

**SPECIAL LITERARY NUMBER**

# NEW MASSES

May 16, 1944

15¢

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## WRITERS AT WAR

**MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV**

*NASTASYA TAKES UP NOVELS*

**ANNA SEGHERS**

*SHELTER IN MARSEILLE*

**CARLOS BULOSAN**

*LETTER TO AMERICA*

**LION FEUCHTWANGER**

*WRITERS IN EXILE*

**SAMUEL SILLEN**

*THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE*



# BETWEEN OURSELVES

SINCE the last time we wrote "Between Ourselves," several important changes have taken place in our staff. As many of our readers know, Herbert Goldfrank, our business manager, has left for the Army. In bidding him Godspeed several hundred of our friends, and our editors, paid warm tribute to the sterling work he did in the two years he was with NM. We know that the thousands of our readers acquainted with his work, and the hundreds who knew him personally, feel the same way. I feel the need, one of these days, to do a column on that unsung hero of journalism, the business manager, and we'll have a few more words to say about Goldfrank's contribution to NM.

It was no easy task finding a fitting successor, but we've done it. This is by way of introducing Lottie Gordon, our new business manager, a young woman known to thousands in New York and Ohio where she has proved her qualities of leadership, organization, and the dogged persistence which are earmarks of that rara avis, the first-rate business manager.

And while we're at it we want to introduce a few more of NM's family. Our new managing editor is Dr. Virginia Shull (you must omit the appellation in future references to her, she insists). A former Henry Fellow at Oxford, she comes to us after teaching at the George Washington University and Olivet College for seven years.

We are glad, too, to announce that Marjorie De Armand, who has been our chief steward in the Sight and Sounds department and mobilizer of our book reviewers, becomes a member of the Board of Editors.

And further, we want to announce that Joseph Foster, whose writing on the film has received widespread favorable response, has been released (at long last) from some of his other pressing duties on the magazine to become our permanent film critic.

Furthermore, NM projects a continuous and more intensive inter-relationship between reader and staff. We propose to reach many more thousands than we did in the past, and we have a number of projects heading in that direction. For these reasons we want to introduce a member of our staff who has already made the acquaintance of many hundreds of you, our Field Representative, Doretta Tarmon. You'll be hearing more from her in the coming weeks.

THIS is being written May 8, one week before the deadline we referred to last week; the creditors' deadline. On that day NM must meet immediate obligations totaling \$8,000.

To date, we have received \$6,500. In other words between now and the fifteenth—one week—we must raise another \$1,500 to satisfy the bill collectors. We believe it can be done. Our readers as always indicate that NM's problems, whatever they may be, are close to their hearts. The fact that our four-week drive for \$8,000 has brought in \$6,500 is an indication that the total can be raised. To those of you who have not yet come through, we submit this appeal: sit down and write

that check tonight.

Furthermore, we want to tell you this: our drive to date toward the annual \$40,000 goal has almost reached the half-way mark. The total altogether is \$19,870 as we go to press. As we mentioned before we had originally set the goal of \$28,000 by this time. We are considerably distant from that mark—by some \$8,000. But we have hopes that the next four weeks will see a big jump in the number of returns. We are glad to say that the graph of response is upward; our readers are coming to understand that the financial responsibilities of their magazine cannot be left to the last: that they must place their contributions for NM toward the top of their lists.

A WORD about this issue: we want our readers' reactions to it. This is our second special literary number: it is our feeling that we have registered progress. We believe that we have, within these thirty-two pages, one of the most significant presentations of

contemporary literary problems that have appeared in many seasons. At least that's the way we feel about it. We are particularly happy to publish Samuel Sillen's challenging article for discussion, and we invite our readers, as well as those among them who are writers and workers in the arts, to send us their reactions to the issues posed in Dr. Sillen's article.

As you will see, his piece is the first of a series probing this whole area and we want to involve in the discussion everybody who is interested. And we believe NM's readers are particularly interested. They, of all people, realize the tremendous changes of our day, and the need for examination and re-evaluation of cultural standards and objectives. And as we said in our first literary number three months ago, this is a venture that cannot be successfully tackled by the editors here in the office. It requires the fullest cooperation of all our readers, as well as the editors and writers. The solution to these issues demands the participation of those for whom writers write, and artists draw, as well as those who do the writing and drawing. The time is indeed ripe for a full clarification of the questions of our culture: and our pages are open.

JOSEPH NORTH.

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# The Challenge of Change

By Samuel Sillen

WHATEVER else may be said of Bernard DeVoto's *The Literary Fallacy*, it is certain that this attack on the writers of the 1920's touched off a small explosion in literary circles. It roused the slumbering lions of criticism, provoked Sinclair Lewis into shouts of "Fool!" and "Liar!" and even awakened the gentle displeasure of J. Donald Adams of the *New York Times*. *The Literary Fallacy* interrupted the stupor into which criticism had fallen, revealing how much confusion and insecurity there is beneath the placid surface of American literary thought.

This invigorating commotion is likely to be very fleeting. For DeVoto's book is so arrogant, ill-tempered, and one-sided that it becomes a brilliant exercise in self-demolition. The former Harvard professor has mistaken abuse for analysis; the former editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature* has defended American life by disowning American literature; the pundit who occupies the Easy Chair of *Harper's* has leisurely borrowed the best ideas of Van Wyck Brooks in order to berate Van Wyck Brooks. On page after page he has wearisomely paid tribute to his own scholarship, judgment, and wit while deploring the abysmal ignorance of all his contemporaries.

Yet the problems raised by DeVoto are inherently serious, and it would be an error to ignore them because of their clumsy setting. More is involved than the evaluation of the twenties. While that is the immediate theme, the book branches off to affect our deeper concern with literary attitudes today and tomorrow. In raising the large question of the relation between American letters and American society between two world wars, DeVoto challenges every critic to define his basic beliefs. To out roar him is child's play. It is more important to counterpose values to his calumnies.

To begin with, what is "the literary fallacy" that has incurred DeVoto's wrath? It is, one gathers, an occupational disease of the writing fraternity. It is an exaggerated sense of the worth and significance of literature. It assumes "that a culture may be understood and judged solely by means of its literature, that literature embodies truly and completely both the values

and content of a culture, that literature is the measure of life, and finally that life is subordinate to literature."

This fallacy, says DeVoto, was strikingly exemplified in the literature of the twenties, which purported to deal with American life while it was in reality out of touch with that life. We cannot go to literature for a reasonable expression of the period, for during the twenties "the society was rugged, lively, and vital, but literature became increasingly debilitated, capricious, querulant, and irrelevant." It was the age of "literary folly" and "slapstick." Hemingway, Lewis, Brooks, O'Neill, and Dos Passos wrongly identified their "lack of intelligence" with an unintelligent society. The "literary way of thinking" was a failure because "a people, a culture, and a civilization cannot be held to literary ideas."

DeVoto is far from suggesting that the situation improved in the following decade. On the contrary, in the 1930's the curve of the arc was still downward. The social concerns of the period now "excused writers of any responsibility of honesty or knowledge, and relieved them of any action beyond that of watching a mechanical determinism fulfill itself." Marxism was a further "repudiation" of society, even more wicked in its consequences than estheticism.

There was a "stampede" of writers "to formidable absolutisms, whether Communist or fascist. . . ." In short, American literature, which was unspeakably bad in the 1920's, was unspeakably worse in the 1930's.

THERE are thus two sides to the DeVoto thesis. One has to do with "the literary fallacy" in general. The other has to do with "the literary failure" of the past two decades.

Three key questions are implied in the discussion: (1) What is the actual relation between literature and life? (2) Is it true that a whole generation of American writers portrayed a country that did not exist, and what was wrong with their portrait? (3) What light does the literary experience of the between-wars period throw on the writer's problem today?

DeVoto's treatment of the relation between literature and life obscures the real issue. He has demagogically stacked the cards in his definition of "the literary fallacy." Only a literary monomaniac suffering at once from bibliolatriy and delusions of grandeur would subscribe to the fallacy as defined. For no serious writer asserts that a culture may be understood and judged *solely* by its literature, or that the values and content of a culture are embodied *completely* in literature, or that life is *subordinate* to literature. If Van Wyck Brooks had ever written, believed, or unconsciously assumed that, DeVoto would win his case hands down. But to anyone who has read Brooks without jaundice this accusation will not easily be sold.

The truth is that, under the guise of attacking an indefensibly exaggerated theory of literature, DeVoto is inviting his readers to share an essential contempt for literature and literary ideas. Nor is this the first time by any means. In previous books, DeVoto has repudiated all ideas and theories as abstractions, frowned upon intellectual consistency as a foreign agent in American life, and thrown suspicion on passionate feeling as a survival of witchcraft. He illustrates a far graver fallacy than the one he sets up as a straw man; he illustrates the philistine fallacy, too widely encouraged, that literature is an aberration of the contemporary American scene and that it need not therefore be taken too much to heart.



"Plains Bison," by Helen West Heller.

This is the clear meaning of DeVoto's attacks on those writers, especially if they are Marxists, who take literature seriously as a reflection of life and as an influence upon life.

It is nonsense to say that a whole body of writing so alive, vigorous, and essentially realistic in spirit as that of the 1920's and 1930's was a vast falsification of American society. One may say that it was a limited picture, lacking in profundity and complexity. But even an imperfect reflection is not a wilfully concocted mirage. "What the imagination creates," as Gorky once wrote, "is prompted by the facts of real life, and it is governed not by baseless fantasy, divorced from life, but very real causes."

A literature is not the sole means of judging a culture, but it is an indispensable means. No sensible person would describe historical reality merely by reference to the novels and plays of a period, but neither would he dismiss these novels and plays, whatever their character, as irrelevant. For literature helps us elucidate the hopes and betrayals, the inner assumptions and explicit deeds of a historic era. There is never, to be sure, a point by point parallel; the degree of correspondence between the social fact and the artistic image varies enormously—depending on the talent and perception of the writer—and it must be determined by a detailed study in each instance. But in any final view, the attitudes and forms of a vital body of literature are anchored in reality; they express a living society and have an impact on living men. To say that the entire literature of the period between two wars bears no relationship to real life requires a devil-theory of literary development, with Van Wyck Brooks in the role of devil, and this is exactly the theory that DeVoto propounds.

**B**UT there is an element of irony in all this. What gives DeVoto's view significance is not that he has set it forth, but that a far more discerning critic named Van Wyck Brooks has recently become converted to it, seconded by another of DeVoto's devils, Archibald MacLeish. DeVoto actually agrees with Beelzebub Brooks and Mephistopheles MacLeish, except that, with a vast sense of virtue, he scorns these "penitents who have lately been tailoring sackcloth to their own measure." In his highly provocative little book *On Literature Today*, Brooks too has disowned most of the literature of the past two decades. He feels—and DeVoto has echoed his very term—that most of our books since the last war have been written by "adolescent minds," virtually the only exception being Robert Frost—an exception also cited by DeVoto.

This, then, is a formidable coalition. Brooks believes that the writing of this period represents a "death-wish" whose influence is disintegrating on national morale.



"Man Eating," by R. Rubin.

MacLeish blames the authors of this period, himself included, for the "moral and spiritual unpreparedness" of the generation now at war. DeVoto, as usual, goes one step further. He claims that there is a "causal relationship" between this literature and the picture of America drawn in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Goebbels' propaganda broadcasts, and Karl Haushofer's geopolitics.

What accounts for this wholesale repudiation of the past? The answer is obvious. It is that the war has compelled men to examine their lives, their values, and their achievements. A democratic writer like Brooks or MacLeish is today vitally concerned with the defeat of fascism. He recognizes that the historic issue at stake is nothing less than the survival of civilized values, the supremacy of reason, and the liberation of mankind's creative energies as against Hitlerite barbarism. He is aware that the free future of America hinges on the victorious outcome of the war. He therefore understands that a mature and realistic approach to art is today not only a problem in esthetics but a necessity of survival. For every artist is imperatively called upon to kindle the imagination, enlarge the understanding, and steel the will of the people in this struggle.

To such a writer, looking backward, the road from 1920 to 1941 may well seem strewn with mistakes. There were plenty. The literature of discontent and despair in the twenties had the effect too often of undermining confidence not merely in a bad peace or an illusory prosperity but in human nature itself. It frequently engendered moods of mysticism, suicide, cynicism, and fatalism. By its generalized negativism it imperiled a positive belief in the power of people to remold the world. It encouraged attitudes of inaction and resignation. Too many writers succumbed to the atmosphere which they critically por-

trayed; they were morally defeated by an environment which they assumed to be eternally and invincibly bankrupt. The worst side of the twenties was summed up in T. S. Eliot's disenchanted remark that "We fight rather to keep something alive than in the expectation that anything will triumph."

But while the past is not irreproachable, there is no sense in reproaching it, as Gorky wisely wrote. We must understand the past, analyze its relation to the present.

**C**RITICS like Brooks and MacLeish commit a dangerous error when they insist that writers under Harding and Hoover should have seen life through the eyes of the Roosevelt period, or that a writer disillusioned with Versailles should have shared the invigorating hope of Teheran. The error is dangerous because it blurs historical differences; it obscures the crucial fact that we are today living in a world that is in essential respects quite different from the one inhabited by the writers of two decades or even a decade ago. If this is not clearly and deeply understood then creative writers and critics alike will wander in paralyzed confusion. If the radical difference between the world of 1920 and the world of 1944 is ignored, words will simply lose their meaning.

There could not be a flourishing literature of hope in that earlier world for the simple reason that a literature of hope and a social program of hopelessness cannot co-exist. A plea for moral affirmations divorced from reality may be singularly hollow and ineffectual, may indeed encourage the very disease of skepticism it seeks to eradicate. Optimism and faith cannot be obtained by rhetorical exhortation. A good writer is an honest writer, and unless he can honestly believe that society is on the path of progress his key attitudes are likely to be critical, tinged with pessimism, bitterness, and regret.

DeVoto insists that American life in the decade from Versailles to the economic crash was "rugged, lively, and vital." In a sense it was, of course. We emerged from the war wealthy and powerful. Yet how tragically right were the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald that showed the brittleness in the laughter; how revealing of essential insecurity and purposelessness were the novels of Sinclair Lewis. The war stories of Dos Passos and Cummings, or a war play like *What Price Glory*, reflected far more than their own authors' feeling that the first world war was not in fact the battle for democracy which millions had been led to believe it would be. The country had retreated, under Republican auspices, into a fantastic isolationism against which many writers reacted with a rootless cosmopolitanism. A labor movement crippled by shortsighted leadership, repressive governmental acts, and internal division could not furnish most writers with the democratic backbone they sorely

needed. Harding spouted normalcy, but the writers were more faithful to the underlying truth when, as with Sherwood Anderson or Eugene O'Neill, they pictured frustration, groping, vaguely defined desire.

Increasingly sterile and hopeless as many of the writers became, they did not, at least, create the illusion of comfort where none existed. The really bad books were those that whitewashed reality with their Pollyannish insistence that we inhabited the best of all possible worlds; the really good books were powerful corrosives to complacency, Babbitry, provincial prejudice, and moral hypocrisy. Undisciplined and nihilistic they frequently were, but they helped clear the air; they had a liberating influence on many minds; they did not sanction the official myths of the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover presidentiad. A sound approach to the literature of the twenties neither glorifies nor damns it, but attempts to understand the social sources of its mockery and heartbreak, its bitterness and anger.

**I**N ANY case, the proper objection is not to Sinclair Lewis, let us say, for writing such novels as *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, or *Arrowsmith*. They were vigorous books, and they are likely to endure as significant portraits of their period. The proper objection is to a writer who stands still while the world moves on. Sinclair Lewis continued to write in the thirties as if he were still living in the twenties. His earlier work, notable for its freshness, gave way to novels that were increasingly stale, superficial, and, above all, unreal. In the world of *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Native Son*, a book like *The Prodigal Parents* was a melancholy anachronism. Lewis furnishes an interesting contrast to Brooks and MacLeish. He condemns the present because it has moved away from the past, while they condemn the 1920's because they were not the 1940's. Lewis is a disturbing example of the penalty paid by an artist who cannot detach himself from attitudes that have lost their vitality because they are rooted in a world that has long since undergone a sea-change.

Lewis was by no means the only casualty of the post-crash period. Immense social forces were at work to outdate a wastelander like T. S. Eliot, a sentimentalist like James Branch Cabell, a cynical technician like E. E. Cummings, an anti-democratic nose-thumber like H. L. Mencken. To sustain creative vigor, to reach any audience worth reaching, it was necessary to keep pace with the oceanic tides of history. Reality now included a grim depression which, instead of defeating the people, first sobered the country and then shook it into affirmative action; reality now included Roosevelt and the New Deal, the unprecedented growth of the labor movement culminating in the CIO; reality now

included the omnipresent threat of Hitlerism, people's wars against fascist aggression in Spain and China, the struggle for collective democratic resistance led by the Soviet Union. A writer who failed to understand this reality, or who failed to identify himself with strong popular forces, was a lost writer.

In this new period, the social writers, particularly those whose understanding was strengthened by Marxist theory, made the greatest impact because they were in closest touch with actual life. An excellent liberal critic, T. K. Whipple, who was a professor of English at the University of California until his death in 1939, clearly understood this truth. He reminded the readers of the *New Republic* in 1937 [April 21] that "As everybody knows, the literary movement of first importance in the thirties has been radical, revolutionary, Marxian, and even their opponents must admit that these people are trying to move on into the collective world and that they have leagued themselves with strong forces." As if in answer to DeVoto's cheap canard that Marxism "excused writers of any responsibility of honesty or knowledge," Professor Whipple wrote that "So far from forswearing intelligence and knowledge, they use all they can get;

it is all grist to their mill." And as if in answer to DeVoto's accusation that the social writers fatalistically watched "a mechanical determinism fulfill itself," Whipple noted that "Their world is not contracting, but expanding, and so are their minds with it. Instead of propping up a decayed edifice or idly chronicling its collapse, they have faith that they are helping to build a fresh and sounder structure. They are on the side of life, of awareness and sensibility; no limits are set to the possibilities of their development."

**Y**ET any candid estimate of the thirties must acknowledge that these possibilities were realized only in part. To see this period clearly, it is necessary, as with the previous decade, to adopt a dialectical approach; that is, an approach which recognizes the contradictory elements of development. Positive and negative forces were at work to produce a literature that cannot be confined to a simple formula.

On the positive side, the characteristic work of this period reveals a much deeper sense of responsibility than had existed in the previous years. More and more writers began to understand that literary creation is not a merely individual act, but a social act. Writing became purposeful. Authors



### ***Ballade of Simple Arithmetic***

In smoke of battles' rubble aftermath  
The partisans reform their wary crew  
All welded one in arc of hot hard wrath:  
A man beside a man is more than two.  
This something more experts could not construe,  
This fierce bright knowledge that the people wore  
True part of arms against whom they pursue:  
You can have what you never had before.

From scintillating stage down dusky hall  
Ecstatic gusts of music flow, born through  
Concerted action that as one moves all,  
A man beside a man is more than two.  
The sudden vision the composer knew  
Wed to symphonic craft produces more  
Than simple hands, ink, wood, or wind could do;  
You can have what you never had before.

With wounded moved from screaming shrapnel's blast  
Skilled surgeons' fingers healing nature woo;  
The operating team toils true and fast  
(a man beside a man is more than two):  
Yet Pasteur, Harvey, Lister, Galen too,  
Were fruitless workers adding to the lore  
If teamwork were not ever learned anew.  
You can have what you never had before.

#### *Envoy*

Friend, this is factual now—more, can be true  
To shape the dawning peace beyond the war:  
A man beside a man is more than two;  
You can have what you never had before.

AL GOEDEL.

# *Art Young Memorial Award*

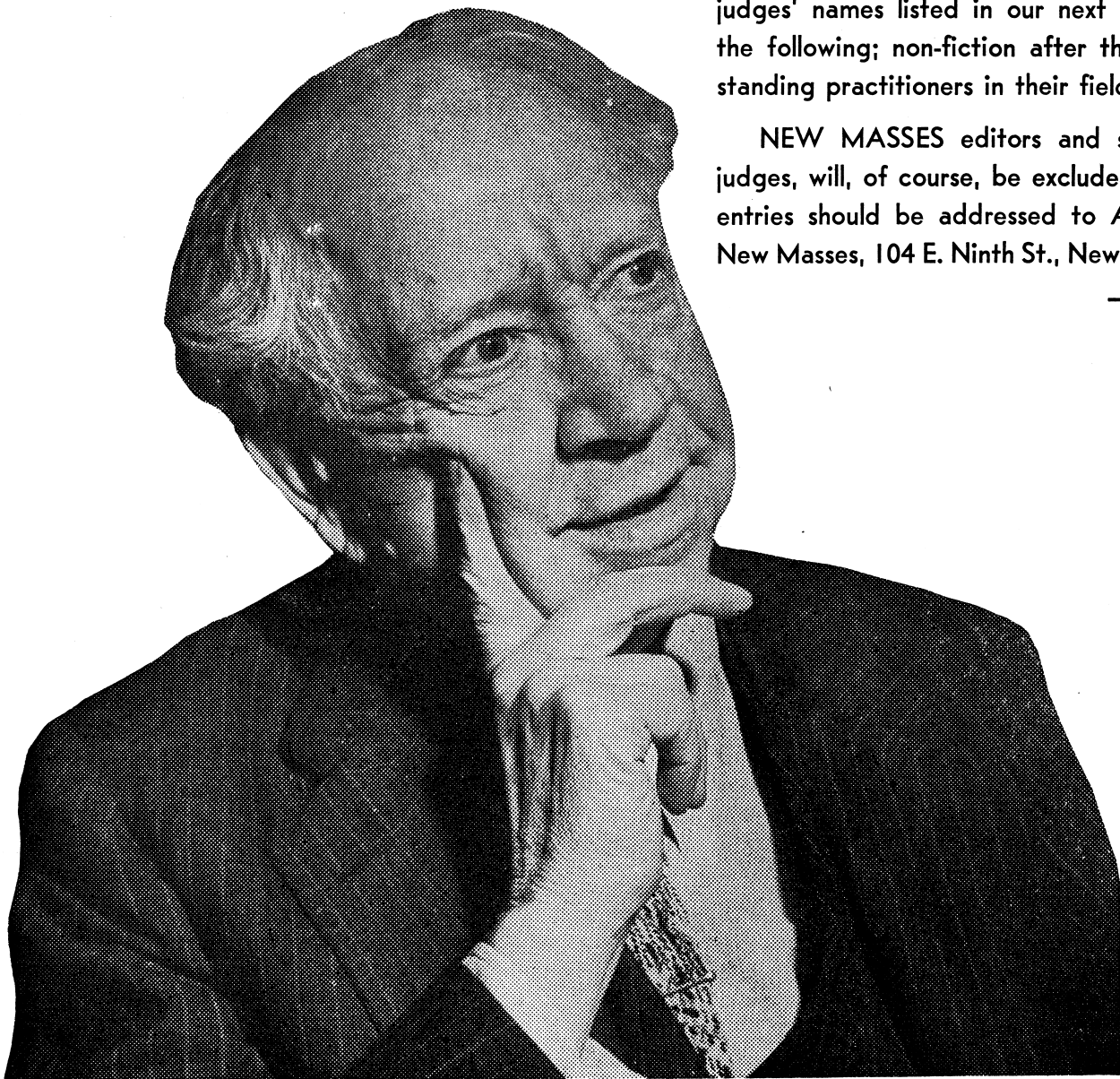
In its second literary quarterly, NEW MASSES is proud to announce the first of a series of Art Young Memorial Awards. The world-loved artist was fearless and alive with the spirit of his times. He loved all forms of art—books, plays, movies—anything creative—were an essential part of his life. It is in the memory of Art Young, for many years one of the magazine's editors, that the first series of NEW MASSES awards is offered, falling into four categories—\$100 for the best cartoon or drawing, \$100 for the best short story, \$100 for the best poem, \$100 for the best non-fiction prose—reportage or criticism.

In each quarterly issue devoted to the arts, we will announce and publish the prize winner in one of the categories. Our first announcement will be the cartoon or drawing award. Winner of the prize will be the cartoon or drawing received in this office before August 10, which merits the first choice of judges Daniel Fitzpatrick of the St. Louis "Post Dispatch," William Gropper, Rockwell Kent, and Moses Soyler.

Competition in all the above fields is open now. The deadline for the short story contest will be set and the judges' names listed in our next literary issue; poetry in the following; non-fiction after that. Judges will be outstanding practitioners in their fields.

NEW MASSES editors and staff members and the judges, will, of course, be excluded from competition. All entries should be addressed to Art Young Awards, c/o New Masses, 104 E. Ninth St., New York 3, N. Y.

—The Editors



climbed down from the ivory tower, or were violently dispossessed from it, and they joined the crowds of unemployed on the streets. Formalism went out of fashion. Many intellectuals could now appreciate Emerson's definition of duty for the American man of letters: "A scholar defending the cause of slavery, of arbitrary government, of monopoly, of the oppressor, is a traitor to his profession. He has ceased to be a scholar. He is not company for clean people. . . . It is not enough that the work should show a skillful hand, ingenious contrivance and admirable polish and finish; it should have a commanding motive in the time and condition in which it was made. . . . There is always the previous question, How came you on that side? You are a very elegant writer, but you can't write up what gravitates down." In restoring this sense of responsibility, in addressing itself to life-and-death issues, in re-affirming Whitman's concept of a democratic literature, the most expressive writing of the thirties made an enormous contribution to our national life.

But it was far more successful in portraying the decadent forces in society than it was in illuminating the creative forces. It was molded almost entirely by the depression half of the decade, not enough by the New Deal half. Its most convincing images are of collapse, hunger, fear, the deterioration of the land and the disintegration of families. *Tobacco Road*, as Carl Van Doren observed, became the *Main Street* of the 1930's. The notorious conversion endings of so many proletarian novels were less persuasive than the broken lives they described. The silicosis-stricken miner of Albert Maltz's *Man on the Road* and Muriel Rukeyser's *US 1* are symbols of the period, victims of a cruel and wasteful society. Stephen Vincent Benet wrote:

*There is a rust on the land.  
A rust and a creeping blight and a  
scaled evil,  
For six years eating, yet deeper than  
those six years.  
Men labor to master it but it is not  
mastered.*

Despite the affirmative effort of *The Grapes of Wrath*, the dominant image remains of "One man, one family driven from the land; this rusty car creaking along the highway to the west, I lost my land, a single tractor took my land. I am alone and I am bewildered." James T. Farrell could see only the degeneration of Studs Lonigan. Clifford Odets soon turned from a story of incipient trade unionism in *Waiting for Lefty* to a drama of middle-class futility in *Paradise Lost*.

To recall this predominant tone of depression literature is of course not to disparage such interesting and powerful work as I have cited. It was, in the first instance, a healthy and earnest criticism of American life and it heightened the coun-

try's awareness of breakdown and deepened the people's desire for change. For the Wall Street collapse portrayed in Archibald MacLeish's *Panic* was no fantasy, nor was the South Chicago Memorial Day massacre of 1937 pictured in Meyer Levin's *Citizens*. The sharecropper South was authentically pictured in *You Have Seen Their Faces*; the ugly lynching and Jim Crowism of *Uncle Tom's Children* were taken out of life, as real as Bigger Thomas.

Yet it is equally true that by the end of the decade most writers were lagging behind the country; they never fully recovered from the impact of the depression. There were at least half a dozen novels about the Gastonia strike of 1930; but where in our fiction or drama is there a convincing reflection of the tremendous strength of labor by 1940? Political corruption, yes; but who has reflected the fact that we are living under the most progressive administration since Lincoln's day? The writers of the 1930's, by and large, were not much more successful than those of the 1920's in dramatizing the gathering forces of change. And when the change came victoriously, it seems to have stunned rather than stimulated them.

Consider two obvious, though quite different, examples. James T. Farrell, whose *Studs Lonigan* was a challenging contribution of the early thirties, has today become as boringly repetitive an anachronism as Sinclair Lewis became after his early period. Like Lewis he grows increasingly resentful of an America that moves into a brighter future. His art has become as reactionary, in the literal sense, as his politics. Another interesting case in point is Clifford Odets, who cannot seem to tear himself from themes and moods that have lost the burning relevance they had ten years ago.

THE sober truth is that for twenty years American literature—the best of it—has been an opposition literature critical of the dominant currents of American life. This was inevitable. For the most part it expressed the true relationships of a society in which the interests of the masses were subordinated to minority interests. Most writers today are rooted in a tradition of protest rather than of affirmation; their psychology is that of the rebel who has become so accustomed to continual defeats that he feels unhappy when he has won a significant victory. The over-conditioned rebel has to oppose even when he is fighting against what started out to be his own side. He resents the victory.

A liberal critic like Malcolm Cowley is the supreme embodiment of this chronic incapacity to recognize a new situation. In the *New Republic* of Jan. 3, 1944, Cowley denies a libelous charge I made against him in these pages; he asserts unequivocally that he does not have "rheu-

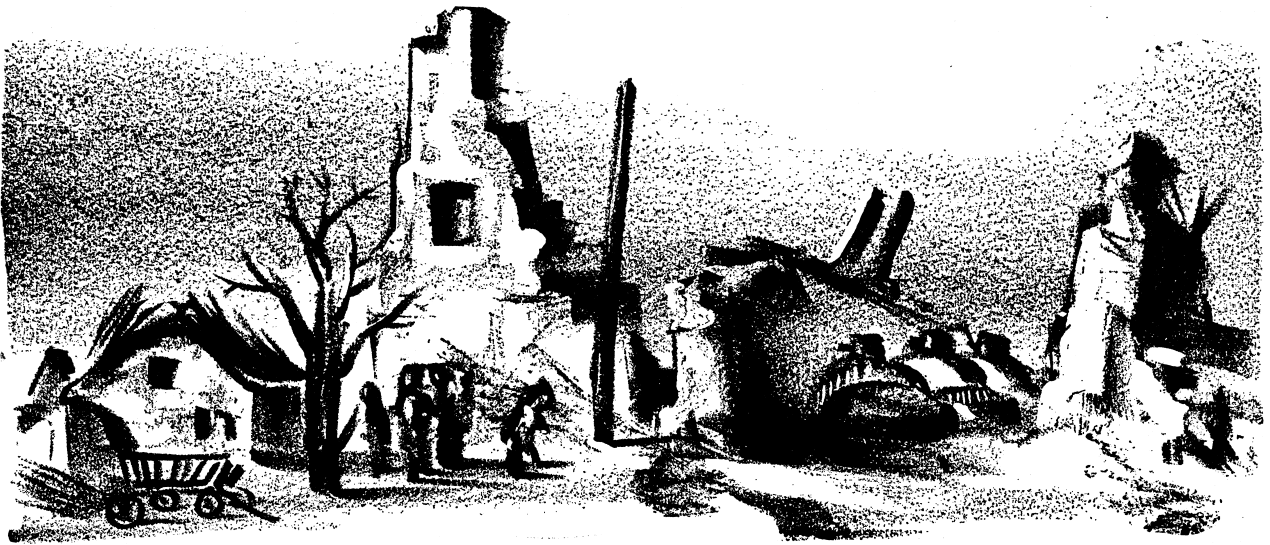
matic joints and a very long white beard." I am glad to make a public retraction. But I still wonder if there is not something intellectually rheumatic about his attack on "The Happiness Boys," that is to say, the *NEW MASSES* editors. Cowley thinks *NEW MASSES* is making a big mistake: "Its mistake partly lies in surrendering its old and useful function as an opposition organ that described the abuses in American society."

That there are abuses in American society today will not come as news to readers of the *NEW MASSES* editorial columns; indeed, *NEW MASSES* has not concealed its regret at the *New Republic's* occasional failure to join in fighting these abuses. But the concept of an "opposition organ" is really significant. Opposition to what? To the national policy that expresses the national interest today? To the war, to the President, to the CIO Political Action Committee? The all-important feature of our national life today—and this is true on a world scale—is that fascism and reaction are the opposition parties. The *Chicago Tribune* is today the arch "opposition organ."

UNDERSTANDING this truth is the crucial problem of a writer today. The progressive forces of the world are the ascendant forces. Military victory is in sight. The tri-power agreement at Teheran opened up the realistic perspective of an enduringly cooperative world. The continued leadership of President Roosevelt would consolidate and extend the democratic gains of the past several years. To be sure, the ferocity of reaction is intensified by such a triumphant outlook for the common man. To be sure, writers will have to fight more passionately than ever before against a degenerate racial prejudice; the spirit of Hitlerism is by no means dead.

The case for a more boldly affirmative literature is not based on wishful thinking. It is based on the heroic promise of the times and the great strength of the democratic masses. No critic can tell the creative writer exactly what to do or exactly how to do it. But he is bound to suggest, in Whitman's words, that the writer "flood himself with the immediate age as with vast oceanic tides." To approach the life of the new era opening before us with the preconceptions of past decades is to surrender one's art. "A writer," as Henri Barbusse once wrote, "influences his epoch provided he is on the side of progress; provided, that is to say, he is right." He must be right about the world as it exists today and not as it was ten or even five years ago. This age waits for no man; it is too busy building a more generous world.

*This is the first article in a series by Samuel Sillen evaluating key problems and figures of American literature between two World Wars. Discussion by our readers is warmly invited—The Editors.*



# Nastasya Takes Up Novels

By Mikhail Sholokhov

THE war had reached even this village, lost in the boundless steppes of the Don. In the yards, against the walls of the barns, stood the ambulances and trucks of a hospital battalion; along the streets marched Red Army men of a sappers' unit; three-ton lorries heavily loaded with freshly sawn willow planks were heading for the river; in the orchard not far from the square was an anti-aircraft battery. The guns were standing near the trees, skilfully camouflaged by the leaves. Wilted grass lay on the earth, thrown out of the recently dug trenches, and the menacing, bristling barrel of the gun nearest the street was trustingly embraced by the broad branch of an apple tree, thickly loaded with pale green unripe Antonovka apples.

Zvyagintsev dug Nikolai with his elbow as he exclaimed gleefully:

"There's our kitchen, Mikola! Keep your chin up! We'll stop here all right, and there's a river and water, and Petka Lissichenko with his kitchen. What more do you want?"

The regiment halted in a big neglected orchard right on the river bank. Nikolai drank the cold slightly salty water in small gulps, frequently lifting his mouth and then again bending eagerly to the edge of the pail. Watching him, Zvyagintsev said:

"That's just how you read your letters from your son: you read a little, break off and then start again. I don't like to drag things out like that. Haven't got the patience for it. Come on, give us the pail, or else you'll swell up!"

He took the pail from Nikolai and throwing back his head drank long, with-

out stopping for breath, in big noisy gulps like a horse. His Adam's apple, overgrown with red hair, bobbed up and down fitfully, his grey goggle eyes were screwed up with bliss. Having drunk his fill, he cleared his throat, passed his sleeve over his mouth and dripping chin, and said in a dissatisfied tone:

"Pretty rotten water. All that's good about it is that it's cold and wet, but it wouldn't have been a bad idea to take out the salt. Do you want any more?"

Nikolai shook his head, and then Zvyagintsev suddenly asked:

"Your son keeps sending you letters all the time, but I haven't noticed you receiving anything from your wife. You're not a widower, are you?"

And surprising even himself Nikolai answered:

"I have no wife. We're divorced."

"Long?"

"Since last year."

"So that's it," said Zvyagintsev, slowly and sympathetically. "But who are your children staying with? I think you said you had two?"

"Two. They're living with my mother."

"Did you chuck your wife, Mikola?"

"No, she left me. . . . You see, on the day war was declared I came home from a business trip, and she wasn't there, she'd gone. She'd left a note and gone. . . ."

Nikolai spoke eagerly, but then somehow cut himself short and fell silent. Frowning and pressing his lips tightly together, he sat down in the shade of an apple tree and began to take off his shoes in the same silence. In his heart of hearts he was already sorry for what he had said. For a whole year he had carried about this

dumb, unuttered pain in his heart just to blurt it out for no reason at all to the first chance person in whose voice he thought he heard a note of sympathy. Why on earth had he been babbling like that? What had Zvyagintsev to do with his troubles?

Zvyagintsev did not see Nikolai's lowered, gloomy face, and continued prying him with questions.

"What was the trouble, did she find someone else, the slut?"

"I don't know," replied Nikolai curtly.

"That means she did!" said Zvyagintsev with conviction, shaking his head accusingly. "What creatures these women are! You're a presentable fellow, no doubt, made a good living too. What the devil did she want? Did she give the children a thought, the bitch?"

GLANCING more closely at Nikolai's helmet-shaded face, Zvyagintsev realized that it would not do to continue the conversation. With the tact of naturally kind and simple people he fell silent, sighed and shifted awkwardly from foot to foot. And suddenly he felt sorry for this big strong man, the comrade beside whom he had been fighting for two months sharing with him the hard lot of a soldier, and he wanted to console him and tell him about himself. Sitting down beside Nikolai, he began to talk:

"Quit grieving about her, Mikola! We'll fight this thing out, and then we'll see. The most important thing is that you have children. The main thing now, brother, is children. The way I look at it, it's in them that the very root of life lies. It's they who'll have to fix up this ruined



life, 'cause the war did a hell of a lot of damage. But as for women, let me tell you straight, they're impossible. Some of them would tie themselves up in knots to get their own way. Terrible creatures women, I know them, brother! See this scar on my upper lip? That happened last year too. On the first of May me and a couple of friends of mine who run harvester combines decided to get together for a drink. We had a real family party with our wives, dug up an accordion, had a few drinks. Well, I had a drink too, of course, and so did my wife. As for my wife—how'll I put it?—she's something like a German tommy-gun: if you load her she won't stop until she's fired the whole belt, and she also tries to take the position by main force.

“WELL, at this party there was a certain girl who danced the ‘Gypsy’ swell. There I sit looking at her and admiring her, without a single uncalled for thought about her in my head, when my wife comes up, pinches my arm and hisses in my ear: ‘Don’t look!’ Well, thinks I, that’s a new one. Am I supposed to sit at a party in blinkers or something? And I look again. Again she comes up and pinches my leg with a nasty twist, so’s it hurt real hard. ‘Don’t look!’ Well, I turned away. Thinks I, to hell with it, I won’t look, I’ll deprive myself of the pleasure. After the dancing we sat down around the table. My wife sat opposite me, her eyes round and darting sparks like a cat’s. And me with black and blue marks smarting on my arm and leg. Forgetting myself, I glance at that miserable girl sourly, and I thinks to myself: ‘It’s on account of you, you little devil, that I have to suffer undeservedly! You shook a leg, and I have to pay.’ And just as I was thinking this my wife grabs up a lead plate from the table and with all her might plunks at me. The target, of course, was a good one. I had a pretty fat mug at that time. Believe it or not, that plate bent double, and the blood started to stream from my nose and lip just as if I had been seriously wounded.

“The dancer, of course, ohed and ahed, while the accordion player fell on the sofa, his legs flying up over his head, laughing and shouting in his disgusting voice: ‘Sock him with the samovar, his phiz will stand it!’ Everything went black in front of my eyes! I gets up and I rips out at her, that is—my wife. ‘What’s the idea,’ says I, ‘you wildcat, what are you doing, you so-and-so?’ And she answers me in a calm voice: ‘Don’t make eyes at her, you red-headed devil! I warned you.’ By this time I calmed down a little, sat down and says to her real polite: ‘So,’ says I, ‘Nastasya Filippovna, that’s how you show your breeding? I must say it’s hardly polite of you to throw plates in front of people, just remember that, and at home we’ll have a heart-to-heart talk!’

“Well, it’s clear enough that she ruined my whole holiday. My lip was split in two, one tooth was loose, my white embroidered shirt was all blood, my nose was swollen and even squashed to one side. I had to leave the company. We got up, said goodbye, made our excuses to our hosts, everything nice and proper, and went home. She walked in front and I, like the guilty one, trailed behind. All the way, damn her, she walked along as lively as can be, but no sooner does she walk through the door than—bang!—down she flops in a faint. There she lies and doesn’t breathe, her face as red as a beet, her left eye open just a crack and staring at me. Well, thinks I, I can’t be swearing at her in this condition, hope nothing bad’s happened to the old woman. I poured some water on her somehow, and saved her from death. A minute later, and again she flops in a faint. This time her eyes are closed tight. Again I poured a bucket of water on her. That brought her to, and did she raise a shout and burst into tears and start kicking her heels!

“‘You,’ says she, ‘such-and-such, you’ve ruined my new silk blouse, poured water all over it, and now I won’t be able to wash out the stains! Traitor! Making eyes at every girl you see! I can’t go on living with you, with a philanderer!’ And all the rest of it. Well, thinks I, if you can kick your feet and remember about your blouse, that means you’ve recovered all right, that means you’ll pull through the winter, my dear!

“I sit down at the table, start smoking and see my beloved get up, crawl over to the trunk and begin to put her belongings in a bundle. Then she walks over to the door with the bundle and says: ‘I’m leaving you. I’m going to live with my sister.’ I, of course, see that the devil’s got into her and that there’s no crossing her now, so I agree. ‘Go right ahead,’ says I, ‘it’ll be much better for you there.’ ‘Oh!’ she says, ‘is that so? You love me so much you don’t even try to stop me? Well, I won’t go anywhere, so there! I’ll hang myself right now, and then your conscience will torture you all the rest of your life, you bastard.’”

ZVYAGINTSEV’S memories had put him in a high good humor. Smiling and shaking his head, he pulled out his tobacco pouch and began to roll himself a cigarette. Nikolai was unwinding the strips of cloth in which his feet were wrapped, damp and hot with perspiration. He was smiling too, but sleepily and lazily: He should have gone over to the well, and washed the cloths, but he did not want to interrupt Zvyagintsev’s amusing story, besides he hadn’t the energy to get up and walk through the blazing sun. Lighting up, Zvyagintsev continued:

“I thought for a bit, and then I says: ‘Go right to it, Nastasya Filippovna, hang yourself; you’ll find a rope behind the trunk.’ She plumped down her bundle,

grabbed the rope, and ran into the parlor. She pushed up the table, tied one end of the rope to the hook from which the baby’s cradle used to hang, made a noose on the other end of the rope and put it around her neck. But she doesn’t jump from the table, only bends her knees, braces her chin on the noose and begins to gasp as if she was choking for air. And I keep sitting tight where I am. The door to the parlor is open just a crack, and I can see the whole thing as plain as plain. Well, I waits a bit and then I says real loud: ‘Well, thank God, looks like she’s hanged herself. I’m through with my suffering!’ You should have seen her jump from that table and go for me with her fists! ‘So you’d be glad if I hanged myself? So that’s the kind of loving husband you are?’ I had to use force to get her quiet again. By then the effects of the liquor had worn off completely, and it was all for nothing that I’d drunk a liter of vodka at the party. I sits there after this scrap and thinks: ‘People go to the clubhouse to see a show, but I’ve got my own show right here at home, free of charge.’ And I bursts out laughing, but somehow deep down inside I don’t feel so happy.

“So you see what these women—that devil’s own brood—are capable of! Good thing the kids weren’t home that night. My mother took them to her house for a visit, or else they’d have been scared to death.”

Zvyagintsev was silent for a while and then began again, but this time without his former animation:

“Don’t think me and my wife’ve been getting along like that all our lives, Mikola. It’s only the last two years that she’s been spoiled like that. And I tell you straight: it’s novels that spoiled her.

“For eight years we lived like any people. She used to work on a tractor, and never went into faints or cut up any high jinks. But then she got the habit of reading all kinds of literary books, and that started it. She’s got so wise, she never says anything straight out, plain like, but everything round about. And she got so taken up with those books that she’d read the whole night through and walk around like a giddy sheep all day long, and sigh all the time, and everything’d be dropping out of her hands. Well, once she got to sighing away like that, and then she walks over to me with a silly grin on her face and says: ‘If only you’d utter words of love to me, Vanya, at least once! Never once have I heard from you those tender words that are written in books!’ I nearly threw a fit: ‘She’s sure read enough!’ thinks I, but I says to her: ‘You’re crazy, Nastasya! Here I’ve been living with you for ten years and we’ve raised three children, what under the sun would I be uttering words of love to you now for? Why my tongue wouldn’t even be able to get around any such business! Since I was a young man,



*"I, of course, have nothing against cultural amusement—"*

I never said tender words to anyone but always used my hands more, and I certainly won't start now. I'm not such a dope as you think! And as for you,' I says to her, 'instead of reading silly books you ought to be taking better care of the children.' And as a matter of fact the kids were being terribly neglected, running around like orphans, dirty, their noses running, and in the house too everything topsy-turvy.

"Just imagine, Mikola, is that right? I of course have nothing against cultural amusement, I like to read a good book myself, something about engineering, about motors. I had all sorts of interesting books: about the care of tractors, and a book about internal combustion engines, and one about the installation of Diesels on a guard ship, not to mention literature about harvester combines. How many times I used to ask: 'Go on, Nastasya, take this book and read about tractors. It's a terribly fascinating book with drawings and blueprints. You should study it; after all, you're working on a tractor.' But do you think she read it? Like hell she did! She turned up her nose to my books, like the devil at incense; just give her novels, yes, and novels from which the love simply oozes, like dough rising out of a pot. I cursed and I asked her nicely, but nothing helped. As for beating her, I never beat her because before I learned to work on a harvester combine I worked for six years with a sledge-hammer, and my hand got terribly heavy.

"So that's how our family life dragged along, brother, until the time came

when I was called up. And do you think that now that we're separated, things are any easier for me? Nothing of the sort! Let me tell you frankly and confidentially: I simply can't get my correspondence with my Nastasya Filippovna going properly. It just doesn't work out, and that's all. There's nothing I can do about it! You know yourself, Mikola, how everyone of us here at the front likes to get letters from home and how we read them to each other out loud. Take yourself, you've read letters from your son to me, but I can't read my wife's letters to anyone because I'm ashamed. Once, when we were still around Kharkov, I got three letters from her one after the other, and every letter began like this: 'My dear Chickie!' I read that, and my ears start burning like fire. From somewhere she'd dug out that fancy word: I bet my boots she'd got it out of some book. Now if she'd written like an ordinary human being: 'Dear Vanya,' or something like it, but that 'Chickie!' When I was home she used to call me Red-headed Devil most of the time, but as soon as I left for the front, right away I became 'Chickie.' And in all these letters she lets me know sort of by the way and hastily that the children are alive and well, that there's no special news in the Machine and Tractor Station, and then she bleats about love on all the pages, and uses such queer, bookish words that they make my head swim. . . .

"I read these impossible letters through twice, and they simply make me feel as if I was drunk. Slyussarev from the 2nd Platoon comes up and asks: 'What news

from your wife?' And I slips the letter into my pocket as fast as I can and just waves my hand: go away, so to say, old man, don't bother me. He asks: 'Everything all right at home? By your face,' says he, 'I see you've had bad news.' Well, what was I to say to him? I think a bit and then I says: 'My grandmother died.' Well, that shut him up and he went away.

"That night I sat down and I starts writing to my wife. I sent my regards to the kids and to all the relatives, I wrote about myself here down to the last detail, and then I write: 'Please don't call me all sorts of impossible nicknames. I have a Christian name of my own. Maybe thirty-five years ago I was a 'Chickie,' but I guess now I've fully grown up into a rooster, and my weight, eighty-two kilograms, doesn't at all fit a 'Chickie.' I also want to ask you to stop writing that love stuff, and don't make me sick. Write more about how things are going in the MTS, and which of our friends have stayed at home, and how the new director is getting along with the work?'

"And here I get a letter in answer just before the retreat. I take the letter, my hands shaking, open it, and I just go hot all over! She writes: 'Hello, my beloved Kitten!' And then again four notebook pages all about love, not a word about the MTS, and in one place she doesn't call me Ivan but some kind of Edouard. 'Well,' thinks I, 'the old woman's gone bats altogether! Most likely she copied all that stuff about this damn love out of a book, or else where did she dig up this Edouard, and why are there so many commas of all kinds in the letters? She never knew the least thing about commas, and all of a sudden she sticks in so many that you can't even count them. A freckle-face has less freckles on his mug than there are commas in a single one of her letters. And what about those nicknames? First 'Chickie,' then 'Kitten,' what next? thinks I. 'In her fifth letter maybe she'll call me 'Trevor,' or some such other pet name for a dog. What the hell is this anyway, was I born in a circus or something?' When I left home I took a textbook on tractors with me—I carry it around in case I should happen to want to read—and by heavens, I wanted to copy out a page or two of this textbook and send it to her so's to get even with her, but then I thought better of it. Maybe she'd take it as an insult. But I really have to do something to cure her of all this nonsense. . . . What do you advise, Mikola?'

Zvyagintsev glanced at his comrade and sighed heavily. Nikolai, stretched out on his back, was sound asleep. Under his drooping black mustache his uneven teeth gleamed white, and in the raised corners of his mouth there was a tiny wrinkle—the shadow of a smile that had not yet vanished from his lips.

# Letter to America

By Carlos Bulosan

**Y**OU have been gone a year now. When you left the orange trees were starting to bloom. Then summer came with all its wonderful grapes and large melons and ripe peaches. Now another spring is here, promising another fruitful year. I hear the sweet purr of industry humming across the land. Yes, it is another spring in America and the orange trees are blooming again.

I cannot ask you, "Is it also spring in the cold bottom of the sea?" To you who have seen death face to face, there is no spring in the world. There is only heavy rain and intense heat. There is also disease and horror. So I can only say, "Thank you, sailor, for Bataan and Corregidor. Thank you for Guadalcanal and Tarawa. Thank you in the name of the American people for your courage and heroism."

I am writing this letter in the house where I was born. My mother is busy canning fruit in the cellar. My father is somewhere on our farm planting tomatoes. My relatives live in the valley below our farm. I can hear some of their children shouting in the morning sun. They are on their way to the new schoolhouse at the foot of the hills. This is the world you told me to go back to, and to discover it with a new understanding. Yes, my roots are here, in this windswept valley, where I was born and where my parents were born before me. And now I can understand why you were always restless when you were with us. You had no home where there are many homes, but the land and the waters around it were yours. You traveled extensively in search of America.

I will tell you how things are in my native land. Spring is in the trees and among the flowers. It is also in the hopeful eyes of women and in the innocent faces of children. The sun is shining and its rays are like bars of silver leaping across the land. The peas are sprouting in our yard. Along the country roads wild poppies are shedding their first leaves and the blue lupines on the hills are blooming. Now I can see my valley with a new love. A slight wind is blowing across the plains, and the early corn bends to its sway. I hear the delicious tinkle of a cow-bell in the valley. There are birds in the air. Spring is in America this beautiful morning.

I am looking at my valley with a new hunger because it is my last day in America. Tomorrow I will be sent abroad, and I may not come back. But I will be coming closer to you, closer to our common ideals and hopes for the future. The war will draw us closer to each other, closer to the world where we were born apart, and when it is over at last, alive or dead, we

shall have seen another spring in our lives.

Didn't you say water-lilies are the most passionate of all plants? I see white and blue lilies floating on the pond in our yard, and in the clear water, where they have not spread, the sky is bluer now that summer is drawing near. All these living and moving things in my native land will remind those who are free of the immortal years that lie ahead.

In the cities now children walk in the streets with the delicious anticipations that we feel in the summertime. At school they sit in the yard and watch the pepper trees; they leap eagerly for the new day. Men and women in uniform go into stores, look at new gadgets and toys, then go out into the streets again scanning the headlines.

The spring is drawing to a close. But a great many things are happening in Amer-

ica. A year ago the race riots in Detroit and Los Angeles marred the beauty of spring. In the factories and on the farm the workers are cheering the gallant stand of the Russians. They talk hopefully about the Teheran Conference. All these good and bad things are happening simultaneously in my native land.

In the parks little Negro children are playing around the statue of Abraham Lincoln. But somewhere someone is shouting, "This is a Jewish war!" And the spring moves into the immigrant districts, into the mines and factories, into the packing houses and on the farm, and the common people of America look into the sky and smile at the new planes, because summertime is near and victory is assured in their eyes.

All these things make the heart jump with joy. Now I can say to you, who could remember many springs with blossoming



## Kharkov Pays a Debt

Four murderers on the scaffold stand.  
(O blood-washed dawn of a blood-drenched land—)

Four murderers stand.  
No tears.

But burst of cheers  
Rings down into the earth  
Where lie those innocent, those fresh from birth.

Four corpses falter,  
Shrink from the halter

And one grows white,  
Unclothed of arrogance,  
A lonely totterer  
In a morning dance;

And one grows faint,  
The lips break in his face,  
Plead "mercy," sways before  
The rope's embrace;

And one grows slack  
As the waiting noose,  
Unspined, the treacherous  
Limbs hang loose;

And one goes gray,  
Falling on rubber knees—

(The other dead, they did not  
Die like these.)

Four murderers on the scaffold stand.  
And not a tear in all the land.

The eye  
Ran dry—  
(A million days of weeping)—sockets burn  
As in the breeze four frightened corpses  
turn.

No woman suckled these, no human  
sperm  
Brought to life's brink, these who now sink  
Back to the lair of the man-eating worm.

(Somewhere debaters play the clown.  
"Should they? Dare they?"—debate and  
frown.)  
Here, Death debauched upon a simple  
town.

Four for thousands . . . how many for  
millions?  
(Somewhere are doubters, stern, circum-  
spect.)

The people have spoken, the people erect  
Crossbeams on a sky of pavilions.

Take bayonet edge,  
Through the red land dredge  
Till the blood beneath is stilled.  
Tears, one day, shall know  
How to brim and flow  
When the earth's great throat is filled.

MARTHA MILLET.

orange trees, that at last we can stand and shout together: "We all belong to America because we work and fight for her!"

But now it is noon in my valley and the sheep are climbing down the hills toward the watering trough. Not far away the school children are shouting and playing with their teachers. I can hear their healthy little voices in the wind. In a little while I will go down the valley and call for my father; then we will sit around the table and eat our lunch. We will have string beans and sweet potatoes, chicken, and plenty of butter. We produce all these things on our farm, and we are grateful, for we are not in want this spring. And tonight we will sit around the radio and listen to some music. Then at last I will remember you and the lovely world that you tried to show me when you were still in America.

All over the land this spring day we are all remembering our great history and hoping for immediate victory. How long ago since you and I, Carey McWilliams and John Fante, sat around a table in Los Angeles. You talked about Olongapo and Cavite, two important ports in the Philippines, where you had been stationed for three years. Then I talked about myself. I told you that I had a preliminary knowledge of American history to guide me. Was America undergoing a radical change? I read *Gone With The Wind* and similar

books, and saw the extent of the lie that corrupted the American dream. I read Emerson, Poe, Thoreau, Dreiser, Anderson, O'Neill, Lewis. I also read their younger contemporaries — Hemingway, Faulkner, Caldwell, Steinbeck. I had hoped to find in them a weapon strong enough to blast away the horrid walls that imprisoned the American soul. But these young writers, like their predecessors, were merely describing the disease, and they did not show any evidence that they knew how to annihilate it.

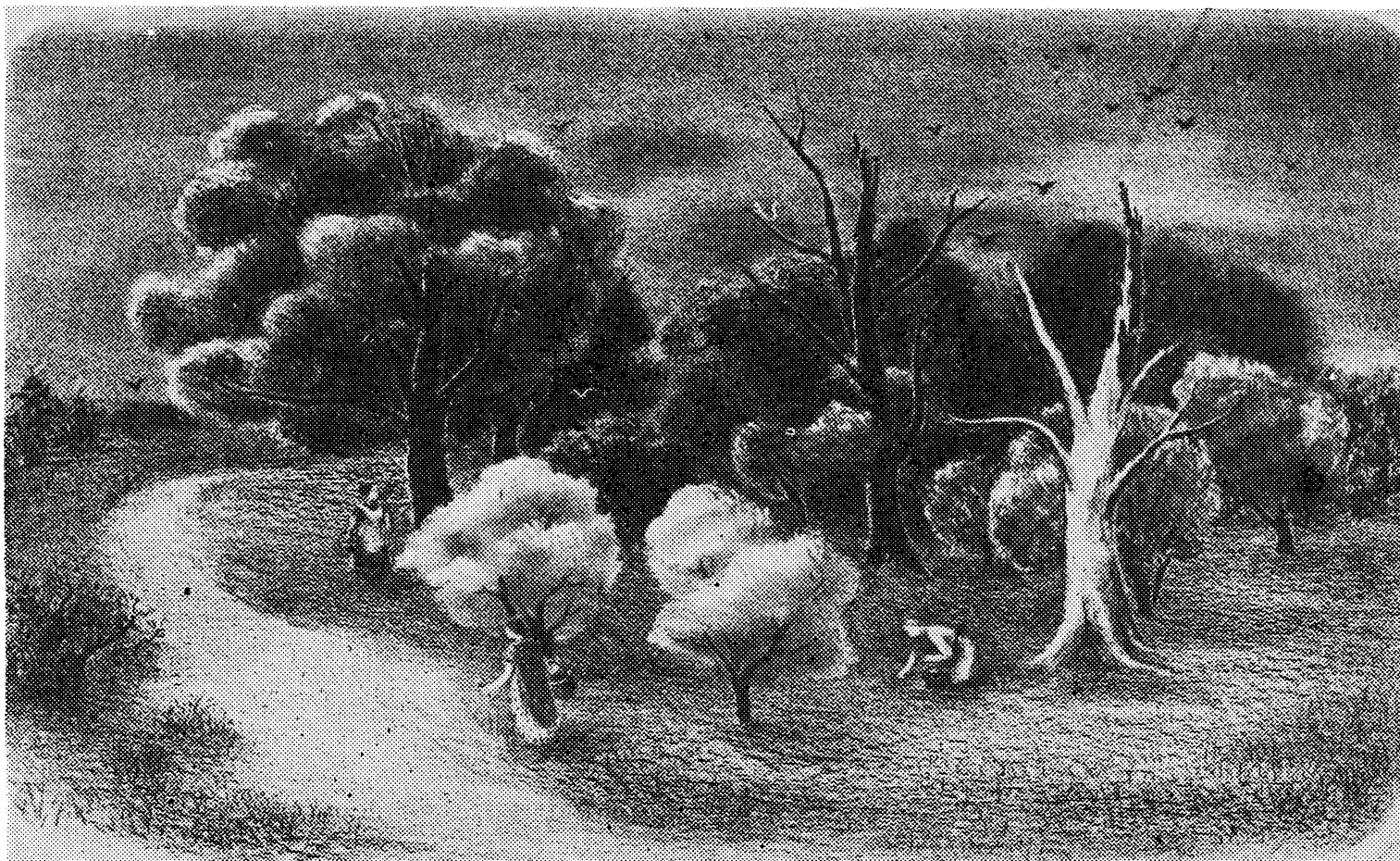
I SAID that night: "Hemingway was too preoccupied with himself, and consequently he wrote about himself and his frustrations. There were times when he seemed to fill the need of America for an artist who had the vision and scope to penetrate and evaluate her capacities. Hemingway was rootless and lonely; he could not write about his native Illinois because he did not know America. If he had used his sensitive feelings for some kind of order in America, he could have found his roots and he would have been the first writer to feel at home in America. He would never have escaped to Paris and Madrid, because he would have been happy to work in his own country. He could have found better nourishments in his native soil, and his work would have taken on a new richness and meaning. . . ."

Immediately afterward the war came. I began to see the forces that uprooted me in my native land. The significance of my search for roots came to me at last; the war against fascism made me understand the fears that drove me as a young writer into despair. I hate wars because they are destructive to humanity. Every war has pushed back civilization into darkness and chaos. But I would like to survive this war, because now we are bound together by a common hope for the future. It is well that we will take nourishment from a common spring. The new society may not be realized in our time, but if the war against fascism terminates, we may be sure that we have been motivated by a native force dynamic enough to give form to the creative spirit of America.

Yes, let us all fight to the end with the happy thought that others will be born to take our places. They will continue where we leave off. They will see to it that the grand epic of America will live again.

The time for me to stop writing this letter has come. I feel like crying now that it is nearing the end. Now for a little while I hear your voice across the years, while the whole world turns slowly around the tall mountains of California.

*Mr. Bulosan is an expert on Philippine culture and author of the recently published book, "The Laughter of My Father."*



"Strawberry Pickers," by Doris Lee.

# The Kids and Ken

By Eugene Feldman

Two boys in dungarees hugged close to the dry grass behind the broken wood fencing and kept their eyes to the east. The water tower stuck up right next to the curve in the tracks, and they kept their eyes on the little pieces of shiny track going past the stilts and then disappearing.

"It'll be coming soon, won't it, Willie?" asked the one closest to the fencing, looking under a jagged piece of wood.

"Five-thirty it always comes—always hear it from the house." He twisted his head around to the two tall black chimneys jutting into the sky from down by the river. "Smoke's less. Almost quitting time. It'll soon come." He watched the smoke go up black.

On the other side of the tracks a small piece of grey curtain fluttered out of a partly opened window. A woman with her hair rolled into a bundle came out and began taking clothes off a line strung from a small bare tree to the side of the house.

"Down, men," whispered Willie and put his face flat against the yellow grass. He pulled his stick to his side and kept his finger ready against the notch trigger.

"Willie, I hear something!"

From the east came a slow far whistle and muffled chugging.

"It's it! Strip for action, men!"

The woman on the other side of the tracks swung shut the screen door. Willie raised his head and looked around on all sides. There was just the sound of the coming train, the loud yelling of a man in one of the clapboard houses on the other side of the roadway by the tracks. A small bird hopped between the tracks.

He put his hand up and motioned, without looking back, for advance. He did it like he had seen it done in the movies. The sergeant, with his eyes squinted and needing a shave, puts up a hand and bullets hit at the sand all around him, and the men crawl forward with their guns ready against the enemy.

They made their way crawling on their knees and leaning tight against the fence. Willie raised a flat hand in the air and Joe behind stopped and put his head down against his gun stick. Willie stuck a head slowly over the fence and looked the length of the tracks. The whistle of the train again, this time shriller and nearer.

"Quick, men!" He swung a foot over the fence, threw his stick to the other side and lay flat against the cinders next to the track mound and waited for Joe.

Together they ran for the water tower. They hunched under the tank, shadowed from the sun already being clouded by the smoke streamers from the chimneys.

"Count, remember, Joe, count. The thing is to count and not forget and see if it can be done," Willie kept repeating.

"Do you think they could be watching this one?"

"Spies can do everything," said Willie.

Quivers began going up the iron stilts. The car honking on the avenue a block away was blotted by loud hissing and bell clanging.

An engine with little grey smoke puffs coming out of the chimney poked its way around the curve.

"All right, men! All right!" screamed Willie into the roar of chugging and bell clanging.

They kept their faces close to the iron uprights and watched each freight car pass, and they counted a number in their minds, and the cinders hit their faces and the water tower trembled and the freight cars from the Northwestern Railroad, from the Pennsylvania Railroad and the New York Central came slowly around the curve and went past the tower.

Flat cars passed with wheels that squeaked and carrying tanks covered by a brown tarpaulin. Through openings they could see little cannons bristling from the sides. Refrigerator cars passed carrying meats and shiny tank cars passed. The kids watched each car pass and added another number in their heads.

The last car trailed away and Joe wiped soot from his eyelids. "It can be done okay, Willie," he said leaning back and aiming at a tin can at the other side of the tracks.

"Joe . . . action . . . quick! A spy!"

A man sat on the last car with his feet dangling over the side. The train was coming near the station and the bell ringing was constant and becoming faint.

"Can I advise bombing, sir?" asked Joe, coming fast out from under the water tower and grabbing up a handful of cinders.

"Fire when ready!"

Loud, loud "bangs" and one hoarse "boom" and a shower of small cinders went through the air. They lay at the track mound and fired at the figure on the last freight car, pressing on the notches on their sticks till the train was out of sight.

They sat on the bank of the river and leaned against a tree that hung out over the river. Joe scaled flat rocks three, four times on the water and watched the ripples get wide and then disappear, and Willie leaning back against the bark told about his brother who was a cook in a submarine and the submarine was somewhere in the Pacific Ocean and his brother was almost chief cook and he wrote the

letter and said plenty was happening but that he couldn't write anything because of military secrets and that submarines were playing important parts now because they sneaked up on Jap ships and put torpedoes smack in them.

"Torpedo number one," said Joe and spit on a flat rock and stroked the grey rock wet.

"Torpedo number one!" said Willie and plopped down on his stomach and pressed a button on the grass and engines roared and he kicked his toe against the bark of the tree and the hulk of the submarine swung around slowly in position deep in the murky water.

"Fire, torpedo number one!" said Joe and pulled his right hand way back.

"Ping," said Willie and pulled on Joe's belt and the torpedo rock went hopping on the river.

A WHISTLE blew somewhere among the square buildings of the factory on the other side of the river. People began slipping from small doors and began making lines in front of the time clock building and long lines of workers coming for the next shift began slipping back into the doors. Men, with little black pails and buttons with their picture and number on, began trekking across the bridge, and the women in little groups walked in their long pants and put on lipstick and powder as they went. Some of the workers stopped and leaned over the railing and watched two kids play dive bomber, whining like dropping bombs and twisting and jumping and dodging gun fire as they raced and zoomed along the river bank. One of them was Jack Dempsey and he had a pursuit ship and the other was Max Baer and he was bombardier on a Flying Fortress and this was a big Nazi and Jap fleet and they had discovered the ships and it was all up to them to destroy the fleet because both their radio sets were broken and there was no time to fly for help and it was now or never and the Flying Fortress had such a kind of invention that bombs were made by a little machine in the plane, and Jack Dempsey had an invention for making machine-gun bullets and he was protecting Max Baer and Max was bombing and Jack was shooting all the Japs and Nazis in the gas and making them blow up, and Max was hitting the munition stores on the boats with his bombs. And all over the water was rough from bombs and oil was all over from ships sinking and on fire, and Nazis and Japs were swimming in the water and yelling how sorry they were for all the things they had done and high up above them the two planes were flying.

"You're goin' to scare all the fish from the river!"

"We're just playing!" shouted Willie up to the voice on the bridge, taking a dead-eye shot at the black man leaning over the railing, with a little wool hat on the side of his head.

"Funny kind of playing. Thought sure you boys were scaring out frogs."

"What's the good of frogs?" and Joe sailed another flat one out on the river.

"You can eat 'em. You can blow 'em up."

"You ever do that?" asked Joe and dropped a rock and wandered toward the bridge.

"Did both. Yes sir," and the black man rubbed a hand over his little hat. "Did both right down there. Long time ago." He shook his head and looked down at his reflection in the water. He picked up his pail and continued walking the bridge.

"How can you do it?" yelled Joe and ran to the foot of the bridge.

The Negro swung his pail and laughed

at the two boys waiting for him. "H'lo, boys."

"How can you do it?" asked Willie and narrowed an eye up at the tall man.

The man kept on walking and they ran to keep up with him. "Gad, got kids younger than youse. They know ten times more."

"With your mouth you do it?" asked Joe and ran to the other side of the Negro.

"Naw, you need to get a reed. You can use a straw." He pushed at Joe with his pail. "What you want to do it for?"

"Why'd you do it?"

"We used to tie 'em with string and let 'em go up like kites." The black man laughed and the kids thought and they busted out into laughs.

Willie pointed a thumb at Joe and introduced him and then hit himself on the chest and said he was Willie.

The black man stuck out a hand and squeezed them both on the elbows and said that he was mighty glad to meet them and that his name was Kenneth and that his

kids and friends called him Ken.

"Even your kids?" asked Joe.

"Sure thing. I'm their pal. We make wood boats together when I ain't working." They were coming toward the main street of town and the blinking light at the intersection shot out light to the darkening street. They walked down the narrow sidewalk between the small poplar trees and the brick private houses with the small wire enclosed lawns. Kenneth straightened the little wool hat on his head and his face became serious. "What you kids walking with me? Ain't you got to be home?"

"Naw, it's all right. We can walk with you. I can walk in any time. I got a brother on a submarine."

"You live in the nigger section, huh?" asked Joe.

Kenneth gave him a wink. "Yeah, kid, I lives where all the other colored folk live."

"I live not far off. On Lawrence Street," said Willie walking faster and trying to catch the black man's eye. "I was born there. My brother too. We live by the church."

The black man looked at the light blinking yellow and red at the crossroads. "Well, I got to be walking down on Main Street, boys. Be seeing you boys again some time, yeah? I'll even take you bull frog hunting," and he gave a rumbling short laugh and swung his lunch pail.

"We live not far from you. Ain't it good for us to walk you a little?"

They came to the corner and a trolley was standing there with lights pouring out and some people inside staring out to the street. A block away the marquee on the movie house had just turned on and the whole avenue looked all lighted up. Ahead of them people were going in and out of the drugstores, delicatessens, and groceries and the thin strips of neon tubes in the windows shone brightly.

"Might not be so good, kids," said the black man. He stopped next to a poplar and the kids stopped too and looked up at him. He arched his neck back and swung his pail wide. "Mighty nice night tonight. Makes you feel good smelling in," he said looking at a small piece of moon coming through thin dark clouds. The kids sniffed and looked at each other and nodded to the black man.

The black man gave another rumbling laugh and clucked with his mouth. "Ain't we getting screwy? I got to get home."

The kids ran to keep up with him. Willie got to telling about his brother who was on a submarine and Kenneth said he had a brother who was down Tennessee now, who was in the artillery and was about the best man there. "He lived up in New York," said Kenneth looking at one boy and then at the other. "He once played sax with Count Basie."

"Who's he?"

"He's a colored man. He got a big band. My brother used to be first man,



"Missouri Wheat Farmers," by Joe Jones.

but he don't like the Army so real much. He likes shooting the guns, but he don't like the other stuff. He ain't used to the other stuff."

"What other stuff?" asked Joe.

"Well, you know he lived in Harlem. Once I went to see him. Harlem—that's where the colored folk live in New York."

"Like here on Dewey Street," said Willie.

"Like here on Dewey Street," said the black man looking at the marquee with the little bulb lights spelling, "Andy Hardy's First Love. . . ."

"But my brother was first sax man and he wasn't used to stuff."

"'Cause it's the same like there was no war on account of slaves out in Tennessee, huh," said Willie and looked at Joe who pulled on his pants and thought about it.

Ken turned his head quickly to the boy. "That's it, son. That's it. He ain't used to that."

The three of them walked down Main Street. The black man talking and swinging his lunch pail and looking ahead and sometimes smiling and sometimes his face getting serious. The two boys kept up with his big steps and they swung their fists wide and listened and asked questions and they began to speak more and about many things and Willie soon discovered that Ken had known his brother, that Ken had been handyman where his brother had once been a baker and that Ken liked his brother real good and knew he'd get there. "A mighty serious boy, your brother," said Ken with his eyes narrow. "Don't talk so much but real friendly."

Old ladies, white ribbons on their hats and cotton stockings on, turned around a few times and wagged heads and made noises with their mouths and licked lips disapprovingly, and thought about the future of America with the two boys and the black man walking the street like that, and so very late too.

In the beer garden at the corner of Jane and La Salle Streets, a red-faced man with his mouth full of gold teeth and a yellow panama hat tilted on his bald head, was talking to Mousey in a hoarse voice and telling about conditions in the country, "where good Christians, white men were goin' hungry and their wives havin' to walk the gutter and niggers gettin' all the jobs."

Mousey waved his tiny face over his beer and sucked at a cavity in his mouth. "Awful, awful. It's all awful. All the nigger-Jews got everything." He staggered slowly from his stool and walked daintily to the juke box and put a nickel into the slot and walked back waving his head to the music.

The red-faced man wiped the suds from his lips and looked again at Mousey. "As long as we live with our heads in the sands we'll have all them niggers goin' with our ladies and with our jobs and what the



Head of a girl, by Raphael Soyer.

hell's goin' to be. You know what's goin' to be?" waving a finger under Mousey's nose.

"What's goin' to be?" A stern, fighting look in his pea eyes.

"Anarchism, anti-Jesus, and everything and Communism and a nigger president and Jews all over."

The man with the panama hat invited Mousey outside to show him some "literature" he had "that really showed the real facts of what was really goin' on."

Mousey leaned back on the fender of the red-faced man's yellow car. He looked at a very large cardboard whiskey bottle in the beer garden window and he thought very seriously and waited while the red-faced man grunted and leaned all the way into the car fishing for the literature.

He turned the pages of a thin pamphlet and read with emphasis as if making a speech to a great gathering. Mousey listened and sucked harder at his cavity and hit with his small fists against the yellow fender. "That's it, huh, that's it," he mumbled.

The red-faced man closed the pages and brought his sweaty face close to Mousey. "Don't even need books. Take a look quick," and he squinted his eyes down the block.

A low rumbling laugh and some kids' laughs came from the darkness behind the beer garden. Mousey brought up a slow hand and blinked into the shadows behind the garbage cans at the corner. "Nigger," he said.

"And two kids, white kids. That's it. Give 'em milk and they want the cow."

"And we have races," Ken was saying as they came to the corner. "Sometimes I tell one of my boys, you just make a mean row boat. Me, I'm going to make a

whaling schooner. And we have races."

"And you win?"

"Why I even got time to make the whale while the kids still whittle at the oars."

They were all laughing as they came out into the flickering red light from the beer dump. Hot music was coming out of the screen door from the juke box and a sailor had finally picked up a girl and was jiving with her between the tables.

"Nigger," said Mousey with a sudden jerk. The red-faced man wiped at his cheek and walked to the back of his yellow car.

The three of them kept on walking.

"Nigger!" screamed Mousey and hit at the fender with both his fists.

Willie stepped closer to Ken and walked faster. Ken hummed a tune and looked at the hedge ahead of him.

"Nigger, in the gutter!" screamed Mousey and lurched forward and sprawled onto the sidewalk.

"Tryin' to make trouble, huh?" shouted the man with the red face and panama hat and rushed up from the back of the car and grabbed the black man's arm and shouted for help into the beer place.

Ken shook his arm and swung with his lunch pail. The man's panama hat fell off and the man slumped back, stepped on the hat and fell to the running board. The screen door smashed open and the sailor stepped out with the bartender behind him. The two kids sank back against the store window. Joe's eyes were closed and his face was down to his shoulder. Willie leaned back against the glass with his mouth partly open and he wanted to scream or run, but he could only see what was happening and that was all that could fill his head.

A crowd collected and blood covered the sidewalk and made a stream in a sidewalk crack. There was shouting and someone ran for an ambulance and police. Ken's lunch box lay open in the gutter and his wool hat was next to the blood. Ken lay under the men sitting on him and hitting at him. He opened and closed his hands and kicked and twisted his feet.

An ambulance clanked down the corner and suddenly there was the starting of a motor and the yellow car careened away. Two men rolled the black man on to a stretcher and shoved it into the wagon and

(Continued on page 31)

# Shelter in Marseille

By Anna Seghers

YOU undoubtedly remember unoccupied France that autumn of 1940. You must have seen the railway stations and shelters, even the squares and churches in the towns, crowded with refugees from the north, from the occupied zone and the "forbidden zone," from Alsace and Lorraine and Moselle. Remnants of that miserable mass of humanity which, even on my flight to Paris, I had realized were nothing but remnants. Many of them had died along the roadside, but I had forgotten that many others would be born in the meantime. When I was looking for a place to sleep at the station in Toulouse, I climbed over a woman who, lying wedged between trunks and bundles and stacked rifles, was nursing a shriveled-up baby. How the world had aged that year! The baby looked old, its mother's hair was gray, the faces of its two little brothers looking over the woman's shoulder were old and sad and insolent. How could it be otherwise, when nothing remained hidden from these boys; neither birth nor death held any mystery to them.

All the trains were still crowded to suffocation with soldiers in ragged uniforms. They openly insulted their superiors, they cursed while they obeyed orders, but they obeyed, headed for God only knows where. Perhaps they were being sent to guard a concentration camp in some forsaken part of the country, or a border crossing that would be changed the day after they got there. Perhaps they were being shipped to Africa because some commander had decided to give the Germans the cold shoulder. The officer, however, would have been removed long before they arrived. In the meantime they plodded along because that foolish order to march was at least something to hold on to, a substitute for a more stirring order or a great war cry or the lost "Marseillaise." One day they handed up to us what had once been a man—his arms and legs were gone. Empty pieces of his uniform swung loosely where his limbs used to be. We crowded him in between us and put a cigarette between his lips, since he had no hands to hold it. When it scorched his lips he grumbled. Suddenly he began to shout: "If I could only know why!" All of us felt that way.

We went in a great senseless arc, spending the nights in shelters or an open field. Sometimes a truck would give us a lift or we would hop a freight train. Nowhere did we find a place to live, to say nothing of any work. Our way took us deeper and deeper into the south, across the Loire, across the Garonne, and as far as the Rhone. All the beautiful old towns were filled with demoralized people. But it was

not the demoralization that I had imagined. These towns were governed by their own particular code, a sort of medieval municipal law that differed from one town to the other. A tireless crowd of officials were on the go day and night like dog catchers, hauling suspicious characters from the mob and putting them in jail. From there they were sent to a concentration camp, unless they could furnish ransom or hire a shyster lawyer who generally shared with the official the exorbitant fee he received for liberating his client. No wonder that these people, especially the foreigners, guarded their passports and papers as if their very lives depended on them. It was amazing to me how these officials, in the midst of their country's downfall, managed to discover even more red tape so they could properly classify, register, and pigeonhole the people over whom they had lost virtually all power. One might as well have attempted to register properly every Vandal, Goth, or Langobard in the Great Migration of Nations.

My companions' cunning saved me more than once from the clutches of the dog catchers. Remember, I had absolutely no papers; I'd left everything I owned in the commander's barracks when I fled from the French concentration camp. I would have assumed that they had been burned in the meantime, had not my experience taught me that paper burns much less easily than metal and stone. One day when we were sitting at a table in an inn, an official asked for our papers. My companions had French documents, fairly good ones at that, although the older Binnet boy had not been regularly demobilized. This official happened to be drunk, so he didn't notice Marcel slipping his own papers to me under the table; they'd already been examined. A few minutes later this same man took a beautiful girl out of the room, to the accompaniment of the cursing and wailing of her uncles and aunts, refugee Jews from Belgium who had adopted her with a great deal of loyalty but insufficient legal proof. She probably faced internment in a women's camp in some corner of the Pyrenees. She remains in my memory because of her beauty and the expression on her face when she was led away from her people. I asked my friends what would have happened if one of them had declared his willingness to marry her on the spot. Although they were all under age, they immediately began to quarrel about the girl so fiercely that they almost came to blows. All of us were already quite exhausted at the time. Besides, these boys were also more than a bit ashamed of their country. If a person is

healthy and young, he recovers quickly from defeat. But betrayal has a paralyzing effect. The next night we finally all confessed that we were homesick for Paris. There, a hard and bitter enemy had confronted us; we'd thought that it was hardly bearable when we were there. But we agree that that visible enemy was much better than this invisible, almost mysterious evil, these rumors, these bribes, this humbug.

Everyone was fleeing, nothing was permanent. How could we know whether this condition would last until tomorrow, or for a few weeks, or for years, or our whole lives?

The decision we made struck us as perfectly reasonable. First we found out from a map where we actually were. We happened to be in the vicinity of the village near which Yvonne lived, my former sweetheart who had married her cousin. So we started off for that village; it took us about a week to get there.

ALTHOUGH there were already quite a few refugees in Yvonne's village—some had been sent to her husband's farm to help with the work—life was still going on pretty much as it always did. Yvonne was pregnant and still rather proud of her new possessions, though she got a bit embarrassed when she introduced her husband and me. When she found out that I had no papers, she sent her husband to the village the same evening; he was acting mayor. She told him to go to the Grappe d'Or and have some drinks with his friends and to be sure to see that the president of the United Refugees from Aigne sur Ange was one of them. The result was that when he came home at midnight, he had a yellow paper, a spare refugee certificate which a man named Seidler had returned when he got hold of better papers. The paper Seidler had discarded was a godsend to me; Yvonne's husband put an official stamp on it. After the plebiscite, Seidler had gone from the Saar to Alsace. We looked up his native village in a school atlas. On the basis of its location, it must have been burned down, which fortunately meant that the village rolls had been destroyed. Yvonne's husband even managed it so that some money was paid me at the county town, some kind of refugee money which he considered I was rightfully entitled to, seeing that my papers were now all in order.

I fully realized that Yvonne had finagled all this so that she'd get rid of me as quickly as possible. My companions in the meantime had written to their families, who had scattered here and there. Marcel



had managed to locate a great-uncle who owned a peach orchard by the sea. Little Binnet and his best friend wanted to stay on with Yvonne. As her one-time sweetheart, I was rather out of place there and entirely superfluous. Again it was Yvonne who disposed of this problem. This time it was a cousin, George. He had been working in a factory at Nevers and been evacuated with it—no one knew exactly why—and had finally ended up in Marseille. He had written that he was doing quite well there, that he was living with a woman from Madagascar who also had a job. Marcel said that he would fix things so that later I could join him at his great-uncle's. In the meantime, I might look Marseille over. This George was somebody to fall back on. So here I was, still depending on the Binnet family like a child who, having lost his mother, clings to the skirts of another woman who, while she can never fully take his mother's place, still gives him some degree of kindness.

Marcel left me, and I went on alone to Marseille.

I had heard along the road that no foreigner had any chance of getting away from the clever body snatchers posted at the Marseille station. My confidence in my refugee certificate had its limits. Two hours before reaching Marseille I got out of the train and boarded a bus. I left it at a village in the mountains. From there I walked down into the suburbs of Marseille. At a turn in the road I saw the sea, far below, between the hills. A little later, the city itself came into view, with its background of water. It seemed to me as bare and white as an African town. At last I grew calm, with the great calm I always feel when something pleases me a lot. It almost seemed that I had reached my goal. In this city, I thought, I shall find everything I've always looked for. How much longer, when I enter a strange city, will this feeling deceive me?

I got on a street car at its terminus and, unmolested, entered the city. Twenty minutes later, I sauntered down the Cannebiere with my bag. Usually a person is disappointed when he sees streets he's heard a lot about. But I wasn't a bit disappointed. I was one of the crowd hurrying along in the wind that swept us with gusts of sunshine and rain in quick succession. My lightness, which had its origin in hunger and exhaustion, changed into an exalted

and magnificent lightness, quite suited to the wind that blew down the street with increasing force. When I realized that the shimmering blue at the end of the Cannebiere was the sea, the Old Harbor, I knew again, after so much red tape and misery, the only true happiness that man can feel every second, the happiness of being alive.

I went into a coffee bar, where I drank my coffee standing up, my bag clamped between my legs. All about me I heard strange languages as if that counter at which I stood were flanked by two pillars of the Tower of Babel. And yet, certain words occurred over and over again. There was a certain rhythm to them, and



Woodcut by Max Weber.

I finally understood them: Cuba visa and Martinique, Oran and Portugal, Thailand and Casablanca, transit and three-mile zone.

I finally succeeded in getting to the Old Harbor at the same hour of the day as I'm telling you all this. I asked someone how to get to the Rue du Chevalier Rouse. That's where George Binnet, the cousin, lived. People were crowding the stores and the street markets. Dusk had already fallen in these cavernous streets, but it made the red and gold of the fruit glow all the stronger. I smelled an odor that I'd never smelled before. I looked for fruit as a possible source of it, but didn't find it. I was tired, so I sat down on the edge of a fountain in the Corsican quarter, the bag balanced on my knees. Then I went up the stone steps, completely in the dark as to where they would lead me.

The sea lay below me. The lights on the poles on the Corniche and on the islands were still pale in the twilight. How I had hated the sea when I was working on the docks! It had struck me as unmerciful in its unapproachable, inhuman solitude. But now, after I had traveled so long through the shattered and defiled

country, there was no more comforting sight than this same inhuman emptiness and solitude, with its tracklessness and purity that defies contamination.

I turned back, down into the Corsican quarter. In the meantime things had quieted down. The markets were closed up. I found the Rue du Chevalier Rouse, and the house. I let the bronze knocker, which was shaped like a hand, fall against the huge carved door. When a Negro asked me what I wanted, I inquired for the Binnetts.

The knobs on the banisters, the traces of colored tiles, and the faded stone coats of arms said plainly that the house had once belonged to a well-to-do man, a merchant or a seafarer. Now it sheltered people from Madagascar, a few Corsicans, and the Binnetts.

I stared at George's mistress. She seemed to me extraordinarily beautiful, though a bit too strange. Her head, her slender neck, the sharp nose and brilliant eyes gave the effect of a black wild bird. Her long hips, her long loose-jointed hands, even her toes in the *espadrilles*, moved constantly like some people's features, as if anger and joy and sadness were a breeze.

She answered my question a bit abruptly—George was on the night shift at the mill, and she herself had just come home from the sugar factory. She turned away from me and yawned. I was utterly disenchanting.

GOING down the stairs, I bumped into a slender dark-skinned lad who was rushing upstairs, a few steps at a time. He and I both turned around at the same time. I wanted to find out whether the fever my arrival had created in me had cast a spell even on him, and he wanted to reassure himself that I was really an utter stranger, an unexpected interloper. A moment later, I heard Binnet's mistress, who was still standing in the open door, scold the boy for being late. She told me later that she'd been trying to decide whether to call me back and ask me to wait. You'll see later why I'm telling you all this in such detail. My call at the Binnetts' seemed a mistake to me at the time, the evening ahead of me empty. I had imagined the city had opened her heart to me, as I had opened mine to her; that she'd let me come in to her that very first evening, and that her people would give me shelter. My reaction to the joy I'd felt on arriving was great disappointment. Yvonne had certainly written nothing to her cousin; she'd just got rid of me in the easiest way she could. . . . Another thing that hurt me was the knowledge that George was on the night shift—that there were still people who were leading an ordinary life.

Again I had to find some place to sleep. The first dozen hotels I tried were filled. Suddenly dog-tired, I sat down at

the first unoccupied table I came to in front of a shabby cafe on a small, quiet square.

I ordered a beer. I should have liked to stay alone there at the table, but an old man sat down with me. He had on a coat which on any other man would long since have turned to rags, but which had happened upon a dignified man whose care did not allow it to fall to pieces. As the coat was, so was the man. He should long ago have been laid in his grave, but his face was firm and serious. His thin hair was parted, his nails carefully trimmed. After a glance at my bag, he asked me almost immediately, not where I wanted to go, but what country I had a visa for. I told him that I had no visa and wasn't trying to get one; all I wanted was to stay here.

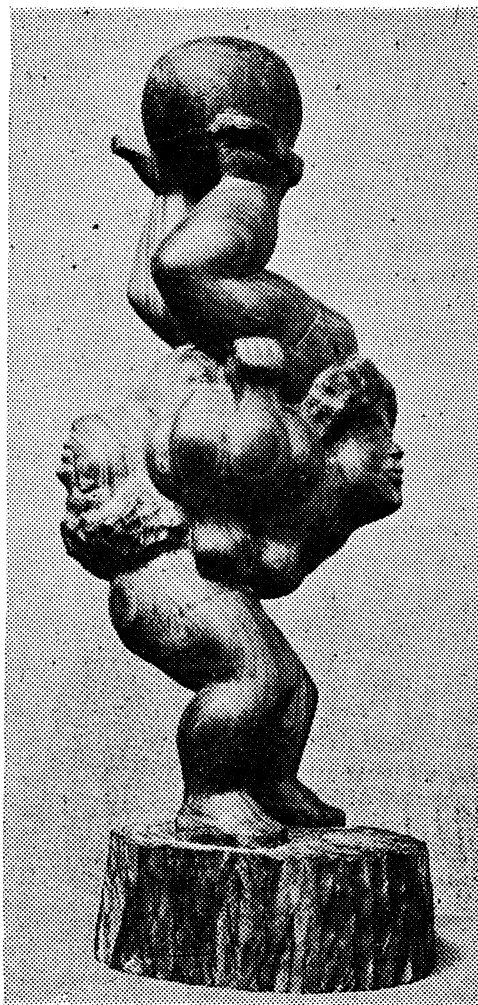
"No one can stay here without a visa!" he said.

I DIDN'T know what he meant. Just out of politeness I asked what he himself had in mind. He said he had been an orchestral conductor in Prague and that he'd been offered a job with a famous orchestra in Caracas. When I asked him where that was he told me, a bit sarcastically, that it was the capital of Venezuela. To my inquiry if he had any sons, he said, yes and no; they were all missing—his eldest son somewhere in Poland, his second in England, and his youngest in Prague. He couldn't wait around any longer for word from them, for it might be too late for him. I thought he was referring to the possibility of his death. What he meant, though, was that he had to join the orchestra before the new year. Once before he'd had a contract, got a visa on the strength of the contract, and a transit on the strength of the visa. Getting an exit visa, however, had taken so long that his transit had expired, and then his visa, and his contract had been canceled. Last week he had been given his exit visa; now he was waiting momentarily for an extension of his contract, which automatically would extend his visa. On the visa depended whether he could get a new transit. Puzzled, I asked him what an exit visa was. He looked at me as if he couldn't believe his eyes. Here was an ignorant newcomer! I would fill many of his lonely minutes because he'd have the chance of explaining a lot of things to me.

"That's a permit to leave France," he said. "Hasn't anybody told you about it, my poor ignorant young man?"

"Why try to hold people here when all they want is to leave a country that will put them in jail if they stay?"

At this he laughed so hard that his jaws creaked—it sounded like a skeleton creaking. He tapped the table with his finger. He was rather repulsive to me, but I stuck it out. You know there are moments in the lives of most prodigal sons when they go



"The Tumblers," by Chaim Gross.

over to the side of the fathers—the fathers of other sons, that is.

He went on. "I'm sure, my son, that at least you know one thing—that the real masters now are the Germans. And since you presumably are German yourself you also know what the German order means, that Nazi order which everybody here is praising to the skies. That order has nothing to do with the old order, the world order. It's a kind of control. The Germans lose no chance of making a thorough check-up of everyone who leaves Europe. Perhaps in that way they'll come across someone they've been looking for for years."

"ALL right! All right! But when everyone's been checked up and been given a visa, why's a transit necessary? Why does it expire? Why aren't the people allowed to travel through a country on their way to their new home?"

"My boy," said the old man, "it's because every country is afraid that we'll stay there instead of going on across the border. A transit, that's a permit to go through a country when a person has given proof that he doesn't want to stay there."

Suddenly his attitude changed. In a new and very solemn tone that fathers

use only when they are sending their sons out into the world, he spoke to me. "Young man, you've come here, almost without luggage, alone, without any goal. You haven't even a visa yet. The fact that the authorities won't let you stay here unless you have at least a visa doesn't bother you in the least. Well, let's assume that you do get a visa. How? Through a good break, through your own exertions—that happens at times, though it's rare—through some friend's hand that reaches out to you from the dark—what I mean is the ocean—when you least expect it, through Providence itself, perhaps, or some aid committee. You'll be happy for a moment. Soon however, you'll realize that it doesn't mean a thing. You have a goal. That's nothing—everybody has one. You can't get there by your will power, you've got to cross oceans and countries in between. You need a transit. That takes cleverness and a lot of time. You've no idea how much time. In my case, there's reason for haste. But when I look at you it seems to me that for you time is even more precious. It is youth itself. But you mustn't dabble in too many things. You've got to think only of your transit. If I may advise you, you must forget your goal for the time being and concentrate on crossing these intermediary countries, or else you won't get away at all. You've got to convince the consuls that you're in earnest and that you're not one of those fellows that'll stay some place he's said he was just going through. And there are proofs of your intentions, proofs that every consul demands. We'll assume a further good break—almost a miracle, when one thinks how few ships there are for the thousands who want to leave. You've got your place on the ship, your passage; if you're a Jew—I'm sure you're not—through Jews; if you're an Aryan, well, with Christian aid; if you're nothing at all, an atheist, a Red—well, let's say through your party, through people like you. You can get on board a ship somewhere. Don't think for a moment, though, that this means that you'll get your transit. But suppose it did mean this. In the meantime, so much time has gone by that your primary objective, your main goal, has been lost again—your visa has expired. No matter how important it was to get your transit, it means nothing at all without a visa, and so on, in a vicious circle.

"Imagine now that you've taken care of everything. All right, my boy, let's imagine things together. You've got everything—your visa, your transit, your exit visa. You're ready to leave. You've said goodbye to those dearest to you and closed this chapter of your life. Now you're thinking only of your goal. You're all ready to board the ship. . . . I spoke to a young man yesterday, a chap about your age. He

(Continued on page 29)

# Writers in Exile

By **Lion Feuchtwanger**

**I**N MY student days in Munich I took a course entitled "Experience and Literary Creation." That was in the peaceful days before the first world war. The Ivory Tower was fashionable in literary circles; and the professor who gave the course made a clean-cut distinction between outer and inner experience. In his opinion, a writer's inner form was prescribed from birth; and he refused to admit that an author's work depended on where he wrote.

In that course there was much discussion of the many writers of all nations and periods who had been forced to spend a large part of their life in exile, and of the many works of outstanding literary merit they had created. The professor asserted that these years of exile had no doubt influenced the authors' choice of subject matter but certainly not their "inner landscape." I confess that even as a callow student I detected a false ring in this thesis. I could not believe that exile had affected only the *subject matter* in the works of Ovid, Li Po, Dante, Heinrich Heine, and Victor Hugo. It seemed to be that the *very*

*heart and essence* of the works which these writers created in exile had been conditioned by the external circumstances of their exile. The inferno-like hatred of some of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the piercing brilliance of Hugo's polemical writings, the sweetly sad and tender nostalgia for his native land in Li Po's poetry, the elegant and deadly scorn of Heine's poems—are any of these conceivable without the author's exile? Exile was not a mere fortuitous incident in these works, it was their very source. It was the essence, not the subject matter, of these authors which underwent a change.

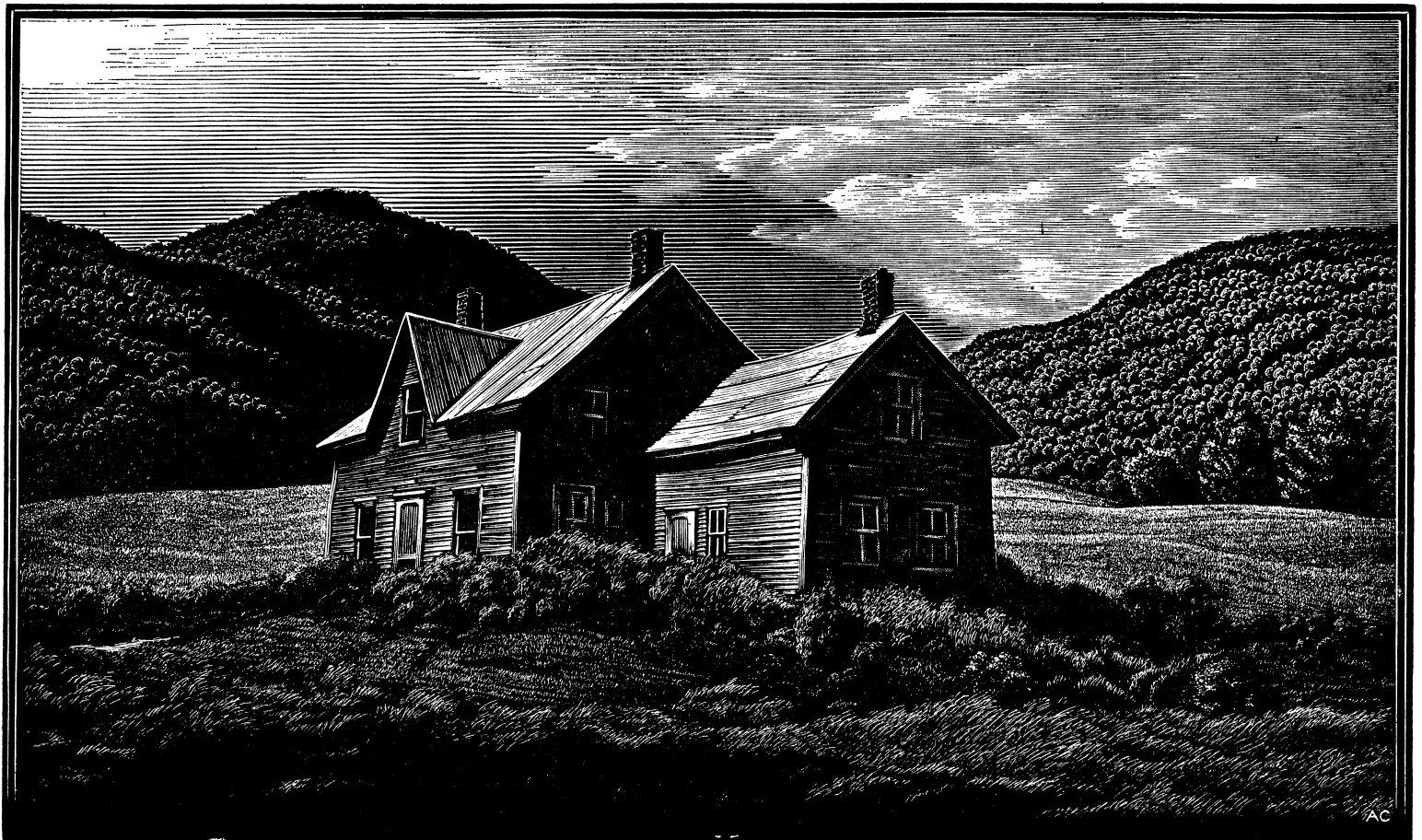
Now at the start of the second decade of my life in exile, his opinion has become much more than just an opinion. It has become one of the basic principles of my inner existence.

I do not want to dwell at too great length on the bitter theme of the external difficulties which are the lot of the refugee writer. The writer who loses the reading public of his own country very often loses with it the basis of his economic existence. Many authors, highly talented and enjoy-

ing a wide circle of readers in their own country, do not sell in foreign countries. This may be because their talent is intimately bound up with their language, which loses its flavor in translation. Or it may be because their themes do not interest readers in other countries. Many refugee writers cannot and will not accept the well meaning efforts of publishers in their land of exile to make concessions to the public's taste. It is astonishing how many refugee authors who have previously won world-wide acclaim are now completely helpless and dispirited, despite their most earnest efforts to continue creative work.

**S**ORR is that many writers suffer the petty, gnawing miseries of everyday refugee life more than most. Economic difficulties and the wearing struggle with never-ending trifles are the external signs of refugee life. Many writers have broken under the strain; and many have chosen suicide rather than continue the tragedy-comedy of life in exile.

The fortunate writer who manages to avoid all this is beset with other difficulties.



"In the Hill Country, Vermont," by Asa Cbeffetz.



"The Untilled Field," by Peggy Bacon.

As he works, he faces inner problems of which he never dreamed in his native land. First of all, there is the bitter experience of feeling one's self cut off from the living stream of one's native tongue. Language changes from year to year. In the ten or eleven years of our exile, life has gone forward with great rapidity and has found thousands of new words and phrases for thousands of new phenomena. We hear the new terms for these new phenomena for the first time in a foreign language. The sound of this foreign tongue is constantly in our ears. Its symbols press in upon us daily, hourly; they gnaw at our own storehouse of expressions. Frequently, a word or cadence occurs to us first in this foreign language.

SOME of us have sought, with some success, to write in a foreign language. But in reality, none of us has succeeded. Nobody can succeed. Of course, one can learn to express one's self in a foreign language, but one cannot learn the *ultimate emotional values* of the foreign tongue. One cannot create or mold in an alien language. The Greeks and Romans gave the name of barbarians to those who could not express themselves in their language. The poet Ovid, living in exile among such barbarians, wrote in their language, and was held in high esteem. Yet he complained: "Here I am the barbarian, for nobody understands me!"

It is a peculiar experience to see how the effect of our books depends on a translation rather than on the conception with which we have written them. The over-

tones we hear are not the overtones of our own words. For even the best translation remains strange to us. We have sweated over a word or sentence; and after a long search we have found the right one, the felicitous turn of phrase which expresses the essence of our thought and feeling. And then we see the translated word, the translated phrase. It is competent and quite accurate—but the fragrance is gone. And with it, life itself!

Gradually, whether we like it or not, we ourselves are changed by our new environment. And as we change, everything we create undergoes changes.

There is no path to inner vision which does not lead across the external world. The new country in which we live influences our style as well as our choice of material. The writer's outer landscape transmutes his inner landscape.

Many of us are so closely bound up with the forms and concepts of our youth and native land that we cannot disengage ourselves. Hence we struggle against our new environment. This self-absorption in the dead past, this shutting out of the real life around us, and this proud self-isolation lessen the writer's powers, drying them up, causing them to wither. The exiled writers who react in this manner—and their number is legion, including authors of eminent skill—suffer the unhappiest fate. And their bitterness is deepest.

I do not want to show too much resentment. So my description seems pale; and I have the feeling that everything I have said is under-emphasized and much too bald. I believe that I have expressed

my feelings on "the writer in exile" much better in my novel *Paris Gazette*.

There I included a general chapter on the effects of living as a refugee, written during one of the most troubled phases of my own life, in an interval between concentration camps in France. Today I am glad that even in that unhappy period I stressed, not how the artist lives, but how the genuine writer, the creator worthy of the name, grows and gains in stature in exile.

Exile disintegrates, makes one petty and mean. But it also hardens one and makes one great. A mighty torrent of new themes and ideas presses in on the exiled writer. He finds himself in the presence of an array of faces unlike those in his native land.

YES, if we try to see our life in exile in historic perspective, we realize that almost everything which seems to hinder our work proves in the end to be its salvation. Even the forced contact with a foreign language about which I have complained, has ultimately enriched us. The author who is constantly surrounded by a foreign language learns almost automatically to compare his own words with those of the foreign tongue. Often he finds a more suitable word in the foreign tongue for the thing he wishes to express. Then he is not satisfied with his own language; he sharpens, refines, and polishes until he has found the equivalent in newer, sharper words. Every one of us has adapted expressive turns of phrase from the alien tongue.

It seems clear that suffering makes the weak weaker, the strong stronger. Many of us have been diminished by exile; but the stronger and more adaptable among us have acquired greater breadth and resilience. We have concentrated our gaze on fundamentals, and have learned not to cling to non-essentials.

Goethe has written: So long as you do not understand that you must *die and be re-born*, you are merely a melancholy guest on this dark earth. Exile is a hard school which forcibly impresses on one what it means to "die and be re-born." A whole group of exiled writers have become inwardly more ripe. They have grown younger in spirit, revived. They have not only grown more bitter; they have also become wiser and more just toward their new world, more grateful and more deeply conscious of their mission. To "die and be re-born" has become the keynote of their experience.

All in all, I think that literature in exile has stood the test. When the flood passes, when we are able to gauge with a surer measure what is worthwhile and what is not, then we will find that among the works created in this period of history those written in exile will be by no means the worst.

# NM SPOTLIGHT

## Groundswell Toward FDR

**G**ATHERING shape on the political horizon is something that is beginning to look like a trend. But instead of being the much-heralded trend against the administration and its foreign policy, it seems to be the reverse. After what happened in the latest primaries last week the gloom at the headquarters of the Republican National Committee must be thick enough to cut with a knife. And the cause of that gloom is not limited to the Democratic primary results in Florida and Alabama. There is certainly precious little comfort for Messrs. Harrison Spangler, Robert A. Taft, Herbert Hoover, and the other GOP master minds in the outcome of the Republican contest for US Senator in South Dakota or for Representative in the eighth congressional district in Indiana.

Most significant were the decisive victories won by Senators Claude Pepper of Florida and Lister Hill of Alabama. These two men are the two most progressive, most consistently pro-Roosevelt Senators from the South, and Pepper especially has made a record on both foreign and domestic questions that is unsurpassed in the entire Senate. The opposition to both these Senators ignored the vital issues of the war and peace and sought to stampede the voters on the spurious issue of "white supremacy," into which were injected definite anti-Roosevelt overtones. Under reactionary fire both Senators unfortunately gave ground. The voters, however, recognized them as militant supporters of President Roosevelt and champions of the new liberal tendencies in the South; Hill was renominated by a comfortable margin of some 25,000 votes, while Pepper won a majority over the combined total of four opponents, thus making a run-off unnecessary. What is more, one of the worst poll-taxers in Congress, Rep. Joseph Starnes of Alabama, member of the Dies Committee and leading anti-administration disrupter, went down to defeat. The Washington correspondents of the *New York Post*, Charles Van Dervander and William O. Player, Jr., attribute Starnes' defeat largely to the work of the CIO Political Action Committee, which indicates the potentialities of the PAC movement that Joseph North described so vividly in two recent articles in *NEW MASSES*.

For the first time the Negro people had a part in the Florida and Alabama victories, even though an as yet limited part.

As a result of the Supreme Court decision outlawing the Texas white primary, Negroes voted in the Democratic primary in many parts of both states, though at some polling booths they were barred.

The groundswell of popular support for the Roosevelt-Hull foreign policy—which recently compelled Governor Dewey and Governor Bricker to do some verbal trimming—also made itself felt in the Republican primaries in two states. In South Dakota Sen. Chan Gurney, whom his opponent accused of having "absorbed too much of the New Deal" because he supported the administration's foreign policy, was renominated with ease. In Indiana Rep. Charles LaFollette, one of a handful of progressive House Republicans, who backed the administration on foreign policy and on a number of key domestic issues, won by an overwhelming majority. It begins to look as if the American people—Democrats, Republicans, independents—want an American foreign policy after all, instead of the pro-Hitler foreign policy that the McCormick - Patterson - Hearst newspaper axis and its congressional copyboys have been peddling.

And it also looks as if, despite all incantations and alarms, the fourth-term movement is growing. In Alabama only one of the ten candidates for six delegates-at-large to the Democratic convention opposed the fourth term, and he got licked. In Florida, where the Byrd-for-President movement has been nurtured by reactionary Democratic leaders, only four of the eighteen delegates elected are pledged to Senator Byrd, the rest backing FDR. In North Carolina the Democratic state convention last week endorsed a fourth term and pledged the state's thirty delegates to the President. All told, of the 510 delegates elected so far in various parts of the country, 410 are supporting a fourth term.

It is still a question, however, whether the President will consent to run again. No doubt he needs the assurance that he can win decisively without being compelled to engage in political campaigning at a time when the climax of the war requires his utmost concentration. And probably he would also like to feel that the next Congress will be more cooperative, less dominated by defeatist and reactionary forces, than the present one. The primary results in Florida, Alabama, South Dakota, and Indiana show that the new Congress is

not foredoomed to be cast in the image of its precursor. There is no reason to expect miracles, but there is every reason to expect results from hard work that clarifies and unites the people.

## Abettors of Sedition

**S**EDITION is an ugly word and should be used with care. But one wonders whether we have not gone too far in construing it narrowly. Twenty-nine men and women are now on trial for sedition—which seems a mild way of describing a charge of conspiracy "with each other and with officials of the German Reich and the leaders of the Nazi Party"—conspiracy to "impair and undermine the loyalty and morale of the military and naval forces of the United States." But what shall be said about the twenty-odd defense lawyers who are sworn to uphold the law and whose fees do not entitle them to aid and abet sedition? The behavior of one of them, James J. Laughlin, has forced the postponement of the sedition trial while he is himself being tried for contempt of court. One wonders whether, in fact, the court has not been too patient with the efforts of these men to obstruct justice, too tolerant of their anti-Semitism, their obscene attacks on President Roosevelt and other government officials.

In New York Frederick Heizer Wright, copy editor of the blatantly defeatist *New York Daily News*, is on trial for failing to register as a Japanese agent prior to Pearl Harbor. That is a much less serious charge than sedition, and one wonders whether it isn't ridiculously out of proportion to the actual offense: the writing of Japanese propaganda articles for the *Daily News*, the suppression of a story warning about Japanese war moves one week before Pearl Harbor, and similar jobs for which the Japanese paid hard cash. And what about the newspaper that published this Japanese agent's stuff and employed him up to the day of his trial, a newspaper whose circulation is 2,000,000 (Sunday, 3,700,000) and whose devotion to the cause of impairing and undermining the loyalty and morale of the military and naval forces of the United States is manifest in every issue?

And in Brooklyn the other day there was held under the protection of the law a public meeting at which the chief speaker was Edward Lodge Curran, eastern representative of the Nazi propagandist, Charles E. Coughlin. Curran defended Coughlin, attacked the American government and its allies, and announced the

launching of a revived *Social Justice* movement. Other speakers included William B. Gallagher, Coughlin representative in Boston, and Capt. William J. Grace, head of the Republican Nationalist Revival Committee, both of whom John L. Spivak, in his recent series of *NEW MASSES*, linked with a conspiracy to launch a drive for a negotiated peace with Germany simultaneously with the opening of the second front in Europe. How long will mad dogs be allowed to run around loose?

## "Untruths and Half Truths"

PERHAPS the Senate and House committees that are investigating the Sewell Avery putsch against the United States government will be interested in what some American businessmen think of Col. Robert R. McCormick's favorite "patriot." If so, we refer them to the remarks made on Dec. 8, 1942, by Harry L. Derby, chairman of the board of the American Cyanamid and Chemical Co., a director of the National Association of Manufacturers, and an industry member of the War Labor Board. Derby said that the ads Avery's firm, Montgomery Ward, put in the papers attacking the WLB for voting for a maintenance of membership clause in the union contract were "untruths or half-truths." He said too that in his opinion "Montgomery Ward has done the greatest disservice to industry and the private enterprise system of any concern in the United States, and I feel that just as strongly as I can."

Another big business representative who was at that time on the WLB, Roger D. Lapham, chairman of the board of the American-Hawaiian Steamship Co., ridiculed Ward's concept of freedom of speech which it pleaded as an excuse for attacking the WLB's integrity. Said the peppery Lapham, who can hardly be accused of being pro-Roosevelt or pro-labor: "The industry members of the WLB also have freedom of speech and they intend to use it to tell the truth and not a damn bunch of half-truths."

These statements serve to underline the nature of the war against the United States which Montgomery Ward has been waging under Field Marshal von Avery for over two years. On Feb. 21, 1942, the National Labor Relations Board certified the United Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Employees-CIO, as bargaining agent for 5,000 employes in the mail order house, and subsequently for the employes in other divisions of the company. On June 16, 1942, the War Labor Board *unanimously* accepted jurisdiction over the Montgomery Ward dispute with the union. Except in one instance, when an employer member dissented, all WLB actions since then, including referral of the case to the White House, have been unanimous.

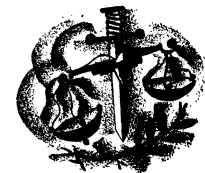
The resolutions setting up Senate and House committees to investigate the Mont-

gomery Ward incident were inspired by reactionary forces who hoped to conduct these investigations as anti-administration lynching bees. Fortunately, the efforts of administration supporters broadened both inquiries to include Ward's labor policies. The action of the AFL executive council in backing the government's seizure of the plant also proved a setback for those who were counting on a split in labor's ranks on this issue. Only William Hutcheson, former America Firster, voted to uphold the Avery insurrection, while Matthew Woll spoke against the government's action, but delicately refrained from voting.

## New York in the Vanguard

EVERYBODY in New York seems to like Mayor La Guardia's plan to keep 7,500,000 citizens healthy, except those practitioners belonging to the five county medical societies of New York who subscribe to the crusty social outlook of the American Medical Association. A growing body of physicians disagree with the AMA—and we don't mean them. But the citizenry generally cottoned to the Mayor's city health plan, which they realize would give them the most effective system of medical care in the country short of the provisions of the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill. The Mayor himself stipulated that "a national compulsory system (of health insurance) is preferable to local voluntary systems." La Guardia clearly said that he proposed the city-wide plan because the national bill is not readily forthcoming.

The Mayor's plan would afford complete medical care to families in the \$5,000 a year-and-under brackets. The cost, to be shared equally by employers and employes, would be four percent of the weekly wage of the employe with the employer invited to pay half or more of the amount. In short, the entire working class and middle class areas of the world's greatest city would get, at minimal cost, adequate home and hospital treatment, surgical service, preventive medicine, diagnostic, laboratory and clinical attention. The system, the



Emma Lazarus was a beloved figure in nineteenth century American literature who turned her literary gifts toward creating a greater understanding of the Jewish people in her time. The editor and biographer of a new edition of her best work, Morris U. Schappes, has been in jail now for five months on a trumped-up charge of perjury. Have you sent your letter to Albany, N. Y., urging Governor Thomas E. Dewey to pardon this outstanding scholar and anti-fascist?

Mayor indicated, will not collide with limited sick insurance plans now in existence. In fact, he would prefer "a merger of all" in the interests of complete medical coverage.

Every New Yorker seems pleased, but the five county societies cock a sour eye at the idea. They would prefer a \$2,500 ceiling on those eligible. In fact, the plan was delayed for months by the unwilling attitude of the AMA; the Mayor was obliged to take the whole business to the public for discussion. It is regrettable indeed that the medical societies took so short-sighted and selfish a viewpoint, obstructing one of the most significant social advances ever proposed for New York. Their position is contrary to the general democratic approach adopted. A city-wide committee of noted physicians and social workers labored months over the plan—individuals ranging from Dr. Louis Pink, president of the Associated Health Service, to Constance Kyle, personnel service director for the National Maritime Union. Management of the city-wide system would be by a board representing the whole community, consumers as well as distributors of medical service. It seems to us a first-rate plan, one that should get the support of every New Yorker.

## Streamlined Daily Worker

THAT the *Daily Worker* is one of the most influential publications in America—despite the relatively small size of its circulation—was never in question. That it has played, and will play, a remarkably important role in the crucial struggle to achieve unity for victory in the war and afterward, nobody can doubt who reads the paper with an honest eye. For that reason all patriots would welcome an increase in its circulation, understanding that clarity would be enhanced by putting the paper into more hands. For these reasons we want to join the chorus of praise for the new streamlined *Daily Worker*. The change to a tabloid size, and the other improvements, such as the additions to its number of meritorious columnists, have won the enthusiastic response of its readers. We want especially to congratulate the editors and staff for the change-over with a maximum of effectiveness, which must have been difficult considering the budgetary problems a newspaper like the *Daily Worker* must shoulder. It has done a first-rate job, one that augurs, we are certain, a rapid increase in the numbers of its readers. We recommend the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker* to our thousands of new readers who may not yet have made the acquaintance of these periodicals. They are *must* reading for any American who wants to be informed, and who feels the urge of getting the news fast, and clearly and truthfully. More power to the *Daily Worker!*

## Pale Blue Ribbons

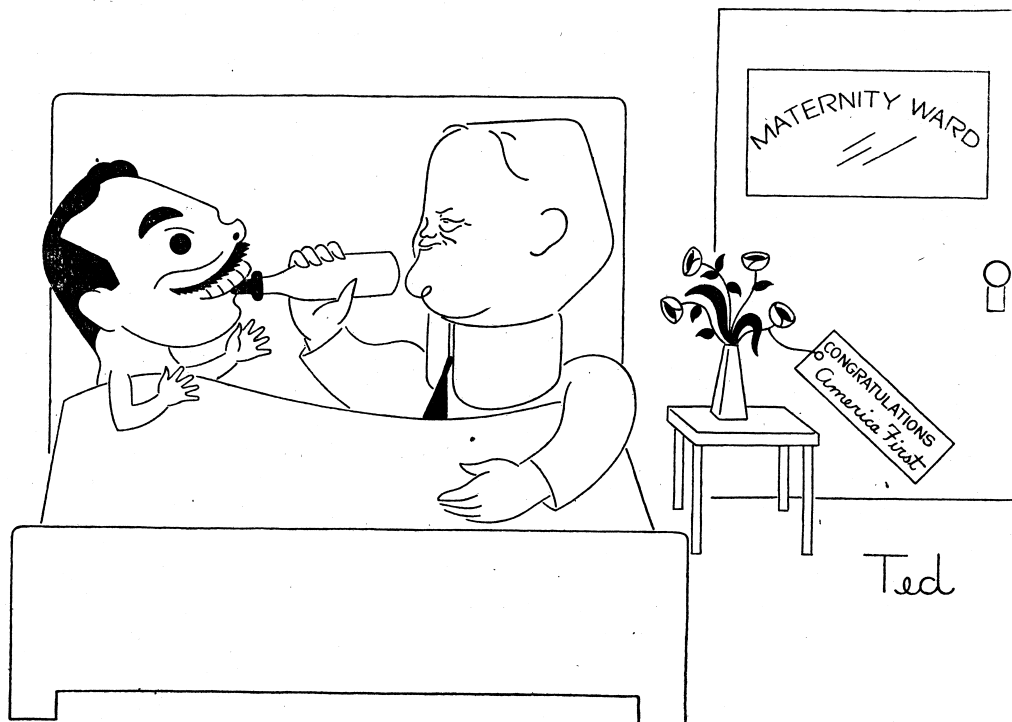
THE Pulitzer Prize awards annually achieve a volume of publicity which is out of proportion to the actual merit of the choices. For several years now, the distinguished selections have been the exception rather than the rule. The committee of judges appears on the whole to be guided by standards that are too timid and conservative. The selections this year follow the conventional pattern. It is as hard to take exception as it is to be enthusiastic. There was no award in the drama, though a special bow was made to the delightful musical *Oklahoma*. The fiction award went to Martin Flavin for *Journey in the Dark*, which was not unfavorably reviewed in these pages. Merle Curti's *The Growth of American Thought* and Carleton Mabee's biography of Samuel F. B. Morse were the recipients of the other book awards. Ernie Pyle's dispatches from the front were recognized for their undeniably homey and vivid quality. The *New York Times* was cited for its survey of American history teaching in the colleges, a project which performed a useful service even though it placed too much emphasis on remembering names and dates, and consequently lent itself to distortion by academic conservatives. It seems incredible that the journalists on the prize committee could find no better choice for the best news story than one from a Hearst paper which has devoted itself exclusively to distorting the news and giving comfort to the enemy. Lack of daring or imagination in its choices has deflated the significance once attached to the Pulitzer awards by the reading public.

### How Come?

LAST week's *New Republic* published a special supplement on Congress with a chart analyzing the voting records of the members of the House and Senate. Of the forty-two representatives from New York, only one had a perfect score—that is, he was present and cast a progressive vote on every one of the eighteen foreign and domestic issues listed by the magazine. The lone representative was Vito Marcantonio. The name is familiar. In fact, it bears a striking resemblance to that Vito Marcantonio whom the *New Republic* was only recently depicting as a "Communist" ogre swallowing up the American Labor Party and the whole future of progressive political action in New York State.

### Father Orlemanski

IT'S a strange phenomenon that when an American of Polish descent accepts an invitation to visit the Soviet Union to study a problem close to his heart, he also becomes the victim of slander. Father Orlemanski is a Catholic clergyman with a deep



Like father, like son.

and abiding interest in the affairs of his parish and of his country. He is a faithful American who more than once has spoken against those in his Church who enter the political arena with anti-United Nations lances and then expect immunity from criticism because their attacks were made in clerical raiment. Being a genuine democrat championing the cause of freedom everywhere, Father Orlemanski is keenly interested in Polish developments. He has been open in his castigation of emigre Poles who would rather slay Stalin than Hitler. He has spoken up against the political heirs of Pilsudski and Colonel Beck who in London hold the last official outpost of Polish toryism. All this can be found in his many speeches, particularly in one he made last December in New York under the auspices of the nationalities division of the Council of American-Soviet Friendship. That talk is of a pattern with his work in founding the Kosciuszko League to aid Polish troops fighting alongside the Red Army.

In the academic world Father Orlemanski's trip to the USSR would be called a scientific effort to study problems at first hand, to determine for himself whether the Soviet government is telling the truth about Polish affairs, and to listen to what Poles themselves have to say about their own future. In the back rooms of some sections of the Catholic hierarchy, however, this honest attempt to explore the scene is denounced as a betrayal of priestly trust. The most vociferous of these denunciations has come from Msgr. Michael J. Ready, who has never, so far as we know, uttered a word of disapproval of either Charles Coughlin, Father Curran or of the anti-

democratic statements made by Fulton Sheen. Monsignor Ready is secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference which recently ridiculed the Moscow agreements as violating the rights of small nations and what he said about Orlemanski's trip would put Goebbels to shame. He charged the Soviet government with "keeping the Russian people from a world fraternity." This about the one power that insisted on collective action for more than two decades and has sacrificed millions of lives to make possible a peaceful world community. Is Monsignor Ready among those in this country who would like to destroy the Soviet authority just as Hitler has tried since 1933? He does his Church and country a great disservice, for obviously the day of such nonsense is long past except for the intransigents who are Hitler's friends or dupes. The trend of Catholic lay opinion in Europe, in Latin America and in the United States is completely at odds with such anti-Sovietism. Father Orlemanski represents those enlightened figures in the Catholic Church who know the time of day and move with the stream of world affairs.

### Wolfram For Casualties

ONE of the bitterly ironic notes of the past week came from a parallel reading of a speech by Britain's minister of economic warfare, Lord Selborne, and the text of the statement issued in Washington on the new agreement with Franco. Vehement in his denunciation of neutrals who continue supplying Germany, Lord Selborne demanded that such trade cease. In spite of all this the British, with appar-

ently the reluctant collaboration of our State Department, made an exception of Spain by permitting Madrid to send reduced shipments of wolfram to Berlin in return for Allied oil. Sweden is warned to desist from traffic with the enemy while Spain is allowed such traffic, albeit on considerably restricted terms. Franco gets petroleum, Hitler gets Franco's wolfram, and we get casualty lists of men maimed and killed by German metal hardened with materials from Spanish mines.

Such is the character of an agreement which so many newspapers greeted as a great victory. In truth the victory is Franco's, not ours. For as long as we proceed in our relations with Spain on the premise that Franco is a neutral or that Franco has been neutralized by the recent negotiations, so long will Spanish fascism retain its lease on life. Franco is an ally of Germany. If there should be any doubt on that point then how explain that when we landed in North Africa the whole of the American Fifth Army was assigned to forestall a possible attack by Franquist troops across the Spanish Moroccan border? If Franco is a neutral, then what reason can there be for our government's indictment of a Puerto Rican Falangist in a brief clearly recognizing the Falange as an enemy group with Franco at its head; or how explain Secretary Hull's labelling as infamous the recent Spanish broadcasts urging that we and Britain end hostilities with Germany and join the Nazis in an attack against the Soviet Union? To get a neutral to eliminate commerce with the enemy is one thing: to call an enemy a neutral is to impede the effective functioning of our fundamental policies. The obvious results are that Latin-American sinarquism can rub its hands with glee while its members make attempts on the life of President Camacho in Mexico City and reinforce their positions in Buenos Aires. On April 9, Mr. Hull very ably told the country that our strength was such that we need no longer tolerate evil institutions and that the conduct of our foreign affairs was based on our own growing power, as well as those of our Allies. Unhappily in the case of Spain we act as though we were still weak. We have an ambassador in Madrid who lives in the Munich atmosphere of 1938 and whose appeasement costs us heavily in soldiers' lives. Until he is removed and until we operate from the realistic position that Franco is one of Hitler's many pseudonyms, until then will the democrats of the Spanish speaking world watch us with anxiety and dismay.

### **Attack on Puerto Rico**

THE outrageous charges that have recently been made against Governor Rexford Guy Tugwell of Puerto Rico spring from the same soil that has nur-

tured the Sewell Avery revolt at Montgomery Ward and other copperhead diversions of late weeks. Note first the type of person who is mouthing these charges. One of them is Fred L. Crawford, Congressman from Michigan, whose position on the House Committee on Insular Affairs has been used for the sole purpose of attacking the Roosevelt administration. Having no thought for the welfare of our Caribbean colony he consistently exploits its grave problems in order to destroy national unity behind the Commander-in-Chief in this country. He is ably assisted by a poll taxer from Mississippi, Dan R. McGehee, who last month demanded Tugwell's ouster. The current issue of *Fortune* describes the strategy of these men and their cronies in Congress very well: "By striking at the governor and the Puerto Rican government they can strike at the ideas and influence of the President."

The 1940 elections in Puerto Rico for the first time in the island's history gave a severe trouncing to the forces of reaction, both indigenous and continental, and elevated to a dominant political position the Popular Democratic Party of Luis Munoz Marin. By an unfortunate quirk a Socialist candidate, with only thirty percent of the vote, was elected Resident Commissioner in Washington. For four years the colony has therefore been in the embarrassing position of being falsely represented in the US Congress by a man, Bolivar Pagan by name, who has used his position for a continuous campaign of slander against the democratic trends of Puerto Rico. He has found his natural allies among the Crawford-McGehee defeatist crowd in Washington and, in Puerto Rico, among the reactionary sugar barons, Falangists, and other fascist-minded haters of democracy. Last week Pagan again took up the cry against Tugwell.

It is not surprising that the campaign of falsehoods has been renewed at this particular time. It is not only that we are on the eve of our greatest military effort, nor is it simply that the American people are hammering out real national unity in support of President Roosevelt. For this particular gang there is an additional incentive: unless they can create a disturbance of major proportions in Puerto Rico, a disturbance, for instance, that will lead to unfair elections next fall, they and the whole caboodle whom they represent will soon be out on their political ears. For the Popular Democrats in the recent primaries polled 190,000 votes to a mere 80,000 for the combined opposition and are therefore certain of sweeping victories in the November elections.

The American people, unfortunately,



know so little about Puerto Rico and take so little interest in its affairs that, outside of the efforts of persons like Congressman Marcantonio and of organizations like the Council for Pan-American Democracy, aided by the progressive press, the slanders of Pagan and his cronies in Washington are not properly answered. It is high time that patriotic, pro-war Americans realize that Puerto Rico is one of the problems towards which they must assume a responsible and constructive attitude.

### **German Democrats**

THE newly formed Council for a Democratic Germany marks a good beginning in rallying genuine German anti-fascists here to contribute a measure of strength towards the annihilation of Nazism. The signers of the Council's declaration as well as the composition of its organizing committee, headed by Prof. Paul Tillich, are on the whole representative of the political groups from the Catholic center to the left. Conspicuously absent, with perhaps one or two minor exceptions, is that bourbon group of Social Democrats, who by their anti-Soviet mania have done such yeoman service in hurting the Allied coalition. The Council's program, evolved after a long period of negotiations in which compromise prevailed, is naturally not definitive, but its emphasis on cooperation between the western powers and the USSR in the settlement of European affairs is of distinct value. "It is inevitable," the declaration also notes, "that the German people will have to bear the consequences of the war into which Hitler has driven them." And in addition "those groups which were the bulwarks of German imperialism and which were responsible for the delivery of power into the hands of the Nazis must be deprived of their political, social, and economic power."

The signers of course are opposed to those who would dismember Germany. But they do not make clear that any future system of European security may necessitate German territorial alterations. This is quite different from carving Germany into pieces, for it involves the return of areas which were never German historically. Lacking also is reference to the Teheran and Moscow agreements and their overall significance for Germany's regeneration. But the statement on the whole is an encouraging development and the council itself will expand in usefulness when it recognizes the value of collaborating with the Free German movements in other Allied countries. Strangely enough, the German subscribers to the council's objectives are by far broader in outlook than the Americans sponsoring the council's organization. Among them are such notorious Red-baiters as James A. Wechsler, John Dewey, and George S. Counts, who in the long run can only injure the council's work.





## While We Wait

THE aerial offensive against Germany and France has entered its fourth week, and at this writing the lull on the Eastern Front has lasted a little more than two weeks. These two situations are doubtless intimately linked to each other. It is hard to say who is waiting for whom—Marshal Stalin for General Eisenhower, or General Eisenhower for Marshal Stalin. It is conceivable that Eisenhower and Stalin are both waiting for the terrain to dry a bit in the central and northern sectors of the Eastern Front so that simultaneous blows can be struck from east and west. On that point it is important to note that the big blow in the east will probably be struck not against the “legs” of that German position (i.e., in Rumania), but against the “abdomen,” “heart,” or “head,” i.e., in the direction of Silesia, Berlin, or East Prussia. The terrain will hardly be practicable north of the Kovel parallel for another three or four weeks, especially this year, when spring in Russia has come fifteen to eighteen days late.

It would seem from all appearances that the big eastern blow will fall in the Kovel-Lvov sector. However, strategically speaking, the Dvinsk area is extremely attractive, because from Dvinsk the Red Army could strike in almost any direction and the enemy would be as much at a loss in guessing as Marlborough's opponents when the Duke marched to the Danube. From Dvinsk one can go to Riga, Koenigsberg, Vilna, or Molodechno, to encircle the enemy troops in Latvia and Estonia, break through to East Prussia, or encircle the central German armies in Byelorussia. Whatever the scheme is, a large scale offensive in the center or the north might have to wait for the drying of the now marshy terrain between Pskov and Kovel.

As far as the situation on the Eastern Front is concerned, its chief feature during the last two weeks has been a systematic campaign of bombing by heavy formations of the Soviet Air Force which have repeatedly attacked junctions and concentration points in Estonia, Latvia, as well as Brest-Litovsk, Kovel, Lvov, Sambor, Roman (Rumania), Bakeu, Byrlad, and Galatz. German attacks in the Stanislavov region (between the Dniester and the Prut) appear to have collapsed. The German-advertized Soviet attacks against the bolt position of Kishinev-Yassy seem to have been pure fiction, as Moscow has offered no confirmation of their existence.

The siege of Sevastopol continues. The

German-Rumanian garrison is being gradually squeezed out of the fortress-port into the open sea, where Soviet bombers, submarines, and surface ships of the Black Sea Fleet and torpedo boats are sinking the ships carrying enemy troops to Rumania or Bulgaria. Since the siege started three weeks ago (Balaklava was captured by General Yeremenko on April 18) about 100 enemy ships have been sunk, including some forty transports totaling close to 100,000 tons. Thus it may be surmised that at least 25,000 to 30,000 enemy troops have been fed to the fish, and the garrison of Sevastopol reduced at least one-third by this comparatively cheap method.

THE beginning of the fourth week of the great Allied air offensive has been marked by a great daylight raid on Berlin (May 7). The raid was a departure from the pattern of the last ten days or so, when most attacks, both by British and American fliers, have been concentrated on the railroads which must shuttle the German mobile reserves to the point or points of invasion. The Germans have only from fifty to sixty divisions for the defense of their entire western periphery. It is obvious that they cannot man their so-called “Atlantic Wall” strongly enough to repel the invasion at any given point. Thus it is reported that they are manning the “wall” with about 200,000 “expendables” who must endure to the end, giving the mobile reserves time to reach the scene. These reserves are probably concentrated some 100 miles from the coast in such centers as Reims, Amiens, Blois, Orleans, Nantes, etc. Between these concentrations and the coast lie the crucial railroads which will have to rush these reserves to the scene (or scenes) of the invasion. These railroads are reported to have been blasted until “there is not a single marshaling yard which can make up a train.” Allowing for customary over-optimism, there is little doubt that the paralysis of the German communications is great, if not complete.

It is very interesting to note that on May 4 the RAF struck its first blow against the Wehrmacht *directly* by bombing “great concentrations of tanks and trucks” in the area of Reims. This concentration must have been part of Rommel's mobile reserve. Thus it would appear that the first symptom of a switch from operational to tactical bombing has made its appearance, which tends to confirm our opinion that the hour of real battle is approaching.

THE war in the Far East has been marked by serious deterioration of the Chinese position on the Honan Front. The Japanese using less than 100,000 troops have succeeded in: (1) capturing the key junction of Chengchow where the Lung-Hai Peiping-Hankow railroads cross; (2) capturing an important pass protecting the town of Loyan; (3) capturing all but a forty-mile stretch of the Peiping-Hankow railroad and most of the Lung-Hai railroad. All this means that the enemy will soon control the entire Peiping-Hankow line and will have probably eliminated the salient which the Chinese have held between the Yellow and Yangtze rivers since the beginning of the war. Their zone of occupation will soon be marked by the line from the elbow of the Yellow River to Ichang on the Yangtze. This in turn means that their powerful central operational base in the region of Hankow will have a direct rail connection with the ports of the Yellow and East China Seas and with Manchuria. Their new offensive in the direction of Changsha and Canton which is bound to come in late May will for the first time have the support of good rail communications.

To sum up: the present Japanese drive in Honan is depriving the Chinese of the rich wheat crop of Honan, is eliminating the potential area where Allied bombers could be based for direct flights over Japan (in the Yellow River-Yangtze salient) and is a long step toward the establishment of direct Japanese rail communications between Mukden, Peiping, Canton, Indo-China and Burma. Thus, while our forces are paring down the eastern and southeastern periphery of Japan's defense area by advancing amphibiously with great energy toward the Philippines and south China, the enemy is consolidating his “inner fortress.”

It has repeatedly been asserted that the Chinese central government has close to a million of its best troops in north China, mostly engaged in blockading and “watching” the Eighth People's Army. It is clear that these troops *have not been engaged fully in repelling the Japanese*, who are advancing swiftly with about one-tenth of the numbers the Chinese should have in the Honan region. Thus it would appear that the Chinese “northern generals” have failed to make up their minds as to *who is the real enemy of China—the Japanese or the People's Army*. The consequences to China could be extremely serious.

# Congress Defeatists and Culture

By Virginia Gardner

Washington.

"Today when what we all want more than anything else is to win this war, most Americans are confident that, whatever our origins, we shall be able to pull together to a final victory. Hitler, though, has always believed we were wrong; he has believed that hard feeling would break out and leave us defeated. He has been sure that he could 'divide and conquer.' He has believed that he could convince non-white races in Asia and Africa that this is a 'white man's war.' He has believed especially that America was a no man's land, where peoples of all origins were ready to fall to fighting among themselves. He believes that this is a front on which we are doomed to lose the battle. It is certainly a front no less important in this war than the Production Front and the Inflation Front."—From "The Races of Mankind," by Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish.

IT WAS no accident that one of the first acts of the Nazi regime was to order book burnings. It likewise is no accident that chief among the self-appointed arbiters of our culture in Congress are such men as Rep. John Taber, New York Republican reactionary, Dies committeeman Joe Starnes of Alabama, happily defeated in last week's primary, and Rep. Andrew J. May of Kentucky. May, an opponent of the anti-poll tax bill, is chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee, which two weeks ago submitted its report on *The Races of Mankind*.

It is axiomatic that a nation's culture must reflect the extent to which it wages an all-out war. So those cultural expressions which reflect most vigorously the life of the people in this people's war are most intimately connected with the very prosecution of the war. Thus the natural pivot of war activity for many artists with the richest skills was the Office of War Information. In the early days of the war they flocked to Washington. Pressures were brought to bear, and before long inner OWI policies appeasing Congress had resulted in the exodus of many writers. In the end Congress passed a law preventing OWI from distributing any pamphlet or periodical of any kind in this country.

A little band of defeatists and reactionary Republicans, aided by poll tax and white supremacy southern Democrats, consistently has set itself up as censor and destroyer of our culture in wartime. There will be no more moving and beautiful brochures such as *Negroes and the War*, put out by OWI. Two million copies of this brochure, which employed exciting

new techniques, the best of photography, the most original layout and design, were printed. A half million were distributed. But Representative Starnes protested. Thus ended this adventure in a popular art form, designed for mass distribution to show the Negro's role in the war, at a time when such unity-welding creations might have done much to stem the anti-Negro hysteria fomented in Detroit and elsewhere. The other million and a half copies of the brochure were put in warehouses or destroyed. This did not prevent Taber and Co., leading the Republican-dominated attack, from using the furore over the brochure and other items virtually to wipe out OWI's domestic branch.

The War Department and its orientation courses were another natural pivot for the activity of some of our best genius—film writers and directors, scientific writers, and historians. No doubt the political education afforded our armed forces could be intensified, yet certain outstanding ventures in this field have been successfully carried out, chief among them the notable series of films shown all soldiers. Every such step is taken warily, in fear and trembling—of Congress, to which all agencies must come for appropriations. The defeatist press, which has a number of wholly owned subsidiaries in Congress, needs only to crack its whip to cause a sensitive war agency, or those planning a film or radio program for the Army or OWI, to jump. The War Department's masterful motion picture *The Battle for Russia* was shown here for preview. Actually it stuck to history and fact. It simply told what happened in regard to Finland and Poland. But a *Chicago Tribune* reporter newly assigned to Washington and apparently

anxious to make good, wrote something, which was printed in the *Washington Times-Herald*, that was neither a review nor a news story. In it he lambasted New Deal agencies for defending the Soviet Union's foreign policy and justifying her war on Finland. Before the film was released to the public it was watered down and fixed to some extent. It remained an excellent film, and the public acclaimed it widely. But it is a case in point.

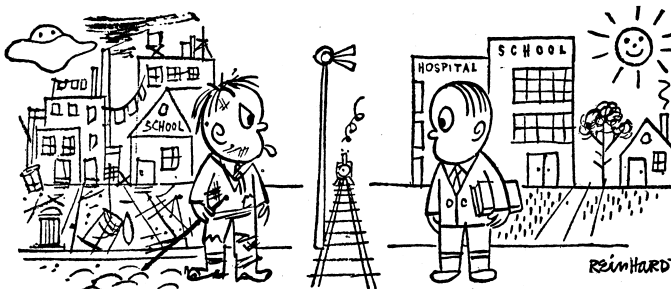
Now, I am reliably informed, 55,000 copies of *The Races of Mankind*—a pamphlet purchased from the Public Affairs Committee, Inc., for use in the Army's orientation course—are reposing in a Washington warehouse. The Army dropped it from its course when the House passed a resolution to investigate the pamphlet. The investigating committee, months later, has completed its study and reported to Congress on it. But such summary action by the War Department before the investigation was even begun did not satisfy the House Military Affairs Committee. It grumbles that the War Department is permitting the pamphlet's distribution for "off-duty discussion." It complains that "the American soldier is still permitted to read it." I asked the committee counsel if this hit at Army libraries, or what. He couldn't tell me. The report adds: "It is significant that the loudest protests against the banning of *The Races of Mankind* by both the War Department and the United Service Organizations come from such publications as the *Daily Worker* and *PM*."

The "most controversial" part of the pamphlet, May's committee finds, is its use of data obtained from intelligence tests in the Army in the first World War. Says the committee:

"Southern whites from states having small educational appropriations are compared with northern Negroes from states with much greater budgets, to the detriment of the former." An anonymous military officer, says the committee, testified that the intelligence test used "was no more than a test of retained schooling." Exactly the point the pamphlet made! All it attempted to show

## Frivolous?

THE RACES OF MANKIND



WITH BETTER HOME, SCHOOL, MEDICAL CARE, JOHNNY COULD HAVE BEEN JIMMY.

was that there was no inborn difference in mentality between whites and blacks.

The committee report is so crudely written that it is difficult in places to determine just what was meant. It declares: "The committee is convinced that war-time is no time to engage in the publication and distribution of pamphlets presenting controversial issues or promoting propaganda for or against any subdivision of the American people." Does this allude to the pamphlet's "controversial" contention that we shouldn't allow Hitler to divide the American people? Should we be neither for nor against disunity?

My attempt to have some light shed on some of the confused, or simply illiterate, statements in the report met with little success. I went to the committee counsel, H. Ralph Burton, chief of the committee's investigation staff, finding him on the top floor of the old House Office Building, where the investigative staffs of the Dies committee, the committee probing the Federal Communications Commission and other inquisitorial committees are cozily huddled with their formidable records and reports and staffs, working away like busy little termites.

The committee didn't like artist Ad Reinhardt's illustrations. It found them "crude, grotesque, and frivolous." It takes exception to the artist's conception of Adam and Eve. "Adam and Eve are depicted with navels in this scientific work." Close inspection bears out the committee's conclusion.

I asked Burton about the significance of this. Attorney Burton placed his hands comfortably over the paunchy part of his own anatomy which, presumably, hid somewhere in its ample folds the offending item artist Reinhardt had attributed to Adam and Eve. He looked at me steadily with what might be described as the suggestion of a leer in a face less granite-like. "Well," he said, "Adam and Eve were born of no woman. They had no father or mother. So it's not very scientific, is it, to depict them with navels?" He paused, added: "You get it?"

The logic was irrefutable. Yet the committee seemed to be doing just what it complained of: "One hardly expects a scientific work to base conclusions on a literal interpretation of Old Testament accounts such as that of the creation of Adam and Eve."

MR. BURTON's literal mindedness did not apply elsewhere. Solemnly he assured me the committee report showed no racial antipathy. It was, he said, the handiwork of the staff as a whole. He modestly laid no claim to writing it himself. I asked him if he had questioned any of the people, the authors or members of the Public Affairs Committee, who were smeared in the report. He didn't see why he should, he said, or why it was assumed

he had so much to do with any investigation. I suggested he must get paid—by the taxpayers—for doing something. I asked him about his former connection with Charles E. Coughlin. Every so often, he replied, *PM* or the *Daily Worker*—between which he apparently fails to differentiate despite all *PM*'s Red-baiting—recalled the fact he once was legal counsel for Coughlin.

"A lawyer has a legal right to represent a Mohammedan," he said. "Father Coughlin is a Catholic priest. So what? What is all this about Coughlin? What has he done? He hasn't been indicted, has he?"

As for himself, he believed in the Constitution, in democratic processes, in freedom of expression. Why, no one could call him anti-Semitic, he had a secretary who was Jewish.

He had heard it claimed that Coughlin was anti-Semitic, he said grudgingly. "Well, what if Father Coughlin did have in the recesses of his mind some feeling against the Jews?" he asked. No one would know it if he kept it in the recesses of his mind, I observed. "Well," he persisted, "what if he brought it out in some writings or a speech or two? It's a free country, isn't it? Isn't there freedom of expression? There's no law against it, is there? What if a man didn't think the Negroes were the equal of whites, and he said so? Hasn't he a legal right to say so?"

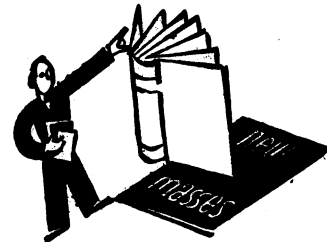
And what if he went further, I asked, and differed with our war aims, and said so, as Coughlin did? Apparently the Department of Justice had felt there was some violation in law in what his magazine said, because in the spring of 1942 it began to move in on *Social Justice*. And what if the Department of Justice (thanks to the pusillanimous behavior of Attorney General Biddle) did drop its grand jury sedition inquiry into *Social Justice* when Coughlin came forward and claimed responsibility for the magazine, despite his previous claims to the contrary, and closed it down? (This was all a complete surprise to Burton, of course. "That's all news to me," he said blandly.)

All this had doubtless escaped his his attention, I said, but he surely was aware that one of the charges against the thirty persons on trial for sedition was that they engaged in disseminating anti-Semitism to oblige Hitler?

"I didn't know anything about that case," Burton said stiffly. "I have no connection with any of those people. I have no interest in anything except in furthering the prosecution of the war."

I congratulated him and on that happy note we parted.

CHAIRMAN MAY, who was widely quoted before the committee began its "investigation," said he was misunderstood. He himself was without any bias against Negroes, he said, and to prove it he



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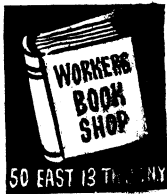
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went on, in the most reasonable tone: "I did think, of course, and still do, that if Negroes were let alone and if they stayed in their place and continued to make progress as they have since the Civil War, that we'd never have any trouble with 'em. We don't where I come from. Why, they vote for me like sheep going over a fence. We have no trouble with 'em—except on Saturday night when they go around those liquor stores and begin carvin' each other up."

He believed in segregation—separation, he called it. "But mentally, I don't know which rates higher," he said mildly. "I think whites do, but maybe they don't. I think Negroes make valued citizens in their place. But I don't think they make as good soldiers. I don't think they show the courage white soldiers do. At least I've been told that by high-ranking officers."

Having delivered himself of that Hitler trademarked blockbuster as if it were some ordinary pleasantry, he became really exercised when I asked him what was the most significant thing the committee "uncovered" about *The Races of Mankind*. "Why, that the thing was written by a Communist to begin with—we got the goods on her—and that it's Communist in its statements," he said without a moment's hesitation.

Against Ruth Benedict the report assembles the usual variety of activities listed by the Dies, Kerr, and other committees on the grounds that anti-fascism prior to our war against fascism proves a person to be a Communist. There is an innovation when it adds post-Pearl Harbor activities such as "sponsor, United Nations in America dinner." Among the Public Affairs Committee members likewise listed are such well-known Red-baiters as Mark Starr and Pres. Harry D. Gideonse of Brooklyn College. To a congressional witch-hunting committee, there are no fine distinctions. All Dr. Gideonse's own witch-hunts avail him not in the committee's eyes. As to one Violet Edwards, it could cite only a single damning fact: in 1940 she was a sponsor of a conference of the Council Against Intolerance in America.

As for the pamphlet's other author, Gene Weltfish, the committee dismisses her in one sentence. It says simply that she "is an instructor in the Jefferson School of Social Science, which, according to its own prospectus, is dedicated to working class movements, the labor movement, and action on the part of all people—the Communist formula, unadorned."

The hearings held by a subcommittee composed of three southern Democrats and two northern Republicans were closed hearings. No transcript of the testimony is or will be available. No one of the numerous persons smeared was called before the committee.

Truly the Dies-Goebbels formula, unadorned.

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## Shelter in Marseille

(Continued from page 18)

had all the necessary papers, but when he started to board his ship the port authorities wouldn't give him the final stamp."

"Why?"

"He had escaped from camp when the Germans arrived," the old man answered in his earlier tired voice. At the same time, he had also—well, not crumpled up, for he held himself too erect for that—but rather shrunk a little. "He had no discharge from the camp, and so everything was all off."

I pricked up my ears. In this dark maze of advice, utterly unimportant as far as I was concerned, this last point had some significance for me. Never before had I heard anything about a stamp being issued by port authorities. This young man was greatly to be pitied, but he was at fault because of his lack of foresight. I certainly would never be held up because of that last stamp; I was forewarned. But then, I was never going away.

"As luck will have it," I said, "none of this concerns me at all. I want just one thing, and that is to stay here for a while, without being bothered by anyone."

"How mistaken you are!" he exclaimed. "I'm telling you for the third time that you can stay here for any length of time only if you can prove that you intend to leave. Don't you understand that?"

"No!" I got up. I was heartily tired of the fellow.

"Your bag!" he called after me.

These two words made me remember something I'd forgotten for weeks—the letters belonging to that man who'd committed suicide in the Rue de Vaugirard when the Germans marched into Paris. I had long since got used to the idea of considering the bag my own property. Weidel's meager possessions took up only a little space in the jumble of my own things. I'd forgotten all about them. Now I could take everything to the consul. Weidel's wife would be sure to ask for mail there. I wondered how something that had stirred me up so much in Paris could possibly have vanished so thoroughly from my mind. So that was the stuff Weidel's magic was fashioned from! But perhaps it was my own volatile mind that was to blame.

I started again to hunt for a room. I came to a huge dim square, three sides of which were almost dark; the fourth was pricked by lights like a seacoast. That was the Belsunce. Heading for the lights, I lost myself in a network of little streets. I went into the first hotel I came to and climbed up a steep stairway that led to the lighted window of the owner's office. I was ready to be told that there were no rooms, but instead the woman shoved the register to me. She watched closely while I copied my refugee certificate. She asked

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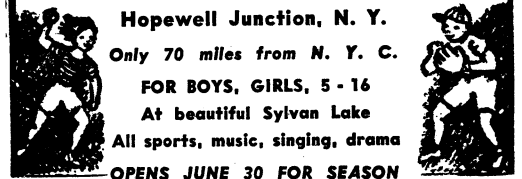
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me for my safe-conduct and laughed when she saw me hesitate.

"If the place is raided, it'll be your hard luck. I want a week's payment in advance. That's because you're here without a permit, you see. You should've gotten permission from the police before you came to Marseille. What country are you heading for?"

I told her that I had no intention of going anywhere else. In my flight from the Germans I'd been driven from one place to another and had happened to land here. I had no visa, no steamship ticket, and I couldn't very well walk across the ocean. She had seemed to be quiet, almost indolent, but this gave her a jolt.

"Why, you don't want to stay here, do you?" she exclaimed, startled.

"Why not? You're staying, aren't you?"

She laughed at this and handed me the key with a room number on a tin disk. I could hardly make my way to the room, the corridor was so blocked by countless pieces of luggage. They belonged to a group of Spaniards, men and women, all of whom wanted to leave that night for Mexico by way of Casablanca and Cuba. I thought to myself with satisfaction, so the young fellow at the Mexican Consulate in the Rue Longuin was right after all! There are boats, and they're here in the harbor.

While I was falling asleep I felt as if I were actually on a ship, not because I'd heard so much about ships or intended to take passage myself, but because I was dizzy and miserable among all this profusion of impressions and sensations which I no longer had the strength to try and figure out. Then too, noises came from all around me as if I were sleeping on a slippery raft, surrounded by a drunken crew. The luggage outside was rolled and knocked around; it sounded as if it had been stowed away carelessly in the hold of a storm-tossed ship. I heard French curses and farewells in Spanish. The last thing I was conscious of hearing came from far away but was more penetrating than anything else—a simple little song that I'd last heard in Germany before any of us, even Schickelgruber himself, knew who Hitler was. Then I must have fallen asleep.

I dreamed I had left the suitcase somewhere, and I looked for it in the most absurd places, in the school I'd gone to as a boy at home, at the Binnetts' in Marseille, at Yvonne's farmhouse, on the docks in Normandy. I finally saw it on a gang-plank, the planes came swooping down in a nose dive, and I ran back again, shaken by a deadly fear.

"Shelter in Marseille" is a section, somewhat abridged, from Anna Seghers' new novel "Transit," published by Little Brown.

## The Kids and Ken

(Continued from page 13)

the ambulance drove off. A policeman went around to the dispersing crowd. The sailor rubbed his head and shoved the screen door open and looked dazed at the tables, bar, and juke box. He began looking for his girl. The policeman went around with his notebook and asked some people what happened and wrote everything down with a stubby pencil and then went over to the thin little man in the gutter. The little man was sitting up and rubbing his jaw and looking all around him at all the people. The policeman asked the little man his name and what had taken place and how was he feeling and would he be able to come down to the station to prefer charges. Mousey looked up and blinked. The policeman explained to him what he meant by "preferring charges."

Willie and Joe leaned against the pane glass till everyone had gone. Hot music was again coming out from the juke box. The wool hat was still by the drying blood and the lunch pail lay smashed in the gutter. Willie looked into the store and then down the street. He walked over quickly and picked up the hat, shoved it into his pocket, grabbed up the lunch box and walked across the street. Joe ran after him.

They walked through the streets past the dark houses with single rooms lit and radio music coming out faintly. Tree leaves and bare boughs made skeleton fingers on the walk. They moved fast, not speaking, thoughts and feelings going hot through them, both of them feeling like falling down and crying and both afraid to talk and open their mouths because then they would have to cry.

Passing the railroad station they saw the yellow car that had belonged to the man with the panama hat. It was parked by a tree next to the loading platform. The long tracks shimmered in the moonlight and a slight wind blew up at them with the smell of cut grass that had a warm softness to it.

Willie turned to Joe. "Keep watch," he said in a stiff voice.

"Aye, aye, sir."

There was a hissing of air, and Joe paced in front of the car, erect, with his eyes moving fast to all sides. Three more hisses followed and the car settled in the dirt. "Almost done," whispered Willie and he unscrewed the gasoline cap.

The two of them ran over the railroad ties. Willie ran ahead and hummed like a plane. Running down the tracks, humming and the piece of moon high in the clear sky with star dots all over. The wool cap in his pocket, and swinging the lunch pail in one hand. Joe held on to the gasoline cap and made up the rear. The Flying Fortress and the fighter escort returning home from a mission.

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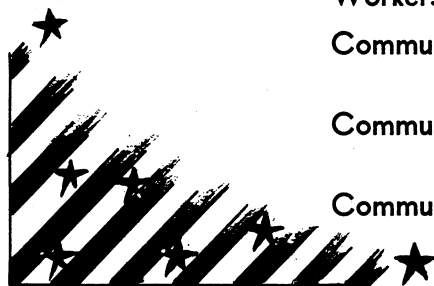
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# JOHN L. SPIVAK

## **Dear Reader:**

Now that you've read my series in NEW MASSES, "The Secret Conspiracy Against America," I'd like to write you a personal note. I feel this is the most crucial period in our lifetime, and the things I saw and wrote about are pretty dangerous to you and to the country. I know that you will do everything you can to put the world's enemies out of business. I know the magazine in which these articles appeared will continue to do the pioneering work it began years ago. Which brings me to the reason for this letter—the NEW MASSES. Its editor Joe North asked me to write you an appeal for funds to keep this magazine going to do the job that has to be done. I resisted writing that letter, because I'm no good at that sort of thing. I wrote him a note to that effect, and he insisted that that note go on to you. So—here it is:

## **Dear Joe:**

**I don't think I should write a "Dear Reader" appeal for funds to meet NM's annual deficit. They don't need a contributor's urging. I'm sure they'll take your word just as much as mine.**

**I think you'd have no difficulty if you got them to feel their part not only in keeping NEW MASSES alive, but in the stuff that goes into it. Suppose, for instance, I were in Chicago working on some native fascist and ran out of money, and I approached an NM reader and told him I needed \$10 to finish the job. I have a feeling that he'd find it for me if he didn't have it in his pocket. Your situation isn't much different.**

**Then, I'd tell them that to get a series like the one I just finished cost several thousand dollars. That'll give them an idea of the sort of expenditure you must meet to give them stuff they don't get anywhere else. Tell them how much it costs to wander from city to city, to live in hotels, and all the rest of it. I think it would help them feel that they are the ones who finance the digging, and not a bunch of editors sitting in rickety chairs in some New York office.**

**I'd point out that after all the digging and writing is finished, the information is of no use unless it's published, and if there is no NM there'll be no similar exposes of value to them and to the country.**

**This, of course, is only one fraction of what goes into the magazine, but I think if you make them feel their personal responsibility for what goes into NM, you'll find they'll come through.**

**I'll drop in at the beginning of the week.**

**Jack**

That's the note. I can't say any more—The rest is up to you. I'll be dropping in at NEW MASSES next week to see how things are going.

