

Can Armaments Bring Prosperity? *By Frank J. Wallace*

# NEW MASSES

FIFTEEN CENTS

September 24, 1940

**THE WAR'S REAL AIMS**

by

**R. Palme Dutt**

**Laureates of Betrayal**

*by V. J. Jerome*

**Mars Goes to the Fair**

*by James Morison*

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## Between Ourselves

**U**NLIKE the editors of the late *Nineteenth Century*, who dismissed their staff for the day at four o'clock and spent the remainder of the afternoon enjoying an elaborate high tea, NM's editors are besieged from dawn to dusk with ideas, plans, articles, and schedules. With the fall season has come a burst of energy from NM's friends, contributors, and even from NM's staff. As we write, the printers are setting the first of two articles by R. Palme Dutt, entitled "The War's Real Aims." The manuscript came out of bombarded London and across a treacherous sea to NM's office. Next week's Dutt article discusses the vital issues of the life and death now before the British public, and more particularly before the entire British labor movement. Dutt's Marxist prescience, so brilliantly exemplified in his analysis of the causes of France's fall and by his identification of her betrayers, is again available to NM's readers, and only to NM's readers. We are proud to number again the famous editor of the *Labour Monthly* among our current contributors.

And we are also proud to be able to announce an article from France, by that same Philippe Deval whose pieces foreshadowing the June capitulation were published exclusively in these columns. Such French news as the public press has been able to publish has been either colored with propaganda or sifted by the Vichy or Berlin censors. Mr. Deval speaks frankly, reporting the new moods of the French people today, their economic situation, and the recent changes in the Cabinet of Marshal Petain.

In fact we are assured by numerous readers that they are finding NM much more useful than Franklin Roosevelt. A. B. Magil's article on Stalin evoked much favorable comment. Typical is a note from Grace Hutchins, author of *Women Who Work*: "Heartiest congratulations on A. B. Magil's swell article about Stalin. It was greatly needed and is most timely and valuable. The whole issue seemed to be the best there's been for several weeks." Another reader, J. K., makes an interesting point apropos of Magil's statement that Trotsky, in his *History of the Russian Revolution* omits all mention of the Sixth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in July-August 1917, in order to conceal the fact that in the absence of Lenin (who had been forced by Kerensky into hiding) Stalin was chosen by the Central Committee to give the two main reports. "This was the congress," adds J. K., "at which

Trotsky was himself admitted for the first time to membership in the Bolshevik Party. Because of this, his omission of all reference to the congress is the more glaring."

From far-off Seattle comes a letter which commends our plan to send Joe North on a tour of the nation for the purpose of reporting on the political, social, and economic scene. T. L. also writes: "As for our local news, Washington is a progressive state and we progressives have been working hard to help save the country and the state from what's being cooked up for them by the chefs over in Congress. I think a lesson is to be learned from what the various unions and other organizations in the Washington Commonwealth Federation have just done. They took John L. Lewis' advice and concentrated on congressmen recommended by Labor's Non-Partisan League in the primary election. After seeing how some congressmen voted on the conscription bill, we old hands at scanning the political skies know that if we don't vote against the traitors, they'll be back in 1941 to plague us anew. As for getting labor together, you ought to have seen the parade over in Seattle on Labor Day, CIO, AFL, Peace Council, Pension Unionists, all in one big mass. . . ."

The other afternoon a friend of NM brought into the editorial office a batch of letters from overseas. One was from the women's camp at Rieucros, in unoccupied France. It said: "We have nothing to eat. We are obliged to boil grass." From the men's camp at Le Vernet d'Ariege comes: "The thing most lacking is food. Even bread is not obtainable." There were letters from other anti-fascist internment camps, where Lion Feuchtwanger, Franz Werfel, Dr. Alfred Neumann, Friedrich Wolf and hundreds of other intellectuals are incarcerated. The Exiled Writers Committee of the League of American Writers has obtained twelve scenarist contracts in Hollywood for refugees; funds are being raised and food packages, medical supplies, money, and visas are being forwarded. A committee which includes Alfred Einstein, Jules Romains, Jose Bergamin, Henri Bernstein, Maurice Maeterlinck, Ramon Sender, and many others has joined in this work; we urge our readers to send contributions to the committee at 381 Fourth Ave., N. Y.

Many are the announcements of future activities. One such date has double significance, for the announcement that Ruth McKenney is to speak at the Fordham Forum at 2413 Grand Concourse, the Bronx, on Friday, September 20, at 8:30 p.m., means

that Ruth is well enough to quit her recent sickbed and therefore well enough to renew next week her series of weekly NM columns under the title "Strictly Personal."

The business office has a number of memos for readers. One concerns the subscription advertisement on page 23. Lack of space there makes it impossible to explain that the increase in subscription scale, which takes place on October 1, is due to the war and the consequent steep rise in the cost of paper. Carl Bristel, NM's business manager, urges readers to renew their subscriptions before that date, in order to take advantage of the lower rates and the book premiums listed in the ad.

Another date to remember, says Mr. Bristel, is October 20, when the John Reed memorial meeting, under NM's sponsorship, will be held in New York City. Indeed, Mr. Bristel is prolix in announcing future events: "Interpretation, Please!" a unique feature, will be presented at a meeting, date not yet fixed; NM's annual Webster Hall ball will take place on Saturday, December 7, and a committee is already working on NM's gala New Year's Jamboree. Don't say we didn't tell you.

### Who's Who

**R. PALME DUTT** is the author of *R. World Politics: 1918-1936* and *Fascism and Social Revolution*. Dutt has been editor of the *British Labour Monthly* since its inception in 1921. . . . Frank J. Wallace is a New

York economist and writer. . . . Sasha Small is connected with the ILD. . . . V. J. Jerome is an outstanding Marxist scholar whose contributions have appeared frequently in NM. His article in this issue is from his forthcoming pamphlet, *Intellectuals and the War*. . . . James Morison, a free lance labor journalist, is a regular contributor to NM. . . . Ralph Ellison has written articles and reviews for NM before. He is a young Negro writer. . . . Joseph Starobin is an editorial writer on NM, specializing in foreign affairs.

### Flashbacks

**T**HIS week two years ago (September 1938) the British empire made one of its greatest efforts to engage Hitler's attention toward the East—and in a campaign against socialism. Czechoslovakia, a democracy, was betrayed by the same social forces now calling on Americans to defend Britain. . . . And while we are taking a glance at the Nazis: Sept. 23, 1933, was the day on which the Reichstag fire trial began. . . . An anniversary of which to take special note in this period of increasing domestic tyranny falls on September 22. That day in 1776 an American, Nathan Hale, aged twenty-one, was executed on American soil by the enemies of American freedom. . . . The Bill of Rights, by the way, was adopted by Congress at its first session on Sept. 25, 1789. Peacetime conscriptees are reminded that "Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech, etc."

## This Week

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## Who Is the Criminal?

AN EDITORIAL

**T**Hese bombings of London and Berlin—few of us have anything but an intellectual comprehension of what they must mean in terms of the fright of little children, the anguish of mothers, the helplessness of both the weak and strong against the sudden suffocation of death, the death whose memory haunts the living. Imagine what it must mean to carry on the simple affairs of life when all day long and through the long hours of night two-thousand-pound spheres of steel and high explosive come hurtling from the sky, ripping open the intestines of the city, tearing apart the delicate ganglia of electric and telephone wires, uprooting the tissues of gas and water mains, shattering through wood and glass, concrete and steel. Imagine human conversation in the scream of shells, the bark of anti-aircraft guns, the air raid alarm, the wail of ambulance and fire engine sirens, the terrifying glow of approaching conflagration, the shroud of smoke. People who once watched the ancient spires and domes of their city facing proudly into the heavens now huddle—those who can—among the damp catacombs of their civilization. Such is the agony of Europe today. Such is the culmination of two thousand years of the Christian era. This is the Europe, which, as R. Palme Dutt recently observed, feared revolution because it meant “too much violence”!

In one of last week's editorials the New York *Herald Tribune* asked how it was that such barbarism crept up on civilization. How was it that decent men stood idle while this menace to “humane society” was still in its early stages?

The question is worth asking. Where were the editors of the American press, and all those who derive their gospel from it, when the airplanes of the Rising Sun brought darkness to the suburbs of Shanghai? Where were these minions of “humane society” when Bruno Mussolini cavorted over the villages of Abyssinia? Where were they all—the responsables—when we warned that the Chamberlain conspiracy with Hitler, the Roosevelt embargo, and the treacherous sabotage of the Socialist International against the people of Guernica, Valencia, Barcelona, Madrid would some day bring the agony of Spain to all the capitals of capitalist Europe?

What is it really that now shocks these paragons of culture and good manners, these guardians of morality? What really underlies their indignation at the bombing of London? *It is the fact that the horrors which they had been visiting upon the colonial peoples for centuries have finally overtaken themselves.* They are outraged at Hitler because he is treating them the way they have been accustomed to treat the peoples of India, of China, and Palestine, South Africa, Ireland, the Caribbean. Hitler has taken the doctrine of “race,” which the *Herald Tribune's* humane society applies every day against twelve million black citizens of the United States, and applied that doctrine against Czechs, Poles, Frenchmen—and now even Britons, too.

This violence in Europe, this spectacle of a world disemboweling itself, was not imposed upon us from without. It did not invade us from another planet. It is not some sudden neurosis, mysteriously afflicting the centers of wholesomeness and health. This violence, this madness springs from the system of capitalism, of which both Britain and Germany have been the foremost representatives in Europe, the models of technical, commercial, financial success. This violence is native, generic. *It is the most dramatic, concentrated expression of that continual anarchy and violence which is the normal mode of behavior of capitalist life.*

Property destroyed in London? Imperialism has always been the

most wanton destroyer of property; its economic crises, with all the horrors of major war, continually wipe out human resources and achievement. Concentrating wealth and power in the hands of the few, the system of capitalism continually robs the small businessman and farmer of his independence, forcibly separates the workman from his work. Human anguish and suffering? All during times of peace, the cup is overbrimming. The system of imperialism imposes the anguish of poverty upon millions of workingmen, frustrates the talents of their children, inspires the dread of ostracism and insecurity even in the doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers—the successful middle classes.

Hitler's regime was founded on violence. It was consolidated in continued violence against the noblest aspirations, the bravest representatives of the German people. This war which Hitler carries to England is merely the extension of a war he has carried on against Germany for seven long years. Likewise, the British empire was conceived and aggrandized in piracy. Not merely in bygone centuries, but against the Boers in 1900, the Irish during Easter Week, 1916, the Indians at Amritsar in 1919, the Jews and Arabs both in Palestine; British planes still bomb the villages of northwest India year after year. It is only a subtler but none the less real violence which has converted three-quarters of London into a vast slum, which makes misery the normal thing in the depressed areas of Wales.

Why should we choose the lesser evil between the bombardments of London and Berlin in the face of the fundamental evil which makes such bombings possible? Why should we measure the degree of greater guilt for one side or the other when the greatest guilt lies in those cancerous social relations which both Hitler and Churchill seek so desperately to defend?

Our own country has become the stronghold, the arsenal of world imperialism. Our ruling class has ever been quick to violence; its vigilantes, its lynch mobs, its labor spies, its gunmen and gangsters have always been the pillars of “humane society.” With the passage of the conscription bill we have been dragged into the first stages of American fascism; none of us even dimly comprehends the changes for the worse which are being imposed upon American life. Let nobody complain five years from now that he was not forewarned. Our ruling class grows in arrogance. Bombs and bayonets are being prepared against the good-neighborly peoples of the hemisphere; tar and feathers (and bayonets, too) for all good men and women of self-respect who protest the degradation of living standards, the violence to civil liberties which always accompany reactionary wars.

There is no peace. Let no one abuse the name of peace who is not ready to take issue with the system of imperialism which brought on us this war. Democracy is becoming a legend; the democracy which they promise us is hedged around with the fatal conditions of slavery. The independence of a dozen nations has been lost and will be regained only in the struggle for new economic relations, the elimination of exploitation by the few of the many.

The entire literature of socialism was prophetic of this juncture in human affairs. Socialism's victory among the 200,000,000 people in the USSR means above all that the conditions which gave rise to this most terrible of wars have been abolished on one-sixth of the earth. The price which we are asked to pay for the continuation of these conditions means ruin, disaster, barbarism desolating the earth. Can we really afford this any longer?

# The War's Real Aims

R. Palme Dutt exposes the true goals of the warring powers. Balance sheet after one year. Death keeps the books as the rival imperialisms vie to take over imperial Britain's 450,000,000.

London (by mail).

ONE year of war. Every continent of the eastern hemisphere, Europe, Africa, and Asia, is now engaged in war; and the interval before the dragging in of the western hemisphere, of America, is already becoming visibly narrow. A year ago, at the outset of the present war, we noted that this was not yet a world war. The action of the Soviet Union had limited its scope and had thus won a last opportunity, in a way that did not exist at the outset of the first world war, for the working people to stifle it and bring it to a close before it had reached its full scope. We noted that were this chance not taken, then it would inevitably extend to world war on a scale far more terrible and with even more far-reaching consequences than the first world war. This path has now been trodden; the advocates of the extension of the war have had their way. The war is now very close to world war. From the more limited inception the rate of development has been very much more rapid than in the first world war. Only the socialist world remains genuinely outside and neutral, holding in its protection two hundred millions of people, one-tenth of mankind, the representatives and guardians of the future, of all human values in the midst of barbarism and reaction. The struggle that opens is more severe: the extension of the war brings great dangers and hardships to all people; but it brings also great opportunities to courageous mass leadership in the midst of the crumbling of the old, sick society. More than ever we need to make true today the words of the Basel resolution three decades ago of the old Socialist International: "*The proletariat is conscious of being at this moment the bearer of the entire future of mankind. The proletariat will exert all its energy to prevent the annihilation of the flower of all peoples, threatened by all the horrors of mass murder, starvation, and pestilence.*"

One year of war. What is the balance sheet? All the contestants are engaged in feverishly counting up their gains and losses, their relative strength for the final decisive conflict that now opens. The outcome of this year makes no glorious record for capitalist civilization. The mounting lists of dead and wounded; the disorganization of economy; all science, technique, and labor turned to the reckless output of engines of destruction; the shadow of famine over Europe; nations enslaved; the destruction of popular liberties; the enthronement of corruption, profiteering, and reaction; the subjection of the labor movement: these are the fruits of one year of war. The capitalist rulers of the world have "solved" the economic crisis, which was beginning to gather in 1937 and which threatened

to be more extensive and disastrous than the crisis of 1929, only by the expedient of a general bloodletting and devastation which has let loose a more terrible and deep mortal crisis of their whole system. Of the governments which launched the war, in the one camp the Polish government is already indicted and condemned, not only by the Polish people, but even by its refugee successors from among the old corrupt ruling class; the French government is under trial by its own reactionary successors; the Entente is in ruins. In Britain the Chamberlain government has fallen and had to give way to the reconstructed Churchill-Chamberlain-Bevin government, which in turn begins to be shaken before the rising mass discontent. In the other camp, despite the military successes which have subjected ninety millions of people (still only a fraction of those subject to the British empire), Hitler fascism has entered on the path of its undoing. Having first come forward and even won support as the supposed champion against the dictate of Versailles, it has now advanced with the dictate of Compiègne on the same path of imperialist conquest and domination and has thereby fostered the avenging forces, already strong within its own territory, and now reinforced by the struggles of national liberation leading to its future downfall. Only Communism, only the socialist Soviet Union and the Communist Parties, have gained in real and lasting strength in this first year of war, to a degree for which there could be no parallel in the first year of the first world war. This is manifest, not only in the relative international position of the Soviet Union and in the situation in the countries bordering the Soviet Union, but also in France, in Germany, and in the present first stage of gathering political crisis in Britain.

It is inevitable that comparisons will be made between the first year of the war of 1914 and the first year of the present war. The contrast is marked. At the conclusion of its first year the war of 1914 had already settled down to the war of position from which it did not emerge for three years, and then only consequent on social-political factors of disintegration which ended the military deadlock. The scale of casualties, of mass slaughter, of that first year was far heavier; the military and political outcome far less. The effective forces of the contestants were then more evenly matched at the outset. British and French imperialism were not only at a less advanced stage of inner decomposition, but had built up for a preceding decade their combination with Russian czarism. They had not yet reached the dilemmas of the modern period in which their class antipathies

led them to abandon their traditional system of balance and finally brought them to launch war in isolation against German imperialism, after first building up its strength. The scale and rate of political-military events, of collapse of states, of sudden far-reaching transformations and sharp turns is far more rapid in this war.

This markedly different character is a reflection of the advanced stage of the general crisis of capitalism within which this war takes place. In the last war the weaker, internally crumbling empires, with a still considerable feudal admixture, which broke up under the stress of war, were successively the Russian, the Austro-Hungarian, and finally the German junker-industrialist empire—though in the last case the basic monopoly-capitalist structure remained intact and was able to rebuild its system in a new form, first through the Weimar republic and finally through fascism. In this war the older, internally weakening empires are the British and French; while German imperialism, though rent with extreme class antagonism to the point of veiled civil war, represents at the same time the newest, most advanced state-capitalist organization of monopoly capital, and is the advancing claimant to colonies, not yet the possessor. The French empire has already gone down in the first year of war; and the battle develops over its inheritance. All the challenging forces of imperialism now direct their attack against the British empire, calculate openly on its demise, and struggle over the inheritance.

The new stage of the war, following on the collapse of France, is thus characterized by the converging attack on the British empire by the challenging imperialist forces from every point of the compass and in every corner of the globe; while the British empire, still confident in its strength, gathers its forces to repel the assault and deliver its counter-offensive equally on a world scale. In this conflict the British empire calculates on the support of the United States even at the same time as the United States stakes her claim for the reversion of the colonies in the eastern hemisphere. British imperialism, utilizing its weapon of naval supremacy, extends its blockade of Europe to a system of world-trade control. German imperialism, having established its domination on the Continent of western and central Europe, and having offered, and been refused, peace on the basis of recognition of this domination, together with colonial and naval concessions, is now in a position to advance to the world offensive against the British empire: first, from its bases on the western European coasts, to strengthen its counter-blockade and attack the nerve,



LAGUARDIA

Groop



Gropper

centers of the empire by an enlarging aerial offensive; second, to feel its way toward the advance along the old route to the Near and Middle East; third, to utilize its Spanish ally for the attack on Gibraltar to close the Mediterranean from that end; and fourth, to utilize its Italian ally for the attack on Suez, Egypt, Aden, and British power in Africa leading in the one direction to South Africa, with the strong pro-Nazi forces there established, and in the other direction again to the vital strategic centers of the Middle East. Japanese imperialism, associated with the Axis but acting independently, presses its offensive in the Far East; encouraged, but not appeased, by the surrender of the Burma road, forces the withdrawal of troops from Central China, threatens Hong Kong, presses toward Indo-China, demands the complete withdrawal of Britain from the Far East, and begins to advance its claims to the Dutch East Indies. At the same time the United States, while fomenting the European conflict and sending military support to Britain, by the Havana decisions ("the greatest victory since 1776," i.e., since the victorious War of Independence against Britain, in the words of the Columbia Broadcasting Corp.) advances the first form of its claim, under the guise of American "collective trusteeship," to the colonies in and adjoining the American continent.

As the full world compass of the present conflict thus comes physically and geographically into view in the present phase, with the spheres of operations extending thousands of miles apart over different continents and revealing the European battle as only the starting point and metropolitan center; as Askaris and Somalis are set fighting one another for the privilege of being dominated and exploited by one or another set of white rulers; as former allies and comrades-in-arms are, in a twinkling, on the word of command of their governments, engaged in blowing one another to pieces; as the armies mass on the borders of Syria, in Egypt, Palestine, and Transjordan; as the fate of the Dutch East Indies, of Indo-China, or of Guiana and the West Indies comes onto the auction table: so, inevitably, the real character of the war begins to become manifest to the most credulous and the least observant, in its relentless, realistic outlines, as a conflict of imperialist powers for the domination of the world. This plain reality still sticks in the gullet of the liberal ideologues whose fading fantasies accompany the progress of the war, until the time comes for them to bewail their disillusionment after they have served their purpose.

It is characteristic of the present phase that, in the midst of the sharpness of the struggle and the dangers confronting the peoples, the question begins to be sounded anew: For what are we fighting? After the example of France, and with the similar blows against democracy gathering force in Britain, the original slogans begin to lose their force. ("The dividing line in Europe is not, as has been sometimes absurdly suggested, between democratic and non-democratic states." — Lord Lloyd, *The*

*British Case*, with introduction by Lord Halifax.) The demand begins to be voiced anew in the liberal-labor press for a definition of war aims only to be met with the old refusal and evasions from the government. This demand for a definition of war aims is, in fact, the reflection of the uneasy consciousness of the liberal ideologues that the imperialist realities are burning through their idealistic myths. As the *Daily Herald* naively declared, in castigating the government for its refusal to give any definition of war aims other than victory:

That attitude will not do. It will not eradicate the suspicion, still active in the minds of many foreign onlookers, that the only true reason for our declaring war was to preserve our imperialistic monopolies. [*Daily Herald*, Aug. 12, 1940.]

After a year of war, after a year of propaganda for the glorious aims of the war, the official apologist of the Labor Party, Harold Laski, wishes to know what the war is for: "We want full knowledge, and in concrete terms, of our war aims. It is not enough, after almost a year of war, to be told that our aim is victory. Victory for what?" (Harold Laski, "Trust the People," in the *Daily Herald*, August 8.) After a year of war, after a year of no less ecstatic propaganda, the official Labor Party organ finds that there is no "clear idea of what we are fighting for": "We have been at war for nearly a year. By now the world should have a pretty clear idea of what we are fighting for. But has it? It has not." (*Daily Herald* editorial, August 12.) Recalling the famous Labor Declaration of Peace Aims of last February, which was hawked round a hundred Labor Conferences over the country to confuse and rally hesitant Labor workers into support of imperialism, the *Daily Herald* now, belatedly, discovers that this document (the prospectus on the basis of which the war was "sold" to the labor movement) has no binding value whatever for the ruling class, which holds the power and whose organ is the Conservative Party: "No such definition of war and peace aims has ever come from the leaders of the Conservative Party." (*Ibid.*) Quite so. The class which rules determines the war aims, and the war aims of the imperialists can only be imperialist. To refuse to face this simple fact is willful self-deception. But it would have been better to have recognized it at the time of the Labor Conferences.

The same Labor Party leaders who produced the document in February have now united with the leaders of the Conservative Party in a single government controlled by the Conservative Party, by the representatives of finance capital. Therefore they have now to become the official apologists of the government policy of refusing a definition of war aims. The following parliamentary comedy accordingly takes place, performed by the same Attlee in August who in February proclaimed Labor's War Aims:

Mr. Sloan asked the prime minister [Mr. Churchill] whether he was prepared at an early date to

make a statement of the peace aims of the government.

MR. ATTLEE: The importance of my honorable friend's question is not underestimated. Members of the government have on previous occasions stated our aims, and these will be elaborated at the appropriate time.

Mr. Bartlett asked if the right honorable gentleman would define the phrase "an appropriate time."

MR. ATTLEE: I do not think it is possible to define "an appropriate time" beyond saying that "an appropriate time" is a time that is appropriate. (Laughter)

Like Nero's fiddle, the "laughter" of Parliament accompanies the conflagration of civilization. The "laughter" of Parliament is the answer of the ruling class to those who are innocent enough to ask for what they are required to fight.

When Molotov in his blunt fashion defined the war aims of British imperialism—about which its official representatives prefer to be decently reticent—in reference to the refusal of the British government to discuss peace terms, following Hitler's official proposal of July 19: "This means that the British government does not wish to give up the colonies which Britain possesses in every part of the world, that it is prepared to continue the war for world supremacy" (Molotov, speech to the Supreme Soviet, Aug. 1, 1940), the *London Times* was hurt at such a coarse presentation of the idealistic aims of the British imperialists:

At one or two points he misinterpreted the British war aims and the reasons for the British determination to win. He declared that the British government are "prepared to continue the war for world supremacy." In fact the British government and the British people are prepared to continue the war against world supremacy, against the German attempt to make all other peoples subservient." [*The Times*, August 2.]

The sublime unconsciousness of this comment could only be achieved by the training of generations of Podsnappery. That the British empire should hold one-quarter of the earth's surface and one-quarter of the earth's population is obviously in the natural order of things and by no means a claim to "world supremacy." But this upstart Hitler has already conquered and annexed some ninety millions of human beings. The British empire has conquered and annexed some 450,000,000. Hitler holds ninety millions in subjection. The British empire holds 450,000,000 in subjection. Is it not obvious to every right-thinking person that the British empire, in combating Hitler's expansion, is manfully combating, not "for world supremacy," but "against world supremacy, against the German attempt to make all other peoples subservient"? Such is the "reasoning" of the British imperialists. Indeed, they have become so unconscious of the trifling detail of their own empire that they have begun to picture themselves, for public view, as a heroic little nation battling alone against a vast imperialistic octopus—"You must not expect immediate miracles all over the world from a nation which numbers only 45,000,000

souls, a third of your own size." (Lord Lothian, British ambassador to the United States, speaking at the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, April 19, 1940.)

Fearlessly pursuing its argument with Molotov, the *Times* even ventures to enter the dark region of the question of colonies:

Twice during his speech M. Molotov seemed to suggest that the only reason for continuing the war was "the question of the redistribution of colonies." That question is only one of many. During the years when the British government were working for peace they set no limits to the scope of general talks with a Germany genuinely desiring peace. The British people fought only when they saw that Germany's ambitions included not merely colonies, but the domination of Europe.

The unconsciousness here is no less sublime. The domination of hundreds and hundreds of millions of non-European peoples in colonial subjection appears only right and proper. These are spoils over the distribution of which a deal might be made under suitable conditions, provided German imperialism were prepared to be reasonably subservient in other respects (against the Soviet Union) and on this basis to receive such colonial crumbs as might be granted instead of claiming the main spoils. But the domination of some scores of millions of European peoples—this is an outrage which can only be met by war. The British imperialists thus present themselves as fighting against "the domination of Europe" by Germany. But this question also merits further definition.

The unification of Europe is historically necessary and inevitable. Such unification can only be combined with national equality and freedom on the basis of socialism, on the same principles as are already realized in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and further exemplified in the voluntary adhesion of the Baltic peoples. Within imperialism this unification can only take place on the basis of the domination of one or another imperialist power. The actual question posed by the present situation is: *under which power?* British imperialism is certainly determined to prevent the unification of Europe under the domination of Germany, for this would provide the decisive basis for the challenge of German imperialism to win world power against the existing world power of British imperialism. But the British imperialists are equally certain that they are themselves destined to be the leaders of Europe. This aim of domination and veiled annexation found expression in the conception of "Federal Union," which underwent a shipwreck with the fall of France. But the aim has not been abandoned. Within four days of its repudiation of Germany's ambition to dominate Europe, the same *Times* was declaring: "Great Britain . . . will become the natural leader in the reconstruction of Europe." (*The Times*, August 6.)

The counter-revolutionary character of such projected "reconstruction" and domination is sufficiently indicated by the counter-revolu-

tionary, anti-popular character of the puppet "governments" and claimants now held in reserve in London for half the countries of Europe. *The issue of the "domination of Europe" is also only an aspect of the basic world imperialist conflict.*

This conflict is ravaging world economy with far greater intensity and devastating range than the first world war. When the war of 1914 broke out, capitalism had not yet reached the stage of a general world economic crisis, a suffocating surplus of all primary materials and manufactured goods, and wholesale policies of direct destruction and limitation of production. But the war of 1939 supervened on such a sick capitalism and, by the blocking of the channels of exchange between Europe and the other continents, has brought ruinous conditions to all countries.

The buy-and-burn policy spreads. A few days ago it became known that West Africa was to burn cocoa. Her European markets, except the British one, have gone. In South America many industries are running into the worst slump of all time. This is a result of the loss of markets. In Brazil coffee farmers are to give up 25 percent of their crops to be burned. . . . The policy of burning also spreads to the Argentine. . . .

There is, of course, danger for the future in this situation. Whereas in the last war there was a vast extension of acreage in foreign countries used for the production of foodstuffs, it is likely that on this occasion the absence of buyers will result in a reduction of acreage. Indeed, the time may come when the inability of nations to exchange goods with each other will bring about conditions of world famine. [*Evening Standard*, June 4, 1940.]

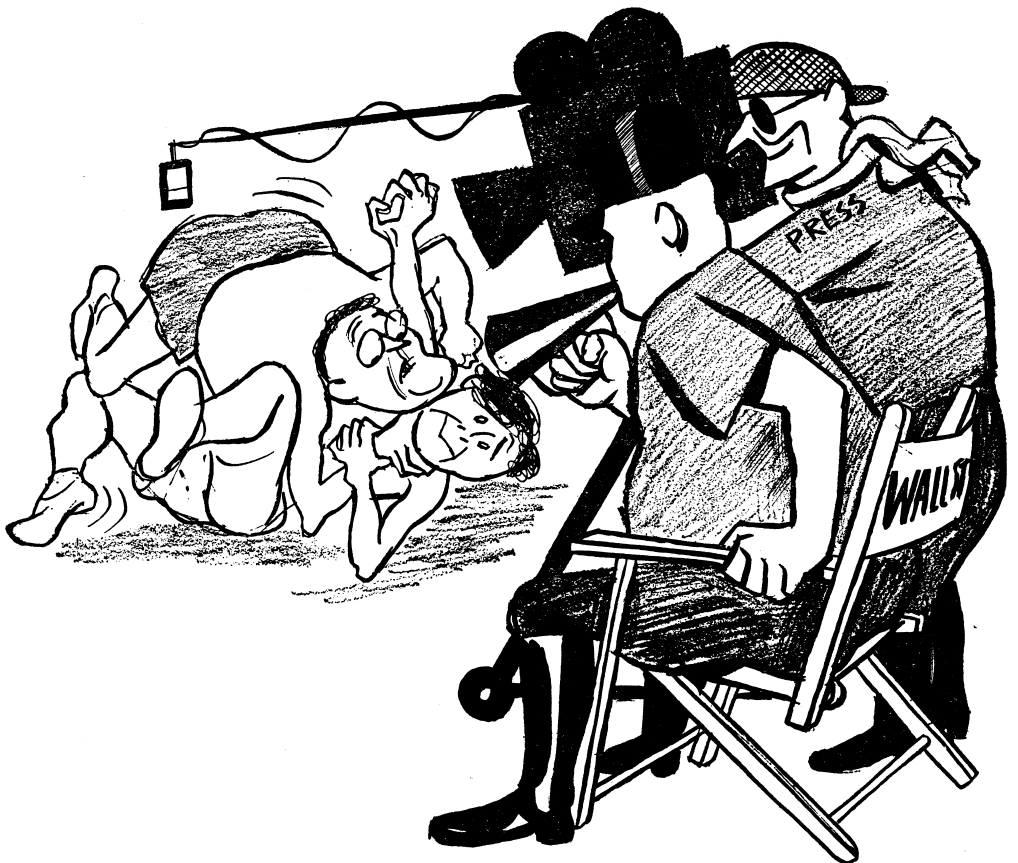
The world conflagration is no metaphor; its fires light up the skies of five continents as the means of life are being annihilated. Such are some of the fruits of the first twelve months of the "war for civilization."

R. PALME DUTT.

*This is the first of two articles by R. Palme Dutt. The second will appear next week.*

## New Jersey Disaster

**K**ENVIL is the little town in New Jersey in which one of the seven munitions factories of the Hercules Powder Company was located. The smokeless powder plant exploded last week, killing over fifty workers, wounding two hundred more, destroying the entire plant, the reverberations causing damage a hundred miles away. The FBI, various Dies committeemen, and the newspaper *PM* have been quick to hint at sabotage, especially since the German American Bund owns a camp at Nordland fifteen miles away. There is no evidence as yet; sabotage may have been responsible, as it undoubtedly was for such explosions in 1917. But it is well to remember that this particular plant suffered similar explosions in March and August of 1934, in which half a dozen lives were lost and scores wounded. District No. 50 of the United Mine Workers, which has been trying to organize this plant, warned months ago that the company's greed for profit and "criminal carelessness was sacrificing the elementary safety measures" in the munitions plants. In peacetime, as in war, workingmen are paying for such greed with their own lives.



"Make it look real, boys!"

Michaels



# Goering Said It First, Mr. President

“Cannon, not butter,” the Nazi warlord cried. The administration blesses the same policy. Frank J. Wallace proves that the armaments industry cannot cancel out unemployment.

A HEART-WARMING glow pervades the business press these days, and eagerness glistens in the eyes of the captains of industry. For the heavy fog is lifting. They can see ahead again. There are big profits to be garnered this side of the horizon. What but a hypocritical lip service to the moralities is it when the *National City Bank Bulletin* for August 1940 says, “It is a tragic circumstance that this long-hoped-for stimulus should come from the manufacture of weapons of war.” Listen to the trumpets as the *Bulletin* announces that the gravy is on the way:

The outstanding fact of the business situation is that the United States is starting out to build a vast new industry. During the past ten years many of our people, disappointed and disheartened by the failure of the country to resume the steady growth of production and trade which had been its characteristic for over a hundred years up to 1929, have searched eagerly for signs of some new industry capable of absorbing large amounts of capital and labor. It appears now that such an industry is in the making—the manufacture of armaments.

The utter degeneracy of capitalism to which this statement confesses is obvious enough. Let us, however, examine its implications for the great masses of Americans whose profits from this new burst of industrial activity may not be quite so obvious. New plants are being built. Orders for munitions and armaments are dangled before coy corporations. Men and women in the hundreds of thousands are going to be working in war-materials plants. There is indeed some talk of the “sacrifices” we must make, but the high-pressure optimism that is selling the “defense” program is promising us our guns and our butter too.

In the *Annalist* of July 18, 1940, the editor disparages the views of those who hold “that as defense production expands there must be contraction somewhere” and quotes approvingly an editorial in the *Exchange*, monthly organ of the New York Stock Exchange: “An expansion of ordinary production and distribution will, if experience counts for anything, run parallel to defense measures as employment is stimulated by industries engaged in manufacturing military necessities . . . as wage payments are enlarged and spending grows.” This is the bait that is jiggled under the noses of the American people: the war boom will bring back prosperity and put our unemployed millions back to work.

Let us examine the prospects for a resurgence of prosperity and a run on “Help Wanted” signs. It is the masses of workers, farmers, and middle class people with whom we are concerned. That prosperity has already returned for the bankers and industrialists is apparent from the profit statements of the big corporations.

Consider first the nature of an armaments boom. This is a “new” industry of quite a special kind. After all, when the automobile industry blossomed it was not necessary to talk of conscripting men to drive the cars; there were no patriotic appeals to buy a Model T, and no hysterical warnings of the danger of depending on horses. An economy in which the manufacture of armaments becomes the key industry cannot be healthy. The special characteristics of war industry are like a cancer in a living organism. All other industries, in the long run, serve to supply us with consumer goods. But armaments represent a complete loss of equipment, raw materials, and labor power.

Yet the materials, the machinery, the munitions all represent labor time put into them. The workers in armaments plants get paid, they buy clothes and food and shelter. But while other workers and machines contribute to the process of commodity distribution, all the productive forces in the armaments industry consume but do not produce anything useful, economically speaking. Aside from the imperialist goals of this war effort, the whole “defense” program can be looked upon as a form of “made work.” And like all employment of this type, it can be financed only by taxes. Like most taxes, the cost of this effort falls on the masses of people. And like all booms, this one will also result in higher prices, diminishing consumption power. Without elaborating this argument further at this point it can be asserted that the very nature of war industry, with its inordinate consumption, drains not only the wealth of the nation but lowers its buying power. Thus it must tend to restrict the possibilities of employment by effectively narrowing the domestic market.

Second, let us examine the nature of the industries that are benefiting from the preparations for war. The government erects a \$20,000,000 plant for the manufacture of tanks and leases it for one dollar a year. Will Joe Smith of Dubuque operate this factory? Of course not. The Chrysler Corp. gets it. A new smokeless powder plant is being built near Louisville. Du Pont is to run it. The RFC is advancing millions for plant expansion. That money is going to the dominant corporations of the country. The amortization plan in the new excess profits tax bill will, in five years, bestow on our superpatriotic manufacturers vast, modern, fully equipped plants, cost free. Read the testimony of William S. Knudsen before the Senate Finance Committee on September 4: it is obvious that private capital is awaiting the “all clear” signal to rush its funds to the firms enjoying the munitions business.

But these corporations that are getting the fat government contracts, whether new factories are thrown in or not, are today the

dominant factors in our economy. Years ago they swallowed up most of their competitors. They represent that union of banking capital and industry which produces finance capitalism. They are the monopolies. They have divided the markets, eased or eliminated their competition with one another by “gentlemen’s agreements,” and they are tied to their mama in Wall Street by a thousand golden umbilical cords.

The United Press recently released some figures which tell us that there are twenty-eight American concerns which claim resources of over \$1,000,000,000 each. Their combined assets are over \$56,500,000,000 and their cash holdings are \$7,200,000,000. Eight of them are banks and seven insurance companies which together hold over \$8,000,000,000 in United States government securities. The thirteen industrial, railroad, and utility companies in this select group showed a net income for 1939 of \$628,773,778 as against \$374,849,332 for 1938. Even aside from the overpowering dominance of these billion dollar corporations, the extent to which a handful of companies rule American industry is exemplified by the figures for 1936, the latest year for which the returns have been tabulated. The number of “all corporations” which filed income tax returns for that year was 415,654 with a total net profit of \$7,618,100,000. Yet less than 0.2 percent (751 firms) gathered in almost two-thirds of all the profit. In the first half of 1940 a list of four hundred industrial corporations alone compiled by the National City Bank showed a net profit of \$648,928,000 or 58.6 percent over the first six months of 1939. Fantastic increases in profit were registered by the firms benefiting from war orders.

The boom is on. As the American Bankers Association remarks, in the August issue of its magazine, *Banking*, “business has been getting kinder treatment in all directions” since the outbreak of the war. In the coming regime of Willkie and/or Roosevelt, this gentle solicitude will continue. Of such collaboration of the government with finance capital Lenin said: “It is in reality wartime state monopoly capitalism. Or, to speak more plainly and clearly, it is military slavery for the workers and military defense of the capitalists’ profits.” The years ahead will not only intensify the rate of cartelization of American industry, but at the end of five years, should there be a temporary period of peace, the giants will have sufficient excess capacity at their command to crush, in every industry, all their smaller competitors who did not share in the spoils, provided, of course, that there are any moderate-sized manufacturers left in the heavier industries.

When they wipe out competition they can artificially restrict supply and jack up

prices. But this impoverishes their market at home. That is one reason why they are forced to seek foreign markets. Since the monopoly industries of Germany, England, and Japan are in the same predicament, the competition between the imperialist nations first takes the form of "dumping" and finally breaks into open war. But if the United States were to have a monopoly of foreign markets, American finance capital could not only buy raw materials at its own price but also sell to South America, for example, at high monopoly prices instead of having to meet German or English competition. That is why imperialism must strive to dominate foreign countries politically, make them colonies. To dominate means to be prepared to use force. That is the meaning of the "defense" program. And since this war may well end temporarily with markets coveted by Wall Street not yet under its complete control, it will be necessary to "dump" goods, possibly below cost. This consideration, plus the determination to take the cost of war preparations out of the hides of the American people, is the meaning of the drive against labor and all progressive anti-war forces.

Some capitalist economists already confess that we cannot hope for any prosperity from the armaments manufacture for the great majority of the people. Thus in the *Annalist* of July 18 the point is made that short of actual war the "defense" program will probably eat up not much more than 20 percent of the national income while "in the area of the other 80 percent there is plenty of room for industrial fluctuations and for cyclical depressions." Disregarding the bolixed-up economics of this statement, here is an admission that we can have a depression in the midst of this boom.

Consider also that American industry has slowed up its rate of expansion for peacetime production. The world crisis even resulted in the dismantling of plants and the destruction of fixed assets. But on the whole there has been a steady replacement of machines. The new equipment is more efficient than the old. Thus the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (CIO) in a report issued on August 28 argues that the technological improvement of the nation's steel mills during the last three years alone has resulted in an employment decrease of approximately 68,000 workers. With 535,000 workers the steel industry in June 1940 produced as much steel, 5,500,000 tons, as it did in August 1937 when 603,000 workers were needed. The continuous-strip rolling mill reduces costs about \$7 a ton and eliminates about 95 percent of the labor force previously used, for it can turn out two thousand tons daily with 130 workers while the old-style manual mill needed 4,300 men to produce the same tonnage.

While idle dollars, as Stuart Chase calls them, have piled up in the banks, how have the big corporations financed their plant expansion and particularly the modernization of their equipment? By their swollen depreciation and surplus accounts. Thus, for the second quarter of 1940 US Steel made a profit of \$19,201,000

against \$1,309,761 for the same three months in 1939. But in addition to that the corporation placed in its "depreciation and depletion" account for three months the sum of \$17,435,029. Yet I. S. Olds, who succeeded Stettinius as chairman of the board, is reported in the *New York Times* to have explained to his stockholders that delays in the enactment of the national defense amortization bill had caused the corporation to defer purchase of equipment required for plant expansion.

This is true not only of steel. New security offerings of domestic corporations amounted in 1929 to \$5,788,000,000. But in 1939 they had dropped to \$371,000,000. Said the *National City Bank Bulletin* for February 1940: "The depreciation reserves and undistributed earnings of business, plus the moderate amount of financing that has been done through banks and government agencies, add up to substantial totals available for capital expenditure."

Machines that turn out more goods with less labor power, new refinements in speedup and stretchout, made it possible for us to have some ten million unemployed in December 1939 while industrial production exceeded the alltime peak reached in June 1929. Of course the argument is advanced that war industry will not only absorb many of the unemployed, as will conscription, but will at the same time give such an impetus to business in general as to bring us new prosperity.

That is pure bunk. American industry has already proved that it can step up production by 42 percent while it increases employment by 12 percent. That's what the figures reveal if you take the months of May and December 1939. There is a legend that during the first world war such a prosperity cycle actually developed. There is little truth in it. The cost of living outstripped the rise in wages and the great majority of workers did not gain. In 1914-18 agricultural prices were high. Today, with cotton, corn, wheat, tobacco, and beef piling up unwanted (except by the hungry), there will be no boom for the farmers. Thus the great rural market offers no promise of prosperity.

In short, this "defense" program will create a most uneven sort of boom. The monopoly industries will wax fatter and more powerful. The consumers' goods industries and production for peaceful uses must decline. And the very strengthening of the monopolists is itself the guarantee of unemployment.

There is yet a third factor which will prove a barrier to prosperity. In its issue of August 31 *Business Week* proclaims that the war program calls for stepping up the country's output by \$10,000,000,000 a year in seventy thousand items. This plainly involves a tremendous dislocation of our productive facilities and therefore vast changes in distribution as well. It means huge migrations of labor to new centers of war industry. It calls for factories turned over to the fabrication of the intricate mechanisms that make war today. It means fewer new machines available for consumers' goods and the wearing out of present equipment without adequate replacements. It signifies the alloca-

tion of vital raw materials for armaments—and almost every raw material is today needed by our modern scientific civilization when it goes to war. Pulling in the belt is the reflex to a war budget. People will buy less because, for one thing, there will be less to buy. All industries become "non-essential" compared to armaments manufacture. The very complexity of modern war machines calls for more men, more facilities, more materials than the last war did. And this upheaval in our production with its starving of consumption is another nail in the coffin of that great lie, "prosperity through preparedness."

The forced reduction in the supply of articles of consumption in a war economy is plainly another barrier to employment. With all the effort England is making it still has close to 800,000 unemployed. It has recruited millions into the army and the war industries, yet it has succeeded in reducing the registers of unemployment to only half the figures of June 1939. A rise in prices is always a war-time phenomenon. That's another way to reduce consumption. Remember how sugar, hides, wool, and other commodities rose sharply in price last September, to be followed by a decline as the realization dawned on the profiteers that all the Allies wanted from us were war supplies, not food or raw materials or consumers' goods? That was a foretaste of what will happen here when the war program is well under way. It is already beginning, as the story in the *New York Times* of September 6 testifies, with its news of the advance purchases of industrial buyers who are rushing into the market not only because they fear higher prices but also because they foresee a "shortage." Prices must rise because consumption will increase without adding to the wealth of the nation.

In Germany all the controls of a fascist economy may keep prices relatively stable, but strict rationing produces the same effect as high prices; the people buy less. That, incidentally, is one reason for the spectacular rise in savings banks deposits in Nazi Germany during the first year of the war. In England, in the midst of parliamentary palaver about the needs of the people mouthed by the Labor "leaders," prices have risen as much as 50 percent on some commodities, and the index of wholesale prices in June was 37 percent above a year ago—which means that the cost of living has gone up far more than the official British index which claims a rise of only 19 percent.

In prospect then are higher prices, less consumption goods available, heavy taxes. In prospect also, with conscription here, is the drive to replace men by lower paid women and very young or middle-aged workers. Where in all this is the boom for the masses, where is the solution for unemployment?

The first world war created in the United States an illusion of prosperity. Today analysis reveals that in this second imperialist war finance capital will be unable to resurrect even the phantom—except for itself.

FRANK J. WALLACE.

# FBI over USA

A survey of the officially inspired lawlessness in America today. From Ducktown, Tenn., to Los Angeles, Calif., hobnail justice marches. The kickback.

**A** BRAND new radio ditty—which, I guess, fondly hopes to become a cross between the “Ballad for” and “God Bless America”—swings along something like this:

The Sage of Monticello  
Was a remar—kable fellow  
And according to his lights  
He wrote the Bill of Rights.

Immediately after which comes—verbatim—the whole of the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States with the “hot-test” lilt around the words “redress of grievances.” This is repeated several times. Then comes the grand finale in barbershop harmony—“Don’t lose it.”

Sure it’s silly, but it’s significant. As significant as the *totals* under which the Hitlerization of America is being attempted: *total* preparedness, *total* peace, *total* war, and *total* national defense—especially *total* national defense. Never before in the history of this country have such crimes against democracy and the Bill of Rights been committed as behind the smokescreen of this *total* national defense.

To those who doubt that, a glance at the recent survey of civil rights in America today (Jan. 1 to Sept. 1, 1940), prepared by the International Labor Defense, may prove somewhat startling. It will bring grim reminders of the tales we used to read about Berlin in 1932, Vienna in 1934, Barcelona after 1938, Paris after 1939. Reminders and warnings.

Take, for example, the Alien Registration Act. Three and a half million men, women, and children are being segregated, labeled—so far only with a registration card instead of some sort of yellow badge—forced to give an accounting of themselves for no other reason than their birth in countries they left to come here and help build a stronghold of democracy. Alien-baiting paved the way for passage of this law. Even the federal criminal syndicalism and military-disaffection provisions of the law were pushed through on the tidal wave of anti-foreign-born hysteria. Already there are such quiet consequences as New Jersey’s arrangements to fingerprint all Negro agricultural workers within its borders; Police Commissioner Valentine’s order to fingerprint all commercial and amateur radio operators in New York City; District Attorney Cahill’s plea for a complete standard identification system for the entire country; Registration Director Earl Harrison’s assurance to aliens that “*everybody will be fingerprinted and registered soon.*”

The lunatic quality of the fifth column hysteria is rapidly assuming coldly solid proportions. What was bitterly amusing in the beginning now has the harsh ring of official

action. In the burst of enthusiasm, inspired by the now famous presidential geography lesson in flying time from Tampico to St. Louis and the “full speed ahead” signal at the end of the equally famous “dagger in the back” speech at the University of Virginia, Westchester County barred all foreign flags from local parades; the mayor of Cliffside, N. J., announced that three thousand school children would henceforth receive fifteen minutes of daily instruction in alien propaganda analysis and fifth column tactics; the Tax Payers Union of New York proclaimed a decision to enlist more than twelve thousand property owners, renting agents, janitors to “*notify us of any unusual activities, secret meetings or suspicious gatherings in any of our buildings. We shall inform the FBI immediately.*” Bridgeport’s *Sunday Herald* “revealed” that “*industrialists predict that certain highways here will be taken over by the federal government soon . . . an army of federal and state agents will be on duty twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week.*” Out in California, Los Angeles’ Dist. Atty. Buron Fitts (up for reelection this year) produced the idea of having in each of the county’s six American Legion districts twenty-five companies of one hundred men each armed “to prevent an armed uprising within this country by any group seeking to destroy American liberties.” But that wasn’t good enough. So he resurrected a “Red plot” involving some of Hollywood’s brightest stars via a San Pedro waterfront murder dating back to 1935, kidnaped a militant longshore trade unionist and announced he had proof of the immediate “assassination of Henry Ford”—immediately after the Revolution!

As companion pieces to the campaign to put peacetime conscription across, alongside of Ambassador Bullitt’s cry for blood, we had—and still have—contributions from those “ladies” who are not engaged in knitting mittens for the British soldiers, such as: Mrs. Blanche (“*Only-the-radicals-want-Democracy-we-don’t*”) Winter’s Women’s Legion of the Blue Cross in Detroit; US Women’s Defense Corps, which has started drilling in Elmhurst, Long Island’s Lost Battalion Hall; the Green Guard of America, whose girls pose for photos in nifty aviation uniforms; and the National Legion of Mothers of America, which hears speeches like the following at its recruiting meetings:

Our first line of defense in view of these parachute maneuvers is not the British Navy nor the American Navy but the American home. As things stand now that line is undefended from 8:00 a.m. till about 7:00 p.m. at night when fathers are away from home. We propose to train and equip the defender of that household so that she will be utter

poison to any parachute jumper who might land near her.

More signposts along the road to American fascism are to be found in such occurrences as these: A letter sent by Donald W. Douglas, Douglas Aircraft Co., to each of his employees reads: “Anyone not in sympathy with the government of the United States, with its defense program, or with this country’s activities should get out.” Western Electric and the Aluminum companies sent letters too—containing copies of the Espionage Act. In the early spring the Portland, Ore., police force issued an edict to the effect that a police permit would forevermore be required for all sales of *Yanks Are Not Coming* pamphlets. One officer added: “*And by God, you won’t get one.*” Edgewater, N. J., passed an ordinance requiring police censorship of all leaflets seventy-two hours before they are distributed as well as the fingerprinting of all prospective distributors. McKeesport, Pa., passed a whole series of similar ordinances with special attention to interference with the possible holding of meetings. The Solons of this community went so far as to provide for police registration through hotels and boarding houses of all persons passing in and out of town.

By the end of the summer newspaper headlines proclaimed: “*ROOSEVELT CALLS STATES TO WAR ON SPIES*” at a national conference of law enforcement officials. Mayor LaGuardia told three hundred police chiefs “We will have a lot of new disturbances. We might as well be prepared for them.” Down in Birmingham, Ala., this gentle philosophy was probably accountable for a headline in afternoon papers on August 28 announcing that for forty-eight hours no one had been arrested under its infamous Ordinance No. 4902. Throughout the country some six hundred WPA workers lost their jobs in the affidavit witch hunt over which the courts, so far, say they have no jurisdiction.

Sherman Anti-Trust Law prosecutions and indictments of trade unions (already affecting some 1,500 persons) are not the only means used these days to “discourage” trade union activity and send to jail such sterling labor leaders as Irving Potash of the furriers’ union. We omit here arrests, sluggings, beatings, shootings of militant unionists. The ILD survey contains among others the following exhibit:

Moore-McCormick ships informed their employees: “While individuals are entitled to their own opinion and are free to exercise it under general circumstances, this privilege does not extend to them as long as they are aboard vessels of this company during the present emergency. Argumentative discussions of existing political and national

problems are hereby strictly prohibited on board the vessel. . . . Any violation of this order will result in dismissal for the good of the service."

We cannot omit the contribution of the FBI which is now on a twenty-four-hour schedule. Its routine antics, as illustrated in Detroit, where it arrested, chained, hounded sixteen citizens last February on charges of recruiting for loyalist Spain, were well publicized by Senator Norris of Nebraska. But very quietly, with almost no publicity at all, the FBI broke a big strike in Ducktown, Tenn. It illegally arrested twenty-two copper workers, members of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, and held them incommunicado in a concentration camp housed in the Copper Hill YMCA. They were dosed with narcotics and otherwise tortured to extort "confessions." All this was accomplished at the end of a nine months' strike against the Tennessee Copper Co. during which the strikers repeatedly appealed to the Department of Justice for investigation of the terror to which they were being subjected by the company and the local police. Eight hours later some TVA power lines were mysteriously dynamited. FBI agents swarmed into Ducktown, and twenty-two copper workers now face prison terms on charges of conspiracy against the federal government. The strike ended with the FBI arrests. Other anti-labor activities by the FBI are well illustrated by a recent editorial in the New York *World-Telegram*, which stated:

Suggestion to employers: Don't fire them just because there is an investigation by the FBI. Wait to find out what the investigation shows and then make sure the members of the bureau think it would be safer for the country to fire them rather than to keep them on where they can be watched.

Other crimes against the Bill of Rights are listed in abundance by the ILD survey. Attacks on minority groups—religious, political, racial—take place throughout the country from coast to coast. Mobbing, beating, tar-and-feathering, deporting, and shooting Jehovah's Witnesses occurred in Maine, Texas, Wyoming, Pennsylvania, California, and Mississippi. Interference with the efforts of minority parties, especially the Communist Party, to enter their candidates on the ballot takes many forms. In West Virginia Oscar Wheeler, Communist candidate for governor, was sentenced to jail for fifteen years. The CP had been ruled off the ballot in Arizona, Kansas, Massachusetts. Earl Browder has been stopped by Federal Judge Knox from conducting his presidential campaign outside of New York. Martin Dies writes personal letters to the 28,000 persons in Pennsylvania who signed their names to Communist election petitions. Vigilantes attacked petition canvassers in West Virginia, Illinois, Maine, New Hampshire, Arizona. There have been seven "authenticated" lynchings so far in 1940—four Negroes and three whites—and almost a score of lynch-terror murders of Negroes, some of them in police stations.

Vigilantism flourishes. It is cropping out in

a collection of brand new outfits making their little contributions to the cause of reaction, augmenting the well organized activities of such firmly established institutions as the Associated Farmers, Ku Klux Klan, Christian Front, Christian Mobilizers, Silver Shirts, and just plain vigilantes. Here are some of them: First Column, organized by New York's ex-Congressman John J. O'Connor with the single purpose of preventing the Communist Party from entering its candidates on the ballot in New York State; America's Sixth Column, Inc., composed of worthy citizens from the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and Merchants and Manufacturers Association, whose modest aim is the outlawing of the Communist Party in California; American Column, organized in Bloomington, Ill., from which, its founders hopefully announce, it will spread over the entire nation where it will "fight factional Americanism, encourage respect for the flag, and combat the fifth column." There is also a thing called California's Hundred Thousand whose motto is "Death before Surrender" and which will recruit only men over forty-five. The former Modern Minute Men of Stamford, Conn., have now become the Stamford Defense Committee and include among their leaders purchasing agents for munitions to Great Britain, experts on White Armies in Russia, and ordinary ward-healers. There are several Home Guards: Mayor Maury Maverick has one in the works down in San Antonio, Tex.; Governor Raymond E. Baldwin started one in Connecticut. Chicago, New York, San Francisco have slight variations on the same theme using sportsmen's clubs, etc., as their nucleus. Father Edward Brophy told a Christian Front

"victory" meeting in Brooklyn: "The Declaration of Independence was framed by Christians for a Christian people exclusively." The Bund and the KKK held a joint rally in New Jersey.

All instances described here have occurred against the background of a national onslaught on the Bill of Rights in the form of such legislation, already passed or now pending, as the Alien Registration Act, the WPA affidavit witch hunt, the Burke-Wadsworth conscription bill, the Voorhis, Hobbs, Dempsey bills, measures to set up industrial stormtroops and private armies against labor.

Resistance to the carefully planned murder of America's charter of liberties is strong and growing. The American people don't like murder. Every new assault is met by floods of protest—petitions, telegrams, resolutions—rallied through 100 percent democratic channels and methods, in sharp contradistinction to the forms taken by the attack. There is enthusiastic response to the ILD's campaign for repeal of the Alien Registration Act. A bill to this effect has been introduced by the ILD president, Rep. Vito Marcantonio of New York.

Whether they swing them on the radio or carry them on picket signs or shout them in courtrooms or write them with stubby pencils on the kitchen table in a letter to their congressman, the American people know and cherish their hard-won rights and liberties. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is no empty phrase to them. Thomas Jefferson built well on foundations now firmly rooted in America's earth. It's good earth and there have been plenty of swell harvests.

SASHA SMALL.



"Time for your labor speech, sir."

Geoffrey David



SHAKESPEARE  
MILTON  
GOETHE  
BEETHOVEN  
GAINSBOROUGH  
NEWTON  
DAVID

LONDON

BERLIN



SHAKESPERRE  
MILTON  
GOETHE  
BEETHOVEN  
GAINSBOROUGH  
NEWTON  
DAVID

LONDON

BERLIN

# Laureates of Betrayal

How intellectuals stood up in previous crises in history. "Against John Dryden stands John Milton—the greater poet, the greater man." First of two articles by V. J. Jerome.

**H**ISTORY gives repeated instances of desertion of the people's cause at critical junctures by intellectuals—as it does also of unyielding and courageous adherence. During the political vicissitudes of the first bourgeois revolutions, in England and in France, many exponents of culture wavered and retreated. Their vacillations reflected the half measures and compromises—even in its revolutionary stage—of the bourgeoisie which brought them into being.

However, despite their instability, the intellectuals as a group were protagonists of the bourgeois revolution. For they constituted the first representatives of that mass intelligentsia which growing industrialism was to call forth. The intelligentsia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries prepared the ideological ground for the bourgeois revolutions in England and in France. A few exceptional intellectuals even manifested a critical attitude toward the young capitalism, voicing ideas of utopian socialism. On the other hand, decayed feudalism was still powerful enough to exert an influence on a considerable group of intellectuals and to engage their services in its behalf.

Upon the death of Cromwell, leader of the bourgeois revolution in seventeenth century England, the not-yet-recreant John Dryden wrote:

His grandeur he derived from heaven alone,  
For he was great, ere Fortune made him so. . . .  
He made us freemen of the Continent  
Whom Nature did like captives treat before. . . .

Dryden was then serving as secretary to Sir Gilbert Pickering, a chamberlain at Cromwell's court, who had been one of the judges to try Charles I. Dryden wrote in defense of the Great Rebellion against the feudal oppressors and of Cromwell's thoroughness in executing the king:

War, our consumption, was their gainful trade;  
We inward bled, whilst they prolonged our pain;  
He fought to end our fighting and assayed  
To stanch the blood by breathing\* of the vein.

Eighteen months later this selfsame Dryden wrote a poem in praise of the restoration of the Stuarts, and shortly afterward a "Panegyric on the Coronation." The ink was still fresh on the "Heroic Stanzas to the Memory of Oliver Cromwell" when they were followed by a lament on the younger Charles' exile during the republic:

For his long absence church and state did groan,  
Madness the pulpit, faction seized the throne:  
Experienced age in deep despair was lost,  
To see the rebel thrive, the loyal crost.

Dryden now hailed reactionary royalism:

The mistrustful fowl no harm suspects,  
So safe are all things which our King protects.

With pro-feudal reactionaries restored to the highest state offices—although the Restoration was not a reversion to feudalism—Catholicism again reached out its tentacles, the king being known to have secret leanings toward it. The poet of revolutionary Puritanism became a convert to the church of Rome.

Fitly, this vicar of Bray† was chosen a Fellow of the Royal Society and raised to the rank of poet laureate. As fitly he was accorded by Macaulay the rank of "illustrious renegade."

Against John Dryden stands John Milton—the greater poet, the greater man. When venal or cowardly penmen were deserting the republic to flatter the crown, Milton spoke out for the most advanced and consistent section of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, in the face of fierce repression. With militant voice he

## Behold the Liberal

"**I**NTELLECTUAL Glands of Antiquity" is the original title of the following poem, published in the *Colorado School of Mines Magazine* and reprinted in the humor column of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. An apter title, thinks one of our readers (and we agree with him), would be "Confused Liberal":

Behold the mighty dinosaur,  
Famous in prehistoric lore,  
Not only for his weight and strength  
But for his intellectual length.  
You will observe by these remains  
The creature had two sets of brains;  
One in his head, the usual place,  
The other at his spinal base.  
Thus he could reason a priori,  
As well as posteriori;  
No problem bothered him a bit.  
He made both head and tail of it.  
So wise he was, so wise and solemn,  
Each thought filled just a spinal  
column;  
If one brain found the pressure strong,  
It passed a few ideas along.  
If something slipped his forward mind,  
It was rescued by the one behind;  
And if in error he was caught,  
He had a saving afterthought.  
As he thought twice before he spoke,  
He had no judgment to revoke;  
And he could think without congestion  
Upon both sides of any question.  
O gaze upon this model beast—  
Defunct ten million years at least.

assailed the restorationists for "this noxious humor of returning to bondage instilled of late by some deceivers." He stood uncompromisingly for democratic liberty, for separation of church and state, for the republic that would make a full sweep of feudal relations. Milton, not Dryden, spoke for the true and forward-looking intellectuals of the seventeenth century—the unsinced and unlabeled; the disgraced, the dungeoned, the hanged. Where is the honest intellectual worker, of his day and since, who has not revered Milton's steadfastness despite poverty, blindness, and the shafts of royal scorn; his superb courage and self-devotion—the deathless stand to the last of that Samson Agonistes?

The great French Revolution came like a lightning streak across the firmament of the entire world, illuminating a path to freedom for the oppressed in every land. In the Declaration of the Rights of Man all of mankind pitted against feudal autocracy gained in stature. The peasant masses, the town artisans, and the advanced sections of bourgeois democracy everywhere rallied to the Revolution. In Britain, as on the Continent and in the New World, ardent sympathy for the Revolution swept intellectuals in all spheres. Outstanding scientific and literary figures had been stirred by Voltaire's devastating anti-clericalism, by the philosophic materialism of Helvetius and Holbach, by the Encyclopedists' cult of reason, and by Rousseau's egalitarian democracy.

Typifying certain of these intellectuals was the English poet Robert Southey who early in life became a fervent adherent of the Revolution. With his fellow poets, Coleridge and Lovell, he worked out a utopian-socialistic scheme, "Pantisocracy," to be realized in the New World, "where Susquehanna pours his untamed stream." In Southey's revolutionary drama, *Wat Tyler*, the captive John Ball, charged with being a rebel and with stirring up the people, answers his inquisitor:

I am John Ball; but I am not a rebel.  
Take ye the name, who, arrogant in strength,  
Rebel against the people's sovereignty. . . .  
If it be guilt

\* Dryden here employs the term *breathing* in the sense of *opening*.

† The sixteenth century English village cleric who changed his religion to accommodate each new regime:

"And this is the law I will maintain  
Until my dying day, Sir:  
That whatsoever King may reign,  
I'll still be *vicar of Bray*, Sir!"

—Old Ballad.

To preach what you are pleased to call strange notions,  
That all mankind as brethren must be equal;  
That privileged orders of society  
Are evil and oppressive; that the right  
Of property is a juggle to deceive  
The poor whom you oppress—I plead me guilty.

Nonetheless, at this very time a wave of reaction in England swept Southey into condemning the Revolutionary Terror in France. His ill proportioned sensibilities were hurt by the execution of Marie Antoinette, and he openly opposed the Revolution.

Two years after writing *Wat Tyler* he declared of the people: "As for pigs, they are too like the multitude." (This contempt for the masses was in like language expressed by the Tories of America in Hamilton's profession of faith: "Your People, Sir, your People is a great beast.") For his swinish conception of the multitude, his Tory masters appointed him poet laureate. Byron aptly rhymed this laureate with *Iscariot*.

From his favored position Southey looked back with nostalgia to the *ancien regime*: "Bad as the feudal times were, they were far less injurious than these commercial ones to the kindly and generous feelings of human nature and far, far more favorable to the principles of honor and integrity." The best that can perhaps be said for Southey is, as a noted biographer has charitably put it: "He never had been a thorough Jacobin, and he never became a thorough Tory."

And Coleridge, who had looked enviously across the Channel and pointed to the new France as the paragon for a new England:

Shall France alone a Despot spurn?  
Shall she alone, O Freedom, boast thy care?

—Coleridge, who had hung his head "and wept at Britain's name," now delighted the masters of England with his avowal:

There lives no form nor feeling in my soul  
Unborrowed from my country.

The renegacy of a host of Southey's and Coleridge's in England, France, Prussia, Austria, the United States of America, and elsewhere came at a turning point in the Revolution. The masses, both urban and rural, were fully convinced that the big bourgeoisie was forsaking the basic tasks of the Revolution. In August-September 1792 they swept out the propertied citizens' Constituent Assembly, after abolishing the monarchy and the bourgeois-aristocratic constitution of 1791. The democratic republic based on universal suffrage could never have been established save for the root-and-branch destruction of the monarchy, rallying center for the people's enemies. The king and queen were proved to be negotiating with the heads of foreign powers for a counter-revolutionary invasion of France; in their name the European feudal coalition had attacked the young republic in the spring of 1792; and in their name the restorationists and their Girondist conciliators were conspiring against the Revolution.

"The fatherland is in danger!" became the slogan of the Revolution against the foe within and without. Victory at the frontiers required victory on the home front. The fall of the monarchy symbolized the ascension of the Revolution.

The poets' revulsion from the Revolution was tory prose set to verse. The bards rhymed what the bourgeois reasoned. The British ruling class looked with growing uneasiness at the new republic, viewing the end of feudalism in France as the emergence of a rival bourgeois state. Impelled by the industrial revolution, England aimed to seize from France strategic Channel ports and colonies in the East, in order to check her industrial expansion and eliminate her as a naval power. To this end the British bourgeoisie entered into collusion with French royalists and with the feudal governments of the Continent.

Bourgeois England feared, as did feudal Austria, Prussia, and Russia, the impact of the Revolution. Jacobinism was sweeping over England, Scotland, and Ireland. There was mounting resentment at Tory oppression and the government's war drive against France. The ruling class was struck with panic. Prime Minister William Pitt, shedding his liberalism like a loose garment, joined Edmund Burke, now the leading counter-revolutionary ideologue, and turned the full force of his class tyranny upon the people. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended. Public meetings of sympathizers of revolutionary France were violently broken up. All publications opposed to monarchy and aristocracy were banned. Obsolete anti-sedition laws were revived. Political prisoners congested the jails.

War became imperative. The masses of England had to be bludgeoned with patriotism.

The king's execution served as pretext for rupturing diplomatic relations with France—to the very bourgeoisie which had come to power by rolling a king's head from the block!

This time the milk of human kindness curdled in the veins of the British diplomats. And the humane Southey's shed wells of ink for the last Louis that were rivaled only by the tears of later Southey's for the last Nicholas.

The Southey's and Coleridge's, the Mackintoshes and Wordsworths made their peace with reaction and were in due course officially rewarded. James Mackintosh became "Sir James"; William Wordsworth was appointed poet laureate. It was to Wordsworth that Robert Browning referred in his poem, "The Lost Leader," which opens with the lines:

Just for a handful of silver he left us,  
Just for a riband to stick in his coat. . . .

But the lineage to which self-respecting men of science and letters trace their worth is of intellectual leaders like William Godwin, who answered Burke's Tory agitation with his epoch-indicting *Political Justice*; who bravely and eloquently defended the leaders of the radical republican Corresponding Society, tried for treason during the anti-Jacobin hys-

teria in 1794. It is the lineage of men like Joseph Priestley, who sought truth in life as he sought it in the laboratory; who, that night in '91, looking on while the "Church-and-King" mob of Birmingham burned his home, his scientific instruments, and his valuable papers, must have felt even his bereavement that those flames would yet light up the ages. He fled finally to the America of Jefferson and Franklin.

In 1848 in France the intellectuals, with the bulk of the petty bourgeoisie, joined the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Utopian Socialists—adherents of Fourier, Saint Simon, and Cabet—demanded an end to the monarchy and to the rule of the banking aristocracy. A red-cravated Baudelaire stood on the barricades with the workers in the June Days. But the liberal bourgeoisie, fearing the proletarian advance, retreated into the octopus grasp of the financial oligarchy. The petty bourgeoisie, dreading working class power even more than big bourgeois ascendancy, deserted the June insurrection. Betraying its own interests, it left the Parisian proletariat to be slaughtered by the hordes of Cavaignac. With the victory of Bonapartism—harvest of this treachery—the petty bourgeois intellectuals grew cynical. Their Baudelaire now hailed "the clergy, the military, and the poets" as the mainstay of society; he now gave his devotion to absolutism and Jesuitism. He who had exulted in "the infinite taste of the republic" now reviled the republican as "the enemy of roses and perfumes." He who had been aflame with the slogan, *Everything by the people, everything for the people*, now, lost in pessimism, lamented:

Hurry, let us extinguish the lamp that is alight,  
Let us sink in nocturnal darkness.

But the workers did not extinguish their light. Out of the very debris of their defeat they began to build. They rose from the glowing ashes of the June Days to become the "heaven-stormers" of the Commune.

V. J. JEROME.

*This is the first of two articles by Mr. Jerome. The second will appear in an early issue.*

## Attention Robert Jackson

AMERICAN pilots are being openly recruited for service in Canada and Great Britain, reports the *People's World*, progressive West Coast daily. Financed by an unidentified New York millionaire, the recruiting service is headed by Clyde Pangborn and represented in Oakland, Calif., by H. L. Stradley, who recently announced that sixty northern California aviators had been sent to Canada and Great Britain. Each pilot receives \$150 a week. The existence of the recruiting service is known to the Department of Justice, which only a few months ago arrested eleven Detroit sympathizers with loyalist Spain on charges of "recruiting for a foreign army."



# Mars Goes to the Fair

The great show on Flushing Meadows began under the slogan "Peace and Freedom." What happened since 1939.

THE first time I visited the fair I hurried down the ramp from the subway station high above a sea of shrill, gay children. They scurried and scattered, darted in and out of line, brought vexation into the eyes of a calm-faced nun. And suddenly, we, the children, teachers, the few adults, were at the gates—and the grand adventure was to begin.

We had been reading about the fair these many weeks, hearing about its aspiring plans. Here before us now it lay, the past, the present—and apparently the future. Was this not the World of Tomorrow? Was not the slogan "Peace and Freedom"? Hopefully we trod the first few steps within the enclosure, eyes widened to the sudden strange beauty. For the fair was, and is, beautiful, alluring in a curious and unreal manner—the huge white statues, the low, streamlined buildings, the gay gardens, the eerie, indirect lighting at night, the play of varicolored fountains.

For back in the spring of '39 the fair was a symbol of international unity. Faults there were, of course; weaknesses, too. But to gather within one great meadowland peoples from so many nations, to have them meet daily in ceremonies and join hands beneath the shadow of the trylon and perisphere, seemed a portent of our future security from wars and the threat of wars.

Yes, faults there were. If you looked beneath the surface, the fair was being operated by promoters and politicians, whose policy was an odd melange of Jimmy Walkerism and old-fashioned democracy. Grover the Magnificent, Jimmy's former police commissioner and greeter extraordinary, was having the time of his life out in Flushing. He was monarch of a kingdom somewhat larger than the Vatican state. He could ordain and counter-ordain—and also ride in an authentic yacht. And greet the king and queen of England!

And the Midway was like a slice of little old New York of the twenties, Tammanyites and Broadwayites and millionaires all a-rolling together. Food was high, higher in some places than it had been chez Florence circa '27. Many buildings were still unfinished that first day, and you couldn't get a full glass of rye for less than half a buck. NTG was selling acres of feminine flesh bare to the view for the small price of 40 cents a peek. Huge crowds lined up before the Futurama; and Norman Bel Geddes used some of the money paid him by Sloan, Knudsen & Co. to build a mirrored peepshow.

But it was thrilling to climb into the interior of the perisphere and listen to the recorded voices of marching America, workers, men, women, children, Negro and white, screened against the walls in a pledge of indivisible unity for democracy, for peace, and for progress. And to walk up the long lane of trees leading to the Court of Peace. Peace

again . . . collective security—the banners of Britain, France, America . . . and there, rising high above majestic marble, the red flag of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

And as you talked to the people and the fair workers, you learned something more. For this was a union shop, this fair. Even old Grover had been obliged to yield: he'd organized a sort of Labor Day preview parade for the opening ceremonies, in order to convince the organized labor of America that the fair was fair to the workingman. Actually, of course, the workingman had won full rights by eternal vigilance and militancy. But Grover, old Tammany hack that he is, twisted his defeat into a gesture of victory.

Well, they called it the World of Tomorrow, but in reality it was the World of Today, of 1939's Today, a world of transition from peace—into the abyss. Only we didn't know—I, for one, didn't know. But I loved the fair, wished I had the money to enjoy the rare dishes at the foreign restaurants, to sample the strange, alien wines. Wished I could visit all the lavish shows of the amusement zone, wondered how I would ever find time and money for admission to the grounds often enough to inspect all the many exhibits. And I was happy, because the fair was a world of peace and freedom.

Seventeen months have passed. An era has ended. Our spinning globe, unchanged to the eye, has passed through one of those curious human changes of direction, from peace into war. The fair is also unchanged, yet changed—no longer the World of Tomorrow, but just the Fair of 1940.

The fair of 1940 has suffered from the dread blight of social decay. The Court of Peace became a Court of War. Side by side the British and French flags waved, as Allied policy insisted upon a continuance of the conflict. One by one the foreign buildings began to close, or were turned over to American concessionaires. The Soviets ordered their three great exhibits, which had drawn millions of inquisitive, eager Americans beneath the steel statue of a marching worker, dismantled. Several Latin American countries quietly withdrew. Holland abandoned her high-ceilinged display. Others, such as Denmark, Belgium, Norway, Luxembourg, continued with the aid of New York import houses. France quit the war and her vast exhibition of luxury goods became a mockery, an odd reminder of the decadence of French upper class life. The Italians, hitherto imperturbable behind their motto of "Live, Fight, Believe!" and the dominant "M" with its ironic memories of a Napoleonic "N," retreated into their shells as Italia joined the war. Finally a bomb was found in the British pavilion on Independence Day; carried out, it exploded, scarring the grounds and slaying two detectives.

But the people continued to love the fair. The grotesque Grover was shoved aside for a banker-businessman, Harvey D. Gibson. Prices were lowered. The amusement zone was dressed up in cheaper clothes, with less expert but shrewder showmen in charge. Foreign restaurants closed for want of patronage. Cafeterias opened. The crowds seemed shabbier, the food simpler. And the fair for a time remained an oasis in the intercontinental desert of war. Here and there were reminders: an unexpected anti-war exhibit of horror pictures on the Midway, the building where funds were raised for the medical relief of the Chinese people.

Today is not the time for world's fairs. This is a time for bombs and battles. Today, in the international zone, Britannia rules the lagoon waves. In her pavilion Britannia has placed shell-shattered Spitfires, the fuselages of wrecked Hurricanes, and pitifully frail air-raid shelters—to impress the American cousins. Lord Lothian, who once belonged to the Anglo-German Union and is listed as pro-fascist, comes down to the garden near the butterfly in the British pavilion and issues official ambassadorial communications from the British Foreign Office as the guests rise to honor him. Noel Coward, that cork-puller for Bonnet and official agent of the British Intelligence Service, speaks of "mutual British and American understanding" in his clipped tailored accents. And his worship the lord mayor of New York, Fiorello LaGuardia, squeaks in approval, cries out for the "civilization and decency of the world" in Wilsonian style.

No . . . the powers that be in America, and also his majesty's government, have no time for fairs next season. Besides fairs are not profitable enough. Only the biggest corporations, which write off losses against advertising expense, can afford to maintain displays. The bondholders, with Mr. Gibson representing them, can see no future for profit in the fair. Damn it, what's the use of anything if it isn't profitable?

So October 27 will be the last day. Then will end the mockery of a World of Tomorrow which has its roots embedded in a dying yesterday. Park Commissioner Moses has asked the city to appropriate funds with which to reclaim as much acreage as possible, including landscaped gardens and the improved yacht basin, and to reopen the grounds next year as a public park. Yet, despite Bob Moses' plan, there is a faint shudder of doom in the Flushing air. The draft is coming. Soldiers must be housed. Scores of fair buildings possess light, heat, and sanitary facilities. The statues can be removed, fountains filled. Parade grounds can be rolled flat in a brown expanse of gravel and sand. The nightly fireworks can be replaced by anti-aircraft practice. Nearby is LaGuardia airport. The fair can well become an army camp. In which case the glorious extravaganza, the hopeful World of Tomorrow, which began to the tinkling music of children's laughter, will end to the thud-thud, crunch-crunch of hobnailed soldiers' shoes. . . .

JAMES MORISON.

# NEW MASSES

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Editors

A. B. MAGIL, RUTH MCKENNEY, JOSEPH NORTH.

Associate Editor

BARBARA GILES

Business Manager

CARL BRISTEL.

West Coast Representative

GEORGE WILLNER.

★

## Conscription

THE future will remember Sept. 14, 1940. On that day the Congress of the United States turned its back on democracy and set the country toward a new way of life, the way of militarism, dictatorship, and war. The enactment of peacetime conscription marks a historic turning point. But it also marks the opening of the second phase of a titanic struggle. "This fight isn't over," said Rep. Vito Marcantonio, who has introduced a bill to repeal conscription. "It is just beginning." Peace, civil liberties, the welfare of the vast majority of the American people—these are at stake in this fight.

All of us must understand what has happened and why. The Burke-Wadsworth bill was introduced and high-pressured through Congress because the American capitalist class is preparing to enter the European war to meet the challenge of German imperialism and establish its own undisputed world mastery. This is not a measure of defense; military experts point out that in view of our geographical position and the strength of our navy, only a small army is required to repel any possible invasion.

Second, the new conscription law is far more than a military measure. It is a measure of unmitigated social and political reaction; in the words of Senator Wheeler, "as a result of it a club will be held over the heads of all workingmen in all communities in the United States of America." The entire country will be placed at the mercy of a military cabal in the service of big business. We present for what it is worth the following extract from Ray Tucker's Washington letter in the "National Whirligig" column as it appeared in the *Brooklyn Eagle* of September 11:

President Roosevelt regards the mobilization of young Americans in military camps under the conscription law as more than an effort to prepare them for war. He believes that the movement can be utilized in an educational way—namely, to counteract the teaching of Communism which, in his opinion, infects the public school system.

Mr. Roosevelt voiced his fears several weeks ago to a group of House members with which he was discussing NYA appropriations. After deploring the radicalism rampant throughout the country, he declared: "Gentlemen, I am going to choke Americanism down the throats of American youngsters, whether they like it or not."

This is the spirit of American Hitlerism.

It expresses the innermost thoughts of those fascist-minded men of wealth who sponsored the conscription bill and entrusted to Franklin D. Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie joint leadership of the anti-democratic campaign which forced it through Congress. The same intolerant attitude is betrayed by Mrs. Roosevelt who, in a letter to the *Guild Reporter*, characterizes as "stupid" statements opposing peacetime conscription—though she herself opposed it only a few days before it became an issue in Congress—and calling the opinions of the American Youth Congress "clap-trap."

These insults and the gibes of such fair-weather liberals as the editors of the *Nation* and *New Republic* will not make conscription and the administration's other war measures more palatable to the American people. The regimenters of America won the first round because the plain people of the country were insufficiently organized to scotch their designs. Above all, because labor hearkened to divided counsels. Many AFL unions were confused by William Green's two-faced position, while a number of CIO unions opposed conscription but greatly lessened their effectiveness by permitting Sidney Hillman to seduce them into endorsing a third term for Roosevelt. But in the last days of the conscription fight a great people's movement in the making was born—the American Peace Mobilization. Congressman Marcantonio is right: the fight is just beginning. Peace and democracy lie wounded, but they still can be saved.

## Roosevelt's Little Flower

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT's address to the convention of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen, and Helpers sounded like an electrical transcription of something delivered in 1936. He promised to improve the social security system—though he himself has shelved all proposals to that end. He promised to preserve and extend labor's gains—though his administration has begun to feed some of these gains to the fires of war economy. And he plumed a new hypocritical low in saying that his "one supreme determination" was "to do all I can to keep war away from these shores for all time"—only a few days after he committed an outright act of war in the destroyers-bases deal.

In fact, this whole effort to recapture the faded prestige of what was once the New Deal was marked by the patent insincerities of those—to use Roosevelt's own phrase—"who love the laboring man in November but forget him in January."

The President's speech was obviously couched to beguile the independent vote, of which labor is a most important component. He knows that he can win only if he retains the support of those independent progressive forces that proved the mainstay of his 1936 campaign. Many of these independents have been disillusioned by the administration's reactionary course in the past year.

It was to hold them in line that the Demo-

cratic National Committee put Mayor LaGuardia on the air the next night to give his blessing to the third term. There are, of course, mean and subversive people who will say—some have already said it—that the mayor's testimonial was in the nature of a *quid pro quo*, since he has been given the chairmanship of the US-Canada joint defense board. Yet there is a deeper political affinity between Roosevelt and LaGuardia, an affinity that has moved the one-time crusader against Tammany to appoint Tinbox Jimmy Walker to a \$20,000-a-year post and to enlist under the banner of Boss Flynn. Roosevelt and LaGuardia are united by a messianic zeal to make the world safe and profitable for American imperialism, cost the people what it may. Theirs is a partnership in the betrayal of liberalism; they are dedicated to essentially the same ends as the crusade of Wendell Willkie.

## The People Fight Back

LAST week the Communist Party won a signal victory in Massachusetts which has nationwide implications. A decision by the State Ballot Law Commission to rule that party off the lists in November was reversed by the State Supreme Court. Needless to say the court did not leap to right the wrong: it required a vigorous protest movement and legal action to convince the authorities. The Massachusetts victory occurred almost simultaneously with the gains made in Pennsylvania where that minority party achieved the ballot despite forty-three illegal arrests and the intimidation of thousands. What happened in these two states is indicative of what is happening elsewhere in the nation: the Communist Party is putting up a gallant fight in defense of its own rights and of democratic liberties in general. The dispatches that appear in the *Daily Worker* regularly from the grass roots of the country show a brave, relentless struggle going on that is completely ignored by the daily commercial press. Plain Americans are fighting as they never did before for their freedom and in behalf of peace. We wish particularly to applaud the splendid record of the Communist Party's vice presidential candidate, James W. Ford, who has gone into the lynch-ridden South to present his political views and has everywhere been met with remarkable demonstrations.

## The Ladies, God Help 'Em

LYSISTRATA won't have a chance in this war: she herself will be drafted, if the administration's plans go through. According to Col. Julius Ochs Adler, general manager of the *New York Times*, women were included in the original draft project but the idea was temporarily dropped because it might "appear too drastic" at that time. Now it's being considered again. And why not? "Universal service" means universal, doesn't it? Women in this country have equal rights, don't they? If an emancipated woman can work in a factory for \$2 less per week than

a man, why can't she serve the war machine for nothing? Besides, in order to draft the man something has to be done about voting wives and mothers, women trade unionists, peace paraders, and striking camp followers. Thus the female world will be made safe for Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Mrs. Julius Ochs Adler, and those ladies who assist the New York *Daily News* in rounding up the "strong, brutal male population." Just to make it perfectly safe, the second draft will get the kiddies and the third the grandparents. If Hitler could do it, why not Adler?

### Zero Hour

SEVERAL signs last week showed how serious is the situation of Great Britain. Italy opened her drive against Egypt and British Kenya on several fronts; the bombardment of Tel Aviv indicated that Mussolini aims not only at Suez but at the heart of the British Middle Eastern possessions. The coincidence of this drive with the intensified German bombardments over British cities indicates the new stage of the war. Another sign was the proposal from the William Allen White com-

mittee that twenty-five of America's fifty-three long-range bombers be sent to assist the Royal Air Force.

As NM pointed out last week, the severe damage to London is filtering through the censorship. The newspaper *PM* reported one week ago that the "hangars and repair shops of ten major RAF bases throughout England had been destroyed, and eighteen others seriously damaged." Four railroad stations plus their yards—Victoria, Paddington, Charing Cross, and Waterloo—have been wrecked, and four others connecting London with the Mid-

## Labor Faces the Polls

Beginning this week, *NEW MASSES* will publish a weekly editorial discussing one of the major issues in the election campaign. This week's editorial deals with the question of labor.

**D**URING the past week both President Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie decided it would be advisable to pay some attention to the labor vote. The President made his first "political" speech before the teamsters' union convention. The GOP nominee made impromptu outdoor talks in various parts of Chicago; he received a chilly reception from the stockyards workers but was enthusiastically welcomed in the financial and shopping districts. Willkie promised to give something he didn't have—jobs to the unemployed. He didn't say how.

Roosevelt was equally generous with promises, equally vague about specific measures to fulfill them. He reiterated the statement he made on May 26: "There is nothing in our present emergency to justify a retreat from any of our social objectives." Despite this assurance, millions of Americans are uneasy. Labor leaders like John L. Lewis, Joseph Curran, and Michael Quill, who supported Roosevelt in 1936, are today sharply critical. Unions like the United Radio, Electrical, and Machine Workers, the United Office and Professional Workers, and many others have turned down an endorsement of a third term. Scores of unions, AFL and CIO, including the one whose convention the President addressed, have strongly opposed his pet conscription project. To the trade unions being prosecuted under the anti-trust laws, to the unemployed thrown off WPA rolls, the pledge of no retreat from social objectives is a promissory note that has already been repudiated in action. That is why even a Willkie, the personification of Wall Street and its anti-labor policies, is able to make some headway among disillusioned union men. The Gallup poll needs to be approached with reservations, yet there is considerable significance in its finding that whereas 80 percent of union members in 1936 voted for Roosevelt and only 20 percent for Landon, today the President's sup-

port has dropped to 64 percent, while 36 percent back Willkie. (The poll failed to record how many oppose both.)

In his address to the teamsters Roosevelt painted a glowing picture of the labor situation in this country. "A decade ago," he said, "only a minority of employers were willing to accept the principle of collective bargaining; today the majority of employers gladly adopt it." Of course the Girdlers and Fords will insist that they accept the principle of collective bargaining—the shadow instead of the substance. Just as the Democratic platform pledges to "maintain the principles of the National Labor Relations Act." It was in the name of these principles that a Democrat, Representative Smith of Virginia, introduced the amendments sponsored by the National Association of Manufacturers to eviscerate the act. It was with the support of most of his fellow Democrats in the House that these infamous amendments were passed. And it was the administration-sponsored Norton amendments which provided the entering wedge for the more drastic Smith proposals.

What about the Walsh-Healey act and the Wage-Hour Act, against which the tycoons of war economy have turned their heavy guns? On July 12 President Roosevelt rejected proposals to lengthen the work week in defense industries. But only a few weeks later the President himself set the pace by permitting government shipyards to lengthen weekly hours from forty to forty-eight. The July 19 issue of the *United States News*, noting that the administration is removing "many governmental restraints objectionable to business," declared:

Other indications of the government's disposition to cooperate with business are found in administrative rulings easing rigidities of the wage-hour law and a provision in the Navy Act to permit the President to suspend operation of the Walsh-Healey act, which requires a forty-hour week on government orders.

How long before the real slaughter of labor legislation starts? Until election day is safely past?

During the past year the Roosevelt administration has made a frontal assault on wage scales and on the right to organize by using the anti-trust laws against trade unions. More than twenty union officials have already been fined and sentenced to prison terms up to two years. Compare this with the deferential treatment accorded the real trusts, against whom the Sherman act was originally directed. Except for occasional gestures against secondary companies, corporate greed is being given a free hand to tighten its grip on the country's economic life. Only recently the Department of Justice suspended a suit against a number of oil companies at the request of the National Defense Advisory Commission.

It is this growing hostility to labor and contempt for its needs that is causing many labor unions to withdraw their support of the Roosevelt administration. The attitude of these unions was expressed in a recent resolution of the Greater New York Industrial Union Council, CIO, which declared that "labor can give no political party or personage a 'blank check,' but must vigorously exercise its independent political power."

In the present emergency labor legislation needs to be strengthened, not weakened—strengthened along the lines urged last December in the CIO legislative program. In fact even broader measures are required. For example, the thirty-hour week without reduction in pay as proposed by the Communist election platform. The elimination of the wage differential between North and South, the abolition of child labor, the establishment of equal wages, hours, and working conditions for Negro workers, the foreign born, women and young workers—these are all measures which our financial and industrial overlords can well afford. *What American democracy cannot afford are the labor policies of the Republican and Democratic Parties.* The men who betrayed France to Hitler began two years earlier by betraying French labor to the two hundred families. Let not America repeat that tragic experience.

lands have been damaged. The East and West India docks, the Tillbury docks, and others along the eastern Thames on which London's food supplies depend are being shattered; the Woolwich arsenal, various gas and water works disrupted. Twenty-five hundred people lost their lives in one week, thousands have been wounded, thousands more are trying to escape the congested metropolis. British planes struck back at Essen, Hamburg, Bremen, the French coastal ports, and Antwerp. Churchill admittedly expects invasion at any moment, while Hanson Baldwin, New York Times military commentator, considers "that if any large scale force is landed upon British shores, it is probable that Britain's fate is sealed."

The appeasers are still in the Cabinet, Germany's striking power has not yet been sapped either by counterbombardments or by the tremendous job of policing six nations in Europe; British big business is in the saddle and holds the people's lifelines in its withered hands. Yet we think the struggle has a long way to go before it reaches a "clear decision" (to use Hitler's phrase) for either side.

### British Communists

ONE item in the news from England is worth more thought. James B. Reston, New York Times correspondent, reports on September 16 that the London Communists, "always active in East End . . . and who have demanded bombproof shelters since before the war started" organized a mass deputation to the Home Office, insisting that the homes of the wealthy be opened to shelter the poor. Government officials conferred with them for three hours and granted their demands in part. Thus, in the midst of the suffering and turmoil of a war which Britain's rulers brought upon the British people, the Communists are disclosed indefatigably defending the people's interest.

### Guns for the Joads

TO FURTHER the press campaign for "national unity" in support of conscription and war, the NEA syndicate is distributing a series of articles on "Our Country" by well known American writers. The articles which have so far appeared are characterized by a complete lack of attention to the social problems which have been the theme of our generation's best literature. It requires astonishing gifts of intellectual dexterity to erase from the record all the suffering and discontent of eleven million unemployed and millions of underprivileged and oppressed Americans. This is the miracle which our writers are being asked to perform by the very forces that drive us toward an intensification of human suffering.

It is not at all surprising to see writers like Mary Roberts Rinehart and Philip Wylie subscribing to that effort with enthusiasm. It is more shocking to find John Steinbeck expressing the view that "nearly all Americans

believe in the same things. They differ on the details. I think they are quite capable of leaving those details for the moment for the preservation of the nation." Are the Joads a mere detail in American life? Will they profit from the war which Steinbeck, like other writers in the series, anticipates so belligerently? When a writer like Steinbeck falls prey to the "anti-fascist" demagoguery of our fascist-minded press, the Associated Farmers and other enemies of the Joads rejoice. When writers whose primary concern should be for the preservation of culture acquiesce in a war that may well destroy culture, the reading public and not the army brass hats will be the losers.

### Mr. Gedye Regrets

THE New York Times has closed its offices in Moscow. Its last correspondent, G. E. R. Gedye, who did not know the Russian language and came to Moscow about a year ago, doth make loud lament in a series of articles from Bulgaria. Ostensibly, the reason is the severity of Soviet censorship. It is implied that Soviet authorities wish to suppress all information to the outside world because things are so bad in the USSR. Yet Gedye himself publishes a long list of items about the difficulties and shortcomings of Soviet agricultural and industrial progress: *they are all culled from the ample discussion which goes on continually in the Soviet press.* Evidently nothing is being hidden from the Soviet people; they know their own problems and discuss them publicly. What they object to, as readers of the American press will understand, is the fact that foreign correspondents take advantage of the Soviets' scrupulous self-criticism to distort the realities of Soviet life, to emphasize the negative things and conceal the overwhelmingly positive achievements.

Moreover, the Associated Press and United Press still find it worth while to keep their newspapermen in Moscow, and the Times even prints AP and UP dispatches on occasion. Although every government in Europe is severely censoring all the stories that appear in the New York Times, this self-appointed mentor of public opinion has not found it urgent to huff and puff against Britain, or Germany, or—for instance—Bulgaria, as he does against the USSR.

A few other items in Gedye's outpourings deserve comment. As soon as Gedye has paused for breath, we shall try to assist our readers in interpreting the rather pitiful apology which Gedye makes for having "wasted" one year of his life in the USSR.

### Out with Almazan!

LAST week Mexico observed the 130th anniversary of its independence on the spot where Padre Hidalgo initiated the great fight in 1810. President Cardenas shouted the traditional "grito"—the cry for freedom—while across the border in El Paso Alma-

zanistas were whispering in dark corners against Mexican democracy. Further north the conspiracy had won the editorial pages and leading tory publicists. Almazan was making headway.

David Lawrence, ponderous reactionary publicist, pleaded Almazan's case in the New York Sun of September 16 when he urged that the United States government officially recognize the Monterrey millionaire's claims. The Herald Tribune said on the same day: "There seems no way of preventing Gen. Avila Camacho from taking office on December 1 except through the use of force." Reports from the border in Chihuahua told of gunrunning and described "unidentified airplanes shuttling back and forth" across the American frontier. Almazanistas played their curious game: they shouted that they were going to revolt and whispered that they were not going to revolt. The State Department played a similar game when Secretary Hull said that Camacho would be a welcome visitor to Washington and so would Almazan. Washington obviously hopes to push Camacho and Cardenas further right by allowing Almazan to pursue his conspiracy here. Meanwhile the oil crowd, impatient for direct and prompt action, is trying to smear Mexico with forged reports of projected "uprisings against the United States" by sinister Reds and embittered Spanish loyalists.

Americans who have not forgotten republican Spain must demand that Almazan be kicked out of the United States. We will not be partners to an American Franco.

### The Indians' Revolt

THIS has been a great season in baseball. Large crowds have rooted for their favorites. In the American League four teams, the Yankees, the Detroit Tigers, Chicago White Sox, and the Cleveland Indians, are racing neck and neck toward next week's deadline. Fans have generally acclaimed the late and gallant dash of the Yanks, four-time champions. Moreover, the season has been enlivened by a particularly significant happening: the Indians, breaking all baseball tradition, sought to bargain collectively last May with their club owner, Alva Bradley; they brought a grievance against their manager, Ossie Vitt, claiming that he was incompetent and disruptive. Baseball writers, sensing a turn toward a ball players' union, lampooned the Cleveland team as a "Soviet," dubbing the players "crybabies," because they dared discuss their problems in a democratic way. Mr. Bradley, however, sustained the players' right to meet with him, and it is likely that, win or lose, Vitt will go. This is an important concession in a game marked by a one-sided approach to the question of players' rights. Meanwhile, the NEW MASSES editorial staff views the outcome of the pennant race with divided loyalty. New York, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago have their intense partisans. It goes without saying, however, that we are united in hailing the two-time National League conquerors, the Cincinnati Reds.

## Stormy Weather

Langston Hughes' autobiography, "The Big Sea," records the travels that brought him to the place he occupies in literature today. Negro writing of the twenties. A review by Ralph Ellison.

THE BIG SEA, by Langston Hughes. Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.

LANGSTON HUGHES' autobiography, *The Big Sea*, is a story of the writer's life from his birth in 1902 up to 1930. It is a highly exciting account of a life which in itself has encompassed much of the wide variety of Negro experience (even within the Jim-Crow-flanked narrowness of American Negro life there is much variety). Before he was twenty-seven, Langston Hughes had lived in Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, New York, and Washington, D. C., on this side of the world; and on the other side he had lived in France and Italy and he had visited Africa. He had known the poverty of the underprivileged Negro family and the wealth of his successful businessman father. He had taught school in Mexico, gone to college at Columbia, shipped to Africa on a freighter, worked as a doorman in Paris, combed the beaches of Genoa, bussed dishes in a Washington hotel, and had received the encouragement of Vachel Lindsay for the poetry he was making of these experiences.

Hughes' family background is no less broad. It winds and spreads through the years from a revolutionary grandmother whose first husband had died with John Brown, to include a great-uncle who was a Reconstruction congressman from Virginia, US minister to Haiti, and the first dean of Howard Law School. Hughes' early life was marked by economic uncertainty, while his father, who left his wife and child to seek freedom in Mexico, was a rich man. Despite its revolutionary source there was even room on Hughes' family tree to include a few bourgeois Washington snobs. This wide variety of experience and background is enough in itself to make *The Big Sea* an interesting book and to recommend it as an important American document. It offers a valuable picture of the class divisions within the Negro group, shows their traditions and folkways and the effects of an expanding industrial capitalism upon several generations of a Negro family.

But *The Big Sea* is more than this. It is also a story told in evocative prose of the personal experiences of a sensitive Negro in the modern world.

In the wake of the last war there appeared that phenomenon of literary and artistic activity among Negroes known as the Negro Renaissance. This movement was marked by the "discovery" of the Negro by wealthy whites, who in attempting to fill the vacuum of their lives made the 1920's an era of fads. Negro music, Negro dancing, primitive Negro

sculpture, and Negro writing became a vogue. The artificial prosperity brought by the war allowed these whites to indulge their bohemian fancies for things Negroid. Negro writers found publishing easier than ever before. And not strange to the Marxist is the fact that the same source which furnished the money of the period had also aroused the group energy of the Negro people and made for the emergence of these writers. But this in a different way.

The wave of riots and lynchings released by the war ushered in a new period in the struggle for Negro liberation. Under this pressure Negroes became more militant than ever before in attacking the shortcomings of American democracy. And in the sense that the American Negro group is a suppressed nation, this new spirit was nationalistic. But despite its national character, the group was not without its class divisions. It happened that those who gave artistic expression to this new spirit were of the Negro middle class, or, at least, were under the sway of its ideology. In a pathetic attempt to reconcile unreconcilables, these writers sought to wed the passive philosophy of the Negro middle class to the militant racial protest of the Negro masses. Thus, since the black masses had evolved no writers of their own, the energy of a whole people became perverted to the ends of a class which had grown conscious of itself through the economic alliances it had made when it supported the war. This expression was further perverted through the bohemian influence of the white faddists whom the war had destroyed spiritually, and who sought in the Negro something primitive and exotic; many writers were supported by their patronage.

Into this scene Langston Hughes made his first literary steps. Two older writers, Claude McKay and James Weldon Johnson, have treated the movement in their autobiographies. But neither has given a realistic account of the period or indicated that they knew just what had happened to them. Hughes himself avoids an analysis, but his candid and objective account of his personal experience in the movement is far more realistic than theirs. For the student of American letters it should offer valuable material.

There are many passages in *The Big Sea* in which Hughes castigates the Negro bourgeoisie, leaving no doubt as to what he thought of its value. Declining its ideological world, he gained his artistic soul: he is one of the few writers who survived the Negro Renaissance and still has the vitality to create. While his contemporaries expressed the limited strivings of this class, Hughes' vision carried him

down into the black masses to seek his literary roots. The crystallized folk experience of the blues, spirituals, and folk tales became the stuff of his poetry. And when the flood of 1929 wrecked the artistic houses of his fellows, his was balanced firm upon its folk foundation. The correctness of his vision accounts for his development during that period of his life which follows the close of this book, and which we hope will be made the material of a forthcoming volume.

In his next book, however, we hope that besides the colorful incidents, the word pictures, the feel, taste, and smell of his experiences, Langston Hughes will tell us more of how he felt and thought about them. For while the style of *The Big Sea* is charming in its simplicity, it is a style which depends upon understatement for its more important effects. Many NEW MASSES readers will question whether this is a style suitable for the autobiography of a Negro writer of Hughes' importance; the national and class position of the writer should guide his selection of techniques and method, should influence his style. In the style of *The Big Sea* too much attention is apt to be given to the esthetic aspects of experience at the expense of its deeper meanings. Nor—this being a world in which few assumptions may be taken for granted—can the writer who depends upon understatement to convey these meanings be certain that they do not escape the reader. To be effective the Negro writer must be explicit; thus realistic; thus dramatic.

*The Big Sea* has all the excitement of a picaresque novel with Hughes himself as hero. This gives the incidents presented a unity provided by a sensitive and unusual personality; but when Hughes avoids analysis and comment, and, in some instances, emotion, a deeper unity is lost. This is that unity which is formed by the mind's brooding over experience and transforming it into conscious thought. Negro writing needs this unity, through which the writer clarifies the experiences of the reader and allows him to recreate himself. Perhaps its lack of this unity explains why *The Big Sea* ends where it does.

For after 1930 Hughes was more the conscious artist. His work followed the logical development of the national-folk sources of his art. Philosophically his writings constitute a rejection of those aspects of American life which history has taught the Negro masses to reject. To this is accountable the power of such poems as *Ballad of Lenin*, *Letter to the Academy*, *Elderly Race Leaders*, *Ballad of Ozzie Powell*, and *Let America Be America Again*. It is the things which he rejects in American life that make for the strength of

the Negro writer. This amounts to the recognition of the new way of life postulated by the plight of the Negro and other minorities in our society. In accepting it the writer recognizes the revolutionary role he must play. Hughes' later work, his speeches before the International Congress of Writers for the Defense of Culture at Paris and his presence in Madrid during the Spanish war, shows his acceptance of that role.

Because he avoided the mistakes of most Negro writers of the twenties, Hughes' responsibility to younger writers and intellectuals is great. They should be allowed to receive the profound benefits of his experiences, and this on the plane of conscious thought. Then, besides the absorbing story of an adventurous life, we would be shown the processes by which a sensitive Negro attains a heightened consciousness of a world in which most of the odds are against his doing so—in the South the attainment of such a consciousness is in itself a revolutionary act. It will be the spread of this consciousness, added to the passion and sensitivity of the Negro people, that will help create a new way of life in the United States.

RALPH ELLISON.

## They Defeated France

J'ACCUSE, by Andre Simone. Dial Press. \$2.50.

IT WAS in the lovely town of Tours in the middle of last June. Pierre Laval, the former premier of France, was sitting in one of the cafes, conversing with associates on the eve of the capitulation. "I was always for an agreement with Hitler and Mussolini," he said. "This insane pro-British policy and those overtures we made to the Soviets have ruined France." Had his advice been followed, he assured his listeners, France would now be a happy country, living at peace. He was interrupted by an elderly gentleman in a gray suit. "Monsieur le president Laval?" the old man asked. And before Laval could answer the old man had slapped him in the face, disappearing in the general uproar that followed. It seems that his son, an aviator, had recently been killed in action.

This is one of the many stories in Andre Simone's *J'Accuse*. It is the best characterization of the book itself—which is a slap in the face of all the villains and vultures, the sordid and sinister, self-infatuated, corrupt politicians who brought France to ruin. Simone is the pseudonym of a journalist who was evidently intimate with French parliamentary circles. It was written "in the white heat of anger," and its title recalls the passion of Emile Zola. But the effect is not anger; rather, a revulsion, a feeling of disgust, a sense of suffocation. It is the history of the last eight years of French politics in terms of its leading personalities. The morose, insecure Daladier, half drunk on *pastis* most of the time, leaning heavily on the advice of his lady friend Mme. de Crussols. Leon Blum is here, foxy, self-satisfied, an esthete in the toils of the British

foreign office. Albert Sarraut, the Radical Socialist boss, "epicure and aging Casanova." Bonnet, whose nose grew longer with every lie he told. Weygand, the tightlipped Catholic general. Laval, whose fortune exceeded \$3,000,000, owner of three vast estates, an ancient chateau, a racing stable, the socialist lawyer who became a Papal count, of whom a bird of a feather, De Monzie, once said: "I don't always agree with Laval's political ideas, but on the Stock Exchange I follow him blindly." These are the vaunted names, the minions of morality, the paragons of public service. Simone dissects their frustrations, intrigues, deceptions, inherent viciousness until it becomes clear that Hitler did not corrupt these men or even defeat them: they corrupted themselves and defeated France.

This book was clearly written in haste; the first half of it is better than the last. The story of the past year is very condensed, perhaps too close in perspective, too much of a nightmare to be fully described. This book is an expose of the figures rather than the forces which brought the debacle about. But it does place the blame for what happened to France where it belongs: on "that fifth column with the most powerful connections in the government, big business, the state administration, and the army." Each day new books are appearing, many of which will confuse the American public on the simple, terrible lesson of France. All the more reason then why the first of these, *J'Accuse*, remains a volume to be read.

JOSEPH STAROBIN.

## Bird of Parodies

LOOK WHO'S TALKING, by S. J. Perelman. Random House. \$2.

YOUR correspondent is hardly the man to say the definitive word on the art of Sidney Joseph Perelman, since he holds the belief that Dr. Perelman is the greatest man alive in the world today. This slender sheaf of fugitive papers gathered from the *New Yorker* and *NEW MASSES* (no relation) is the apogee of that wondrous and eerie art of critical parody that Dr. Perelman practices under a simpleton guise. It includes dangerous thoughts on the subjects of *Saturday Evening Post* biographies, streamlined trains, country life, advertising, Hollywood, and a scarifying piece on the catalogue of W. S. Darley & Co., a Chicago house offering lethal weapons to the police.

Since his last work, *Strictly from Hunger*, Dr. Perelman has become increasingly preoccupied with neuroses, and the variety which he has acquired will take care of practically every phenomenon of Western bourgeois society. This aspect of Perelman struck the *Time* reviewer so tunefully that he wrote a piece to prove that Perelman is the greatest surrealist since James Joyce. This is error: Perelman is a critic. He is not feeling his way around and spinning his odd sequiturs for an esthetic kick. There is a uniform social

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point of view in the scattered essays of *Look Who's Talking*.

I am not quarreling with *Time's* thinker over which side owns the true bones of the prophet, but I want to point out Perelman's motivations. When he burst upon the literary scene as a rosy-cheeked college boy from Brown, he bent his talents to annihilating Rover Boy ideas, which he found on every level of literature in the twenties. Who will forget the magic of *Dawn Ginsberg's Revenge*, or the formal Assyrian line he wielded in the monstrous graphic puns in the old *Life*? I suspect the Parson Weems tradition got its death blow from Perelman alone. At least it lost its language when Perelman held it up naked.

The mature Perelman lives in a world in which the Rover Boys have turned into Willkie, and the leading gazettes, such as *Life*, are sneering at the barbarity of the German tongue. Perelman has goosed the minor bizzarrie of the publishing business and needs a forum for brushing off the higher imbecility. *PM* has had the wit to let Perelman into a cageful of movie magazines. Why not give him a regular column and subscriptions to the big political rags?

JOB SMITH.

**War Symposium**

DEFENSE FOR AMERICA, a symposium edited by William Allen White. The Macmillan Co. \$1.

THIS is a collection of radio broadcasts, speeches, and articles by the heavy hitters, the Murderers' Row of the William Allen White committee. A motley crowd indeed: Rabbi Stephen Wise joins with Wall Street's Lewis Douglas, George Creel, of odious memory, and three university presidents—Conant of Harvard, Seymour of Yale, and Frank Graham of North Carolina—in expounding, proclaiming, exclaiming upon the necessity of aiding the Allies (when there still were allies). Rupert Hughes and Mrs. Dwight Morrow, Lindbergh's mother-in-law, also serve, while Mgr. John Ryan and Henry Sloane Coffin of the Union Theological Seminary, act as chaplains to the regiment; a selection of the President's messages on armaments brings up the rear. The word "defense" appears in every other paragraph, but it remains for the sinister lawyer, Grenville Clark, to admit that the United States must clean up on everything in sight from the Caribbean to Canada to New Zealand. Aid for the Allies means, to these people, encouragement for other peoples to hold the lines until the American people have been beaten into shape for war.

Democracy and civilization and morality are concepts, promiscuously employed on every other page; nowhere is it hinted that the main issue before the American people is the defense of democracy, civilization, and morality from the horrible frightfulness which capitalism in its imperialist stage is visiting upon Europe and ourselves.

J. S.

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**GOINGS ON**

**ALFRED GOLDSTEIN**, popular political analyst, reviews **THE NEWS OF THE WEEK** every **SUNDAY EVENING** at Workers School, 2nd floor, 35 East 12 Street. Admission 25c.

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**New Negro Theater**

The Negro Playwrights Company holds dedicatory meeting.

**T**HE night of September 6 saw a new theater born in Harlem, a Negro theater, of, by, and for the Negro people—and the whites as well. About two thousand people gathered in the Golden Gate Ballroom on Lenox Avenue and cheered the formation of this new group, which is dedicated courageously, at a time of imminent war, oppression, and rising race prejudice, to the solidarity of all oppressed and minority peoples.

The Negro Playwrights Company is sponsored by some of the finest artists of that race: Paul Robeson, Richard Wright, Theodore Ward, Langston Hughes, Edna Thomas, many others. Most of these people were present at the dedicatory meeting. Robeson, never in better voice, sang for the people—"Water Boy," "Old Man River," "Die Moorsoldaten," the song of the new Russia, "Fatherland," various spirituals.

Greetings to the new enterprise were brought by Morris Carnovsky in the name of the New Theater League and the Group Theater. Hazel Scott, on her way to Cafe Society, stopped by long enough to sing a song and swing Liszt's Second Hungarian Rhapsody. Theodore Ward, president of the new group, replied to Mr. Carnovsky, and Richard Wright told his mixed audience how he had conceived *Native Son* and carried his conception into execution.

It was both significant and moving that every word spoken, by Miss Gwendolyn Bennett, chairman, by Mr. Ward and Mr. Carnovsky, by Miss Scott and Mr. Robeson, by Mr. Wright, invoked and strengthened the bonds that exist and daily grow stronger between oppressed people everywhere—whatever the "reasons" for their oppression: poverty, race prejudice, national chauvinism, religion. In such a mood and such a setting, there was established a new theater group that joins forces with a host of other peoples' organizations to drive oppression from the earth.

The new drama season opened horribly at the Biltmore with Dr. A. J. Cronin's play about other doctors called *Jupiter Laughs*. Nobody else did. The whole affair was so dull, so mannered, so lacking in anything worth listening to that not even the free seats were filled.

Certain of Cronin's novels, notably *The Citadel*, have made excellent motion pictures that had a grasp of their subject and a point of view about it. Here, in the exposition of the character and works of young Dr. Verner, who though still not out of his internship is hot on the trail of a great therapeutic for nervous disorders, the older doctor, Cronin, must have been thinking of something else. But you needn't worry about it, for the play will be closed by the time you read this.

ALVAH BESSIE.

**WARNING!**

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“ . . . fascism

to end all

fascism? . . . ”

*“Round up the cream of our strong, brutal male population . . . whose brutal instincts will be attuned to the brutal machines of twentieth century war . . . to raise contingents of born brutes and young brutes.”—New York “Daily News.” September 12.*

The *Daily News* put it in plain, bald journalese so there could be no mistaking the idea. That’s what they want and they say it in plain English. But there are others saying the same thing in fancy words, in “high-sounding words,” as Ernest Hemingway put it when he chastised Archibald MacLeish several months ago after the Great Librarian charged the anti-war writers with responsibility for what Mr. MacLeish called “the moral unpreparedness” of America’s youth. The author of *A Farewell to Arms*, speaking for his

generation of opponents to militarism, said, “Do his [MacLeish’s] high-sounding words blame us because we never advocated a fascism to end fascism?” “MacLeish,” he said, “seems to have a very bad conscience.” The bad consciences fill the pages of the liberal weeklies. They wheel out all their high-sounding phrases that in essence advocate fascism to “end” fascism. Once they talked about saving the world for democracy. Today they charge America with “going soft,” a la FDR. They rant against rationalism (see Waldo Frank); they go into mystic trances (see Lewis Mumford). The brass hats bark and they hearken, all these summer soldiers, from Max Lerner and Malcolm Cowley on. Their ideas are the ideas of jingoism, but they have all the fancy words to put them in. The *Daily News* put it clearer, better, but it was the same story.

NEW MASSES is happy to announce that Dr. Samuel Sillen, former literary editor of this magazine, has prepared a series of articles that will turn the spotlight on these laureates of betrayal. You have not forgotten his splendid series of articles, “Writers and the War,” that appeared in this magazine a year ago. His first article will be printed in an early issue.

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