

NEW MASSES

MAY 16, 1939

FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY

How Strong Is the Red Army?

A STATISTICAL SURVEY BY MAX WERNER

Genevieve Taggard

MALLORCA MEMORY

The United States Arts Projects

JOSEPH STAROBIN

Go Left, Young Man, Go Left!

JAMES DUGAN

Cartoons by Gropper, Richter, Redfield, Ajay, Kruckman

BETWEEN OURSELVES

THIS week marks Carl Bristel's induction into the fraternity of NM. He takes George Willner's place in that very hot spot here, the business manager's post. Carl has already been hazed and hazed plenty—the NM is no mystery to him. He was associated with the weekly in its earliest days when he worked on the editorial board as representative of the students.

For Bristel was a student—editor of *Frontiers*, magazine of the City College Social Problems Club, back in 1933—when Umbrella Man Frederick B. Robinson (remember?) used his rainstick against the lads in the university, and expelled some twenty-one. They had committed the terrible faux pas of leading an Anti-Jingo Day demonstration against the will of this precursor of Chamberlain. (Incidentally, does anybody know where F. B. Robinson is *now*?) Among those expelled were Adam Lapin, the *Daily Worker's* Washington correspondent, and Joseph Starobin, whose articles have appeared frequently in our pages. Bristel was kicked out with all the others. He had headed the most popular magazine in the college when he got his

walking papers. Blackballed out of college—the boys couldn't get admission anywhere else—he went to work. Today, we're happy to announce, he is working for us.

Bristel, a young man with a very serious eye—as befits an NM manager—is assured the heartiest cooperation of the editorial board. We know he will do an A No. 1 job here. For two years he directed the *Daily Worker* financial drive and was a considerable factor in raising half a million dollars for that worthy cause. It's a tough job here, he knew that when he came on, and there is a lot of satisfaction to it (even if the wages come low). The work he does will have quite a bearing on whether the American Hitlers can hoist the swastika over Washington or not. And that's an honorable life job for any young man. Meet Mr. Bristel.

Vincent Sheean, Corliss Lamont, Maurice Hindus, Gen. Victor Yakontoff, and Prof. Dorothy Douglas will discuss cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union, at a meeting in the Hotel Center, 108 West 43rd St., N. Y. C., Thursday, May 18, at 8:15 p.m. The meeting is being sponsored by the American Friends of the Soviet Union.

Mme. Julio Alvarez del Vayo, wife of the foreign minister in the Spanish republican government, and Constanca de la Mora, director of foreign press in the same government, will be honored at a dinner symposium at the Hotel Commodore, N. Y. C., Wednesday, May 17, by the American League for Peace and Democracy. Speakers will include Genevieve Taggard, Rockwell Kent, Dr. Harry F. Ward, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Harold Clurman, and Dr. Clark M. Eichelberger. Among the sponsors are Vincent Sheean, John Groth, Peggy Bacon, Syd Hoff, and Bennett A. Cerf.

A recital of Negro music and literature, sponsored by the Citizens Civic Affairs Committee, will be given Friday, May 12, 8:30 p.m., at the Central YMCA, 55 Hanson Place, Brooklyn, N. Y. Richard Wright will speak on the cultural contributions of the Negro to America; Juanita Lewis, diseuse, will give a dramatic presentation of Negro poetry and short stories from Phyllis Wheatley to Langston Hughes; Leonard Franklin, tenor, will give a recital tracing the history of Negro song.

Earl Conrad, whose address is Rm. 532, 316 West 93rd St., N. Y. C., has a request to make of us:

"I am writing the biography of that great American woman, Harriet Tubman, and I am in quest of letters,

information, anecdotes, incidents and so forth, concerning her life and contribution. I should like to hear, in particular, from the descendants of Abolitionists, from the estates of Garrison, Colonel Higginson, Thomas Garrett, Gerrit Smith, any and all operators of the Underground Railway, and descendants of any officers of the Union Army who may have been associated with her when she served as a soldier, spy, and nurse in South Carolina and in Virginia."

Who's Who

MAX WERNER is the pseudonym of a leading European authority on military affairs and the author of *The Military Strength of the Powers*, which has just been issued in London by the Left Book Club. . . . Joseph Starobin's article in this issue is the second in his series on the federal cultural projects. He is the editor of the *Young Communist Review*, monthly magazine of the Young Communist League. . . . Paul G. McManus is NM's Washington correspondent. . . . Joy Davidman was this year's winner of the Russell Loines Memorial Fund poetry award, bestowed by the Na-

tional Institute of Arts and Letters. . . . Peter Lyon is a radio scriptwriter out of Williams College, whose interest in jazz dates back ten years. . . . Elizabeth Lawson is the director of the summer day school of the Workers School of New York. . . . Al Richmond is managing editor of the San Francisco *People's World*.

Flashbacks

MEMO to the United Mine Workers: On May 12, 1902, 140,000 anthracite miners struck for the eight-hour day, union recognition, the uniform ton. . . . Eleven years before, in 1891, the miners in Tennessee had been taking bold measures to stop the operators from continuing their practice of leasing convicts at so much per head to work the mines—measures which eventually led to legislation against convict labor in coal mines. . . . In May 1904 the big strike in Trinidad, Colo., was broken only with police brutality. On May 18, sixty miners were marched without food in a scorching hot sun twenty miles over the mountains, being beaten along the route. . . . Henri Barbusse was born May 17, 1873, near Paris.



Genevieve Taggard

The author of several volumes of verse and the biographer of Emily Dickinson has been a contributor to both the old "Masses" and NM. She compiled and edited "May Days," an anthology of verse from the "Masses" and the "Liberator." Virtually all of her childhood was spent in Hawaii, and she has lived in the states of Washington, California, Connecticut, New York, and Massachusetts, as well as in France and Spain. Miss Taggard contributes poetry and criticism to many periodicals.

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How Strong Is the Red Army?

Here, in a factual, documented article, is the truth about the growth of the Red Army. Even its present political opponents attest its enormous power. Its morale and culture.

“THE military strength of the Soviet Union represents a factor of decisive importance in the power relations of Europe.”

Thus the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, one of the leading conservative publications in France, which numbers among its military contributors Marshal Petain, General Weygand, and the former chief of the French General Staff, General Debeney.

The existence of Russian military strength of such importance represents an entirely new factor in the European situation. National Socialist Germany is merely winning back the old position of Hohenzollern Germany before the World War, but Russia is advancing to a front place among the military powers of Europe for the first time in history.

We must study the dispute which has been going on in Western Europe for some time now concerning the fighting value of the Red

Army if we are to understand anything of the latter's unique character. Three circumstances make it difficult to form an objective judgment of the Red Army: plain ignorance, conservatism in thought, and simple prejudice. As a result the military experts of Europe and their professional journals are not keeping abreast of Soviet military developments, and even their information is often old. In 1937-38 the European press was publishing figures about Soviet armaments which referred for the most part to the beginning of 1935. Here we have a clear case of conservatism in thought finding itself incapable of keeping up with the rapid development of modern military science.

The Italian General Visconti-Prasca writes: “The unexpectedly rapid development of military technical resources has outstripped the military doctrines of many armies, and their theoreticians still cling to antiquated

ideas.” (*La Guerre Decisive*, Paris, 1935).

Such prejudices and misunderstandings are gradually being recognized and abandoned, because the facts themselves are too eloquent and convincing. At the beginning of 1935 the French deputy Archimbaud, reporter on the Military Budget, argued in the Chamber that the Red Army was strong only as a defensive weapon, and that therefore the military assistance the Soviet Union could give France under the Franco-Soviet pact would not be very great. However, the military and political value of a coalition partner necessarily depends on the ability of his army to wage offensive warfare. Later on Archimbaud, himself one of the most influential parliamentary military experts in France, found cause to revise his judgment; speaking in the Chamber on June 23, 1936, he declared: “I have changed my opinion about the Red Army, and I am now convinced that the Soviet



Sovfoto

SOLDIERS WHO SMILE. Three Red Army tankmen, snapped before their high-speed heavy tank. They don't have to worry about fighting with Ersatz equipment, their heads full of hysterical mumbo-jumbo, their leaders costumed political clowns. They are members of the Red Army, the only army of workers and peasants in the world, the finest standing army extant, as even their enemies admit.

Union will be in a position to honor all her undertakings under the pact."

The facts demonstrate that the Red Army has bigger reserves of manpower than any other army in Europe, the biggest volume of armaments, and the most powerful offensive weapons. At the same time it has been uniformly trained to wage a strategic offensive. Together with the German army it is one of the most modern among European armies.

In the Polish military journal *Przegląd Wojskowo Techniczny*, in 1934, J. Watyn Watyniecki wrote as follows about the progress being made by the tank arm of the Red Army:

The rapidity with which the Department for Mechanization and Motorization in the Red Army makes its decisions with regard to the introduction of new tank types, and the equally great rapidity with which such decisions are then put into operation, i.e., the "elasticity" of Soviet Russia's present-day war industries in the matter of tank production,

are very noteworthy indeed. The result of this is that today the Red Army is stronger in motorization and mechanization than any other army in Europe.

In the first half of 1935 Major General Guderian, who is now commanding the German Tank Corps, put the number of tanks in the Red Army at ten thousand.

This estimate is quite in accordance with the official Soviet statement concerning the percentage growth of the tank weapon in the Red Army, and with the norms which were accepted at the time for the use of the tank in modern warfare.

Thus, even at the beginning of 1935, the Red Army took first place among the armies of Europe in the question of armament volume, and, above all, in the matter of modern weapons of offense. Two years previously the Soviet Union had caught up with France; now France was outstripped, and not only numeri-

cally. During a journey of investigation made in 1934 Henri de Kerillis, himself an experienced war pilot and the leading journalistic representative of the French right wing, declared that in numerical strength, technical efficiency, modern equipment, and flying ability the Red air arm was considerably superior to the French. It is quite clear that in the concentrated and feverish period of rearmament experienced by National Socialist Germany up to the beginning of 1935 there was no possibility whatever of her nullifying the enormous start of the Red Army in point of time, technical progress, and armament volume. Even at that time the Red Army had a good chance of maintaining the military leadership of Europe.

And now we come to the third and decisive stage, 1935-38. In order to recognize the structure and the military value of the Red Army we must examine its strength after the latest armament achievements. All other figures, even those of early 1936, have since been rendered valueless both in quality and quantity. The growth of military expenditure in the Soviet budget since 1933 offers us a useful measure of achievement:

1933.....	1.5 billion rubles
1934.....	5 " "
1935.....	8 " "
1936.....	14.8 " "
1937.....	22.4 " "
1938.....	34 " "

The military expenditure for 1937 consisted of 20.1 billion rubles for the People's Commissariat of Defense and 2.3 billion rubles for the newly formed People's Commissariat for the War Industries, amounting together to 23 percent of the total Soviet State Budget. The corresponding figures for 1938 were 27 billion rubles and 7 billion rubles. The State Budget of the Soviet Union is constructed differently from the budgets of ordinary countries. As almost the whole of the economic system is in the hands of the state, the greater part of the national income goes through the State Budget. A certain amount of direct and indirect military expenditure is not included in the sums mentioned; for instance, the expenditure for frontier defense, which appears in the budget of the People's Commissariat of the Interior, and sums expended on the building of strategic railways and roads, and on certain supplies. The increase of expenditure on armaments in the Soviet Union in recent years has thus been enormous; between 1933 and 1938 it increased twenty-two-fold. In the four years 1931-34 a total sum of 9 billion rubles was expended for military purposes, while in the four years 1935-38 a total sum of 79 billion rubles was expended for the same purpose, or a ninefold increase. What does this enormous expenditure represent in terms of military strength?

First of all there is the numerical increase in the strength of the standing army from 940,000 in 1935 to 1,300,000. This increase in strength was connected with the change in the structure of the Red Army. Formerly,

A Political Army

THE Red Army is something more than a mere military instrument. It is at the same time a school and a political organization. There is no other army in the world which pays greater attention to the question of education. The Red Army is an educational institution which seeks to raise the general educational level of its men. It has innumerable schools and over two thousand libraries, and every soldier has to have some general knowledge of both modern and classical literature. The French military expert Henri Bidou declares that the general education and training of the ordinary Red soldier are as high as those of a German non-commissioned officer, and Bidou has had the opportunity of studying both systems at close hand. In an article in *Vu*, July 10, 1935, he wrote: "The ordinary soldier in the Red Army has a level of education, discipline, and professional earnestness unrivaled in any other army."

Education is closely connected with politics. The Red Army is a political army; it gives the soldier a political education and molds his general social outlook. The relation of party and army in the Soviet Union is very different from that which prevails under a fascist dictatorship. In the totalitarian states the army is to a certain extent an institution apart which cannot be assimilated by the ruling party despite all its attempts at universal incorporation. In the fascist states the old army was taken over, it was not created by fascism. The army is declared to be above politics and there are no party-political organizations within it. The officers' caste remains isolated and secluded, and maintains its own traditions. In the fascist state there is an unavoidable dualism between the party and the army, and in critical situations this cleft can threaten the very existence of the dictatorship. Under such circumstances conflicts break out very easily between party and army: e.g., fascism versus the older reaction and perhaps the crown, or in Germany the monarchist tradition, or between fascist leadership and fascist foreign policy on the one hand and the military necessity of a suitable strategy on the other. Such conflicts are impossible in the Soviet Union. The Bolshevik Party created the Red Army, it did not take it over, and a political organization, a military party organization,

embraces the whole army from top to bottom and gives it ideological cohesion. The military party organization and its political education guarantee the absolute reliability of the masses in the army and give them ideological *elan*. It is interesting to read the verdict of enemies of the Soviet Union in this respect: White Guardist military experts and German military men. Colonel Piatnitzki declares: "It is naive to expect an explosion of general dissatisfaction from the army. The tentacles of the party have seized too cleverly and too firmly not only on the leaders of the army, but also on the masses of the army." (*The Red Army of the USSR, Paris, 1931.*)

And Colonel Saitzev declares:

"And above all efforts are being made to identify army and party, and from this develop the logical and determined labors to make the army, and in particular its officers' corps, socially proletarian and politically Communist. At the same time everything possible is being done to ensure that the political organization covers the whole army from top to bottom. Thanks to these measures the Communist Party has the Red Army well in hand; in other words, the Red Army is a completely reliable instrument of the Soviet political authorities." (*The Red Army, Berlin, 1934.*)

This fact is still more strongly underlined by the *Deutsche Wehr*, German military publication which always pays particular attention to political problems as they affect military matters:

"Since the existence of the Red Army there has been no single case of mutiny either at the front or behind the lines. The question as to the reliability of the Red soldier in the event of war must be answered in the affirmative." (Dec. 12, 1935.)

And in March 1937 the British Conservative *Round Table* declared in an article on the defensive strength of the Soviet Union that in the matter of morale there was hardly another army in the world which could compare with the Red Army.

Complete political reliability and high morale, together with powerful economic backing and modern war technique, are the main factors of Red Army strength.



Groppe

74 percent of the infantry divisions were of a territorial character and their ranks were formed of short-service men, so that only a minority of the army actually served a two-year period of training. Since 1935 the proportion has been reversed: today 77 percent of all infantry divisions are long-service formations, and only 23 percent are on a territorial basis. This change naturally means that military training in the Soviet Union has been greatly intensified. The numerical strength of the long-service troops has been increased almost threefold, and the Red Army has become a mass army of thoroughly trained soldiers. For the great majority of Soviet infantrymen the term of service has increased two and a half times.

It is clear, too, that in the same period the volume of armaments at the disposal of the Red Army must have grown very considerably, though the enormous increase in military expenditure indicates that the progress in war technique, etc., has been even greater than the increase in army effectives. Thus the intensification in armaments must have been continued rapidly. Not only did the effectives increase, therefore, but the volume of military equipment and technical resources per thousand bayonets must have increased too. The increase in the number of effectives in this period must have required an increase in the volume of armaments of between 35 and 40 percent. Over and above this, however, there has been a supplementary addition in the volume of technical resources. We may assume that in the years 1935-38 the Red Army doubled the number of modern weapons of offense at its disposal, and that in 1937-38 it had between fifteen thousand and twenty thousand tanks and over ten thousand airplanes. Colonel von Bulow assumed in 1935 that in the next few years the Red Air Force would have a strength of ten thousand machines, and he declared that the armaments program of the Soviet Union was to be completed in 1937. For the beginning of 1939 we may assume that the Red Army is striving to reach the highest known norms of armament, and we may also assume that it will succeed in all modern weapons of offense.

The enormous volume of military expenditure in the Soviet Union indicates that there are still other directions in which money is flowing, namely, apart from the increase in military effectives and the intensification of armaments, the accumulation of military supplies. In a very thorough and objective examination of the military strength of the Soviet Union Dr. Erwin Haudann writes as follows:

Another means to bridge the transitional period and satisfy the enormously increased demands of the first months of war is the accumulation of weapons, supplies, and reserves of every possible kind, and this is being done on a wide scale in the Soviet Union.

There is no doubt whatever that the Soviet Union will be in a position to equip whatever new troops she may raise, and she already possesses sufficient supplies to equip an

army at full war strength. The whole recent development in the Red Army indicates clearly that its leaders reckon with an enemy attack in the near future, and Germany's preparations for a timetable war of offense are being countered with thorough preparations for a timetable war of counter-offense.

The military achievement of the Soviet Union in the years 1935-38 culminated in the formation of a powerful mobile shock army on its Western frontier, an army capable of delivering a rapid counter-blow. This army is the strategical incorporation of all modern military technique and it represents a unique concentration of modern weapons of offense. The official report on military affairs placed before the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union in January 1936 has been widely quoted in the European press; nevertheless, the following significant passage has received too little attention:

Together with a complete transition to the system of strengthening our cadres, we have also strengthened the defense of our frontiers by a supplementary development of our mechanized units and cavalry forces. It is well known that these mechanized units and the cavalry are distinguished by a particularly high level of fighting morale, and by their ability to maneuver with the utmost determination and rapidity. It may also be added that our infantry units, mechanized units, and cavalry forces are now all considerably more mobile from the standpoint of defense than ever before. Together with the tremendous development of the air arm all this creates unique operative possibilities. [Kraz-

naya Svesda, the official organ of the People's Commissariat of Defense, Jan. 16, 1936.]

At the beginning of 1938 the Red Army had far outstripped the armies of the Western powers in numerical strength, in technical resources, and in war preparedness. The German army was certainly not then in a position to equal the armament level of the Red Army, though it certainly ranked second after the Red Army in the hierarchy of European military powers, and it is now doing its utmost to obtain the lead.

MAX WERNER.

Assistant Finks

MANY New Yorkers noticed that there were numerous photographers covering the May Day parade but few pictures found their way into the papers the following day. That's easy. Most of the photogs, notwithstanding the press cards sticking jauntily from their hatbands, were members of the Police Department's criminal alien squad.

Whenever a new division of the parade reached the reviewing stand in Union Square, the police photographers got busy. They were especially feverish when the National Maritime Union contingent, headed by Joe Curran, president, came along. The NMU is now engaged in a strike against four oil companies, which may have something to do with the sudden activity.



"Sorry I haven't anything smaller."

A. Ajay

Mallorcan Memory

Genevieve Taggard, American poet, evokes the spirit of Spain before the holocaust of fascism. The permanent people of Spain who cannot be changed by temporary slavery.

IN 1931 when I was living on a Guggenheim Fellowship in Puerto Pollensa, a fishing village on the northeast coast of the island of Mallorca, I scribbled down the first lines of a poem. It was early morning, and the water of the bay was edged with crystal. My hands shook. I was enormously excited:

I met an angel walking in Mallorca,
A sunflower striding, petaled with rays, a broad
visage,
Who spoke sternly and with joy; "Hurry, hurry;
America, Revolution, Go home," he said in Spanish.

I was not thinking about America. I was thinking about Blake's angel of revolution and Van Gogh's sunflowers. I was also thinking of a young priest I had just seen walking by the edge of the water, coming away from mass, kicking up the back of his dusty gown with his large feet. The angel agitator took his place. I was also thinking of the recent coup that had sent Alfonso scurrying to Paris. I was thinking of the faces I had seen in Barcelona; and the way people hunched together over the tables of the cafes in Madrid; and the bookstores, displaying pictures of Karl Marx. I was thinking of the crowds on the bull-fighting Sundays—the Solemnidad, they called it—people, lean, intent, and ardent. And with the poverty of workers and peasants vividly evident all around us, I thought naturally of the great force hidden beneath the surface of the quiet tourist life we were living.

I was in love with Spain, it seemed a country charged with a power as yet latent. And I felt this keenly because I was in need of change, after ten years in New England. When I wrote, groping for this new reality, I could not keep the angel and the sunflower of the two anarchist artists, Van Gogh and Blake, out of my sun-drenched mind, much as I disapproved of anarchism. Anarchism was in the air. It is now too late to get the facts of that world; but I know now that I saw the inscrutable edge of something that has become history.

SENSE IMAGES

That year in Mallorcan Spain piled up thousands of little pictures, trifles, fragments. I did not understand what was going on. But I go back in memory now, drawn by the intense, knife-edged excitements of that life. Now every news story is infused with the sense images of that year. A blind man becomes hypersensitive to touch, to smell, and to tone of voice. Because I could not talk directly to the people with whom we lived, I began to dwell on facial expression as if I were a

painter; on tone of voice and accent, as if I were a dog who wished to guess the mood of a master. This led me to feel that we were living with a people about whom the usual tourist sentimentalities were taboo, a people of great dignity, capable of freedom.

We heard wild and beautiful melodies hundreds of years old. Poverty and superstition had not destroyed the voice that spoke in them. We heard street songs, work songs—lamentations and serene, joyous meditation. There were special melodies for each kind of work, but given the set form, each worker might *ad lib* the words, speaking his thoughts with the movement of his hands. There was a song for whitewashing a house, another for mending a boat; a song for washing clothes, a song for ironing. If you knew the songs you could tell as you went down by the edge of the sea what each person in the Puerto was doing; the chant of occupations blended into the peace of the hour. Spain, magnificent in cathedrals, upheld by the landlords, the crown, and the church, was never so impressive to me as in this intangible music. . . . The landlords drove the Moors out of Spain but the workers' music held an echo of the Arab cry. . . . Then the republic came and the workers grew hopeful of a better world. They had no warning of the gigantic betrayal to come. The landlords feared the infringement of their old absolute power, based as it was on authority and superstition. Even in 1931 it was possible to see that the rich landed class would organize in some way against the young democracy.

But to return to the songs, where the voice of the people was resonant. On the bay we heard the moonlight song for spearing fish, a song that mingled with the put-put of the little boats; in the rock mountains echoed the song for cutting palmetto.

We came down the mountain one afternoon late, after a trip through the pass to Formentor. Pure faint lemon sky, ruffled iridescent sea, and mountains behind us, in lines like those on a graph, sharp and eroded; rock bristling nearby with the palmetto fans. And flat on the little rim of the bay, a bit of fertile soil, where a few squares of trees and beans grew, behind the white cubes of huts. A bell jingled in the wilderness of rocks where sheep and goats ate spiny moss. We thought we were alone except for the sheep-tinkle. We looked down from our height on the village where smoke puffed up thin blue from evening fires. Fragrant smoke we knew it to be; and the air, radiant still, was the sea-clean air of islands. Then we heard the first bar of song and saw that a boy was cutting palmetto far off to the left, singing as he bent with his sharp knife. He hacked and

sang a wild minor phrase. We walked on, the soft lifting wind of evening on our faces; we walked, tired and elated, sensing the loneliness of that afternoon toil. Then away to the right came the answer of his comrade, far off, invisible to us. I have never heard such tender melancholy music since, and never will. All afternoon they had been conversing back and forth, with the mountain for soundboard.

Today those boys are being bullied by Italian fascists. If they are not dead.

"HOR-NAY"

But to get down to familiar things, and into the company of flesh and blood: the early morning voice of the bread boy crying "Hor-nay, hor-nay," is equally vivid. The mouse-colored donkey of the dainty hoofs and the large tender eye ambled in the cart; and the cart where the boy sat above blue wheels bristled with sticks and slabs of bread, and *enciamadas*, a mushroom-like breakfast bun. Hor-nay, hor-nay, he would cry, delivering bread and messages. Slowly he progressed, impeded by pretty girls who held him in conference, sticking geraniums into the donkey's bridle, and offering watercress. We called the boy Hor-nay. I hope Hor-nay does not wear a blue shirt and beat anti-fascist fishermen with the butt of his gun.

We came to Mallorca because it was cheap. The franc and the lira were up—the peseta down. Spain's poverty was an advantage. Many others came for the same reason—blond German boys and girls who had seen the starvation years in Germany come, driven from home by what seemed to us then an unfounded fear of a little Munich demagogue. Famous German intellectuals came, and rented the cheapest rooms and read newspapers from home with agonized faces, and went for long desperate walks by themselves, looking as if the end of the world had come. The riffraff came, riffraff of all varieties, elegant and seedy. Scholars arrived, padded in shawls, and caught cold, and went away. One young American who was getting his doctor's degree in geology at Heidelberg was run off the nearby island of Minorca by the Civil Guard, who grew suspicious of his notes on strategic formations—his geologist's hammer, authorities felt, was the camouflage of a German spy. The English, of course, had been there for twenty years, living quietly in superb isolation, indifferent to the life of the "natives," bowing only to gentry and Spanish titles. Retired English colonels sipped aperitifs with cold reserve while the first Americans floundered in the mud of the new territory.

We all grumbled at first about the lack of comfort, and remembered the French beds and the plumbing at home. But after a bit

this humble fishing place became quite chic, and newcomers who could not see the archaic charm for the mud and the flies were made to feel very gross indeed, very provincial. Only grumpy Babbitts held out in the hotels, sputtering about the amount of oil in the food. One by one they left, humiliated by simplicity. Formentor, where speed boats tied and yachts put in, where you could get a manicure, remained a lonely Monte Carlo.

PEACETIME MALLORCA

We set up housekeeping. We gardened, we wrote, we swam, we sailed, we learned a little of the language, and much, by long observation, of the people. We had yards and yards of imperfect conversation with the inhabitants of the Puerto about the groceries we bought, the mail we wanted, the schools we needed for our young, the tennis court—because the untethered goats were fond of eating the stray balls—and finally a great deal of talk when we wanted to rent a rowboat. On festive occasions we ate at the Fonda. There we got rice tinged with saffron, cooked with bits of squid—*calamaris*, a much prettier word, it was called. There we came for a glimpse of itinerant Spain; smugglers, guitarists, and circus people. The people of the early Picasso. There we liked to pass the time of day with Manuel, who always wore a white coat, a white cloth on his arm. There we were invited to see dances as old as the Phoenicians. Then we sat in the sun to dry our muddy feet, watching the life of the village—the wharf, the church, and the fishermen's cooperative.

Pollensa, of which our village was the Puerto, lay six miles inland. We found a cafe where we could sit while waiting for the bus, a dark and poverty-stricken place, but agreeable. Here we could spell out the contents of Spanish newspapers, socialist newspapers, full of columns of poetry, exquisitely rhymed. We called the proprietor of this cafe El Greco because of his striking resemblance to the painter's portrait of himself as an old man. In the cave of the dark cafe we could sit in the long waits for the bus, and look at the town as it went by to market, while El Greco, in a dark corner, stared at us.

Two miles from the Puerto, on a bit of fertile land under rock mountain, was our house, Can Cingala. We rented it in a babble of tongues from a sad-faced spinster daughter, who made inventories many yards long. She went off to Palma very fearful of her dishes, horrified by our bare ankles and our *espadre*, shuddering into a black coat and gloves on a hot September day. It took time to learn how to live in this shabby-genteel house, designed for the strictest kind of dolorous family life. A fisherman's sunny house, immaculate with whitewash, would have been nicer. A house with fewer rocking chairs, and no piano out of tune, and no mended cut-glass. Bit by bit we dared to put away the splotched brocades with ball trimming, and the framed chromos.

Doing business with fishermen was something quite different. Painter friends came, and got themselves a white cube on the shore of the bay. In the mornings they sun-bathed in

Il Messaggero

Mercoledì 28 Aprile 1937-XV - S. Vitale

I marxisti hanno gettato grida al cielo dicendo che l'aviazione nazionalista aveva bombardato lo storico villaggio di Guernica, ma un comunicato ufficiale del Gran Quartiere Generale mette a posto le cose dicendo che mai apparecchi nazionalisti hanno sorvolato tale località e se distruzione vi è stata questa deve essere imputata unicamente ai rossi i quali nella ritirata, come nuovi vandali, distruggono ogni cosa sul loro passaggio.

L'aviazione nazionale oggi ha continuato a partecipare intensamente alla battaglia, bombardando intensamente Arbadegui e Guerricaiz, dove il nemico accennava di volersi riordinare a difesa, e soprattutto Guernica, l'antica capitale basca, la cui importanza strategica appare evidente da una semplice occhiata alla carta geografica. Per lungo tempo le squadriglie nazionali si sono avvicinate sulla città e sulle opere fortificate circostanti, gettandovi esplosivo in abbondante quantità.

Fascist Confessions

THE above clippings are taken from the front page of the fascist newspaper *Il Messaggero* of Rome, its issue of Wednesday, April 28, 1937—just two days after the bombardment of Guernica, the holy city of the Basque people.

The item on the left is from the fascist correspondent Ricardo Andreotti in San Sebastian, where the Italian propaganda headquarters handed out its releases. The item on the right, printed on the same front page, is from the *Messaggero* correspondent D. Larocca, who was with the troops before Guernica. This double coverage explains the contradictory items about the destruction of Guernica appearing in *Il Duce's* paper.

The item on the left appeared in the next to last column on the front page:

The Marxists have been crying to heaven, saying that the nationalist aviation has bombarded the historical town of Guernica but an official dispatch from General Headquarters settles this by stating that no nationalist plane has flown over this locality and if there has been any destruction of property, it must be

attributed solely to the Reds who, like the new vandals in their retreat, destroy everything in their way.

On the same front page, last column, Larocca wires from Durango (which had been thoroughly bombarded three weeks before this) the item reproduced on the right:

The nationalist aviation continues to take considerable part in the battle by bombarding intensively the towns of Arbacegui and Guerricaiz where the enemy was forced to reorganize its defense, and particularly at Guernica, the ancient Basque capital, whose strategic importance can be seen by a simple glance at the map. For a long time the nationalist escadrilles flew over the town and the fortifications that surrounded it, letting go explosives in abundant quantities.

There are some pro-fascist dupes in the United States who remain more fascist than Mussolini and still deny the bombing of Guernica, the holy city of the Basques. Perhaps they will be influenced by the candid admission of *Il Messaggero*.

the boats drawn up on the sand, and played with the children, and swam with them, and painted the old men, and fed the donkeys. Soon they had many friends up and down the line, and especially among the old women who mended nets or shelled almonds. Then, presently, our friends wished to move to the Canaries. They had paid three months' rent; we were given the keys to keep while they wandered. Out of the next complication we learned something about the ethics of the workers.

Another painter arrived full of determination to paint, and paint immediately—no house

was to be had, no room; everything was full. Could he live in the house of his friends, the other painters? We thought he could; why not? But no, we must write a letter, said the woman who had rented to the Canary friends. She must be assured of the consent of the original lessee. No number of pesetas could bribe that woman. Why? Because the first tenants had left two shirts, a pair of bathing trunks, and three books in the house. For a week our incumbent painter fretted and tried to paint in the wind. The key in our possession could not be used. And when the letter arrived from the Canary friends, the

fisherwoman feared that it was a forgery. It took several telegrams and endless talk before we succeeded in the simple act of unlocking the door. Then, with solemnity, the fisherwoman bore off the property of our absent friends to her own house where it was guarded and delivered to its owners when they returned. We came to admire that woman. She stuck like a barnacle to her conception of honesty.

Centuries of poverty had made this honest honor of hers. What does a Spanish peasant, worker, fisherman, *own*? The clothes on his back, and if he is married, a bed, or a pallet, a chair or two, or a stool, a few clay pots, a coil of rope, a basket, and maybe a goat. Nets, perhaps; and part of a boat. The peasants of the Middle Ages had more.

Maria took us under her wing when we moved out of somber Can Cingala down to the small white house on the water; Maria had a sense of humor. Of all the Spaniards I knew, she is in memory the best example of those who fight and work today. The women of Spain are sad now—they have lost children in air raids, and husbands and brothers in the mud of the trenches. But they are determined. Their faces on the screen resemble Maria's. How to describe Maria? That is hard. But I can imagine Maria sitting in a congress of workers' deputies.

I remember best how she sat on the floor and played the phonograph; also how she brought twin kids for us to see, when they were born next door; and how she ran in and out, picking flowers for all the glassware in the house. We went to parties at Maria's house and sat in rocking chairs placed in double rows and rocked and tried to talk to the old people politely. Before we left, Maria and her friends, the masons and carpenters building a house nearby, gave my sister a party, impromptu. It was for her and the full moon; they brought along a decanter of wine; they poured out their friendship. Good luck in "Nueva Yorcka." They danced all their dances and sang their very best songs.

Maria and her friends and children will live out their lives under Italian fascists, friends of Franco, invaders of Mallorca and our little Puerto, unless some very heroic fighting and dying ultimately succeeds. When will Franco fall? Defeated in the first battles we must prepare for sterner struggle.

Now and then a little news trickles out of Mallorca. The violence is past—now terror reigns. The fondas are full of uniforms; and the people work in silence.

NO POEMS ABOUT ANGELS

I heard their voices; their faces look straight at you in the newsreels. I predict a change. And I must try to write a poem, but not about an angel as before.

Those millions of Marias, Manuels, and Juans who put their bodies up as a barricade to defend liberty and a decent wage don't need poems about angels. They want new forces, the release of new forces, and some hope for future victory. Remember their songs and their faces. GENEVIEVE TAGGARD.

Thank You, New Republic

THE *New Republic* thinks it important to keep NEW MASSES alive and has told its readers so. Under the title, "Money Makes a Free Press," the *New Republic* of May 10 publishes an editorial describing the financial campaign of NEW MASSES as "a real fight for the freedom of the press." The editorial states:

There are more ways than one to kill a cat or a magazine. The easiest way is to let it starve to death, and well-to-do America is letting NEW MASSES starve, by not advertising in it, not buying it, and not mentioning it. Though it represents as many people as, say, the *American Mercury*, they are for the most part poor people, and that is why their magazine is fighting for its life. Freedom of the press in America exists for those who have money to pay for it.

NEW MASSES is not only an outlet for official Communist writers. As excellent and unlike contributors as Dorothy Parker, Ernest Hemingway, Vincent Sheean, Sir Stafford Cripps, and Alvarez del Vayo have made it a forum for some of the best progressive thinking and writing being published in America. Though we have often criticized its views and have been severely attacked in its columns, we believe NEW MASSES is a valuable force for progress. Readers who agree with us can help defend the freedom of Americans to say what they think by sending money to NEW MASSES, 461 Fourth Ave., New York City.

We thank our friends of the *New Republic*. This is a question of freedom of the press. NEW MASSES must go on. Hundreds of letters coming into our office tell us that. But in the last two weeks our financial drive, which is still nearly \$10,000 short of the \$30,000 goal, has fallen off until it is hardly more than a shadow. Difficult days are ahead. On Friday the editorial and business staffs received only half pay. The printer, the paper man, the landlord won't wait. And as yet only about 3,300 of our readers have contributed anything, compared to some nine thousand in last year's campaign.

You can end this drive within a couple of weeks and secure the existence of this "valuable force for progress" if you'll dig down and give whatever you can possibly spare, whether it's a \$100 bill or a dime. And hurry!

NEW MASSES, 461 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

Enclosed is my contribution toward the drive for \$30,000 which will guarantee another year of your fight against fascism.

Name

Address

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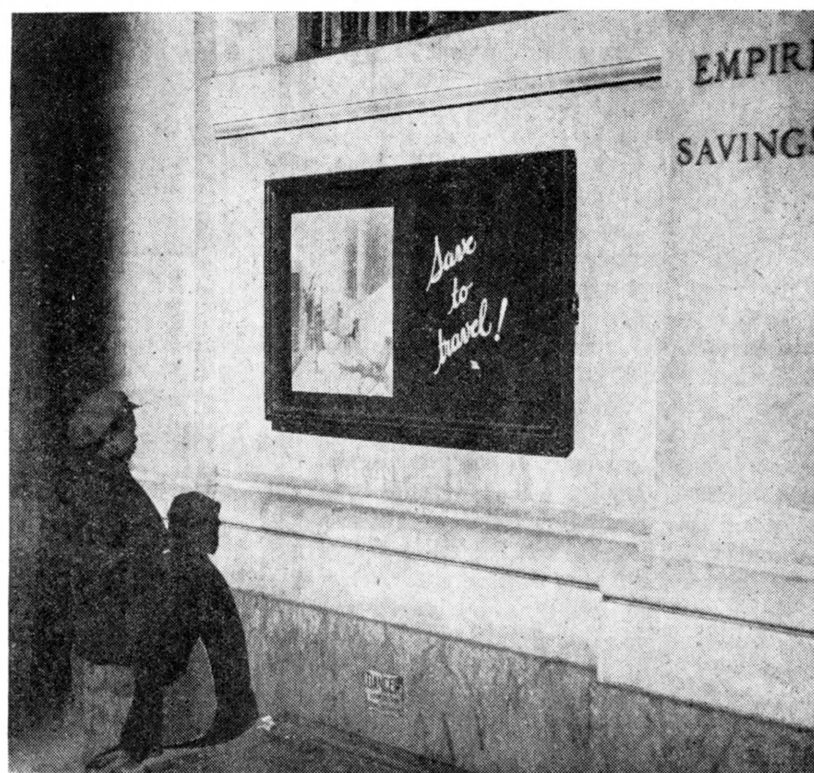
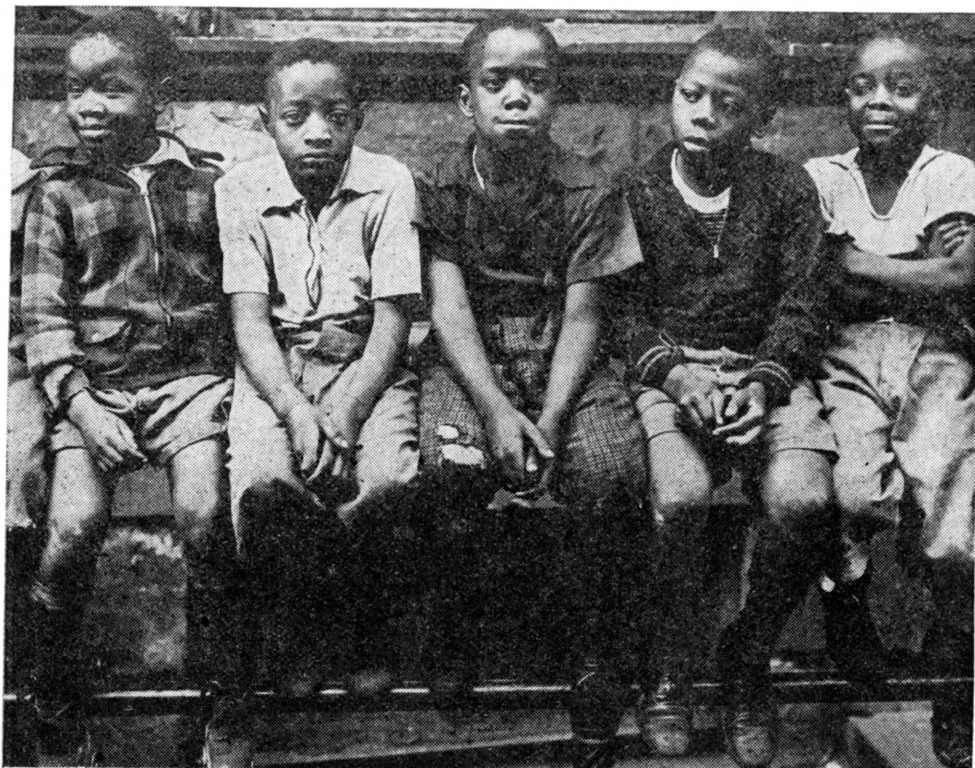


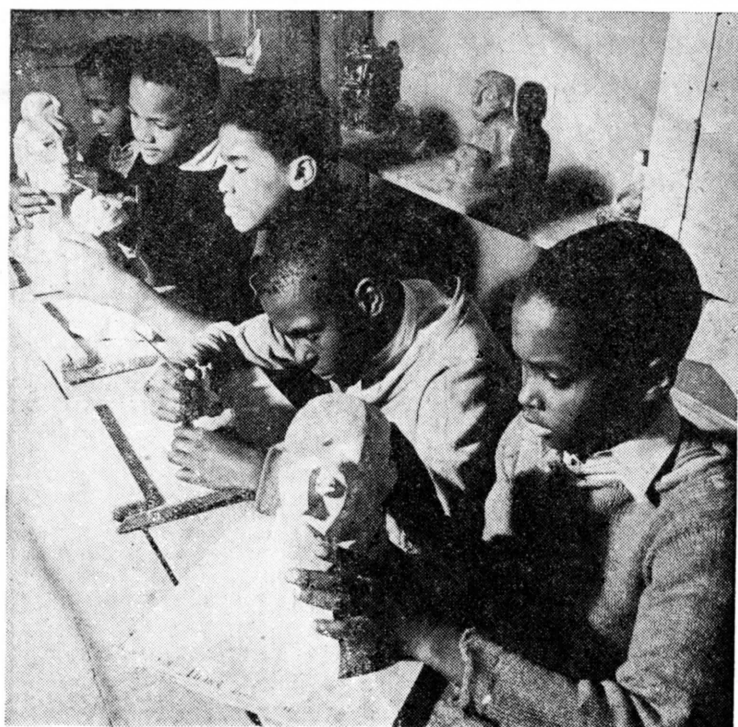
Photo League

Harlem Children

WITHIN the greatest city of the world lies the greatest Negro metropolis of the world—Harlem. Crowded into the northern tip of Manhattan Island, for the most part, the children of this great, foul slum lead hard, choked lives.

The Photo League, in assembling its presentation of *Toward a Harlem Document*, presents these and many other photographs of Harlem at an exhibition on view at the New School for Social Research, 66 West 12th St., New York City. This show will run from May 8 until May 21. After that it may be seen at the Photo League, 31 East 21st St., New York City.

The show is the work of one of the production groups of the Photo League. The entire document, which is now near completion, is projected in the form of a book for which Mikel Carter is writing the text.



Go Left, Young Man, Go Left

Lifting up their hearts and heels, the Young Communist Leaguers of the USA convene in the biggest hall in America. The rallying point of all young anti-fascists.

THE Young Communist League of the USA believes you can have your fling and do your work too. A thousand delegates from all over the country, gathered in New York at the national convention of the organization, are showing what America's young people can do. Together with some nineteen thousand others, they jam Madison Square Garden at the convention opening on the evening of May 11 to listen to an important speech by Earl Browder on the work to be done for 1940 and to get something new in convention fun, a musical revue entitled *America Swings*, which they have produced themselves. Earl Robinson sings a new song that fits these young Americans, *Go West, Young Man, Go West*, which becomes slightly altered on the punch line to "Go left, young man, go left."

The delegates leave the Garden steamed up for four serious days of planning their frontal attack on the messed-up lives of American boys and girls. There will be eleven panel discussions and two major reports on such practical questions as techniques for recruiting Italian, Negro, and Polish girls; the attitude of the YCL toward the crime wave; land tenancy; the problem of age differences in the organization, all the knotty details that go into working out a broad campaign for young America. The biggest national problem of the young people is simply, we want jobs. To be practical, the YCL is going to set up a plan for orientating unemployed kids toward the trade union movement, to ask unions to set up youth activities of their own, and to increase national pressure for more government-sponsored work.

MASS ORGANIZATION

The Young Communists are broader, if less intensive, in their interests than their elders in the party. They will vote on a draft preamble to their constitution stating that the YCL "is an organization of young people for character building and education in the spirit of socialism." This year's convention will put into effect an idea that has been in the works for several years—to complete the transformation of the YCL into a mass organization for the cultural and political needs of all the young folks, not the YCL alone.

A YCL member is just like the rest of young America, only more so. The 23,000 national membership divides into the same thirds as the general average—unemployed, employed, and students. A YCLer is one of these in his background and his interests, from the New Deal to swing. He has come along further in realizing what the score is and teaming up to do something about it, but he is still distressingly like twenty million other

young citizens. This convention is grappling with the big job of getting the 19,977,000 into organizing for their heritage of jobs, education, recreation, health, security, and peace.

CARL ROSS, JOHN GATES, CLAUDIA JONES

The leaders of these bright young people are already veterans of the fight for socialism. Carl Ross, national executive secretary, is a blue-eyed Finnish-American from Superior, Wis., who joined the YCL as a sophomore in high school. He missed a college education, as have most of the national leaders, and went directly into trade union work when he left school in 1931. For five years he was secretary of the Midwest Labor Sports Union. In 1935 he became YCL section organizer in St. Paul, moved into a district administration post, and finally, in 1937, to the national office. The typical YCL leader is a quiet, non-flamboyant fellow, who has no time to sit around and gossip. When I asked them about themselves they could scarcely remember any startling facts about their past. I got the admission from Carl Ross that he likes nothing better than to get back to upper Minnesota when northern pike is in season; and John Gates, a shy fellow who, as International Brigade commissar, was one of the most important military figures in Spain, allowed as how he liked to swim. I realized how much he liked to swim when he told me about getting caught in a fascist break-through on the Ebro, spending three days dodging around in Franco territory and finally swimming across the turbulent Ebro under machine-gun fire from some Moors who were acting as judges in the swimming meet.

John, who will speak at the Garden meeting, is a New Yorker, son of a small storekeeper, who managed to get up to two years in City College. There he was one of the leading agitators against compulsory military training. He got to know something more about military matters after two years in Spain on the Cordova front, Teruel, the Aragon retreat, and the little matter of the Ebro. Before this he spent five years in Youngstown on YCL business. Six of his pals from the mills went to Spain with him and four came back.

Claudia Jones, for the distaff side, is a handsome, laughing Negro girl, who is New

York State chairman. Claudia went to Wadleigh High in Harlem from which she graduated in 1934. She has worked in a dress factory, a laundry, a millinery shop, and as a typist. In 1936 she met James Ashford, a Negro YCL leader to whom belongs most of the credit for the strong organization in Harlem. Claudia joined the Young Communist League after hearing Jimmy Ashford's arguments. Now she does a good deal of work with members of the thriving James Ashford Branch. Jimmy worked himself to death a couple of years ago.

JOHN LITTLE

John Little, New York State executive secretary, is a dark, powerful fellow, born in Milwaukee in the family of an Italian-American factory worker. John has come along nicely, thank you, on a grade school education, plus the educational factor of working as a machinist and in the YCL. He joined in 1926 and quickly became one of the crack organizers of the movement. His trouble shooting in California in the late twenties helped lay the ground for the progressive California of today, although few people besides himself thought it possible that the California of the Mooney frameup, Merriam, and the San Jose lynchings could have the democratic boom it has had today. There were other tough jobs for John Little on the road for the League in the southern Illinois coal fields, and, since 1933, as leader of New York State's twelve thousand YCLers, whose membership has multiplied nine times since he took over. John is also a fisherman, "once every five years or so."

CANADA AND LATIN AMERICA

There has been more news around about some of the other leaders in the YCL, like world-famous Angelo Herndon; the cheerful Negro youth, Henry Winston; and Gil Green, national chairman. Their stories vary little from the ones I have told.

Besides five hundred regular delegates and five hundred alternates and observers, the convention will be attended by fraternal delegates from Canada, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and a Leaguer who will travel eight thousand miles from Popular Front Chile.

They'll be out there Thursday night, hep to that jive, and also mighty close to the enormous job they face. They have already a great tradition. Seven hundred Young Communists fought for democracy in Spain and many fell. They have been shot down by Henry Ford's machine guns, and they have fought the fight up and down America. They've got a right to make the rafters swing.

JAMES DUGAN.

Warning

People whose minds and emotions are misty
Make ready material for the
Fascisti.

LOUIS TRAVERS.

The United States Arts Projects

The tremendous effect of the WPA projects. \$125,000,000 for four years of culture. A challenge to fascist barbarism. Their meaning for our society.

PEOPLE are frightened by figures. Most of us who travel a few miles each day by trolley or subway find the fact that light rays travel 186,000 miles per second on a 93,000,000 mile right-of-way perfectly exhausting. Similarly, for men and women of the middle middle classes, it sounds forbidding to declare that the federal arts projects have cost about \$125,000,000 since their inauguration in the late summer and fall of 1935.

That is a sizeable sum of money in any language. And it is no more than a tour-de-force to compare it with the expense account of the Department of the Interior for the care of Indian reservations. But the truth is that the value of the arts projects cannot be expressed in legal tender. If one insists upon statistical interpretations, one can divide the nine-figure number by forty thousand. That was the total number of people employed on the arts projects last December. Then it begins to mean something that the average wage for all the creative endeavors of forty thousand individuals in almost four years' time was less than \$25 per week.

IN HUMAN TERMS

Of course, the government was shelling out the smackers without any pretensions. The money went to relieve the unemployed—citizens made jobless through no fault of their own. But from another, more judicious viewpoint you can divide the sum of money by the human beings involved and get a figure that cannot be estimated in any currency. You will get the measure of the esthetic and professional rehabilitation of artists, writers, actors, and musicians for whom the milk of human kindness flowed from their loneliness these last few years. You will perhaps gain insight into the beginnings of a cultural renaissance which is permeating the American common people with a scope, a sweep, and a quality that is one of the most significant single facts in our crowded decade.

I visited the director of information on the New York Art Project. One thing more impressive than his own remarks, more compelling than all the folders, booklets, pamphlets, clippings, and figures that I carried away with me, was a bulletin board hanging on his sunny wall, showing the places where art had been exhibited for the month of January 1939. One such place was the Amalgamated Meat Cutters Union, AFL. Another was the Hebrew Orphan Asylum. A third was the Columbia School of Pharmacy, followed by the Ninety-sixth Street branch of the Public Library. Local 58 of the Workers Alliance enjoyed a WPA art exhibit alongside of the Bronx Parent-Teacher Association.

That bulletin board, it seems to me, makes

the first important point. Sixty-two similar art galleries have been opened throughout the country, operating on this very principle of art for Us The People. And the names of cities and towns through which the twenty-five caravan art exhibitions are traveling would sound like a Presidential campaign itinerary.

TEACHING THE ARTS

But these are more than art galleries. They also provide for the instruction of children and adults in the decorative and industrial arts, conducted in cooperation with hospitals, settlement houses, and community clubs. In New York alone, thirty thousand individuals receive such instruction regularly. The emphasis is all on freedom and initiative in style and materials, best illustrated by the story of the six-year-old who was asked to draw a still life of the vegetable she eats. The little girl drew a picture of a can of baked beans.

The same thing goes for the Theater Project, one of whose outstanding though lesser known activities is the sponsorship of community drama groups. If the Ajax Social Club of East Canarsie wants to start a dramatic group that will some day grow to be as successful as, say, the Flatbush Community Players, the WPA Theater Project will supply it with competent coaches. The National Service Bureau of the same project offers advice and manuscripts out of its carefully documented files. Some night, after weeks and months of passionate preparation, the neighborhood troupe will perform its one-acters in a luminous premiere in which the Federal Theater Project can modestly rejoice.

But no single group of American citizens have a better word for the WPA than those millions who have enjoyed its open-air concerts, chamber-music recitals, opera, and choral festivals. More people than voted the Republican ticket have attended its continuous cycle of classical and popular programs. Such pillars of society as Yale, Harvard, Ohio State, Loyola, among a score of other institutions, are listed as co-sponsors of federal music activity. The National Federation of Music Clubs, with five thousand member bodies, has cooperated intimately with WPA musical programs in locations that range from the Hollywood Bowl to the mighty slopes of Mount Tabor, Ore., to the Mississippi levees and our own Central Park.

SINGING ON WPA

Into the remotest rural communities, where musical accents are still Elizabethan, the WPA has come a-singing. Citizens who can least afford musical instruction have insisted that they cannot afford to do without it. More people than you could crowd into the Yankee

Stadium after a week of midsummer rains are taking lessons gratis in all the musical instruments from the harp to the clarinet.

A unique aspect of this community service is the cooperation of WPA musicians with hospitals and psychiatric institutions in what is known as "music therapy." Under the baton of medical advisers, WPA musicians are playing soothing melodies to the mentally disturbed in the wings of scores of hospitals. A major literature has emerged about music therapy for which nothing lends itself better, in terms of long-range planning and experimentation, than the FMP.

The Theater Project raises the curtain on a drama all its own. It is a continuous variety performance. During one season, Uncle Sam took the spotlight with a classic such as *Murder in the Cathedral*; in another, with the contemporary hit in the Children's Theater—Yasha Frank's version of *Pinocchio*. Five-star dramas in a more native American setting were *Haiti*, *Prologue to Glory*, and *Big Blow*, all three of which played a straight hand to full houses.

DRAMA AND NATIONAL GROUPS

Another example of the Federal Theater's fullblown imagination has been its work with specific national groups, of which the Yiddish Theater and the Negro Theater have more than justified themselves. *It Can't Happen Here* and *Awake and Sing* did far more than give employment to Yiddish actors. They have integrated the Jewish community into the larger dimensions of American life. Productions such as *Haiti*, *Battle Hymn*, and the Negro *Macbeth* emphasized the potentialities of a people whose culture is interwoven with the dramatic fabric of our history. Itself a minor eulogy to the federal arts projects, the Negro production of *The Swing Mikado* had the private producers hot with envy. It was finally taken over by a commercial producer.

Against this backdrop, include the radio division (remember Paul de Kruif in his *Men Against Death* series), as well as the Dance Project, whose *How Long Brethren?* and *Trojan Incident* definitely took the dance out of the pale of precieuse audiences. Add also the road work of the Portable Theater and that great American institution, the circus, and you have an achievement that defies every big blow from the Senate reactionaries and all the shrapnel of pink slips from Capitol Hill.

If what we have said sketches the integration of the arts projects with the life and hopes of the American community, there is something to cheer about in the WPA pioneering on new artistic frontiers.

The Living Newspaper, to take one phase of FTP as an example, was itself a prologue

to glory. Here were a group of fresh minds in the theater, given the chance to try something different. They succeeded in telling the whole American people what had been said to narrower circles by the workers' theater alone. Plays like *Power* or *Triple-A Plowed Under* were an educational experience as well as a dramatic experiment. *One-third of a Nation* showed that the Federal Theater had its ear to the ground, and for such things alone WPA can say its lines with quiet passion and sober pride.

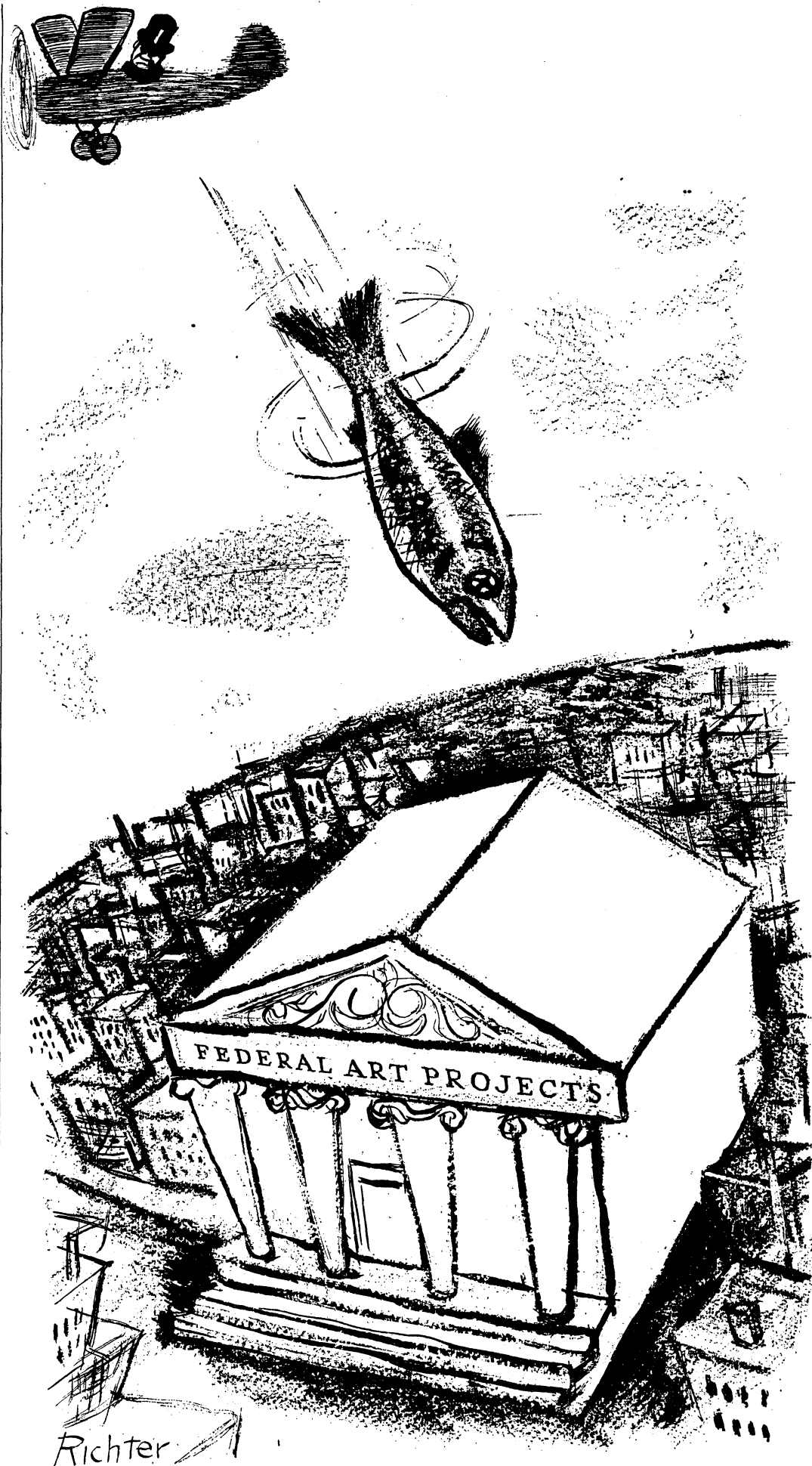
Ditto on the Index of American Design, a pictorial record of American decorative culture since the days when the Pilgrims disturbed the somnolent cod. The idea, here, is likewise experimental, on a scale that private enterprise could not possibly underwrite. Its procedure is necessarily cooperative, and its focus spans decades and centuries. Now under way in twenty-seven states, the Index of American Design requires five hundred research workers and artists. They are producing facsimiles in color, and black-and-white, of the furniture, costumes, embroidery, ironwork, glass, and silver taken from America's architectural records. The finished job will delineate the essence of American manners in the framework of American design—will show how our forbears lived: the tools and materials with which they worked, the ships they sailed, the clothes they wore, the homes, carriages, and ornaments that furnished the physical matrix of their lives.

WE LEARN ABOUT AMERICA

But if the WPA arts projects as a whole are fashioning the biography of our life and times, the Federal Writers Project is preparing our Baedekers. But more than Baedekers, the series of American Guide-Books have given the banal slogan "Know America First" an authentic and exciting meaning. In the early days, these guide-books were published by the Government Printing Office. Of course they didn't sell. And so the Writers Project demonstrated intelligent flexibility by contracting its books with private publishers, who have thus far found it profit-making to sponsor FTP publications with sums that now total over \$1,000,000.

In this neglected example of cooperation between business and government, the Writers Project has been able to publish such successes as *Almanac for New Yorkers, 1939*, and the very successful *Cape Cod Pilot*, and such best sellers as *Who's Who in the Zoo* and *Skiing in the East*. Thirteen state guide-books are off the press and scores of regional guides are in various stages of production all over the land. Expanding into related fields, the Writers Project has been planning studies in American folklore of which a little brochure such as *Wisconsin Circus and Folk Lore* is but a minor example.

The Writers Project, by its very nature, cannot develop those relations with the community that characterize the Art, Music, and Theater Projects. It does, however, extend the system of sponsorship of local studies



Congressman Woodrum Investigates.

Mischa Richter

to the point where hundreds of semi-private and public institutions are now expending sums of money for locally valuable research and writing. For example, when the Bloomingdale, N. J., Borough Council wanted to celebrate the anniversary of its historic old Volunteer Fire Department, it called upon the local Federal Writers Project. A sum of money was allotted for non-labor costs and guarantees of distribution were assured. Before you could say, "PLEASE WALK—DO NOT RUN—TO THE NEAREST EXIT," FWP had produced a crackling little volume about the fire volunteers that warmed the hearts of their countrymen.

ATTENTION TO THE PAST

The Historical Records Survey, sometimes called the fifth arts project, is a research group whose chief job has been the collation of historical documents. In its own quiet way, this project has already catalogued and indexed the historical records of about 70 percent of all the counties in the country. Ninety thousand of the 250,000 churches are availing themselves of the same service. Normally, the job of preserving historical records is the kind of thing one puts off for a rainy Sunday. But the Historical Records Survey has demonstrated that in preserving the records of the past, it earns the gratitude of posterity, while helping to solve the highly contemporary problem of unemployment.

The arts projects, as we have seen, derive power out of the cooperative scope of their enterprise. Their enormous achievement is proof of the creative wealth that lies in associated labor. But this has not prejudiced work of the individual artists. On the contrary.

On the Writers Project, for example, an important publication is the *American Staff* magazine, compiled and published in the volume *American Staff*. Here individual writers contribute verse and prose in off-project time. One is struck by the freedom of form, the diversity of subject matter, the boldness in execution. Some of the stories enjoyed the literary and political distinction of having been read into the hearings of the Dies committee.

Another aspect of this emphasis upon the individual is the retraining division of the Theater Project. Recognizing the erosion of talent in the last few years, particularly among actors and actresses beyond middle age, the Theater Division has set aside the old Provincetown Playhouse for special work in the rehabilitation of its personnel.

A third example, perhaps, is that unique institution on the Music Project, the Composers Forum Laboratory. The laboratory holds regular auditions in which the individual composer, assisted by all the facilities of the project, presents new musical compositions before a lay, critical audience. Questions are encouraged about every phase of the musician's methods and mathematics. It was at one of these sessions that a woman composer presented a brand new berceuse for the piano. A member in the audience arose to apply her own critical standard to the performance.

"Madam," the listener asked, "would you

sing your baby to sleep with that berceuse for the piano?" The composer, taking refuge on non-professional grounds, replied: "A modern baby? Why not!"

"No one would have dreamed in 1933 that the (Art Project) would broaden into a movement as solid in achievement . . ." said Mr. Lewis Mumford in a survey of its work. "It is all very sudden, unexpected, and fabulous—enough to set one singing *The Star Spangled Banner* while walking down the street . . ."

Indeed, if there is satisfaction and pride in the work of the arts projects, there must also be, at this time, alarm over their future. Any summary of achievements, or critical appraisal, no matter how sketchy, must emphasize that the arts projects are in danger. And the challenging question is: how shall they be saved?

JOSEPH STAROBIN.

Victory in LA

Election of new councilmen gives control to progressives.

LOS ANGELES progressives, who won in the mayoralty elections last fall, won again in the May 2 elections for City Council. All the usual symptoms of the progress-versus-reaction political battle attended the councilmanic elections. There was Red-baiting and splitting on one hand. There was a coalition of honest reform and labor and left forces on the other. Each camp had its personalized symbol: Mayor Bowron for progress, publisher Harry Chandler of the *Los Angeles Times* for reaction. The progressives won.

When the smoke cleared from the ballot counting rooms, Bowron seemingly was assured of an eight-to-seven majority in the new council. In the old one, there was a solitary councilman who consistently supported the mayor. Significant, too, was the election of Fay Allen, progressive Negro woman leader, to the Board of Education. Los Angeles is the largest Negro center in the West, with some fifty thousand Negro inhabitants. Miss Allen received 116,282 votes. Having slapped Harry Chandler, the voters turned on LARY (Los Angeles Railway), the most unpopular local utility, and outlawed its one-man cars.

The extent of the progressive swing marked by the elections can only be gauged by the character of the campaign. Under fire of reaction, Bowron was compelled to lean more heavily on labor and left forces. The mayor, who was a staid and conservative Republican judge last summer, having displayed no unusual social perspicacity, has surprised observers by his rapid strides in a progressive direction.

During the campaign, he made an open bid for an alliance with labor in an address before a conference of Labor's Non-Partisan League, where he said: "I want to assure you that I understand your program and purposes and that I am for and with Labor's Non-Partisan League."

The mayor also displayed political courage

in challenging the center of reaction here, Harry Chandler and his *Los Angeles Times*. Chandler is the epitome of the open shop and anti-labor movement in Los Angeles. He is the ideological leader of the Manufacturers Association and its streamlined offshoot, Southern Californians, Inc. He set the tone which had made the city famous as an open shop mecca, contrasted with San Francisco, its rival to the north. He bossed the city through an alliance with the underworld and the politicians who kept their bearings between the warehouses and the open shop *Times*.

When Bowron was elected last September as the outgrowth of the popular resentment against the old Chandler-supported administration of Mayor Frank L. Shaw, his sole known qualification was honest conservatism. He was a compromise candidate of the recall forces, labor and the left agreeing to support him in an effort to prevent a split in the movement which was challenging the Shaw-Chandler machine. Behind Bowron were numerous churchmen, reformers, labor unions, progressive political groupings, the Communists and CIVIC (Citizens Independent Vice-Investigating Committee), a reform anti-vice movement which was the creation of a wealthy and energetic cafeteria owner, Clifford Clinton. The weakest link in this motley chain was labor; the AFL leaders opposed Bowron, and the rank and file were unable to work up any enthusiasm for the strait-laced judge on the basis of his past record.

All Bowron had promised was reform and honesty. However, he went farther than that. He disbanded the nationally notorious police Red Squad, which had an unequalled record for brutality against labor and the Communists, and set Capt. "Red" Hynes to pounding a beat. He established the elementary principles of civil liberties as a guiding rule. He began the purge of undesirable holdovers from the old administration in all branches of municipal government.

The people expressed this will despite a torrent of Red-baiting. On the Friday prior to the Tuesday on which the elections were held, the council voted to invite the Dies committee to investigate the "invisible control" the Communists were assertedly seeking over the city government. The original resolution actually mentioned the mayor by name as one of those to be investigated. However, the reactionary councilmen were overawed by their own audacity and deleted his name.

On the day prior to the election, the *Times* published a large facsimile of councilmanic endorsements of the *People's World*, left-wing daily. The caption was: "Red organ praises Bowron, endorses candidates." Below was a story which singled out the fact that the *People's World* carried "articles praising Dr. Arthur E. Briggs and Parley P. Christensen, two of the radical slate candidates. . . ." Both of them were elected on the next day. Christensen, incidentally, ran for president on the Farmer-Labor ticket of 1920.

AL RICHMOND.

The "Business Confidence" Game

The tax revision boys operate the old shell game to evade big money levies. Passing the buck on bank deposits tax.

Washington.

TAX revisionists are rumbling again on Capitol Hill. Last year they rumbled through some of the sharpest tax reductions of the entire seven years of the Roosevelt New Deal. They lopped chunks off the capital-gains tax, and they whittled the undistributed-profits tax down to a vestigial shadow. But that wasn't enough for them. This year they're out for more.

The Big Boys have taken their jobs seriously this year. No sooner had they tucked last year's reductions into their bank accounts than they again began to raise the cry of "business confidence." (Wall Street has used more than one kind of "confidence" game to good advantage.) Then they came down in twos and threes—not ostentatiously, not at all like the big blustering masters of Wall Street—but just casually, dropping down now and then for off-the-record conferences with their white-haired boy, Undersecretary John W. Hanes of the Treasury, and with big-voiced Pat Harrison, intriguer-de-luxe in the Senate.

APPLE-FARMER MORGENTHAU

And the cards began to fall their way. In mid-February Roosevelt went fishing in the Caribbean. Before he left he reassured business there would be no new taxes. No sooner had he gone than the Harrison-Hanes crowd decided to do a little fishing of their own. Hanes conferred with apple-farmer Henry Morgenthau, who, with the best intentions in the world, but with none too great a knowledge of the ways of Wall Street (the Morgenthau fortune and reputation were made by Henry, Sr., and Junior has to his credit mainly a close personal friendship for Roosevelt and an active interest in apples), was soon made the front for another reactionary raid. Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, in the full dignity of his position, called a press conference and announced that not only did he approve the President's concept of no new taxes, but he even thought a revision of some of the old ones might also be viewed with approbation.

He wasn't very specific about just which taxes might be revised, but Hanes dropped a hint or two indicating it would be nice to see the undistributed-profits tax go by the board completely, and that the capital-gains tax and top-bracket surtaxes might also be reduced just a bit more. He also was not *too* specific as to details, for Hanes believes it better to wait and see what you can get before making too public precisely what you want.

Morgenthau also forgot to add that the revisionist idea was not his or the President's, as would normally be assumed by the man in the street and the man behind the counter; that it stemmed directly from tobacco scion

Johnny Hanes and the Wall Street boys. That was part of the game.

Immediately Harrison let roll with his big voice. He applauded the idea, stirred up quite a rumpus about it. Said it was one of the few things the administration had ever done that was really worth doing. The press, of course, well controlled and well trained, blazoned the headlines where they would do the most good. And the whole thing was planned to take the ground out from under Roosevelt's feet before he got back; plotted and designed to put him in the position of bucking his own administration or keeping his mouth shut and taking it like a gentleman.

ROOSEVELT DELIVERS A BLOW

Then Roosevelt came back. There ensued a series of long and very intense conferences between the President and his secretary of the treasury. Then, despite all the buildup, despite all the clamor in the press, despite Pat Harrison's deep voice, and despite Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Roosevelt announced quietly but determinedly that he saw no particular reason for revising the government's tax structure at this time.

It came as quite a blow to the boys who thought they "had the old dog this time." For that matter, it was such a blow that the talk and fuss and fury about tax revision promptly went underground. It stayed there for a month and a half, with only occasional stirrings to show it was just playing possum, and was not actually dead. Then last week, strangely coincidental with the annual convention of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, it began to creep warily to life again. Perhaps it was the encouragement of hearing so many business men bellow at once that did it. Perhaps in addressing so many of America's "more respectable" men of means, Pat Harrison was charmed by his own stentorian voice. Perhaps hatchet-faced Harry Flood Byrd of Virginia sparked the possum back to life with his impassioned plea for "retrenchment." Or perhaps it was the confidence instilled in the business men by the assurances of Vice-President Matthew Woll of the American Federation of Labor that labor was 100 percent behind them. In any event, word began to seep through channels on the Hill that, despite opposition from the House leadership, Chairman Doughton of the House Ways and Means Committee had practically made up his mind to proceed with hearings on tax revision proposals by early next week.

SPRINGTIME IN WASHINGTON

There is a slim possibility that Doughton will change his mind at the last minute, for he is meeting hot opposition. The House

leadership wants the tax matter quietly disposed of by means of two resolutions simply renewing expiring "nuisance" taxes and the rather shadowy undistributed-profits tax, and a third which would postpone stepping up social security taxes this year. Besides, the warm spring airs of Washington are affecting Congress with that perennial nostalgia for home. And if Doughton persists, then Congress just won't get home, because, as Barkley put it in the Senate:

"If we go into a general revision of taxes, we'll be here all summer, because it is impossible in a short time to revise a complicated tax system . . ."

Everything hinges now on who can crack the heavier whip this second time, Hanes-Harrison and the Chamber of Commerce, or Roosevelt and spring.

HANES CUTS A NOTCH

Undersecretary Johnny Hanes, incidentally, is cutting another notch in his gun these days. He has spiked another attempt by the President to split the business front.

As was reported in these columns last week, the administration has long been disturbed by the problem of facilitating loans to little business, since neither the RFC, major government lending organ, nor private banks will lend the little men adequate funds on small enough collateral or long enough time.

To remove this stumbling block, brain-trusters Corcoran and Cohen drafted a measure to establish a federal corporation to insure bank loans to little business. Roughly, the plan envisioned a corporation which would tax the total deposits of all banks, making an insurance fund of the sum thus collected. As it was hypothetically figured out, the banks, having paid the tax, and feeling the security of the insurance behind them, would feel tempted to secure some benefit from their "investment" in the insurance fund, and accordingly would loosen up some of their frozen assets to the benefit of little business and the country. It was a fine idea—until it was sent to the Treasury for its approval. There Hanes did a quiet but efficient job on it. The measure is now dead, at least for this session.

PAUL G. McMANUS.

We Are Very Careful

FRANK MASON, who happens to be a vice-president of the National Broadcasting Co., recently gave Alton Cook, New York *World-Telegram* radio editor, a statement concerning the company's nightly shortwave broadcasts to European countries. "We are very careful," said Mr. Mason solicitously, "about any items that might interfere with the domestic economy of any nation." He cited in particular the company's suppression of news about the slowdown strikes reputedly current throughout Germany. "We rejected that," he said, "not because we doubted the correspondent but because a German listener hearing that might try to spread the strikes to his own neighborhood."

Forsythe

Mr. Behrman and the "New Yorker"

THE most perfect effrontery of the period is being supplied by Mr. Wolcott Gibbs of the *New Yorker*, who has been writing in the daintily elephantine style of one who is self-conscious about his craftsmanship, and who has been letting drop dicta of such ponderousness as might properly come only from God.

In commenting upon Mr. Behrman's new play, *No Time for Comedy*, Mr. Gibbs has offered the suggestion that the Comrades will not be pleased by Mr. Behrman's contention that a man with a talent for polite comedy will be better for not thinking. Since this is almost exactly the editorial policy of the *New Yorker* as well, one may be excused for examining this phenomenon with some attention. The theory that Mr. Behrman was merely a muddled liberal has become more tenuous with each of his recent plays but, for me at least, it disappears entirely with his latest. I am sorry to disagree with one of my colleagues on NEW MASSES, Mr. Steve Morgan, who has found some good points in *No Time for Comedy*. The author's pretense of impartiality was destroyed early in the first act when the playwright hero of the piece announced his intention of throwing aside his crocheted comedies and going to fight in Spain. This brought one of the big laughs of the night and was followed by other laughs as the mention of Spain was repeated. If it is conceivable that Mr. Behrman's intent has been sabotaged by Mr. McClintic, the director, and the actors, a case may be made out for him, but it is no accident that the progressive point of view is presented by a woman who is most obviously a fool and by a playwright who is offered as a sort of wonder-child and halfwit. Having had friends killed in Spain, perhaps I am touchy on the subject but such references as Mr. Behrman allows his characters to make in this connection come with poor grace from a man who may still wish to think himself a liberal. The absolute zero in this striving for cheap approval is reached when the fatuous female, speaking in her burlesque way of the horror of war, refers to the poor people who are bombed and "hit right in the—uh—suburbs." The intonation, the hesitation and timing, the use of the comic word "suburb" in that connection are as disgraceful as anything I have seen in a theater.

The possibility that Mr. Behrman may be the captive of his cast and director falls apart when one realizes that he has carefully placed his important speeches in the mouths of those who are content to "weed their little gardens and live quietly in their little streets," far from the problems of life. If it were a fair fight between those who want to do something

about the world and those who prefer to avoid it, there would be no objection but the cards have been stacked in every respect, the writing of the play, the acting, and the direction. The most vicious of all his utterances, placed in the mouth of the reactionary banker, and denouncing human beings as savages not worth saving, brings no retort from his other characters. After weighting the evidence in favor of reaction throughout the play, he allows Katharine Cornell to make one speech at the end in which she decides that after all the people are worth fighting for. This may be Mr. Behrman's idea of balancing up, but it has no influence on his fashionable audiences (and it was almost strictly a white-tie group when I attended). They have been flattered to a point of ecstasy long before by this witty man who has confirmed their belief that the way to live is to avoid any contact with life. They are the supreme isolationists of thought and action and politics. What they want most in the world is to be left alone with their possessions, and Mr. Behrman encourages them with a philosophy which shows how right they are in their selfishness. For it is these worthies, according to Mr. Behrman, who are really defending the human spirit and carrying on the torch of civilization. One almost hears them purr as these words come over the footlight.

The connection of the *New Yorker* with this is far more than the reaction of their present dramatic critic. By a queer process of ratiocination these ladies and gentlemen of our weekly humorous periodical have convinced themselves that they are the protectors of an ancient national tradition. In their own minds they are the guardians of the Holy Grail of Comedy, which is to say, the civilized way of life. Because our memories are short, they have managed to establish the doctrine that thought is a perversion of humor and hence a violation of the American spirit.

As a matter of truth, they are entirely outside American tradition and not at all in the great line of Mark Twain, Artemus Ward, or Mr. Dooley. Their origins may be Gallic and their cleverness may be unquestioned but it may be noted, quite contrary to the opinion they would like to have believed, that almost without exception American humor of the sort that has survived is not only robust but political in nature. Artemus Ward and Bill Nye could be bitter and vitriolic. Mr. Dooley was strictly a political commentator as well as being one of our finest wits. Mark Twain was violently caustic and, in his suppressed pieces, shows a gigantic fury against injustice and intolerance which would have made him a Swift had he not suffered from the Swiftian fate of

being regarded as an author for children. Even when they were not directly political, these men were concerned with public morals and public affairs. In contrast with these great figures, the comedians of the *New Yorker* seem a trifle ridiculous. They are clever but they are also perilously anaemic and there is every possibility that their successors, if they foolishly follow the *New Yorker* tradition, will be finally indistinguishable from white mice which have been left out in the sun.

Nothing has saddened me more recently than the reading of a book by Mr. E. B. White, an important *New Yorker* editor. Its title is *Quo Vadimus* and perhaps enough will have been told of its general tenor when it is added that it has a subtitle: *The Case for the Bicycle*. With a dexterity that is astounding, Mr. White has produced a book in 1939 which so studiously avoids mention of anything current in this sad year that it may be considered a triumph. Unless reincarnation is a reality and Mr. White is but another John Kendrick Bangs, I am at a loss to explain him. However far removed Mr. White may be from human habitation, he must certainly read a newspaper or hear a radio broadcast or meet an occasional friend. His revulsion from anything which might conceivably interest an adult mind can scarcely be accounted a private phobia when one recalls that Mr. Behrman, the *New Yorker*, and countless other clever and juvenile souls are similarly afflicted.

At the very least these jolly people are assuming too much. That they have had a deleterious effect upon many excellent minds is bad enough but their subtle intimation that only the sophisticated few are privy to the delights of civilization is part of an attitude which is dangerous. If I become heavy at this point and bring in the word "fascist" it will be solely for the purpose of pointing out the obvious truth that disdain of the masses is a first step toward fear of the masses and barely precedes an active hatred of them. Mr. Behrman, carried away by his desire to prove that a manufacturer of polite comedies might better stick to his last, has marched directly forward with the notion that anybody who occupies himself with "serious" affairs is a bit of an ass. It is not at all curious to find that the "purer" and less influenced an artist is by political life (which is to say, life), the more reactionary he becomes when he is forced into activity. Almost without exception the ivory-tower gentlemen have become fascist when the pressure of events (generally a threat to their investments or allowances) has brought life to their doors.

Although I seem to have brought a charge against the *New Yorker* staff of being either fascists or ivory-tower residents, I continue to have hopes for them. They are too intelligent not to see where their theories are leading them. Their influence is great and their cleverness may be conceded; it is sad that they have no interest in their own fame. They have become the victims of their illusions to the point of believing that their policy of making trivial issues out of great ones has a virtue of

its own. What they don't see is that mediocrity has organic and hard rules which are never broken, to wit, a big man becomes a little man by dealing with little things. As a friend of man, I don't like to see sincere artists ruined in this fashion.

They may quite honestly feel that by walling themselves off from reality they are protecting the atoms of truth and decency in a mad world, but this is quite untrue because they have never possessed either. What they have held in trust and attempted to force upon the country as the standard of American humor was a minor and escapist art which had almost nothing in common either with our traditions or our needs. With the times crying for another Tom Paine or Mark Twain or Ring Lardner (a Lardner who understood *why* he hated life), they have been educating an entire generation to feel that the lusty political humor of old America was awkward and vulgar. They have whittled down everything important and avoided everything dangerous. They can't do that to America. . . . They can't even do it to themselves.

ROBERT FORYSTHE.

Writers Congress

League of American Writers issues call to its third congress.

FOLLOWING is the call to the Third American Writers Congress, which will be held in New York City, June 2-3-4:

In the last two years, writers in other countries have sacrificed their lives and suffered exile and imprisonment. They have proved that the preservation of every form of culture is inseparable from the struggle of the people everywhere against those forces that seek the death of liberty in our time.

We can report that the League of American Writers, since its formation as a national organization at the congresses of 1935 and 1937, has increased its membership fourfold, and has worked actively in behalf of democratic culture wherever threatened. At the coming congress we will consider the media, markets, and associations by which we may increase the effectiveness of our professional aims. In particular we will consider the question of how mass audiences can most effectively be reached by existing media, such as motion pictures, radio, and television.

The call to the Third American Writers Congress goes forth at a time when the world fears the outbreak of more invasions and wars. We address ourselves to all professional writers who recognize the need to face the immediate problems—technical, cultural, and political—that confront them today, and warmly invite them to attend.

We will discuss the following subjects, and shape a policy in relation to them:

The defense of democracy in the United States, cooperation of this country with other nations and peoples opposed to fascism—including the Soviet Union, which has been the most consistent defender of peace; cooperation with writers exiled from the fascist countries; support for the anti-fascist policies of the present administration; support for the labor unions; cooperation among all democratic and progressive forces; opposition to race prejudice, to attacks on social legislation, and to efforts to cripple



A. Redfield

"It isn't poor pater, Doctor. It's the inheritance tax."

or abolish the federal arts projects; in general, the defense of a free world in which writers can function.

We propose these subjects as a framework for discussion at the congress, while welcoming further suggestions—if they are sent promptly. The congress will be held in New York City, on June 2-3-4. Writers planning to attend it should get in touch with the executive secretary of the League of American Writers, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Signed: Benjamin Appel, Newton Arvin, Albert Bein, Nora Benjamin, Aline Bernstein, Millen Brand, Bessie Breuer, Dorothy Brewster, Louis Bromfield, Van Wyck Brooks, Sidney Buchman, Kenneth Burke, Erskine Caldwell, Katherine Garrison Chapin, Humphrey Cobb, Lester Cohen, Malcom Cowley, George Dillan, Muriel Draper, Philip Dunne.

Guy Endore, Henry Pratt Fairchild, Francis Edward Faragoh, Kenneth Fearing, Arthur Davison Ficke, Marjorie Fischer, Joseph Freeman, Daniel Fuchs, Mauritz Hallgren, Henry Hart, Lillian Hellman, DuBose Heyward, Eugene Holmes, Jess Kimbrough, Arthur Kober, Alfred Kreyborg, Joshua Kunitz, David Lamson, Jesse Lasky, Jr., John Howard Lawson, Meyer Levin, Alain Locke, Helen Merrell Lynd.

Albert Maltz, Bruce Minton, Ruth McKenney,

Carey McWilliams, Harvey O'Connor, Dorothy Parker, S. J. Perelman, John Hyde Preston, Frederic Prokosch, Lorine Pruette, Samuel Putnam, W. L. River, Ralph Roeder, Harold J. Rome, Muriel Rukeyser, Budd Wilson Schulberg, Vida D. Scudder, Edwin Seaver, Irwin Shaw, Vincent Sheean, Viola Brothers Shore, Upton Sinclair, Tess Slessinger, Philip Stevenson, Donald Ogden Stewart, Irving Stone, Leland Stowe.

Genevieve Taggard, James Thurber, Frank Tuttle, Jean Starr Untermeyer, Louis Untermeyer, Carl Van Doren, John Wexley, William Carlos Williams, Ella Winter, Richard Wright, Stanley Young, Leane Zugsmith.

Anti-Catholic Films

MAX HALBE'S notorious *Youth* film, which aroused bitter protests from the Catholic Church in Nazi Germany when it was shown, is one of a hundred such motion pictures now being dumped in Argentina as part of the Falangist anti-Catholic campaign of fascist penetration in South America.

An attractive inducement to the theater operator is the fact that it is distributed free.

New Masses

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Military Bandit Pact

THE military alliance between Italy and Germany is a pact between two bandits for the promotion of bigger and better banditry. It comes as new appeasement buds appear in Downing Street, as Britain and France continue to do nothing but make elaborate feints in the direction of collaboration with the Soviet Union, and as Chamberlain extends the offer of a Runciman operation to hard-pressed Poland. The signing of a formal alliance may seem like carrying coals to Newcastle in view of the intimate relations already existing between the two fascist dictatorships, yet it undoubtedly gives the axis greater immediate striking power, with all that that implies for other countries and for world peace, and its political implications are no less significant.

The new agreement also marks a further step toward the reduction of Italy to a mere satellite of Germany. It is no secret that pressure for the pact came from the German end of the axis, while the Italians held off the too ardent embraces of their partner as long as they dared. Today more than ever the Nazi dachshund wags the Italian tail. Not only Gestapo agents but German soldiers are being sent in growing numbers into Italy, and the Nazis are tightening their grip on both the internal and external policies of Italian fascism. The new alliance, however, far from alleviating the conflict between the two axis powers, will tend to sharpen them since it will bind Italian imperialism more closely to a line of action which in many spheres is inimical to its own interests. Yet despite this clash between the two imperialisms, Mussolini sees his only hope of grabbing even a small share of the loot in a more complete subordination of Italy to Germany through a direct military alliance.

Landon Double-Cross

THE Republican Party's anti-New Deal position on domestic issues is thrusting it into more emphatic hostility to the New Deal's foreign policy. A case in point is the recent radio address of Alfred M. Landon. For some curious reason most of the press comment seems to have taken at face value Landon's opening statement that he was crossing party lines "to support my President." Actually, Landon's journey across the Republican frontier was more in the nature of a double-cross. His speech was an adroit flank attack on the whole Roosevelt anti-fascist policy and a plea for an international conference to prepare a second Munich.

Landon attacked economic assistance to the victims of aggression, describing the word "aggression" itself as "the 'weasel' word to fool the American people into sending their sons to Europe," etc. He sniped at the President's message to Hitler and Mussolini. ("We can all remember that we were involved in the World War by another President who attempted to act as a mediator.") And he echoed Hitler by branding all those who favor a positive peace policy to curb aggression as "the war party."

Landon "supported" Roosevelt furthermore by uttering no word of censure of Hitler, but, on the contrary, stating that "fairness and frankness compel the observant citizen to admit that he made a rather strong case against economic injustices." And while presumably endorsing the President's proposal for an international conference, he qualified his endorsement with copious appeasement phrases and urged Roosevelt "to take such advantage of further discussion as Mr. Hitler's reply offers." Clearly, Landon has joined Hoover in the patriotic fraternity of the American friends of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis.

The Gloomy Chamber

BIG business is pretty much all of one mind. Twelve hundred delegates went to Washington for the U. S. Chamber of Commerce convention but only 150 of them cared to stay around for the resolutions session in which big business mapped its strategy for the coming year. No doubt any six of the delegates would have been able to agree on the twenty-six resolutions, for they were reactionary without exception.

Business was gloomy at its Washington convention. Things are worse than ever; the delegates reported, and show no signs of improvement. The wage-hour law, the Wagner act, what is left of WPA, federal taxes on income and industry—all of these were said to be holding back recovery. The

resolutions called for repeal and amendment that would amount to repeal of virtually every New Deal measure.

While business was lamenting the almost irreparable damage done it by the New Deal, economic reports from various sources indicated a very different state of affairs. Arthur Krock, New York Times Washington correspondent who harbors no fondness for the administration, was able to report in last Sunday's Times that "Business is not so bad. In fact it is pretty good." Krock quoted a report made by the chief economist of a large national manufacturer which showed that, despite the Wagner act and the wage-hour law, "labor costs per unit of production are near the lowest record point," and "output per man hour is near the highest record point." The May bulletin of the National City Bank in New York announces that first-quarter net profits of 305 leading industrial corporations amount to \$206,000,000, which is more than double the \$94,000,000 total reported by the same companies in the corresponding period in 1938. And in Washington, Harry Hopkins pointed out that:

National income in the first quarter is already at a rate of \$66,000,000,000 for the whole year as against \$62,000,000,000 in 1938. The whole construction industry is infinitely better. It surpassed the same quarter of last year by 43 percent.

The facts play havoc with the pomposities of the Chamber of Commerce, but they are not, of course, indicative of an economic resurgence. Business is not what big business men call it, but nothing in the present situation justifies the twenty-six reactionary resolutions of the Chamber.

Beck Replies to Hitler

IN HIS strong and effective reply to Hitler, Foreign Minister Josef Beck undoubtedly spoke for the vast majority of the people of Poland. Poland now finds itself on the horns of the same dilemma as did Czechoslovakia in the months preceding Munich—a dilemma which has its ironic side in view of Poland's participation in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. And as in the case of the unfortunate Czechoslovak nation, behind the scenes in Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay, betrayal moves apace, hurdling allegedly binding guarantees—not without covert assistance from certain quarters in Warsaw.

It is well known, of course, that without Soviet participation the British and French pledges to Poland mean little. "There is no means of maintaining an Eastern front against Nazi aggression," wrote Winston Churchill in the May 4 issue of the New York Herald Tribune, "without the active aid of Soviet Russia." The strenuous efforts

being made by the ruling circles of Britain, France, and Poland to avoid a hard-and-fast Soviet alliance is thus itself *prima facie* evidence of lack of good faith. But there are other indications as well that, for all Chamberlain's militant speeches, appeasement is still a very live corpse. On the eve of Beck's speech the London *Times* burst into bloom with appeasement letters and also stated editorially: "Danzig is really not worth a war. It is essentially a question for skillful diplomacy." This was echoed some days later by the official *Gazeta Polska* in Warsaw: "An understanding on Danzig dictated by reason would not be difficult." Finally, on May 8, R. A. Butler, undersecretary for foreign affairs, speaking in the House of Commons, offered British mediation in the Danzig dispute. In other words, another Runciman mission.

The cession of Danzig will mean the beginning of the end of Polish independence. The way to prevent war over Danzig or any other question is to create an impregnable front against aggression as the Soviet Union has repeatedly proposed.

Vandals at the Fair

LOUIS SLOBODKIN, an important contemporary sculptor, won second prize in the federal sculpture competition for the World's Fair, with a steel and plaster statue of young Abe Lincoln in the symbolic act of joining two split fence rails. A day before the Fair opened Mr. Slobodkin invited his friends to come to the exposition to see the work upon which he had spent a year. The statue was not in its designated place. Mr. Slobodkin asked Theodore T. Hayes, assistant United States commissioner, where it could be found. Mr. Slobodkin discovered that young Lincoln had been dismantled under the direction of the Bronx Tammany leader, Edward Flynn, United States commissioner to the Fair. Mr. Flynn took the action after a lady luncheon companion had found the work objectionable. Mr. Hayes explained: "We bought the statue from the boy—he was only a runner-up in the competition—and it's our property. We can do anything we want with it. It's like having a suit of clothes made. If it doesn't fit, you put it away until it can be restitched or something."

We do not misinterpret the temper of American artists and art lovers when we say that Messrs. Hayes and Flynn had better substitute a couple of asbestos suits for the one they "put away." This is the final act of a bureaucracy that fought against exhibiting contemporary art at the World's Fair and which, when it was finally overcome by concerted action of the art world, persists in regarding art with the attitude

of a Goebbels. Those responsible for this act of vandalism should be dismissed from their posts at once. Such cultural barbarism may rule in Berlin, but it is completely hostile to the spirit of the World of Tomorrow.

Catholic "Fakers"

RALLYING to the aid of his political superior, Father Coughlin, the Royal Oak prophet of racism, denounced the motion picture *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* last Sunday despite the fact that it had already received the *nihil obstat* of the Catholic Legion of Decency. Of course, this only confirms Cardinal Mundelein's statement that "Father Coughlin does not represent the doctrine or the sentiments of the Catholic Church."

The same Sunday morning John K. Carroll, assistant United States attorney, addressing the Communion breakfast of 650 Catholic employees of the Consolidated Edison Co. of New York, charged that Coughlinites "have no right to raise racial issues, or to use the Christian front as a medium of race prejudice."

Another Catholic, John V. Hughes, New York State district deputy of the Knights of Columbus, speaking before the Brooklyn and Queens Post Office Holy Name Societies, said that "Catholic fakers in public life, men untrue to the principles they professed, were responsible for conditions today in New York City," alluding to the Tammany Hall scandals which involved Hines, Manton, the Farley boys, Curry, Walker, Flegenheimer, and a score of suicided police.

Should such gradual realization grow among Catholics as to who are the real enemies of the Catholic Church, with or without Roman collars, the confused anti-Catholicism stirred up by Coughlin's fascist bombast may be averted.



Herb Kruckman

2,130 Ball Games

IN 1925 there were disastrous storms in Missouri, earthquakes in Japan and California, a terrific bomb explosion in Sofia, the Shenandoah broke up in a storm over Ava, Ohio, two nine-power treaties were ratified, Germany signed on the dotted line at Locarno, and a strapping Dutch youth from the Bronx stepped up to bat in Yankee Stadium on June 1 to begin a playing record of 2,130 consecutive games. Lou Gehrig of the New York Yankees has just completed his goofy and awesome record by benching himself at the outset of another season. Like the one-hoss shay, Lou busted up all at once—this is likely his last season as a player. The big fellow never ate as many hot dogs as Babe Ruth, or provided eccentric anecdotes like Chief Bender, or guzzled as much Rabbit Maranville, but he was a whale of a ball player, a strong lad with the club and a mighty first-baseman. Although it has been indelicately hinted that his collapse is the fatal reward of clean living, we think anyone who has stepped out on the diamond in every game for fifteen seasons deserves a long siesta, good fishing, and a few glasses of beer. He has got his name imperishably in the record books and in a better place, the hearts of his fellow players and the gang in the bleachers.

The "Times" on Litvinov

PITY the reader who tried to make head or tail out of the mare's nest of capitalist press comment on Litvinov's resignation. As a shining example, take the New York *Times*:

Three-column front-page headline in *Times*, May 5: "Russia Switches Her Policy; Drops Collective Security; Foreign Capitals Puzzled."

Subhead directly underneath: "Soviet May Be Driving for a Stronger Alliance with Britain, France."

Editorial, May 5: "... with Maxim Litvinov there passes from the stage the last of the old Bolshevik guard, aside from Stalin himself and Michael Kalinin . . ."

Subhead on story in same issue: "Molotov an Old Bolshevik."

On page 36 of the *Times*, May 7, the Soviet Union is negotiating for a pact with Germany.

On page 37 of the same issue the USSR is about to move armed forces into the Baltic states in order to halt Nazi aggression.

Finally, one-column headline, May 9 issue, page 10: "No Change Is Seen in Russian Policy."

All of which adds up to what? Of course, any *Times* copy boy knows that a change of personalities in the Soviet Union *never* means a change in policy. Policy is determined, not by this or that individual but by the responsible party and government organs, representing the interests of the entire people.

Meet the Friends of "General Krivitsky"

The "Saturday Evening Post" admits Levine wrote the "Krivitsky" hoax stories. Ginsberg's hoax involves the Trotskyites, the "Daily Forward," Martin Dies, and H. L. Mencken.

It's really an old wrinkle and Hitler has, in recent times, been most adept in its use. The general idea is to tell a lie so big it's hard to get at it for refutation. People have been doing it for quite a while: the Protocols of Zion, the Sisson "documents," the Rosenberg theory of Nordic supremacy, just to mention a few. Der Fuhrer didn't patent the formula and a lot of imaginative souls are chiseling in on his territory these days. "General Krivitsky," to mention one. He did a nice job in the *Saturday Evening Post* articles. It is useless to conjecture whether the *Satevepost* was taken in by the spurious general—or whether they were scouting for some such series and obliging entrepreneurs introduced the daring soldier to them.

To get down to brass tacks. We received irrefutable information last week, just as we went to press, that General Krivitsky was not quite what he seemed. We tore a page apart to get that declaration in. We said last week that the general is a Mr. Shmelka (Samuel) Ginsberg, who is not and never was a general. We reiterate that today. We pointed this slight discrepancy out as a forerunner of quite a few more. (The *Jewish Daily Forward* has since charged us with anti-Semitism for saying Shmelka Ginsberg was Shmelka Ginsberg. Their editorial line amounted to—"When you call me that, smile!" Without laboring the point, it is somewhat ridiculous to charge NEW MASSES with anti-Semitism in view of the fact that this magazine first warned America of the dangers of Jew-baiting, in the series by John L. Spivak back in 1934.)

Last week we said Mr. Ginsberg is no military man. Check. Last week we indicated Mr. Ginsberg's fiercest battles were waged about a roulette wheel in Paris. Check. We said too that the general was precisely the type of petty-larceny crook the infamous Yagoda would have selected for his dirty anti-Soviet work. We repeat that this week. (In the seven days that passed the general enlisted with the Dies committee.)

We said last week that Isaac Don Levine obligingly ghosted the articles for General Krivitsky. Check again. Mr. Levine has done a few such stunts in his time and to date has built for himself quite a reputation as an authority you cannot afford to miss if you want first-class anti-Soviet falsification. Levine's White Guard connections are not sparse.

We said last week that the Trotskyites are involved in this mess. We repeat. Suzanne La Follette is helping Mr. Levine in his chores. Right, Miss La Follette? The cries of anguish sounding from the Trotskyist journal, the

Socialist Appeal, this past week attest to the possibility that the NEW MASSES shaft struck somewhat deep somewhere.

We didn't mention the fact last week, because it was not at hand then, that H. L. Mencken—the Baltimore Diogenes in a bock-beer barrel—had taken to the general with a vim. Mencken gets articles by the great military man prominently printed in the *Sunpapers*—oh, you know the type of articles—that Stalin is flirting with Hitler—that there isn't really much difference between the two, and all the rest of it. Mr. Mencken even wrote an essay about it in the *Baltimore Sun*. All about the International Brigadiers who really fought for Moscow and not for Madrid. (There are quite a few of the lads back, Mr. Mencken, and they might be considered somewhat authoritative about what they fought for.)

Let's look about a bit and notice where we are. A General Krivitsky who was neither a general nor a Krivitsky put this name over some articles Isaac Don Levine ghosted for him. Liberty League's *Saturday Evening Post* printed them. (See Wellington Roe's article on "The Satevepost und Beobachter," NEW MASSES, April 4. Mr. Roe's point was that flossy makeup and shiny stock with colored illustrations do not necessarily tally up to probity.) The White Guard papers like *Russkoye Slovo* reprinted the articles. The Trotskyist mouthpiece says, "Fine. First class stuff." H. L. Mencken tosses off a bock or two and takes flaming pen in hand. But that's not all. Look about a bit more and meet some more friends of the military man. Remember J. B. Matthews, a name connected with a strike at Consumers Research some time ago, and latterly a Dies committee investigator? Well, Mr. Matthews and Rhea Whittley, counsel for the committee, "are in New York to invite former Gen. W. G. Krivitsky" to appear as a witness before that body. Nice company.

Let us consider the *Saturday Evening Post* folk for a moment. They did print the articles, and we might say a few words about what happened with them.

We sent our Philadelphia correspondent, Ernest Pendrell, to interview Wesley Stout, the editor. Mr. Stout was out of town, wouldn't be back for a few days.

Mr. Pendrell does get to see a William Jonas, a somewhat belligerent associate of the Curtis-Bok aggregation. Outside of stoutly maintaining that the NEW MASSES story is "inaccurate and false" he won't give any statement for the *Post*. Isn't he interested in what the readers of the *Post* will think? He

isn't at all interested in what the readers of the *Post* will think. If they don't believe the stories that's their fault, not his.

But NEW MASSES men are rather dogged, sometimes unpleasant fellows. Mr. Pendrell kept after Mr. Stout and finally, three days later, Mr. Stout told his receptionist, Miss Goodspeed, that the presence of the NEW MASSES representative in the Independence Square office-building is not wanted. It seems there is not enough room in Philadelphia for NEW MASSES and Mr. Wesley Stout.

But we continued to check in Philadelphia. We learned the following—that William Jonas and Stuart Rose, an associate editor, did admit that Isaac Don Levine ghosted the articles. More, Kathleen Taylor, secretary to Wesley Stout, editor-in-chief of the *Post*, admits that Levine wrote the stories. A. R. Jackson, associate editor, admits it too. It is generally known upstairs that "General Krivitsky" did enter the country bearing a passport under the name of Ginsberg.

To date only three of the stories have appeared. At the end of the third, in the April 29 issue, the following note was published: "The next article will appear in an early issue." Yet nothing has appeared since. The general is hard put to dig up more stuff. The *Post* people, we learn, did not like the fourth installment. It was too full of mysticism. All about the Russian soul and they don't think the readers will care for that. Mr. Rose wouldn't say whether or not they would print any more stories. He just doesn't know.

We said last week that Curtis Brown, Ltd., figured in the picture by trying to arrange for book publication of the series. We said too that the small sum of a \$500 advance was all that's necessary to get the book rights. We don't want to be too hard with Curtis Brown, Ltd. After all they are merely commercial literary agents who are in business to sell any sort of publishable manuscript for a fee. But in passing we might warn them that it's not the best of business to try to sell hoaxes of this sort even for the 10 percent. It is usually bad business.

It is interesting to note, too, in passing that the long hand of the *Saturday Evening Post* has been fighting the expose of the general. Last week when Walter Winchell, whose syndicated column appears in the Philadelphia *Evening Ledger*, controlled by the same interests that operate the *Post*, mentioned that the Krivitsky articles were ghosted by Isaac Don Levine, the *Post-Ledger* outfit deleted the item from the column.

To close the discussion for this week we want to say just one final word: Krivitsky's

friends indicate the character of Krivitsky's activities. Meet the boys: Mr. Ginsberg, Mr. Levine, the gentlemen of the reactionary Republican *Saturday Evening Post*, the White Guard *Russkoye Slovo*, the tory H. L. Mencken and his anti-new deal Baltimore *Sun*, the foul Trotskyist circle, Mr. Dies and his ace investigator, Mr. Matthews.

We have made our charges. The facts are serious enough. But please excuse us if we cannot take Ginsberg's pretensions seriously; we find the military man's facade a bit amusing and pardon us if we seem to smile. There are too many scoundrels around to get lugubriously serious about them all. Somehow this spurious gent is among the funniest—and phoniest.

What's On Your Mind?

Two questions and answers on the Soviet Union.

Q. *Why does the Soviet Union continue to buy and sell from and to the fascist countries?*

A. Soviet foreign trade is a government monopoly. Cessation of trade with the fascist countries, despite existing contracts, would be equivalent to a government embargo. This would represent a unilateral action by the Soviet Union which so far not even a single capitalist government has undertaken. Such a single-handed action by the Soviet Union would amount to a practical declaration of hostilities, and, instead of serving the cause of peace, would only play into the hands of those profascist imperialist circles who hope to direct the aggressors into a war against the land of socialism. The Soviet Union must be careful at all times not to allow itself, as Stalin said at the recent Eighteenth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, "to be involved in conflicts by instigators of war who are used to getting other people to pull their chestnuts out of the fire." The United States, on the other hand, is in a position to take unilateral action without running the danger of being left out on a limb. On the contrary, embargoes imposed by this country on the aggressor governments would tend to stimulate similar action by other countries and strengthen the peace forces everywhere.

The Soviet Union, however, has always pressed for *collective* measures which would really stop the fascist aggressors. Thus, at the time of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, despite its existing contracts with Italy, the Soviet Union took the lead in urging the League of Nations to adopt economic sanctions against the Italian invaders. But for the Soviet Union to have resorted to unilateral economic action would have failed to check Italian aggression, while giving the enemies of socialism the pretext of a *casus belli* to use against the USSR. Today, after Munich, it should be even more readily understandable why the Soviet Union cannot engage in single-handed actions that would endanger its consistent peace policy.

At the same time, the Soviet Union has deliberately used its foreign trade policy to advance the cause of peace. As its trade contracts with Germany, Italy, and Japan have terminated, the Soviet Union has reduced its trade with them, diverting it to the democratic countries. Soviet exports to Italy, Germany, and Japan dropped from 186,770,000 rubles in 1936 to 67,839,000 rubles during the first nine months of 1938. Soviet imports from these

three countries declined even more sharply from 376,266,000 rubles in 1936 to 60,059,000 rubles during the first nine months of 1938. (See the *American Quarterly on the Soviet Union*, April 1939, page 16.)

Q. *Isn't it a fact that Hitler has carried through a socialization of property unparalleled anywhere except in Russia and that when the Germans have completed their new economic program it will be a short step to the Russian system?*

A. The actual facts show how completely wrong this notion is. Certain newspapers and magazines have made efforts to popularize the patently monstrous falsehood of a "Nazi Bolshevism" or "Brown Bolshevism." These pitiable echoes of Nazi demagoguery, which has tried to create the illusion that it has put an end to the rule of capital, can hardly conceal the real nature of the Nazi regime. This regime represents the naked, brutal, violent dictatorship of reactionary finance capital. It represents an effort to maintain a decaying capitalist economy and to prevent the birth of the new socialist society.

Nazi Germany is ruled by a handful of big capitalists. During the World War, Germany was dominated by three hundred of these capitalists. By 1930, this number decreased to about 140. Today, after five years of fascist rule, large-scale capital has been concentrated into the hands of about fifty to sixty people who are the undisputed masters of Germany. In 1933, 40 percent of industrial production was concentrated in the hands of a few large-scale capitalists. By the beginning of 1938, 70 percent of industrial production was in the hands of monopoly capital. The balance sheets of all German banks totaled 23,000,000,000 marks at the beginning of 1938; 83 percent of this capital was in the hands of the *four* largest banks in Berlin. In 1937 Hitler promulgated a law which put the entire capital of the country at the disposal of these four banks and the fifty largest capitalists of Germany. This law liquidated all joint-stock companies with a capital under 100,000 marks, and required all new joint-stock companies to have a capital of not less than half a million marks. In 1938 alone over 136,000 small industrial concerns were eliminated for the benefit of monopoly capital. The "Aryanization" of Jewish business has merely consolidated and concentrated its control in the hands of fascist monopoly capital. The chemical trust, for example, now controls 94 percent of Germany's chemical industry as compared with 80 percent in pre-Hitler days.

The Hitlers, Goerings, and Goebbels, who have served their masters well, have in turn been well compensated for their services. Goering himself ranks among the big capitalists. His brother Herbert and another relative by the name of Brassert occupy a number of directorates of large companies and jealously safeguard the interests of the Goering "dynasty." Goebbels' financial affairs are managed by Gunther Ewardt, who is chairman of a dozen directorates of big corporations. Through Ewardt, Goebbels paid 300,000 marks for the castle of Schwannerwander, which is worth several million marks. Hitler's financial affairs are directed by the Munich banker August von Fink. The capital of the largest Jewish bank, Dreyfus & Co., was turned over to this "friend" of Hitler. Fink is chairman of steel and coal companies as well as of banks. Another well known "friend" of Hitler is the banker Schroeder who also manages Hitler's personal financial affairs. Hitler owns the largest publishing house in Germany, the Scherl Publishing House, and is the co-owner of another newspaper publishing concern. All of these business enterprises bring in millions of marks in profit.

Thus it is evident that the extension of state in-

fluence in the Nazi economic system only represents the direct domination of monopoly capital, the means of production remaining as before the private property of big capital. The rule of fascist capital has led to the decay and degeneration of Germany's productive apparatus and to an actual decline in the productivity of labor. This decay is expressed in the fact that the increase in production has been primarily an increase of the production of the means of destruction, that is, war armaments. It is further expressed by the steady worsening of the living conditions of the workers and the masses of the people. New labor laws have legalized the ten, twelve, and sixteen hour day. Despite the legal stabilization of money wages, their purchasing power has steadily declined because of the increasing cost of living and the deteriorating quality of the goods that can be bought.

Under Nazi economy the men of labor and the means of labor are consistently deteriorating. Under actual socialism in the Soviet Union there has been an unparalleled growth in the technical productive forces and a steady advance in the material and cultural well-being of the Soviet masses. Certainly there is a vast difference between those two systems, the difference between life and death.

A. LANDY.

READER'S FORUM

Old Timer

FROM Louisville, Ky., A. S. writes in: "That article by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn in the May Day *NEW MASSES* sure did revive old and dear memories within me. I also had the pleasure and honor to meet James Connolly on his very first visit to our country (1901, I think). I introduced him to a large crowd at Cincinnati, Ohio, and then traveled with him to Louisville where he spoke the following night. We slept in the same bed in a Cincinnati hotel and remained awake half the night discussing the labor movements of America and Ireland. This number of your magazine also took me back to the stirring days of 1886-87, as it was the news of the so-called 'Haymarket riot' at Chicago (and subsequent events) which first got me interested in the labor movement when I was seventeen years of age. I then lived in the country, but moved to Louisville in 1900 where I joined the Socialist Labor Party, remaining a member and officer in that party until 1905 when I left it and joined the IWW which was then just organized. May *NEW MASSES* continue to live for the great cause of world labor.

"I enclose \$1 to help at least a little."

"I Feel Ashamed"

FROM T. A. of Evansville, Ind.: "I feel ashamed that you've had to write a letter to all of us who are readers of *NEW MASSES*—and who should not need to be told that it must not be allowed to die.

"I feel ashamed every time one of my fairly flush friends refuses to help it stay alive—ashamed for them that they find such comfort in blindness, ashamed for myself that sometimes the impact of the need for China, the need for Spain, the need for the Lincoln vets, need for *NEW MASSES*, is so compelling that I can't be articulate about it. I want to smash their smug faces.

"Here is \$2. I'm sorry I can't make it more. It's all I've been able to scrape up since your first appeal. I hope it will work out that I, and all the other readers of *NEW MASSES* who won't let it die, can give enough to make such appeals unnecessary."

American Cartoons: 1865-1938

William Murrell's fascinating research into American graphic humor. The political cartoon from Nast to Gropper.

HEYWOOD BROUN made a little speech on cartooning several years ago at a farewell party tendered a radical cartoonist who was going to the Soviet Union. As a painter himself, Mr. Broun ventured the generalization that revolutionary subject matter created a revolutionary style. It seemed to him that Jacob Burck, whom he was honoring at the time, had a boldness of line that was not found in cartoonists of lesser purpose.

Looking at William Murrell's *A History of American Graphic Humor, 1865-1938* (The Macmillan Co., \$6.50), representing the great era of comic art in America, one can find few exceptions to the rule. Peter Arno might be one brave draftsman occupied with piffling themes, but the others whose esthetic properties stand the test of a second look are the crusading political cartoonists from Thomas Nast to William Gropper, through Reconstruction, Corruption, the halcyon days of pre-war Socialism, up to the Communist journalism of the last twenty years. Well-meaning fellows like F. Opper and Davenport, whose early cartoons were their own ideas, degenerated under the touch of Hearst into pitifully poor draftsmen. The cartoons of men like J. N. (Ding) Darling, who serve reaction, are as messy as their politics.

Nast himself did not escape this weakness. In politics he was an independent, savage in his attacks on corruption, but singularly devoid of any consistent political line. After his historic assault on the Tweed Ring in which he became a cartoonist worthy of his contemporaries, Daumier and Cham of *Charivari*, he descended, in the Greeley-Grant campaign of 1872, into pictorial billingsgate against poor Horace Greeley. The author has fittingly handled the great Nast by giving him a chapter of his own, for the period from 1870 to the artist's retirement from *Harper's Weekly* in 1877 was in a sense as much the time of Thomas Nast as it was of the Robber Barons. He represented fierce personal honesty in an hour of unparalleled corruption and chicanery. He was an individual of integrity when there were no political parties with integrity. He skinned the Tweed Ring and couldn't believe there was a Grant Ring.

In many ways it is a distinct loss to the lively cartoon tradition of the post-Civil War period that it included no painter tradition. This is partly due to the techniques themselves, which were, in that day before photo-engraving, dependent on the skilled hand of the steel engraver who transferred the original pencil drawing to the plate. The European cartoonists, from Rowlandson and



Joseph Keppler



Thomas Nast

Hogarth to Daumier, were also painters. Daumier's brave crayon, working directly on the stone, makes him infinitely more permanent than Nast with his secondary technique. The Americans were illustrators, Daumier an artist.

About Nast's time the comic magazines that died in our day were founded—the sprightly *Puck*, originated by Joseph Keppler, *Judge*, and *Life*. Regional magazines appeared, like the satirical San Francisco *Wasp*; in fact, *Puck*, the first professional humor magazine in the United States, developed from Keppler's German-language comic, *Die Vehme*, founded in St. Louis in 1869. What a sorry contrast is our own period, when there is no national comic magazine with a place in American life!

Crazy Willie Hearst, a modern Lorenzo de Medici in his patronage of cartoonists, burst upon New York near the end of the century and the comic strip era got under way with a hurrah. Hearst used what might literally be called press gang methods in his raids on the cartoonists of other papers; he hired Out-

cault, who fathered the first color strip, "The Yellow Kid," from the *World*; and the *World* hired George Luks to invent another moppet (equally yellow) to rival Hearst's strip. The magazines lost their cartoonists and their circulation as the newspaper cartoons expanded, but they held their place by developing a new kind of cartoon that reflected the serious trend in American social thought represented by the rise of Progressivism and Socialism. Art Young, a clean draftsman and a folk humorist, typically Midwestern, began to draw challenging Socialist cartoons for the popular weeklies. It is a very interesting comment on Art Young's timelessness that John Ames Mitchell, the intelligent editor of *Life*, upon first seeing Art's cartoons in 1897, complained of their "archaic" style. I have heard this repeated in 1939 by equally perspicacious people. Art Young is about as fashionable as Hogarth, and he has never fitted into the mannerism of the moment.

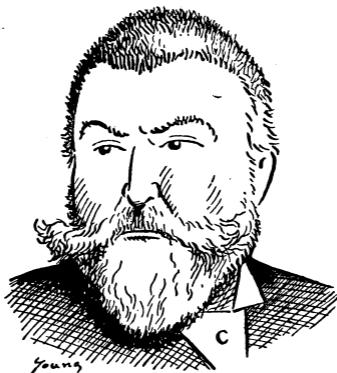
There were others in the post-Spanish-American War period who questioned the drift of things: William Balfour Ker drew a sentimental but startling warning entitled "From the Depths"—a formal wine party is invaded through the floor by the upthrust fist of the oppressed proletariat. The trusts and the monopolies got a vigorous drubbing and the comic weeklies were not afraid of crusades.

In 1912 a Socialist magazine called the *Masses* captured and developed the trend of social cartooning, retaining the leadership in an unbroken line down to our own day. The illustrious names of Glenn O. Coleman, H. W. Glintenkamp, William Glackens, Robert Henri, George Bellows, H. J. Turner, Maurice Becker, Boardman Robinson, Ryan Walker, Balfour Ker, Robert Minor, Art Young, and John Sloan belong in the first decade of *Masses* art. For the first time qualified painters appear in American graphic humor and the art quality of *Masses* cartoons matched the fighting subject matter. Daumier's crayon returns from disuse—the crayon that is the most powerful weapon of social satire was employed by Robert Minor and Boardman Robinson, who schooled a whole tradition of satirical art. Men like Fred Ellis, Daniel Fitzpatrick of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, Jacob Burck, Phil Bard, Reginald Marsh, Edmund Duffy of the Baltimore *Sun*, the late Clive Weed, and Rollin Kirby threw away the pen and the pencil for the exciting plastic possibilities of the lithographer's crayon.

Robert Minor is one of the boldest figures



Joseph Keppler



Art Young

Thomas Nast

in the American revolutionary cartoon. Mr. Murrell reproduces one of Minor's masterpieces of 1915: a huge, headless figure standing before an army medical examiner, who is saying: "At last, a perfect soldier." Boardman Robinson, who had traveled for *Metropolitan Magazine* on the war's Eastern front with John Reed in 1915, produced some inspired and prophetic cartoons: he drew a dead hand signing the Versailles Treaty in 1919.

American graphic humor in the twenties became sophisticated. The establishment of the *New Yorker* in 1926 marked the official end of rural and regional cartoon humor. Now the artists looked at the middle class of the city with whimsy and a kind of foppish satire. "Good taste" became the god honesty once was, and politics had no place whatsoever in the *New Yorker*. This cartoon comedy of manners with its fetishism of the one-speech gag line that had been used occasionally in the *Masses* a decade before, swung the other comic magazines into its orbit. *Life* and *Judge*, which had lately resembled the rah-rah college comic magazines, now took to filling their columns with *New Yorker* rejections. There is no doubt in my mind that the death of *Life* and *Judge* was partly due to the fact that their readers in the rest of the country were simply puzzled into losing interest by the urbanities that filled them. When there is no demand by editors for homely humor few artists will supply it. Thus we find the comic artists striving to make the *New Yorker* grade and unconscious of the rich, vulgar, and bumptious comedy that sustained their predecessors. Characteristically enough, only about a dozen Art Young cartoons were ever printed in the *New Yorker* and few from the other *Masses* humorists. A fragment of the urban middle class can support a suave and special spokesman of its own, but what of the mainstream of national humor? Certainly, *Esquire's* harem formula, or the feeble whither-now political cartoons in *Ken*, or the scattering of cartoons designed to stop the eye beside an advertisement in the popular magazines, cannot be called important in any way.

Mr. Murrell is conscious of this collapse of the tradition: his book, while it is necessarily a rapid survey, carries critical weight and its author's social views are enlightened. The last mention in the book is of the animated cartoon which has been technically mastered by Walt Disney. The emphasis here is correct: Mickey Mouse belongs in the same cultural pigeonhole as the Yellow Kid rather than with Chaplin or Rene Clair. The film critics who lobbied for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* as the finest motion picture of 1938 were distressingly out of their province: Disney is an industrialized cartoonist working in film rather than newsprint. To babble of the saccharine Miss White in the same year that Jean Renoir gave us *Grand Illusion* is profoundly to misunderstand cultural values. Disney's feature-length film was the most engaging novelty that has come to the theater since sound, but the animated cartoon has no

possibility of realism: it cannot produce, for its very life, a serious work of art. It is a cartoon, and, if it is to proceed further, it must grow up and become a better cartoon. That means it must become satirical. What more stunning blow could be dealt Hitler and Mussolini than to portray them in Disney's magic medium? The thought is enchanting: the possibilities of satire are limitless in the medium. J. D.

On Anti-Semitism

League of American Writers publishes "We Hold These Truths . . ."

THE final words on anti-Semitism, which appropriately are the final words in *We Hold These Truths . . .* (League of American Writers, 25 cents) come from the Statement of the American Anthropological Association, prepared by its committee headed by Prof. John M. Cooper, head of the Anthropology Department of Catholic University, Washington, D. C. It concludes:

1. Race involves the inheritance of similar physical variations by large groups of mankind, but its psychological and cultural connotations, if they exist, have not been ascertained by science.
2. The terms Aryan and Semitic have no racial significance whatsoever. They simply denote linguistic families.
3. Anthropology provides no scientific basis for discrimination against any people on the ground of racial inferiority, religious affiliation, or linguistic heritage.

Anti-Semites, of course, have no respect for science, thought, art, culture, morality, or religion. That is obvious in those racist-ridden countries such as Nazi Germany, fascist Italy,

Falangist Spain, and their political allies. In the United States, a country composed of refugees from political, religious, and racial oppressions since its first colonization, such imported anti-democratic and inhuman ideas have been fought incessantly. We fought a civil war to blot out of our national life man's enslavement of man. We are now faced with removing from our midst those who would destroy us from within; setting non-Jew against Jew, non-Catholic against Catholic, non-religionist against religionist to serve their masters who cannot rule except by terror.

The fifty-four writers, statesmen, educators, clergymen, and trade-unionists who have stated the truths they know about anti-Semitism in this excellent booklet should be read. Catholics, Jews, Protestants, and non-religionists have contributed to this brave and distinguished manifesto; Margaret Culkin Banning, Stephen Vincent Benet, Louis Bromfield, Walter B. Cannon, William Green, Harold Ickes, Robert H. Jackson, Paul de Kruif, Lewis E. Lawes, Ida Tarbell, Dorothy Thompson, and Mary E. Woolley are some of them.

The League of American Writers is to be congratulated on its editorial assemblage of this vigorous opposition to the handmaidens of Hitler. Lillian Lustig's typography and format for the pamphlet frame the contents with allied art. This most readable booklet of over a hundred pages will be widely publicized in the usual energetic manner of the League of American Writers. It amply deserves it. FRANCIS XAVIER STANLEY.

"The Power-House"

Joy Davidman reviews Benjamin Appel's latest novel.

IF THE World's Fair visitor should tire of the glitter of the Ford exhibit or of the Broadway soft-drink stands, he might be inspired to wander westward along Forty-second Street, thus getting a taste of the New York we do not advertise. Beyond Eighth Avenue, where the ten-cent movie houses cease, this wide-eyed visitor will catch our city undressing with the shades up.

The narrow-chested, wry-mouthed young men in their bright impossible suits of blue and green; the ancient grime of the rooming houses; the starved children hugging a starved cat on the front steps, and the decayed fruit peel in the gutter; the utter filth, misery, and abandonment in which so many thousands live may perturb our traveler. This is Hell's Kitchen, where rotten politics, rotten housing, and rotting lives are cooked into an unsavory mess. The sensitive visitor will be well advised, after all, not to wander this way; he can learn much more with less physical discomfort by reading Benjamin Appel's admirable new novel, *The Power-House* (E. P. Dutton & Co., \$2.75).

Mr. Appel brings to the novelist's trade clear eyes and unflinching honesty, a style capable of every beauty and the ultimate violence, a gift for idiomatic speech; he



A MODERN CARICATURIST. A. Birnbaum's conception of Frank Hague, mayor of Jersey City. Birnbaum, a frequent contributor to NM, is exhibiting his work throughout this month at the F.A.R. Gallery at 19 East 61st St., N. Y. C.



A MODERN CARICATURIST. *A. Birnbaum's* conception of Frank Hague, mayor of Jersey City. Birnbaum, a frequent contributor to NM, is exhibiting his work throughout this month at the F.A.R. Gallery at 19 East 61st St., N. Y. C.

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possesses, in addition, that profound scientific understanding of society without which no decent novel can be written; but greater than these are the understanding and compassion he has for human beings.

Mr. Appel gives us Ray, the tubercular gunman of nineteen, his brain twisted by misery and weakness out of all sane humanity; and we, seeing Ray not crudely as a wild beast but clearly as a victim, hate not him but the beastliness which has made him. Mr. Appel gives us Schneck, the big meatball, the twenty-year-old slugger with his childish mind, who can come straight from participating in the rape of a drugged girl to beat up a "Red" in sincere indignation at one he has been taught to think a "despoiler of American womanhood." Yet we do not hate Schneck, we do not even presume to despise him; we are permitted to watch his bungling, heartbreakingly ineffectual attempts to build a decent life for himself and the girl he has attacked, and when we see him killed by the forces which perverted his ignorant strength to their use, we know whom to hate.

The Power-House of the title is the secret political and financial machine of the city, controlling a gambler through a judge, the police through a gambler, the brothel through the police, and training young thugs to do its errands. It takes its cut from the whorehouse in return for protection; it supplies the union racketeer with triggermen in exchange for votes. One of its leading activities is the recruiting of labor spies and scabs. Bill Trent, the "Brain Guy" who organizes most of the dirty work in the book, takes a long while to realize the full scope of the Power-House, but the reader will be quicker, and will not need an anti-union manufacturer's whisper to recognize the Power-House as the organized gang of international capital.

While Bill Trent is promoted from gangster to brothel keeper to fink agent, ending in the stench of his own nausea gas as the head of a "Citizens Back-to-Work League," Cathy Gebhardt is trying with three strikes called on her to make an honest life for herself and Bill Trent's brother Joe. Cathy is seventeen, strong-limbed, wheat-blond, cornflower-eyed, magnificent, innocent, and heroic. She keeps the weak, lazy, and not too bright Joe at a decent job for a considerable time; when Bill ropes him in as a labor spy Cathy follows her lover to Slagtown, and it is here, in the violence and courage of a bitterly attacked strike, that the basic struggle of this splendid book is sharply defined—Cathy, the workers' America, against Bill Trent, the spirit of fascism on the make. JOY DAVIDMAN.

Three English Novels

Books by Pamela Frankau, Margaret Kennedy, and Ruthven Todd.

PAMELA FRANKAU shares with such novelists as Elizabeth Bowen a talent for singularly pellucid and evocative writing which achieves those effects of perfect and arrested

reality usually found only in painting. It is an art somehow potential rather than dynamic: attempting to embrace ideas or violent movement, it falters into incoherence. For 350 pages *The Devil We Know* (E. P. Dutton & Co., \$2.50) builds up a beautifully finished portrait of Philip Meyer, an intelligent, neurotic young Jew: his work as scriptwriter for a British film studio, his nebulous family connection with Germany, his obsession with his race, his love affair with a fashionable dressmaker—all exquisitely done, alive, exciting. But as the streams of Philip's life converge into despair simultaneously with the rise of the Nazis in Germany, and personal tragedy turns for him into a symbol of racial persecution, it becomes apparent that the author is no longer in command of material which has worked toward a meaning too vast and complex for her to handle.

Philip is agitated not only by the racial question but by the drift to political and social "classification," in which "identity" is lost. He plunges into an insane generalized hatred of humanity, into diatribes against his race, both its defenders and its persecutors, takes to rioting at meetings of both left and right, and is finally saved in a most uncertain and dubious manner by a variation on the old evasion, the "change of heart." It is wrong that an individual should not be judged by his own worth; these things should not be, and therefore they are not. The concluding section of the book bristles with imperfectly grasped philosophical and social ideas and the reader also bristles, with insistent questions. The clarity of the writing and the inherent honesty of the artist are lost pathetically in a morass of wishful and bewildered thinking.

Margaret Kennedy does not try to solve any problems but, dancing slyly and insouciantly through sheer melodrama in *The Midas Touch* (Random House, \$2.50), manages to brush against a lot of interesting ideas without losing gayety. Conclusions are avoided by scrambling acute observations together in a wildly diverse and improbable plot. The ruthless financier, swimming sharklike through the book, is preyed upon by a bogus clairvoyant whose sinister prophecies come true; an illegitimate son with a split personality and an inherited ability to make fortunes at the drop of a hat becomes his unsuspecting father's secretary; and, quite realistically, the gentry wistfully decay and the poor are deceived and frustrated. There are some very funny and witty chapters and others which are rather moving in a facile way.

Over the Mountain, by Ruthven Todd (Knopf, \$2.50), is an allegory in the prevalent Kafka manner. A young man, after infinitely perilous and exhausting struggles during which he develops amnesia, manages to climb a fabulous Pale Peak beyond which lies an unknown land. He descends (the reader guessing it is only back to his own country), into a Looking Glass world: a polite English variety of fascism. Unfortunately the book draws only crude and unpenetrating cartoons

on the too familiar situation: the spies, the robot police, the kept press, the oily churchmen in league with the exploiters, and so on. Mr. Todd, who has a genuine gift for realistic narrative—the description of the mountain crossing is extremely fine—seems ill at ease in his medium, never able to choose between plausibility and mysticism. It is curious to note that he, along with Miss Frankau and Miss Kennedy, is bothered about Identity: a matter evidently haunting the English novelist. MARJORIE BRACE.

Hot and Bothered

Hot jazz criticism comes of age in three new books.

OF ALL the partisans of an art, the hot music fan has without doubt the least sound criticism to rely upon. The field has been clear, the season open on any kind of untutored opinion. Writing in the music papers and in a few books, mainly from abroad, has been the lowest kind of esthetic criticism, flavored with the personal enthusiasms of the writer and a mystic terminology nobody outside the jive cult can understand.

Fortunately, however, the tremendous upsurge of popular interest in hot jazz has brought in the last month a small freshet of good, informative, critical writing on the subject—a freshet that will do much to clear the air of fake that has surrounded hot music since the time H. Moliter penned a monograph entitled *La Musique Chez Les Negres*.

Until recently the earnest initiate in the uncharted field could go to Charles De-launey's indispensable bibliography of hot records, *Hot Discography* (Editions du Jazz, Paris, \$1.50), a research as fortuitous and awesome as *The Road to Xanadu*. Or one might find the standard critical work, *Le Jazz Hot* by Hugues Panassie (Witmark, \$5), to get the personal taste of a pioneering Frenchman, who had lain three years in bed in a castle and listened to three thousand American hot records three thousand miles from their source. Barring a Belgian outburst, *Aux Frontiers du Jazz* by Robert Goffin, and a few utterly ignorant treatises produced here during the twenties, this was the poor fare of the jazz music lover.

Now we have three books, *The Kingdom of Swing* (Stackpole Sons, \$2), written by Benny Goodman in collaboration with Irving Kolodin of the *New York Sun*; *Jazz, Hot and Hybrid* (Arrow Editions, \$5) by Winthrop Sargeant, wrongtime music critic of the *Brooklyn Eagle*; and, most important, *American Jazz Music* (W. W. Norton & Co., \$2.50), by Wilder Hobson, whose article on Duke Ellington and jazz published four years ago in *Fortune* was perhaps the first authoritative study in the field.

The Kingdom of Swing is Mr. Goodman's autobiography, simply and modestly told with little false respect for himself or others. The Pied Piper of jazz clarinet comes from a poor Jewish family in Chicago. He started to play

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RANDOM HOUSE recommends *The Stars and Stripes Forever* unreservedly to all those who read *The Life and Death of a Spanish Town*. They will find it equally dramatic and moving, but dealing with a scene and a problem more real to Americans of the year 1939. It is a story that will leave you roused and angry, but with greater faith than ever in the American people. . . .



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in the hot style when he weighed seventy-five pounds in his three-cornered pants, during the exhilarating period when the musical high school kids of Chicago began to idolize the great Negro players who came to the Windy City after the war. The book is full of valuable reminiscences of the great players Benny has performed within the years since.

Mr. Sargeant's study of the musicology of jazz is approached from an academic point of view. *Jazz, Hot and Hybrid* sets out to prove that America's folk music is jazz, and that it is the original contribution of the Negro. This thesis may seem obvious unless one remembers that Southern chauvinists and sophisticated formal critics have already begun to spin theories that the language of jazz is more Jewish, Spanish, Italian, or what have you; and that polytonalities and polyrhythms are not intrinsically the Negroes'. Mr. Sargeant proves his point solidly through a careful reference to sources and a liberal use of musical notation in his text. But, his point once made, he appends certain moralistic conclusions like, "At best (jazz) offers civilized man only a temporary escape into drunken self-hypnotism."

Wilder Hobson destroys this idea completely at the very beginning of his book, *American Jazz Music*, in several chapters of definition, lucidly worked out. He rejects moralizing as an impertinent confusion of the issues and brings to his material a laudable social understanding of the why of jazz. Jazz criticism is still not entirely liberated from the narrow esthetic point of view but Mr. Hobson at least saturates his book with the color and the interesting atmosphere surrounding this American music. He has got far enough into the implications to make one hungry for a book starting out from the social understanding of American jazz.

To one who is approaching hot music for the first time, Mr. Hobson is particularly kind. He has selected a list of thirty records which he discusses in detail in the appendix and all the references in the text are made to these so that his book is based, as it rightly should be, on the actual performance of the music. Having listened to Hobson's choice of sixty sides, I can say flatly that no one has written about jazz who can match the impeccable adjectives of the writer of *American Jazz Music*. It is a genuine literary achievement as well as the clearest criticism of a perplexing art form.

PETER LYON.

John Wilkes Booth

Philip Van Doren Stern's "The Man Who Killed Lincoln."

THE murder of Abraham Lincoln seventy-four years ago has always fascinated the historian, but until now the dramatic values of the assassination and its aftermath have been slighted, even though they provide the material of romantic fiction ready-made: a President murdered in a crowded theater at the height of his power

and fame by an almost insane "natural aristocrat"; the dramatic escape of the wounded assassin and his wretched flight and suicide—still convinced of the justice of his act. Philip Van Doren Stern has recreated the drama by writing the story of John Wilkes Booth and his part in the assassination.

The Man Who Killed Lincoln (Random House, \$3) is an interesting attempt at historical fiction, though as history it is unimportant and as fiction its best values are not the "romantic" ones. For as history it does not touch the political and social forces working behind the murder, and it does not attempt to solve any of the still unanswered mysteries about the assassination. These historical considerations are legitimately outside its scope, for it is concerned with what happened to Booth: how did he kill Lincoln, how did he escape, how was he tracked down?

The first part of the "novel" attempts to draw the psychological motivations for the crime and suffers because, as Stern himself indicates in an interesting historical supplement, Booth is almost the stock romantic figure. We soon lose interest in him as a man, and since the minor characters are only sketched, there is little that is exciting from the psychological point of view. What is good are the more purely narrative parts of the book: the murder of Lincoln, the unsuccessful attempt on Seward's life, and above all the flight of the injured Booth and the unfortunately simple Herold. For what happened to Booth is much more exciting than the murder he committed or the psychological makeup of his character. Booth is a wounded and tortured animal, and his flight and capture are here told swiftly and well.

PAUL SELVIN.

Rum, Slaves, Molasses

The slave trade of 1812 the background of "The Middle Passage."

FROM New England, the early slave ships, loaded with rum and with trinkets, sailed for the African coast; from Africa, their human cargo rammed into the holds, they passed to the West Indies, where they unloaded the black freight and shipped molasses and sugar; in New England, molasses and sugar became rum for the African trade. A triangular voyage—rum, slaves, molasses. The second leg of the trip, with the shackled slaves wedged below decks, became infamous as "the middle passage." This is the title chosen by Roland Barker and William Doerflinger for their novel about the slave trade in the year 1812—a book which builds, upon a foundation of tremendous research, the structure of a wholly credible story (The Macmillan Company, \$2.50).

It is all here—the "blackbirds," slave ships supposedly outlawed but doing a flourishing business at the command of Southern planters; the crews, scourgings and outcasts of the nations of the world; the fomenting of intertribal wars and internal struggles among the African peoples so that captured prisoners

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might be sold as slaves; raids into the interior and the driving of the yoked coffles to the coast; the Negroes whipped to the water's edge and flung upon the ground for branding; men and women tossed to the sharks when blinded by ophthalmia or upon the approach of a searching vessel; and the trade's tremendous profits—in the words of Covado, the Spanish factor on the Guinea coast, "One slave out of three, delivered alive, ensures a profit."

One important aspect the novel omits: the struggle of the African peoples against their enslavement. The reader is led to believe that the Africans meekly acquiesced in the trade. Yet the long record of Negro revolts against bondage in America begins even before the slaves touched Western soil. There were uprisings in the barracoons in Africa, and insurrections aboard the slavers. Sometimes the struggles at sea were successful, and the captives turned the ship about and regained their homes; in other instances, they reached the powder stores and blew up the boat rather than be carried into bondage. One of the most famous cases of slave revolts aboard ship, that of the *Amistad*, reached the United States Supreme Court and ended in the liberation of the Negroes. The novel's failure to bring forward this phase of the African trade—an omission which amounts to distortion—mars a picture that is otherwise rounded and convincing.

ELIZABETH LAWSON.

Brief Review

A pamphlet on anti-Semitism, by three Harvard instructors.

THIS interesting example of modern pamphleteering is the product of three young Harvard instructors. (*Anti-Semitism, a Threat to Democracy*, by D. J. Boorstin, George Mayberry, and John Rackliffe. Wakefield, Mass.: Theodore DeLuca. 5 cents.) Roused by the spread of anti-Semitism, these young men made a study of the subject, put their conclusions into writing, and secured a group of eminent citizens in Greater Boston to sponsor the resulting pamphlet. Particularly addressed to the people of New England, the pamphlet has had a wide circulation in that area. It is, however, of general interest and deserves to be read throughout the country.

There is a good section on the role of the Jews in American history, an uncommonly well informed summary of the rise of anti-Semitism, a clear analysis of the recent performances of Father Coughlin, and a special appeal to Catholics. Written in a warm, appealing tone, but never over-emotional, the pamphlet is well calculated to affect those who are only beginning to become conscious of the threat to democracy that is implicit in anti-Semitism.

It is, of course, impossible to give an adequate discussion of anti-Semitism in thirty-two pages, but there are points at which this study would profit by further exposition and documentation. It is also true that the discussion of methods of combating anti-Semitism, though fundamentally sound, seems rather hasty and a little confused. On the whole, however, the job is well done. The impression the pamphlet has made might well encourage academic groups in other parts of the country to try their hands at pamphleteering.

G. H.

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The Music of Paul Hindemith

John Sebastian reviews the ideas of a great modern German composer. Prohibited from playing in the Nazi Reich, he finds refuge in America.

PAUL HINDEMITH, who was so insensitive a composer as to be unable to express in his music the ideology of Nazi Germany, and whose music, in consequence, is *verboten*, appeared in Town Hall on the evening of April 23 in a program devoted entirely to his own compositions. It was an exceptionally interesting program, played extremely well by members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Hindemith, and Lydia Hoffmann-Behrendt. The evening lasted a little too long, but it provided the means of hearing music which is not generally available on standard programs. Also, it brought before your eyes and ears case number 8,567,493 from Nazi Germany—the case of Paul Hindemith.

Mr. Hindemith professed, in a conversation with this writer, to be entirely unpolitical, but at the same time admitted that he was in better company outside of Germany (i.e., Thomas Mann, Einstein, etc.) than he could possibly be had he stayed there (i.e., Max Trapp, composer; Hans Ewers, writer; Adolf Schickelgruber, art critic; etc.). Even more important, Hindemith stated definitely that the fact that his music is forbidden public performance had nothing to do with his leaving Germany, and that he would not stay there if his music were played. Since he is of Siegfried's blood, he would be allowed the questionable privilege of remaining in Germany, and could be there today if he so wished. His music is still sold publicly, as are recordings of his music, and sales on both have jumped since being placed on the non-performance list.

Now, above and outside the personality of Hindemith himself and his own feelings about politics, we have the case of his music. For if Hindemith hasn't been politicized by the events in Hitler's Germany, his music certainly has. It is banned on the purely arbitrary basis of being unfit for the ears of National Socialists (this column, by the way, is open to lists of compositions *fit* for the ears of National Socialists), and, if for no other reason, deserves examination. Anyone with a sense of humanity instinctively feels that something which meets with the disapproval of a murderer must of necessity have some noble qualities.

One of the wildest opinions to hold about Hindemith's music is to consider it as a last milepost in modernity. In doing that, you'll find yourself using such a word as "atonality" (since this represents to many persons the ultimate in "modern music") which is in no way applicable to the music of Hindemith. He has never written an atonal composition in his life, yet it is the one word most often used to designate his style. If his music must

be catalogued, I would say that it is the development of a style intimidated by Max Reger and Busoni (and before them, a jump back to Machaut and other fourteenth-century composers) in contradistinction to post-Wagnerian methods (Schoenberg), post impressionistic methods (Ravel, and sometimes Stravinsky), and is a negation of the purely emotional and coloristic in favor of accurate and precise workmanship after intellectual consideration. His music is rather dry at times, highly rectified, and partial to chamber-music forms in its manifestation.

If you will accept even a part of that description, you can start asking yourself why Hindemith's music is not acceptable to Goebbels. Certainly not on the basis of dissonance, for Stravinsky and others are still heard in Germany. Well, first of all, Hindemith's music is anti-Wagnerian (I am not speaking of the composer's personal opinion, of course, but of the summative effect of his music), pays no obeisance to that composer, and could just as well have been written had there never been a *Ring* or a *Tristan*. Not being a Wagnerian myself, that pleases me; but I can understand that it would make the *Festspiel* boys quite sore, particularly such an

unreasoned and fanatic enthusiast as Hitler. Then, Hindemith's music has none of the qualities of lust, and should be listened to as music and not as in a psychopathic dream world in which Leni Riefenstahl skis past in the nude. Again, there is no grandiose theater connected with his music, no evocation of marching titans. And again, Hindemith's music is a little too serious to use as escapist material for a population already starved on *Ersatz*.

Yet Hindemith and his music are German to the core. He has some attributes which one would think would appeal to the "new" Germany; a personal credo of "let me alone with my music and I'll let you alone with your politics," a deep sense of a somewhat mechanical orderliness, and, by God, he's a blond. But his drawback in the eyes of the Nazis must be his superb, fresh, and ingratiating sense of humor. And it's that same quality, that fresh humor, which sometimes comes through in his music to save what might otherwise be a too recondite dissertation in tone. Also, he is amazingly (and sincerely) modest; a little embarrassed by attention and ready to admit that, to him, his musical theories are the "best," but may not be accepted as



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such by others. He is extremely personable and impresses one immediately with his sincerity.

I can't help but wonder what might have happened to Hindemith if he had lived under a set of circumstances other than the World War, post-war confused Germany, and fascism. The direction in which he was headed was essentially correct. His devotion to *Gebrauchmusik* (music which serves a purpose other than mere satisfaction for the composer) represents a real desire to reach a large public outside of the typical concert-hall rich-patron type; a desire which led him to devote eight years of free service to the *Volk-musikschulen*, which correspond to our settlement schools. Here he came in contact with young musicians of the "proletariat" (which word Hindemith used himself), and found time for them along with his work at the Berlin Hochschule. As I say, the direction in which he was traveling was certainly opposed to ivory-towerism, and he still has a deep contempt for what he calls the "highbrow" in music. But as it turned out, his inability to see clear through to the end of his ideas, combined with an innate reluctance to admit that the fate of music is unalterably associated with the fate of the humanities, left him bewildered before the viciousness of a brutal political system.

JOHN SEBASTIAN.

Two Tries

"Let Me Live" and "Back Door to Heaven," sincere films.

JOHN BRAHM, the director of last year's fine picture *Girls School*, has another go at the problems of little people, in a picture called *Let Me Live*, which tells the story of a smalltown taxi driver who is convicted of murder by circumstantial evidence. The story is a true one and Mr. Brahm's interpretation is sympathetic to plain anonymous people like Henry Fonda's simple hacky. Exhibit number two, a film made at Astoria, L. I., by director William K. Howard and the able writing team of John Bright and Robert Tasker, name of *Back Door to Heaven* (also true), tells the story of another smalltown boy convicted of murder by circumstance of environment.

Both projects are handled with commendable realism, sensitive acting, and earnest direction. But they remain merely stories of young men framed for murder by circumstance, and they do not rise above this level to become facsimiles or symbols of millions of young men framed on worse things than murder charges—the walled-in life of a small town, poverty, unemployment, and the cramped horizons of twentieth-century capitalism. Mr. Howard, in fact, sentimentalizes his small town in the maudlin manner of the late Odd McIntyre on the subject of Gallipolis, Ohio. St. Mary's is the actual birthplace of Mr. Howard, and I am afraid his Old Home Week feeling has run off with his picture. The direction of *Back Door* is imaginative. Mr. Howard has contrived to have his players

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act and speak it in the true, embarrassed, tongue-tied fashion of the small townsman facing his dilemmas. Unfortunately, this does not make for dramatic value unless the director is able to state some tragedy in spite of this convention. The dialogue writing does not help and neither do the halting gestures of the cast. Let me be the last to attack such a well-meant picture, for Messrs. Howard, Bright, and Tasker are genuine hopes in the serious film trend. But *Back Door to Heaven* opens upon too little.

J. D.

"Gang Busters"

A radio feature which indicates that crime sometimes does pay.

PHILLIPS LORD, creator and original writer-director of *Gang Busters*, one of the prominent crime presentations on the air, is a very able salesman. In fact, he is a much better salesman than writer, director, or philosopher. Phil's theme song—that the best way to stamp out crime is by mowing down the delinquent or speeding him off to Alcatraz—is warbled weekly to the accompaniment of machine-gun music, screaming sirens, and the wails of physical agony. It is amusing to hear Phil chanting that crime doesn't pay, especially when he shows so clearly that crime *does* pay. It brings him a neat little check every week from the sponsor.

However, Lord is unquestionably a master showman. One of his cute little methods of injecting local color into the weekly melodrama is a statement intended to delude the radio audience into believing that the interview between Col. Norman Schwartzkopf and a visiting police official is being held in a private office in New York Police Headquarters, turned over to the show by Police Commissioner Valentine. Of course this is not so. The entire broadcast takes place in Studio 3 of the Columbia Broadcasting System. Nevertheless, the trick has its desired effect.

Moreover, this interview is, most of the time, no more than a prepared talk between the good colonel and a studio actor; the police official not being present but receiving a fee, and a small one at that, for the use of his name. Not long ago a well known law enforcement official told me that it was a pleasure for him to sit in his car out in the Far West and hear his voice with a broad English accent come over the air.

Also interesting is the pittance paid to research experts for the material on which the program is based. No one disputes the fact that the story is the backbone of the show. But for this work, which involves an outline of twenty pages, friend Phil of the anti-crime crusade pays the stupefying sum of \$25. If the plot is used on the air, Phil loosens up with another twenty-five, making \$50 the total compensation for perhaps weeks of research. And according to those in the trade, the sponsor pays Lord \$4,000 a broadcast. That doesn't include air time. Who says crime doesn't pay!

JOHN VERNON.

Tamiris in "Adelante"

New WPA dance production portrays old and new Spain.

IN SPAIN the lines of battle have shifted and are less obvious, but the Spanish people's struggle against the fascist invasion goes forward, taking new forms. This essentially is the idea behind Helen Tamiris' *Adelante (Forward)*, the new WPA dance production which opened at Daly's Theater (N. Y.) and is continuing with the WPA Theater at the World's Fair grounds.

The dance opens on the execution of a peasant soldier, utilizes the split second between the blindfolding and the *coup de grace* to recall familiar portraits—the fiesta, the Inquisition, the medieval court—and ends in a climactic triumphal march—forward.

Cut to an hour's presentation (World's Fair requirements) *Adelante* unfortunately assumes, for all its excellent spots, an arbitrary quality. The history of the struggle of the Spanish people against the barbarisms of the feudal aristocracy, which the choreographer evidently intended to portray, does not come through as a dialectically continuing process. The folk dance, the most colorful and best staged section of the work, is an interlude which interrupts whatever historical continuity the dancer achieves. The final "forward" march, consequently, following defeat on defeat, and death on bewilderment, lacks the convincing punch it should rightfully obtain.

An over-emotional approach to the episodic composition—which depends much for dramatic effect on pantomime and the effective Eli Siegel and Rolfe Humphries translations of poetry written literally on the battlefield—has tended, as well, to upset a proper balance. The work lacks the stolidity, the fortitude, the courageous qualities which belong undeniably to the Spanish people.

The WPA dancers, as always, performed with professional excellence. Tamiris herself danced beautifully as the "Beloved," and Bill Matons as the "Peasant Soldier," while a bit weak in pantomime, disported his usual vigorous manner. Wallingford Riegger conducted the Genevieve Pitot score for the work, Miss Pitot led the capable chorus, and Alfredo Allegro proved an excellent narrator. Additional verse for the composition was provided by Bob Whittington; the sets and costumes were by Alexander Jones.

At the Labor Stage (N. Y.) Lillian Shapero presented a number of new solo and group compositions of which *The Story of David*, done in simple childlike patterns, and the folklike *Song of the Harvest* were the most happily conceived. Choreographically, the young dancer's work has opened up a bit, allowed for some freshness of movement; but her dances still need to move away from a preoccupation with abstract pattern whose subtleties tend to obscure whatever ideological structure her dancing has.

OWEN BURKE.

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FEW PUBLICATIONS would handle the news that appeared in NM last week—even if they could get it.

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