

War by Spring?

A Cable from London
RICHARD GOODMAN

The Struggle for Jobs

JOHN STRACHEY

How Dies Was Born

ROBERT TERRALL

Ye Olde English Yuletide

ROBERT FORSYTHE

Newton Arvin's 'Whitman'

Reviewed by
OBED BROOKS

Eleanor Flexner's 'American Playwrights'

Reviewed by
NATHANIEL BUCHWALD

Cartoons by Gropper, Redfield, Richter, Yomen, and Others

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David and Wallis
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DEC. 27, 1938

New FIFTEEN CENTS
MASSES



RUTH MCKENNEY is at present on vacation; she will resume her weekly column of dramatic criticism upon her return early in January.

From *Spirituals to Swing*, by the time you pick up this magazine, will be in rehearsal, under the direction of Charles Friedman and John Hammond. Friday night the first concert of the real American Negro music will be presented before a capacity audience at Carnegie Hall. There are about two hundred more tickets available which will be sold to the first comers, and the first callers to Tiba Garlin at CAledonia 5-3076. Last-minute additions to the program include a harmonica blues player from Durham, North Carolina, Sanford "Sonny" Terry, whom Mr. Hammond heard on his recent trip to the South; and Sister Tharpe, of Florida, who will sing Holy Roller songs. Sister Tharpe has been having a great success at the Cotton Club, while Terry is making his first New York appearance. Additional stress has been placed on a number of small jazz ensembles, including two groups from Count Basie's personnel, the Kansas City Six and the Kansas City Five. Sidney Bechet, the great Negro clarinet and soprano saxophone player, will appear with a group known as the New Orleans Feetwarmers to present early New Orleans jazz. This five-piece ensemble will include the little known trumpet virtuoso, Tommy Ladnier, who played with Bechet, Louis Armstrong, and Joe Smith, during the golden age of jazz—the middle twenties. James P. Johnson will play the piano; Dan Minor, the trombone; and Jo Jones, the drums, with the Feetwarmers. Mr. Hammond has formed another interesting group from Basie's band which will be heard for the first time: Basie's Blue Five, with Count Basie, piano; Shad Collins, trumpet; Walter Page, bass; Jo Jones, drums; and Herschel Evans, tenor saxophone.

They will join the artists already announced — Mitchell's Christian Singers, Ruby Smith, Joe Turner, Big Bill, James Rushing, Helen Humes, Albert Ammons, Meade "Lux" Lewis, and Pete Johnson—in this history-making concert of Negro music. The producers promise, in addition, some surprises in the form of small unknown choral groups from Negro churches in Harlem.

There are something like one-half more shopping days until Christmas. Then there will be six exchanging days until New Year's Eve when NEW MASSES throws a theater party at a performance of Irwin Shaw's new play, *Gentle People*. While you are downtown exchanging six electric toasters and a dozen bilious neckties for something you'd really like, remember to see Tiba Garlin for your share of the few remaining tickets for the party. Sylvia Sidney, Sam Jaffe, and Franchot Tone are in this new Group Theater production which will mark Franchot Tone's return from six years in Siberia-under-the-palms. The remaining seats range from \$1.65 to \$3.30. The phone is CAledonia 5-3076, ask for Tiba.

Will readers of NEW MASSES who have copies which they can spare of the Jan. 11, 1938, issue please com-

municate with us. Our supply of this issue has been exhausted.

One of our readers has written us in protest against the many colloquialisms and slang expressions in Elliot Paul's cable from France on the general strike (December 13 issue of NEW MASSES). The reader feels that these expressions were unnecessary and detracted from the force of the article. On the other hand, we have the following letter from H. R. Milford of Chicago:

"Elliot Paul's article on the general strike is the sort of thing I particularly like to see in NEW MASSES. It is an example of reporting that gives a sound analysis through the very presentation of the facts; that is, the reader himself draws the proper conclusions without having them thrown at him. The verve and

occasional humor of the piece actually served to bring out more sharply the significant and serious import of the event Mr. Paul was reporting—because it was the kind of humor that arises from the writer's serious understanding of his subject. Robert Forsythe's pieces, in a somewhat different way, illustrate this same point.

"I don't want to leave the impression that Elliot Paul's article is the sole example of excellent reporting to be found in NEW MASSES. There have been many others. But we should have more of it—more dramatic and factual presentation, terser articles, humor and color that sacrifice nothing in the way of essential seriousness. Above all, let us have writing that reflects the personality of the writer."

THIS WEEK

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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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Who's Who

RICHARD GOODMAN is on the staff of the London *Daily Worker*. . . . John Strachey, who needs no introduction to NEW MASSES readers, is working on a book dealing with problems of money, credit, etc. . . . Robert Terrall has been a member of the staff of *Time* magazine. . . . Lee Collier, formerly associate editor of the Louisiana *Federationist*, an official AFL paper, and more recently editor of the *New South*, a journal of opinion published by the Communist Party, is writing a book on progressive movements in the South. . . . Val Valeo, twenty-three years old and a graduate of New York University, has been a clerk, stage hand, and press agent. His story in this issue is his first published work of fiction. . . . Obed Brooks' contributions to NEW MASSES have included both literary comment and political analysis. . . . Joseph Starobin is editor of the *Young Communist Review*. . . . Joy Davidman's poetry has frequently appeared in NEW MASSES. Her recently published book of verse, *Letter to a Comrade*, for which she was awarded the Yale Series of Younger Poets prize, will be reviewed by Willard Maas in next week's NEW MASSES. . . . Nathaniel Buchwald is dramatic critic of the *Morning Freiheit*. He has written some drama reviews for NEW MASSES.

Flashbacks

MEMO to Norman Thomas: Marx, writing to an American correspondent on Dec. 28, 1886, said of recent developments in the American labor movement: "It is far more important that the movement should spread, proceed harmoniously, take root and embrace as much as possible the whole American proletariat, than that it should start and proceed from the beginning in theoretically perfect lines. . . . The great thing is to get the working class to move as a class; that once obtained, they will soon find the right direction, and all who resist will be left out in the cold with small sects of their own. Therefore, I think also the Knights of Labor a most important factor in the movement, which ought not to be pooh-poohed from without but to be revolutionized from within; and I consider many . . . have made a grievous mistake when they tried, in face of a mighty and glorious movement not of their creation, to make of their imported and not always understood theory a kind of sacred dogma to keep aloof from any movement which did not accept that dogma. . . . A million or two of workingmen's votes for a bona fide workingmen's party is worth infinitely more at present than a hundred thousand votes for a doctrinally perfect platform. . . . Anything that might delay or prevent national consolidation of the workingmen's party—no matter what platform—I should consider a great mistake." . . . The first local assembly of the Knights of Labor was organized at Philadelphia, Dec. 26, 1869.

War by Spring?

Fascism Plans It; Democracy Can Stop It

RICHARD GOODMAN

London (By Cable).

WHILE democrats in Europe are this week settling down to an uneasy attempt to make Christmas happy, they are realizing that, thanks to the policy of the Herren Chamberlain, Daladier, and Bonnet, Hitler is now moving near to the objective laid down by him in *Mein Kampf*, of splitting Eastern Europe from the West, and in the West isolating France. They recall the half-prophetic, half-threatening words of the South African defense minister, the pro-German Oswald Pirow, on his return from Germany, that unless something radical is done the tension in Europe will reach the breaking point by spring at the latest. For the dominant fact about the present development in the European situation is that the warnings repeatedly made by the friends of peace and especially by the Communists, that the policy of capitulation to fascism, which is also a policy of alliance with fascism, leads inevitably to war, are perilously near to being confirmed. Seen from London the position reduces itself in brief to the following.

As predicted in my last dispatch, Ribbentrop and Chamberlain have by forcing upon France—with, of course, the willing assistance of Bonnet and Daladier—a declaration of non-aggression and consultation with the Third Reich, gone a long way toward completing the Munich process and reducing France to a second- or even third-rate power, and finally thereby giving Hitler the "all clear!" to go ahead in Eastern Europe. This has been accomplished by the characteristic tactic of the Berlin-Rome war axis and the characteristic cooperation of Chamberlain with the axis. It was at the very moment when resistance in France to the idea of friendship with the Germany of the pogroms was holding up the Ribbentrop-Chamberlain-Bonnet plan that the Italian end of the axis swung into action against France with demands for Tunis, Corsica, and Nice. The immediate danger to French security and thus to the security of all democracies in Europe—as represented by the plan to tie France to Germany—was overshadowed by what was then essentially a diversionist Italian threat. Immediately, the pro-German elements, backed up by those who still pathetically believe in the efficacy of the tactic of "splitting the axis," by pacifists and in general the whole pro-Munich gang, came

out with the line that if German "friendship" was won, Hitler would "moderate" his truculent axis partner. The Franco-German declaration was accordingly signed and immediately the "ambiguity," allegedly seen in the German attitude toward the Italian claims, disappeared. Germany came out clearly in support of Italy and the Italian claims began to be taken very much more seriously in Paris, where more farsighted people pointed out that the more you capitulate to the axis, the more the fascist threats become really businesslike and less and less purely or even mainly bluff.

Meanwhile, however, it was realized both in London and Paris that although there was a very real threat in the Italian attitude, the main objective of both ends of the axis was to force France to agree to accord Franco his much needed belligerent rights, which, thanks to public feeling and despite Chamberlain, he had not got out of the Paris meeting of the British and French statesmen. In other words, the axis was working up an atmosphere in which it would be possible for Chamberlain to build a new Munich, this time at the expense of the Spanish republic. This impression was strengthened when Chamberlain not only announced that he accepted the "assurances" of Italian Foreign Minister Ciano as to the Italian aims and would therefore not postpone his visit to Rome, but when, in answer to a question in Commons, he "indiscreetly" stated that Britain was not committed under any treaty or pact to assist France in the event of an Italian attack. It is true that immediately afterwards, after the French had told the British ambassador in Paris that they thought this "unfortunate," Chamberlain in his speech at the foreign press dinner did his best to blanket this pretty obvious hint to Mussolini. But it is stressed here that the whole affair smelt sinisterly like the sequences of the "indiscretions" and "assurances" which preceded the sellout of Czechoslovakia. And there is little doubt now that the premier's indiscretion was calculated to panic France and strengthen those elements who are ready to betray Spain under cover of standing firm against the Duce over Tunis. In the meantime the Italian pressure on France continues, and Bonnet has

been forced by public opinion to utter and repeat a "hands-off" warning to Italy. It is recalled that the warnings and assurances of this gentleman, in the light of his behavior in the Czechoslovakian crisis, are worth a little less than nothing, and that the same goes for Chamberlain.

If, however, the Italian end of the war axis is doing its best to create an atmosphere of tension suitable to staging a new Munich, the German end has been and is no less active in this direction. Here it is necessary to note that while the Italian press has been lashing France and friendly to Britain, the German press has been friendly to France and violently anti-British—an interesting division of labor on the part of the axis powers. Against the background of these Nazi press attacks there takes place the visit of Dr. Schacht to London, ostensibly to discuss with Governor Norman of the Bank of England the question of the emigration of German Jews, but actually to demand by blackmailing methods, in which Schacht is an expert, an extensive amount of money from Britain to bolster up the Hitler regime, as was done in different circumstances and in a different fashion in 1935. In an attempt to give his "arguments" weight, Schacht employed a typical device frequently used by the Nazis and now being taken up by Franco and Tokyo. Knowing very well that Norman & Co. maintain Hitler to be a "bulwark against Bolshevism" in Europe, Schacht, like Goering's aide General Godenschatz before him, threatened that unless Britain saw to it that money for the Nazi regime was forthcoming, the regime would either collapse or be forced into new adventures as a result of "the extremists" in the Nazi party—Goering is old, the story goes, and is gentlemanly and "moderate"—consolidating their positions. Schacht got an icy reception, with even the *Times* indiscreetly admitting that the acceptance of his schemes would result primarily in a loss of employment by British workers, but nevertheless negotiations are being continued in secret. When one recalls that Pirow, upon his return from Germany, stressed the importance of a "solution" of the refugee problem in preventing a threatening outbreak in the spring, the significance of Schacht's visit and his demands begins to be realized.

The question is, therefore, what is Germany going to do in the next month or so in this coordinated axis drive to precipitate a new crisis for Chamberlain to "solve" in his best Munich fashion? There is no doubt here that Berlin is fully supporting the Italian push to make trouble in the Mediterranean so as to obtain the French surrender of Spain. The whole scheme was discussed between Ribbentrop and Ciano in Rome and was published by the Nazi press a week before the "spontaneous" demonstrations began in Rome and Naples. The fact is, it was decided between Ribbentrop and Ciano that there should be a double push by the axis in the spring, possibly together with a push in the Far East by Japan; i.e., the whole anti-Comintern triangle should go into action together. In the light of the most recent inclination filtering in from the Continent, there is reason to believe that Berlin has singled out Poland for attention. In the first place, there is a big push centered upon Ruthenia-Carpatho-Russia—as the Nazis call it—for the establishment of "an autonomous Ukrainian state," built up from Ukrainians in Poland, Rumania and, as an optimistic thought, Soviet Russia. Whether this is a move to distract Polish attention from the Nazi designs in Memel or whether with the internal situation in the Reich going from bad to worse, Hitler really does intend to do a Czechoslovakia on Poland, it is yet too early to say. There is even a possibility that the next Nazi step will be in the direction of Budapest.

There is no doubt, however, that Germany does not intend, should Chamberlain do a Munich with Mussolini, to be left out in the cold as Mussolini was the last time. Although in Hitler's threats there is still an element of bluff, that element is diminishing with each success. But in view of Poland's hurried and belated move toward closer friendship with the Soviet Union and in view of the fact that Hitler knows perfectly well that he stands no chance of tampering with the Soviet

Ukraine, it is likeliest that he will try to bite off a less ambitious piece of the European map, but one sufficient to precipitate a first-class crisis in the process. In this no one here doubts that he will have the assistance of Bonnet and Chamberlain, if these gentlemen are still in office by spring. For this is known, that when Ribbentrop was in Paris for the signing of the Franco-German declaration, he raised with Bonnet the whole question of the Franco-Soviet Pact, the Franco-Polish Pact, and particularly Bonnet's attitude on the Ukraine. According to information received from the most reliable sources in Paris, Bonnet told Ribbentrop an entirely different story from that he told the Chamber Foreign Affairs Commission, and later the Chamber itself, when he was under the deputies' fire. Then, I understand, Bonnet said "plainly" that while he is French foreign minister, Germany need fear nothing from the Franco-Soviet Pact, although it was impossible formally to repudiate it. He continued by declaring that so far as he himself

was concerned, France no longer interested herself in Eastern Europe. However, Bonnet does not represent the majority of the French people—which is clearly shown by the fact that he was forced in the Foreign Affairs Commission to declare that France would honor her understanding in the event of an attack upon the Ukraine—and in view of the precarious position of the Daladier government, both in the country and in the Chamber, Bonnet may very well be out of office by the time Hitler is foolish enough to attempt such a suicidal move.

This, indeed, is one of the bright spots in the none too happy Christmas European scene. Another is the growing opposition to Chamberlain from all quarters in Britain. For some time now conversations have been going on between the anti-Chamberlain Tories, the Liberals, and Labor on the question of how the new "national government" which will reverse the Munich policy can be established. In these conversations, which are of course very unofficial, Earl Baldwin has been



playing the most important role. How important these conversations are is shown by the fact that Chamberlain now is considering whether or not to throw overboard at least four members of the present Cabinet—Hore-Belisha, now in bad with the army council; Inskip, in bad with everyone; Morrison, the farmers' Enemy No. 1, and Elliot, who is just no good for anything—in an attempt to lighten the sinking ship.

However, Chamberlain mainly hopes to pull a coup in Rome which will enable him to return to the offensive once more. Should he do so, there can be no doubt that the Spanish republic will be the victim. As Chamberlain will then be working in close gear with the fascist powers—his aim their aim and theirs his—as tension caused by fascist aggression on the one hand and “appeasement” on the other mounts again in Europe, Spain once more is seen to be the key sector of democracy's front line. And as Franco masses his Italian troops—“arrows of all colors of the rainbow,” as Modesto has put it—for an all-or-nothing offensive against Catalonia; as new fascist arms and men pour in from Germany and Italy; and as Chamberlain works over his scheme to “save the peace of Europe” again by granting Franco belligerent rights; the preparing and vigilant republican army calls to democrats in all countries, especially in anti-fascist America: “We can hold your front if you will guarantee our rear from hunger.”

★

Big and Little Farmers

ONE-THIRD of the income available for the living needs of American farm families in 1935 went to just 9 percent of those families, possessors of well-to-do and corporation farms. Eleven percent of the consumption income went to only 1 percent of the farmers, whose holdings include corporation farms and plantation estates. In the first group are represented farm families with incomes of \$2,250; the second embraces those with net incomes of over \$5,000.

“At the other end of the farm ladder,” states *Facts for Farmers*, publication of Farm Research, Inc., “the 300,000 smallest farmers living on less than \$250 made up 4 percent of all farmers and got only .2 percent of the total income, while the 19 percent of the farmers earning \$500 or less accounted for only 5 percent of farm income.” More than half our farmers got \$1,000 or less, their living income representing 27 percent of the total.

This distribution of consumption income, however, is not as unequal as that of total farm income. *Facts for Farmers* points out that earlier studies by Farm Research, Inc., showed that 9 percent of the farms received 39 percent of the gross income. The present study of income figures took into consideration a cash equivalent for all food, clothing, housing, and other living needs supplied by the farm, as well as relief benefits.

The Struggle for Jobs

The Author of “Hope in America” Clarifies His Position

JOHN STRACHEY

NEW MASSES welcomes this stimulating contribution by John Strachey which helps to clarify his position and the issues involved. His article serves to eliminate what may have appeared to be political differences by placing him in complete agreement with the approach of the Communist Party toward the immediate practical problems facing the American people. His emphasis on the question of providing jobs is decidedly to the point. This has, in fact, been made the center of the program for building the democratic front proposed by the Communist Party at its tenth national convention in May. That program is epitomized in the slogan: “Jobs, Security, Democracy, Peace.” NEW MASSES, needless to say, has consistently supported the Communist position.

In his report to the recent meeting of the National Committee of the Party, Earl Browder again placed the question of jobs and security uppermost in the developing struggle against reaction. He stated, moreover:

“The mounting mass movement for more adequate old-age pensions must absolutely be satisfied in federal legislation which will remove this problem from its present chaotic condition in which it becomes the football for every reactionary demagogue.”

In line with this, the National Committee meeting put forward a proposal for minimum pensions of \$60 a month.

There remains the problem of money and credit, concerning which there are still differences between us and Mr. Strachey. He correctly points out, however, that this is a secondary question and he has written his article in an effort to place it in proper relation to the more important problems of program and organization. For purposes of clarification NEW MASSES is planning to publish in an early issue an article dealing with money and credit.—THE EDITORS.

THE controversy which has arisen out of Bruce Minton's review of *Hope in America*, and my article replying to that review, has not taken a very fruitful form.

For this I am mainly to blame. I see now that my reply to Minton was written in a debating spirit; that I allowed myself to be irritated by his review and that consequently I failed in my reply even to begin to make clear what is, in my opinion, the main point. Instead, attention was concentrated on a narrow monetary issue. As the correspondence columns show, a fear was awakened in the minds of many NEW MASSES readers that I had gone off on some trick currency scheme. I realize that, more especially in American conditions, it is of first-rate importance to prevent the people being led off into barren distractions of this sort. If my article and letter were having the effect of confusing people's minds in this way, then the protests against them were fully justified.

In this article I will try, by using an entirely different approach to the matter, to put forward my point of view in a way which will not create confusion. For in spite of the risk of creating confusion which an emphasis on

this whole question may involve, it seems to me to be a matter of such life-and-death importance, and to be, moreover, a matter which we are still so seriously underestimating, that its discussion is indispensable.

The question in the back of my mind, throughout the discussion, is simply this: Have any of us, even now, sufficiently realized the supreme political importance, for the whole struggle against reaction, of the maintenance of a high level of employment during the period of office of any progressive government? This is primarily a political issue rather than an economic or monetary issue. It can, indeed, be approached from the angle of monetary analysis, but I now see that in making this approach I risked causing great confusion.

Let us apply this principle of the supreme importance of maintaining the level of employment to the present political situation in America. I realize that important local factors, such as those which Earl Browder has analyzed so fully in his articles in the *Daily Worker*, account for many of the New Deal's defeats, in particular states, at the recent elections. Many scandals, weaknesses, disunities had developed within the ranks of the progressive forces; and the only way of eradicating these weaknesses is, as Browder reiterates, to improve in every possible way the organization, discipline, and coherence of these forces. But at the same time, can it be denied that the New Deal would not have suffered these defeats; that it would have been able to carry these, perhaps inevitable, inner weaknesses, had the new slump of 1937 not been allowed to take effect? Further, can it be doubted that the progressive forces will conquer in 1940, in spite of the inner weaknesses which it will be impossible wholly to eradicate, if a tolerably high level of employment is maintained during the next two years? Equally, can it be doubted that the progressive forces will be defeated by 1940, despite any other achievements which they may have to their credit, if a new slump, involving the horrors of vast unemployment, is allowed to develop?

A principle applicable to the struggle which faces the forces of progress in every capitalist society seems to me to lie behind this present-day American example. We live today in a period in which the decline of those societies which are based on capitalist relations of production has reached an acute stage. Such societies are totally unable to use anything like their available supplies of labor and capital. This inability sets up the most violent social strains and stresses. These racking strains and stresses can and must lead ultimately to the abolition of capitalist relations of production.

But if we see only this, we see only the ultimate perspective and miss the vitally important foreground of the picture.

The decay of capitalism presents itself to the masses mainly and decisively in the form of the loss of their jobs. Hence an overwhelming pressure arises from the masses, tortured by the unspeakable horrors of unemployment. But we sometimes mistake the nature of this pressure. It does not go, and cannot be expected to go, beyond the simple demand that someone, somehow, should give them jobs. Translated into economic terms, what the masses are demanding is that some force should bring the idle masses of labor and capital together; should free, somehow, the productive forces from the capitalist fetters which bind their every limb.

Now, it is an illusion from which many of us consciously or unconsciously suffer, to think that this freeing of the productive forces—this, to put it in human terms, provision of jobs for the unemployed—can only be accomplished by the total and immediate abolition of capitalism and the organization of social production for use. Needless to say, the productive forces can only be finally, completely, and permanently liberated in this way; but history has shown us conclusively that a determined government can, within a short space of time, at any rate temporarily and partially, liberate the productive resources of the community, and consequently give its people jobs. Moreover, I am convinced that the progressive forces can do this as an indispensable part of their very struggle to begin the process of first modifying, and then abolishing altogether, capitalist relations of production.

Let me put the same point in more human terms. It is possible for the progressive forces, having elected a progressive government, to provide employment for the unemployed; to do so can be made the very core and heart of the general struggle to improve the conditions of the masses of the population as a whole, and to begin the struggle for the socialization of the economic system.

Moreover—and here is the sting of the whole matter—if the progressive forces do not somehow take hold of the resources of production left idle by the decay of capitalist enterprise and set them to work again, then this utterly indispensable task will be undertaken by the reactionary forces. Worse, the lesson of history is that for a time, and at an inconceivably horrible cost in terms of the lives and liberties of the masses of the population, the reactionary forces in their fascist form can succeed in reemploying the population. Moreover, these blackly reactionary forces, in spite of the horrors which they inflict upon the masses, will receive a substantial degree of popular support, if they register this one single achievement of giving the people jobs. For the workers must have jobs. They quickly perish without them. And if they cannot get jobs while following the leadership of the progressive forces, they will

turn, in their despair and disillusionment, to the reaction. They will turn to the reaction even though the progressive forces are protecting the standards of the employed workers; even though the progressive forces are protecting civil liberties, democracy, and peace. The people will turn to the reactionaries if the reactionaries give them jobs when we do not, even though the getting of jobs under reactionary leadership involves an appalling degradation of wage rates, the loss of liberty and democracy, and the prospect of inevitable war. Therefore, the progressive forces, if they are to have any hope of victory whatsoever in the next phase of the struggle, must at all costs take hold of, organize, bring together, and set to work, those masses of idle capital and idle labor which the decay of capitalist enterprise has left lying about, as it were, within the community.

Now, this is a new task which, especially in America, has only come to face the progressive forces in the past ten years. Before that time, capitalist enterprise was itself capable of employing virtually all the productive resources of the community. Hence, the task which faced the progressive forces was to struggle for the maximum possible share of the product. All our thinking and feeling has been conditioned and formed by this struggle to get for the masses as large a share as possible of a total national product which we assumed would be of the maximum possible size in any case. Now, however, the very decay of capitalist enterprise forces us, not of course to abandon the struggle for the maximum share of the product, but to add to that traditional struggle the struggle to raise the total national product itself, by ourselves taking hold of the available idle masses of capital and labor and setting them on to work. History, however, has so suddenly faced the progressive forces with this new task and this new struggle that they are finding it difficult to readjust themselves. We are all apt to concentrate our main attention on fighting to increase the workers' share in the existing product by raising his wages, by trade-union activity, by getting minimum- and maximum-hours laws passed, etc., and relatively to neglect the equally indispensable task of maximizing the community's total product by putting the unemployed on to work. And yet, our whole traditional struggle to increase the workers' share of the total product, improve wages, decrease hours, etc., has become dependent on our ability to win the other struggle, the struggle for jobs, the struggle for maximizing the national product. For, I repeat, if we do not carry through this second struggle, if we fail to give men jobs, then the workers will turn from us and will support the reaction, no matter how good our record is in every other respect, no matter how vilely the reaction will treat them while it is providing them with work.

But what, the reader will be saying, has all this got to do with money? It has got this to do with money. The task of releasing the productive forces from the fetters of capitalist

relations of production, is not, of course, a monetary one and cannot be solved by monetary means. But it is equally true that we cannot even attempt to begin the accomplishment of this task if we do not understand the monetary mechanism; if we are afraid to do things which involve, as one of their consequences, increasing the volume of money in circulation in the community, if we are terrified that any such increase will lead to the boggy of inflation. For how can we make a start upon the task of freeing our resources of production from the stifling embrace of monopoly capitalism? We can do so only by increasing the purchasing power in the hands of the masses. It does not matter so much how we do this. It can be done by initiating a gigantic housing program; it can be done, as I ventured to suggest in my former article, by paying substantial pensions to every citizen over sixty years of age. It can even be done in the thoroughly illogical and inequitable way in which it was done in 1936, by means of paying out the veterans' bonus; it can be done in the excellent way of providing work and wages to the unemployed by the WPA, or the PWA; it can be done by building new railroad equipment, financed by the government; it can even be done by building armaments. I am far from saying that some of these ways are not better than others; but the decisive thing is that all of them help to release the productivity of the population and put men on to jobs.

Most, though not all, of these expedients are being used in the present "spending-lending program" which was adopted last summer and which is supported by all the progressive forces in America. Now any such spending-lending program as this, more especially if it is to be carried through to a point where unemployment is reduced to a genuinely tolerable level, raises at once the issue of how such a program is to be financed. Now let me say at once that I believe that the present spending-lending program of the federal government is being financed by the most practicable means available. What happens is this. The government borrows the money from the banks. Let us pause for a moment to envisage clearly what this means. In essence it means this: the Treasury hands to a bank an inscribed piece of paper on which is written a promise that the government will pay, say, \$20,000 a year for, say, twenty years, to the bank in return for the bank allowing the government to draw checks on it for \$1,000,000. The government then proceeds to draw on its checking account with the bank in order to pay out the money to WPA workers, to veterans, to contractors building PWA dams, etc.

But these recipients of the government's money then spend it; they buy goods and services with it; for a time the money goes circulating around, distributing goods and services throughout the community. Sooner or later, however, somebody pays this money back into a bank as a deposit; and it is the money of these deposits (with which the banks are now stuffed) that the banks lend to the gov-

ernment when it comes along to borrow some more!

If you look at the statements of the comptroller of currency, you will see that the banks have lent between fifteen and sixteen billions to the government since 1932; and, sure enough, these same sixteen billions have come around through the circulation and have been deposited again in the banks! In a word, the government debt and the deposits in the banks have both risen by the same fifteen or sixteen billion. Nor is this a coincidence. This is the same money circulating around. We look at it at one place in the circle and call it the government's debt to the banks, and we look at it in another place and call it the public's deposit with the banks.

Now, I do not wish to raise the point of whether this process of borrowing money from the banks and then depositing it with them again involves or does not involve the creation of money. In one sense it seems to me that it does, and in another sense I quite admit that it does not. (Important theoretical issues underlie this question. I've been working on this matter for the past eighteen months and hope to publish a book on the subject in, say, another year; but it was foolish of me to raise this question in these columns; for it is a question quite unsuited to discussion in a weekly magazine.)

But this much is certain. This process of financing is indispensable to the whole lending-spending program; the lending-spending program is indispensable to any hope of releasing the resources of production and so giving people jobs; giving people jobs is indispensable to any hope of the victory of the progressive forces in America.

Therefore, it would be tragic if any part of the progressive forces were to become confused by the reactionary propaganda; were to become fearful about "the growing national debt"; were to become panicked that the increase by fifteen to sixteen billions in the quantity of money in circulation, which has undoubtedly taken place (whether you choose to call this increase the creation of money or not), was leading to "inevitable inflation."

It would be tragic if this were to happen, because the real and desperately serious danger which faces the American masses today is, on the contrary, a new and bitter period of deflation, produced by the terrific pressure which the reactionaries are now exerting in order to stop the spending-lending program. (Inflation can undoubtedly be a menace to the masses, but to concentrate attention on the menace of inflation today is rather like warning a drowning man that he might be killed if he climbs out of the water onto the roof of a nearby house and then falls off.) The truth is that only the most sustained and united efforts undertaken by the progressive forces can now enable the New Deal to carry through its spending-lending program on a sufficient scale to ward off deflation caused by the reactionary attack. Remember that once before, at the end of 1936 and during 1937, a spend-

ing-lending program was checked before it had fully mastered unemployment; that the reactionaries, utilizing the inner weaknesses and vacillations of the New Deal itself, forced the administration virtually to balance the budget and to stop the distribution of mass purchasing power. Within six months the country had fallen into the pit of the 1937 depression, with all the almost disastrous political consequences which ensued. For of course big business had no intention of filling the gap left by the cessation of government spending by itself beginning to spend on capital development on a large scale. On the contrary, big business intensified its strike of capital, with which it will always meet any progressive administration, and found an excellent excuse for doing so in the fact that the purchasing power of the masses really was dropping rapidly since the government had ceased to distribute money.

Can anyone doubt that if reaction succeeds once more in halting the spending-lending program, as it is evidently determined to do if it can, the most serious political consequences will follow the new slump which reaction will have brought on? That is why I suggest, for purposes of discussion, that the main thing on which every progressive should concentrate today is to put the very maximum pressure upon the administration in order to induce it to extend the spending-lending program by, for example, a really comprehensive old-age pension scheme, and/or a vast housing program, or by any other means. A tremendous drive in favor of such an extension of the spending-lending program—upon the fate of which, I do not hesitate to say, the future of the progressive forces in America is staked—seems to me the one thing which can offset and defeat the formidable reactionary drive which is going forward today. And I should have thought that, in the present state of public opinion, the key demand to make was for old-age pensions.

It should be needless to repeat that a spending-lending program will not in itself take us to Socialism; the point is, rather, that if we allow this program to be wrecked, the ensuing deflation will take us a long way towards fascism. The struggle for the raising of mass purchasing power as a means to and as a part of the struggle to release the resources of production and so maximize the total national product, is nothing more, but nothing less, than the next round in the long, heavy struggle which is going on all over the world today.

★

Workers in Naziland

DISGUSTING conditions in German factories have been revealed by Dutch workers who, after an intense campaign by the authorities which was partly supported by the Social Democrats, went to Germany to work. Many of them hastily returned to their homes, and the press has received a great number of letters from them expressing their indignation.

The *Volksblad for Gelderland* published facts sent by workers from Doetinchen, Groningen and Delft, who worked in the Hermann Goering factory at Hallinsdorf.

The working day lasted from 6 o'clock in the morning until 6:00 in the evening, plus two hours of traveling to and from the camp where the workers lived. The weekly salary varied from 25 to 30 marks. Half of this was retained for food and lodging. The food was abominable. At midday they were given soup or potatoes and turnips. They received hardly any fat at all. For the rest of the day they had to be content with half a loaf. Good fresh water to drink was impossible to find; when they were thirsty, the workers were obliged to buy beer in the factory canteen.

At their camp, they had a wireless but the Dutch workers were forbidden to listen to broadcasts from their own country. One of the men shortly after his arrival developed a stomach illness; he was refused medical attention. He left on foot for Holland with two other workers, dying of hunger.

The situation of the agricultural workers is even worse. One worker from Nymegen accepted work with a big farmer. He was given a room above the stables and a single cover was all the bed linen he received. The day's work began at 4:30 in the morning and breakfast was served at 7:30. This meal consisted of four small pieces of dry bread. Then he had to work until midday, when he received a meal composed invariably of fried potatoes and herring. When that was eaten he worked until 9:30 in the evening. And for this work the magnificent sum of 40 marks was paid monthly. After a fortnight the worker decided that he could not continue, and gave notice. His two weeks' salary was not given him. The farmer told him that the 20 marks due for his work was all owing for his keep. In addition he had to pay 8 marks for his "certificate of discharge."

"Since then I consider that my bicycle, which happily I had kept hidden, was my savior," this worker wrote.

Workers from Delft, who were in a German camp with Polish and Italian workers, speak of a working week of one hundred hours as a normal occurrence. After a day's work, which commences at 6:00 in the morning and continues until 6:30 in the evening, they have the right to one hour's rest before beginning night work. Often they have to work on Sunday.

Never are the complete salaries paid to the workers. There are always deductions of 10 marks for "lodging," seven marks for "food," and on what remains they get an "advance." The Dutch workers don't have a halfpenny left to send to their families.

Young workers also speak of days of work lasting twelve hours or more, of Sunday work, bad food, and inhuman exploitation.

As a result of these accounts, no more Dutch workers can be found who want to go to Germany to work.—*Dispatch from Amsterdam in the news bulletin "France Monde."*

Just a Mistake, Buddy

A Short Story

VAL VALEO

YOU would imagine a fellow'd get plenty hard in this racket, so hard that nothing would ever bother him. Hanging around morgues, hospitals, executions, and a wide assortment of dip joints, you see a lot of things that make nice people shudder just to hear about. Well, in a way, you do get hard. A reporter looks at life more or less in the raw. Still, I've got feelings, the same as the nice people.

That's why I can't forget what happened to that poor kid in the Thirty-second Precinct one night last week. I wanted the boss to start a row about it, maybe get Dewey on it or something. He just said to me:

"Eddie, you're a nice boy, but don't go reformy, or you'll wind up in Bellevue and I'll wind up without a job. I've told you a hundred times, don't take up my time unless you've got something really big."

"But this is important," I insisted.

"The kid rate like Hague?"

"Hague's a clown. This kid's a martyr."

"People go to the circus. Get me stuff on the big guys or go out soliciting obituaries."

I saw that I wasn't getting anywhere, but I tried him once more.

"If the people who read this sheet knew about this kid, they'd boil," I said.

"Join the Salvation Army, Eddie. I'll cook the dear readers."

He laughed once, a very loud and irritating laugh, then he bent over some copy, acting as though I wasn't in the room, just to make sure I got out in a hurry.

I got out all right and I went straight up to the flat and began to plug this out. The thought of that night filled me up so, I had to spill it somewhere or wind up in Bellevue like the boss said. I don't know, maybe I am a reformer, or maybe I just can't mind my own business.

I wasn't in the Thirty-second Precinct on assignment that Sunday night. I just happened to be wandering around the river, thinking I might pick up a feature. It started to rain. I knew some of the boys at the station, so I figured I'd go in and gab a bit and maybe have a drink.

Rizzio was in the back room, his service jacket and cartridge belt hanging over a chair. He was playing five-and-ten with a colored bootblack and an ice-cream vendor. They were being held for night court. In one corner of the room there was a fat woman. She was crying and, I guess, swearing, in Jewish. She held on to her pretzel carriage as though she was afraid someone was going to take it away from her.

"Hello, Rizzio. What's doing?" I said.

"Hy, Eddie. Nothin' much. Black boy's takin' me over."

"Yes, suh!" the shine boy cried. He smiled, showing little blackened broken teeth. The kind you get from bad food. I thought of all the minstrels' pictures I'd seen. They always had sparkling ivories. I guess they were well fed.

"Wanna take a hand?" asked Rizzio.

"Don't mind if I do."

I sat down. We played for half an hour. I lost about a dollar. The shine boy sure was lucky! Suddenly we heard a rumpus outside. Rizzio looked up. He was silent for a second.

Then he said: "Oh, oh! Somebody's in for it."

"How do you know?" I asked.

"That's Moran you hear. Whenever his blood pressure goes up, somebody takes a beating until it goes down."

"Yes, suh!" the shine boy assented with a vigorous shake of his head.

"See? He knows. He's been here ten times in the last six months. He'd a been here more, only the new magistrate handed him a couple of heavies," said Rizzio. He laid down his cards. There was a confident smile on his face.

"Full house."

"Aces, you got me," said I.

"Straight flush!" cried the shine boy, and he laid down five spades.

"Black as you, you lucky bastard," Rizzio said. He brushed the cards aside in disgust. "I'm through."

We all got up together. Moran, the lieutenant in charge, came in. He was a big man, bulging fat in certain places, developed from sitting too much. Rizzio was right about his blood pressure. His thick neck expanded over his collar and it was cherry red like the rest of his face. He looked pretty mad about something.

Right behind him was a patrolman. He held a slim, coatless youth with blonde hair, by the wrist. The boy didn't seem scared or anything like that, but his face had a surprised expression, as though he had never seen the inside of a police station before. Probably he hadn't. He was no more than nineteen.

"Sit down there," Moran growled. He pointed to a straw-colored chair.

"I'd rather stand, if you don't mind, officer," said the boy quietly.

There was a dead silence. The shine boy's eyes opened wide. He flattened himself against the wall. The woman stopped wailing

and stared intently at the boy. Rizzio shook his head. He had a son of his own and he knew Moran. The lieutenant's face grew redder. I thought that any second the blood would spurt through his skin. His arm lifted from the hip and clouted the boy on the ear. The boy sat down without another word.

"Wise guy," Moran muttered.

"I found him around the corner from Handel's store," said the officer who had brought in the kid.

"What makes you think he done it?" asked Rizzio.

"Shut up!" said Moran. "I'm in charge here."

"I didn't have anything to do with it." The kid's voice had a tone of assurance that held you.

He got another slap from Moran. This time in the face. A little stream of blood started from his nose.

"Don't speak unless I tell you to," said Moran. He turned to the arresting officer: "What made you pick him up?"

"He was in the lot near Handel's store, playing that game of rocks with some wops. Handel's help are out on strike. I heard him make a speech against Handel yesterday, so help me, right in front of the store. I'd a stopped it, but so help me, there'd a been a riot. Everybody in the neighborhood knows him. He's supposed to be a smart guy, one of them City College Communists. I put two and two together and figured that he musta been the one who chucked the rock through Handel's window this afternoon. Of course, I'm not sure, but what the hell, he's worth checking on."

"You'll be a detective, Ellis . . . when you're dead. But I got an idea that he's the guy," said Moran. "What's your racket, Mr. City College?"

"I look for a job. I've been looking six months."

"With your eyes closed. Did you make a speech at Handel's this afternoon?"

"I said a couple of things."

"You're a Red, huh?"

"Do you have to be a Red to know how to talk?"

"I don't like Reds."

"If the city hired a scab to take your job, maybe I'd make a speech for you too." The boy's eyes flashed when he said that.

I laughed, but a second later I realized that I shouldn't have. Moran let go a kick that caught the kid square on the shin. He yelled once and stooped over to rub his leg. Moran grabbed him by the throat and straightened him up. He was real mad now.

"I'll teach you some respect!" Moran shouted.

"I told you I didn't throw the rock!" said the boy. "What right have you to slap me around? I haven't done anything."

"You broke that window, you sneakin' Red, and, Christ, you'll admit it if I have to break every bone in your body!"

"Did you ever hear of constitutional rights?"

"They wasn't made for punks who don't believe in the government."

"You trying to find out whether I broke the window or how I vote on election day?"

It went on like that for an hour. Moran would ask questions. The kid would tell him they were off the subject. Every time he told him, Moran got madder. It got to the point where Moran must have completely forgotten what he was holding him for. It seemed as though he was just asking questions to get a rise out of the kid so that the kid would reply with an antagonizing answer. That was the signal for Moran to send one flying.

If you follow the prize fights you know that the human body can turn into a soggy mess after it's pummeled for half an hour. Prize fighters wear gloves and can defend themselves. This kid was a pitiful sight when Moran finished with him. His face was bloody and swollen. His neck was bruised where Moran had pulled his tie so tight that the kid's eyes almost popped out of his head. The shirt was ripped and large discolorations appeared all over his body.

The woman got sick looking at it. She shut her eyes and began mumbling prayers. They must have been prayers because they sounded a lot different from the things she said before. The shine boy crouched against the wall, his shoulders heaving every time a blow landed. Rizzio tried to interfere a couple of times, but Moran shut him up. Rizzio had a wife and kids, and a patrolman's salary is a good living these days.

A reporter usually minds his own business. He can lose out plenty if he doesn't. Now I'm no Communist myself, but I'm human. As I said before, I've got feelings no matter how hard I may be. My stomach turned over half a dozen times watching this one-sided slaughter. It reached a point where I just couldn't keep quiet any longer.

"Lay off the kid, Moran," I said. "Maybe he didn't do it."

"He did it, all right. Besides, mind your own damned business."

"Suppose I made it my business and gave you a nice story on it?"

Moran looked up from the kid and looked at me. He put his hands on his hips and said very slowly:

"Suppose you did? Do you think you'd get a story again?"

"Maybe I wouldn't have to," I said.

"Don't threaten me! I know you guys. There's not one of you with guts." He turned back to the kid. "Who the hell cares what happens to a Red?" he added, under his breath.

"They might care what happens to a boy of nineteen."

Moran didn't like that. He scowled and pointed a finger at me. "Do you want me to throw you the hell out of here!" he cried.

I wanted to stay so I shut up. Anyway, Moran had about finished. The kid didn't answer any more when the questions were asked. He hadn't answered since he took the kick in

the groin. He just stared straight ahead with a blank expression masking his face.

I was filled with a terrible loathing. I realized that if the people in the room, the shine boy, the ice-cream vendor, the fat woman, had been articulate, if they hadn't been battered around so long that they didn't dare open their mouths, Moran would never have raised his hand. Smug people who sit in official chairs have a faculty for cowering when anybody threatens to take their seats away.

Finally, Moran stepped back and surveyed his work. He couldn't get the kid to admit breaking the window. I felt that he never would, even if it killed him. There was a sullen expression of defiance in his eyes. I knew the expression. Even death has difficulty in erasing it.

"Book him on a disorderly-conduct charge," said Moran. "We'll come back to him later. I can't waste the whole goddam night."

He mopped his face with a handkerchief.

You could sense the feeling of relief that passed through everyone in the room. It was like stepping out of a seething steam room into the cold clear air. You could breathe again.

A patrolman came in from the reception room. He went straight to Moran.

"What do you want?" snapped Moran.

"A report just came over the teletype, lieutenant. They picked up a drunk down on the river and Fourteenth. He's been throwing rocks at every window along the street."

I watched Moran's face. You could see the silly stupid egotism, the refusal to admit a mistake, clear as light in his eyes. His lips twisted into an ugly line. The kid heard the patrolman and smiled faintly. Moran swore and drove a straight right to the kid's mouth.

He turned to Rizzio and said: "Let him go." Then he hurried out of the room.

The kid slumped over and would have fallen from the chair, if Rizzio hadn't caught him.

"Go on home, kid," Rizzio said.

The boy didn't move for a second. He just sat there staring. Then he lifted his face to Rizzio.

"Yeah, just a mistake, buddy," said Rizzio. "Think you can make it?"

The kid nodded. He got slowly to his feet and hobbled towards the door. His head was erect as he passed me on the way out. There was something fine in his eyes. It sent a funny sensation through me. You got the feeling that no matter how hard you tried, you could never break his spirit. And I figure that if you can't break the spirit, the dignity of the human is preserved. Eventually, the human will triumph over the inhuman. Then maybe reporters won't get so hard in this racket.

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In Memoriam: John Cookson

Killed in Spain October 1938

Comrade, you have fought well,
you have died well.

We who are here
look at the seadark where you have gone
and say that it is well.

It is well that men can fight so,
die so . . .

And though the mind turns sick at the
thought that you who were so alive,
eager, searching, lovable,
are dead, inanimate,
unfeeling.

Though the mind cannot grasp this,
and turns sick at it

(Yes it is hard to grasp this.
If you entered this room now,
lanky, with nervous step,
head thrust forward,
talking,
your mind swift-darting,
eternally eager,
eternally, childishly, curious,
I should not feel surprise.)

But though the mind cannot grasp this,
though it sicken at it

yet we can say

It is well that a man can die that a world
may be born.

It is well that a man can die to push back
the face of the jungle.

It is well that a man can die so.

For those who say only
you should not have died
you were young,
and it was vain to die.

To these we say, in the words of your
father,

"It is better for a man to die fighting for a
principle

Than to live a whole life without one."

We do not see your death as these see it,
Isolated, self-circled.

For us it is part of a greater whole,
a part of the gray surge
of the millions of the earth
trampling war and fascism,
marching with slow, sure tread
(rocking the continents)
into the inheritance of the earth.

Of this you are part.

HAROLD DOUGLAS.



Gropper.

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Labor Looks to 1940

BEGINNING with the New Year, Labor's Non-Partisan League, heretofore limited to union members, will expand its membership to include anyone generally sympathetic to its aims and willing to become active in its behalf. With this broadening of membership will come a structural strengthening. Headquarters and field staffs will be expanded in all states, in congressional, county, and municipal areas. Large-scale membership campaigns will be held throughout the country, with particular emphasis on key states such as New York, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. This is the substance of a statement made by John L. Lewis in Washington last weekend.

In the middle of 1939, a league convention will be held with representatives from the trade unions, league units, and all affiliated progressive organizations. The broad program outlined in John L. Lewis' statement will then be augmented by more specific proposals, including, probably, nominations for candidates whom the league will support in the next year's election.

Finally, the league convention will authorize delegates to work within the structure of the Democratic Party and to use their influence to assure the nomination by the Democratic Party of candidates for President and Vice-President whose policies will coincide with the progressive aims of the league.

These proposals, if made effective, will provide the progressive forces with the basic machinery for the 1940 campaign. Lewis spoke for labor, but not alone to labor. His proposals, in effect, were an invitation to the middle class, to all progressive sectors of the population, to join labor in its coming struggle for the maintenance of the New Deal.

Don't Get Caught

IF THERE are any elements yet lacking in the McKesson & Robbins scandal to make it the exposé par excellence of Wall Street, the next editions probably will reveal them. Beginning as simply a story of a big drug firm in financial difficulties, it quickly developed into a first-rate thriller, with new sensations every hour. A dozen searchlights were at work probing the big mystery of how the firm was looted of millions. The identification of F. Donald Coster as the swindler and ex-convict Philip Musica rent the veil, but raised other questions. How could this notorious crook, only a few years after he had been functioning as a stoolpigeon for the district attorney, return to New York with an enameled 'scutcheon, join tony clubs, lord it in high financial circles, bring in his three brothers under three assorted aliases, and for years and years get away with it? Didn't anybody suspect—are New Yorkers so completely unobservant?

The answer is that plenty of people not only suspected but knew, and the Musicas paid huge blackmail—from the firm's till. But how did Musica get his start altogether? Bootlegging. Didn't the astute money lords who helped him finance his attempt to monopolize the drug business inquire into his antecedents, satisfy themselves as to his bonafides? Wall Street instantly recognized his ability to make money, and make it fast, and that was enough for Wall Street to call him its own. Were there no suspicions in official circles? Back in 1932 the fullest kind of information was offered to the Hoover administration, and nothing was done about it.

Bribery, bootlegging, gun-running, thievery, all enter into the case, and in the background—perhaps shortly to be dragged into the foreground—are some of the choicest spirits of big business. Wall Street is still dazed by the Richard Whitney revelations, but only the other day it flatly refused to make the slightest move against the house of Morgan, which knew Whitney was a crook a long time before he was caught. The McKesson & Robbins case adds and will continue to add considerably to the country's distrust of the money bags who have only one law—don't get caught; and who have run foul of their own law.

Lineup at Lima

ATTEMPTS at Lima to find a formula for an effective declaration of solidarity among the Western republics and a clear warning against fascist aggression are being blunted by the stubborn opposition of the Argentine bloc. While international fascism rants that the good-neighbor policy is nothing but a mask for a campaign of imperialist aggression, made in the USA, the Argentine

delegation, backed by its satellites Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia, and with the support of Brazil and representatives of the old, reactionary regime in Chile, seeks to checkmate every move toward a united front. It is in Argentina, at the moment, that cries of "Yankee imperialism" are loudest.

Secretary Hull went to Lima prepared to offer a splendid declaration of solidarity. He is determined on unanimous acceptance, however, and so the declaration that finally emerges is likely to be considerably weakened by Argentine resistance. Some progress, however, is noted in the unanimous acceptance of Mr. Hull's recommendations on foreign trade practices.

The struggle of democratic forces to overthrow the reactionary dictatorships still in power in many of the Latin American republics is inextricably woven into the fabric of many issues at Lima. This struggle burst into the limelight during the week when Provisional President Mosquera Narváes, of Ecuador, sought to set up a permanent dictatorship by disbanding Parliament and calling off the elections scheduled for January. Democratic forces were quick to rally and checkmate the move. The shortcomings of the conference reflect the need for close collaboration between trade unions and democratic movements on both continents.

Faith in China

TWO steps taken by the Roosevelt administration during the last few days tend to throw its support more actively on the side of China in its war with Japan. The government's Export-Import Bank has authorized \$25,000,000 in credits to China for the purchase of American agricultural and manufactured products, and the Treasury Department has decided to continue the arrangement whereby China is able to borrow dollar credits against its gold reserves in this country. Both these measures, which are really disguised forms of government loans, have a political significance far beyond the economic assistance they will provide. They are this country's answer to Japan's slamming of the Open Door and its public announcement that it regards the Nine-Power Treaty as a dead letter. And they express the sentiment of the vast majority of the American people.

By these acts the Roosevelt administration also affirms its belief in the Chinese government's stability and its ability to beat back the invader. Recent events in China certainly justify this attitude. Less than two months after the fall of Canton and Hankow, the Japanese find themselves harassed on every side by a mobile foe that threatens every position that they have taken. The united front of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party has been strengthened and

traitors and fainthearts cleansed from the ranks. Once more the Chinese people have given the lie to the press reports of the imminent collapse of their struggle.

The \$25,000,000 in credits is a good beginning—but only a beginning. A much larger sum should be extended. It will help not only the Chinese people but our own workers and farmers, by providing an outlet for American goods. And at the same time the Roosevelt administration should act to deprive Japan of the sinews of war, more than 50 percent of which are imported from the United States. Under Section 338 of the Tariff Act, the President can impose an embargo on Japan and thus deal the aggressor a shattering blow.

Tribute to Monopoly

BACK in 1916, Lenin in his *Imperialism* cited the suppression of patents by the American and German bottle-producing industry as an example of the tendency of monopoly capitalism to restrict technological progress. Last week the American end of this industry was being investigated by the Temporary National Economic Committee.

Out of the testimony there emerged the fantastic outlines of the Hartford-Empire Co. of Hartford, Conn. This company does not manufacture, distribute, or finance the manufacture or distribution of a single bottle, yet it controlled 67.4 percent of the production of glass containers in this country last year. It maintains this dominant position entirely through the control of patents, and derives its principal income from license fees and royalties on these patents. Hartford-Empire is nominally a research company, but the testimony revealed that a large part of its activities is devoted to preventing the fruits of research from becoming generally available. It has cross-licensing agreements with the other major company in the field, the Owens-Illinois Glass Co., and together these two control 97 percent of the output, fix prices, restrict production, and blackjack competitors out of existence.

As a result of these high-minded endeavors, Hartford-Empire corralled \$40,479,062 in license fees and royalties from 1923 to 1937 inclusive. Significantly, its income from these sources showed a steady increase throughout the whole period of the economic crisis, with the exception of 1931, and its annual return on net capital employed in operations ranged from 4.25 percent in 1931 to 67.77 percent in 1937!

The Hartford-Empire Co. is, of course, typical of other big business corporations which have succeeded in perverting the original intent of the patent law. Windy and ponderous Senator O'Mahoney, chairman of

the monopoly investigation, for once hit the nail on the head when he stated recently:

This testimony shows clearly that the present patent law offers the opportunity for those persons or corporations who desire and have the necessary resources to secure by guile, by skill, by coercion, or by force a dominant position through which payment of tribute may be required.

A Question for the *Nation*

THE *Nation* has received many letters protesting its advertisement of an article on "Stalinism Becomes Fascism" by Max Eastman in *Liberty*. In an editorial statement, the *Nation* agrees that the advertisement was "a stupid piece of sensationalism." But the editors maintain that to refuse such advertisements is to "combine the practice of censorship with the preaching of free speech." Censorship is an unpleasant word, and nobody likes to be accused of practicing it. Yet we wonder if the *Nation* itself would not draw the line somewhere. Would the *Nation* publish an anti-Semitic advertisement by Father Coughlin? A Ku Klux Klan ad attacking the Negroes? A strikebreaking plea by Republic Steel? An appeal for funds by the Bund? And if so, what reason would there be for "suppressing" an advertisement for Herr Streicher's *Der Stürmer*?

Social Security

THE report of the Social Security Advisory Council, urging extension of old-age benefits to nearly fifteen million more workers, taking in wives, widows, and orphans, is a constructive document whose proposals, if adopted, would add substantially to the value of the present law. Farm workers, domestic employees, seamen, and white-collar workers in various non-profit organizations would be added to the 42,000,000 Americans now covered by social security. The report, representing fourteen months of intensive study, is in line with President Roosevelt's speech of last August 14, on the third anniversary of the Social Security Act, and carries the New Deal a step further.

It is richly humorous to read of the claims that the most reactionary Republicans are advancing, to be the progenitors of the report. Senator Vandenberg lost no time in reaching the spotlight with a self-congratulatory statement. Only two false moves spoiled his plastic pose: he wants the payroll tax to be dropped at once, and he objects to including the other fifteen million. Outside of these two provisos—one of which would jeopardize the Social Security Act's means of functioning, and the other doom a substantial section of the population to unrelieved want—Senator Vandenberg is all for social security, and the nomination.

A Decree Against Culture

MORE of the particular items on the bill for Munich are beginning to appear. News from France reveals that Daladier is considering a decree that would rob the world of the fine French films we have welcomed in America. The contemplated decree would seriously limit American films which are very popular in France, and give Daladier complete control of the domestic industry. Put forward as a move to stabilize the industry, the plan calls for the creation of a national cinema registrar, which would grant films a "civil status" from the moment of their conception, in order to encourage investment in film projects. Salaries would be guaranteed and receipts audited by the state. The premier will be given a censorship power which he may delegate to the ministry interested in the subject of a given film.

The plainest statement of Daladier's intentions is contained in the provision which would make it impossible "for certain categories of bankrupts and undesirables to participate in production, distribution, and exploitation of films in France." Jean Renoir, one of the world's finest directors, is covered by this clause. M. Renoir is a bankrupt, because he prefers unemployment to making bad pictures, and he is certainly an undesirable by Daladier's standards.

Hitler's pimp has shown his hand clearly, if this decree is made, as the worst enemy of French culture. The news should shake people who don't readily see the organic connection between reactionary political acts and suppression of culture.

Armaments—For What?

THOSE who say "No" to Munich, and in this country they are the overwhelming majority of the people, cannot fail to see how inescapably the Chamberlain-Daladier betrayal has raised the question of resistance to fascism. We have discussed before the armaments program now rapidly taking shape in connection with our foreign policy, and pointed out that the two cannot be considered separately. Viewed in the perspective of a positive anti-fascist foreign policy—a perspective which has yet to be brought within focus by a thorough housecleaning among Secretary Hull's fascist-minded subordinates—it has become increasingly clear since September 30 that the United States cannot fail to put its defenses on the highest plane of efficiency. This is a progressive view, a realistic view that faces unflinchingly the post-Munich world. It is a view that has been given expression by Earl Browder in a report of the Communist Party to the National Committee:

Prior to the Munich pact, we declared that a correct peace policy by the United States which would organize the overwhelmingly preponderant peace forces of the world, could quickly halt and remove the menace of fascist aggression without the necessity of a big armaments program for our country. We opposed the Naval Bill, on these grounds, because it became a substitute for a correct peace policy and an obstacle to the adoption of the correct policy. Now the failure of the United States to adopt and follow energetically the policy we proposed has borne its fruits in the Munich pact. Munich enormously increased the fascist menace and brought it to the American continents in an immediate sense.

This argument on armaments that was valid before Munich loses its force afterward. Munich is an accomplished fact, with all its awful consequences. We can no longer dismiss the armaments question with the old answer. We cannot deny the possibility, even the probability, that only American arms can preserve the Americas from conquest by the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo alliance. The Munich betrayal shattered not only the possibility that the relatively unarmed United States, by material and moral aid, could organize the rest of the peace-loving world to halt the fascist offensive, but also destroyed at one blow the sheltered position of the Americas. The Atlantic Ocean is transformed from a barrier to a broad highroad for the aggressor powers. The Pacific may soon be the same.

This logic is unanswerable, and consequently, Browder points out, "We cannot adopt a negative position on the question of armaments."

Neither can we meet the new situation with a simple affirmative. No matter how much the situation has changed, it still remains true—more true than ever—that armaments are no substitute for a positive peace policy, for a correct approach and active role in organizing the world against the warmakers and therefore for peace. The question is not are we for armaments, yes or no; it is the more complicated question, "Armaments for what?" If it is for the defense of the liberty and independence of our own and other peoples, yes, emphatically yes! But the people must learn to make its "Yes" a power for securing guarantees that the armaments will be for that purpose and for no other.

A One-Man Bolt

WE DON'T know what's eating Mr. Francis J. Gorman, but he has apparently decided that the former United Textile Workers of America, of which he was president, is his personal property. And so he has announced *ex cathedra* that the agreement entered into by the UTW with the CIO Textile Workers Organizing Committee is null and void, and is attempting a one-man bolt from the CIO and in the general direction of the AFL.

Mr. Gorman at one time played a progressive role in building the CIO and the movement for independent political action. We are, therefore, sorry to see him turn away from these ideals to adopt policies and tactics which can bring joy only to the forces

of reaction. The CIO, however, happens to be bigger than any one man, and if Mr. Gorman chooses to make his bed after the fashion of William Green, he has only himself to blame if he finds it rather hard sleeping. Four vice-presidents and the secretary-treasurer of the former UTW have already repudiated Gorman.

More than a year ago, the United Textile Workers, one of the constituent unions of the CIO, signed a contract with the Textile Workers Organizing Committee by which all of its activities were taken over by the latter organization. Gorman and other UTW officials became members of the advisory council of the TWOC, of which Sidney Hillman is chairman. At the time of the signing of the contract, the UTW had only a few thousand members. Today the TWOC has more than 400,000 textile workers in its ranks. Using as a pretext a recent decision of the Rhode Island Superior Court invalidating the contract, Gorman is attempting to split the TWOC at a time when it is seeking restoration of a 12½ percent wage cut for 150,000 woolen and worsted workers. In the words of Sidney Hillman: "Mr. Gorman's attempt is doomed to failure because he has no organization and no following."

A Traitorous General

IF YOU want to know what kind of generals revolted against the democratic government of Spain, take a good look at Major Gen. George Van Horn Mosely, retired. Last week, before the annual luncheon of the New York Board of Trade at the Waldorf-Astoria, this American Queipo de Llano told a select group of big business men that they should prepare for "a massacre of our domestic enemies" that would "make the massacres now recorded in history look like peaceful church parades." He indicated very clearly that he meant the Communists, by his definition everybody opposed to the views of the luncheon assembly. That would mean everybody who is opposed to the policies of representatives of the following companies: the New York Central; Otis Elevator; Equitable Life; Consolidated Edison; United States Lines; the Baltimore & Ohio; Remington-Rand; and the racketeering fascist, the Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith; all of whom were among those present.

Like the Spanish traitor generals, General Mosely has his remedies for a democratically elected government. "If New York and Washington were burnt down tonight it would not cause a ripple in the America that I am talking about. In fact, in Washington, it might be one definite way of reducing bureaucracy," he said. He derided the danger of fascist aggression and advocated strengthening Japan against the Soviet Union by in-

creasing our trade with the murderous state in the Orient. A few days later, speaking before the fascist American Patriots, Mosely delivered a violent tirade against the Jews.

On September 30 the general was branded as "flagrantly disloyal" by Secretary Woodring because of an attack on the Roosevelt administration he made on his retirement. If there are more like him in the armed forces the President should remove them now, before they plot their insurrection.

Esquire's Christmas Idea

THE December issue of *Esquire* caught us off guard. We are in the habit of thumbing through our exchange copy of "The Magazine for Men" while waiting for the Lexington local. The articles never tax our brain. The pictures of long-legged ladies in negligee are amusing when they are not vulgar. The stories are sometimes good, but the magazine as a whole is mainly a comfort in the dentist's waiting room. Nobody, so far as we know, expects any more from *Esquire*.

But the December issue breaks out into a thoroughly vicious editorial which suggests that the boys in the back room are not fun makers but fascist-minded politicians.

Esquire calls for the suppression of the Communist Party as a legal political organization in America. It anticipates that this proposal will "raise loud shrieks about 'freedom' and Americanism." Of course there will be loud shrieks, and they will come from those who are really concerned about freedom and Americanism. They will come from people who do not use freedom in quotation marks, from people who have read the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the Communist Party, and history.

Esquire attempts to lump the "black variety" and the "red variety" of "totalitarian slavery." This is a malicious equation. One of the first aims of fascism is to suppress the Communist Party, for the very good reason that the Communist Party stands solidly for democracy. And this move is, of course, but the opening wedge in a drive against all other democratic groups. There is nothing secret about the purpose and organization of the Communist Party. It works legally for legal ends. The fascist groups in this country work illegally for illegal ends. These "two extremes," as *Esquire* calls them, are indeed extremes. One is the extreme democratic party; the other is the extreme anti-democratic party.

No reputable newspaper or magazine in this country has dared to make such an outright fascist proposal as *Esquire* does in its last issue. Published by the same people who issue the pseudo-liberal *Ken*, this magazine has aligned itself with the supporters of the Dies committee.

Forsythe's Page

Ye Olde English Yuletide

London, Dec. 2 (UP).—The *Evening Star* said today that the Duke and Duchess of Windsor have invited a London workingman and his wife and two children for Christmas at a chateau at Cap d'Antibes on the French Riviera.

THE duchess was sitting on the terrace sipping her morning coffee and reading the morning mail when the duke came out.

"Good morning, Wallis," he said cheerily.

She looked up at him curiously and then asked: "Who are the Thomases?"

"The Thomases?" repeated the duke, as if racking his brain.

"The William Thomases," went on the duchess, and he could see now that she was looking at a telegram.

"I do wish you'd stop opening my mail, Wallis," he said querulously.

"It was addressed to us both," she answered, quietly cold, and then persisted: "And *who* are the Thomases?"

He sat down, spreading his serviette almost viciously on his lap.

"If you must know," he said. "They're coming for Christmas."

"Oh, indeed," replied the duchess.

"I suppose it's all right if I ask a few friends for the holidays," said the duke, angrily on the defensive.

"Especially such *close* friends as the Thomases," said the duchess.

"You needn't be so lofty, my dear," he reminded her. "We've had friends of yours, too. The Bedauxs, the Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Bedauxs. What was that famous plan of his?"

"He rationalized labor," she said coldly.

"Ah, yes; the stretcher-outer. The one who kept us from visiting your dear native land."

"I suppose he wasn't your friend, too," observed the duchess ironically. "They never are when they turn out badly. I imagine you'll be accusing me next of advising you to visit Germany?"

"No," agreed the duke sadly. "That was our dear *mutual* friend, Herr von Ribbentrop. We really do have some strange ones."

"Including the Thomases," said the duchess. "I suppose you realize they'll be on our laps practically any minute now. This message was sent yesterday from Paris."

"Good God!" cried the duke, half rising and then suddenly subsiding. "Certainly . . . And why not!" he demanded sharply. "I shall be very happy to see Mr. and Mrs.—uh—" He tried to snatch a look at the telegram.

"Thomas," the duchess told him wearily.

"It's only a code name, anyhow," he ad-

mitted. "I've forgotten the real name. But it's a good idea, anyhow—especially at the Yuletide season; what with the children and all."

"The children . . ." she repeated in a far off, bitter voice. She looked at him for a moment without speaking. "David, tell me," she said finally. "Are you still taking advice from that New York advertising firm? You're really going to have to stop these little nonsense schemes. You're getting too old for it. First that trip to the distressed areas when you were king, and then Germany, and now this silly invitation to some unknown people to make the world believe your heart is wrung for the downtrodden. . . ."

The duke was silent, sulking. She leaned over and patted his hand.

"It's all right, David," she said, comfortingly. "It does no harm, I imagine . . . But it makes it terribly awkward for our other guests . . . Mr. Thomas with his bowler hat and buttoned shoes and smoking a pipe and carrying an umbrella . . ."

The duke was plainly worried.

"Next time," she suggested kindly, "why don't you just visit somebody in a hospital or talk with a workman in the street. The papers will like it just as well."

He still said nothing, seeming to be thinking.

"In fact," she went on, "why keep up the pretense at all? The workers don't believe it and everybody else is laughing at you."

"All right," he cried brightly. "We'll pack up right now and go back to London. We can leave a note for the Thomases. I suppose it is all a bit balmy of me . . ."

The duchess was thunderstruck, and then began to cry.

"Go back to London and have all those hateful women ahead of me at table!" she cried bitterly. "I to be fortieth and you to be third . . ."

"Well, darling, after all, I couldn't help being born," he reminded her, worried at her tears. "You mustn't forget that I was once first in the list."

"That doesn't help me," she said tearfully. "No matter what I do or what I say, I'm still fortieth . . ."

"Wallis," he pleaded. "You mustn't cry like that. Really you mustn't. You know I'm not going back home before we get that matter of the rank fixed up."

"And you'll give up that foolishness about the workingman?" she asked, looking up at him craftily through her tears.

He laughed aloud.

"Darling," he cried. "I'm astonished at you. Do you mean to say that even *you* were taken in by that stuff!"

There was a discreet noise at the doors leading to the house, and the butler stood there bowing.

"Mr. and Mrs. William Thomas and children," he said pontifically.

The duke bounded to his feet, adjusting his face in its characteristic newsreel contour as he arose. The duchess dabbed hastily at her eyes and seemed to push her public smile forward to her face from some place back of her ears. She became at once as simple and charming as a milkmaid.

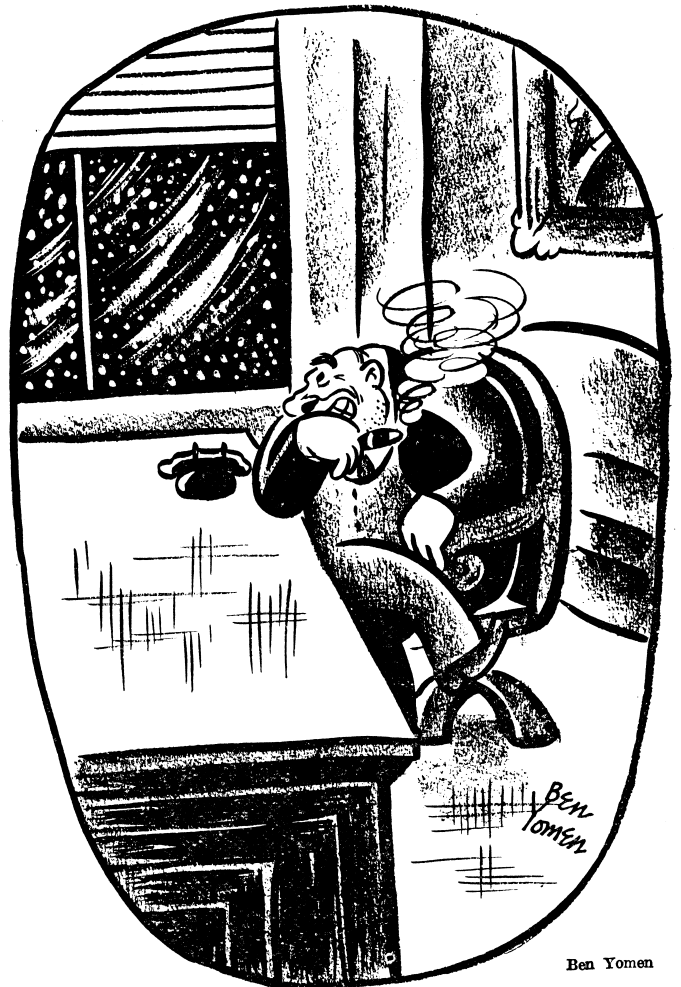
"How do you *do!*" cried the duke.

"Well, this *is* nice!" said the duchess, centering her attention on Mrs. Thomas.

At this the Thomas family—father, mother, and children—curtsied in a manner to reveal that they had been in hard practice for a week, bowed very low and solemnly, and said in a concerted rush:

"Happy Noel, Your Majesties!"

ROBERT FORSYTHE.



"Heh, heh. Who can I evict tonight?"

Attacking Problem No. 1

The Southern Conference for Human Welfare

LEE COLLER

LISTEN to the land all a-cryin' . . ." It was the refrain of a Negro spiritual, sung by a chorus of Negro students, that opened the recent Southern Conference for Human Welfare in Birmingham. And it was the refrain of 1,225 Negroes and whites who came to the conference from the gullied and eroded hill country, from the alluvial plains, from every industry, from the South.

These were 1,225 Southerners who knew that their region was the nation's number-one economic problem, and that, as Southerners, the problem was theirs. They came in full knowledge of the agricultural problems of the South, the poverty of the farm people, tenants and small landowners both, whose land and incomes have been steadily wasting away. They know the conditions of the industrial workers in the South, the actual and relative low wages, the grip of Wall Street on Southern industry. They were concerned with the South's traditional paucity of education. Most important of all, perhaps, they knew and understood what has kept the common people of the South from getting at these problems until now—the stupid, cruel system of race hatred that finds its expression in jim-crowism.

And, significantly enough, that problem was tackled at the outset. Anyone who has been down South and seen Negroes jim-crowed in streetcars and trains, forbidden to use public libraries, and shunted into top balconies of theaters, will know what a jolt I got when I walked into the Tutwiler Hotel, Birmingham's best, the day the conference opened, and saw Negro delegates walk in the front door of the hotel and take their places in the line of those registering at the conference, in some cases in front of the whites—and no one said a word.

Of course, Jim Crow hasn't been buried yet. The City Commission of Birmingham hauled him out in the best Bourbon style. Invoking a city ordinance prohibiting mixed meetings in city-owned buildings, the City Commission forced segregation of Negroes at the sessions in the municipal auditorium and sent a police squad over to see that the ordinance was obeyed. Mixed sessions continued, however, in buildings that were privately owned.

If you had sat in on the farm-tenancy panel, as I did, you would have heard Dr. George Mitchell, upper-South administrator of the Farm Security Administration, describe the FSA program—and then a gaunt, red-necked sharecropper, D. A. Griffin, get up and tell the assemblage, "The program's not

bad. But all the applications by union members in my district have been turned down. The planters run the committees. We need tenants on those committees. We need a little democracy in the FSA."

In the suffrage session there wasn't any discussion on whether the poll tax, which disfranchises the black and white majorities in eight Southern states, should be abolished. Of course it should, but how? Should the conference endorse state and federal action, or only state action? Francis Miller, a member of the Virginia Legislature, thought the fight should be restricted to the home front, to prevent raising the boggy of federal interference. Stanton Smith, a Chattanooga school teacher, felt that federal legislation is necessary and must come "as a result of the demand of the Southern people." Rob F. Hall, secretary of the Communist Party of Alabama, pointed out that the Constitution provides for federal legislation to cover the election of congressmen and the President, thus not involving the question of states' rights. After much discussion from the floor, a committee representing all viewpoints was selected to draft a resolution. The majority report was for both kinds of action, and the delegates accepted it.

The breadth of the representation in the conference disclosed the unprecedented awakening that is taking place below the Potomac. Friendly association of most of the white and Negro delegates, the adoption by the entire conference of resolutions supporting the federal Anti-Lynching Bill, condemnation of special discriminatory laws and practices against the Negro people, and a resolution calling for the pardon of the remaining Scottsboro prisoners, will strengthen this growing bond of unity.

All delegates, with the exception of a few hesitant AFL officials, supported the Wagner act and the Wages-and-Hours Law. Resolutions calling for the elimination of the wage differential, for equal pay for white and Negro workers, for extension of WPA, for the abolition of company-town abuses, for ratification by Southern states of the Child Labor Amendment, showed the strong progressive sentiment on economic questions that is developing in the South. Special needs of Southern farmers (both tenants and landlords), of business men, professionals, and youth, and the need of the entire South for increased educational facilities and an adequate public health program, all received consideration in the proposals for action outlined by the conference.

Democracy was the watchword of every speaker. "The black race must be the test of democracy and Christianity," said Dr. Frank P. Graham. "Unless we can work out some redistribution of the wealth produced by the machine, we may not be able to save democracy itself," declared Aubrey Williams, assistant national WPA administrator, who is a Southerner, to prolonged cheering by his listeners. At a packed open mass meeting of the conference in Birmingham's municipal auditorium, Mrs. Roosevelt appealed for the preservation of America as "the greatest democracy on earth." And Supreme Court Justice Hugo L. Black described the medal which the conference awarded him as the Southern statesman who had done most to promote human welfare along the lines of the philosophy of Thomas Jefferson, "as a symbol confided to me for the many Southerners who stand with Jefferson in the belief that good governments give first importance to promoting the welfare and happiness of human beings—of all human beings—by assuring equal justice to all and special privilege to none."

And the delegates understood that the democracy which they sought to maintain and extend in the South was not a thing apart from the rest of the world. They voiced their indignation at the Nazi atrocities and gave their endorsement to President Roosevelt's "positive peace program."

In setting up a permanent organization, with Dr. Frank P. Graham as chairman, the conference decided that its objectives shall be to unite the Southern people and their organizations to:

1. Promote the general welfare.
2. Improve the economic, social, and cultural standards of the Southern people.
3. Advance Southern functional growth in accordance with safeguarding American institutions and ideals.
4. Initiate and support progressive legislation in Congress and the states in harmony with the principles and program of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare.
5. Continue and expand activities started at the Southern Conference for Human Welfare.
6. Secure the cooperation and coordinate the activities of other organizations now existing in the Southern states.

★

Hitler "Wins"

A PROMINENT Catholic periodical, *Queen's Work*, recently published the results of a poll of its readers on world figures whom they would nominate as "most unpopular." Fittingly enough, Hitler won, and the combined votes of the other nine nominees were only one-fourth of Der Führer's elegant total. Stalin was second; Mrs. Roosevelt and Earl Browder were tied for third place; and Franco and Mussolini found themselves regarded as equally unpopular by the Catholics. Others who didn't rate with the readers of *Queen's Work* were Mae West and the famed baiter of Communists and Catholics, Judge Rutherford.

How Dies Was Born

A Comedy of Manners

ROBERT TERRALL

WHEN the first session of the 76th Congress of the United States is solemnly brought to order at noon on January 3, one of the pieces of literature which congressmen will presumably have read will be a little pamphlet of perhaps seventy-five pages entitled *Report of the Special House Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities*.

Because of the hearty cooperation of the nation's press during the last seven months, the conclusions of this particular committee will already be well known. The committee will ask for more money to bring out some more appalling "facts." To be precise, it would like \$100,000. That would permit it to go on at its present rate, if organizations like the Associated Farmers and the Republican Party of Minnesota continue to be kind, till the first of May 1941.

No liberal, progressive, trade-unionist, New-Dealer, farmer, writer, Jew, Catholic, or simple wage-earning citizen can look on that prospect with equanimity. There will be a debate in Congress when Mr. Dies, the committee's chairman, asks for his \$100,000. It will probably not resemble the debate last May 26 when Mr. Dies finally succeeded in insinuating Resolution 282 out of the Rules Committee onto the floor. Read the account of that debate in the *Congressional Record*, keeping in mind what you know of the subsequent activities of Mr. Dies' committee—it makes a neat little comedy of manners, which might as well have taken place in Wonderland. It brings out what no one has ever had reason to doubt—that Mr. Dies is as slippery, as abject, as unscrupulous, as dishonorable, as vicious as his own witnesses.

Now, there is nothing set and formal about a debate in the House of Representatives. Each speech is like a movie designed for continuous performance: the burden must be repeated every now and then for the benefit of people who have just come in. The thirty-eight hottest opponents of Mr. Dies' resolution, the group referred to derisively in newspaper headlines as the Young Turks, were all set. Mr. Maverick of Texas was to get first crack. Not for a while, however, for after a short parliamentary fuss it was determined that Mr. Dies should have control of one hour of the debate and Mr. Taylor should have control of the other. Neither of the gentlemen liked Mr. Maverick.

Mr. Dies yielded himself ten minutes, and there was a noticeable movement towards the exits. He began disarmingly. There had been much talk in the sensational press about

certain activities of the Nazi Bunds, certain small armings of citizens, certain heilings of Hitler, and so forth; but, said Mr. Dies, with perhaps a slight tendency toward understatement, "The impression which has been created in some quarters that this investigation is directed at the German-American people is unfounded." He had the greatest respect for the German-American people. His own mother—he paused a minute, for he had begun life as an elocution teacher, and he was not one to slip up on any small sentimental effect—his own mother was of German descent. "This investigation," he said, "is not directed at any race, for we all live in America, peoples of all races and all creeds."

That was the way he talked all the time. He referred to people of other races largely from force of habit. His father before him had been a member of Congress; he had helped draft the first piece of legislation restricting immigration. When Martin was growing up he had known that he, too, might some day get the chance to restrict immigration, and when he went to Congress from his decent little law practice in Orange, Tex. (pop. 7,913), he got himself put on the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, and introduced a half-dozen bills every session marked, "Aliens, for the deportation of certain," or "Immigration, to further restrict." He never did anything else, except to agitate for a PWA bridge across Lake Sabine, which happened to be in his district, and a little relief for the East Texas oil field, which was in his district too. That was why he was in Washington, after all.

He assured the House that if he had anything to do with this investigation—he might not be picked, you know (coily)—"it would in no sense be an effort to abridge the undisputed right of every citizen of the United States to express his honest convictions and enjoy freedom of speech. I am not one of those who are inclined to be alarmists. I am not inclined to look under every bed for a Communist, but I can say to this House that there is in my possession a mass of information showing the establishment and operation of some thirty-two Nazi camps in the United States, that all of these camps have been paid for, that they claim a total membership of 480,000, that they assemble in these camps, and I have seen photographs that have been furnished from various sources showing the fact that in these camps men are marching and saluting the swastika, if that is the proper word for it."

The Democratic member at the next desk

whispered that that was indeed the proper word for it, and Mr. Johnson of Minnesota rose to inquire why, if such a situation as the gentleman described did, in fact, exist, he was not for the Voorhis bill, which made private armies illegal. The gentleman from Texas was sorry, he had not heard of the Voorhis bill. Mr. Johnson asked why he did not recommend that the Department of Justice proceed immediately against the Bunds instead of spending seven months on an investigation of what everybody knew already. Mr. Dies' answer was as follows:

"I care not what the gentleman's views are, I care not what his economic or political or religious views are, and I respect every man in this House who believes in his views, but I do believe that every man's right to express those views should be safeguarded."

Mr. Johnson sat down, stunned.

Mr. Crawford of Michigan said he was interested in what the gentleman had said about Communists under his bed, because he, Mr. Crawford, had listened to a speech by Earl Browder the night before on the radio and, "I suggest," said Mr. Crawford, "if the gentleman did not hear it, that he move heaven and earth to get a copy of it, because it was a hair-raiser." (Mr. Browder, as usual, spoke in support of New Deal legislation and the labor unions.) "I thank the gentleman," said Mr. Dies.

Mr. Keller of Illinois asked if maybe the House hadn't investigated the subject enough in the past few years. Said Mr. Dies, "Let me say to the gentleman that I believe all depends on the way the committee is handled. I can conceive that a committee constituted or composed of men whose object it is to gain publicity, or whose object it is to arouse hatred against some race or creed, or do things of that sort, might do more harm than good." Having made that admission, he stopped to consider. "On the other hand," he said, "investigations have a useful purpose. The other body" (referring wistfully to the Senate) "creates committees constantly. . ."

Mr. Cochran of Missouri asked how much Mr. Dies was going to ask from the Committee on Accounts for his investigation. Mr. Dies said he didn't know. Mr. Cochran said he did so, too.

Mr. Stefan of Nebraska was afraid that the committee might inflame the American people. Mr. Dies repeated: "There is no one who detests more sincerely than I any attempt to inflame the American people." "I hope," said Mr. Stefan gloomily, "the gentleman will carry that attitude throughout the investigation."

Mr. Dies then incorporated into the *Record* a number of endorsements of his resolution by the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American League for Peace and Democracy (he didn't know then what he knows now, that it is a sinister organization whose title means what it says), the New Jersey CIO (evidently under the impression that Mr. Dies might regard Mayor Hague as slightly

un-American), the International Workers Order, the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, Massachusetts Non-Partisan League, International Typographical Union. Most of these organizations were obviously under the impression that they were endorsing a resolution to investigate Nazi activities. Mr. Dies could not have known what he was doing. The American League! The International Workers Order! His own committee has frequently proved, using endorsements of organizations not a bit more compromising, that various prominent individuals were Reds. Is the Dies committee composed, then, of fellow travelers? Well, maybe he knew perfectly well what he was doing.

Mr. Taylor of Tennessee took the floor. He is one of those old-time Southern orators whose stuff looks very funny written down. "The time has come," he said, "when we must not only investigate subversive influences and un-American activities now rampant in the United States but we must proceed to arrest and throttle them if our boasted democracy is to continue. Any man or woman who would hoist any other flag than Old Glory or preach any other ism except Americanism is not only unworthy of American citizenship, they are not even entitled to temporary residence in this land of the free and home of the brave." That is perhaps about enough of Mr. Taylor. You have heard the speech before. He spoke at length about the Nazis and briefly about the Communists.

"Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, on the Madison Square Roof Garden" (he had never spent much time in New York) "eighteen thousand militant Communists assembled, denounced and advocated the overthrow of this republic. Communist radicals recently for the second time had the unmitigated audacity and depravity to desecrate that hallowed shrine sacred to every red-blooded American—

Plymouth Rock—by enveloping it in red paint. The miserable wretches who committed this dastardly deed ought to be hunted down like rattlesnakes and kicked out of the country." [Applause.] It is not likely that Mr. Taylor, like Mr. Dies, sticks in his own stage directions when the *Record* comes round to him for editing before it is printed. He plays for applause.

Mr. Knutson asked about the McCormack committee of 1935—what had it done? (It had taken the direct testimony of Earl Browder, revealed that Carl Byoir & Associates were handling the Nazi Bunds' public relations, and generally observed the rules of evidence surprisingly well.) "I am sure," said Mr. Taylor, "that the investigation had the direct effect to retard the growth and activity of these movements for a while, but as a result of an apparent lethargy of interest in patriotism . . ." in short, it was time for another investigation.

Mr. Dies thought there were five million aliens in the United States illegally. Well, well—he himself didn't think there were more than three million. They were the riffraff of Europe, however, and he regretted that he had to blame the unhappy situation mostly on the policies of Miss Frances Perkins. Take the case of Harry Bridges, for example. Notorious.

Having given the members an intimation of what he would investigate if he were named to the committee (but he had been on the McCormack committee and the general feeling was that he ought to step aside and give somebody else a chance), Mr. Taylor sat down and Mr. Maverick got up.

"Bear in mind," said Mr. Maverick, "this is to investigate Nazis, not Communists; all of the agitation, all the talk has been against the German-American Bund."

Even Mr. Taylor had appeared agitated when he spoke about the Nazis. "I believe that this is the entering wedge of religious persecution—" not of Nazis, but of Jews. It didn't seem very logical at the time. Mr. Dies had said that there were half a million members of the Bund, one of whom had advocated the assassination of President Roosevelt. "Personally, I think it better to refrain from talking about the assassination of the President . . ." Mr. Maverick said.

Would an investigation, he continued, take away the title of a single Nazi camp?—"not under our Constitution." There was plenty of legislation before the House already. Actually the Voorhis bill that had been spoken of was having trouble because some of the members feared it might make illegal the little private armies of corporations as well as of the Nazi camps. Well, that could be fixed up. "There is no use kidding the public, much less ourselves, for we know enough now to pass the necessary legislation to cover the situation fully. But what are we doing? We are passing the buck. We are coming in here and making pompous patriotic speeches, 'Oh, how we love the flag! Oh, how we love America!' And then we are going to traipse out of Con-

gress, doing nothing. The American people are going to laugh at us and say, 'What did you do for us?' 'Oh, man,' we can answer, 'we fixed you up. We passed a resolution to investigate un-American activities.' The flash-bulb boys and the photographers will rush back and forth, and there will be a lot of sweating and oratory about the flag.

"The only reason for our investigating will be to go around here and scare the people with exciting stories, making them suspicious of their fellow Americans, which will get the committee members headlines in the papers—in other words, the motto will be, 'Feed the people headlines instead of groceries and jobs.'"

Why not investigate the problems of the South? Why not investigate unemployment? Mr. Johnson of Minnesota said that the resolution was so sweeping "that they could investigate Old Faithful geyser in Yellowstone National Park"—but of course not the problems of the South or unemployment.

Said Mr. Maverick: "We have had one Republican investigation that caused some furor, and that was the Fish investigation; and then we had the Democratic one by Mr. McCormack. I think we have had about a 50-50 proposition on these foolish things. It is a mania—it comes every now and then, about every three or four years."

Mr. Taylor yielded six minutes to Mr. Thomas of New Jersey and Mr. Thomas spoke for four minutes about the Nazi camp at Nordlund, N. J., how awful it was, how much it ought to be investigated (it has not, of course, been investigated), one minute and a half about "the millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money our present national government is spending just to perpetuate the bureaucrats in office," and one quick half-minute about the Communists.

Mr. Boileau of Wisconsin observed, "I do not know whether the gentleman from New Jersey is going to be a member of this committee" (he was going to be indeed), "but if he is you will have from him an effort to investigate the New Deal, as he claims it to be un-American. [Applause.] And then my good friend from Texas" (meaning Mr. Dies) "showed here the other day that he thinks that those of us who advocated the Wages-and-Hours Bill are un-American. Knowing the gentleman from Texas to be a very high type of gentleman and a great American patriot" (please excuse Mr. Boileau; he is simply obeying the rules), "if he conscientiously and honestly believes that the Wages-and-Hours Bill is un-American, he will be fighting to see whether or not the AFL, the CIO, and other organizations—yes, and whether or not some members of Congress who advocated the Wages-and-Hours Bill—were not paying their obligations to some un-American organization."

Mr. Coffee of Washington, with the broken-winded courtesy required of even liberal members of Congress, spoke of ". . . the genial and capable gentleman from



Martin Dies

Charles Martin



Charles Martin

Martin Dies

Texas." Then: "Nevertheless, there are those of us who like to denominate ourselves as more or less liberal who believe that this is a disguise for a smelling expedition aimed at liberal organizations in the United States. My God! The whole nation is crying out for succor in its distress! What are we doing to promote Americanism in the United States? Americanism is an abused word. It is as abused as the word Love in the United States. . . ."

Mr. Maverick: "This would put the Democratic Party in a silly position, for it looks like we are going to be investigated ourselves. . . ."

Mr. McCormack: "You know when one calls a man a Red-baiter he can call someone else a Red-lover. I simply refer to this so some of our friends who may have a tendency to enter into the field of personalities may realize in the future that when they open the issue the other fellow has a chance to say something in return."

Mr. Maverick: "Does not the gentleman think that when we do not say anything about him it is a little mean in a way for him to say we have bad intentions?"

Mr. McCormack (pathetically): "We received thousands of editorial comments, and never one editorial comment of an adverse nature. . . ."

Mr. O'Malley of Wisconsin said, "Mr. Speaker, I am overwhelmed with the generosity accorded those in disagreement with this resolution in the matter of time—they cannot get any. I fear the committee will be as arbitrary as the conduct displayed today." (Mr. O'Malley was wrong. Mr. Dies, naturally, was not as sure of himself in Congress as he was going to be on his committee. But he had a sense of prophecy.) "Apparently," he said, "the open season on damn foolishness has begun. . . ."

Mr. Cochran was impatient with the way the debate was going. "Some newspapers, always critical, will make it appear, if the resolution is defeated, that the House of Representatives has declined to investigate un-American activities. I do not want to be accused of refusing to vote for legislation to investigate un-American activities." That wasn't the important thing. He was on the Committee on Accounts; how much, for God's sake, was Mr. Dies going to ask for his committee? Mr. Dies told the gentleman again that he didn't know. Mr. Cochran said that he knew perfectly well; he had in his possession a resolution for appropriation which he would drop in the hopper the moment Resolution 282 passed. *How much was he going to ask?* Mr. Dies wouldn't tell him.

Mr. Eberharter of Pennsylvania: "I have faith and confidence in our Speaker that he will appoint as members of this investigating committee men of a character and caliber who will hold this investigation within bounds." Speaker Bankhead of Alabama at this point may or may not have snickered up his sleeve.

Mr. Dies and Mr. Taylor, with all their impartiality, had unquestionably saved the remaining minutes of their time for the right people. Mr. Ford of California: "Mr. Speaker, I do not care what these other nations have in the way of a government. That is their business. But I do not want them to try to attempt to inaugurate it in our own country [applause] and I am not going to have it."

Mr. Robson of Kentucky: "We have no Communists or Nazis in my congressional district. Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini have no appeal for the citizens of my district." The gentleman's district is Harlan County.

Well, up to now the speakers have all denounced the Nazis and most of them have thrown in a small denunciation of Communism because they thought it was expected of them. All along, the opponents of the resolution have known it was going to pass, the majority of the House, like Mr. Cochran, being afraid to vote against it because of the newspapers. The Nazi camps had even been exposed by *March of Time* — why waste the country's money? It was left to the last speaker to bring out the unreality of the whole debate—Mr. O'Connor of New York. It appeared that Mr. O'Connor didn't think the investigation was aimed at the Nazi camps at all.

Mr. O'Connor (with a heavy sense of doom): "The allies of the Communists have joined forces. Let me read some extracts

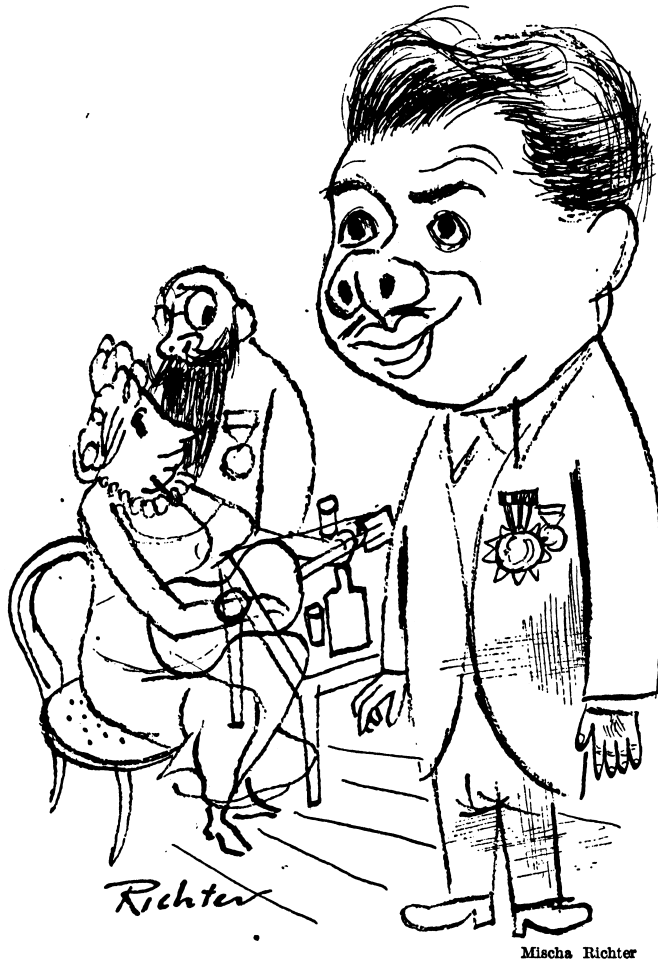
from a letter just received by me today: 'Congressman John J. O'Connor, etc., etc., I have deposited affidavits accumulated during two years that I have been studying Communism from the inside. Mail is no longer safe, as there is a Communist within every New York post office. In the office or at the phone of every large industry there is a Communist spy. No one is safe on WPA in New York who does not join the CP. Under protection I will go before Congress and testify to the nefarious plans of Communism toward America.' Do the accents sound familiar? Does it conjure up a picture of the Dies committee nodding sagely as some ten thousand pages of testimony on the same moral and factual plane, without question or contradiction, are inserted in the record and spread on five hundred front pages? The letter went on. Mr. O'Connor, with a magnificent disregard of the rules of evidence, did not tell the House who had written it.

"All this," said Mr. O'Connor, and even he was feeling prophetic, "is a great compliment to me. If ever I were defeated for public office it is my solemn wish that I go down to defeat fighting the Communists. . . ."

And yet: "We just *must* stop it now. Why, Mr. Speaker, I saw fifty thousand people march through our streets with the red flags of Communism. They were of all nations and all colors! Let us save this country—and I am serious—let us save it from this horde of radicals, this horde of Communists,

before the hour becomes too late." [Applause.]

The two hours were almost up. There was some trouble about whether Mr. Dies could accept the amendments he wanted without allowing a vote on the others, and the Chair was of the opinion that he could. Mr. Dies moved the previous question, Mr. Boileau demanded a division, and there were 191 ayes, 41 noes. Mr. Boileau asked for the yeas and nays. The yeas and nays were refused. The question was then on the adoption of the resolution, the resolution was adopted and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table; as Mr. Dies went off up the aisle, flushed and happy, the House moved on to consideration of a bill permitting foreign articles to be admitted without tariff for exhibition at the World Poultry Congress.



"Grand Duke Vladimir is a new man since Hitler gave him the Ukraine."

Readers' Forum

On Benjamin Franklin

TO NEW MASSES: I should like to add a note to Granville Hicks' review of Carl Van Doren's *Benjamin Franklin* (NEW MASSES, December 6).

Hicks is generally right when he says that Van Doren's book is mostly good reporting but unskilled and unscientific interpretation. But there is missing from Hicks' review some good examples to prove that point. The best example is shown with regard to Van Doren's treatment of Franklin's essay called "A Modest Inquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency," published April 3, 1779. Van Doren gives facts about this essay, but fails to understand its tremendous theoretical significance.

Marx was not so neglectful. He went so far as to give Franklin credit for first enunciating the theory of labor-time and value, which is one of the keystones of all Marxian economic theory. In his *Critique of Political Economy*, Marx says:

"The first sensible analysis of exchange value as labor-time, made so clear as to seem almost commonplace, is to be found in the work of a man of the New World where the bourgeois relations of production imported together with their representatives sprouted rapidly in a soil which made up its lack of historical traditions with a surplus of humor. That man was *Benjamin Franklin*, who formulated the fundamental law of modern political economy in his first work, which he wrote when a mere youth and published in 1721.

"He declares it necessary to look for another measure of value than precious metals. That measure is labor. 'By labor may the value of silver be measured as well as other things. As, suppose one man is employed to raise corn, while another is digging and refining silver; at the year's end, or at any other period of time, the complete produce of corn, and that of silver, are the natural price of each other; and if one be twenty bushels, and the other twenty ounces, then an ounce of that silver is worth the labor of raising a bushel of that corn. Now if by the discovery of some nearer, more easy or plentiful mines, a man may get forty ounces of silver as easily as formerly he did twenty, and the same labor is still required to raise twenty bushels of corn, then two ounces of silver will be worth no more than the same labor of raising one bushel of corn, and that bushel of corn will be as cheap at two ounces, as it was before at one, *ceteris paribus*. Thus the riches of a country are to be valued by the quantity of labor its inhabitants are able to purchase.'

"This Franklin regards labor-time from the one-sided economic point of view, as the measure of value. The transformation of actual products into exchange values is self-evident with him and the only question is as to finding a quantitative measure of value. 'Trade,' says he, 'in general being nothing else but the exchange of labor for labor, the value of all things, is, as I have said before, most justly measured by labor.'

"Substitute the word 'work' for 'labor' in the above statement, and the confusion of labor in one form and labor in another form becomes at once apparent. Since trade consists *e.g.* in the exchange of the respective labors of the shoemaker, miner, spinner, painter, etc., does it follow that the value of shoes is most justly measured by the work of a painter? On the contrary, Franklin meant that the value of shoes, mining products, yarn, paintings, etc., is determined by abstract labor which possesses no particular qualities and can, therefore, be measured only quantitatively. But since he does not develop the idea that labor contained in exchange value is abstract universal labor which assumes the

form of social labor as a result of the universal alienation of the products of individual labor, he necessarily fails to recognize in money the direct embodiment of this alienated labor. For that reason he sees no inner connection between money and labor which creates exchange value, and considers money merely as an instrument introduced from outside into the sphere of exchange for purposes of technical convenience. Franklin's analysis of exchange value did not exert any direct influence on the general trend of science, because he discussed only special questions of political economy whenever there was a definite practical occasion for it."

Philadelphia.

SAM DARCY.

Jewish Colonization

TO NEW MASSES: The present Jewish crisis in Germany has resuscitated proposals for the establishment of an inviolable, Jewish protectorate. Most prominently mentioned by governmental and editorial spokesmen of the democratic powers is "a haven in Africa." The fact that Germany is not kindly disposed to such a Jewish territory is merely due to a fear that her pre-war colonies may be the site. Otherwise such a colonization scheme might well fit fascist ideology.

Why, then, are these suggestions coming from certain powerful groups within England, France, and the United States in the guise of humanitarianism? It is because they some day hope to be rid of their own Jewish population and an African colony today will make it easier tomorrow. With the support of the chauvinist elements of Zionism, propaganda devices are being oiled. Mention of lowering immigration bars will be carefully avoided, except by liberals.

An interesting parallel may be found in the history of the American Negro. In 1815 a society was founded to colonize him and Liberia was finally chosen as the place. Such men as Henry Clay, Francis Scott Key, Daniel Webster, and Thomas Jefferson had looked with favor on such an enterprise for colonizing free Negroes who consented.

In 1819 Congress passed a law providing for the return to Africa of smuggled slaves. Monroe cooperated with the American Colonization Society. Over a period of fifty years only twelve thousand Negroes had been sent to Africa.

Whatever the merit of the plan in its early stages, the rise of a new Negro national life in America put a halt to any enthusiasm for the plan by the vast majority of Negroes. America was now the Negroes' native land. Its climate, soil, language, and customs were in their blood. "How can a man be born in two countries at the same time?" they asked. The temperate zone suited them far better than hot African jungles. Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington opposed the plan, as did William Lloyd Garrison, speaking for Abolitionists. Washington could find no way out of the Negro's predicament in the South by a return to Africa, over which the "great powers" had either possession or spheres of influence. "The adjustment of the two races must take place here," he wrote.

Now the situation of the Jews in Europe and America is much more emphatic in its conformity to the laws of nationality. Nor should they be herded to Africa. The Jews are a part of the nation in which they are domiciled. Taken as a whole they no longer have a community of territory, language, personality, or economic life, which is evolving itself within one culture.

Tulsa, Okla.

C. VON DER LANCKEN.

Railroad Problem

TO NEW MASSES: Ernest Dore's article and the two recent letters in your Readers' Forum on the railroad problem have been very stimulating. But they leave the question of rail nationalization still somewhat up in the air. Since the time is now ripe to press forward with a program of nationalization, further clarification appears necessary.

Briefly the case for nationalization may be summarized as follows. It is necessary to: (1) break the control of finance capital (particularly the banking houses of Morgan and Kuhn, Loeb and their associates) at whose door lies the responsibility for the present condition of the railroads; (2) cut the capitalization of the railroads drastically and so reduce the intolerable burden of capital charges; (3) protect the interest of the public by ensuring modern service to meet present-day needs at reasonable rates; (4) protect the jobs and wages of the railroad workers and improve their conditions.

Under present conditions it is obvious that to take over the railroads the government will have to give some compensation to the owners and creditors. Mr. Dore infers that the basis of valuation for compensation should be a modified physical value. The trouble with this method is that it would force the government to pay for a great deal of railway property which has physical value (in that it would cost plenty to reproduce it) but is economically obsolete today in that it can "earn" little or nothing road workers and improve their condition.

A more logical method of valuation is that based on profits, averaged over a period including both good and bad years, say, 1928-37, and capitalized at the going rate as reflected in the ratio of net railway operating income to the total market value of railroad stocks and bonds. This method is just as readily applicable to the determination of value of individual roads as for the railroad system as a whole. Certainly it could not be held "confiscatory," for it is based upon the values which the capitalists themselves have placed on the railroad securities in the stock and bond market. A rough check of the application of this method indicates that it would produce, on the basis of 1928-1937 earnings and market prices, a total value for all United States railways of about \$10,000,000,000. This compares with the present par value of all United States railroad securities outstanding of nearly \$24,000,000,000, of which somewhere near \$6,000,000,000 are held among the railroads themselves.

Michael Adams, in his letter in your column, November 22, seems to have been taken in by the deluge of propaganda from the railroads and their financiers that government ownership will completely destroy railroad security values and that the burden of this will fall on the "widows and orphans" since the insurance companies and banks hold large amounts of these securities.

While the amount of railroad securities at par held by banks and insurance companies is somewhat greater than the figures Mr. Adams gives, the fact is that investments in such securities are but a small part of the total for these institutions. Insurance companies have by far the larger holdings, and with them investments in railroads amount to about 10 percent of their admitted assets, on the average. So even if this 10 percent were wiped out completely, it would not bankrupt these institutions.

Second, and this is the important point, railroad securities on the average have already depreciated to about 50 percent of their par value. (See article on "Financial Condition of U. S. Railroads" in Labor Research Association's *Railroad Notes*, November 1938.) This tremendous reduction in security values did not bankrupt the banks and insurance companies so it is hard to see how government ownership could do so, especially as the price the government would pay would not in all probability be greatly different from present market values, particularly after the elimination of inter-railroad holdings.

E. GREY

Labor Research Association.

New York City.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

Newton Arvin's *Whitman*

THE social ideas of a poet are shaped by his social experience. When he has come to terms with the community of which he is a member, his ideas are not likely to be very different from those of quite uncreative persons of similar experience living two houses up the street from him—or, in themselves, except for some fancifulness of expression, any more interesting. Only when a poet's contacts with his own time have been wide and instructive, and he has had the mind to think about them fruitfully, are his expressed opinions of any value for what they actually mean. When his experience is meager or his thinking inadequate, the ideas will be bad, however great the poet. The passages from Republican newspaper editorials, for instance, that emerge occasionally in the recent work of Robinson Jeffers and Robert Frost profit not at all from the minds through which they have passed.

Happily, writers can create from what they have felt and observed without the necessity of logical formulation. Often, indeed, their conscious or public attitude is irrelevant and even contradictory to the truth that lies in their work. The discerning critic, then, even though his own interests are primarily social, is concerned with the poetry itself, for what it is and means, and secondly in the creator's life for the way it has developed his sensibility and provided the material with which he works. Only when the author's conscious social opinions appear in his poetry or determine its form is it necessary to take them into account in examining the value of what he has produced.

But though a writer's pronouncements on the questions of his day may be conventional or obtuse and apparently unrelated to the peculiar merits of his work, they have a basic significance ignored by the academic biographers of the last century who tended to put them on the same level with the poet's habits of work, his fondness for cards, or his horseback rides before breakfast. For a writer's social opinions tell us very accurately what his class position was and how he adjusted himself, as a member of a class, to the changing social conditions of his period. This knowledge is not necessary for the appreciation of particular poems, but is essential for an understanding of how the body of the author's work came to be, its relation to the society in which it was produced and to the work of other writers. Marxist criti-

cism has demonstrated abundantly the value of this kind of study. Never, however, has the special problem of a writer's stated opinions and their relation both to his poetry and to his time been isolated and given the brilliance and clarity of treatment it receives in Mr. Arvin's *Whitman* (The Macmillan Company. \$2.75.). There have been books, of course, on the "mind" of Dante or Shakespeare or Robert Browning, but nothing like this approach to Whitman, as far as I know, in the whole history of critical biography.

Whitman is a conspicuously appropriate subject, because he is the only major poet of American democracy and because he has seemed to European critics the most available or successful embodiment of the American spirit in literature. Moreover, since Whitman's own time he has been claimed by socialists as one of the prophets of the socialist movement. Mr. Arvin, himself a socialist, quotes one of these claims on his first page, and on his last describes *Leaves of Grass* as a "brave anticipatory statement . . . of a democratic and fraternal humanism." But his purpose is not, as most reviewers have suggested, to establish Whitman within the socialist tradition.

Mr. Arvin does not describe the events of Whitman's personal life, nor does he attempt a detailed criticism of the poetry, though that is where Whitman's "socialism" chiefly resides. The book is devoted to a judicious and thoroughly scholarly examination of Whitman's attitudes toward contemporary intellectual and social problems, as these attitudes are revealed by Whitman's

journalism, by his notebooks and drafts of articles, and by the records of conversation made by his friends and disciples. There is nothing unsuitable in Mr. Arvin's use of the last name alone as the title of the book, for this is Whitman as his associates knew him, the public Whitman, Whitman being consciously the citizen of the republic. As such he was not a socialist. Mr. Arvin has not written to make him seem so, or to find isolated statements which, detached from the context of mid-nineteenth-century American life, can be used as mottoes for progressive activities today, a practice carried too far by left critics eager for testimonials from the illustrious dead. As a matter of fact, Whitman's social thought is often not very happily phrased or penetrating, and many of the things he said seem deplorable to a socialist now. What Mr. Arvin uses this material for is so to relate Whitman to the democratic movements of his early manhood that his achievement as the poet of democracy becomes understandable.

The first of the three central chapters of the book, "The Tenor of Politics," is a brilliant clarification of the complicated party politics in the thirty years before the Civil War. Whitman began as a Jacksonian Democrat, swung his support to the Free Soil Party for two elections, voted for the Republican Fremont in 1856, but a couple of years later, because of his strong union sentiments, hoped Douglas might save the country from civil war. After the war, like Emerson and Mark Twain, he accepted the Republican administrations with uncritical complacency. He feared slavery and the Southern oligarchy because they threatened the free labor of the North. With the Abolitionist movement he had no sympathy, and with the Negroes, whom he considered an inferior race, very little. He held the people to be the source of all political power, and the chief function of government to be the protection of the individual against monopolies and privilege. He accepted the Mexican War because it seemed to him an extension of democracy. In the late fifties he was ready to compromise with the slaveholders because he feared disunion. He had grown up in a time when union had been achieved after great difficulties, and the future of democracy seemed dependent on it. Once the Southern states had rebelled, however, he supported the Northern cause with full devotion.



Aaron Elkind

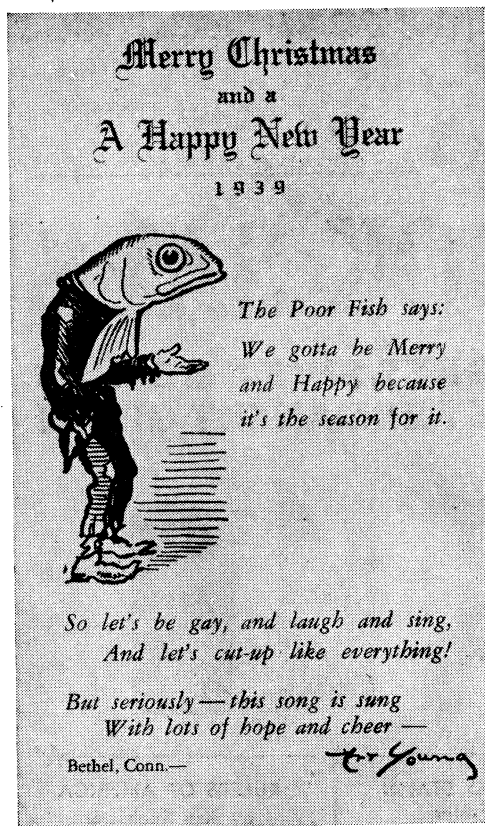


Aaron Elkind

The next chapter, "Wealth and Illth," is concerned with Whitman's shifting and inconsistent attitudes toward inequalities of wealth and toward the acquisitive spirit. At times Whitman was alarmed by the disparity between great wealth and great poverty, but on the whole he had the early nineteenth-century American faith that with self-dependence and perseverance a comfortable living was within reach of all. He saw the achievement of Carnegie as evidence of admirable and socially useful genius. He even declared at one point that business leaders seemed to him the modern heroes. Labor unions he distrusted because they represented a kind of monopoly that restricted free enterprise. "His conscious, prosaic, and merely habitual thought about social problems never moved very far," Mr. Arvin says, "from the hopes and needs of the middling Americans among whom he had spent his cheerful boyhood and youth," the independent farmers, shopkeepers, and humbler professional men.

The chapter "Science and the Unseen," like that on politics, is a complex but organic and developing study of the relation of two tendencies in Whitman's thought, the earlier rational materialism common among the democratic groups in the early days of the republic, and the more or less mystic transcendentalism of the American romantics. Thomas Paine, whom his father had known slightly, was an early hero. Whitman had read Volney, and had unbounded admiration for Fanny Wright. From these people he learned a respect for natural science that continued throughout his life and gave him more direct and responsive knowledge of scientific developments than any other of the major American writers. But he could go so far with thoroughgoing scientific rationalism and no farther. He had also been influenced in his youth by Elias Hicks preaching the "inward manifestations of divine light," a doctrine sympathetic to his intense individualism. As he came under the influence of the German romantics, of Hegel, Emerson, Carlyle, he changed his philosophic costumes easily, but underneath there was always strong dependence on feeling and intuition as a way to truth. This led him to make a bible of George Sand's *Consuelo*, with its semi-religious glorification of the role of the artist. But Whitman's mysticism and theism never alienated him from a deep and even lyrical appreciation of the great possibilities for good in science and material progress.

In a concluding chapter, "For Purposes Beyond," Mr. Arvin gives coherent meaning in our terms to what are in Whitman's terms diversities and contradictions. They are the contradictions of the bourgeois movement in that period. Like Whitman's refusal to take into account or even to see the evils and injustices in American life, they result from the completeness with which he embraced the principles of Jacksonian democracy. "The arts," Mr. Arvin says, "can draw fruitfully only upon ideas that, beyond their intrinsic soundness, have become irresistibly relevant



Christmas Greetings from
Art Young

to the whole culture that produced them." If Whitman had felt and thought differently he might have had more sense of "evil," fewer passages of diffuse optimism. But feeling as he did he could find ways of expressing, as no other American writer has expressed it, with a sensibility new to literature, the genuine democracy he had known among certain groups in his formative years. What Whitman made of the relationship of free men in a free society, because it represented so completely the democratic best in his own time, has transcended that time and created what can be fully used and understood, Mr. Arvin suggests, only when the possibilities of democracy have been finally realized in a socialist society.

Mr. Arvin's *Whitman* is austere conceived. At times the separated consideration of different aspects of Whitman's thought and the limited references to his personal development and his poetry make the treatment seem inorganic or undialectic. Particularly in "Wealth and Illth," the accumulation of Whitman's views favorable and unfavorable to different aspects of competitive capitalism fails to give the reader, as he progresses through the chapter, a sense of development or increased understanding. But the last chapter uses all that has gone before in a positive and very eloquent resolution. Judging, however, by some of the reviews that have so far appeared, it is possible to read this book, so modest, so lucid, so scholarly, without realizing that apart from what it says about Whitman it has, by the freshness and rightness of its method, made a contribution which considerably widens the scope and possibilities of Marxist criticism. OBED BROOKS.

Criticism and Crusade

AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHTS: 1918-1938, by Eleanor Flexner. Simon & Schuster. \$2.50.

THE simplest way of appraising Miss Flexner's penetrating study of contemporary American playwrights would be to call it brilliant and assign it as required reading for all students of the drama. But to convey its essential virtues, and weaknesses, within the available space is another matter. It would be begging the question to characterize it as Marxian criticism since Miss Flexner's manner of approaching her problem in itself constitutes an attempt at explaining and illustrating Marxian criticism, even if she never once uses the term. She addresses herself to a wide audience of educated Americans who may not take for granted the basic tenets of Marxism but who will find it difficult to resist the cogency of her analysis and reasoning.

The weakness of the book derives mainly from the fact that it is something more (which tends to make it something less) than a Marxian study of contemporary American drama: it is also a crusader's denunciation of Broadway, Hollywood, and their votaries. This mood of wholesale condemnation frequently gives rise to overstatements that cannot be reconciled with a dialectical approach to the manifold and contradictory manifestation known as the American theater. There is unintended humor in Miss Flexner's unwitting admission that "the wonder is not that there are so few well written, coherently thought out plays, but that any of them make any sense at all." With less of the crusader's spirit and more of dialectical probing, the author might have arrived at an explanation of Broadway in which there would be room both for the routine hokum and the body of creative American drama which, after all, has reached us via Broadway.

It is very well to urge upon playwrights "an understanding of life and characters as the product of social forces and social relationships in perpetual conflict and dynamic evolution"; but the same criterion may with equal validity apply to Broadway audiences. And since the American theater is essentially commercial and ready to please all tastes, at a profit, the impressive list of good plays, sanctioned by the author, may be less of a miracle and more of an index of the "perpetual conflict and dynamic evolution" of "social forces and social relationships," as reflected in the theater.

For all her brilliant analysis and earnest probing of individual playwrights and their plays, Miss Flexner fails to bring into focus the valid idea that playwrights and plays are not only manifestations of individual creativeness but frequently also expressions of currents in social thought, of which they may be at once the stimulators and reflectors. Thus, Eugene O'Neill cannot be completely understood merely on the basis of his Freudian "preoccupation with sexual problems" in which

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and a
A Happy New Year
1939



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and Happy because
it's the season for it.*

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*But seriously — this song is sung
With lots of hope and cheer —*

Bethel, Conn.—

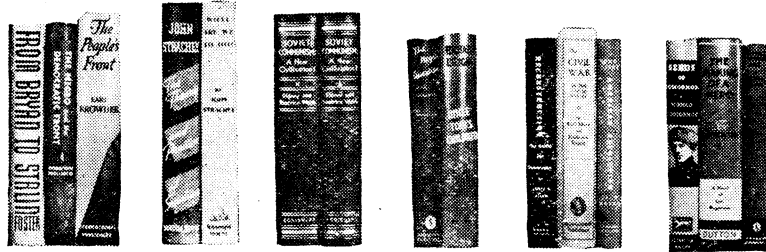
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he "never admits any reason for sexual mal-adjustment excepting previous sexual mal-adjustment," but he must be studied also in terms of the social strata that fell under his sway and found in his plays an outlet for the peculiar brand of social neuroticism. Nor can the failure of so many successful writers to interpret character in terms of social causes be ascribed entirely to deliberate evasion motivated by sordid and selfish considerations or to the blighting influence of Broadway. It is obviously true that many American playwrights "eschew a basic philosophy from which they may regard, understand, and interpret life." But it is equally true that such a philosophy cannot be acquired by a mere act of volition. Indeed, evasion and "eschewing a basic philosophy" are also a philosophy of life, stemming from the very "dynamic evolution" of "social forces and social relationships." (John Gassner's wise preface deals with this point.)

We find too much in Miss Flexner's book that is in the nature of accusation against individual writers, too much righteous prosecution of their artistic wrongdoing, with the consequent one-sidedness that should not be mistaken for rigorous Marxian criticism. As a "prosecutor," she is, indeed, devastating. Her "case" is generally airtight and the verdict of guilty—a foregone conclusion. But one would wish, in the case of Maxwell Anderson, Eugene O'Neill, Sidney Howard, Philip Barry, and others, a more sympathetic insight into their own artistic problems and a balanced estimate of their artistic worth as well as an explanation of their failure to live up to the highest standards of creative drama. That her standards are valid, few serious playwrights will deny. But equally undeniable is the peculiar potency of plays by O'Neill, Anderson, Barry, etc., despite their warped thinking, despite their evasion and escapism. Yet in Miss Flexner's catechism of the drama there is hardly an explanation for this potency. While she succeeds in proving that O'Neill's plays (with the exception of his earlier period) are muddled in their philosophy, repetitious in their theme, and essentially false in their conclusions, she fails to reveal the mainsprings of their force, fails to relate them to their source and to their audience. What is it that made it possible for O'Neill to dictate his own terms with respect to subject matter as well as theatrical form? How is it that Maxwell Anderson has "shaped public taste rather than conformed to it, and has followed the dictates of his own interests and artistic standards rather than those of the box-office"? Miss Flexner's book does not provide the explanation, and for a complete understanding one must turn, it seems, to more sympathetic sources.

This is a pity, for *American Playwrights* is of the caliber of an authoritative study strengthened by a guiding philosophy that leads to the heart of a work of art. The chapters on Anderson, O'Neill, S. N. Behrman, George S. Kaufman are not only brilliant essays on the respective writers but also

fine specimens of drama criticism. With uncanny penetration she finds the basic weaknesses and presents them with a lucidity of statement and a felicity of expression which make her book thrilling reading. She frequently succeeds in summing up the result of her patient and painstaking analysis in a phrase as compact as it is scintillating. She writes of George Kelly that he "never obtrudes his own brilliance at the expense of the consistency of his characters, and this alone distinguishes him from such writers as S. N. Behrman and Philip Barry." Of O'Neill she says that "he is forever arriving at the same conclusions and embarking on the same quests." Kaufman's style is captured in the phrase "characteristic technique, combining terrific pace with the most realistic and minute detail." Rachel Crothers is classed among those who have "abdicated the realm of character development and conflict to toss back and forth ideas and arguments couched in witty speeches." The author's sympathetic and appreciative (though all too brief) survey of the "so-called left or social plays" which she considers as following in "the main stream of our dramatic tradition," leads her to the conclusion that among the many problems "still unsolved" are: "How, for instance, avoid undue repetitiveness of pattern, degenerating into the formula of the 'strike play'?" and "How, on the other hand, draw the line between one particular theme, and its wider social aspects, a consideration of which leads to chaotic all-inclusiveness?" Odets gets a high score in her estimate of the representatives of "The New Realism." While she properly regards *Waiting for Lefty* as Odets' best play, she says of *Golden Boy* that it "represents approximately the highest point of honesty coincident with prosperity, beyond which a theater with social ideas cannot go on Broadway." In view of *Dead End*, one wonders why *Golden Boy* captured first prize.

Less successful as a crusader than as a critic, Miss Flexner arrives at the dismaying conclusion as to "the folly of pursuing an art under conditions which have evolved, not to assist the creative process, but because of economic chaos." And "in the last analysis the future of films and theater alike must lie outside the field of private enterprise." Which is not very encouraging for those who strive to gain on Broadway a foothold for the social drama. Presumably we'll have to wait for the millennium and abandon Broadway and Hollywood to their ultimate fate.

NATHANIEL BUCHWALD.



Fred Ellis

Southern Novel

THE BACK DOOR, by Julian R. Meade. Longmans, Green & Co. \$2.50.

THE appearance of a social literature in the South has been obscured by a landslide of Confederate romances, written by ignorant lady authors and polished Brahmins of the Allen Tate persuasion. Nowhere in this noble Ku Klux parnassus is there a hint that the authors are living in a region that constitutes a great nation's number-one economic problem. The propaganda corps of the Confederacy didn't get properly organized until all the generals were dead but they sing of their ghostly legions no less heatedly.

Julian R. Meade does not wear the sash of a dead rebellion; his book is about the South today and about the biggest fact in the South—the exploitation of the Negro. Mr. Meade is a Virginian of aristocratic origins and he has been able to free himself of the wistaria and the crinoline to write about the things under his nose. About a Negro servant girl and her tubercular boy friend.

The Back Door is told from the point of view of Mary Lou, the pretty girl who lives on Chinch Row and works for the Careys as a maid. Warner Carey, heir of the family, is a writer who is crusading for a sanitarium to meet the widespread tuberculosis stain among the local Negroes. In his campaign he is hampered by the bourgeois bigots of the town, and the Negroes themselves are unaware of the presence of the dread disease. Mary Lou, overhearing talk about the sanitarium, cannot understand it, although her Junie, the robust Junie of the fine voice, is slowly dying of tuberculosis. Mary Lou's family treats it as a chest cold with mustard plasters and traditional remedies.

With this as his main story, Mr. Meade examines other aspects of the South's shame: working conditions in the mills and tobacco sheds; Jim Crow, god of exploitation; the *droit du seigneur* exercised by white men over attractive Negro women. We are allowed quick scenes of more dreadful things like the pellagra victims filling up their sacks of rich earth which they will eat, the grinning forces of the law waiting to break up Negro parties.

Mr. Meade's story is unresolved. An oppressive situation is described and developed with force and accurate description; Mary Lou and her neighbors are handled with unpatronizing sympathy and understanding. It is a situation crying for an answer but the author does not lead us to it. This is not to ask for a wishful analysis, the kind that mars certain proletarian novels. Mr. Meade has gone quite far enough in his picture of the objective situation. The novel would become ridiculous if a mechanical political solution were forced into it. What is asked for is a fiber of hope—if we could only see new forces gathering to meet the problem. But Mary



Plate 3: Pierrot and Harlequin (Cezanne)

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Lou never knows what a sanitarium is; no one knows Junie has tuberculosis; Warner Carey feels himself a stranger in his own community; we see no one concerned with the situation but Carey and his friend, the judge.

The Back Door is nonetheless a fine work. Its dialogue is true, the characterizations are rich, and the author writes in a manly passion. He is a Southern writer in whom we can have confidence of further growth.
 JAMES DUGAN.

Pan-American Problems

THE COMING STRUGGLE FOR LATIN AMERICA, by Carleton Beals. J. B. Lippincott & Co. \$3.

CARLETON BEALS' book documents a struggle that is already here. It gives the tangible, irrefutable evidence of fascist insinuation into the native structure of the South American dictatorships. Here are the military missions, the carefully designed trade routes, the systematic immigration, the cunning intrigue, the palace politics, the neat espionage by means of which the fascist powers have penetrated into the commercial and political life of the Western hemisphere.

But the story is disappointing on at least two counts. In a chapter called "Red Star South," Mr. Beals feels compelled to allege that the Soviet Union constitutes a new and formidable imperialism in Latin America.

But since there are clearly no Soviet aerial missions, no colonization by the Russians, no breakneck barter pacts, no aski-rubles, Mr. Beals is able to implicate the Soviet republic only through the shabby, hoary, weary, time-worn, threadbare charge that "every Communist, up to a certain extent, is an agent for the Soviet government. . . ."

In a distinctly second-hand and second-rate account of Communist successes and defeats in South America, Beals declares that "the Communist movement has pricked military dictatorships and pseudo-fascist regimes into life . . ." that the Communists "have helped pave the way for certain reactionary tyrannies in Cuba, Peru, and Brazil . . . and they are now paving the way for the same thing in Chile."

The only trouble with this is that it isn't true. If anything, it has been the correct policies of the Communist Parties, truly interpreting the mass movement of the people, that have contributed to the democratic developments in Cuba, which were merely intimated in the recent visit of Colonel Batista to America. As for Chile, the Nazis are gnashing their teeth because the Chilean Popular Front stands secure, the first Popular Front in the Western hemisphere, proving such a powerfully magnetic force that the Nazi movement in Chile is losing its misled followers to the progressive camp.

But the misrepresentation of the Communists in Latin America is merely an aspect of

Mr. Beals' misunderstanding of the American good-neighbor policy.

The whole book falls down on this crucial question. Having himself spent some of his most useful days (in the Coolidge era) exposing the bestialities of American army rule and American-supported dictatorships below the Rio Grande, Mr. Beals cannot appreciate what deep-going changes in world and domestic politics dictate a revision of American foreign policy toward the Western hemisphere.

To be sure, Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Hull are trying to succor American capitalism. Our present economy cannot, they believe, avoid collapse without finding markets for our agricultural and industrial goods. To make the New Deal workable within the United States, they must combat fascist inroads among our neighbors.

But it is the crucial and peculiar characteristic of the present world setup that the United States cannot keep South America free for its own commercial expansion without doing three things at the same time: (1) routing the fascist forces in every sphere of their activity, (2) encouraging the spread of democratic governments in all Latin American countries with the concomitant rise in their standard of living and degree of civil liberties, (3) discouraging and even undermining the "older" American imperialism which drew raw materials and natural riches out of these lands, prevented their own industrial development on a sovereign basis, and incited the suppression of native democracy.

In these three fundamental conditions, the good-neighbor policy coincides with and reinforces the struggle of the South American peoples for national liberation, for democracy, and for industrialization that will end their colonial status.

Until he acknowledges and fully comprehends the many-sided progressive aspects of the good-neighbor policy, emphasizing not only its inadequacies, but also the impetus it gives to the liberation of those Latin American countries which he has so often described with fondness and sympathy, Mr. Beals cannot overcome the paradoxes in his own writing and thinking.
 JOSEPH STAROBIN.



Soriano

Arcadia, Kentucky

BLACK IS MY TRUELOVE'S HAIR, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts. Viking Press. \$2.50.

Now that Hollywood and automobile roads have nearly put an end to regional peculiarities of the American people, a good many writers have come to specialize in a sentimental and nostalgic literary regionalism. No trick of Georgia dialect, no local Oklahoma method of hog-killing, escapes having the last drop of picturesqueness wrung out of it. Regionalism is all too often no more than an escape from the social problems of today, an escape into the backwoods. What Thornton Wilder does in *Our Town*, that innocent vignette of New England life, Elizabeth Madox Roberts has been doing for a long time in novels of her native Kentucky, of which *Black Is My Truelove's Hair* is the latest example.

But although the story of Dena and her two loves is laid in modern Kentucky, it is a dream Kentucky, without mills and mines, without starvation, without Harlan County. Dena might as well be misbehaving in a remote corner of Ireland, or in the operatic Italian village of *Cavalleria Rusticana*. All that Miss Roberts sees in Kentucky is the old-fashioned quaintness of language and housekeeping, and she insists so strongly upon this quaintness that when she happens to mention an automobile or a movie they seem anachronisms.

The mannered primitiveness of Miss Roberts' style, moreover, often makes *Black Is My Truelove's Hair* hard reading. Dena's thought processes are analyzed at great length with a labored simplicity, and the monotonous pitch of Miss Roberts' prose is alike ineffective to express the terror of attempted murder and the farce of a lost thimble. On the other hand, the characters often break into speech so lyrical as to seem grotesquely out of place in the mouths of the people who at other moments seem unpretentious.

The author is at her best in description. She can convey the light and atmosphere, the very odor of the hot day in which Dena lies naked under the sun; the gander which causes Dena so much trouble is more sharply individualized than many of the people in the book. And there are memorable scenes, notably the dialogues with Journeyman, the local pagan, and the pages in which Dena, ignored by young people of her own age because of the scandal of her first love, watches the carnival while a compassionate older woman tries to entertain her. For the most part, however, characters and events appear vague to the reader, blurred by the fog of Miss Roberts' style; and one questions whether it was worthwhile to devote so much hard work and so great an ingenuity with language to the elaboration of a rather slight love story.

JOY DAVIDMAN.



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Costume Novel

THE HOUSE OF TAVELINCK, by Jo van Ammers-Kuller. Farrar & Rinehart. \$3.

THIS book deals with the influence of the French Revolution on the Dutch bourgeoisie and aristocracy. Before the French Revolution, the Dutch merchants had already developed an economy which predisposed their sympathy for the revolutionary middle class of France. The progress of the bourgeoisie in Holland was hampered on the one hand by the Prince of Orange who had feudal and family connections with the royal family of Prussia; on the other hand by the regents—the feudal lords of Holland. The success of the French Revolution had its repercussions in Holland, where the Patriots (Dutch counterpart of the French Jacobins) soon established full political power of the bourgeoisie.

The reader of this novel, however, must infer these historic events; for nowhere in the book is there revealed an awareness of what was actually occurring at that time. The shattering of feudalism and the progressive movement of the bourgeois revolution are discussed as follows:

When the country was prosperous and the people lived carefree, the regents became supreme . . . when war came and heavy cares followed, the people turned against the regents . . . and again, as if it were a law of nature, when the country was in need, the love for Orange predominated.

The revolutions and confusions of this transition period are treated as an incomprehensible and nasty mess, and the author hastily turns to the love life of her characters for refuge. To indicate the influence of Rousseau and Montesquieu, a character drags forth from his pocket a copy of Rousseau's *Social Contract*. (No one seems to have a copy of Montesquieu.)

In a way, the author qualifies her book as an historical novel. Historical novels are of two kinds: those that deal with events and those that are concerned with costumes. This is a costume novel. The structure of French and Dutch society is less interesting to the author than the architecture of a corset. And the hairdress of one of the chief characters rates a chapter entitled "The French Ambassador Looks Coldly at a Coiffure." Between sheets and necklaces, we are permitted a glimpse of Dutch society.

MARTIN LUDWIG.



Charles Martin

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Charles Martin

S I G H T S A N D S O U N D S

Music in North Carolina

ON DECEMBER 9, at 4:30 a.m., the phone rang. A voice informed me that I had fifteen minutes in which to get dressed. At 5:01 a.m., I was sitting in John Hammond's car en route to North Carolina. Being susceptible to cliché, it was always my impression that one arrived in Carolina "in the mawnin'"—but after fourteen hours on a road drenched with rain, it was already dark as we pulled in at Elon College, N. C. Meanwhile, there had been plenty of time for me to form a healthy respect for Hammond's knowledge of Negro music, and to feel an excited anticipation from what he said we might expect to hear during the next few days. My anticipation was so well fulfilled that I can only say that I'd travel twice as far for a similar experience.

There are many critics and musicologists who, as a gesture to their own pedantry, feel constrained to classify Negro music in terms of Bach, Schumann, harmonic rules, modes, scales, and other component parts of world music. Such attempts invariably end in a welter of intellectual rubbish, and show the writer to have no emotional or even social understanding of the Negro's art. "Shorty," whom we met the first night of our stay, is a Negro musician who performs with his voice (augmented by a kazoo), a washboard, an empty oil drum, frying pans, and a cymbal. If he sings blues which are based on the simple harmonic scheme of tonic and dominant, this does not indicate a paucity of musical ideas. So too, an analysis of the incredibly beautiful and sometimes complex harmonies evolved by Mitchell's Christian Singers could only prove that, under emotional stress, music makes its own rules and sets its own limitations. It becomes increasingly clear that the musicians who feel they must dissect either the music of the Negro or swing music in general, do so as a defense of their innate inability to understand that music. They constantly remark at the limitations, failing to realize the genius necessary to generate such variety within those limitations.

If NEW MASSES' *From Spirituals to Swing* concert were to bring no other attraction than Mitchell's Christian Singers, its artistic success, I feel, would be guaranteed. I shall not soon forget the evening we drove to the small town of Kinston, N. C., to hear them. We had to wait until 9 o'clock for the four men of the male quartet to assemble, for all

four singers have other jobs, a fact in itself not unremarkable in North Carolina. When we finally assembled them in a small room of the baritone's house, they unostentatiously stood up to sing. From the moment they started (with no one giving a mechanical pitch), the room was filled with some of the most glorious music conceivable. Unaffected voices joined in creating harmonies and counterpoint which defy description no less than they defy comparison. Each singer's voice is so sure, so flexible, so filled with emotion, so alternately ecstatic and somber, so perfect for the music sung, so liquid, fresh, and unique—Enough? I haven't said a tenth of it. The voices when joined raise the significance of a single word to poignant heights. I should also like to mention that their name gives no real hint of what they do. Negro spirituals, through arranging, misinterpretations, jimcrow alterations, have come to be considered a more or less fixed type. In reality, the character of spirituals is made up of innumerable facets of temperamental and intellectual timbres. It is safe to say that Mitchell's Christian Singers will give you an entirely new feeling of what a spiritual may be. If you are receptive to their subtleties, a new musical experience awaits you.

There were other occasions, though for me they were overshadowed by the evening with the Mitchell Singers. We were, however, vouchsafed a remarkable experience in listening to a harmonica player called Sanford

"Sonny" Terry. Constitutionally opposed to harmonicas, I, that evening, became a convert to the instrument—at any rate, as played by "Sonny." He brought me face to face with folk music when he played a piece called *Fox Chase*, singing, shouting, and puffing into the harmonica throughout. It was something like a one-act musical pantomime, starting with a rush after the fox until it was finally caught and neatly dispatched. There was also Blind-Boy Fuller, a competent guitar player and blues singer but not extraordinary. A little flushed with success (he makes records), he is not above pandering to what he believes to be popular taste. Much more talented was "Red," a real troubadour, filled with the poetry of blues, which he sang with a personal conviction since the words in almost every case were directly concerned with his own activities, whether they spoke of love, or the inability to meet the rent. Unfortunately, both "Shorty's" and "Red's" addiction to *corn* makes them somewhat undependable and unpredictable, but they are representative of a definite type of Negro musician who is roaming the South, either with guitars or one-man band contraptions slung over their shoulders. Picturesque—products of oppression—they are undiscovered chroniclers of an aspect of American life which, unwritten, will nevertheless leave a mark on our culture.

I HAVE MEANT TO REMARK for some time about a splendid musical score by the young composer Herbert Haufrecht, for the Federal Theater's puppet production of *Ferdinand the Bull*. Delightfully scored for small orchestra, and intimately related to the action, the music achieved a real success both with the children in the audience and with me.

JOHN SEBASTIAN.



Tone Robinson

Surrealist Scrooge

MY TEXT for this week is the old Hollywood maxim, *If at first you do succeed, do it again and again.* The first exhibit is a picture titled *Ride a Crooked Mile*, for which Paramount will have to answer to the Will Hays of heaven. In it Leif Erikson, Akim Tamiroff, and Frances Farmer are forced, practically at gun's point, to enact



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a desperately moral fable about a bad ex-Cossack in the meat business who is thrown in Leavenworth for rustling. His son joins the cavalry at Fort Leavenworth to spring his papa from the jailhouse, but the code of the U. S. Army conquers him and he drops the plan. The story includes the Rustler theme, the Prison note, the West Point strain, and a heavy touch of czarism, for bad measure. I am aware that I am taxing your credulity but I direct scoffers to check for themselves. And don't come whining to me.

Next we display a number called *Storm Over Bengal*, better known as *Drums*, in which the Indian independence movement is trod upon by the noble English. In many ways the English are more daring in their frankness. If an American company attempted to deal with the Negro in these terms, there would be mass meetings in the streets. But Adolf's racist ideas have always been the spine of British imperialism and we should not show impolite surprise at this late date. This one, however, was made by Republic in Hollywood, in the producers' best osculatory deference to the tory *derrière*. There is a story going around that Darryl Zanuck and Louis B. Mayer are competing for a British knighthood in payment for services rendered. This is not unreasonable—many a foreign toady of the empire has taken English citizenship to make himself eligible for titles. The California knights, if and when, will need a special title. Can the Lud Privy Seal arrange to call them Yes Sirs?

Now we bring up Walter Wanger's current anthology of the best in the motion picture, *Trade Winds*. Wanger, an enterprising independent producer with progressive ideas, took a chance on Hedy Lamarr in *Algiers*, after MGM had allowed her to languish on contract for a year. Miss Lamarr was a sensation and MGM snatched her back after she became marketable, like a big corporation swindling a patent from a small competitor. Wanger met the deficiency by making up Joan Bennett to resemble Lamarr, and has cast her in a picture prepared by Dorothy Parker, Alan Campbell, and Frank Adams. The first hour is a travelogue with Fredric March, Ralph Bellamy, Ann Sothorn, and Miss Bennett standing in front of various Oriental stock shots, exchanging persiflage as only Parker can write it. The plot is the one about the reporter chasing the runaway rich girl, altered to make March a detective and Bennett only a slightly rich girl. The second forty minutes of the film is occupied with unraveling a murder mystery. Ann Sothorn has an appealing role and Dorothy Parker and Fredric March do well by each other.

MGM has adapted Dickens' *Christmas Carol* to the screen with lamentable literalness. If you can imagine the Ghost of Christmas Past as a toothsome Hollywood tootsie in an Aimee Semple McPherson getup, conducting Scrooge through the air against the blast from the wind machines, you'll have the spirit of the picture. Jean Cocteau once

made a film like this called *The Blood of a Poet*, in which such unabashed incongruities were presented. One scene showed a formally dressed couple dining in a snowy square, watched by society folk in the balconies of surrounding houses. Under their table is a schoolboy who has been killed by a snowball. Presently he is restored to life by a nude gentleman with wings who comes slogging through the snow. But Cocteau is a surrealist and the scene was only a grim frolic, while I suspect Hollywood is trying to tear at our heart strings in this gladsome Yuletide season. It's too bad in a way, because Reginald Owen makes an interesting Scrooge and Gene Lockhart as Bob Cratchit contributes a genuinely touching performance.

Our next item is Joe E. Brown's latest, *Flirting With Fate*. Joe does his borrowing from the early silents. He causes men in white suits to fall in the mud.

Your correspondent had a reunion with another old friend, the Service Institution plot, at Radio City last weekend. Last year the name was *Navy Blue and Gold* and the current alias is *The Duke of West Point*. This particular cousin of the football plot is distinguished by the fact that it contains a Christmas sequence. Louis Hayward and Richard Carlson, new juveniles, will be watched from this corner in the hope that they are lucky enough to be cast in a movie sometime.

BUT A NOTE OF CHEER. Charles Laughton's new picture, *The Beachcomber*, made from Somerset Maugham's book, is a lot of fun. There are those—this department among them—who are loath to think of Laughton as the greatest actor alive. But he is shrewd and effective and he knows the good of appropriate vulgarity. Here he is Ginger Ted, an English remittance man on a Dutch island in the Malays, whose anarchic activities include stealing native maidens from a missionary's schoolroom, and wrecking the local grogshops, come pay day. Virtue, in the person of Miss Jones the missionary, played by Elsa Lanchester, attempts to reclaim our besotted beachcomber. There is a hard fight, involving much humor, but Ginger Ted succumbs in the end. Except for some rubbish about an Oxford-educated native reverting to his primitive gods during a typhoid epidemic, the picture is worthy of Maugham and excellent material for its talented players.

JAMES DUGAN.

Federal Theater's "Androcles"

THE Federal Theater Project has scored another substantial success, with its all-Negro revival of Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion*, and the Lafayette Theater in Harlem has a paying guest for the rest of the winter. This is the second revival since the original American production in 1915; the Theater Guild put the show on in 1925. Among those

reviewers who were already functioning thirteen years ago, the opinion seems fairly unanimous that the present version is distinctly better. But they are also pretty much in agreement on another point, that *Androcles and the Lion* has no special significance for our day, and that any effort to turn it into an attack on fascism is misleading. This attitude can be readily identified as ostentatious sales resistance to a press book sent out by the project, which points out that Shaw's fable-play

can be presented as if it were written yesterday by some gifted young dramatist who has just witnessed with deep concern the social and economic trends evident in world affairs in the past months. . . . *Androcles and the Lion* becomes, in effect, a pertinent dramatic discourse upon the problem of world minorities today.

Which is exactly true. And since the anonymous writer for the Federal Theater Project is doing so well, why not let him go on for another paragraph?

The main difference in the current production, as contrasted with both the 1915 and 1925 versions, centers about the character of Ferrovius. Without changing the concept of the character, the Federal Theater, in this instance, has brought Ferrovius to the fore by a detailed and deliberate treatment. A character beset by an inward conflict arising from his Christian philosophy of non-resistance on the one hand and his natural instinct to fight back on the other, he becomes, in this production, the symbol of that struggle between two modes of thought and action in political affairs peculiar to our time.

It may even be noted that what tips Ferrovius, the fighting man turned Christian non-resister, over from his determination to let himself be killed is the bringing on of the whips, the public scourging in the arena to make the martyrs fight the armed gladiators and so furnish better sport. Death he could endure, but not degradation, and so he flings away non-resistance, lays six of the gladiators low, and saves not only himself but the entire company of martyrs, for Cæsar orders the persecution to halt.

However, it must not be understood that grim political point-making is what goes on in Harlem. The show is better than good, it is utterly delightful. Samuel Rosen and his associate director, J. Dewitt Spencer, have assembled a company that performs with gusto and fine restraint. Ferrovius is nobly acted by Daniel Haynes, and Arthur Wilson is ingratiating as Androcles. Add Bates as the Lion is irresistible, whether in his man-eating moods or in his giddy moments of gratefulness when he waltzes with Androcles. To see him pick up his tail and daintily brush off the tuft before swinging into the dance, is to want to steal him for a house pet. There are solidly satisfying performances by Edna Thomas as Lavinia, P. Jay Sidney as the handsome Roman captain, Maurice Ellis as Cæsar, and Wardell Saunders as Spintho, the lumpen who betrays his faith and is promptly eaten

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Press Time, by Stedman Coles and Jerome Brookman, produced by the Actors Company of the New Theater League, is the story of the *Decorum Republican*, a small-town newspaper whose name deceives. The paper has fallen into pro-labor hands, and a strike of 2,400 *Decorum* mill workers provides a testing period for the editor's hopes. When the paper supports the workers, the bank and advertisers withdraw support of the paper. There are riots, shots in the dark, gangsters, scabs, and lynch mobs. Some of the *Republican's* staff welch a little, but not for long. The reporters gather enough evidence to make the company bosses look like about sixteen F. Donald Costers.

All the characters and situations are earmarked Hollywood, but even the movie reporters seem somehow more real helping strikers than unraveling phony mysteries. Two actors, Billy Sands and Peter Leeds, deserve special note. Sands, who plays a photographer, has all the bounce of an Elia Kazan, and Leeds, who is uproariously in love with a strip-tease artist, is a close second. The script is good on the whole, though it drags at beginning and end. A good play doctor could fix that up, and the Actors Company could bring *Press Time* back to Broadway.

R. H. R.

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her earliest important successes in London, was rather much an artist of the pre- (and post-) depression school of escape. She sought in every foreign region, epoch, character, for her work, in Egypt, Paris, Renaissance Italy, 1910 Vienna, the Parisian *Aphrodisiac*, the *Queen of Heaven*, and turned back to her own country (the United States) only to caricature the 1897 cakewalk, the traditional *Field Day*, etc. The approach is familiarly the Bohemian's, glorifying the exotic and sensuous, belittling the trivial middle-class philistinisms and provincialisms for generally smug bourgeois consumption.

In these past few seasons, however, there has been a marked change in the direction of Angna Enters, dating almost precisely from her experiences in Spain during the first days of the rebel invasions when she witnessed and was horrified by the fascist slaughter and stirred by the heroisms of the Spanish people. Not only did she at once express, and unequivocally, her sentiments in the daily press, but she immediately began to comment in her work on the fascist violence.

Closer to home, she introduced her sensitive portrait of the city worker folding the postcard memory of the summer into her shoe to save its sole; and perhaps most significant, her medieval and renaissance figures began to take on overtones of contemporary meaning. Her *Grand Inquisitor*, a new composition, is a completely modern note on Nazi barbarism, done to the classic ritual of the Spanish bullfight; her *Auto Da Fe*, an older work, dealing with the persecution of the Jews, Moors, and "witches" of the fifteenth century, has present-day significance.

Her satires on contemporary political figures, unfortunately, do not come off so well. The Nazi femininity of *A Modern Totalitarian Hero* and the Chamberlain and Munich deal of *London Bridge Is Falling Down* are undoubtedly well meant but lose their impact, become somewhat distorted in the stressing of superficial aspects of very significant materials.

OWEN BURKE.

Drawings of Spain

DRAWINGS made by Ione Robinson on her recent visit to Spain are being shown till December 23 at the Julien Levy Gallery. Proceeds of the modest admission fee of 25 cents and also of sales go to the rehabilitation fund of the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. The exhibition will travel to Philadelphia and other cities after it closes in New York. Even without this worthy purpose, the exhibition would be worth seeing. For the artist has set down simply and cleanly the women and children whom she saw in crowded *refugios*. Here is the human bull's-eye of fascist bombs—innocent non-combatants. Their very economy of line makes the drawings more powerfully evocative of emotions of kinship and protest.

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