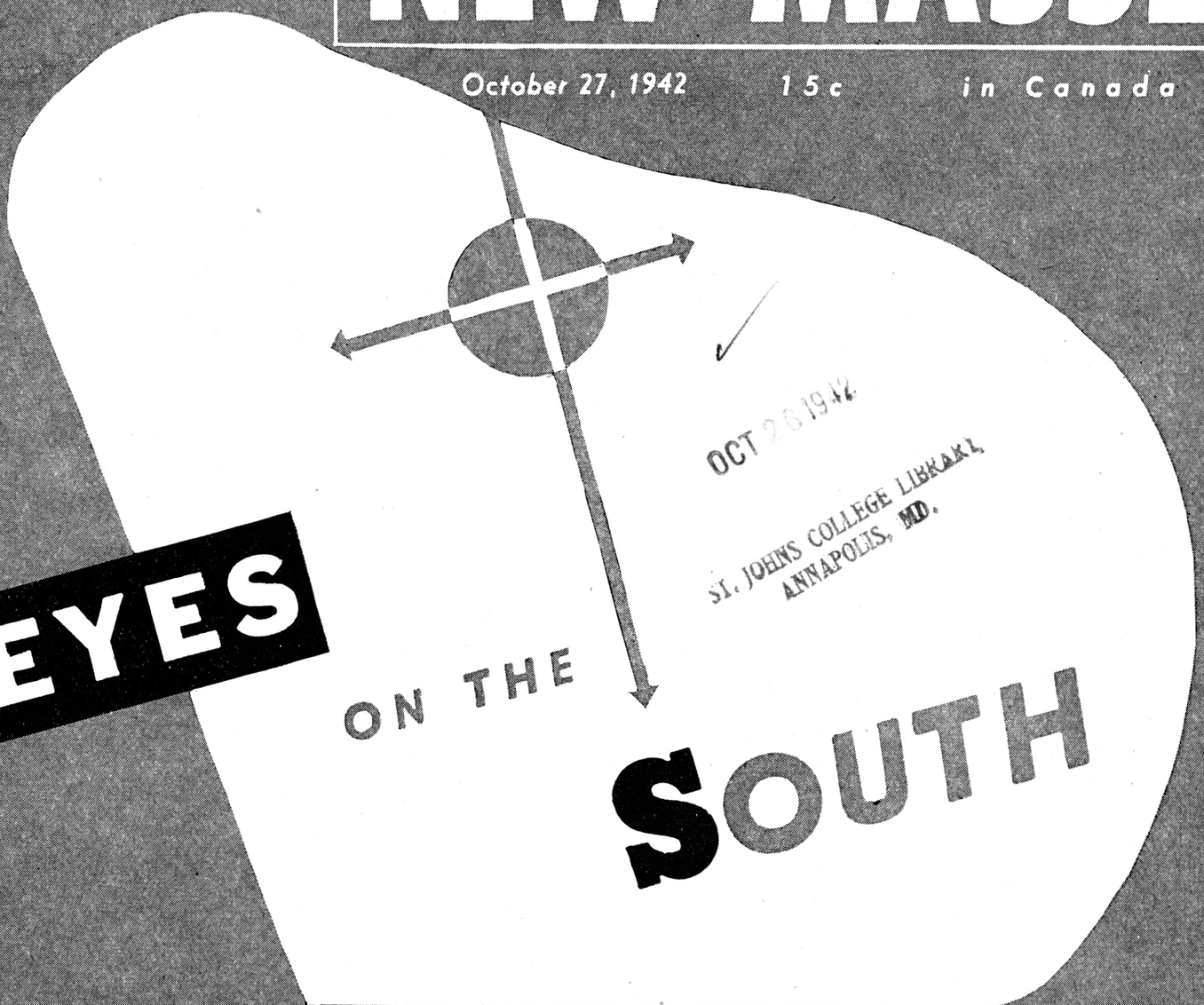
WHAT THE RED ARMY FACES NOW BY COLONEL T.

NEW MASSES

October 27, 1942 15c in Canada 20c



EYES ON THE SOUTH

"THE WAR MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE." WHAT THE NEGROES ARE THINKING. FIRST OF TWO REPORTS BY **JOSEPH NORTH**

KEYS TO ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS BY EARL BROWDER

BETWEEN OURSELVES

IF WE were choosing a place to live in by the attractiveness of its name, probably we'd pick a town in the Dominion of Canada—to wit, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Don't say it fast, it will trip you; but slowly, it's poetry. However, that's not why we are publishing below a letter from a subscriber living there. It is one of many letters we have been receiving from our Canadian readers since the Dominion government several months ago permitted the reentry of NM into Canada. We select this particular letter (which came with a subscription order) because of what it has to say. Before you read it, however, you might like to know a little about the correspondent, Nelson Clarke. At the age of twenty-seven, he has quite a record. Mr. Clarke is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan. He has also been a leader in the youth movement of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation. Last fall he was elected to the City Council as a candidate of the United Reform movement, a local progressive organization which Mr. Clarke helped to found. He is a member of the International Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, and hopes to be able to enlist soon in the Canadian Army "to carry into the military sphere the fight I have so long waged against fascism." Mr. Clarke's letter follows:

"The material contained in your magazine, particularly pertaining to the second front, continues to be of the greatest assistance to us here in combating the arguments of defeatists of various kinds. The province of Saskatchewan has been heavily settled with Germans and Ukrainians, among whom Bundists and Ukrainian Nationalists have been active for many years. There happens to be a Provincial election coming up this fall or next spring and the two main political parties—the Liberals and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation—are vying with each other for the vote. James G. Gardiner, federal minister of agriculture, goes into a district in eastern Saskatchewan and informs the German voters there that because of the heavy casualties at Dieppe there can be no thought of a second front until 1943. M. J. Coldwell, federal leader of the CCF, informs audiences that because we haven't got socialism in Canada, we will not be able to produce sufficient materials of war to open a second front before 1943. The situation is rendered more complicated and difficult by the fact that the Dominion government persists in its ban on the Communist Party. This is something I think NM should take up very sharply, because the whole continental war effort is being weakened by the attitude of a section of the Canadian government on this question.

"However, a number of us here are endeavoring to carry on a strong agitation for the second front, for total mobilization of Canadian manpower, and for the complete utilization of our great agricultural resources on these prairies for the production of the food so badly needed for victory. Granted an intelligent approach to the question of agricultural planning on the part of our government, there is no reason why Saskatchewan farmers couldn't greatly improve their economic position, as well as make a tremendous contribution to the cause of the United Nations. What is needed is: more adequate debt protection, governmental assistance to enable farmers to develop herds of livestock and buy more farm machinery, and—particularly at the present time—a relaxation of regulations governing manpower, to enable the farmers to harvest the huge crop now lying in the fields. With thousands of men in Army training camps prevented from going overseas by the vacillating conscription policy of the King government, there seems to be no reason why a portion of them could not be made available for harvest work. There is a widespread appreciation of these problems among the farmers; unfortunately, many of their political leaders in both major parties—the Liberals and the CCF—are directing their attention away from the all-important question of a victory program for agriculture, and leading them down blind alleys with a view to serving narrow partisan ends."

JOY DAVIDMAN, who is well known to NM readers and others for her poetry as well as her movie criticism, is editor of a forthcoming anthology, *War Poems of the United Nations,* which is being gotten out by the League of American Writers and will be published by the Dial Press. The volume will include battle poetry from the Russian front, from China, Britain, and the United States. Contributions will also be solicited from the Nazi-occupied countries—the French underground, and so on. The people of Latin America will be represented by their war poems. The anti-fascist spirit of suppressed people in Axis countries will be expressed through poems by Italian, German, and Spanish anti-fascist refugees. Any number of poems, not more than 500 lines long, may be submitted, the only stipulation being that they shall not have been published in book form in the United States. All communications should be addressed to Joy Davidman, editor for the National Board, League of American Writers, 13 Astor Place, NYC.

"THE Century of the Common Man" is the theme of a dinner to be given by the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee on Tuesday evening, October 27. The guests of honor will be the men and women who are working to make Vice-President Wallace's great concept a reality—an aircraft worker, an air raid warden, clergyman, farmer, machinist, miner, seaman, and so on. Speakers will include Carl Sandburg, Paul Robeson, Jan Struther, and Joseph Curran, with Louis Bromfield as chairman. Proceeds from the dinner will go to the committee's program of rescue and relief of anti-fascists in countries dominated by Hitler. During the past year alone the committee succeeded in rescuing more than 200 of these men and women. Mexico has just issued forty new visas to interned anti-fascist allies and sixty more are expected shortly. The committee's campaign requires $88,640 by November 15. The dinner will take place at the Astor Hotel, NYC. Reservations can be secured by writing the committee at 425 Fourth Ave., NYC, or telephoning MUrray Hill 3-0180.

THIS WEEK

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October 27, 1942

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"This is our war too"—Negro sharecropper near Birmingham, Alabama. Lange, FSA

EYES ON THE SOUTH

In the tumbledown cabins of the cotton belt, on the mountains of coal and iron—the war is making a world of difference. What the Negro is thinking. First in a series by Joseph North.

Birmingham.

THE war is very much with Birmingham; the furnaces on Red Mountain roar day and night. Armies of workingmen dig the mountain's coal and melt its iron for the steel our frontlines need. The city's papers carry photographs of Alabama boys killed in action. I saw Birmingham's sons marching down the street from the big Post Office where the Navy recruits. I saw one procession of white lads, their womenfolk hanging on their arms. I had seen these processions before, in Spain in 1937. A few minutes later I saw another parade, of black lads, also off to man the battleships. Yes, everything about Birmingham was the war.

Alabama is very much in it. And the changes that war brings —a war of this sort—are being felt, argued, discussed, debated in every backwoods cabin, in every milltown and smoky metropolis. So I found it in Birmingham, so in Bessemer, so in Chambers and Talledaga Counties in the Black Belt, so it is in teeming Mobile where the ships are built. Alabama is the South; here you can find every trend, every thought, that runs across the giant land from Richmond to Tucson. Alabama affords a good picture of the South today, I was told by Alabamans.

I CAME South to ask a lot of questions about the Negro and the war. What are the trends? Are the 9,000,000 Negroes afforded the opportunity to serve their country as they wish to serve? Is their status improving? What about the "White Supremacy" movement launched by "Judge" Horace Wilkinson of Birmingham? What was Governor Dixon of Alabama up to? How did the southerner assay Gene Talmadge's defeat? What about the poll tax? What about labor? What about race relations?

Alarming reports have come North of increased violence; of heightened tension between the white and the black American. Certain New York newspapers had taken a poll of the southern Negroes' attitude toward the war; their picture was none too encouraging. Were they right? I had talked to Negro and white observers in the North: had followed the Negro press. I had formed certain conclusions, but wanted to see for myself. I had determined to talk to many Negroes and whites of all categories down here. I did. I spoke with leading politicians, labor leaders, workingmen, sharecroppers, school teachers, editors, and I believe I got a fairly accurate picture.

Of course many of the facts about the South are known to the nation as a whole. The President's report in 1937, when he referred to the South as our Nation's No. 1 economic problem, had focused national attention on Dixie. The Scottsboro case is known to many millions; Gene Talmadge and the dangerous antics of the poll-tax congressmen had advertised their homeland in a manner that the Japanese short-wave propagandists love. What I specifically sought here was the trend in relation to the Negro. What changes had the war wrought? What chances were being afforded the Negro to participate in the war?

My second day in Birmingham provided me with a chance to go to the Black Belt, to the countryside. A Negro workingman, a CIO member whom I knew, was visiting his folks—sharecroppers—somewhere near Montgomery. He invited me along and I snapped at the offer. He had worked in Bessemer, in Birmingham, in Mobile. He knew his Alabama. His rattletrap car trundled down Alabama's fine highways, through the piney hills and valleys, and we talked. "You'll probably be surprised at what you'll see," he said. "The northerner has a wrong idea, generally, of the Negro down here. Lots of southerners, even, don't realize what's going on. Times have changed, been changing. We know a lot more than people think we do. You'll see."

THE BLACK BELT: The cotton fields gleam as they have for centuries. The white fluff has burst through the boll, the families, white and Negro, mostly Negro, move in the fields, sacks to their sides, stuffing them with the fruit of their toil. The rickety clapboard homes lean crazily as they ever did; a

bony cow splayfoots toward a brook that runs among the scrub pine which is so much a part of the South. You think that Jefferson Davis must have looked upon a scene very much like this. But then you hear a familiar drone and you look up; the ubiquitous squadron of bombers streaks across the blue Alabama sky. They come so often these days that the hawk wheeling over the fields is no longer frightened; he circles gracefully about in his timeless gyrations, undisturbed, single-minded. Without the flight of the army bombers it might be rural Alabama, circa 1850.

But the army bombers make a world of difference, I learned. Some of them are flown by black men from nearby Tuskegee where Uncle Sam is training Negro aviators. And that makes a world of difference.

THIS I shall never forget. The sharecropper, with the radio, in his tumbledown cabin deep in the Black Belt. Nine children, he had, all standing there on the rickety porch, barefoot. "Barefoot," I noted mentally, "but handsome, sturdy. They don't show that swollen stomach of hunger." Their large eyes shone as they crowded about the unusual spectacle of a white man in their home. "I can't send them across the hill the four-mile to school this year," the sharecropper said. "No cash." The boll weevil had hit him hard this year. He had expected to harvest ten bales; he'll be lucky to get five. Half of that is already pledged to his landlord—"landlaw," he pronounces it. He'll emerge, after a season's hard toil, and hard it is, with a deficit of $75.

He explained that his plight was exceptional. "That damn boll weevil got me this year," he said. Other croppers were better off. Fortune had been with them; the boll weevil hadn't eaten his way as far up as their farms. Later I visited some of these other farmers. He was right. Their status was considerably better than his. Many of them, as he pointed out, have been helped by the Farm Security Administration. He said that much of the support of the New Deal among the Negro sharecroppers derives from the FSA's work. True, he pointed out, the majority of those who administer its benefits locally are representatives of the "landlaws," but the government has applied pressure on them to deal equitably with farmers.

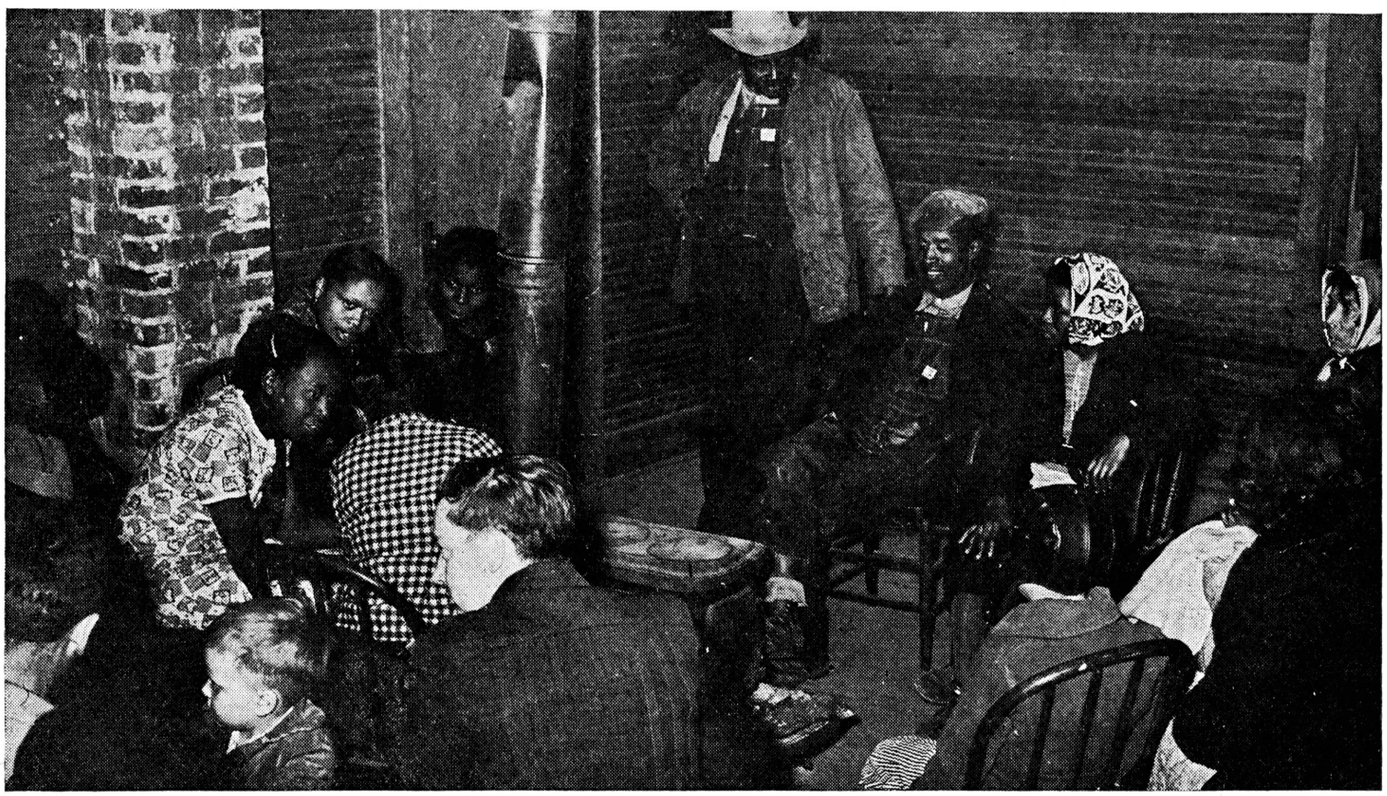
Later I learned from Gerald Harriss, leader of the Alabama Farmers Union, that there are some 670 fulltime FSA employees in the state. Their task is to "bring security to the farmers through loans and to rehabilitate them, to help them get proper living conditions." But he did admit that most of the 670 derive from the planter class. "Nonetheless, there have been gains." The governmental agencies demanded that the planters give written contracts to their tenants or sharecroppers and that government agents keep the books, which are subject to federal scrutiny. This has cut down on the widespread practice of cheating the Negro farmers, many of them still illiterate, of their hard-earned gains.

"Yes," my sharecropper host assured us, "things have been better in recent years. Gov'ment has helped." By "gov'ment" he means, of course, Washington, not Montgomery. There is no faith in the poll-tax state government—nor in the poll-tax congressmen in Washington. "Gov'ment" refers chiefly to Roosevelt and the New Deal administration.

" 'Cause things been some better last few years I was able to buy me a radio two years back." It is obviously his most treasured possession. It had cost $25 and it requires two batteries a year. That means $14 out of the slim pocketbook, about $1.10 a month. But he pays that and goes without other necessities. For he feels that the radio is a necessity. Information has become vital.

THE radio dominated the room. It shone from the mantelpiece, above which was a picture of the Madonna. "Sometimes," he said, "I can even git London. I listens to broadcasts from Moscow. I hears Washington and New York every night." I glanced at my friend, the Birmingham workingman, with surprise. He noted it, smiled faintly. I thought, "We had known that America was casting off its isolationism, its provincialism. But I had not suspected that it was happening here, with the speed of the airwave."

The sharecropper invited us to stay the night. I rejoiced over the invitation and asked if I could chip in for supper.



Lee, FSA

White and Negro farmers talking things over before their union meeting opens.

He said there was a grocery store three miles off. Tom and I got in the Ford and found it. It was pitch black, and we discovered the place by means of the flaring kerosene lamp in the doorway. Inside we found a dozen or so cans on the shelves, a bit of fatback, some corn, some tobacco, and nothing more. We brought back some sardines and salmon. The sharecropper's wife had some fruits and vegetables in neatly stacked jars on her shelves in the kitchen. "Got these jars from the FSA," she said. "They show us how best to can them." Though the jars are scrupulously kept for the winter, she did open one in honor of the northern guest.

AFTER dark some of the sharecropper's friends came to the house. They wanted to hear the nine o'clock broadcast. They got New York—WMCA, I think it was—and listened to the discussion of Wendell Willkie's statement concerning the second front, the statement he made in Moscow. I looked about the room. The kerosene lamp shed its faint light from the mantelpiece next to the radio. The corners of the room were shrouded in darkness, and all about, on the bed, on the floor, the sharecroppers sat listening.

In the semi-dark they discussed the broadcast. "Now why haven't they opened that second front yit?" one of them asked. Another wondered if Willkie was talking for Roosevelt, or merely for himself. A third asked how Churchill would react to the prodding. As I listened, sitting there in the rocker, I thought, "When I write about this, there will be many who will find it hard to believe." They talked about Stalingrad's defense. "That Red Army, man, that Red Army's got somep'n." Another said: "Down in my hollow, they been feelin' bad the last month. Thought ol' Hitler would take Stalingrad. Now since Stalingrad's holdin' out, everybody's feelin' a damn sight better."

They asked me a multitude of questions about the war. One said jokingly: "Talk a while." Afterward their discussion continued: I saw how deep their faith was in Roosevelt's policies. "He wants right; right will come out on top. Roosevelt is on our side. But what he says in Washington don't always come out the way he wants by time it gets here. Something blocks it along the way." Discussion of inflation—"What does that-all mean?"—discussion of the farm bloc (they knew what that meant, all right); discussion in that Deep South accent of all the things I've heard northern workingmen talk about. Shrewd observations. "Some of them Four Freedom gonna come down here. Roosevelt been trying to git some of it down here befo' the war. Landlaw won't let it git down. Wrong walks a short road, though. Right will get here." The sharecropper who was host wound up the discussion about midnight. "I look at it thisaway. Hitler's constitution is all discrimination, all lynch law. Our constitution means democracy. We got a chance here to make our constitution work. Under Hitler, lynch law's the constitution."

I WONDERED, as I listened to the discussion in the cabin: "How typical is this? Does this represent the southern Negro? Or have I stumbled upon a remarkable group, exceptional in its level of political understanding? Or is this a more articulate group expressing the general sentiment of the southern Negro on the land?" Later I learned that the sharecroppers in this area were acquainted with organization, had banded together several years ago. I asked my friend Tom his opinion. "These men," he said, "are organized. That's why they know so much. They are the leading men in this part of the country. They are influencing the others to think the same way they do. And the others *are* thinking that way. You will find some Negroes who don't see as they do. You'll find those who say 'This is a white man's war.' They're in the minority. You'll find Negroes like those you saw around the radio all over Alabama's countryside. Their ideas are in the majority." Many

Liberman, OWI

Champion riveter in a southern shipyard.

factors had contributed to this, he felt. Chief among them was the belief that Roosevelt was their friend; second, the growth of labor organization in the South; third, the increasing awareness of what the Axis stood for; fourth, the identification of Hitler's aims (Nordic Supremacy) with the goals of their own oppressors (White Supremacy). The next morning I asked my sharecropper host the same question. "Of course," he said, "we got people around here who don't see as we do. Mostly, the old-fashioned ones." He indicated their bitterness over the treatment of the Negro soldiers in the nearby camps; the news of the beating of two aged Baptist ministers on a train enroute to Atlanta; the continued harshness of the Negroes' lot. "It's easy to understand why," he said. "We all feel bitter about those things. We can't, and we won't, bear them." But, he indicated, the war would end these wrongs. He didn't have the words for it, but what he did say amounted to a belief in the dynamics of this war. It was a different war.

I cite this episode in considerable detail, as I did to most of the men, Negro and white, with whom I talked later in Birmingham. There were some who refused to believe it, who said as politely as they could that they felt I was mistaken, had not heard what my ears told me. These were men who should know better, men who make their living as observers, editors, newspapermen. When I told it to a leading Negro editor, who asked me to withhold his name for evident reasons, he manifested no surprise: "Of course, that's the way most of the Negroes feel. We have a stake in America. We helped build it; we're building it today. We seek to ensure victory. We will shed our blood as will every American. But we say that bullets recognize no color lines. What we seek today is a reevaluation of the worth of the Negro in the South. We don't intend to 'freeze' our progress 'for the duration': that's what some of our leading white citizens here want. They want us to freeze our 'status quo.' You saw what the status quo of the Negro sharecroppers is. You also heard how they feel. They don't want that 'status quo.'" That, he said emphatically, does not permit the Negro to function anywhere near maximum, as warrior, as worker, as farmer. "We want a greater share of democracy, economic and political, so we can contribute at maximum in the war. It is *our* war, too."

BESSEMER: War posters line the clapboard walls of the union hall: "Give them both barrels," one says. It shows a machine-gunner and a riveter. Outside, the Southern Railway locomotive, quaintly painted a vivid green, backs and pulls

a few feet from the entrance to the hall. One flight up and you come into the large bare room, typical of union halls in a thousand towns of America. But this is different. You feel that as soon as you enter.

Black men, white men, meeting in the same room, in the heart of the South. These men are the stuff of the South; the whites, gaunt, bony, wiry, the men who tilled the soil for generations, now makers of iron; the Negroes, too, kin of the men I had just met in the Black Belt, the subjects of King Cotton.

My friend Tom had said, "Look to organized labor." I came to look.

On the platform sit the officers; the president a white man, the vice-president a Negro. President is John Butler: "My grandfather was a plantation owner," he told me. The vice-president is Louis Tarrent, a tall monument of a man, prematurely gray. Both had just returned from Denver, Col., where they went as delegates from this district to the convention of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers International Union. This is Raimond Local, No. 121, a union with a history.

I listened to Mr. Tarrent report on the Denver convention, and was particularly impressed by the four principal subheads with which he organized his talk. First: everything to win the war; second: organize the unorganized; third: beat the poll tax; fourth: a proud recital of his union's growth.

Later I talked with Mr. Tarrent, with another Negro, Asbury Howard, international representative of the union, and Homer L. Wilson, a white union organizer.

I found, as everywhere else in the country, the southern workingman is primarily interested in winning the war. That is the point of departure for all other considerations, the gains he seeks or the grievances he raises.

Later the officers told me how they had succeeded, just a few days ago, on September 5, in securing a contract with the company—after nine years of hard work. And how at the last moment, the company tried to renege on a verbal agreement by inserting jokers in the contract. Word of the ruse spread through the community. Their patience sorely tried, a hundred of the men and their wives descended upon the Birmingham offices of the company where the negotiations were taking place. They came with the ultimatum "Nobody leaves the building until that contract is signed." The offices happened to be in the upper story of a skyscraper. "We put pickets, men and women, white and black, on each floor of the skyscraper. If the supers tried to get down by the elevator—before the contract was signed—they would be met on any floor." They assured me this was no strike. "You don't strike in war time." The pickets had come after work. "We did not want to strike. This was a way to win without strikin'."

They also had put pickets around the building. Birmingham saw the rare sight of white and Negro pickets—men and women—marching side by side. The Birmingham police watched it, and directed traffic.

The unionists had many stories to tell. I cite several that they told me as significant of the trend of the times.

In a certain southern county, last winter, a gang of thugs took two CIO organizers "for a ride." They flogged the men, left them for dead. Before departing, the gang poured hot tar over the organizers. Since 1933 a number of organizers have been kidnaped and beaten there. A few weeks after this terror, the NLRB held elections in the plant. The vote was 323 to one for the union. Today there are five CIO locals in this county.

"Well, up here in this area, we got a manganese smelter works, important war stuff. It hires about 400, two-thirds white. The whites heard some foremen refer to the colored workers as 'niggers.' The grievance committee of seven, five of them white, came to the superintendent and protested. They wanted action taken against the foremen. They expressed their objection in unmistakable terms. The result: The super called in his foremen and warned them against ever using that word again.

"Another thing happened just a few weeks ago. The union wanted a white high school for a mixed meeting. The head of the schoolboard was met by a mixed delegation. The chairman of the delegation introduced each of the men: 'Meet Mr. Jones, meet Mr. Smith,' and so on. The schoolboard official shook hands warmly with each of the whites. When the Negro delegate, a Mr. Thompson, was introduced, the school man waved his hand and said, 'Hi, Arthur.' The white chairman said, 'Perhaps you didn't hear me right, sir. I said "Mr. Thompson." The official hesitated, then put his hand out. 'How do you do, Mr. Thompson?' he said to the Negro."

THESE instances were cited to me as significant. Significant because they illustrate the changing spirit of the times. Remember that the South is one of the great war production areas of the land today. Hundreds of thousands of rural workers—sharecroppers, tenant farmers—are becoming industrial proletarians. They are encountering organization—and meeting Negroes as fellow-workers, men with common problems. The exigencies of this war are rapidly creating the conditions for racial unity.

True, as the men of this local explained, the above episodes are not the rule. They are exceptional. But they show which way the wind blows. True, too many AFL locals are still hamstrung by the old ways; too many locals of the CIO permit the old to drag at their progress. But their membership is learning. Further proof?

The following instances were cited by the Bessemer organizers: in North Carolina the AFL state convention elected a

OWI

(Left) Dr. Malcolm S. MacLean, president of Hampton Institute, Virginia, points out one of the school's buildings to a group of Negro seamen.

(Right) Honor Roll of Negro war heroes.

From the Birmingham *World*

Negro for the first time to the executive board; in Gulfport, Miss., the AFL journal quoted CIO representative Alton Lawrence approvingly. He had said, as reported by Victor Bernstein in *PM,* "The labor movement in the South never will amount to a hill of beans until unions are prepared squarely to face and solve the Negro problem." The organizers pointed to the fact that William Green and Philip Murray are members of the President's Fair Employment Practice Committee. They cited the fact that the recent AFL convention in Toronto went on record as opposing the poll tax.

THE unionists felt that the quickest way for the South to advance was through labor. They recalled the resolution passed at the last CIO convention: "Organize the South." They expressed this in their own slogan: "Organize the unorganized." Thus, they felt, will the inequities be overcome, those that are still the rule rather than the exception.

These industrial inequities fall into two categories: first, the refusal of certain companies, particularly the shipyards in Mobile and New Orleans, to hire Negroes, save as sweepers. Second, and this happens chiefly in the industries that are organized, the rights of seniority are not accorded Negroes. In these latter plants the differential in wages has in the main been overcome; but the differential in ratings continues. The term "differential in rating" implies the following: skilled Negroes are not given skilled jobs. In many instances, they work at skilled jobs but are still rated as unskilled, or semi-skilled, labor. The unions have much to do to eliminate these injustices. And, under pressure of reaction, some have been temporizing. Kluxer influences have yet to be overcome in many areas. The Raimond local is one that can well be the example for Southern labor.

Later I talked a long time with two of the organizers, one white, one Negro. They said, in effect: we know there is no fundamental antagonism between white and Negro. God did not ordain men to be judged by the color of their skin. We know that is Hitler's slogan: "Aryan Supremacy." That is next of kin to the Kluxer's slogan: "White Supremacy." The Negro does not hate his white brother; or vice versa. Look at Bloody Roane County. Race hatred has to be *organized.* These incidents you read about, the violence and lynchings, are *organized* hatred. They come from Kluxer leadership. Once you have that straight, you can organize white and Negro on the basis of their economic needs, and today, on the basis of the war's needs. The war makes a lot clear. You can't drown out the aims of this war. If labor leadership acts with energy, on the basis of experience here to date, we can hurdle all the bars to improving the Negroes' lot. The war demands that so that we shall be able to make our great contribution toward victory.

THESE things that I saw—and others that I shall recount in later articles—lead me to believe that the trend in the South is forward. I say this after full consideration of the mounting list of violent incidents—the lynchings in Mississippi, the beatings, the continued discrimination in many industries. "Race hatred has to be organized," the labor leaders told me. I believe it *is* being organized. A group of political desperadoes plot to halt the onward march of the South. The reality of the forward trend can be estimated by the violent response it has brought from a small coterie of reactionaries in the South: men closer to the ante-bellum feudalism than they are to 1942. Included among these are Governor Dixon of Alabama, Governor Talmadge of Georgia, "Judge" Horace Wilkinson of Birmingham, exponent of "White Supremacy," former Klansman. They have allies; they are powerful, willful men, and their ties are more than sectional. I determined to find out more about their current activities. I got a fairly good bead on them. I shall discuss this in next week's article.

JOSEPH NORTH.

HESS HAUNTS ENGLAND

Let's get rid of him, the British people say, and get on with the second front.

London (by wireless).

THE extent and depth of increasing public demand to open the second front in 1942 was expressed in startling fashion at the meeting of the Transport and General Workers Union, the largest union in Britain. It went unanimously on record in favor of opening the second front. This was peculiarly significant because of the fact that for years the transport union has been reckoned as not merely the most powerful, but also the most reactionary, of big British unions. This particular vote followed a speech by Ernest Bevin, the boss of the union, who later became the Minister of Labor. Under the thinnest of disguises, he opposed the line of those who were most actively supporting the views of the second front strategists.

Despite some abuse from Bevin, the union reflected in an unprecedented way the feeling of the British people, who—whatever may be said by the enemy and enemy propagandists—retain a high hope and a high morale in spite of all disappointments and delays. In fact, it is the mark of British morale at this moment that, despite very considerable discouragement from certain quarters, and despite the discouragement afforded by the visible facts, the British people still believe in the offensive. They refuse to consider the possibility of "stalemate," which the German government is so obviously offering as a basis for a peace offensive. The British public is by no means unaware of the efforts that are being made in enemy quarters, and quarters friendly to the enemy, to lay this basis.

THE Hess episode, and the public response here to the Russian request for the immediate trial of the man whom Hitler sent to negotiate with the British government, testify to the strength of feeling and the high level of morale. People are disgusted at the mere reminder that this criminal still exists untried and unpunished in our midst although he is the only topgrade criminal of the Nazi clique in Allied hands. For months past the gentle treatment accorded Hess has been a subject of comment by the press funny men. The British public, however, has never thought it very funny, and the Russian demand that the matter no longer be treated as a gentlemanly joke has evoked an immediate response.

Rightly or wrongly there is a fairly widespread belief that it was not by accident that the Nazi-controlled press of Sweden recently tried to revive the "atmosphere" of the original Hess mission and that Hess is—in some sense which it is difficult to understand fully—a symbol of importance. Because he is a symbol and because of the sort of policy he symbolizes, as well as for many graver reasons, the public is passionately anxious for effective offensive action. They want such action now—before the possibility of a joint effective offensive by all the Allies has been dissipated by continued Anglo-American subservience to the Axis policy of "one at a time." CLAUDE COCKBURN.

'Tain't Elegant

THE Nazi controlled Paris press has been warning Frenchmen against cheering in movie houses when Russian soldiers in the fighting for Stalingrad appear on the screen. Frenchmen are being told that such jubilation is bad manners.

OUTLOOK FOR THE EASTERN FRONT

The six objectives of the German High Command this past summer have not been attained. Hitler's next moves. . . . What is happening at Guadalcanal.

THERE is no way of telling whether, or how, the crises in the Solomons and at Stalingrad will have been resolved when these lines are read. The outcome seems to be hanging in the balance at both points. For the moment the enemy attacks are being pressed in an eastwardly direction. Had the United Nations agreed upon and implemented a real strategy of coalition, the situation would have been different. Consider the "broken" ring of Axis might, stretching from the North Cape, through Europe to the Dodecanese and El Alamein and from Petsamo to that strategic pass southeast of Novorossisk, and from the Indian-Burmese border, along the complex curlicues of the Chinese fronts to the Kurile Islands and down from Kiska, through Wake, Guadalcanal to Templeton's Crossing in the Owen Stanley Mountains. That ring would now be subjected to excentric and concentric attacks. The excentric would come from the Soviet Union and China, one pressing westward and the other eastward. The concentric attacks would be made by the United Nations fighting on a second front facing eastward in Europe and by the United States pressing Japan westward. This would really have meant a double vise on the grandest possible scale.

INSTEAD of that we have two major enemy thrust-points—one at the "Tractor Factory Settlement" of Stalingrad and the other in the jungle surrounding Henderson Field on Guadalcanal, in the sea around the island and in the air over it.

True, the size of these two thrusts is very different in terms of fighting manpower and, say, weight of hourly or daily salvos fired. At Stalingrad, on the crucial sector alone, the enemy is hurling into battle probably no less than thirty divisions with more than 1,000 tanks and 1,500 planes. At Guadalcanal the Japanese operate with less than a division against probably no more than a brigade, with a few tanks and hardly more than a couple of hundred planes. But it must be remembered that the Battle of the Solomons is a battle for communications, not a battle to annihilate manpower and materiel. Here mighty fleets hover off the islands, ready to pounce upon each other for a decisive fight to determine who is going to run the southeast Pacific.

The Pacific battle may bring a decision. True, since Japan definitely is only "Enemy Number Two," this battle will not decide the outcome of the war. But on it probably hinges the character of the next phase of the Pacific fighting. At this writing nothing is yet known which might permit us to make the slightest forecast. The issue is in the hands of better men, planes, and ships than the men, planes, and ships of Nippon. But Nippon may have at the Solomons (and probably has) *more* men, planes, and ships. All we can do is wait patiently to be told what is what. It is too early to draw the line which just precedes the grand total.

AS FAR as the Eastern Front is concerned, the summer campaign is about over and what fighting will be done now depends on the luck of a belated spurt of Indian summer—except along the eastern coast of the Black Sea where there will be hardly any real winter at all. A balance sheet for the summer campaign can be drawn, even if an approximate one.

This year the Germans faced the Red Army with a numerical superiority of about two to one in manpower, and probably no less than three to one in materiel—especially in tanks and planes. Despite this superiority, the Nazis were able to wage a massive attack on less than one third of the entire front (as compared to their offensives of the summer of 1941, which were simultaneously conducted along nearly the entire front). Last year the Germans occupied about 500,000 square miles of territory (about 100,000 square miles of which were liberated by the Red Army during the winter offensive). This year, so far, they have occupied only about one-fourth of what they took in 1941.

True, some of this occupied territory is extremely valuable. It is hard to replace the production of the Donbas. The wheat fields of the Don and Kuban are temporarily out of the economic scheme of the Soviet Union. Two major naval bases in the Black Sea—Sevastopol and Novorossisk—are lost to the Soviet Fleet. The Maikop oilfields—about seven percent of Soviet production, according to pre-war figures—have been lost, although the Germans will not be able to use them for months to come. In fact the Germans can use little of all this territory because of the scorched earth destruction, because of the evacuation scheme, and because Soviet agriculture is largely tractor-operated and the Germans will have few machines, little oil, and practically no horses. Their greatest gain is in the Donbas where whole mines could not be so effectively destroyed as plants and oilfields could.

German lines of communications in the south are now 200 miles or more longer than they were last year. The front, because of the huge Caucasian bulge, is now about 700 miles longer than it was. While last year the Germans were acquiring territory with a dense network of railroads, their advances this year have carried them into regions which have few railroads. Thus their supply system has become (proportionately) an ever increasing drain on their stocks of oil. The great bulge has actually only two radial railroad lines—Kamensk-Stalingrad (one-track) and Rostov-Tikhoretsk-Mozdok (double-track, with ramifications in the Kuban District). The 50,000-square-mile area of Stalingrad-Salsk-Astrakhan-Groznyi has no railroads whatsoever, for instance (except for the new line along the western shore of the Caspian). For this the Germans have paid with certainly more than 1,000,000 men in casualties, Stalingrad alone costing them a regiment a day, or a quarter of a million men so far.

SUCH is the balance sheet as far as gains and losses are concerned. But this balance sheet applies to a certain period of time—four and one-half summer months of 1942. In war, however, the balance sheets of certain periods must be considered not in absolute terms, but in relation to the strategic objec-

Red Army infantrymen under cover of tanks attack to dislodge German troops on the southern front.

tives for which the given time under consideration can happen to be but a stepping stone.

What were the strategic objectives of the German High Command this summer? They appear as follows:

1. To split the Red Army in two by a drive to the Volga.
2. To deprive the Soviet Black Sea Fleet of its remaining bases and thus force it either to scuttle itself or ask for internment, say, in Turkey.
3. To deprive the Soviet Union of the oil of the Caucasus.
4. To acquire the oil of the Caucasus.
5. To cut the Volga line of communications between the Caucasus and the center.
6. If all the foregoing objectives were achieved early in the summer, then the next objective would be: (a) to drive for the northern route and cut it at Vologda, joining forces with the Finns on the Svir and creating a threat to Moscow from the north; and (b) to drive, say, from Voronezh along the line Tambov-Gorky, pinching off Moscow from the south and joining hands with the northern branch of the pincers (the juncture to be effected somewhere near Gorky). The latter objective was obviously a sort of *ultima ratio* to be attempted only if the other objectives were attained, for instance, no later than in August.

An alternate plan should be considered, too: should the Soviet High Command have fallen into the trap of rushing its strategic reserves from the area east of Moscow to the south, to save the Don and Kuban, the Germans might have driven toward Objective Number Six immediately, without waiting for the consummation of the southern campaign, as a reversal to last year's strategy of unlimited objectives.

The Germans have driven to the Volga, although on a very narrow and so far insecure front. They have done so late in the season when the Volga will soon be frozen anyway, and of no use as a line of communications. They have not deprived the Black Sea Fleet of all bases, although they have taken the two larger ones. They have not deprived the Soviet Union of most of the oil of the Caucasus. They have not acquired any appreciable amount of oil. They have not split the Red Army in two. Now, behind the Volga, the Soviet Front is tightly knit, with Stalingrad only a bridgehead in the general scheme of things.

As FOR the large objectives of Point Number Six, they are hardly attainable this season. The whole German plan, even in its circumscribed outlines, was frustrated by delay. This delay was caused by: (1) Marshal Timoshenko's Kharkov offensive in May; (2) the resistance of Sevastopol; (3) the stand at Stalingrad.

However, the campaign of this summer on the Eastern Front discloses a precarious balance of forces. This balance, unfortunately, does not leave much room for hope that the Red Army will be able to launch a large-scale winter offensive. *The best that can be expected* is that it will succeed in keeping the Germans away from the large section of the lower Volga, from Groznyi and Baku and from Batum and Poti.

Such predictions are, of course, contingent upon the opening of a second front in Europe this year. If this is done and if other Allied promises are carried out "fully and on time"—the whole picture will certainly change. This precarious balance can and should be broken by an Allied invasion. The double vise is the real solution—the real, *speedy* solution.


PLOT AGAINST 2ND FRONT
LEAVE IT TO THE EXPERTS!
DO NOT DISTURB
EXPERTS
LET'S WAIT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THE ARTISTS SAY "NOW!"

Charlie Chaplin came back to the stage waving two fingers forming a V-sign. "Victory with and through a second front." What happened at the great Carnegie Hall meeting.

TWICE last week Arturo Toscanini conducted Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony at Carnegie Hall in New York. And from the same platform last Friday evening the glorious challenge of this music evoked a fitting response: a call by American artists for a second front now. "The artists of the world, speaking a universal language, influence people in every land," wrote Vice-President Wallace to the Artists Front to Win the War, sponsors of the second front meeting. The universal language of Shostakovich spoke eloquently for a United Nations victory. It was appropriate that he should be answered by a man whose name is synonymous with universality, Charles Chaplin.

Toscanini, Shostakovich, Chaplin. This is the world we know and love. It is the world where men and women strive to fashion beautiful things to enhance the dignity and meaning and joy of our lives. Least of all can the artist forget, as Carl Van Doren said at the meeting, "the bloody hands that struck, or the cynical hands that did not protest, or the greedy hands that profited by misery." For the artist, if he is indeed a man of imagination and sensitivity, need not have been at Lidice, he need not be at Stalingrad to feel, with the mighty wrath of Milton, the actual horror of fascism, or to celebrate, with the ardor of Shelley, the Promethean sublimity of our comrades. The artist, if he truly sees this war in human terms, is tormented by every moment of delay. He wants to win the war: quickly, surely.

And that is why Jan Struther, having really lived with her Mrs. Miniver, spoke for a second front now. The picture of Joris Ivens' native Rotterdam bloodied and defiled by the Nazis haunts him, and a liberated Holland is the proper subject of his greatest documentary film. Lillian Hellman knows that there are Kurt Muellers watching along the Rhine for the signal flares of invasion. Max Yergan knows that the same people who are inciting savage lynching bees against his people in Mississippi are also doing Hitler's work in obstructing a western front. Norman Corwin, in a shortwave broadcast from London, reported that the English people are "anxious as hell" for action. And Congressman Elmer J. Holland declared: "Mr. President, we—the people—are ready."

I WISH Chaplin's talk could have been broadcast to all the lands of the earth. He did not make a speech, this man in a dress suit which hardly disguised the little man we have loved for almost three decades. He violated all the rules of formal exposition with extraordinary finesse. He was warm, real, human, and he leaped across the stage as he had always broken through the screen. He acted, and therefore he was natural, his hands and legs moving expressively, his face beaming with delight at his wonderful epigrams and then sobering as he spoke reverently of Stalingrad. This was his greatest role and he did not fail, just as he has never failed.

He hit on every cylinder. To the "columnists and fifth columnists" who have been vilifying him for his second-front-now position he delivered rebukes which should pierce even those thickskins. He feels that a panning of his new picture by the New York *Daily News* is not too high a price to pay for winning the war. You can't stop progress; you can't stop the little man. This basic faith Chaplin values dearly, and the guttersnipes do not wring concessions from him.

Chaplin knows President Roosevelt and likes him. Mr. Roosevelt is a people's President and he wants to win the war, and Chaplin likes that. Mr. Roosevelt freed Earl Browder, and Chaplin said he likes that. The administration did well to change its attitude toward Italian aliens; but it is making a bad mistake in prosecuting Harry Bridges, whose pro-war leadership Chaplin admires.

Who are Communists? Chaplin asked. And he replied that they are people who want decent things, education for their children, decency and security in their lives. "It is a pleasure and a privilege," he said, "to address the defenders of Stalingrad as comrades." Chaplin did not add any of those revolting "buts" after his remarks about the gallantry of the Russian troops. "Yes," he said, "I want to pay tribute to the 3,000,000 dead Russians who have sacrificed their lives, holding the fort of democracy while we, their allies, are getting ready. . . . I say we are coming with arms and men, brave men like yourself, and we together with you will crush the enemy."

Chaplin said that no decent, self-respecting person can be opposed to the opening of a second front. We promised it. We need it. Moreover: "Stalin knows what he is talking about. He would not ask for it unless he thought it was possible, because failure of that second front would be just as disastrous for him as it would be for us. . . . So let's have it now!" It is the America Firsters who want America last, said Chaplin, but the common people who want the second front first.

The hall that had resounded with bravos for Toscanini and Shostakovich rang with cheers for Chaplin's second front talk. The actor came back to the stage waving two fingers forming a V-sign. "Do you know what that is?" he challenged the audience. He didn't take "Victory" alone as an answer. *Two* fingers, he shouted with triumph; victory with and through a second front.

THIS summed up the urgent thought of the meeting. It was a demonstration in support of President Roosevelt's policy of the offensive. The Artists Front chairman, Sam Jaffe, praised Mr. Roosevelt's closeness to the people and cited him as an example to artists. The meeting was also an answer to those "experts" who, as I. F. Stone said, have been consistently wrong for two decades. It was an expression of fellowship between the American and Soviet peoples symbolized by the playlet, *My Brother Lives in Stalingrad.*

Such a meeting makes all the more regrettable the fact that, as Rockwell Kent said, artists have not been given a sufficient opportunity to express their fervor for victory. Our cultural resources are vast, but they have only begun to be tapped. There is no doubt that one effect of full scale action in the West would be to vitalize and release our cultural energies, just as it would step up our industrial output, deliver a blow to the defeatists and appeasers, strengthen morale in general. Not enough was done with this idea at the meeting. In stressing aid to the Russians, insufficient emphasis was placed on the manifold values of a second front to America, particularly with respect to activity in the arts.

THE credo of the Artists Front to Win the War states that "artists are the spokesmen of democracy's culture and ideals, which Hitler has sworn to destroy, and that we have a responsibility to act and speak now, when these traditions stand in such mortal danger." At Carnegie Hall a large and representative group of American artists did act and speak as the necessity of American survival demanded they should: for a second front; for a second front now.

SAMUEL SILLEN.

KEYS TO ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

Earl Browder surveys the problems arising from the rivalries between the two powers. Their effect on United Nations solidarity. New policies the war demands. Last of five articles.

IT IS generally assumed in public debate in this country that the greatest solidarity exists between the "two great Anglo-Saxon powers," the United States and Great Britain. Such shallow thinkers as the "Union Now" propagandists base their "program" for the whole world upon this assumption. But it remains unfortunately true that contradictions between the two countries present some of the most stubborn practical problems to be solved in the welding together of the United Nations.

What is the nature of these contradictions? For answer to this question, let us turn to a speech delivered by a scientific employee of monopoly capital to a gathering of investment bankers at the end of 1940. A few of Dr. Virgil Jordan's phrases will bear repetition at this point to make clear the nature of the obstructions to Anglo-American cooperation within the United Nations:

"Whatever the outcome of the war, America has embarked upon a career of imperialism, both in world affairs and in every other aspect of her life. Even though, by our aid, England should emerge from this struggle without defeat, she will be so impoverished economically and so crippled in prestige that it is improbable she will be able to maintain the dominant position in world affairs which she has occupied so long. At best, England will become a junior partner in a new Anglo-Saxon imperialism, in which economic resources and the military and naval strength of the United States will be the center of gravity."

The same ideas formed the basis for Henry R. Luce's programmatic manifesto on "The American Century" issued at about the same time.

This "utopian imperialism" of the Jordan-Luce school has already suffered shipwreck on the rocks of a war which did not develop according to the textbooks. It is no longer talked about in public, it has become slightly disreputable and *passe*. But the harsh realities noted by Dr. Jordan, the destruction of the foundations of the sprawling British colonial empire, have indeed raised problems which continue to bedevil the relations between the two governments and to present problems for the United Nations. Today even Herbert Hoover acknowledges the dreamlike unreality of the projected Uncle Sam–John Bull partnership in an amalgamated Anglo-Saxon imperialism to replace the old world structure. But the rejected Jordan-Luce utopianism has not yet been replaced by any coherent set of policies to regulate British-American handling of such problems as Latin American relations, India, Africa, Spain, Vichy France, and so forth. The United Nations has as yet only the vague generalities of the Atlantic Charter for guide.

Into the gap thus created there is the constant intrusion of conflicts upon particular questions which express the continuing antagonisms of two rival imperialist powers unable as yet to rise above their imperialist natures even while they are fighting a war which has become irrevocably a People's War of National Liberation.

It is a task of the United Nations, and all who would help hammer out policy for the United Nations, to conciliate, soften, and find solutions (temporary or permanent) for these conflicts between Great Britain and the United States, as well as of the problems arising between these great powers on the one hand and the weaker powers and colonial peoples on the other. That is our purpose in discussing the question here. It is no service to the common cause to avoid such problems, or to ignore the essentially imperialist character of the forces which create them.

SUCH problems are inherent in the economic, social, and political order which dominates Great Britain and the United States. That order is what is generally known as capitalism in that stage of development in which monopoly capital holds the dominating position. Monopoly capital is the decisive factor in modern imperialism and it dominates both the United States and Great Britain. Once monopoly capital has come into power, only the most profound and far-reaching revolution (the introduction of socialism) can eliminate it. Since we have laid down the thesis of this series of articles as the problem of winning victory for the United Nations, including capitalist and socialist countries, without any necessary fundamental changes in the regime of each country, it is clear that we do not place the abolition of imperialism in our program for victory; according to our understanding of imperialism, its abolition requires the abolition of capitalism itself.

When Sumner Welles said: "The age of imperialism is ended," he was using the term "imperialism" in a less fundamental sense than I am using it in this argument. Mr. Welles clearly meant to say that the age of great colonial empires is ended, and not that the age of monopoly capital is ended. It is in that sense that his words must be understood if they are to have any practical meaning. But the disappearance of the great colonial empires does not abolish the innate imperialistic nature of monopoly capital, nor subdue its strivings for world domination, which merely take other forms. It is not any supposed disappearance of these innate imperialist tendencies from the United States and Britain that makes it possible to characterize this war as a People's War of National Liberation, but the fact that the war, breaking out of the bounds of imperialism, has presented all nations, even the imperialist powers, no alternative between destruction at the hands of the Axis or victory on the condition of alliance with the Soviet Union and the liberation of nations, the abolition of the colonial system. Thus have even conscious imperialists been conscripted by history for a war which is essentially anti-imperialist.

MOST writers on the war are exceedingly vague and confused on the nature of imperialism and its role in this war. For some of them this is the result simply of lack of understanding; for others it is deliberate mystification of their readers, to avoid delicate problems. It is probably the latter which causes the well known writer on international questions, Vera Micheles Dean, to say: "The relationship known as imperialism will exist, in one form or another, as long as some peoples are economically advanced and others are economically backward." (*The Struggle for World Order,* page 50. Foreign Policy Association, 1941.)

This is true only if we add that the advanced country is capitalist, with monopoly already beginning to dominate its life. That is what Mrs. Dean avoids saying, and thereby avoids the essential character of imperialism. It is a demonstrated fact that in the Soviet Union, where there is no capitalism, the relations between the economically advanced republics and the backward ones have developed without anything that may be described as exploitation or oppression or imperialism. But it must be admitted that Mrs. Dean's formula is accurate as describing the inevitable tendency of British and United States relations to backward countries—so long as this tendency is not overruled by a higher power, a power which has now appeared in the necessities of war which demand liberation of nations in order to have them on our side for victory, or in order to prevent them from falling victim to the Axis' false promises of independence. This anti-imperialist influence of the war needs is made more powerful and finds its spokesmen within Britain and the United States in the naturally and traditionally anti-imperialist elements of the population, first of all in the labor movement. Within the United Nations it is represented by China, to some extent by the smaller nations, and most decisively by the Soviet Union.

In this article we are concerned primarily with the problems that arise from the rivalries between Britain and the United States on the basis of past and present imperialist interests. Clearly, it is most destructive of United Nations solidarity, if the United States is embarked on a campaign to use the war as the occasion to take over the British empire with

John Bull as a junior partner—if he behaves himself. In an earlier stage of the war, the British imperialists had to smile and pretend to like it when Dr. Jordan and Mr. Luce announced their grandiose plans for a new American empire built upon their ruins. But that day is long past, ever since it became clear that all nations are in the same boat together, and that a certain "equality of sacrifice" as between Great Britain and the United States will be imposed willy-nilly by the exigencies of war.

IT ALSO appears that the Soviet Union will have an increasing role within the United Nations in softening the antagonisms between Great Britain and the United States. The Soviet Union, clearly without any interest in perpetuating imperialist control over India and the other subject peoples, is even less interested in "handing them over" to the United States, and is ready to contribute to a fight to the death to keep them out of the hands of the Axis.

Within Britain and the United States the forces which will contribute most to cementing Anglo-American solidarity are those which will most insistently demand and fight for the abolition of all imperialist policies and practices *which stand in the way of victory in the war,* in the first place each in his own country, and in the second place as a common policy of the United Nations. Thus, in the United States, when the *Daily News* of New York comes out for the second front in Europe *on condition that the British* must open and maintain this front, with the United States cheering from the sidelines, that is nothing but a way of undermining Anglo-American relations, disrupting the United Nations, and sabotaging the second front. Those Americans who are really strengthening Anglo-American relations, building the United Nations, and helping to realize the second front, are *only* those who insist that the United States participate fully in the offensive against the enemy with men and materiel, carrying the maximum possible share of the burden.

It is necessary also to note India as a factor in Anglo-American relations. It should be clear that the Jordan-Luce point of view, whether openly expressed or working behind the scenes, makes of India a factor very disturbing and embittering in these relations. British imperialists, always mindful of the American imperialist dreams, are suspicious of every act from the United States which tends to support the independence aspirations of the Indian people, seeing it as merely a Machiavellian way of breaking off parts of the British empire so as to attach them to the American empire. They are confirmed in this suspicion by speeches like that of Senator Reynolds, one of the most reactionary spokesmen of American imperialism, suddenly a "friend of India"—in the same way as are the Japanese. And when, to allay that suspicion, Americans give their unquestioned support to the British in India, that merely confirms the British imperialists in their standpat determination to crush the Indian national movement, and thus makes a bad matter worse. No American can help the British solve the Indian problem without himself beginning with a clear repudiation of the Jordan-Luce dream of "American empire."

We cannot, of course, soothe the susceptibilities of the British imperialist circles by

American and British troops "somewhere in Britain." First Sergeant Warren E. Evans of South Dakota lights up for an English Commando sergeant.

assuring them that the United States is going to help them reestablish the status quo of colonial empire as their share of the fruits of a common victory. Neither can we put the dissolution of the British empire as a goal of the war. But we can, and clearly must, as a precondition for effective collaboration in the war of Britain and the United States as they now exist, make it absolutely clear that no advantage will be taken by one over the other as a result of the common war, that United States policy in relation to the colonial empire system will be determined solely by war needs, affecting all powers alike, and not by any special American grasping for power.

Just as we have both imperialist and anti-imperialist forces and political trends within the United States, so also has Great Britain. In both countries the obstacles to close collaboration in the war arise from the imperialist forces, and conciliation and adjustment depend upon the assertion of the anti-imperialist forces. Even Herbert Hoover admits "the rivalries between imperialisms have made for war" and "we know of no case where it has made for durable peace." (*The Problems of Lasting Peace*, by Herbert Hoover and Hugh Gibson. Pages 234-35.) The problems of Anglo-American relations are made easier as the imperialist tendencies within each country are subordinated and pushed into the background; they become more difficult to the extent that the imperialist tendencies assert themselves. The imperialist tendencies hold positions of power, but suffer from the fatal handicap that their assertion endangers the common victory over the Axis; the anti-imperialist tendencies are still not well organized and have no clear understanding of their task, but they are driven to assert themselves more and more by the necessities of war, and from the very nature of the war the future belongs to them.

IT IS the war, and the consequences of war, which have shattered the system of colonial empire, the foundation of the old regime in Great Britain. It is not the rival aspirations of American imperialism which has brought this about. And to the extent that this colonial system must be dismantled in the course of the war by action of the great powers themselves, there is clearly but one effective motive for this, the motive of military necessity. While the leopard can never change his spots, yet the leopard acts differently in a forest fire than when stalking his prey in the green forest. "Needs must when the devil drives," and the Axis devil is driving us all.

It is the historical fatality of the British empire that its greatest source of strength, the colonial system, became its point of greatest weakness, its Achilles' heel. But the death of a colonial system does not mean the death of the nations involved in it, nor of the nation that dominated it, provided its people can adjust themselves to new times, new policies, and new relationships. Britain is threatened with extinction, not by the loss of her colonies, but by defeat at the hands of Hitler. The dismantling of the colonial structure has thus, in the light of the war, no more significance than the tearing down of obsolete and indefensible fortifications in order to replace them with a modern system of defense in depth.

THE United States can facilitate or hinder this solution of Britain's war problem, which becomes one of the common problems of the United Nations as a whole. If there are powerful voices raised gloatingly in the United States forecasting how in the future Britain's realignment lays her open to conquest by an "American empire" (whether that conquest be peaceful or violent), such voices are seriously damaging the war effort, rupturing the threads of confidence between the United States and Britain, sabotaging victory. Every demonstration of United States determination to repudiate such a "course of empire," every strengthening of the anti-imperialist forces in the United States, make the transition easier for Britain, strengthen confidence between the nations, and hasten the moment of victory.

American imperialism has developed without a great colonial empire. It thus has certain advantages in relation to the British type of imperialism, especially now with the certain dissolution of the colonial system resulting from the war. These theoretical advantages form the basis of the dreams of the Jordan-Luce school of imperialism, which envisages the liberated colonies automatically falling into the clutches of American monopoly capital through the operation of finance, investments, and loans. What the Jordan-Luce school has not taken into consideration, however, is that the American type of imperialism actually depended upon the existence of the British colonial type and upon the world structure built around it. The American imperialists considered that old world a drastic limitation upon them. But they forget that when the limitation is removed, there is removed at the same time the basic factors of the world order under which they had learned to operate, and that they have nothing to take its place. American imperialism arrived at its subjective maturity just in time to see the world slipping out of the hands not only of the British colonial system, but of any possible world system of imperialist rule.

THE imperialist rivalries which bedevil the relations between Britain and the United States are thus the automatic carry-over from a pre-war world which is already gone beyond power of recall. The quicker and the more thoroughly this fundamental fact can be made clear, the better for Anglo-American relations. For such an understanding will clear the way for dealing with these relations from the approach of the true national interests of the peoples, and of the tasks of winning the war.

There is one clear and overriding interest common to the British and American peoples, as to all the United Nations, and that is the interest of survival, of victory in this war, *and* the establishment of a tolerable post-war world. Everything else must be subordinated to this common interest. And a common course must be hammered out in practical life, on the anvil of war. That which proves disastrous in the war must be ruthlessly searched out and eliminated; that which helps to victory must be found and built up and carried through to the end. Wherever it leads us, the one thing we need to know is that it leads us away from a world of Axis enslavement and the death of civilization.

EARL BROWDER.

Low in the British press

SMALL BUSINESS IN A BIG WAR

Continued concentration of orders in a few large plants means unfulfilled production schedules. The tragedy of idle machines. Where the blame lies.

Washington.

SECRETARY OF WAR STIMSON revealed for the first time before the House and Senate Military Affairs Committee that the War Department plans an army of 7,500,000 by the end of 1943. The setting of definite goals after all the uncertainty of the past months has been greeted with much satisfaction. For, as I pointed out in this column in the October 13 issue, no progress toward the full use and distribution of manpower could succeed until some decision was reached concerning the size of the armed forces. Only now can consistent draft policies be adopted by Selective Service, regularizing withdrawals of men. Production can be geared to a definite goal—the provisioning of an army of 7,500,000. The War Department's decision was matched by an announcement from the War Manpower Commission that it will test voluntary manpower control in ten cities and in the Washington-Oregon area. The WMC will attempt to secure area-wide agreements outlawing pirating of labor and improving hiring practices by persuading employers and employees to make use of the US Employment Service.

IN OTHER words, planning, without which there can be no all-out war production, has made some progress. Today in Washington, there seems to be a greater awareness of the urgency of planning, in itself a gratifying advance. Of course progress is still far too slow, far too hesitant. But each step forward, no matter how small in comparison to the whole production problem, pushes ahead the battle to bring order out of the appalling production chaos.

A new pressure was added this last week. The Senate Committee to Study and Survey Problems of Small Business Enterprises, headed by Sen. James E. Murray of Montana, opened hearings on the relation between small business and total war production. As Senator Murray stated: "We have no second front in Europe today because those who are in charge of the battle production have thus far waged this production battle on one front only—in a few large plants." This is the nub of the problem. Even disregarding such important considerations as what happens to postwar economy if small enterprisers are bankrupted and forced out of production, even ignoring far-reaching economic dislocations that accompany the devastation of small business, the fact remains that total production is out of the question until every resource, every machine, every factory capable of contributing to the war effort is utilized to the full. So far, small plants have been almost wholly excluded from war contracts. The reason is easy enough to find: it takes planning to draw in the smaller units; it does not take planning to award contracts automatically to a handful of largest corporations.

Up to now, failure to include smaller shops and factories in the war effort has resulted in two major dislocations. Machinery available in smaller plants has idled, while the same type of machinery is hurriedly built for the large factories. This needless duplication wastes precious stocks of raw materials, such as high quality steel, copper, aluminum, tungsten, chrome, etc. In addition, concentration of orders in a few large factories naturally leads to delay—while waiting for new machines; while backlogs of orders pile up; while bottlenecks in the huge factories restrict production and limit the capacity of the whole plant to the maximum attained by the slowest unit, or to the rate established at the point where inadequate and insufficient machinery holds production back. But these delays could almost always be eliminated by bringing the smaller plants into operation, or if bottlenecks were smashed by drawing into production the machines now idle on the floors of smaller plants. It is all very well cavalierly to disregard the dangers to postwar economy inherent in the present methods of awarding contracts to a few hundred producers; it is all very well to dismiss as a secondary consideration the alarming tendency systematically to ruin smaller manufacturers; but it remains a war imperative to mobilize all resources because—and this is all-important—without smaller enterprise our productive capacity is insufficient to meet the strain of global war.

THE problem was brilliantly presented at the first day of the Senate committee hearing by Russ Nixon, Washington representative of the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers. At the outset Mr. Nixon reminded the senators that his union has supported every measure to assure maximum war production. From the first, the UE contended that only by

"I don't want a doll—I want a welding set."

A small plant in Queens, N. Y., forced to shut down for lack of war orders.

exploiting the production potential of small concerns could America satisfy the demands of the armed forces, of civilian supply, and of lend-lease. The union had hoped that the Murray-Patman legislation (the result of former Murray committee findings) would help solve small business difficulties. But while Congress authorized the formation of the Smaller War Plants Corporation within the War Production Board and under the supervision of Donald Nelson, the corporation has accomplished nothing of significance to date. It has been four months since the Murray-Patman act was enacted—three of those months went by before Mr. Nelson appointed members to the agency and issued the necessary authorization. The last month was consumed by the corporation's efforts to familiarize itself with the job.

MR. NIXON placed the blame for neglect of smaller enterprises squarely on the procurement agencies of the armed services. The agencies, he said, refused "to take any steps for the organization of pools of small business concerns to facilitate their participation in war production—this in spite of the clear directives of Congress. . . . The shortcomings of our procurement policy are further evidenced in the failure of the Army and Navy and Maritime Commission to enforce subcontracting in the proper degree. . . . The present system of plant inspectors for the Army and the Navy operates purely upon a single plant basis and tests merely the meeting of single schedules. . . . They cannot tell you that they have a program for total maximum utilization of our resources."

At this point, Mr. Nixon asked the committee pointblank: "Is the Army and Navy and Maritime Commission subject to laws passed by Congress, such as the Murray-Patman act? If so, what have they done to put that act into operation?"

That is the issue, bluntly stated. With complete power over procurement, the armed services have ridden high, wide, and handsome across the production scene. They have paid no attention to legislation ostensibly binding on them. They have proceeded without plan, without objective. They have thought in terms of dollars only, awarding contracts running far into the billions. With the contracts placed, they consider their job completed. But contracts do not thereupon turn into tanks, planes, guns, ships—not when the contracts are handed out to a few large producers with no provision for subcontracting, and with no thought given to small enterprise. The procurement officials have followed fantastic, unreal, irresponsible, high-handed procedures, and the result has been to gum up the works, to endanger the economy, and worst of all, to hamper the war effort.

Mr. Nixon did not mince words. "The Army and the Navy," he charged, "have been playing a cute trick on the American public by diverting criticism from themselves for war production shortcomings over to the OPM and the War Production Board. . . . All the while, the War Production Board has really possessed no power over procurement, and has only recently gained even an uncertain authority over raw material allocation. . . . Mr. Nelson has lacked the guts from the very beginning to make the fight with the Services necessary to establish civilian jurisdiction over the really vital war production functions."

It is common knowledge that the armed services have bulldozed Mr. Nelson, robbing him of authority granted by executive order and attempting to exercise the final control over American economy. But the duty of the armed services is to fight the war. Serious and difficult economic problems remain a civilian task, as Bernard Baruch pointed out back in 1931, and as now becomes clearer with each passing week. Mr. Nixon put the armed services on the spot. The Murray committee summoned Army and Navy witnesses to reply. The best the officers could do was to squirm, bluster, and finally admit that the procurement agencies have been guilty of arrogantly brushing aside legislation. Col. Robert W. Johnson, chief of the New York Ordnance Division, reluctantly admitted that his superiors had turned him into a glorified office boy—as Mayor LaGuardia charged when he appeared before the committee to complain that small enterprise in the New York area was being starved out of existence by the armed services. Colonel Johnson, formerly the head of Johnson & Johnson, an able, energetic executive eager to improve production, testified that an average of seventy to eighty-five percent of the orders coming into the New York area were earmarked by procurement officers in Washington, and therefore he was unable to distribute these contracts among smaller producers. And it was generally accepted by the committee that what was true of the New York area was to a great degree true elsewhere throughout the country.

They told me at the offices of the Smaller War Plants Corporation that criticism of their failure so far to act is unfair since the agency has been operating only a month. Legislation granted them the right to review any contract; if they find contracts going to plants overloaded with orders or to producers not meeting delivery dates, they intend to step in to force subcontracting. They also intend, they said, to make the armed services disgorge contracts to smaller plants. The SWPC knows where the smaller plants are located, what their capacity is, what machinery is available. "Any independent company, whether it employs two men or 2,000, which should be engaged in war work, will be utilized," they promised. But it is hard to take the SWPC seriously. Their brave words are not convincing until they get Mr. Nelson's complete backing. The armed services will not readily relinquish authority, and certainly they will do no more than throw a concession or two in the direction of Mr. Holland's SWPC. It will take a bitter fight to unseat the armed services from their position of authority over procurement. Mr. Nelson can do it, *if* he will fight. He would have the backing of the unions and of management if he dared challenge the procurement agencies. But first Mr. Nelson must know his own goals, and must summon his still lagging resolution. So far, he has shown a great reluctance to move into battle.

THE hearings of the Murray committee are only another means of spotlighting the pressing need for planning. There can be no substitute for centralized direction and control of war production—and today, all production must be viewed in this category, whether the end product is guns or butter, tanks or underwear, planes or coal. Up to now, production has been limited to amounts turned out *despite all obstacles*. The danger continues of serious dislocations that can lead to a breakdown at a critical moment of the war. Certainly, the full power of this great nation cannot be mobilized against the Axis so long as production chaos obtains. The Murray committee, like the Truman and Tolan committees, performs a great service by publicizing abuses. The time is ripe now to clean the armed services out of their place in the war production setup—where they had no business in the first place. The longer it takes us to put our economy on a rational basis, the longer we must wait for victory.

TAXES IN A VICTORY ECONOMY

The 1942 legislation circus. Timidity in the Treasury Department. Fact and fiction about taxes and inflation. An expert presents a program to improve output and morale.

THE story of federal tax legislation in 1942 has lent new meaning to the old phrase "from bad to worse." In the course of its meanderings through the committees and chambers of Congress, the proposed program deteriorated to the point where it can be described as next to the worst of all possible wartime tax bills. Only an undisguised sales tax upon all the necessities of life and an open waiver of added taxation upon corporation profits could be much farther removed from an effective measure of war taxation than the mutilated bill which recently passed the Senate and which was substantially the same as the one agreed on by the House and Senate conferees. By the time this is read the bill may have been pushed through both houses of Congress.

Against a background of wartime realities, the course of the 1942 tax bill reflects the same basic forces and pressures which have hindered full and rapid war-conversion throughout the national economy. There was the same resistance by powerful industrial and financial interests to measures threatening their peacetime privileges. There was the same subservience to those interests from dominant groups in Congress. On the administration's part, there was the same timidity in providing effective leadership and the same failure to understand fully both the purposes and the limitations of wartime taxation as one instrument in the far broader problem of how to attain a complete war economy.

The 1942 tax bill started out as a compromise. This is not to say that the program proposed to Congress by the Treasury last March was devoid of progressive or realistic features. The Treasury program, for example, would have closed glaring loopholes which give insupportable tax-free benefits to wealthy persons and corporations. The Treasury proposed a considerable increase in corporation taxation and a sharp rise in levies on medium personal incomes, with continued exemption for low-income families. It called for higher taxes on estates and gifts.

But much that should have been done was passed over in the Treasury program, in an effort to escape opposition from the same interests who subsequently sabotaged even these limited proposals. Only the weakest kind of lip service was given President Roosevelt's proposal for a wartime ceiling of $25,000 on individual incomes after payment of taxes. Under the Treasury's proposals, individual incomes of $500,000 or $1,000,000, after taxation, still would have been possible. The tax exemption bonanza for wealthy persons provided by the billions of dollars of outstanding federal bonds issued prior to 1941 was left undisturbed. So was the basic loophole in excess-profit taxation which permits corporations to calculate their exemption either on a percentage of invested capital or on their average pre-war earnings, whichever saves them the most in taxes.

However, the greatest weakness of the Treasury program arose from indecision on the really basic problem: the role of taxation in attaining an all-out war economy. This indecision was reflected not merely in the compromise nature of the Treasury's initial proposals but also in its subsequent shifts of position on certain issues—the proper level of tax exempt allowances for individuals, the issue of voluntary savings versus forced savings, and the question of a spending tax. In the last case, the Treasury's panicky and over-complicated last minute suggestions resulted in strengthening the sales-tax agitators.

Moreover, the indecision was not simply an expression of uncertainty on the part of Secretary Morgenthau and his tax advisers. It was indicative of an uncertainty which reaches into all circles of the federal government when it comes to the basic issue of a war economy.

IN CONTRAST, the financial opponents of effective wartime taxation, already strategically entrenched in Congress, had thought through their position and thus were able to concentrate their pressure where the most damage could be done. As on all matters relating to the war economy, the influence of the dominant financial and industrial groups has been concentrated on two objectives: (1) to hold to a minimum the wartime dislocation of established spheres of influence or control and established privileges; (2) to hold to a minimum the extension of democratic controls over the free maneuvers of financial and industrial power. In the specific field of wartime taxation, this position has been expressed by two maximum objectives: (1) the avoidance of further increases in tax rates on corporation profits or large personal incomes, together with the preservation of existing loopholes; (2) the establishment of sales taxation, not only to shift the added burden of the war away from those best able to pay, but also to establish a tax precedent which might well be of vital importance in the postwar period.

The success attained in moving toward these objectives is a matter of record. The House Ways and Means Committee ignored the Treasury's proposal for eliminating the outstanding tax loopholes of certain groups of wealthy individuals and corporations. Instead of heightening estate and gift taxes, as the Treasury wished, the committee actually weakened them. The Treasury's proposed increase of $3,348,000,000 in corporation taxes was whittled down to $2,589,000,000, and individual income taxes were upped by $2,872,000,000 instead of $3,228,000,000, chiefly because the proposed rates on higher incomes were softened.

SINCE all its members face the problem of reelection this November, this was as far as the House bloc dared go toward meeting the maximum objectives of their counselors from the ranks of big business-as-usual. But their colleagues in the Senate Finance Committee—under the leadership of reactionaries like Senator George of Georgia and Senator Taft of Ohio, the latter well known as an appeaser—were less inhibited. Leaving intact all of the weakening measures approved by the House, the Senate committee proceeded to emasculate the proposed taxation of corporation profits to the point where the permanent added revenue received by the Treasury from this source would be only $1,210,000,000, or sixty-four percent less than the Treasury requested. The committee proposed to carry the personal income tax deeper into the low-income groups by further reducing dependency exemptions. And it took a long step toward an undisguised general sales tax by inventing a "Victory Tax," under which a flat five percent levy would be imposed on all personal incomes above $12 a week, with no allowances for dependents or any graduation on the basis of ability to pay. In all, approximately eighty percent of the increased taxation suggested by the Senate Finance Committee would fall on individuals, and predominantly upon individuals of low income.

The threat presented by this legislation cannot be remedied simply by denouncing the financial, industrial, and political interests who have controlled its course through Congress. Since Secretary Morgenthau has announced that he will present a supplementary $6,000,000,000 tax plan to Congress, it is well to agree on what kind of tax bill is called for by the war effort—a bill around which popular support could be mobilized in sufficient strength to force a reversal of the legislative trend in Congress. And the essential prelude to such an agreement is a clear understanding of the role of taxation in a war economy. Three assertions clearly can be made about that role:

1. No program of taxation can conceivably finance out of current tax revenues the total dollar cost of the war. Nor can the program's contribution to the war effort necessarily be gauged by the percentage of that total cost it will return in current revenues.

2. As a means of preventing serious price inflation, taxation cannot be a substitute for effective rationing of consumption goods and price control.

3. In a positive sense, effective wartime taxation is one of the steps toward organizing the centralized war economy necessary to attain maximum productivity for war purposes.

OF COURSE, the administration has never maintained that its war expenditures, which will reach at least $77,000,000,000 during the current fiscal year, could be financed entirely out of current tax revenue. But it has used the magnitude of those expenditures as a major argument for enacting the tax measures it favors. Thus, when Secretary Morgenthau protested the form in which the 1942 tax bill passed the House, he laid great stress on the fact that the House bill would necessitate borrowing to meet sixty-eight percent of the current cost of the war, as against sixty-four percent if the Treasury proposals were adopted. He implied, moreover, that that added four percent of borrowing would mean "endangering the survival of all that we are fighting to preserve." The obvious ineptness of this approach—which ignores the basic function of effective wartime taxation—has naturally helped the efforts of the opposition.

A much more fundamental error, however, has been the administration's emphasis upon taxation as the principal means of preventing a disastrous price inflation. Most New Deal economists have become infatuated with the theory of the "inflationary gap." This "gap" is a hypothetical figure obtained by deducting their estimate of the dollar value of the goods which will be available for civilian consumption in any given period, from their estimate of the total dollar volume of spendable consumer incomes in the same period. The theory is that unless the major part of this "inflationary gap" is "channeled off" into taxation, the American people will use their increased dollar income to launch black market operations that will override all price controls and bring on an uncontrolled price inflation.

The primary implication of that position is that the New Deal economists and the officials whose views they represent prefer heavy consumer taxation in one form or another to the stringent application of rationing and price control powers as the chief means of blocking inflation. Apparently they feel that the disturbances to the peacetime economic and social status quo inherent in the full use of those powers outweigh the inequities, dislocations, and positive interference with war production which would result from consumer taxation on a scale sufficient to close the hypothetical "inflationary gap." The stronger position recently taken by the President on price control and rationing matters, and the sweeping powers he has delegated to the new Office of Economic Stabilization may indicate that this period of vacillation is drawing to a close. If so, the essential falsity of using taxation as a substitute for effective rationing and price control will become all the more apparent.

In any event, the administration's previous preoccupation with the "inflationary gap" has played directly into the hands of those industrial and financial groups working for heavy sales taxation as an escape from an effective wartime tax program. The inescapable inference of the "gap" theory is that the main threat of inflation arises from the larger aggregate dollar earnings of industrial workers and farmers, in conjunction with a declining supply of consumer goods. If this false premise is accepted as valid, it then follows that the best way to prevent inflation is to tax consumer incomes heavily. And the simplest way to accomplish that objective is through sales taxation. While few New Deal economists have carried their argument to this logical conclusion, they have provided the advocates of sales taxation with an opportunity which has been seized upon. The latter have woven an extensive apologia for the Senate Finance Committee's tax proposals simply by borrowing the learned arguments of the "inflationary gap" economists. For example, the September bulletin of the National City Bank of New York maintained that the principal objective of the 1942 tax bill should be to prevent inflation, and declared: "It is this situation which has made the arguments for the sales tax increasingly impressive. Not only is this a tax of widespread applicability, but it is a tax on consumption; and it is consumption in wartime that needs to be reduced. As the tax system now stands, it bears chiefly on savings and on the instruments of production. . . ."

All of which leads to the question: what kind of tax bill will be most helpful in achieving an effective centralized war economy and maximum production for the war effort? This question apparently has received only the cloudiest sort of thinking from the administration's tax experts.

Corporation taxation is a case in point. One of the most troublesome barriers to attainment of this country's complete industrial potential has been the struggle on the part of entrenched capital groups to maintain their position against encroachment by less strategically situated capital interests. Fundamentally, this barrier can be overcome only by establishment and full exercise of centralized control over the entire war economy. But this task could be facilitated greatly by a sweeping, uniform war tax on corporation profits which would reduce all wartime profits to the minimum level necessary to produce collaboration by capitalist groups in the war effort. By establishing in effect a minimum wartime ration for the owners of invested capital, such a tax would simplify the problem of cutting through the hindrances to full war production resulting from the peacetime pattern of monopoly industrial controls. Such a tax would strengthen control over the flow of dividends, which reach the groups likely to undermine effective distribution of the reduced wartime supply of consumption goods.

THE relationship of tax policy to consumption controls also should be examined in its war-economy context rather than in theoretical terms of preventing "inflation." The problem of distributing the supply of essential consumption goods in such a way as to lend maximum aid to the war effort can be solved basically only by complete rationing of that supply, accompanied by rigorous price control at all stages of the production and distribution process. The guiding principle should be a uniform ration representing the maximum possible share of the available supply of all essentials. Moreover, the dollar value of that ration, adjusted to family size and with suitable allowance for other essential expenses such as rent and medical care, should be exempt from taxation. Taxation below that level would unjustifiably curtail the living standards of the workers upon whom the basic responsibility for war production rests, and would not serve any conceivable price control purpose.

Above that exemption level, income taxes can provide important support to an effective rationing system. Such taxes obviously should bear most heavily on the recipients of large incomes, who are accustomed to a luxury standard of living and therefore represent as a group the most likely source of efforts to undermine rationing controls in order to maintain their standards. Therefore President Roosevelt's proposed $25,000 ceiling on individual incomes after payment of taxes should be applied not only to executive salaries but to income from all sources, and taxes should absorb a large proportion of the higher incomes below that point. In the lower incomes, emphasis should be placed on absorbing any surplus earnings above the basic living ration through savings, whether voluntary or compulsory. That would strengthen morale.

If approached along these general lines, war taxation can be forged into a most useful weapon for victory. And in view of the plans for a new tax bill, it is not too late to crystallize such a program.

ROBERT O. WINTERS.

STATEMENTS TO "NEW MASSES" FROM PROMINENT AMERICANS

THE NEGRO AND THE WAR

Carl Murphy

President, Baltimore "Afro-American"

I SHOULD like to begin by quoting the words of Frederick Douglass, that "I am an American and as an American I would speak to all Americans. . . ."

Whatever America has to lose, whatever stake it has to gain, affects me equally with all the others. I make but one demand: that in this fight for world freedom I be given the fullest opportunity to work for victory and to fight for it without such handicaps as segregation and Jim Crow which everywhere prevail even in the armed forces of the United States.

It might be possible for our country to win the war without utilizing to the fullest extent every ablebodied citizen, but how much sooner would it be able to do it, and what tremendous saving there would be in blood and tears, if we all could throw ourselves into the struggle with the knowledge that we are not only fighting to bring democracy to China or to India or to the underprivileged in Britain, but also to ourselves.

Mary E. Woolley

President Emeritus, Mt. Holyoke College

WHY are the ending of discriminatory practices and the giving of full citizenship rights for Negroes essential to winning the war and winning the peace? The question practically answers itself. *How* can there be a successful war for democracy and its establishment for the future *unless* there is an ending of the discriminatory practices against the Negro and the giving of full citizenship rights to him?

Rev. Henry Sloane Coffin

President, Union Theological Seminary

THIS country cannot with a clear conscience do battle with the atrocious doctrine of the superior race, held by both Nazi Germany and militarized Japan, if it permits racial discrimination and racial injustices to flourish in and ruin its own democracy. Jim Crowism must be frankly faced wherever it appears, and fearlessly attacked and done away with. There are inequalities among men and women due to differences in ability, in skill, in knowledge, in character. These cannot be disregarded. One man is more useful to society than another. But these differences among men are not due to race. True religion and enlightened science assert that a man's race does not determine his capacities, although the race may have more capacity along one line than another. But the door of opportunity must be kept as open to members of one race as of another in education, in industry, in the professions, in social intercourse, and in public affairs.

Those of us who profess the Christian faith believe that God has made of one blood all dwellers on earth and is no respecter of persons, that His son died on the cross for all and has ever had special concern for the neglected and oppressed and underprivileged, and that He judges men by their attitude towards "the least" of His brethren. For Christians to defend, or apologize for, or compromise with any form of Jim Crowism is to deny their Lord. Church folk everywhere are under solemn obligation to be in the lead in abolishing barriers erected by racial feeling against any in their community.

This is a day to deal our most vigorous blows against powers out to destroy our freedom and the freedom of other lands, and to set our own national house in order, that injustices may not give the lie to our professions or sap our strength of will to conquer. We shall not vanquish the enemy, unless we master the enemy of racial snobbery within our own souls and within our society.

R. O'Hara Lanier

Dean of Instruction, Hampton Institute, Virginia

NOW that ancient prejudices are being fused in the cauldron of necessity, the Negro regards World War II with hope, if not with expectation. Stalin and Churchill now pull together. Gringo and gaucho stalk the Nazi wolf, and brown boys from Harlem, once spurned, now work and fight in far-off white man's Australia.

For all that, the issue is drawn. The question clamors: Will the Anglo-Saxon, ever stubborn and unyielding, now really learn to live, let live, and work with darker men? Denied the ballot in Texas, deferred freedom in India, peonized in Arkansas, enslaved at Rabaoul, men of color everywhere feel the unity of the oppressed. Everywhere we fight, die, and hope.

We read the promise of the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter. We fight and wait. We are elated by the brotherly sentiments of the Free World Association, and sink under taunts hurled by the unreconstructed in training camps. Of common decency in everyday human contacts or of the efficiency in high democratic ideals, the Negro remains the measure of this nation's sincerity. The Negro remains the test of America's integrity.

At one then with degraded darker peoples everywhere, the Negro in America presents this challenge: Remove the barriers to political enfranchisement and full social, economic, and educational development. This is the only policy that will give heart and conquering morale to black men fighting for democracy. For only breaking down of discrimination can usher in the promise of democracy.

Edward Corsi

Chairman, Enemy Alien Board, New York

UNITY among the diverse elements of our population is essential to the winning of the war. This unity is bound to be endangered if we fail to check discrimination wherever and whenever we find it. Discrimination against workers because of their color, their race, or place of birth, is undemocratic. It is un-American. It is contrary to the very cause for which we are fighting. If the Negro is good enough to wear the uniform of Uncle Sam, he is good enough for a job wherever his services are needed. This is equally true of those "enemy aliens" who, though loyal, have not yet acquired American citizenship. There should be only one test: the test of fidelity to democracy; otherwise we play right into the hands of Hitler.

Charles A. Collins

Executive Secretary, Negro Labor Victory Committee of Greater New York

THIS war teaches me and should teach all Americans the disastrous consequences that come from compromising with evil.

Hitler's lust for plunder and blood, his use of the whip on the naked backs of his victims, his vile abuse of Jews, Catholics, and trade unionists, have exposed in all its horror that which Negroes know so well—poverty, Jim Crowism, and lynch terror.

The debt America owes her 14,000,000 black citizens is in part being paid as her sons shed their blood on the field of battle against the greatest enemy of the Negro people, Hitler and his Axis partners. But here at home a struggle must be waged by all haters of tyranny and lovers of freedom, a struggle that will not and dare not cease until America's greatest shame, her treatment of her loyal Negro citizens, is forever wiped out.

Mark Van Doren

Noted Poet, Teacher, and Literary Critic

THE war, to be won, must be fought *by* everybody, *for* everybody, including of course the Negro. And for him *now*. We should not, and we cannot, wait till *then*.

J. Donald Kingsley

Professor of Political Science, Antioch College. Co-author of "Strategy for Democracy"

IT MUST be evident to everyone but a Talmadge or a Dixon that we can neither win the war nor secure the peace on the basis of "white supremacy." Total war is necessarily a people's war. The all-out effort which victory in such a war requires can be achieved only in terms of an all-out commitment to the purposes for which the war is being fought. This is without doubt the secret of the magnificent performance of the Red Army and of the stubborn resistance of the embattled people of China. Conversely, the absence of any such universal commitment underlies the tragedy of France and the long list of British reverses in Hong Kong, Burma, and India.

There is a lesson here which we must learn before it is too late. The common people everywhere

are sick of special privilege and vested inequality. They will make the effort which victory demands only when they have caught a glimpse of a better world to come. The picture of that world cannot be painted for them in words alone. It must be shown concretely in terms of deeds. So long as we treat our 13,000,000 Negroes as second-class citizens it will be impossible to convince either our own people or those in Europe and Asia that we are really fighting for the Four Freedoms and the liberation of all men everywhere. We cannot win a white man's war; we can win a people's war.

I. Willis Cole

Editor, Louisville, Ky., "Leader"

NEGROES in America should feel themselves indebted to those agencies, periodicals, and individuals that are so possessed of the spirit of democracy and the brotherhood of man in the Christian way of life that they are urging the need to end all discriminatory practices and guarantee "full citizenship rights to Negroes in order to win the war and fulfill the pledges of the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter."

It is this attitude on the part of those of the majority group which should give encouragement even to those Negroes who may have lost hope for the life and labor and the enjoyment of it in the fullness which the Constitution guarantees all citizens of America. This alone, as a result of the war, has meant something to me as a Negro.

To me a Hitler victory is the death knell of our struggle for equal rights, but to the same measure in which we reaffirm our loyalty to the nation as a member of a minority group, whose loyalty need not be questioned, we ask full and equal participation in every branch of the national defense program at home and abroad.

The war in its beginning has already brought to the Negro unforeseen opportunities and changed attitudes from the least suspected quarters—and whatever may be the sweat, tears, and blood which Negroes, too, must shed in an unfortunate world conflict, we are imbued with the thought that out of the war we will come into our share of the happiness and blessings of the new world, which should evolve out of the United Nations victory despite certain national defense, labor, Navy, and Army discrimination and the rantings of southern political demagogues.

Bertha C. Reynolds

Noted Authority in Social Work

THERE can be no greater mistake than to think that the ending of discrimination against the Negro people is a matter of being "good" to them—to show in a vague way that we are worthy of the democracy for which we are fighting. It is literally a matter of survival for everyone of us. In the life and death struggle between fascist barbarism and civilization, the most powerful weapon of the enemy, by which his victims are prepared for military defeat, is the idea that there is an elite group fit to rule and that the great majority of common people are to be despised as fitted only for slavery. Too clever to preach this doctrine openly, as regards the majority all at once, one minority group after another is singled out for attack on grounds of racial inferiority, or vague charges of "communism," "dangerous thoughts," or what not. Having diverted attention from themselves as the real enemy, the fascist gangsters do their work of rendering a people defenseless against military attack by pretending to "save" them from the race or creed they have been taught to fear.

In proportion as we in America have made ourselves vulnerable to this mortal danger by condoning a treatment of the Negro people which gives them only a fraction of human rights, we find our fight for victory hampered at every turn. It is not only that our country needs the help of its 13,000,000 Negro Americans, as the United Nations need also the help of millions of colonial peoples in defense of the lands in which they live. It is not only that we need their brains and strength and loyalty in a people's war. It is not only that it is dangerous to create by denial of their civil rights a body of citizens who will feel that they have little to fight for. It is also that if we white people are fighting to maintain "white supremacy" we are fighting *for* fascism, not against it. If Negroes do not have full rights, then we shall all lose those rights. We ought to be smart enough by this time to know gangster tactics when we see them.

William Henry Huff

Chief Counsel, Abolish Peonage Committee

THE present world war is said to be a struggle for a new freedom for all. If it is won by the Allies, assuredly it will safeguard the freedom of those who are already free—the dominant group. But the thing that bears down on me is, what will be done toward the extension of the vaunted freedoms to those who are right now wearing the yoke of bondage, those who are chained to peonage, the men, women, and children farthest down?

When I think of the years of fumbling with the Oglethorpe County, Georgia, peonage cases; when I think of how an overlord there is substantially charged with the whipping of a poor, defenseless Negro woman to insensibility with a buggy whip thirty days before she gave birth to a little brown baby; when I think of how a Negro man was held in peonage by this same overlord for twenty-two years, and how the poor fellow was chain-ganged each time he attempted to escape, and how, finally, holes were whipped into his head with a pistol butt because he, having been worked down, could no longer speed up; and when I think of how the same overlord whipped and shot a father, and when the son approached to see what was happening to his father, shot him, too, in the groin, then sent both father and son to the dingy jail to recuperate and thence to the chain gang—all because the father objected to the son's eating watermelon over which the overlord's wife had slobbered! When I ponder all these things, I am compelled to wonder if the victory for which we are fighting—the victory which we must and will win—is to end in a new freedom for some and a new slavery for others, in a continuation of peonage, in a continuation of fumbling by those whose duty it is to remedy the situation—the attorneys for the government—I am compelled to wonder what will be the plight of America's loyal tenth when victory is won. Will there still be fumbling? God forbid!

F. O. Matthiessen

Professor of History and Literature, Harvard University

THE most concrete way to prove that we practice as well as preach the four freedoms is by our treatment of the Negroes. The war can hardly be called a people's war, or even a war against fascism, unless all of our own people share in full democratic rights. We have come increasingly to realize during the decade of the New Deal how much and in how many fields the Negroes have contributed to our native art and culture. Their continued fight for equality is the fight of all of us.

Alain Locke

Professor of Philosophy, Howard University

WHAT the war means to the Negro can only sensibly be stated as a corollary of what the war means in general, since his basic interests are really those of humanity at large. In these terms, I see the world crisis offering the constructive chance and promise of making through "blood, sweat, and tears" great world gains in social democracy: chances only, but the alternatives are so repugnant even to those whose vested interests are anti-democratic that they will probably be forced to choose the lesser of their evils. These possible gains are: the final breaking down of the barriers between the Occident and the Orient, the liquidation, gradual or sudden, of colonial and economic imperialism, the permanent vindication of the necessity for a planned society, and the development in every nation of a more integrated, less class-stratified society.

In every one of these gains the Negro and all oppressed groups have everything to gain and little or nothing to lose; the crisis is their chance and hope of a new position in society. For self-interested as well as general reasons, they should join the issue with every ounce of their strength and all the drive of their intelligence.

Maurice Sugar

Noted labor attorney. General counsel, United Automobile Workers (CIO)

RACE prejudice and discrimination find their fruition in fascism. Fascism has revealed the horrors that logically follow the encouragement of race prejudice and discrimination—demonstrated it not merely in the agony of the persecuted but in the corruption of the very souls of the self-appointed "superiors."

The war *must* be won. And it can be won only if there is a fervent will to win on the part of all of our people. In millions of Americans the will to win can be generated to the required fervency only by stamping out the unjust and inhuman practices of racial discrimination in their own country.

Lack of space prevented the publication of these statements in last week's special issue on "The Negro and Victory." Additional statements will appear in an early issue.—The Editors.

NEW MASSES
ESTABLISHED 1911

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Mr. Welles on China

ONE of the most significant clarifications of our war policy that has been made since Pearl Harbor resulted from the interview on October 12 between Sumner Welles, Under-Secretary of State, and Earl Browder, secretary of the Communist Party. It dealt with the attitude of our State Department officials concerning China. What Mr. Welles had to say will greatly hearten the Chinese fighting men, their allies in the United Nations, and the hundreds of millions in the colonial countries who identify themselves with the superb struggle of the Chinese people.

Mr. Browder, in the *Worker* of October 4, had charged that certain "reactionary officials in the State Department" were encouraging the maintenance of a situation in China harmful to the war effort of our country and its allies. His article referred to "the strained relations between the Kuomintang and Communists, resulting in the immobilization of large numbers of the best troops in that country." It was in connection with these charges that Mr. Welles invited the Communist leader to Washington.

Mr. Browder, in a press statement after the session, declared: "I believe our war effort will be benefited if I make public that portion of Mr. Welles' remarks which was given to me in written form." We quote extracts from that memorandum:

". . . This government desires Chinese unity and deprecates civil strife in China; this government treats the government of China as an equal; it does not dictate to the government of China; it does not make United States friendship contingent; it regards unity within China, unity within the United States, unity within each of the countries of the United Nations group, and unity among the United Nations as utterly desirable toward effectively carrying on war against the Axis powers and toward creation and maintenance of conditions of just peace when the United Nations shall have gained the victory which is to be theirs."

Other extracts from Mr. Welles' memorandum state:

"With regard to the specific 'charge that it is on the advice of reactionary officials in the State Department that Chiang Kai-shek is keeping his best armies out of the war,' the simple fact is that the nearest approach to 'advice' given by any officials in the Department of State in this context has been an expression of an opinion that civil strife in China, at all times unfortunate, would be especially unfortunate at a time when China is engaged in a desperate struggle of self-defense against an armed invader.

"The implication of this expression of opinion was that the Chinese government should try to maintain peace by processes of conciliation between and among all groups and factions in China. And the course which Chiang Kai-shek has been pursuing is not 'keeping his best armies out of the war.' Both the armies of the national government and the 'Communist' armies are fighting the Japanese. . . ." In his press statement after the interview Mr. Browder declared: "I believe it is established that no responsible official of the State Department is contributing to disunity in China, and that the policy of the United States government is being exerted in the opposite direction."

Under these circumstances Mr. Browder was "more than happy to retract those charges without reservation. What I had thought of as a heavy door that needed pushing open proved to be but a curtain of lack of information."

The significance of Mr. Welles' statement is apparent: it will undoubtedly be welcomed by millions in Asia, and by their devoted allies in this country and throughout the world.

Pass the Anti-Poll Tax Bill

A SHOCK of horror went through America at events in Mississippi where three Negroes were lynched in one week, two of them boys of fourteen. This brings to gruesome climax the season of violence in southern states—shootings of Negro soldiers, almost daily beatings of Negro men and women. The labors of Governor Dixon of Alabama, Governor Talmadge of Georgia, "Judge" Horace Wilkinson of Birmingham are bearing fruit. As Joseph North, in his article on page 3, cites a southern Negro labor leader: "Race hatred has to be organized. These incidents you read about, the violence and the lynchings, are organized hatred."

It is no coincidence that the horrors of Mississippi occur while the Senate considers the Anti-Poll Tax Bill authored by Senator Pepper of Florida. Smarting under the passage of the Soldiers Vote Bill, and the 252-82 vote in the House for the Geyer Anti-Poll Tax Bill, the reactionaries fan race hatred. They will use every trick to block the Pepper bill.

The principal danger in the Senate is the "constitutional amendment" dodge, as put forth by Senator O'Mahoney of Wyoming, chairman of a subcommittee appointed by the Senate Judiciary Committee to report on the Pepper measure. O'Mahoney's group termed the bill "unconstitutional." O'Mahoney, himself, pretends to be in favor of abolishing the poll tax, but wants it done through a constitutional amendment. This artifice would stymie passage for years, as in the case of the Child Labor Amendment. It would have to be passed by three-quarters of the states.

As we go to press the Judiciary Committee is reviewing O'Mahoney's report. We trust that it will reverse the subcommittee's findings and that the Pepper bill will come out on the floor for vote. In any event the millions of America, particularly labor, must make themselves heard. They showed their strength in the House vote on the Geyer bill; now they must raise their voices to a new crescendo. If the Senate does not pass the bill in the remaining ten weeks of this Congress, the measure will die as did the Anti-Lynch Bill, several years ago—it passed the House only to be blocked in the Senate. Patriotic Americans will bestir themselves to let their senators know what the nation wants.

Eighteen and Nineteen

AS THIS is written, the Senate has not yet acted on the bill to draft eighteen and nineteen year old men. However, the overwhelming vote in the House for the bill seems to ensure its speedy passage. This change in draft status was inevitable, as President Roosevelt said in his Columbus Day talk.

The strongest objection to the drafting of younger men has been that they are too inexperienced to adjust themselves to Army life. It is true, of course, that merely to thrust a young man from civilian into military life involves serious dislocations. But the solution is not to postpone induction, thereby depriving our forces of youth, stamina, and courage. The solution is rather to provide means of easing the problem of adjustment. And the most effective means, we are convinced, is education both within the Army itself and in the pre-induction period. We must be sure that our young people, as well as the older recruits, know what is at stake in this war. The ex-

periences of the Soviet and British armies in this respect have proved that young men who understand why they are fighting make the grade without difficulty. We must avoid any tendency to overlook the difference in experience represented by different age groups, and it is to be hoped that an adequate Army education program will take this into account.

It is not easy for parents to see an eighteen year old son off to war. But the alternative, a possible fascist victory, is even more painful to contemplate. We have no choice. We must win, and our younger people are necessary for victory. They are eager to fight for the democratic world which they shall inherit.

Back to the Jungle

THE *Saturday Evening Post* has been going from bad to worse for twenty-five years. Judging by an editorial in the October 10 issue, the *Post* is bent on plumbing new depths of bigotry and bellicose reaction. Not so long ago the new editor tried to clear his skirts of a vile anti-Semitic article which had drawn protests from thousands of readers.

Under the guise of attacking the "total state," the editorial on "Neo-Liberal Illusion" attacks the American people and American democratic ideas. It preaches reliance on the "natural forces" of economics as against the "paternal pap . . . of federal handouts." It defames 19,000,000 immigrants as "ignorant of basic American ideals." And it concludes with the ominous threat that "the useful citizen will rise up in his wrath and overthrow the state" if "the state persists in subsidizing and pampering the relatively useless citizen. . . ."

In pseudo-philosophic dress this is treason against the people—"the pack," as the *Post* likes to phrase it. The "milling, confused herd" is fighting to defend America; but the editors of the *Saturday Evening Post* are fighting to restore a jungle of greed and rapacity. They want to end suffering not by destroying Hitler, but by creating more millionaires on the theory that "the more millionaires a society can produce—the less suffering that society will experience in the lower brackets. . . ."

The *Post* speaks for those who regard Roosevelt, not Hitler or Hirohito, as the main enemy. By attacking every measure necessary to win the war as "collectivism," these stubborn reactionaries seek to awaken fear of prosecuting the war effectively. Victory, they say, may mean socialism; and they use this demagogic argument to serve their defeatism. They fail to point out that the "economic freedom" they preach will be freedom to serve Hitler if we fail to integrate our war economy. They undermine confidence in the government. They are a menace to American independence.

The People Are the Experts

Wendell Willkie

THERE is a vigor and richness in the movement for a second front that lifts it steadily higher despite the devious dams raised to hold it back. The ill-tempered sniping of the New York *Times*, the cackling of defeatist newspapers like the Chicago *Tribune* and the New York *Daily News* are as powerless as King Canute to prevent this great tide from rolling on. And since Wendell Willkie spoke up, it is no longer possible to pretend that the second front movement is merely a Communist or a Russian interest. Mr. Willkie's statements are reminders, as is the revolt of the French people, that the second front is an American interest and a world interest. What was dismissed as the voice of Union Square proves to be the voice of history.

When Mr. Willkie tells us, as he did in his press conference on returning from his trip abroad, that it is not the military men who must make the major strategic decisions in this war, but the political leaders—men like Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill—and that these political leaders often must choose between conflicting recommendations of the military men, he puts everything rightside up and sets the whole discussion in its proper framework. Policy determines the course of arms. It was policy that gave Hitler his cheap victories at Munich. It was policy that led the powerful French army to inglorious defeat. And it was policy that created the United Nations alliance and determined the agreement on a second front in 1942 that can destroy Hitlerism.

President Roosevelt's expression of satisfaction with the results of Mr. Willkie's trip has confounded the defeatists and troublemakers who were eager to create a conflict between the two men on the issue of the second front. The President is too close to the people to be greatly impressed with those who try to persuade him virtually to abdicate his powers as Commander-in-Chief. And there is something peculiarly American in Mr. Willkie's refusal to be overawed by the military experts. Ours is not a country that developed in any spirit of reverence for authoritarian sacred cows. It is not for nothing that the Constitution provides that the political leader of the country, the President, shall be the Commander-in-Chief. Even before the Constitution, George Washington set the example during the War of Independence by the meticulous care he took to act as the instrument of the Continental Congress.

Some of the opponents of the second front are trying to twist history to their uses by making it appear that Abraham Lincoln gave Grant *carte blanche* to do as he wished. They ignore the fact that everything Grant did was based on the *policy* first enunciated in the Emancipation Proclamation of ruthless attack on the slave power. They also ignore the fact that the earlier history of Lincoln's relations with his generals was one of incessant interference—fortunately for the country—with "experts" who were incompetent or, as in the case of McClellan, downright defeatist.

The full logic of the "leave it to the experts" doctrine is military dictatorship in every sphere of American life. But this is a people's war. It cannot be waged and won by a passive, inert mass taking orders and asking no questions. It is no lack of confidence in our military leaders or in our political and economic leaders to insist that the winning of the war requires the active participation of the people in such matters as organizing maximum production, eliminating discrimination against Negroes, ending appeasement of Vichy, Madrid, and Helsinki, opening a western front, and many other aspects of a victory policy. And the military, political, and economic leaders in turn need the public prodding, criticism, and support; need the demonstration of alertness, offensive-mindedness, and readiness to sacrifice on the part of the ordinary people. This is what is meant by morale. This is being tough deep down.

Today, when anybody questions one's participation in the second-front movement, one must, paraphrasing Thoreau, reply by asking: what is any patriot doing outside this movement? A land invasion of western Europe, coordinated with the action of the Red Army and the stubborn struggles of the peoples of conquered Europe—this is the very crux of the strategy of coalition warfare that alone can bring victory. Each of us who is an American has been touched by destiny. When we join with the people of England in urging our two governments, while Stalingrad still stands, to break through all obstacles and strike the crushing blow in the West, we act in the great tradition of America. We act for our country's salvation and the world's.

MISSION OF FRIENDSHIP

A noted correspondent's book enriches the country's understanding of our Soviet ally. Wallace Carroll points to the policies which pave the way to successful collaboration. Reviewed by Isidor Schneider.

WE'RE IN THIS WITH RUSSIA. *How To Do Business with Stalin and Why. By Wallace Carroll. Houghton Mifflin. $2.*

IN 1938, on my return from the Soviet Union, several publishers expressed interest in a book I might do. The negotiations that followed were peculiar. I was asked whether I would be "objective"—which, upon elaboration, turned out to mean hostile toward the Soviet Union. Since I could not promise such "objectivity," we came to no agreement.

This experience brought personally home to me the gathering reaction that was darkening American intellectual life and focusing on attitudes toward the Soviet Union. In an incredibly short time it reached the point where, as regards testimony on that subject, scientists and churchmen were crowded off while convicts were given seats of honor in literary high places.

It was with eyes contracted to the gloom of such chamber-of-horrors exhibits that the American people were suddenly brought by history face to face with shining Soviet realities in the events that began with June 22, 1941. What the American people saw was in such enormous contradiction to what they had been told that the whole nation clamored for enlightenment. It was bitterly amusing to read editorials in newspapers and magazines that had been avidly spreading the misinformation, now complaining, "we have been misinformed!"

The suddenly acknowledged need for information could not immediately be satisfied. The formerly relied-upon "experts," the Lyonses, Chamberlins, Utleys, et al., had been sweepingly given the lie by an authority beyond challenge—history itself. On the other hand, the Dies and Coudert terrors had laid a pall of untouchability over that group of writers whose testimony had been favorable. A few of these, the more obscure or the less stamped, were commissioned by book publishers to write "quickies," which proved, however, not nourishing enough to satisfy the public hunger. The situation called for new witnesses.

THESE have been coming forward and the appearance of their books has brought about a welcome change in the literary atmosphere, raising to a new and decently communicable plane our intellectual relations with our Soviet ally. Of all these books Wallace Carroll's *We're in This with Russia* is perhaps the best. It gives me confidence that the new era in literature on the Soviet Union, inaugurated by former Ambassador Davies' *Mission to Moscow,* is truly an era and not an interlude.

Carroll's book is important not merely because it is appreciative of the Soviet organization and effort in war—and, it should be added, in peace—nor because it offers first-hand impressions, nor because it happens to be a very readable book. Its immediate predecessors have nearly all had these virtues. Its transcending quality is that it makes clear what are the sound, the realistic, the usable bases for present and prospective relationships between the United States and the Soviet Union; and why it is important for both countries and for the world that these relations should have the character of close and equal collaboration now for the destruction of fascism and afterward for the establishment of international security.

This achievement was possible for Carroll because, like Howard K. Smith who wrote that valuable book *Last Train from Berlin,* he took on his correspondent's assignment at an uncommonly high level of consciousness. He wanted not merely to be able to report things heard and seen. He wanted to be able to apply what he saw and heard to the answering of basic questions, particularly the question, "What policy should Britain and America pursue toward Russia, now and after the war?" And to this task he brought the knowledge and understanding gained in an exceptional journalistic experience. Mr. Carroll served as a diplomatic reporter covering most of the important international conferences, and spent four and a half years, from May 1934, as the manager of the United Press Bureau in Geneva.

Wallace Carroll

We're in This with Russia falls into three main sections. The first deals with the Soviet pre-war international relations and provides answers for his questions from that basis. The third section deals with the present and probable postwar situation of the Soviet Union and finds further answers for his questions there. Thus Mr. Carroll works out his thesis on the evidence of the past, the observable present, and a discernible future plotted out on their projections.

The middle section is mainly correspondent's reportage. And though well done, it is a twice told tale by now and unimportant in comparison with the other sections.

IN THE first section, though its purpose is to assess Soviet policy, the main emphasis is on Chamberlain. Such a focusing is useful. For in the pre-war situation Chamberlain held the key. France had been reduced to a choice of patrons and had chosen England. Of the other major European powers, the Axis asked of Chamberlain leeway for their aggressions in Europe, in return for police duty against "Bolshevism"; while the Soviet Union offered Chamberlain plans for collective action for peace. As regards the smaller European powers, Chamberlain could have won them all to collective security until his betrayal of Czechoslovakia left them with no alternative but an accommodation to the Axis or a sacrificial defense.

Carroll puts the matter with nugget-like succinctness: "It is a cardinal principle of diplomacy that a nation must have an alternative policy to fall back on if its primary policy fails." Both the Soviet Union and Germany had alternative policies, eventuating in their non-aggression pact. Chamberlain had none. When opposition in England, and the Nazi appetite, which grew with eating, made impossible Chamberlain's primary policy of an understanding with Hitler, the only possible alternative policy, an understanding with the USSR, proved impossible for him. Chamberlain's Soviet negotiations were conspicuously dilatory, hypocritical, reluctant, piddling. Though his overtures to Hitler had always

been in positive and even eager terms, his "references to the Soviet Union were mostly of a negative kind: 'the government had no objection in principle to an agreement with Russia'; 'no ideological consideration would be allowed to stand in the way,' and so forth." Carroll concludes: "New information is not likely to alter one salient point which seems supported by all the present evidence—that Chamberlain never offered Stalin anything which the government of a great power could accept."

Mr. Carroll makes clear that the Soviet Union nevertheless pursued at great risk and to the limit of safety its policy of collective action for peace by the democratic nations. The anti-Bolshevist psychosis of the morbidly deluded Chamberlain stood in the way. "The Soviet-German pact," Mr. Carroll concludes, "was the bitter and inescapable fruit of Chamberlainism."

Unfortunately, vestiges of Chamberlainism, particularly its anti-Soviet phobias, still remain in the United States as well as Great Britain. Twenty-five years of bogy-raising have had their effects and the anti-Soviet psychoses are deep-seated; shut off from direct outlets they find indirect ones. It is against the dangerous fears, hesitations, and hypocrisies born of them that Carroll directs the latter part of his book; and it is just here that he performs his most important service.

The particular value of this service lies in the fact that Carroll yields to no illusions, to no easy rationalizations, to no appeasement of surviving prejudice. He makes no attempt to present the Soviet system as anything but what it is. It is not, he makes clear, in a transition stage, in an inevitable devolution back to capitalism. It remains a socialist state, and relations with it must be based on readiness to deal with a socialist state. Establishing from historical evidence that the USSR is committed internally to the policy of continuing its socialist development and, externally, to a collaboration for peace with her capitalist neighbors, he calls upon the United States and other capitalist powers to do as much in their international relations. Only misfortune can follow from less.

In stressing the Soviet will and need to collaborate with the capitalist democracies it seems to me that Mr. Carroll somewhat underplays the Soviet will and overplays the Soviet need in his estimate. But no matter. The important thing is that he makes clear the need, the will, and the capacity of the USSR to live and work in peace with her capitalist neighbors, *as a socialist nation.*

CARROLL writes: "Some foreign observers in the Soviet Union . . . believe that the government will have to beat a temporary retreat from Soviet socialism. . . . I should not be surprised to see the Soviet government call in foreign engineers and technicians to help in the tremendous task of reconstruction. But the return of private enterprise is another matter. Stalin and his colleagues have nailed their flag to the mast. They have proclaimed time and again that the exploitation of man by man has ended in the Soviet Union. . . . Convinced of the all-conquering power of Soviet socialism, he and his colleagues will depend upon Soviet methods."

Thus, Mr. Carroll calls for collaboration with the Soviet Union without raising illusions about a capitalized Russia. And if he emphasizes the need of the Soviet Union for this collaboration he makes clear that the need is mutual, that the capitalist countries have as great a need.

Mr. Carroll is good at exorcising the anti-Soviet bogies. In disposing of one of them, the fear that the Soviet Union might use collaboration with the capitalist powers to foment revolutions, he uses an incident at Geneva to reemphasize the point that revolutions are always home, not imported, products. Uruguay had broken off relations with the Soviet Union, charging her with having fomented a revolution in neighboring Brazil from the Soviet legation at Montevideo, Uruguay's capital, thereby abusing her diplomatic privileges. Litvinov, taking the case before the League of Nations, read from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* entries on Brazil's many revolutions, concluding that "You do not need a Bolshevik to have a revolution in Brazil." Then he revealed that the break had come over the Soviet refusal to buy Uruguayan cheese. Cheese, apparently, did not make as dignified a pretext as the fomenting of revolutions.

Neither attempts to bully the Soviet Union into becoming a dumping ground nor wild allegations of propaganda, nor any of the slurring and silly procedures used by the capitalist democracies in the past in their Soviet relations, can be allowed a place in present and future relations with the USSR. The fate that Chamberlainism brought upon us has made one thing self-evident. No world order can have any secure base which is not founded on complete and equal Soviet collaboration.

To use some paragraphs of Carroll's for my conclusion:

"The nature of America's future policy toward the Soviets has been clearly marked out by the failures of the capitalist countries in their previous relations with the Soviet Union. First they tried to destroy the Soviets by armed force. That failed and, if anyone should be so mad as to try it again it would fail once more; the Soviets would fight as stubbornly against American and British invaders as they have fought against the Germans. Next, the capitalist countries tried to ignore the Soviet Union. That policy also failed, and it is even less practicable now than at the time it was attempted. Then the capitalist powers recognized the Soviets but treated them like poor relations. The outcome of that policy was a new world war.

"There remains only one course—a policy of equality, carried out with firmness but without condescension or hostility. It will not be easy. It will challenge American statesmanship and the intelligence and good sense of the American people. But it is the only policy which has a chance and it is a policy which may give the world a long period of peace."

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

CITY AND COUNTRY

Anna Rochester's brilliant study of Lenin's agricultural program.

LENIN ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION, *by Anna Rochester. International Publishers. Trade edition, $2.50. Popular edition, $1.75.*

THIS is a book for everyone. It is just as important for city people as for farmers. In the Soviet Union socialism has developed a new kind of people, in both the city and the country. The world is admiring their steadfastness, enthusiasm, and loyalty. Here we are painfully aware of the many difficulties which still restrain the American people from making the maximum war effort.

We know that America's farm organizations have not mobilized their members to meet the war crisis, even to the degree attained by the labor unions with their labor-management production committees. The nearly one-fourth of America's population who live on the farms are far from fully mobilized. No person can afford to ignore this problem, which must be solved by the joint efforts of labor and the farmers.

In this short and readable volume by Anna Rochester we learn how the Bolsheviks overcame the antagonisms of city and country; how the Russian workers established the closest fraternal relationship with the peasant masses; how they guided the transformation of backward, medieval peasants into modern farmers operating power-driven implements. The complete unity of the population achieved by Lenin's leadership and by the carrying out of Leninist policy is manifest today in the skill and heroism of the Russian people on the fields of battle, in the besieged towns, and in the widespread guerrilla activities.

American trade unionists reading this book will see how unions can be of assistance to farmers in fighting for the conditions necessary for increased agricultural production. Ample attention is given to the differences between American and Russian agricultural conditions, but despite these differences there remain fundamental considerations common to both. The relationship of the workers to the farmers is a key to national unity.

LENIN'S writings on the agrarian question are scattered through the thirty volumes of the Russian edition of his works. Miss Rochester has searched through these volumes and studied all the writings on this subject. One of the valuable features of her book is the fact that perhaps a third of it consists of direct quotations from Lenin, many of which now appear in English for the first time. Thus the book becomes a necessary companion to the English volumes of Lenin's works.

Miss Rochester's organization of the material makes for easy reading. The chapters are chronological, starting with Lenin's writings on rural czarist Russia before 1905. Feudalism was then giving way to the tardy development of capitalism, which was breaking down the old commune, producing the kulak, and driving masses of the rural poor to the city. There follow chapters on the revolutionary period of 1905-07, when uprisings against the great landlords paralleled the revolt of the proletariat in the industrial centers.

During this period Lenin sought to direct the ferment of unrest in the countryside into organized revolutionary peasant committees. He showed his great trust in the masses, emphasizing again and again that definite gains —however small—won by the peasants themselves through their revolutionary committees would be more fruitful than grand schemes for nationalization of land carried through without organized peasant activity. Lenin saw in such peasant committees the nucleus of democratic political life in the countryside.

CHAPTERS on the years of reaction after the 1905 Revolution, on the World War, the Revolution of 1917, the Civil War, famine, and gradual economic recovery, reveal in a dramatic way the steady development of Lenin's agrarian policy. When the workers and peasants had won political power, the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets roared its approval of Lenin's proposal for nationalization of all land. But this did not mean displacement of farmers from lands they had been cultivating. And Lenin, wise in his understanding of the farmers' desires, refused to launch at that time a mass campaign for collective operation of peasant farms. He wrote:

"We have got to give the peasant, who not only in our country but all over the world is a practical man and a realist, concrete examples to prove that the commune is the best possible thing. Of course nothing will come of it if hasty individuals go flitting to the villages from the cities, come there, make a speech, stir up a number of intellectual and at times unintellectual brawls, and then shake the dust from their feet and go their way. That sometimes happens. Instead of arousing respect, they arouse ridicule, and deservedly so."

Though Lenin died in January 1924, he had already formulated the lines along which socialist agriculture would proceed:

"Our task as regards small peasants is first to lead their private enterprise and private property into cooperative lines, not forcibly, but by example and by granting public aid for this purpose. . . . The transformation of the small farmer, the remolding of his mentality and habits, is a work of generations. Only a material base, technique, the employment of tractors and machinery in agriculture on a mass scale, can solve the problem of the small farmer, make his whole mentality sound, so to speak. This is what would radically and with enormous rapidity, transform the small farmer."

The book does not close with Lenin's death, but includes the realization of his great

plan for bringing socialism to the countryside. Miss Rochester describes the unique methods used to accomplish this rural revolution: how the machine-tractor stations have aided the collectives; how in 1933 some 25,000 Communists from factories and schools were mobilized to help the new collectives in their problems of management, organization, and bookkeeping; how in 1934 a Congress of peasant delegates drafted a model constitution to embody the best kind of relationship between farm families and the collective farm.

A chapter on "Underlying Principles of Lenin's Analysis and Program" is of broad general interest. It not only summarizes the development of Lenin's agrarian thinking but it describes concisely—and largely in Lenin's own words—the process of social change.

"A Postscript on American Agriculture" affords a sharp contrast with the development of socialist agriculture in the Soviet Union. It brings up to date the chief findings of a study which Lenin made of the 1900 and 1910 United States Census of Agriculture. Lenin had pointed out the marked trend in America toward the impoverishment of the small farm operators while larger operators tend to increase their capital and constantly produce a greater share of the total commercial output. In short, the capitalist process pursues the same course in both industry and agriculture, with the sole difference that in agriculture the process is slowed down by the draining off of capital for the possession of land and by the retarded development of automatic machinery for mass production methods.

Miss Rochester's book is a "must" for everyone who aspires to a Marxist library. And all people who are deeply concerned over the future of American democracy will want to read and re-read this book, not only in these wartime days but in the years to come.

LEM HARRIS.

Robert Frost's Poetry

FIRE AND ICE, *by Lawrance Thompson. Holt. $2.50.*

THE Emersonian doctrine of self-reliance is one of the forks in the road of our American tradition. It may lead us via ignorance, smugness, and indifference right smack up to Cal Coolidge's doorstep. Or it may lead us to a fiercely individualistic pride functioning for a collective good. The doctrine itself is, I think, unassailable. What is important is the use we make of it, how we fit it into our own time and for our own needs.

Robert Frost has built his house of poetry right at this fork in the road. It's a snug New England house possessing all the virtues of a lack of pretentiousness and an easy-to-take style. Mr. Thompson sees in it far more architectural inventiveness than it really has. Painstaking and scholarly, his exposition of Frost's work—humanistic in its slant—is invariably that of a disciple rather than a critic.

For this poet contains the strength and the weakness of the Yankee manner. His over-the-fence farmer-talk with its wit, skepticism ("We dance around a ring and suppose, But the Secret sits in the middle and knows."), taciturnity, shrewd indirection—we can build more than stone walls with these. We may question the philosophical priority of "Resourcefulness Is More Than Understanding," but certainly the stress may be heard with profit—especially in military circles.

It is when Frost (and Q.E.D., Mr. Thompson) begins to relate the individual and society that he goes Coolidgean. He is an old States Righter and distrusts industrial society and its inevitable centralization of government. "Keep off each other and keep each other off." And "We congregate embracing from distrust as much as love." What of it? We must congregate nevertheless, so we'd better learn to do it as intelligently as possible. Yes, we must become better individuals, but this is not—as Frost seems to think—incompatible with neighborliness practiced internationally and nationally as well as locally. Even he has understood this at times, as when he wrote of this land:

Something we were withholding made us weak
Until we found it was ourselves
We were withholding from our land of living,
And forthwith found salvation in surrender.
Such as we were we gave ourselves outright
(The deed of gift was many deeds of war)
To the land vaguely realizing westward,
But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced,
Such as she was, such as she would become.

SIDNEY ALEXANDER.

Address Unknown

WILL GERMANY CRACK?, *by Paul Hagen. Harper. $2.75.*

TO THE observer of developments in the main citadel of the Axis this book offers nothing new. It is a diligent collection of well known material and previously published reports about the situation in Germany. It points to the many weaknesses in the structure of the Nazi war machine, ranging from the shortage of iron, steel, and oil, the transportation crisis, the need for food and the lack of tractors, to the overaged, overfatigued, and undernourished German and foreign workers. The greatest weakness is the political exhaustion in the Third Reich.

The author describes the solidarity of interests between big business and the Nazi ruling clique, but government control of the economic life under war conditions leads him to the erroneous conclusion that "big business has definitely abdicated as the leading monopoly power." What the author calls the "continued retreat" of German big business has been clearly refuted by the events of the last few months: the most influential capitalist circles, the iron and steel barons, have achieved greater independence and power than ever before. This, of course, will not prevent the disintegration of the alliance that constitutes German fascism when the final crisis comes and each group tries to save its own skin at the expense of the others.

Hagen proposes that the United Nations seek the collaboration of those elements in Germany who share their democratic outlook and have demonstrated before and during the Hitler dictatorship their steadfast opposition to Nazism. The principle he argues for is good, but his approach to methods of political propaganda during the war and to the problem of postwar Europe does not go beyond hazy generalities.

Hagen gives no picture of the struggle of the German opposition because he knows nothing about it despite boasts about connections and his trips in Germany. He ignores or falsifies the activity of the most vigorous German anti-Nazis, the Communists. He wants us to believe that the organized underground groups in Germany are composed mainly of supporters of his own Social-Democratic sect, *Neu Beginnen* (New Beginning). Unfortunately for Hagen, this group is completely unknown in Germany though it has managed to place more of its members in the US Office of War Information and the British Ministry of Information than it can muster in the Third Reich. Now Hagen is attempting to transmute the reputation he has gained in certain American drawing rooms into leadership of the German opposition. However, the responsible heads of the German Social-Democratic Party in exile in America have published a wealth of material questioning and contradicting his aspirations to "leadership." Some day the German opposition will be amazed to learn of Paul Hagen's existence.

ANDREAS NIEBUHR.

The Best?

THE BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES, 1942. *Edited by Martha Foley. Houghton Mifflin. $2.75.*

MISS FOLEY'S collection contains one good and funny Lardnerian story by James Thurber, and the rest might as well not have been collected. The extraordinary thing about them is that they seem so trivial, not only for a time of war but for a time of peace or any other time. Irwin Shaw and John Steinbeck, for instance, are represented by incredibly slight efforts. The tone of the whole collection strikes one as uniformly absent-minded —as though the writers weren't interested in their own work. Possibly this is due to preoccupation with the war. But in that case the nine stories dealing in one way or another with it ought to be very good, which they are not. The most successful of these are the sensitive studies of refugees by Nancy Hale and Marjorie Worthington; the rest are oblique, unreal, and not honestly felt.

The remainder of the stories are presumably of permanent, rather than timely, interest; but nothing new is discovered in experience or in technique, and the themes are written around and around to exhaustion. Even "Biceps" by Nelson Algren, one of the best stories in the book, seems over-written and too long. All of them are like receding echoes of the thirties.

JOAN ROCKWELL.

THE WILL AND THE WAY

Some weeds in the Hollywood victory garden. Joy Davidman asks the blondes to stay out of the bombers. Nor are there barrels of fun in a heap of corpses.

BACK in the depression, Hollywood was often blamed for its willful refusal to face the economic facts of life. Hunger, to the films, was what you felt when you were trying to reduce, and unemployment was one of the words on the Hays Office taboo list, along with "lousy" and the vocabulary of sex. It is pleasant to be able to report a partial change of front.

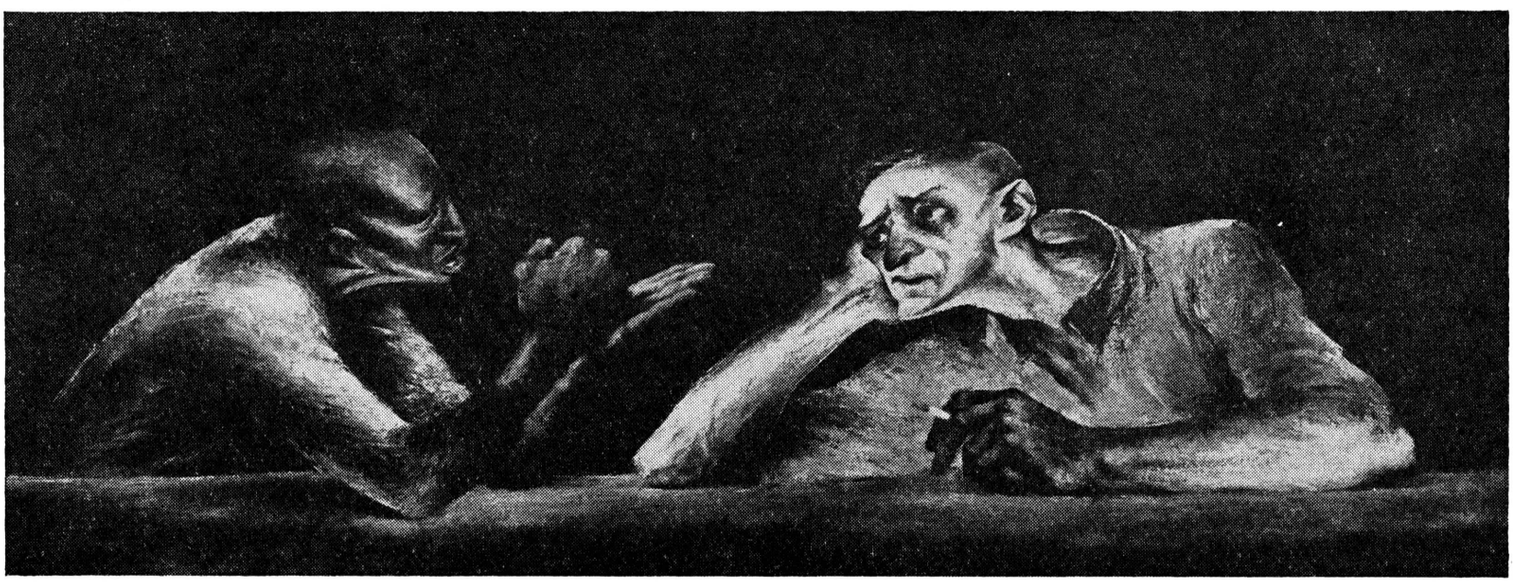
The film community is keenly conscious of its duty in the war effort. Through individual and group activities it has done much to strengthen that effort; the industry is, at last, accepting the fact that it has a responsibility to the people. No longer do producers argue that escapist entertainment is the sole business of the film; education and morale-building are recognized as duties. Hollywood's will to aid the war effort is unquestionable. Unfortunately, the producers have not often been able to translate that will into film terms—the films remain as questionable as ever.

Through failure to readjust, much of what now appears on the screen, far from being stronger and more realistic than pre-war films, has actually disintegrated to the shocking inanity of a comic strip. This is true of one type of movie in particular. Films for the war may be divided into three groups—frankly educational documentaries, usually made under government supervision, which are serious, straightforward, and effective; fictional films based on some real aspect of the war, which are bad but getting better; and entertainment-fictions which leave the war and other stern realities completely out of the discussion. It is these "business-as-usual" films which have gone most completely to the dogs.

FILMS dealing with war problems, while often shoddy enough, have at least made an effort at readjustment, and sometimes have succeeded brilliantly. There was *Mrs. Miniver,* there is *Wake Island;* minor pieces like *Manila Calling* and *A Yank on the Burma Road* share some of the dramatic seriousness of these. Last year's *Invaders,* in spite of romantic weaknesses, was well aware of the real issues and the real problems of the anti-Axis struggle. All these films are powerful because of their emphasis on the terrifying commonplaces of our lives instead of on sensational improbabilities. Ordinary people were their protagonists, ordinary people exposed to the enormous onslaughts and equally enormous opportunities for heroism in this war. It is probable that, as the pressure of the war intensifies, and reality seeps through the California climate, these films will set the tone for others still more honest. As yet, however, directors from Hitchcock down are still turning out tangles of silly villainy—*Sabotage, Desperate Journey,* even an anachronistic *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror*—as if the war were romantic, as if the Gestapo's chief occupation were twirling its collective whiskers and snarling, "Foiled again, by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer!"

Well-meaning unimaginativeness inspires this failure to visualize the people's war as anything more than a vehicle for Errol Flynn, and the headlines will educate these imaginations. The business-as-usual films present a different problem. They are important to the war effort, for they are or should be the strain-lifters, the cheerer-uppers, the movies to which soldiers on leave take their girls. Little conscious attempt has been made to adjust them to the new situation, but they have involuntarily suffered a sea-change since Pearl Harbor, for it is impossible now to duplicate the casualness and complacency of pre-war days. Would-be grace and lightness sweat with effort, nonchalance becomes imbecility, the smile becomes a painful smirk. Certain changes of subject and attitude have also made their appearance, dictated by the box office and the jitters.

IT WOULD be unfair to blame Hollywood entirely for the two most significant current trends in entertainment. They are the contemplation of sex and the contemplation of death; and never has there been a violent moment of history that didn't produce both. It would be equally unfair to call them unhealthy tendencies. As reflected on the screen, however, they become neurotically exaggerated. The tragedy and heroism of wartime love are disregarded in most Hollywood films; what we are offered instead is a completely irrelevant quantity of female flesh in an unlikely place—a blonde in a bomber, a brunette



"Two Men." Painting by Joseph Hirsch.

caterwauling to the troops in the jungle, with improbably large areas of skin exposed to the jungle bugs. No more destructive undervaluation of women's place in the war effort can be imagined.

The prevailing attitude toward death is similarly cheapened on the screen. One of the most notable aspects of courage is a refusal to shudder at the thought of death. "Come on, you——; do you want to live forever?" In the fourteenth century, when the Black Death depopulated Europe, entertainment developed the Danse Macabre, which reduced horror to farce and made it bearable. Exactly the same thing is happening in the current enormous popularity of murder stories, murder plays, murder movies—but stories and plays which represent violent death as a trivial and amusing thing. The conspicuous Broadway success of our time is *Arsenic and Old Lace,* which piles up the laughs by heaping corpse upon corpse. Murder doesn't frighten you after you've taken a good look at Hitlerism.

Political thinkers and literary critics are often impatient with this macabre laughter, seeing in it a mere failure to face a serious situation rather than the invaluable psychological defense it often is. For it fills a need, it helps us keep our balance. Our present humorous enjoyment and callousness in the face of death may be repugnant to human decency; yet if we allowed the horrors and atrocities to tear us in bits with proportionate emotional agony we would be good for nothing except giving employment to a deserving straitjacket. The trouble is that many of Hollywood's horror-farces exaggerate this psychological defense until it becomes destructive itself.

SUCH a film as *To Be or Not to Be,* a perfect example of the defensive laugh, offended a great many people through bad taste and pettiness. More, the laugh often becomes hysterical, as in the dancing-madness of the slaphappy gyrations of our musical films. And, still more, the laugh often becomes a substitute for action. It is not true that you can laugh or satirize an enemy out of existence; those who try it usually discover that mockery is the slave's consolation for his servitude.

Thus when Hollywood takes its old horror-film mad scientist formula and turns it inside out, in *The Boogie Man Will Get You,* the product twitches with sick nerves. Basically, Hollywood is doing a healthier thing by making you giggle than it used to by making you shudder; but *The Boogie Man* is laboriously crazy, and your head aches in sympathy with its writers. Somewhere along the line it picked up a few good action gags which contrast oddly with its adenoidal plot. The light comic touch contributed by, of all people, Boris Karloff and Peter Lorre, and the heavy comic wallop of Maxie Rosenbloom, give it moments of delirious charm. Yet it tries too hard to pretend that everything's a barrel of fun; it is the work of frightened people, and something you shouldn't serve to normal adults.

The same holds good for *The Glass Key,* which started with much better material—a Dashiell Hammett novel and Brian Donlevy. The failure here is twofold; in the first place, Alan Ladd and Veronica Lake would give any film the rich mellowness of an unripe persimmon; in the second place, this tough gangster stuff just doesn't impress us any more. It used to be effective when we were gentle people in a reasonably unbrutal world, where violence was abnormal. Now it is unconvincing, in *The Glass Key,* except for the vivid moments in which an elephantine thug makes a vast joke out of his own brutality.

Nobody could give a hoot about either of these films on their own merits. They are, however, dangerously significant as signposts. Granted that the macabre is with us, and that we had better laugh at it than cry, it would be still better to think and act. These escape-entertainment films are involuntarily sidetracking thought and action, substituting a half-mad recklessness, and, worse yet, a taste for sadism. In consequence, these films are not valuable as morale-builders; nor can they be called cheerer-uppers; nor are they even entertainment. If we must laugh at death, let's laugh with our eyes open.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

Idea for a Play

Alvah Bessie suggests a dramatic production of a recent novel.

IT HAS occurred to a lot of people who have read Arnold Manoff's moving first novel, *Telegram From Heaven,* that it would make an excellent play. I'd like to second the motion, and urge Mr. Manoff either to take a crack at it himself, or to find a good playwright to do it for him.

The first thing that occurs to anyone considering the translation of material from novel to play form is dialogue and on that score alone Mr. Manoff could do a bang-up job, for there is nothing wrong with the dialogue in *Telegram*—it is swift, pungent, highly redolent of the atmosphere that surrounds his characters. But as we've seen on innumerable occasions, dialogue alone never makes a play—the most startling example of this fact being, perhaps, Hemingway's play, *The Fifth Column.* Everyone had expected—rather naively—that since Hemingway was the master of a peculiarly effective and oblique sort of dialogue, he would automatically make a good playwright.

But dialogue aside, *Telegram From Heaven* possesses other excellent possibilities for the stage. The scope of its action, in a geographical sense, is limited; which would make it possible to present the play in relatively few scenes; always an advantage in the theater from the production point of view. Many fine novels, of course, range so widely both geographically and in time, that attempts to force them into the mold of the theater result in episodic treatment that loses the developmental qualities which have made them memorable in book form.

I feel that *Telegram From Heaven* could be confined within the walls of Sylvia Singer's home, a park, possibly the optometrist's office, the candy store. But that is the playwright's problem. What I'm chiefly interested in is seeing someone attempt this book as a play, solely for what it has to say about the problems of its little people—a people Odets has used to excellent effect in his better plays—whose possibilities for drama have by no means been exhausted.

For there are millions of little people in America, and the Singers (Sylvia and Mom) and the B. F.'s and the girl friends, too, present the pageant of America in their lives and aspirations. These people are full of the juice of life; they present, in certain respects, the least common denominator of human existence in this period of war and human upheaval: the struggle for survival, for security, for homes, husbands, wives, love, and peace. In Sylvia and her boy friend Paul, the stage would have a likeable human pair immediately recognizable to almost any Broadway audience.

The play form is obviously a much more rigid form than the novel, but nothing essential need be lost by such a transformation. Much of Sylvia's internal monologue might be lost, but even a good deal of that might be externalized by clever and valid dramaturgy. And such scenes as her conversations with the photograph of President Roosevelt, her struggle with the amorous optometrist, her arguments with Paul about the impossibility of immediate marriage, her scenes with her brother and her mother, would be as rich on the stage as they are in the book itself. For these scenes in particular go deep in their humor and pathos, and the pathos is genuinely the other face of the humor, as it is in any good work of art.

The humor of *Telegram From Heaven* is not gag humor; nor is the pathos tear-jerking. They are reverse expressions of the same deeper emotion—the yearning for security, the struggle against confusion and defeatism, which is so essential a battle today. The scene with the optometrist, for example, while hilariously funny on one plane, is essentially pathetic on another—if you recall the moment when Sylvia frustrates his advances by smashing several trays of his lenses, and he gropes about on the floor trying to salvage them and saying with utter bewilderment, "Look what you've done; just look what you've done!"

These are scenes, and while the optometrist scene is not central to the play, the relationship between Sylvia and Paul constitutes not only the chief conflict of the book (and play) but a problem in contemporary life that has deep and broad implications for America: the problem of the girl who seeks fulfillment in marriage; of the boy who seeks fulfillment in marriage at a time when his country needs his energies—and possibly his life—in the struggle against its deadly enemy, fascism.

ALVAH BESSIE.

COMMUNIST PARTY
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