

NEW MASSES

MAY 11 1937

FIFTEEN CENTS



Mr. Windsor Goes to Town

ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS GIVES AWAY "THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH" *by T. A. Jackson*

JOAN CRAWFORD got a letter from us this week, and we dare say she was as pleased to get it as we were pleased to send it. For our own part, however, we were not only pleased, but envious, because we acted merely as a sort of go-between for a large group of Joan's foreign admirers. What we mean is that the jack tars of the Spanish loyalist fleet elected a deputy to write Joan in their behalf to express their thanks for the help she has been rendering, along with many other Hollywood celebrities, to Spanish democracy. We can't tell you what their letter to her said, since we don't read other people's mail, but we do know that they sent along with it the ribbon from the cap of one of the blue-jackets on the loyalist destroyer *Alcala Galiano*. As is naval custom, the ribbon carries the ship's name in gold. José Perez was the man chosen by the sailors to write to Miss Crawford, and he sent the letter via the *NEW MASSES* because he didn't know her address. In his covering letter to us, Perez, speaking for the crew of the *Alcala Galiano*, said: "Thanks for the work you are doing for Spain. Your special Spanish number [Jan. 26] was grand."

Letters from readers take us severely to task for being too reserved about what we say in the pages of the magazine about our drive for \$15,000 to finance the current improvements in the magazine. They say we have more right to do some tall crowing about the magazine than we've been availing ourselves of, and several say we ought to come right out and ask for money. These folks have sent in con-



tributions directly without waiting till their parties and meetings are organized. Okay! We should be the last to lag behind the masses. While you're going ahead getting your friends and your organization to arrange *NEW MASSES* benefits, you yourselves are invited to send in your contribution, small or large, but the larger the better. And in this connection, don't forget our \$100 lifetime subscription offer and our \$25 ten-year subscription offer!

Here's a letter to our chief editor that will interest you:

"Dear Mr. Freeman:

"As a friend of Ben Leider, who was always in close intellectual and emotional community with him in his love and devotion to the cause of the workers throughout the world, I am sending you the enclosed check as a general contribution to the fund of the *NEW MASSES*, which has so eloquently described his significance as a fighter in that cause. I do this with the sincere conviction that Ben would have wanted friends of his family to support not only the cause of the Spanish people, in whose defense he died, but also any force which actively and effectually operates in the interest of the workers. Ben believed the *NEW MASSES* to be such a force, and so do I."

And here's another:

"Dear Friends and Comrades of the *NEW MASSES*:

"I am one of the first subscribers of the *NEW MASSES* and I well remember

BETWEEN OURSELVES

the meeting at Irving Plaza in April of 1934 where you openly and squarely placed the question of continuing the *NEW MASSES* or not before us subscribers. Either we raise enough money to pay up the printer's bill, rent, and back salaries (of \$15 per week), or the *NEW MASSES* will have to give up the fight. The result of that meeting was that a few hundred dollars were raised in donations and loans to meet the most pressing needs of the hour. At that meeting I donated \$6 and made a loan of \$25, and since then I have many times answered your SOS calls with \$2 donations.

"My answer now to the charge of 'Moscow gold' by that fascist gangster Trotsky is a \$5 donation to the *NEW MASSES*, and I appeal to all friends and subscribers of the *NEW MASSES*: let our answer to those gangsters of the pen be by flooding the *NEW MASSES* with American dollars!

"An agent of the Gay Pay Oo.

"(Louis Rafals)"

Can't we expect a similar letter from you? Friends all over the country are sending in their \$100 and \$25 subscrip-

tions, and are going ahead with benefit parties and affairs. Next week we will give you more news about the drive, and publish a thermometer showing how we stand. Let's hear from you!

Who's Who

T. A. JACKSON, an Englishman, is the author of the current popular work in Marxist theory, *Dialectics*. . . Howard Rushmore has been active in farmers' movements for years, and has contributed frequently to various publications in that field. . . Joseph North was formerly editor of the *NEW MASSES* and is now editor of the *Sunday Worker*. . . Ralph Fox, recently killed in action with the loyalist forces in Spain, wrote *Lenin*, a biography, and *Genghis Khan*. His essay in this issue is part of the volume *The Novel and the People*, just published by International. . . William Johnston is an American writer who recently completed an extensive trip through European countries. . . Edwin Berry Burgum is a member of the faculty of New York University and is a contributing editor of *Science & Society*,

the Marxist quarterly. . . Milton Howard, who has contributed frequently to our columns; is a member of the staff of the *Daily Worker*. . . Corliss Lamont has published several articles and books on the Soviet Union, and is the compiler of the recently published poetry anthology, *Man Answers Death*. . . Grace Hutchins is a member of the staff of the Labor Research Association and the author of *Women Who Work* as well as of a number of pamphlets. . . William Gropper's drawing on page 8 is one of a series of eight issued in print form by the A.C.A. Print Group. The original prints, on view at the A.C.A. Gallery in New York, sell for one dollar, proceeds going to aid the Spanish loyalists. . . Anton Refregier, who did the painting on page 20, designed the Madison Square Garden decorations for the convention of the Young Communist League.

What's What

BRUCE MINTON and **JOHN STUART**, who wrote the excellent biographical article on John L. Lewis which we ran some weeks ago, have written another on William Green, president of



the A.F. of L., which we will publish in three installments, beginning next week. This is a definitive picture of William Green the man and of his influence on the American trade-union movement. Don't miss it!

Writers who were interested in the call to a National Congress of Writers printed in the last issue of the *NEW MASSES* can obtain further information about the congress by writing to the League of American Writers, 125 E. 24th Street, N. Y. C.

Flashbacks

IN Washington on May 12, 1916, a resolution was offered calling on the House of Representatives to express the horror of the American people at the execution that day of the leaders of Ireland's revolt against British imperialism. Among those shot was Socialist James Connolly, Commandant-General of the Irish Republican Army, who, in the words of the resolution, "following the inspiration of the American Revolution, attempted to erect a republican form of government." The House of Representatives sidetracked the resolution to a committee, avoided expressing horror. . . "If your honor please," said Bill Haywood, during his cross examination, to the Idaho judge who was trying him for the murder of ex-Governor Steunenberg, "will you kindly have the shutters closed in that window? The sun is shining in my face and I cannot see the senator's eyes." Later young Senator William E. Borah, the prosecuting attorney, admitted, "The request doubled me up like a jackknife." One hundred alibi witnesses, defense attorney Clarence Darrow, and countless demonstrators (200,000 in Boston alone) doubled the whole prosecution up like a jackknife. Haywood was acquitted in the trial which began May 9, 1907. . . John Brown, militant organizer for Negro freedom, was born at Torrington, Conn., May 9, 1800.

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

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Joe Bartlett

The Coronation Is Haunted

One of his majesty's subjects says three ghosts will be present: P. T. Barnum's and those of two revolutions

By T. A. Jackson

IT is no good you folks thinking everybody in Britain has gone plain daft—except insofar as they didn't have to go. Our coronation carry-on isn't anything like as daft as it looks.

Bernard Shaw years ago let the world into the secret. Arguing from the cases cited by Darwin of protective mimicry in nature, he advanced the theory that the inconceivable imbecility and general cretinism exhibited by the middle and ruling classes in Britain were to be explained likewise. It was their mode of luring their prey within grasping range.

Naturally, coming as it does from an Irishman, the theory must not be taken too literally. But there is a good deal of truth in it. For instance: from a rational standpoint what excuse is there for taking the unfortunate chief magistrate of a front-rank state and putting him through a ceremonial lasting for a couple of hours of such a nature as would tax the strength of a heavyweight champion trained to the minute?

They carry him through the streets in a coach of a design that was about up to date when Queen Anne died—a design invented when the immortal fathers of your republic had none of them been born—when the parents of those immortal fathers were biting chunks out of Plymouth Rock in preparation for busting chunks off the British empire. They get the king into the Abbey Church at Westminster; put him on a platform; make him kneel down; stand up; kneel down again;

give the right answers to a set of riddles; half undress him; grease his chest; decorate him with robes weighing all-told about ninety pounds; put a jeweled pot on his head; and tell him he is, now, the finished article. Then the archbishop asks him to contribute to the collection.

After the same performance has been gone through in the case of the queen, with modifications—they don't undress her so much, and she doesn't get so much greasing, or so big a crown; *per contra* isn't asked to contribute to the kitty—he has to sit while representatives of the peers present go through the ceremony of rendering homage to him as their "liege lord of life and limb."

A little comic business with a couple of swords, one with no point and another with no edge, an orb and a couple of scepters (with which he doesn't do any neat juggling, because even if he had learned how he would, by then, be past it), he ought by rights to listen to a sermon. Out of deference to the modern craving for speed, the sermon has, this time, been cut out.

Then they take him home again, wearing the robes and the crown, and bowing all the way in acknowledgment of the cheers of the loyal and enthusiastic populace.

This king of ours is in luck—he has some hair! I can testify from personal observation of his father and his grandfather in similar circumstances that there is no more terrible dilemma in life than that of a bald-headed king

trying to calculate just how much of a bow he can manage without dislodging his crown and sending it over one eye or an ear. One of these days, when we at last allow an heir to the throne to be begotten on the body of an American woman, we shall have a king who solves the difficulty either (a) by anchoring the crown on his head with a wad of well-chewed gum, or (b) by waving it out of the coach-window on the end of his scepter.

As it is he must go through with it, bowing continually as the coach proceeds at a walking pace the longest way round they can invent from the Abbey to his home. After that he can change into pajamas.

YOU THINK all this is just plain damfoolery? Not a bit of it. It is made to look like that on purpose. But every stroke on it is as calculated and designed as every call in a poker game.

Take the ceremony itself. Basically its substratum is primitive ritual-magic—an example of what the anthropologists call a "rite of transition." By this ceremony, ritually speaking, an ordinary mortal man is magically converted into something more than man—into a king! In its aboriginal substratum, the ceremony did more than that—it converted a plain man into a triune being who was king, high priest, and god incarnate, all at once.

Relics of the second and third of these functions still remain. The king is *ex-officio* head of the church. And "the divinity that doth

hedge a king" is not wholly a mere figure of speech. But out of deference to the clericalists and the Bibliolators, those aspects are soft-pedaled. They give him a Bible along with the rest of his kit, and he promises to make a real fuss of it. This sidetracks the Fundamentalists, as his solemn promise to look after the church (and its revenues) sidetracks the Clericals.

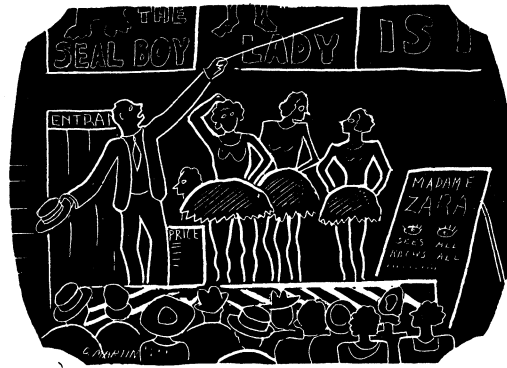
But superimposed upon this basic ritual-magic stratum of the Coronation ceremony is the ceremony of *electing* the leader of a feudal-military host of conquerors. As part of the ceremony the assembled peers are *asked* if they accept "this man, George, etc.," as their king. There is no telling what would happen if any peer, being in drink or otherwise smitten with a spirit of devilment, should say "No!" It is, now, a mere formality. But it does survive as a relic from the time when the leaders of conquering hosts were elected to their office of war-leader by their "peers"—that is to say, their "equals."

There is a two-edged purpose in preserving this feudal relic. In the first place, it creates the pleasing illusion that the king only took on the job with great reluctance out of deference to the pleadings of "his people." In the second place, it subtly suggests the republican contention that it is the people who make, and who therefore have the right to dismiss, the king. Also, and arising out of the latter aspect, it suggests that the "peers" are really and truly the natural and proper spokesmen for and champions of the rights of the people.

There is a cunning here that it would be hard to underestimate. You, in your republic, think it is all nonsense to pretend that by calling a man a "lord" you make him anything other than a plain man. The ruling class of Britain, wise with the experience of centuries of dealing with a people who were once notorious as the most intractable and rebellious in Europe, knows that there is a subtle dialectic involved in a man who is both a plain man and also, at the same time, more than a man, a "lord" or a "king."

You see, the core of the whole business consists in a wholesome fear of what the common people, the plain working folk, might do if once they decided really and truly to look after themselves. Thus, allowing for the natural diffidence of each man taken separately, there is an amazing political efficacy in creating an institution which suggests to each of these diffident ones that he needn't bother—there is a power already provided which will take care of him better than he could possibly take care of himself. And the more the status of "lord" and "king" is surrounded with a halo of time-sanctified tradition and customary usage, the more efficacious it is for the purpose of inhibiting all determination in the people—in the workers as a class—to take into their own hands the decision of their own destinies.

For instance, these "lords." In your country everybody knows Henry Ford, and "the nail and saucepan business as he made his money by." Our English Henry Ford, when he has made his pile, hides the origin of that



C. Martin

pile, skillfully, by becoming metamorphosed into Lord Nuffield. When you read of a mass strike at the Beardmore works in Glasgow, and the press carries a story of how deeply Lord Clydebank deplores the loss to the nation involved in this calamitous interruption of essential production, you will be all the more impressed the less you know that Lord Clydebank is none other than old man Beardmore himself. When, at the Coronation, you hear of the part played by Lord Devonport, you may, if you don't know, envisage him as the latest link of a chain of noble and chivalrous ancestors stretching back beyond the Conqueror to King Arthur and the Round Table. It makes a difference if you happen to know that the first Lord Devonport started in the tea business and finished by building a dock-and-harbor trust that had to be bought out by the state as a front-rank public nuisance. Similarly, under the title of Lord Allerton, is discreetly veiled the memory of his father, a railway boss known to his employees as Bloody Bill Jackson. And so on.

You think you are cute in the U.S.A., and on points so you are. But, as the literature of your country should have taught you, "you've got to get up early to get in front of God." And even God stands a poor chance when the British ruling class sets out really on the make.

YOU SEE, the British ruling class has one great virtue. It knows how to learn. And it has learned a lot from the U.S.A.

Would it surprise you to know that it is to a large extent the U.S.A. which is to blame for our forthcoming coronation ballyhoo? No, I am not, wholly, thinking of Wally Simpson—though she, certainly, gave them a reason for laying on the flapdoodle with an extra-large-size trowel. (You can't sack a king quicker than a boss would sack an errand-boy without running some risk of shaking the foundations of the monarchical superstition.) I go further back than that and affirm that the whole cult of royalism and aristocracy in Britain is a relatively modern manufacture, and that its initial impetus came from the fright received by the rulers of Britain at the revolt of the American colonies and the foundation of the United States of America. I affirm it as my profound conviction that if the revolt of the American colonies had been delayed for ten years, Britain might easily have

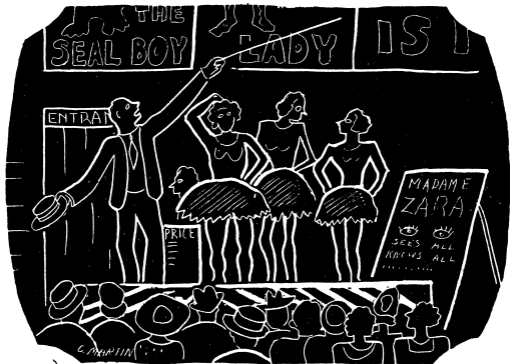
become a republic first! That the alarm excited among the waverers by that revolt added to the extra circumspection induced in the ruling oligarchy by that revolt made all the difference at a critical moment.

Even if this be an exaggeration, the fact stands clear that ever since the American Revolution, and its logical consequence, the French Revolution, the British ruling class has been extra-supersensitive to the possibility of revolt among the "lower orders," and has taken extra precautions both to have available a force for crushing such a revolt, should it ever break out, and to anticipate its possibility by systematic neutralizing propaganda.

You see this most clearly when you notice that the pageantry indulged in on such occasions as coronations and jubilees has grown steadily more elaborate and more designed to win the populace over to the side of faith and trust in royalty and all that it signifies.

Until the twentieth century, for instance, the coronation ceremonial was confined wholly to the Abbey pantomime. Only in the cases of Edward VII, George V, and now George VI, was there added the elaborate military parade through streets lavishly decorated at the public expense for the occasion. This public parade, which at one time consisted of no more than a passage of the king, attended by a company of guards and the gentlemen of his court, from the palace of Whitehall or St. James's to the Abbey, less than half a mile away, was first elaborated as a technique on the occasion of Queen Victoria's first jubilee in 1887. On the occasion of her second jubilee in 1897, it was enlarged enormously to include not only representative companies of every branch of the armed forces of the crown—infantry lining the streets, and cavalry and horse artillery in the procession itself—but also a special colonial procession in which contingents from the armed forces of every British dependency or possession—including the Fiji Island police, as well as the Royal Irish Constabulary—formed an extra-super guard of honor under the command of Field-Marshal Lord Roberts in person.

For the coronation of George VI, preparations have been made to include all the special features of Queen Victoria's Second Jubilee plus the most elaborate coronation pageant yet designed. And that the public may be properly prepared to respond to the display, the whole advertising talent of the British Empire (reinforced especially from the U.S.A.) has been mobilized. That fine twentieth-century technique which has filled every home with breakfast foods—for offering which to our ancestors men would have been, and deservedly, hanged to the nearest tree—and which has made us all self-conscious about our collars, our socks, our shaving, and (sublimest touch of all) our B. O., is being developed to the uttermost in order to convince every last guttersnipe in the British islands and the British dominions beyond the seas that the British empire is the greatest show on earth and its king the grandest king in the king-line ever revealed to the gaze of a wondering mortality.



C. Martin

And don't you run away with the idea that the whole business is just plumb dumb. In the days when "Hopkins and that crew" (as a noble lord called them) were founding the U.S.A., and, indeed, more than forty years later, when George IV was crowned, in 1820, they simply would not have dared to parade the king through miles of streets. Their "loyal and devoted subjects" had a way of being dexterous with brickbats and garbage.

Round about the year 1870 it was the common belief that Queen Victoria would be the last monarch to occupy the throne of Britain. Today—! Well, watch for yourself.

YOU SEE, the rulers of Britain were cute enough to see what they were up against, and they acted accordingly. They had one big asset in the fact that Victoria was not only a widow, but essentially as petty-bourgeois as they made 'em. No small-town tradesman's relict ever wore her widow's weeds with such a relish as did Victoria. No deacon's widow was ever so quintessentially respectable. Her

efficient and punctual fecundity as a wife, combined with her adamant hostility to all the cardinal sins—save possible gluttony-on-the-sly—made her ideally fitted for convincing every strait-laced petty bourgeois in the land that she was "just like one of us."

In the U.S.A. you manage very well by means of the "log cabin to the White House" myth. In Britain our rulers go one better by promulgating the myth that the heart that beats in Balmoral Castle or in Buckingham Palace is secretly pining for a back parlor, and holds its yearnings in check only out of self-sacrificing deference to the duty of serving the nation.

Wally Simpson very nearly knocked this myth end-ways-on. She was only just stopped in time. But she was stopped. And nothing stopped her more effectively than the fact that there was handy, as an alternative to Wally's man, an ideal Young Couple, with two really delightfully (almost Shirley-Temple-like) young children. Wally's man was paid off and got rid of. And all the advertising ex-

perts set to work to sell to the British public the cutest outfit in royal families that the country was ever blessed with.

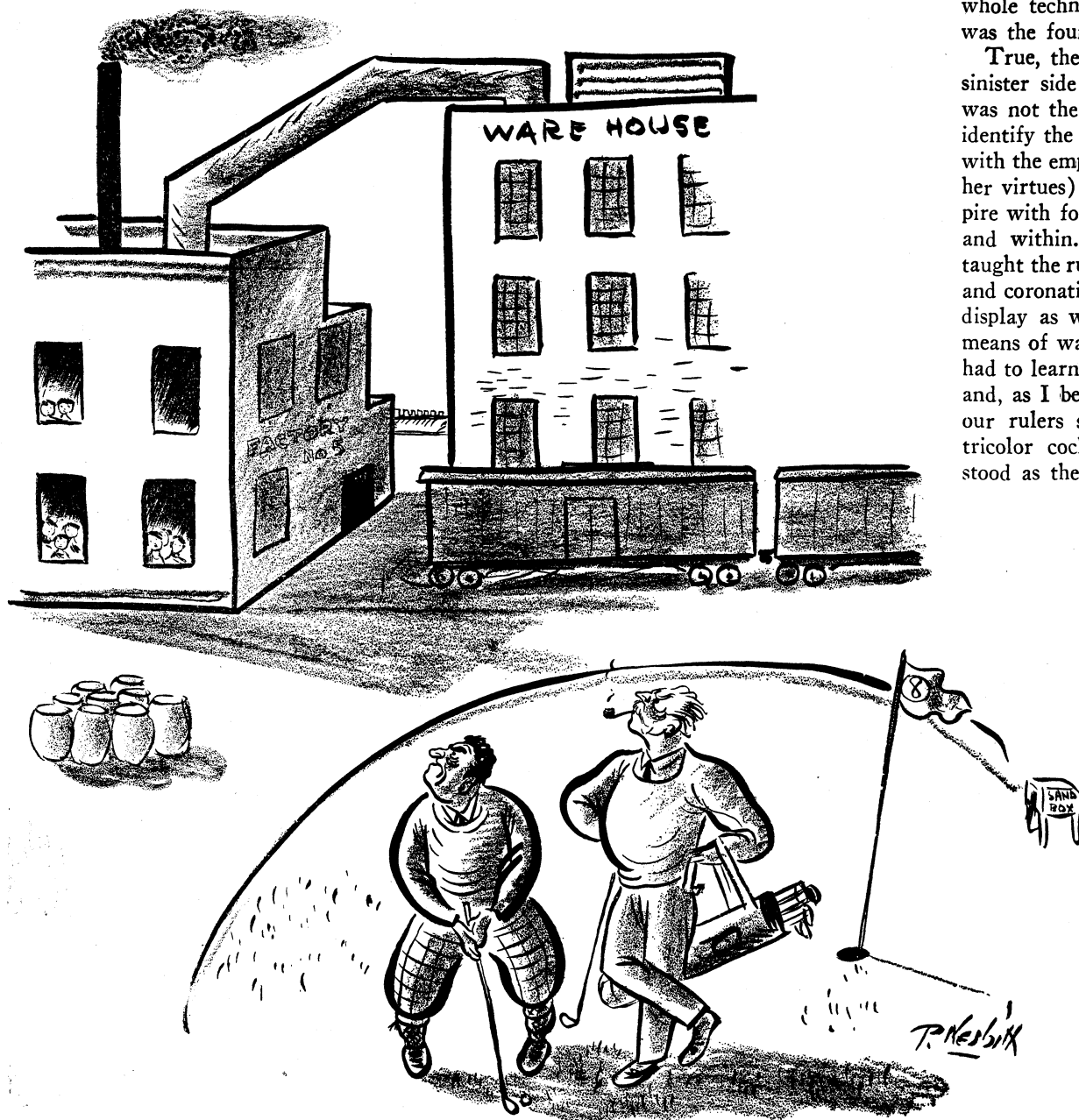
Please note the cunning two-sidedness of the whole baloney. First of all the king (and family) are boosted as just plain folks—"like ourselves." That is not only the human-interest pull. It is a cunning way of suggesting that really, he'd rather not have all this fuss if it could be avoided. Which in him brings into view the other aspect—that after all he is the Head of the Greatest Empire that the World Ever Saw ("our" empire), so that in making a fuss over him we are really making a fuss over our "empire," which ultimately means "ourselves."

I BLAME the U.S.A. You cannot study the technique of selling royalism to the British public without realizing from the outset how much the rulers of Britain owe to that great man Phineas T. Barnum (who said "there's a sucker born every minute," and who invented "The Greatest Show on Earth") and to the whole technique of salesmanship of which he was the founder.

True, the U.S.A. is not responsible for the sinister side of the coronation pageantry. It was not the U.S.A. which taught Disraeli to identify the queen (and her domestic virtues) with the empire, and loyalty to the queen (and her virtues) with the need to defend that empire with force and arms against foes without and within. It was not the U.S.A. which taught the rulers of Britain how to use jubilees and coronations as occasions of such a military display as would make them invaluable as a means of war preparation. These your rulers had to learn from ours. But it was the U.S.A. and, as I believe, P. T. Barnum, who taught our rulers such tricks as that of using the tricolor cockade, which, to my grandfather, stood as the symbol of jacobinism and republican-ism—symbol of the two greatest revolutions till then known, the American and the French—as the symbol of monarchism and something peculiarly British.

Will our rulers get away with it? On the surface, yes. The press will see to it that there is the largest and most enthusiastic crowd ever—and, for that matter, as a spectacle it will undoubtedly out-Barnum Barnum's best. But under the surface? Who can say?

This is a funny country in many ways. In some ways Wally Simpson has helped to make a far bigger crack in the foundations of the royalist hokey-pokey than is as yet apparent. 'Twould be funny if a stick of lipstick proved an agency for turning the whole British empire "Red." But it is not impossible.



"Something must be done about those mill kids, J. M. They're adding six strokes a year to my score."

P. Nesbitt

Back to the Soil

Returning to the gumbo land of South Dakota, the author finds farming and farmers greatly changed

By Howard Rushmore

LAST summer, when the hot winds were baking the Great Plains and grasshoppers were flying by the billions in the scorching heat, I rode into town with a pioneer Davison County, South Dakota, homesteader. His "tree-claim" homestead was six miles from town and he makes this trip only once a week—but even twelve miles in a low-horsepower Chevrolet takes gasoline, and the state of South Dakota taxed unmercifully on this commodity. For twenty years this typical mid-western dirt farmer had been struggling for existence.

"The government," he told me, "bet me 320 acres against my belly that I couldn't stick it out. I won, I reckon, but there ain't nothing on the land and less in my belly."

After he had "proved up" the claim by planting five acres of trees and cultivating forty acres of gumbo, as the fine, silty soil of the West is called, for a number of years, the government gave him the land. He and his quiet, hard-working Norwegian wife had scrimped and saved, raised a fair herd of cattle, enough horses for plowing, a few chickens, some Poland China hogs, and three tall, husky youngsters. Before the drought became a yearly occurrence, they had a bumper crop now and then, and earned perhaps three hundred dollars profit for twelve months of the hardest work in the world.

"We took our shepherd's bible [mail-order catalogue] and stocked up our place with furniture, machinery, and fencing. The missus got a new coat and I got a new suit, to boot. We're still wearin' them. That was eight years ago."

He jerked a thumb towards the squat little cream can in the back seat. "Now, that's our only income. And the damned cows are going dry. No feed." I asked him what the cream would bring. "Three or four bucks. Made into butter, they'll sell it back to us farmers and to the city folks for a profit of twice that much."

When we got to town, the cream was weighed up and the farmer had \$3.28 in his pocket. I went with him on his shopping rounds, and we entered one of the chain stores. "I wouldn't buy from these bastards, I just wanta show you something," he told me. He asked the price on butter. It was 48 cents a pound. "That cream of mine would have made twenty-five pounds; figure it up for yourself." Pork chops were twenty-one cents. "I'd lose three or four dollars on every hog I have if I'd sell him now."

The farmer went into a locally-owned store for his groceries. Prices were higher

there, and I asked him if it was civic pride that made him pay eight cents more for a sack of flour from the home-owned concern.

"Naw, but when I buy from Kroger's or the A. & P. I help the eastern capitalists. This fellow is going broke competing with the big boys, and yet he always kicks in when our Holiday asks him to contribute. He even helped send a delegate to the national convention."

He spent three dollars: flour, lard, and other necessities, and looked long at some shoddy house dresses in the window. "The missus needs one of those, but by God and by Jesus, every week the cream check gets smaller and there ain't nothing left but money for gas."

We paused to exchange greetings with a crowd of farmers squatting on their heels in the dust outside the store. They were looking at a shiny Buick parked in front of the tiny bank up the street, and cursing under their breath.

"That jitney belongs to one of the capitalists' shepherders," my friend said. "He keeps tab on the farms for the Metropolitan Insurance Company."

"How many of them?"

"Most of Davison County farms are owned by insurance companies. Pretty soon every damned one of us will punch a time-clock the insurance company hangs on our barn."

I spent a week in Davison County and found it had changed a great deal since I left there twenty years ago. Although my head barely came up to the belly of dad's prize gelding when I left South Dakota, I remembered the prairies and their people enough to know that many things had happened since we sold our stock and pushed westward into new frontiers.

My dad had been one of the typical early pioneers: a fifteen-hour-a-day farmer who pitted two hundred pounds of bone and muscle against the black gumbo and finally lost. My mother, almost as tall as dad, had hitched up many a team before dawn and gone out into the fields with her mate to turn the buffalo grass under and make the prairies green with short corn and small grain.

We had plenty to eat then: coarse, rough food, supplemented with vegetables from the garden I had helped tend after we came in from the fields. In the winter time, with five feet of snow on the plains, we killed jack rabbits and ate cornmeal mush. It was a fight, but all the farmers were convinced that they could win.

Even then, there were rumblings of the storm to come. Farmers came back from town

in their flat-bed wagons, grumbling about "elevator shysters." Short-weighting and down-grading of corn followed closely on the heels of the ugly red buildings by railroad sidings.

But on the whole, it was very much of a hard and individualistic life. Aside from get-togethers at the "god-houses," as we called the country churches, the Davison County farmers kept pretty much to themselves. Organization was unheard of, and a photographer in town who was rumored to be a Socialist was a favorite object of scorn. I remember a bunch of farmers discussing horsewhipping him out of town, only to be sidetracked by a hail-storm which flattened half the Davison County crops that night. Wobblies popped up now and then, and when one slow freight puffed down from Brown County full of them, we heard that they had been burning haystacks—sparks from the engine really caused the fire—and five hundred farmers were at Mitchell to meet them. All the farmers around us took their twelve-gauges and helped run the Wobs out of town. My father, remembering stories his Pennsylvania coal-miner father had told him, refused to be a scissor-bill and stayed in the fields.

South Dakota had changed in the twenty years. I found the Socialist photographer still in his shop and one of the best-liked progressives in town. He remembered taking my picture as a little shaver, and didn't even blink when I told him I was returned to the homeland as an organizer of the Young Communist League.

"I'm getting old and smooth-mouthed," he told me. "I'm glad to see you boys taking the reins. Look around Mitchell and see the class lines taking shape. Then go up in Roberts County and ask about the struggle they had up there."

Hitch-hiking the two hundred miles up to Roberts County, I had plenty of opportunity to talk to farmers along the road. I encountered many shades of political opinion, but one thing on which everyone seemed to agree: as far as South Dakota farmers went, they were finished. The gumbo air-castles had been blown away by the hot drought winds, eaten up by grasshoppers. Only the bare, brown prairies remained.

Every homestead had a similar look of poverty: machinery, the farmer's pride and joy above everything else, stood rusty and broken by the barn, equally delapidated. Stock huddled together in the hot sun with lowered heads. South Dakota and its inhabitants reflected one thing to the tourist speeding along the highway: hopelessness.



Woodcut by Dan Bico

But occasionally, I heard a note of that same spirit that pushed the covered wagons along the prairies in the nineties. By aid of thumb, I was brought closer to Roberts County. Farmer after farmer who picked me up spoke of the "Holiday"—a word which was unknown in Davison County twenty years ago.

One Swedish farmer gave me a lift towards Sisseton, county seat of Roberts County, and dropped a hint. "You're in 'red' Roberts now: you easterners ain't exactly welcome."

I took a long shot and told him I was a radical, and was born in South Dakota. Both facts seemed to meet with his approval, for he took his Copenhagen from his overalls and offered me a chew. That, I know, was a gesture of friendship, and I stuffed a good pinch under my lip for final proof that I wasn't a "furriner."

I stayed a week around Sisseton, picking up the story of what had happened in and around there. I heard the story from the lips of farmers who had participated in it, and spent two days at the claim shanty where the two of the "revolution" lived.

Back in 1932 and 1933, the homesteaders of the Great Plains, more and more bitter at the fate which had made their life's work a mockery of barren fields and rotting buildings, started talk of organization. In Roberts County, a Norwegian farmer and his son had an old paper they had bought in Chicago years ago. They saved up money for a subscription, passed the paper around. Other farmers around liked the *Daily Worker*. They came often to the claim shanty where old Knute and Julius Walstad lived. "Order us some stuff written by this guy Lenin—it sounds like good stuff to us."

Organization fattened on the literature that the Walstads sold; grew like a yearling's belly

in an alfalfa bed. Rumors came of the United Farmers' League, and what it was doing in other parts of the country. Soon farmers were meeting by the hundreds and singing, to the tune of "Springtime in the Rockies":

It's hard times in Dakotas,
Our crops are rotting here,
Our taxes and our interests
Will not be met this year.

As I listened to the leaders of the U.F.L. tell their story, I agreed with them that their group was too narrow, sectarian to a great degree. "We can see our mistakes now," one of them told me, "but, hell, we sure could fight like Billy Hell."

In 1934, with organization drawing in more and more South Dakota farmers, a group in Roberts County decided to start a "school" for all who wished to attend, and selected an old two-story dance hall among the cottonwoods near Clear Lake. Teachers, for the most part, were farmers, schooled in the two-year-old struggle that had been going on; pupils were both young and old farmers from all over the state, catching up on politics and economics. They left their homesteads to study Marx. The school was soon packed. Twenty years ago there was only one man in Davison County who ever heard of Marx. I wanted to know what changed them.

Old Knute pointed a gnarled finger out of the window. "Ever see grasshoppers like this before? Ever see stock look like this twenty years ago? You didn't have these damned dust storms, then. And some things you can't see: half the farms owned by banks and insurance companies, schools shut down, farmers living on relief seeing their family and stock starve thinner every day. That's why the dirt farmers came to study Marx."

When the training school opened, the

Hearst Homestake mine in Lead went into action. The officials of the world's richest gold mine got their heads together with the police and the American Legion officials. The farmers at Clear Lake heard rumors of this, but the school went on and so did organization in a hundred townships.

One night the students decided to relax and throw a good, old-fashioned square dance. It was a small crowd, but a lively one. The teachers and organizers were in a corner, planning an eviction fight that would take place next week. Suddenly, a mob of two hundred men, many armed and masked, all drunk, surrounded the two-room-frame building and went to work, tearing up pamphlets, using clubs on any head that came their way. Six of the training-school leaders fought them off, then retreated to the attic, where one of them, a crippled war veteran, bounced a baseball bat off the heads of hoodlums who attempted to climb the stairs. Tear gas was thrown into the attic and bullets started popping up through the floor. The six surrendered, were taken out and beaten, the little crippled vet getting the worst punishment.

Immediately, the state shook with repercussions. Truckloads of farmers poured into Roberts County, a veritable army carrying shotguns and forty-fives. At Pierre, the capital, "Cowboy Tom" Berry, the governor, considered proclaiming martial law; the attorney-general, in response to the United Farmers' League protests, said, "You were all lucky to get off so easy."

Farmers continued to pour into the county. The school was moved and fortified by an army of farmers. One Legion post, with a membership of progressive farmers, resigned in a body, and throughout South Dakota the American Legion split into two camps. Many left it entirely.

Other incidents had kept the spirit of militancy alive in Roberts County. Police officials arrested eighteen farmers when they attempted to halt a foreclosure, and the same army—swelled by truckloads of reinforcements from North Dakota and Minnesota—flocked to their aid. Even Bill Langer, now governor of North Dakota, whose political ideas were as uncertain as a thistle in a dust storm, sent a check to the U.F.L. committee and signed a letter of support: "Comradely yours, Bill Langer."

"What about the United Farmers' League now?" I asked one of the old-time leaders.

It's been disbanded. It served its purpose, and even though we were sometimes as sectarian as a skunk in August, we're not ashamed of what we accomplished. Most of our members are now in the Holiday and Farmers' Union, and usually they show the results of their training by being real builders of those two groups."

(This is the first part of an article by Mr. Rushmore on the farming situation in the West. The second part, to be published next week, will deal with the present status of the farmer-labor party movement there.)

MAY 11, 1937



Woodcut by Dan Bico



William Gropper (A. C. A. Print Group)



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Bilbao in the Balance

THE position of Bilbao at the present moment resembles in most respects the position of Madrid last November. Therein lies both the danger and the hope. In both cases, insurgent forces succeeded in driving forward almost to the limits of the city. If Bilbao can duplicate the feat of Madrid in holding its own once the siege of the city actually begins, then the loyalist forces will have registered another magnificent victory. If not, the situation for the rebels will have improved, but still not decisively.

As we go to press, the rebels appear to have made progress toward the Bay of Biscay in an effort to cut off Bilbao from the coast. The city's defenses, however, have been enormously strengthened by a reorganization of the army and the arrival of an air armada from Valencia. Five of these planes made naval history by sinking the insurgent battleship *España*.

Meanwhile, France and Great Britain are cooperating in the evacuation of women and children from Bilbao. Since the number of non-combatants runs into the hundreds of thousands, only a small fraction at best can be evacuated unless the insurgents hold up their drive or are stopped—and at the moment there seems a fair chance for the latter to come true.

Gone with the Fish

AS the fish course at the annual dinner of the alumni of the Columbia School of Journalism was being served, up rose President Nicholas Murray Butler to announce the Pulitzer prizes for 1936. The awards this year are, on the whole, easily the equal of past performances by the Pulitzer Committee for literary and political mediocrity. Most critics were agreed that John Dos Passos's *The Big Money* and Carl Sandburg's *The People Yes* were the outstanding achievements of last year in the novel and in poetry, respectively. Yet the

award for the novel went to Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, which notoriously rewrites the Civil War and Reconstruction from a bitter anti-Negro viewpoint and does it in a banal literary style. Sandburg's brilliant poetic vision of America as a whole was ignored for *A Further Range*, in which Robert Frost's New England regionalism has at last run very thin.

In journalism, the committee overlooked the Spanish war, which was brilliantly reported by several journalists, in favor of Anne O'Hare McCormick, whose foreign correspondence for the *New York Times* could have been written in the *New York Public Library*. Of the remaining awards, a few were well-deserved, especially Van Wyck Brooks's *The Flowering of New England*. Quite as important as the awards is the fact that the trustees of Columbia University, who control the Pulitzer fund, further weighted the advisory board in favor of conservatives by adding as new members: William Allen White, Landon's intellectual front, and that defender of the tory faith, Walter Lippmann.

Stars and Strikes

IT seems that the workers of the dream factory—to use one of Hollywood's euphemisms—intend to take the title *Wake Up and Live* seriously. As we go to press, the unions associated with the Federated Motion Picture Crafts have issued orders to their 6000 members not to report to work. This means that painters, scenic artists, make-up artists, and studio workers will not enter most of the movie lots, thus seriously curtailing production. The unions are demanding recognition.

While there is every indication that the strike may spread and become the first major labor dispute in the history of the motion-picture industry, a great deal depends upon the action of the Screen Actors' Guild. What is most significant in the situation is the fact that high-salaried stars are earnestly conferring on the necessity of maintaining a solid front with the lower-paid manual workers—the unsung men and women without whose essential contribution no film could be produced.

United action is imperative in the current strike if its important demands are to be won.

Meanwhile, as both the actors and the craft workers take time to make up their minds, it is pleasant to anticipate a picket line—if not in this strike, then the next—in which the posters announcing the militant demands of all the workers in the industry are held aloft by such subversive figures as Robert Montgomery, Joan Crawford, Clark

Gable, Jean Harlow, Bette Davis, Robert Taylor, and, of course, Greta Garbo.

Labor Coercion?

THE effrontery of labor's enemies reaches its crassest in the coupling of the words "coercion" and "violence"—favorites in the terminology of the open-shoppers—exclusively in connection with labor action. The words recur frequently in the recent Chamber of Commerce resolution.

The actuality, however, is exactly the opposite of the impression that big business desires to create. At Stockton, Cal., agricultural and cannery workers have been on strike for increased wages for more than six weeks. More than two weeks ago, Governor Merriam informed the press: "I told the canners they could write their own terms for mediation by a commission which I would select, but they wouldn't go along." And the *San Francisco News* commented: "The canners preferred to fight it out." Now, with the threat of a general agricultural strike under consideration by the San Joaquin Central Trades & Labor Council, the probability is strong that further violence on the part of the canners and their thugs, of the kind described in the following letter, will occur. The words are those of a young reporter, and they were written last week to his brother in the East:

"I just missed being sent to Stockton, where there's a strike on in which more violence is being used, more quickly, than in Salinas. Thirty people have been shot, gassed, or clubbed so far. Just saw a picture of an old man, in overalls, with shot wounds all over his face and chest. A tear-gas salesman started shooting gas shells from a roof, just to insure sales. . . . One newspaperman has been shot in the leg, and they're now all wearing gas masks. The . . . in power control and use all the instruments of violence. . . . The strikers asked for arbitration, saying that a half-hour conference would fix everything up. And this is what they're getting for their peaceful desires, they having started no trouble at all. . . . The sheriff at Stockton armed a thousand men with clubs before a single move had been made by the workers. . . . This is by far the most violent fascist stuff I have heard of in California."

Japan in Extremis

JAPAN'S extremist military cliques did not have to count the votes in the parliamentary elections held last Friday to learn that they had suffered overwhelming popular repudiation. On the very day of the

election, Home Minister Kakichi Kowarada announced that the whole electoral system would be "reformed" along fascist lines by an imperial ordinance, and that the new order of things would make political parties illegal. On Monday, after the votes were counted, Premier Senjuro Hayashi informed the country that election or no election, he intended to remain in power.

A two-fold movement is discernible in the election results. The big bourgeois parties, Minseito and Seiyukai, lost some, but not much, ground; Minseito held 179 of its 205 seats and Seiyukai regained 171 of its former 175. Both of these parties have increasingly become the voice of the middle class and the independent industrialists who are faced with the crushing competition of the big monopolies. That these parties should have practically held their own signifies that the split in the ruling class of Japan is growing ever deeper, as compared with the situation in February, when General Ugaki was frustrated in his attempt to form a cabinet following the fall of Hirota.

Equally significant are the gains registered by the parties representing the workers, peasants, and lower middle class. The Shakai Taishuto (Social Democrat) seats rose from eighteen to thirty-seven, while the more radical Proletarian Party, headed by Kanju Kato, Japan's foremost trade-union leader, added two for a total of three. These tendencies—the growing conflicts within the ruling class and the mounting strength of the masses—are complementary. It remains to be seen whether the fascist-military cliques are strong enough to suppress them.

The Nervous System

THE week witnessed a resounding crash in commodity and stock prices, despite the fact that company earnings are rising rapidly and in many cases moving toward their 1929 highs. The slump originated in London, whose markets experienced the heaviest selling wave since the devaluation of the pound in 1931, and was quickly reflected in the New York exchanges when the need of London speculators for cash to pay their debts forced them to dump their security investments in New York. The immediate cause of the break was the top-heavy speculative position in London, where commodities and stocks are carried on a much smaller margin than in New York.

For weeks before the collapse, markets had been nervously aware of rumors of an impending drop in commodity prices. This rumor reveals a changed economic situation. Whereas but a year ago, all governments were seeking primarily to expand exports and to cut imports to maintain profitable busi-



Dope Sheet

ness at home, there have been many instances of an opposite tendency in recent weeks. At first glance, this world trend in the direction of freer imports creates the impression of international economic coöperation. It is, however, simply an indication that world economic struggle at present is being geared less to the search for markets than to competition for raw materials.

This slump in the stock market may be traced to such fundamental factors as the course of the war in Spain. The set-back suffered by the fascists in Guadalajara has led many to declare that the Nazis have revised their war plans. Speculation in war materials has been heavy, and the slump would, in this interpretation, follow from possible postponement of the next world war (barring "episodes," of course). Continuation of the armament spree is most likely, however, and stocks may very well go soaring again, primed for a frightful fall when armament-building nears exhaustion.

The Ghost of Goettingen

PRINCETON'S neat rejection of the University of Goettingen's invitation to its two-hundredth anniversary fête next month added another rebuke to the few American universities which have accepted the bid. The Princeton authorities conveyed "esteem of Goettingen's distinguished past and our hopes for her future." In other words, Goettingen, great you were, great you will be, but sad your present plight.

About a dozen other universities, including Yale, Columbia, and Pennsylvania, joined Princeton in turning down the invitation. It is to be regretted that Harvard and M.I.T. failed to meet the issue squarely. Harvard's decision that any senior faculty member who happens to be in Germany on June 30 may

be designated as the Harvard delegate means that Harvard will probably be represented at Goettingen. This face-saving ambiguity sharply contrasts with the forthright rejections by all the important British universities.

May 10 marks the anniversary of a cultural event which the Nazis may more properly claim as their own. It was on that day, four years ago, that fascism passed its judgment on scientific thought by the "burning of the books." Every university now considering the Goettingen anniversary is compelled to remember this one. The most obtuse Nazi official should realize by now, after last year's Heidelberg fizzle and this year's Goettingen washout, that world opinion will not be duped by efforts to cash in on cultural traditions which fascism is systematically stamping out. By reminding the world of Goettingen's past, the Nazis dramatize their own barbarism.

"Recommended for Dismissal"

ATACKS on academic freedom in this country, which have received little publicity in the press, continue to run dangerously close to the fascist pattern. The dismissal of Philip O. Keeney, librarian at Montana State University, is a flagrant example. Keeney came to the State University six years ago as full professor. His tenure should have become permanent three years ago. Two days after Professor Keeney secured a large number of signatures for a Teachers' Union charter, he was informed by President Simmons that his contract would not be renewed. His demand for a public hearing, to which he is entitled under Montana law, has been refused. Backed by organized labor in the state, Keeney is fighting the administration's arbitrary suppression of the right to organize.

In New York City, the Teachers' Union is busily occupied with discrimination cases at Hunter, C.C.N.Y., and Brooklyn College. Student picketing and daily bulletins issued by the union have focused public attention on the proposed dismissal from Brooklyn College of Henry Klein, active union member. After three and a half years' service, Mr. Klein was "recommended for dismissal" by the acting chairman of his department, who visited his class for the first time two school days before annual recommendations were due. Following the model set by last year's victorious Schappes campaign, the union is vigorously prosecuting the case within the college and before the Board of Higher Education.

At Cambridge, increasing pressure is being brought by labor and liberal groups against Harvard's decision to cut short the contracts of Dr. J. Raymond Walsh and

Dr. Alan R. Sweezy, instructors in economics. Dr. Walsh is New England president of the American Federation of Teachers. Dr. Sweezy was active in the founding of the Cambridge local and is one of its officers. Together with the scandalous dismissal of Professor Jerome Davis from Yale (whose case is fully documented in a sixty-four-page booklet to be issued by the A. F. of T. this week), these are outstanding examples of a nation-wide drive by reactionary university administrations and their Wall Street angels to curb academic freedom.

Pageantry and Perspectives

IT was an inspiring pageant when 25,000 people, mostly young men and women, packed Madison Square Garden in celebration of the opening of the Eighth National Convention of the Young Communist League of America. What made the moment more significant was that the convention marked the fifteenth anniversary of this organization, out of whose ranks have come some of America's outstanding labor figures. Symbolic of the spirit and forward-moving temper of the League was the smiling figure of the meeting's chairman, Angelo Herndon, who declared: "I am free, and I am happy." He went on to urge his listeners to do for Tom Mooney and the Scottsboro boys what had been done for him.

The seven hundred delegates from thirty-six states responded warmly to the greetings of the League's oldest honorary member, Mother Ella Reeve Bloor, and to the words of Earl Browder, general secretary of the Communist Party, its parent organization. From the keynote speeches of Gil Green, national secretary, Herndon, and Earl Browder, came the new perspectives of the Young Communist League: there is to be a widespread movement to enlist the many progressive youth organizations of the country in a mass front against war and fascism, here and abroad; there is to be no let-up in youth support for besieged Spain; and there is to be found a way "to unite the broadest masses of the young people for their immediate needs and struggles for everyday necessities of life."

Education of an Editor

MR. KINGSLEY MARTIN is the editor of the *New Statesman & Nation*, the foremost British liberal weekly. After the Soviet trial of Radek, Piatakov, and the rest, Mr. Martin wrote an article for his paper, entitled "Will Stalin Explain?" in which he took Soviet justice to task, with a pro-Trotskyist slant. Pursuing the matter,

Mr. Martin paid a visit to Trotsky in Coyoacan, just before the recent "impartial investigation," reported in our issue of April 27. When Mr. Martin returned to England, he wrote another article, in which he said:

"I came away from our talk rather less inclined to scout the possibility of Trotsky's complicity than I had before, because his judgment appeared to me so unstable, and therefore the possibility of his embarking on a crazy plot more credible."

Mr. Martin was also disturbed by Trotsky's attitude toward D. N. Pritt, the British barrister whose pamphlet, *At the Moscow Trial*, found the proceedings fair:

"What had I got to say about Mr. Pritt? How much had he been paid to write an account of things he did? This was more than I could bear. I explained that I knew Mr. Pritt well . . . that his integrity was beyond question. Trotsky and I had a regular wrangle on this point. . . . To see him get up and shout abuse at Mr. Pritt was revealing. He seems to believe that anyone who has a word to say for Stalin or who hesitates to denounce the whole trial as a frame-up must be in the pay of Moscow."

Bingham vs. Common Sense

THE Trotskyists invented the myth that the Communist movement is a pawn of the Soviet foreign office. They conclude, therefore, the less of that movement, the better. Now comes Mr. Alfred M. Bingham, co-editor of *Common Sense* magazine, with a variation on their familiar theme. "The fact is that anti-Nazi sentiment in America today has become a weapon in

the hands of the Soviet foreign office," writes Mr. Bingham in an article entitled "War-Mongering on the Left" in the May issue of his publication. And he concludes that the less there is of anti-Nazi sentiment, the better for peace.

According to Mr. Bingham, "fascism is a more advanced economic form than the kind of capitalism that exists in democratic countries." More advanced, he might have added but didn't, in its use of terror, torture, concentration camps, and cultural barbarism as political weapons. He likens supporting democracy against fascism to supporting *laissez-faire* capitalism against monopoly capitalism. His argument assumes that fascism is a progressive form of society, not a reactionary and degenerate one. It should be clear now to everyone that to defend democracy against fascism means to defend that measure of decency and liberty still left under capitalism, not those monopoly interests mainly responsible for the drive towards fascism.

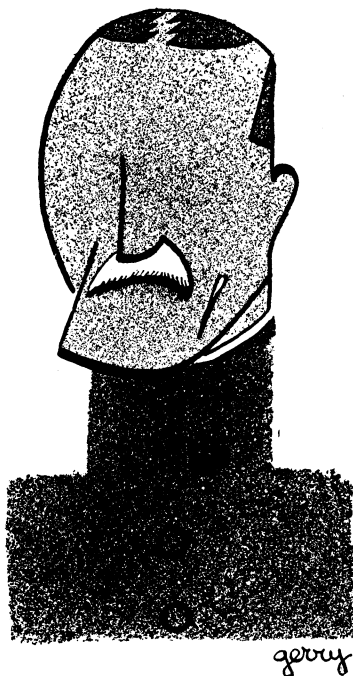
Despite Mr. Bingham's platonic avowal that "the only positive alternative to fascism is a socialist democracy," his article is alarmingly filled with conciliatory gestures towards Nazism, to put it mildly. He sees no difference between the German invasion of France in 1914 and the German invasion of Spain in 1936-7. And he promises, in his next article, to show that "neither democracy nor socialism will necessarily be served by supporting the Soviet Union in a war against Germany."

Crown the King!

IF T. A. Jackson is right about the British empire being "The Greatest Show on Earth," then a coronation is certainly the show's supreme performance. The stage-setting is approximately in the mode, as Thorstein Veblen happily phrased it, of "conspicuous waste." The street pageantry in the Westminster area alone will set the British treasury back \$30,000 per mile. Fifty miles of London streets have been decorated with gold lace. Ordinary onlookers have to fork over thirty shillings for the privilege of viewing the parade.

However, the promoters of this imperial circus have forgotten the bread. The government has proclaimed May 12, date of the coronation, a national holiday, and employers will close their shops and factories. But the patriotism of the British owning class falls short of paying their workers for the holiday. The coronation will introduce a new type of lockout in labor history.

Trade unions are retaliating with a boycott. The Miners' Federation, with 500,000



Black Jack, Coronation Competitor



gerry

Black Jack, Coronation Competitor

members, and the National Union of Railwaymen, with 250,000, are among those which have decided not to march in the coronation parade. The boycott has reached such dimensions that tickets are being peddled at half price to union members through the ever-obliging Trades Union Congress officialdom.

From the long view, the chief value of the coronation to the empire will be the ballyhoo about "national unity." The promoters of

The Neutrality Betrayal

THE ordinary American would be shocked to find himself accused of complicity in the destruction of Guernica, that little Basque town which General Goering decided to wipe out "to vindicate some of his strategical and tactical conceptions." This shock would be testimony to the essential peacefulness of the average American. Indeed, this very desire for peace accounts for the fact that such a dishonorable piece of legislation as the Neutrality act can be put over on the promise that it will keep America out of war.

Shock or no shock, that is precisely how things stand. This little town of Guernica embodies a great principle. A war was thrust upon Guernica just as war was thrust on China by Japan, and on Ethiopia by Italy. The town was entirely defenseless, just as weak nations are relatively defenseless against strong. It was confronted with an alien enemy, Nazi airmen and Nazi infantry, in the manner of other imperialist enterprises. Guernica is the very symbol of Spain.

Two days after the Guernica slaughter, the United States Congress passed a Neutrality act which is so much legislative grease for the wheels of fascist aggression. This act makes no distinction whatever between the aggressor and its victim, between Guernica and the Nazis. This act deprives the victim of the right to purchase the means of defense, deprives Guernica of the right to purchase anti-aircraft guns to protect itself against Nazi airmen.

On the other hand, it explicitly permits any power to buy American raw materials, provided payment is made in advance and the goods are transported in foreign bottoms. The Nazis, in direst need of raw materials, are aided by this measure, but Guernica, without Germany's great armament factories, is again betrayed. To top all this, the act makes it dubious whether Americans can organize to send non-military assistance to victims like the refugees of Guernica. At first, Senator Pittman held that the act forbade such organizations as the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy

the coronation are also promoting an imperial conference, to begin just two days after. Selected troop detachments and officials from the dominions and colonies have been invited to sanctify themselves with the coronation spirit. Our own General Pershing, engaged in a private sartorial competition with George VI, will presumably come home with enough of the spirit to address the English Speaking Union on the irrefragable bonds between Britain and America.

from collecting funds. Later, however, Ernest L. Cuneo, the Committee's attorney, announced that the State Department had so interpreted the act that it had no bearing on the work of the committee. But the clear threat remains if this latter interpretation does not stand.

No wonder, then, that the Neutrality act

The Pack in Full Cry

IN passing its resolution on "employer-employee relations," the Chamber of Commerce of the U. S., meeting in Washington, launched organized capital's counter-offensive against the Wagner act and against an awakened labor movement which has made 1937 a banner year in American labor history. Led by the C.I.O., labor had already chalked up successive major victories in the maritime, steel, and auto industries when the Wagner act was passed. The C.I.O. then supplemented its major advances by ground-gaining skirmishes in scores of smaller industries. Finally, only two weeks ago the Oshawa, Ont., General Motors strikers voted overwhelmingly for the United Automobile Workers, C.I.O. affiliate, as their representative, and a little more than a week ago the Packard Motors employees made the same decision by a vote of four to one. Such progressive action by the unions cannot but have a decided effect upon Congress. All indications point to organized legislative effort on the part of labor to safeguard its present gains and to push forward to even greater victories.

Hence the attempts of the Chamber of Commerce of the U. S. and other reactionary groups to nullify the Wagner act or amend it to death. One Chamber resolution calls for state laws "directed specifically against concerted action, whether or not accompanied by disorder, directed by individuals, groups, or organizations, to bring any degree of coercion through economic channels upon the public or upon public authorities—legislative, executive, or judicial." The indus-

trialists want to see strikes and picketing declared illegal. But they want more. They want the law to prevent employee organizations from making "political contributions." They want the right of picketing "limited to giving information."

was passed in the House with but a half hour's debate, without roll-call, with steamroller tactics that prevented Farmer-Labor Congressman John T. Bernard of Minnesota from attacking it on the floor. This act is such a flagrant case of pro-fascist legislation, utterly at variance with the wishes of the American people, that it simply could not stand the light of day in open debate. An aroused public opinion can force its early reconsideration and repeal. That is the plain duty of every American. The two most pressing responsibilities of the American people are support of the resolution presented by sixteen progressive Congressmen for an arms embargo against German and Italian fascism and vigilant opposition to any attempts by the State Department to ban collections of medicine and food for the victims of fascism in Spain. These are minimum duties, but only a complete reversal of the whole neutrality fraud ought satisfy any genuine American spirit of fair play.

To guard against what it calls "irresponsible action," the Chamber proposes that organizations both of employees and employers who are negotiating labor agreements should be publicly registered. This reminds one of Anatole France's observation that the law, majestically impartial, gives the rich and the poor the same right of sleeping under bridges. What the Chamber now urges is the old cry for the enforced incorporation of unions.

Those reactionaries who make this demand pretend that incorporation would place unions on the same plane as industries. What they conveniently forget is that it is *optional* for big business to incorporate. Huge enterprises incorporate not for the purpose of achieving public control over their activities, but to limit possible liabilities. Business incorporation insures the accumulated profits of the top ownership. Enforced incorporation and accounting of funds for labor unions is an entirely different matter. The liabilities of a bona-fide union are those of the entire membership. Profits are non-existent. The net effect would be the creation of official espionage and terror. These would be used to control or suppress militant unionism.

The labor movement will have to be alert and determined to preserve the gains of the Wagner act and to prevent the enforced incorporation of the unions.

Herndon Is Free!

*And it is the collective might of the American people,
not Supreme Court whim, that frustrated the bourbons*

By Joseph North

Every mail day I get a letter
Son, come home, O son, come home.
—Georgia prison song.

FULTON TOWER glowers over Atlanta, and I stood inside its stone corridors, hoary as the Confederacy, waiting for a chance to talk to Angelo Herndon—but the warden changed his mind. After I looked that prison over, the warden even showed me the chamber where the gibbet stood and hanged black and white without discrimination—death knows no jim crow—and I thought: it will be a long time and a hard fight to get Angelo out of this dungeon.

But Angelo felt otherwise. I had accompanied him to Georgia back in October 1935, when he returned to give himself up to a sentence of eighteen to twenty years on the chain gang. He could have jumped bail, and George Schuyler, columnist of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, said he was a fool not to; but today everybody knows who the fool is. The *Courier* liked Schuyler's line so much they printed a cartoon that week showing Angelo handing himself over to the Dixie sheriff and the caption was "Little Man, What Now?" Everybody knows who the little man is today.

Angelo Herndon returned to prison of his own sweet, twenty-one-year-old will to what seemed certain death in some Georgia morass. He was assigned to prison in Lanier County, a marshy, malarial region where convicts often work in mud up to their knees.

Before Angelo went in, about a block or so away from the courthouse I recall him halting and saying to me with a wry smile:

"You know, Joe, the nearer I get to the court, the nearer I feel to freedom. I'm dead sure I'll get out soon. Funny, isn't it? The nearer I get to Fulton Tower this time, the closer I feel to freedom." He was silent a moment. "That must be the old dialectics, hey, Joe?"

The old dialectics it was. The simple heroism of this young Negro lad had inspired a world of workmen and progressives to his side, had inspired that hard-fought battle which ultimately unlocked Fulton Tower's mediæval gates and set him free.

I'll never forget that trip on the mile-a-minute express in the jim-crow car going back South with Angelo, who was giving himself to what appeared certain death on the chain gang. The locomotive was the latest stream-lined model, with four gold bands running along its sides, and it tore down the Atlantic Coast hell-bent to put Angelo behind bars for twenty years. We talked of a lot of things that night



Bertrando Vallotton

Angelo Herndon

in that jim-crow car—for even this ritzy locomotive with the 10,000 horsepower recognized the color line—and Herndon sang me some songs he had learned in prison. One sticks in my mind particularly:

Every mail day
I get a letter
Son, come home, O son, come home.

How can I go
Shotgun and pistols
All around me
To blow me down
O Lord, to blow me down.

If I had my, had my
.32-20
I'd go today,
Lawd, Lawd,
I'd go today.

And I think of the power, greater than that pathetic old .32-20 that meant freedom to this unknown singer. The power of tens of millions of common people, on continents across the world as well as here, unlocked Fulton Tower, freed Herndon.

We talked of many things then, and life, as you can imagine, is sweet to a twenty-one-year-old lad. He told me how he felt when he discovered communism. "It was like turning off an old, muddy road onto a broad, shining highway," he said.

He came across communism one day while hunting for work. He had passed a post on which a leaflet fluttered. He crammed it into

his pocket. That night he unfolded the leaflet, spread it on the table under the lamplight. "Would You Rather Fight—or Starve?" it asked.

"The letters danced in front of my eyes," he said to me. "It's war—it's war—it's war," I said to myself. 'I might as well get into it now as any other time.'

That introduced the concept of class war to Angelo. Practically, he had known it all his life, ever since he went down that mine at fourteen—no, even before that, for he was born a Negro lad, and they learn sooner than even the poor white child.

FIVE YEARS AGO, this unknown Negro boy stepped into an Atlanta post office for his mail. A couple of dicks hiding behind pillars stepped out, clamped a pair of handcuffs on him, carried him off to Fulton Tower where they held him incommunicado for eleven days before he smuggled out a note to his friends.

That was the anonymous beginning of the famous Herndon case. Forty, fifty persons knew him by name then. Today millions know him. Letters three inches high in the metropolitan headlines announced his freedom and they said "HERNDON" without even an identifying phrase.

He had been arrested for organizing a demonstration to demand more relief from the county authorities. That was his crime. Twice the Supreme Court turned his case down, returned him to the mercies of a Georgia chain gang. But that happened before American labor swung into motion in steel, in Detroit—before the C.I.O. was more than three letters in the alphabet.

The friends of Herndon wouldn't call it a day even after the Nine Old Men pontificated. Under the initiative of the International Labor Defense and the Communist Party, they carried on, held their endless meetings, passed their multitudinous resolutions, did all the thousand and one prosaic things generally summed up in the proletarian term "mass pressure," and it added up to the strength of a million .32-20's the old prisoner sang about.

Last week the court freed him. Yes, he did happen to be the national chairman of the Young Communist League, he was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. None of these accomplishments endeared him to one solitary soul on the Supreme Bench; four of the nine could not overcome their revulsion at this "damn yellow black Red" as one Southern official called him. Four others voted as they had previously, in their liberal tradition. Justice Roberts swung



Bertrando Valloton

Angelo Herndon

like a weather-cock, and Angelo walked a free man. Something had happened throughout America these past months, and the Supreme Court realized it even in their marble grotto.

WHAT WAS the Herndon crime? What the basis for trying to jam him into a coffin at the age of nineteen?

The story of Herndon harks back to 1932, when hunger cut a wide swath through the country, leaving its deepest marks in Dixie. Herndon had come down from Cincinnati to find work, found the Communist Party, worked in the unemployment movement.

After his arrest for organizing the relief demonstration, the authorities excavated an ancient slave-insurrection law passed in 1804 that had been nullified by the four years of Civil War. But in 1866, during the treachery of the early Reconstruction period, the slave-owners refurbished it, put it into use once again.

As Herndon himself says, the significance of his case is far greater than the freedom of Herndon the individual.

The declaration by Justice Roberts that this insurrection law is unconstitutional involves the entire question of Supreme Court personnel and set-up; the question of criminal-syndicalism legislation throughout America; the question of the right of labor to organize in the South.

The fact that Justice Roberts reversed himself and produced a "liberal" verdict must befuddle nobody. This is precisely the strategy of the Nine Old Men under fire today.

No legerdemain caused this verdict, so different from the other two decisions. No sudden impulse of humanitarianism impelled Justice Roberts, no fundamentally differing viewpoint in interpretation of the constitution was involved.

The august judge merely found that membership in the Communist Party and the soliciting of other members did not constitute insurrection. He avoided the principal issues invoked by the case, narrowed the question down to the issue of whether membership in the Communist Party and the soliciting of other members constituted "insurrection." It did not, he grandiloquently conceded.

The Supreme Court, since 1866, had betrayed the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments many times. It had helped bring on the Civil War by its infamous Dred Scott decision, and today, more than half a century afterward, it declared itself for a verdict America had passed in the historic fury of those four years of civil warfare. And that by the grace of one man.

The court had indicted itself irrevocably in the two earlier Herndon decisions. Liberalism, suddenly displayed, was induced by the in-

dignation of the American people which made itself felt even in that marble mausoleum in the capitol.

As it was, four of the nine members could not bring themselves to change their traditional attitudes. Consider the declaration of the amazingly frank Justice Van Devanter:

It should not be overlooked that Herndon was a Negro member and organizer of the Communist Party and was engaged actively in inducing others, chiefly southern Negroes, to become members of the party and participate in effecting its purpose and program.

Not deigning even to conceal his bourbon attitudes, he declared that the literature Herndon possessed

was particularly adapted to appeal to the Negroes in that section, for it pictured their condition as an unhappy one resulting from asserted wrongs on the part of white landowners and employers, and sought by alluring statements of resulting advantages, to induce them to join in an effort to carry into effect the measures which the literature proposed.

In case this is not clear enough, the tory wound up with this statement:

In this instance the literature is largely directed to a people whose past and present circumstances would lead them to give unusual credence to its inflaming and inciting features.

Could the owner of the largest cotton plantation in Dixie speak up more clearly and graphically than impartial Mr. Justice Van Devanter?

Then how come this change in attitude of the court—or rather, in the attitude of one member of the Court, Justice Roberts?

The answer is to be found in a thousand workshops in America; in the factories of General Motors, of United States Steel, of Chrysler. The tidal wave of labor organization, the surge of sit-down strikes and their victorious conclusions, the growing unity of labor, the drive on the Court induced by the President's reform plan, all this inevitably caused the Court to reconsider its previous decision.

This is the meaning of the Herndon victory; this the essence of its importance. A smashing victory, yet it is not a conclusive victory in the fight on criminal syndicalism. The court did not inveigh against "insurrection laws" per se. It skirted the fundamentals of the issue.

But it did do this: it freed Angelo Herndon. It proved to the people their might. It established a precedent that will permit greater freedom of movement to labor and Communist organizers in the South. It indicated the duplicity of the court and established the necessity for reform in its set-up.

It was a liberal decision established, one might say, at the muzzle of a .32-40. It was induced by the irresistible weapon of the mass pressure of the American people. It helped cement the alliance of black and white in labor.

Indubitably it will prove a landmark in the fight for greater political and industrial democracy in America.



"After so much talk about Mr. Mellon, we're tempted to give our tropical flies to the government."

The Prometheans of the Novel

Balzac and Flaubert, the author says, dared heroic tasks to fulfill their conception of the artist's role

By Ralph Fox

MARX concluded one of his articles in the New York *Tribune* during 1854 with a reference to the Victorian realists: "The present brilliant school of novelists in England, whose graphic and eloquent descriptions have revealed more political and social truths to the world than have all the politicians, publicists, and moralists added together, has pictured all sections of the middle class, beginning with the 'respectable' rentier and owner of government stocks, who looks down on all kinds of 'business' as being vulgar, and finishing with the small shopkeeper and lawyer's clerk. How have they been described by Dickens, Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë, and Mrs. Gaskell? As full of self-conceit, prudishness, petty tyranny, and ignorance. And the civilized world has confirmed their verdict in a damning epigram which it has pinned on that class, that it is servile to its social superiors and despotic to its inferiors."

About the same time as these words appeared in the New York paper, Flaubert in physical agony was writing to his friend Louis Bouilhet: "Laxatives, purgatives, derivatives, leaches, fever, diarrhoea, three nights without any sleep, a gigantic annoyance at the bourgeois, etc., etc. That's my week, dear sir." English and French novelists were alike faced with the same problem, that of giving artistic form and expression to a society which they could not accept. In England they only succeeded in the end by a kind of compromise with reality, but the whole history of France made such a compromise impossible in that country. No country of the modern world had passed through such terrific struggles as France, with her great revolution followed by twenty years of wars in which French armies marched and counter-marched across the feudal states of Europe till the final catastrophe of 1814.

Napoleon was the last great world-conqueror, but he was also the first bourgeois emperor. France was only able to support that vast war machine because in those years she began to catch up on her rival, England, to develop her industries, to introduce power machinery on a large scale, to create a great new internal market from her liberated peasantry. When the process was completed, a generation after Napoleon's fall, you had the strange paradox that a completely new France, a France in which money spoke the last word, a France of bankers, traders, and industrialists, was being ruled by the feudal aristocracy whom the revolution had apparently smashed into fragments. Yet the heroic tradition of this new France with its old rulers remained

essentially revolutionary, on the one hand the Jacobin of '93, on the other the soldier of Napoleon.

Balzac, the great genius of the century, consciously set himself the task of writing "the natural history" of this society, Balzac who was himself a monarchist, a legitimist, and a Catholic. His *Comédie Humaine*, that encyclopædic study of human life, was a revolutionary picture of his age; revolutionary not because of the intention of its author, but because of the truth with which the inner life of his time is described. Engels, in his letter to the English novelist, Margaret Harkness, has emphasized the *truth* of Balzac's realist method:

Balzac, whom I consider a far greater master of realism than all the Zolas, *passés, présents et à venir*, in his *Comédie Humaine* gives us a most wonderfully realistic history of French society, describing in chronicle fashion, almost year by year, from 1816 to 1848, the progressive inroads of the rising bourgeoisie upon the society of nobles that reconstituted itself after 1815, and that set up again as far as it could the standard of *la vieille politesse française*. He describes how the last remnants of this, to him, model society gradually succumbed before the intrusion of the vulgar, moneyed upstart, or were corrupted by him, how the *grande dame*, whose conjugal infidelities were but a mode of asserting herself, in perfect accordance with the way she had been disposed of in marriage, gave way to the *bourgeoise* who gains her husband for cash or customers; and around this central picture he groups a complete history of French society, from which, even in economic details, for instance, the rearrangement of real and personal property after the Revolution, I have learnt more than from all the professed historians, economists, and statisticians of the period together. Well, Balzac was politically a legitimist; his great work is a constant elegy unto the irreparable decay of good society; his sympathy is with the class that is doomed to extinction. But for all that, his satire is never more cutting, his irony more biting than when he sets in motion the very men and women with whom he sympathizes most deeply—the nobles. And the only men of whom he speaks with undisguised admiration are his bitterest political antagonists, the Republican heroes of the Cloître-Saint-Merri, the men who at that time (1830-36), were indeed the representatives of the popular masses. That Balzac was thus compelled to go against his own class sympathies and political prejudices, that he *saw* the necessity of the downfall of his favorite nobles and described them as people deserving no better fate; that he saw the real men of the future where, for the time being, they alone could be found—that I consider one of the greatest triumphs of Realism, one of the greatest features in old Balzac.

BALZAC has himself explained in the preface to the *Comédie* that he saw man as the product of society, saw him in his natural environment, and that he felt the same desire to study him scientifically as the great naturalists feel

who study the animal world. His political and religious views were those of the old feudal France, but this attitude to man, this conception of the human comedy, was the product of the Revolution, of the Jacobins who so ruthlessly smashed the social fetters on French society, of the marching soldiers who brought the monarchies of Europe to their knees before the leadership of Napoleon. Balzac, indeed, was France's literary Napoleon, for he destroyed feudal ideas in literature as thoroughly as the great soldier destroyed the feudal system in politics. In Restoration France, criticism of capitalist society, of the new capitalist social relations, was concealed under the mediæval disguise of romanticism. The extravagances of the Romantics in their personal lives, quite as much as their extravagances in art, were a protest against the present as well as an escape from it. Balzac neither protested nor escaped. He had all the imagination, the poetry, and even the mysticism of the Romantics, but he rose above them and showed the way to a new literature by his realist attack on the present. He was able to conceive the reality of contemporary life imaginatively, to

conceive it almost on the scale on which Rabelais and Cervantes had conceived it. It was his fortune, however, to have lived in the early part of the century when the force and fire of that immense outburst of national energy which made the Revolution and the Napoleonic epic was still able to make itself felt in the literary movement of the thirties and early forties.

It was a long way from Balzac to the



Frank Davidson

Flaubert whose dominant passion was hatred and disgust for the bourgeoisie, who signed his letters "Bourgeoisophobus," and suffered such physical and mental agony in the long years of creative work he gave to a single novel on the life of this hated and despised class. Balzac was consciously proud of his political views, of his royalism and Catholicism. The Goncourt brothers wrote in their *Diary* that their disillusionment in the good faith of politicians of all sorts brought them, in the end, to "a disgust in every belief, a toleration for any kind of power, an indifference towards political passion which I find in all my literary

friends, in Flaubert as well as myself. You can see that one should die for no cause, that one should live with any government there is, no matter what one's antipathy to it, and believe in nothing but art, confess no faith but literature."

So many writers since, of considerably less talent than the two Goncourts and whose names cannot even be mentioned in the same breath with Flaubert, have professed (and still profess) a similar outlook, that it is worth our while to seek the origin of this apparent disillusionment and detachment from life. I say "apparent" because in Flaubert's case at least (he was a great writer) there was no detachment, but a bitter battle to the death with that bourgeois society he hated so violently.

The Goncourts knew Balzac personally, their diaries are full of anecdotes about that vital and Rabelaisian genius. Flaubert, like themselves, also overlapped him in his creative work. Whence comes the great difference between the master and the disciples, a difference not in time but in outlook that divides them like a gulf? The energy engendered by the Revolution and its heroic aftermath had died out by the advent of Flaubert's generation. The bitter struggle of classes and the real predatory character of capitalist society had become so clear that they aroused only disgust; whereas Balzac, still inspired by the creative force that built this society, sought only for understanding.

The democratic and Jacobin ideals of '93, in the mouths of the liberal politicians of the nineteenth century, had become intolerable and monstrous platitudes. The real leveling character of capitalism was becoming apparent, its denial of human values, its philosophy of numbers that covered its cash estimate for all things human and divine. The old aristocracy whose corruption Balzac had drawn in such masterly fashion was nothing but a decayed shadow of its old self, an obscene ghost muttering and grumbling in the forgotten drawing-rooms of provincial country houses, or else indistinguishable from the new nobility of hard cash. Socialism, only known to Flaubert and his friends in its Utopian form, seemed to them as stupid and unreal as the worst extravagances of the liberal politicians who daily in word and deed betrayed their great ancestors. (That Flaubert considered them great ancestors there is plenty of evidence: "Marat is my man," he writes in one letter.) Socialism was only another form of the general leveling of all values which so revolted them, and rendered the more disgusting because of its sentimental idealizing (it seemed to them) of the uneducated mob.

The period of 1848 saw the end of many illusions. Who after that bitter experience would ever again believe that fine words could butter parsnips? The June days, in which the Paris workers took the spinnets of phrases at their word and fought in arms for liberty, equality, and fraternity, were the writing on the wall. Flaubert was a novelist, not a student of the social history and economic

Prewar Vision

Down dark ways my feet are led
guided by the reckless blind
past the houses of the dead
beyond the limits of the mind.

Strident orchestrated fear
trumpets shrieking out my name
crazy drums drove me here
nerves commanded and I came

through the gravedge deathsweet smell
of the spectral frontline camp
where beneath a silent spell
countless murdered armies tramp

to the wind's marshaling.

A squad front a company back
struck in mirth these shadows swing
breathless bones to mock attack

precise and perfect. No mistake
disturbs deadlock with defeat
no thrust allows ranks to break:
from this last field is no retreat.

I wheel and run defy wind
leap wire jump trench shrilly
scream

wild to leave that place behind.
I fall entangled in the dream.

Before me no room for doubt
my own head barring escape
grinning mouth nose eaten out
eyesockets agape.

JOSEPH KEHOE.

★

machinery of mankind, and to him the June days merely proved that flirting with empty slogans roused dark forces that were a threat to the very existence of civilized society. The dictatorship of the blackguard Louis Napoleon which followed was just a dictatorship of blackguards, the apotheosis of the bourgeois, and all that could be expected from the follies of preceding years. So the *Education Sentimentale* is a bitter and mercilessly ironical picture of the end of all the fine illusions of the liberal bourgeoisie, illusions which the red flag and rifle shots of June, 1848, shattered forever. After that, the vulgarity of the Empire. Nothing would be the same again, and one could resign oneself to the long process of social decay and destruction of civilization by this stupid and miserly bourgeoisie, with its wars, its narrow nationalism, and its bestial greed.

It might be thought that between Flaubert's theory of god-like objectivity of the artist and Balzac's theory of the natural history of social man, there is no great difference. In fact, there is all the difference in the world. Balzac's scientific views were possibly naïve and incorrect, but in his view of life he was truly realist. He looked at human society historically, as something struggling and developing through its struggles. In Flaubert, life becomes frozen and static. After 1848, you could not observe and express life in its development be-

cause that development was too painful, the contradictions were too glaring. So life became for him a frozen lake. "What appears beautiful to me," he writes to his mistress, "what I should like to do, would be a book about nothing, a book without any attachment to the external world, which would support itself by the inner strength of its style, just as the world supports itself in the air without being held up, a book which would be almost without a subject, or in which the subject would be almost invisible, if that is possible. The most beautiful books are those with the least matter. The nearer the expression comes to the thought, the more the word clings to it and then disappears, the more beautiful it is."

ONCE this view was accepted, the way was clear for the new "realism" which took the slice of life and described it minutely and objectively. But life, of course, proved too restive a creature to slice up artistically, so the novelist grew finicking about the choosing of his slice, demanding that it be cut off such a refined portion of life's anatomy that in the end he came to describe little more interesting than the suburban street or the Mayfair party. Revolting against the narrow view imposed on their vision by this theory, others drew their inspiration from Freud and Dostoevsky in order to give us the poetic picture of their own stream of consciousness. So in the end the novel has died away into two tendencies whose opposition has as little about it that is important to us as the mediæval battles of the schoolmen.

Flaubert, however, was an honest man and a great artist. If his successors were content to avoid the task of mastering the reality of their age and substitute the "slice of life" or the subjective stream of consciousness, he was not prepared to make any such easy surrender. His letters are the confession of a most frightful struggle with a life, a reality, that had become loathsome to him, but which nevertheless must be mastered and given artistic expression. No man has ever raged against the bourgeoisie with the hatred of Flaubert. "I would drown humanity in my vomit," he writes, and he does not mean humanity as a whole, but only the capitalist society of nineteenth-century Europe, immediately after the Paris Commune of 1871.

Letter after letter describes his struggle to find expression. He takes two months to write the tavern scene for *Madame Bovary*, the duration of which in the novel itself is only three hours. Over and over again he mentions that in the last month he has written some twenty pages. Can this be explained simply by his devotion to the perfect phrase, to the exact word? Is it an artist's conscience which will be satisfied with nothing less than perfection in style? Hardly that. He himself says that the works in which the greatest attention has been paid to style and form are mostly second-rate, and in one place declares outright that he is not sure if it is possible to find a criterion for perfection in style. When he writes of the great authors of the world, it is enviously:

"They had no need to strive for style, they are strong in spite of all faults and because of them; but we, the minor ones, only count by our perfection of execution. . . . I will venture a suggestion here I would not dare to make anywhere else: it is that the very great often write very badly and so much the better for them. We mustn't look for the art of form in them, but in the second-raters like Horace and La Bruyère."

Yet Flaubert did not live in physical and mental agony, shut up in his country home among people he despised, because he was a second-rate artist seeking formal perfection. No, he was a great and honest artist striving to express a world and a life he hated, and his whole artistic theory was the result of the compromise enforced on him in that struggle. "Art must in no way be confused with the artist. All the worse for him if he does not love red, green, or yellow, all colors are beautiful, and his job is to paint them. . . . Look at the leaves for themselves; to understand nature one must be calm as nature." Or again, the famous letter in which he sums up his

credo: "The author in his work must be like God in the universe, present everywhere and visible nowhere; art being a second nature, the creator of this nature must act by similar methods; in each atom, in every aspect, there must be felt a hidden and infinite impassibility."

FLAUBERT himself failed utterly to live up to his precepts. Such a god feels neither love nor hate. Flaubert's whole life was animated by hate, a holy hatred of his age which was a kind of inverted love for man deceived, tormented, and debased by a society whose only criterion of value was property. He gave his view of that society at last in the irony of *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, a novel which arose out of his scheme for a *Dictionary of Accepted Ideas* in which you were to find "in alphabetical order on every possible subject everything which you need to say in society to be accepted as a respectable and nice fellow."

Flaubert, like Dickens, was a great writer faced with the problem of giving a true picture of a society whose very premises were

rapidly becoming a denial of the standards of humanism once looked on as our common heritage. Dickens solved his problem by the compromise of sentimental romanticism. English conditions made it inevitable for him. Flaubert, who lived in the France of June 1848, of the Third Empire, the Franco-Prussian War, and the Commune, had to take another road. Not only his own temperament, his uncompromising honesty, forbade the path of sentimentality (how easy that would have been for a less great man, Daudet was to show), but the harsher reality of French life irrevocably closed that path for him. He stood apart from the struggle, with infinite pain created for himself an unreal objectivity, and tried to isolate by means of a purely formal approach, certain aspects of life. Poor Flaubert, who suffered more terribly than any writer of his time in his effort to create a picture of life, who more than any man felt the real pulse of his age, yet could not express it, this man of deep passion and intense hatred, has suffered the sad fate of becoming that colorless thing, the highbrow's example of the



SEEING AMERICA FIRST
XI—Eviction

Herb Kruckman



Herb Kruckman

SEEING AMERICA FIRST
XI—Eviction

Herb Kruckman

"pure artist." Why we should admire a "pure artist" more than a "pure woman" is one of the mysteries of the age. Why not just an artist, and a woman? They are both interesting and they both suffer, but not in order to be beautiful.

There was one contemporary of Flaubert's who went through the same agony of creation, who tormented himself for weeks in order to find the precise words to express the reality he was determined to dominate and refashion in his mind. This other artist wrote and re-wrote, fashioned and refashioned, loved and hated with an even greater intensity, and finally gave the world the mighty fragments created by his genius. His name was Karl Marx and he successfully solved the problem which had broken every other of his contemporaries, the problem of understanding completely the world of the nineteenth century and the historical development of capitalist society.

"From form is born the idea," Flaubert told Gautier, who regarded these words as being "the supreme formula" of this school of "objective" realism, worthy to be carved on walls. Content determines form, was the view of Marx, but between the two there is an inner relationship, a unity, an indissoluble connection. Flaubert's ideal was to write a book "about nothing," a work of pure formalism, in which the logical was torn apart from the factual and historical. In its extremest form, as developed by Edmond de Goncourt, Huysmans, and others, this became a pure subjectivism, which converted the object into the passive material of the subject, the novelist, who in turn was reduced to a mere photographer.

Lafargue, Marx's son-in-law and a keen critic of the French realists, has contrasted the two methods:

Marx did not merely see the surface, but penetrated beneath, examined the component parts in their reciprocity and mutual interaction. He isolated each of these parts and traced the history of its growth. After that he approached the thing and its environment and observed the action of the latter upon the former, and the reverse. He then returned to the birth of the object, to its changes, evolutions, and revolutions and went into its uttermost activities. He did not see before him a separate thing for itself and in itself having no connection with its environment, but a whole complicated and eternally moving world. And Marx strove to represent the life of that world in its various and constantly changing actions and reactions. The writers of the school of Flaubert and Goncourt complain of the difficulties the artist encounters in trying to reproduce what he sees. But they only try to represent the surface, only the impression they receive. Their literary work is child's play in comparison with that of Marx. An unusual strength of mind was called for in order to understand so profoundly the phenomenon of reality, and the art needed to transmit what he saw and wished to say was no less.

Lafargue rightly estimates the creative method of Marx, and correctly shows the deficiencies of Flaubert's method, though he does not understand that Flaubert himself in his heart of hearts was aware of its deficiencies. Neither does Lafargue realize the forces which drove Flaubert and the Goncourt brothers to

adopt their artistic method. The diary has some interesting light to throw on this last point. In 1855, Edmond writes that "every four or five hundred years barbarism is necessary to revitalize the world. The world would die of civilization. Formerly in Europe, whenever the old population of some pleasant country had become suitably affected with anæmia, there fell on their backs from the North a lot of fellows six feet tall, who remade the race. Now there are no more barbarians in Europe, and it is the workers who will accomplish this task. We shall call it the social revolution."

In the midst of the Commune he remembered this prophecy.

What is happening [he wrote] is the complete conquest of France by the working-class population, and the enslavement of noble, bourgeois, and peasant beneath its despotism. The government is slipping out of the hands of the possessing classes into the hands of those with no possessions, from the hands of those who have a material interest in the preservation of society, into the hands of those who have no interest in order, stability, and conservatism. After all, perhaps in the great law of change of things here below, the workers, as I said some years ago, take the place of the barbarians in ancient society, the part of convulsive agents of destruction and dissolution.

Neither Flaubert nor the Goncourts saw the working class as anything but a purely destructive agent. They did not suffer from any illusions about bourgeois society, they hated its greed, its narrow nationalism, its lack of values, its general leveling tendency and degradation of man, but they saw no alternative to this society, and here is the fundamental weakness of their work. After Flaubert, critical realism could progress no further, for his tremendous labors had exhausted the method. Either the novelist must again see

society in movement, as Balzac had done, or he must turn into himself, become completely subjective, deny space and time, break up the whole epic structure. There was also a further difficulty, one that had been growing for more than a hundred years, and was now reaching its acutest tension, the difficulty of a unified outlook on life, of the ability to deal with human character at all.

The great novelists of the Renaissance had not felt this difficulty. For them, humanism had given direction to their ideas and inspired their work. The Renaissance produced its great philosophers, though at the end of the period rather than the beginning, in Spinoza, Descartes, and Bacon. Certainly, even here the main division in human thought is apparent in the conflict of Descartes and Spinoza, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was not yet so violent as to destroy all philosophic unity. The English and French realist novelists on the whole had a similar view of life, their work in consequence gains in completeness and force. In the nineteenth century, however, the period when all the violent contradictions of the capitalist social system become clear, when wars and revolutions destroy the last feudal strongholds in Europe and the modern nations are formed, there is no longer any philosophical unity. Kant and Hegel have so developed idealism that it temporarily overwhelms the realist, materialist philosophies. The century is one without a unified view of human life, so that it becomes more and more difficult for the novelist to work except in a minor, specialized way, by isolating some fragment of life or of individual consciousness. Flaubert's letters are full of this feeling, and he describes his vain efforts to master the philosophers, his rifling of the works of Kant, Hegel, Descartes, Hume, and the rest. All the time he feels the desire to get back to Spinoza, as the Goncourts felt the desire to get back to the dialectic thought of Diderot. But in the end they give up the search for a philosophical basis as being impossible of fulfilment in the contemporary world.

It is the tragedy of Flaubert and his school that they so continually and acutely felt their own insufficiency, were so conscious of the great superiority of the masters of the past, Rabelais, Cervantes, Diderot, and Balzac. Sometimes they almost blundered on the reason for this, and there is a passage on Balzac in the Goncourt diary which comes so close to the truth, and is so significant for the writer today, that it will perfectly sum up the argument.

I have just re-read Balzac's *Peasants*. Nobody has ever called Balzac a statesman, yet he was probably the greatest statesman of our time, the only one to get to the bottom of our sickness, the only one who saw from on high the disintegration of France since 1789, the manners beneath the laws, the facts behind the words, the anarchy of unbridled interests beneath the apparent order, the abuses replaced by influences, equality before the law destroyed by inequality before the judge, in short, the lie in the program of '89 which replaced great names by big coins and turned marquises into bankers—nothing more than that. Yet it was a novelist who saw through all that.



J. E. Holker



J. E. Heliker

Conversations in Germany

*What the traveler sees and hears explains
the recent growth of popular disaffection*

By William Johnston

APPROACHING the border of Germany, we gradually divested ourselves of incriminating books, scribbled notes, and magazines. We discarded all evidence of our cultural interests lest we become suspect. And fortunately we did so, for our baggage was minutely examined.

As we passed station after station, Hitler's pictures, both in full face and profile, more severe than he had ever appeared before, more sharp, dissolute, and maniacal, peered at us from counters, walls, and mirrors. Every news-stand was covered with posters showing sly old Jewish men with long beards and enormous noses tearing the dresses off little Aryan girls, their breasts exposed, desperate fear clutching their faces; posters with huge-nosed Blum, Litvinov, and Benes supporting one another; posters depicting Hitler with flaming sword saving Germany from the horrors of an international Bolshevik-Jewish invasion.

Station after station . . . and in contrast, lovely German towns, solidly constructed as though to withstand ages of wear, the gentle, verdant fields, the cultivated surfaces of hills, lush and rich with growing grain, passing my train window as they did in 1929—but with this difference, that as I stared at the horizon, I could see beyond it the hundred concentration camps, the burning of books, the brutal beatings, murders, and sadistic orgies, that have made of beautiful Germany a military camp, and of scholarly Germany a corpse.

About four hours northeast of Berlin, a neatly dressed, tall, middle-aged German woman entered our second-class compartment, sat down near the window, placed her small traveling bag on the seat beside her, and with weary but dignified gestures slowly removed her gloves. I continued to read my German newspaper, raising my eyes now and then to look at her. The gloves removed, she gently patted them smooth on her lap, let her hands rest heavily on them there, and turned toward the window. Her thin face showed strain in tight creases at the corners of her mouth and along her nose and eyes.

A little later, when she had finished with the moving landscape and glanced at my valise on the rack, I wondered whether I should attempt to speak to her. European train compartments are conducive to conversation; one need but introduce oneself, and all barriers usually disappear; but this woman seemed so tired, so removed from any desire to talk or exert herself as she rested her head against the back cushions, that I thought it best to continue reading.

But after a page or two, observing that her

eyes, gentle and inquiring, were focused on mine, I closed the book and smiled.

She was first to speak, her voice hesitant and guarded.

"You are an American?" she asked.

"Yes, I am," I answered.

She leaned slightly toward me, inquiry deepening in her eyes.

"You are coming from Poland?"

"Yes." I watched her closely. "And from the Soviet Union."

A flutter passed over her face. Her lips tightened. "So?" It was partly question, partly formal interjection.

She didn't add anything else, but continued to look at me, her features expressionless, her head bent forward, shadows lengthening beneath her sunken eyes.

I waited. Then after a moment, accepting her silence as permission, and choosing the most innocuous incidents lest she, a confirmed Nazi, make the remainder of the journey to Berlin too unpleasant with argument, I began the story of my visit there.

As I passed from one bit of information to another, her eyes were intent upon me; and while I described the new society, its theaters, children's palaces, food stores, and altered attitudes, she listened silently, stiff in her seat, her body turned toward me. Only when I pictured the freedom of the Russian women did she say anything, and then the "So?" again, this time with a little note of surprise in her voice. It indicated nothing to me, for her features were still expressionless.

But as I continued, mentioning details of their lives, their work, their evenings of study and pleasure, I observed that she was sinking into the corner of her seat, her entire body was losing its quality of stiffness, as though a compressed spring had been softly released within her.

Was she warming to my story as a sympathizer might, I asked myself, or was she just relaxing through weariness as she listened to the description of a country that she, as a German, might some day endeavor to possess? But before I could directly question her, two young men in labor-camp uniforms entered the compartment. She turned her face to the window. They sat down. I resumed my reading.

A half hour later we entered a station. She rose, took her valise, and with a slight nod beckoned to me as she passed through the door. I got up and followed her down the entire length of the corridor, wondering, as she approached the end, whether she had really beckoned.

Turning abruptly at the steps, she grasped

my hand, and in a rush of whispered words, her eyes roving the vestibule behind me, said, "Thank you, Comrade," and then she was gone.

EXCEPT for some vacant stores on Friedrichstrasse and the disappearance of the trees on Unter den Linden, Berlin had changed little in outward appearance—the part of Berlin I saw.

I had been warned by previous travelers not to walk through the working-class districts—"S.S. men concentrated there pick up a visitor on sight."

The sightseeing bus, crowded with middle-class Germans, had taken us from the heart of the city through the respectable Tiergarten, past numerous department stores and cafés, to Templehof airdrome, and was now retracing its way to the station.

My companion, an anti-fascist American, asked the announcer if he intended showing us anything else.

"Some more public buildings and Hitler's house again."

"What about the rest of Berlin? I heard it was a big city."

"Read the program," was the curt answer.

"What a frame-up," Jim said, peering down at the paper in his hand.

A man seated ahead turned and stared sharply at him.

"Careful," I whispered. "You're not home."

"Don't I know it," Jim laughed.

He had similarly laughed, but with greater satisfaction, during luncheon when the waiter had refused him a second portion of meat though he had offered to pay for it. "The law forbids," the waiter had quietly said.

Through the Tiergarten again and then into the crowded center, with its government buildings, hotels, and stores. There were few workers to be seen, and during the entire journey only one Jewish-looking person; but he was so nattily dressed that he might have been the Italian attaché.

The streets were filled with vari-colored uniforms worn by S.S. men, S.A. men, youthful aviators, labor-camp workers, Reichswehr soldiers, and women in tight-fitting suits with Sam Browne belts—all saluting so that at times the streets gave off a moving blur of half-raised arms.

Parading groups of young girls passed with troopers at their head; tractor-drawn trucks wove in and out of traffic; army cars, readily convertible into tanks, sped by; armored motorcycles skirted the bus; three truckloads of black-uniformed, helmeted S.S. men roared

round a corner . . . more saluting . . .

"This is the Reichstag building," the announcer droned. "The Communists burned it down three years ago."

AN ACCIDENT a few miles ahead forced us to change trains, necessitating the transfer of our baggage through an underpass from one platform to another.

A porter, somewhere between forty and fifty years of age, with a bristly, graying mustache, thick eyebrows, and muscles humping his back, hurried over to receive the pieces as I lifted them through the window. When I descended, three of our heavy valises were weighing him down as he grappled with a fourth.

"I'll help you," I said, taking it from him.

He remonstrated with me.

"No, three are heavy enough," I said, and turned toward the stairway.

Bent over, he walked beside me; the valises, two in back and one in front held by a leather belt crossing his shoulder, bumped against him as he waddled along. He peered at the pavement, chewing the end of his mustache.

"Are you busy all day like this?" I asked as we descended the steps.

"Sometimes," he said, without lifting his head. He was breathing heavily.

"Family?"

"Yes."

I hesitated, wondering how blunt I should be.

"Make a living?"

He didn't answer, but upon reaching the bottom looked up at me, his back still bent, a quizzical probing expression in his eyes.

"I know it's Germany," I said to him as we turned up the passage-way.

He was gazing at the floor again, the valises swinging a little from side to side.

"Yes," he mumbled.

I shifted the bag to my other hand.

He again offered to take it. I refused.

I decided on another tack.

"Many porters working here?"

Again he looked up at me, twisting his head to do so. When he answered, his eyes were back to the pavement, a smile crinkling his cheek.

"Yes."

"Makes it pretty hard, doesn't it?" I said.

He glanced at me, but didn't say anything.

We were ascending the stairway. He was going slowly, and I had my hand against the valises on his back, steadying them.



Painting by Anton Refregier (American Artists' Congress)

Fascists over Spain

"Thank you," he said between heavy, wheezing exhalations. We reached the top.

"I've just come from a country where there aren't any poor like in Germany," I said, shifting the bag back to my right hand, "I lived for about a month in Moscow."

He wiped his forehead and asked me for my car number. I told him. Then I added, "I may go on to Spain."

That was all until he was alone with me in my compartment. He had set the baggage in the racks, again wiped his face with the back of his hand, and received a four-mark tip which he stared at as though he had found an unexpected treasure. Then he said quickly, half losing the words in his mustache, his eyes warm and grateful, his fingers touching my sleeve as he backed into the corridor: "Thank you, thank you. Make it our second victory. Thank you. . . ."

IN THE COMPARTMENT next to ours was a tall, elderly man, military in bearing, neat and Prussian. During the early afternoon he had smiled at me in the dining-car as he walked by, his white mustache lending the only other note of softness to his face; so toward evening, as we were approaching Antwerp, noticing that he was alone, I dropped into a seat opposite him.

He spoke fluent English, regretted that the next station was his, and questioned me about my impressions of Germany.

Having little time, the lights of Antwerp twinkling beyond the window, I answered, as one might in conclusion: "I am not a Nazi."

He smiled wanly. "I know that. I heard bits of your conversation with your friends this afternoon. You should have been more careful, we were still in Germany." Then, after a pause, "I am a Jew."

I smiled in surprise.

"You live in Antwerp?" I then inquired.

"No, Germany. I am in the metal business. I am needed." The last was said with a trace of bitterness.

"And your life there?"

He answered as he rose to collect his things. "There is nothing left in Germany for me. No books, theater, friends, nothing."

We were entering the station.

"You were a liberal?" I asked, rising.

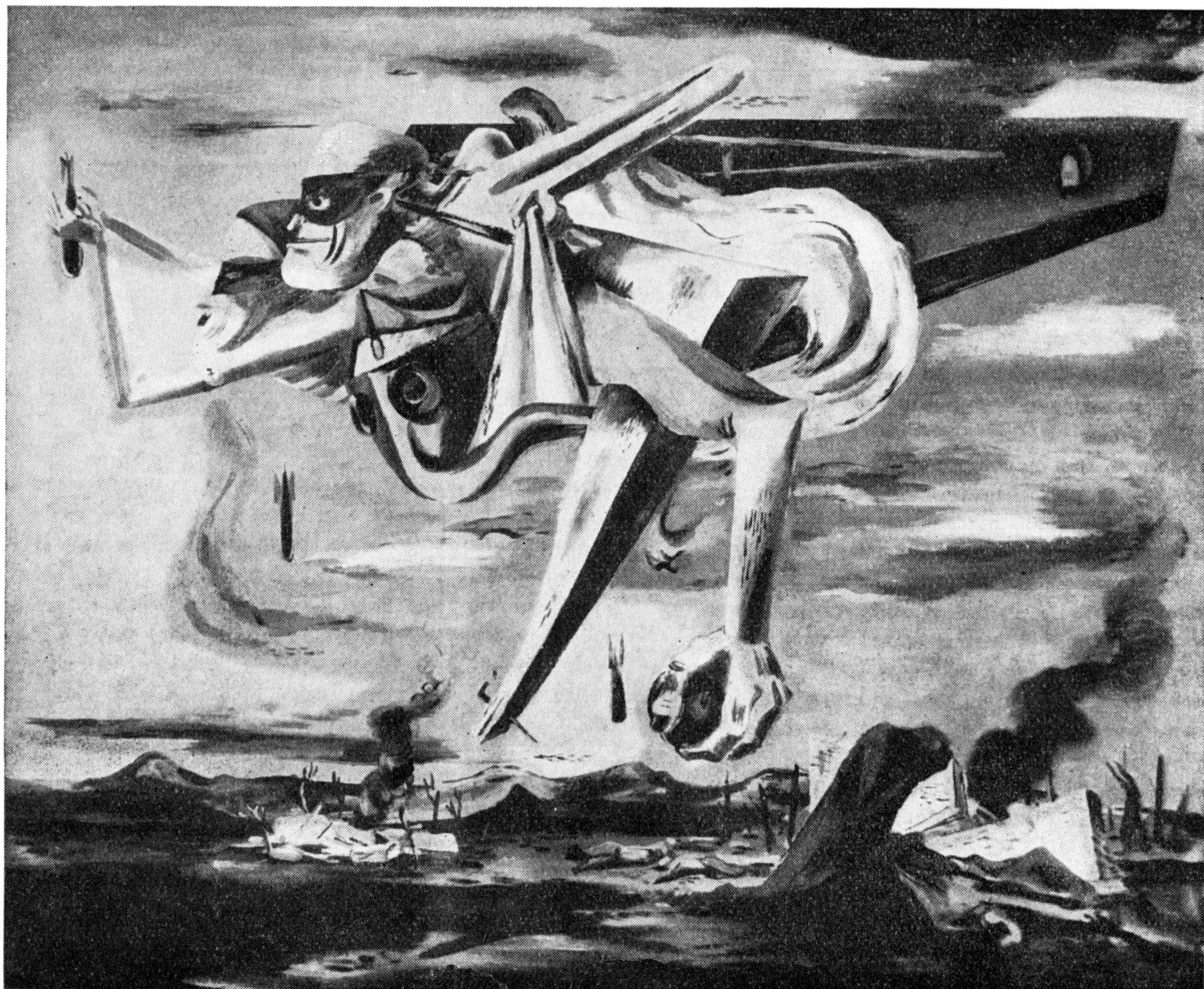
"I was a business man."

I helped him with his coat.

"And now?"

"And now? . . . Well . . ." He hesitated, extending his hand to me. "Well . . ." His shoulders moved slightly. "A young man visits me once in a while. Sometimes he comes from France, sometimes from Czechoslovakia; once he even came from Italy. I never ask him what he does. But I always give him money." His eyes sparkled. "Sometimes very much money . . ."

He bowed stiffly as we shook hands, smiled again, and bade me good-by.



Fascists over Spain

Painting by Anton Refregier (American Artists' Congress)

READERS' FORUM

A letter the New York "Times" didn't print—Maurice Becker suggests an anti-war action—On Hogben's "Mathematics"

● I am sending you a letter that I sent to the New York *Times* which, so far as I know, they have not seen fit to publish.—NATHAN BERMAN.

To the Editor of The New York *Times*:

My attention has been called to a letter by Mr. Max Eastman in the New York *Times* of April 6, 1937, which contains some items of special interest to me. I am referring to this part of his letter which deals with the treatment of juvenile delinquents in the Soviet Union. While I take exception to many other points in his letter, I shall confine myself to that phase of it with which I am most familiar.

I am a social worker doing juvenile delinquency work in connection with the Boys' Court of Chicago. Between July 1935 and January 1936 I carried on a research project in the field of juvenile delinquency in the Soviet Union. In carrying on this project I had the advantages of my social work background, knowledge of the Russian language, and a student visa which enabled me to work independently. My work took me to places of first detention, courts, clinics, and correctional institutions. The result of my study is now in the hands of a publisher. An article of mine on the above subject, a reprint of which I am mailing you, is appearing in the current issue of the *American Journal of Sociology*.

In his letter, Mr. Eastman says: "He [Stalin] decreed a law making theft a crime punishable by death. He has decreed laws extending this death penalty for theft, among other provisions of the Penal Code, to children twelve years old."

Both of these statements, I maintain, are vague, misleading, and incorrect. With reference to the first statement, does Mr. Eastman mean to imply that every theft carries with it in the Soviet Union a penalty of death? Does it mean that if one worker steals a shirt or a pair of trousers from another he will be subject to the "supreme penalty of social protection"—death? Obviously he does not, yet he plainly states that Stalin decreed (??) a law "making theft a crime punishable by death."

In his second sentence he evidently refers to part one of the Act of April 7, 1935, the exact translation of which is:

"Minors twelve years of age and older apprehended stealing, committing violence, inflicting bodily injury, maiming, committing murder or attempting to murder, be brought before the criminal court where all measures of criminal punishment may be applied to them." (*Pravda*, April 8, 1935.)

Now, the law here is quite plain. The death penalty is not mentioned, certainly not in connection with theft! The fact that more serious juvenile offenders are now being handled by the regular courts does not justify supposing that they will be shot for stealing. Our own criminal courts handle cases of minors who have committed burglary, larceny, assault, and murder. It does not follow, however, that a boy tried for grand larceny will face the electric chair just because he is being tried in the criminal and not in the juvenile court! Yet, that is precisely what Mr. Eastman's statement tries to convey. One wonders whether this statement of his was a slip of the pen or conscious distortion.

Mr. Eastman, as everybody knows, gets his information on the Soviet Union mainly from literature and reports. The writer, in addition to following carefully the literature on the subject both during his stay in the Soviet Union and, since, had the additional advantage of observing the courts in action and talking to inmates of correctional institutions intimately and privately. During all these contacts he did not come across a *single instance* where a juvenile was being severely punished, let alone sentenced to death, for theft or robbery. Where then did Mr. Eastman get his information while living

thousands of miles away from the Soviet Union? The writer would be deeply obligated to Mr. Eastman if the latter would kindly furnish him with data pertaining to the death penalty for theft to juvenile delinquents in the Soviet Union.

What is the actual truth with reference to the new Soviet juvenile delinquency law which Mr. Eastman seems to make so much of? Here is what the organ of the Commissariat of Justice has to say in connection with the new law:

The prosecution and the courts "must assure the most attentive and most careful study of every juvenile case, investigate the conditions under which the crime was committed, to carefully think through the most desirable steps to be adapted in every instance" but "strict and unbending should be the line of the courts toward the class enemy who over and again stretches out his dirty hands to our children." (*Soviet Justice*, June 18, 1935, p. 13.)

No, Mr. Eastman, facts are stubborn things; we may not like them, we may despise them, but we cannot twist them to suit ourselves.

Hoping that for the sake of the truth in which your paper is interested you will give this letter the same space as Mr. Eastman's, I remain,

NATHAN BERMAN.

A Sit-In Strike Against War?

● The recent ballyhoo about Army Day and the anniversary of the entrance of the United States into the World War, plus the more encouraging subsequent news of the students' national anti-war strike, call to my mind an action that took place when the youth of the country was being shipped across the Atlantic to die in the "war to end war." Some of the boys refused such a treat, and staged what would today be called a sit-in strike against war and conscription.

They were not strong in organization, except for the religious groups—in fact, almost every Socialist, Wobbly, and humanitarian based his objection to service on a more or less individual philosophy. Yet what they lacked in numbers they more than made up in conviction and idealism.

Would it be too fantastic an idea if today, with thousands of war objectors in colleges, mills, mines,

factories, and C.C.C. camps, we were to call a conference to discuss a national sit-in against war and conscription? Their anti-war spirit is such as to make it probable that they would fight against becoming soldiers—known or unknown.

There's talk of another international armaments conference. We've seen the disappointing results of these pow-wows. Wouldn't it be something to write home about if these gents found a sit-in conference against war holding forth next door to their own?

Twenty years ago our handful of c.o.'s (conscientious objectors) had to do their sitting-in at Fort Leavenworth. And where we sat, the war machine did not turn! With the popularity of the sit-in strike today, I doubt if there would be enough jail space to hold us. And what if Leavenworths should suddenly sprout all over the land?

You probably remember the occasion when 3000 military prisoners staged a sit-in strike against the jail sit-in. That was the day we smashed those twenty-five- and fifty-year sentences.

If the day should come, the sit-in strikes against war and conscription could put it up to our President as the sit-in strikes in Flint put it up to Governor Murphy. Any blood spilled would be on his hands. And we would risk having it spilled on the streets of Washington, D. C., before we'd be shipped out of the country to spill our guts on some Flanders field. Yours for an international sit-in against war!

MAURICE BECKER.

Philly's United Front

● For the first time in history we had a united-front May Day demonstration and parade between the Socialist and Communist parties.

Considering the past attempts to bring together these two parties, it was almost incredible to hear the Socialists singing "Our emblem is the Soviet star," and later to hear them applaud the various Communist groups as those sections went marching by. During the assembling at City Hall there was a moment or two when the main banners of the two parties were face to face just a few feet apart. This happened as an accident, but when it was pointed out, the cheering from the crowds came as from one throat. From now on, politically speaking, Philadelphia will be "going to town" on the united front.

DAVID SEIDMAN.

Exciting Science

● Naturally your book-review editor took the safe road and had Lancelot Hogben's *Mathematics for the Million* [issue of April], that looked technical reviewed by someone who is learned, if not an authority, in that branch of science. Okay. His left flank is protected. But the thing is, he didn't realize that this book *Mathematics for the Million* is honest-to-God for the Million. Any scientist can pick a flaw in any other scientist's book, even if both of them have received the Order of Lenin. But when a book for the people comes out, I do think it should have a word in its behalf from one of the people.

The important thing is that Hogben's book is exciting. I don't know a thing about mathematics, but this bird Hogben lighted me a bonfire in the darkness. The man writes witty, ironic, lucid, magnificent prose. He gives us poor unscientific devils the conviction that science was invented for us, even though we've been a long time collecting. He restores our faith in the nobility of mankind. He is tops.

Now Struik [the reviewer] and Hogben both contribute to *Science & Society*. Let them fight it out there. But please, can't the readers of the *NEW MASSES* be told that this book of Hogben's is the most readable and provocative thing to appear in a dog's age?

EMILY GRANT.



Demonstration

William Hermandes

HEW TO THE LINE

By *Simon Eddy*

THE paragraphist-versifier and his Humor Column appear to have slunk out with craft unionism and—what was his name again?—oh, yes, William Green. Four or five cultural diehards persist in New York, Cleveland, and Chicago, but for the most part the signed newspaper or magazine pillar of today is a frantic, hot-off-the-griddle compendium of Broadway lowdown or an essay in political reflection.

WHICH makes the appearance of Hew to the Line at this point a pretty strange event. Yet what is your correspondent to do? The itch to erupt into rhyme is one that the class struggle has only reheated in him; and the temptation to puns, apt or distorted quotations, and one-line comments on cited text from our agitated journals, is one that was practically born to be executed under the heading of Wilde's sensible counsel of yielding to temptation as the best method of removing it.

COLUMNS have relied on their contributors before, so the encouragement to send in your paragraphs and your verse is perhaps a routine



one. There is only this difference: that the cue to style will really be taken from the hoped-for army of collaborators. If you want the column to do elfin translations from Horace, Ovid, and Catullus; if you relish impassioned campaigns against dry street-cleaning or for visible house-numbers; if the misuse of "who" or "whom" gets you rabid and seems to call for unflinching derision—say so. Say so—and the clinical examination for the sources of your galloping senility will be absolutely gratis.

THE prize for the best contribution of the year is a little difficult to determine. We're torn between offering an album of drawings from Julius Streicher's *Stürmer* and a scrapbook of progressive sentences out of the obiter dicta of Walter Lippmann, Dorothy Thompson, and Mark Sullivan.

GETTING a letter *before* you start a column is a fresh definition of news, but this one didn't come directly to us, of course. A certain mystery attaches to the communication, since it seems to hail from Mexico City, is poorly signed, and clearly represents an unvarnished effort to unsettle the dignified pages of this publication with vernal epilepsy. Leaving blanks for the uncertain letters of the signature, we make the name of the poet to be S-zan-e L-f-llet-e. We should be grateful for more detailed identification. This is the poem, which the editors turned over to us:

Trial Triolet

I could never believe those Moscow trials,
But I'm mad for the way they're clearing Trotsky.
The Russians, you know, work with venomous
vials—
I could *never* believe those Moscow trials.
When Leon gives out his bright denials,
I'm so convinced I could do the kosotsky!
I could never believe those Moscow trials,
But I'm *mad* for the way they're clearing Trotsky!

THE BATING of breath that went on was practically national in scope when the late President Taft's son Charlie addressed the forty-sixth congress of the Daughters of the American Revolution. He had begun to advise them against the fatuity of trying to rout a Communist rabbit out of every liberal warren—and the next appalling step seemed to be a severe reminder that the ladies present owed their existence exclusively to ancestors who had found a political set-up intolerable and proceeded to replace it with one of their own choosing . . . but Charlie came through and



shifted to pure senseless oratory. Once again the Dames were spared a revelation whose intimations shine with annihilation.

TOPICS OF THE *Times*, Simeon Strunsky's little pillar of sunny babble in the *New York* paper of the same name, is a-swoon with ecstasy because the Lynds' new book on Middletown has convinced it that "in small-town America it is not yet class against class. It is still people living on different sides of the railroad tracks." As soon as this column has

beaten out its aluminum cup for Fine Distinctions, the presentation will be made to Mr. Strunsky. Meanwhile, Simeon, relax: Al Smith is no Fascist; he is merely an avowed and methodical enemy of working-class interests and freedom of speech and action. Get it? Pretty fine.

BRITONS never shall be slaves, and you're crazy if you don't believe that that applies to his majesty's seamen as well as to anyone else. An Admiralty fleet order recently announced that "requests for better quality braces will be met with the introduction of a new type in due course." Braces are suspenders to you. We hope this new type of brace is ready in time for the coronation so that no jolly



William Sanderson

English tar's pants will drop on that golden day in case he is suddenly visited with the sacrilegious and suspender-busting suspicion that this may be the last shindig of its kind ever to blind our wary eyes again.

JUST as you were about to abandon hope that democracy could be saved, along came Dr. Jay B. Nash with his marines to show you that organized indulgence in athletics would promptly obviate the unfortunate effort to make the world choose between communism and fascism. Sports should be compulsory so that the young may be strong—"frankly, strongly for war." This is of course an infallible guarantee of democracy. Draft us for the course in shot-putting, Doctor; the louder the sound of our activities and the deeper the roar of health-through-joy blood in our ears, the harder it will be to hear the hideous noise of fascist bombs falling in Madrid.

POLITENESS is the new keyword in A.F. of L. operations. F. J. Dillon recently wrote an extremely cultured letter to Edsel Ford asking if he might gain a foothold in the auto plant. Thus Mr. Dillon: "I direct your attention to the significant fact that in every case where the A.F. of L. has been privileged by management to function as a legitimate bargaining agency for employees, there has occurred not one repulsive and demoralizing sit-down strike." In other words:

The sit-down is a gross device,
We shun it.

It's unrefined, not neat, not nice,
We loathe it.

Besides, the C.I.O.'s knocked hell
Out of the old-guard A.F.L.

And loudly sounded Bill Green's knell—
We're infuriated by it!

REVIEW AND COMMENT

The essays of Waldo Frank—Edgar Lee Masters on Walt Whitman—Vida D. Scudder's autobiography

IN his foreword to this collection of his miscellaneous essays,* Waldo Frank says Harold Clurman of the Group Theater, who undertook the editing, found a natural unity, even a plot, emerging from the material. It would be more accurate to call the entire book the third act of a four-act play. Plot of a kind *In the American Jungle* contains, but only those acquainted with Mr. Frank's earlier work will do justice to it. *Salvos* presented Frank's critical writings from 1915 to 1924. *The Re-discovery of America* carried the account forward to 1929. But this present volume, though it brings the narrative down to 1936, goes as far back as 1925. It begins with a series of sketches of American life during the boom years and appraisals of the writers in the liberal tradition to which Mr. Frank then belonged. The style of these sketches is abrupt and falsetto, as though Frank were finding old attachments difficult to maintain in changing circumstances. He is obviously breaking away from a former orientation. Yet one has to return to the *Re-discovery* to find out what the orientation has been, and to read well into the new volume before it becomes clear that the progress to which Mr. Clurman alludes has led Mr. Frank from Spinoza with a dash of Marx to Marx with vestigial remnants of Spinoza.

This change in point of view had become, I think, necessary for Mr. Frank's peace of mind. For he was never altogether successful as a partisan of Spinoza on the American scene. As a young man he had tried Paris, and had rejected alliance with the American expatriates. His consciousness of the destiny of America led him to join the group of writers who had stayed at home and who, under the hegemony of Van Wyck Brooks, were already celebrating our coming of age. The period was still dominated by the new liberalism in politics of Herbert Croly and the new adoration of sex in Sherwood Anderson. In literary criticism the program was less clearly enunciated. It was a deduction from the critical warfare of Stuart Sherman and H. L. Mencken; Mencken's emancipation from puritanism fused with Sherman's belief in the achieved unity of the national spirit. As one of the younger members of this movement, Frank was able to do little or nothing to further its aims. A curious dualism permeated his writings, for which his interest in Spinoza was responsible. Spinoza permitted him to preach the new gospel with unusual fervor, to accept the rhapsodic generalization that the triumph of a progressive America was at hand. But at the same time, the mysticism which Frank drew from this alien philosopher forced him continually to raise the doubt—in the face of increasing material prosperity, to

accept this glorious future as possible only in case the materialism of the industrial machine were controlled. Perhaps also Frank came a little too late for the new liberalism to appear altogether plausible. Too much of it had been associated with the career of Woodrow Wilson. By the mid-twenties, the war had cast doubt on man's capacity to control the machines of his creation, and attention had begun to turn from the expansion of the individual spirit to social and economic problems. But these practical problems, of which his mysticism had made Frank cognizant, served only to make the mysticism itself appear the more out of date. His demand that men become aware of "the whole," if it was too robust to be compared with Emerson's absorption in the over-soul, was, after all, closer to Whitman's humanism than Croly's cheerful pragmatism. Meanwhile, the movement was turning out to be little more than evidence of the well-fed literary stomach, the genial reflection of our temporary prosperity on the literary sky. Its optimism, which had been from the start philosophically lackadaisical, came in due time to change its direction into the subtle distortions of democratic theory in the more recent writings of Walter Lippmann.

Frank rejected the distortion, and continued to grapple with the problem which his superior philosophical insight kept before him. His best essays in this volume represent his projection of this struggle to reconcile the industrialization of the country with its democratic tradition. He praises *The Bridge* by Hart Crane in the best criticism that has been written on the poem, but for reasons that at bottom are purely personal: the Brooklyn Bridge symbolizes to him matter made into human action. And his enthusiasm leads him to ignore Crane's obliqueness of expression through the prediction that a collectivist society alone will be able to understand the poem. Then, as though putting aside a personal temptation, he proceeds to reject the points of views of T. S. Eliot and Spengler. Eliot, he finds, manages to live in his world by reducing it to a fragment. In a careful, detailed analysis of Spengler's *Decline of the West*, he shows him to have neglected

the Hebraic contribution to world culture and the philosophical implications of Darwinism. Thus he paves the way for his own escape from the jungle, and discovers that he can preserve his own "consciousness of the whole" by predicating its attainment in the classless society through the intercession of the democratized masses of mankind. Marxism has succeeded in breaking his dilemma. In the *Re-discovery*, Frank was tolerant of the Soviet Union, but an intransigent opponent of Marxism as a dogmatic system. Now he has found out that Marxism is not, as its enemies maintained, a "closed" philosophy like mediæval scholasticism. In his addresses as first president of the League of American Writers, he gives most positive expression to his new orientation. And it is doubtless true that his immediate concern with the reality of fascism and its corroding of all that Mr. Frank has long held dear in his ideal of the "wholeness" of life, has made possible this fuller understanding of that wholeness as Marxism defines it.

At the same time, it is only proper to add that Mr. Frank does not believe that he has now rejected Spinoza entirely. He still looks upon the good life as a mystical-religious participation by the individual in the sensory experience of material life. To many of his readers he must seem to retain certain ambiguities more peculiar to nineteenth-century romanticism than to Spinoza, vestiges of Rossetti, of Musset, indeed of the Savoyard Vicar whom Frank continues to respect. But it will do no harm, certainly, to his audience at the present time if Frank somewhat extremely counteracts the confusion between mechanical materialism and dialectic.

EDWIN BERRY BURGUM.

The Man of Paumonok

WHITMAN, by Edgar Lee Masters. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.50.

EDGAR LEE MASTERS comes to a study of Whitman with a mind seeking desperately for some certitudes in a world that appears to him to be going to the dogs. But Masters's own perceptions are so crude, and his general level of consciousness so embogged in a poorly liberated provincialism, that he cannot give us any analysis of Whitman or his significance for our times. Instead he gives us all the well-known facts about Whitman's life, relying on copious quotations from other sources, a method not at all objectionable in itself, but which, in his hands, tends to take the place of original criticism. So that the general reader who is unacquainted with the Whitman literature may get something out of the book, but the reader looking for fresh evaluations in the light of modern awareness will get only some dubious psychiatric specu-



A. AJAY

* IN THE AMERICAN JUNGLE, by Waldo Frank. Farrar & Rinehart. \$2.50.

lations on Whitman's libido. In the end, Masters concludes that the fate of Whitman's literary achievement will depend on the fate of the democracy of which he sang in his huge hymns. This conclusion gives us the heart of Masters's inadequacy. For if this were so, Whitman would today be a dead dog, which he decidedly is not. Whitman's democracy was practically dead when *Leaves of Grass* made its appearance.

The rejection of Europe as a concept in favor of America as a concept could have something of glorious validity in the brief dawn of bourgeois democracy in this land unmoored in a feudal past. It reminds me of the mystical exceptionalism of the Irish "emerald isle and pixie" cult upon which Engels turned his scorn. But Whitman lived to see the day when the federal troops, formerly at one with the "free mechanics," became an alien body of violence, shooting the strikers of 1877 and of 1886. The *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 was catching up with the *Leaves of Grass* of 1855. When will its corresponding complex sensibility make itself felt in our literature?

The truth of the matter is that Masters cannot weigh Whitman for us because he himself cannot transcend Whitman's values and inevitable historic limitations. Masters yearns with a too-bitter nostalgia for Whitman's prairie democracy to be able to view his subject with modern eyes. He is himself too ridden with the obsessions of mystical American destiny and too raw with the gaucherie of an anti-puritanism whose very hatred of its enemy bears the tragic marks of its enemy's influence. I cannot but respect the desperation of search which I feel in Masters's prowling about the serene figure of Whitman. But I cannot at the same time help feeling the doom which pervades Masters's preoccupations simply because he is attempting to operate with a critical apparatus rooted in an American petty-bourgeois outlook darkened with shadows of horror at the remorseless advance of twentieth-century monopolism. For this reason, Masters makes of Whitman something perilously close to a lost cause, a vanishing dream. Because he expects too much of Whitman, expects that he will in fact be the prophet of a divine America, he ends by placing him in a false position where we must either reject or accept him completely. The genius of Whitman for us does not at all lie in such a quandary. He is with us. But we go beyond him.

Whitman wrote in his exaltation: "I reject nothing—I accept the master as well as the slave." The slave cannot be grateful to him for it. But neither can the master breathe easily in the storms of his social and natural pantheism. He wrote: "My call is the call of battle, I nourish active rebellion." But he also wrote:

I hear it was charged against me that I sought to destroy institutions,
But really I am neither for nor against institutions,
(What have I in common with them? Or what with the destruction of them?)

Has anyone ever explored the organic lack of discipline and responsibility which is coiled secretly within Whitman's all-encompassing embrace of nature and society? Is it this, as well as his problem of rendering vastness, which conditioned the form of his verse? Is that why, with all his tireless apostrophe to masses, he was unable to give living form to dramatic or even lyrical conflict of individuals? And the problem of Whitman's sexuality, its quality and its sources, still needs, after Masters's book, modern critical examination. Greatness of spirit was needed to affirm it in a country dominated by New England. Does it need the foil of puritanism for its effectiveness? Generally, his sexuality remains at the level of discovery (there are, of course, some remarkable exceptions, as in the beautiful image which closes the fifth section of the *Children of Adam* poems). But what have we to learn from a comparison of Whitman's sexuality with the subtleties of daring eroticism which irradiate the texture of Elizabethan intellectuality in Shakespeare's day?

The problem of Whitman's genius as a critic needs (Masters does express his opinion on this

point) more study. Whitman, like T. S. Eliot, who has never thought fit to expose Whitman to his researches, preferred the leanness of Dante to the torrential abundance of Shakespeare. There were in him, the man who "sent his barbaric yawp across the rooftops of the world," many elements of modern critical awareness. Like Milton, Blake, Shelley, and others, Whitman was trying to affirm some aspect of the spiritual realities which accompanied the anti-feudal revolution. For the modern poet who has gone beyond that restricted affirmation, Whitman, like the others, is a proper subject for "critical assimilation." But Masters's book is evidence that the job remains to be done.

MILTON HOWARD.

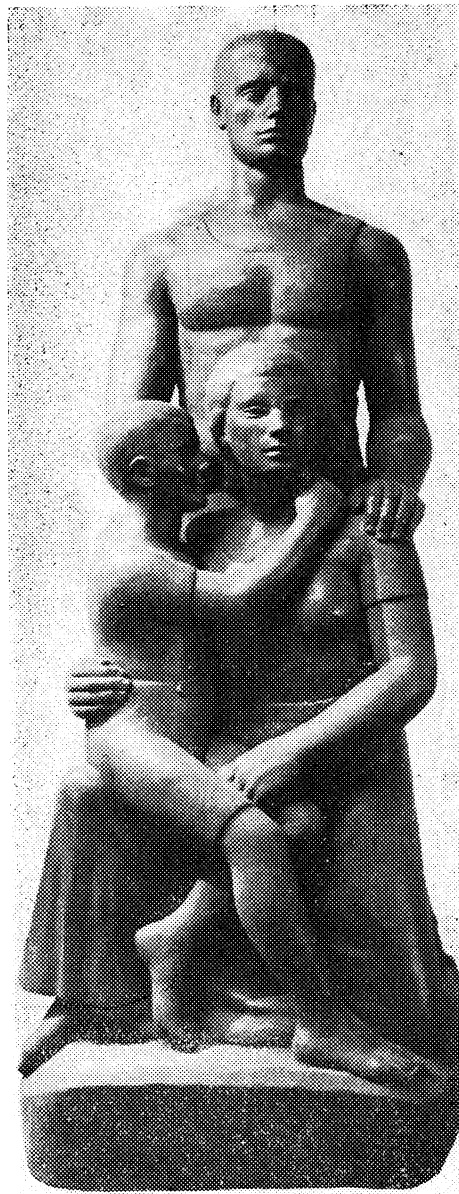
Magnissima Charta

THE NEW SOVIET CONSTITUTION, by Anna Louise Strong. Henry Holt & Co. \$1.50

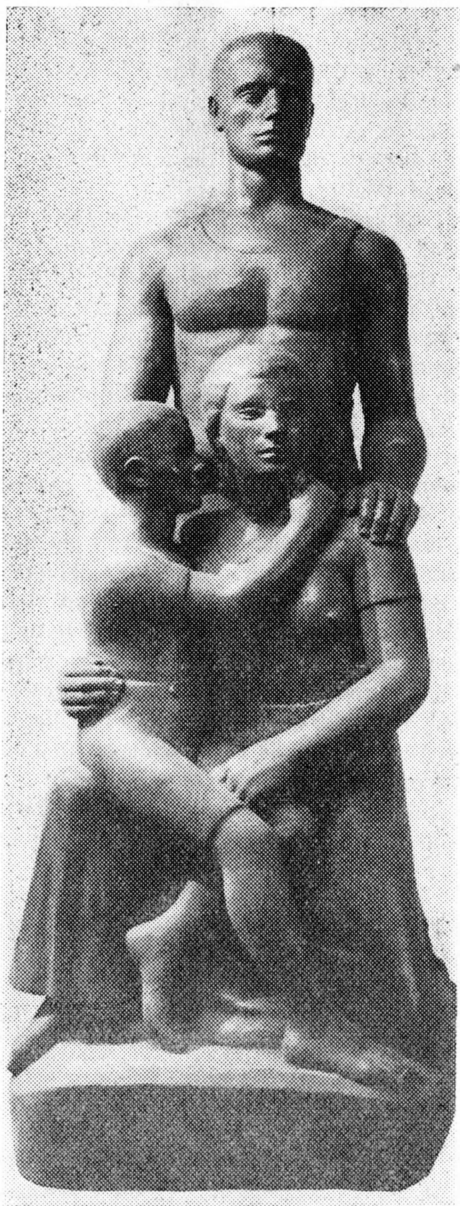
IN this compact little volume, Anna Louise Strong continues her brilliant and invaluable role of interpreting Soviet Russia to the outside world. Starting with an analysis of the present sad state of democracy in capitalist countries, she goes on to give the background of the new Soviet constitution in the evolution of the U.S.S.R. This approach shows clearly that the new constitution is not something strange and unexpected, but a natural outgrowth of those democratic principles and processes which were inherent in the first workers' republic from the day of its establishment. The very manner in which the new constitution was adopted demonstrates this point. Surely no other document of its kind in history was ever discussed before enactment so thoroughly, so democratically, and by so large a proportion of a nation's population.

Miss Strong proceeds to explain the political provisions of the constitution. The creation of a second chamber, the Soviet of Nationalities, in addition to the Soviet of the Union, is due, she points out, to the fact that "the U.S.S.R. is a multi-national state" in which it is only just that the particular interests of the minority national and racial groups should be protected. If the British empire, the author intriguingly suggests, had a similar constitution, it would mean that "all imperial laws had to be passed both by a majority of the total population—with India outvoting the rest of the empire combined—and also by a majority of the constituent nations, in a second chamber which would restore to England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales a certain equality of rights!"

Quite fittingly Miss Strong concludes her book with a chapter on the "New Rights of Man" embodied in the Soviet constitution. Outstanding among these provisions are those guaranteeing the right to work, the right to rest, the right to material security in old age and in case of sickness or other incapacity, the right to education, the right of women to full equality with men, and the right of freedom from all racial discrimination. These constitutional guarantees are so extraordinary and



Maurice Glickman (American Artists' Congress)
Asturian Miner and Family



Maurice Glickman (American Artists' Congress)
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epoch-making that in themselves they entail an affirmative answer to the query of Sidney and Beatrice Webb as to whether there exists a new civilization in the Soviet Union. The articles in question take up only five pages in the author's carefully annotated translation of the new constitution, and I declare without qualification that no one henceforth can be considered educated who does not read, remember, and reflect upon these five pages.

Of course it is easy to say that this is only a "paper" constitution. But it is obvious in the nature of the case that all written constitutions are paper constitutions. In other words, the extent to which constitutional provisions become actualized is dependent on the good faith of the government and people involved. Now I do not contend that the new Soviet constitution will always be lived up to 100 percent, especially during these first years; but I venture to predict that its basic principles will become in reality the law of the land far sooner than in the case of most other constitutions. The United States Constitution has been in effect for one hundred and fifty years, but we all know how frequently it is violated even today, particularly its guarantees regarding civil liberties.

Furthermore, the Soviet constitution shows a rate of growth towards democracy in the U.S.S.R. unprecedented elsewhere in political experience. The British parliamentary system has been in process of evolution for more than six hundred years, but till 1884 approximately 50 percent of the population did not have the ballot; and only in 1918 was universal suffrage for men and women over twenty established. In the United States it took nearly a century after the Declaration of Independence for Negroes to win equal political rights; even then it was mainly on paper and remains so to this day. Women's suffrage came in America only in 1920. In the Soviet Union, nineteen years after the revolution, there is suffrage for everyone of both sexes over the age of eighteen. These are a few of the more obvious comparisons that can be made, but they may be sufficient to indicate the swift pace at which Soviet democracy marches on.

CORLISS LAMONT.

Napoleon the Class Warrior

BONAPARTE, by Eugene Tarlé. Knight Publications. \$4.50.

THE relation between certain stages of Napoleon's life and their social and economic background has been demonstrated, in fragmentary analyses, by many writers, among them Marx and Engels. In this excellent biography by a leading Soviet historian, these analyses are now expanded and integrated, and Napoleon's personal role is shown in relation to the development of the bourgeois revolution in France.

As Tarlé demonstrates, the revolutionary and, later, imperial armies derived their strength from the newly liberated energies of the French middle classes. They conquered the feudal countries that opposed



Martin

them, but were unable to hold their conquests; at the beginning of the nineteenth century no more than now could there be a really unified Europe within capitalism. The greatest military genius of all times, with all his miraculous organizing powers, was helpless when faced with an economic crisis and the anarchy of the market. But as Tarlé shows, the rhythm of the social and economic forces explains not only the objective facts of Napoleon's rise and fall; it also explains to some extent his subjective decisions. Napoleon was aware of the forces he represented. He was a loyal instrument of his class, and naturally could not transcend its historic perspectives. In Russia he discarded the idea of liberating the czar's serfs, and even after Waterloo he refused to lead the "proletarian rabble" against the restoration of the Bourbons. In Tarlé's materialistic treatment, despite its necessary accent on impersonal forces, the tragedy of Napoleon as an individual is not blurred; on the contrary it stands out with greater clarity, because instead of a blind victim tossed about by chance, he is seen here as the focal point of a class consciousness. In addition to its scientific merits, *Bonaparte* has that of being as smoothly readable as any "novelized" biography.

NORMAN GOODRICH.

A Socialist Reads Lenin

ON JOURNEY, by Vida Dutton Scudder. E. P. Dutton & Co. \$4.

VIDA SCUDDER, professor emerita of English literature at Wellesley College and for forty years a Christian Socialist, at the age of seventy-six has begun the study of Lenin's writings. Her article, "A Little Tour in the Mind of Lenin" in a current issue of the *Christian Century*, is refreshing after the mysticism of the closing chapters of her autobiography, *On Journey*.

In the earlier pages of her life story, she ranges pleasantly over the wide meadows of English letters, from Beowulf and Chaucer, through Ruskin and Matthew Arnold, down to Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis

—whom she does not so much like. She reads Dante and the records of early Franciscans in the original Italian, quotes them, and does not imagine that her readers may need a translation. She is conscious of writing more for the élite than for the masses.

From a family representing New England's cultured minority—an uncle was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and another uncle was head of Dutton's publishing house—Vida Scudder found herself readily in the field of literature. On her many trips abroad, she has been as much at home in Oxford or Assisi as in Wellesley, Massachusetts. The mediaeval, whether in art, religion, philosophy, or letters, has always called forth her special enthusiasm. It provided the theme for several of her earlier books, solid contributions to scholarship, on the Arthurian legends, the Franciscans, and Catherine of Siena. In religion she is more than a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church; she is an American Anglo-Catholic, that is, a catholic who has not "submitted to the Roman obedience."

It was through hearing Ruskin's lecture courses at Oxford in the 1880's, reading his "Unto This Last" and the works of Frederick Denison Maurice and Charles Kingsley, that the young graduate of Smith College became a Christian Socialist. Later she took out her red card as a member of the Socialist Party, but was never very active in the party's political life. Through the work of Denison House in Boston, one of the early college settlements, she maintained contact for a good many years with the trade-union movement in New England and with working-class neighbors who came to the settlement for classes, discussions and forums.

But for any consistent, logical economic thinking, the autobiography is disappointing. Miss Scudder admits that she is confused, that she is famous among her friends for her "disconcerting habit of switching from side to side in an argument." She has, however, a definite program of three "essential" points: "Faith in the movement toward political socialism, in the pressure exerted by organized labor, and in the growing development of Consumers' Coöperation." She claims that in the class struggle she is one with the workers in spirit. But she can speak of "laughing and weeping over the constant failure of communism"—and she can keep her name on the Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky.

It must have been after finishing the autobiography that she began to study Lenin's life and work, of which she now writes in such invigorating fashion. Urging her middle-class readers to travel "for a time" (why only for a time?) "along the new trails broken by communists," she describes Lenin as statesman and thinker and one whose intellect was at once powerful, flexible, and creative.

Will the time ever come, she asks, when Lenin's *Selected Essays* will be assigned in America as college preparatory reading? And she concludes that Marxists, "however one judges their ultimate theories"—which she rejects—have unprecedented understanding of



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the whole historic process. She is perhaps a little wistful about these Marxists. Is it because she does not accept what she realizes is an integrated and coherent conception of the universe?
GRACE HUTCHINS.

Recent Fiction in Brief

ANOTHER SUCH VICTORY, by Clifton Cuthbert. Hillman Curl. \$2.50.

A more interesting and significant novel than the author's earlier *Thunder Without Rain*, and sharply different in theme, *Another Such Victory* describes a strike of New England textile workers. While adding little to the strike-novel formula, it manages to be clear, honest, and readable; and one looks forward with interest to Cuthbert's next.

THE GODS ARRIVE, by Grant Lewi. J. B. Lippincott. \$2.50.

A novel of New York life from 1928 to 1933. Some excellent descriptions of department-store administration, particularly as it weighs on the workers. Energetic political conversations which, though a little confused, are enlivening and adult.

TODAY IS FOREVER, by Ramona Herdman. Harper & Bros. \$2.50.

Miss Herdman's first book, *A Time For Love*, was both polished and sympathetic satire, but in this novel she is bent on being serious and analytical and Freudian, and the results are less interesting.

A LAMP ON THE PLAINS, by Paul Horgan. Harper & Bros. \$2.50.

A rather static and indecisive novel of a young man of the Southwest in search of knowledge. Scattered among the embroidered and precious pieces of nature-description is some really good writing.

YOUNG ROBERT, by George Albee. Reynal & Hitchcock. \$2.50.

A lively story of working people in San Francisco of the forties. Some supple and precise writing and convincing portraiture of proletarian types.

WE ARE NOT ALONE, by James Hilton. Little, Brown. \$2.

About a little doctor in a small English community, who serves his patients with skill and sympathy and whose overbearing wife drives him into a strange affair with a German dancer. Undoubtedly one of the high points, if not the saturation point, in the hazy school of novel writing.

THE GROWN-UPS, by Catharine Whitcomb. Random House. \$2.50.

A story of corrupt parents and a child's mental suffering. Vivid and sensitive, though a trifle over-written.

PEOPLE ON THE EARTH, by Edwin Corle. Random House. \$2.

A Navajo lad lives for a time among white people and then returns to his own tribe. Observant study of Indian life and problems.

THE SCANDALS OF CLOCHERLE, by Gabriel Chevalier, translated from the French by Jocelyn Godefroi. Simon & Schuster. \$2.50.

The mayor of a French small town installs a public comfort station for gentlemen only, and a civic storm ensues. Not quite so gay, giddy, and Gallic as it should be.

PIPE ALL HANDS!, by H. M. Tomlinson. Harper & Bros. \$2.50.

Another sea story by the author of *Gallions Reach*. A pot-boiler, but quite accomplished.

LUCIFER IN PINE LAKE, by Samuel Rogers. Little, Brown. \$2.50.

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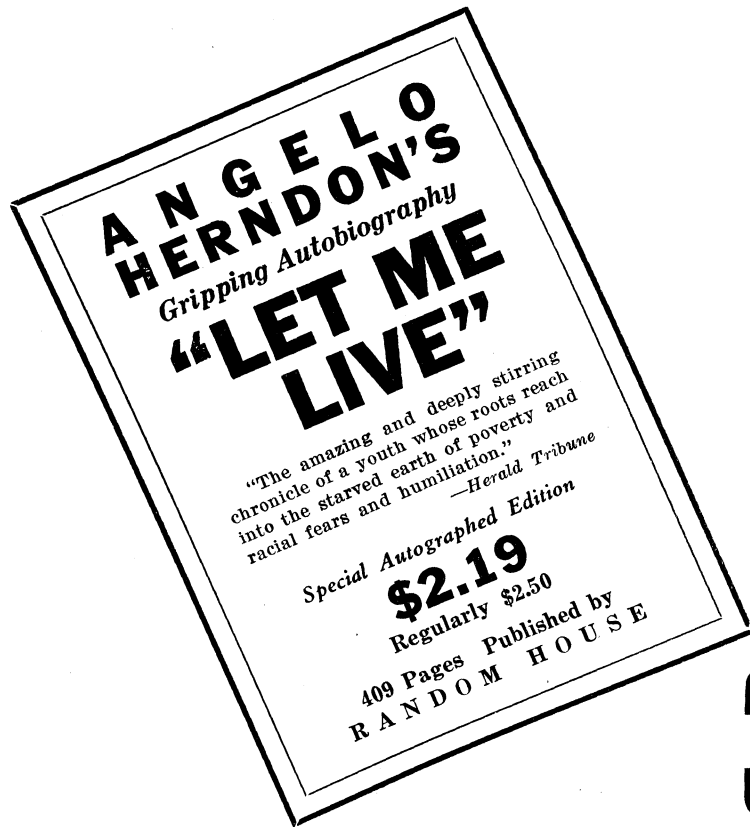
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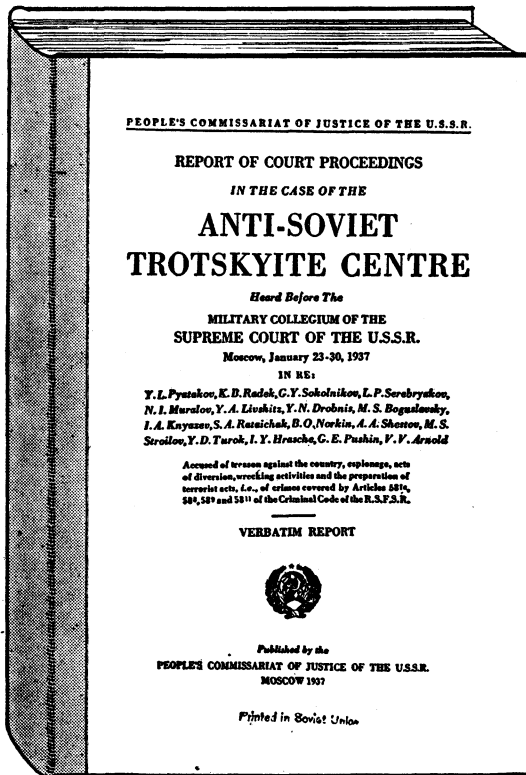
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provement over *Dusk at the Grove*, which won its author the *Atlantic Monthly* prize a few years back. The writing, still heavily nostalgic, lacks variety and pungency.

Pamphlets Recently Published

(This listing appears regularly in the first issue of every month.)

- Mastering Bolshevism.* Workers' Library Publishers. 5c. Stalin's brilliant report to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, made on March 3, and his reply to a discussion of the Central Committee on March 5. A document of great importance.
- The Fascist International*, by Harry F. Ward. American League Against War and Fascism. 2c. An authority examines the origins of this new form of world Reaction as well as methods of combatting it.
- Toward a "Closed Shop" on the Campus*, by Joseph P. Lash. American Student Union. 5c. An A.S.U. leader recounts the gains made on the campus against war and fascism.
- Questions and Answers*, by William Z. Foster. Workers' Library Publishers. 10c. America's foremost labor leader explodes the myths which were concocted to discredit the Piatakov-Radek trial.
- The Great Sit-Down Strike*, by William Weinstone. Workers' Library Publishers. 5c. "The big corporations know how to deal with a walkout, but General Motors did not know how to deal with the sit-down strike," writes Mr. Weinstone, who discusses the relation of this tactic to a new era in trade unionism.
- Terror in Cuba*, by Arthur Pincus. Workers' Defense League. 5c. Four million Cubans today are being ruled by machine guns and bayonets as a result of a "blood bargain" involving Yankee corporations. A brilliant exposé. Preface by John Dos Passos.
- An Eye-Witness at the Wreckers' Trial*, by Sam Darcy. Workers' Library Publishers. 10c. An account of the intrigue and sabotage in the U.S.S.R. which culminated in the treason trials.
- They Crashed the Color Line.* National Urban League. 15c. How six Negroes achieved success despite obstacles. Reprinted from *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life*.
- Occupational Opportunity for Negroes*, by Lester B. Granger and Arnold Hill. National Urban League. 15c. A guide to job-hunting; "primarily prepared for use by young people."
- ★
- ### Recently Recommended Books
- The Tragic Fallacy: A Study of America's War Policies*, by Mauritz A. Hallgren. Knopf. \$4.
- The Cock's Funeral*, by Ben Field, with an introduction by Erskine Caldwell. International. \$1.25.
- Mortgage Your Heart*, by Sophus Keith Winther. Macmillan. \$2.50.
- Mathematics for the Million*, by Lancelot Hogben. Illustrations by J. F. Horrabin. Norton. \$3.75.
- Peace Is Where the Tempests Blow*, by Valentine Kataev. Farrar & Rinehart. \$2.50.
- The Private Manufacture of Armaments, Vol. I*, by Philip Noel-Baker. Oxford. \$3.75.
- Rainbow Fish*, by Ralph Bates. Dutton. \$2.
- Look Through the Bars*, by Ernst Toller. Farrar & Rinehart. \$2.75.
- Low Company*, by Daniel Fuchs. Vanguard. \$2.50.
- Spain in Arms, 1937*, by Anna Louise Strong. Holt. \$1; paper 25c.
- Bread and Wine*, by Ignazio Silone. Harper. \$2.50.
- Away from It All*, by Cedric Belfrage. Simon & Schuster. \$3.
- The Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Center: A Verbatim Report*, published by the People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R. Bookniga. \$1.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The first offering of Frontier Films—Some recent dance recitals and two new plays

RECENTLY Will H. Hays delivered his annual report to the motion-picture industry. As usual, it was full of many brilliant and original remarks about the medium and the artistic progress of Hollywood. But one of the brighter spots in the speech was that "the American film industry has endeavored to produce its pictures on a high plane of entertainment and artistic merit, with complete freedom from propaganda and objectionable matter." Well, perhaps it is better that we leave the matters of "art" and "quality pictures" to Hollywood and the Hays office. In my discussion of *The Wave*, I mentioned the newly organized Frontier Films. In spite of the fact that this organization did not announce a film universe full of stars, it is, nevertheless, of great importance to the movie-goers of America. The purpose of this group of progressive professional scenarists, directors, dramatists, and cameramen is to produce realistic films of American life. In their announcement they state that

There are many aspects of American life ignored by the film industry. In the stirring events that overflow our newspapers . . . in the vivid reality of our everyday lives . . . in the rich and robust traditions of the American people . . . there exists a wealth of dramatic material. This is the subject matter that needs to be dramatized in America's most popular medium of entertainment. It is this America—the world we actually live in—that Frontier Films will portray.

And in New York's Roosevelt Theater the first film to come from this organization is on

view: a short entitled *The World Today*. This film shows every indication that Frontier Films will keep its promise.

In form, *The World Today* bears a superficial resemblance to *The March of Time*. Just as *The March of Time* revolutionized the newsreels, so will *The World Today* revolutionize the method of dramatizing actual news events and happenings. As a matter of fact, it was very easy for *The March of Time* to advance over the conventional newsreel. It eliminated the "entertainment" values of the newsreel and presented "news" and "educational" features in a fresh manner. It proved that the reënacted newsreel, the dramatic documentary, need not necessarily detract from the actuality of the event. As a matter of fact, it added the welcome dramatic punch. But in the name of objectivity and honest reporting, *The March of Time* went the way of the rest of the *Time-Fortune-Life* enterprises: flirting with Reaction. In addition to this ideological danger, *The March of Time* landed in a well-worn rut. By this time their method has lost its freshness and their technique has become stale, conventionalized, and uninteresting. On a smaller scale they are doing exactly what Hollywood is doing: avoiding or distorting reality.

The first issue of *The World Today* contains two subjects: a re-creation of the fight against the mortgage companies by the residents of New York's middle-class suburb, Sunnyside, L. I., and a frank reënactment of the activities of the Black Legion and the mur-

der of W.P.A. worker Poole by Black Legion killer Dean. In the Sunnyside sequence, the makers went to the scenes of the actual eviction for their material. The script was written with the assistance of the dispossessed home-owners and was shot with the same people reënacting their own fight. The result is extraordinary. It is so realistic, that when this sequence was shown to the "actors" they refused to believe their eyes—that this was not the actual eviction. The Black Legion sequence was obviously done entirely by actors. But in spite of that, it looks like a documentary film and functions like one. The initiation scene, for instance, is more vivid than anything in the Warner Brothers' version of *The Black Legion*.

This first issue has its faults; to deny them would be unfair to the members of the staff of Frontier Films, since in ideas and technique they have advanced beyond this film, made months ago. Nevertheless, it is strong enough, fresh enough, and exciting enough to amaze many members of *The March of Time* staff when it was shown to them. This is truly a bold new step in the field of the American movies and it is up to us to support it for all we're worth. PETER ELLIS.

THE DANCE

IN its last concert, the New Dance League (now merged with the American Dance Association, which convenes May 14, 15, 16 at the New School for Social Research in New York) presented, among others, Jane Dudley in her *Songs of Protest*, from Lawrence Gellert's collection (Tamiris and her W.P.A. group, incidentally, are giving their *Songs of Protest* at the Nora Bayes Theater in New York on May 5), Lily Mehlman in a lyrical *Harvest Song*, Miriam Blecher in her gay and earthy folk dance, *From Biro-Bidjan in the Field*. Malvena Fried, a newcomer, offered a thoroughly amusing, burlesqued *Portrait of an American Lady* (petty bourgeoisie); Bill Matons one of the best of his protests, *Letter to a Policeman in Kansas City*; and Blanche Evan a rhythmically good but somewhat dated *An Office Girl Dreams*.

Technically and artistically, the dancers have moved forward. Gestures have grown more sparing, movement more incisive; the patterns of their dances have lost the ingenuous qualities of obviously sloganed pantomime and their choreography has lost whatever tendency it might have had to swing into equivocal abstractions. The concert was perhaps not the most exciting that the New Dance League has presented since its first production at the Civic Repertory only a little over two years ago, but certainly it was one of its most polished performances.

Another young dancer, Lillian Shapero,



Joseph Serrano

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who has worked considerably with the Yiddish theater and with the Freiheit Gezang Farein, was seen with her group, in a concert given over to such excellent thematic material as *Jingoist, Proletarian Songs, Crisis* and a *Trilogy* on women and war.

But the choreography of the compositions was top-heavy with abstract patterns, and the patterns weren't particularly exciting nor very clear in their meaning. A more logical development of the theme contest of her work might have helped considerably. Whatever the case, Lillian Shapero has accepted uncritically the whole Graham technique and manner; and her idiom, for the most part, smacks much of the first art-for-art's-sake days of the modern-dance movement. The technical approach of the young dancer is essentially escapist and has little in common with the ideological militancy of her themes. The concert wasn't a particularly happy one. Lillian Shapero has done better; she can do better, and should.

OWEN BURKE.

THE THEATER

IN keeping with the spirit of lassitude induced by maturing spring, apparently, the Federal Theater Project in New York has installed in the Provincetown Playhouse (of hallowed memory) a play by James Bridie called *Tobias and the Angel*, which is a tale of human fate and foibles presided over in good style by the Archangel Raphael, who manages to put to rout the demons of flesh and spirit that badger the characters of the play. Cast in the general mold of Hebrew lore of biblical days, this easy-going little pilgrim's progress yet manages to have much freshness and charm for the contemporary audience. It is hardly a full-bodied dramatic effort, however, and never gets to the point of taking on the flesh and blood of life. The same leisurely good humor and sense of human



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values which characterized Mr. Bridie's *Storm Over Patsy*, which the Theatre Guild put on this season, is apparent here, and if you're within easy distance of Greenwich Village you can spend a not unpleasant evening seeing it. But don't go expecting anything solid in the way of a play.

The overlords of the United States Army may well be distressed by the substance and setting of *Without Warning*, a murder play by Ralph Spencer Zink, which has a lot to say about callousness and brutality and third-degree in the armed forces. And the military governors of the Philippine Islands during recent years may well, if they have guilty consciences, feel their skins developing gooseflesh. Unfortunately, the army men and their patriotizing sponsors are not the only ones this play will discomfit. There are, alas, the audiences, who by and large deserve better treatment. The substance of this play should have been made into a crackling realistic exposé; as it is, it merely seems to be something which will fade with the apple blossoms.

No one has asked our opinion as to the best play of the year, but if anyone did, we'd prefer the Pulitzer choice, *You Can't Take It With You*, to the critics' *High Tor*.

ALEXANDER TAYLOR.



Forthcoming Broadcasts

(Times given are Eastern Daylight, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups)

Senator Wagner. "Employer and Employee Cooperation," Sat., May 8, 2:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Total Eclipse. Mid-ocean broadcast from the U.S.S. *Avocet* expedition. Mon., May 10, 8:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Health and Growth. Louis I. Dublin, on "Health Hazards in the Period of Growth," Wed., May 12, 4 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Wed., May 12, 7:15 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Recent Recommendations

MOVIES

The Last Night. A vivid Soviet film of the night of Oct. 6, 1917.

A Family Affair. A warm and human rendering of the small-town-middle-class-family story, with Mickey Rooney.

The Wave (Filmarte, N.Y.). Pioneer Mexican film with distinguished photography by Paul Strand. Working-class theme handled deftly.

Quality Street. A polite and charming filming of James Barrie's whimsical play. Katharine Hepburn and Franchot Tone in the leading roles.

Maytime. Just in case you like this sort of thing. It features Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy, and a potpourri of music.

PLAYS

Professor Mamlock (Daly, N. Y.). Family of German-Jewish physician is caught in maelstrom of Nazi regime. A fascinating study of the psychology of changing human nature.

Babes in Arms (Schubert, N. Y.). Pleasant and talented cast of youngsters in amusing tuneful Rodgers and Hart musical.

Excursion (Vanderbilt, N.Y.). Thunder on the left in comic vein by Victor Wolfson.

Miss Quis (Henry Miller, N.Y.). Small-town social satire by Ward Morehouse, with Peggy Wood and James Rennie.

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Friday the big bombing attack started and we were all on duty 30 hours. I was with Dr. Barsky in the operating room. The instruments were so cold we could hardly handle them. Every bed and stretcher full, at least a dozen more lying on the cold stone floor. We were out of ether and one of the Spanish women had run over to the surgery in the other building. One of our own American boys was on the table, suffering terribly with numerous shrapnel wounds, days old, gangrenous.

Then overhead, we heard the fearful drone of Fascist bombers, several of them. Spotting our hospital in the white moonlight, they let go a score of bombs. Oh how I have learned to hate white moonlight! None hit us, but they put out our lights. In almost utter darkness, with two flashlights to help, the operations were continued!

You have never seen such spirit. One day we were very crowded. A young Spaniard who had been waiting for treatment for hours became impatient. Unseen by us, he took out his pocketknife, cut open the palm of his hand and himself removed the imbedded bullet, and so many others suffer terribly, awaiting their turn to be treated.

Withal I have never been so happy. We are so badly needed here I often wonder what would happen if we were not here. I have the opportunity here, the rare one, of working and feeling of value.

These are not ordinary men dying. These boys, voluntarily, go out into the lines in the real struggle against Fascism for you and me, for the Spanish people and the liberty and democracy of the whole world. Yes, I weep when one of them goes out before my eyes.

A last word and the most important. We need supplies desperately. Ether, gauze, hypos, tetanus anti-toxin especially. More everything—and more doctors and nurses, quickly. Thousands of boys are dying. We can save them if we have supplies. Beg, if you must, do anything. Tell the American people they simply must help. Don't let them forget us. They can never fill the need here, but they must never stop trying.

Urgently,

Rose.

You have read a typical letter from one of our heroic American women serving humanity in Spain. We of the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy make this urgent appeal to you.

In January the first group of 16 surgeons and nurses was sent to Spain by the Bureau. Directed by Dr. Edward H. Barsky, noted New York surgeon, this group established the first American Base Hospital near Madrid. Since, we have sent three other groups of surgeons, nurses and technicians led by Dr. Donald H. Pitts of Oklahoma, Dr. John Jacob Posner of New York, and by Dr. A. Ettelson, brain surgeon, of Chicago Loyola University Medical School.

So far 61 surgeons and nurses have been sent with 55 tons of medical supplies and 11 ambulances. A cable has just come announcing the establishment of the second American Base Hospital with six hundred and fifty beds.

The Medical Bureau has been the first and the only American organization to undertake the humanitarian task of saving lives in Spain. It has the full approval of the Spanish government.

Wounded men and women by the thousands look to us to help their suffering. Most desperate of all are the little children who have become the special target of Fascist bombs, little bodies ripped to ribbons by the invader's shells.

If we delay thousands will die for the lack of the simplest supplies, ether, bandages, anti-toxin, instruments. In Spain, doctors, nurses, technicians are working day and night risking their lives to help. You can alleviate terrible sufferings. You can save a life today!

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