Britain Primes for a Second Front

LONDON CABLE

NEW MASSES

JUNE 2, 1942 15c IN CANADA 20c

In This Issue: *Herr Patterson of the "Daily News," by Barbara Giles; Heinrich Mann, Colonel T., Samuel Sillen, Ralph Ellison, William Gropper. Letters from Alfred Kreymborg, Frederick V. Field, Bella Dodd, Frederick N. Myers, William Z. Foster.*

EUROPE CAN BE INVADED NOW!

A Western Front Could Decide the War This Year

Americans throughout the land are arguing these great issues. As in Great Britain, the public demand for coordination of our offensive with Russia's great fight is growing. Instinctively, Americans are for the attack, for carrying the war to the enemy. But many ask these questions:

How would the defense of Britain be affected?

Bombing Germany—will that alone do the job?

Can the Russians be expected to win the war by themselves?

The shipping situation—how serious a bottleneck is it?

What would the effect be on the Pacific front?

New Masses explores these questions, assembles the answers in a special issue: "The Case for a Western Front."

Convincing available evidence has now been brought together between two covers. The opinions of leading journalists have been marshalled. The pros and cons of military authorities are here.

NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, MAY 22, 1942.

"Let the world know about it"

That's what a group of NEW MASSES readers said when they saw the galleys on our special issue, "The Case for a Western Front," last week. They insisted that we place a big ad in the New York "Times." When we explained that finances would not permit it they asked to pay for the ad themselves. We said we were barely pulling through our financial crisis, and that we would prefer to use their contribution to pay the printer's accumulated bills.

"No," they said. "That ad would prove that NEW MASSES is operating in the true spirit of the offensive." They cited Churchill's welcome of popular expression on the question of a Western Front. "Your readers will come through all the more enthusiastically after they see how NM surmounts every hardship, keeps punching away come hell, high water, or creditors." So more than 500,000 persons saw the ad. Our friends had their way.

Do you agree with them that NM is operating "in the true spirit of the offensive"? Do you agree that it provides expression for the will of the people? If you do, then you will not let NM die for want of help.

Our creditors don't want to see the magazine die, but they have legitimate claims which we must satisfy — or else. . . .

To date we have raised $19,210 toward our $40,000 goal. But the hot months are coming on. Months when income inevitably declines. We put it to you as squarely as we know how. Do you want more issues like "The Case for a Western Front"? Do you want us to continue hitting at the fifth and sixth columnists?

Do you want us to keep driving ahead on the world-moving issues of this greatest of all wars?

We are sure you are with us in the spirit of the offensive.

If that's so, then the life of this magazine means as much to you as it does to us.

Then let us hear from you by return mail. Time is short. There is nothing more we can say.

THE EDITORS.

(Please fill out the coupon on page 30)

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

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DAILY NEWS

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FINA

3. No. 284 New York, Friday, May 22, 1942★ 56 Main+8 Manhattan Pages 2 Cents IN CITY LIMITS | 3 C Else

HEIL PATTERSON

Profile of a publisher who smiles when he says "Dictator." Why the Captain reaches for his Maury when he hears the word culture. Barbara Giles focuses the camera-eye on New York's biggest picture paper.

EARLY this spring Capt. Joseph Patterson denied a disagreeable rumor concerning himself and his New York *Daily News:* "We aren't defeatists; not even pessimists," he asserted editorially on March 24. That matter settled, the publisher went on to explain why it would take four years to push Japan back from Australia to Tokyo. The subject of defeatism wasn't mentioned again, but constant readers of the *News* are supposed to assume that Patterson is an incorrigible Pollyanna because he still entertains a hope that we can hold the Hawaiian Islands. It's a pretty bleak hope but the best that the publisher can muster as long as Franklin D. Roosevelt doesn't agree that our resources should be concentrated around Hawaii first and to hell with the rest of the Pacific. He doesn't even listen when Patterson explains that Japan is probably just "making a feint" in other places to draw our attention away from the Islands. As for Germany, the publisher can't see that Hitler is doing us any particular harm. He hasn't taken the Atlantic yet, has he? If he does, then Captain Patterson may consent to worry about the world situation (provided there *is* a world situation, which Patterson isn't entirely ready to admit).

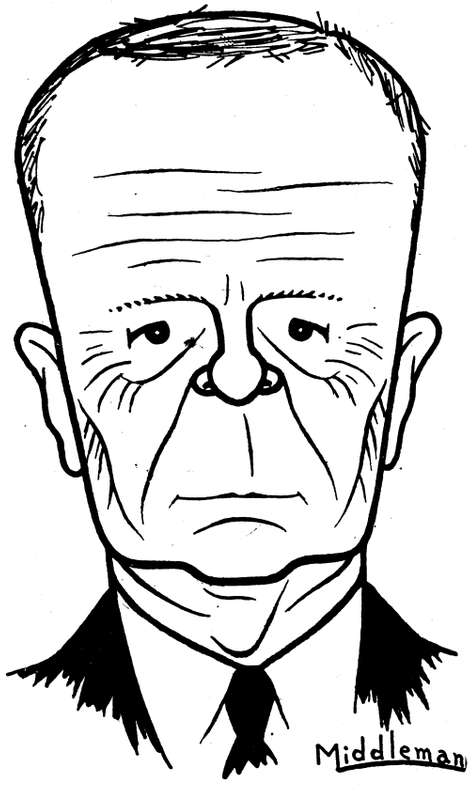
This peculiar optimism—if you want to call it that—would be easier for Captain Patterson if it weren't for England, Russia, the Netherlands, and China. It is they who corrode the captain's faith. The English and Dutch are fighting mostly to regain the rubber which Japan has taken from them, while the Chinese have betrayed Captain Patterson for more than four years by continuing to resist Japanese aggression when he gave them up as lost from the beginning. He had told them expressly why they were lost, too—because some peoples were born "masters" and others "servants" and they belonged in the latter class. The Chinese didn't believe him and now look what's happened: without that conquest to appease her, Japan has turned on us—on the Hawaiian Islands, anyway. Of course Patterson doesn't trust Russia for a minute. He has said at least twice that if a second front is necessary one of its purposes is to "keep Russia fighting." For he spreads a favorite lie of defeatists, that "There is always the danger that peace between Stalin and Hitler may break out at any time." He said this in the *Daily News* of March 30 and has said it in different words at other times. Privately he has said to Lord Beaverbrook—according to a story in the New York *Post*—that he would prefer Russia's defeat to Germany's.

Just to be fair, Patterson occasionally criticizes the Axis nations too. Like this: "Germany has France in practically the same grip as the Union had the Southern States after our Civil War." On April 18 he wrote that "The Japs were known to history as favoring the sneak punch." That, however, was not really in criticism of Japan but of the US Army and Navy Departments for not adequately safeguarding Pearl Harbor. The 2,000,000 readers of the *News* (3,500,000 on Sunday) are trusted not to remember that the sneak punch came just two weeks after Captain Patterson urged: "Come On—Let's Appease Japan." Lately he has taken to conceding that Hitler will probably have to be smashed—some day. His prescription for doing this is like taking cyanide for smallpox. First we must go through a lengthy process of putting Japan in its place, preferably by air power (Patterson is opposed to AEF's). Then we must "get the bloody business over with as fast as possible" through a concentrated attack that will "cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of our best young men" and "bring grief and heartbreak to every American community and countryside." One corner of this gruesome picture is reserved for a contrasting glimpse of the blessings of Patterson's kind of "peace."

That's Captain Patterson's campaign for the Western Front and it's as cute as his Defense Bond drive. On December 15 and 22, the *News* urged people to "Buy Defense Bonds" in two editorials which regretfully admitted that they might be worthless after the war. But then if they were, Patterson added cheerfully, the whole country would be worthless too. Priorities and rationing are something he doesn't uphold with one hand, the better to shoot them with the other. He uses the frontal attack: "We are being ordered and rationed around in an even more bullying tone by the bureaucrats. . . . The result is that more and more people are coming to feel about the war effort as they felt about prohibition—that the bureaucrats are petty tyrants and that it is more or less a citizen's duty to hinder them." This is plain speaking, but you should read it twice. Perhaps Patterson is right in thinking that the word "defeatist" doesn't exactly fit the *News*—"inciting to rebellion" comes closer.

IN MORE playful mood, the captain likes to pretend that there aren't any shortages actually. People who say so are just a lot of old meanies who don't want us to have any fun. Take

training in blitz technique. This small infantry detachment from the AEF uses a 37-mm. anti-tank gun in the shelter afforded by a bombed building.



Patterson

Harold Ickes, for example. Ickes, who talks about gas shortages, "thinks we should suffer deprivation whether there's any reason for it or not. Ickes even seems to take a sadistic delight in it."

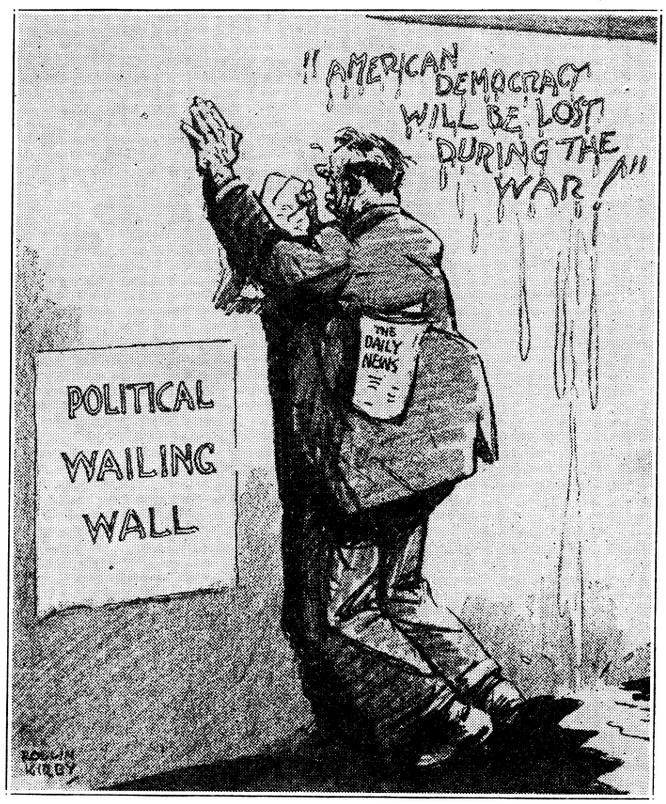
Which would make Ickes a hero, if Patterson were consistent. For in 1914 one of Patterson's idols was Gen. Friedrich von Bernhardi, spokesman for the Prussian Junkers, who wrote that ". . . sacrifice and suffering are more precious than enjoyment." Patterson also liked to quote him on war, as Hitler's men still quote him—that war was a biological necessity which made for progress since only the most "vital" nations would finally survive. It was Patterson's opinion that this "German idea" couldn't be beaten. In fact, he was so taken by Bernhardi's philosophy that he wrote editorials in the Chicago *Tribune* advocating that the weak and unfit be put to death. This was something of a departure from the struggle-for-survival thesis, since it would eliminate the struggle. But then, it would expedite the survival to the point where we would soon have a world of physically elite like the late Max Annenberg.

Annenberg was the most cherished of Patterson's heroes, surpassing even Clyde Beatty the lion tamer, from whom Patterson once begged a whip for a souvenir. For nearly three decades Max was Patterson's Man Friday. The publisher met him in Chicago when Patterson and his cousin Robert McCormick were running the *Tribune*. Annenberg had been Hearst's Chicago circulation manager, which meant knowing how to slug, blackjack, and shoot in wars against rival papers. He was doing such a good job against the *Tribune* that the paper took him over to slug, blackjack, and shoot the Hearst circulation men. Patterson himself had reached no such heights. The best he had been able to do was picking fights with toughies to prove to himself that wealth had not made him effete.

When Patterson went to New York to take charge of his tabloid *News,* he took Max with him, and Max was a fixture at the *News* until he died last year. It was he who installed some forty men, fully armed, plus machine-gun emplacements in the basement. The guards, through an elaborate system, signaled each other every fifteen minutes that all was well. To Max the guns were a nice homey touch, and besides protecting the building they brought down the insurance. There is no record of the guards having been called into action although they bristled dangerously for a while when WPA workers were picketing a building across the street some years ago. Max felt compelled to take their guns away on that occasion. He reasoned, soundly enough, that it wouldn't be good for the *News,* which had a liberal reputation at that time, to get involved in any anti-labor violence.

The only quaint touch which Patterson himself has contributed to the *News* surroundings is the hatchet which hangs on the wall of his private toilet, so he can chop his way out if locked in. His claustrophobia is such that he has metal doors in his home because wooden ones might swell and get stuck. There's a very fancy bathroom at the *News,* done in red onyx, but that's for Colonel McCormick when he comes to town. The colonel is vice-president of the *News,* and Patterson is vice-president of the *Tribune.* There used to be a lack of cousinly love between the two men, but they are *en rapport* now in the common cause of impeding the administration's war program. Patterson is more affectionate to his sister, Eleanor (Cissie) Patterson, who constitutes the Washington end of the publishing Axis. He advises her in running her *Times-Herald* and she republishes his more drastic editorials. These editorials, it should be stated, are not written directly by Patterson but by Reuben Maury. However, Maury's job is mostly that of a transmitter. He listens intently while Patterson talks, then puts it down on paper in the Patterson style. He is probably the only editorial writer in the country who enjoys being a dictaphone. Last year, when *PM* discovered that Maury was writing against aid-to-Britain in the *News* and for it in *Collier's,* he replied in indignant self-defense that he did not "pretend to be anything but a newspaper hired man."

News reporters are less anonymous than they used to be, although Captain Patterson still doesn't believe in "star journalists." His pets are the comic strip artists, who get not only tremendous salaries but personal tutelage from the publisher. Patterson prides himself on his sense of humor. In his *Tribune* days his greatest delight was The Katzenjammer Kids, which stimulated him to compose jokes for the *Tribune's* humor column. They were so bad that "B. L. T.," the columnist,

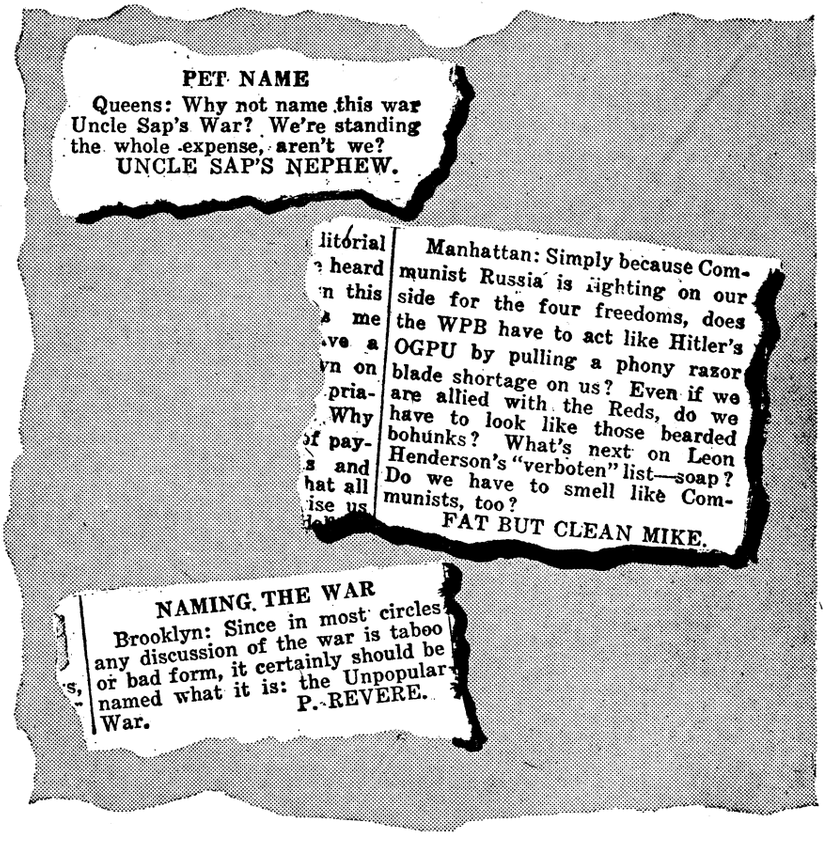


Rollin Kirby in the New York "Post"
"People We Could Do Without"

refused to print them, and Patterson never forgave him. When the columnist died, Patterson delivered an address at the memorial services which was so ungracious it startled those who heard it. The publisher's present favorite in comic strips is The Gumps, which he invented himself. He also created Dick Tracy, Little Orphan Annie, and Moon Mullins.

Some of the stories in the *News* contain little more text than a comic strip. There isn't room for much, what with the pictures and the advertisements. On Thursdays and Fridays, the big department-store advertising days, the news columns run like tiny rivulets between mountain banks of ads. This makes it a little difficult to get in the big events of the day, although space can be found for, say, a picture of Rep. Clare Hoffman (Appeaser, Mich.) and a fairly good-sized story about his opposition to Army regulations forbidding the privates to date the nurses. Back in 1938 Captain Patterson managed to get in no less than eleven columns of anti-Semitic propaganda from William Dudley Pelley, recently arrested for sedition. When the protests from readers poured in, Captain Patterson defended himself in an editorial, thus: "The Bill of Rights does not mean that Americans are forbidden to dislike other Americans on religious or other grounds. Plenty of people are just now exercising their right to dislike the Jews."

Captain Patterson himself has exercised this "right" more than once. On Sept. 10, 1941, the *News* editorially referred to "those who are called anti-Semites by the more enthusiastic warmongers—who believe the United States should not send an army of millions of men—for hundreds of thousands would not be enough—to Europe to avenge upon Hitler the wrongs he has inflicted on the Jews in Europe." Coughlin could not have said it better.



PET NAME

Queens: Why not name this war Uncle Sap's War? We're standing the whole expense, aren't we?
UNCLE SAP'S NEPHEW.

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Manhattan: Simply because Communist Russia is fighting on our side for the four freedoms, does the WPB have to act like Hitler's OGPU by pulling a phony razor blade shortage on us? Even if we are allied with the Reds, do we have to look like those bearded bohunks? What's next on Leon Henderson's "verboten" list—soap? Do we have to smell like Communists, too?
FAT BUT CLEAN MIKE.

NAMING THE WAR

Brooklyn: Since in most circles any discussion of the war is taboo or bad form, it certainly should be named what it is: the Unpopular War.
P. REVERE.

Patterson's Voice. Here are some typical excerpts from the "Daily News." letter columns, which the publisher titles "Voice of the People." In cruder, Coughlinite language they reiterate the conclusions of the "News" editorial columns. The phony signatures above are also typical. Patterson loads "Voice of the People" with this kind of stuff.

LIKE Colonel McCormick, Patterson has a dread of being "influenced" by men in power and therefore avoids friendships with them. He is equally suspicious of the less privileged who may be after a dollar or two from his pocket (the *News* profits are around $5,000,000 yearly). When the publisher takes a subordinate to lunch and suspects that his guest is hoping for a de luxe meal, Patterson chooses a cafeteria. He does make an effort to find out what the Little People are thinking, and used to slum around flophouses disguised as a bum, conversing with the habitues. In his early post-collegiate days he scandalized Chicago society by declaring himself a Socialist and appearing in the family box at the opera clad in muddy shoes, lumberman's shirt, and rumpled tail coat and trousers. Socialism in that time had been given a glamorous journalistic appeal by Jack London's popularity. With Patterson it lasted just long enough for him to turn out a book or two denouncing the idle sons of the rich.

There is evidence that Patterson disliked the rich but never riches, and that his dislike was based in part at least on an aversion to refinements of dress and speech. He doesn't like "fancy talk" or "fancy writing"; stories written with any trace of the latter are ruthlessly cut down before publication. When the publisher hears the word culture he reaches for his Maury and there's an editorial blast in the *News* the next day. The paper enthusiastically supported the congressional campaign against WPA art projects, although Patterson had been pretty consistent in backing the New Deal as a whole. ("The New Deal," he said once, "has taken the place of Peaches Browning.") His foreign policy was very rarely liberal. The *News* was among the few newspapers which persistently, and inaccurately, referred to the Spanish loyalists as "Reds." As far back as his *Tribune* days Patterson had the America First outlook—never mind about Europe's troubles, let's stick to this continent, taking over Canada and Latin American countries for ourselves. Even after Pearl Harbor Patterson was still suggesting that while the British were busy fighting this was a good time for us to put the snatch on Canada.

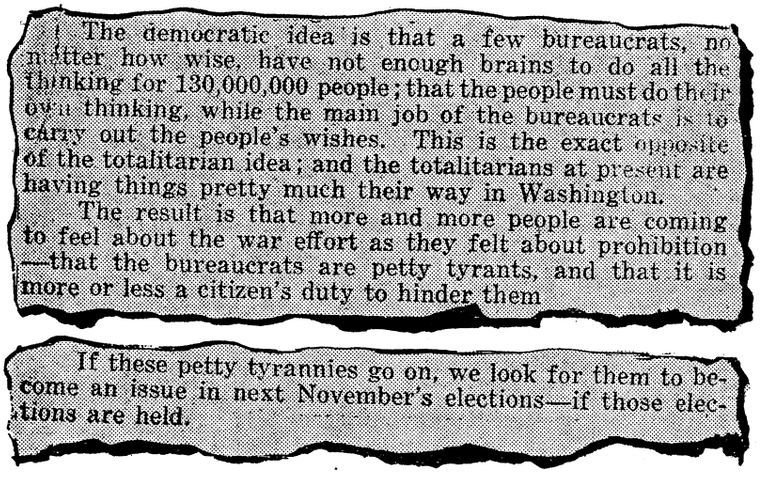
Six weeks before the "sneak punch" at Pearl Harbor, Patterson gave America First $5,000 to keep up its dirty work. The organization officially disbanded after December 7 but Patterson, as though he were trying to realize on his investment, keeps its spirit alive and shouting in his paper. On April 16 he announced that "we" were better than the President because "we love this country exclusively." It's the sort of America First love which embraces everything but the country's government, its allies, its people, and its traditions. You can go through *News* editorials over a two-month period and find scarcely one decent word for anything the United Nations are doing in the struggle against the Axis. You will find only whining, mean cracks, outright resistance.

If you do discover an orchid blooming among the editorial sourweeds—watch out. It's been planted there for a purpose. When Brig. Gen. James Doolittle got the Congressional Medal for the bombing of Tokyo, Patterson wrote quite a loving little piece about him—and about three other aviators named Lindbergh, Rickenbacker, and Al Williams. The last two, like Mr. Lindbergh, were devotees of America First. Patterson has quoted Rickenbacker at least three times on the editorial page, apparently for the sheer pleasure of hearing him say that we have already lost the war. The *News,* the Chicago *Tribune,* and Washington *Times-Herald* have virtually made General MacArthur their personal protege (without asking his consent) simply to boost him as their Favorite Son of 1944, in order to embarrass the administration. They use his heroic record in a war which they themselves oppose, to snipe at President Roosevelt for keeping MacArthur "pigeonholed away" in Australia and to accuse the administration of refusing to help him in the Battle of the Philippines. Once or twice Patterson has even cast a posy at the Red Army and "the colossal drama on the Russian Front"—which, says the publisher dreamily, we in America can "watch" while keeping our sole attention fixed on Hawaii.

I DON'T know how much Patterson finds out about what the Little People are thinking from the letters he receives. The *News* gets a tremendous amount of mail, but it's carefully sorted out before publication in "Voice of the People." Reuben Maury does the selecting, and what does appear in print is not designed to hinder the captain's crusade against the war. Of course Maury is smart enough to publish a few which call the *News* names or perhaps praise the Soviet Union. These, it strangely happens, are almost always signed with Jewish names. The greater percent of the appeaser mail carries Irish signatures, though the downright seditions are usually signed only with initials or with sobriquets. "Voice of the People" is an appalling refutation of the comfortable theory that most *News* readers look only at the stories and comic strips, disregarding the editorial page. "Voice of Patterson" would be a more fitting title for these columns. These readers, too, "love America exclusively." They too promote the dark suspicion that the "dictatorial" administration will abolish national elections for the duration. They are bitter about blackouts, rationing, price control, and priorities.

Many of the letters could have been taken straight from *Social Justice*. For example: "Intoin all the Bundists, Silvershoits, Blackshoits, America Foisters . . . and ya have 25,000,000 locked up." Or this: "Now that we have muzzled Father Coughlin's paper, let's go all the way and ban all church papers. In this way we can achieve the sacred aim, which is Communism throughout the world." "Roosevelt squanderbund," "the fake 'emergency,'" "bastions of hogwaller"—these are some of the phrases applied to the administration and the war effort by *News* readers, who also regard air-raid wardens as "power drunk ninnies" and beg for a "Peace Soon" campaign. President Roosevelt's request that someone think up an appropriate name for the war drew a riot of Coughlinite suggestions in the *News* letter columns. One reader offered "R.I.P." —for "Rackets Inaugurated Politically, Rogues in Power, Reds in Plush, Religion in Peril, and Rights in Pawn." Several suggested variations on "Roosevelt's War"—such as "The War of Krum Elbow," "The Fourth Term War," and "The Raw Deal."

All this, with Patterson's own bellyaching, is printed under the plea that to do otherwise will weaken "freedom of the press." That much-mangled phrase used to stir Patterson's risibilities, especially when he heard men like McCormick use it. But not any more. His Washington correspondent, John O'Donnell, devotes most of his time to the subject. When Roosevelt made his press conference statement about sixth columnists, O'Donnell wrote on March 25: "The press, FDR tartly observed, no longer has the influence that it had a short time ago." By March 30 the correspondent's impression of Roosevelt's manner had changed: "There was a note of smug satisfaction in the voice of the President last week when he blandly told the White House newspapermen that the American press is losing influence with its readers." On the other hand, he is stern in calling the government to order for exercising its own freedom to inform the press about what's going on in the war agencies. This becomes "propaganda" and, to believe O'Donnell, the capital is practically paved with government publicity handouts. He frequently calls attention to the fact that the men who write them are paid for their work, which seems to strike him as peculiar.



Just as Berlin says. The ideas expressed above are favorites with Captain Patterson, but not entirely original—they've been expressed in other words over the Nazi shortwave to this country. These ideas add up to the lying thesis that Americans have been deprived of their liberty —even their constitutional guarantee of free elections—by a "totalitarian" government which is more dangerous than the Axis. Note that Patterson, in the second paragraph above, talks of a citizen's "duty" to "hinder" the war effort.

THE *News'* disdain of an honest press release from open sources is understandable in a way. It is like the disdain of a professional smuggler watching the naive traveler declare his valuables. Captain Patterson works hard at his propaganda and the result is supposed to look like something else completely. The fact that it doesn't, isn't entirely the publisher's fault—you can switch the labels on a Berlin-made shirt and re-tailor it, but you can't wash out all the tattle-tale brown. Readers of the *News* must know by now that when Captain Patterson says "bureaucrats" he means the United States government. When he says "dictator" he means our Commander in Chief—a querulous, vindictive old man, according to the *News,* who makes faces at "all those who venture to disagree with him." You don't need the Berlin shortwave to this country to get the Hitler line on how America has already lost its freedom, so why fight for it?—it's in the *News* editorial columns, over and over. (Sample quotes: "More and more people are asking why we are fighting to make the world safe for democracy when the bureaucrats are destroying democracy right here at home" (April 13). "As for getting our liberties back after the war—we won't get all of them back in any event. We can be confident that after the war we'll be more totalitarian than ever before. That is how those things go" (May 22).

To indicate the *News'* chief propaganda tricks gives only a small idea of the propaganda's extent. First of all, the tricks are played constantly, day after day. There's nothing you can tell Captain Patterson about the Value of Repetition—sometimes he hardly varies the rhetoric of his pet arguments. Then there are minor tricks, also repeated. Patterson, for example, often makes a point of Russia's 180,000,000 people and the "fecund population" of China (with all that manpower, what do they need from America?—and are "fecund" peoples really fit to survive?). In general, the publisher's line exactly fits the purpose of defeatist propaganda as warned against by Archibald MacLeish: to divide the American people from the British and Russian peoples; to inspire a demand for a purely defensive war; to inflame race against race and class against class.

But MacLeish isn't the only person who has exposed the sort of Goebbling found in the *News*. If Captain Patterson wants to know what the "Little People" on his own paper think, he could find out from a recent statement distributed in the plant by members of the Newspaper Guild unit of the *News*. It had some plain things to say about publishers who try to create distrust of our allies and disunity at home. The *News* wasn't mentioned directly, but Captain Patterson probably got the point. And the point, as most people see it, is roughly this: that Herr Hitler undoubtedly would be charmed to see us follow Captain Patterson in his campaign just to hold Hawaii and let the rest of the world go hang, but to good Americans this is no time for a Hula war dance to the tune of the *Horst Wessel*.

BARBARA GILES.

". . . that the government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

MEMORIAL DAY, 1942

". . . that the government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

MEMORIAL DAY, 1942

The Case for the Western Front

BARGES CAN DO IT

Colonel T. analyzes the arguments of those who say we can't invade the continent because of a lack of deep-sea transport. "But the Commandos cross the Channel in barges," he points out. Further discussion of today's most crucial issue.

THE arguments against the opening of a second front in Europe this summer have been varied and many. Their general nature was based in the main on two propositions: that the Allies are too weak, or that the Germans are too strong. There were also the "Our-main-theater-of-war-is-in-the-Pacific" and the isolationist "Keep-our-boys-home-and-our-ships-close-to-our-shores" arguments.

Finally, the isolationists found a "front" (witting or unwitting—we do not know) in Major de Seversky's *Victory Through Airpower.* In this book he propounds the "theory" that America should not do anything until it has built a super-air force. Which means at least three years of waiting on the side lines while "the teeming millions of Europe" (*sic*) kill each other off.

All these arguments have been gradually dismantled and demolished by the action of the Red Army, by information already available on Britain's preparedness, by the landing of American divisions in Ireland and the British Isles, and, generally, by the inexorable logic of events.

At this juncture the anti-second front people gallop out to the firing line with their last battery: There-are-not-enough-ships! To begin with, it is unfair to raise this cry while many ships still carry a lot of things which have nothing to do with war. True, the United Fruit something or other tells us on the radio promptly at 6:49 PM every day that "Your government wants you to eat a lot of fruits and vegetables, etc." This is all very well. Fruits are good for your health. But having fifty-seven ships carrying bananas to this country while they could carry three divisions of infantry to Europe is a little "too much vitamins." There is no doubt that many more ships could be found plying a no more martial trade.

WE HAVE just said that these fifty-seven ships could carry three divisions of infantry. How did we get at that figure? Well, we confess with a slight reddening of our fair complexion that we got it from Mr. Hanson W. Baldwin, military commentator for the New York *Times,* who in last Sunday's edition said that it takes 100,000 ship-tons to carry a division. Mr. Baldwin's reasoning is seldom good. His intuitions are worse, his prophecies pretty terrible. But it must be admitted that his filing system seems to contain a lot of pretty useful data. So we will take him at his face value. Let it be 100,000 ship tons for a division.

At this point it is pertinent to remark that it is one thing to carry a division on a voyage lasting days and even weeks, and another to transport it on a two-hour trip.

We are not experts on maritime logistics, but it seems obvious to us (all you need to figure that out is a narrow studio couch) that in order to lie down and sleep, a man needs about four times more space than a man sitting, while eight men can stand where one man bunks. Add to this the ship space necessary for the men's mess, recreation, etc., and you will see that it is one thing to take a division from the United States to England, for instance, and it is another to take it from England to France.

To come down to figures: if transporting, say, 15,000 men rrom New York to Liverpool engages 100,000 tons for ten days (counting ten days for the trip across in convoy), these 15,000 men can be transported (packed like sardines) from Dover to Calais or Boulogne by engaging 25,000 tons for two hours or so. There is no getting away from the fact that the carrying distance is 100 times shorter and the "embarkation density" four times greater. This is not even logistics. This is plain arithmetic.

Invasion barges—the answer to the shipping problem. Here British troops practice landing operations.

It seems, therefore, quite clear that the argument about "bottoms" is being conducted under a smoke-screen of miscalculation. *The invasion army does not have to be taken to France from North Dakota, but from England.* Shipping would be certainly insufficient for the former purpose. There is no doubt that it can be found for the latter.

As for the naval vessels to escort the invasion convoys, the argument runs along similar lines: there are not enough naval vessels, what with convoying ships to the far corners of the earth, patrolling two oceans, etc.

Here again we can reply: if a second front is considered more important than the arrival of an extra convoy of tanks and planes in Murmansk and Archangel, it would be quite possible to discontinue the flow of materials along the northern route for two or three weeks, call in the light cruisers, destroyers, trawlers, submarines, and what-have-you, and use them to protect the invasion channel to France.

Lastly, people seem to forget that there are such things as *invasion barges.* The Germans contemplated using them back in the fall of 1940. They have been used by the Japanese in Manila Bay, by the Germans around Crete, and by the British Commandos in Norway and in France.

A thousand steel barges can be stamped out much like automobile bodies. Old airplane engines can be used to power them. The average barge carries two or three score men. A barge can make several round trips in twenty-four hours between England and France. The evacuation from Dunkirk showed that England has a lot of small craft manned by plucky fishermen and even sportsmen. All this can be mustered for the dash across. Ships could follow with the heavier stuff. The problem of supply would not be insuperable.

IN OTHER words, the whole dispute about shipping boils down as follows: the issue is not whether there are enough ships to travel from Oregon to Britain, from Britain to France. The issue is not whether there are enough freighters or tankers to cross the Channel, but actually whether we have enough barges, the only kind of ships that are needed to transport men who are about to invade Europe. Barges are the real instruments of invasion; not tankers, freighters, or tramp steamers. With all due apologies for our ignorance of maritime affairs, we therefore submit that the "not-enough-shipping-argument" doesn't hold water.

COLONEL T.

Bombs Can Do It, Says Heinrich Mann

The great German anti-fascist would prefer a second front but believes airpower alone can do the job.

FOR a long time now I have been a Czechoslovakian citizen, and I have always been a German writer. I wrote in French also, during the eight years I spent in France. In more carefree days some of my books were written in Italy, and I had some of my most glowing experiences there. A considerable part of my reading public has been, and is today, in Russia. I have a well earned understanding of all these countries and of the whole continent of Europe; and I feel bound up with their fate.

I would not wish to see a single country more unhappy than alas! it now is. It is not hate and revenge which impel me to seek the defeat of Hitler. The destruction of nations, peoples, and cultures is only his affair, not mine. But I do not want Germany to murder others, and I do not want Germany to commit suicide. Under Hitler, however, such an outcome is inevitable.

So the question, it seems to me, is this: how shall we get rid of Hitler at the least possible cost? How shall we spare Europe and all its component parts already so severely stricken, and yet see to it that Germany is separated from Hitler, that it stops obeying him and ceases to fight?

Two facts speak for themselves: First, it is due to Hitler alone that the Soviet Union and Germany have been forced to make enormous sacrifices of their manpower. And they will make still further sacrifices unless someone intervenes.

Second, the western powers are neither ready nor able to make those same terrible sacrifices of their manpower. From the start of the war both France and Great Britain were resolved to husband their manpower. They acted thus for very cogent reasons, both demographic and psychological. For every highly developed people there comes a time when war is a spiritual and material impossibility. I mean war in the sense of uncontrolled mass slaughter.

I know that the people of Russia and Germany have also outgrown this most brutal and senseless form of war. But a war of mass slaughter has been forced on both nations by an unscrupulous aggressor. It was forced on the Germans by trickery, deceit, and terror. It was forced on the Soviets by Hitler's aggression. The Russians could not have acted differently: their love of country made them prefer the loss of human lives to loss of the earth which nourishes them. Their pride in the future of their new society bade them defend it even at the cost of millions of lives. And the people heeded not only the future of their country, but also its past. Throughout Russian history every invading enemy has been thrown back across the borders. This time the Russians were more duty-bound than ever.

The experience of the last war has to be taken into account, particularly since it is also valid for England. At a moment when the Russian armies have stopped the main body of the German armed forces, England is not at all eager to land 1,000,000 soldiers on the continent. Yet only such a preponderant force engaged in active combat could liberate Europe. Since it is not happening now, it will never happen; or it will happen too late to save human lives. The reasons are understandable and must be considered.

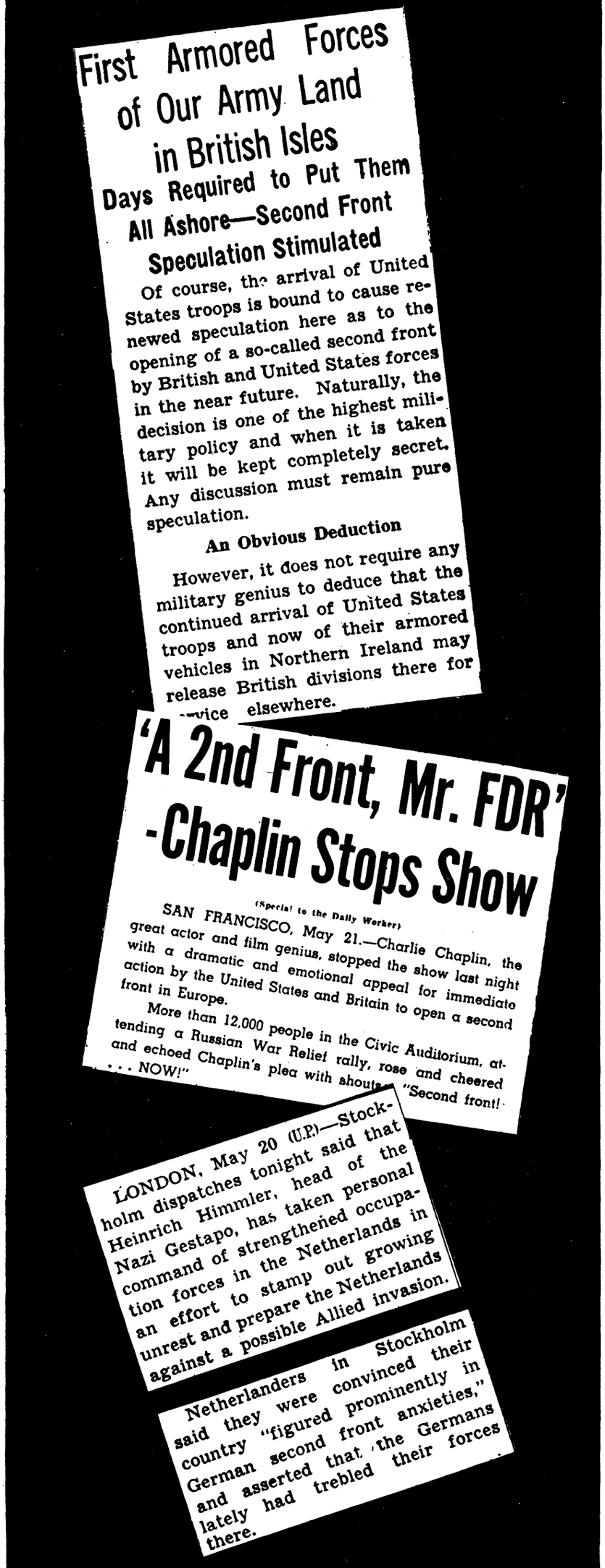
THEN some other method must be found. For there does seem to be another way of opening up a second front to defeat Hitler. Of course it is taken from technical warfare. Five thousand American Flying Fortress bombers would so thoroughly destroy German communications with the East that the German armies in Russia would be cut off. They would be forced to surrender. The inevitable result would be the surrender of the occupation troops in the rest of Europe.

The use of air power, not so much to destroy as to save, seems such a common-sense and effective proposal that one scarcely understands why it still has to be publicly suggested. It should have been carried out long ago. So many brave Russians are dying while a most efficacious technical weapon is left unused. The unhappy Germans, abused as they are, deteriorate and die because their hangman is permitted to send more and more cannon-fodder to the Eastern Front.

Destroy his lines of communication—that is all. The oppressed peoples of the European continent doubtless expect just that, nor can they expect anything equally effective.

HEINRICH MANN.

Comment on Dr. Mann's article appears on the next page



The Hour Grows Near

As one newspaper phrased it last week, "London Clamor for a Second Front Sets a New High." In his London cable on the following page Claude Cockburn tells what the average Britisher is feeling and doing about a second front. And in the House of Commons Sir Stafford Cripps declared that the air offensive over Germany would go on until the moment when Britain launches "a carefully prepared attack on the continent," which, as he said, "we intend to do."

But with the fighting around Kharkov, the imminent struggle for the Caucasus, the impending drives around Smolensk, most Englishmen are bound to feel impatient with the government's declaration. Sir Stafford's statement was a great step forward; the promise of a second front had never been made so clearly before. But there is still too much of the "wait-and-see" attitude about it in the face of a situation in which the word "now" is decisive.

In the United States also the ground of the second front discussion is shifting. More and more people have accepted the idea in principle; the notion of the war's crisis coming in 1943 is being discarded. The argument that we don't have the stuff is losing its force, as each day's press releases hammer home the fact that our production is booming beyond expectations.

But already it isn't quite enough to admit that the Russian front is decisive, to admit that the decision will come this summer. The problem is to break away from the hypnotic gaze on the vast and terrible events in the Ukraine, and get the forces of the United Nations in motion in the very next weeks.

In this as in other matters, the labor movement is taking the lead. Hardly a day passes but what another labor body goes on record for immediate action. The debate and discussion is widening. A still wider discussion is needed, as our special Western Front issue last week made clear. And out of this discussion has got to come the demand for "action now" to meet the great crisis of the war which is already upon us.

As part of this discussion New Masses prints Dr. Heinrich Mann's contribution on the preceding page. Coming from a leading European anti-fascist, a courageous leader of the German people, we naturally respect Dr. Mann's opinion. We think, however, that he misjudges the British and American people when he emphasizes the fear of casualties in London as an obstacle to the opening of a land front. It is true, of course, that memories of enormous sacrifices of men in the last war haven't been fully erased. Yet, judging from the news of this and other weeks, the demand for action is deepest among the very people who will have to pay the heaviest price. So we don't think that failure to open a front can be attributed to hesitations about sacrifice.

Second, we cannot share Dr. Mann's emphasis on air power. Not that we minimize the effect of bombardments over Germany; on the contrary, the more, and the more continuous the better. But we don't think there is any evidence to show that airplanes alone can be decisive. Airplanes can prepare the ground; they are indispensable to accompany land fighters. But the offensive that will really lock the Nazis in two fronts, and will simultaneously rouse the peoples of Europe to resistance by the side of our fighters must come on land. Air power, yes—not as a substitute for a front, but as an auxiliary to it.

The issue that faces us can't be solved by a cure-all. It can't be solved by relying on planes, on the Russians, or the unconquered peoples of Europe alone. In the next days and weeks the supreme test of the United Nations is at hand. To meet that test—in our own interests as Americans above all—the coordination of Allied armed forces with the promethean heroes of the Soviet people is the need of the hour.

The Editors.

THE WEEK in LONDON by CLAUDE COCKBURN

BRITAIN PRIMES FOR ACTION

The majority of the public wants full concentration on the main issue—total mobilization for the second front. What happened at the Labor Party conference.

London (by cable) May 25.

LIKE the front pages of the press, the public mind here is dominated by news of the decisive battle of the world—the Ukraine. It is no exaggeration to say that the broad mass of the public realizes—sometimes far in advance of certain political elements—that this really is a decisive battle of the world. That's one reason why maneuvers and countermaneuvers of "independents" inside and outside Parliament, intrigues against the government by various interests, have within the past ten days acquired a certain unreality in the public view. Three weeks ago the last parliamentary debate, with its variety of criticisms, would doubtless have produced considerable public response. But reactions to this debate were of a most unexcited character. Public opinion has grasped the real significance of the battles of the Eastern Front. And now that the battles have started, opinion is noticeably impatient of all political maneuvers, from whatever quarter they may be directed.

There was an example of this impatience at the Labor Party conference a few days ago. An attempt was made to press leaders to threaten withdrawal from the government unless it soon made a "token" political payment by nationalizing the war industries. It wasn't that the delegates—and probably the large majority of delegates—weren't fully aware of the extent to which vested interests and lack of genuine control prevent full mobilization of the nation's resources. It is equally true that the majority of delegates are anxious to fortify the Labor members of the government in the fight between truly national, and fictitious private interests. These delegates are determined to do everything possible to extend and tighten the systems of control.

But it was precisely those most progressive and determined elements who showed the clearest irritation—irritation that anyone should use the dissatisfaction with insufficient mobilization of resources to divert attention toward what is at best an academic discussion—or, at worst—an attempt to split national unity and the labor movement in the interest of groups ranging from opportunists and adventurers to political children. The most progressive elements at the conference were anxious to direct criticism of the Labor Party executive and the members of the government toward their apparent hesitation in responding fully to the popular clamor for a second front and for full cooperation in strategy between Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

THE delegates met under the deep impression created the previous evening by the Communist meeting in Trafalgar Square. This marked a new record of London demonstrations, for the crowd was the largest ever seen in that historic place. It wasn't much use for the Labor executive to declare that it "preferred the strategy of Whitehall to the strategy of Trafalgar Square and Fleet Street"—the last phrase, of course, being a dig at Lord Beaverbrook.

The particular significance of this demonstration is that it paralleled the national conference of the Communist Party which was in session in London that day and the day before. The conference emphatically confirmed the policy of unity; the strengthening of the government, the Labor Party, and the trade union movement; and the real mobilization of forces for opening a Western Front for victory in 1942.

The enthusiasm with which the conference greeted the news of Earl Browder's release corresponded to the pleasure and increased confidence felt by enormous numbers of people outside the ranks of the Communist Party. Many of these people had considered Browder's case as in some sense a test of the American government's attitude toward the people's war against Hitlerism. Certain quarters here had circulated on many occasions—as I have reported to you in the past—the suggestion that the American government, or the attitude of certain influential interests in Washington, was a principal brake on progressive action.

For example it was quite frequently said in some Conservative and Labor circles that the real reason why the British government hesitated to lift the ban on the London *Daily Worker* was the fear of making a bad impression on the United States—which, it was hinted, would thereby come to the unpleasing conclusion that Britain was virtually Bolshevized!

Apart from such frivolous suggestions, it is nevertheless true that in British working class circles there has been—and still is—a pretty prevalent notion that somehow the United States does represent a reactionary tendency in the alliance of the United Nations. And reactionary elements here are somewhat inclined to "play up" the American alliance as against the alliance with the Soviet Union. The President's action in releasing Browder, climaxing the great nationwide campaign on this issue, has done much to remove existing suspicions and at the same time to encourage real hopes that the British government will now follow a good example by lifting the ban on the *Daily Worker*.

The arrival of an increasing number of American troops has acted as a fine tonic on all who have doubted the capacity of the western allies to mobilize offensive forces in western Europe speedily. It has certainly reinforced a confident belief that if the utmost vigilance and energy—both industrial and political—is summoned up in Britain and the United States now, victory in 1942 is a practically attainable objective.

CALIFORNIA HEADACHE: Too Many Miles

How workers have to travel anywhere from nine to forty miles to get to the far-flung war plants. Key to a problem: better housing and transportation.

Los Angeles.

THE private transportation of some 750,000 workers in California's war industries will have come to a halt eighteen months from now. Five-sixths of the automobiles in this state will have been immobilized by the end of the year as a result of the rubber shortage. This transportation crisis threatens to cripple California's aircraft plants and shipyards—the heart of the nation's aircraft production.

The whole story can be stated with terrifying simplicity. Every day 4,000 tires are burned up by Angelenos, who collectively own more cars than any other city dwellers in the world. At this rate, 1,460,000 tires are consumed each year. Yet Los Angeles' 1942 share of tires, under the rationing plan, is only 25,000. From seventy to ninety percent of the war workers in this area must ride to and from the far-flung plants in anything from "hopped up" jaloppies to the latest streamlined car models. Occupancy of these automobiles is low; a recent survey shows that Lockheed Aircraft workers average only 1.6 persons per car. What will they do when February 1944 rolls around, by which time it is estimated that the wheels on their autos will have ceased to roll around?

Various solutions are being proposed, everything from "making every car a jitney" by packing it to capacity, to such drastic expedients as commandeering cars from non-war workers, and building barracks near the plants for single male aircraft workers. There are other schemes—rationing streetcar rides to give war workers priority; or hauling the men into the plants on vast strings of railroad flat cars; or bicycling.

But none of these proposals strikes at the center of the problem, which lies in a combination of very bad transportation and very bad housing. Neither can be considered without the other.

TO UNDERSTAND the chaotic living conditions of these war workers, you must realize first the tremendous impact of greatly expanded war industries upon this region's economy. Some idea of the mushroom growth can be obtained from the over-all employment figures: 72,000 in January 1940; 202,000 in February 1942; and an estimated 340,000 workers by the spring of 1943.

As early as February of this year, the Social Security Board observed that "about seventy-two percent of all industrial workers travel to and from their employment by private automobile," and predicted:

"Curtailment of automobile use will require public carrier facilities along routes on which no service is provided at present and is expected to make it necessary for a large portion of the workers now employed in aircraft plants and shipyards to move closer to their places of employment. *This will create acute local housing shortages in Burbank, Santa Monica, Inglewood, Long Beach, San Pedro, Wilmington, and Downey. . . .*"

The "acute local housing shortages" already exist. In the Burbank-Glendale area, where the giant Lockheed-Vega aviation plants employing 54,000 workers are located, a homes registration bureau reports: "730 furnished and unfurnished rental vacancies under fifty dollars a month." The bureau for the Inglewood-Hawthorne area, where the North American and Northrup aviation plants employ 25,600 workers, reports that: "Sixteen rental vacancies below fifty dollars a month, 110 applications; majority asking for houses to rent at between thirty-five dollars and forty dollars. . . . People who are desperate have had to pay the price or not get it."

In southeast Los Angeles, site of numerous rubber and steel plants employing an estimated 56,000, the Downey Chamber of Commerce states: "Have had no rental vacancies for three years. There is a large waiting list and a great demand." At least 100,000 more war workers will flood these very same areas before the end of 1942.

RECENTLY the State Division of Immigration and Housing inspected forty-eight auto camps in the southeastern industrial section of town. The housing units consisted of a one-room and kitchenette combination with no private toilet or bath. "Conditions in the camps are deplorable," the Commission reported; "inconvenient and overcrowded toilet facilities; overcrowded sleeping rooms, lacking sufficient light and ventilation, with unvented gas ranges and heaters that deplete the oxygen."

These are the kinds of quarters our factory fighters are being forced to live in. The real estate sharks have been quick to take advantage of the situation by raising the rent. Median rent for the Lockheed-Vega plant area is forty-five dollars as compared with $22.50 for central Los Angeles. In nearby San Diego, with its huge Consolidated Aircraft plant, Price Administrator Leon Henderson has ordered rents frozen at their Jan. 1, 1941 levels in an effort to stop unprecedented rent gouging. Landlords have responded with a wholesale eviction of tenants in an effort to destroy evidence of rents charged a year ago. "Total confusion reigns," reports Tom Hamilton, chairman of the city's war housing commission.

War workers and their families follow a definite pattern in finding a place to live. First, they attempt to settle near their place of employment, in order to save the expense and wearing inconvenience of traveling great distances. Denied such locations, they then choose a site on broad, fast highways leading to the plants.

A revealing survey of Vultee Aircraft's 6,000 workers shows that a lack of housing and prohibitive rental have permitted only 7.16 percent of them to settle in Downey, where the plant is located. So a majority of Vultee workers did the next best thing—moved to locations in Los Angeles and Long Beach that are near fast highways. They drive a minimum of fifteen miles to work every day. The other Vultee Aircraft workers are scattered like pollen in 110 different communities.

A survey of Lockheed workers, conducted jointly by the management and the AFL Machinists' Union, shows that 22,000 of them drive from nine to forty miles to work every day. Another group—the shipyard workers—are using up 72,000 tires a year, or nearly three times the total allotment of tires for Los Angeles county this year, according to Ralph T. Dorsey, L. A. Traffic Engineer.

BUT how about public transportation? There are still streetcars and buses, aren't there?

Unfortunately Greater Los Angeles is plagued with one of the worst public transit systems of any city of like size in the United States. The vast majority of streetcars are from fifteen to thirty years old and it will require $182,000 in repairs to make all of them serviceable. The big bulk of the passenger increase will come on the Pacific Electric Railway's lines, whose equipment is just as obsolete. The motor coach situation is a little better. Altogether—giving them the benefit of every doubt—the public carriers will be able to increase their present load capacity only twenty-five or thirty percent by utilizing every available piece of equipment.

Which means that transportation facilities must be supplemented as quickly as possible. The following steps are recommended:

1. *Cooperative riding:* Every automobile used as transportation to a factory or shipyard should be packed to capacity. Such a jitney car plan can be worked out only with the closest cooperation of labor and management, as it must be enforced at the plant. Plant workers must be canvassed, cooperative riding schedules worked out, cars checked as they arrive and leave the plant to make sure they are loaded to the hubs.

2. *Staggering of Working Hours:* A Citizens Transportation Committee, appointed by Los Angeles' Mayor Bowron, has already recommended a system of staggering the working hours of 142,000 downtown office workers. This stagger plan would send 22,000 government employes home at four-thirty PM; 90,000 office and loft workers at five PM; and 30,000 retail store workers home at six PM. The plan would permit forty percent of the transportation facilities which are now used only in peak hours to do double duty. Thus some $6,000,000 worth of the Los Angeles Railway Co.'s equipment, which is hauled out of the barn only twice a day for the morning and evening rush hours, could be used almost continuously.

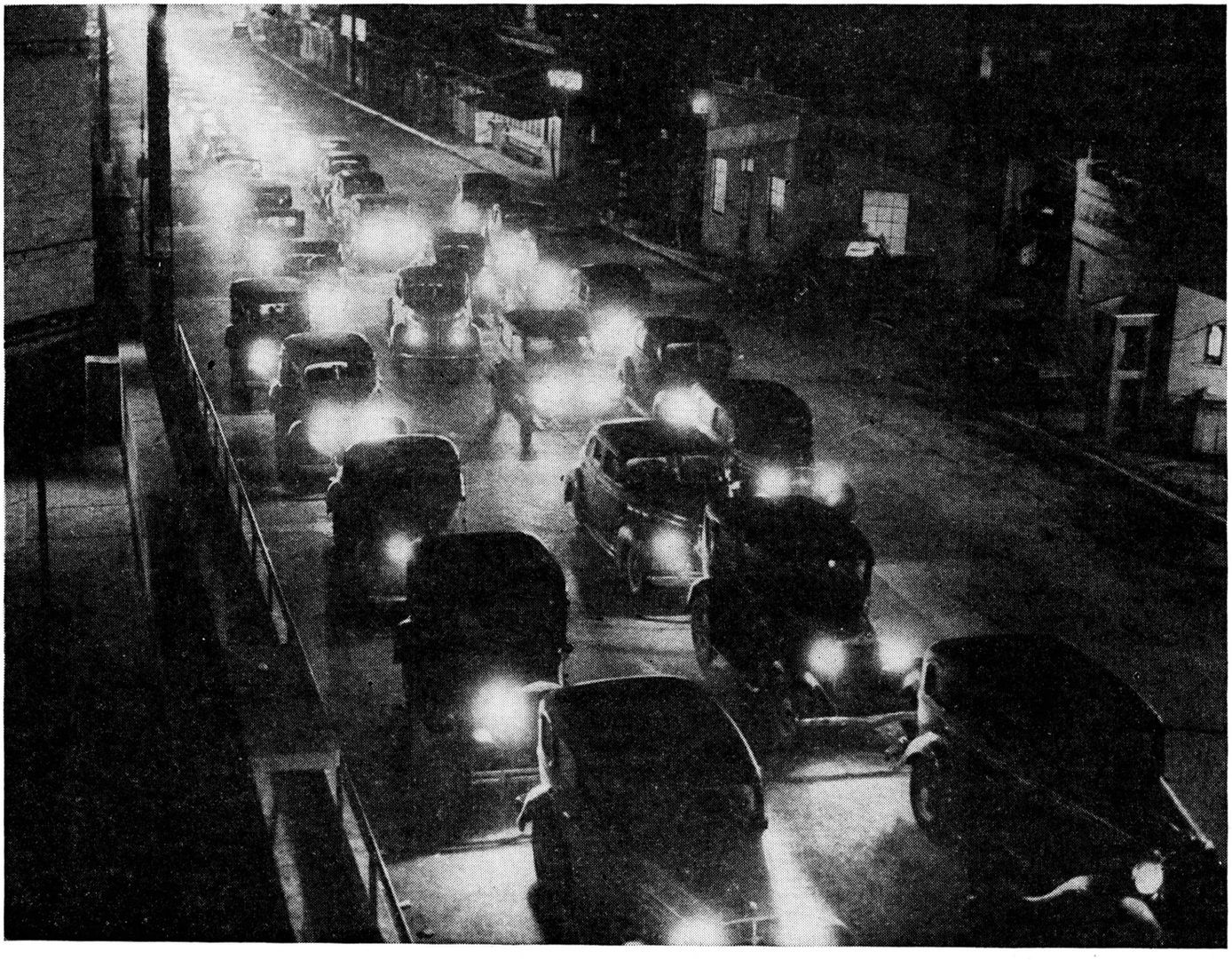
3. *Rail Extensions and Shuttle Lines:* Wherever possible rail lines should be run right into the big plants. Duplicate transportation must also be eliminated. Certain bus lines should be transformed into "shuttle" lines, the buses stopping at the end of carlines and transferring their passengers to streetcars for the rest of the ride into town.

BUT for a permanent solution to this transportation fiasco Angelenos must come to grips with the housing shortage. Recently a War Workers Housing Conference was held in Los Angeles, attended by some 136 AFL and ninety-six CIO representatives, and over 100 architects, public officials, Chamber of Commerce men, realtors, etc. The conference was notable not only because it represented the point of view of the housing consumer, rather than that of the housing producer, but because it marked a display of official labor unity around the war effort.

Out of the conference came the demand for 60,000 publicly financed and constructed dwelling units, 20,000 of these to be built immediately. These new housing units would be located in war production areas, and at least eighty-five percent of them would be on a rental basis of not more than forty dollars per month, including utilities. Also there would be no discrimination against race, color, or creed in tenant selection. The conference likewise favored the establishment of fair rent committees in communities where needed, and requested the Office of Price Administration to enforce rent ceilings where such committees do not exist, or where they do not function in the public interest.

As Hal Dunleavy, secretary of the War Workers Housing Committee, puts it: "Housing cannot win the war, but it can lose it. And we don't intend that it shall be lost. Which means labor is going to fight hard to get the houses necessary, as it will work to produce the guns necessary and fight to win the battles necessary."

TOM CULLEN.



The road home after the "swing shift." These workers at Lockheed Aircraft travel from nine to forty miles each day.

A SHORT STORY

Double Play

Every time the manager looked at the kid he thought of young Ty Cobb. Then came the playoffs for the pennant and then came Mr. Cleete and a bankroll. A baseball tale by Charles Winston.

ON THE night before the playoffs they were having a round of poker in Kennedy's room when the telegram came for young Shore. He put his cards down and read the telegram. It said "Pop's operation will cost two hundred and fifty dollars love Sis." Shore got up and said he was turning in.

"What's it all about, kid?" asked Kennedy.

"It's from a feller called Joe—Joe DiMaggio," explained Shore, walking to the door, "asking me to teach him how to hit." He banged the door hard, going out.

Kennedy, his face very red, said: "That kid's stuck on himself. First year of pro ball and he says he's through if he don't get picked up for double A ball this year."

Shore read the telegram again in his room. He sat for a long time with the telegram in front of him. Then he put the light out and tried to figure out what it was that could wither his old man down from 200 to 115 pounds in eleven months. But he couldn't figure it out. He fell asleep and woke up suddenly before dawn. But he still couldn't figure out how his old man could wither down like that.

When he went out to the ballfield the next morning the air was very clear and there was a bit of cool wind blowing. He could see it was one of those great days for baseball—boy!—it almost made him forget the telegram from home, but not quite. It was so very clear and blue today that he felt he could wallop a ball a mile and a half on a line. On a day like this it was hard to understand how a big man like his father could lose so much weight in eleven months.

He came onto the field and walked toward Joe Turner, the second baseman, a college boy. Shore goosed Turner gently and said, "Good morning, Doc, how's the Doc this morning? Listen, Doc, what would you call it if a feller melts down from 200 to 115 pounds inside of eleven months?"

"I'd call it cancer," said Turner, "but on the other hand—"

"Thanks," said Shore. He picked up a rolling ball and pegged it. He just picked it up and threw it hard anywhere and it went into the grandstand on a line.

McHenry, the manager, came running out of the dugout on his bowed Honus Wagner legs and yelled, "Stop murdering the cash customers." He had all his big guns ready for Shore, including the one about a ten-dollar fine for being late to practice. But all he actually did was to make the crack about the cash customers, because Shore was kicking at the ground with his spikes. He was kicking with his spikes like a pony, chopping chunks of dirt out of the basepath.

McHenry watched him kick and then turned around and went down the path toward third, with Shore following him. He knelt on the grass, and Shore squatted down next to him and asked:

"How much dough in these playoffs?"

"Seventy-five winning, fifty losing per man," said McHenry, "and we've got to take the two games to win."

"I've been thinking it over all night," said Shore. "I figure it's worth two fifty—maybe more but not less."

"Try the bank down at the corner," said McHenry, "try it with a tommy gun."

"No fooling," said Shore.

The manager said carefully, "What do I do now? I got a raw kid first year in pro ball threatening me. Do I jump off a bridge or turn on the gas?"

He stood up and tossed his cap on the ground and stepped on it with both feet. He jumped up and down on the cap until the redness went out of his face. Then he said, "I'll call Travers after the game, I'll tell him you had a good year—"

Shore turned around and went down to the batting cage. He hit a couple of long drives. They were hit on the wood and they felt good. At third McHenry was barking with the fever of a man who has lived for a long time along the coaching line. Just for the hell of it Shore gripped his bat short and punched an inside pitch through third. It drove McHenry into the dirt, and he came up spitting grass.

He came into the dugout spluttering and nasty. He took off his cap and wiped his head with it and then he dusted off the cap on his knee. Then he said, "Shore, you're one dirty bastard."

The umpire settled behind the plate. Mac peered out of the dugout. He could see the high blue sky overhead; and the outfield green grass was very bright in the clear air. The pennants on the walls unfurled in the breeze. He thought, for a moment, of a time of heroes—the time of Chase, Alexander, McGraw, and Mathewson.

Shore was sitting near him, with his head bent towards the ground and a bat between his knees, like a resting soldier with a rifle. Mac said, without violence, "You'd sell your own sister down the river for a lousy buck, your mother must've tripped over a cash register before you was—"

"Why don't you save it, there ain't an umpire on the field."

McHenry watched the players drift past his eyes like ghosts, like nothing else. He said, automatically, "You watch that Felton boy, he throws them low curves close, you watch—"

"I'll murder him," said Shore in a dry voice. He was doodling in the ground with his spikes.

McHenry was going to give it to Shore, he had something good on the tip of his tongue, but he forgot it. And he turned around to watch his young men, eager-faced, on strong young legs, trot into the arena. The high flies soared, the fielders twisted and wheeled, and Mac saw them far off today, like dancing figures seen through the wrong end of a telescope. He felt tired.

The sharp, pinging sound of a hit, man on first. Mac said to his second baseman, "Lay one down, Doc." Turner laid one down—neat—and was out at first, but the run stood on second. Young Shore drove the run around with a long, low drive into the left corner.

He hit all through the game, he hit savagely and low, no home runs over the fences but low, angry drives for extra bases, grass-toppers which moved as if they were aimed somewhere and had no time to loop in the sun. McHenry, watching Shore up there at the plate, hugging the plate and waving his bat at the pitcher and with his face faintly jeering, thought for a moment of someone. He thought of the young Ty Cobb and shivered in the mid-September sun.

Now it was over. His boys had beaten Shelbyville seven to one and the players moved across the field with the crowd.

And McHenry sat in the dugout as the crowd thinned out and the players went by him. Shore said, whispering and wiping sweat off his forehead, "Do I get that two fifty or don't I? Like you told me when I came down here." He lighted a cigarette. "You said it's a money game." He exhaled.

"I don't play this afternoon if I don't get that dough."

"Standing me up now," said Mac harshly,

"standing me up like that. Goddamit. I'll call Travers and ask him. Get outta here."

Shore dressed and went off. He looked funny walking, he seemed to sway on his long legs, as if he were still growing.

The manager thought, I let that kid sass hell out of me, maybe I'm getting old. He sat in the dugout staring at the empty ballpark.

McHENRY went out of the park and called his wife, long distance. He said, "Hello, Martha, this is me, the old man. I'm taking the train home tonight."

"Do we get that bonus, Ed, or do we wait for next year?"

He was silent.

"Ed, I spoke to Tom Saxon and I told it to him just the way you put it in the letter. I said there wouldn't be any next year, but that it was this year definitely. And he said he'd let you have the gas station for three thousand and the down payment of five hundred, just like you asked in the letter. But he said he can't wait for next year because you've been telling him about next year for the past—"

"All right, Mrs. Mac, goodby."

"What's the matter, Ed?"

McHenry mopped the back of his head and said, "You tell Tom I meant it about the five hundred down payment. Goodby, Mrs. Mac, I'll see you in the morning."

He stepped out of the phone booth for half a second and then went in and again called long distance. He said, "We won going away this morning, Mr. Travers."

"Congratulations."

"Mr. Travers, I know it's written into the contract but I want to sort of confirm it again. I mean there are no ifs, ands, or buts in this thing. If we grab that pennant this afternoon the contract gives me a bonus of five hundred, is that right?"

"That's right."

McHenry cleared his throat. He could hear Travers tapping at the other end, maybe tapping a pencil on a piece of paper. He said abruptly, "That kid, Harry Shore, is pulling the riot act today. He wants two fifty for the playoffs or he's out of the game this afternoon."

"McHenry?"

"Yes."

"McHenry, we're a bank. Maybe Walker promised it to him. But the bank took that club off Walker's hands." Travers' voice said patiently, "We only recognize obligations written on paper, McHenry. You'll have to give it to that boy according to the book—tell him he's out of organized ball if he tries any walkout stunts now."

"You think I ought to put it to him that way?"

"I do, McHenry."

The manager kicked the door of the booth open to get some air.

"Listen, McHenry, they tell me you know how to run a ballclub. I don't know your job but I know mine. You're on the scene, I leave everything to you, and that's that."

"I can't talk to the kid like that, Mr. Travers."

"You're on the scene—"

"All right, Mr. Travers, goodby."

McHenry came out of the booth, breathing hard. He was going to throw his baseball cap on the ground and dig at it with his spikes but the cap wasn't on his head. Neither was he wearing spikes. He was breathing hard.

He leaned against a window, puffing a cigarette. Looking up, he could see it was a great sky today, great for the outfielders, great for the hitters. Five hundred bucks. He breathed hard.

Then he tossed his cigarette away and started to walk fast down a side street. He turned a corner and there was the place. He was breathing very hard. Cleete was standing in the back near the ticker. Cleete was big, framed by two men, a head shorter, who seemed to perch on his shoulders like epaulets.

Cleete's eyebrows lifted a little, he said, "If the old Judge heard—"

"What are those playoff odds?" asked McHenry.

"Four to one, Shelbyville on the short end since this morning."

"Four to one," said McHenry. "I'm playing the short end today," he said, looking out of the window.

Cleete didn't blink, only seemed to yawn a little so that the single button holding his jacket strained against his stomach. He said, "Maybe I can get you four to one—with my end one-quarter on the winning—"

Mac turned away fast. Cleete said, "It's a free country, Mac. You just go ahead and place that bet anywhere else in this town."

"Shore was sitting near him, with his head bent toward the ground and a bat between his knees. . . ."

The manager thought for a long second, watching a fly buzz along a windowpane. It just buzzed and buzzed. He thought, maybe I could swing that down payment for three seventy-five.

"I'll bet a hundred and twenty-five."

One of the men said, "I'll take that hundred and twenty-five—"

"He's good for it," said Cleete.

McHenry jumped, as if some one had hot-footed him, and he turned fast and walked for the door.

From the doorway Cleete and the two men perched on his shoulders watched McHenry go out. Under their limp Panama hats, their eyes, unblinking and without depth, mistrusted the world forever and a day.

"If that guy—"

"I'm not interested," said Cleete. "He can bet any way he damn well pleases. He must have a lot of dough one way and wants to pull bets the other. . . . Does he figure I'll spread it over town so the odds'll drop? We're riding the short end today. How much dough we got up, Clem?"

The little men computed silently.

"Slower'n creepin' Jesus, you guys. Ten thousand eight hundred."

"Where we going, Jackson?" they asked Cleete.

"We're going to get some insurance."

"What?"

"We're going to see that feller who plays center field," said Cleete, walking fast under shade trees along the curb.

SHORE waited for Mac in the hotel lobby. He couldn't stand still because his old man had found a hook in his mind and wouldn't get off. He thought that if he kept moving around, the old man would fall off the hook. Shore walked all around the lobby and then went to the entrance and looked up. His face was dark and high-cheekboned and with the fine lines around the eyes that come from spotting high flies in the sun. It was a blue, clear sky up there today, not the kind that hurt your eyes when you looked up. It looked so good he was sure he could peg the ball down to the plate without a hop all the way from deep center.

Shore went up to his room but Mac didn't come. The clock handles seemed to be spinning around like slingshots. Someone knocked on the door. He opened the door but it wasn't McHenry. A big guy in a gray suit and a dirty white Panama hat stood in the door. He came in, with two other men framing him, their heads hung on his shoulders like epaulets.

"Business, boy! Yessir, boy, I know you though you don't know me. . . . I'm an inveterate fan of the national pastime. My name is Cleete and these gentlemen here are friends of mine, Mister Smith and Mister Lennox. This here is that slugging—I mean, what's your name, young feller?"

"Shore."

The big man heaved softly, with the gray jacket held by a single perilous button, yawning on a thread.

"Got two hundred and fifty dollars here, Mister Shore—what's the matter, boy?"

"Nothing." He sought something solid, moving backwards until he reached a wall. And he could see Cleete's hand go into a pocket, making a fat lump along the big man's trouser leg.

"I'm an inveterate fan of the national pastime, Mister Shore, seen the Series in '31—you hit a mighty long ball, Mister Shore, a mighty long ball."

Cleete's face grew into a smile in front of him, grew like a balloon. Then it stopped growing. And from the suddenly fixed, smiling mouth—hurled hard and thunderous at him:

"Throw it this afternoon, Shore."

"Look now, boy," said one of the epaulets quickly. "This dough, it's two hundred and fifty dollars—take it easy, boy!—why, you could open a department store in New York next winter and sell 'em red underwear."

A smile fled across their faces, thin and wise.

"How much did you say?"

"Two hundred and fifty."

"How much?"

"Two hundred and fifty. . . . Swing at that third strike, don't take it with the bat on your shoulders, gawdammit," said Cleete. "Everyone knows you can hit that ball."

"You can open up a department—"

"Shut up, Clem, gawdammit! . . . You swing hard at that third strike, young feller. You got a right to miss a few. . . . There's a hundred and twenty-five, the half of it. All in tens—one five. See it, boy? Under the pillow there. Give you the other half after the game."

They turned like soldiers, going to the door. Cleete's hand was on the knob.

"Is it all set then?"

He was taut and long against the wall, with his eyes flat and only his big hands moving.

"Is it all set there, boy?"

He didn't answer. Their faces exploded into anger.

"Gawdammit, boy, what you lookin' at like that—is it all set for this afternoon?"

"Watch me out there," he said.

MCHENRY squatted on the grass back of third and tore grass with his fingers. "I'm giving it to you right, kid. I've been in this game so long I remember the day Pete Alexander came out of Syracuse to pitch for the Cubs. Ain't that time enough to learn something?"

"It's pretty long. What did Travers say?" asked Shore again.

"I'm telling you to forget it. You'll be up there in a year, two years. A lousy two fifty. All right, it's your business," Mac said harshly, "I told it to Travers and he said no go."

"Is that what he said?"

"That's what he said."

McHenry grinned. "Now you can play ball or you can go home and read a book. Either way it'll suit me fine. You can do anything you want—it's a free country," said McHenry harshly.

The sounds of the infield play, of leather on leather, leather on wood, beat and beat on Shore's ears. And looking at the stands he could see that the papas and their kids

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were at the ball game today in full array and roaring with great lungpower. And there was Cleete in the box behind third, and the bright flags along the walls furled and unfurled in the quick tide of the autumn breeze.

"Well?" said McHenry.

Shore tried to shut things out of his head, so that he could think, but the flags and the beating sounds and the outfield green grass ran through him and there was no stopping it. He tried to shut it out but it roared and flooded over and kept on running, beating like mad against his ribs—

"I'll play," he said.

The day was roaring with color and light as he went up in the second inning. He felt swell, and he thought it was funny that he should begin to get sick at the stomach as he swung. And it was so blue up there in the sky you might have thought it was a stage sky. On a day like this he felt he could hit a ball clear out of the world—boy! He struck out. In the fifth he waited for the one good ball and he got it and he swung and missed. My timing's off, he thought. He drank water when he came in to the dugout because the nausea kept getting worse. It was very strange.

The crowd got on top of him, roaring *that boy can't hit for sour apples.* He shook his fist at the crowd as he went out to center field. The sweat broke cold on his forehead running into his eyes. By this time the nausea was very bad and he found it hard to keep down. In the seventh the bags were jammed. On the three and two, he was fooled, backing off a sharp-breaking curve and swinging. This time the sickness climbed up into his throat and he swallowed it down.

In the dugout Mac was bent over and not saying anything. He wished to God Mac would open his goddam mouth. If Mac would just open up and say just one goddam thing so you could come back at him. He trotted out to center and the crowd's roar was flailing his back, was whipping him. And the high blue sky was swinging, swinging down close over his head like a tent top until he couldn't breathe. He wiped the sweat out of his eyes.

He came into the dugout and it was like running a terrific gauntlet. He went up again in the ninth. He swung and missed. It was as if his arms were held. The crowd was half-standing, waiting to go home. The flags rose and drooped in little gusts of breeze. The nausea lurked in his chest like a demon—he swung. But he didn't hit the ball squarely, and it went high over first and was gathered at the foul line. And he puked at the plate as everybody went out of the park.

McHENRY got his money. He counted it walking along side streets with a few leaves pattering softly down from trees. He kept counting it—but he couldn't get rid of the figures of Alexander with the soldier's back and pudgy McGraw coming out of the dugout to scrap with the umpires. He kept counting his money down to the three hundred and seventy-fifth dollar as the early leaves of mid-September pattered softly around him.

Shore felt very weak down to his toes as he walked down the street to the post office. He still felt weak, and with his stomach turning. He changed his two fifty into a money order at the post office. As he put the money order into an envelope to send home he thought, but I never said I'd take that dough. He felt sick down to his toes.

He went out of the post office to the railroad station. The sun was going down in the west and the moon was coming up in the east and he was walking between them on his long, young legs which swayed, as if they were still growing. He kept saying to himself, but I never said I'd take that dough.

He waited for a train to home. The evening was creeping down along the rails. There was a tap on his shoulder and a brisk voice asked, "Shore?"

"Yes."

"I'm scouting for the Cubs and I've been watching you for the last three weeks."

Shore stared at the rails fading into darkness.

The voice said, "We'd like to try you out at Catalina Island next spring."

"Catalina Island?"

"California, great country," said the voice helpfully.

"Mister, I'm washed up with this game."

"That stuff this afternoon. I've seen the best of them go 0 for 4."

"So long, bud."

"We'll give you two hundred and fifty for signing."

It was quiet. After a minute the voice said encouragingly, "Did you hear that? Two fifty for signing?"

"I heard you."

The voice said laughingly, "All right, kid, I get it. Don't we all? It's a money game. We'll give you five hundred."

Shore lighted a cigarette and the puffs showed his face counting. His eyes were flat. He was counting with the muscles of his jaws.

"They say California is a nice place to train in, in the spring," said Shore.

"Best damn place in the world," said the voice heartily.

"I used to sit in the bleachers at the Polo Grounds—you know that one—about wishing you could put on a uniform and be allowed to walk across the infield and you'd pay *them?*"

The voice said feelingly, "I get what you mean."

"One thousand for signing," said Shore.

There was a gasp. The voice said flatly, "One thousand. A thousand bucks. I'll have to call Chicago."

"Sure, you call Chicago."

The scout went off quickly.

Shore sat on the bench at the station. The nausea was still there but it was going away. The nausea was going away and everything was getting all right and it had only hurt a little plus the nausea but maybe that was how it had to be. That stuff he had told the scout about the Polo Grounds was strictly out of the hat because nobody could be as dumb as that. Nobody but a dumb kid. Everything was going to be all right and better and better, but right this minute he was numb all over as if he wasn't ever going to feel anything again.

CHARLES WINSTON.

Strictly Personal

by RUTH McKENNEY

FIFTY MILES FROM WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE little Virginia town reeked of decay and dirt. The beauty of the rolling hills, the carefully kept plantation houses of the fox-hunting gentry, ended abruptly at the village limits. I hesitated—I could imagine the sort of doctor this wretched tumble-down community was likely to enjoy.

But I got the shock of my life when I walked up the shaded pathway to the little white hospital. Mike Gold had said in his column a few days before that the South was changing; and here was remarkable proof. The young doctor's diplomas, ranged in his pleasant waiting room, included special certificates from the two best-known medical schools in America.

The doctor was brisk, and exceedingly efficient. In this sordid, poverty-stricken hamlet was a whole collection of the most modern, the most advanced scientific equipment. When I murmured my interest, the doctor blushed with pleasure, and showed me through the neat hospital—ten beds, to be sure, and as he was not a surgeon, the operating room was equipped for only special purposes. Still, in this Virginia town, a woman could bear her child with every assistance science affords.

"Of course, in emergencies," the doctor said, "if I couldn't get my patient to the big hospital twenty miles from here, I could do even major operations—in a pinch, that is. I have some surgical training. I consider it necessary for a general country practitioner. Just in case, you know."

I settled into the station wagon in a pleasant glow; driving back to the old plantation house where I was "boarding" while I finished up a piece of work, I poured out my enthusiasm to Mr. Singleton, my "host." Mr. Singleton listened to my praise of the young doctor. Finally he said, in that soft Virginia drawl I can't put on paper, "Well, now he's a good doctor. Yes. A very good doctor. We don't like him much, though."

I was irritated; I said, with exasperation, that the countryside was very lucky indeed.

Mr. Singleton nodded. Yes, he agreed. He and his wife were grateful to the doctor; their second son had been in a bad hunting meet accident last year. The young doctor had made the boy good as new—all those fancy machines of his—why twenty years ago the lad would probably have had a limp all his life. Yes, he was a good doctor. But still Mr. Singleton didn't like him much. "He don' treat our n-----s right."

The word made me grit my teeth; the ugly word, casually said, implicit with its dark story of rapacity and inhumanity.

Mr. Singleton began laconically, "You remember that hill you drove past comin' down here? About eleven miles from town, it is. You saw that patch of huts there?"

The young doctor had been called to the patch to visit an ailing boy, two months ago. The boy was eleven years old. He and his mother, who took in wash and made a bare living for herself and her fatherless son, lived up the mountain a mile or so, on a back road. The young doctor saw, as he walked into the one-room, tar-paper hut, that the boy had acute appendicitis. He had made a quick, expert examination. Yes, appendicitis, quite far advanced.

The young doctor said to the mother, "You'll have to get him to the city; they have a colored ward there. He has to be operated. See you get your boy there within five or six hours. Otherwise he'll die."

The Negro mother, of course, could not appreciate the skill that allowed the young doctor to make such a quick diagnosis; to set such precise time limits for her son's eleven-year-old life. Not every country practitioner could be so sure. But this young doctor had diplomas from the proudest medical schools in the United States of America. And as he picked up his bag and went to the door of the shack, he repeated, "Five or six hours; be quick about it."

The Negro mother said, "There ain't no auto here in the patch."

The doctor did not bother to answer.

The Negro mother, in the extremity of her terror, committed a social error. She cried, "Doctor! Please! Just this once! Give us a ride to the railway station!"

The young doctor was truly shocked. This woman was suggesting that she and her son ride on the cushioned seats of his private automobile! He answered coldly, "I haven't a truck here, you know."

The Negro mother heard the motor fade away down the lonely country road. She hoisted her pain-racked son to her back; and she walked eleven miles to the village railway station. Now and then she had to stop, for breath; now and then the little boy screamed with such agony, that she had to put him down on the roadside grass and sponge his face with water from the ditches.

And so, with these ill-advised halts, she missed the train to the city twenty miles away.

Mr. Singleton said, "The boys driving our truck happened by just then; and when they saw her, they quick got on the phone to ask me if they could take her to the city."

Mr. Singleton saw nothing odd in the fact that his "boys"—two grave Negroes of over forty—telephoned him for permission before they took the mother and her child on the white bosses' truck.

"It wasn't any use," Mr. Singleton said. "The boy died before they got ten miles away."

I said, my voice trembling, "But the doctor said he could do emergency operations!"

Mr. Singleton stared at me curiously. "You maybe didn't understand," he said politely. "His hospital don' have a colored ward; nearest colored ward is in the city, twenty miles from here."

Mr. Singleton said judiciously, "It wouldn't of hurt him so bad if he took the boy to the railroad station; everybody knows there's only one train a day. Suppose if he did have to get new seat cushions?"

"New seat cushions?" I stammered.

"Well," Mr. Singleton said patiently, "you couldn't sit where one of them sat, after all. But the way I look at it is this: the doctor didn't do right, leaving that woman alone with the boy dying. He shouldn't have let the boy die. That's why Mrs. Singleton and I don't like the doctor. He don't treat our colored people right."

I said, my voice trembling, "I wish you'd told me this first. I wouldn't go near such a doctor with a ten-foot pole."

Mr. Singleton said, with surprise, "Why he's a very good doctor! And he's nice enough in some ways; he was in to dinner a few nights ago; you ought to hear him talk; he's right interestin'."

"You had him to dinner? I thought you didn't like him?"

"Well," Mr. Singleton said, "of course . . . but his mother was an Abbot . . . from around Lynchburg way . . . after all. . . ."

THE events of which Mr. Singleton spoke occurred two months ago, fifty miles from the capital of the United States of America, a nation now engaged in a life and death struggle for the preservation of democracy.

And so vast are the issues of this war, so immense its scope and geographical sweep that it is not an exaggeration, but rather an exact statement of fact to say that on the outcome of military battles fought half way across the world rests the issue: shall the little Negro boy be avenged? For if the people of this country win the war against fascism, the oppressors everywhere shall at last tremble before the power of an outraged democracy. And conversely, if the war be lost, the endless agony of that Negro mother watching her little son die shall be multiplied a hundred fold.

But my question is purely rhetorical. We, the people, mean to win this war; and we shall win it, at home, and abroad, across the whole face of the earth—including, and as far as I am concerned—*especially,* Virginia!

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

Washington Editor
BRUCE MINTON

Business Manager
CARL BRISTEL

Promotion and Circulation
HERBERT GOLDFRANK

★

The Great Battle of Kharkov

THE third week of the great battle of Kharkov finds the Soviet armies advancing again after a brief pause to consolidate their gains. It is tough going and the Germans are throwing in large numbers of tanks and fighting desperately to hold on to their strongly fortified positions. South of Kharkov, the Nazi counterstroke in the Izyum-Barvenkova, after making initial progress, is being held, and this attempt to outflank the main forces of Marshal Timoshenko, while still potentially dangerous, has for the present failed. Around Kharkov itself the Red Army still retains the initiative as we go to press, refusing to heed the dictum of Hanson W. Baldwin in the New York *Times* of May 24 that "the initiative in the Kharkov sector was passing, as expected [by whom?] to the Nazis."

It is now clear that the fighting in the south of Russia is of a limited character and no large-scale offensive has been launched by either side. Yet these battles are, nevertheless, of major strategic importance. After two weeks of bitter fighting the Soviet forces were driven off their precarious foothold on the Kerch Peninsula and the Nazis now occupy almost the whole of the Crimea. But unless they can hold Kharkov and smash through the Rostov-Taganrog sector to the southeast, the drive for the Caucasus, for oil, for the gateway into Asia remains wish rather than reality. Kharkov is the pivot for all offensive plans in the south and by beating the Germans to the punch, the Russians may well have upset Hitler's long-heralded spring offensive. The fact that the Berlin radio has begun minimizing the importance of Kharkov shows that the Nazis are preparing the public for even worse eventualities. And, as Maj. George Fielding Eliot points out, "even a stalemate is a Russian victory." Which means, of course, a victory for all the United Nations.

Undoubtedly the Germans are also bothered by fear that a Western Front may be opened in their rear and by the need to divert part of their air power to meet the Allied air offensive in the west. Yet the longer Britain and the United States delay in putting the Nazis in the death-grip of a two-front war, the greater the danger that Hitler and his vassal "allies," backed by the war production of the whole of Europe, will mass their still formidable strength for a blow that may be difficult to retrieve. The most cautious policy today is to invade in the west at once while the bulk of the Nazi armies are tied up in the east.

China in Peril

ONE of the direct consequences of the Allied defeat in Burma is the heavy pressure upon China. From Chungking last week came what amounted to an SOS appeal, calling attention to the fact that the Japanese enemy seems to be concentrating for manifold blows on China. First, there is the threat from the south; the Japanese followed their victory in Burma with a thrust up the Burma road into Yunnan province, and its capital, Kunming. In Chekiang province, just below the Yangtse delta, heavy fighting is taking place around Kinhwa, with the Japanese spearheads aimed at the major central Chinese city of Changsha. Lower down on the coast heavy Japanese landings have taken place in Fukien province, and there are also reports of renewed activity in the northwest.

It would be too early to say whether the Japanese are developing this concentric pressure against China instead of projected offensives against India, Australia, or Soviet Siberia. But the chances are that with their communications secured all around the coast of the Asiatic mainland, the Japanese can afford to combine intense pressure on China with offensive operations on still another front. In brief, China's position is difficult, and is going to be more so. The problem of getting help to her becomes a major one confronting the United Nations, especially Great Britain and the United States.

British responsibility revolves mainly around India, for it is from India that China must now be supplied. Some way out of India's deadlock must be found, so that her vast resources and her willing millions can be organized—not only for India's own defense—but for China's sake. There has been little news recently from India; the British authorities are undoubtedly making some progress in building up her defenses and expanding her production, but it is a fraction of what could be done, if the Indian people were given what Chiang Kai-shek called "real political power."

As for America's responsibility, it is bigger than the good work of our technical mission in India, and the valiant efforts of our fighters led by Lieut. Gen. Joseph Stilwell. This is the moment to convince the Pacific peoples that we will see them through; this is the moment for some intervention to break the Indian deadlock. And now also, despite our heavy commitments to the European theater, our fighter and bomber planes must be gotten across Africa, the Near East, to India, and finally to the airfields that wait in central China. With our planes, China's able fighters can still throw back and disorganize the menacing ring of Japan's many-pronged offensive.

Mexico's Example

PERU'S President, Dr. Manuel Prado, is back in Quito after a tour of our country; Chile is still treading water about breaking off relations with the Axis; in Argentina the dictatorial pro-fascist government of Ramon Castillo is still riding high; but by far the most significant event in hemisphere affairs is the imminent declaration of war against Germany by our most immediate good neighbor, the Mexican republic. In the last three weeks two Axis submarines caused the loss of two Mexican ships in the Gulf. Both went down with considerable loss of life. The Wilhelmstrasse perfunctorily rejected a Mexican note of protest, and this week, on the wave of popular anger, the Mexican Congress meets to discuss a declaration of war.

For a number of reasons this is a very important development. First of all, Mexico is still the leader among Latin American nations. What Mexico does is really a bellwether for the hemisphere, and her declaration of war would do much to solidify the unity of the Latin American peoples against Hitler. Secondly, although Mexico was among the first to break off relations with the Axis, she has been a sort of concentration point for all the vile anti-American and anti-democratic propaganda. A declaration of war would make it easier for the Avila Camacho government to clean out all the hidden—and open—agents of the enemy, who have been trying so assiduously to turn the Mexican people against the common cause.

Finally, this crisis is affecting the inner relationship of forces in Mexico. The labor movement has taken the lead in demanding war with the Axis: at a great demonstration a few days ago the Confederation of Labor and its former secretary, Vicente Lombardo Toledano, were in the forefront. Thus, the distinct setback which Mexican labor experienced in the general rightward trend since the close of the Cardenas regime is evidently being repaired. The workingmen of Mexico are finding a greater unity within themselves and with the Camacho government in face of Nazi attacks.

Men of Steel

THERE'S a new union in the land and it's something to write home about. Of course, the United Steel Workers of America isn't entirely new; it's precursor, the Steel Work-

ers Organizing Committee, has been around doing a grand job for several years. But now at last the organization of the nation's steel workers has come of age, and at a notable convention in Cleveland last week it became a regular international union of the CIO, adopted a constitution and elected a slate of officers. And what should be more fitting than that the workers in the most basic of all basic industries, the one on which all armaments production depends, should choose as their first president the head of the CIO, Philip Murray?

Look back across the history of American labor to the grim epic of steel that stretches from the Homestead massacre fifty years ago through the great 1919 strike led by William Z. Foster, through the Chicago Memorial Day massacre and the Little Steel strike of 1937, to last week's convention. The years of struggle and sacrifice have borne fruit and a new era has come. All America is stronger today because the 600,000 workers in the steel industry are strong and united in a union of their own. They stand in the front lines of the production battle, and they can be counted on to give everything they've got for victory. As President Murray put it in his closing speech: "The paramount task is to win the war."

The steel workers' convention showed it understood what winning the war means by the resolutions it adopted. It unanimously voted to ask the CIO executive board to consider the question of urging our government to open a Western Front against Hitler; it called for closer cooperation and unity of action between the trade union movements of the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, China, and the other United Nations; it urged an economic program in line with President Roosevelt's seven-point plan; it opposed "discrimination in industry, in government, and everywhere else on the basis of race, creed, or color"; it spoke up for cooperation between labor and the farmers; it pledged support in the Congressional elections to all candidates, regardless of party, who have shown they can be relied on to back the war and the objectives of labor; and it brushed past John L. Lewis and his appeaser clique in control of the United Mine Workers and speaking directly to the miners themselves, urged that their union and the United Steel Workers sign a solidarity pact on the basis of supporting the war and the President.

AFL Plus CIO

PLENTY of bad news from America, this past week, for Hitler: among the worst, headlines bearing the words "labor unity." Indispensable for Axis victory is division—disunity. Millions in the United Nations

Watch Them

NO FULL-FLEDGED peace offensive has come out of Germany as yet. And perhaps nothing quite so obvious and recognizable as an actual peace offensive ought to be expected. The Nazis may be shaping subtler weapons to blunt our will to victory and stave off total defeat for themselves. And it would be folly to forget for one moment that the native advocates of negotiated peace, on whom Hitler counts so much, are only biding their time. Over the weekend one of them spoke up: the Rev. Aloysius McDonough, professor of theology at the Passionist Monastery at Jamaica, New York, who urged that Pope Pius XII be asked to mediate the war. Undoubtedly this speech was prompted by the Pope's own unfortunate broadcast of May 13 in which, despite the horrors visited on Catholics by the Nazi regime, he expressed "absolute impartiality toward all the belligerents" and asked that no opportunity be allowed to pass for a compromise peace. This is exactly what the Nazis want.

That Dr. McDonough, whether wittingly or unwittingly, spoke this pro-fascist "peace" propaganda before 3,200 New York City employees, only underscores the need for greater vigilance. Particularly in view of the fact that on the same day Mayor LaGuardia, ignoring protests, permitted an out-and-out fifth columnist, Father Edward Lodge Curran, Charles E. Coughlin's close lieutenant, to deliver an anti-Russian tirade before Catholic employees of the New York City Department of Finance.

What we have to be wary of today is not so much the Nazi peace offensive as such, as *the effort to break down our defenses against it,* to soften us up by creating doubts about our allies, about our government, about the meaning of the war, and the value of victory. To recognize these fifth- and sixth-column tactics, to draw a rigorous line between them and legitimate constructive criticism is not as difficult as is sometimes believed. Civil liberties will be strengthened rather than weakened by smoking out those whose propaganda helps the enemy.

A case in point was Herbert Hoover's speech last week before the National Industrial Conference Board. It was a clever speech—a bit too clever. Hoover professed his devotion to the war effort, in fact, demanded even more power for President Roosevelt. But how did he describe the "dictatorial economic powers" that he urged for the President? He said that to win the war we must adopt "plain fascist economics." This is one of the favorite lies of the appeasers and defeatists. On one side are the brutal economic decrees by which the fascists force down the living standards of the German, Italian, and Japanese peoples and loot and starve the conquered peoples in the interest of a small caste of plutocrats who want to dominate the world. On the other side are such measures as the President's seven-point economic program which, based on the principle of equality of sacrifice, seek to strengthen the people in the fight to wipe out the fascist plague. Hoover, like the New York *Daily News,* the Chicago *Tribune,* and other defeatists, puts an equation mark between these two sets of economic measures. He thereby tries to plant in the minds of our people the seed of doubt about the democratic character and aims of the war. The fact that he declares himself in favor of "plain fascist economics" is revealing as a confession of faith, but applied to what is required to win the war it is a complete distortion.

Significant, too, was Hoover's defense of the sixth column. "From a philosophical viewpoint I would like to see the sixth columnists given a little more liberty," he said. "They are defined as the ones who discuss the war or speculate or even criticize in private conversation." And having made his own definition it is easy enough to stir up resentment against those who want to crack down on people who "debate and speculate on this war around every corner grocery store, every logging camp, every machine shop, every family table. . . ." Clever, isn't it? And Hoover trusts that nobody will notice the sleight-of-hand by which he has substituted Joe Smith, American, for the real sixth columnist, for those who, according to President Roosevelt, "wittingly or unwittingly spread the rumors and doubts devised by fifth columnists."

On the same night and before the same audience Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson also spoke. "Be on guard against the Axis peace offensive," he said. Hoover's advice was the direct opposite: more liberty for those who wittingly or unwittingly act as instruments of the Axis peace offensive. If the second front against Hitler is to be opened, if the war is to be won in Europe and Asia, if a real peace is to come after, the American people must not fail to choose between these two opposite lines of action.

recognize this, particularly the men who turn out the machinery for battle. "There ought to be unity in the house of labor," William Green, president of the AFL, said when he proposed resumption of unity negotiations with the CIO; and Sir Walter Citrine came here urging American labor's affiliation with the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee.

So far as AFL-CIO unity is concerned, the common desire to win this war and to do everything possible to win it, has created most favorable conditions for cementing the breach within labor. Witness the achievements of the combined Labor Victory Board, of the many joint AFL-CIO committees throughout the land, loyally pooling their war effort. Witness, too, the unanimity shown by the steel workers at their Cleveland convention when they urged a joint meeting of the AFL and CIO executive boards to increase their combined war efforts.

Experienced labor observers feel that the achievement of unity is perhaps more feasible along the lines suggested by the steel workers, rather than reopening the issue formally and throwing all the long-standing differences and vexing jurisdictional questions into debate. They fear the latter course may accent differences and tend to delay, rather than speed, unity. Let disagreements slide for the duration and emphasize all areas of agreement.

Concerning the proposal for affiliation with the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee: the great convention of the steel workers went on record in its behalf. But as we go to press, the AFL has announced a counterproposal to direct affiliation. The nature of this plan remains to be seen. The millions who seek outright affiliation manifest uneasiness over the influence of William Hutcheson and Matthew Woll. The anti-Soviet stand of the latter in the past is a bad omen: and Mr. Hutcheson's espousal of America First makes him more than suspect. Direct affiliation is the desire of all who recognize the needs of this war: and they hope that outworn prejudices will not obstruct Sir Walter's excellent proposals.

Ways and Means and Taxes

IT IS nearly three months since the Treasury Department presented its win-the-war tax program. After being mauled around in the House Ways and Means Committee, there is some doubt as to what the program looks like or whose victory in the war it is designed to promote. Instead of a weapon against Hitler, the gentlemen of the Ways and Means Committee seem to be fashioning a club against the American people. First they chopped about $500,000,000 out of the Treasury plan for taxing corporations. That was a very mild plan, made before President Roosevelt offered his seven-point economic program, but the majority of the Ways and Means Committee wouldn't stand for even that modest interference with profits-as-usual.

Then the committee gave the wealthy another break by turning down the Treasury proposal for $200,000,000 in new revenue through removing tax exemption for state and local securities. Another Treasury request, which would have raised $80,000,000 by ending "depletion allowance" for oil well and mine owners, was likewise rejected.

During the past week the committee, acting in the same spirit, devised new income tax rates which sock single persons earning as little as ten dollars a week and greatly increase the levies on other low-income groups. For example, a single person earning $800, who now pays an income tax of three dollars, would under the committee's proposals have to pay forty-nine dollars, or more than sixteen times as much. At the same time the Ways and Means Committee did not neglect to turn thumbs down on President Roosevelt's request that individual net income after payment of taxes be limited to $25,000 a year.

For the committee's behavior on the income tax question the Treasury Department itself is not without blame. The Treasury's recent proposal that income tax exemptions be lowered gave the saboteurs of the seven-point program just the handle they were looking for. What has finally emerged is a hybrid scheme that will yield $750,000,000 less than the Treasury plan. Thus the committee's labors so far deprive the war effort of about $1,500,000,000 in badly needed revenue.

Taxation is one of the pillars of the President's economic program. But what the President proposed and what the Ways and Means Committee has done are two different things. As a result, the entire seven-point program is threatened. There is rescue work to be done, and it isn't necessary to wait until election day to do it.

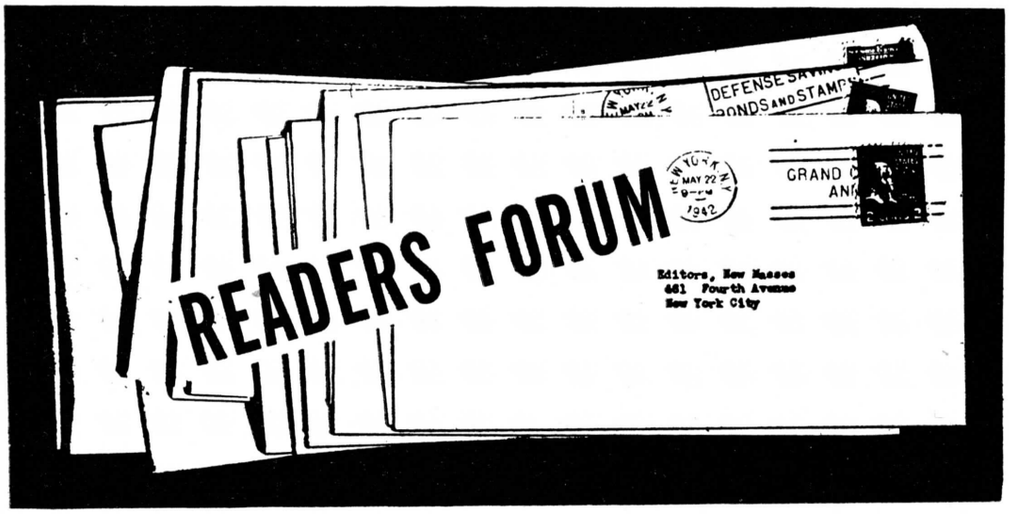
Play Fair

ANY baseball umpire can tell you about the temper of Americans who suspect that the rules of fair play aren't being strictly observed. Yet the most powerful "umpire" of them all, Judge Kenesaw Landis, Commissioner of Baseball, refuses to hear the cry "Fair play!" when it is addressed to him. He refuses even to acknowledge that there is such a cry, though it comes from millions—those who demand that Negroes be permitted to play on the big league teams. It can't be that Landis hasn't heard the demand yet; it has been directed at him for several years now. It can't be that he doubts the ability of Negroes in baseball; managers of big leagues, as well as players, have testified that at least twenty Negro ball players have demonstrated their qualifications for a place on the big teams. Even southern papers, like the Louisville (Ky.) *Courier-Journal,* have editorially urged Judge Landis to throw off his Jim-Crowism. But he is silent; he does not even give a reason for his refusal. It is no more than fair, then, to suggest a reason for him: which is simply that Judge Landis is so prejudiced against Negroes that he will act contrary to the best interests of baseball in order to "keep them in their place." This would be intolerable enough in other times. But in the year 1942 it is flagrantly unpatriotic.

It Strengthens National Unity

JUBILANCE over the freedom of Earl Browder was as instantaneous as wireless would permit: dispatches from as far off as Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and London indicate that all anti-Axis peoples regard his release as a battle won against fascism. "His liberty," Lombardo Toledano, eminent Mexican leader, said, "will contribute importantly to the popular struggle against the Axis powers on the entire Western Hemisphere." That sums up the feeling of millions of Americans who understood the meaning of his imprisonment. The 500,000 members of the New York CIO saw it that way: so did private citizens like Theodore Dreiser and Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, the noted Negro educator who wired President Roosevelt that "I regard your release of Earl Browder as an act of farseeing statesmanship."

Of course, there was the inevitable sourpuss reaction of a handful of sixth columnists such as Westbrook Pegler. Their response—judging from their record—was a foregone conclusion. The vehemence of these worthies attest to the truth: they cavil at anything that would strengthen the President's hand in the effort and they hastened to get in their dirty work. But they work against odds: history is moving contrary to them. The majority of America's newspapers—ranging from the Detroit *Free Press* to the *Daily Enquirer,* of Columbus, Ga.—and the mass of America's people hailed Mr. Roosevelt's statement that Browder's release would tend "to promote national unity."



That Western Front

TO NEW MASSES: Your issue on the second front packed a real punch. I wish all the rest of the press today could see it as clearly as you do. The maritime union agrees with you in the main: but I think you'll need to explore the question of shipping more than you do. There's more confusion on that score than on any other point. Have we got the shipping to do the job? That convoy that took four days to unload in Ireland last week is one answer. Besides, I agree with those who feel that the principal question is getting the boys across the Channel in barges—and they can be turned out by the thousands in relatively little time. I'd like to see your magazine keep up the offensive to take the second front until there is a second front. And keep the issue of shipping clearly before the country. We can do it, and do it now.

FREDERICK N. MYERS,
Vice-President, National Maritime Union.

TO NEW MASSES: If every magazine in the country packed as much punch as your latest issue, Schicklgruber would soon find himself facing a second front—or trying to.

CHARLES J. COE,
Editor, Farm Research.

TO NEW MASSES: The special issue of NEW MASSES devoted to the problem of the second front should be read by all Americans who look forward to an immediate and decisive victory over Hitler. Thousands of anti-fascist teachers in this country will welcome the authoritative military analysis of such experts as Maj. George Fielding Eliot and Lt.-Col. W. F. Kernan. The material presented assures us that opening a second front is not only theoretically desirable, but can become a practical reality.

We teachers see the effect of war tension upon the children in our custody. We want a speedy and victorious end to this war so that we may continue to train future citizens to take their place in a world of peace and justice with the black shadow of fascism eliminated.

The editors of NEW MASSES have done us a great service in bringing light upon a campaign which if promptly executed can save the lives of thousands of American boys.

We owe it to ourselves, to the brave men of the Red Army, and to the millions of subjugated European people, to take decisive action to open the second front now.

BELLA V. DODD,
Legislative Representative of the Teachers Union of the City of New York.

TO NEW MASSES: It was a timely and brilliant idea for NEW MASSES to devote a whole issue to the most important problem in the world today—A Western Front To Win the War. The issue, written by competent military experts and illustrated with dynamic maps, graphs, cartoons, and figures, is a comprehensive survey that is thoroughly convincing and leaves no further room for delay or argument. It should be read by every American because it reveals the next and only step for the United Nations to follow and for our government and people to carry out with concentrated power.

Russia fighting in self-defense is on the defensive no longer. And Russia has been aided by her two great allies, England and America, aided with tons of arms and food. But not as yet with fighting men, not on a second front. Men can fight just as well as the Russians can, once you start them going. And men have as great a cause as the Russians have—human freedom everywhere. Let's not argue any longer and make long speeches. We've had enough long speeches, grand though they sound. We need action now, lightning action well prepared and delivered in vulnerable spots. The kidneys, the belly, the solar plexus, and most of all the heart, the blackest heart in history. Here we are near the close of round three in 1942. There should never be a bell for the fourth round. Only the death knell for Hitlerism!

ALFRED KREYMBORG.

TO NEW MASSES: Congratulations on NEW MASSES' special "How to Win the War in 1942" issue. It deals with the biggest issue facing the United Nations today; it builds up an airtight case for the immediate opening of a Western Front in Europe; it provides leadership on this vital question to the millions of Americans who know that Hitler must be smashed this year.

My own special field of information is the Far East. Therefore, when discussing the opening of a second front in Europe, I always think of its relation to the liberation of China, of the Philippines, and of the other Pacific countries now overrun by the Japanese fascists. You have to make a thoroughly convincing case to show that the best way to smash Japan is to shoot the works now in Europe. You've done it. I agree with you: we go on hitting at the Japanese as hard as we can, but our big immediate offensive must be in Europe where, thanks to the Red Armies, the heart of the Axis can be throttled this year.

FREDERICK V. FIELD.

TO NEW MASSES: Your special issue, "The Case for the Second Front," is in the real spirit of the offensive. The battle on the Eastern Front is developing into the greatest struggle the world has ever seen. Now what will we do about it? I think your issue effectively and graphically presents the evidence that a second front now adds up to victory in 1942.

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER.

TO NEW MASSES: I must write to tell you that I have been for a long time skeptical about a continental invasion. The reason is simple: I just didn't think we were prepared for it. And while I am not as yet totally convinced, your special Western Front issue has eradicated several of my doubts and brought me closer to your view of the problem. I am now using the handbook in my history classes as a basis for debating the issue.

COLLEGE INSTRUCTOR.

Philadelphia.

We'll Do Our Best

TO NEW MASSES: I'm happy to see that at long last NEW MASSES has published an article on an artist and his work. I refer to William Blake's review of the Gropper exhibition in the April 28 issue. Blake of course is an excellent prose painter himself. And his remarks on the explosive and brilliant achievements so apparent in many Gropper canvases were a delight to read. But why such interminable spaces of time between critical articles?

Week after week you cover the news with sharp and constructive commentary. Your book section although uneven at times throws light on trends in the literary world. It acknowledges the place and importance of a whole sector of American culture. So for the movies, the theater—and yes, jazz, with which you do right well. Then why not more on art and artists? Your artistic heritage is tremendous. It would take everyone of your pages to enumerate the many accomplished artists who first appeared in the MASSES, old and new. And I'm a little sad to find that artistic guidance and evaluation do not appear more often.

This is a world which for all its turbulence is producing fine creative talent. An anti-fascist war will release a fresh genius and power. And I hope that NEW MASSES will act both as mirror and generator of our people's gifts. It has in the past and I know that it will now.

EVANS DONAHUE.

Baltimore.

BOOKS and PEOPLE by SAMUEL SILLEN

SIX WEEKS

In an impassioned novel Vladimir Pozner depicts the drama of the betrayal of France. The generals who defeated their own soldiers.

THE debate over Steinbeck's *The Moon Is Down* has been a healthy thing on the whole, even though more problems have been raised than settled. By battling it out in public, without pulling any punches, critics like Lewis Gannett, Brooks Atkinson, and Clifton Fadiman have at least suggested that art is a life and death matter, that in seriously evaluating any literary work it is impossible to ignore its historical truth or its social effect. This much is all to the good. I take it as a sign that this war, like every historical crisis, forces criticism to get down to fundamentals.

But the debate has had one unfortunate effect. It has tended to divert attention from other war books that deserve to be more widely read and discussed. I am thinking of such splendid novels as T'ien Chun's *Village in August* or Franz Weiskopf's *Dawn Breaks.* And I would quickly add to any list of must reading Vladimir Pozner's novel of the French defeat in 1940, *The Edge of the Sword,* (Modern Age, $2.50). This powerful story adds convincing evidence that in the very midst of war we are witnessing a rebirth of vitality in the novel. The anti-fascist impulse is not destructive; it is creative and liberating.

For the enemies of fascism this war has been a war of defeats as well as of victories, and we do well to learn from both. Dealing with the swift collapse of France during May and June of 1940, Mr. Pozner's novel is in many respects a heartbreaking experience; but we dare not forget the image of that experience. This story is written against the background of a vast betrayal. The rulers of France, those who had destroyed the People's Front and suppressed *L'Humanite,* pursued not a policy of "national defense," as they claimed, but of "national desertion," as the people instinctively felt. The Lavals who preside over the peace of surrender conducted the war of surrender. And on the altar of greed, ambition, fear of the people, they sacrificed the interests of France.

The six weeks following May 10, when the Nazi offensive began, were tragic, and Mr. Pozner has pictured the disorder of those days with a vividness that is at once compassionate and unsparing. The dominant image is one of movement, the confusion of flight. At the opening, we meet a figure, Dubois, who has been blinded by a Nazi bomb; and his feverish gropings, in a long-familiar world that has suddenly become unrecognizable, may be taken as a symbolic prelude to the main action. The image of unceasing movement is carried forward in the scenes dealing with Caillol, the working class organizer, who is chauffeur for Colonel Carvin; in the adventures of the tank manned by Vandervenne, Moustier, and Mirabelle; in the poignant shots of the highway leading out of Paris with its crowded and pathetic human freight. And at the very head of the flight are the officers and the bankers, generals of disorder.

There is a pattern in this confusion, though it emerges gradually, subtly. The essential meaning is that the war is within France itself. In a significant passage we are reminded that if Saint-Just, who had dreamed of a democratic army, were alive and had lifted his voice again in 1940, the government would have sent him to a concentration camp for anti-nationalist propaganda. Throughout the story, Caillol is evading Bissieres, the former industrialist now a sergeant, who conceives of the war as a way of getting even with his People's Front workers. The government radio plays *"Aux armes, citoyens,"* but the army is equipped with 1917 model guns. This is the war between democratic and anti-democratic France. And if it is possible at the end to make a courageous affirmation about the future, it is because the worker Caillol has transformed the hypocritical slogan of the Daladiers and Bonnets by changing the stress on the words: "With *your* scrap, *we* shall forge the steel of victory."

BUT I want to remove the impression that this is a formal novel of ideas or that its interest lies mainly in its analysis of "the lesson of France." The overpowering impact of the novel, the quality that makes you read it at one sitting with utter fascination, is the result of Mr. Pozner's exceptional skill as a story-teller. I can think of no recent novel that takes so many chances, in the sense that it attempts scenes that with one wrong shade of emphasis might seem staged instead of convincingly real. For example, the scene in which Jaqueline gives birth to her baby in the open field, assisted by the sympathetic but crude poilu-obstetricians, must be read to be believed; the amazing thing is that you do believe it, even though on one level you remain a detached skeptic. The peregrinations of the tank through the forests and fields of the war-torn country is a legend which is in one sense comic and in another tragically symbolic.

The plain soldiers, men like Lozange and Moustier, Leloup and Mirabelle, are keenly differentiated as individuals at the same time that their identity as a group is preserved. They give the book its earthiness; in their jokes, their grousings, their memories of home, the reader is often reminded of the rank and file soldiers in Barbusse's *Under Fire.* They are bewildered, to be sure; but their instincts are sound, and by the end of six weeks they are, most of them, pretty well persuaded that they have been sold out. Caillol, the chauffeur, is the most conscious character of the book, the only one who never loses his bearings.

Among the best passages are those which depict the unspoken clash between Caillol and Colonel Carvin. As the chauffeur and his superior watch one another in the automobile mirror, an intense and subtle psychological relationship is set up; the atmosphere bristles.

Caillol is not an elaborately developed character, but this is in part due to the special circumstances under which he is forced to operate. As an active anti-fascist his name is naturally on the police blacklist. Working under cover, separated from his political associates in this turmoil, he can express himself only through indirection. But beneath his disciplined restraint, one senses power and clarity. Unable to save France, he will live to help win her back from the defilers of Paris and their sordid servitors at Vichy.

Readers who look for a well defined plot will be disappointed here. I think Pozner has wisely avoided any elaborate story; for, in a way, no story was possible in those hectic weeks. They were compounded of rapidly shifting sensations. The people behaved as stunned men. If we in America were overwhelmed by the swiftness of the Nazi march to Paris, we ought to appreciate what it must have meant to Frenchmen whose government had proclaimed the security of a Maginot Line that was rotten with treachery. With terrific power, Pozner has conveyed that feeling. His book is intensely alive with anger and irony and wit directed at the scoundrels who turned his native land over to the Nazis.

With this novel, Vladimir Pozner clearly establishes himself as a leading figure among those writers who, even in exile, carry forward the great tradition of the French novel. *The Edge of the Sword* has been sensitively translated by Haakon Chevalier, who introduced us to Malraux and Aragon. That Pozner should have managed to escape to America was our good fortune, and I hope that we shall respond to our opportunity by giving his fine book the attention it deserves.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

In the Depths

NEVER COME MORNING, *by Nelson Algren. Harper and Bros. $2.50.*

IN 1935 Nelson Algren published *Somebody in Boots,* dedicated To the Homeless Boys of America—a powerful study of the underdog, the lonely, brutalized, and suffering. Like few American books, it had the feel of Gorky, in vitality and particularly in color. His new novel, *Never Come Morning,* brings Algren back at his best. It has qualities I believe no other writer among us can touch, of the light shifting away from the earth into unpossessed borderlands, the home of the tender and lost. It has the quality of anger, anger against a fake world which isolates its people into traps of denial and death. This world appeared on the first page of *Somebody in Boots* and goes on unrelentingly to the last page of *Never Come Morning.* It is Algren's central statement. For his struggling people it makes every man and woman an enemy: it makes the cry from the American depths a cry for human integrity.

In *Somebody in Boots* it was Cass McKay, the "native son" of Texas, who drifted up to Chicago, Bad-Hat McKay, who had to convince the world of the flophouse, brothel, and jail that he was a citizen. Lefty Bruno Bicek of the new book grows up in Chicago, a son of the fighting Poles; he makes the rapid journey deathward in less than twenty-one years: "I knew I'd never get t'be twenty-one anyhow." The brevity of Lefty's life is foreordained: he steps awkwardly and hopelessly from childhood into violence and self-desecration and early death. It is as if his degradation and death were written on his birth certificate. Society makes him, hunts him, and at the end drops him downward quickly, easily, out of mind. Yet here is a human being with a constant longing for a better world —as Bigger Thomas in his way longs and cries out—who longs to get a little money, give his girl a home, ease himself out of the pressures of mob and police. Instead he crucifies his girl and kills others as he has killed himself. His girl, Steffi R., is left to a house of prostitution, and it is she even more than he who understands the world of cheat. It is her humanness which continues unbroken to the end, it is she who sees the stamp of the inhuman being placed on her customers. "She did not fear their depravities, she could protect herself against those; but against a lack of humanness she had no defense. It was something beyond her feeling and her understanding, and when she sensed such a lack she feared the man as she would some monster."

The story of the book is simple. Lefty Bruno, with a sick mother on relief, dreams of a career in the "roped arena." He betrays Steffi R., is haunted by the police and at the end of his biggest fight is arrested for murder. Fight and arrest somehow are anticlimactic: the main events are police questionings, the parade of the long hours of nights that never end, the schemings of a world which believes in no friend and depends on nothing. And these are the premonitory voices of death.

How is such a world to be changed? Algren says nothing about it, but the need of a change of value is implicit in every sentence he writes. Richard Wright in his introduction calls the book a warning. After this book, after a *Native Son,* nobody can say the reality of the American depths has not been brought to view. Here it is to look upon and to call the conscious to action.

MILLEN BRAND.

Prescription for Defeat

AMERICA IN THE NEW PACIFIC, *by George E. Taylor. Macmillan. $1.75.*

SINCE Pearl Harbor most Americans have rightly concentrated on winning the war; the tangled problem of war aims has received correspondingly less attention. For one thing, winning the war is itself the first war aim, or should be, on anyone's private list. We may not unanimously agree on the world we want if we win, but we can unite against the kind of world we will get if we lose. In this sense, victory is not only a war aim; it is the common denominator of war aims. In considering any broader proposals, such as Professor Taylor's, it is good to keep in mind the fundamental question: "Will they help to win the war?" Any particular set of war aims which may make it harder to win, or even impossible, is only doing Japan's work.

The importance of *America in the New Pacific* is that it is representative of a trend of thinking on war aims which may be worth at least a few divisions to the Japanese. Henry Luce of *Life* might easily adopt this book as a working out of his own ideas for the Far East. In Professor Taylor's case he insists on opening up the whole subject because, as he says, victory depends on knowing "what kind of world we are fighting for." This emphasis may not only be dangerous, if it tends to put the cart of war aims before the horse of victory, but it can easily slip over into something much worse by setting up war aims which are in fact incompatible with victory under cover of making them a precondition of victory.

The book is tough-minded, carefully argued, and clearly written, and all the more poisonous for its technical virtues. The irony is that Professor Taylor (and those who think like him in the State Department, in the coterie of Far Eastern "experts," and in the banks and export houses) is all-out for an "American" victory. No other kind of vic-

tory will satisfy him and sometimes he writes as if he would not want a victory if the United States did not get all the gravy. The war, he writes, is an "American-Japanese struggle for the leadership of Asia," "America is fighting back to retain the leadership of Asia which was slipping from her grasp," America is the "senior partner" of the United Nations. It is remarkable how the first principles of Japanese imperialists and some short-sighted American imperialists coincide. For Professor Taylor's basic conception of the war is exactly the same as that of Japanese propaganda.

Not that Professor Taylor is a Japanese propagandist; he tries to explain in great detail why American leadership is better than Japanese leadership for Asia. Unfortunately the Asiatic peoples seem to have had enough of any outside "leadership," especially when the chief virtue of American domination, according to Professor Taylor, is "westernization," which implies that the eastern peoples are expected to accept a destiny which has already been decided for them. In short, he calls upon the subject peoples of Asia to give their lives to save the leadership of Asia for the United States and, as a consolation prize, he tells them that they will get more of the drippings than the Japanese can offer or afford.

In the sense of winning the war, are these *war* aims? How many new allies will we get, and how much better will our old ones fight, if we tell them that they are really deciding whether they will be "led" by Japanese generals or American businessmen? Or to be westernized? Will it improve our relations with our Soviet ally to gloat over the fact, as Professor Taylor permits himself to do, that Soviet Russia was "occupied" in Europe when Japan attacked us? Why should any Far Eastern nationalist get excited over America's efforts to control the balance of power in Asia, an effort which Professor Taylor admits depends on throwing the weight of American influence now on one side and now on the other? Have these aims anything in common with the Four Freedoms or the Atlantic Charter, which interestingly enough Professor Taylor never mentions?

In the propaganda war, this is precisely the terrain which has already been preempted by the enemy, which the enemy knows best, and has exploited, notably in Thailand, with deadly effect. It is true, as Professor Taylor says, that Japanese militarism is the greatest enemy of eastern nationalism; but "westernization" is just about the last battle-cry to take advantage of Japan's growing difficulties. In fact, Japan, the most "westernized" of all the Asiatic nations, has been least willing to accept the leadership of the westernizers, and Professor Taylor never quite extricates himself from this obvious contradiction.

Professor Taylor is one of that small but influential group of Americans who envision the break-down of the British empire and dream of grabbing as many of the pieces as possible to set up an American empire or at least a hegemony. This is the major premise which he never quite brings out into the open in this book, though he has already done so in a recent article in *Pacific Affairs,* December 1941. It is conceivable that he might object that his views are for Americans, not for Asiatics. Unfortunately, if there is one theater of the war where we cannot win without allies, it is the Far East. It is not enough to write war aims for the State Department, for the Institute of Pacific Relations, or for Wall Street; in fact, it may be disastrous. If the war in the Pacific could be won by satisfying their narrow and selfish ambitions, *America in the New Pacific* might pass as a sort of promissory note. But if every additional Asiatic ally may save an American life, hasten the end, and even guarantee the final victory, the sooner its influence is burned out the better.

THEODORE DRAPER.

Report on Hawaii

REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR!, *by Blake Clark. Modern Age Books. $1.25.*

WHAT happened on the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, was already being feared and anticipated in 1896 when my mother and father went to Hawaii from the West Coast. They went as part of a slow race against the on-coming fact of war between Japan and the United States; they were schoolteachers, part of an Americanization program that is today bearing its best fruit in the loyalty of many Japanese-Hawaiians. My parents and the people with whom they worked never forgot the problem of the Pacific and the danger of a clash between American democracy and Japanese miiltarism.

Mr. Clark's book is an able and swift report on the event of attack and into this he draws some of the older surrounding problem. He begins with the somewhat long and complicated story of Hawaii, the wrong and right of it. I say complicated for this reason. American citizens have been content to be ignorant about Pacific problems, and even many intelligent and progressive people have not been alert to fight against the strong eastern tide which turns away from the West, the Pacific, and Asia. We have all been content to take the Chamber of Commerce version of Hawaii, and the Tourist Trade Version, and the Hollywood Version. This is blind and degrading and now we find that our minds are crowded with junk when they should be well informed.

And so I say, read this small and clear account of the bombing attack and what it meant to the peoples of Hawaii. Mr. Clark writes chapters on the flying fields, the wounded, the Japanese community, and the Niihau story; he concludes: "Japan is not acting alone, but in collaboration with the other members of the Axis . . . on the offensive. . . . Here Hawaii . . . we had our fascist-minded people, just as the mainland had. We had individuals here who were inclined to do busi-

ness with Hitler—who did not admire him, perhaps, but who envied him his lack of labor problems. We had our America Firsters. . . . If the Big Five of Japan had solved Japan's social problem, given Japan's people food, they would not have had to give them fanaticism and superstition. We knew this before . . . but on that terrible Sunday morning we realized with a jolt that Japan and the Axis will, if they can, impose this intellectual and social blitzkrieg upon us by a blitzkreig of arms."

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD.

Clue to Drama

HOW TO WRITE A PLAY, *by Lajos Egri. Simon & Schuster. $2.50.*

LIKE John Howard Lawson's earlier book, *The Theory and Technique of Playwriting,* Mr. Egri's little work represents a pioneering tendency. Both books are predicated upon the principles of dialectics. Mr. Egri's treatment is neither as extensive nor as intensive as Mr. Lawson's, and, in fact, he takes issue with Lawson on many points. But his work, like Lawson's, possesses validity far beyond the field of playwriting. His principles, largely sound, can be applied to all creative writing, as well as to an understanding of human motives outside of their reflection in literary form. This constitutes the main importance of his book. He makes it amply evident that human character is neither accidental nor, in essence, "mysterious"—i.e., beyond understanding. And he provides clues and attitudes from which human character can be evaluated and understood from a scientific point of view.

The student of playwriting will find *How to Write a Play* a useful tool. The author analyzes various dramas, illustrating his main contentions that all good plays *must* proceed out of a premise, develop through rising conflict, possess the unity of opposites which makes this conflict not only possible but inevitable—and so on.

It is possible to be a little annoyed with some of the attitudes Mr. Egri reveals in the method he has chosen to expound his ideas. He makes use, at times, of a dialogue form between his students and himself, and while the ideas he puts forth seem generally valid, a certain smugness in their exposition is evident, making for categorical statements that are debatable.

An example is Mr. Egri's attack on Lawson's exposition of the so-called "obligatory scene" in a play. Mr. Egri seems intent on splitting hairs. *All* scenes in a play are obligatory, he says; which is of course true, since a play is not an arbitrary catch-all for its component parts, but a living organism—if it is a good play. But Mr. Lawson would not disagree with this point of view; and Mr. Egri himself admits that Mr. Lawson, in contending that the entire play must mount toward its solution, is quite reasonable and correct.

ALVAH BESSIE.

Lizardi's Classic

THE ITCHING PARROT, EL PERIQUILLO SARNIENTO, *by Jose Joaquin Fernandez de Lizardi, translated by Katherine Anne Porter. Doubleday. $2.50.*

THIS Mexican classic, now translated into English for the first time, is said to have sold nearly 100,000,000 copies. The first work of fiction written in the popular Mexican tongue, it is unequalled for its picture of the teeming, oft-cheated, but indestructible people to the south of us.

Its author, Lizardi, was born in the first year of our own war for independence; when he was twenty the French Revolution occurred; his own life cannot be separated from his country's early struggles for liberty. Like Defoe, this father of the novel was first and foremost a political pamphleteer. His work begins at that crucial moment in the life of the Spanish empire when Simon Bolivar and the Juntas began the wars that created nine new republics in fourteen years. Lizardi issued protests in the popular argot under the pseudonym of "The Mexican Thinker."

He was to endure a lifetime of persecution. His was no rock-like character such as that of his contemporary Morelos, the military genius of the revolution. Lizardi was the victim of the most human frailty and vacillations. Yet his writing battled for every liberal issue. He wrote against the Inquisition, against all forms of social oppression.

He had hoped at last to outwit the censors by smuggling all his pamphlets into the roaring tale of a rogue's adventures. The translation (whether for better or for worse) has cut out a good deal of this material. But the Rogue's Progress that remains, the history of that ridiculous buffoon and sinner, that parasite and adventurer, El Periquillo, is itself a honeycomb of social criticism. Poll, ne'er-do-well son of respectable parents, grows up to caper through the careers of barber, cleric, grave-robber, thief, gambler, soldier, merchant. Only the role of picaro could reveal so many aspects of the social scene.

But that cannot be the only reason for its long popularity. The people loved Lizardi during his lifetime and love him today because he tried to tell them *la verdad pelada,* the naked truth. In his savory descriptions of wakes, weddings, and drinking parties, beggars in their flop-houses, gentlemen in their inns, dishonest apothecaries and incompetent doctors, blood-sucking sub-delegates and mercenary clergy, is contained all the animated reality of his native city. Certain scenes are justly famous—the wake in which the watchers play cards through the night, borrowing one by one the blessed candles of the dead as their own give out, the grisly humor of the hospital or prison scenes, the conversations in the doss-houses. There is even an interlude in an improbable island Utopia where our hero is confronted with the Good Society of the Philosophers. That good society may be rather far off, but Lizardi's campaigns for freedom were never more close to us than today.

MILLICENT LANG.

Brief Reviews

INSIDE RUSSIA, *the first issue of Picture Digest, on newsstands at 25c.*

The old Chinese saying that one picture is worth 1,000 words receives strong support from this picture story of our Russian ally. Such fundamental questions as "Can Russia Smash Hitler This Year?," "1001 Things You Never Knew About the USSR," "How the Russians Do It?" are dealt with in the 130 pages of pictures making up this publication. Some of the best as yet unpublished photographs of Russia at war appear here. This book shows how the people of the Soviet Union prepared for this attack of Hitler's, how the masses of the population are backing up their Red Army on the production front and home front in general. Whether it be the action photo of the Red Navy landing on an enemy-held island or a shot of the people of Moscow digging anti-tank ditches and emergency defenses—this array of photographs is dramatic testimony to the magnificent fight being waged by the Soviets.

BREATHE THE AIR AGAIN, *by Ward Moore. Harper & Bros. $2.75.*

Breathe the Air Again is announced as "a picaresque novel of our time." Unfortunately its chief resemblance to picaresque fiction of the past is its length. The innumerable incidents suffer from an inadequacy of sharp observation, clear feeling, and artistic integration.

A major weakness of the novel is its central character, Simon Epstein, an eager adolescent who leaves his Los Angeles home to seek work and adventure. He has several love affairs, he takes part in a couple of strikes, and he makes many reflections on the world and on his place in the world; but his thinking and feeling remain basically those of a well intentioned, tentative, somewhat commonplace young egoist. The union activities and the socialist talk, the selfish schemes of the businessmen and the quaint chatter of the hobos have neither the strength nor the reality to offset the hero's deficiencies.

WHAT'S THAT PLANE?, *by Walter B. Pitkin, Jr. Penguin Books. 25c.*

This latest addition to Penguin's aviation series, which includes *Flight to Victory* and *Aircraft Recognition,* will be a valuable guide for airplane spotters or average citizens anxious to know what manner of craft is overhead. The deficiencies of the earlier *Aircraft Recognition* have been made good by a liberal selection of silhouettes and photographs of Japanese and German combat types that might possibly be seen in this hemisphere—heavy bombardment craft, as well as various types of carrier-borne and seagoing ships. American types (fighters, bombers, seaplanes and boats) are also included.

THE STRINGS ARE FALSE

Paul Vincent Carroll's new play falls short of the mark. A transition work in which rhetoric collides with good intentions . . . Macabre Uncle Harry.

ALMOST anything Paul Vincent Carroll writes is worth consideration. In the past Mr. Carroll demonstrated that he had an original mind, a distinct gift for characterization, and a powerful sense of the stage. He also revealed that he was working his way toward a less metaphysical understanding of the world. And it was rumored that the new play, *The Strings, My Lord, Are False,* involved a radical departure from metaphysics into reality. To a certain degree it does.

For in this drama of life on the Clydeside during a Nazi blitz, Mr. Carroll pins his faith completely on the dignity of the common man, and illuminates the split between the lower orders of the Church and the hierarchy. His Canon Courtenay, while a believer, is no dogmatist, no cynic. He is both a Christly man and of as common clay as the motley crowd of parishioners who seek refuge with him in the church of St. Bride's. His outspoken defense of the people against profiteers, hoarders, and fascist-minded men on the town council has earned him the displeasure of his churchly superiors, and the title of the "Red Canon." He defies them.

His people demonstrate, once more, the insuperable strength and energy of the people, and there is no substitution of the supernatural consciousness for the plain, scientific facts of this world. But it is precisely here that Mr. Carroll stops—as a dramatist. With a valid concept in his hands, he has not known how to give that concept life. Strictly speaking, his play has no plot, no action but the superficial (dramatically speaking) action of the Nazi demolition bombs. (Sound effects can always cause excitement in the theater.)

His characters are rubber stamps; the usual ones. Here again we find the hectic, war-created romance that ends in illegitimacy; the prostitute-with-heart-of-gold; the "comic" Communist (who is, also, and typically, for men of Mr. Carroll's mind, a thief, a drunkard, a wife-beater, a diamond-in-the-rough). Here again is the pacifist who is convinced of the righteousness of the war *only* when he loses his girl friend in the blitz; here again is the woman-in-childbirth-under-the-bombs.

All these people could have been real, had Mr. Carroll made them so—by intensive study and projection of their human realities. He has not been able to do so. So his play remains a transition work, both in a dramaturgic sense, and in the sense of accurate understanding of the issues and the personalities involved.

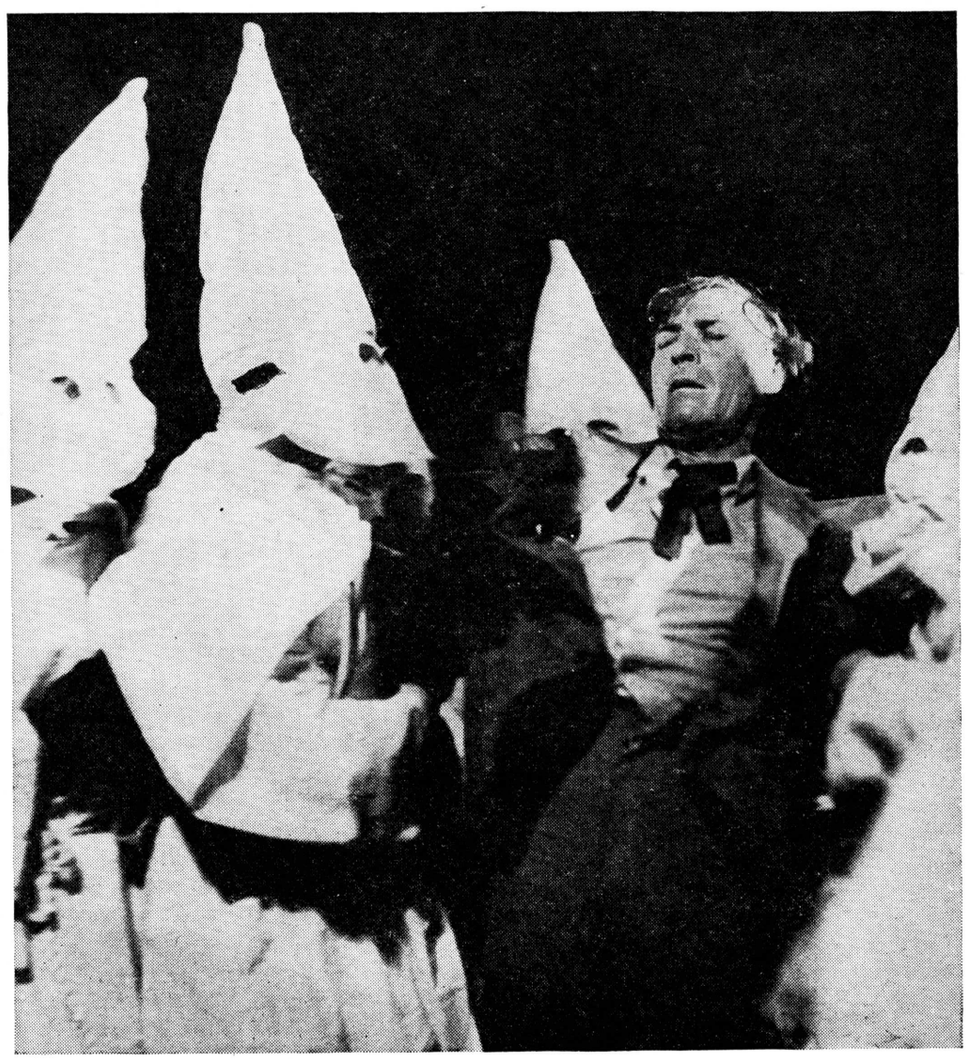
Elia Kazan, as director, has given considerable color and movement to a largely static drama. As the Canon, Walter Hampden is credible, though still inclined to resemble a wooden Indian. Miss Margot Grahame again reveals that she is a considerable actress within certain readily definable limits. (Someone should try her out as something other than a streetwalker, and see what she can do.) Art Smith works a minor miracle with the highly distasteful role of the uncommunist Communist, and Will Lee, always an imaginative performer, does what he can with a repulsive character who has lost an arm at Dunkirk. As the blitz romanticist who got caught, Ruth Gordon gives one of the more ludicrous performances of the season.

But Mr. Carroll should sit down to his desk again, and try to see things straight and see them whole. He has the gift of tongues, the gift of understanding, and the gift of drama. He must recognize that rhetoric is no substitute for understanding and action; that caricature is no substitute for character.

THE SEASON has ended with a minor skyrocket called *Uncle Harry* after its main protagonist, and written by Thomas Job. The play contains several surprises. It is a psychological murder story in the vein of *Ladies in Retirement,* and quite exciting, although it cannot touch that earlier masterpiece of the macabre.

But like the earlier play, it reveals a reasonable understanding of human character and depends, for its effects, upon the interplay of that character, not upon sliding doors or green hands stretching from the cuckoo clock.

"Uncle" Harry is the spoiled brother of the Quincey sisters. He is a mollycoddle; a "schlemiel." He is too good to be true, as the barmaid at the tavern shrewdly observes. But the worm, Uncle Harry, turns; his life as a man destroyed by his overmaternal sisters, he destroys them in his turn, with considerable ingenuity. He commits the "perfect" crime. There would be no point in revealing how he



A scene from "Native Land." The KKK flogging a defender of civil rights.

does it, for if you want to spend an entertaining evening in the theater, you will want to watch the angelic Uncle Harry at work yourself. Suffice it to say that Retribution, with a capital R, comes home to roost, in a highly ironical fashion. This is the first twist Mr. Job gives to his plot, and it is quite legitimate. After that, not content with leaving well enough alone, the playwright insists on tying a couple more knots in the tail of the plot.

Lem Ward, who directed *Brooklyn, USA,* has taken a slick commercial job and given it a highly human finish. He has pointed up the valid human content and played down the purely meretricious. The result, as I said before, is superior entertainment of the Broadway variety, not Ibsen. In the title role, Joseph Schildkraut gives a shrewd performance, neatly observed and brilliantly projected. Eva Le Gallienne (who last played with Mr. Schildkraut in the original American *Liliom)* is the younger of his sisters, and matches his performance with an understanding job. As the elder sister Adelaide Klein is equally obnoxious (the Quincey sisters are a frightful pair). Miss Klein moves from the radio to the stage with fine impunity and rare effect.

Howard Bay is responsible for the stage sets for *The Strings* and *Uncle Harry.* He is one of the most versatile of our designers, and the contrast between these two jobs will demonstrate why. Stage design, in the hands of Mr. Bay, is a fine art; which is as it should be.

ALVAH BESSIE.

NATIVE LAND

Ralph Ellison continues the discussion of Frontier Films' feature production. The common man's march of freedom.

"AS WE begin the final stages of this fight to the death between the free world and the slave world, it is worth while to refresh our minds about the march of freedom for the common man."

These words by Vice President Wallace might well have been uttered in recommendation of Paul Strand's and Leo Hurwitz' new film, *Native Land;* for this, in terms of the cinema, is what it does. *Native Land* is the first full length feature film to project the struggles and values of the common man upon the American screen. And while it deals with the struggles of farmers and workers for civil liberties during the 1930's, its emotional impact and political implications, its truth, extend far beyond the period of its specific incidents. As Paul Robeson states in the epilogue, it depicts these struggles not as an end, but as a beginning, a discipline for a broader struggle: that against the fascist Axis, which is now made more real because understood in light of similar forces in American life.

Focusing specifically upon these fascist forces at home, *Native Land* has the purging effect of tragedy, clarifying and translating emotion into consciousness and indignation to crush the greater enemy. It is a testimony to the vision of Strand and Hurwitz and their fellow craftsmen that although production on *Native Land* began some three years ago, it is perhaps the most vital American film being shown today. That they have seized upon basic patterns of American experience is witnessed by the fact that during this period rather than becoming diminished, the significance of their production has become amplified. For instance, its depiction of Black Legion and KKK activities as a grave danger to civil liberties becomes even more meaningful in light of the fact that these forces now join in a conscious, international attack against the allied nations through instigating such acts as the Sojourner Truth Housing riots. Contrary to the doubts of some critics, such incidents do not weaken national unity, but strengthen it by giving intensification and direction to honest anger and hate.

It is significant that such a film is produced today. Since the early thirties there have been scattered efforts to organize a real progressive cinema—one that would maintain the professional craft standards of Hollywood and yet be based upon an integrated approach to American experience. This was the dream of Leo Hurwitz back in 1932 when he filmed the Washington hunger march, and late in 1933 when be made a newsreel of the Scottsboro case. Such too, was the dream of Paul Strand, who during that time was in Mexico supervising and photographing that masterpiece of the camerman's art, *The Wave.* It was a dream that was an artistic counterpart of the progressive struggle which went on at that time. But in large measure, because of the high cost of movie production and monopoly control of the industry, progressive films were confined to shorts, thus rendering the search for new forms and approaches to audiences extremely limited.

The first real crystallization of efforts in this direction came in 1937 with the organization of Frontier Films, for which, by doing a series of still photographs for a fashion magazine, Strand and Hurwitz raised $340. A small sum, but it led to such documentary films as *People of the Cumberland* and *Heart of Spain.* And more important, when work began on *Native Land,* the farmer and labor core of the progressive movement for the first time had their struggles and values approached as real material for American cinematic art. The reception accorded the production well justifies the assumptions upon which Frontier Films based its efforts. *Native Land* integrates in its conception incidents from all phases of the struggle for civil liberties. In its production it makes use of some of the best artistic talent in the country. One hopes that the Americans of good will to whom *Native Land* is addressed will recognize the invaluable instrument which this blending of artistic techniques and democratic values has given them. Such syntheses come only through arduous effort. The three years in which *Native Land* was in production were years of constant struggle, marked by many breakdowns during which the producers were forced to raise funds with which to continue. And yet the cost of this magnificent film ($70,000) is meager when compared with the sums spent upon most Hollywood creations.

There is a simple economic side to the matter that should be understood. Distributors consider such films as *Native Land* bad risks. And yet when Frontier Films produced *China Strikes Back* and had it turned down by every house in New York, Strand and Hurwitz by getting the support of progressive organizations were able to book the film in sixty-five local neighborhood theaters. This represented a very limited effort, but it demonstrates the possibilities of producing vital films when there is support on the part of those to whom such films are addressed. This, in terms of the moving picture, is a base for a people's art. Again in simple economic terms, *Native Land,* being the first progressive full length feature, allows the producers to use a share of the gross receipts in first run houses to build up funds for further production of progressive films. It also creates the possibility of opening channels through which similar films might be shown and thus breaking down some of the monopolistic control of the industry. In terms of the people's war and the general artistic standards of the cinema, in terms of refreshing "our minds about the march of freedom for the common man," *Native Land* and Frontier Films must be supported. They are signs of a healthy art and a healthy art implies a healthy people.

RALPH ELLISON.

Shadows in a Fog

Flat is the word for Tortilla . . . and other films.

SEPIA is a substance emitted by the slimy cuttlefish. When pursued he squirts it out, makes a brown impenetrable fog in the water, and leaves the beholder in a state of foggy confusion. Sepia is also the medium in which *Tortilla Flat* was photographed. The mist is not entirely impenetrable, however. At times Hedy Lamarr looms through it, talking tinnily; at times John Garfield reels through, socking people.

Steinbeck's novel about the California paisanos had earthiness and human sympathy; in the film earthiness has become vulgarity and sympathy has been denatured to sloppy sentiment. The corruption of Sweets Ramirez into Hedy Lamarr is symbolic of the whole film's falsification; it has become a struggle for the soul of Danny, the youngest of a crew of likable bums, with Hedy representing the forces of respectability.

In this improbable contest, her antagonists

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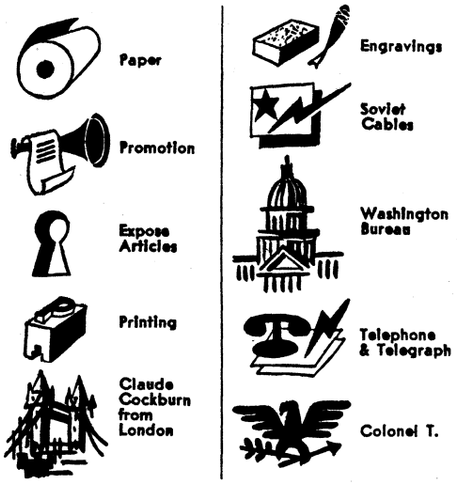

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are Danny's friends, portrayed by Spencer Tracy, Frank Morgan, Akim Tamiroff, and others, in a wild variety of un-Spanish accents. Trouble is made between Sweets and Danny; melodrama occurs on a conveyor belt, sending Danny to the hospital and giving Spencer Tracy a lovely opportunity to pray to St. Francis; Danny recovers, settles down to married life with Hedy and a beautiful vacuum cleaner, and gives his friends his house, which they promptly succeed in burning down. Obviously the entire point of this story is in the local color it introduces. There was much of this in the novel, and some of it has survived; the vacuum cleaner and the squid-cutting, for instance, provide authentic moments. For the most part, unfortunately, the characters have been reduced to so many Wally Beery types. In fact, you keep looking around for Mr. Beery. At least he would have done better by the dialect.

Yet clumsy acting, stilted dialogue, and lackadaisical direction are not the real tragedy of *Tortilla Flat;* that lies in its insufferably superior attitude toward its characters. There is an indulgent smile lurking behind its quaintnesses and coynesses, a tacit chauvinism which uses a pat on the head as the medium of a racist attack. Tobacco Roads are pretty much alike, whether in Georgia or California; they are not funny and they are not the fault of their victims, *Tortilla Flat* to the contrary.

"THIS ABOVE ALL" distinguishes itself with the most heartbreaking anticlimax that ever weakened a strong argument. The film is, ostensibly, an account of a wistful wartime romance; beneath the plot, however, lies a discussion of the great basic fact of this war —that it is a people's war. Clive Briggs, the hero, is an English worker who has been through the hardships that beset his class—inferior educational opportunities, inferior and inadequate jobs, class discrimination. Having been sensationally brave at Dunkirk, he is revolted by the inefficiency of the Colonel Blimps and the cynical indifference of the Cliveden gang. He loses his belief in the war and deserts. *This Above All* traces the process by which he regains his belief and finally comes to participate again in the people's war effort. So far so good.

In the characterization of upper class slackers, moreover, there is honest and biting criticism of the sixth column. Aunt Iris, who wrinkles her aristocratic nose at the mere mention of democracy; Uncle, who "refuses to get excited" about the war—these are the people named Barnacles by Dickens, whose function in the ship of state is to encrust. Incumbents of office, they see that something must be done, and bend all their energies to discovering how not to do it. *This Above All* scarifices the Barnacles. So far, even better.

Yet *This Above All,* after raising a burning question, does not answer it. Clive Briggs asks forcibly; what have the people to fight for? Surely it would have been easy enough to give him the equally forcible truth, to demonstrate that fascism is the enemy of all the people, that the people's very survival

GOINGS ON

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depends on its destruction. His question is asked rationally; it should have been answered with reason. Instead, *This Above All* suddenly takes a head-over-heels plunge into bathos. His sobbing girl friend and a chance-met clergyman tell Clive that he must fight because:

(1) The word England has a musical sound.
(2) Think of the sun and the buttercups and the New Forest.
(3) Don't think at all. Just have faith!

These absurdities tax even the powers of Joan Fontaine and Alexander Knox, the unfortunate actors compelled to utter them. Tyrone Power does not help matters by behaving like a sulky schoolboy in the role of the tortured Clive. Otherwise the acting is brilliant; Miss Fontaine, Philip Merivale, and Thomas Mitchell live up to their past, and Sara Allgood stands out in a small part. The film's portrait of England under the bombs is in many respects a heartening one. But the often-repeated adjurations to have faith and die are hardly slogans to give a democratic people; and *This Above All's* powerful beginning makes its anticlimax all the more sodden.

"SABOTEUR" would seem a better film, no doubt, if Mr. Hitchcock had not made *The Thirty-Nine Steps* long since. His new picture is an almost exact duplicate of the old, with just enough superficial difference to keep it from appearing as an honest remake. The Scottish moors are now the western desert, the blonde who first distrusts, then loves, our hero is Priscilla Lane instead of Madeleine Carroll—definitely a change for the worse. The queer people whom the saboteur-hunters encounter are different, and queerer people. And *The Thirty-Nine Steps,* bless its heart, did not end with a spy hunt all over the Statue of Liberty.

In general, *Saboteur* is a most unconvincing film. To be saved from the police by a carload of circus freaks is not downright impossible; but it hadn't ought to happen to a dog, much less a movie hero. Hitchcock's best device for a long while has been the contrast, in his spies, of homely habits and human affections with deep-dyed villainy. In *Saboteur* this device is reduced to a running gag; one spy sentimentalizes over his little boy's first haircut while planning to blow up Boulder Dam, another wants to kill his prisoner quickly so that he can get off to take his kid sister to the Philharmonic, and a third solemnly brings the doomed heroine a chocolate soda, accepts a quarter, and gives her ten cents change.

Nevertheless, if we must have still more films about the blonde-accompanied cross-country chase of the unjustly suspected hero, by all means let Hitchcock make them. His spies are the most hair-raising yet, especially in the hands of Otto Kruger; his incidents, though about as lifelike as a waxwork chamber of horrors, are as startling too. His genius survives a hackneyed plot.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

Chicago "Daily Times" of May 6th said the following about Bruce Minton's article in New Masses titled "We've Got the Ships for the Western Front": ". . . New Masses publishes what is probably the most provocative article of the week, a constructive expose of the slowdown in east coast shipping." Now his special study of Congress will not only stir the nation but will lay the basis for defeating the defeatists and electing a victory Congress this year.

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