious consequences of crop destruction, directly affecting their families, already living on the thin margin of existence. That humor is part of their courage, which might otherwise be justified complaint. It is part of that mighty spirit of working people everywhere in the world, extending themselves out of the poverty of their lives.

I rode back to the house with the Big Farmer.

"This is pretty serious," he said. "Something like this has great social significance. If it isn't stopped soon, it means hardship on thousands of migratory workers. Barley and flax harvests, and cotton chopping soon, and next fall picking. The company next to me uses thousands of workers. I keep as many of the best people as I can the year round. We've never driven them off the way a lot of them do. This is the least we can do."

## "THESE FOREIGNERS"

When I talked to the workers I had noticed their state accents. "Have any trouble with the Oklahomans?" I asked.

He smiled. "That depends on how you treat them. They're independent. Most of them are fine people. Naturally some aren't." A young county entomologist, ten years out of Oklahoma, had just been smugly telling how he hated the Oklahomans, all drunkards, fighters, thieves; in fact, how he hated the Fresno Indians (Armenians), the Googoes (Filipinos), the Negroes, the Mexicans, the Rag-Heads (Hindus), the Eye-talians, Japs, Chinks.

"Do you like Hitler?" I asked him.

"No, I hate him too."

"You'd better think where we Americans came from or some local Hitler will sneak up on you."

"Well," he said, "I'd help in a purge of these foreigners out here."

"I think I'll walk over to the camp, if you don't mind," I told the farmer.

"Go right ahead, but if you've never been in one before, don't expect too much." I've been in so many I don't expect anything unless it's a government camp. You can tell the difference miles away. A quarter of a mile down the road the workers were living in a small group of corrugated iron shacks. Children were teeter-tottering on old tree stumps uprooted in the yard. Seven or eight women came out to "visit."

"These old tin houses are gettin' so hot we can't hardly stand 'em," a woman said. Grasshoppers were thick in the yard. "Now it's these pesky things." She shook them off her dress. "Eat up everything in sight. Hungrier'n we are." She laughed at her joke.

"That's goin' some," another woman said dryly.

"This is a worryin' time, I'll tell you. You think these folks from the state can stop 'em? What next, I wonder?" I remembered being in the fields last spring when the floods came. I asked them how they liked this place.

"Not fit to live in, but anything's better'n movin' all the time. We just about manage to eat and sleep. Sometimes I say to husband, what in the world we livin' for any more? Can't look ahead, that's sure as death."

"Look at these blamed 'hoppers!" another woman said. "It's scary. I been wakin' up in the night imaginin' they could eat us all up if they took a mind to."

## CHANGING THEIR TUNE

As if natural problems of fighting this strange menace were not enough, diversity of interests delays work whose effectiveness depends upon quick action. Standard Oil owns the land. It is leased to big farmers, big cattle and sheep men, and rented to small farmers. Standard Oil gave the state permission to dust the wild lands, but the cattle and sheep

men withheld theirs, fearing the poison. If machine dusting is used there is little or no danger to animals and birds, but many farmers are using their men to scatter by hand. Big farmers are worried about their crops but are reluctant to cooperate with the state in dusting the surrounding grass land. Obviously one without the other is useless. There is a shortage of men; workers are in other parts thinning fruit, harvesting vegetables. Associated Farmers, Inc., is calling for men from the CCC and WPA, agencies it has persistently fought to destroy. How feeble these men's concern for state economy when they need help! A few thousand hungry men more or less—well, you can't afford to be sentimental. A few thousand acres, dollars, in danger—that's a horse of another color! Some place in all this cross-firing, the small farmer is desperately worried about his crop. I walked with one of them into his barley. The edge was frayed clean, and far into the field every stem held as many insects as could crowd on its surface.

"You might say, now, my crop is a goner," he said. "Already stunted from lack of rain this year, but I was hopin' to get a little harvest, maybe enough to pay off the loan on it. I'll do well now to pay my rent to the big fellows—" he waved toward the Kettleman Hills, thick with oil derricks. "They say there's oil under this whole valley, so this small farmin' is a kinda fly-by-night affair. They say every well sunk costs around a hundred thousand dollars. Look at 'em! No place in the world for the little man any more. No difference much between us and these poor workers movin' through every crop." We spoke for a while about this, then he said: "Just to show you now, I'm willin' to pay \$1 a hundred for cotton picking, one year I coulda paid \$1.10 and still made a profit. A man can't live on less, and you get real work when you pay fair. But what happens? They're bigger'n we are. They say pay 75 cents. What can you do?"

#### A MAJOR CATASTROPHE

It is quiet out here in the fields save for the small, ominous sound of millions of grasshoppers chewing. It is hard to believe that something is happening on the still landscape which may ruin many small farmers, bite into the big company- and bank-owned farms, creating added suffering for thousands of migratory workers. It is hard to believe because everything looks the same. But you can't put your foot down in a space clear of 'hoppers. I stood still and watched them: they are young, no more than an inch long, and their wings are showing. They are not the intensely migratory type, they are sluggish flyers whose weak wings seldom carry them into the air currents. This much is good. Neither do they move instinctively in one direction, unwilling to turn aside at any obstacle—a point that worried farmers and towns in the line of march. They crawl steadily along, hopping some, and their big expressionless heads give them a purposeless look; but their saw-toothed

## Chorus

### Invitation to Bitterness

(From a new opera, "No for an Answer")

Rise. Rise.  
 We who dream in anger  
 We the unrewarded  
 We who have been silent  
 Rise. Speak. Speak out.  
 Show the wounds discolored.  
 Name humiliation.  
 Call the invitation  
 To mute mouth and slack look  
 And mild broken whimper  
 And easy despairing:  
 All out, invite to bitterness.

Armed so with bitterness  
 Armed with hate and our great need  
 Armed then: act: together.

Clear the way.  
 Make the mind be fire.  
 Make the heart be stone.

MARC BLITZSTEIN.

legs moving over the miles an inch at a time, on a wide front, seventy-five miles deep, make you fearful of their instinctive determination. They move onto a crop and leave destruction. They march into a town, and all the giants above them, the machines roaring over them, cannot stop them. They are billions strong. They eat the lawns into the earth, the flowers and the vegetable gardens, and they move to other crops, to other towns—unless they are destroyed soon. If the farmers cannot handle the work themselves, the state plans to use CCC boys, WPA workers to fight the 'hopper invasion. The sheriff just told me he intends to take the prisoners out of jail. The next weeks will show whether or not this is a major catastrophe—now, and in all its subsequent hardships for the small farmers and the migratory workers dependent on this lap of their journey to get them through the workless months. If the young man sits in the park long enough to get vaggged, he'll again be pursuing his depression job.

SANORA BABB.

## USSR Movie News

WHILE American movie exhibitors are experiencing a shortage of films, production of all types of pictures is increasing by 50 percent in the USSR. In 1937 thirty feature films were produced; in 1938, forty-one films; and 1939 will have sixty-one. Fifty-six short films will be produced and time in production has been considerably cut. Six defense films will be produced, three on the Stakhanov movement, and collective farm life will be the

subject of two features. Socialist reconstruction and the friendship of peoples will be shown in ten pictures. Historical literary and biographical sources will be found in *Lenin in 1918*, *Stepan Razin*, *Kirov*, *Frunze*, and the eagerly awaited third part of the Gorky autobiography, *My Universities*. Six films treating anti-Soviet espionage and wrecking activity will include the second part of *The Great Citizen*. A number of comedies, the most planned thus far in Soviet studios, include one called *The Boy at Home Everywhere*. Seventeen scenarios are in preparation already for 1940 and the judges of a vast all-Union scenario contest will shortly pick many more possibilities. The moving picture quota of the Third Five-Year Plan calls for the production of eighty standard films in 1940.

## Seamen on Strike

Higher wages, preferential hiring demanded.

LAST week Socony books showed \$40,000,000 on the profit side of the ledger in 1938. Rockefeller had a good year, thank you. But that's more than can be said for the seamen hired by his oil companies. Their wages averaged \$72 a month. They got around to ask for a bit more; they also asked for job security—preferential hiring. For six weeks the National Maritime Union negotiated with the representatives of Standard Oil of New Jersey and of New York, Tidewater Associated Oil, and the C. D. Mallory Shipping Co. The union had to call a strike to protect their membership.

The companies took down all the old familiar paraphernalia. They brought on finks and tear gas. They slugged; they rounded up ex-convicts to scab. They subverted police forces in several ports.

Standard Oil tankers (built, incidentally, in German and Italian shipyards because fascist-Nazi labor comes cheaper) are taking on unqualified and uncertified finks in defiance of navigation laws. More than half their fleet sail under foreign flags and employ foreign seamen because the wage standards are lower. As a matter of fact the heroic seamen who went out on a stormy night to rescue the survivors of the airplane *Cavalier* last January—the men of the *SS Esso Baytown*—are now charged with misconduct by the company, which is attempting to withdraw their certificates and bar them from the sea. The seamen have listed as unfair the following companies: Tidewater Associated Oil; Veedol and Tydol; Standard Oil of New York and of New Jersey; the C. D. Mallory Shipping Corp.; the Standard Vacuum Transportation Co.; Mobilgas, and all carriers of Standard Oil and Gas.

It seems to NEW MASSES that every fair-minded American should lend the seamen a hand—just as the boys on the *SS Esso Baytown* lent a hand to the aircraft passengers drifting at sea.



# Forsythe

## Forsythe to Broun to Chance

**D**EAR HEYWOOD BROUN: From being at one time an assistant on a magazine, I have discovered that no editor likes criticism and no editor ever takes advice unless it comes down from upstairs marked "must." So there is little likelihood that you will care for what I have to say about *Broun's Nutmeg*, particularly when what I have to say is that it isn't much good. Don't run off in a huff, now, till you hear me out, because I have some flattering things to say later on and perhaps have a solution for your problems.

The trouble with that magazine when it started as the *Connecticut Nutmeg* was that it was obviously something thought up on a rainy afternoon. The scene is quite plain to me: you were cooped up in the house like Sadie Thompson; the talk, which had never been much good to begin with, petered out completely; you were tired of playing cards. At this moment a gentleman who had been resting with his head on the sofa and his feet plumped up against your best wallpaper slowly lowered himself and said reflectively, as if he had just come upon something Einstein had overlooked: "I'll tell you what let's do; let's start a sort of paper."

Upon saying this, he looked triumphantly around from face to face, elated as he saw them lighting up, and the room was soon filled with the sound of men slapping the fat part of their breeches with an open and enthusiastic hand and cries of: "By jove!" "By jiminy!" and "Hear! Hear!"

Since I am an old sectarian, the venture had from the start a pathetic quality which saddened me. It was something that should have been happening in 1922, and if not happening then, should have been forgotten forever. It brought excited little gasps from people who were nostalgic for the past, and even caused some talk in the columns and among the literati who make cafe society so noisy in New York, but it had the marks of death on it from its inception. The little pieces that began appearing in its pages were quaint and amusing and thoroughly second rate. Quentin Reynolds did a few serious ones for you which were excellent and some of yours were not bad, but, if you will pardon a curious old Americanism I have just picked up, you were all too "God damned" whimsical for any use.

As if that were not enough, you also had Stanley High and, as if that were not enough, you continue to have Stanley High after you have taken over the paper yourself. Also, I'm afraid that you continue to have the whimsicality. This is based, I am sure, on the theory that you can catch more flies with molasses

than with vinegar, the silliest proverb ever invented. You can't do any such damned thing and you will find it out as you go along. It belongs with the equally stupid old saw that the only way to get anything out of the British lion was to feed him sugar, when every line of history proved that the lion would only listen to reason when his teeth were well kicked out.

In short, while your handling of the *Nutmeg* would be an improvement if you merely threw out most of the old contributors, it is far from being what it should be under your management and I think I know the reason. You will have kindly friends telling you that what you need is an editor, but that is nonsense. The last thing in the world you need is an editor and the other thing which you emphatically don't need is writers. What I mean is that you must eventually write the entire number yourself if it is going to be any good. When you once get that fixed in your mind, you will find that the other annoyances disappear naturally. It is your misbegotten attempt to have an "all-around" old liberal journal that is throwing you. Because there are other ladies and gentlemen writing in your pages in a genteel and amusing (amusing to whom, my God!) manner, you feel that you must cover their shame by pretending that what they are doing is exactly what you would do too, if you were in their shoes. That is a perfect attitude for a host but nothing else.

The only article of yours I've heard commented upon lately is the one called "Ham and Hitler," in which you removed Mr. Fish's hide in little patches. When you write like that you get readers; when you write as Peter Neale the sports columnist, you get yawns and should get hunks of brick. When you feature "Another Broadway Column," you merely add another atrocity to the list for which America will have to pay if the Nazis get us on the hip. Naturally, you are not superman enough to write the whole paper now along with your daily column but I want to knock this nonsense of the all-around journal out of your head before you get thinking that perhaps it is what you want. It isn't what you want because it isn't what your readers want. They want the serious and indignant Broun, which is not to say that they want a dull and pompous Broun, something you couldn't be. Did you ever realize that you were most amusing and most effective when you are steamed up? Did you ever read Bernard Shaw when he was a pamphleteer? He was the most vitriolic and insulting and devastatingly hilarious writer in the world when he was in that mood. When it

is realized that Shaw, almost single-handed, tore away the foundations of Victorianism, and did it with not a solitary kind word and not a drop of treacle, the full import of the molasses theory becomes apparent. As things stand now, you have a group of readers who belong to the old *Nutmeg* and will love you as long as you continue being a buffoon. My information about your new readers is meager but I'm certain you will make no appreciable dent among them with your present policy. People don't object to being amused but they want more than a continuation of the old *Bingville Bugle* policy.

I'm probably wasting my time in writing this because you *can't* write the whole *Nutmeg* now and I am one of the few who are convinced that Mr. Roy Howard is *not* going to fire you when your contract runs out. The gentleman may not be a thinker but he is also not a madman and he knows where his business interests lie. But if I am wrong and you are assed out, all the better. Roll up your sleeves and start laying about you! Pay no attention to the fools who tell you that you are alienating your followers by the one-sidedness of your approach. How many sides are you expected to be on, anyhow? Among your first projects under the new policy, have Dr. Gallup make a poll for you showing how many of these impartial birds were ever won over by having Karo sprinkled on their tails. When you get that information, I think I'll have no further need to worry about you.

ROBERT FORSYTHE.

## Truetalk

**C**OMMENTING on the Francoist propaganda in America by certain treacherous lay Catholics and irresponsible priests, the *New World*, organ of the Roman Catholic diocese of Chicago, writes:

The Holy War aspect and the church were dragged into the picture by the propagandists and interested parties, just as the church is dragged into local and municipal politics throughout the world by selfish individuals and groups, willing to trade the church, the people, and everything they should hold dear, for some immediate gain.

The sad part about it all is that it will not be the last time that the church is used and that churchmen will permit themselves to be used. Nor will people learn from this experience any more than they did from other ones. Stop, look, and listen, when the propagandists of press, pulpit, and platform turn on the sob stuff and the mass hysteria in the name of the Catholic religion.

Replying to Father Thorning's pro-fascist jabberings about mass treason by American Catholics should the United States act in unison with other democracies, including the USSR, to stop Hitler, the *New World* says:

For anyone at the present time to assert that a military alliance with Russia would be an act of treachery is to utter the sheerest kind of nonsense.

If war does come, Catholics will be called slackers and other names because of statements like Father Thorning's, which will be freely quoted by anti-Catholics for years to come.

# New Masses

ESTABLISHED 1911

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## Maverick Revidus

IT WAS not the New Deal that threw in the towel on Maury Maverick after his defeat for Congress last year. The Texas progressive got right back on his feet and beat the Garner-backed incumbent, C. K. Quin, for the mayoralty of San Antonio in a decisive fashion. In Bayonne, N. J., five city commissioners swept in on a "Home Rule—Not Hague Rule" platform, and New Brunswick voted in as city commissioner, Joseph V. Egan, president of the Central Trades and Labor Council.

The San Antonio and Jersey results follow the trend already manifested in earlier municipal elections, notably in Chicago and Los Angeles. Behind each of these progressive victories was the solid organization of a united AFL and CIO rank and file plus New Dealers and liberal groups. Mayor Maverick's spirited campaign among the Mexican and Negro people of San Antonio brought out a record vote for progress. Although New Deal reverses in the state and congressional elections last November may have seemed the beginning of a reactionary riptide, these local victories are proof that Republican promises are no substitute for New Deal deeds. Unity is the magic of New Deal power.

Through the further unification of the progressive forces these gains can be widened and the basis laid for victory in the Presidential elections in 1940.

## Soviet Peace Policy

THE past week has brought fresh evidence that the two decisive forces in the aggression and anti-aggression camps are, respectively, Germany and the Soviet Union. Mussolini spoke, but after Hitler's success in pressing him into a military alliance in which he plays second fiddle, what Mussolini

said was anti-climactic. And Chamberlain announced a British-Turkish pledge of mutual assistance, preliminary to the signing of a formal agreement. But the whole world knows—and the canny Lloyd George never tires of emphasizing—that the new British guarantees in Eastern Europe mean little without the inclusion of the Soviet Union in the anti-aggression front. And so, in a week in which Mussolini spoke and Chamberlain announced a pact with the chief power in Southeastern Europe, the most important event was an editorial in the Soviet government newspaper, *Izvestia*.

Breaking through the fog of inspired rumors concerning the position of the Soviet Union in the European crisis, the editorial turned the tables on Chamberlain by making clear that it is the tactics of the British and French Munichites that stand in the way of a powerful peace front. What the USSR wants, *Izvestia* stated, is "a united front of mutual assistance," based on reciprocal obligations, comprising Britain, France, the USSR, and Poland, or at least the first three of these, who would, in turn, guarantee the other states of Eastern and Central Europe. What Chamberlain and Bonnet propose, on the other hand, is that the USSR pledge itself to assist Britain, France, Poland, and the other states without receiving any assistance from them in return. To Chamberlain's statement that the Soviet Union would not be called on to act unless Britain and France came to the aid of the smaller states, *Izvestia* replied by pointing out "the highly interesting fact that under this arrangement the actual resistance to aggression and the time of commencement of this resistance are left to be decided only by Great Britain and France, although the brunt of this resistance would fall principally on the USSR, owing to its geographical situation."

In taking this position the Soviet Union is protecting not only its own interests, but those of the small states in the direct path of aggression. For only through the formation of a reciprocal mutual assistance alliance such as the USSR proposes can Poland, Rumania, and the other states have any real guarantee that Britain and France will not run out on them, as they did on Czechoslovakia. The *Izvestia* editorial is a blow to the rumor-mongers, the appeasers, and the enemies of peace. It confirms what NEW MASSES has insisted on: that Soviet policy has not swerved one inch from the path of organizing collective resistance to fascist banditry. It emphasizes the point made by Allen Hutt in his article elsewhere in this issue: that replacement of the treacherous Chamberlain government by one based on a popular front led by the Labor Party is essential for the peace of Europe and the world.

## Hobbs Bill

SPEAKERS as diverse as Mgr. John A. Ryan, Sen. James E. Murray of Montana, and Dr. Harold C. Urey, Nobel prize winner, addressing the sessions of the National Emergency Conference held in Washington over the past weekend, joined in urging a determined fight against the seventy or more anti-alien bills pending in Congress. The wave of the particular kind of reaction represented by these bills started a year ago when the Dies committee was voted into existence. It is stronger today than at any time since the early twenties.

The most serious and the closest to becoming law is the bill sponsored by Rep. Samuel Hobbs of Alabama. The Hobbs bill, as it now stands, provides for the imprisonment of non-citizens who have been ordered deported and have not, because of passport or other difficulties, left the country. When the bill was first proposed, perceptive Washington observers recognized it immediately as an attempt to set up concentration camps in this country. In an effort to relieve the bill of that stigma, the House Judiciary Committee changed the wording of the bill so that the places of detention were described as "established" rather than the earlier "special," which would have implied the construction of new camps and prisons to meet the requirements of the Hobbs bill. And the classification of aliens was reworded to make clear that only political and criminal deportees would be included.

The new wording matters very little. The constitution provides that "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law," and any place to which they are committed without legal action is a concentration camp, regardless of whether the construction is "special" or "established." Moreover, we know from long experience the low level of reactionary accuracy in defining the politically and criminally undesirable.

The Hobbs bill has already passed the House, and is now before the Senate. Only vigorous protest to United States senators can ward off the creation of American Dachaus.

## Il Duce's Overtures

EVERY time Mussolini growls softly—as he did just before the seizure of Albania—trust that eminent American patriot, Roy Howard, to pat him on the head. Nowhere does appeasement die harder than in the Scripps-Howard press. Mussolini's "peace" speech at Turin, near the French border, last Sunday—exactly one week after the announcement of the military alliance with Germany—once more mellowed the editorial heart of the New York *World-*

*Telegram.* "If the Duce is really holding out his hand toward France and Britain," wrote the chief sparkler in the Howard diadem, "they must grasp it without undue loss of time. There are indications that they could meet Italy's demands without loss of dignity." Simultaneously, the appeasers in London and Paris also lifted up their hearts. And to give the devil his due, Mussolini's cooing must have been unusually seductive when even the *New York Times*, which has been advocating collective security, was moved to hum the appeasement tune on Tuesday, although only the day before it had commented in quite a different vein.

In other words, Mussolini achieved in his speech precisely what he intended: the revival in the reactionary circles of the capitalist democracies of that appeasement sentiment which is the hope of the fascist aggressors. A second aim of the address was to allay through highly pacific talk the fears of the Italian people concerning the implications of the war alliance with Germany, which is highly unpopular among the masses. And finally, the statement that "there are not at present in Europe problems big enough or acute enough to justify a war" was a possible hint to Hitler to watch his step in the Danzig issue. But, however great may be Mussolini's disinclination to follow Hitler through all the dangerous paths of Nazi conquest, his need of Hitler's assistance to satisfy his own imperialist appetite is greater. Hence, all overtures to Il Duce weaken not the axis, but the anti-aggression front.

## "Happy" Chandler Is Sore

**L**ABOR won one of its greatest victories last week when the United Mine Workers gained a union shop in the majority of the nation's bituminous pits. But Gov. A. B. Chandler of Kentucky—"Happy," they call him—doesn't know it or doesn't believe it. He has called out the National Guard to help the recalcitrant coal miners open their works with scabs, and as Heywood Broun said the other day, is not averse to changing the blue grass of Kentucky to deep purple. Heavily armed National Guardsmen have clashed twice with United Mine Workers pickets at the time we go to press. A motorized caravan of union miners two miles long cruised Harlan County in a show of strength, and at the time of this writing, it appeared as though the operators' front would be broken, despite "Happy's" howitzer and tank companies and eight hundred Guardsmen standing duty. Only six of the forty-two companies in the county which refused to sign contracts with the UMWA attempted to reopen their shafts.

Meanwhile all progressives in America have occasion for cheer: more than 80

percent of the coal operators signed the two-year union agreement. Only the handful of operators in Harlan County held out. Anti-New Dealer Governor Chandler is backing them to the limit of his guns. He further reveals to America what may be expected if the enemies of the New Deal come to power. Government by bayonet—and not by ballot—that is the program of such gentlemen as Governor "Happy."

## Nazi Testimonials

**O**UR movie reviewer confesses himself at loss to produce more eloquent testimonials for the social usefulness of *Juarez* and *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* than those furnished by the parties attacking these great democratic films. In Kansas City, the German vice consul, Herman Gastreich, is circulating a petition against the showing of *Nazi Spy*. Fritz Kuhn is suing Warner Bros., the producers, for an astronomical amount of racial balm, and in California the Nazi gutter element is circulating anti-Semitic broadsides on the spy expose film. *Nazi Spy* is a calmly literal account of last year's spy trials and the Nazi agents who blather against it are reenacting in their foolish way an episode in the picture. After the spies are caught by G-man Robinson a blustering agent appears from Germany to blackmail their release. "Are these people crazy," asks Robinson, "admitting their complicity?"

There are people who might be frightened by such Nazi arrogance. This is the effect Hitler's agents want. They know that they will have hamstrung the American screen in its emerging social power if they can carry off the trick. Every brutish appeal in Goebbels' repertoire is being tried. The American people must answer them at the box-office ballot box with a landslide for *Juarez* and *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*.

## Trotskyist Trap

**O**NE of the most significant symptoms of our times has been the growing expression of active opposition to fascism among leading American educators and scientists. The movement represented by the Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom, headed by Prof. Franz Boas, has enlisted the support of more than two thousand educators. And the same spirit was manifested at the last conventions of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and other learned societies.

Perhaps it was to have been expected that reactionary efforts to divide this movement would emerge sooner or later. And almost equally inevitable was it that the chief inspiration for these efforts should come from the Trotskyites. Headed by that favorite front of Trotskyism, Prof. John Dewey, the

new group, calling itself the Committee for Cultural Freedom, announces its opposition to the Soviet Union as well as to fascist Germany, Italy, Japan, and Spain. The list of sponsors includes such veterans of the discredited committee in "defense" of Trotsky as Max Eastman, Benjamin Stolberg, Sidney Hook, Suzanne La Follette, and Eugene Lyons. It also includes outright reactionaries. And it includes some liberals who must certainly be unaware of the real purpose of the committee.

The political orientation of this new group is the same as that of the Dies committee, which also links Communism with fascism and pretends to be equally opposed to both. Its purpose, too, is similar: to split the democratic forces by the time-dishonored red-herring device. True liberals, whatever reservations they may have about Communism or the Soviet Union, should beware this trap set by anti-democratic demagogues.

## Fascism in Bolivia

**O**RIGINAL suspicions concerning the influences that inspired Lieut. Col. German Busch's fascist coup in Bolivia are confirmed by the announcement of the barter arrangements that are being negotiated between Bolivia and Germany. Germany has already opened an initial credit of 4,000,000 marks and is offering an additional credit of 8,000,000 marks, under which the Third Reich will take large quantities of Bolivian oil in return for drilling and refining equipment. Bolivia is also seeking arrangements with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay, by which she will supply them with the oil products that they are now importing from the United States.

Shortly after Colonel Busch executed his coup, Genevieve Tabouis, the unusually well informed foreign affairs commentator of the *Paris Oeuvre*, described it as "a first success for Capt. Fritz Wiedemann." Wiedemann, former adjutant to Hitler, became German consul general in San Francisco about three months ago. According to Mme. Tabouis, numerous Gestapo spies, disguised as consular agents, are now in Bolivia.

Part of the credit, however, for the new totalitarian regime should go to our stupid and criminal embargo against Spain. Predictions of American friends of Spanish democracy that a fascist Spain would mean intensified Berlin-Rome-Tokyo activities in Latin America are being fulfilled all too soon. The events in Bolivia also emphasize how essential it is for the New Deal to give every encouragement to the democratic forces in the Latin American countries if continental solidarity against aggression is to amount to something more than good resolutions.

# What's On Your Mind?

The aged unemployables in the Soviet Union, and the question of better or worse cultures.

QUESTIONS on various topics continue to arrive, some of them on themes that have been answered before in this department. We invite you to send in your questions; we shall make every effort to answer them promptly and satisfactorily.

Should any inquirer feel that he needs further details than the ones published under this department head, we will be glad to forward them upon request.

*Q. What provision does the Soviet Union make for old people who cannot work and have no one to support them?*

A. Article 120 of the Soviet Constitution states explicitly that "citizens of the USSR have the right to maintenance in old age and also in case of sickness or loss of capacity to work. This right is ensured by the wide development of social insurance of workers and other employees at state expense, free medical service, and the wide network of health resorts at the disposal of the toilers." Old people are provided for by means of old age pensions and homes for the aged.

The Soviet Union is now in the process of gradual transition from socialism to Communism. But the Soviet Union is still far from having a limitless quantity or even an abundance of products. It is still behind the USA with respect to economic development. Consequently, the amount set aside for the care of old people is necessarily limited by the actual means at the disposal of the Soviet government. When the Soviet Union has built the material basis for full Communism, the entire population, including the old people, will enjoy the highest standard of living known to mankind.

Meanwhile, no old person in the Soviet Union suffers from lack of maintenance. Male wage and salary earners, after twenty-five years of work, upon reaching sixty years of age, and women wage and salary earners, after twenty years of work, upon reaching the age of fifty-five, are entitled to old age pensions amounting to between 50 and 60 percent of the prevailing wage in the respective industry. In hazardous industries, workers are entitled to old age pensions after twenty years of work upon reaching the age of fifty. A bonus in the form of an additional percentage is added to the pensions of those who have performed exceptionally valuable service.

*Q. Is it not gratuitous to say that any given culture is better than any other, if it be granted hypothetically that both peoples are satisfied with the values which their society holds up? Are not qualitative differences in value ultimately subjective? Finally, if a negative answer be given to these two questions, has not the way been opened to racial persecution and Kultur crusades?*

A. This is really another way of asking whether progress is possible. The answer to this is given in the living practice of society, and theory is merely a means of recording and illuminating the significance of this practical activity. Take a look at the World of Tomorrow at the New York World's Fair and compare it with the grim realities of our world of today. Isn't it slightly embarrassing to ask whether the culture of such a world is really better than the culture of poverty, exploitation, and war

inherent in capitalist society? One might as well ask the multitudes crippled by disease whether a state of health isn't merely a subjective distinction; or tell a person standing in the path of a speeding express train that it is all the same whether he gets off the track in time or remains there, since qualitative differences in values are ultimately subjective. Under the conditions of Southern slavery, the average span of life of a working slave was not more than seven years. Would the fact that the slaves accepted their bondage make slavery any less inferior, both in regard to the productivity of labor and the welfare of the laborer, to a system of free wage labor? It is evident that the distinctions of better or worse, superior or inferior, have an objective validity. In the last analysis it is the distinction between life and death. A "theory" which refuses to recognize the difference in "values" between disease and health, poverty and wealth, slavery and freedom is simply fatuous nonsense.

Actually it is a naive abstraction, without theoretical or practical ground, to assume "that both peoples are satisfied with the values which their society holds up." The ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas of society. But in capitalist society, even when the exploited masses suffer from capitalist illusions and do not fully recognize their own class interests, these illusions sooner or later come into conflict with the real conditions of their existence; the class struggle proceeds in an open or concealed form; opposing and conflicting "values" inevitably emerge.

In the socialist system of the Soviet Union you have a moral and political unity of the people which does not and cannot prevail in capitalist society, least of all in the fascist capitalist countries. The reason for this is to be found in the material economic foundations of the two systems. The Soviet Union has abolished the exploitation of man by man and the division of society into exploiter and exploited. It has done this by abolishing the private ownership of the means of production. The workers, peasants, and Soviet intellectuals have the same fundamental conditions of existence and the distinctions between them are gradually disappearing. They represent a people united in cooperative labor, utilizing the means of production to promote the material and cultural welfare of the entire population. The progress of Soviet society, not only internally but as compared with the capitalist world, is tangible and manifold; it can be measured objectively by the growth of the material forces of production, the advance of science, the steady improvement in the material conditions of the life of the masses, and the increasing spread of knowledge and culture among the population. It is evident that the same cannot be said for capitalist society.

From this we see that regardless of the illusions people and classes may have concerning themselves, regardless of the subjective ideas of individuals or groups, social progress can be measured by definite objective standards. A system which prevents the unhampered development of the means of production, of the productive forces, including the producers, regardless of the illusions the system seeks to create about itself, must ultimately give way before the irresistible development of these productive forces. This is the objective criterion and regulator of progress.

The fact that all human activity is the activity

of human "subjects" doesn't make this activity necessarily subjective and arbitrary. People live and are active within certain conditions. These conditions, even though in the main the product of human activity and labor, determine the course of people's lives and represent an objective force and criterion by which the values of all "subjects" are regulated, tested, and measured. The first of these are the conditions of production and the means of production. That is why Marx advanced as the objective of progress the development of "production for production's sake."

A. LANDY.

## READER'S FORUM

### Strecker Case

ONE of our readers, Julius Deutsch, corrects us on a point:

"In Tom Cullen's article, 'Bridges Frameup Falls Down,' in NEW MASSES for May 9, he states: 'The Supreme Court's decision in the Strecker case held that membership in the Communist Party at the time an alien enters this country, or at the time deportation proceedings are instituted against him, is cause for deportation.' I failed to find any such statement in any of the reports on the Supreme Court's decision. So far as I was able to see, only Strecker's case or a case similar to his was considered. It was only decided that former membership in the Communist Party was no cause for deportation. Under the circumstances it was difficult for the Supreme Court to make a decision that could be more far-reaching.

"I feel some sort of correction should be made by you, and the position of the Supreme Court on this question clarified. Clarification on this issue is important, because such statements as the above could be very damaging to the progressive movement, particularly among the foreign born."

The point is well taken. The Supreme Court did not decide on whether membership in the Communist Party at any time warrants deportation. It merely decided that former membership is no ground for deportation.

### His Third Gift

A. G.D. of New York City sends the following letter enclosing his *third* contribution to the NM fund drive:

"As soon as my eyes caught sight of the strikingly effective layout of the cover design of the May 9 issue of NEW MASSES, I got the feeling that the magazine had advanced one more step in improved appearance. Each page was one surprise after another in quality of writing, in importance of subjects discussed, and in the always outstanding artistic quality of the cartoons for which NEW MASSES has become the superior of all other magazines in this country.

"All of which prompts me to send my third contribution to the present drive for the \$30,000 sustaining fund. NEW MASSES deserves thousands of times more than what any meager pecuniary means allow me to contribute to its continuance, but, however small my contributions may be, I send them very gladly, earnestly hoping that many more of its readers will do as much."

If you haven't got around to sending your bit towards the NM drive, we hope this gentleman's letter inspires you.

# World Congress of Writers

Samuel Sillen discusses the recent congress of the PEN clubs (Poets, Playwrights, Editors, Essayists, and Novelists) at the World's Fair.

THE PEN clubs have in the past been very proud of their moderate attitude toward world politics. They liked to regard themselves as mediators between nations and cultures. Let other men and other groups become embroiled in temporal strife; the members of the PEN as writers, as custodians of the eternal spirit, would remain aloof. Through a proper exercise of dignity and restraint they would in the end prevail against the powers of hate and destruction.

They had a passion for conciliation which events were gradually and subtly distorting into a passion for compliance. Because other groups of writers were immoderate (i.e., "fanatical") in their hatred of fascism, the PEN clubs were, in the words of their distinguished president, Jules Romain, obstinate in giving the devil his due—"without too many illusions, but in order not to give him any false pretexts, and in the hope of bringing him even a little within the ways of honest men." Ironically enough, this hope appears to have sustained the PEN clubs at their congress in Praha last year. That congress was held three months before Munich. It was still anxious to avoid giving any "false pretexts" to Hitler.

Men who are determined to appease Hitler seem to emerge only slowly and painfully from the hypnosis of conciliation. The PEN supported Chamberlain at Munich because peace, however temporary and illusory, was "preferable to catastrophe." What a mockery Hitler has made of that peace! A recent letter addressed by the London office of the PEN to the International League for Culture in Praha was returned with the notation: *Ca n'existe plus!* Culture doesn't live here any more—that is the official answer from the fascist postoffice in Praha and Berlin and Vienna and Madrid.

But men do learn, even if, as one sometimes felt at the World's Fair congress of the PEN last week, they learn unsurely and slowly. For this congress registered a profoundly important change in the mentality of writers who were once committed to appeasement but are now committed to struggle. To be sure, the PEN clubs have not as yet reached the more realistic position of the International Association of Writers for the Defense of Culture, nor of that association's American affiliate, the League of American Writers. They have not as yet recognized that the masses of working men and women, particularly those organized in the trade union movement, are the backbone of the fight against fascism. They have manifested no appreciation of the fact that the Soviet Union

is the sturdiest defender of peace and the surest ally of an international cultural movement. But they have at last understood that the problem is not to avoid giving "false pretexts" to fascism. The problem is to fight and overcome fascism. Jules Romain put the matter plainly:

Ladies and gentlemen, the past attitude of the members of the PEN clubs gives us great freedom in reaching a judgment upon these things. The more moderate and prudent we have been, the more right we have to be severe. We have made incredible and almost paradoxical efforts to hold ourselves outside and above the quarrels of ideologies, to avoid pronouncing ourselves on the internal government of nations, even when it was impossible for us not to see what mortal danger for the spirit and conscience and even for the future of civilization was bound up in the principles of such regimes. We have retained our contacts as much as we could. We have tried to hope that the inhuman harshness of these regimes was of a transitory character, and since they called themselves revolutions that they would tend like other revolutions to resolve themselves into forms of common existence that would be nearly normal or tolerable. We asked of them above all—even when they maintained within their frontiers an atmosphere which we judged impossible to breathe—to leave peace to the rest of the world.

These feeble hopes have been belied. Today the demonstration has been made. It would require on our part more than a pharisaical hypocrisy to re-

fuse to see from what side comes the supreme danger, on which side is the evil. I repeat that as writers we have a deep responsibility for the maintenance of the essential values of civilization. These values are more than threatened. They are furiously attacked, by a systematic and convergent offensive. Each time that they are attacked, in every corner of the world where they find themselves pushed to the wall, they are savagely stamped out. We can no longer tolerate a single retreat, or else we are failing in our condition as writers and our condition as men.

In another part of his address, Jules Romain reminded the members of the PEN that "We are no longer able to act as if tyranny did not exist. Therefore we must act in order that it shall not exist." For those of us who attended the morning session of the congress on the following day, the reminder was hardly necessary. Who could act as if tyranny did not exist after listening to Arnold Zweig, Ernst Toller, Ferdinand Bruckner, G. A. Borgese, Sholem Asch, Klaus Mann, and Pedro Salinas? These writers from Germany and Austria and Italy and Spain, these men whose work we had read and respected, were they not in themselves bitter enough testimony to a tyranny which we must learn to oppose with every ounce of our strength? And those others in the audience, like Doebelin and Oskar Maria Graf? And those absent ones of whom Toller spoke, the "soldiers of the spirit" who died fighting fascism, and the living ones, the prisoners in concentration camps?

"We are witnesses and victims of the flood," Toller said. But like Heine and Marx, we shall in our exile enrich our native culture and the culture of the lands in which we are guests. He who has overcome fear, Toller continued, has also overcome the dictator, and this is just as true of states as it is of individuals. As writers we face the dangers of isolation and loneliness. But above all, we face the danger of starvation. In answer to the topic of the forum, "How Can Culture Survive Exile?" Toller pointed to the simple truth, so easily forgotten when we are making eloquent speeches, that culture will not survive if the exponents of culture do not survive. On behalf of the Czech and Spanish and German writers Toller pleaded for something more than sympathy, and he made the sound suggestion that the PEN cooperate with other writers' organizations to do something about the material needs of writers in exile.

The afternoon session that day was devoted to a discussion of "The Writer's Responsibility for the Crisis of Today and the World of Tomorrow." And here one heard, as so



JULES ROMAINS. *The distinguished author of "Men of Good Will" is the president of the international PEN clubs.*



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often during the congress, echoes of that older mood of compliance. Andre Maurois, one felt, would utter platitudes almost to the edge of the abyss. The greatest service that we writers can perform, he said, is "to hold explosive words under lock and key," and his own speech furnished the example. How thoroughly exasperating, at such a moment, to listen to these counsels of patience and forbearance! This is indeed what Maurois must have meant by "The Miracle of England." It is at least the miracle of Chamberlain. But the man who sat next to Maurois on the platform was Thomas Mann, a wiser and bolder writer, who by contrast reminded us of the tragic consequences of that unpolitical and unexplosive attitude which had prevailed among German writers before fascism. The gulf between Mann and Maurois, it occurred to some of us, is the gulf between courage and surrender.

J. B. Priestley's broadcast from London was a bit annoying. Like several of the other speakers, he talked at times as if he were a liberal who insists on traveling down the middle of the road even if the road happens to be divided by a ditch. We must avoid two extremes, he said over and over again. By all means let us avoid two extremes. We must avoid the ivory tower, and we must avoid writing exclusively about the International Brigade (as some writers—you know who—insist). I for one am sick and tired of this "you know who" stuff which by implication attributes all sorts of ridiculous literary theories to left-wing writers.

But the shilly-shallying of Maurois and Priestley was perhaps preferable to the down-right nonsense one heard from some of the Americans the next day. The topic was "The Ivory Tower or the Soap Box," a symposium on propaganda in literature. Bernard De Voto, like Henry Seidel Canby, on-the-one-hand-and-the-othered, but he finally made up his mind that in the end we may perish anyway. On the one hand, there is Milton; on the other, there is Herrick. Not a word, so far as one could tell, about the here and now. No one, said Mr. De Voto, can prescribe for a writer what his relation to the times should be. Does not this come with ill grace from a critic who has for a long time been prescribing to left-wing writers what their relation to the times should *not* be? Mr. De Voto and Mary Colum battled for the inalienable "right" of the author to hold himself aloof, as if that were the issue at stake. Mary Colum accused an unnamed writers' organization (I presume she meant the League of American Writers) of asking writers to express their opinion on various political questions—i.e., Franco, anti-Semitism, and so on. This was an attack on free thought, she said. It is as much of an attack on free thought as a national election for President. Since when was a referendum, without any element of compulsion, an attack on free thought? As Harry Hansen had predicted in the New York *World-Telegram* the day before the congress,

the American symposium on propaganda was one-sided: "The views of Erskine Caldwell, Granville Hicks, and Charles A. Beard would have been worth hearing."

What a relief to hear Walter F. White declare, as a spokesman for the Negro people, that it is impossible for a writer to dwell in the ivory tower today. Propaganda? Yes, said Mr. White, every time we Negro writers have told the truth about Negro life we have been accused of propaganda. This kind of propaganda, this truth telling, we must continue to produce. And what a relief to listen to Ralph Bates talk about the "party discipline" that some of the speakers had disparagingly referred to. I am not a party man, Bates said. But I know after my experience in Spain that the artist is not in a "superior" position. He must be a man before he is anything else. And if he is a man, if he wants to act effectively and to write honestly, he cannot divorce himself from "corporate activity." Many of the speakers that afternoon had spoken of honesty in writing, but honesty was always referred to as something alien to corporate activity, as an achievement of individual will lifting itself up by its own boot straps. Bates effectively disposed of that illusion.

Bates made a very fruitful suggestion at the end of his talk. He urged that the PEN clubs consider the possibilities of cooperative action with other writers' organizations, like the Authors Guild and the League of American Writers. A consultative committee might be established to discuss action in defense of certain principles on which all these groups are agreed: the four basic freedoms, for example, to which the World's Fair and the PEN congress are dedicated. Such a step would be the logical culmination of this progressive meeting, and it is to be hoped that the representatives of the various writers' groups will take it. After all, the keynote of this congress was sounded by Hendrik Willem van Loon, president of the Authors Guild, when he said: "We writers must unite and



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fight together." Cooperation on an international scale of all anti-fascist writers' groups would give force to M. Romain's warning that "We can no longer tolerate a single retreat, or else we are failing in our condition as writers and our condition as men."

SAMUEL SILLEN.

## The German Exiles

Harry Slochower reviews Erika and Klaus Mann's "Escape to Life."

**E**RIKA and Klaus Mann's *Escape to Life* (Houghton Mifflin Co., \$3.50) is doubtless the most comprehensive account to date of the general effects which Nazidom has had on German artists and thinkers and, indirectly, on the German people as a whole. It presents intimate sketches of the writers, musicians, actors, etc, who have been driven into exile, and of the fate of those who chose to stay in Germany.

We hear of the Muehsams, heroic in their uncompromising defiance of Nazi attempts to degrade them; of the Ossietzkys who oppose Nazism at home, feeling that they are a greater menace to their enemy in a concentration camp than in exile; of the Georg Kaisers who try the method of silence, only to find themselves left by the cultural wayside. We read of Ernst Glaeser's astounding *return* to Germany to vote "yes" on the annexation of Austria. The authors write of "the willing exiles," offering useful characterizations of Werfel and Stefan Zweig, and of the more militant groups represented by Oskar Maria Graf and Bertolt Brecht, Feuchtwanger and Arnold Zweig, Toller and Bruckner, Friedrich Wolf and Doebelin, Thomas and Heinrich Mann. The whole presents an impressive record of the cultural wealth which Hitlerism has forced out. Within its own borders, it is choking every human element in the interests of its death machine. This appears from the tragic situation in which Nazi artists find themselves. We read of the ironic justice meted out to Hauptmann, who, having shifted with every wind of doctrine, has finally arrived at the point when, even among the Nazis, "no one takes (him) seriously now." The discussion of the Nazi artists suggests the dilemma which fascist regimentation is in—finding it impossible to *manufacture* a vital esthetics. Indeed, one may add that whatever genuine writing is produced in Hitlerland reveals the chaos, frustration, and masochism tearing at the root of a desperate and dying system.

In the most appealing chapter of the book, "Portrait of Our Father," we get close to the nerve of the opposition to Nazism on the part of Thomas Mann. Describing the atmosphere in their home, the children of Thomas Mann write of "the feeling of spiritual responsibility, the discipline of work, the regularity of life, the cheerfulness, the calm, the gravity always tinged with irony." The whole might be summed up as a sense for orderly living, for a living order, for a *conservatism* that would preserve general human values. It

is precisely the disturbance of order that is perhaps the basic emotional factor in Mann's attitude, as it was with Goethe in his reaction to the disturbances of his time. This book is thus another detailed refutation of Hitler's hysterical monotone that his function is to save Europe from chaos. To vary R. Palme Dutt's definition, we may say that *fascism has organized chaos*. In Germany, it has systematized disorder with a Teutonic *Gruendlichkeit* that distinguishes it from all previous dictatorships. It has shown genius in eliminating all exceptions in its technique of uprooting order.

Beneath the brave attitude of the book, one can sense a tragic undertone. It is that of the psychologically disinherited, of those who have lost their homes. To be sure, many of these exiles have exchanged the insecurity and confusion of a contradictory system for the clarity of their convictions and the integrity of their personalities. But their deepest wish must be for the day when they will be able to return to their mother country, as free men. But their experiences have taught them that the struggle is not over with exile, that "we can escape *nowhere* from all this. . . . We remain involved, however many thousands of miles we may put between ourselves and the Brown House in Munich." And they can draw comfort and courage from the unity that is forming among the people everywhere. This unity is taking place in Germany as well. The graph indicating the growth of political awareness among the exiles applies also to those who have remained in Germany. More and more Germans are beginning to *know* Hitler. Hitler continues to heap abuse on intellectualism and "Bolshevik art," long after the burning of the books. Is it not because he fears it still? Fears it for its subtle underground threat to the fascist temper in that it *sees* through his shams? Here, Hitlerism faces an enemy who is baffling even in his silence, a ubiquitous force that works *indirectly*, and which concentration camps cannot regiment. It is this element that is furthering the realization of social and spiritual freedom on the part of the German people. This *knowledge* is growing. As the father writes to the authors of this book, "unless all signs fail, they (the German people) have already learnt . . . what freedom means." It is the first step toward the removal of the hard necessity to "escape into life," and toward the reconquest of one's native soil, on which men may live their life through.

HARRY SLOCHOWER.

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against fascism as the guiding principle for democracy today. Others, like Amos Pinchot, have become front-men for reaction, which uses their outworn phrases to conceal its aim of destroying the New Deal. A third group still clings to some pet issue, varying from individual to individual, complacently ignoring the central problems of the day.

In *Democracy Works* (Random House, \$3) Arthur Garfield Hays writes from the viewpoint of this latter category. He makes a wordy argument for civil liberties conceived as an abstraction, and divorced from the realities of the economic and political scene. This concept is portrayed as an end in itself, as the motive force of history. The author hardly seems to realize that civil liberties are the by-products of a working democracy; when the latter is attacked or breaks down, then the former is restricted or abolished. Thus abstract equality under the law means little or nothing to the unemployed or the unorganized worker. Only when he has at least a minimum of economic security do his democratic rights become more than mere formalities.

Mr. Hays' error arises from his habit of viewing democracy as some kind of parlor game. He operates with an ideal individual, who, like the "economic man" of nineteenth-century bourgeois thought, exists only in his own mind. In this game, Henry Ford and a worker in his open shop plant are equals, and require equal protection for their civil rights. But in life it is the worker and not Henry Ford who suffers from insecurity, and whose privileges depend upon the good will of stoolpigeons and foremen. Civil rights for the worker will mean something when he cannot arbitrarily be deprived of his livelihood, when he does not have to truckle to Ford's secret police. Hence the struggle for his rights involves taking away Ford's power to coerce and browbeat.

Yet Mr. Hays ignores reality to play his pleasant game. In his little world it is Ford who is "coerced" by the National Labor Board. He is so worried over this attack on democracy by the NLRB that he overlooks the actual menace to liberty represented by Wall Street. Now, he is no apologist for the Tories. Within the limitations of his outlook he has fought hard against some of their most oppressive abuses. But by equating democracy with an abstraction, in this case civil liberties, he unwittingly helps reaction sap the foundations of all democratic institutions. For Wall Street wants the people to play such liberal games of make-believe. It wants to divert attention from the underprivileged; it wants everyone to concentrate on the injustice done Mr. Ford and similar defenseless victims of the New Deal. Then it can sidetrack the need for union organization, or the defense of the rights of the Negro people.

By playing with abstractions, Mr. Hays is defeating his own aims. The past few years have conclusively demonstrated that organizing drives by the CIO did bring civil liberties to workers in company towns, after decades of well-wishing talk accomplished

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nothing. Not that talk in itself is bad, but the fact remains that this talk about rights came to life only when real problems were solved. Despite such examples, Mr. Hays sticks to his formal approach, apparently believing that if everyone, including Ford, pays lip service to civil liberties, then the depression and the threat of fascism will somehow disappear.

It is disconcerting to find a supposedly practical person putting such faith in verbal fetishes. As against the proposals of militant progressives, Mr. Hays offers the cure-all of "selection and adaptation." Given enough time, this "cockeyed" world will straighten itself out; meanwhile one can play the fascinating game of defending Ford and other oppressed individuals. To progressives who demand action, who point to the timetables of fascism, Mr. Hays offers the technocratic chestnut—the new industry, which will put an end to those "dislocations" that we unscientifically call depressions. Making democracy work, according to Mr. Hays, depends on your point of view, and he calls the attention of the unemployed worker to poor millionaires, "troubled and harassed to meet the rent of a Park Avenue apartment, who would willingly live in a wilderness tent and cook their own meals." Having given us this observation, he concludes by saying: "I'm going to enjoy life in my own way as much as I can."

Unless Mr. Hays and the liberal type he represents stop playing their parlor games, they may not be able to enjoy life as much as they did in the past. The fascist plans of Wall Street would put an end to this just as they would destroy the trade unions. To make democracy work, we must meet the enemy on fundamental issues. This is the lesson that the younger liberals have already learned; this is the lesson that Mr. Hays might profitably study while leaving Ford's defense to his own lawyers.

DAVID RAMSEY.



Beatrice Tobias

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## Making the Social Film

Directors, writers, editors, and critics face entirely new problems in films like "Juarez" and "Nazi Spy". . . Maxim again in a new Soviet picture.

THE press received Warner Bros.' two great films, *Juarez* and *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* with praise. With the exception of the peevish turkey gobbler, Otis Ferguson of the *New Republic*, *Juarez* was given its due for the political event it is, and *Nazi Spy* got past everyone but Frank Nugent of the *New York Times*, who was reminded of *The Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin*. Personal taste, which has served most critics adequately, is no equipment for handling social films. For the first time Hollywood presents films with ideas and most of the reviewers are caught without theories to cope with them.

The reviewer's problem is a small part of the esthetic dilemma brought up by these pictures. The outlines of a mature form for social movies are exceedingly hazy. Hollywood can make diverting love tales in its sleep; there is a serviceable formula for historical colossals and gangster or detective material; but there is little precedent in the American film style for handling ideas and issues. *Nazi Spy* is not merely a spy picture, nor is *Juarez* a costume drama. They are forthright political statements employing something from these familiar conventions. Finding a serviceable art form for saying something important was solved admirably in *Nazi Spy* by abandoning Hollywood treatment in favor of the documentary style. The picture is remarkably self-contained and compact, despite the mass of details and characterizations necessary to its telling. In its headlong flight there was precious little opportunity to motivate or explain the characters, much less to give the stars a chance to shine. But Milton Krims and John Wexley, the writers, and Anatol Litvak, the director, have brought out remarkable tabloid biographies with the inspired connivance of Francis Lederer, Paul Lukas, Edward G. Robinson, and the others. I think Frank Nugent was dead wrong when he attacked the film for having black-and-white characterizations—good guys and bad guys and nothing in common but the Yorkville ozone. No, the spies in the picture are human beings. George Sanders, the Gestapo agent, and a pair of Goebbels musclemen are not shown with sympathy. I will lay a tin medal from the *World of Tomorrow* that actual Gestapo agents are hardly congenial types. There are Nazi schemers and sophisticates but you can't do a job like Hitler's without some fairly sinister accomplices. If anything, the Bull Montana quotient was admirably restrained in Central Casting.

In both pictures the star system takes a lamming. In *Nazi Spy*, Edward G. Robinson does not appear until the third reel, and the others appear in thoroughly unsympathetic roles. And

the actors fought to get these parts. In *Juarez*, Paul Muni, Bette Davis, Brian Aherne, John Garfield, Claude Rains, and a dozen others in the star category are scattered through a picture in enforcedly small footage. This kind of brutal casting is possible only at Warners, which is the only company sensible enough to maintain what is virtually a stock company. Yet the actors contribute their most memorable playing. There have been star-loaded movies before, like MGM's *Grand Hotel*, in which a dozen blinding box-office names shouldered for closeups like goldfish bumping against the window of an aquarium. But these are the first films in which top actors are fitted into a real story, worthy of them. Actors love this and you can measure their worth by their willingness to take such assignments. This is their payoff as artists; to work in a story where they can say something that will last after the house lights have come up. This is the feeling that Cherkassov has about playing two hundred feet of *The Man with the Gun*. Politics has brought some art to movie acting.

Leaders of American democracy have been quick to recognize the power of *Juarez*. Be-

sides the President's implied endorsement, Secretary Wallace, John L. Lewis, Josephus Daniels, ambassador to Mexico, and Gardner Jackson of Labor's Non-Partisan League have praised its social importance. It is significant that never before has a Hollywood film been hailed as both a political and artistic event, and if I were any of those men who made this picture I'd feel more puffed up about these bouquets than anybody's review.

The problem of a new form for the stirring content of *Juarez* was not solved so happily. Despite the most exhaustive research and responsible writing and directing ever done in Hollywood, the picture is out of balance. To put it bluntly, Maximilian almost wins. It is almost certain that this is not the fault of the writers. In the uncut version *Juarez* is four hours in length. It has been cut to two, and the editing was done without consulting the director or the writers, due to the haste with which the picture was rushed to open coincidental with the President's speech before the Pan-American Union. *Nazi Spy* was also timed to appear with Roosevelt's message to the fascist dictators.



"OASIS." One of the paintings Sylvia Wald, winner of the American Artists Congress' third annual competition for a first New York Show, has included in her current exhibition at the ACA Gallery. Her paintings and sculpture are on view until May 27.



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In the haste of cutting up a carefully planned film the emphasis has been distorted—an old Hollywood headache for directors and writers, but disturbing when it happens to a deadly important film like *Juarez*. The Screen Directors Guild has been campaigning for the director's right to supervise cutting, as well as his right to see a script in sufficient time to plan it before shooting. It may seem startling that these simple, almost automatic prerogatives are not customary, and it may also explain the feebleness of much of the work of good directors. The trend is toward director-writer teams with full control of production, and this condition must be hastened in the case of projected social films. The teamwork of Frank Capra-Robert Riskin, and John Ford-Dudley Nichols has proved how effective this control can be, both artistically and financially.

From the keen and imaginative Jacob Wilk, who seized the story of Benito Juarez in his capacity as story editor, through the front office trio of Jack L. Warner, Hal B. Wallis, and Henry W. Blanke, to the research and writing of John Huston, Aeneas MacKenzie, and Wolfgang Reinhardt, to the historical checking by Jesse Dossick of New York University, among others, *Juarez* received a most salutary preparation. William Dieterle, the director, was given something to work with and he brought his job off brilliantly. In the production mechanics, the pioneering experiences in writing, and the deep seriousness with which this picture was made, we can see the rough outline of the setup necessary for the mature social film in America. Not often have pioneers gone out into the dark to bring back such a harvest.

"NEW HORIZONS"

The third panel in Lenfilm's admirable Maxim biography, *New Horizons*, has reached the Cameo (N.Y.). In *The Youth of Maxim* and its successor, *The Return of Maxim*, we saw the political awakening of a Leningrad lathe worker and his steady growth as a leader of the October Revolution. The directors, Gregory Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg, change the key of the third study to one of rich humor and boisterous Russian self-criticism. The time is 1918. The insurrectionist phase is passing; the Bolsheviks are routing the bourgeois sects in the Duma; and Maxim comes back from the war to the gigantic challenge of socialist reconstruction. Other civil war heroes, without the political fiber of Maxim, came back to the ravaged villages, the starving women and children, and the skilled jobs abandoned by the bourgeoisie. The boredom and the bickerings and the sleepless nights of the work drove some of them to suicide. But not our Maxim, who wished he knew as many languages as he knew songs.

Maxim returns from the front to Smolny Institute in Petrograd for his next assignment. Sverdlov gives him the shocking news that he has been chosen to handle the ruined monetary system as commissar of the Government Bank. Poincare and Lloyd George have shut off the credit of the Workers Republic,

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although they had passed billions into the czar's war. Maxim knows nothing about banking but he wades into the job, despite the sabotage of the bank employees, the poor supply of money, and the heartbreaking needs of the starving people. He repudiates the Allied loans to the czar, requisitions insurance clerks to take the places of the vanished bankers, and sits up night after night studying books on banking.

His comrade, Natasha, is the chairman of the district soviet of Vyborg, working-class quarter of Petrograd. Her problems are, if anything, worse, because she has to deal every day with the desperate workers' wives and children of Vyborg who have been cut off from the Kerensky relief. Anarchists are marching around chanting their wonderful slogans of destruction while the Red cadres are trying heroically to put the pieces together. The Anarchists learned responsibility in Spain two decades later but here in Petrograd they are social nuisances only matched by the White Guards and interventionists. The love and work of Maxim and Natasha meet fleetingly in the wild six months before intervention. One episode that stands up revealingly in the film is a trial of Anarchists and wreckers before the People's Court of Vyborg, presided over by Natasha. The justice of socialism, which springs from a new moral law, is illustrated in these proceedings.

Boris Chirkov in the familiar Maxim role continues to be the very model of the modest, humorous commissars who each did ten men's work for society in the chaotic birth years of socialism. Many were killed by the interventionists and others died of overwork, heroes of the desk. Maxim sweats blood over his banking books as Lenin wore his great soul thin in the drudgery of building again what enemies had razed. Lenin, Stalin, and other Bolshevik leaders appear in *New Horizons* in the magical reenactments we have come to expect from the Soviet film. M. Shtraukh is again Lenin, the sharp and imperturbable, quick and gay. Dmitri Shostakovich composes the film music, fitted cunningly into the emotional pattern of the story. The climactic episode is a beautiful thing. Maxim receives a copy of the first state budget of the Russian Federated Socialist Republics, the culmination of his brave work. Heroes have been rewarded at the end of films by love, touchdowns, or the juncture of transcontinental railroads, but there have been few compensations as satisfying as that of the lathe worker who became a banker, mastered the science of finance, and was rewarded by a wonderful paper full of figures. But this is not the happily-ever-after denouement. Natasha pleads for more money for Vyborg housing and bread and the telephone announces to Maxim that he must strap on his revolver and go to meet the German interventionists. There will be happiness ahead for Maxim and Natasha and the millions of them but it will have to be through more sleepless nights and snowbound forays against the enemy in the fateful decades to come.

JAMES DUGAN.

## Four Artists

A. Birnbaum, Selma F. Ramsey, Robert Liebknecht, Harriet Fitzgerald.

WHAT A. Birnbaum says and what he means are so exquisitely one that he stands as a formidable adversary to those who have not yet pitched their tents on the logic side of the line. We must acclaim, with all the understanding we can bring to bear, this champion whose mental maturity finds its counterpart in a thoroughly well elaborated graphic expression.

NEW MASSES readers will find at Birnbaum's one-man show, at the FAR Gallery (N. Y.) throughout May, certain of the political drawings that have appeared in the magazine. They will find besides these, however, works in a different mood, animated by the same astute perception (this time of the more familiar scene), testimony to the equipment which the artist carries into the field of caricature. For Birnbaum is an A-1 draftsman and his line is as sure and direct as it is purposeful. The statement is simple, but in almost every case, especially in the work called *East Side Interior*, the overtones ring out the meaning that exists over and above the straight factual portrayal.

Thus *Unemployed*, a rich figure study of a man seated on a park bench, provokes a profound sense of quiet but weary listlessness. Incidentally, it is nice to see Birnbaum's exact and tasteful use of color.

The murderous, or ridiculous, or treacherous Hitlers, Mussolinis, and Chamberlains need no evaluation here—Birnbaum's pen is far mightier than the fascist sword. To watch it work with lesser fury but ever constant magic, go look with him at Joan Crawford,



BENJAMIN ZEMACH. He is appearing with a ballet of fifty at the *Freiheit Gesang Ferein's Festival of Jewish Choral Music at the Hippodrome in New York City on Saturday evening, May 20.*

the Windsors, and *I Am the Law* Hague.

At the ACA Gallery a group show brought the work of three artists, two of whom stem from these shores, while the third sends his paintings from Paris. The last is Robert Liebknecht, son of the famous Karl Liebknecht, who as a painter is not concerned with the social scene, but seems rather to be engrossed with the natural scenic brilliance of his adopted France. The ten canvases shown all evidenced the Impressionist's absorbed interest in movement, light, and color, and while one felt occasionally that the articulation was confused, there is much of interest and of future promise in his work. Harriet Fitzgerald's concern is with the streets and landscape and people of her native South. She paints with smooth competence on an easy level of comprehension. Selma Freeman Ramsey has chosen a more complex path; with highly original stylization she succeeds in drawing for us the groups of men and women who constitute part of the "one-third of a nation"—furriers at work, underprivileged children at play in the streets, etc. Hers is a genuine talent working to point up the existing reality.

M. R. LINDEN.

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WITH the amount of ballyhoo given to Hollywood guest stars, listeners can't be blamed for thinking that movieland supplies radio's choicest acting talent. The fact is, though, when it comes to broadcasting, very few of the screen's top-flight actors can hold their own with even a mediocre radio performer.

Given straight parts, these glittering West Coast sensations can get along reasonably well. But for practical air purposes, most of them are about as useful in a studio as a baguette watch.

Good radio technique requires more than an ermine wrap, a Grecian profile, or an exotic personality manufactured in a makeup department. It requires versatility. It requires the ability to change a voice, a dialect, or a mood in a moment's passing. And in this respect, good radio actors are true artists. They are the backbone of radio, though the listening public never hears of them unless they hire press agents.

Frank Lovejoy, for example, has had his name on Broadway but never on a radio announcement. A legitimate stage leading-man himself, he has supported numerous Hollywood importations—has even carried them—but he is unknown to the air audience. Walter Vaughn, with fifteen years of vaudeville experience and the ability to play any character from the toughest mug to a drawing-room sophisticate, is obscure when it comes to radio listeners. Jackson Beck, a one-man cast, is an asset to any show. The Italian, the German, the Greek—they are all Jackson

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Beck. But who knows it? Carl Frank can run his voice from sixteen to sixty, can make you laugh or cry, yet no one hears of him. Ken Digneau has no superior in his roles. Judge, detective, banker, roughneck, each part that Digneau may be playing, has a distinct and convincing tone.

Then, there are Ray Collins, Frank Rettig, Ken Delmar, Lois Jessen, Betty Worth, Ken Lynch, Stefan Schnabel, Barbara Weeks, Don Costello, and numerous others, all of whom are capable artists, and in constant program demand. These people are the real actors of radio—talent without whom the air would be dull, even dead. And they can't depend upon expensive tailoring or facial expressions to project their personalities through a microphone. They must rely solely upon their voices and their feelings. Today, Orson Welles is a name on the air. But he was recognized as a competent radio actor long before his Broadway stage triumph, or his sensational H. G. Wells broadcast, although, like the others, he was not a "star" to the listening public.

Some day many of the above may also crash the headlines. But don't wait until then to express your appreciation. When you hear a characterization that especially pleases you, let the sponsor know about it. It might mean a break for an "unknown."

JOHN VERNON.

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ONE of the most important choral groups in New York City, the New Singers, was heard in an extremely interesting program of American song on April 28. This group, which is conducted by Frank Ilchuk, has heretofore evidenced an ability to concoct programs of vital interest. On this occasion, there was presented a cross-section of American song (selected by Elie Siegmeister) which fell into the categories: "From the Revolution to the Civil War," "Folk Songs," "Negro Folk Songs," and "Songs of Democracy." Many of these were in splendid arrangements by Mr. Siegmeister who also acted as commentator. In fact, most of the songs were in manuscript (significant comment on the American music publishing business) and the standard arrangement of the white spiritual, *Poor Wayfaring Stranger*, by G. P. Jackson and E. J. Gatwood, was the most inadequate of all.

In making these early songs of democratic struggle available to choral singers Mr. Siegmeister has made an important contribution; no less important was the part played by the New Singers and Mr. Ilchuk, who gave them splendid performances. The program was further enhanced by the, as usual, exceptional pianism of Milton Kaye, who played *Three Preludes* of George Gershwin and a new sprightly *Sonatina* by Morton Gould.

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