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IS "WORLD GOVERNMENT" THE ANSWER?
Joshua Strauss

A POEM BY LOUIS ARAGON

CLASS STRUGGLE: 1946 MODEL
Elizabeth G. Flynn

dear reader:

When I joined the editorial board of New Masses recently, I did so because I wanted to work with a free press. I wanted to be associated with a magazine that has fought, year in and year out, for the highest human values and for the ending of the oppression of man by man.

The first step on the road toward fascism is to throttle the voice of the people. Our so-called free press is a mockery, and the men of the trusts own ninety percent of the country's newspapers and magazines. They have declared for reaction, for dictatorship, for repression with no holds barred. If you ever had any doubts of this, the events of the past few weeks must have convinced you.

In the light of the domestic and international situation, with powerful and desperate forces hurling our country nearer to war, *a free press is not merely a luxury, not merely a need, but the vital difference between freedom and slavery.* New Masses is such a free press. It speaks of you, for the people, for the oppressed, the voiceless! It tells the truth! It is unafraid and unequivocal!

You need New Masses, and only you can give it the power to continue. We have no million; no men of the trusts back us; it is you, our readers, on whom we must depend.

And we need help—all the help you can give us. A hundred dollars or five dollars or one dollar—send us what you can. Our need is great, but we think *your* need is greater.

Make it possible for us to continue our good fight!

Howard Fast.

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Keep up the good work. Enclosed is my contribution for $ . . . .

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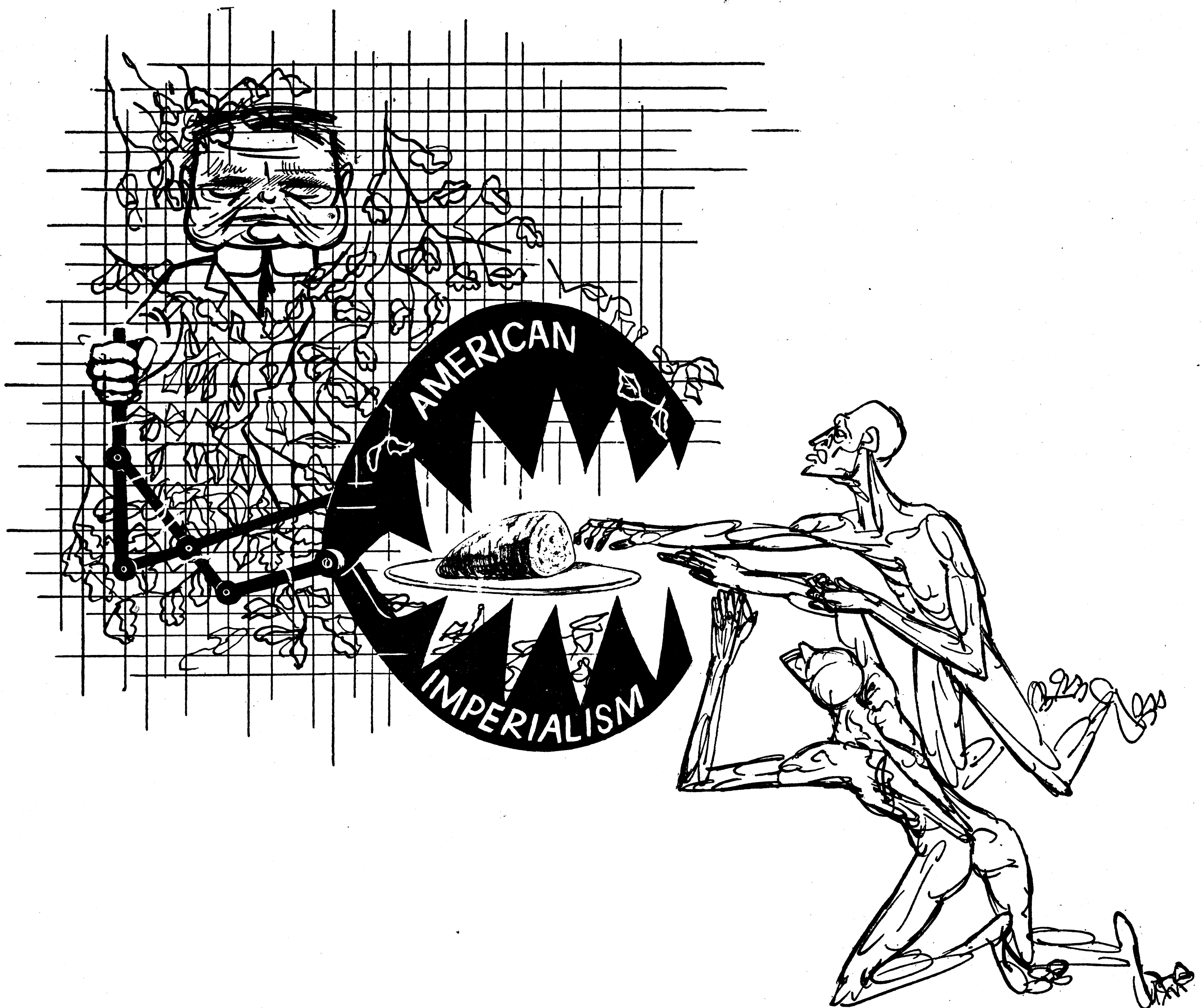


Milton Zolotow.

IS "WORLD GOVERNMENT" THE ANSWER?

Obscuring the dominant role of imperialism, the advocates of a "World State" see national sovereignty as the root of international conflict.

By JOSHUA STRAUSS

LAST February, nearly 1,000 of "America's most prominent scientists, writers, actors, industrialists and clergymen" (so described in the New York *Herald Tribune*) petitioned President Truman to "invite the governments of the peoples of the world to a world constitutional convention for the purpose of setting up a world government." Among the petitioners were honest advocates of world peace and security such as Albert Einstein, Joseph Salerno (president of the Massachusetts State CIO Industrial Union Council), UAW vice-president R. J. Thomas, Helen Hayes, Leland Stowe and many others. In the same company were such notorious reactionaries as Louis Bromfield and Fletcher Pratt and Red-baiters from the Social-Democratic camp such as President Harry D. Gideonse of Brooklyn College, Varian Fry and Arthur Garfield Hays. Since February, the number of world government advocates has grown steadily. James Carey, Professor Harold C. Urey, Louis Fischer and several NAM leaders are among the more recent converts.

The world state drive cannot be dismissed lightly. Its bible, Emery Reves' *The Anatomy of Peace,* has been near the top of the best-seller lists for a year. It has just been reissued in a paper-bound edition of 100,000 copies by Pocket Books. *Readers' Digest* has reprinted the book in condensed form and is circulating a discussion outline about it among schools and study groups. The Catholic magazine *The Commonweal* published one chapter in its June 15, 1945 issue with the "hope that the sample given may lead readers to study the whole of Mr. Reves' thesis," which, in an

unsigned review in the same issue, the editors call "basically a sound thesis." Reves and other world state advocates are frequent contributors to *American Mercury*, magazine of the anti-Soviet literary racketeers. Former Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts, together with Carl and Mark Van Doren, initiated an "open letter to the American people," signed by twenty well-known names, plugging the Reves book. The letter has appeared in newspapers and periodicals all over the country.

Norman Cousins' *Modern Man is Obsolete* is equally illustrative. Originally published as an editorial article in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, it later appeared, somewhat expanded, in book form, and has already sold well over 50,000 copies. Finally, we should note Professor Einstein's widely quoted article on the atomic bomb and world government in the November, 1945, issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, which closes with a reverential bow to Reves' book.

Like all utopian ideas, the world state has an obvious appeal. For many, the vision of a "world state" is comforting, a "rational," "common sense" way out of the welter of wage struggles, colonial upheavals and bitter political strife that has followed immediately upon the ending of the war. But by diverting attention from the real conflicts in society and by seeking solutions in abstract reason and justice rather than in the actual class forces of society, it weakens the struggle for progress and strengthens the hand of reaction.

Reves—and I cite him at length because he is the accepted theorist of world government—states the core of his ideas in the following series of propositions:

"1. That in all steps of history, social units of equal sovereignty in contact inescapably get into conflict and war.

"2. That a phase of human history marked by a series of clashes between a particular type of equal sovereign units comes to a close when sovereign power is transferred from the conflicting groups to a higher unit.

"3. That a transitory period of relative peace follows each such transfer of sovereignty.

"4. That a new cycle of wars begins as soon as the new units of equal sovereignty come into contact with each other."

The entire world, he also writes in his book, is torn by a "conflict which threatens to destroy all the possible achievements of the past two centuries. This conflict is the clash between industrialism and political nationalism." Both capitalism and socialism have failed miserably to prevent it and necessarily so, since no "economic system *as such* is capable of solving the issues." "Wars between national units are caused, not by the internal structure of the economic and social system within these individual nation-states but by the fact that they are independent, sovereign units whose relationship is unregulated." During the war that has just ended, he continues, the USSR, one of the "two most virulently imperialist nations" today, along with the United States, was "defending exactly the same position—that of unrestricted national sovereignty—as did Lodge, Johnson and Borah in the United States Senate" in 1919.

Unrestricted national sovereignty is *the* evil, then, as once it had been tribal sovereignty and later the sovereignty of the feudal barons. Just as the feudal wars ended when sovereignty was transferred to the king, and dynastic wars with the creation of the nation-state, the latter must now give way to the world-state, the next "higher" unit.

"The seeds of the twentieth century crisis," writes Reves, "began to germinate almost immediately after the establishment of the modern democratic nation-states. Quite independently of the organization of the nation-states . . . something happened which was destined to become an equally strong movement . . . industrialism. . . . The political framework of our world with its seventy or eighty nation-states is an insurmountable obstacle to free industrial progress, to individual liberty and to social security."

It is a "mental aberration" to place any trust in international diplomacy, treaties, collective security, the UN. They are all "static, nation-centric conceptions." The UN is a "feeble and antiquated instrument" (Cousins), a "tragic illusion" (the Roberts open letter), an "epileptic convulsion of the incurably infirm system of nation-states" (Reves). What is needed at once is a world government, with the power to make law and to exercise the force to compel obedience. "Democratic sovereignty of the people," writes Reves, "can be correctly expressed and effectively instituted only if local affairs are handled by local

Dana Fradon.

government, national affairs by national government, and international, world affairs by international, world government."

Of course, there is a sharp indictment of imperialism (Reves calls it "industrialism" and balances his condemnation with a parallel attack on socialism), and the urgency of discovering a solution is heavily underscored. These critical elements are what gives the world state program its appeal.

Having made the indictment, however, the world government advocates depart from reality in search of the Idea that will save the world. One sentence just quoted is the Achilles heel of the entire argument: Industrialism, says Reves, "happened" quite "independently of the organization of the nation-state." Industrialism "happened," the nation-state "happened," wars "happen,"—all products of an unexplained, abstract, mystical process. It is never men who create states or make wars, and certainly not historically determined men with specific class characteristics and class interests.

No one could deny that there is an element of fact in Reves' four propositions. "Social units of equal sovereignty" have engaged in war repeatedly, and so on. Not one of the propositions contains the whole truth, however, and a half-truth is frequently more dangerous than none at all. What Reves does not take into account is that every one of the steps he describes in the history of state-forms, in the conflicts between states, and in the cessation of these conflicts after the creation of new forms, is a revolutionary step, the triumph of a new class creating new political forms in its own interest. The feudal barons fought one another, for example, not because of some abstraction called "sovereignty" or "independence," but because the feudal economy itself, and its political and social superstructure, drove them to war. Out of the feudal system was born the class of burghers. This class, pursuing its narrowest class interests, rallied around the kings and city tyrants to eliminate the feudal princelings, take their holdings, and consolidate them into city-states and absolute monarchies, the only form of political organization in which the newly-created capitalist economy could survive and grow.

This is not the place for a step-by-step account of the political history of bourgeois society. The important point is that the contemporary nation-state is a bourgeois state, whose function is to maintain bourgeois rule internally while fostering the interests of the bourgeoisie externally, ultimately by war.

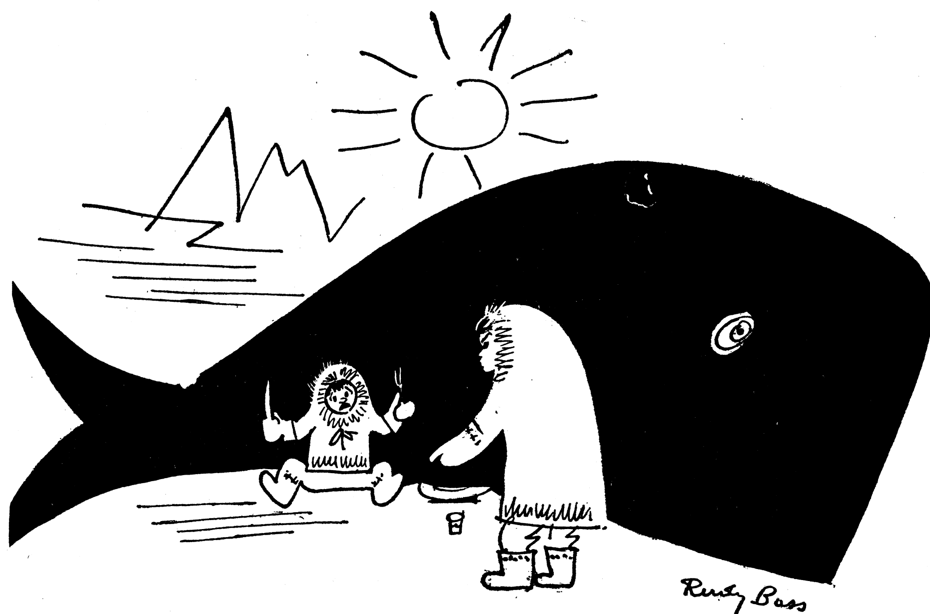
Not only is it not true that industrialism arose "quite independently of the organization of the nation-state," but it was able to arise only after, and because, the nation-state had been organized. From the latter part of the eighteenth century on, the two developed in the closest interrelationship. The state fostered industrialism, and growing industrialism determined the internal and external history of the state.

By the end of the nineteenth century, capitalism reached its monopoly stage, or imperialism. Imperialism is characterized by: (1) the concentration of production and capital into monopolies as the decisive factor in the economy; (2) the creation of a financial oligarchy through the merger of bank capital and industrial capital; (3) the export of capital (to be sharply differentiated from the export of commodities); (4) the creation of international monopolies (cartels) that divide up the world among themselves; and (5) the completion of the process, begun some four centuries earlier, of the territorial division of the entire world among the big capitalist nations (until the October Revolution permanently removed the peoples comprising the Soviet Union from either end of imperialist rule).

The maneuvers within the monopolies and cartels and the struggles among them for raw materials, markets and places to export capital have led to unceasing rivalries, and ultimately wars. Because capitalism develops unevenly in different countries, the later entries into the imperialist arena find the world already fully divided, and must resort to war in order to wrest a share from the older imperialisms. As illustrations, Germany and Japan come to mind at once.

The modern nation, which capitalism brought into being as the political form appropriate to its needs, has become under imperialism an instrument to be used when possible, to be abandoned or destroyed when necessary. Sovereignty, the legal expression of nationhood, is also nothing but a pawn in the imperialist game. Not only is the sovereignty of a *foreign* state a pawn, as was the sovereignty of Czechoslovakia at Munich, *but the sovereignty of one's own state, too.* Today the bourgeoisie does not hesitate to surrender its own national independence when its class interests call. Thus, the dominant sections of the French bourgeoisie *gave up* the sovereignty of their country to Hitler's German Empire. I underline "gave up," for after a few days of token resistance, they betrayed their nation, and left Hitler with the relatively simple task of conquering the largely unarmed masses who did resist. There lies the complete denial of the theory that sovereignty is the root of the world crisis.

The concluding section of Mr. Strauss' article will appear next week.



"And don't waste any, Oolick—remember the meatless Americans."

OH WAD SOME POWER THE GIFTIE GIE US . . .

An Editorial by A. B. MAGIL

Do you feel very moral today? Is your soul filled with righteous fervor and your mind with that pure nobility of thought that comes from breathing the austere air of Principle? Or isn't your name James F. Byrnes, Secretary of State?

Today the peoples of Europe are looking at *us*. And what a moral spectacle they behold! A gang of profit-mad corporations and their Congressional fixers have just participated with indecent haste in what they hope are the last rites over the body of price control. And now they are moving on, hell-bent for hijacking billions of dollars out of the American people. Millions living in poverty will have less to eat and less to wear, people will be thrown out on the streets because they can't pay higher rents, homeless veterans will continue to be homeless if the real rulers of America and their obliging Senator Tafts have their way. What becomes of Mr. Byrnes' unctuous sermons to the peoples of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Poland and Rumania, who in their benighted fashion are struggling to achieve a social and political order in which they themselves, rather than big business racketeers, will shape their destiny? Isn't it *our* way of life—the monopoly capitalist way—that has a lot of explaining to do in face of the monstrous depravity represented by the slaughter of OPA?

Is there anybody with the brass to insist that all this, deplorable though it may be, was after all a very democratic murder, that price control was done to death by the will of the people? A recent public opinion poll shows that more than eight out of every ten Americans want the extension of price control. We can be sure that only the overwhelming nature of this public sentiment could have persuaded so listless a supporter of price control as President Truman to ignore the advice of his own Congressional leaders and veto the ersatz OPA bill sent to him.

Then why did the members of Congress vote as they did in an election year?

They voted as they did because, election or no election, money talks in this richest capitalist country: the millions of dollars spent by the National Association of Manufacturers and other business groups and corporations were an articulate power against price control. That power, driving the Republican machine and large segments of the Democratic Party, produced many anti-OPA votes.

The members of Congress voted as they did because the Democratic Party itself is so largely a captive of its reactionary Southern members, who don't worry about elections because under the poll-tax dictatorship the outcome is rarely in doubt.

They voted as they did because the Truman administration began immediately after V-J Day to lift controls and give price concessions to big business, while its whole course in foreign and domestic affairs nurtured those ultra-reactionary forces that were working to atomize price control.

And they voted as they did because, though eight out of ten Americans favor price control, not even one out of ten took the trouble to let Congress know it. Meanwhile the NAM crowd enlisted a corporal's guard of small business concerns and farmers who, with the help of the press, trumped up a "popular revolt" against OPA.

Mr. Byrnes is busy with other affairs far from his native land, but one can imagine some citizen of Yugoslavia or Poland saying to him: "If that's democracy, no thanks; I prefer my own kind." Of course, it isn't democracy except in a very limited sense. Its foundation is thoroughly undemocratic: ownership of the entire economic plant, of the nation's means of life by a financial and industrial oligarchy. Even Max Lerner speaks in *PM* (July 2) of "the profit-greedy corporations who rule American economic life—and its political life as well." One could only wish that Mr. Lerner would retain this insight and that next week or the week after would not find him extolling "Western democracy" and discovering totalitarianism in the one country where the profit-greedy corporations have been abolished and economic and political power is in the hands of the people—the Soviet Union.

Yet the real menace not only to our bread and butter, but to our and mankind's peace, stems from those very corporations which seek to make their domain the entire world.

Yes, they do these things differently in socialist Russia. The other day the Soviet government announced the dismissal, imprisonment and fining of a number of factory directors, engineers and accountants who faked production figures, distributed illegal bonuses and misappropriated factory funds. Anne O'Hare McCormick chortled over this news in her column in the New York *Times*. "For it must be hard to proclaim," she wrote (June 29), "even as a warning, that there are so many profiteers and grafters, so many who behave like 'capitalists,' among Soviet executives." Mrs. McCormick wrote more truly than she realized. These Soviet citizens who betrayed their trust did indeed behave like capitalists. The corruption which is an isolated phenomenon under socialism is the very flesh and bone of capitalism, sanctioned for the most part by law. If we in this country dealt with such corruption as does the socialist people's government of Russia, we would have to empty our jails of common criminals in order to make room for the capitalist class.

What a moral gulf lies between socialist democracy and that maimed democracy whose matrix is capitalist exploitation, profiteering, imperialism, Bilboism and all their cognate evils! What a commentary on the blessings of "free enterprise" is the saturnalia of rent-gouging and predatory price increases touched off by the extinction of OPA! But this Lucullan feast may have a decidedly unpleasant aftermath. There is a host other than Wall Street to be reckoned with. The eight out of ten who want price control, if the scattered fingers of their strength are joined into a single fist of organized action, can quickly bring to their senses the gentlemen in Congress who have mistaken the ring of the cash register for *vox populi*.

PEOPLE'S SONGS AND SINGERS

A technique and organization to spread the songs of labor throughout the land, circumventing the music monopoly of Broadway and Hollywood.

By PETER SEEGER

THREE young guitar pickers stood on a platform in the center of Pittsburgh last March and led a crowd of 8,000 striking electrical workers in singing union songs. They were rallying there to protest an anti-picketing injunction, and when they sang "Solidarity Forever" and "You Can't Scare Me, I'm Sticking to the Union," and "In Spite of Governor Martin, We Shall Not Be Moved" you could hear it all through downtown Pittsburgh. People leaned out of office buildings for blocks down the street to listen.

In a Southern labor school a young millworker moved her classmates to tears one day when she sang a song called "The Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues":

Old Man Sargent, sitting at the desk
The damned old fool won't give us no rest.
He'd take the nickels off a dead man's eyes
To buy a Coca-cola and a Pomo pie.
I've got the blues, I've got the blues
I've got the Winnsboro cotton mill blues. . . .
Lordy, Lordy, spooling's hard
You know and I know, I don't have to tell
You work for Tom Watson, got to work like hell.

When I die, don't bury me at all
Just hang me up on the spoolroom wall.
Place a bobbin in my hand
So I can keep on a-working in the promised land.
I've got the blues. . . .

It had been made up by her mother thirty years before, working in the same mill.

In New York City last winter, at an anti-discrimination rally, Josh White lifted his guitar to his knee and sang a song called "The Free And Equal Blues":

Charles Keller.

I went down to the doctor's
And I saw some plasma there
And I up and asks the doctor,
"Was the donor dark or fair?"

It produced practically an ovation; the audience stood up and cheered for minutes. Yet when people asked around, "Where can I buy a copy of that song? Where is it sold, who wrote it?" no one could give an answer. A few thought they had heard

People's Songsters: Earl Robinson and Josh White.

that Earl Robinson had made it up. No one knew where a copy could be bought.

These are just three examples of songs which Broadway and Hollywood are *not* interested in. The heavy hand of the entertainment monopoly is probably more strongly felt in music than in any other field, as anyone who has ever tried to publish a song will tell you. You either write the kind of song generally approved of, and work through the accepted channels, or your song just doesn't get around. And that's where the organization "People's Songs" comes in.

Last December 31, a group of us got togther. There were about thirty miscellaneous folk-singers, leaders of choruses, union education leaders, and stray interested persons. We met to organize what is now "People's Songs." We chipped in about $135 to get it started. That meeting took place in the cellar of a house where the boards were breaking through because they were rotted from leaky sewage (it's an old house and the pipe, originally laid before the American Revolution, had worn through). In the midst of all this mess and smell of sewage, friends, relatives and members of the Jefferson Chorus and other outfits began coming in to help address envelopes and do other clerical chores. And from there we began to get out bulletins with news and songs.

Songs like "The Rankin Tree"—an allegory sung by one person with the audience singing each line right after him, a song that tells about the vicious Rankin Tree and how it poisoned everything else on the singer's farm, and how he finally had to cut it down and burn it up, which "was the only time the damn Rankin Tree ever did any good . . . when I chopped it up for kindling wood."

Songs like "Listen Mr. Bilbo":

Listen Mr. Bilbo, listen to me
I'll give you a lesson in history
Listen while I show you that the foreigners you hate
Are the very same folks made America great.

Songs like "Looking For a Home":

The first time I saw my bedroom
It had just one bed and a chair
The next time I saw my bedroom
There were five guys sleeping there.
I'm a-looking for a home
I'm a-looking for a home.

All these songs are shot out to the members of People's Songs, wherever they are, in a monthly bulletin which also gives them news of what's going on in the field: listings of new recordings and songbooks and critical articles, and interviews with union educational directors about what kind of songs they need most, etc.

While at this stage of the game there is a preponderance of folk material, we aim eventually to have People's Songs cover every kind of musical expression which can be of use to people's organizations: folk, jazz, popular, or serious cantatas for union choruses. This is an important point. For example, Bob Russell, one of Broadway's top songwriters ("Don't Get Around Much Any More"), is on the National Board of People's Songs. He was approached last January by the CIO Steelworkers and asked to write a song for their coming strike. He took a copy of a pamphlet on the CIO economic program, and turned it into a song—"Money in the Pocket":

Money in the pocket is food on the table
Food on the table is cash in the till
When the till is loaded, the merchant is able
To fill up the counters he has to refill.

This song was recorded for the steelworkers, and the record played over countless soundtrucks during the strike. We printed the song in our second bulletin. Another of his songs was made up during the war, for an OWI broadcast, but still stands as a very neat song in a popular style, which says certain important things:

It's a small world, after all
For our backyard is the China wall
And front yard discussions can be held with the Russians
Any time at all.

Furthermore, we are not restricting the songs in the bulletin solely to topical songs which may be out-of-date in a few years. The democratic struggles of Americans have been told in many a folksong, and in each issue are certain old songs which point up the historical basis of what we are working for. For example, a migratory worker's song of a hundred years ago:

From New York into Buffalo I tramped it all the way
I slept in brickyards and old log barns until the break of day
My feet being sore, my clothes being tore
But still I didn't complain
*I got up and I hoisted my turkey**
And I walked the road again.

I worked in the Susquehanna yards
We got one dollar a day

---

* Bundle.

People's Songsters: Earl Robinson and Josh White.

Toiling hard to make a living, boys
I hardly think it pays.

We are not neglecting songs from abroad, either. In the first issue was a song of the famous International Brigade in Spain, *"Viva La Quince Brigada,"* with an English translation. And in this last issue we printed one of the world's best songs, *"Zum Galli Galli."* It is a modern Palestinian song about the young builders and laborers who are working to build the land.

I HAVE heard all of these songs used with terrific effectiveness. While most of the folksongs are best for mass singing, here is an example of what the popular type of song can do. In February a group of well-known Broadway stars went up to Schenectady and put on a show for the union. On the train Larry Stewart, a well-known Broadway singer, figured out some picketline parodies to popular songs. Sample:

We'll picket once, and picket twice,
and picket once again
It's been a long, long time.

And so on. When he sang them, the crowd went wild. At the end of the show the MC, Howard DaSilva, got up and said to the 5,000 people in the audience, "We're all going to be out on the picketline tomorrow morning. How many of you are going to be there?" And next morning there were 5,000 people on the picketline.

The union people say that it was the turning point in the strike. They had been scared that General Electric would soon try to start a back-to-work movement, but after that mass picketline, and its spirit, which kept up during the following week, there was no doubt but that the union would win.

We are rapidly building up a membership which is intensely interested in using union songs, topical songs, folk songs, jazz, cantatas, anything which actually says something—and is, in the terminology we use, a song of the people. They receive our bulletin every month with new songs in it.

If, next October, someone makes up a really terrific song about the elections, within a week it can be in the hands of 2,000 people across the country, who will use it at political rallies, etc. That song will really damage the people we want to get out of office.

The important thing about People's Songs is: we have set up a new technique and organization for getting people's songs spread, and circumventing the music monopoly of Broadway and Hollywood. The next job is to get as members all union educational directors in the country who want to use songs in building their unions, all ordinary union people who like to sing, all leaders of union choruses, IWO choruses, etc. Right now we're concentrating on being a service organization, to spread songs. But money is needed, and we are expanding into the concert field to raise funds.

What is our end aim? A singing labor movement. Every meeting, it seems to me, should start and end with a song. When a bunch of people are seen walking down the street singing, it should go almost without saying that they are a bunch of union people on the way home from a meeting. When an organizer comes into a new territory to set up a local, the second thing he should think of is, "Who am I going to get to lead the singing?"—just as a minister setting up in a new parish looks around for someone to lead the choir. We hope all organizers will recognize the principle that a song can be as effective as a speech—that music, too, is a weapon.

THE MAN WHO DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO MAKE MONEY

A Short Story by PHILLIP BONOSKY

AGAIN he had no money. It had always been so with Kazlak; back in '29 when everyone was losing his Kazlak's had already been lost; in '33, and all during the decade, and even during the war when everyone else was supposedly making money, Kazlak wasn't making any.

"When are you going to make some money?" people would ask him, as if he were stubbornly refusing to make some. They looked at him as if he were queer because he didn't make any money.

The trouble with Kazlak was that *he didn't know how to!* He'd never learned!

This is of course unbelievable in our country, and perhaps it's useless to go on trying to show that Kazlak really didn't know how to make money. No one will believe me. And yet just as there are people with only four fingers, and people without enough teeth, Kazlak was born without whatever it is that shows you how to make money.

Kazlak wanted to make money. It would have been sheer atheism for him not to have. Only he didn't know how.

Sometimes, it would seem that he had caught on, for money would come rolling in on him like a little river; then suddenly it would stop and Kazlak would realize that it was still true that he didn't know how to make money. He studied people who obviously knew how to make it; studied them very closely, as closely as he could, to see if he could learn the trick. For instance, Perry T.

Perry had gone to school with Kazlak, as far as Kazlak had gone, and hadn't seemed to be brighter than anyone else, except that obviously he had learned somewhere, certainly not at school, the important secret of making money. He was a rather pale, almost blurred kind of person, with faint blue eyes, and certainly not looking like anything which would make you suspect that he knew how. And yet he did. He would carry with him a little bag of money (where did he get it in the first place—from God?) and boys sooner or later would come to him and say: "Hey, Perry, you're my friend. Lend me a dime." Or maybe a nickel . . . or maybe even a quarter. And Perry would say: "All right. I'll lend you a dime if you pay me back fifteen cents next Saturday." Or seven cents, or thirty-five cents. There was a scale, which Kazlak, who was just a boy then, memorized. Perry T. grew up to keep his money in a bank, then to have a bank (which broke in '30, but that doesn't matter; even though the bank broke, Perry still had money. I don't think he kept *his* money in the bank).

Anyhow, Kazlak thought he had found out how to make money and so he thought he'd try the same thing. Well, in the first place, it was hard to get the *first* dime or nickel or quarter to lend out; and when he had saved a dime selling old rags, he was very much tempted to spend it on a movie, and did. Somehow, the second dime disappeared too. It was only the third dime that he managed to lend out and that was because Korday, a friend, was right there when he made it and asked to borrow it. All the right words were said (or perhaps something was forgotten?) and then Kazlak waited. He waited all week, then he met Korday and asked Korday for the dime and the extra nickel in interest. Korday was very much surprised and said that he didn't remember borrowing a dime from Kazlak and even hinted that Kazlak never had a dime in the first place. Kazlak replied, well, he did borrow it. Korday asked him to show him where it was written down. Well, here was where Kazlak had failed, of

Mutch Ado

course. He should have had Korday sign something, or kept a notebook. But it would have cost him a dime to buy a notebook, so. . . .

Kazlak was a sadder and wiser boy. Of course since nothing was written down, nothing was counted. He gave the game up. It had taken him three months to get three dimes ahead. (You don't believe that? Well, Kazlak's father didn't know how to make money either; he worked in a coal-mine, which everyone knows is no way to make money; and his mother didn't know how, either. So Kazlak had to pick rags and junk to sell, and that's hard work, when a lot of other boys are doing the same thing. He always hoped he'd *find* money but never did.)

So Kazlak started looking for other ways, easier ways, ways that perhaps didn't demand notebooks. In town there were a lot of people who seemed to have money but they made it invisibly. Scarpos, who did nothing but stand around the poolroom all day, and perhaps call up on the phone. As long as Kazlak watched him (and he watched him once all day, even when he went into the toilet he watched until he came out) he never saw Scarpos do anything but pick up the phone and speak in it.

All he heard was: "Win, place or show." Then: "Okay, on the nose."

That's all. Wasn't that easy, Kazlak thought; and if that's all he did to make money . . . ? Horses ran somewhere (Kazlak didn't know where they ran: down south somewhere) and people asked you to put their money on some horse and you told them you would, and that's all. Kazlak thought he'd like to have a job like that, and he asked Scarpos if there was another job like that for him.

Picking himself up off the sidewalk outside the poolroom, Kazlak wondered what he had done wrong. . . .

It seemed a bit insane to him. Here, everyone was making money; that is, everyone who didn't seem to be working was making money, and that appealed so much to Kazlak that he simply wouldn't give up trying until he had found out how to make money. He kept asking everyone, and that's how the phrase got started: "When are you going to make some money, Kazlak?"

When he was discouraged, he got a job in the mine and started to work there. Well, at first it seemed that this was one way of making money, too; he put it aside, added it all up on a piece of paper, and just when it seemed that there would be a nice sum, the mine stopped working. In a month all of Kazlak's money was gone again. He bought food, and he had nothing to show for a whole year's work in the mine except of course that he was alive, and a down payment on a car. (They took the car back.) But he was young —only eighteen. There must be other ways.

So Kazlak thought about it and asked questions and watched more carefully those people who made money invisibly.

In a while he began to realize that there was some system to the *kinds:*

1. The Perry T. kind, who kept notebooks, if he had the *first* money.
2. The kind who made it invisibly like Scarpos.
3. Then the last kind—like Thorgenson who not only seemed to make it invisibly, but had somehow learned the trick of making *others* make it for him.

For Calvin Thorgenson, although he didn't own *all* the mine, owned a good part of it. The six hundred men who worked in his mine and turned out the coal worked, of course, for Mr. Thorgenson, or the Company. And Mr. Thorgenson never did anything at all, except to come around at Christmas time with his wife and hand out boxed candy to the children of the workers.

Oh, if he could only learn how Mr. Thorgenson did it, Kazlak thought. After all, Thorgenson, they said, had been an ignorant miner once, too—a long time ago; and he had learned. So why not Kazlak?

Meanwhile of course he was out of a job and his money was gone, and Kazlak had nothing but a sack of semi-frozen potatoes between him and starvation. Those potatoes made Kazlak think. They would last only a week, and he would have to work out some plan by then.

This was the autumn of '29 that I mentioned before. It was the year of the Big Crash. A lot of people in our country who knew everything about making money suddenly . . . well, why remind anyone of those sad days?

Anyhow, Kazlak read about the rich men jumping out of high buildings and felt that at least he had his frost-bitten

mutch
Hit & Run

HELLO?

SWOOSH!
the catch

STRIKE!

Sandwich

potatoes and there were no high buildings around. And yet, although millions of people complained that they had no money, there were still others who not only had money but were going to Europe for the winter. Some locked food and wine in their cellars, some complained that those who had no money were threatening to take away. . . .

Ah, but that's so foolish! In America? Everyone knows that if anyone is held in high esteem and honored it is those who know how to make money, for without them what would we do for churches, hospitals, orphan asylums, homes for the aged, poorhouses? Eh?

Who would pay for them except those who knew how to make money? Surely, not those who didn't; a little logic will show. . . .

No: there was no cause for fear.

Fortunately, before Kazlak lost too much weight, his mother died. She left him from her insurance $125, less of course what it cost to bury her. (I might mention that Kazlak's father had died earlier. Of him the priest had said: He was poor but hard-working and honest.)

So after all, there was still hope. Kazlak added another "kind" to his list:

4. The kind who make money when somebody dies.

In some ways this was the best way of all to make money. It hurt no one, the person died, was buried, and his insurance came to you. But there was nobody else that Kazlak knew who was likely to die profitably for him. Besides, Kazlak, a little dizzy from the windfall, foolishly agreed to get married, and on his nineteenth birthday did so.

Everybody told him it was the wrong thing to do. Don't get married, they told him, you'll never make any money that way.

How right they were Kazlak learned very soon. The money from his mother's insurance vanished like smoke. The girl he had married ate as much as he did; only he forgave her because she knew how to make him forgive her at night.

PERHAPS it would be good at this point to answer a few questions. Was Kazlak a hard worker? Yes, he was. He worked as hard as any one. Did he drink? A little; he was young . . . beer still did for him. And girls? Not until Stella; oh, a little—you know, everyone does it if he can find someone who will cooperate, but nothing that cost money. Anyhow, he got married. No, he didn't gamble, except once or twice on the numbers (here, too, Kazlak had looked into an invisible way of making money) but once when he hit a number the numbers-writer left town in a hurry and never did come back.

So Kazlak had no outstanding deficiencies. He was strong. He worked hard. He drank moderately. He did not involve himself too deep with women. He had everything on that score that would have helped him to make money. But after his marriage he didn't even begin to make it.

It was a very hard winter. It's no use reminding you of that winter; let it be enough to say that Kazlak stayed in bed for two days because he had nothing to eat. When spring arrived, there was work again. Government work. Kazlak was in a fever when he applied for fear that he would be turned down, but he was accepted . . . and just in time, too, because Stella was expecting Joey in the summer. (Just in order to forestall any false hopes, let me say immediately that Joey too inherited his family's shameful inability to make money. . . .) So Kazlak had to have a job, even a government job which paid only enough to feed himself and Stella but not the sparrows that came to the yard.

Never did Kazlak think so hard and spend so much time thinking as he did now about the way to make money! Surely there must be a way! And surely he ought to be able to learn, for wasn't he an American, and wasn't this America? Who knew better how to make money than Americans? Who knew the trick?

Even as Kazlak was worrying so much and eating so little, he read in the newspapers that a lot of people were buying cars and fur coats and diamonds, making invisible money right and left. So it wasn't an illusion. *Somebody* knew how to make money; the thing existed, it was real.

People still asked him: "When are you going to make some money, Kazlak?" but it wasn't with the same joking air. Unfortunately, they, too, would have liked to have known when *they* were going to make money. It seemed as if everybody had lost the touch at the same time.

But the trick still existed and Kazlak had been taught too well that he must learn how to make money to give up so easily. In school they had said: Be a success and you will make money. Or was it: Make money and you will be a success?

So Kazlak wondered how he could become a success.

Well, it really was simple. There is a happy part in this story, too. Because (to spare all the terrible details in between: CWA, no CWA, WPA, relief, no relief, etc.) Kazlak's wife became pregnant again. She gave birth to quadruplets. Kazlak was dismayed for already he had two children (one more had slipped in after Joey) and he was wondering how he could ever feed all the hungry mouths. Now four more at one time!

But that morning the house was full of reporters who wanted pictures, wanted statements, wanted him to go on a lecture tour telling people how he got four babies all at one time, and Kazlak was so bewildered he didn't realize that the thing that he had been trying to find all his lifetime had at last happened: *this* was the way to make money.

He had found it—only Kazlak, the fool, didn't realize it. Besides, it embarrassed him to have them come into his house, tramp over the carpet and take pictures of his wife, not even all dressed. So he chased the reporters and photographers out and locked the door. Next day when they still waited outside, he sneaked out of the house with the help of some friends and rode several miles deep into the hills until he came to his aunt's house where she agreed to help take care of the children.

So he stayed there and no reporters could find him. He didn't know of course that they wanted to pay him money for being the father of four children at one time. And when his aunt, who knew more about these things than he did, finally convinced him that there was money in it and to give himself up to the newspapermen, just then up in Canada a little man became the father of *five* babies and they no longer were interested in Kazlak.

Oh, well. Kazlak kept on struggling—it was his nature. He believed that if he had come so close to it once, he could get there the next time. The war came and he was working the mines; but even then he never made any money. Most miners will tell you the reason why.

So, as you can see, Kazlak's case is hopeless. He *never* will learn the secret of how to make money.

PALESTINE

WHAT ABOUT IT, UNITED NATIONS?

An Editorial by LLOYD L. BROWN

"ANY questions, guys?" I turned around hopefully from the blackboard where I had chalked up a diagram of interconnected squares and circles, the structural plan of the United Nations organization soon to assemble in San Francisco. It was our squadron's weekly orientation hour. From the rear of the long mess-hall that was our meeting place (the Base service club was for white EM only) a voice challenged: "Yeah, sarge, I got a question for you." The lanky frame of Corporal Jenkins rose slowly from a bench. "What I want to know is how are *we* going to be represented in this thing?" The soft Florida drawl did not conceal the bitterness of his words.

Nodding heads jerked erect, the men were instantly alert—this was *their* question. This was the question which in one form or another was discussed in our barracks bull-sessions, over our PX beer, incessantly and everywhere: would we Negroes still be treated as second-class citizens of America when the war was over?

I had no simple answer. Certainly the material supplied by the Information and Education division for Army orientation had not anticipated Cpl. Jenkins' query. I could only say that what we wanted would not come to us like the "Greetings" we got through the mail; we would still have to contend for that which is rightfully ours: equality as men, equality as Americans.

This incident flashed to mind when I heard the dramatic radio announcement: *One thousand delegates to the National Negro Congress, meeting in Detroit, have addressed an appeal to the United Nations to take steps to end the oppression of thirteen million Negroes in America.*

I recalled how Frederick Douglass, writing in the abolitionist *Liberator* over 100 years ago, had ripped away the hypocritical morality of America's rulers: "You shed tears over fallen Hungary, and make the sad story of her wrongs the theme of your poets, statesmen and orators, till your gallant sons are ready to fly to arms to vindicate her cause against the oppressors; but, in regard to the ten thousand wrongs of the American slave, you would enforce the strictest silence, and would hail him as an enemy of the nation who dares to make those wrongs the subject of public discourse! You are all on fire at the mention of liberty for France or for Ireland; but are as cold as an iceberg at the thought of liberty for the enslaved in America."

The great leader of the Negro people wrote these words in October, 1841; yet how true they ring in July, 1946!

The petition of the National Negro Congress has been presented to Trygve Lie, director-general of the United Nations. That this is clearly a matter within the jurisdiction of that body is shown by Article I, Section 3 of the Charter which states: "The purposes of the United Nations are: To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion."

Aware of the powerful forces which will seek to bury this petition and prevent discussion and action upon it, the National Negro Congress is preparing an energetic campaign to arouse public opinion in its behalf.

Fact-finding on this question has been made easy for the UN. Embodied in the Congress' petition is a document entitled: "The Oppression of the American Negro: The Facts," prepared by Dr. Herbert Aptheker, historian and associate editor of NEW MASSES. These facts about the conditions of the Negro people are an unassailable indictment; they are based almost entirely on *official US government records.*

This document clearly reveals the economic exploitation and discrimination suffered by the Negro people, the basic factor in their oppression. It shows that, in 1940, there were 4,479,069 Negro wage earners in the United States (1,542,273 of them women). Of these well over half (fifty-five per cent) were engaged in the two lowest paid and least protected of all occupations, those of domestic servants and agricultural workers. Other than those engaged in "other service work" and unskilled occupations, there were only 370,000 Negroes to make up the manager, proprietor, professional, semi-professional, clerical, sales, foremen and craftsmen groups *combined.* As a result, in 1940, two-thirds of the Negro families in America earned less than $750 a year.

Space does not permit even brief summary of the evidence presented in the fields of housing, health, education and civil rights.

BUT one does not have to delve into the archives and tomes of statistical records to see the facts of Negro oppression in our country. The daily reports in the press cry out to the conscience of the world for an end to the Bilbonic plague of repression and terror under which Negro Americans live and die. The most ominous feature of the current drive against the Negro people is the *official* character of the terrorists. In Freeport, Long Island, the unpunished killer of the Negro war veterans is a man in the uniform of the law. In Columbia, Tennessee, it was the public forces of "law and order" which fell in fury upon the Negro community, sacking, ravaging, destroying. The two Negroes who were killed that terrible day were slain within the confines of the city jail. And now the law courts there continue the attack by the mass trial of twenty-five Negroes (ten of them recently returned veterans) on a charge of "attempt to commit murder" because they defended themselves against the lynch-mob.

America and the world have been treated to the spectacle of the unspeakable Bilbo roaring up and down the state of Mississippi, calling upon all "red-blooded Anglo-Saxons" (spirit of Winston Churchill!) to "resort to any means" to keep the Negroes from voting—and a Negro veteran is flogged in the deep of night as a warning! And Bilbo's colleague, Rep. Rankin, is the official standard-measure of "Americanism." And Attorney General Tom Clark of Texas, whose agents could find no evidence of denial of civil rights in Columbia, encourages the night-riders of reaction with grim warnings of the "menace of Communism."

Fascist theories and practice of racism are more than ever a threat to the American people and the entire world. Gentlemen of the United Nations: what do you say to ex-Corporal Jenkins, first-class fighting man, second-class citizen? He and his people—thirteen million of them—demand an answer.

THEY HAVE JUST BEGUN TO FIGHT

A cross-country tour shows a "ferment all over America." From coast to coast the workers are asking questions—and demanding answers.

By ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN

Pittsburgh, Pa.

ON THE last lap of a ten weeks' trip around the country, I find a situation here that symbolizes the alarming state of the nation—the Navy in charge of the coal mines and the Army in charge of the big Jones and Laughlin steel plant in Pittsburgh. It's a long time since armored trucks with uniformed men rolled into the Iron City to break a strike. But 525 strong, the 772nd Military Police Battalion are camped in South Park, at this writing (June 16), waiting for orders to do guard duty at the US-seized Monongahela Connecting Railroad, an inner plant line where 250 trainmen struck last week. All the bitterness and disappointment that railroad men feel nationally was concentrated in this little captive railroad strike of five days, which President Truman ruthlessly broke by seizing the railroad. These railroad workers contend that the Washington agreement does not cover them and that since they work for a steel plant they are entitled to hours, wages, overtime and vacations equal to those of the steel workers. Their International Brotherhood upheld them in their claim and sent in a representative to negotiate for them. Since it cannot be contended in this instance that passengers or mail are interfered with, it is the clearest possible instance of strikebreaking by the government and has created tremendous resentment among steel workers, miners and others.

The marching feet of armed men arouse somber echoes in the Pittsburgh area of federal troops in the seventies, eighties and nineties, of the brutal Coal and Iron Police in 1919. Men died in bloody struggles to organize here. Workers had begun to believe this was all a thing of the past. But the same old class struggle remains with us, illusions are falling like withered leaves and workers are girding themselves for political and economic battles, which will surely equal if not surpass past struggles. The "industrial peace" which the newspapers welcome with sighs of relief is a deceptively thin lid over a volcano, which the legislative slaughter of the OPA is likely to blow skyhigh in the near future. The people are darned sore about it everywhere.

I have been in eleven states since I left New York early in April. The core of my trip was eight May Day meetings in Pacific Coast cities, from Seattle to San Diego, preceded by three weeks in Chicago and Detroit and visiting Phoenix, Salt Lake City, Denver and Omaha on the way back. My schedule included also women's conferences, trade union conferences, meetings with Communist Party state and city boards. The purpose of my trip was to help build the Party in the present recruiting drive for 20,000 new members. At this writing over 13,000 have already joined nationally. I am convinced there are many thousands more who are Communists and don't know it as yet. When I said this in a broadcast in Washington, Pa., the other day, a man stepped up to me in the lobby of the radio station and said, "You've got something there—about not knowing when you're a Communist!"

I find interest is growing in what the Communists think and what they are doing. Our meetings were all held under the auspices of the Communist Party. They were well advertised and held in good public places—high schools in Portland, Oakland, Phoe-

Sen. Rankest Says:

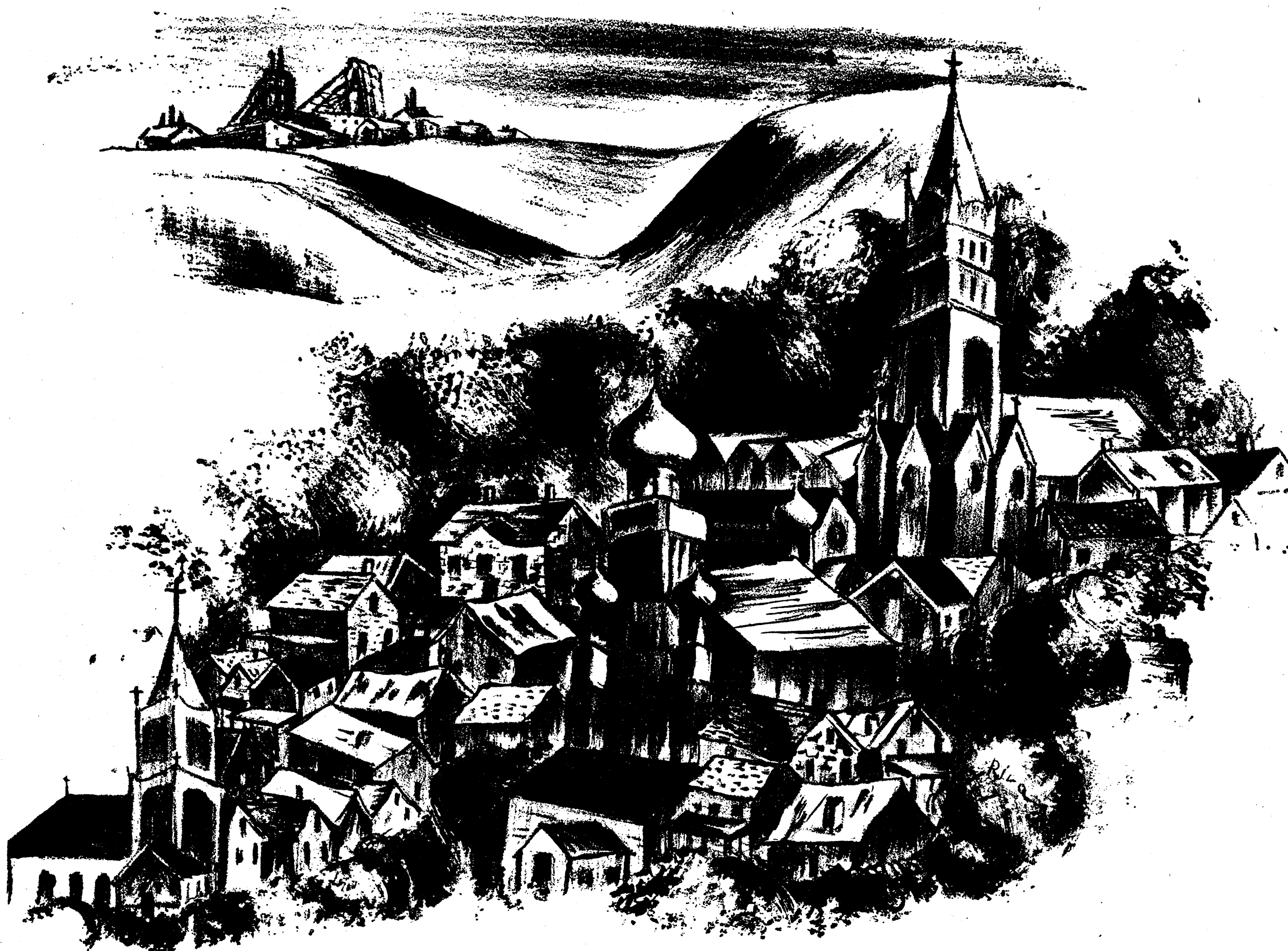
"Folks, I feel right at home in this here outfit, even if it ain't got any eye-holes."

nix; CIO halls in San Francisco, Oakland, Flint; Masonic, Odd Fellows' and settlement halls elsewhere; an AFL hall in Denver. No matter how much Churchill, Hoover, Bevin & Co. rave against the Communists, the size and political importance of the Communist Parties in Europe and Asia today creates tremendous natural curiosity among the workers of America. The character of questions asked at some of our meetings indicates this —about nationalization of industries in liberated countries—whether it's like Truman seizing the railroads; how trade unions function in the USSR; the status of religion in Europe; what we mean by socialism; what are Trotskyites and Social Democrats; how do we answer the charge of "orders from Moscow"; Is the US becoming a fascist country; are we headed for another war?

Red-baiters underestimate the number of foreign-born people, especially in big industrial centers, who have contact with their birthplaces now and hear directly from families and friends of events there. They also underestimate the powers of observation and thought of the many GI's who are the second generation of immigrant parents and of others who are trade union members; of other young Americans who fought as anti-fascists and have a healthy admiration for the Soviet Union. The veterans of this war are different. Many who never met an American Communist met our comrades abroad and return to join our party.

Veterans who return to a homeless, jobless, shirtless America are not food for Red-baiters. I find a progressive ferment among such veterans everywhere. They hate the "brass" in the shop and politics as well as in the Army. To tell them that the Communists in the Army were responsible for the discontent there, as the Doolittle report does, is to hand the average GI a big laugh. There comes a point when Red-baiting reduces itself to an absurdity. It is a dud with the present-day veterans of working-class origin, if I judge correctly.

There is widespread unemployment on the Pacific Coast—especially with the shutdown of shipbuilding and aircraft. At present the effects are not too noticeable, while workers spend their unemployment benefits and their war savings. But when these run out the full impact of depression will hit the Coast. Workers who came from elsewhere like the Pacific Coast (and who wouldn't?), and the tendency is to remain there. Housing shortage is the No. 1 headache. In the Northwest I saw timber, which is plentiful there, used to build stores, garages, roadside restaurants—but not houses. Real estate interests are deliberately holding back everywhere on building programs, hoping for the end of price and rent control. The only exception I saw was Phoenix, Arizona, but the explanation was, in the words of a woman on the train: "They're all remodelling and building, getting ready for the big-time suckers from the East." They were not building homes for workers, but swanky air-conditioned, streamlined homes for retired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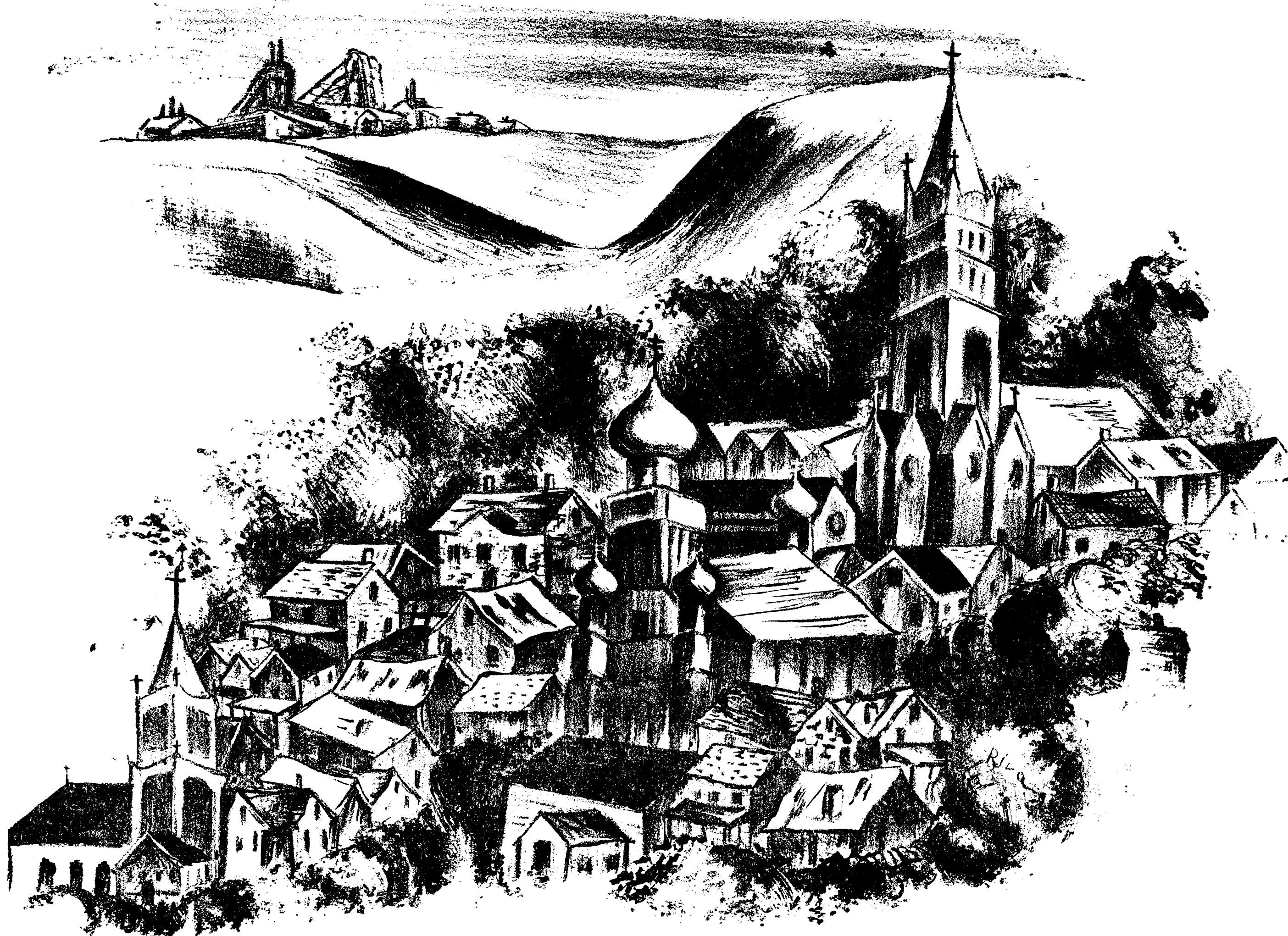

Riva.

middle-class people and capitalists who come from elsewhere.

Food shortages are nationwide too, and there are many mistaken notions deliberately fostered by the press and radio. There is a general sympathy with the starving people of Europe and a desire to help them. Progressive people—in women's groups, unions, the Communist Party—are demanding the reinstitution of rationing in our country so that we can adequately aid suffering people elsewhere. A lot of Americans, however, are misled into believing that there are bread, butter and meat shortages here because we are sending too much abroad. They raise the cry: "Why not feed our own people first?" Actually, no such thing is happening. I was in Omaha, Nebraska—the second largest packing center in the country—just before the railroad strike, when you would expect the cattle pens to be full of cattle. There were hardly any there. This is not exceptional, packing house workers informed me. The same situation prevails in Chicago and elsewhere. Cattle pens are empty and the working force is cut to one-third. The packers and the big cattle growers of the Western ranges are actually on a sit-down strike against the union and the public.

Small growers are selling to local black markets, wherever possible. Pigs, cattle and sheep are consuming grain needed in Europe, while American cities go meatless. Big grain growers are holding crops in Midwest granaries. They have deliberately produced a bread, meat and butter famine in the hope that price control will be off by July and they can reap a harvest in profit, when prices will skyrocket. But if they expect the organized workers to take this on the chin and be satisfied with the weekly increases the government bullied them into accepting, the employing class and their Washington stooges are in for a rude awakening, I believe. The same old struggle remains with us and the American workers are in a fighting mood.

There are few unions anywhere today satisfied with their contracts or awards. Of this I am sure. I have talked to auto, steel, railroad, oil, lumber, copper and coal miners, farm equipment, packing, radio, electrical, railroad and other workers. The struggle has just started, they say. The workers are more class-conscious and aware of their power, both economic and political, than ever before. All their wartime expectations of a long-term partnership with capital and the government have been shot to hell in the last year. The employers everywhere are extremely provocative, confident now of Truman's support to break any outburst by rebellious workers. Speed-up elimination of workers, is going on generally, especially in mines and steel plants. Here in Pittsburgh's J&L plant it caused a week's strike of 100 scarfers, who remove the defects in steel, when they were eliminated from a process on the fifteeen-inch steel. Hundreds of little struggles — unauthorized or "wild-cat" strikes—are occuring all over the country in every industry. They are forebodings of storms ahead.

If I were asked to pick out the most interesting place I visited I would say unhesitatingly Phoenix, Arizona. Not for reasons of natural beauty, which abound elsewhere in the West. (In fact, I believe it should be compulsory for all Eastern editors, union organizers and Party workers to take at least one trip to see how big, beautiful and varied our country is and to shake off Eastern provincialism!) No, Arizona isn't beautiful in the copper kingdom of Phelps-Dodge, where the workers are on their third month of strike. It is not only the hot air of the desert which one feels here, but the hot-air blasts of Red-baiting and race hatred against the miners. The weird, ugly cactus plant is beautiful beside the man-made ugliness—the shacks, the low pay, the discrimination practiced against Negroes, Mexicans and Indians. The desert breath heals, the cactus puts out a delicate blossom each spring, but the fabulously wealthy absentee copper barons only ravish the country of its resources and exploit its people. Remembering the Bisbee deportation in 1917, when 1,186 copper strikers were kidnapped and deported at gunpoint over the state line and dumped in the desert near Columbus, New Mexico, the copper miners will never, as long as capitalism lasts, desert the class struggle. Four thousand of them are out in the Arizona area, under the leadership of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union-CIO, a worthy successor of the historic Western Federation of Miners and the IWW of former days.

The Communist Party of Arizona has won a place on the state ballot by collecting 2,530 signatures from six counties. A Communist candidate

Philip Reisman.

recently received 1,250 votes in the non-party senatorial primaries. In Arizona, our party is "turning its face to the people," helping raise money and food for the strikers, fighting a phony "Right to Work bill," fighting against discrimination and for a state civil rights bill which would guarantee full democracy for 50,000 American Indians, 125,000 Spanish-speaking people (mostly Mexicans) and 20,000 Negroes—over one-third of the state's population. Indian veterans are demanding the right to vote. Our party has picketed Woolworth stores in Phoenix and Tucson against their jim crow practices and is fighting to end segregation in the schools. As a party of struggle, our party is invincible. Little Arizona shows the way. The Communist Party grows whenever and wherever it assumes its historic role—to lead the people in all immediate struggles for democracy and against wage slavery and for socialism. Our American Communist Party is on this right path once again. It will grow. We need more speakers to tour the country, to stay longer in each state, visit the smaller cities and towns where "the little people live in small houses." We need to renew our ties with the farmers. We need more papers, magazines, pamphlets and literature, to agitate, educate, organize the American people.

The American people are questioning, seeking answers—and getting many wrong ones, it's true, from radio and press. The pattern of fascism is visible in our country today—Red-baiting, labor-baiting, anti-Semitism,

white supremacy. Will our country be cut to that pattern? Outlawing strikes, "running the railroads on time," drafting workers to compulsory labor, KKK revivals in the South, California, Pennsylvania and New York—are danger signals. But we must not be over-pessimistic or fatalistic. Fascism is not inevitable. The workers are not taking all this meekly. In preparation for the fall elections we see organized labor, in many places, uniting—CIO, AFL and RR brotherhoods. The old slogan "Punish our enemies" has a new punch. Labor and its supporters will do the getting tough this fall, and those congressmen who howled loudest against labor will have to face the music back home, away from national limelights. There is local progressive ferment all over America. It needs to be tied together nationally, made articulate and effective politically, organized as a strong political force. When you meet the people around the country, you feel more confident of the future of our country. Truman unmasked himself and his friends during the past period. There are no more illusions about him, no hope lingering that he will carry on FDR's policies.

It's an inspiration and an education to tour our country; and it's a beautiful country, rich in resources, pregnant with potentialities for life and happiness for all. Stretching three thousand miles from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with its snow-capped Rockies; its fertile black fields of the Dakotas; with Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas, bread basket for ourselves and half the world, if necessary, with its rich coal, copper, iron ore and oil supplies, its orange groves, palm and pine trees, its rivers and lakes—there is no other country comparable to it geographically except the Soviet Union. Here, like there, are all nationalities who can live together in comradeship and cooperation. Here is a high degree of technical skill and industrial development which makes possible plenty for all, the feature of our country which Soviet citizens admire most and are rapidly emulating. There's nothing the matter with our country—except that the people do not own it. It's good to see America, to realize it's a people's prize worth fighting for, and to realize anew that capitalism is what is wrong with our beautiful country, which is ready and willing to give us everything if we but give her the chance. Many people as yet unknown to us share "the dream of Debs." I am full of hope for the labor movement, for our Communist Party, for our country, for the winning of socialism in our time. We must fight; there are stormy days ahead. But we are nearer socialism today than ever before.

PERGAMUM IN FRANCE

By LOUIS ARAGON

One evening as I dreamed on the banks of the Scamander,
The bridges, the lovely bridges, were playing dominoes,
And the newspapers rustled: Don't wait till winter blows
To turn in for repair your ancient Salamander;
Upon his lonely barge a sailor drolly sang
One chorus of a musical: No No Nanette,
And Notre Dame was a casino across the rivulet,
And up like a diver the Pantheon sprang;
Is it Troy or is it Paris? the Seine or the Scamander?

Helen, listen Helen, your shepherd is worth more
Than seven years of death and war and infantry
And decimated dreams of Martha and Marie,
Who would have aged with the seasons had not Roger or
Pierre
Cradled in their earthy arms the grain against the cold;
O Helen, think of flowers in the whispering prairie-grass,
And let us stroll tonight in the Tuileries, and pass
In fickle sports of love the hours and the pain
That you might forget Hymettus and your swain.

Helen, listen Helen: I love her . . . my delight . . .
Your sole faith is love and so I speak this way:
One must see her sleeping to understand the day,
One must sleep beside her to understand the night.
Who, then, is this madman who cries—one nightingale
Does not make a Spring—when the M of her lips
Is the very womb of May: blossoming again
From the first gentle pout to the semblance of two wings!
I tremble in her beauty. The wondrous world sings.

She is profoundest peace and profoundest exultation,
All that was the child and the man that I would be;
Paris, you say Paris is all that pleases me,
Yet my winged-lyre is starless and sings without elation.
I must await the hour when the heavens blaze less
To learn if we must die to redeem your distress,
For too many stars eclipse the Milky Way
And we cannot read, O Helen, in that alphabet above
The blood of ecstasy and the price of your love.

It was a Trojan evening in search of the beloved,
And threats to Priam's palace seemed grumblings from afar:
The Louvre after all is but the name of a bazaar:
I alone saw the flames, saw the tall twist of smoke,
And Hecuba's grief amidst the armed host
Of taxis overladen with passengers fantastic:
Their naked bodies gilded for the Four Arts Ball:
Egyptians Gauls Romans, Franks without lances:
Greeks who shed no tears for our well-beloved's glances.

Translated by Sidney Alexander
from: *"Pergame En France"*
in *"Le Creve-Coeur."*

Note: "Pergamum" means "citadel of Troy." "Scamander" is the ancient name for a small stream that flowed near the city of Ilium or Troy. "Salamander" probably refers to a type of small stove whose name derives from the fable of the salamander lizard being able to live in fire. "Hymettus" refers to Mt. Hymettus, a mountain range in Attica famous as a source of honey.

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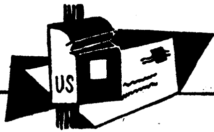


Monopoly and the Theater

To NEW MASSES: Please allow me space to gasp at a remark of Arnaud D'Usseau, an otherwise knowledgeable gent of the theater, in his recent piece, "The Theater as a Weapon," which was in most respects accurate and helpful. The boner:

"The theater has one compensating economic advantage and it is this: the theater is still relatively free from the curse of monopoly. . . . Unlike the movies and the radio there's not yet a complete monopoly on ideas, nor a complete rationalization of talent. In the theater, little business still survives."

This contention he himself contradicts later in his article, thus:

"Wide audience support was given *Home of the Brave*, but the fact remains the producer lost $60,000 trying to keep this good play open."

Why did *Home of the Brave* close? He does not bother to inquire. The answer will be found in the current methods of monopoly in the theater. Just as there is a shortage of housing today, so there is a shortage of theaters. Of the available, fit-to-operate legitimate theaters in the country as a whole, at least ninety-five percent are either owned outright or controlled by contingent leases and other keeping-a-string devices by the brothers Shubert, or through their United Booking Office which dictates the terms under which a show—"independently" owned and produced or not—may tour or tryout before coming in to Broadway. In New York itself, their percentage of monopoly is somewhat less—perhaps seventy-five percent rather than ninety-five percent. But in a time of shortage this is more than enough to insure the "free" operation of monopoly through what is known as the "stop clause." That is, the producer's contract with the theater owner requires him to do a certain gross business—in the case of *Home of the Brave* I hear it was somewhere in the neighborhood of $14,000 a week, but in all cases it is as high as the monopoly traffic will bear—and if he fails to make the figure in any one week, he forfeits the theater and either finds another (let him try!) or closes the show.

What does this mean in practice? It means that a show must "click" from its opening week—else it is yanked. It means the producer has no time to "build" the show on the basis of good reviews or growing audience interest. It means if he has not hired a great star who will attract the public from the start, regardless whether the play is good or bad, the chances of his doing business above the stop-clause level in the early weeks are very slim. And further, if his play is so progressive as to rouse the sensitive Red-baiting nerves of the reviewers, he is sure to have to overcome hostile reviews *immediately*—which is no mean feat for any producer.

So there is no monopoly on ideas—so what? Mr. D'Usseau to the contrary notwithstanding, there is no monopoly on ideas in Hollywood either. And in Hollywood, as on Broadway, so-called "independent" producers are on the increase. Yet he admits the film industry is a monopoly.

The point is, the monopolies in both the theater and motion pictures operate less through monopoly of ideas than through a monopoly on distribution—through ownership or control of theaters and theater bookings.

If we are unclear on this point, if we nurture illusions that the theater, "unlike the films," is "relatively free from the curse of monopoly," we are going to come a cropper in trying to employ theater as a weapon—or even in understanding the potentialities and limitations of that weapon.

Nor is this monopoly a transient condition due to the current theater shortage. A few years ago an honest and independent Broadway producer made the "mistake" of opening his show in a non-Shubert house in New York because the terms offered by the Shuberts were outrageous. The show turned out to be a tremendous hit. When he proposed to tour the play the following season, the Shubert United Booking Office again offered punitive terms. The producer decided to fight the monopoly. At the expense of many thousands of dollars he hired a top-notch booking agent of his own to make a flying trip around the country to book the show in any non-Shubert-controlled houses he could find. It was a tough job; the producer even had to take dilapidated old barns that had been converted to showing movies and spend $$$$ to put them in playable shape. But the tour was arranged. However, the expense involved had been a serious drain; and the season after, he proposed to book through the Shuberts, who proceeded to penalize him a four-figure sum per week for the privilege. So far as I know, no other producer has matched this one's courage in trying, and today the booking monopoly operates as completely "free" enterprise.

I cite this instance as only one of hundreds.

CHARLES A. CRAWFORD.

Chicago.

Three Cheers!

To NEW MASSES: I take pen in hand to apologize for the slight scepticism I felt when you first announced a *new* NEW MASSES.

Why this hullaballoo, I thought, about making NM a lot better? It's a good enough magazine as it is, and worth supporting as it is. This effort to pretend it's going to be noticeably better sounds as if NM publicists couldn't think of any new arguments to advertise with.

Well, I take it all back. I just got the June 25 number, and the first thing I read was Peter Ayre's review of Alexei Tolstoy's novel, *Road to Calvary*. I don't know who Ayre is, but he knows how to rise to the occasion when he has a great work to review. I like to see a critic who knows how to let go when he should, and Ayre's critique of Tolstoy's work is magnificent. It's poetry. Or drama.

Then I read Sean O'Casey's "Rise o' the Red Star," and I simply don't know what to say. O'Casey is better than Ayre, maybe better than Tolstoy (for all I know). He's like a giant. His writing is atomic magic. I'll have to let Peter Ayre tell how good it is, I can't even speak.

Then I read "Trotsky's Kampf," by V. J. Jerome, and I had to write this letter. I know how Jerome had to hold back his hand, how he had to dissect—gingerly, at arm's length—the filthy cadaver of Trotskyist propaganda (which calls itself a biography of Stalin), and do it quietly, with restraint. He did a masterly job.

The *new* NEW MASSES is *good*. More power to all of you.

OAKLEY JOHNSON.

New York.

Like the Song "Joe Hill"

To NEW MASSES: While talking to a friend he mentioned the fact that a few days before the June 15 maritime strike deadline he was aboard a ship near Baltimore and, while looking out into a misty sea, he suddenly saw a ship come out of the haze and there on the bow was the name *Patrick B. Whalen.*

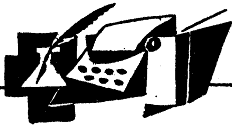
My fellow seaman said he was not a bit superstitious, but it gave him quite a start. It made him feel as though the ship *Patrick B. Whalen* were bringing back its crew to carry on in the threatened strike in all the true tradition of the Patty Whalen we used to know—a good seaman, a good union man, a real good Communist.

Yes, I think the spirit of the Patrick B. Whalens, the Joe Biancas, the Harry Hineses lives on like the song "Joe Hill"—they carry on wherever union men are fighting for good conditions, for the right to enjoy life and bring their children up as they should be. What do you think?

FRED A. REED.

New York.

review and comment



POETRY: FORM AND CONTENT

How shall we judge poetic values? A poet views the work of Vincent Ferrini and Alan Swallow.

By THOMAS McGRATH

TIDAL WAVE, *by Vincent Ferrini. Great Concord Publishers.* 10¢.
THE REMEMBERED LAND, *by Alan Swallow. Press of James A. Decker.* $2.

THE two books under consideration illustrate a kind of false dilemma which has grown up among left-wing writers and so may properly be considered together, although the subject matter of the two, and especially the methods and the esthetic theories behind them, stand at two poles.

Ferrini's pamphlet, subtitled "Poems of the Great Strike," deals with that phase of the class struggle which was signalized by the battles of the automobile, packinghouse, electrical and steel workers during the first part of the year. Composed of nineteen poems related only by the theme of the strike, the pamphlet has the immediacy and the urgency of a series of leaflets. This is the main value of the book—for certainly it is a fine thing for a writer to contribute to the immediate class struggle. There can be no doubt that this pamphlet is an immediate weapon and that it was consciously intended as such by Ferrini. The only question left in the mind of the reader is how effective it is as a weapon, and whether or not it is art—in this case poetry.

To take the latter part of the question first: In some of Ferrini's work, primarily *Blood of the Tenement,* the language has a remarkable vitality. The imagery is striking, sometimes complex, occasionally obscure. One has the feeling that the poems are written from the inside out, that they have been based on whole and personal experience.

These elements are generally absent from *Tidal Wave.* Here he writes:

All the unions of our country
Are now galvanized to the great Strike,
Throwing in monies, legs, arms, pickets
And work stoppages
Plugging up the sink.

It is useless to examine this very closely. The central image is clumsy and ludicrous. Like a land mine, it explodes on contact and when the dust settles the poem has been blown out of existence—this despite the fact that the idea behind the poem is one which we thoroughly accept.

Similarly in "Union Hall" he writes:

The union began:
The idea moved like molasses
Through a jungle of fears
Stopping at stumps,
And underbrush of individualism:
But steadily growing bigger
Till the weld of the union
Brought forth edible fruits . . .

Here Ferrini's idea of metaphor takes on the character of a snowball rolling downhill picking up debris as it goes. The basic metaphor changes and changes as new images are thrown in without regard to the function of one in relation to another. When this growing snowball of metaphor, like plutonium, reaches its critical size with the addition of the "weld" which brings forth "edible fruits," the inevitable chain reaction occurs and another poem is atomized.

There is contrary evidence as well—instances of powerful and exact images—but they are scarce. There are many other problems of language in the poems, problems which are always related to a loose form of free verse.

Is the pamphlet then a failure? It depends largely on what Ferrini intended. As agitational verse it was certainly excellent in conception and Ferrini must be praised for his work. More such pamphlets should be printed—collective works, perhaps, to which several poets contribute material on a single theme. Here it may be worth pointing out that in agitational verse traditional rhyming forms are probably best, since for the average worker poetry is largely synonymous with rhyme. If enough such writing were done we would create a *style* of agitational verse, and in writing of this kind, creation of such a style might be of greater importance than the creation of individual talents.

If Ferrini intended that this pam-

Underwater With Anton Refregier

"Gossip."

phlet be considered on the same basis as *Blood of the Tenement*—or the poems of Pablo Neruda—then it must be regarded as a failure *as art and as poetry*, although as agitation or propaganda it may still have some value. In this respect it is worth pointing out that to succeed as agitation a poem must first succeed as art, and the working class is entitled to the writer's best effort.

Despite the fact that the basic social attitudes of Ferrini and Alan Swallow, author of *The Remembered Land*, are the same, the latter's book is at the opposite pole from *Tidal Wave*. Here the writing is subdued and philosophical, rather than hortatory; there are strong lyrical elements; and the poems exhibit a clear sense of form. Few of them deal with such openly class themes as Ferrini's strike, but in even the most "personal" of them, the actual human condition is a strong informing element.

One of the most obvious characteristics of this poet is economy. In "Scene for A Scenario," he needs only two short stanzas to sketch a picture of a pair of lovers, Negro and white, and to suggest the tragic elements contained in such a relationship in our time. Similarly, in "The Too Much Loved Earth" he writes:

Where, beneath, trees
Are small indecencies—
The bee's strong metal
On the opened petal,
The tall clover
For daytime cover,
Pollen on insects feet
Casual as sun or sleet; . . .

This is indicative of the control and precision of his verse. The image "The bee's strong metal," which is so right that it gives one the shock of discovery, of seeing for the first time what we have always missed, is equalled again and again in these poems. The experience is communicated and dramatized through such metaphor, and some of the most successful poems, like number two of the "Social Sonnets," elevates metaphor into symbol to create a complex and powerful statement against the common isolation of the intellectual.

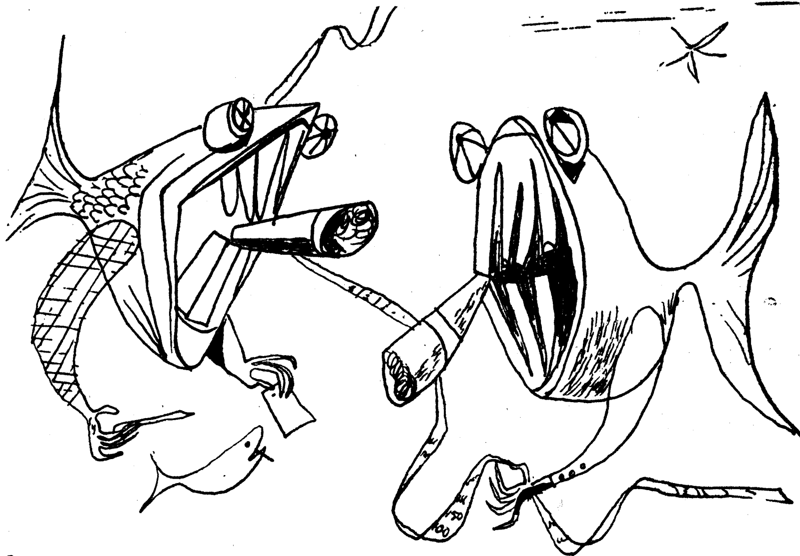
The poems have a considerable range. Some are concerned mainly with attempting to understand the character of the country Swallow knows best—the mountains and plains of the Rocky Mountain states, and especially Wyoming. Some are personal with social overtones. Others, such as the sonnets mentioned above, "Worker Asleep," "Psalm," and "The Mountain," are centered on social themes.

This wide range of interest, coupled as it is with fine technique and a dialectical view of life, can make Swallow a Marxist poet if his development continues. By that I mean a writer to whom "nothing human is foreign." We should ask that he try bigger themes, perhaps more immediate problems, but adjure him to keep his sense of the language and of form. He is one of the few poets writing who can achieve a poem which is neither simplified to the point of abstraction nor arbitrarily complicated with personal preciosities or historically irrelevant ideas.

The decisive element in poetry is language. Elementary as this may seem, it is something which is often forgotten. Since a fundamental character of all art, with the possible exception of non-programmatic music, is the communication of experience, our critics often wind up in a blind alley by insisting that the value of "content" is the touchstone for deciding the value of a poem. While it is true that the value of the experience in a poem, taken by itself, is an important factor in creating our attitude toward the work, it cannot be made the only basis for our judgment. ("Content" is sometimes used incorrectly as an equivalent to the communicated experience, while at the same time it is made to mean a prose paraphrase of the poem. This dismisses the emotional tensions and attitudes which are the dynamic elements of experience.) For example, no one will argue that a prose edition of Shakespeare (or, say, Lamb's versions) is better than the original. Both might have the same "content"—that is, a prose paraphrase or synopsis might cover both types—but the work of *art* has been lost with the change of language. To go on a step farther: a song by the Almanacs may be timely and topical and aid in the class struggle, but to ask that it compete on a basis of equality with a Shostakovich symphony—as has sometimes been done by implication—is to eliminate any real consideration of either. Both forms may communicate an element of revolutionary experience; but each has its own standards of artistic development by which it must be judged. The two forms do not compete.

We need an immediate fighting style of propaganda verse, and this Ferrini is helping to create. But we shall be doing a disservice to criticism, and the writer will be deluding and crippling himself, if either begins to subscribe to such a work as the one under consideration an artistic significance it does not possess—no matter how valuable the subject matter. In order for agitational verse to succeed, it must succeed first of all on its own terms as an art. That it can so succeed has been proven by Aragon, Mayakovsky and others.

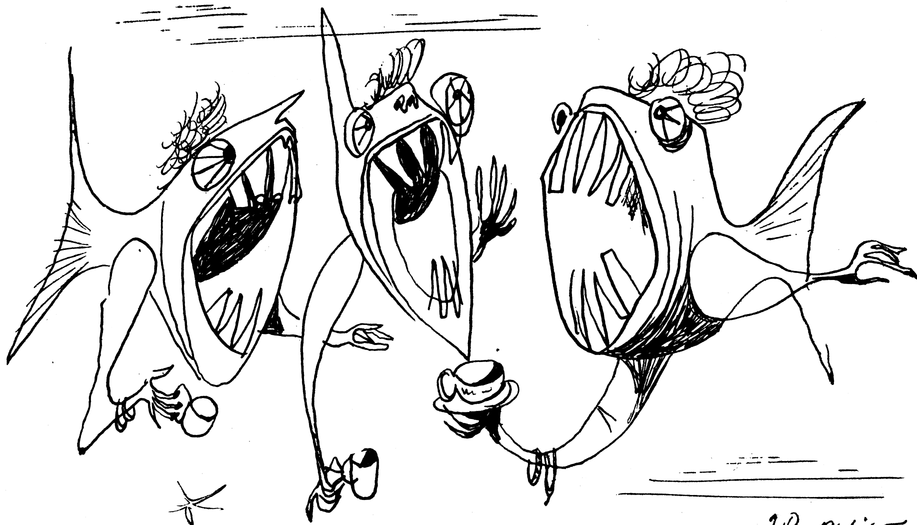
On the other hand, we need a kind of writing which will recreate experience with all its complex dialectical character. It may be reflective, philosophical or lyrical; revelatory or experi-



J. Refregier.

"Big Business."

Underwater With Anton Refregier



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mental; a kind of writing which will project the whole range of human experience in a new way—a Marxist way. Such a poetry, obviously, is not a hothouse product. It may very well be an extension of the first type. The values of such writing are strategic and enduring. Those of the first type are tactical and generally, though not always, ephemeral. Both kinds of writing are essential. But the writer and the critic must not confuse the two.

Poison Ivy Grower

LITTLE WONDER, or The Reader's Digest and How It Grew, *by John Bainbridge. Reynal & Hitchcock.* $2.

"THE NEW YORKER" owns a singular place among our periodicals. It is a gallery of paradoxes. A caustic monograph on the fraudulent press by A. J. Liebling will be found near an institutional ad bought by aforesaid press. For the same fifteen cents that buys John O'Hara's great story of our day, "Like Old Times," the reader gets the literary Pecksniff, Edmund Wilson, rag-picking and crooning to himself over his Trotskyist remainders. Alert young writers lie cheek-by-jowl with an accredited pantaloon who brought nothing back from the birth of Yugoslav democracy but spook stories, which could have been written more neatly by Dorothy Thompson. Irwin Shaw writes "Act of Faith," while in "Notes and Comment," E. B. White vaguely inspects the world to find nothing but his own muddle. The space is there for Rebecca West to demonstrate her thesis that traitor John Amery was the black sheep in a British ruling class otherwise uniformly white. But the space was also there for John Bainbridge to write the longest piece which has yet appeared in *The New Yorker,* on the subject of *The Reader's Digest.* In articling "Little Wonder," the magazine performed an act of citizenship, and of confidence in a reporter unheard of since the days of the muckrakers.

Mr. Bainbridge's disclosure of journalistic quackery in Chappaqua is now in a little book, with some additional tattle not used in the five-part "Profile" in the magazine. One can only guess why *The New Yorker* rudely attacked another paper, a practice which passed out of free American journalism about the time the Welsbach mantle was extinguished. Perhaps it was occasioned several years ago when Harold Ross refused to renew an arrangement with the *Digest* by which DeWitt Wallace, the head snake oil man in Chappaqua, used *New Yorker* jokes as a reviver when his political poultices stunk too bad.

The *Digest* had never been able to make *The New Yorker* stand still for its grosser trade practice, that of "planting" *Digest*-manufactured articles in captive magazines, from which the *Digest* "reprints" the item with the spontaneous air of discovery of a guide at Luxor, coming up with a Woolworth scarab he had sown an hour before. This ingenuous development of monopoly journalism is delightfully explained by Mr. Bainbridge. The captive editor would seem to be in the predicament of the man who tries to feed a pill to a horse. The man puts the pill in a tube and attempts to blow the pill into the horse's mouth. What happens when the horse blows first is vividly demonstrated in the chattel magazines which have swallowed so many *Digest* pills they have turned the color of Hearst journalism.

Mr. Bainbridge spent two years at his chore, and adduces evidence from analyses of the *Digest's* contents from its beginning. In the last six years, for instance, there were sixteen articles on trade unions, of which thirteen "were plainly and extensively unfavorable." No statistics are needed on the fundamental animus toward the Soviet Union, which is handled by a corps of specialists headed by Max Eastman, who receives $30,000 a year from DeWitt Wallace to soothe his heartache over Russia. Mr. Bainbridge's roll-call of the well-paid slanderers of our Soviet ally does not include George Eggleston, who joined the *Digest* staff after the study was finished. Mr. Eggleston, formerly editor of *Scribner's Commentator,* was in receipt of financial aid from the German Embassy, according to testimony at Nuremberg. The field never seems to be overcrowded: eight of the *Digest's* five-figure editors are making their emolument chiefly from pestling the anti-Soviet pills.

During the war the *Digest* circulated 2,000,000 copies a month among overseas troops. Your reviewer saw one aspect of DeWitt Wallace's morale work when he met a dozen ground crew men who had returned to Britain from the Eastern Command bases of the US Strategic Air

Forces in Poltava and Mirogorod in the Ukraine. Upon learning your reviewer's profession they crowded around, unfurling their wallets, and producing clippings from the *Digest* of W. L. White's noted empyreuma on the Soviet Union. "Do you know this guy White?" they said. "Where is the bum?" With cries of, "What kind of a snow job is he trying to hand us?" and "Just lead me to that character," they testified to an old problem of lying journalism—the disparity between what the pleader writes and what people see with their own eyes. The GI's had spent six months with the people of the devastated Ukraine. They were as angry at Mr. White as they would have been had his "article of lasting interest" been written about the USA.

Not all of the 11,000,000 readers of the *Digest* are as fortunate as the GI's from Poltava, of having knowledge that confounds falsehood. Indeed, *The Reader's Digest* is able to foul the springs of knowledge as they first flow among school children. The school editions of the magazine are privileged as textbooks in many public schools. *The New Yorker*, the only general mazagine which has shown the guts to fire back at this knavish periodical, has less than 200,000 circulation. Too few thousands more will see Mr. Bainbridge's superb little book. The good citizenship of *The New Yorker* in this case deserves greater currency.

This entertaining and thorough revelation of the sinister quacks of Chappaqua should be entered at the same weight as the *Digest*—in a quarter-dollar edition which could be put in the ring with the *Digest* on every newsstand.

James Dundonald.

Invincible Man

DEAR THEO, *edited by Irving Stone. Doubleday.* $3.

The jacket on this collection of van Gogh's letters to his brother, Theo, states that the gifts which made Vincent an artist were responsible for his "tragic failure as a man." But Vincent van Gogh, who was magnificent as a writer and thinker also, succeeded as a painter by waging one of the most heroic struggles in the history of art. So if the statement means that van Gogh never succeeded in establishing normal relations with society, that is true.

But the tragic failure was not his. It was the failure of capitalism, which treats the artist like a homeless cat and condemns him to live on the back fences of the world. The shoemaker performs socially useful work and is an accepted member of society, but the artist, who also helps man walk, shoeing him often with glory, eats out his heart and brain in the bitterest of all acids, neglect.

The triumphant struggle put up by van Gogh beats in every letter he penned. This collection is addressed to the one man who had, in his words, a "part in the actual production of some canvases which even in the deluge will retain their peace." During the last ten years of his life, when he was hard at work on his painting, almost every night—after fourteen and sixteen hours before his easel—Vincent sat down and poured out his heart to his dear Theo. Theirs was a comradeship and love unexampled.

The letters reveal why Picasso asked, "Why should the Dutch mourn for Rembrandt? They have van Gogh." In them you get clearly the development of the painter whose retina was so sensitive that he could see twenty-seven different varieties of black in Franz Hals. They cover the stay in Holland when he worked with the miners and peasants, producing his masterpiece, "The Potato Eaters," and then his breakaway from the black-and-white period when he submerged himself in the color of southern France, establishing himself at Arles. This is the period when he seemed to paint as if he were sunk in a heat wave with color skinned from the sun.

Being, however, a layman to whom "parallel lines are monsters"—I've always used a brush or pencil as if it were some sort of a one-handled plow —I must let others write about the painter. The collection of letters shows his stature as a thinker and poet. There are profound insights, wonderful descriptions of people and the countryside, statements of the painter's credo which can be run up on the writer's masthead, too. Above all there is the man's courage.

It was during the trying days immediately after the defeat of Republican Spain when fascism was on the march that I first got hold of *Dear Theo*. I was staying on a lonely farm, living with roadworkers and farmers, potato eaters, working desperately on a novel—and after the day's job, I read these letters. The fire hammered out by this invincible man helped to il-

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luminate and break a night which seemed to be engulfing the world.

Van Gogh's greatest painting was his own life. The son of a clergyman, a clergyman himself among the poor, his triumphs vindicate our faith in man. Vincent was always close to the people; he dreamed of the time art would be in the hands of the masses. He saw profound humanity in the face of the peasant, and the figure of a laborer humped over the job was a great knot of poetry to him. He, who could kneel in the mud during a storm to get proper coloring, who for weeks on end subsisted on coffee and crusts, was filled to bursting with emotions which rarely were piped out in the normal way. Hence the proud flesh and the burr fastened around the man; hence the eccentricity and harshness to protect the feeling heart. And what adds to the poignancy and nobility of this life is the fact that van Gogh saw clearly what he faced in taking up the life of a painter. In one of his early letters he gave himself ten years to succeed. At what a cost he did is indicated in the heart-breaking letters written when his reason had foundered.

Dear Theo is a great human document, and the publishers are to be congratulated on this reprint. What fine and brave people are these van Goghs, the brothers, the widow of Theo who, though she was left penniless with a child to support, fought for years single-handed to win recognition for the painter. Is not such courage flashing steel these days, and cannot one say: he who really understands these letters and this life, these canvases, banishes sadness forever?

There is a story about Vincent which tells us that when the miners in the Borinage had given up as impossible the job of rescuing the last survivors in an explosion, Vincent went into the mine again and again to carry out a suffocated workingman on his back. Yes, van Gogh carried man on his back, and out of the heat and struggle of his life he brought up canvases which will always be among the world's dearest possessions.

BEN FIELD.

Prodigal Son

PASSAGE FROM HOME, *by Isaac Rosenfeld. Dial.* $2.50.

THE painful, groping search of the unfledged individual consciousness for maturity has become a theme so familiar in American writing of the last three generations as to seem almost *the* American theme. All through the years of America's own transition from adolescence to adulthood—ever since Henry James chose for a subject the naive American exploring a more sophisticated Europe in a quest for understanding—American writers have been obsessed with it. So many American novels of this period have been portraits of their artists as young men. Again and again recurs this pattern of the young man's quest—of the adolescent's painful longing to grow up, his leaving home in search of richer satisfactions than the harsh life around him seems to offer. Floyd Dell, Genway Wescott, Thomas Wolfe—all have told this story of the prodigal son —and all have told it in the form of the autobiographical novel. It is as if the longing to break through the rough surface of life in these United States towards some fuller, some more meaningful kind of existence—whether in another place or time or another way of life—was indeed a longing closest to the American heart.

Passage from Home is another such novel—a first novel, autobiographical (one assumes) in inspiration, the first-person account of one more adolescent's growth to consciousness, and even set like so many of its forbears in that mid-continent matrix of questing talents, Chicago.

It is the story of Bernard, the "precocious child, as sensitive as a burn," who at fourteen "suddenly shot up . . . towered over life. Life meant the family." It is the story of how Bernard leaves home—a home which has come to seem too poor, too narrow —in search of insight, of experience which he cannot find with his dour, uncommunicative father, his harassed stepmother, his grandparents and the other relatives of a large Jewish family who assemble in periodic reunions. Bernard's search carries him toward the one relative who lives outside the family circle—toward his Aunt Minna, the cold, the self-contained, whose mysterious relationships with men challenge his understanding, rousing his first-known sexual feelings. It is these relationships he sets out to learn about.

Thus he goes deep into the lives of ne'er-do-well Willy, the Tennessee mountain man; of shifty Mason, ill at ease in his cuckoldry; of his own repressed father. Setting out to explain a mystery, he makes a discovery: "The

mystery was not to know the truth, but to be moved by it." And so he comes home again, hoping to reach with his newfound insight a deeper understanding with his father—but this is not to be. In the end he finds himself "suspended over the unmade declaration, the postponed scene of final understanding."

For all its familiarity, the theme of *Passage from Home* remains a good theme, and Isaac Rosenfeld's first-novel treatment of it has certain real virtues: an unpretentious simplicity of manner, a good grasp of structure, a sensitive feeling for human character. The sharply focused scenes of a Chicago Jewish family's existence — the holiday gatherings, Bernard's visit to his Old Country grandparents, his hard-working stepmother's management of her kitchen—convey a sense of intensely felt life. The characters are sensitively drawn: father and stepmother, grandparents, Minna and Willy and Mason.

Yet *Passage from Home* remains in effect curiously remote. The meanings are there. Why do they seem so muffled, so partial in their application? Perhaps the answer lies in a kind of disparity between form and content. It is Bernard himself—the "I," the teller of the tale—in whose mind the meanings mature; and yet Bernard never quite comes alive—either as an adolescent hungry for knowledge or as the grown-up interpreting his youthful experience from whose standpoint the story is unfolded. Rosenfeld's choice of the retrospective first-person point of view enables him to analyze—in a manner reminiscent of Henry James' minute investigations of inner motives—his characters' reactions; and the emphasis throughout is on reactions rather than actions. But one wonders if in this case the Jamesian manner really fits the material. Again and again, as if unwilling to sacrifice the sense of dramatic immediacy entailed by such a method, Rosenfeld tends to desert it for the dramatist's more objective, omniscient point of view. Thus a confusion arises. And somehow the meanings, essentially simple enough, tend to grow less clear, rather than clearer, under direct analysis. One feels that an objective, third-person treatment presenting Bernard in all the immediate reality of his precocious fourteen-year-old eagerness might have brought out those meanings more sharply, if more indirectly.

For the courage to attempt a well-worked theme—and to attempt it with unforced modesty—Rosenfeld deserves respect.

And it seems likely that his search for meanings, once he finds not only meanings but also means for best presenting them, will make his future work worth looking for.

WALTER McELROY.

History Retouched

SILENT IS THE VISTULA, *by Irena Orska. Longmans, Green.* $3.

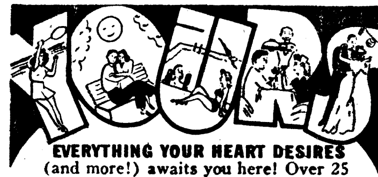
IRENA ORSKA's account of the Warsaw uprising must be viewed primarily as another contribution to the anti-Soviet campaign being waged by the remnants of the exile Polish government and by the discredited leader of the uprising, General Bor-Komorowski, until recently touring the United States.

It is, at the same time, a first-hand study of the heroic rising of the people of Warsaw and the tragedy of their defeat. But despite its value in this respect, it is, apparently purposely, loaded against the Soviet Union. Miss Orska tries to show that while the Poles, under the direction of the emigre London government, fought valiantly against the Germans, the Red Army broke its word and did not come to the aid of the resisters.

This is an old story. It has been repeated by the reactionary Poles and other Soviet-baiters for two years. Miss Orska's story is but another restatement of the canard. At more than twenty-five carefully chosen points in the narrative she refers to the oft-exploded myth of a Soviet promise of aid and its lack of fulfillment. Even when the Red Army, at the risk of its own over-all plan on a many-hundred mile front, parachuted supplies down to the people of Warsaw, we read that none of the supplies were good because they were "dropped without parachutes" and were therefore spoiled!

Of course Miss Orska has a ready explanation for Bor-Komorowski's "Home Army" not coming to the aid of the Polish Jews in the Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto. "The Home Army," she writes, "could not rise at the time of the Battle of the Ghetto, as there was no chance of victory."

Beyond doubt the people of Warsaw were told by Bor-Komorowski that the Red Army had promised them help. But he knew that the Red Army could not help them at the moment when he gave the signal for the rising, for the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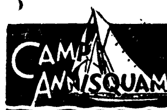

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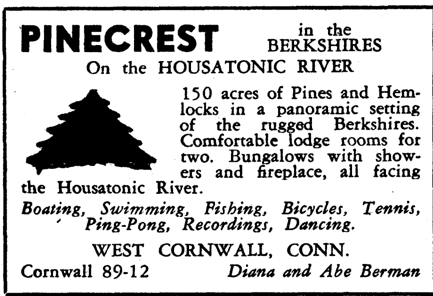
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Polish government-in-exile in London had been told so by no less a friend of theirs than Anthony Eden, then British Foreign Minister.

In a hitherto secret document released last March, Polish Vice-Premier Gomulka showed that the rising was ordered against the advice not only of the Soviet Union, but of the British government as well, and that the exile regime was solely responsible for its timing. Gomulka directed his charges against Polish Peasant Party leader Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, who was Premier of the emigre regime at the time of the insurrection.

Here is the story as disclosed by Gomulka:

In July, 1944, Mikolajczyk informed Prime Minister Churchill and Foreign Secretary Eden that Bor-Komorowski had been instructed to time the rising for July 17 to 25. He requested that a parachute brigade be sent to Warsaw, that airfields around the city be bombed by the RAF and that a division of Mustangs be sent to airfields controlled by Bor. However the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a letter to Polish Ambassador Raczynski, officially stated Britain's considered refusal of support. The letter said:

"The decision to make a rising in Warsaw was taken without first consulting His Majesty's Government, who had no possibility therefore to prepare an adequate plan of collaboration. Soviet strategy evidently does not allow an improvised immediate activity in the neighborhood of Warsaw coordinated with the rising in this town, regarding which neither the Soviet nor the British government were beforehand informed."

When the rising failed, the reactionary Poles and other Soviet-haters blamed its defeat—as has Miss Orska—on the Soviet Union. The revival of this campaign now by Miss Orska, among others, coinciding with Bor-Komorowski's visit to the United States, fits neatly into the current "Hate Russia" campaign.

The Warsaw uprising was one of the greatest human events of the war. But it is a story of betrayal and treason by the exile regime, which ordered an insurrection doomed to failure because its purpose was not liberation. The human drama of the uprising, which resulted in such terrible destruction to the people of Warsaw and to their martyred city, remains to be written.

MARTIN T. BROWN.

Civil-War Mississippi

MISSISSIPPI FARMERS, 1850-1860, *by Herbert Weaver. Vanderbilt University Press.* $2.50.

"MISSISSIPPI FARMERS," by a former scholar of Vanderbilt University, demonstrates that there still remains a group of Southern "scholars" intent upon defending the slave system of pre-Civil War days and, by implication, the plantation system which is still maintained in the Black Belt.

Dr. Weaver attempts to make three points. The first is that the plantation slaveocracy was not the dominant economic group in the agriculture of pre-Civil War Mississippi. Second, that the "poor whites" were not the great factor in the life of the state that opponents of the plantation slaveocracy make them out to be. Thirdly, that the "yeoman" farmers made up the dominant group in pre-Civil War Mississippi agriculture.

Dr. Weaver divides Mississippi into three areas according to geology, type of agriculture and population. From among these areas he chooses twelve sample counties. He then takes the unpublished Seventh US Census statistics for every individual farmer in these twelve counties and proceeds to interpret them.

To prove his points, Dr. Weaver takes the total of the number of slave-owning landowners and that of the non-slave-owning landowners in the twelve counties. He finds, in 1860, 3,676 slaveholding landowners and 2,718 non-slaveholding landowners. This would seem to indicate a ratio of a little less than fifty-eight percent of slaveholding landowners to a little more than forty-two percent non-slaveholding landowners, which is not too unbalanced.

But this tabulation does not take into account the most significant group in Mississippi agriculture of that period: the Negro slaves. As compared with the total figure of 6,394 white landowners, there were more than 70,000 slaves in these twelve Mississippi counties.

Hoping to show that the yeoman farmers were not "poor whites," the author asserts that Mississippi at that time was a pioneer, frontier area and that the living standards of the older agricultural areas could not be applied to it.

But Dr. Weaver does not explain how, if this be true, the slaveholding planters lived in such affluence and

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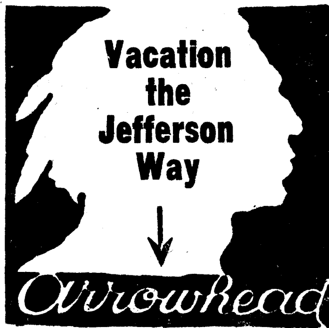

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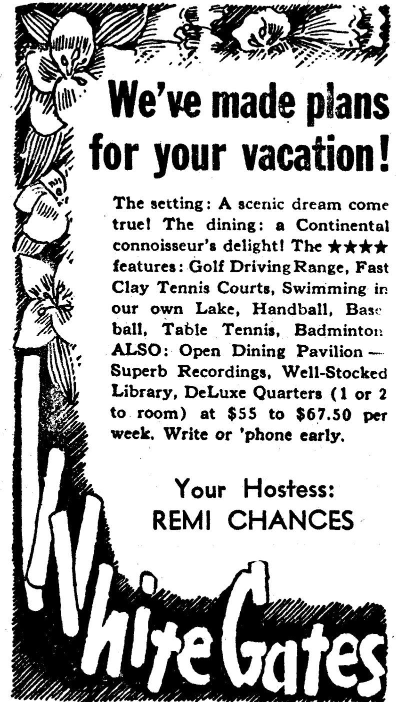
luxury, controlling most of the land and harvesting most of the crops.

The author himself shows that the less than fifty-eight percent slaveholding landowners (of whom, by the way, far less than half owned the overwhelming portion) in 1860 owned 87.63 percent of the improved cropland and harvested 93.17 percent of the cotton crop and 86.56 percent of the corn crop. Perhaps this explains better than the frontier theory why the yeoman farmer lived, as Dr. Weaver himself admits, in "crudely constructed houses" whose interiors were "comparatively bare," and why they "dressed in clothing not unlike that to be found on any frontier."

The book hints unwittingly at a number of points which require detailed Marxist analysis for us to arrive at a clearer view of the agrarian question in the South. It is not enough for us to assert that the plantation system in the Black Belt today is a feudal survival of the slave system, merely permitted to exist after the Civil War through an agreement between the industrial capitalists of the North and the plantation owners of the South. I believe that investigation of the facts will show that there was direct intervention by the monopolists and bank capitalists to preserve the plantation system after the Civil War.

Mississippi before the Civil War was still a largely undeveloped and unexploited area. In Dr. Weaver's twelve sample counties there were in 1860 less than 7,000 farmers, who operated on less than 1,500,000 acres of land. By 1945, long after the Civil War, according to the preliminary figures of the Agricultural Census of that year, there were more than 40,000 farmers in these twelve sample counties operating on almost 3,000,000 acres of land.

Today Mississippi, along with Alabama, is the heart of the plantation system in the Black Belt, the very core of Jim Crow terror and oppression. Why did Mississippi, whose agricultural resources did not really receive full development and exploitation *until after the Civil War,* become the heart of the plantation system long after chattel slavery had been abolished? What happened to the more than forty-two percent of pre-Civil War small non-slaveholding landowners and their descendants who made Mississippi after the Civil War predominantly a tenant agricultural system, overwhelmingly sharecropper in character? Part of this can be explained by the chaining of the



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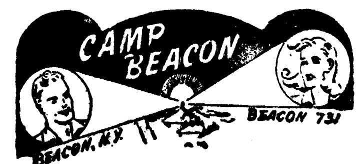

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freed Negro slaves to the land. But why, then, are also most of Mississippi's white farmers tied to the land as tenants and sharecroppers? Why was it impossible for both the white and Negro farmers to escape from the plantation system to the vast area in Mississippi which prior to the Civil War was undeveloped and unexploited?

To answer these questions, I believe it will be necessary to investigate the amount of direct intervention into the agricultural economy of Mississippi after the Civil War by bank capital and industrial capital.

Perhaps the direction of this investigation can be found in a footnote on page 112 of *Mississippi Farmers*: "People from outside the state, many of them from New Orleans, tried to enter land [establish ownership—D.C.] by engaging agents to make certain improvements. . . . It was suspected that some of the absentee applicants were agents for railroads. . . ."

Dr. Weaver's book is useful in a way he did not intend. Communists in the United States are preparing to engage in intense discussions to enrich their Marxist understanding of the Negro question. Such comprehension cannot come without a full understanding of the agrarian economy of the South from pre-Civil War days to today. Dr. Weaver's book indicates the fruitful material which can be dredged out of the Agricultural Censuses for this purpose.

DAVID CARPENTER.

Films of the Week

MADE by the Signal Corps of the US Army, *Don't Be a Sucker* was originally intended as an Army educational film. With a commentary spoken by Lloyd Nolan and the two male roles carried by Paul Lukas and Felix Bressart, the film picks up an American fascist spreading his poison on the street corner of an American town; shifts to Germany at the time the Nazis were about to take power, and, using sequences from the movie *The Hitler Gang*, tells the story of how the Nazis managed to split the German people, using religious and "racial" differences as a means of reducing their opposition.

To one who has seen many of the Army educational and anti-intolerance films, *Don't Be a Sucker* will be familiar both as to content and method. Like most films of this type made by the Army, it has certain deficiencies of form: a tendency to be talky and to lack dramatic force—defects difficult to avoid when one attempts to present an important social problem in the brief space of eighteen minutes. More important is an element which did much to vitiate most Army educational films and the whole Army orientation program—that is, an oversimplification of historical processes.

In *Don't Be a Sucker* this oversimplification is all too evident. Thus while anti-Semitism, religious persecution and chauvinism generally are shown to be the common tools of the fascist politician, they are never endowed with parentage. There is no attempt made to show that those really responsible for fascism and its persecutions were and are the monopolists, and that the thugs and gangsters who put their policies into action are hired agents—although these lieutenants often volunteer their services.

In spite of these weak spots *Don't Be a Sucker* is a fine film and can be a powerful weapon in the fight against intolerance. Its release through Paramount Pictures will guarantee it an audience of millions, where formerly such pictures, since they were shown haphazardly by isolated theaters or under the auspices of progressive organizations, reached a much smaller number.

The Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions, which arranged the preview, is urging all organizations to push for a showing of the film in their local theaters. Such a program, energetically carried out, can do much toward cutting the ground from under the feet of the Bilbos and the Gerald K. Smiths.

IT IS a minor tragedy that the French film *Resistance* has little in common with the great popular underground movement other than its name. In one way it must be considered an achievement of sorts—to reduce a tremendous historical fact, the struggle of millions of ordinary people against fascism, to the level of a little group of conspirators and professional spies. It is the kind of achievement that is all too common in the "non-political" climate of Hol-

lywood. It is too bad that the producers of this film seem to have tried to equal it. At this kind of game, they are bound to be beaten hands down.

In 1942 presumably, a couple of Frenchmen labelled by the Nazis as De Gaullists are thrown into a boxcar full of deportees bound for a concentration camp. With very little difficulty they manage to escape, taking with them a girl, Francoise. They reach Algiers by way of Spain, the latter country apparently offering them no obstacles. In Algiers the men are questioned by French secret service operatives, Francoise having turned them in as possible Nazi spies. One of them, it turns out, is a German agent. The other, an Alsatian who has been a Nazi party member for years, is a French master spy. Among other things he brings with him information to the effect that an Allied landing in North Africa would be highly feasible. Remarkable people, these spies. The French officials too are remarkable. They receive his news with enthusiasm—but it is worth remembering that when the landings actually came off, they were decidedly cool in their reception. Just a result of the volatile French temperament, no doubt.

The Alsatian Labarth, his usefulness in Africa impaired by his being pulled in by the cops, goes back to France where, as head of the Gestapo in one of the cities, he is presumably in a position to do great things for the Underground. When first Francoise turns up as part of the underground group, and then Labarth's Nazi companion, who has escaped, things begin to get hot. Labarth is forced to go into hiding. Captured for a spectacular piece of sabotage, he is jailed to wait for the firing squad. Take it from there.

The greatest single weakness in the film is its desire to avoid any kind of politics. This imparts to the movie an aspect of mild schizophrenia, with the result that actions which are supposed to be heroic turn out to be merely melodramatic. There is not one working-class character in the picture; there is no hint that there was even one French collaborator. Everything is as simple as cops and robbers, but it does not move fast enough to be entirely successful on that plane.

The scenes involving the firing squads have a rawness about them which lifts them above the rest of the movie. The players in the small cast, none of whom, with the exception of Yvonne Gaudeau as the girl Francoise,

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are pretty, lend to the picture an element of reality, of more or less ordinary people engaged in extraordinary activities, which unfortunately the story does little to sustain.

THOMAS MCGRATH.

Records

RANDALL THOMPSON'S "The Testament of Freedom," performed by the Harvard Glee Club and the Boston Symphony under Koussevitzky, is another of the small but growing number of splendid recordings of American works that are adding distinction to record lists. The work, written in 1943, is a setting of passages from Thomas Jefferson, and what is immediately apparent is the composer's masterly solution of the difficult technical problem he set himself. He avoids the easy way out of accompanied declamation. By subtly shortening some syllables of Jefferson's classic prose and lengthening others, he has been able to cast it into regular musical bar lines, and yet preserve and even intensify the word-meaning. For models, Thompson has gone back to the great Renaissance masters who wrote for accompanied voice, such as Monteverdi and Gabrieli, trying to make the music an expressive setting of each phrase rather than seeking a more formal all-over structure. It is not tuneful music, but at the same time the melodic phrases gain a definite American flavor, through the use of modal scales, based on fewer notes than the familiar scales. The harmonization is simple, the orchestral accompaniment often reaches heights of expressive beauty, and the entire work is easy to take, powerful in its effect, succinct, admirable in its freshness and inspiring in its message (Victor M 1054).

Prokofiev's "Overture on Hebrew Themes" is a tender and witty piece of contemporary music, for clarinet, piano and strings. It is admirably performed by David Weber, Vivian Rivkin and a string quartet (Disc 4020).

The performance by Adolph Busch of the Mozart A Major Concerto does full justice to Mozart in its phrasing and rhythmic nuance, but suffers from scratching and technical lapses that will annoy the lover of polished violin playing. The music, although written when Mozart was twenty-one, is equalled by only a handful of works in the form (Columbia M 609).

Eugene Ormandy leads the Phila-

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delphia orchestra in the evergreen music of Dvorak's "New World Symphony," which his vigorous and forthright style fits very well. The recording is much better than Columbia has given this orchestra in the past (Columbia M 570).

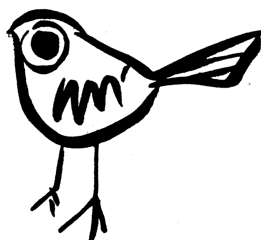
Helen Traubel and Kurt Baum sing the sentimental melodies and nonsensical poetry of the Bridal Chamber scene from Wagner's *Lohengrin* with excellent voice and good musical sense, accompanied by Rodzinski and the N. Y. Philharmonic (Columbia X 261). Equally effective is the collaboration of Traubel and Rodzinski in Elsa's dream, from the same opera (Columbia 12321-D).

The melodies of Jerome Kern's *Show Boat,* excellently sung by the stars of the current revival, sound as fresh and strong as they did twenty years ago (Columbia, M611). By comparison, two records from *Carousel,* the waltz conducted by Fritz Reiner (Columbia 12322-D) and the Soliloquy sung by James Melton (Victor 11-9116), show that little progress has been made toward creating a genuine opera out of the Broadway musical play. What has been added to the basically enjoyable melodies is merely a set of orchestral and harmonic platitudes, pretentious and inexpressive.

Spirituals can be sentimentalized, dramatized, or sung straight, as simple, heartfelt folk songs. The latter is Paul Robeson's style, and his performance of eight spirituals make up an album of fine human and musical qualities (Columbia M 610).

The Esquire All-American Hot Jazz Album, supervised by Leonard Feather, presents the pale, over-refined melodic base, combined with an immensely subtle and polished instrumental performance that is typical of hot jazz today (Victor HJ-8). By contrast, "Memphis Five Favorites" successfully revives the happy-go-lucky ensembles and boisterous solos of the small-band music of the Twenties, in an album marred only by vocals that are pure corn (Stinson-Asch S-365).

S. Finkelstein.



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