

**ROOSEVELT'S NEXT STEPS**

BY ADAM LAPIN

# **NEW MASSES**

FIFTEEN CENTS

MARCH 25, 1941

## **WASHINGTON'S WAR**

### **DEALS** *Watch the "Lucky Twenty-one."*

*The inside story of their contracts. How they got them. The fable of the fixed fee.*

*by* **BARBARA GILES**

**THE SPRING OFFENSIVE STARTS** AN EDITORIAL

**IF ST. PATRICK DROVE A BUS** BY JOSEPH NORTH

**SHERWOOD ANDERSON** BY SAMUEL SILLEN

**WHY BROWDER SHOULD BE FREE** Ellsworth Huntington

Rockwell Kent, Harry F. Ward, Elliot Paul, Joe Jones  
Isobel Walker Soule, Albert Maltz, Millen Brand, Eliot White and others

# If It Weren't For a Good Friend . . .

Last week a good friend of the magazine sent us a thousand dollars.

That saved the magazine this week. Without it we would not have gotten the issue out. The drive is already a third over, and to date we have only received \$3,699 — approximately a sixth of our goal.

Too many of our friends take it for granted that we'll pull through. But the creditors do not. They are outside our door, demanding their due. We have been able to hold them off until the drive, and now they won't wait any longer.

We have not cried "Wolf, wolf." The margin between us and financial suppression is what you send us.

We want to warn all NEW MASSES friends — with all the urgency at our command—that you, and only you, can save the magazine. Please don't hesitate any longer, so that we can cut the agony short. If the drive doesn't go any better the next week than it has to date, we'll all of us be tragically sorry. You would never forgive us for not making these unpalatable truths even more urgent.

THE EDITORS.

WE keenly regret the inconvenience which was caused NM readers last Friday evening by sudden postponement of the preview of *Native Son*. The postponement was entirely due to unexpected mechanical difficulties arising from the late arrival of stage scenery. Our office was notified at 2 PM on Friday that the play could not be staged that evening and we tried to reach as many ticket-holders as possible to save them the trouble of going to the theater. Those who did go were informed that their tickets could be exchanged at the box office of the St. James Theater for any night except Saturday or Sunday. Incidentally, anyone who still wishes to buy tickets for the play from NM can obtain a good selection for Friday, March 28. Call CA ledonia 5-3076 or drop by the NM office, 461 Fourth Avenue.

### Who's Who

SASHA SMALL is connected with the I.L.D. . . . Adam Lapin is NM's Washington correspondent. . . . Frank

T. Baker has written on Latin-American affairs for many magazines. . . . Millicent Lang is a graduate student, specializing in contemporary literature. . . . Lloyd E. Trent's articles have appeared frequently in NM. . . . Joy Davidman's poems are well-known to readers of this magazine.

### Flashbacks

ON March 20, 1852, just prior to the second great revolutionary step in American history, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* appeared in book form. . . . Unemployment, one of the central phenomena of capitalism and our times, had already put in several cyclical appearances before the end of the nineteenth century. And the unemployed had fought determinedly for their right to local and federal aid. On March 25, 1894, a jobless army led by Jacob Coxey began (in Massillon, Ohio) a march on Washington. . . . William Z. Foster went on trial March 26, 1923, for attending the Communist Party convention at Bridgeman, Mich.

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# NEW MASSES

VOLUME XXXIX

MARCH 25, 1941

NUMBER 1

## Washington's War Deals

Every day millions are turned over to the "lucky twenty-one." Barbara Giles reports on how contracts are made and the men who negotiate them. Shades of '17.

**A** WAR contract is a sacred document. It is not open to the vulgar stare of taxpayers, who might stare indeed if they got a real look at the way their money is being let out at the rate of about \$1,750,000,000 a month. Contracts are made with the industrialists by the Army and Navy with the "advice" of dollar-a-year men. The most important, as for bombers, destroyers, tanks, etc., are done by chummy across-the-table negotiation instead of the old-fashioned bidding which is now considered just too slow-poke and cautious for words. On a single day, September 9, nearly \$4,000,000,000 worth of contracts went through—the day that Roosevelt signed the "two-ocean navy" act. The contracts had already been drawn up between shipbuilders and the Navy, ready for signing the minute FDR put his name to the act.

"The essence of the preparedness program," says the dollar-a-year men's statement of policy, "is the getting of an adequate supply of materials of the proper quality in the shortest space of time possible. *Considerations of price alone are highly important, but in the emergency are not governing.*" (My italics.)

That is an interesting admission, coming from gentlemen who admit to practically nothing. But it's an understatement. You can find that out without actually seeing a contract, simply by examining forms and regulations and talking to people in Washington whose business it is to know how contracts are drawn up. I discovered soon enough, in the process of doing this, that the contractor—to whom "considerations of price" are most often "governing"—holds the aces from the start.

"Costs" is the key word to profiteering on war orders. Contracts are negotiated on a cost-plus-fixed-fee basis. That is, the cost of fulfilling the contract is determined in advance and the contractor's fee is based on a percentage of that cost. Such percentages presumably run from six to ten, with Army contracts limited to seven. Obviously, then, the contractor's profit is dependent on the estimate of his costs. Here is where all sorts of fancy tricks can be pulled.

I have before me a copy of a Treasury decision, TD 5000, which is supposed to guide government officials in making contracts. "Cost" items cover seven closely typed pages. Nothing has been forgotten, absolutely nothing. A war contractor can charge the government for practically anything. The US Treasury, for example, will pay his state sales taxes. It donates his dues in trade associations and

"contributions to local or community organizations." It will even lay out the money for the paper and ink used in drafting. Try to imagine a government official really checking cost estimates submitted on such a basis—with \$11,315,856,522 worth of contracts given out between July 1, 1939, and Jan. 15, 1940!

IN ADDITION to the allowable cost items, others may be included if the contracting officer finds them "reasonable." The contract itself may be changed during its duration. When I was in Washington I was told that the Vultee Aircraft contract was reopened to take care of the company's higher costs in increased wages following the strike. This can be done through "escalator" clauses in the contracts. In a wonderfully candid speech made last December to a group of cost accountants in Buffalo, Herbert F. Taggart, the consulting cost accountant to the Price Stabilization Division of NDAC, explained that escalator clauses "are intended to shift the risk of increased wage rates and increased prices of materials to the government." There are also bonus clauses in many contracts "for cost saving and for time saving."

In considering the loopholes, it's important to remember the men who draw up contracts. On one side of the table sit industrialists to whom a chink in a contract is like a break in a Mississippi dyke. On the other sit Army and Navy men whose tender cherishing of profiteers is blazoned into the records of congressional investigations. It is no secret in Washington that the boys on both sides of the table can hardly keep a straight face when they talk about "fixed fees." We may not know for some time the dollar-and-cent results of their handiwork, but there are indications. The very profits of these contractors, the nine-figure sums that stud the headlines of financial pages, are glittering testimony to their prowess in grab.

We the people also pay for the industrialists' war plants. If a contractor wants to expand his facilities for making war supplies, he can do it at the government's expense. The cost of plants may be amortized, i.e., taken out in tax exemptions over a period of five years. Money to cover the expense until payment has been made by the government may be borrowed from the government itself, through the RFC. Or the manufacturer can, if he wishes, take an "emergency facilities" contract to his banker and assign it as security for a loan to cover construction expenses. The cost, in Mr. Taggart's words, "is

guaranteed by the government, regardless of the success or failure of the supplies contract, and without regard to the general credit of the contractor."

The generosity of these conditions is almost fabulous. Suppose you were a shoemaker with a small establishment and somebody suddenly offered to buy millions of shoes from you at a guaranteed profit. He would pay the entire cost of manufacture down to the last inch of thread used for stitching. On top of this, he would lend you the money for expanding your facilities to make the shoes and then pay the loan himself! That, in effect, is just what the government is doing for the war industrialists.

After the plant has been paid for, it belongs to the government—unless the contractor still has use for it. In that case, he may buy it back after the "emergency" at the original cost minus allowances for depreciation. "Depreciation," like "costs," is a word of best-grade elastic. And there's plenty of room in the emergency-facilities contracts for "cost" profiteering too. In fact, the contract form used for building war plants expressly states that "the contractor does not guarantee the correctness" of his cost estimate.

WE DO at least know who's getting contracts, and how much. Every week or so the Defense Commission releases a list of awards. It's enlightening to examine those lists from last July to Feb. 15, 1941. Looking at the names, you may feel that nearly every manufacturing concern in the nation is getting its share. Looking at the amounts, you change your mind. The million-dollar awards become small potatoes. You notice Bethlehem's orders adding up to \$1,152,278,281 (and 10 cents). Or Newport News Shipbuilding's \$475,961,000; US Steel's \$444,308,000; General Motors' \$321,617,269.09.

Yes, hundreds of contracts had been signed. But just twenty-one corporations had received amounts of more than \$100,000,000 each. And those amounts, totaling \$5,683,662,268, accounted for well over a third of the fifteen billions in contracts let by the war agencies.

Lucky twenty-one!—you should know their names. In the order of their war receipts up to February 15 they are: Bethlehem, Newport News, US Steel, NY Shipbuilding, General Motors, Curtiss-Wright, Douglas Aircraft, Consolidated Aircraft, Todd Shipyards, United Aircraft, Western Cartridge Co., Bath Iron Works, Remington Arms, du Pont, Ford, Boeing Airplane Co., Electric Boat Co., Wright Aeronautical, Glenn L. Martin Air-

# ARMY

THE GAZETTE OF THE LAND  
SEA AND AIR



# NAVY

SPOKESMAN OF THE SERVICES  
SINCE 1863

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The Defense Program

Navy Plans to Advance  
Office

**Foreign Affairs**—There is a great deal of truth in the Senatorial forecast that, as a result of the enactment of the Lend-Lease bill, the GHQ of the wars in Europe and Asia will be located at the White House. The great power the Act confers, which supplements that hitherto granted, will enable the President to give or withhold materiel as he may deem advisable. That is to say, if a Government which we are assisting, contemplates an expedition he disapproves, he will have the authority to deny it the ships and planes and guns the expedition requires. Again, if in his judgment a certain movement is strategically desirable, and the Government concerned refuse to embark upon it, he may apply pressure through the withholding of munitions for the execution of the plans it prefers. Since the purpose of the President in obtaining the enactment of the Lend-Lease Act, and the title of the Act specifically expresses it as the defense of the United States, it is his responsibility to see that the supplies dispatched abroad shall be effectively used for our own protection through the defeat of the Totalitarian States. This will mean that he must know in advance of the military operations the Governments he proposes to assist are preparing to undertake, and if they accord with the single design of American protection, then by his order the necessary supplies will be forthcoming.

Since GHQ activities, as General Pershing so clearly demonstrated in France during the first World War, relate to all forms of war—diplomacy, propaganda, finance, and economics, as well as military—it follows that in all these fields the President will wield tremendous influence. As a result of the Lend-Lease Act, the President has been empowered for his assumption of the role of the GHQ heretofore.

THE SPOKESMEN of imperialism occasionally lapse into frankness—after their objectives are accomplished. Thus we find Henry R. Luce, publisher of Life, telling us in a recent issue of that magazine that America got into the war—a war in which he admits the American people did not want to participate—“on the basis of defense,” and “that very word, defense, has been full of deceit and self-deceit.” And now the Army and Navy Journal comes along and offers a few blunt truths about the lend-lease bill. Of course, to readers of NEW MASSES these ideas are not new: we told these truths from the beginning. What is significant is their admission by the semi-official organ of the officer caste. Mark Sullivan, in his syndicated column on March 13, gave virtually the same interpretation of the President's role in the new relations created by HR 1776.

craft, Cramp Shipbuilding, and Consolidated Steel.

Notice that Knudsen's General Motors and Stettinius' US Steel are among the top five. However, if we added the Remington Arms contract to du Pont's, as we should since du Pont owns Remington, this would put General Motors sixth. But GM owns the Yellow Truck & Coach Mfg. Co., with \$65,833,859.62 in orders, which brings its total above that of du Pont plus Remington. It really doesn't matter, though, because du Pont and Morgan control General Motors, so the whole question of who's first becomes only a family dispute. For that matter, US Steel (Morgan-dominated) has enough additional in contracts for its Federal Shipbuilding and Carnegie-Illinois Steel to put it above Newport News. And a marriage was recently effected between Todd Shipyards and the Bath

Iron Works; President Newell of Bath became president also of the newly formed Todd-Bath Iron Shipbuilding Corp., which is building tankers for Britain.

Naturally, the lucky twenty-one are also at the top, or near it, in their respective fields of industry. Which is exactly why they are getting the largest handouts. Theirs is the power, the influence, the control of industrial empire—a control that will be immeasurably intensified by their favored position in a war economy. What goes on here? A “defense” program run by anti-democratic monopoly to further monopoly's domination—surely this is a curious way to Save Democracy.

In most cases the very names of the contractors symbolize monopoly. General Motors is not only a giant in the automobile industry. Through stockholdings it controls the North American Aviation Co. as well as Bendix

Aviation. And North American with United Aircraft and Curtiss-Wright dominate the aircraft industry.

The “Big Three” of shipbuilding are Bethlehem, Newport News, and NY Shipbuilding.

Electric Boat is the only company in the United States making submarines.

In powder, du Pont is preeminent. The next two largest companies are Atlas and Hercules, which were split off from du Pont in 1921 but still have close banking connections with their former parent. (Atlas has \$48,825,000 in contracts, Hercules \$88,098,399.)

US Steel and Bethlehem produce fifty percent of the steel output in America.

God forbid that I should try to set forth the maze of interlocking directorates, stockholdings, and subsidiaries which connect members of the group comprising the 200 fattest contractors. For example, both the Midvale Co. and Mesta Machine Co. are dominated by Baldwin Locomotive. US Rubber is twenty percent controlled by du Pont. The Aviation Corp. owns Vultee Aircraft. One of Todd's eleven subsidiaries is the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Co. Many of the connecting lines cross industries. Thus, Aviation Corp. and NY Shipbuilding are linked through interlocking directorates, as are Bethlehem Steel and Anaconda Copper. The relations of corporations through their kinship in the families of Morgan, Mellon, Rockefeller, du Pont, deserve a whole separate study.

A brisk little business in “defense” goes on between contractors. Ford and General Motors are both licensed to produce Pratt & Whitney engines. About ten percent of plane manufacturing costs are due to aluminum, giving Mellon's Aluminum Company of America an extra cut of the war pie. While General Electric has received directly no more than \$34,768,000 in war contracts, the company itself states that its orders from shipbuilders for Diesel engines, turbines, and other marine equipment brings its “defense” total to \$250,000,000!

More is involved in this picture than the amounts of money you and I are being forced to contribute to big business. That more concerns our daily living. General Electric's war orders approach ninety percent of its 1939 sales. Curtiss-Wright's have already reached 356 percent; and Fairbanks, Morse's are 101.7 percent. Which raises an interesting question: at this rate, how much production for anything but war will there be left in industry? And how much will it cost the consumer?

BUT SIZE, POWER, PROFITS are not the only marks of a war contractor. The largest ones are also tattooed with the swastika. In the first article of this series I cited some of the more notorious examples, Standard Oil, General Motors, du Pont, National Lead, and others. There are many more.

Take the aircraft industry alone. Remember Col. Edward A. Deeds from the last world war? He was a member of the Aircraft Production Board headed by Howard E.



Coffin which spent more than a billion dollars for 196 planes that were so defective they became known as "flying coffins." Deeds was also placed in charge of the Army Signal Corps Equipment Division. So flagrant was his record—graft, favoritism, waste, giving out army information to private manufacturers—that Charles Evans Hughes later recommended him for court-martial. The colonel is still associated with the aircraft industry and is profiting from this war also, as we shall see later. Of more interest at this point is a notation in *Ambassador Dodd's Diary*, made Dec. 5, 1936: "Deeds had negotiated a deal with a German corporation for sending over our airplane patents so that the German company could manufacture and sell a hundred planes to Italy, the American company to share the profits."

About a month ago Thurman Arnold threatened to investigate the plane companies' licensing arrangements with Germany. We shall see whether he makes good that threat, which comes rather late. After all, the administration plunged into "anti-Hitler" preparations some eight months ago. And the aircraft industry has already gotten a gigantic share of contracts. So far as its sales to the Third Reich are concerned, we know that it exported \$2,225,000 worth of products to the Nazis in 1933-38 alone. United Aircraft and its Pratt & Whitney division probably took the lead but they were not alone. A report of the Nye committee refers to "very definite information" regarding sales by Sperry Gyroscope, Curtiss-Wright, and Douglas Aircraft after Hitler's rise to power.

Other industries offer notable examples of Nazi business. Ford and Standard Oil of New Jersey both have interlocking directorates with the American IG Chemical Corp., American branch of the IG Farbenindustrie. NY Shipbuilding has had licensing agreements with the German firm Maschinenfabrik Augsburg Nurnberg for the latter's diesel engines. Bausch & Lomb are closely linked with the German Zeiss Co. And Remington Arms (du Pont's subsidiary) has mutual patent licensing agreements with the Dynamit AG and Rhenisch Westfalische Sprengstoff, according to a Nye report made in 1936. The Edward G. Budd Co. also has a German subsidiary.

There have been quiet little notices on the financial news pages recently to the effect that so-and-so contractors have "divested themselves" of their Nazi holdings. Whether this is so or not remains to be proved. But suppose it is? These men still had interests in Hitler's domain for more than a year after the "anti-fascist" war began. They helped to build up Nazi war strength. Now they're participating more intensively in the war on one imperialist front, Great Britain's, and their financial stake in that empire has become more important. As I remarked in the first article of this series, most of the corporations which are linked with German firms are similarly linked with British companies. General Electric is a case in point. GE (a Morgan firm) controls the International General Electric

Co. which had until recently interests in both Germany and England, as well as Australia, France, Holland, Spain, Belgium, Portugal, Japan, and Hungary.

ANYONE who was close to the Washington war setup in 1917-18 might say on returning to the capital now, "This is where I came in." Lobbyists for the same old crowd of arms makers, shipbuilders, etc., are on the scene again and getting theirs. No one, apparently, reminds them of their record in that first "war to save democracy." Let us recall that record. It is spread through thirty-eight volumes of the Nye committee hearings. This was a famous investigation: it consumed eighteen months' time and a great deal of government money. Behind it was a definite purpose—to prevent a recurrence of the gigantic waste, corruption, and downright murder which

marked the conduct of the last war. The testimony made sensational headlines. Out of it came the phrase "merchants of death." The name of du Pont took on a stench like the company's poison gas. Silk-hatted darlings of Wall Street were exposed as no better than underworld denizens. On the basis of its findings, the committee's majority concluded that it was virtually impossible to regulate war industries. It recommended complete government ownership of all facilities for constructing the implements of war.

How those war industrialists must laugh now—they who squirmed under Nye's questioning a few years ago. When they come to Washington these days it is to pick up their bags of gold. The "Now It Can Be Told" department, which was opened sixteen years after the last war, has been locked again. But this is the time, right now, to reexamine its

DEATH AND PROFITS. In the back pages of newspaper financial sections the headlines proclaim the delights of "democratic defense"—for the war contractors. And the dance of the billions has just begun.

contents. There isn't space to give even a tenth of them here; we can only select a few typical instances.

Did I mention Col. Edward A. Deeds? The colonel went through a hard time wriggling out of the threatened court-martial, and the publicity must have been thoroughly unpleasant. However, he had important friends to sustain him. They were not the kind of friends who would shun him for a small matter like bilking the Treasury out of a few hundred million dollars and giving away military information. The colonel, so far from having to slink into retirement, became a director of the National City Bank. He is also president and director of Niles-Bement-Pond, which is getting government orders and owns stock in United Aircraft, one of the largest twenty-one contractors. His son, C. W. Deeds, a vice-president of Pratt & Whitney, was summoned by the Nye committee in September 1934 to testify concerning his company's deals in Nazi Germany.

The colonel had some associates in his world-war enterprises. One was Charles F. Kettering, now a vice-president and director in Knudsen's General Motors. Another was Harold E. Talbott, a director of Chrysler, which is also getting large contracts. In April 1917, three days after war had been declared, Deeds, Kettering, and Talbott formed the Dayton Wright Airplane Co., outstanding benefactor of the billion-dollar handout that brought forth 196 flying coffins.

In war profiteering, it seems, the wages of sin is death for other people, bigger business for the sinners. Deeds and his friends are not the only proof of this, as a glance at the 1914-18 crimes of the present largest contractors will show.

Du Pont, I think, takes the medal for brazenness. In 1916, when du Pont was making big profits from selling munitions to the British and French, it opposed the imposition of taxes on that part of its income derived from exports—because, said the company virtuously, the Constitution (Section 9, Article 1) provided that “no tax or duty shall be laid on articles exported from any state”! It was du Pont, also, that delayed for three months one of the most important contracts of the war, that of the Old Hickory Powder Plant, because the company wanted better than the generous terms offered by the government. A few weeks after the plant was built, du Pont had made a profit of \$1,961,560 on it. (Supervising this contract and siding with du Pont was the present Stettinius' papa, then a partner in J. P. Morgan & Co. and second assistant secretary of war.)

NY Shipbuilding built a \$14,000,000 shipyard at the taxpayers' expense, bought it after the Armistice for \$500,000. We also paid \$2,500,000 for a plant which the Navy later turned over to Newport News Shipbuilding for nothing at all. It cost du Pont just \$650,000 to buy a village and short spur railroad that the government had constructed for \$21,000,000. Remember that when you read about how the government *should* pay for

war plants since the manufacturers have no use for them in peacetime.

In 1918, when eighty percent of war profits was supposed to be taken by taxes, Bethlehem made over \$61,000,000 and paid a tax of \$14,500,000. Other corporations cited by Nye as conspicuous examples of how excess-profits taxes can be evaded were Jones & Laughlin Steel, Crucible Steel, Phelps Dodge, Lukens Steel, and Kennecott Copper—all battenning on the present war.

Profits? In the four war years, General Motors increased its net profits 200 percent over the previous four-year period; Atlas Powder Co. nearly 400 percent; US Steel 100 percent; Anaconda Copper 200 percent; Hercules Powder, 500 percent; Bethlehem, 700 percent; du Pont nearly 900 percent.

Concerning the shipbuilders—the same ones that now get war orders in the hundreds of millions—Nye has said: “They secured cost-plus contracts and added questionable charges to the costs. They took their profits on these ships after the wartime taxes had been repealed. They secured changes in contract dates to avoid war taxes. They bought from the government very cheaply yards which had been built expensively at government cost. . . . Huge bonuses were paid to officers. Profits were concealed as rentals. After the war was over, keels for \$181,247,000 worth of destroyers were laid, which was probably the largest post-war favor done by any government to any munitions group.”

Maybe you remember what the contractors of the last world war (and this one) turned out for their billions. The 196 flying coffins didn't reach the front until the war was nearly over. The Shipping Board put out \$3,500,000,000 but just one vessel built for this money carried any American troops (fifty soldiers) to Europe. Only one percent of the ammunition expended by American artillery



A. Blashko

was of American manufacture. Less than 200 American-made cannon were used in action. Twenty thousand shells were produced for \$827,450,214. A government expenditure of \$478,828,345 brought from the manufacturers forty-eight 4.7-inch guns, twenty-four eight-inch howitzers, and thirty-nine anti-aircraft trucks. If this isn't swindling and sabotage, the definitions in Webster's should be revised.

WAR PROFITEERS do not rest between world wars. They're too busy making money out of smaller conflicts, building up military machines, and trying to wreck peace efforts. The aircraft companies sold not only to Hitler but to Mussolini and the Mikado, especially the latter. In fact, they sold all over the globe. Like the other merchants of death, the munitions makers, they aren't proud about customers—or methods. In a single report of the Nye committee we find the criminal international records of eleven corporations which now feed the most lustily at the war-orders counter. They are: Electric Boat, Colt's Fire Arms, du Pont, Curtiss-Wright, Remington Arms, Lockheed, Douglas Aircraft, Sperry Gyroscope, Boeing Aircraft, Bethlehem Steel, United Aircraft and its Pratt & Whitney division. Another report covers the biggest shipbuilders, Newport News, Bethlehem, etc.

What was the behavior of these war profiteers? They bribed officials in foreign governments, conspired to overthrow Latin-American governments, fought the banning of poison gas in warfare. They spent large sums of money to influence the press and legislators in favor of huge war appropriations. They sent professional lobbyists to obstruct international peace conventions—the most famous case is that of “Big Bill” Shearer who was hired by the Big Three shipbuilders to throw monkey-wrenches into the Geneva Naval Disarmament Conference of 1927. They made agreements with companies and cartels in other lands to divide the world for selling and licensing arrangements. Electric Boat's patents were used in German submarines in the last world war. Why? Because Electric Boat had licensing agreements with an Austrian firm through which Germany got the patents.

Nobody asked of a customer nation “Friend or foe?” Certainly not “Democrat or fascist?” There was just one password: profits. The merchants of death claim that this indifference to their customers' intentions, this playing ball on all sides, only testified to their own “neutrality.” Lenin had a better word for it: imperialism—the same old imperialism that has marked all the adventures of monopoly capitalism since the 1890's. In this respect all monopoly capitalists are merchants of death. And their most desperate adventures, the culmination of all preceding adventures, are fascism and war.

BARBARA GILES.

*This is the second of three articles by Barbara Giles on “defense.” The third, which will appear in an early issue, deals with the war program as it affects labor and the consumer.*

# If St. Patrick Drove a Bus . . .

He'd be on the picketline, too, the man from Kerry said. Why 3,500 bus drivers are striking. Mr. Ritchie and Mr. LaGuardia. 900,000 union-conscious passengers.

HE HAD a little gold cross in his lapel and his shoe-laces were untied. "You cannot push a seventy-five passenger battleship up and down Fifth Avenue for years and then take to walking," he said ruefully, looking down at his shoes. "Your feet swell." He shook his gray head philosophically. "Oh, me dogs. They were good in County Kerry, they carried me fine for seventeen years on the Third Avenue trolley and now Mr. Dies says they belong to a Communist." He was on his way to early Sunday mass and before bidding me goodbye he invited me to march with him in St. Patrick's Day parade the following day. "Like as not we'll be going down the avenue with the placards on," he said. "Just like St. Patrick would of if he drove a Fifth Avenue bus."

The man from County Kerry was typical of the strikers. A solid family man. "Three daughters I have," he said. "No, two. One of them has gone into the convent of the Sisters of the Assumption." He gave me the strikers' case when I met him in front of the great garage they were picketing at 146th Street and Lenox Avenue. He had lowered his placard which he carried with typical Celtic aplomb, that banner which said in characteristic green letters "United—Invincible: CIO." He had asked me if I had ever tried to drive a battleship down Fifth Avenue. I had not. Well, if I had, and also behaved as an information bureau for nice old ladies who stood on the step fishing for their fare with gloves on their hands while he was trying to make up lost time—and all of this happening to him with a nervous stomach and a bad case of piles—I'd know what he was striking about. "And now Mr. Ritchie wants to take the conductor off, make the motorman do two men's job." He turned to his fellow picket whom he introduced to me as a "bright young American fellow with a high school education."

"Listen, Johnnie," he said to his partner. "We'd go mad in three months if they did that, wouldn't we?" The bright young American fellow nodded. "In two months," he said.

THE ELDERLY MAN was the typical philosopher the proletarian becomes after a lifetime of hard work. In the Coffee Pot across the street where we had a drink (soft) he looked about at the busmen in their uniforms crowded around the counter. "Look at them," he said. "Thirty-five hundred Irishmen drinking Coca-Cola. 'Tis a tribute." He told me how the strikers had all agreed to observe the strictest discipline, to rob Mr. Ritchie and the mayor of even the slightest opportunity to pin "violence" upon the men. (The mayor had dramatically warned that

"responsibility would be strictly placed" if any violence occurred.) All day I observed but one lad under the weather and he had been bundled into a taxi by his companions and whisked homeward. "'Tis a discipline like you never saw," my friend said proudly. Afterward we walked across the street to the vast garage in which some 400 buses were stationed, silent row upon row, and the big doors were closed. We peered through the windows at them. "Indeed, my boy," he said, "'tis a long time I've waited for this day. A very long time. And there's not a garage door open in the city." It was true. The strikers were solid. One hundred percent. They had organized their 3,500 men—and their wives—with the same meticulous care they observed in following their transport schedule. Each man had turned in his union card to the strike committee, had received a picket card in return. Each day the picket card was checked off. And if the striker didn't show up for his appointed rounds, a strike captain dropped around his house to find out why. All was order, discipline—and unquenchable zeal. My Fifth Avenue bus driver friend said, "We'll win the strike. We're solid. Unity does it. And in fact, me boy, there never was a strike that was lost. Like the woman of Kerry said 'The tides go out, but they come back.'"

AND HE GAVE ME the strikers' story. I, along with millions more, had already read the case for the New York City Omnibus Corp., and the Fifth Avenue Bus Co., in the *Post*, the *Times*, the *Sun*, the *Tribune*, the *Mirror*, the *World-Telegram*. "They say we don't want to mediate. 'Tis generous they are. They're willing to give us everything, negotiation, arbitration, mediation, everything but a raise in wages and what else we ask for." He told me how they skipper the bus (battleship) some nine hours a day, six days a week, through the maze of city traffic; how they do their bookkeeping simultaneously (save on the double-decked Fifth Avenue buses which are as yet manned by two men); how they sit glued to their seats for five hours at a stretch with no opportunity of "retiring to a toilet"; how they suffer from nervous stomach, ulcers, piles—and then after twenty years or so of service they get the sack. He told me how an old friend of his had been fired before the union came into existence. "Look here," his friend said to the super, "I've worked for you for twenty years and now you throw me out on the street. And me with not a penny to me name." The super looked up from his records. "You are paid for your service. The company can't assume responsibility for you if you haven't saved any

money. Sorry. Good day." And his pal had stood there "on both feet looking at the super" and then went away "quiet." That was before the union. Before Mike Quill. Thank God for Mr. Quill. "They call him a Communist," the old man said. "If 'tis that that is a Communist . . . well . . ."

THE STORY of the "sacked" old man, standing there "quiet," had, to me, a profound moral. The men don't walk away "quiet" any more. The union has changed that. It has returned their dignity. "It takes organization," my old Fifth Avenue philosopher would have said, "to be one man, to be yourself. You cannot be yourself by yourself, these days." They can be the men they are, now that they are united. They can ask for more, they have gotten more since 1937, but they need much more to live the life they dreamed of. They originally asked for a twenty-five percent increase in wages. "Look at the way the war has jacked the cost of living up," Mike Quill said. Working fifty-four hours a week, nine hours a day, six days a week, they seek a forty-eight-hour week and a three-week vacation. The company made a terrific to-do about the vacation. Well, it so happens that some forty-four doctors who have been treating the bus-drivers have learned that stomach ulcers occur twice as often among these "battleship pilots" than among any other transport workers. The constant tension, the barbarously long hours, the hastily snatched food, the unnatural position of their work, all induces to the nervous stomach that causes their illness. The doctors have learned that even four or five days rest will do wonders in improving the drivers' well-being. Hence their "extravagant" demand for three weeks vacation a year.

Transportation strikers have a way of startling the country. Their history is one of bitter conflict in which the magnates have always shown the claw and fang of today's industrial setup. The obscure men who run the giant vehicles have needed every ounce of their combined strength to win whatever advances they have. They began the good fight a century ago during the first great influx of Irish immigrants who, pick-axe in hand, laid the basis for the vast railway system in America today. It was in the middle of the last century that Ralph Waldo Emerson remarked "The poor Irishman: his world is a wheelbarrow." Since that time the Irish working man has greatly expanded his world: he has been among the foremost in the creation of the unions. He has had to: the overwhelming majority of the Irish population here (as, indeed, every immigrant group) belong to the most hard-worked strata

of the proletariat. So when the bus drivers decided to strike after the company refused to concede their demands, things began to happen.

Mr. Ritchie flew from Chicago; Mr. LaGuardia flew to the White House; Mr. Meyer, the mediator, flew from Florida, and Mr. Dies flew off the handle. The strikers are only 3,500 out of the city's 8,000,000. Why all the excitement? My old friend told me why. The company's game is transparent. It sought to enlist the 900,000 bus travelers on its side. It had already won the endorsement of the mayor, who had promptly characterized the union leadership as "bull-headed, obstinate, and stupid"—words he will have to eat when election day rolls around. The company shrewdly figured on the mayor's support. After all, now with "unification" of the subways, LaGuardia will have to deal with the Transport Workers Union when the contract expires in June. Victory for the union now strengthens their hands for the days to come.

The company shelled out plenty for its advertisements which thundered that the tolerant Mr. Ritchie was willing to "arbitrate, to mediate," but that the strikers were unreasonable. The fact is that the union negotiated with Mr. Ritchie until it was painfully evident that he talked a different language, that he refused to cede a single demand. Only then did they call the strike. After the men were out, Mr. Ritchie's game was to get them back on the buses, then to "arbitrate." It isn't so easy sitting around the famous table with the pickets around the garages. The strikers, however, were willing to explore every possibility for settlement. They did meet with Mr. Meyer, the mediator, who flew from Florida. They did scale down their demands for wage increases by \$2,000,000. But Mr. Ritchie was adamant.

AND SO the strike enters its second week. What will happen now? The strikers have won support as few strikers in the city's history ever have. After all New York is rapidly becoming a union town. It has three times as many unionists today as it had during the last big transportation strike in 1916. CIO and AFL unions are wiring their endorsement. John L. Lewis has already sent his. The justice of the men's case is obvious. But Mr. Ritchie is already considering strikebreakers. If the plug-uglies enter the picture (and they can only do so with the mayor's tacit or open consent) the company is provoking violence. The men's response, and that of their wives, at the mass meetings, indicated complete support of the union leadership. If Mr. Ritchie is spoiling for a "fight"—he will get it. But he won't be fighting 3,500 men. The 900,000 union-conscious bus riders are on the right side this time. As my old friend, the Fifth Avenue philosopher, might put it, "Oh, that union card. 'Tis a power."

JOSEPH NORTH.

## Tribute to J. B.

### Thirty years behind prison bars could not break J. B. McNamara's invincible spirit.

**D**EATH has cheated California "justice"—or perhaps it put into those unclean hands the only weapon left against a shining spirit that cruel punishment could not break. By killing him in prison, California extracted its last ounce of vengeance and the full measure of the life sentence it had imposed on James B. McNamara thirty years ago. They killed him with thirty years of rotten food, thirty years of the torture that is life behind steel bars, thirty years of work with a guard's loaded rifle at his back, work which for J. B. included such tasks as carrying their last suppers to men about to die on the gallows. But they never killed the warmth and radiance of this rare man; his courage, his faith in the people. That never faltered. No steel bars were strong enough to lock away an invincible spirit that roamed the world beside his fellow man.

Such complete selflessness as J. B.'s is difficult to define. Except perhaps by such deeds as his adamant refusal, for all the months that the people in Spain were fighting for democracy, to accept the small relief checks the International Labor Defense Prisoners fund sent him. He could not take it—or its equivalent. "Send it to the place where all the pain is," he said, to dodge the prison censors who watched like vultures for every opportunity to still his voice. "It has an 'S' at the beginning of it." He never gave up and he never fought for himself.

J. B. had few of the frailties of humankind. J. B. was for a long time the loneliest labor prisoner in the world. The cross he bore was not only that of being imprisoned for a longer sentence than any other labor prisoner of our times. He had to face the bitterness of vilification from many sides. His colleagues, so-called labor leaders who ran like rats from a sinking ship when J. B. was convicted in 1911, howled louder than the wolves of reaction for his blood. Workers misled by the pack joined the chorus in the early years. For most of the first fifteen years of his incarceration he had none of the encouragement that comes with the small tokens of remembrance messages of solidarity from those left to carry on on the outside. It was not until the ILD came into being fifteen years ago that a voice was raised in his behalf.

Once J. B. wrote to the ILD: "I have been submerged for a generation." It was truer than he knew, and still another of the burdens this indomitable spirit shouldered and bore. A whole new generation was born, and grew up while he was locked away, very few among us knowing anything about him.

The new generation perhaps got to know a few bare facts about J. B.: that he was arrested, tried, and sentenced "in connection with the bombing of the Los Angeles *Times* plant in October 1910"; that he pleaded "guilty" to the dynamiting. Facts that told nothing of the bitter labor war of the first decade of our century, of the greatness of a young man of twenty-eight who willingly stuck his neck into a noose after he allowed himself to be persuaded that it would save his brother's life and help the cause of labor.

LINCOLN STEFFENS told the whole story of this persuasion and accepted more than his full share of the responsibility for it. A "deal" was made between the defense and the prosecution, while the McNamara trial was in progress. Very definite stipulations were made to drop all further prosecutions of all other trade unionists involved in the case. Less definite but equally impressive promises were made regarding the retreat of the open-shoppers.

J. B. fought against the "deal." He distrusted it. He knew that the gentlemen concerned were not people to keep promises. But the pressure was great. The alternative was the hangman's noose for his brother, John J.,—he didn't think about himself—and a witch hunt that might send as many as fifty leading union men to the penitentiary. J. B. gave in. He and he alone kept the bargain. The rest of the agreement was kept in no particular.

Now he is gone, after a whole lifetime locked away from the world he loved so well.

Those who vilified him, those who kept him behind bars, arrogantly refused to consider a mercy pardon so that he could die in "freedom." But they didn't win. They can't. In the words of one of his few kindred spirits "I wanted a roof for every family, bread for every mouth, education for every heart, the light for every intellect. If it had not been for this thing I might have lived out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have died unmarked, unknown, a failure. Our words—our life—our pains—nothing. The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler—all. That last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph." Vanzetti said it that way. J. B. said it: "The most beautiful, most joyous, most honorable, most virtuous aspect while on this earth is for one to lose oneself in the broad deep masses. It is only amongst them that radical tolerance, understanding, fellowship, and comradeship can endure."

SASHA SMALL.





NATIONAL DEFENSE  
SACRIFICE

RUSH ORDERS  
SPECIAL EMERGENCY

KNUDSEN'S RULE

MODEL 1941  
STRAIT JACKET  
FOR LABOR

HILLMAN'S SHOP

MEDIATION BOARD

NO STRIKES  
PLAN TO OUTLAW STRIKES

PERKINS FINISHING DEPT.  
LABOR RESTRICTIONS

Groppoli

# FDR's Next Steps

Adam Lapin discusses the administration's "no longer short of war" program. Gold rush on Capitol Hill. Priorities, profits, and plunder. Labor fights back.

Washington.

ADMINISTRATION spokesmen in Congress were rather half-hearted about it, but they did assert from time to time during the recent debate that the lend-lease bill would keep the United States out of war. As recently as last week when the House was preparing to rush the bill to the President for signature, Majority Leader John McCormack assured the congressmen that they were giving their approval to a "peace" measure. It is no longer necessary to dispute that point with lengthy or abstract arguments. It has been disproven by the swift-moving events that have since transpired.

The President has not yet signed an executive order proclaiming a full national emergency, but he is expected to do so very shortly. As a matter of fact, the administration's program entered this stage when the lend-lease measure was passed. And full emergency is, of course, just another way of saying war. Today, tomorrow, and next week it is to be war with everything except men. The administration is no longer making promises about what will happen after that. It is a war against Germany in alliance with the British empire. It is war against the American people which goes under the name of "sacrifice." And it is not without mordant humor that the President's plea for "sacrifice" was made at the dinner of the White House Correspondents Association costing \$7.50 per plate.

*Military aspect of lend-lease program:* According to administration officials, the new \$7,000,000,000 lend-lease program has two immediate objectives as far as the European war is concerned. First, to keep the sea lanes open for the British. Second, to provide the British with the weapons of war necessary to repel a Nazi blitz. In the immediate future this means large-scale transfers of American destroyers, merchant ships, and planes. It is understood, for example, that the seventy-two "over-age" destroyers still remaining in this country are being prepared for transmission to the British.

The danger of direct military participation is still equally great whether or not the lend-lease program achieves these immediate objectives in the near future. The only difference one way or the other will be the time factor. If the Nazi invasion attempt is unsuccessful, the administration may not try to send a large expeditionary force to Europe this Spring. It may follow the pattern of the first world war and send armed forces when they will have the most decisive effect in determining the outcome of the war—either late this year or in the early spring of 1942. If the British get into serious difficulties soon the administration may be expected to send naval vessels immediately and then troops.

*Guns instead of butter:* The administration's

perspective is obviously to militarize the national economy without loss of time. As the President indicated in his radio speech, the whole country is to be turned into one vast assembly line for arms production. With the \$7,000,000,000 for the lend-lease program, the total in appropriations and authorizations to date for the arms program reaches the sum of \$35,480,000,000. For a program of this kind to be achieved with the speed demanded by the President, military needs will have to take precedence over those of consumers.

It is now apparent that the plaintive hopes of some of the New Dealers that plant expansion would make possible production for both civilian and military requirements at the same time will not be realized. Big business is willing to build a certain number of new plants at government expense. But it is determined to avoid the expense of idle plant capacity after the war. The steel industry, for example, continues to resist plant expansion on a large scale. And the President's approval of Gano Dunn's steel report means that the industry's contention that present capacity is sufficient for all needs has been sustained.

Rapid extension of priorities now seems to be the order of the day. Formal priorities have already been issued for aluminum and machine tools. Allocations, by which the government assigns a given supply to specific users and producers, have already been placed on certain aluminum forgings, magnesium, commercial aircraft, and neoprene. "Voluntary" priorities have been instituted in zinc, structural steel shapes, and stainless steel. New priorities in steel may come soon. The obvious effect of the priority system will be a rise in prices and a drop in employment on consumer goods production.

*Unemployment:* This horrid word is rarely used in Washington these days, but the fact is that the arms program has not solved the unemployment problem. It is a devastating comment on capitalist economy that it took a war to put America's vast industrial apparatus to work. But even with the Federal Reserve Board index of production at the record-breaking peak of 138 in December and 139 in January, the latest CIO estimate of unemployment is still 9,000,000. WPA Commissioner Howard Hunter has placed the number between 7,500,000 and 9,500,000.

It is not expected that the army of unemployed will decrease by more than 2,000,000 in 1941. The rate at which the unemployed are being put to work is now slowing up. Technological advances have made possible greater production with fewer men. A number of industries are already producing at capacity with little likelihood of their taking on more workers. Some forms of temporary

work, such as the construction of cantonments, have already passed their peak. Priorities will further impede reemployment in some fields. A career on the battlefield is apparently the only future which the arms program extends to most of the unemployed.

*Profits:* As the *Wall Street Journal* exclaimed jubilantly in a page-one headline the other day, profits are still going up. The economic bulletin of the National City Bank showed an increase in 1940 profits of 390 selected companies of thirty-two percent over 1939. The last quarter of 1940 was easily the best of the year. The first quarter of 1941 is likely to be even better.

It is hard to believe, but the actual trend in the last few weeks has been toward easing the tax burden on big business. The excess profits tax was a joke to start with, of course. It was designed to make evasion simple. But the new tax bill, recently passed, took care of those companies which might have had to pay a substantial excess profits tax. The so-called "hardship cases" covered by the new bill included for the most part the aircraft companies which showed spectacular increases in their 1940 profits. It is possible that, as a desperate war measure, corporation taxes may be increased. Even so, all the signs are that the chief burden of paying for the arms program will not fall on war profits. The President's repeated promises of cracking down on the profiteers have so far proven to be rhetoric.

*Sacrifice:* It was not much more than a few weeks ago that the President unequivocally condemned a sales tax at his press conference. More recently Treasury Department officials have changed their tune. They now say that a sales tax is not probable right away. The fact is, however, that some kind of stiff tax on consumers is being seriously considered. It may take the form of a sales tax or a direct tax on wages. Forced savings schemes on the British model are being widely discussed in administration circles. The campaign to sell small "defense" bonds, which starts on May 1, points in this direction. New Deal economists used to talk a good deal about increasing purchasing power. Their chief concern now is to reduce it as quickly as possible.

The administration has accepted the premise that higher wages mean higher prices. As a matter of fact, this principle is incorporated in the escalator clauses which adorn hundreds of arms contracts. Hence the administration's drive against inflation is centered on wage increases rather than on profits. The refusal of US Steel and of the coal operators to grant wage increases is understood to be due to administration advice. The fact is that Benjamin F. Fairless of Carnegie-Illinois conferred with OPM officials and with President



Roosevelt before turning down the demand of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee for a ten percent wage increase.

**Labor:** If labor does not get substantial wage increases now, its real earnings will obviously suffer sharp decline. They will be consumed by increased taxes, defense bonds, and rising prices. The Labor Department's latest report shows that food prices have gone up 4.7 percent since the war started. In many booming arms centers the cost of living has gone up even higher. And the President has made it plain that he expects labor to work longer hours for the same wages.

Hillman's strategy all along has been to keep the labor movement in line by getting as many labor leaders as possible to jump on the administration band wagon. High hopes were placed in CIO Chief Philip Murray. It is true that Murray accepts in principle much of the administration's war program; his industrial council plan differs only in details from the administration's present program. Nevertheless, Murray has helped in labor's demand for higher wages. Hillman's plans for eliminating the influence of John L. Lewis and of the progressive CIO leaders have not materialized. In his skillful and militant handling of the coal negotiations, Lewis is obviously making a comeback.

It is expected that one of the first steps that will be taken is the setting up of a War Labor Board which has the full support of the AFL bureaucrats. While at first Philip Murray objected to a mediation board he now seems to be in agreement. The timing of this proposal indicates that it is designed for use against the unions which are fighting for wage increases. The Board's blackjack will be the issuance of public reports condemning unions and strikes that get out of line.

**Opposition:** Shortly before the President went on the air last Saturday night, a high administration official said privately that the speech was intended as a kick in the pants for the American people. He reported that the President was dissatisfied with public morale, that he felt there had been a real let down in the last couple of months. How effective the kick in the pants will be remains to be seen. That the masses of people have shown little enthusiasm for the war is obviously true.

The trouble is that the grass-roots opposition of the people has been largely inarticulate and has had little organization.

Real opposition on a larger scale than before may develop sooner than is expected. Anti-war sentiment will be knit together by the People's Meeting called by the American Peace Mobilization on April 5-6. Unprecedented mass disillusionment with the administration may grow out of the immediate demands of labor, out of specific conflicts over wages, hours, and working conditions. Steel workers and miners who know that the President is keeping their wages down while profits skyrocket upwards will get all the insight they need into the Roosevelt brand of sacrifice.

ADAM LAPIN.

## Not a Speech — a Harangue

**F**OR all those who heard the President's speech to the White House Correspondents Association over the radio, and for all those who can read between the lines, it is clear as day that Mr. Roosevelt has already gotten us into war, and is proceeding to take full advantage of that fact. It was not a speech at all; it was a harangue. It was an exhortation to the American people to accustom themselves to the idea they are in the war whether they wanted it or not, and whether they like it or not.

Every peroration was deliberately directed to influence the developing events abroad. The references to the defense of Britain, to which he returned several times, can only be interpreted as a play to the British gallery. The President was making headlines in the British press; and evidently he had information, unavailable to the rest of us, that the British big boys needed this particular tonic. The continued coupling of "aid to Greece" with "aid to Britain" can only mean that when the British General Staff decided last week to make their desperate bid for a front at the very southeastern corner of Europe, they did so only after prior consultation with the President of the United States. And when Mr. Roosevelt takes the highly unusual step of referring to "Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek" by name at a time when the latter has taken responsibility for the incitement against the Chinese Communists, this confirms our suspicion that American imperialism openly identifies itself with Chiang's suicidal course, and openly proclaims him as their favorite son.

When the President announces he will consider any power, or gang of generals as "allies" of his "democracy" if only they come to terms with him rather than Hitler, he confirms in public what has long been obvious in private: that the State Department has been working feverishly to buy off well-known "democrats" like General Franco, Marshal Petain, and Maxime Weygand, ready to give them food, and even arms if only they will switch sides.

And what does it mean, all rhetoric aside, when the President promises us that after the disintegration of the dictatorships, "our country must continue to play its great part in the period of world reconstruction for the good of humanity." It means only one thing. It means that the men who make American policy visualize nothing short of a military occupation of Europe by American troops as the final phase of the war. That is to say, *a counter-revolutionary effort to prevent the peoples of Europe from taking the only course which will have meaning for them* once the fascist scourge has passed, namely, the course of socialism. All this is implied in American foreign policy today. All this the President admitted.

In its domestic aspects, as Adam Lapin discusses in these pages, the speech was a deliberate appeal to the most reactionary passions in American life, the most reactionary prejudices against the labor movement, and against all those who have the guts to say they are against this war. It was significant, and unquestionably as Mr. Roosevelt intended, that the assembled audience cheered his warning against strikes most hysterically. But while he sonorously advises "Business to be content with lower profits," the facts cry aloud from every morning's newspaper that Big Business is simply wallowing in profits. When he mentions higher taxes as a corrective to such profits, again the hypocrisy is shameful beyond words. Only a week earlier the excess profits law was scaled down to ease the "hardships" on the big money-makers in this war! What a supreme cynicism, in truth, to hail the passage of the lend-lease bill "as finally settled and decided by the American people themselves" when the whole nation knows such organizations as the American Peace Mobilization were deliberately denied a hearing before either house of Congress.

Like all harangues, this speech betrays uneasiness. The President is well aware that the American people are not sold on this war. Their suspicion of it grows every day. They feel themselves tricked and betrayed, hogtied and buffaloes in these few short months since the elections. The President knows, and his speech revealed it, that he is taking the American people into a war in which the strategic situation is very unfavorable, a war which can only be a long, drawn-out, fearfully costly struggle involving the absolute destruction of everything worth fighting for in American life. This is the Achilles heel of his policy. For with each passing day, the yawning divide between the feelings of the common people, and the mad lusts of the ruling class become wider. As that divide becomes wider, it becomes recognizable to the millions. And as they recognize it, their actions will speak louder than words.

# Battleground in Brazil

While its 45,000,000 hunger, its rulers debate allegiance to the Axis or Anglo-American imperialism. Whom Vargas represents. Where the people stand.

“WHEN the imperialist war enters the Americas in the aspect of its military belligerence,” Earl Browder observed some time ago, “it will in all likelihood enter through the door of Brazil, and in the form of civil war there.” This may happen “in the not too distant future,” Mr. Browder continued, and in his opinion the responsibility would lie equally on the shoulders of Anglo-American and German imperialism.

Such a prophecy, coming from so keen an observer of world affairs, makes it all the more necessary to take a long look at Brazil. And it is, in fact, more than an eyeful. For Brazil is the largest country in the hemisphere save Canada, larger by one-tenth than the United States itself. Its population of 45,000,000 equals the combined populations of all the other Latin-American nations. Strategically, it is the key to the continent in the sense that it borders on all the other South American nations except Ecuador and Chile. But it is also the natural land bridge to Europe and Africa; for the bulge of Brazil's eastern shore, at Natal and Recife, lies at least 2,000 miles east of Europe and only some 1,600 miles from Dakar, the westernmost point of the African continent. While it takes a couple of days to reach Rio de Janeiro from the eastern seaboard of the United States, a fast *Luft-hansa* plane makes it to Berlin in about forty hours. A glance at the map will show that naval forces based on Brazil could control all trans-Atlantic shipping to the southern half of the hemisphere.

In terms of productive resources, Brazil is one of the great frontiers of humankind. Even today, it supplies two-thirds of the world's coffee, and produces a large share of the world's sugar, cocoa, rice, cotton, beef and hides, waxes, oil-bearing nuts, and industrial diamonds. Vast timber forests lie hidden away in the tropical valleys of the mighty Amazon river. There is oil yet to be tapped, and from the tropical north to the temperate south and southwest the earth conceals minerals of every kind: a large share of the world's manganese, and in the province of Minas Geraes, about twenty-five percent of the best grade iron ore on the globe. The network of rivers can supply billions of kilowatts of electric energy and become arteries of a flourishing commerce. As things stand today, two-thirds of its people and its greatest wealth-producing areas lie in the southeastern provinces of Sao Paulo and Minas Geraes. But there are wide stretches of territory to the north and the west, larger in area than all of Europe, with less than one person to the square mile that might support a population two or three times that of the entire hemisphere. In Brazil, nature has been waiting even more impatiently than on the

rest of the globe for Man to come of age.

THE INDIVIDUAL who rules this country is Getulio Vargas, a short, roundish, crafty politico from the ranching country. He is unimpressive as a “man on horseback” but has been the efficient instrument of the coffee and landed aristocracy for a full decade. His is the typical story of a man who broke the faith with his own people. For all during the twenties, the Brazilian masses had been girding for a showdown with the corrupt powerbarons of the wealthy southeast. There was a long, brave history of strikes, demonstrations, army uprisings, and electoral combinations which culminated in the candidacy of Getulio Vargas on the National Liberal Alliance ticket in the elections of 1930. It was a year in which the bottom dropped out of the coffee market and the entire nation was in ferment. Defeated at the polls, the people did not accept defeat, and Vargas was swept into office in an armed uprising in October 1930. No sooner did he entrench his power than he began to betray the men and the people that made his victory possible. He made political deals with the opposition; in 1932 he crushed a rebellion led by the former governor of Sao Paulo; he embarked on price-fixing schemes to make the ownership of coffee plantations profitable and thereby practically depleted the treasury; to keep up prices he instituted the policy of burning coffee which reached a destruction of nearly seventy million bags by the end of the decade.

In the fall of 1935, the progressive movement which Vargas had betrayed took on new shape and will in the form of the National Liberation Alliance. Its leading figure was Luiz Carlos Prestes, the “Knight of Hope” as the people called him. He was a former army officer, returned from exile in Bolivia. He had a legendary reputation based on a fabulous three-year resistance of his “Prestes Column” in the wilds of the Brazilian interior ten years before. Setting himself against the program of the Alliance, Vargas crushed it in blood in the last days of 1935. Tens of thousands of working men were arrested; the jails and island dungeons were filled with progressives from all walks of life; Prestes himself was condemned to a long prison term. Less than two years later, while three candidates were contending for presidential office, Vargas stepped in, and with the help of the army and the secret police under the evil Felinto Muller, called off the election. The people



awoke on the morning of Nov. 10, 1937, to find the *estado novo* in power. It was frankly inspired by German and Italian imperialism, then in the heyday of their resurgence. Washington and London hardly batted an eyelash. The Minister of Justice, Francisco Campos, proceeded to give the *estado novo* an ideology; but the program of hospital construction, drainage and irrigation projects, minimum wage legislation, government-engineered unionization, the bacchanalia of parades and holidays failed to conceal the hollow foundation of the new regime. The army ruled supreme; the press was commandeered; the police interfered with education, and the country has ever since continued in a state of emergency.

Walter Sharp, an American professor of government, describes the conclusions of a visit to Brazil last summer in the October 1940 *Inter-American Quarterly* as follows:

So far as structure and methods are concerned the Vargas regime is undoubtedly Fascistic. The Constitution of 1937 which accompanied the *coup d'etat* confers far-reaching powers on the President. He may dissolve the Federal Parliament in case of an emergency, defined by himself; he may govern by decree during such an emergency; he may replace state governors and state legislatures by Federal “interventors” of his own choosing under conditions which are without effective limit. He is declared, textually, to be “the supreme authority of the State” and there is no bar to his running for re-election as many times as he wishes. On the economic and cultural side, the Constitution implies, even if it does not prescribe, the establishment of a “corporativism” not unlike the Italian model.

BRAZIL'S ECONOMIC PROBLEM can be stated very simply: it is the problem of every South American country whose industries are largely controlled by foreign capital, and whose prosperity depends on a world market for agricultural goods. The first problem is pressing. Brazil lacks the capital to develop its own resources. Over a billion dollars have been invested by British bankers in the ship lines, utilities, and railroads, while American capital is runner-up with about two thirds of a billion. But the profits of these investments are always flowing out of the country to fill the bank balances of foreign investors; little of it has returned in the last ten years to expand Brazilian productive capacity. Dependence on the world market for agricultural sales is still another aspect of Brazil's semi-colonial status. In the last decade, the United States has been faced by a tremendous glut of its own farm products, and Britain has faced the same condition in its dominions. This enabled Germany to step in and offer its industrial goods in exchange for Brazilian products. But Germany did not use these products for itself. It resold them on the



world market to raise exchange for its rearmament program. This only depressed world prices further, and made Brazil a plaything of Nazi economics. At the same time, it fanned the effort of British and American firms to regain their positions, and thus Brazil became even more perilously the arena of an imperialist trade war.

And the outbreak of the war has made Brazil's economic position more fragile than ever. The British blockade has cut off its markets in German-occupied Europe, catastrophic for a country selling one-fourth to one-third of its produce across the Atlantic. At the same time, with the United States itself preparing for war, the trend is to reduce American purchasing power for agricultural goods, making it even less than likely that Brazil will find markets for its exports in the United States. In fact the trade figures show that while big business has boosted its sales to Brazil from \$50,741,000 in the first nine months of 1939 to \$82,565,000 in the corresponding period of 1940, imports from Brazil actually declined. And Britain is being pressed by her agricultural dominions as well as by Argentina to buy their surpluses, without the sale of which they cannot accumulate exchange for their own contributions to the empire's war. The result is a profound economic dislocation, which bears heavily on the masses of the Brazilian people, which makes even more acute the political rivalries and allegiances of different groups within the country.

Vargas himself has become hardly more than a puppet, trying to determine the best moment to come over to the American or the German side. His War Minister, Eurico Dutro, and his Chief of Staff, Goes Monteiro, are known to be sympathetic to Germany. Both of them, shortly before the war were decorated by Hitler. And even Monteiro's recent trip to this country at the invitation of the War Department during which he was shown around West Point, the government arsenals, and the big industrial plants, does not seem to have shaken his belief that Germany will win the war and Brazil ought to help by declaring itself in the war on Germany's side. Meanwhile, the traditionally Anglophile grouping in Brazilian politics has its own calculations: Armando Salles de Oliveira, who had been exiled by Vargas to Argentina, and who represents wealthy pro-British interests in Sao Paulo, has never given up hope of a return to power, and is now being wooed by the third main grouping, the pro-American.

The chief figure here is the present foreign minister of Brazil, Oswaldo Aranha, an old crony of Vargas' and a habitue of the best circles in Washington. Aranha, and Brazil's leading industrialist, Guilherme Guinle, are orientated to American capital. It was Aranha who arranged for a series of loans from the Export-Import Bank which will help Brazil begin to pay some of its defaulted bonds to American investors. Guinle only recently negotiated the loan of \$17,000,000 from Jesse Jones to begin the exploitation of the

iron ore in Minaes Geraes. Nothing would suit the pro-American grouping more than some precipitate action by the pro-Axis group; for in that case, Aranha expects that Vargas will invite the intervention of American troops. On the other hand, the pro-Axis grouping is in control of the official leadership of the army, and might, in any showdown, make it difficult for Aranha or even Vargas to save their skins.

Against the background of such intrigue, the average Brazilian questions the future of his country. In the first place, there is his own standard of living. It is so deplorable that the former minister of health once declared: "Hunger, syphilis, and malaria are slowly killing 30,000,000 Brazilians." Perhaps seven out of ten people have not had the chance to learn reading and writing. When Vargas introduced a minimum wage law for the 2,000,000 industrial workers, the averages ranged from five to twelve dollars a month. A study of some 500 working families in

Pernambuco showed that the average wage earner with four dependents was getting eighteen and a half cents per day, against expenses of 19.3 cents a day; the average laborer was getting only 2,000 calories to live on when the minimum he needs is at least 4,000.

What the great proportion of the people want therefore is an immediate increase in their living standard, something which they know can be brought about if Brazil could develop its resources, industrialize itself, accumulate the capital necessary for the exploitation of its vast wealth. But after a ten-year experience with Vargas, the average Brazilian also knows these things will never begin to happen without political democracy—the overthrow of Vargas and his military regime. "Democracy" is a word he hears most from the north, from the United States. And yet on closer examination, he finds that the American ambassador in his country is none other than Jefferson Caffery, as bitter a reactionary as will be found in the German or Italian



Here is one of the potential battlegrounds in the next phase of the war, one of the places that American troops might be sent. Brazil is a vast subcontinent, a treasure-house of raw materials that whets big-business appetites in Washington, London, Rome, and Berlin. Most of its population is concentrated in the southeastern region. The interior is yet to be fully explored. Notice Brazil's strategic position, only 1,700 miles from West Africa. Notice also, that it is much nearer to Dakar than even Trinidad.

## Do You Remember Mr. MacLeish?

Buenos Aires.

**N**EARLY three years ago, a lady, well-known in the diplomatic circles of my country both for her cultural activities and for her knowledge of languages, came to me one day and said, "A great North American writer, Archibald MacLeish, is in Buenos Aires and wants to meet you." He had been sent, she explained, by *Fortune* magazine to make a political, social, and economic study of Argentina. Some newspaper publishers had drawn up a quick itinerary for him and he wanted my opinion on it. I was slightly puzzled by his interest in me, but decided that he had seen an article on Argentine politics I had published in *NEW MASSES*, and, of course, I agreed to help him in any way I could.

So one day, he, the wife of the artist Tono Salazar, a worker named Jose Peter, and I took a taxi and went to Dock Sur where the huge packing house plants and the hovels of the plant workers are located. MacLeish should remember it well, or at least the taxi. It was the picturesque taxi with drawings on the windshield which Tono Salazar later drew in gay colors for *Fortune*—and for \$200, an unheard of price in Buenos Aires.

Jose Peter, knowing that MacLeish came from the United States, that fabulous land which received the larger part of the dividends realized from investments in the packing house companies, tried to explain everything he could about the work and the workers. Tono Salazar's wife and I tried to translate; French, Spanish, English filled the taxi. Finally MacLeish put an end to this by saying that Jose was so eloquent, so expressive, that he did not need to be translated to be understood.

When Jose left, MacLeish exclaimed: "Now, there's a man! It's been a long time since I've seen such a real man!" Gratiified by this spontaneous tribute to our friend, we told MacLeish about him, about his years of hardship as a leader of the packing house workers. During the dictatorship of General Uriburu, he was tortured until his health failed and then he was condemned to the prison at Usuahia down at the tip of the continent, near the South Pole. He lived through that and came back to help the workers in their struggle to win as a yearly wage the price *Fortune* paid for a cartoon of a Buenos Aires taxi.

Finally we got around to the itinerary. I made changes here and there, suggesting he see such places as the cotton plantations in the central Chaco, where the American firm, du Pont de Nemours Co., reigns. MacLeish followed almost every point in the itinerary. When he returned to Buenos Aires, his remarks made me think he had been profoundly impressed by the poverty and hunger of a large part of the Argentine people. Jose Peter had explained to him that these conditions resulted from the system which granted excessive profits to the packing house companies, some European, some North American, a very few Argentine. I also explained it to him, embellished it with statistics. He read further in Argentine economics under the guidance of industrialists. And finally he left.

For many months Jose Peter waited anxiously to read what MacLeish was to write about Argentina. God only knows what miracle he hoped this North American would perform. Then one day we received an issue of *Fortune* with an article on Argentina, and after having a translation made, I thought perhaps it would be best not to say anything to Jose Peter about it. Mr. MacLeish's story offered the Argentine worker no more hope than that his foreign taskmasters in time might be exchanged for domestic exploiters. "You know how these North Americans are," I pointed out to Jose. "They come down here and get a lot of facts and then wait for us to pop into the news to use them. It'll come out some day."

As I said, this happened almost three years ago. Recently in the office of *La Hora* where I work, I saw a copy of the *Nation* with an article by MacLeish on "The Irresponsibles." This was another one of MacLeish's articles which I didn't care to show to Jose Peter. Many Argentine intellectuals think more or less like MacLeish. The Socialists of our country think like MacLeish and are in agreement with those bankers and industrialists who guided him in his economic studies during his visit here. They all believe that in this second world war one side has a monopoly on civilization and culture, the other a monopoly on savagery and barbarism. Jose does not believe that. Jose notices that millions of workers in all capitalist countries are suffering from hunger, grief, and poverty. And that the workers of Argentina, literally enslaved to Anglo-American capital, are also deprived of security.

Suppose I should show Jose Peter the text of "The Irresponsibles" and point out the paragraph where MacLeish says: "What matters now is the defense of culture—the defense truly, and in the most literal terms, of civilization as men have known it for the last two thousand years." Surely he would ask me if that great North American writer considers the state of hunger, poverty, and desperation forced on the Argentine workers by the defenders of "democracy" to be a part of "civilization." Or perhaps he would ask if Argentina's foreign exploiters are any different from those who exploit labor in Germany for German imperialism.

The Socialists have recently expelled Jose Peter from the executive board of the General Federation of Labor because his ideas about these things are different from MacLeish's. And thousands of workers, to support Jose, laid down their tools in protest. The police, who are today jailing the workers on strike against du Pont, also broke up this demonstration.

Neither Peter, the worker, nor I, the writer, want that civilization, even if it does come wrapped in the beautiful and messianic words of MacLeish. Peter, the worker, and I, the writer, want a civilization where the men MacLeish saw living in the oil-can houses of Dock Sur can utilize the creative, non-imperialist heritage of Milton, Voltaire, and Las Casas to build a better life—as men have done in the Soviet Union. This is our vision and our hope. This is the civilization MacLeish cannot stop from coming.

RICARDO SETARO.

diplomatic service. On top of it all, when such "democrats" as James Farley take trips down Rio way, they return as Farley did the other day with praise for Vargas. In the light of the average Brazilian's experience, if Farley finds anything to praise in Vargas, there must be something very cockeyed with Farley's brand of democracy.

And even when the United States decides to loan money to Brazil, the discerning Brazilian observes that the money goes to pay back the defaulted interest on Brazilian bonds to American investors! Or else, as in the case of the loan for the building of a steel plant, the profits will accrue to corporations and stockholders, more interested in profitable enterprise than they are in helping Brazil become either an industrialized or a democratic nation. Even when liberal economists such as Mordecai Ezekiel, the former adviser to Vice-President Henry Wallace, work out long analyses of inter-American economic relations, they think exclusively in terms of the rubber, the manganese, the diamonds which they can get from Brazil for their "defense program"; they think less in terms of long-term capital investments in industries of every kind that will help Brazil become a sovereign nation in the full sense of the word.

They think in terms of preventing Germany from getting Brazilian agricultural surpluses, and they are prepared to invade Brazil to keep that from happening. But they offer no solution for the problems of the Brazilian people, who must sell their agricultural wealth in the world market, or starve. And, as a matter of fact, when the South American nations get together for the development of trade among themselves, as they recently did at the Rio Plate conference, the American State Department looks on with scarcely concealed panic. For it sees in the economic collaboration of the South American countries, even ruled as so many of them are by reactionary governments, obstacles to its own program of hegemony over the hemisphere.

Something in the setup is wrong. There is something that will never permit Brazil to achieve the powerful, highly industrialized economy of abundance that its people clearly deserve from their natural heritage. The Brazilian is not afraid of Hitler alone; he has experienced fascism for at least half a decade, and he knows he's against it. But he doubts very strongly the well-wishing that comes from Washington, for he has learned that "democracy" in the hands of Jefferson Caffery and Sumner Welles is not democracy at all. It is the rule of financial barons, the rule that Henry Ford maintains on his fabulous rubber plantations in the wilds of the Amazon forest. That is why, if the family quarrel breaks out among the generals and diplomats, and American boys are sent down to hold Natal and Recife, it should not be surprising to find the spirit and the slogans of Luiz Carlos Prestes and the National Liberation Alliance animating millions of Brazilians. They will expect the people of the United States to understand.

FRANK T. BAKER.



# It Died With Lincoln

He was the last great figure of bourgeois democracy, A. B. Magil writes. After Reconstruction the industrial capitalists broke all ties with their revolutionary past.

*This is the third in a series of articles on the driving forces in the past development of American democracy in relation to the problems of the present and the future. The first two articles discussed the struggles during the Republic's first half century, with special emphasis on the roles of Jefferson and Jackson.*

THE defeat of Andrew Jackson's disciple, Martin Van Buren, for reelection in 1841 marked a turning point whose full meaning became evident only in later years. For it brought to power those forces which twenty years after sought to dismember the union and establish an independent slave republic. Van Buren's successor, William Henry Harrison, a Whig, died a month after his inauguration and Vice-President John Tyler of Virginia became President. Tyler, an anti-Jackson Democrat who turned Whig with an eye on the main chance, was a follower of John C. Calhoun, the fiery sword of the slavocracy.

Through an alliance with the northern Democratic Party, representing a section of the commercial bourgeoisie, the slave power retained control of the Presidency for twenty years till the election of Lincoln. (Zachary Taylor was elected in 1848 as a Whig, but he was himself a southern planter, and his Cabinet consisted of three Northerners and four men of the South.) Under Tyler's successor, Polk, this slave despotism drove the country into the predatory war with Mexico; later, under Buchanan, it again sought to invade Mexico and even dreamed of seizing the whole of Central America. Thus it anticipated by half a century the course pursued by a later reactionary system, imperialism—the monopoly stage of capitalism. And in Buchanan's administration the slavocracy openly used the three branches of the federal government to organize treason and rebellion. "The Union had in fact become the slave of the three hundred thousand slaveholders who held sway over the South," wrote Karl Marx in an article in the *Vienna Presse* in 1861.

In my previous article I pointed out that the Jacksonian era cut across the beginnings of the two great social conflicts of American history: between capitalism and the slave system and between capital and labor. Before the second of these conflicts could mature, the first had to be resolved. What the British mercantile system had been in the eighteenth century, a straitjacket on American capitalist development, the slave system became in the nineteenth. And in both periods, though at different levels of growth, the forces of capitalist accumulation pressed against the straitjacket until it burst. Moreover, American democracy—bourgeois democracy—could not achieve its fullest scope so long as millions

of Negroes were held in bondage and they, together with large numbers of southern whites, were denied elementary democratic rights. For three and a half decades after the defeat of Van Buren the battle for democracy had to center around the slavery issue and its aftermath. As in the past, it was the common folk who bore the brunt of this struggle, while the commercial and banking interests, who had business ties with the slaveholders, pursued an appeasement policy.

THIS WHOLE PERIOD preceding the Civil War witnessed a regrouping of class and political forces far more fundamental and definitive than that which had occurred in Jackson's administration. In 1840 a dissident wing of the Abolitionists formed the Liberty Party. It polled no great vote, but eight years later it merged with a more significant group, the Free Soil Party, which by 1850 was strong enough to hold the balance of power in the House. The issue of "free soil"—that is, limiting the extension of slavery—was closely bound up with the homestead question. The westward expansion of the slave power had its counterpart in the pressure for opening government lands in the West to provide homesteads for small farmers, artisans, and workers—sowers of the seed of capitalism. By defeating all efforts to pass homestead legislation the slavocrats sought to dam up this swelling tide. But it became one of the powerful forces not only in the direct struggle against slavery, but in propelling the northern capitalists into resisting the slaveholders.

Within the anti-slavery camp itself a differentiation took place. The minority, the Abolitionists, demanded the complete emancipation of the slaves, while the developing coalition of Free Soilers, Northern Whigs, and anti-slavery Democrats merely opposed the extension of slavery to the western territories. Thus the alignment from which sprang the Republican Party expressed the spirit of bourgeois compromise with slavery in a new form. But this new form was of very great significance, for it meant that under the pressure of the twin forces of small-farmer economy in the West and nascent industrial capitalism in the East, the northern ruling class had abandoned retreat and begun to oppose further encroachment of the slave power. This new form of bourgeois compromise was, moreover, a dynamic phenomenon, serving as a transition to the revolutionary struggle for the total destruction of the slave system inaugurated after nearly two years of Civil War by the Emancipation Proclamation. The courageous, farsighted minority, the Abolitionists, who had been hounded by the pillars of capitalist society, had become the majority that waged the war to victory.

It was the independent farmers of the West who took the initiative in launching the Republican Party. Only after the party had established itself in the West did it begin to win substantial support among the northern capitalists. The nomination of Abraham Lincoln at the 1860 convention marked a victory for the frontier West over the eastern capitalists who favored William H. Seward of New York. In fact, influential sections of the commercial-financial bourgeoisie were still seeking a new compromise with the slave power. "The large financial interests of the East," writes Arthur M. Schlesinger in his *Political and Social History of the United States*, ". . . feared that Republican victory would mean secession and a general derangement of business. William B. Astor and other wealthy men are said to have contributed two million dollars to prevent Lincoln from carrying New York State."

AGAIN the middle classes were presumably in power. But again a new era was at hand, working a more fundamental change than any that had gone before. Paradoxically, the triumph of middle class democracy with Lincoln's election sounded the death-knell of middle class ascendancy, for it unchained those forces that quickly brought to power the new industrial bourgeoisie. In his message to the first regular session of Congress in December 1861, Lincoln pointed out that the majority of the American people consisted of independent farmers and artisans, "asking no favors of capital on the one hand, nor of hired laborers or slaves on the other." Unless this situation continued, "all of liberty shall be lost." Thus, Lincoln, like Jefferson and Jackson before him, sought in the middle classes the permanent economic foundation of American democracy. But even as he spoke those middle classes were beginning to break up. A small section of them were entering the ranks of the industrial capitalists; the rest, despite the Homestead Act of 1862, were to retain their economic independence for only a short time and were then to be reduced to a position of debt-burdened poverty which found political expression after the Civil War in the Granger, Greenback, Farmers Alliance, and Populist movements.

Lincoln's own waverings and hesitations throughout the Civil War reflected the conflicting pressures of the commercial interests, the industrial capitalists, the slaveholders of the border states, and the democratic masses; these vacillations revealed that the petty-bourgeoisie was no longer able to play a relatively independent, decisive role as it had under Jackson. The fact that Lincoln's temperament may have disposed him to this course does not diminish the social character of his



acts. As Marx put it in a letter to Engels in 1862: "All Lincoln's Acts appear like the mean pettifogging conditions which one lawyer puts to his opposing lawyer." But he also added: "But this does not alter their historic content. . . ." It was the industrial bourgeoisie, represented by the Radical Republicans, that emerged during the war as the driving force of bourgeois democracy, eventually sweeping Lincoln onto the path of revolutionary struggle against the slave system.

The first American revolution had been part of an international movement for bourgeois liberation. Jefferson, in opposing the Federalists, fought to preserve and further develop its international principles. The second American revolution—the Civil War—extended and deepened the international aspects of the first. In an article in the *New York Tribune* of Dec. 7, 1861, Marx wrote that "the true people of England, of France, of Germany, of Europe, consider the cause of the United States as their own cause, as the cause of liberty, and . . . despite all paid sophistry, they consider the soil of the United States as the free soil of the landless millions of Europe, as their land of promise, now to be defended, sword in hand, from the sordid grasp of the slaveholder." And just as in our first revolution enlightened Europeans came to this country to help us win independence, so in the Civil War political exiles, especially participants in the German bourgeois revolution of 1848, shed their blood for liberty as soldiers in the Union armies; among the foremost of these fighters were a number of Communists, disciples of Marx and Engels.

In Europe the workers of England, where Marx was then living, led the way. The decline of the English cotton industry as a consequence of the northern blockade of the South meant widespread suffering for the workers, but they endured these privations heroically. And it was the protests of the workers that were largely responsible for preventing the Palmerston government, strongly sympathetic to the Confederacy, from dragging the English people into the war on the side of the slave power over the *Trent* affair. Also significant is the fact that it was the representatives of the English *industrial* bourgeoisie in the government, Gladstone and Milner-Gibson, who opposed war with the United States and were most favorably disposed toward the North, in contrast to the spokesmen for the commercial and banking interests, Palmerston and Russell.

As for the American workers, they fought in the federal armies and their unions actively supported the war against the slavocracy. But the slowness of the development of industrial capitalism and the necessities of the forty-year struggle against slavery greatly retarded their independent economic and political activity. (As late as 1852, Marx, in a letter to Weydemeyer, wrote that "bourgeois society in the United States has not as yet developed far enough to make the class struggle obvious. . . .") Throughout this period the workers constituted merely the extreme left wing of bourgeois democracy, acting under the

leadership of the industrial capitalists. The antagonism between capital and labor grew considerably as a result of the industrial expansion stimulated by the Civil War, but the workers were still too weak organizationally and too inexperienced politically to come forward with independent class demands as had the French workers in the 1848 revolution.

THE RECONSTRUCTION ERA opened a new phase of the bourgeois democratic revolution. In the words of James S. Allen, whose *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy* is a brilliant Marxist analysis of the social forces of this era: "Emancipation was merely the springboard from which the revolution in the South could leap ahead. Once the former slaves were set into motion, the revolution had to assume an agrarian and democratic character." This was one of the most revolutionary periods in all American history; it is no wonder that in later years bourgeois historians, including most of the liberal school, turned against the revolutionary and *democratic* implications of the Reconstruction era, just as the industrial bourgeoisie itself turned against them. Even a writer like Matthew Josephson, who has been influenced by Marxism, in his book, *The Politicos*, echoes this anti-democratic propaganda. Rarely has a class so vilified its own best achievements and created so vast a canvas of historic falsification.

Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, had been a lifelong Democrat from the border state of Tennessee. He represented those southern petty-bourgeois masses who were torn between fear of the slave power and fear of the new power of the industrial bourgeoisie. With the industrialists in the saddle after the Civil War, Johnson sought protection for these masses against the new menace by measures which would have had the effect of restoring the economic and political power of the southern planters. The defeat of Johnson by the Radical Republicans, who controlled Congress, and the launching of Congressional Reconstruction in 1867 marked the establishment in the South of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the northern bourgeoisie in alliance with the Negro people and a section of the white farmers. This period saw a flowering of democracy such as the South has never known since. The century-old hunger of four million Negroes for freedom, for knowledge, for the right to live like human beings surged into creative activity. The joint Negro-white people's governments set up in the southern states blazed new democratic paths and swept away many of the economic and social vestiges of the old oppression.

Reconstruction also revealed the dualism of the dominant industrial bourgeoisie: its bold utilization of democracy and of revolutionary methods to consolidate its rule, and its halting before the full implications of its course in terms of popular power. It was this latter aspect of its policy that led within a few years to the betrayal of bourgeois democracy in the South by the Republican Party and the establishment of a new reactionary dictatorship of the southern planters in alliance with

the northern capitalists. The failure of the northern Reconstructionists to confiscate the large estates and divide them among the Negro people deprived democracy in the South of an economic foundation; at the same time this gave the planter obligarchy the basis for the restoration of its power—although subordinate to the northern bourgeoisie—through the establishment of the neo-feudal sharecropping system. Thus the Republican Party, which began Reconstruction as the party of the left, ended as the party of the right. The revolutionary giants, men like Thaddeus Stevens and Senator Charles Sumner, gave way to the James G. Blaines and Roscoe Conklings, the plumed knights of Wall Street.

Viewing the history of the democratic struggle in America up to this point, it clearly falls into two periods: from the end of the Revolution of 1776 to the conclusion of Van Buren's administration in 1841, when democracy developed as a result of the struggle of the middle-class masses, predominantly agrarian—the progenitors of the future industrial bourgeoisie—against the reigning merchant capitalists; and from the forties till the end of the Reconstruction era in 1877, when democracy progressed through the conflict between the capitalist system as a whole and the slave system. Only in the next period does the bourgeoisie, or any section of it, cease to be the piston rod of democratic advance.

Abraham Lincoln was the last true representative of the middle classes to hold the office of President. In the person of his successor, Andrew Johnson, those middle classes appeared as caricature, a prey to reactionary influences. Lincoln was also the last great figure of bourgeois democracy; in the ensuing years the industrial capitalists, who won power in the Civil War, broke all ties with their revolutionary past and became the architects of a new despotism. His greatness lies in the historic role he played: he led the nation to victory in the second bourgeois democratic revolution—"the first grand war in contemporary history," as Marx called it—a revolution that smashed the slave system and began the extension of democracy not only to four million black Americans, but to millions of southern white farmers whose own servitude sprang from Negro bondage. And Lincoln had qualities which were fully appreciated only after his death: his warm humanity, his simple eloquence, his identification with the common man—the creative dreamer in the man of action. Though there are respects in which he was the inferior of certain of his contemporaries, of him it can be said that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts. After him came the satyrs and whirling dervishes of the gilded age. And a new class, the proletariat, grasped the torch of democracy from the fallen leader's hands.

A. B. MAGIL.

*In a concluding article Mr. Magil will discuss the development of American democracy from the end of Reconstruction till the present day and its course in the future.*

# WHY EARL BROWDER SHOULD BE FREE



The editors of *NEW MASSES* invited prominent Americans to express their opinions on the sentencing of Earl Browder to the penitentiary for four years. "It is common knowledge," it was stated in a letter to writers, artists, teachers, and other leading professionals, "that the prosecution on a passport technicality is in reality persecution because of Mr. Browder's political beliefs. It is common knowledge that many individuals of a different political persuasion have travelled abroad incognito and no questions were asked by our federal authorities. Mr. Browder has explained that he found it necessary to travel under an assumed name to certain countries as a protection of his life or liberty. We believe that thousands of Americans who may differ with Mr. Browder's ideas will agree with us that the four-year sentence is political persecution. We fear that the Browder conviction establishes a precedent for further harassment of individuals who may differ, to any degree, with current government policies. It seems to us that this danger must be made clear to the American people before further liberties are truncated."

Below we print the answers so far received. Other statements will appear in future issues.

—The Editors.

## Ellsworth Huntington

*Associate Professor, Yale University*

I entirely agree with you in thinking that Mr. Browder's prosecution and conviction for misrepresentation in respect to his passport were due to the fact that he is a Communist. I do not at all agree with Mr. Browder's ideas. Nevertheless, I think it was a great mistake and a crying shame that he was convicted for a very minor crime which many other people are known to have committed without arousing any effort on the part of the government. His conviction was a sign of weakness rather than strength in our government.

## Louis P. Birk

*Vice-President, Modern Age Books*

When hysteria of every variety is rampant, as at present, it is especially easy to understand why Mr. Browder found it necessary to travel under an assumed name in certain countries, at the time when he committed a technical violation of the passport laws.

It is even more clear that his recent conviction and punishment, particularly in its degree, arose from the intent to persecute and not from the intent to see that justice was done. Persecution can rarely be dressed up to look like justice and the sentence Mr. Browder will serve comes under the head of a *miscarriage of justice*. There is in my mind no shadow of a doubt that this decision means simply the denial of an American citizen's right to his political belief and that if we have any precedent to worry about, it is the kind of precedent which makes it easier to harass other indi-

viduals having a difference of opinion with officials in our government and/or influential members of our society.

## Isobel Walker Soule

*Journalist*

The case of Earl Browder has upset me as a citizen and as a journalist because it is a well known fact that people have travelled incognito for years past and there has been no persecution. I don't feel that Earl Browder was tried on the technicality of the law but on the fact that he is a Communist.

As a person whose family came here in 1648 and as one whose family had a good deal to say as to what went into the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights, the least I can do is to uphold those two documents and interpret them as I think they were written.

Although I am not a Communist I will not stand by and see a person persecuted for either religious or political beliefs, because as soon as our liberties of freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of political right are taken from any one person, that person becomes a symbol of persecution and it is a violation of American democratic tradition.

## Harry F. Ward

*Professor, Union Theological Seminary*

By admission of the government the case against Earl Browder was purely technical. Therefore, even for those who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, the due maintenance of the majesty of the law required only a nominal penalty.

Consequently, the severity of his sentence, contrasted with the much lighter sentences imposed since in two cases of securing passports by fraud and perjury, one of them used to make money illegally and the other to distribute Nazi funds, proves beyond question that the Browder prosecution was political.

The course of history makes it clear that a social order which has to resort to injustice to maintain itself is thereby digging its own grave. The task of the people is to see that this job does not take too long or cost too much.

## Albert Maltz

*Author, The Underground Stream, etc.*

From 1798 to 1800 the American nation was taught a political lesson that will be forgotten today at the risk of national decency and public safety. At that time the administration of our country, autocratically determined to allow no political opposition, passed a law now known as the infamous Sedition Act. Under that law any criticism of the administration was seditious. And under it the followers of Thomas Jefferson, by various legal subterfuges, were pilloried, slandered, and sentenced to jail. There is no believer in democracy today who can do anything but repudiate that black moment in our history.

When one examines the Earl Browder passport case, it becomes evident that the crime is curiously technical, and the punishment, in comparison with other passport cases, shockingly severe. I, for one,

am forced to conclude that this is precisely an instance where a minority political opinion is being silenced by a legal subterfuge. As such I protest and deplore it. The technique of the Sedition Act, only thinly disguised in this passport case, has become in our modern world the technique of fascism rising to power. If political minorities in America, however unpopular, are gagged by one legal device or another, the liberties of the majority are not worth the paper the Bill of Rights is written on.

It seems obvious to me that if Earl Browder were the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, he would not now be under sentence. It seems equally obvious that if he were a staunch supporter of the war faction in our society, the technical error in his passport application might merit radio time rather than a jail sentence.

Precisely as in the days of Jefferson, all non-Communists, who are concerned about the maintenance of American democracy, and who are not afraid of name-calling or shibboleths, are forced to protest this persecution of Earl Browder, a Communist. They must be forced to this out of the necessity of elementary self-defense, however much they may disagree with Browder's political philosophy. The persecution and silencing of Earl Browder can only be regarded as the first of a series of acts, not the last. And as such it becomes a matter of menacing concern to the whole American people.

It is to me, and I protest it.

## Rockwell Kent

*President, United American Artists, UOPWA, CIO.*

Earl Browder—intending, and doing, no harm, to this democracy of which he is a loyal citizen—to protect himself in traveling through countries that were not democracies, was guilty of passport irregularity. For subsequently not telling what he had done, our democracy, its courts, sends him to prison for four years.

About such imprisonments, at such a time as this in America today, Thoreau has this to say: "Under a government which imprisons any unjustly the true place for a just man is also a prison." Writing of Massachusetts when Massachusetts was returning escaped slaves to bondage, he said: "The proper place today, the only place . . . provided for her freer and less despondent spirits is in her prisons, . . . the only house in a slave state in which a free man can abide with honor."

We may have hoped that history would not repeat itself. But history does.

## Millen Brand

*Author, The Outward Room, The Heroes, etc.*

It's to be regretted that the American people cannot know at first hand and from some unbiased vantage point just how Earl Browder was persecuted in the case which has just ended for him in a four-year prison sentence. I saw one session of the Browder trial, by chance the one during which Browder made his own defense—in the belief that writers should see what goes on in the world around them—and I don't know that I ever saw more apparent prejudice. Whenever there was the shadow of a chance that Browder might be able to present himself as an ordinary decent human being, whenever the jury, unable to restrain its

suspicion that maybe it was dealing with a decent person, began to relax, the prosecution—and the judge—restored the proper atmosphere of the courtroom. What that atmosphere was, I suspect, is something close to the courtroom where Sacco and Vanzetti were tried.

In days to come, when times are calmer, people will look back to this as an obvious piece of political persecution. Unfortunately, now, a good and courageous man, exactly for that courage, must undergo a four-year punitive term. He will have to give up important political work, recognized as legal and at its core a working demonstration of what democracy we have left. That that work is to keep our country out of war and to bring closer the time of the world's change to socialism, which means only the abolition of extreme social privilege in the economic field for the benefit of all, is enough in itself to make clear the meaning of Browder's imprisonment. The times are against democracy and any large-scale social change—the times may be against them, but the people will yet have to be heard from.

## Joe Jones

*Artist*

The determination of our government to go through with their persecution of Earl Browder, leaves no doubt in my mind that a fascist program is on in dead earnest.

Jailing Browder is clearly a threat to anyone who believes that as an American he is free to express himself, as an individual, or in any other capacity that will be in disagreement with our war-minded government.

As an artist, I can thrive only on a right to individual conviction; as an American my national pride comes from the Bill of Rights and our democratic constitution.

Persecuting people like Browder fills me with shame for the political neurosis of my country.

## Shaemas O'Sheel

*Journalist*

It used to be said, "You can't convict a million dollars." I believe it's been done once or twice in late years, but not so often as to throw fits into the select circles of our best citizens; especially as, in such deplorable cases, the government so beautifully demonstrates that Shakespeare was right: "The quality of mercy is not strained, it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven." No convicted million has yet been sentenced to four years in the jug.

So it's too much for me to believe that Earl Browder was given four years, for the horrendous crime of making a minor error in filling out a passport, solely out of a stern Draconian determination to enforce the law equally against all transgressors. No, he's getting a striped suit and a number because he differs with some current government policies.

It gives me the shivers. Without even being one of these here "reds," I differ with so many policies of the present vice-regal regime that if each of my dissents should draw four years, why if you laid the sentences end to end I wouldn't get out much before the end of the world, which the professors down at the Hayden Planetarium set for about fifteen billion years hence. (If they'd about triple that allowance, we could pay off the cost of aid to Britain at a dollar a year; think it over, professors.) Although maybe the people would open

the prison gates before then. Maybe they'll open Earl Browder's prison before his sentence is up. (Think *that* over, gentlemen of the administration and the courts!)

## Eliot White

*Episcopal Clergyman*

An ominous peak on the temperature chart of our present social and economic "system" in its illness, is constituted by the imposition of a four-year term in a federal penitentiary, upon Mr. Earl Browder. The severity of such a penalty, out of all proportion to that which incurred it, discloses more convincingly than words could do, a climax of FEAR! For that is the fever of the current system of exploitation of the many by the few—FEAR!—consuming fear of the advancing retribution for all the past centuries of injustice and legalized (yet never truly lawful) plunder.

Surely it is time that loyal citizens of this country, regardless of their political and economic beliefs, should protest against so obvious a demonstration of terrified prejudice, in conflict with both the letter and spirit of our Bill of Rights.

It is manifestly the sentenced leader's thoughts and words, more than any one of his actions, which are hereby being punished. This is an attempt (so often proved a failure in the past), to imprison ideas and silence teachings, instead of seeking to confute and really answer them.

Fear, most definitely, is the sickness near unto death of the fever-stricken "system"; and more eloquently than any physician's lecture to medical students, this new peak on its temperature chart registers for friends and opponents alike, one more evidence of approaching crisis in the patient's malady.

Entirely in harmony is this disclosure also, with the amazing contradiction between the frequently heard assertions that Communists in present-day America are politically and socially negligible, because of their allegedly small numbers, and on the other hand the almost panic-stricken warnings of the influence they are increasingly achieving. Either one or the other of these tenets must be wrong; they cannot in any logic both be true.

Finally, even so imperfect a Christian as the writer, who has been a clergyman of the Episcopal Church since 1895, might be permitted to wonder what kind of report some possible imperial Roman "Dies committee" of about the year 33 A.D., might have submitted to the Emperor Tiberius, on the beliefs and customs of the dangerous sect of the "Christiani." For according to records of their own, called "The Acts of the Apostles," it was confessed by these subversive folk that "All that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need, and they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Also, "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked, for distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts 2:44-6, and 4:32, 34-5).

## Elliot Paul

*Author, The Life and Death of a Spanish Town, etc.*

I am glad to add my simple protest against the treatment of Earl Browder, who was given a barbarous sentence for an offense which was trivial, to say the least, and did no one any harm. Being an

incurable sentimentalist, the question that arises immediately in my own mind is: How can we get Browder out of jail? I hope that his friends will keep up an organized effort in that direction until results are obtained, and I am sure that, regardless of political beliefs, they will have the support of all liberal people in the United States if the issue is not presented in a complicated way.

When a man gets himself heartily disliked by people who do not know him, because of his expression of political beliefs (often misquoted and distorted), the resentment which piles up against him colors the actions of public officials and citizens serving on juries. I think it is safe to say that I do not know one man of Mr. Browder's age who has led a normal, active life, who has not committed a dozen graver offenses against the law than using an assumed name in applying for a passport to travel through countries which would be dangerous to him if he used his own name. Very few of these men have been sent to jail for four years. I think, in making an appeal for Browder, the elements of common humanity should be stressed. Here is an innocent man, whom some of his followers consider a courageous, far-sighted leader, and the majority of people think of as a misguided politician with exotic notions. Whether Earl Browder is a sage or a "whack," he should not be penned up behind bars these fine spring days, unless we want to build a fence around the United States like the Great Wall of China and consider ourselves all criminals.

## Dorothy Brewster

*Assistant Professor, Columbia University*

My viewpoint concerning the Browder case? Another Debs case, of course, illustrating the 1941 method of silencing troublesome talkers in a time of crisis: a neater method, employing a passport technicality instead of the less precise and more vulnerable interpretation of a sedition act. It was really very inconsiderate of Earl Browder to protect his own life and liberty under an assumed name when he traveled abroad in the disturbed era of the 'twenties. He should rather have proclaimed his name and his politics, and let himself be quietly bumped off, thus saving taxpayers now in the 'forties the expense of court proceedings and prison accommodations. Anyone can see that. As to his guilt? Let me quote a passage from Anatole France's *Penguin Island*, about the guilt of Pyrot (i.e. Dreyfus). Two patriotic churchmen are speaking. "You do not doubt Pyrot's guilt?" says one. "I cannot doubt it," answers the other. "That would be contrary to the laws of my country which we ought to respect as long as they are not opposed to the Divine laws. Pyrot is guilty, for he has been convicted. As to saying more for or against his guilt, that would be to erect my own authority against that of the judges, a thing which I will take good care not to do. Besides, it is useless, for Pyrot has been convicted. If he has not been convicted because he is guilty, he is guilty because he has been convicted. It comes to the same thing. I believe in his guilt as every good citizen ought to believe in it; and I will believe in it as long as the established jurisdiction will order me to believe in it; for it is not for a private person, but for a judge to proclaim the innocence of a convicted person. Human justice is venerable even in the errors inherent in its fallible and limited nature. These errors are never irreparable; if the judges do not repair them on earth, God will repair them in Heaven."

Shall we leave it to God? Or not?

# Communists in the Trade Unions

Reactionaries and former liberals join hands to break down democratic trade unionism. What's behind that cry of "Red." An editorial article.

**I**MPLICIT in the attempt to pin the "Communist" label on teachers in New York's Brooklyn College and City College are two ideas, both repugnant to the democratic tradition. First, the Rapp-Coudert committee has made it clear that the testimony of any anti-Communist is sufficient to convict, that the word of four or five impostors outweighs the word of some sixty respected members of the teaching profession. Second, the Rapp-Coudert committee, with the collaboration of the Board of Higher Education, is trying to set up political tests for teachers. The arbitrary suspension of Morris U. Schappes, City College English teacher, after he announced that he had formerly been a member of the Communist Party, carries dangerous implications for every teacher in the country. By this act the authorities declare that only Republicans, Democrats, and Socialists may—for the present—teach in the public schools of New York. But no one need be so naive as to imagine that this exemption is unconditional. More than one Republican, Democrat, and Socialist has at times been accused of being a "fellow-traveler" or a member of a "front" organization. Thus, what the Rapp-Coudert committee and the Board of Higher Education are doing is establishing a "dangerous thoughts" test after the totalitarian pattern. Under this test, teachers, no matter what their political affiliations, will be compelled to toe the line—to resort in the classroom to the very indoctrination that the witch hunters now profess to deplore—on pain of dismissal.

IN THIS SITUATION the attempt of the leadership of the American Federation of Teachers to revoke the charters of the teachers' union locals in New York and Philadelphia is a veritable Godsend to the Rapp-Coudert committee and all enemies of free education. Were those quondam liberals, Professor George Counts and his colleagues on the AFT executive council, to have their way, it would mean the expulsion of twenty-five to thirty percent of the union membership, the extension of the purge to other cities, and the emasculation of an organization that has accomplished much for its members and been in the forefront of many progressive causes. That this union-wrecking and denial of simple democracy is applauded by magazines like the *Nation* and *New Republic* only reveals the deep degeneration of these self-constituted spokesmen for liberalism under the impact of an anti-democratic war.

The fact is that both these magazines have abandoned their former position and embraced ideas which they previously opposed. In an editorial entitled "Communists and Unions" the *Nation* tells us that everything

was sweetness and light in the labor movement until the Communists came along in the thirties. In the same vein Bill Green and John P. Frey insist that the AFL was just one big happy family until the CIO came along. But these are tales for infants. Anybody who has the slightest knowledge of the history of the American labor movement knows that reactionaries fought progressives long before there was a Communist Party. At one time the tory hue and cry was against "Anarchists." Later "Socialist" and "Wobbly" became the favorite terms of abuse. Today it is "Communist."

Like the Rapp-Coudert committee, the *Nation* and *New Republic* are very skeptical of the statements of the leaders of the teachers union locals, though quite ready to swallow whole the charges of the AFT executive council. "Despite the formal denials of leaders of the local unions," writes the *New Republic* in an editorial, "Communists and Teachers," "there seems little doubt that these groups have been dominated by Stalinists. . . ." But what was this magazine's attitude on an earlier occasion, when the right-wing cabal in the American Labor Party made similar charges against progressives? "It is customary for factionalists to charge," wrote the *New Republic* in its Nov. 1, 1939, issue, "that anyone who agrees with the Communist line at any point is a 'fellow traveler'; yet intelligent trade unionists, liberals and Socialists often have agreed with it." And in the *Nation* of Nov. 4, 1939, its editor, Freda Kirchwey, defended the American League for Peace and Democracy against the Dies committee's charge that it was "Communist-controlled." But that was before the war fever had begun to work with full force in the timorous souls of the editors of these two magazines.

TO COVER UP its rejection of democratic methods in the teachers' union the *Nation* complains that "the Communists do whatever hard work they can lay their hands on," and in this sinister fashion impose their will on the less hard-working members; the *New Republic* discovers something equally subversive in the fact that "The party disciples come early to every meeting and stay late."

There was a time when these magazines turned a deaf ear to such "arguments." When Prof. George W. Hartmann of Teachers College, Columbia, sought election as president of College Teachers Local 537 on a Red-baiting platform, the *New Republic* wrote (May 17, 1939): "Anyone who is dissatisfied with the policies or officers of a union is much better engaged in trying to change them by democratic processes than in

endeavoring to smear them in the public press." Hartmann was defeated by a five to one vote in an election in which eighty-three percent of the local's membership participated. What the *Nation* and *New Republic* now conceal is that it was the repeated failure of the Counts-Hartmann crowd to win any substantial support among the members of the locals in New York and Philadelphia that has now caused them to resort to the desperate measure of revoking charters.

The *Nation* not only endorses the purge technique in the American Federation of Teachers, but declares that "It will also have suggested to other unions that the problem created by the Communists is by no means insoluble." To soften this shocking betrayal of elementary liberalism it warns against "abuses" and "dangers." But the warnings and qualms of the *Nation* and *New Republic* only make it painfully evident whose fellow-travelers they have become. For the editors of these ex-liberal magazines know and have known for a long time the meaning of the juggernaut of repression they are helping to build. "The time is not a good one for purges and denial of rights in progressive and labor organizations," wrote the *New Republic* (Oct. 9, 1939) concerning the purge in the American Labor Party. "The example may be followed far too readily by those who would purge the purgers." And Freda Kirchwey wrote in the *Nation* of Oct. 14, 1939:

The anti-Communist wave that is sweeping in from the left is meeting and merging with the tide of intolerance that has been rising on the right. . . . For the real danger is that general detestation of Communists and Bundists will lead to acts of outright repression supported not only by reactionaries but by disgusted liberals. The anti-Communist drive in the American Labor Party echoes too closely for comfort the noisy denunciations of Martin Dies. . . . Only a weak and distrustful American could today advocate measures of repression and coercion, or encourage a mood of panic.

Neither the teachers' union nor any other union that reactionaries and pseudo-liberals try to paint Red are dominated by the Communist Party. There may or may not be Communists among their leaders. If there are, what of it? Communists have as much right to be elected to office in unions or other organizations as Republicans, Democrats, and Socialists. They have as much right to teach in the schools as supporters of other political parties. To argue otherwise is to reject democracy. The problems involved in this controversy deserve full discussion and we shall return to them in a future issue.



# NEW MASSES

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## I. Spring Offensive

THE Ides of March have come and gone, and there was every indication last week, from both President Roosevelt's and Adolf Hitler's speeches, that the spring campaign, the second spring of the war, had already begun. In a military sense, the winter's fighting consisted of a British offensive against the Italian empire. It was an offensive in which the British succeeded in routing Italian forces in Libya, and have gone far in isolating them hopelessly in East Africa. It was an offensive in which the British took the fullest advantage of Mussolini's failure in Albania; but basically, Britain's major objective was to gain time, time to mobilize its own empire, time to develop the Anglo-American alliance to the point where, as Roosevelt's speech acknowledged, the United States would be in the war on England's side.

It was also a winter charged with diplomatic tussles. The British were trying to keep the Vichy government from full cooperation with Germany, trying to prevent Spain's adherence to the Axis by giving Franco food. The British stiffened their defenses in Singapore; and while carrying forward Anglo-American preparations for a military and naval showdown with Japan, they also continued their efforts to detach Japan from the tripartite alliance, a hope which Churchill has by no means given up.

On Germany's part, it was a winter of consolidating her continental position. Military preparations went forward all along the Atlantic seaboard for an invasion of England, or at least a big effort to break the British blockade and enforce a counter-blockade by aircraft and submarine on British communications. Rumania was occupied, and after four months of diplomatic effort, Germany succeeded in getting Bulgaria to join her alliance. It was a winter in which the Nazis were deliberating just how to assist Mussolini in Albania, to do so in such a way as would advance the general German objective of getting into the Near Eastern oil fields and the hub of the British imperial network. Several times, Hitler reiterated his hope of a political victory in the form of a truce with Britain; each time it became clearer that the decisive factor standing in the way of such a development was the influence of the United States on British policy. Perhaps the winter's major event was the decision of American imperialism to enter, and dominate, the war.

## II. Air War and Shipping

LAST WEEK, air warfare was resumed over the British isles, the Atlantic and the Baltic sea coasts. German aircraft carried out a series of big raids, not only over southeastern England, but against Liverpool, and for the first time in the war, against Glasgow and the Clydeside. It was clear that the Germans are concentrating their air power against the main regions of British shipbuilding as well as the docks and ports where British commerce comes in from the rest of the world. The raids were admittedly destructive, although not quite as bad as last Fall's assaults on Birmingham and Coventry. On the other hand, the Royal Air Force continued to attack the submarine nests and the bases from which any invasion attempt would be made from Norway to the southern shore of France. There were also bombardments of Hamburg and Bremen, an obvious effort to hurt German naval and submarine construction at its source.

Both sides are clearly paying a great deal of attention to each other's actual and potential sea power. It is the significant fact about this war that Germany's control of the continent makes it impossible for Britain to use its land armies, except at tangential spots like Greece and Libya. On the other hand, Germany still has no navy to speak of, Italy's navy has been bottled up in the Mediterranean, while the fate of the French navy is in doubt. Thus, Hitler can only challenge the world-wide British naval power by submarine and aircraft, forcing it to disperse its strength by threatening the island, the Near East, and the east Indies (through Japan) all at the same time. What the British therefore want badly from their American ally is naval support, one of the things they are sending the economist Sir Arthur Salter across to negotiate.

Britain's naval problem is most urgent in respect to its merchant fleet, upon which it depends for the food, raw material supplies, and munitions. The British started the war with about 19,000,000 tons of shipping. They seized several million tons from their phantom allies: Norway, Holland, and Belgium. Together with what they have taken from Greece (and from the Soviet Baltic republics) they probably added about 8,000,000 tons to their fleet. At the same time, they have lost at least 5,000,000 tons on the high seas, a figure which has not been balanced by their shipbuilding program, nor by the tonnage purchased in the United States or picked up from Latin American nations. Inasmuch as the British are completely dependent on their merchant shipping for supplies, merchant marine communications become one of their major fronts, just as it is one of the major points of German concentration against them.

On the other hand, it is always worth remembering that while the British come hat in hand to Washington for more ships, and while they propose that the United States convoy its own and Canadian supplies with

American naval forces, at least nine or ten million tons of British shipping continue to carry on a flourishing trade with the dominions and the South American nations. Within the Anglo-American alliance, therefore, a fierce competition goes on between American and British businessmen. American shipowners, barred as they are from the war zones, are not anxious to give more ships to Britain, or have American goods convoyed, unless the British relax their grip on the lucrative business with South American and East Indian ports.

## III. Southeastern Europe

MEANWHILE, the most dramatic spot in the war remains the southeastern corner of Europe. Germany's occupation of Bulgaria has served to isolate the Yugoslav bourgeoisie, but Hitler has nevertheless been compelled to treat them cautiously. For one thing, Hitler fears that any armed resistance in the Balkans may unloose a social struggle which would divert his energies and which neither his own forces, nor the armies of the Yugoslav or Bulgarian governments, would be able to control. Secondly, Hitler's diplomacy is based on a perverse exploitation of the word "peace," which makes it essential for him to gain his ends now by diplomacy rather than force. As a result of these two factors, the Yugoslav ruling class has been able to bargain with Germany, and this has delayed an agreement which would enable the Nazis to turn their whole attention to Greece.

This same delay in ironing out German-Yugoslav relations seems to have fanned flickering hopes in the breasts of the British general staff (and their political adviser in the White House). There was evidence last week, and the President's speech confirmed it, that the British were landing troops in southern Greece with the intention of giving the Nazis pause, if not battle. At the same time, the Greek General Staff was announcing that Italian counter-offensives, personally directed by Mussolini, had been repulsed. All of this means, contrary to what we thought might happen, that the war will continue in this corner of Europe for a while longer.

Yet by any sort of hard-headed analysis, the British and their American mentors are taking a very long and desperate gamble. Even if German forces and aircraft are not yet fully assembled along the Bulgarian border, and even if relations with Yugoslavia are not clarified, Germany's strategic position *vis a vis* Greece is vastly superior to Britain's. It is difficult to see what the British hope to do; from all the speeches in the Turkish parliament last week it was clear that while Turkey might fight if directly invaded, she will hardly come to Greece's assistance. The Turks had a mutual assistance treaty with Greece which they did not honor last October; it is difficult to see them doing so now. Once again therefore, the British are playing for time, even at the cost of man power, and the risk of fiasco.

#### IV. And Remember France

THERE remains still another possible reason for making a desperate stand in Greece, and that is its influence on France. As we have indicated in these columns many times, France and its colonial empire remain a real factor in the calculus of the war. So long as Hitler hesitated to cross the Danube southwards, so long as Mussolini was taking a terrific rocking around in Albania and in Libya the French bourgeoisie resisted closer collaboration with Germany, at least in so far as German or Italian use of French naval bases in Algeria and Syria were concerned. General Weygand sat on his haunches in Morocco and tightened his grip over the French empire. These circumstances encouraged Washington and London to entertain hopes that Marshal Petain and his crowd might still be bought off, or that they would stall Hitler along. The policy of loosening the blockade against France received a sympathetic hearing in Washington, where it is sponsored by one of the president's strategists, William Bullitt. And Colonel Donovan, Admiral Leahy, together with several unofficial and amateur diplomats were sent over to canvass the situation in detail.

But with Hitler moving toward the Near East, and with the arrival of German troops and tanks in western Libya to block General Wavell's advance, the French ruling class must make some decisions quickly. Significantly, in the very days when German troops were coming through Bulgaria, General Weygand broke his long stay in north Africa for a trip to Vichy. After a week-long conference, it was announced that France would defend its colonial empire against all comers. And Admiral Jean Darlan made a last effort to get food shipments from the United States by threatening to use the French navy against the British blockade, a threat which involves much more than the issue of food—the actual entrance of France into the war on Germany's side.

As a matter of fact, it is probable that both the Nazi ambassador in Turkey, and the British foreign minister, Anthony Eden, have been trying to win the Turks over, each to his side, by promises at the expense of the French empire. It is altogether logical to assume that the British would promise Syria, or parts of it to the Turks; on the other hand, the Germans probably offered the same things plus a share of Mosul, a province which the British tore away from Turkey after the World War. If the British really make a stand in Greece and eventually help Turkey, they would have to get over the obstacle of Syria, which lies between Turkey and their own forces in Palestine. On the other hand, if the Germans settle the Greek situation to their own advantage, they could champion the French *status quo* by arranging some kind of pact between General Weygand and the Turks, which would bring German influence to the gate-valves of the Iraq oil fields and the borders of Palestine.

Syria, incidentally, is worth watching for

other reasons. It is the center of a powerful nationalist movement which has never been reconciled to French rule. Fifteen years ago that movement gave rise to a revolt which French imperialism suppressed with great difficulty and equally great brutality. And the Syrians have never forgotten that France never ratified an "independence" treaty which had been negotiated as far back as 1936.

Careful readers will notice that the American press has recently carried several stories tucked away in odd corners about student demonstrations against French rule which have been going on since the last days of February. Demonstrators have been shot down, and the populations of Aleppo, Beirut, and Damascus are in ferment. All of which serves as a reminder that, beneath the surface of the struggle among the imperialist powers, the peoples with whom the bourgeoisie deals as pawns are restless and ready for action. That is the *inner front* in this war. As in Europe, it is a front where all belligerents face their ultimate obstacles.

#### Kriegssozialismus

THE disintegration of the Socialist Party proceeds apace. On the day that Norman Thomas appeared before the House Foreign Affairs Committee to oppose the lease-lend bill, a group of leading New York Socialists issued a statement fervently supporting the bill and the Anglo-American side in the war. Now four members of the party's National Executive Committee have resigned in order to plump for all-out aid to Britain. They express, however, their "highest esteem" for the other NEC members, and the hope that the time will soon come when they will again be working side by side.

Lest anyone think that the majority of the Socialist leadership are genuinely anti-war, the party has issued a statement signed by Norman Thomas dispelling these suspicions. For the Socialist gentlemen who have openly decided to grease the wheels of the Wall Street blitzkrieg against peace and de-



A print from the Foster Folio by Chicago Artists

mocracy the Thomas statement expresses the most tender affection; they will remain members of the Party and one of them will continue to serve on the National Action Committee. The differences regarding aid to Britain are not differences of principle, but "of judgment and emphasis," the statement asserts. It declares that British imperialism is far less guilty in this war than German imperialism and approves assistance to the former though on a rather more niggardly basis than do the all-outers.

All of which underlines a point we have made before: the Socialist Party in this country, as in other countries, reflects the interests and ideas of monopoly capital. Monopoly capital here is divided on the tactical problems created by the war, the dominant section favoring full participation in the British war effort, other big business groups urging a more cautious policy and an early negotiated peace with Nazi Germany; the Socialist Party has divided along the same lines. And like the two wings of big business, both Socialist factions are united in their hatred of the Soviet Union, their fear of social revolution in Europe, and their hostility to every progressive tendency in the United States. The position of Thomas and his colleagues has nothing in common with that of the genuine peace forces in the country who oppose both sides in the imperialist war, favor strict neutrality for America, and a positive peace policy looking toward collaboration with the USSR.

#### Straitjacket for Labor

ALMOST hourly, the pattern of repression grows clearer. The administration ever more carefully scrutinizes the lesson of World War I, perfecting methods of coercion tried before, hurriedly replacing government by consent with government by edict. "You will have to work longer at your bench or plow or machine," the President commands, as he inveighs against "unnecessary strikes of workers," and orders "the sacrifice of some privileges."

It is not accidental that this burst of dictatorial energy comes at the moment when miners demand a new contract and steel workers ask for higher wages and the adjustment of industry's worst abuses. The administration is definitely bearish on wages: Leon Henderson, presidential spokesman at the head of the price stabilization committee, made clear to Benjamin Fairless, president of Carnegie-Illinois Steel, that Washington opposed higher pay for steel employees. The fear, said Henderson, was "inflation." The fact that wages have been steadily deflated by the upward rush of living costs went unremarked. Or as William Bullitt put it, present work hours are subversive: the French workers enforced a forty-hour week (before the war), and where, asked the former ambassador, is France today? Bullitt skips the days following the declaration of war, when the French forty-hour week was smashed, the unions were broken, wages were reduced—and the





A print from the Foster Folio by Chicago Artists

result was fascism in France. With presidential benediction, he urges for this country longer hours, less wages, curbs on unions. The end—can it be fascism for America?

Mr. Knudsen of OPM agrees with such plans. William Green of the AFL agrees, too, and so does Sidney Hillman. They and the administration plot a War Labor Board, to prevent strikes and in effect prevent labor from defending itself against any abuse employers can devise. Sidney Hillman jumps the gun by arranging parleys to fix wages of ship-building workers and to reach no-strike agreements. It is well to recall that the essence of fascism is the wiping out of working class organizations and the paring of workers' living standards. And the War Labor Board is designed to achieve just this. Huey Long, who should have known, once said that fascism in this country would arrive disguised as anti-fascism. The President and his cohorts talk imperialist war and call it "the fight against fascism"; they talk no-strike, no wage increases, and call it "defense of democracy."

### *Bursting the Bonds*

IT is the old shell game. Philip Murray, president of the CIO, denounced the proposed War Labor Board, pointing out that the "cooling-off" policy of delaying strikes "would be a negation of collective bargaining rather than its encouragement. The voluntary system of collective bargaining is essential to afford the greatest assurance of peaceful industrial relations." But now Mr. Murray, under pressure, has retreated. He doesn't yet "approve" the anti-labor board, but he will not resist its formation. His retreat severely handicaps the unions.

Even so, the security of the labor movement rests in the last analysis with the workers themselves. The administration's best laid plans have still to surmount working class resistance. The Steel Workers Organizing Committee has notified US Steel that a new contract must be negotiated, pointing out that the demanded ten percent rise in wages is nothing compared to present profits and those indicated for the future. Were the steel corporations to pay twenty percent higher wages, they still would be assured six percent profit. And Murray, for all his tendency to yield before the employer-administration offensive, cannot ignore the SWOC's determination to improve conditions. In addition, steel workers look to the coal miners, also negotiating for a contract for a pay rise, vacations, safety devices, a guaranteed work-year of 200 days, and other changes. In these conversations, despite the administration's urgent advice to mine owners that they turn down just demands and thereby break the power of America's strongest union, the miners can be sure that their spokesman will firmly champion their needs. John L. Lewis expresses the miner's resolve: "No contract, no work." And when he declares that "the mine workers hold that the defense of America and defense of democracy here in our own country is the



Stevenson

best defense," he speaks for more than the miners; he speaks for all the working folk of America. His words are the promise of the true fight against fascism—the fight to preserve the labor movement, to build it and strengthen it against its enemies both in government and business.

### *Tom Mann*

MANY workers in the United States knew Tom Mann—and in Germany, France, Spain, Belgium, Norway, and other lands besides his own England. In some of those countries he helped personally to build trade unions, in others he traveled as a delegate to union congresses. He was the man who had led the famous London dockers' strike in 1889, whom Friedrich Engels had praised as "the finest" of proletarian leaders, the man who had refused to let a Royal Commission from Queen Victoria dilute his trade union militancy. Tom Mann died at the age of eighty-five. It would be presumptuous to try to give here a picture of his international working class life—the last twenty years alone are too rich for summarizing. He knew Lenin and had often visited the Soviet Union. In his seventies he was twice arrested, once imprisoned, for leading the unemployed's battles. Tom Mann opposed this imperialist war as he had opposed the first one. The stature of his life is gigantic: it will be remembered long after the knightly titles of his country's present "Labor" leaders have faded out of history.

### *TNEC—Requiescat?*

The first truth is that the liberty of democracy is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of private power to a point where it becomes stronger than their democratic state itself. That, in its essence, is fascism—ownership of the government by an individual, by a group, or by any other controlling power. The second truth is that the liberty of a democracy is not safe if its business system does not provide employment and produce and distribute goods in such a way as to sustain an acceptable standard of living.

Thus Franklin D. Roosevelt, on April 29, 1938, in his message to Congress establishing the TNEC, popularly known as the Monopoly Committee. Last week the committee, after practically three years of work, folded its tents and silently stole away. Mr. Roosevelt made no comment on its findings, which constitute the most thorough, relentless indictment ever made by a government body of monopoly's anti-democratic role in American life. He may hope that the volumes of testimony will be safely hidden away in libraries. And not even TNEC Chairman O'Mahoney's

mild suggestions for reform through federal regulation are possible in the monopolists' wild spree of war economy. Indeed, as Senator O'Mahoney himself must know, the federal regulations which exist now are fast being abandoned.

But suppose the times were "normal"—would the TNEC's testimony be acted upon? This is not the first long, expensive government inquiry into the disorder and piracy of big business which has been quietly put away or used to establish minor "controls" that the power of monopoly can always cut through. The net results of these government inquiries are as significant as their findings. They prove that the plague of capitalism is far beyond the medicine-drop treatment of "reform" by federal statutes. For, owning the means of production, the capitalists control the state itself. When the people have fully recognized this truth, which was half acknowledged by the old New Deal Roosevelt, they will also recognize the alternative and act upon it.

### *Hearst Raises Kane*

IT DOESN'T soothe William Randolph Hearst any for Orson Welles, who made *Citizen Kane* for RKO, to deny that the film is about the lord of San Simeon. Mr. Hearst has already publicized the likeness by his enraged campaign to suppress the movie. Louella Parsons, his Hollywood writer, saw it and reported to her boss that the "hero" of the film was a famous newspaper publisher, definitely not Horace Greeley or Charles Dana. He was a publisher who had deliberately incited war for circulation purposes, used crooked tactics in an effort to get himself elected governor, and painted American journalism with the loudest, most repulsive shade of yellow ever seen. Mr. Hearst did not wait to reach for the nearest mirror. He went after RKO with all the fury and force of his publishing power and his money bags. He threatened to instigate a boycott of all RKO productions, to ruin them with adverse criticism. And he reminded Hollywood producers that he had a propaganda medium as good as theirs for "exposing" prominent citizens. Result thus far: *Citizen Kane*, which was completed on January 1, has not been released and Orson Welles threatens to sue RKO for breach of contract.

There is comedy as well as poetic justice in this picture of a man whose profits have been largely derived from slandering good American citizens, flying into tantrums when Hollywood, which he regards as part of his own kingdom, shows a disposition to kick over the traces. A serious issue is involved, though: whether this man, whose name symbolizes corrupt journalism, can prevent the American people from seeing a movie which certainly should be shown. Mr. Hearst's tactics in this fight alone are typical enough to make the release of *Citizen Kane* highly important. Let the public judge his likeness to Kane—and the implications of that likeness.

## Sherwood Anderson

The significance of the late novelist's career. His criticism of American life was at once confused and instructive. A comment on his meaning for younger writers, by Samuel Sillen.

IN ONE of his later novels, *Beyond Desire*, Sherwood Anderson described a character whose intellectual life stopped dead when he was still a young man. What had happened to Judge Long, he observed, happened to most American men. At some indeterminate point and for some queer reason, they ceased to grow. It was the same with innumerable American books which stated an interesting problem of life, went so far with it, and then broke down. "They stated a problem they themselves wouldn't face, then suddenly they began crawling. They got out of it by suddenly becoming cheerful or optimistic about life, something of that sort."

It would be an over-simplification to say that Anderson perfectly illustrated his own thesis. In even his poorest work there is a sense of restless striving and questioning. Whatever escape he sought, it was not, certainly, in a cheap *Saturday Evening Post* optimism. During the worst depression years, as we shall see, he made a distinct though befuddled effort to come to grips with modern industrial America.

And yet, as one reviews his career, seeking for a key to his troubled personality, one appreciates the parallel between Anderson and literally scores of intellectually and emotionally unfulfilled characters like Judge Long. One recalls his disturbing question in *A Story Teller's Story*: "Would I ever become mature?" Or the passage from his poem, "Chicago," expressive of so much bewilderment and defeat: "I am a child, a confused child in a confused world." Or the truly childish anger of *The Triumph of the Egg* echoed elsewhere by countless slurs on the "dry" and "sterile" brain: "What makes you want to read about life? What makes people want to think about life? Why don't they live? Why don't they leave books and thoughts and schools alone?" Or his defiant declaration that "I am one who has always lived in his dreams." Much of what Anderson said about himself was sheer pose, to be sure, but after a time the pose was inseparable from the man. It is impossible to mistake his repeated and almost fanatical protests against a mature intellectual discipline.

It would appear paradoxical, in one sense, to speak of Anderson's truncated development as an artist and thinker. His literary career did not begin until he was forty, with the publication of *Windy McPherson's Son* in 1916. He liked to regard himself as the outstanding example of that rare type of self-made businessman who can start his life all over again at the height of his commercial success. One day, in the middle of



Sherwood Anderson: 1876-1941

a letter which he was dictating, he walked out of his office in the Elyria, Ohio, paint manufacturing concern of which he was president. He was never to return. In his autobiographical sketches and in novels like *Many Marriages*, he has often told the story of the man who, stifled by the business world and conventional family life, runs away to seek a more satisfying expression of his nature. He had "made good," this moody Ohio boy who came from a poor and nomadic family. Having wandered over the Middle West as a race-track follower, tramp, odd-job man, and factory hand he had worked himself up to the world of buying and selling. At forty, he was ready to move into what he regarded as a third social class, "my own class, the artist's class."

Despite the surface appearance of a literary life beginning at forty, one cannot escape noticing that Anderson's work, to the very end, was largely determined by his experiences, ideas, and moods before he left Elyria for Chicago. This was, at first, neither surprising nor by any means deplorable. The life of Ohio towns like Camden and Clyde where Anderson spent his earlier years had to be told. The crude impact of a machine age on the struggling communities of the Middle West, the Winesburgs and the Bidwells of his stories, had worked remarkable changes in America which needed to be chronicled in our literature.

In the pre-war years, as Anderson wrote in *NEW MASSES* a few years ago, "There

was a stirring, something felt, as one might say, coming up from below—as though the farms of our big fat Middle West wanted to speak." Dreiser, Sandburg, and Edgar Lee Masters found in the disillusioned business executive an important ally in the necessary struggle against New England's monopoly of American letters. A new and welcome boldness was asserting itself. If Anderson, like the others, was denounced by the genteel arbiters of taste in Boston as "sex-obsessed," he could later justify himself as having made an effort to get sex back into a healthy place in American life. It was a vital period of our culture, and Sherwood Anderson many years later remembered his exhilarating talks with John Reed and Art Young, his contribution of "Hands" to the *Masses* (the story was later included in *Winesburg, Ohio*), his contacts with the Provincetown group on MacDougal Street and with Margaret Anderson of the *Little Review*. And then the World War came, choking literary effort, teaching the people the highly moral and democratic lesson, so familiar to our own ears, that "in order to stamp out brutal militarism it is best to adopt brutal militarism, teach it to our sons, do everything to brutalize our own people." A new grimness came into faces seen on streets, and "oh Lord, the hypocrisy!"

The basic theme of Anderson's pre-war experience in the rapidly growing factory towns of Ohio and Indiana was a protest against industrialism. In book after book, whether in an earlier novel like *Poor White* or a later one like *Kit Brandon*, he celebrated the virtues of pre-industrial craftsmanship. The harness-maker, the carriage-maker, the builders of wagons and barns he described with loving care and with respect for their love of craft. Modern industrialism he identified with hurried workmanship, apartment houses, tiled bathroom floors, the movies, the Twentieth Century Limited, and the World War. And he equated the call of the factories to honest farmers and smiths with the siren call of the *Saturday Evening Post* to honest literary craftsmen. He attacked Morgan, Gould, Carnegie, and Vanderbilt as "princes of the new faith, merchants all, a new kind of rulers of men, who defied the world-old law of class that puts the merchant below the craftsman, and added to the confusion of men by taking on the air of creators." And, like D. H. Lawrence, whom he resembles in so many respects, he could speak with equal scorn of "the futile little vanity of the workers who have forgotten the cunning of hands, who have long let machines take the place of the cunning



*Sherwood Anderson: 1876-1941*

of hands!" He felt that poetry and music had disappeared from the lives of a people rushed pell-mell into a new age. At times he railed against the fate that had thrown him into the twentieth century.

His attitudes having become fixed by the time he wrote his first books, Anderson was constantly to repeat the prejudices of a man who would criticize society only from the viewpoint of a pre-monopoly order. Even a novel like *Marching Men*, remarkable as it is when one considers that it was published in 1917,

betrays an attitude toward the working class which is more romantic than sympathetic. The workers are children, he writes. "Suppose like children they begin to play a bigger game. Suppose they just learn to march, nothing else. Suppose they should begin to do with their bodies what their minds are not strong enough to do—just learn the one simple thing, to march, whenever two or four or a thousand of them are together." The novel betrays not merely a vast condescension, but even more significantly a vast

misunderstanding. And the truth which is misunderstood is the essence of that monopolistic capitalism which puzzled and discomforted Anderson. He was inclined to envisage the restoration of a vanished life rather than the construction of a new society which, in utilizing the machine and in controlling it for the benefit of the producers, would raise civilization to a higher level. The issue was not between craftsmanship and the machine, but between monopolistic ownership in the interests of a few and social ownership in the interest of the many. Only intuitively, falteringly, with a thousand and one reservations, did he see the working class, produced by industrialism, as the creative transformer of life. When he was a young man, Sherwood Anderson once said, he wrote a book called "Why I Believe in Socialism." He tore it up, he added, because it was badly written, and there is no need to question his judgment.

But a criticism of American life in the twentieth century, even from an essentially nineteenth century point of view, could be instructive. Increasingly sterile as this criticism was bound to become the more the ground of reality slipped from under it, no one can question the positive values of *Winesburg, Ohio* or *Poor White*, or *Horses and Men*. For Anderson was acutely sensitive to the frustrations of human beings who did not fit into the financial scheme of things. In the vast human scrapheap of an individualistic and selfish economy he discovered people whose desires did not appear on the ledger books. In the defeated figures of the towns, in the lonely, unwanted, and inarticulate ones, he found concealed reserves of passion and torment which had gone unexplored. Anderson was incapable of writing a great novel because he had no sustaining analysis of the modern world; he was at a loss to see the real direction of American life, and his longer works are singularly aimless, choked with miscellaneous characters and editorial observations. He had, inevitably, to "crawlfish" at any major fictional problem he set himself. But he could write great stories which communicated those "high moments" in which he once said he was solely interested. Avoiding plot situations in his stories, he was able, at his best, to create an unforgettable mood and portray a delicate psychological experience.

For a time, Anderson edited two newspapers in a Virginia town. One was Republican and the other Democratic. But with the economic crisis of the early thirties, Anderson was disturbed, and he came out of his squirearchic editorial office to look at the world again. A year before the crash he had written an article on "The Writer's Trade" for *Vanity Fair* in which he announced that "I see no reason why the underdog should be given the upper hand of things. . . . If money were not accumulated by the few, how would anything beautiful ever be present in this world?" Like so many other middle class writers, however, vacillating in their feeling toward the proletariat and the Big Money, stuffed with contentment at one mo-

## Pacific Shore

What do we do now?

What do we do now?

Slice the seabeach open with the plough,  
salt our tears with the seawater,  
seed with our bodies the unpregnant sea?

What do we do now?

Plant our bodies in the ebb and flow?  
Harvestless man, wife and son and daughter,  
bury ourselves in the nice cheap water?

Where do we go from here,

O pioneer?

Where have we got to go?

What have we got to do?

Shoved off the earth, where do we go from here,  
to what clean homestead in what heavenly sphere?

We stand on the nation's edge; our shadows fall  
starved lean on the unprofitable wave.

Remembering the spilled honey of our days  
we see the last land farmed, the field fenced in,  
the mountain gold stopping the banker's tooth;  
between the fences and the barren sand  
is not room for one man to make a stand,  
one seed to grow, the scratch of one bird's foot,  
the six feet of one grave.

And we, and we

here at the money's end and the work's end  
help the sun go down to burial;  
sunken in a pit of whispering sand,  
claw with our fingers at the sliding wall,  
hope to get out this coming year.

Brothers, where do we go from here?

Tell us the road we take from here,  
farmer, butcher, baker, beggarman, thief,  
doctor, lawyer, Indian chief—

Rich man, where do we go from here?

Give us a ditch to pioneer!

Turn around and take it back again,  
turn again and take the country back  
that the bank nibbled in the honest man's track;  
here's what we do, the road we've got to take;  
turn around and help the daylight break,  
see stretch naked to the rising sun  
the whole new continent, the ungardened land,  
the barbed-wire paradise for the fertile gun,  
the stripped and beautiful miles, the place for pioneering:

Turn back, turn back our faces to the sun.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

ment and panicky with insecurity at another, Anderson came forward in 1932 with a vigorous defense of the Harlan, Ky. miners. In a speech delivered at a mass meeting of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, he paid tribute to Dreiser's hunger for truth and integrity, contrasting him, significantly, with that type of literary betrayal which we witness periodically with disgust:

As soon as a man here, in America, shows some talent as a writer they pounce down on him. They want to buy his talent.

They usually do too, I'll tell you that.

So they offer him money, position, security.

All he has to do, you see, is to corrupt slightly everything he does.

They want to make a clever man of him, a cunning little twister of words and ideas, spoiling his own tools, going crooked, you see, selling the people out.

Shocked out of his agrarian idyll by the intensifying social catastrophe, Anderson was groping toward a more valid analysis.

In August 1932, he was at Amsterdam, attending as a delegate the World Congress against Imperialist War. In a dispatch to NEW MASSES he described the proceedings with enthusiasm. He was excited and absorbed by the speeches of the workers and peasants who, to his surprise, were more eloquent than the writer delegates:

There is something alive here, glowingly alive. Let the capitalistic newspapers of the world play all this down. In the end it will assert itself. . . .

It is a beginning. There is a song of hope in it. There is a fist raised. It is a mass of workers, from many countries, having sincere feeling for each other. Internationality.

But Anderson continued to distinguish between the "artist class" and the "worker class." That was the flaw in his orientation which had kept him from growing and which was to lead him further and further away from the socialist movement in the years since. In 1932, this flaw revealed itself negatively, in a self-abasement of the artist: "If the movement to free all men from the rule of money means the submerging of our class, let us be submerged. Down with us." Anderson expressed regret that he had ever ceased to be a worker.

But this self-abasement could easily turn to self-glorification. It reflected, certainly, a complete misunderstanding of the proper relation between the writer and the people, a sense really of unbridgeable distance. *Beyond Desire*, the novel which he had hoped would contribute to an understanding of the proletariat, suffered from this split. The sections on the mill workers and the sections dealing with sex-twisted people do not hang together. The mystical interweaving of "sex" and "the machine," of revivalism and Communism, of militant working class action and unthinking martyrdom, shows the old confusion, however sympathetic the intent. Anderson had hoped to carry the people of Winesburg forward into the "new American life-machines," but he failed. And the failure

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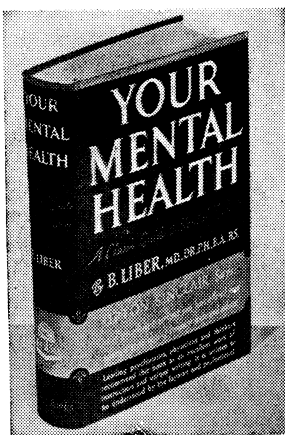
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was even more obvious in his *Kit Brandon*.

Sherwood Anderson is dead, but he has left a number of works which will long survive as the artistic embodiment of an extremely important phase of American life and consciousness. For the young writer he is an illuminating example of a central difficulty in the literature of our epoch. The era of conflict between finance capitalism and socialism, between war dictatorship and the people, cannot realistically be portrayed in terms of an illusion concerning the past. This era cannot be understood or depicted from the point of view of "the good old days" when life was presumably more equable and simple. The reason why so many writers "crawl" in the third act of a play or in the last half of a novel is that they fear to confront the implications of their own materials. The movement of our time, concealed by a thousand lies and hypocrisies, is forward toward socialism, and the survival of essential human values, as well as of literature itself, depends ultimately on the success of that movement. In his moments of keenest penetration, Sherwood Anderson knew this. And a younger generation of writers, confronted again with war and repression, this time even more bloody and bitter, look forward toward a higher level of society in which the tyrannies Anderson described will be an incredible memory.

SAMUEL SILLEN.

Two Babbitts

H. M. PULHAM, ESQUIRE, by John P. Marquand.  
Little Brown and Co., \$2.50.

PERHAPS TIMOTHY WAS, by Thomas Broughton.  
Modern Age Books. \$2.

THE first of these volumes is written by the Pulitzer Prize winner of 1938 and is the March Book-of-the-Month Club selection. The second is frankly blurb-ed as "light reading." Amazingly they come together out of their distant categories to demonstrate that the distinction between the serious and the trivial has almost lost its meaning in current fiction. Mr. Marquand's book presumably inherits the novel's ponderable responsibilities of ordering experience, while Mr. Broughton's can be permitted the slight frothy privileges of an aphrodisiac cocktail. But this oddly yoked pair are really two of a kind.

Both are "private lives" of the American businessman. H. M. Pulham and Timothy Martin might even have gone to Harvard together, married similar DAR's and worked at identical executive desks. Together they represent two variants of the ruling-class male. Mr. Marquand's H. M. Pulham meets us, in his diffident first-person singular, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his class at Harvard. He "looks back," as the Class Book will say, over those arid years so similar to those of his classmates—canalized into the iron pattern of his bourgeois heritage. His friend, Bill King, once remarked that any life truly told is a great story. But this

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life of an Esquire is almost as boring in the telling as in the living. We can predict that this son of Boston brahmins will be broken from the mold only momentarily—by the war or by an early love affair with a clever New York girl. After that he must return to the predestined DAR, the town house and the country home, the squash clubs, the bumping tournaments, the North Shore summers, the “old gang” of decayed college athletes. He returns in spirit to the only home his type can know—the effete school-memories of businessmen in their middle forties. There is something altogether so sad about this childish haven of the heart that Mr. Marquand gains at least a certain pity if not a tragic interest for the priggish Pulhams, dreaming forever of some careless Groton of rich schoolboys, with its disinterested team-play, its ever omniscient headmasters.

The simple sequence of life, like the organic process of a disease, conveys a sense of form. And H. M. Pulham, much more than Santayana's odd hero, is a last Puritan, a man whose life of conformity is played out on an invisible screen, letter-perfect in prediction. But the novel lacks a sustaining critical conviction to carry its drab subject out of his Class-Book picture, lacks even the caricatured rhythms of Lewis' *Babbitt*. Somehow the author has succeeded too well in communicating the character's insensibility—the autobiographical style with its deliberately conventional phrasing leaves us no outer vantage from which to judge him. Real form, form of the compelling imagination the book has not. We are never allowed to hear the complex chords of social action that surround this human being, merely the muted theme of a useless personal life. And this is a minor tragedy, after all, in this world of terrible frustrations.

Timothy of *Perhaps Timothy Was* is a different sort. Obeying the outward conventions he is thoroughly disreputable in personal life. There is something unbelievably atavistic about that absolute conformist, H. M. Pulham. One imagines that the urbane Timothy with his three extra-marital redheads and his cynical reflections on sex is more in the actual top hat manner. Destiny in the form of a jealous husband, a murder, a suicide and



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the traditional punishment of blindness finally undoes him. After which, you discover that you've passed that presumptive idle hour.

The *moral structure*, the level of seriousness, like the subject matter, is identical in these two books. Both, for instance, are largely preoccupied with the problem of adultery. For Mr. Pulham it is a serious temptation, since his single memorable emotional experience has been a brief love affair with a girl outside his sphere. His wife and his best friend attempt to solve their ennui by adultery—Bill King, the friend, is a sort of Timothy Martin, and H. M. Pulham is ponderously sentimental about his self-denial, after the fashion of the last century. Neither book is concerned with what is properly significant to a modern mind and even actually most important to the hardheaded Pulhams and Timothys of real life—those compulsions, vast as oceans, that sweep our society. MILLCENT LANG.

### Brief Reviews

ENGLAND'S HOUR, by Vera Brittain. Macmillan. \$2.50.

VERA BRITTAİN is one of those "pacifists" who, it has been well put, clamor for peace when the bourgeoisie needs peace, and supports war when it needs war. This is the essence of her book, although it pretends to be only ". . . a close-up study of the past fifteen months as experienced by a civilian." Now and then Miss Brittain dares to criticize Britain's past, but she only does so, it seems, in order to defend the war in a more "unbiased" way. Frequently she searches for the causes of the great catastrophe which has descended on the English people, and each time she passes by the Cliveden set, Munich, the tory anti-Soviet policy, and fastens the war guilt on the people: they were "too easily satisfied," and they lacked "spiritual qualities."

SHORT DAYS AGO, by Renee Brand. Farrar & Rinehart. \$2.

THIS is an intense, highly emotional account of a little group of refugees caught in a 'no man's land' between Germany and an unnamed border. They live in a barren field, sleeping in holes dug in the frozen ground, fed by the kindness of villagers into whose country they are not permitted to pass. Birth, death, love, and suffering are their lot, until the Nazis come on the march, and drive these people ahead of them into an unknown but certainly even more terrible future.

It is a ghastly picture. But all of the characters (among whom there are no workers) and Miss Brand herself do not understand what has befallen them; as far as the author is concerned, this thing simply "happened," and there is no attempt at insight or understanding. The story leaves the reader angry, but does not point the finger of accusation toward those responsible for the tragedy.

## Pepe le Moko

The forerunner to Walter Wanger's "Algiers" came from Paris. Hollywood should have learned more from it than it did. Joy Davidman also reviews "Cheers for Miss Bishop."

LIKE so many French films, *Pepe le Moko* sees human beings as solitary figures in a hostile universe. Its characters are betrayed by petty circumstance and their own weaknesses. This romantic attitude seems a little trivial today, when betrayals are bigger and better; nevertheless the direction and acting of the film give it tragic power. Pepe, the thief, impregnable as long as he stays in the native quarter of Algiers, is led by homesickness and love of a girl from home into coming out where the police can get him. His story is not, however, just another story of a man who gave all for love. The emphasis is on Pepe's rebellion against the trap in which he is caught, and Gaby, to him, is a symbol of escape; while Gaby, the pampered mistress of a repulsive millionaire, sees in Pepe an escape from her own love of luxury.

This film, made some years ago, was bought by Hollywood's Walter Wanger and copied scene for scene in *Algiers*. Although smeared with glamour and Hedy Lamarr, *Algiers* was not bad; the French original, suppressed until now to avoid odorous comparisons, is very good. The forthrightness and unsentimentality of its characterizations keep it from descending to melodrama, and its points are made effortlessly.

Pepe himself, the cocky, doomed thief, is admirably played by Jean Gabin, an actor who provokes superlatives. He is perhaps the only heart-flutterer in the business who never relies on charm or good looks, who has no affectations, who consents to be an ordinary human being. As Pepe, he is human and tragic. Mireille Balin, the Gaby, is hardly less gorgeous than Lamarr and far more adroit. Her cynical cocotte, on the make and not very happy about it, avoids the sentimentality into which it could easily have fallen. And the patient, understanding Inspector of Police is a little brother of the Inspector in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*.

Only the photography and lighting of the film fall somewhat below those of its Hollywood copy, the production of which obviously cost far more. Technically, however, *Pepe le Moko* is competent enough. As a study of human motives it is much more than that.

DESCENDING TO THE RIDICULOUS, we encounter *Andy Hardy's Private Secretary*. This is the eleventh or so in the Hardy series; if you look closely you can tell it from the others. Perhaps there are small improvements, for the plot is not as incredible as usual, and there are no excursions to the White House and the Stork Club. Our hero remains a

smalltown boy trying to pass his final examinations. We wouldn't care if he *never* graduated from high school.

Mickey Rooney's coy version of adolescence has its amusing moments, though his school-teacher ought to make him write the word "restraint" 500 times. Lewis Stone is still judicial as the judge, and Ian Hunter, with a great waste of talent, makes the film pleasanter. A new juvenile soprano, Kathryn Grayson, contributes a voice like a piccolo. The picture's homely sentiments, however, are anything but new.

THIS WEEK the Radio City Music Hall is paved with good intentions. In *Cheers for Miss Bishop* it has a picture intelligently written, acted, directed; a tender study of a woman's frustrated loves; and even an eloquent and timely plea in defense of our free colleges. What it has not, unfortunately, is what *Cheers for Miss Bishop* pretends to give: an honest study of a school teacher's life.

Miss Bishop and Mr. Chips are not quite identical. True, Miss Bishop teaches in a democratic American college instead of in an upper-class English "public" school, and her pupils don't throw things. True, that subversive document, the Declaration of Independence, is recited from memory by a little German girl in the film's most moving scene. But when it comes to applying the principles so glibly stated, to the daily life of a college, Midwestern University might just as well be Eton with coeds. The only student problems in the entire film are an accusation of cheat-

ing and the vexed question of whether or not to elope with a married man.

The picture has much to recommend it, taken solely as the romantic story of Miss Bishop. She is the usual old-maid school teacher, all of whose pupils grow up to be President. The most irritating thing in the film is its bland assumption that her school teaching is a mere second best; poor thing, she couldn't nail her men. But Martha Scott's restrained and tender portrait of Miss Bishop makes two-thirds of the film a delight. Unfortunately, the effect of her performance is weakened by a lame ending—the usual surprise farewell banquet to the retiring teacher, with all her alumni present. The food at that banquet must be getting pretty stale after all the films it's been through.

THERE IS SUSPENSE enough in *The Mad Doctor*, Basil Rathbone's latest fiendishness. To Hollywood a scientist is either Muni or loony, and the spectacle of Basil stalking his victim pantherishly through the New York Public Library (of all places!) will give you the creeps. Unfortunately, the film's sense is not equal to its suspense. Beginning in the orthodox manner with a wild thunderstorm and Mr. Rathbone murdering his wife, it unfolds, rather sentimentally and incoherently, a sad tale of a homicidal maniac who tries vainly to reform when he falls in love. Rathbone's performance is uneven; he was a much better psychopath in the brilliant *Love from a Stranger* of a few years ago. Ellen Drew is so-so as the suicidal heroine. There is one really magnificent piece of acting, however; Martin Kosleck as the Second Murderer, catlike and quiet.

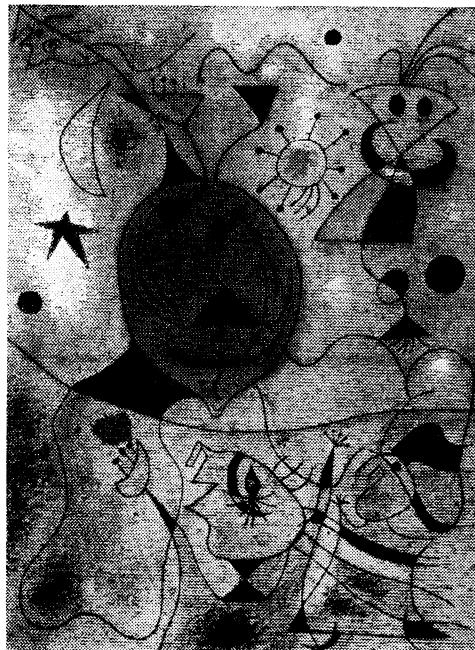
JOY DAVIDMAN.

## Oboler Obliges

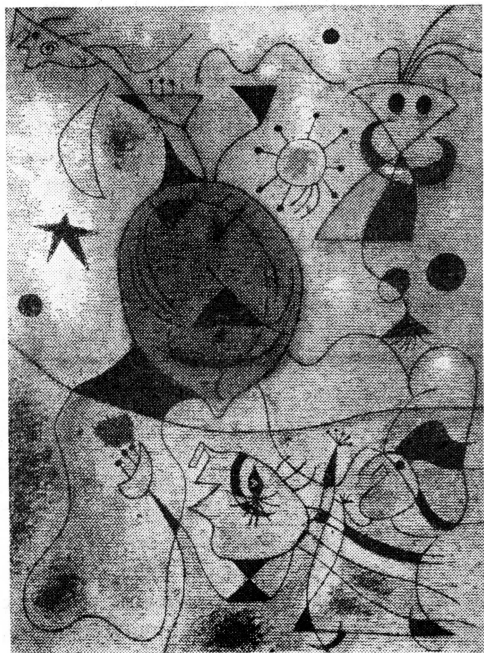
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Last March on one of his NBC sustaining programs, writer Arch Oboler demonstrated how the force of radio drama can be turned to progressive ends. He wrote and produced a masterful adaptation of the Dalton Trumbo novel, *Johnny Got His Gun*, with James



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Cagney in the lead. That anti-war play drew the most enthusiastic response from listeners that any radio drama ever received.

Previous to that, Oboler had already established himself as one of the most talented writers developed by radio. Though he was never the major dramatist that some touted him to be, in relation to the usual run of radio writing, his work was impressive. For it was intelligent and imaginative; it dealt with ideas of some substance. His dialogue was human, and he experimented in production techniques. He showed a facility for using dialogue, sound, and music in a way that took advantage of radio's qualities as a dramatic medium. His thinking, however, was usually superficial. And he had a disturbing tendency to resolve his dramatic problems in terms of pulp magazine fantasy or feeble allegory.

Several of Oboler's pre-*Johnny Got His Gun* scripts were anti-fascist. Oboler's anti-fascism was honest, but it was superficial, and when time moved on, Oboler straggled behind. Like some others, Oboler's politics were grounded largely on the "crazy, bad man" theory of fascism. As a result, he has become a victim of the very forces he thinks he is fighting. I need only give two examples of how fast Oboler has moved—in the wrong direction—from last March to this March.

After the broadcast of *Johnny Got His Gun* there were many requests from organizations and individuals for a recording of the program. Such a recording could have been an effective anti-war weapon. One of the major record companies finally arranged to distribute records of the broadcast in album form. But Oboler got caught up in the hysteria that was blown up after the Fall of France. He refused to allow the recordings to be released. He is reported to have explained that he was afraid that distribution of *Johnny Got His Gun* would now be inopportune. Significant, too, was the omission of the *Johnny . . .* script from the collection of Oboler's radio plays which was published several months ago.

Now, Oboler is back in New York planning to write and direct a super-colossal dramatic series in the interests of "defense." What that series will be like is indicated by the incident of the *Johnny . . .* records; and from the following excerpt from an article on Oboler in last week's *Time*, previewing his projected defense dramas:

"Typical plot he has in mind: a man and wife live all by themselves in an apartment, refusing to speak to other inhabitants. Then, a gangster moves in, and the man and wife discover they can't isolate themselves from others. 'See,' he says, 'That's like American isolationists, and the gangster could be Hitler.' The rest of the series is along the same lines."

It is as simple as all that to Oboler; no understanding and therefore no death. It moves neatly into line with what Archibald MacLeish would like Americans to think about the war. Perhaps sometime Remington Arms will become the program's sponsor.

LOYD E. TRENT.

**An**  
**Explanation**

NEW MASSES regrets the inconvenience and annoyance caused our hundreds of friends by the sudden cancellation of the preview showing of "Native Son" last Friday night.

OUR OFFICE was not informed of the decision of the producers until 2 P.M. on the day of the scheduled performance and therefore could not inform our readers in time. We did phone as many as we could reach and notices of the cancellation were placed in the afternoon papers by the theatre management.

THE PERFORMANCE was cancelled because the late arrival of the scenery made it impossible for the stage hands to learn how to manipulate it in time. In the opinion of the producers, the long waits for scenery changes would have ruined the performance.

TICKETS FOR March 14th may be exchanged at the St. James Theatre box-office immediately for any performance except Saturdays and Sundays.

THOSE WHO have not yet purchased tickets for "Native Son" and would like to see it under New Masses auspices may get their tickets for the performance of Friday, March 28th, by writing or phoning New Masses. There are some choice locations available at \$1.65 and \$2.20.

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**MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE WEEK'S NEWS.** by A. B. Magil, New Masses editor, Sunday, March 23rd, 8:30 P.M. Workers School, 50 East 13 Street. Admission 25 cents.

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## "LEAVING COW WITH NEIGHBOR,"

Writes Iowa Farmer,

Coming to People's Meeting, April 5

### "Dear Jim:

I expect to see you and every other New Yorker at the opening session of the **AMERICAN PEOPLE'S MEETING**, APRIL 5, at Tri-Boro Stadium (Randall's Island). I'm leaving the cows with Thomp-sons to come; Lil is stop- ping off at Butte to leave her kids with Mom and Jeff is bringing several guys from the refinery in El Paso for all the doings. We hear that **PAUL ROBESON'S** singing and that Rev. John B. Thompson plus a lot of other important people will be speaking.

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