

PICASSO TALKS OF ART AND POLITICS

by Pfc. JEROME SECKLER

MARCH 13
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NEW MASSES

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MAURICE THOREZ:

WHAT FRANCE FACES

BRITONS LINE UP FOR YALTA

A CABLE FROM LONDON

by **JOSEPH NORTH**

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: WLB's Garrison, by Virginia Gardner; Alexei Tolstoy, by Dorothy Brewster; Mexico City Conference, by The Editors; Hollywood's Town Meeting, by Marjorie De Armand.

BETWEEN OURSELVES

A WAG recently remarked that if there were no Polish issue, the reactionaries would invent one. By which he meant, of course, that its existence served admirably their purpose of trying to unravel the fabric of unity the United Nations have knit so firmly. In the same sense, but from an opposite point of view, if there were no NEW MASSES, such a magazine would have to be created. This conclusion refers not only to the quality of the magazine, but to the fact that it is the only weekly journal in America that presents the Marxist outlook on world events. That is to say, it is a progressive weekly with a special point of view. You may well ask why such a special magazine is needed today, since the keynote of all democratic publications is unity on an anti-fascist basis.

One example of news interpretation in recent weeks will serve as an answer. When Senator Vandenberg made his speech obliquely attacking our British and Soviet allies and proposing that all European settlements be subject to veto after the war, all the liberal publications and commentators, i.e., those who support Roosevelt and the war, hailed the Michigan Senator as a political savant. The *Nation*, *New Republic*, the *Post*, *PM*, even Samuel Grafton, who usually recognizes a goldbrick when he sees one, were taken in. Only NEW MASSES (and the *Daily Worker*) disagreed. In an editorial of January 23 we pointed out the reasons why we felt that the Vandenberg proposal was dangerous. Four weeks later, after the Yalta conference, I. F. Stone conceded in the *Nation*: "This time the leader of the 'but' brigade is Vandenberg. Until the announced results of the Crimea Conference, he seemed to offer a bridge, however shaky, between the old isolationism and world cooperation. But the final settlement of the Polish question at Yalta brings fully into view the most treacherous aspects of the Vandenberg proposal." And the *New York Times* and other papers, by endorsing the Yalta decisions, in effect repudiated their prior endorsement of Vandenberg. Now NEW MASSES has no clairvoyants on its staff, nor are we blessed with special dispensations from the inner rooms of the mighty. But by applying Marxist principles to the complex problems of today we are able to steer a steady course even when mirages beckon.

A NOTHER factor that makes us unique is the different sort of publisher we have. Other papers reflect the opinions of private owners who are interested in making money and/or purveying ideas which may or may not accord with the national interest—too often they don't. If the publisher should change his mind overnight, his editors will reflect the change. The

publisher feels no particular responsibility to his readers.

NEW MASSES, on the other hand, is published by our readers. We mean just that. Our readers created this magazine, they have kept it alive all these years, and we have no interests aside from theirs. Our political concerns are defined by the political and social needs of our readers and the best way of securing them. We can therefore be moved by no personal whims, indulgences and editorial skylarking. That is what we mean when we say the editors are merely the magazine's trustees.

Our total revenue, with the negligible exception of our advertising revenue, comes from those who read us. In only one major respect do we behave like other publications. When finances are needed, we go to our publisher for the wherewithal. Hence our annual appeals for funds. We dislike these fund drives as much as you do, but they represent the penalty we pay for being different. In the past, such drives used to occupy your attention and ours for far too long a period. But there is too

much happening, too much to write about, for long financial campaigns. We want to get the business over with and get on to the more pertinent matter of discussing the issues of the day. That is why we asked your cooperation for reaching the best part of our \$50,000 goal by the end of February. Your answer to date has been good—some \$15,000 in cash and pledges—but the people who responded represent less than five percent of our circulation. Therefore ninety-five of every hundred who read this have not done anything about it—which, on the basis of percentages, probably means you.

The editors want to get out the best magazine they can. You as publisher should see to it that they have every help in doing so. Right now, it means filling out the blank on page 25, sending in your contribution or pledge and confirming your position as boss. We have many plans that we would like to put into effect, but we must whittle down our deficit. In addition, we want to initiate regular service between us and a number of European political and literary men, organize a campaign for new readers, and be in a position to invite many new writers to our pages. We can do all that if you act promptly.

J. F.

NEW MASSES ESTABLISHED 1911

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Two weeks' notice is requested for change of address. Notifications sent to NEW MASSES rather than the Post office will give the best results. Vol. LIV, No. 11. Published weekly by THE NEW MASSES, INC., 104 East Ninth Street, New York 3, N. Y. Copyright 1944, THE NEW MASSES, INC. Reg. U. S. Patent Office. Washington Office, 954 National Press Bldg. Drawings and text may not be reprinted without permission. Entered as second-class matter, June 23, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies 15 cents. Subscriptions \$5.00 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico; six months \$2.75; three months \$1.50. Foreign, \$6.00 a year; six months \$3.25; three months, \$1.75. In Canada \$6.00 a year, \$3.50 for six months, U. S. money; single copies in Canada 20c Canadian money. NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers and artists. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by stamped, addressed envelope.

WHAT FRANCE FACES

By MAURICE THOREZ

THE simultaneous recognition by the three greatest states of the anti-Hitler coalition—the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union—of the Provisional Government of the French Republic; the admission of the representatives of France to the European Advisory Commission; and finally the signing at Moscow of the Franco-Soviet treaty of alliance and mutual assistance—these are manifestations of friendship which have touched the hearts of the French people.

It is no small thing for the people of France, whose sons have made so many sacrifices in the cause of liberty, in the underground and in the liberation battles, to see themselves treated by their allies as a great people. Yet this legitimate satisfaction does not cause the French people to lose sight of the fact that numerous tasks will demand all their ardor if they are to regain the summits of greatness in all spheres—military, economic, political, moral and cultural. France stands before an enormous task of reorganization, construction and regeneration.

Three great problems await solution. First, the problem of ever-increasing participation by France in the war, and of the building up of a powerful French army; second, the problem of production; third, the problems of internal policy and of democracy.

We consider that the essential task of the hour is to wage war; to wage war at the side of our allies for the crushing of Hitlerism and the triumph of democracy. Indeed, without victory over the Hitlerite barbarians it is not possible to envisage for France, or for the world, an era of security, an era of civilization that will flourish with the upsurge of democratic institutions. For this, we must wage war; but to wage war we must first have a great French army: an army which will take an active part in the decisive battles, and which tomorrow will be able to protect the security and guarantee the independence of France.

Is the formation of this French army possible? Obviously, yes. France pos-

sesses all the elements for its creation. We have the soldiers who are returning from Africa and the soldiers of the French Forces of the Interior. It is a matter of bringing them together under a unified command. But the numerical effectives of these troops are absolutely insufficient. We need to enlarge them through the mobilization of several age groups, and thereby raise forty, sixty, even eighty divisions.

Certain people are opposed to the conception of a mass army. Their erroneous conception of a professional army, an army of specialists, is an outworn conception, contradicted by the whole experience of the war. What we need is a powerful, national, Republican army.

There are some who object: "We lack cadres, we lack arms." These arguments do not hold water. There is no lack of cadres, including those who for a time allowed themselves to be taken in by Petain, and who only ask for the chance to redeem themselves by doing their full duty towards France and the Republic. Moreover, we have the young men who have won their stripes and proved their aptitude for command in the missions of the underground and in the operations at the time of the Allied landing and of the national insurrection.

It is easy to find the right solution to this problem. It would be facilitated by unifying the army of the nation from the bottom 'up and from the top down, and by assuring everywhere unity of command. Yet this solution encounters many obstacles of red tape and hostility.

THERE remains the question of arms and equipment: it is not insoluble. On the contrary. In the first place our English and American allies have each proclaimed their readiness to provide us with the necessary arms. We have no reason to doubt their word. It appears, moreover, that the latest events on the western German front will have the effect of increasing deliveries of war materials to our country.

Second, we can and must bend all our energies to getting our factories into

production again, particularly our war factories. Unquestionably our national economy is gravely impaired. That is the consequence of Hitlerite pillage and Vichy treason. But one fact strikes even the least informed: many plants which worked during the war for the Germans have stopped or been slowed down since the liberation, when it has become a matter of producing for our fighting men. In other words, the difficulties are not solely economic. There is inertia, bureaucracy and sabotage on the part of men who were yesterday responsible for our country's disaster, and who today seek to block all economic revival.

The workers, the engineers, the technicians are demonstrating their initiative. Urged on by the trade unions of the General Confederation of Labor, the workers have done wonders in all spheres of production and of transport. But they are not helped, encouraged or rewarded. The same elements of reaction and disorder, which yesterday wallowed in the swamp of collaboration, too often still occupy commanding positions in the administration and on committees which have yet to be cleansed.

It is not surprising that there is sabotage, since Vichy's system of organization committees and of regional organs has been preserved practically intact. One of the conditions of economic revival and of French rebirth is that of proceeding with a real cleansing of all branches and levels of administration, tracking down saboteurs, traitors and agents of the enemy and bringing them before the regular tribunals. That is not being done. Those who are most guilty have not yet been judged or, when they are, they enjoy an impermissible clemency. This creates an undeniable uneasiness.

It is in the sectors of production and supplies that the agents of the enemy are particularly numerous. This increases greatly the difficulties of the workers, who for their part are demonstrating the utmost patriotic understanding and devotion.

The people of France demand that the government render the saboteurs and

agents of the enemy incapable of further ill-doing. Among the legitimate and essential measures demanded by all the organizations and parties of the Resistance, from the group of Louis Marin to the Communists, are the following: confiscation of the enterprises and property of those who voluntarily placed themselves at the service of the enemy during the occupation; and the requisition of those enterprises which refuse to contribute to the effort of production for the needs of national defense, or which sabotage that effort.

These are not measures of socialism, but simply measures of a democratic character whose application would make it possible to further the war effort and aid the nation, which stands before a task that is arduous, difficult, immense. For France must actively effect her liberation, prosecute the war at the side of her allies, work for her full rebirth, and assure for herself in the family of democratic nations a position of the first rank.

The French Communist Party declares that this cannot be the task of a single party, nor of a few statesmen. It is the task of millions of Frenchmen firmly united under the tricolor banner of the French Republic. Hence national union is more than ever necessary to apply the program of the Resistance, worked out in the underground and approved by General De Gaulle: a program which provides for the return to the nation of the monopolies, the heads of which, moreover, are in most cases guilty of treason.

Certainly, hidden sinister forces are at work seeking to sow division among patriots, and to weaken the unity of the Resistance movement, in order to gain time and to disrupt our new, democratic life. To this fatal policy of division the French Communist Party, whose Central Committee met January 21 to 23, counterposes its policy of union, summed up in these three words: "*S'Unir—Combattre—Travailler!*" (Unite—Fight—Work!)

This policy was dealt with and developed in my report as general secretary of the Party; in the speeches of Jacques Duclos and Andre Marty, secretaries of the Party; in the contributions of Georges Cogniot, dealing with secular education, and of Waldeck Rochet on the defense of the peasants against all attempts to set the countryside against the cities.

In order to draw closer the bonds of unity among the workers, and to agree

(Continued on page 22)

PICASSO EXPLAINS

By Pfc. JEROME SECKLER

Paris (by mail).

FOR the past ten years my friends and I had discussed, analyzed and re-hashed Picasso to the point of exasperation. I say exasperation because very simply it was just that. The only conclusion we could ever arrive at was that Picasso, in his various so-called "periods," quite accurately reflected the very hectic contradictions of the times, but only reflected them, never painting anything to increase one's understanding of these times. Various artists and critics who make their living by putting labels on people identified him with a wide variety of schools—surrealist, classicist, abstractionist, exhibitionist and even tortionist. But beyond this lot of fancy nonsense, these people never did explain Picasso. He remained an enigma.

Then came the bombshell. In the midst of the last agonized hours of Loyalist Spain Picasso painted his Guernica mural, and with this mural emerged as a powerful and penetrating painter of social protest. But there was only the Guernica. Up to the time France entered the war there were no echoes in Picasso's painting of the furious protest that had produced the Guernica. Then came France's military disaster and her humiliating occupation by the Germans. Nasty stories circulated about Picasso. That he was living well in Paris under the Germans; that he played ball with the Gestapo, which in return permitted him to paint unmolested. That he was selling the Nazis fakes—works he signed, but which were actually painted by his students. Still another that he was dead. From 1940 until the liberation of Paris, Picasso remained a figure completely surrounded by mystery and obscurity.

Then in October following the liberation came the electrifying news that Picasso had joined the Communist Party.

In that same month liberated Paris held a gigantic exhibition of contemporary French art, one room of which was especially devoted to Picasso—seventy-four paintings and five sculptures, most of them executed during the occupation. The exhibition startled me. It was the Picasso of the Guernica, painting powerfully, painting beautifully, painting of life and hope.

I was so excited by Picasso's work I determined to see him. Through a young French artist who knew him I managed to get his address. At his studio I was told, after a whispered conversation in another room, that Picasso was "not at home." His secretary explained, "Picasso has not painted for two months what with all that was happening, and now he wants to settle down and do some work." But finally my young artist friend arranged a meeting for me, and at 11:30 of a Saturday morning I arrived at his studio, was ushered in and told to wait.

Picasso occupies the top two floors of a definitely unpretentious place, a four-story building close to the Seine. To get up to his studio one enters one of the holes in the wall that pass for doorways and climbs three flights up a narrow winding stairway with bare walls and worn wooden steps. This has been his home and his studio for the past eight years. You enter directly into one of the studios, a room with several easels, paintings, books—without order. As I waited I noticed one of his recent paintings on an easel, of a metal pitcher on a table. Tacked above the painting was a small pencil sketch of the composition, which the painting duplicated down to the last line and detail. Though it was only a quick sketch, he had followed it so closely that when he crossed lines at the corner of a table he also crossed them in the painting.

I asked his secretary if Picasso had had trouble with the Germans. "Like everyone," he said, "we had hard times." Picasso was not permitted to exhibit. Once the Gestapo came and accused Picasso of being in reality a man called Leipzig. Picasso simply insisted, "No, I am Picasso, that's all." The Germans did not bother him after that, but they kept a close watch on him at all times. Nevertheless, Picasso maintained a close contact with the underground resistance movement.

AFTER about ten minutes, Picasso came down from the upstairs studio, and approached me directly. He gave me a quick glance, looked me squarely in the eyes. He was dressed in a light grey

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business suit, a blue cotton shirt and tie, a bright yellow handkerchief in his breast pocket—small hands but solid. I introduced myself and Picasso offered me his hand immediately. He had a warm, sincere smile, and spoke without restraint, which put me at once at ease.

I explained that I had always been interested in his work, but that he had always puzzled me, and how I felt suddenly at his recent exhibition that I understood what he was trying to say. I wanted to know him personally, and to ask him if my analyses of his paintings were correct, and if they were, to write about them for America. Then I described for Picasso my interpretation of his painting, "The Sailor," which I had seen at the Liberation Salon. I said I thought it to be a self-portrait—the sailor's suit, the net, the red butterfly showing Picasso as a person seeking a solution to the problem of the times, trying to find a better world—the sailor's garb being an indication of an active participation in this effort. He listened intently and finally said, "Yes, it's me, but I did not mean it to have any political significance at all."

I asked why he painted himself as a sailor. "Because," he answered, "I always wear a sailor shirt. See?" He opened up his shirt and pulled at his underwear—it was white with blue stripes!

"But what of the red butterfly?" I asked. "Didn't you deliberately make it red because of its political significance?"

"Not particularly," he replied. "If it has any, it was in my subconscious!"

"But," I insisted, "it must have a definite meaning for you whether you say so or not. What's in your subconscious is a result of your conscious thinking. There is no escape from reality."

He looked at me for a second and said, "Yes, it's possible and normal."

Picasso then asked if I were a writer. I told him the truth—I was not a writer, had never written before. That by vocation I worked in lumber. I was a painter too, but only by avocation, because I had to make a living. Picasso laughed and said, "Yes, I understand." Then I asked if I had his consent to write an article about him.

"Yes," he said, and then added, "For which paper?"

I told him the *NEW MASSES*. He smiled and answered, "Yes, I know it."

He looked at the open door. There were several people waiting for him. "Let's go upstairs to the studio for a moment," he said. So we climbed the stairs to the large studio where he ac-



All photographs courtesy Marc Vaux

"The Bull and the Lamp," oil by Picasso.

tually does his painting. The room was neat and clean. It didn't have the dusty, helter-skelter appearance of the room downstairs.

I told Picasso that many people were saying that now, with his new political affiliations, he had become a leader in culture and politics for the people, that his influence for progress could be tremendous. Picasso nodded seriously and said, "Yes, I realize it." I mentioned how we had often discussed him back in New York, especially the *Guernica* mural (now on loan to the Museum of Modern Art in New York). I talked about the significance of the bull, the horse, the hands with the lifelines, etc., and the origin of the symbols in Spanish mythology. Picasso kept nodding his head as I spoke. "Yes," he said, "the bull there represents brutality, the horse the people. Yes, there I used symbolism, but not in the others."

I EXPLAINED my interpretation of two of his paintings at the exhibition, one of a bull, a lamp, palette and book. The bull, I said, must represent fascism, the lamp, by its powerful glow, the palette and book all represented culture and freedom—the things we're fighting for—the painting showing the fierce struggle going on between the two.

"No," said Picasso, "the bull is not fascism, but it is brutality and darkness."

I mentioned that now we look forward to a perhaps changed and more simple and clearly understood symbolism within his very personal idiom.

"My work is not symbolic," he answered. "Only the *Guernica* mural is symbolic. But in the case of the mural, that is allegoric. That's the reason I've used the horse, the bull and so on. The mural is for the definite expression and solution of a problem and that is why I used symbolism."

"Some people," he continued, "call my work for a period 'surrealism.' I am not a surrealist. I have never been out of reality. I have always been in the essence of reality [literally the 'real of reality']. If someone wished to express war it might be more elegant and literary to make a bow and arrow because that is more esthetic, but for me, if I want to express war, I'll use a machine-gun! Now is the time in this period of changes and revolution to use a revolutionary manner of painting and not to paint like before." He then stared straight into my eyes and asked, "*Vous me croirez?*" (Do you believe me?)

I told him I understood many of his paintings at the exhibition, but that quite a few I could not figure out for myself at all. I turned to a painting of a nude and a musician that had been in the October Salon, set up against the wall to my left. It was a large distorted canvas, about five by seven feet. "For instance this," I said, "I can't understand at all."

"It's simply a nude and a musician," he replied. "I painted it for myself. When you look at a nude made by someone else, he uses the traditional manner to express the form, and for the people that represents a nude. But for me, I use

a revolutionary expression. In this painting there is no abstract significance. It's simply a nude and a musician."

I asked, "Why do you paint in such a way that your expression is so difficult for people to understand?"

"I paint this way," he replied, "because it's a result of my thought. I have worked for years to obtain this result and if I make a step backwards, [as he spoke he actually took a step back] it will be an offense to people [the French was just that, *offense*] because that is a result of my thought. I can't use an ordinary manner just to have the satisfaction of being understood. I don't want to go down to a lower level.

"You're a painter," he continued; "you understand it's quite impossible to explain why you do this or that. I express myself through painting and I can't explain through words. I can't explain why I did it that way. For me, if I sketch a little table," he grabbed a little table just alongside to illustrate, "I see every detail. I see the size, the thickness, and I translate it in my own way." He waved a hand at a big painting of a chair at the other end of the room (it had also been in the Liberation Salon), and explained, "You see how I do it."

"It's funny," he went on, "because people see in painting things you didn't put in—they make embroidery on the subject. But it doesn't matter, because if they saw that, it's stimulating—and the essence of what they saw is really in the painting."

I asked Picasso when I could see him again, and he said he would be glad to see me any time I wished. We shook hands and I left.

I FOUND it difficult to visit Picasso again as promptly as I wished, but on a Saturday morning some weeks later I paid him a second call. Picasso received me in his bedroom where, when I entered, I could hear him discussing political problems to be solved within the unity of the Allies with several friends. As soon as he saw me he came over, smilingly shook hands and greeted me, "*Bon jour! Ca va bien?*" Again he was so simple and sincere that I felt as though I had

known him for years. He apologized for receiving me in his bedroom. "I've had to organize myself in this little room," he said, "with my dog, my papers, my drawings, my bed, because I was freezing downstairs." His hands as usual were expressively accompanying his words, like those of an orchestra conductor's. For a small room, it certainly was crammed full. The unmade bed, several bureaux, a slanting drawing table and a large gentle-eyed dog all revolved about a little coal stove, capped by a pot of water. Scattered on the bed and table were seven or eight large etchings in color which he had just finished—with bright reds, blues and yellows laid down in mass. On the bed also were five or six newspapers, including *L'Humanite*. Resting on a bureau on the wall was an etched zinc plate with two prints from it, of a lemon and a stemmed wine glass, done in the same beautiful bright colors. Over another bureau was an old photograph of a Reubens—a man and woman bursting with love, very richly and sensitively done. On another wall was a small Corot landscape.

I brought out my report of our first interview and we went over it together. The article being in English, I had to translate into French. Everything was agreeable to him, but in translating what he had said about the bull, palette and lamp painting, I must have slipped in my French and he misunderstood me, think-

ing I was quoting him as saying the bull represented fascism.

"No," he protested, "it doesn't represent fascism."

I explained what he had said was that it did not represent fascism but that it did represent darkness and brutality. "But that's just the point," I said. "You make a distinction between the two. But what distinction can there be? You know and the people of the world know the two are the same, that wherever fascism has gone there is darkness and brutality, death and destruction. There is no distinction."

Picasso shook his head as I spoke. "Yes," he said, "you are right, but I did not try consciously to show that in my painting. If you interpret it that way then you are correct, but still it wasn't my idea to present it that way."

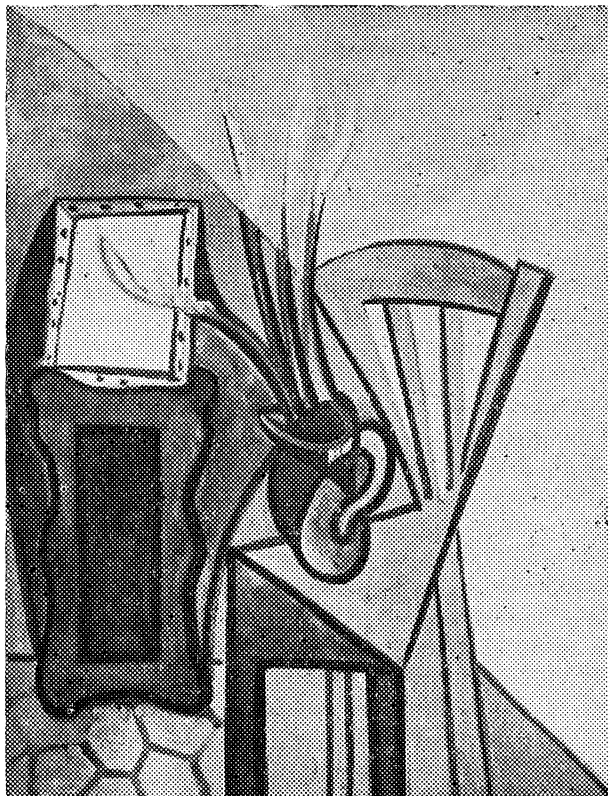
"But," I insisted, "you do think about and feel deeply these things that are affecting the world. You recognize that what is in your subconscious is a result of your contact with life, and your thoughts and reactions to it. It couldn't be merely accidental that you used precisely these particular objects and presented them in a particular way. The political significance of these things is there whether you consciously thought of it or not."

"Yes," he answered, "what you say is very true, but I don't know why I used those particular objects. They don't represent anything in particular. The bull is a bull, the palette a palette and the lamp is a lamp. That's all. But there is definitely no political connection there for me. Darkness and brutality, yes, but not fascism."

He motioned to the color etching of the glass and lemon. "There," he said, "is a glass and a lemon, its shapes and colors—reds, blues, yellows. Can you see any political significance in that?"

"Simply as objects," I said, "no."

"Well," he continued, "it's the same with the bull, the palette and lamp." He looked earnestly at me and went on, "If I were a chemist, Communist or fascist—if I obtain in my mixture a red liquid it doesn't mean that I am expressing Communist propaganda, does it? If I paint a hammer and sickle people may think it's a representation of Communism, but for me it's only a hammer and sickle. I just want to reproduce the objects for what they are and not for what they mean. If you give a meaning to certain things in my paintings it may be very true, but it was not my idea to give this meaning. What ideas and conclu-



Oil painting of a chair, by Picasso.

sions you have got I obtained too, but instinctively, unconsciously. I make a painting for the painting. I paint the objects for what they are. It's in my subconscious. When people look at it each person gets perhaps a different meaning from it, from what each sees in it. I don't think of trying to get any particular meaning across. There is no deliberate sense of propaganda in my painting."

"Except in the Guernica," I suggested.

"Yes," he replied, "except in the Guernica. In that there is a deliberate appeal to people, a deliberate sense of propaganda."

I PULLED out my cigarettes and we lit up, Picasso smoking his in the ever-present cigarette holder. He took a few puffs meditatively as though waiting for me to say something, then said quietly and simply, "I am a Communist and my painting is Communist painting." He paused for a moment, then went on. "But if I were a shoemaker, Royalist or Communist or anything else, I would not necessarily hammer my shoes in a special way to show my politics."

"And yet," I said, "what a man is and thinks can be deduced from his paintings. But it is not necessary for a socially conscious painter, for instance, to show a scene of Nazi horror or destruction, of a person with blood dripping from the mouth, or a soldier shooting a rifle." I pointed to the small coal stove with the open pot of water on it, and continued, "You can paint that, you can paint a mother and son, or a child, as you did, or a family eating dinner around a table—you can paint the glass and lemon. By its very objects, colors, forms it becomes a beautiful thing, the kind of thing, the kind of beauty we want to surround our lives with, the kind of life we are fighting this war for. Being social beings we think politically whether we intend to or not."

Picasso rested his hand on my shoulder and kept nodding his head vigorously as I spoke, saying, "Yes, yes, that's right, that's so very true."

I told him of the stir his joining the Communist Party had caused in the art world—how the critics, still labelling him "surrealist," hopefully wanted him to continue painting as he had some years before—how they quoted him as saying there was no connection between art and politics.

Picasso laughed and said, "But we know there is a connection, yes?" and



"The Sailor," oil by Picasso.

added smilingly, "but I don't try myself, that's all."

I asked Picasso if my article, and I meant to include what he had just been telling me, had his approval. "Yes," he said, "go ahead with it."

At this point some of his friends drifted over and we discussed some of the trends in American and French painting. Picasso seemed unacquainted with our leading American painters. I mentioned some, including Thomas Benton, but Picasso did not know them or their work.

"That shows the distance between our two countries," said one of Picasso's friends.

"In the United States," I said, "we don't have as many artists as France, but on the whole our artists are more

vigorous, more vital, more concerned with people than the French painters. France has had the same big names in art for the past forty or more years. From what I observed in the exhibition at the *Salon d'Automne*, the younger artists were mostly introspective, concerned mainly with technique and hardly at all with living reality. French art is still concerned with the same techniques and still lifes."

"Yes," Picasso said, "but the Americans are in the stage of the general sense. In France, that is past for us and we are now at the stage of individuality."

By then someone decided it was time for lunch. I thanked Picasso and he told me again to drop around whenever I wanted, and with a warm handshake we said *au revoir*.

BRITONS LINE UP FOR YALTA

By JOSEPH NORTH

London (by cable).

Not all the desperate last-ditch battles are being fought along the Rhine and Oder. I witnessed one here this early English spring day with primroses on sale at all the street corners while in the redoubtable House of Commons a political conflict raged affecting the destiny of Britain's millions. I watched a slim, embittered file of Munichers fall back repulsed from the impregnable Churchillian ramparts. Sitting in the ancient gallery among many uniformed men of our allies—and by chance next to an impassive observer from the London Polish government—I saw a spectacle that made history. The anti-Crimea knights attired in the tarnished armor of the Arciszewski colonels clanked and rattled through the parliamentary fray, but when the battle's din ended, their maimed figures couldn't be found.

The London *Times* headline this morning—"413 to 0"—is an eloquent summary of the House of Commons vote endorsing Crimea, and it is amply symbolic of Britain's will. Not even Captain McEwen's band of "rebel" Tories dared to vote against the Churchill motion for endorsement, though they heroically identified themselves with everything anachronistic in foreign policy and probed what they considered the weak spot in the Yalta agreement—the Polish issue. They adopted the flank attack—and you know their tactics. Half of Poland, they claimed, is being torn from the Motherland, and they questioned the probability of the free elections Yalta promised. But they telegraphed their punch; their motivations proved altogether too apparent. The most objective observers felt as Lord Addison did, who said in the House of Lords, which debated the issue the same day as the Commons, "With regard to Poland the Curzon line was in the main as fair a boundary as could be drawn. This was not another partition of Poland. One couldn't escape the impression that some of the extreme propagandists for the extension of Polish boundaries far to the east, apart from being unacquainted with the population and the ethnographic facts, seemed to be more inspired by hatred of Russia than with enthusiasm for Poland."

The anti-Crimea Tories discovered to their dismay that "the weak spot" con-

cealed reserves of strength, and the rest is history. Anthony Eden and Clement Attlee will go to San Francisco with a unanimous mandate from Britain.

What Churchill sought had been achieved—an overwhelming vote and endorsement to cheer his friends and confound the enemy. Berlin understood that its fond and final plan—division—had been triumphantly frustrated. Its overwhelming frustration here can be credited to a great extent to Churchill's powerful stand, his and Eden's and Attlee's. In the words of the Manchester *Guardian* Churchill's speech was "one of his less oratorical efforts, but one of his best explanatory ones." And the *Guardian* continues, in what might be considered a summary of the press opinion here, "His vigorous declaration of belief in the Soviet government's good faith and his unhesitating defense of the arrangements for the future of Poland which the Yalta conference reached is a sober antidote for all the nightmare of the defeated Nazis so far as they relate to the world's, and not merely the Nazis', future."

If Churchill has been likened to the classic figure of John Bull—stout and dogged—Eden on the floor affords a considerably different picture. Handsome as the traditional Arrow collar ad, a sheaf of notes in hand, he's visibly straining at the leash: nervously Eden gets going against the opponents of unanimity. He never loses his urbanity as he dons and doffs his spectacles, and he has a devastating effect on the opposition. He put the government's case in all its cogency and answered the arguments of the dissident Tories one by one. Suspicion of Russia's motives, he declared, is the eternal trap the Nazis set for the western democracies. To quote the Manchester *Guardian* again, "Is Russia to be believed when she says that she wants a strong, free and independent Poland? That was the question underlying the whole debate." The reply: 396 to twenty-five on the motion for amendment on the Polish question. The *Guardian* continues, "If the result is to be interpreted in one sentence, it is a pledge of faith in Russia. Mr. Harold Nicholson, in an outstanding speech, thought it impertinent even to ask such a question. Stalin, he submitted, has kept all his promises in the letter and the

spirit, and might be regarded as 'about the most reliable man in Europe.'" There was a rustle of approval in the galleries as well as in the pit when Shinwell said, "Question good faith in Russia and there's no hope for the world."

IN A limited sense, however, the anti-Crimea cabal achieved its objective. Its diehard members sought to signal their opposite numbers across the Atlantic that the battle is not finished. I dare say their argument found some reflections in a certain portion of our press. These are the British counterparts of Senator Wheeler and his ilk, and cannot be blinked at. They unfortunately have reserves, and it might be well to spend a few moments evaluating their power.

On the eve of this historic debate Capt. J. H. F. McEwen, M.P., called a secret conference of his anti-Crimea Tories. "Keep it under your hat," he wrote in his conference invitation, which broke into the press despite his precautions. He's a man who has plenty under his top-piece, and his associates likewise carry more there than springtime fancies. Capt. John Helias Finnie McEwen is allied by marriage to one of the great feudal Scottish aristocratic families who were ennobled in the fourteenth century with the right of raising their own cavalry regiments: and he's evidently still engaged in that vocation. It must be mentioned too that Captain McEwen last year became the chairman of the Conservative members of the House, a significant enough post. His political fate now is somewhat in doubt, since he ran counter to the overwhelming majority of his parliamentary associates, and to Winston Churchill. An ardent Chamberlain disciple, he belonged to the pro-Franco United Christian Front Committee during the fascist invasion of Spain. His record includes a furious sniping at Lord Beaverbrook's "unorthodox methods" of reorganizing tank production and a calculated battle against collective security before the war and social security today. His principal followers include Major M. Petherick, a tall, dour Chamberlainite who in 1935 voted against the opposition motion condemning the Hoare-Laval plan to surrender the greater part of Abyssinia to Italy. In 1938, he supported Munich with the



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following illuminating comment: "If we refrained from making attacks on dictators and their systems for a few weeks, we should soon see a response from the other side." Reaction in foreign policy is difficult to separate from reaction at home: in 1939 the major voted against an increase in old age pensions and in 1943 against the Beveridge report. A charming note in his other interests includes praise for the whipping post.

Major Petherick carried the ball for twenty-five dissidents at the debate and I heard him with an eloquence characteristic of the British parliamentary move an amendment criticizing the Yalta decisions on Poland. As the *London Times* wrote the next day, "The mover of the amendment was not deterred by plain facts and figures," and generally speaking the public agreed with the *Times* that the Curzon line "can be unreservedly justified" as "the most practicable frontier which impartiality could devise." Eden, the *Times* pointed out, insisted this was "a position which successive governments in this country had consistently taken." The *London Times*, as usual nowadays, aptly sums up: "What's true is that agreement once and for all on this contested eastern frontier is the necessary preliminary to the all-important task of establishing a strong and independent order in the new Poland, resting on the firm foundation of Russian friendship."

If I have gone into detail delineating the opposition to Crimea it is to highlight the dangers which must be recognized to be combatted. The overwhelming fact is this: the vote was 413 to 0. As I pointed out last week, the area of agreement is widening, and Crimea has added vastly to that area's circumference. The over-all picture here, as I see it, is this: the overwhelming majority in all British classes stands four-square behind Crimea. Churchill, Eden and Attlee speak for the complex of national interests—finance, industry and labor.

I CANNOT describe the mingled feelings of a traveler like myself who came here last some seven years ago when Chamberlain commuted to Godesburg and Berchtesgaden. I happened to be here in this great House of Parliament at a time when the Munich policy dominated. What an extraordinary reversal: here were the Munichmen still battling, but they were fighting with their backs to the wall. They truly seemed like some brand of prehistoric monster still lumbering about in the august halls of the mother of parliaments. And, I

daresay, their fate will be that of the pterodactyls.

Nonetheless they are still capable of havoc. The task here, it seems to me, is so firmly to cement the alliance behind Crimea that no shock from any quarter can damage its unity. Britain, like all other nations, faces a host of problems today and in the postwar; but they are the problems of life and reconstruction, of happier times, and not those of the destruction of Munichism. But they are problems, nonetheless, and the anti-Crimea plotters bide their time. The war hasn't been won yet and a cascade of postwar reconstruction questions loom: housing, foreign trade and the streamlining of British industry, which in many categories belongs to the standards of several decades ago. These are but a sample of the problems and they will require all hands on deck, working together.

Hence I am convinced that every economic and political grouping here must reconsider past attitudes in the light of common objectives and arrive at the maximum formula for unity of action. The old yardsticks must be abandoned for a new one which reads, "Are you for or against Crimea?" That, unfortunately, hasn't been totally achieved.

LATER, after the debate, I hastened to an appointment with R. Palme Dutt, Britain's leading Marxist and the highly respected editor of the *Labour Monthly*, whom NEW MASSES readers know as an old contributor and friend. To reach him required a train ride through the city and what I saw from the window was indescribable. Scarcely any street was unscarred by bombs. In some localities people had constructed new houses resembling our prefabricated kind. But the extent of the damage was enormous; you must see scarred London to understand what it means. Yet the faces of people are bright with the certainty of victory and a just cause: morale, after half a decade of manifold wartime hardships, remains unbombed.

The couple facing me on the train watched me with some curiosity, and we got to talking about the prefabricated houses I saw. "Not like yours," the woman said. "Americans have rather fancier ones." "But these look more durable," I said. She smiled at the word "durable." After all these bombings, she indicated, a sense of durability was

somewhat diminished. "We shouldn't mind a bit of American frills in our homes," she added.

As a matter of fact housing is undoubtedly the most vexing issue today. And for obvious reasons. Many thousands have lost their homes; and manpower for rebuilding or new building is simply not at hand. Its solution is one of the most vital domestic issues, and hot debates are brewing in Parliament. "No castles in the air, but homes on the ground," the present minister in charge of housing declared upon taking office. But to date, this remains a slogan. For obviously the primary war requirements take precedence over it.

When I reached Dutt, I found a tall spare man with eyes bright behind spectacles and with the quiet, gentle manner of a scholar. I had looked forward to meeting him for years and was eager to get his reaction on the parliamentary debate. "The principal conclusion to be drawn from it," he replied to my question, "was this, as I see it: Churchill didn't exaggerate the significance of Crimea when he said, in closing, 'a fairer choice is open to mankind than any they have known for recorded ages.'" The vote, Dutt emphasized, must be regarded as a true symbol of the nation's will. But the vote did more, he felt. It revealed the nation's friends and enemies. He felt the three day debate had cast a searchlight upon the nation's political future. Not only did it reflect the people's overwhelming will for Crimea, but it also revealed those who would subvert that will. It must be understood that a serious fight is required to win the goals of Crimea. It would be folly to take their fulfillment for granted. For even amid the first burst of general approval opposition sprang into the open in the twenty-five votes for the Munichers' amendment on Poland and in the abstentions on the final vote.

The character of that opposition must be fully understood, he warned. It is led by men who regarded Franco and Mosley, Mussolini and Hitler with high reverence, who supported Mikhailovich and the Polish disrupters. You can hear Goebbels' arguments when they open their mouths, and they are accompanied by their faithful allies, the Independent Labor Party, he said.

Furthermore, one must recognize that this opposition has infected some areas of the labor movement, although, he emphasized, "in no sense does it express official policy." He cited Arthur Greenwood's speech ostensibly on behalf of the Labor Party and Sir William Beve-



ridge's on behalf of the liberals to indicate the extent of the penetrations. He particularly deplored the effect of Greenwood's address: "It misrepresented the standpoint of the labor movement and was in flagrant contradiction to the official policy of the Labor Party as represented by the Labor ministers in the government." He added that the lineup thus revealed has confirmed the policy presented by the recent executive committee meeting with the party several weeks ago and in an article by Harry Pollitt recently published in the *Daily Worker* here. "That policy," he said, "underscored the necessity for national unity in order to achieve the Crimea decisions on the basis of the firm cooperation of all the political sections that supported those decisions." I asked Dutt about the practical conclusions to be drawn from the situation the debate highlighted. He felt the need for a campaign to awaken the maximum opinion in the labor movement and among the public generally to all that the Crimea decisions mean for the future. That would enable the people to drive from public life "all who showed their hands in the debate as anti-Crimea, as well as their concealed supporters."

Later I traveled to a political meeting somewhere here in southern England: it was jampacked and all the issues discussed above were on the agenda. England is in a ferment of discussions of its future. Men from factories, men from the fronts, women and youth. I watched the faces of the people during the meeting—the strong, alert faces of Britain's defenders—and listened to their questions and arguments. In the midst of this an air raid siren sounded: a few heads turned but the speaker went on. Nobody showed further reaction to the air raid and the questions and answers continued as though no siren had wailed. Truly, people like this will find their way through the most burdensome of decisions. One can feel a certainty that they will discover a formula to win the maximum unity necessary to achieve the Crimea decisions. I shall in forthcoming articles present the views of other representative Britons on the principal issues of our time: Anglo-American cooperation, Bretton Woods and the rest. I have already interviewed Quintin Hogg, one of the leading Tory M.P.s in the "Tory reform" group, Geoffrey Crowther, editor of the *Economist*, Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman and Nation*, some leading trade unionists and labor M.P.'s—and, of course, my old friend—the man on the street.

WLB'S GARRISON

And some notes on Bretton Woods

By VIRGINIA GARDNER

Washington.

IT WAS originally hoped by labor that a split would develop among the public members of the War Labor Board on their wage report to the President. It seemed a modest enough hope that at least Lloyd Garrison would not go along with the other three in opposition to revision of the Little Steel formula but would issue a minority report.

Certainly in other years there was no predictable unanimity among the public members. Wayne Morse, now a GOP Senator from Oregon, differed violently with his colleagues at times, and his dissent in the West Coast airframe case and others was most articulate and sharp. Nevertheless, now a sort of rally-round-the-team spirit pervades the public members' chambers, and however uneasy it is, that unanimity is maintained. Unfortunately, it is around Vice Chairman George W. Taylor's influence that the team seems to rally. It was Taylor who put the finishing touches on the statistics on wage increases.

Garrison, in the end, did swallow the report, with its tortured statistics and specious reasoning justifying its recommendations to make no increases now. But his appendix, one of many in the 105-page report, reveals his apparent conflict over the subject.

Thus things may be found in the appendix which are not to be found elsewhere in the report. Included are the arguments of labor "that industry has been given some substantial protection against postwar losses by the carry-back provisions of the tax laws and that agricultural producers have been assured minimum prices of ninety percent of parity for two years following the cessation of hostilities," while labor has no such protection. He emphasizes, moreover, that it is not within the province of the WLB to determine whether or not a wage increase will require price relief, that the WLB has "neither the power nor the requisite knowledge to say what effect" on prices a change in wage policy would produce.

That is why it is doubly disappointing to those who have been cheering on Dean Garrison's many courageous and public spirited acts through the years to

see the cavalier way he deals with profits in his report. True, he includes a table of profits before and after taxes over recent years, where the main body of the report limits its entire discussion of profits to two footnotes that in brevity overcompensate for the usual Davis-Taylor brand of verbal dysentery. One footnote declares, "In view of our conclusion that no present inequity exists in the relationship between wage and price levels, we have not discussed corporate profits. . . ." Their second footnote, in the section dealing with a proposed wage rate increase in relation to the reconversion period, is made after the line, "The resulting pressure upon prices would, in our judgment, be so formidable as to jeopardize the whole wartime stabilization program." Says the footnote: "We have reached this conclusion . . . after taking into account, among other factors, the level of corporate profits."

GARRISON's chart, taken from Department of Commerce publications, shows profits before and after taxes at an all-time peak. And OPA uses profits before taxes in appraising requests for price increases, he concedes in a footnote. In another footnote, he quotes OPA Administrator Chester Bowles as saying that even for small business profits are at record levels and "business failures at an all-time low." But then Garrison says, in effect, that this doesn't mean much. Why? Because of "possible divergent profit positions among the various industries" and among companies within an industry. OPA, he says, may do this or that—after saying WLB isn't supposed to worry about what OPA does. Among other things he cites which OPA may do is to increase prices of particular products "even though the industry has a satisfactory over-all earning position." If this is an oblique reference to something OPA did in steel prices, it must strike labor people as a particularly mealy-mouthed one. What OPA did was to grant price increases to the steel industry on certain individual items the industry claimed it was losing money on, despite its over-all swollen profits. The increases will cost purchasers some \$50,000,000 annually. Interestingly

enough, the rise was granted by OPA shortly after Economic Stabilization Director Fred Vinson allowed the so-called fringe increases to the United Steelworkers-CIO. And the cost of those increases to the industry was estimated at about \$50,000,000 annually.

In other words, OPA apparently yielded to political pressure, and labor people point out that the real inflationary danger is not economic but political: a danger that if labor obtains any kind of wage increases, industry will pressure OPA into giving price "relief" which is not justified by industry's profit position.

The unions that maintained their no-strike pledge despite the weaknesses of the WLB would not abandon support for OPA because of its failure to show enough strength to resist unjustified price increases. But they do say that the wage increase should not be withheld because OPA action is a question mark. Labor's security should be improved, and then an all-out effort made to support and strengthen OPA.

The 1942 obsession, the "inflationary gap," has been discredited. The public members' current phobia, inflation based on increased costs, is just as subjective and unsubstantiated.

REP. FREDERICK C. SMITH (R., Pa.) is working night and day prior to hearings on the Bretton Woods legislation by the Banking and Currency committee, of which he is a member, preparing for his attack on it. He couldn't see your NEW MASSES representative because he couldn't take time out. But his secretary gave me a copy of his speech on the then tentative Keynes-Morgenthau plans, delivered in the House, Nov. 1, 1943, which was entitled, "British Plot to Seize Control of United States Gold."

CHAIRMAN BRENT SPENCE (D., Ky.), who introduced the Bretton Woods Bill in the House, said, "It means something more important than pork-chops—peace." Prefacing his remarks by saying, "I don't want to boast," he declared the hearings before the committee would be a real forum for massing public sentiment back of the bill.

REP. JOHN H. FOLGER (D., N.C.), a member of the committee, talking about the bill: "We can't live a life of isolationism any longer, economic or any other kind. We can't be too exacting on a dollar-and-cent basis in aiding the economic welfare of the world. We won't give away anything—we'll benefit."

DR. W. E. B. DuBois, distinguished Negro scholar and representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, at the forum discussion on Bretton Woods held here recently, asked if the BW conference considered the subject of colonies. "Colonies are economic problems even more than political ones," he said. Dr. Harry White of the Treasury answered him. "It's a very interesting question," he said. "The answer is no. But it points to the fact that there are a number of other areas which need to be explored—colonies, cartels—there are many facets."

An Episcopal clergyman at the conference, under auspices of Americans United for World Organization, complained that most of the questions asked were technical. That was doubtless because, answered White, the opposition to Bretton Woods, at least on the surface, was not based on its objectives but on technicalities.

ANSWERING a question on the American Bankers Association position that the International Bank be approved without the Monetary Fund, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Ansel F. Luxford replied, on one phase: "As businessmen, a number of you will see it at once." If one outfit ran both, and there was poor management on the stabilization side, the temptation would be to bail out through activities of the bank. Under the setup the BW plan envisions, though, if there are mistakes they will show up, rather than be covered by long-term loans of the bank.

Some of the businessmen at the conference may have received a slight shock when White declared they decided "to have this bank the most conservative in the world." Its liabilities will be limited to 100 percent of its assets.

A FORMER president of the People's Trust Co. of Malone, N. Y., Rep. Clarence E. Kilburn (R.), a new member of the committee, had not read the American Bankers Association tract on Bretton Woods. He was studying up on it the night before, he said, but could not remember the name of the legislative service which supplied him with material. It was free, he said, and recommended by the Malone superintendent of schools.

When this representative from New York's largest geographic district was asked whether he would call himself a conservative, he wisely replied:

"I don't think those terms, 'conserva-

tive,' 'liberal,' mean very much in this period. It's whether you think of things as one world, as Wendell Willkie did. I'll tell you how I voted—I voted all the way through with the President on foreign policy—extension of the draft, repeal of neutrality laws, repeal of the arms embargo. But—I'm very much against the New Deal. And I've voted against lots of appropriation measures for agencies because I thought they weren't cut enough."

AN ELDERLY man with a quizzical smile, Rep. Daniel K. Hoch (D., Pa.), thinks Bretton Woods a step in the right direction, and although he hadn't heard of it, was glad the Pennsylvania Bankers Association had gone on record approving it. "I lived through the other war, and I'm rather proud of the steps being made now preparing for peace, the Big Three conferences, the Hot Springs, Bretton Woods and Dumbarton Oaks meetings. We all have our prejudices to break down, and all these help. And full employment will depend on our foreign trade."

This Congressman, who worked in every department of the Reading (Pa.) *Eagle* before he went into Congress, from the time he set type by hand at the age of seventeen, is proud of two things in his first term, the 78th session. He voted with the administration in "practically everything." And he wrote a poem which was published. It was on the soldiers' vote bill, which, he said, was not a bill but a recommendation to the states. He recited it:

*"I wanted to vote," the soldier
said,
As dejected and sad he sat.
But Congress said, "We will
recommend,
You will not expect more than
that."*

*"But I could not vote that 'recom-
mend,'
'Twas a ballot I needed then.
That 'recommend' I could not
vote—
I wanted to vote for men."*

*And so election day passed by;
The ballots they failed to send.
But instead I heard the old refrain,
'Oh, soldier, we recommend."*

If any doubt remained in my mind about Representative Hoch, it was dispelled when he said, as I took my leave: "By the way, I saw you over there at the inquisition—the Rules Committee hearing on the George bill."

WE MEET THE RUSSIANS

By EDMUND STEVENS

While he was at Yalta, President Roosevelt presented to Marshal Stalin a number of decorations awarded by the United States to men of the Red Army. Some of the decorations were given in recognition of the services of Soviet officers who cooperated in American Air Force shuttle-bombing over Germany. And below we publish excerpts from the forthcoming book "Russia Is No Riddle" by Edmund Stevens, who tells the story of the American air bases built on Soviet soil and used in the shuttle-bombing operations. Mr. Stevens' book will be issued on March 15 by Greenberg, with whose kind permission these excerpts are printed.—The Editors.

THREE days before D-Day the world was informed that the first flight of American heavy bombers had landed at bases of the Eastern Command of the US Army Air Force "somewhere in the USSR."

The story of these bases went back to October 1943—to the time of the Moscow Conference between Hull, Eden and Molotov. It was then that Averell Harriman also arrived in the Soviet capital to assume his ambassadorial duties. In his party was a quiet, pleasant-spoken Army officer—Maj. Gen. John Russell Deane. Deane was the new head of the United States Military Mission to the Soviet Union, succeeding Brig. Gen. Philip Faymonville, the War Department's long-standing Number One expert on Russian affairs.

Later, in the course of the winter, there were constant comings and goings of Liberator-fulls of Air Force personnel—radio detection experts and sundry officers who just didn't seem to fit in with the routine of lend-lease to Russia. A few of us made guesses which we kept strictly to ourselves. Later it transpired that Harriman and Deane had brought the project for the bomber bases with them and had first broached the matter to the proper Soviet authorities soon after their arrival. . . . Finally in January the green light came, and from then on it was a question of working out the details, choosing the sites, deciding on the size of the establishment, and arranging for the shipment of the necessary equipment for the ground staffs.

The project, like other Army projects, was given a code word, and packing boxes labeled "Frantic" began to ac-

cumulate in various American Atlantic ports. Some of the supplies were sent in by the northern route to Murmansk; others through the Persian Gulf and across Iran. The Russians did everything they could from their side to expedite supplies for the bases.

On a chilly day in April the first contingent of American personnel stepped out of the special railway cars that had brought them up from Baku into what looked like the midst of nowhere. . . .

The traditionally hospitable Russians did their best to make their American guests comfortable. The plumbing in the building was beyond repair, so Russian workmen proceeded to clothe in lumber the Russian conception of a multiple-seated American privy. In the beginning the Americans and Russians ate together; the latter ran the mess and supplied the menu. It did not take them long to discover the American liking for rare juicy steaks, and since some of the Americans failed to finish off the huge helpings of boiled cabbage—the only available green vegetable—the Russians decided that Americans were an exclusively carnivorous nation. So for a time, with appalling regularity, the Americans were served nothing but juicy steaks three times daily. Fearing they might offend the Russians' feelings, the Americans hesitated to say anything until they were finally driven to it by sheer desperation. The Russians, far from being offended, asked them why they hadn't spoken up sooner.

This experience taught the Americans a valuable lesson: the direct approach, rather than the devious, was the best way of getting along with the Russians. Whenever there was something you wanted or didn't like, you came right out and said so, without trying to be too subtle or diplomatic.

The major obstacle to complete harmony and cooperation between Russians and Americans was the language difficulty. The Army personnel department had done a bang-up job of easing this problem by rounding up for the project a fair proportion of men of Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Czech or some other Slavic stock, whose knowledge of Russian or a related language would give them a head start in making themselves understood. But even those men who knew not a word of Russian soon became experts in the art of sign language.

Of course, they sometimes misfired—as when an American mechanic asked his Russian assistant for his cigarette lighter and the latter brought him a blowtorch.

Sometimes practical jokers made the most of the language difficulty. Thus one American mechanic taught his two Russian understudies to yell "Jerk!" when they saluted American officers. There was one word, however, which all the Americans, from the colonel down, were taught to master right from the very first day. That was *Stoi!*—Halt! The camp was guarded by Red Army sentries, and when any Russian sentry yelled "*Stoi!*" the Americans were told he meant "*Stoi!*" And if you failed to comply, you ran a pretty good risk of getting shot.

ONE day in mid-May the Anglo-American press corps was invited to a press conference with General Deane at Spasso House. There it was that we were officially let in on the secret of the bases. The general, disarmingly frank in admitting that he had had little experience with such matters, asked our advice about handling the publicity releases. On the basis of our suggestions an appropriate communique was drawn up for release when the first group of bombers would fly in from the west and land at the new bases, thus inaugurating the "shuttle-bombing" operations. The date for this first operation, the general told us, had not yet been set. But he planned to arrange for all of us who wanted to go down to the bases in time to witness the arrival of the planes.

That was how, for the first time since the start of the war, American and British pressmen in the Soviet Union were able to cover an operational story first-hand, and not by copying their stuff out of the columns of the Soviet newspapers. The press department of the Foreign Office arranged transportation, and with a few hours' notice on the morning of June 3 we flew down to the main American bomber base.

The first impression was unforgettable. On the vast, Nazi-devastated Ukrainian steppe was a bit of America, as unmistakable in its identity as a baseball diamond. Everything from the big square khaki tents to seventeen-ton gasoline trucks was strictly GI. The base personnel, both the officers and men, included representatives of practically

every one of the forty-eight states. Russia, they frankly acknowledged, was the last place they had ever expected they'd end up in, and even now, after more than a month, they were still wondering how it had happened. But they gave a collective impression of enjoying the experience thoroughly. Many of them remarked that the surrounding landscape, with its broad fields of grain, rich pastures, and green forests, was more like an American landscape than anything they'd seen since leaving home. This was especially true for those who had been stationed for a considerable period in barren, sun-baked sections of North Africa or southern Italy. The people, too, they said, looked clean and healthy—quite different from the Arabs or poverty-stricken southern Italians. And from the outset everyone—from the Russian soldiers to the inhabitants of the neighboring town of Poltava—was hospitable. So it hadn't taken the GIs long to make friends, especially with the girls.

To the local Ukrainian inhabitants—some of whom had lived through the German occupation, others of whom had recently returned from the Soviet interior to which they had been evacuated early in the war—these Americans were like men from another planet. They had not, of course, been tipped off beforehand; so that when they saw the first group of American uniforms, a few wondered if they had again been invaded by some other nation.

At the enlisted men's mess, we found a dozen strapping Russian girls in bulging GI coveralls helping out on KP. They were opening cans of rations, dumping the contents into huge pails, and then dishing out the warmed-up stuff on the chow line. These girls, regular soldiers in the Red Army, were anything but fragile. I noticed one of the girls watching with an amused look while two GIs swayed and staggered with the weight of an enormous soup pail, whose hot contents was sloshing on their feet. Finally, taking pity on them, the Amazon stepped over, motioned to the GIs to set it down, then lifted it and easily carried it away herself, unaided.

The boys in the cookhouse, having given up trying to memorize the girls' Russian names as a hopeless job, had re-christened them with American nicknames. So that now the Russians answered to such descriptive monikers as Fatty, Curly, Blondie, Tubby, Freckles—while one girl was called "New York," for no apparent reason since she hailed from Kharkov. The girls took all this and any amount of kidding with

puzzled good nature, setting it all down to the eccentricities of the *Americantsi*.

ON ONE particular, back in the days when the project was being blue-printed, the Russians had remained adamant. The total American permanent ground staff for the bases was to be restricted to one thousand, and no amount of argument would budge them. And now the explanation for this stand came to light. The Russian High Command conceived of the American bases as schools where Russian personnel could study and master American methods and American equipment. If American personnel were limited, it would mean that American mechanics would have to work with Russian assistants. And so most of the crews trained to service the bombers consisted of three Russians under the direction of one American. To this work the Russians assigned a picked personnel, and every evening, after working all day on mixed service crews, these Russians would attend classes conducted by their own officers. Requirements were stiff, and anyone who lagged was weeded out. No wonder the Americans were amazed at the apparent ease and swiftness with which their Russian assistants "caught on." The Russians were also under orders to learn English. In fact, Americans and Russians working on the same service crews would often place bets as to who could learn the other's language fastest. In general, the GI had to acknowledge that the Russians were winning hands down. All the Russians carried around little notebooks in which they jotted down English words and phrases (spelled phonetically in Russian characters) together with their Russian meanings.

Contact between Americans and Russians was not limited to working hours. Almost every evening some sort of entertainment was put on—either a movie, a concert, or a song and dance and vaudeville program—by some traveling Russian troupe. All these shows were held in the open air, in the ruins of a former theater that had lost roof, walls—everything but the stage. During the intermissions a Russian would come out and translate explanations or announcements into halting English, which always got him a big hand. Sometimes he made brave attempts to translate the jokes, and everybody laughed whether he got the point or not.

The shows would be followed by dances. There were only three American nurses in camp, and no WACs; so most of the GIs dated Russian girls. The GIs

taught the girls to jive or cut a rug, and the girls taught them Ukrainian folk dances. Usually the evening ended up in a round of community singing. All these gatherings were permeated with the warmest spirit of friendship and camaraderie, despite the language barrier.

At one shindig I met a group of five inseparable companions—Joe from New York, Shorty from Pittsburgh, Nikolai from Leningrad, Kostya from Moscow and Misha from Rostov. For the most part they just sat around and grinned. When I saw them, the two Americans were initiating their Russian sidekicks into the mysteries of chewing gum and trying to get across the point that you weren't supposed to eat or swallow it.

THE real fun at the base began when the first mission flew out of the low western clouds two mornings after our arrival. The planes were from the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy, and its commanding officer, Gen. Ira Eaker, was riding the lead plane. One ship had blown up in the air over the target—not from flak, as far as could be observed, but from some internal trouble. Otherwise there were no casualties.

Despite their long flight, the members of the combat crews were in no mood for rest. They were all keyed up over being in the Soviet Union for the first time in their lives, and they were raring to see the sights. Previously there had been some talk of the town being off limits until after the planes had taken off on their return flight. But in less than no time, most of the combat crews, washed and shaved, were on their way to town. For the next two days American fliers were in evidence everywhere. They conquered the town utterly and completely, and in a brief period got closer to the Russian people than many of the foreigners stationed in Moscow had in a year or more. They liked the people from the outset. Said Maj. John S. Cunningham of Milton, Massachusetts, "These people go around holding their heads up, and making every effort to look presentable. This is more like the States than anything I've seen since I left home."

Thus was launched a major practical demonstration of the thesis that Americans and Russians can get along and work together. In this respect, the political aspects of the Eastern Command far outweighed its military importance. It was no routine combat assignment that its members were detailed to perform. They were diplomats, laying the groundwork of the future peace.

FULL CIRCLE

SOME thirteen years ago there appeared in the late V. F. Calverton's *Modern Quarterly* an article called "Artists in Uniform" by Max Eastman. The article was an attack on American writers of the left who were accused of being in the service, if not the pay, of Moscow. It grew particularly frenetic about a few Americans who had attended, in November 1930, an international conference of writers and artists at Kharkov, USSR. Perhaps my recollection of the article is merely a form of vanity since I was among the recipients of Eastman's most lush and lurid castigation as a delegate of the American John Reed Club to the Kharkov conference.

My mind went back to those days recently when I encountered an Eastman tidbit in a publication called the *New Leader*, of which he is one of the contributing editors. The *New Leader* is put out each week by a group of professional Russia-haters called the Social-Democratic Federation, which would be an impotent little sect were it not for the fact that, thanks to the political and financial favors of David Dubinsky, it constitutes the core of the leadership of what is euphemistically known as the Liberal Party. The Eastman article was a complaint against the editors of the *New Leader* for their support of President Roosevelt in the election. And to give the devil his due, Eastman's logic was unassailable. "Governor Dewey," he wrote, "gave informed and vigorous expression to the *New Leader's* pre-campaign policy. When he said that Roosevelt is a 'push-over' for Stalin, and that is why Stalin is eager to see him elected, he spoke an unvarnished truth. This same truth was welcomed by the *New Leader* with vociferous applause when suggested by its friend William C. Bullitt in a recent news article from Italy. . . . Another momentous issue before us was that of the Communist infiltration. . . . On this issue, again, Governor Dewey presented the *New Leader's* pre-campaign position with vigor."

Readers will of course recognize the particular school of Deweyites to which Eastman belongs and to which he quite logically thinks the *New Leader* should belong. There were thousands of decent, honest folk who voted for the Albany icicle in the mistaken belief that he represented all the warm and hopeful things that they wanted. But Eastman's affection for Dewey obviously rests on other grounds. The *Chicago Tribune*, the Hearst press and the Berlin radio discovered similar grounds for preferring the Republican candidate.

All of which brings into clear view the fact that Max Eastman has now come full circle. From revolutionary playboy to pro-fascist via

Trotskyism is a fitting consummation. (Are there still people who are incredulous about the Soviet Eastmans—the Bukharins and Radeks?) Yet it is with some sense of shame that I write, for nothing can expunge from history's books the fact that Eastman was many years ago the editor of this magazine. Thank God, not he, but another editor, an "artist in uniform" named John Reed, fathered the tradition in which we have worked throughout these years.

AND reading Eastman's *New Leader* piece also brought to mind some of my fellow-"artists in uniform" of a decade and a half ago. Among the Americans at the Kharkov conference were those premature anti-fascists, Mike Gold, Bill Gropper and Fred Ellis, who still wear the uniform of the world battle against fascism. And I think of another who was at Kharkov: Louis Aragon. In those days Aragon had only just come out of the surrealist movement, whose literary leader he was, to discover the world of poverty and fascism and war. He was a slender young man in his early thirties, though he looked no more than twenty-five, and he spoke English quite well. His charming wife, Elsa Triolet, herself a novelist, was with him at Kharkov, as she was when Aragon visited the United States in 1939 to attend the American Writers' Congress.

It is a long span from Kharkov—the Kharkov the Nazis destroyed—to the France of the half-Germans who played at being kings in Vichy. And Aragon's name for a time seemed swallowed in that darkness, emerging fitfully through occasional poems and letters to American friends in Aesopian language. What bribes were offered him to become a Max Eastman we do not know, but that such offers were made we can be certain. We do know that Louis Aragon, the Communist and great writer, did not merely survive: he fought. And how hard such a choice can be Aragon himself has told us, not in writing about himself, but about another: the Communist editor, Gabriel Peri, the story of whose life and death at the hands of the Nazis he has told in one of the most moving pieces to come out of the war (published in *NEW MASSES* of January 23).

I think of others of my fellow "artists in uniform" who were at Kharkov: Anna Seghers, whose remarkable anti-Nazi novel, *The Seventh Cross*, has won her acclaim throughout our country; and Ludwig Renn, that tall, ascetic soldier and writer who fought Hitler in Germany (spending two and a half years in a concentration camp) and again in Spain.

Today the artists in uniform, literally and figuratively, are no longer a pioneer band, but a large fellowship of men and women of all countries who are fighting and building that culture may have a home in every land. Some have already given their lives in that cause. Does it seem likely that those who will live on into the days of light and freedom, the young writers and artists of America, France, Russia, England and other countries, will have any patience with the Goebbel-Eastman witchcraft?

At any rate, when my own time is up, perhaps I'll make it my final plea for grace that Max Eastman once barked at me.



GIANTS AT WORK II

By MERIDEL LE SUEUR

This is the second half of an excerpt from a forthcoming book by Miss Le Sueur. The first section appeared last week.

BUNYAN was of many races. Farmhouses burned in Ireland and the people were driven into the English mills, their land turned into grazing lands. In sixty years four million left—"Only the old and helpless stayed in the motherland keening for the dead and gone." The Norwegians who migrated equalled the total population of Norway in the early nineteenth century. The Lithuanians, the Czechs and Slovaks in 1847 fled royal vengeance and the potato famine. Thousands fled also from Bohemia and France. Finns, Croats, Poles, Russians came to the Big Woods and the Mesabi when ore was discovered to inaugurate the new century of steel. New England workers fled the soup lines, forming in the East, and German revolutionists fled Germany while French Communards who had swum the channel to the Jersey Isles, rowing back with their underground papers until there was no hope left, came to the North Country.

Simultaneously with building a sod shanty, breaking prairie, schools were started, Atheneums founded, debating and singing societies organized, poetry written and recited in the evenings, the rights of the common man spoken along with the making of a better breaking plow and twine for the reapers; newspapers started with Indians looking on, translations of the *Declaration of Independence* and the *Communist Manifesto* printed, carried by horseback, Red River cart, and river packet.

Many faces appeared on the prairie horizon, unmarked courses of history in their blood, the eye adjusting to a new space, disaster, hope, the amplitude and prodigality of the prairies, terrors of space and quiet, extremes of weather, and work, plenty and poverty, feast and famine. The map broken, sometimes lost, the line obscured, speech unrecorded of men riding to death towards a far horizon; of lone women talking when the loons cry, the lineaments of the great human face looking west from famines, from expropriated lands, from stolen fields and burning houses, feeling the mighty pull then of free

lands, education, no military service, Jeffersonian democracy—the first in the world.

Man creating huge myths of labor, a walker in a beckoning horizon swung like a frail bridge in the tall walking wind. The inheritor of hunger and a believer in the long chance, hunting the red sundown. Looking for no conquerors, he still slept with a carbine by his side and the evening sun swung always before him, a scythe cutting tomorrow; all the nameless ones not listed in old newspapers coming day and night with the ploughs and the pestles, the blades of wood and the turning wheels; and the deep breasted women who believed in hope and had pools of wishing in their eyes to match the blue of water of the buffalo wallows; and the root of survival to hand down to sons in the evening; those with the habit of survival so deep they did not know they had it, nor ever thought to speak of it.

The new Bunyan of our time saw the rise of cities, the urban population leaving for the factories; the handling of a new tool. From the hand loom, the axe, hoe, and peavey, the wheel-barrow, to steam power, and then the dynamo: man's hand turning the dials, pressing the buttons of a new power, of the juice peddler, hot box, lightning snatcher, the gut hammer, bull-dozer, the Stilson wrench, air hammers, compressors, the giant earth augers; instruments of thousands of horsepower, of remote control, with mechanical interrogators, differentials, multipliers, machines to solve instantly and continuously problems in solid geometry.

Pine Cone, lumberjack poet, writes in *Midwest Labor* a toast to the new Paul Bunyan:

*Here's to a timber worker
The hero of us all,
Paul Bunyan, the mighty lumber-
jack
Who logs the timber tall.
Now this ancient timber worker
Is as modern as can be,
And he has more time for leisure
'Cause he's organized you see.
The Timber Workers Union
And mighty CIO
Have solved a lot of problems
For Paul Bunyan and his crew.
And he marches forward with
them*

*Sings their praises to the skies
And we'll always be together
For Paul Bunyan never dies.*

With the machine came new forms of social relationship. In the West were always suggestions of broad forms of collective ownership, widening common and individual rights.

Today threshing machines and farm machines are often owned collectively. Today in the harvest fields are high school kids, bankers, stenographers helping to harvest wheat, can peas and corn, see that nothing is destroyed from lack of hands. Munition factories have come to the corn fields. A cooperative bought up an old mill town and will build houses for mill workers, recreation centers, community health clinics.

The wheat no longer is hauled long miles by wagon, by single men, but is stored in elevators, many owned and operated cooperatively, or it goes down the Mississippi or is poured into the port at Superior, where 100,000 bushels can be loaded in an hour, not by a thousand backs and hands, but by movable power shovels or scraper rigs. The wheat is weighed as delivered by two spouts to lake boats—1,400,000 bushels in ten hours.

PAUL BUNYAN in lumbering has new power. Instead of the old river logging, Russel cars ship the timber straight from the skidways to the mills. The McGiffert loaders do the work of jammers at the skidway, a steam hauler replaces the locomotive. It is half tractor and half ski and can haul timber all winter, a papa of the modern cats. A timber song goes:

*If I were old Paul Bunyan I would
be a clever fox,
I'd hitch the vigilantes to the le-
gendary ox.
So let's all get together boys and
take a pinch of snuff,
The hard life makes the man they
say but plenty is enuff.*

If the work on the Mesabi should stop for just one day the results would be felt around the world.

The layers of black, brown, red, yellow iron ores of the great Hullrust mine at Hibbing are mined now by the giant machines, not men. Steam and electric shovels ply their red ore day

and night moving a volume that exceeds the cut of the Panama canal. It is loaded directly on flat cars, graded, analyzed, taken by gravity down to the Duluth docks on to automatic scales at the rate of two miles per hour, the cars sorted by the requirements of blast furnaces in Ohio, Illinois, or Pennsylvania. The high steel docks stand eighty feet above the water, flanked by pockets into which the ore is dumped, released from the hopper bottoms of the cars. The pigs coming back with coal unload it by special machinery, electric gates open to drop the ore on two parallel rubber belt conveyors which carry it to cross conveyors where it goes ashore by a boom with a swinging radius of up to two hundred and twenty-six degrees.

Another kind of hero, like Casey and Danny and Bong and Foss, is heard of now in the North Country, all from small villages, from farms, the 4H clubs, the baseball teams. They are men with a delicate touch for a machine, for a joy stick, and a gun sight. Foss from North Dakota says, "Nearly all our successful pilots have been boys who loved hunting as far back as they can remember. I can take you to all the places I've ever hunted in my life, through all the broad sweep from the Vermillion clear to Aberdeen. This is the one thing I can remember better than everything else."

These are the young men barely seen during the depression, dimly through the dust storms, not recorded, who migrated on freight trains—the mechanics, horn blowers, ball players, sharpshooters, hunters—always surviving. They are now the young heroes returning to the luncheon, surprising nobody. We expect large heroes. Now they are photographed in the afternoon, look laconically out, shamefaced that they are present when so many are missing, wearing an old Yankee mask; they are practical jokers, comic characters, brief speakers, worry about why they are alive when so many are undeservedly dead and for no further reason than the way the dice might fall; they cannot wait to get back to their machines, to the target, to the bullseye.

They are accurate, familiar with dynamite. They are the bulldozers, surveyors, choir boys and cat skimmers, longshoremen, stevedores, ore loaders, gypoes, mechanics, butchers, rivet tossers from swinging caissons, muckers under compressed air, the hooded on steel mill floors, welders, torchers, molders, plowers, on the day shift, night shift, swing shift, the users of gadgets, gauges, dials, indicators, earth augers, turning valves, regulating burners, turning the

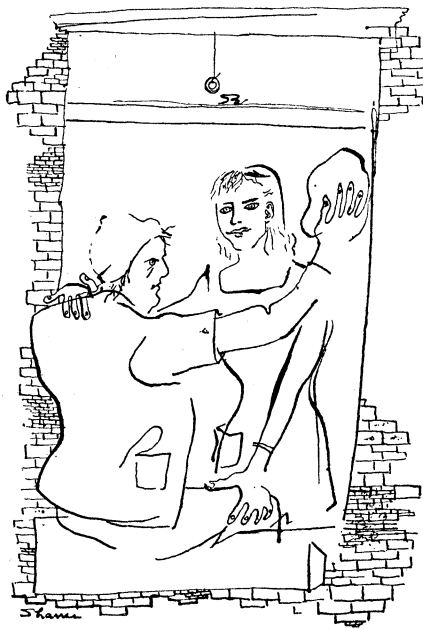
switch on electric motors, conduits, connections and controls, that send roaring to a crescendo a thousand metals in motion, turbines, evaporators, condensers, a concordance of thunderous pumps, motors, generators, the turbines of the new giant, the potential converter of steam into the torque which expands, unleashing titanic powers, a potent generator, an accurate time machine delivered into the naked palms of man alive in a new era.

The new Bunyan with steel cross-head, brass oilcups, blue burnished bolts, the connecting rods, the polished shin-bones of the giant, knuckles, transferring the vertical motion of the piston into the rotary motion of the propellers, tandem, pedalling the screw churning one wake, sixty-five strokes to the minute, the web cranks flying in orbits of oil, beating down the North Sea, driving to the apex of the sky, to the core of earth and the arc of the ocean, six times as tall as a man, the new giant, the new Bunyan.

Man and the machine making vast and intricate combinations, using the democratic legacy in accumulations and extensions of old forms. Man, in a tremendous moment of equilibrium, agile, acrobatic, swift, shifting his wonderful and fragile weight, his hope real and honored, as he moves forward to great ends, in new configurations of power.

As Walt Whitman said: "To these eligibilities, to this limitless aperture the race has tended en masse roaring and rushing and crude and fiercely turbidly hastening."

OUR past is real. Our hope is real. Our future stands in real and sunlit shapes ahead in all the gloom. Planes



Honoré Sharrer

from far countries fly over us. Planes leave here daily to fly over Siberia. Messages not yet cipherable are myriad in the air.

The people are a story that never ends. They are a river that winds and falls. They are a story teller with long talk, and new heroes, and myths to support their dreams. They are a seed that incessantly comes alive upon the earth. They incessantly bring the earth alive with greater production, perchons, babies, machines, always knowing the indestructible fact that some of the grain will be good, will bear in its kernel the strength of its breeding, that from the bloodiest flux some survive, that some vines outfox the frost.

Waiting and working they speak in the early morning, waiting for the engine to warm up for one shift to go on and another to come off, sweating it out while the mail comes, or the plane is late, or the letter doesn't arrive:

It's not invented yet but I'll take your order.

I rent sky space.

She's a sweet engine. Fourteen thousand horses. I oil her pistons and she could crack your back running at open throttle.

When the huge cranks are galloping in the pits and the long bright shafts spinning in the shaft tunnels then's when I'm happy.

I just want to get back to my engine.

What are you gonna be IF you live?

All I did was freeze my finger to the trigger until she was hot enough to boil an egg and the kraut kept comin' on.

I hope this shebang ain't over before I get a crack at it.

I been down under. I been over. I'm goin' up now.

It'll be opening up all over if it's done right. There'll be chances again.

Freedom is when you can bawl out the umpire.

My engine was named Alice and she fell out over a daisy field in France and I never saw her again.

You can't see nothin' such in Europe and I want to get home where you can see where your headin'.

I heard of a road from Tierra del Fuego across South America, North America, crossing the North Country into Canada, across the straits to Siberia, into Russia—why stop there, why not drive through Germany, and home across Greenland?

We got the know how and the daring do, the got to, will do, must do and the can do.

NM SPOTLIGHT

The President and the Mules

SOME said, after Mr. Roosevelt finished his review of the Crimean Conference before the joint session of Congress, that he had revealed nothing "fresh." What a stupid comment about an address which by its very weight and force slammed the door tight on a whole era of American policy abroad! The pigmy critics are always impervious to the new, to the currents that stir the whole of democratic mankind in their advance toward the future. One might almost say that the President accomplished the impossible, so sweeping will his international triumph be in its effects on the world after the war. And this is remarkable indeed because Mr. Roosevelt has had to smite hip and thigh a whole crew of encrusted opponents whose contempt for his policies arrested their growth.

The desire of everyone whose feet are not planted in the fruitless past is to cross the threshold and begin the work outlined at Yalta. But the President knows that he cannot move ahead if he is impeded by a mulish bloc in Congress, particularly in the Senate. And it is not for nothing that he spoke directly to both Houses, appealing for nonpartisanship and active support in order that Crimea may have lasting results. It was only a few days before that Sen. Hugh Butler rose to attack the tri-power meeting. Butler is a Republican from Nebraska and he was not speaking for himself alone when he assailed the Big Three as attempting to "control the destinies of the smaller states." Mr. Butler has mastered well the brief of arguments Mr. Dewey used against the Dumbarton Oaks project. And it is the Butlers, frantically echoed over the radio by Senator Wheeler, that the President must contend with before the "last stone is laid on the structure of international peace." Unfortunately not one among the forward-looking Republicans challenged Butler.

All this is a measure of how hard is the President's work and how urgent it is that he have unmistakable support from the nation. Mr. Churchill felt the need for a vote of confidence to prove that what he had done at Crimea was not the result of a private idiosyncrasy. That unanimous vote was evidence to

Britain's other allies that the Prime Minister's commitments would be carried through. The President had his vote of confidence last November, but such is our constitutional system that the unity expressed at the polls can be frustrated on Capitol Hill. Mr. Roosevelt has taken many steps, obviously, to prevent the kind of outburst in the House or Senate which would falsely tell the world that he acted alone when he put his signature to the Crimean pact. His appointment of Senator Vandenberg to the American delegation for the forthcoming San Francisco United Nations conference was an expression of his desire that America act together, that it duplicate in its own internal life the harmony which prevailed at Yalta.

When Mr. Roosevelt spoke of the national interest as being benefited by our coming to the economic assistance of liberated areas, he was laying down a principle whose ramifications extend beyond the economic sphere. This principle also dictates our position on Poland and on dozens of other questions. The whole concept of national interest has been invigorated and deepened by the President's insistence that the national interest can thrive only if it coincides with the interests of the world—that it is not something above and separate from the interests of other nations. This fundamental philosophy in Mr. Roosevelt's whole approach is one of the important keys to his leadership—a leadership whose stature is emphasized by midgets who pull and tear at his trouser cuffs.

Hands at the Machines

WE HOPE that by the time this is read the manpower bill will have emerged from the snarl in which, as we go to press it is caught. The Senate is divided into three groups: a minority led by Sen. "Happy" Chandler (of unhappy fame), who want no manpower legislation of any kind; the supporters of the May-Bailey limited national service bill, which would place administration of manpower mobilization in the hands of Selective Service, and the backers of the Kilgore-O'Mahoney-Ferguson bill reported by the Senate Military Affairs Committee, which would strengthen the

authority of the War Manpower Commission to set plant employment ceilings and secure compliance.

Both the CIO and the AFL, as well as the US Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, indicated their support of the original version of the Kilgore-O'Mahoney-Ferguson measure. That is certainly a strong argument in its favor. Technically, it may not be national service legislation, but it will accomplish the same end. One valuable feature is a provision for labor-management committees on a national, state and local basis (agriculture would be included wherever appropriate) to cooperate in enforcement. We have delayed too long in effectively mobilizing our manpower, the only leading member of the United Nations that has failed to do so, and the cost in terms of inadequate war production—a cost ultimately measured in human life—is more than the country can afford.

Adam and Eve

MARCH 8 was International Women's Day, a day born in the USA of the struggle for women's suffrage. Women all over the world have come a long way toward winning real freedom since March 8, 1908. And in this latest worldwide battle, they have received an accolade even from the soldiers of the *Kinder, Kirche und Kuche* theorists, who have tortured and shot them indiscriminately with men.

Yet even in the USA, whose women have been envied, one can read strange things. In one of the great national organs of the American press, a paper that reaches millions of homes of a Sunday, there appeared an article with such arguments as these: After the war women must return to the home, and the returning GI will demand that they do. "At least for the next generation, the patriarchal family must be restored and strengthened. Women must bear and rear children; husbands must support them." There must be fewer women in certain professions which would be "better for a strong infusion of masculinity." "Some old-fashioned feminist will say that a woman is the mistress of her own body; the nation has no right to force her to bear children. Well, a man is the master of his body too, but

hardly anyone questions the right of the nation to force him to expose his body to the risks of war. A woman's ownership of her body should be subordinate to her obligation as the trustee of the race." Besides, observes the author of this piece, in the essential antagonism between men and women, the man must learn to dominate. Not because he is the more intelligent, he admits—but that the world—and women—despise a henpecked man. The man must "just tell her plainly that he is going to be boss."

This is not a quotation from a left-over tract from Vichy. It is not a bit of Herr Goebbels' pamphleteering. It is an article in *This Week*, purveyed around this borough by the New York *Herald Tribune*. And it is written by an associate professor of sociology (save the mark!) at Barnard College for women, Mr. (perhaps Doctor) Willard Waller—who thinks that if the big bully makes the women knuckle under they will be very angry, but just love him to distraction. Pfaugh! We hold our editorial nose.

Politics and Bluenoses

ONE must condemn the roundabout attempt to introduce theater censorship in New York through revoking the license of the playhouse where the disputed play is being shown. Since there are laws on the statute book concerning "indecent," License Commissioner Moss' act is, in effect, in contempt of law. The disputed play, *Trio*, is an adult treatment of the subject of homosexuality and there is no more reason to bar such a play than one dealing with any psychological abnormality. It is probable that *Trio's* chief offense is that it treats the subject in a serious manner. In night club entertainment and revues smirking allusions to the same subject are routine. Under present conditions the censor's hand is inevitably a reactionary one. Four letter words in *Strange Fruit* supplied the pretext for the Boston censor's ban on the novel, but a number of books have since appeared containing the same words without drawing the censor's fire. These books, however, did not commit the real "indecent" the censors objected to: unlike *Strange Fruit*, they took no progressive stand on important social issues.

Rumanian Headaches

IT is quite possible that the Rumanian crisis has come to an end with the elevation of Dr. Petru Groza, chairman of the Peasants Union, to the pre-

Strikers and the War

TODAY the integrity of labor's pledge to the nation to forego wartime strikes is at stake. As we go to press, the strike at the Detroit Chrysler plants has ended, but is still in progress at Briggs. Simultaneously John L. Lewis has served legal notice on the government that the miners are preparing to take a strike vote March 28. Two weeks ago the Textile Workers Union executive board, at the request of its president, Emil Rieve, repudiated the CIO no-strike pledge for 100,000 cotton workers. These alarming developments are taking place in a critical stage of the war.

In each case of a strike or threatened strike there are justifiable causes for the workers' discontent. And in some cases the strikes are deliberately provoked by employers. But we are in the midst of war and strikes are military weapons. They may be aimed at the employers, but they hit our fighting men on the battlelines. The strikers on the whole may not be aware of this, but most of the strike leaders are not so innocent. The hostility of John L. Lewis towards the war and its anti-fascist aims is widely known. The Trotskyites who are the principal leaders of the Detroit strikes are shouting for Lewis to replace the patriotic leadership of the United Automobile Workers. In this situation the editors of *PM* have with characteristic irresponsibility started a campaign to give aid and comfort to the strike fomentors under the dangerous slogan of "No excuse for the causes of strikes." This campaign is in effect a skillful justification and incitement of strikes, especially since it ignores the Trotskyite and anti-war outlook of the strike leaders.

The situation is extremely dangerous and calls for energetic measures. The CIO leadership particularly should reaffirm its no-strike pledge and supplement it with the removal of the strike leaders. All public-spirited citizens should urge the government to make the necessary preparations to take over all mines and plants on strike or threatening to strike. At the same time the President should adopt measures to invigorate the War Labor Board either with a new sense of responsibility or new men of social vision in order to speed the solution of long delayed cases involving serious grievances. It would also be a good idea for the WLB to single out and publicly expose those employers and labor men who provoke strikes.

The recent WLB decision to authorize its regional boards to grant increases of sub-standard wages up to fifty-five cents an hour will potentially have a favorable effect on the incomes of 4,000,000 workers. While this decision will be greeted by the labor movement, it must be noted that it has been long overdue and even this new minimum falls considerably below the sixty-five cents proposed in a bill introduced by Senator Pepper last year. This important action of the WLB illustrates both its positive role and its weaknesses. On the whole it has prevented the deterioration of living standards, but always after inexcusable delays that try the patience and the tempers of workers laboring under the strain of intense war production and the petty provocations of irresponsible employers.

miership. Groza will have to move rapidly towards making amends for the failures of his predecessors since the country surrendered to the Allies last August. All of them were notoriously slow in fulfilling the terms of the armistice agreement, particularly the provisions on the punishment of war criminals and the cleansing of anti-United

Nations personnel from administrative departments and the Rumanian army. While previous cabinets contained several officials eager to live up to the country's armistice commitments, their efforts were frustrated by other members violently opposed to the National Democratic Front, which had relatively small representation in the government. The

Security for the Americas

IN HIS report to Congress on the Crimea Conference President Roosevelt, in referring to the fourteen-month period since Teheran, said: "There actually began to grow in some of these places queer ideas of 'spheres of influence' which were incompatible with the basic principles of international collaboration. . . . If allowed to go on unchecked," he continued, "these developments might have had tragic results, in time."

These remarks are related, of course, to Europe, but they provide a sort of negative text for the Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace in Mexico City. For until some twelve years ago the official line of American policy in the Western Hemisphere was to regard Latin America as a special preserve for Yankee imperialists, a preserve maintained in semi-colonial subjection to the "mother country," the trade of which insofar as possible was to be confined within the hemisphere. There are reactionary sections of North American bankers and industrialists who still hold that view; there are important elements abroad, represented for instance by the London *Economist*, who continue to believe that the Good Neighbor policy is merely camouflage for the same old imperialism that characterized the first thirty years of the century.

The Mexico City meeting, and especially the contribution of our State Department officials to it, will go far to overcome such suspicions. Our representatives have made it evident that a turning point has been reached and passed, that the old imperialist concepts are giving way to plans for an expanding world economy. The dominant leadership at Mexico City, which the United States has shared with other anti-fascist nations, is deliberately swinging the inter-American system into gear with the world system projected at Dumbarton Oaks. The Mexico City Conference is thus being made

an integral part of the global plans which will be charted next month in San Francisco. The "Act of Chapultepec," providing for diplomatic, economic and military sanctions against any Hemisphere aggressor, is a momentous development whose significance will be clear to the Argentine fascists.

It is too early to comment on conference details, for the final resolutions of the Inter-American Conference have not, as we write, come out of committee. The expressions of policy laid down by Secretary of State Stettinius and by Assistant Secretary Clayton clearly reveal, however, a forward-looking policy. Mr. Stettinius in his opening address made it abundantly clear that the United States' interest in improving Hemisphere relations was governed by the global policies established at Bretton Woods, Dumbarton Oaks, Teheran and Yalta. Within the framework of the United Nations he envisaged an inter-American system which could immensely strengthen the role of all American republics in their joint responsibility for seeing the war through to victory and in maintaining postwar security. The United States, he assured his colleagues, would make a large contribution toward freeing the hemisphere of Nazism and toward building higher standards of living.

Some of our liberal friends should take special note of the excellent economic charter presented to the conference by that conservative businessman, William H. Clayton. As *NEW MASSES* continually pointed out during the debate on the State Department appointments, large sections of American capitalists are understanding the need for aiding economically backward nations. Never has this been more dramatically illustrated than in the proposals presented at Mexico City for the industrialization and modernization of the Latin American countries.

front is made up of all genuinely anti-fascist groups from Socialist and Communists to the trade unions and agricultural and professional workers. It is the front which has continually sought to democratize the country despite the terror inflicted on those who peacefully demonstrated in the streets in the front's name.

Groza must meet the test of establishing a really broad government without any of the burdensome baggage of the past, embark on a program of domestic reform to bring Rumania fully into the war and stabilize the rear, without which the Red Army cannot be sure of the safety of its supply lines. It is this latter which obviously concerns Moscow and not the transparent nonsense about the USSR desiring to impose a "Communist regime." The fact is that the

removal of Radescu, Groza's predecessor, came as a consequence of nationwide protest against his backward policies. All correspondents, even if some of them invent stale fantasies about "bol-shevization," admit that the Red Army in Rumania has done nothing to interfere with the internal trend of affairs, although it is clearly anxious to reduce conflicts that might jeopardize military operations.

Philippines Step Ahead

THE restoration of "full powers and responsibilities" to the Philippines by General MacArthur is a step of the largest significance. Perhaps in no other area of United Nations political problems was such a bold forward step more necessary. And as much as we rejoice

in the policy which brings the promise of early independence to our Filipino friends we regret that this policy is not yet pursued by others of our allies, either Dutch, French or British. Because the needs of the war against Japan require the active assistance of the colonial people of Asia and because economic and political stability is always threatened by the colonial system, this whole issue is as urgent as it is troublesome. Not much progress will be made here, however, until the problems of trade and markets among the major powers are threshed out in keeping with the unity and understanding they have reached on other matters. In the meanwhile, we have made good our pledge to our Filipino ally. President Osmena's government has difficult jobs ahead, not least of which is a thorough cleansing of the

liberated areas of their pro-Tokyo and Falangist disciples.

Here and There

IT IS not too far-fetched to say that one of the effects of the triumph of Yalta was the fizzling out of the tory "revolt" on the appointment of Henry A. Wallace as Secretary of Commerce.

... His confirmation by the Senate is an international victory. ... Other effects of the historic conference, which reaffirmed free elections as a principle of the United Nations world, was the calling of elections in dictator-ridden Brazil and in China, where a polling booth hasn't been seen in years. ... Chiang Kai-shek's statement announcing elections in his country was, however, com-

promised by his attack on the Communists. ... The announced plans for converting lend-lease into a postwar reconstruction agency may also be counted among the good fruits of Yalta. An agreement was reached with France which by-passed the Senate slow-down on the Bretton Woods proposals on which a major reactionary offensive is looming.



FRONT LINES

by COLONEL T.

HURDLING THE RHINE

WHAT was forecast by this department last week has come to pass. Our push to the Rhine was effected against token German resistance. The trap between the Canadian First Army and the American Ninth did not snap shut. Venlo and Roermond at the bottom of the prospective sack fell without resistance. They were occupied, not taken. The city of Muenchen-Gladbach with more than a quarter of a million inhabitants was occupied with exactly *five casualties* to our troops. There was no real fight for Crefeld. The Germans did not put up a strong defense along the ridge of the Vorgebirge which commands the eastern bank of the Erft on the immediate approaches to Cologne.

Thus the contention that the Germans would not risk their remaining first class troops west of the Rhine has been fully vindicated. They fought in earnest only near Crefeld and they did this to prevent the closing of the Crerar-Simpson trap. Maj. George Fielding Eliot has this to say in the New York *Herald Tribune* of March 4: "It would seem at present accounts (Saturday afternoon) that the enemy has succeeded in getting back across the Rhine with the bulk of the good divisions which he had used to hold off the flank attack of the Canadian First Army. That Army and the United States Ninth Army have effected a junction, but the junction point was too far to the west to entrap the German troops and cut them off from the Rhine. The crucial moment probably came Thursday [March 1] when spearheads of the Ninth Army ran into heavy resistance north of Crefeld and had to 'sideslip' to the west. The speed of the Ninth Army's advance apparently was so great that General Simpson's men could not

develop quite enough punch to go straight ahead for the Rhine west of Duisburg." In fact, the junction of the Canadians with Simpson was effected quite close to Venlo instead of the Calcar-Crefeld line where a real trap was possible.

The fact that the bulk of German armor, panzer-grenadiers and airborne troops (used as shock infantry) have made an escape across the Rhine is of great importance. Unfortunately, several over-sanguine correspondents and newscasters have been drumming into our ears the idea that Eisenhower would "destroy all the Germans west of the Rhine." These are the fellows who have transformed an occurrence which was to be expected by any literate military man into a disappointment and an anticlimax.

The Germans have only the line of the Rhine to pin their hopes on, just as in the East they have only the Oder-Neisse line. When these lines are broken through, the "exfiltration" of the Nazi party elements from the fronts and into the Alpine region must begin. Every day gained helps the Nazis strengthen their future Valhalla. Risking their mobile shock troops west of the Rhine would have been a crazy stunt, especially after von Rundstedt's experience in the disastrous Belgian drive. This was not to be expected of Rundstedt.

Allied troops are bound to come out on the Rhine along a front of about 110 miles, between Bonn and Arnhem. Such a front cannot be adequately manned by the Germans throughout its entire length. The watch on the Rhine will be effected by second and third rate troops (so-called defensive troops) while a first rate mobile reserve will be kept back, probably in the Muenster-Hamm-Dort-

mund triangle, for vigorous counterattack at points where Allied troops will attempt crossings. Such a mobile reserve for the defense of the Rhine is *as essential as the river itself*. One without the other would be of no avail. Well, Rundstedt understands this as well as we do. This is why it was not to be expected that he would risk the material for such a reserve just to delay the progress of Allied armies to the Rhine. All the fighting the Germans did west of the water barrier in the two weeks, up to March 4, had for its objective to get their best troops out. The Germans did not resist frontal assault, they resisted only the forming of pincers. In this they succeeded, by and large.

THE German problem now is not to defend Cologne or Bonn, or any city on the left bank of the Rhine. Their problem is to get across the river, blow up the bridges and then defend the Rhine in a last stand. Conversely, the Allied problem is not to set up a watch on the Rhine, but to cross it as quickly as possible, "straight from the march" as the Russians say. All radio-commentator talk about "logistics" and "supply difficulties" sounds very convincing but loses its punch when set against the experience of the Dnieper River, for instance, which was crossed "straight from the march" and after a very long march, too—much longer than the march from the Roer to the Rhine (twenty-five miles).

Such a crossing of the Rhine would have the overwhelming support of our combined air forces and all the engineering materiel which we have accumulated, but have not used yet in a river crossing of any importance. If the Rhine is too swift for pontoon-bridges, then as-

sault boats and ferries could be brought in via sea, river and canal, say, to the confluence of the Waal and Neder Rijn for a crossing between Arnhem and Emmerich.

Again I quote Major Eliot because I absolutely agree with him: "The German Army is by no means in a state of disorganization, but it is certainly suffering for the moment from considerable confusion due to having been pushed around, made to do a good many things in a hurry, and suffering pretty severe losses in the process. The Germans recover very quickly from such conditions. Hence there would seem very good reason to expect that a further and very important extension of the Allied offensive will follow immediately, before the Germans have had a chance to pull fragments of units together, reinforce existing units with replacements, and organize their defense. They will be greatly impeded in all this by the attacks on their communications system which our air power has been carrying out; but again, they repair such damage quickly. All the more reason why *our offensive must go on to its next step with as little pause as possible.*" (My emphasis—Col. T.)

THE Red Army has been "squaring its shoulders" for the last couple of weeks, both in Pomerania and in Silesia. On March 4 it was announced that Marshal Rokossovsky, after a march of sixty-two miles in four days, had reached the Baltic shore near Kolberg, opposite the Danish island of Bornholm and 125 miles due south of the Swedish port of Karlskrona. Thus another Baltic trap has been snapped shut. A sizable German army is now trapped in the Danzig-Dirschau (Tczew) - Stolpe - Lauenburg area and the Pomeranian wing of the Wehrmacht has been broken clean off. Thus on the eve of the combined assault across the Rhine and across the Oder-Neisse we see the German Army minus half a hundred divisions blocked and reduced to impotence in Latvia, East Prussia and Eastern Pomerania. More German troops are besieged in Graudenz (Grudzadz) Glogau and Breslau. More are crazily scattered in Norway, in Crete and other outlandish places when the Berlin front needs them so badly.

A better moment for the grand and final assault could not be found.

THE campaign on Iwo Island is drawing to a close and the enemy has been compressed into a narrow strip in the northern part of the island, his back

In This Corner

"Please," says Argentina,
"You misunderstand!
I'm not a friend
Of The Fatherland!

"Nazi bank deposits?
I'd sooner be shot!
If you don't believe me,
X Reichsmarks the spot.

The Town Hall "Reader's Digest"
Forum of the air
Is strictly impartial,
Neutral, and fair.

No questions are loaded,
The scales are never tipped,
It's all on the level!
. . . it says here in the script.

I agree with Pete V. Cacchione,
The proposed ten-cent fare is a
phoney.
Unless they decidè
To hand out with each ride
"New Masses" from Concourse to
Coney!

On what to do with Germany
That pillar of the "Post,"
Miss Dorothy Thompson
Is Dotty-er than most.

N.M.

to the deep blue sea. Both airfields are in our hands and the southern one is already in full use. It is most interesting to note that the Suribachi volcano at the southern tip of the island has suddenly sprung into action. Sulphuric fumes have driven Japanese holdouts from caves into the tender arms of our Marines. The latter are using hot cracks to heat up their rations (cooking on a volcano is next best to chewing nails). This raises the interesting question of the effects of violent explosions on the behavior of volcanoes. Quite a problem for seismologists to sink their teeth into.

American troops have taken possession of the long island of Palawan which stretches 250 miles between Mindoro and Borneo, thus forming a 750-mile front from Lingayen Gulf to Balabac Strait, facing the South China Sea and the Japanese communications with the East Indies, Malaya and Indo-China. The bombing of the Japanese home island by Superfortresses and carrier based planes is increasing in frequency and violence. Our surface ships have bombarded Japanese bases in the Ryukyus, between Formosa and Japan. The next big step in the Pacific appears to be an invasion of the great stronghold of

Formosa, the point where Japan actually laid the first stone of its plan of world conquest half a century ago.

However, all these successes, due to the magnificent planning by Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur and to the efficiency of our Navy and troops is being offset by the stubborn refusal of Chungking to effect an understanding with the Peoples' Armies in the north. Our D-Day in China is approaching, but China is in turmoil and remains militarily ineffective. No Ledo Road can remedy that. What is necessary is direct pressure to purge Chungking. This is a military necessity.

What France Faces

(Continued from page 4)

on common actions that are required without delay against reaction, which is again grown threatening; and in order also to lay the foundation for a great national workers' party, a great people's party in France, the Communist Party has just formed a joint committee with the Socialist Party. In order to make of the coming municipal elections a striking demonstration of French unity, our Party supports a proposal for united lists of candidates of the Resistance. For the same reason it favors all efforts to unify the organizations of the Resistance, such as the project of unification of the National Front with the National Liberation Movement, and the agreement reached among all the organizations of the youth of France.

The French Communist Party is thus conscious of serving faithfully the true interests of France and of the Republic. Certainly on the road to the rebirth of France there still stand many obstacles. But France has risen from the abyss, thanks to the efforts and sacrifices of our people; thanks to the precious aid that we have received from our British and American friends and allies, whose men have shed their blood on our soil for the liberation of our country; thanks to our Soviet allies, who have saved the world from fascist barbarism.

The work of reconstruction still demands an effort that is tenacious and sustained. The Communist Party, true to its policy of national union, will devote all the resources of its patriotic energy and of its devotion to the people to the task of ensuring that the France of the future shall live happy, strong and free!

From the Canadian magazine "National Affairs."



FROM PETERSBURG TO LENINGRAD

An Appreciation of Alexei Tolstoy, by Dorothy Brewster

WHEN I heard of Alexei Tolstoy's death and began to think of his novels, read several years ago—*Darkness and Dawn* and *Peter the Great*—one scene from each book came most vividly to life. That from *Darkness and Dawn* is a picture of Petersburg in the winter of 1917-18, a terrifying picture, a symbol of dying cities in days of war and revolution. "Along the deserted streets the icy wind drove paper litter—the debris of martial law proclamations, theater bills, manifestoes appealing to the 'conscience and patriotism' of the Russian nation. . . . The idle crowds were gone from the streets and the squares. The Winter Palace stood empty, its roof pierced by a shell from the cruiser *Aurora*. . . . The resplendent carriages, the well-dressed women, the officers, civil servants and public men had disappeared from the neglected, dirty streets. The nights resounded with the tap-tap of hammers boarding up the doors of shops. . . . The north wind sent its ice-cold breath into the darkened windows of the houses and blew through the deserted porches, sweeping out the ghosts of the luxury of the past.

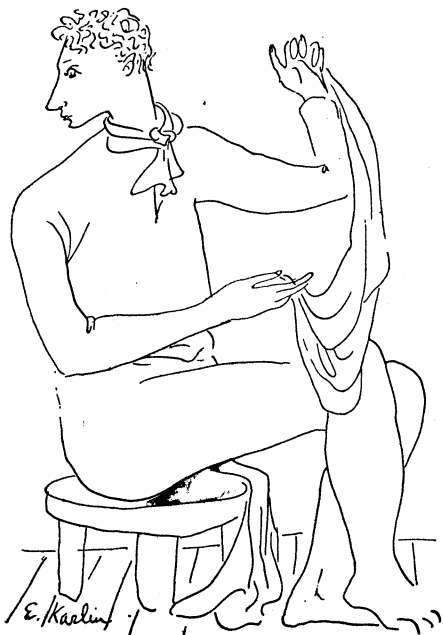
"A man with pail and brush, in a battered hat, hurried through the storm-swept street, pasting ever fresh decrees on the walls. . . . Night comes. It is pitch dark, there are neither street lamps nor lights from the windows. There is no coal, but people say that Smolny is ablaze with lights and that lights are on in the factory quarters. . . . Shots ring out in the darkness. Who fired them? At whom? Why? What's that over there where the glare of a fire flickers and colors the snow-clouds? The vodka warehouses are burning. In the cellars men are lying drunk in the liquor flowing out of smashed barrels. . . . Starving Petersburg, despoiled by the villages, frozen stiff by polar winds, surrounded by an enemy front, shaken by conspiracies—a city without fuel, without bread, with factory chimneys no longer smoking, a city like an exposed human brain. . . ." True—Smolny was ablaze with lights and some of those proclamations being pasted up did mean

the future. But the terrified and bewildered Dasha (one of the two sisters whose experiences spin the thread that leads us through the labyrinth of war and civil strife and revolution with which the trilogy deals) can see no future but misery.

With this picture in mind, one can measure the contrast presented by the besieged Leningrad of 1941-42: in physical destruction, suffering and death far surpassing the Petersburg of 1918, but in spiritual strength and unity belonging to another world altogether, a world created by heroic effort in the intervening quarter of a century. Read the account of blockaded Leningrad by the poetess Olga Begholz (VOKS Bulletin 11-12, 1943), with its terrifying and inspiring details: read of the morgue that had to be set up in the Public Library reading-room for the bodies of staff workers; of the readers in the adjoining hall sitting in their coats and gloves, some of them learning from old manuals how to make candles, soap and matches; of the old scholars who would come to the library saying, "I shall probably soon die; come and take my books for safe-keeping"; and of the library workers, as wasted as the old scholars, who would haul those books

and manuscripts on children's sleds to the library. The Nazis were confident that as a result of the inconceivable hunger, the people would collapse, would tear at each other, would revolt, would forget everything for the sake of bread. But though they died by the hundred thousands, they were still capable of offering a few grams of bread in payment for a newly-published book of poems about their city. There grew up a will to life that could not be killed.

How did the people travel from the Petersburg of 1918 to the Leningrad of 1942? How did Tolstoy himself travel that road? He had belonged, like his Dasha, to the old world of writers and artists and intellectuals which he portrays so well in the first volume of the trilogy, *Sisters*. The title of the trilogy is *The Road to Calvary*, or in Russian *The Visit to the Damned* (*Khozhdeniye po mukam*), from an old Slavonic legend describing the visit of the Virgin Mary to the places of torment of the sinners, where, moved by their suffering, she asks the Lord to lighten their lot. (To the western reader the title *Road to Calvary* suggests what *Visit to the Damned* does to the Russian—or so we are told.) For this work, completed with the last page of *Gloomy Morn* written on June 22, 1941, Tolstoy was awarded a First Degree Stalin Prize. He had begun *Sisters* in 1919, finishing it in 1921. The years from 1919 to 1923 were those of his absence from the Soviet Union, and were spent partly in France and partly in Berlin, where some of his writing was published. While he was writing *Sisters*, he tells us, "events were progressing in Russia and it became clear to me that I could not put 'finis' to this book." But before he could go on with the second volume, *1918*, he had to study documents of the period, talk with participants in the civil war, visit the scenes of the novel—Tsaritsyn, Krasnodar, the Kuban; and, most important of all, he had to determine his own attitude towards the material, to relive it, to ponder over it. He began it in 1927; and only some time after he had finished



Eugene Karlin.

it, eighteen months later, did he realize how important a role had been played, in the 1918-19 struggle of the revolution against counter-revolution, by the defense of Tsaritsyn. He could not change the published book nor could he go on to the third volume without the Tsaritsyn episode; so he wrote the separate novel *Bread*.*

Between completing *1918* and beginning *Gloomy Morn* in 1939, Tolstoy wrote the first two parts of the novel *Peter the Great*** So in 1939 he had two uncompleted trilogies; which should he finish first? "By that time it was already perfectly clear to me that world war was inevitable. And it was equally clear that after this global war I should be unable to revert to the epoch of the civil war, as it would have receded too far. But it would be quite possible to write the third part of the novel *Peter I* after the world war." He did not regret the lapse of time between the writing of the second and third books of *The Road to Calvary*, because during those years his own attitude towards life matured. He defines the theme of the trilogy: "Mother country, lost and regained. . . . On the eve of and even during the first world war, the feeling for one's own native land was rather weakened among the intelligentsia. And it was only in the course of twenty-five years of the new life, and particularly when we were on the verge of the second world war, that the sense of the indivisible bond with our native soil was felt with unusual intensity. Through profound suffering, through struggle, we had reached this national consciousness. Never for a whole century has the feeling been so deep, so keen, as now. But I could not have understood all this in 1927, when I wrote *1918*. *The Road to Calvary* is the path that the writer's own conscience followed through suffering, hope, elation, depression and exaltation." (*International Literature No. 4.*, 1943). The writer, Constantine Fedin, in a fairly complete and critical account of the trilogy (*Int. Lit. No. 10.*, 1943), tells us how the younger readers of today look upon it: "For those born in the last

quarter of a century, Czarist Russia, the first world war, and the civil war all seem distant and mysterious, like an old man's stories of his boyhood. . . . We feel everything we read in these three books in the same way as we feel the living present, but it sinks into our minds in the same way as our fathers' reminiscences of the past." So swift has been the movement of Soviet history! The gloomy March morning at the end of the trilogy "is not frowning with hopelessness, but is frowning exactly at people who have passed through a cycle of torments, people who have undertaken to build a new world."

WHAT of that other scene which I recalled so clearly from *Peter the Great*? The English timber merchant Sidney has seen in the square near the Pokrovski gates a space cleared of snow, a guard, gallows, and a woman's head sticking out of the ground and blinking its eyes. He is told it was a Russian execution, for the murder of a husband, the woman to be hung up presently by the feet after some days of torture in the ground. What of it? asks the Czar, to whom the Englishman ventures to express his horror. They have been executed like that for centuries. Sidney has already seen enough of the life of Russian women, of the way they are beaten and oppressed, to be critical. They go out to the square, and in the torchlight that makes the helmets of the musketeers glitter, they look down upon the head with big sunken eyes gazing up at them from the snow. "Why did you kill your husband?" Peter asks. "Did he beat you? Was he cruel?" The head opened its black mouth and in a hoarse deep voice that was filled with hate, it said, "I killed him. And I would kill him again, the beast." The eyes closed. No one spoke. "Drops of resin fell from the torches with a hiss. Sidney began to speak rapidly but no one would translate. The sentry touched her with his felt boot. The head rolled over as if the woman was dead. Peter coughed harshly and went to his sledge. He said in a low voice, 'Order her to be shot.'" To Sidney he says: "You accuse us of being savages, beggars, fools, and beasts. . . . I know we are. But wait—wait." Horrifying as the scene is, the woman's defiance remains in one's mind as indicative of a strength which, along with Peter's willingness to listen to the voice from the west, is prophetic.

Tolstoy called *Peter the Great* the search for a clue to the Russian people and the Russian state system. And the

novel is considered to have given a fuller and deeper interpretation than anything previously written of the figure of Peter. The interest in historical fiction, well developed before the present war, was intensified by the conflict. "The finest traditions of bygone days are seen again in the deeds and exploits of the men of our time." For some years literature had been striving for the reestablishment of the ties leading from the contemporary man to the historical past, and naturally the historical novel took precedence over other genres. Tolstoy was continuing his own work in this field with a dramatic trilogy about Ivan IV—traditionally styled "The Terrible," though we are now told the better translation of Grozny is "redoubtable." The first two plays—*The Eagle and his Mate*, and *Trying Years*—were completed.

AFTER the death of Maxim Gorki in 1936, Tolstoy became what Gorki had so preeminently been—the living bridge in literature between the past and the present. Shortly after the outbreak of the war against the Soviet Union, Tolstoy wrote of what the writers were defending. "For more than half a century I have seen my country in her fight for liberty, undergoing her amazing transformation. I remember the dead silence of the reign of Alexander III; the poverty-stricken village with the hayricks, thatched roofs and the willows on the side of the rivulet winding in the steppes. I look back into the past, and the faces rise before me, clever, unhurried, dignified people. . . . There is the father of one of my playmates, Alexander Sizov, a handsome man with a fair, curly beard, a born athlete. At holiday times when one side of the village fought the other side in the snowdrifts, Sizov would glance through the window with a smile in his eyes, go out and stand near the gates. And when the calls for his assistance were very urgent, he would put on his mittens and jokingly overthrow the whole front rank of the opposing side. . . . Today some grandson of his is hurling himself like an angry falcon at German bombing planes. . . . I remember a cottage with a warm stove, a young girl sitting at a hand loom and a calf sleeping on straw behind a board in the corner. We children sat on benches round the table and listened to a tall one-eyed man who looked like a horse. He told us fairy tales. He used to go begging from village to village and slept where he could get shelter. The young woman at the loom said softly: 'Why do you tell terrible things all the

* *Darkness and Dawn* (Longmans, Green, 1936) includes *Sisters* and *1918*. *The Road to Calvary* (Boni & Liveright, 1923) is a translation of *Sisters*. *Bread* has also appeared in an English translation (1938). *Gloomy Morn*, begun in 1939 and finished in 1941, is, I believe, still untranslated. One hopes there will be a complete authoritative English translation of the trilogy, with *Bread* included.

** *Peter the Great* (Covici-Friede, 1932). Also Victor Gollancz, London, 1936.

time? Tell us something happy for a change.' 'I don't know any, my dear, I never heard or saw anything happy,' and he fixed his one terrible eye on us. 'There, the children—they will perhaps see and hear something happy. . . .'

Tolstoy saw the happiness of children in the days before 1941. He contributed to it with his fairy tales and his plays for children. But he also had to see new cycles of torment for children, when he with other members of state commissions investigated the "misdeeds of the German fascist invaders and their accomplices" in the towns of Vyazma, Gzhatsk and Sychevka, the Smolensk Region. . . . He wrote articles and stories about some of the things he saw. "Mother and Daughter" is a moving and powerful story of a little girl who has seen her mother tortured and killed by the Nazis, on the instigation of a vicious old villager who has found his profit in working with the Nazis. Stunned almost to idiocy, she is picked up along the road by some soldiers of a Red Army battery, and for many weeks she has to remain with them.

Gradually their kindness brings her back to something like childhood again—and the story of what finally happens I have no time to tell here.* But at one point the child's best friend among the soldiers, Yuri, is smoking his pipe and reflecting and he recalls that once Ivan Karamazov, sitting in an inn, had asked his brother Alyosha: "If the people's happiness demanded that just one child be sacrificed, be tortured—could you torture a child even for the people's happiness?" Ivan had been passionately rehearsing all the horrors he had ever heard of cruelty to children. Alyosha could not at first find an answer; then he thought he had solved the riddle—"Yes, let it be tortured, but let the child be myself." Yuri thinks: "But that's a stupid problem, imaginary, speculative. Life itself poses another question: to save one child from torment, isn't everybody calling himself a human being ready to give his life? A straight question and a clear answer. And Grisha, and the machine-gunner Ivan, and the other four snoring lustily in the dugout, and he himself, Yuri, replied: 'Yes, they are ready.'"

A long road from Dostoevsky's Alyosha to Tolstoy's soldier—from mysticism to humanism. A long road, but at the end of it—the end for Alexei Tolstoy, though not for his people—a straight question and a clear answer.

Czechoslovak Literature

HUNDRED TOWERS, A CZECHOSLOVAK ANTHOLOGY. Edited by F. C. Weiskopf. Fischer. \$3.50.

THE western Slavs were printing books before printing reached England. Their great university at Prague antedated those of Leipzig and Heidelberg. Their flourishing culture was stifled, however, when in 1638 German invasion, which had frequently saturated the land in blood, ended in conquest. The Hapsburg Empire began its oppressive rule over the western Slavs with a ferocity comparable to that of the Nazi Reich. Murder and looting was accompanied by a calculated destruction of intellectual life, which was inaugurated by a burning of 60,000 books.

Not till some 200 years later were the western Slavs permitted to resurrect their culture. Then the liberating breath of the French Revolution blew all through Europe and the Hapsburg despotism felt threatened enough to become "enlightened." When the revival began not so much as a child's primer was in print in the native languages. It had to begin from the folk lore of a half-slave peasantry. A new literary language had to be molded, and the first books of the resurrected literature were dictionaries and translations. Yet as early as the 1830's a Czech poet, ranked with such contemporaries as Shelley, Lermontov and Holderlin, had appeared, and he led a brilliant procession. Slovak literature, lacking the support of as ancient a cultural tradition as the Czech, was slower to develop. But it already had notable achievements to its credit when the Hitler blight defaced it.

Franz Weiskopf, the noted anti-Nazi German refugee writer now in this country, has put us in his debt by making available a selection from the past generation of this western Slav literature. The first reason for our gratitude is implicit in Mr. Weiskopf's informative commentary and shines from the superb and individual quality of the writing itself. Mr. Weiskopf's other motives we can share:

Like my countryman, Rainer Maria Rilke, I was "always so much touched by the Czech people's song." From my childhood, the Czech and Slovak languages were familiar to my ears and to my tongue, and dear to my heart. Being a German from Czechoslovakia, I felt doubly shocked, doubly awed and filled with double scorn at the crimes committed against my Slavic friends by Hitler's cut-throats. If, by editing this anthology, I can win a few more friends for the cause of

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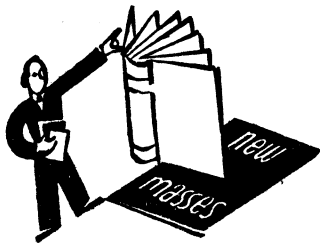
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free Czechoslovakia and, perhaps, inspire more just hatred towards its enemies; and if, through acquaintance with this selection, something is gained for this country (toward which I feel a great debt of gratitude for having given me a hospitable haven in exile) . . . then I shall consider myself more than richly rewarded.

As already noted, the aggression that Mr. Weiskopf refers to is nothing new in Czechoslovak history. The costs and value of freedom have been magnified for these small, and exposed peoples living in one of the invasion corridors of Europe, and the everpresent reality of struggle is reflected in their culture. No national literature that I have had the opportunity to read into has such a natural "social consciousness," a social consciousness that is no mere "trend" but springs straight from the history and life of the people. As Mr. Weiskopf notes:

From the earliest times, Czech (and, later on, Slovak) writers were close to the common people. . . . So strong was the imprint left by constant pressure and wrong, that even the "symbolist decadent poetry" invoked by the influence of Verlaine, Baudelaire, and Mallarme did not rest satisfied with elegiac expression of dusky moods and morbid states of the soul, but searched with irony for the cause of that hopeless *tristesse sans raison*. That representative of the Czech decadents (Karel Hlavacek, 1874-1898) confessed that his Muse was not weak with ennui and hyper-satiation, but with hunger.

This characteristic social protest was already clear in the two Czechoslovak writers of major stature already known to English-speaking readers: Yaroslav Hasek, author of *Schweik*, *The Good Soldier* and Karel Capek, author of *RUR*. In the first we have a sort of guerrilla humor in the continuous outwitting by the Czech peasant soldier of his Austrian officers; in the second, a satire on capitalist dehumanization that has added the word *robot* to the languages of the world.

American publishers are said to be on the lookout for good books to add to their lists. They have strung thousand-dollar prizes along all the literary highways as bait. They might shorten some of their quests by looking up some of the fresh and flavorful fiction to be sampled here.

Unfortunately, the poetry representation does not show up as well. The talent required for the transmigration of souls that poetry translation calls for is apparently not available. But Czechoslovak criticism is represented by a remarkable article, "Poetry, Immortality and Eternity," which is by no means the

tissue of abstractions that the title threatens but speaks of the relations between art and life with lucid wisdom and a probity uncommon in a field where cleverness is esteemed above integrity.

Finally, I wish to comment on the selection provided here of the work of the master Karel Capek. It is drawn from his biography of Masaryk which, judging from the excerpt offered here, is major biographical writing and certainly calls for a complete English translation. In these selections a powerful personality is evoked, in the most extraordinary way, merely through notes on Masaryk's speech habits. The depth and intimacy of these observations remind one of Gorky's penetrating and loving memoirs of Tolstoy and Lenin.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Labor in China

THE CHINESE LABOR MOVEMENT, by Nym Wales. John Day. \$2.75.

LABOR UNIONS IN THE FAR EAST, by Eleanor H. Lattimore, American Council, Institute of Pacific Relations. 10¢.

WHEN the World Trade Union Conference assembled in London early in February, Chiang Kai-shek's government was represented by a delegate from the Chinese Association of Labor. But the North China Trade Union Federation, though seeking admission, had not been invited to send a delegate. Government-controlled unions were thus represented while a million other free trade unionists in China's northwest border region were not. This situation is fully described and interpreted in *The Chinese Labor Movement*, the first history of trade unions in China and a book that is of special importance at the present time to American trade unionists.

Nym Wales, the author, is well qualified to write on the subject. She spent ten years in China, interviewed many union leaders of both right and left wings, studied all articles, reports and records of twenty-four years' activity, and carefully sets down the story with a source for every statement made.

Relief funds contributed by American trade union members in the AFL, CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods have been going to China since 1943. The money has been used to set up recreation centers for workers, to provide supplemental feeding for soldiers in base hospitals, and to transfer skilled workers to the interior. But all the funds so far have been given through the Chinese Association of Labor, dominated by the

Chungking government., This association, Miss Wales points out, is a "labor front" under which membership in unions is compulsory. All workers in a particular factory or category are considered union members *ipso facto*. "Real labor unions," she concludes, "cannot be hoped for under Chungking until the present anti-labor and anti-democratic policies of the Kuomintang and the cliques controlling the government are changed."

The board of custody set up in China to handle the American Labor Fund for Aid to China has given no share of these labor funds as yet to the workers in the Industrial Cooperatives nor to the labor unions of the North China Trade Union Federation in guerrilla areas. A few unions in the United States have contributed directly, however, to the American Indusco (Industrial Cooperatives) Committee and the China Aid Council in New York for the cooperatives and guerrilla areas.

American and British labor can make no mistake if they clearly indicate their impartial support for democracy and unity generally in China, Nym Wales suggests. Every avenue of reaching Chinese labor should be utilized. Every worker in China, whether in Chungking, Yenan or Shanghai, has only one elementary demand: the right to organize unions as part of a new democratic system. When that system is achieved and when Japan is driven out of China there will be time enough to argue over a future type of society.

Rising from almost nothing in 1920 to a total of 3,065,000 in 1927, the Chinese labor movement was largely under left-wing leadership. But during the years from 1927 to 1931, as Nym Wales shows, the leadership was practically, if not literally, beheaded. Over a thousand women leaders and some 10,000 responsible Communist Party members were killed in 1927, it was estimated. This violent suppression almost destroyed the earlier trade unions.

But though labor has no independence and no voice as yet in Chungking, it has organized the only democratic movement in government territory—the industrial cooperatives. And no other underground labor movement during this war has grown from infancy to a network a million strong, as has the North China Trade Union Federation in guerrilla areas. In this region, the strength of labor unions is growing as part of the liberation of a nation from the double chains of feudal oppression and Japanese exploitation.

ANOTHER authority on Far Eastern problems, Eleanor H. Lattimore, has written a popular and useful booklet, *Labor Unions in the Far East*, which should have a wide circulation among trade unions in the United States. The story she tells of the Chinese labor movement agrees with Nym Wales' conclusions. This latest Institute of Pacific Relations pamphlet includes an account of trade unions in India, south-eastern Asia, the Philippines and Japan.

GRACE HUTCHINS.

Isolationist, 1918 Model

THE GENTLEMAN FROM MASSACHUSETTS: HENRY CABOT LODGE, by Karl Schriftgiesser. Little, Brown. \$3.

HENRY CABOT LODGE, the "Wily One," friend and mentor of Theodore Roosevelt, the "scholar in politics" whom Henry Adams called "Boston Incarnate," and whom President Eliot of Harvard branded "a degenerated son of Harvard," was defeated by history at the recent Teheran and the Crimean conferences. For the Senator from Massachusetts devoted his life and his considerable energy to winning world hegemony for a rapacious United States imperialism; the vain, egocentric, cruel little Brahmin who hated the "lower classes" fought hard—and for a while successfully—to build this nation into an aggressive and arrogant empire capable unilaterally of deciding the fate of the world. Lodge's efforts in public life helped breed the second world war out of the first: his legacy was fulfilled at Munich in 1938 and at Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Lodge was the spiritual forebear of the appeasers, the Red-baiters, the American Century spokesmen, the Hoover-Dewey cabal determined to prevent a stable and lasting peace. The mantle worn by Lodge is now competed for by native fascists. In his life of Henry Cabot Lodge, Karl Schriftgiesser has effectively pictured the motives and the reasoning of the venomous Senator. Lodge's career has a contemporary importance to all who see danger ahead from such Senators as Vandenberg and Taft to agreements arrived at in the past and to be augmented in the future by the Big Three. *The Gentleman from Massachusetts* is useful reading. Karl Schriftgiesser has written a lively and instructive biography of the man who reviled Great Britain and the USSR, who hated all progressive ideas and the common man, and who, in reality, loved only himself. BRUCE MINTON.

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PRODUCTION, JOBS AND TAXES, by Harold M. Groves. McGraw-Hill. \$1.25.

PRESENT SAVINGS AND POSTWAR MARKETS, by Sumner Slichter. McGraw-Hill. \$1.

PROFESSOR GROVES presents a program which, with some modifications, was adopted by the Committee for Economic Development, a comparatively enlightened organization of big business interests. His chief proposals are to remove taxation from corporations and base the federal tax system entirely (with minor exceptions) on personal income. He argues that corporation taxes are unjust, retard business incentive and are in the long run passed on to the consumer. He would also reduce rates on high and medium incomes while retaining prevailing rates on low incomes. In his view this would not reduce the buying power of low-income groups because the huge sums saved by corporations on taxes would be passed on to the consumer in lower prices and more jobs. The professor's optimism will scarcely be shared by the lower-income groups (about ninety percent of the people) who, within their own circles, will find sounder and more equitable ideas on tax policies.

PROFESSOR SLICHTER's study of the role of wartime "savings" on postwar economy is restricted in scope and throws little light on the problems we will face after the war. Though he is a prominent leader of our Keynesian school of economists, Professor Slichter's work does not project their interesting plans to avoid unemployment and depressions. The "savings" he examines, running into about \$100,000,000,000,



is mostly idle capital, of which some will be used for reconversion to peacetime production. Only a small portion of it is private savings of lower-income groups.

All such treatises on "savings" fail to distinguish between the savings of the high, medium and low incomes. The savings of the first group and those of the corporations is really idle capital that must find new fields for investment. The latter two groups, especially the last, represent saving for the rainy day or insurance against hard times. These can become a factor in stimulating production provided we enter the postwar period without serious unemployment or replace these rainy day savings with adequate social insurance. Slichter's superficial treatment evades the real issues.

RALPH BOWMAN.

Worth Noting

THE Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions, which played so important a part in the last elections, has become a permanent organization. The Literature Division of the Committee set itself up at a luncheon meeting on February 28. It elected Van Wyck Brooks chairman, Howard Fast co-chairman, Lillian Lustig executive secretary and a distinguished list of writers and publishing personalities as its executive committee. Its program includes the following four planks: To work for the Economic Bill of Rights, for the full citizenship now denied to minorities subject to discrimination, for world peace and world organization, and one resounding "anti" plank—no censorship!

AN EXCELLENT exhibit of Soviet war posters and color prints is on in the Rotunda of the Low Library at Columbia University. It continues to March 31 and succeeds an exhibit of pre-Soviet and Soviet architecture and an exhibit of Soviet books, both of which attracted wide attention.

A SELLOUT inaugurated the three "Fun with Music" concerts presented by Variety Programs at the Hunter College Auditorium in New York. In the first, given on February 24, Vivian Rivkin at the piano and Nathan Gordon on the viola gave an excellent performance of the *Brahms Sonata in E flat Major, Opus 120*, and of interesting new music by Alan Shulman and Leo J. Kauffman; the stunning dancer, Pearl Primus, performed; a Hawaiian number was attractively

danced by Remutha Spurlock and Richard James to drum rhythms by Coker and Cimber, who gave a separate drum "conservation" number. Ballads by Woody Guthrie and the burlesque lecturing of "Professor" Irwin Corey, completed the program. The two succeeding programs will feature Richard Dyer-Bennet, ballad singer, Ray Lev, pianist, and the Dudley-Maslow-Bales trio, dancers (March 10); and Zero Mostel, comedian, Grace Castagnetta, pianist, Kenneth Spencer, singer, and Arlene Carmen, contralto (March 24).

THE Anisfeld-Wolfe award of \$2,000 given annually under the sponsorship of the *Saturday Review of Literature* for the best books on race relations was divided between Miss Gwethalyn Graham for her novel of Jewish-Christian relations in Canada, *Earth and High Heaven*, and Gunnar Myrdal for his scholarly study in *The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. The judges were Henry Seidel Canby, Henry Pratt Fairchild and Ralph Linton.

A RADIO program worth following is "Labor, USA," offered Saturdays at 6:45 by the CIO and the Blue Network. The scripts are prepared by Pete Lyon. A recent one was based on a narrative poem by Norman Rosten, soon to be published, on the building of the Alcan Highway, and had a dramatic musical background and eloquent cantata-like choruses by Henry Brant.

AN ALL day conference, "Folklore in a Democracy," is to be held Saturday, March 10, at the Elizabeth Irwin High School in New York. The participants will include Ben A. Botkin, director of the Archive of Folklore in the Library of Congress and compiler of a *Treasury of American Folklore*, Charles Seeger, head of the Music Division of the Pan-American Union, Harold Thompson of Cornell University, Norman Studer, director of the Folk Festival of the Catskills, and other authorities on folklore and folk music. Sessions during the morning and afternoon will be followed in the evening by a concert participated in by George Edwards, Catskill Mountain folk singer, Woody Guthrie, Richard Dyer-Bennet, Sonny Terry on the harmonica, and the Jefferson Chorus; and there will be music inspired by American folk songs—*American Suite for Cello and Piano*, composed by Norman Cazden and played by Oliver Edel, cello, and Lillian Levkovsky, piano.



HOLLYWOOD TOWN MEETING

By MARJORIE DE ARMAND

Hollywood.

IN a town which has been justly publicized for its gala and colorful film openings, it might seem the height of brashness to say that the recent Hollywood Mobilization-sponsored premiere was the most exciting and significant first night ever seen here. Most of the people who attended are saying just that. For there has never been anything comparable on the West Coast or elsewhere.

All the familiar premiere props were there—lights, cameras, celebrities. Auto-graph hounds hung on the ropes, clutching at their favorites—Charles Boyer, Fred MacMurray, Bette Davis, Cary Grant, Ann Dvorak, Anne Baxter, Lena Horne, Dick Powell, Maureen O'Hara and several dozen others. From the outside it looked like the ancient ceremonial, but it wasn't.

Because the Hollywood Writers Mobilization built this opening around an original plan. The organization's Awards Committee had selected Lester Cowan's production of *Tomorrow the World* for its first "Writers' Award for Distinguished Film Achievement." The committee's members (twenty-one) included producers, actors, writers, directors, and educators—among them Dore Schary, Vincent Sherman, Greer Garson, Katharine Hepburn, Lena Horne, James Hilton, Emmet Lavery, Lamar Trotti, John Cromwell and Franklin Fearing. "*Tomorrow the World* seems to us to achieve a most important blending of idea content and entertainment quality. It presents through a fresh and powerful approach the real nature of the enemy. It shows up against the contrasting decency of an American home the ugliness of race prejudice and religious bigotry. It has something to say and it says it in a manner certain to attract the attention of a mass audience." These are a few sentences from the Mobilization's statement on the reasons for its important first choice.

Along with the selection of the award winner, the HWM agreed upon one of the oldest forms of democratic practice—a town meeting, to be held immediately following the picture's showing on opening night. The stage play of *To-*

morrow, by Arnaud D'Usseau and James Gow, adapted for the screen by Ring Lardner, Jr. and Leopold Atlas, concerns itself with a twelve-year-old, Emil Bruckner, who comes to the country from Germany, a complete Nazi ideologist. His endeavor to divide and conquer his schoolmates and the household in which he lives forms the pattern of the plot. In the end he takes a physical beating which breaks him. The problem for discussion was, of course, "The Re-education of Nazi Youth—How?"

Beyond the presence of portable microphones there was not even a vague resemblance between the healthy give-and-take which followed the film and Mr. Harold Denny's carefully one-sided "Town Hall Meeting of the Air." The opinions offered and questions raised ranged as far as the physical distance between the Coasts. There was serious discussion of urgent issues of today: the punishment of Nazi war criminals, the inhuman character of fascism, treatment of Germans in US prison camps. A young professor thought that in some cases of reeducation a good grounding in liberal arts, emphasis on the classics, including the 100 Best Books, might be helpful. A housewife felt that an "incorrigible" member of a family would have to be treated as such—whether that family be composed of nations or a few individuals. Representatives of trade unions spoke; so did Thomas Mann, Ruth McKenney, Vladimir Pozner, Alexander Knox, Albert Maltz, Dr. James T. Shotwell, Albert Dekker, and two returned servicemen, to mention a few.

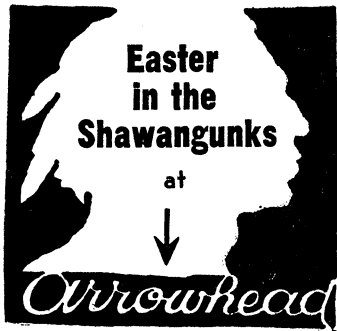
There was no talk about the film's technical achievements or lack of them. That was left to the critics. No decisions were reached, no vote was taken. Some people were disappointed at this: as one put it, "It's not a real town meeting if, after discussion, you don't vote whether or not to install the sewer pipes." Then, too, many disagreed with the ending of the film. I have made no attempt here to analyze the picture. It was reviewed by Joseph Foster in *NEW MASSES* of Jan. 16, 1945, and there is to be fur-

ther comment on it in these pages shortly.

WHAT is of greatest importance, I believe, is the Mobilization's achievement in establishing this kind of precedent—first, the selection of a film which merits good audience debate on the social issues presented, and possesses the entertainment element necessary to make box office cash registers ring throughout the country; second, sponsoring a premiere which gives a mature audience opportunity for adult discussion of the problems posed by the film. Dr. James T. Shotwell urged—and on this point everybody seemed to agree—that there be evenings of this sort everywhere. Nothing stands in the way of that, and if participation elsewhere is as enthusiastic as it was here, increased box office receipts ought to insure the production of more films with "idea content."

The first "Town Meeting" of its particular kind did something else. It added to the living proof that the motion picture industry, in all its intricate categories, is filled with straight-thinking, progressive people who are not afraid of the problems of our time, who do not fear to discuss them frankly and act upon them willingly. Paul Henreid said it well in his preliminary remarks: "We are workers and we are citizens as well as actors. . . . The theory that actors must do nothing except play parts during the day and gin rummy at night, is out—not only for the duration, but for all time. . . . When Nazi fascist terror was a threat, and not the . . . reality it later became, there were many professionals in all countries who said nothing and did nothing. They are dead. . . . Neutrals are either killed or they become traitors. In either case they die. I think it is worthwhile remembering this."

They will not need to try to remember it—those Hollywood writers, actors, directors, war workers, servicemen, and all the others who crowded the Westwood Fox Theater for that first night. They know it well—they have demonstrated that.



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On Broadway

“AND BE MY LOVE” is the one about the renowned actor in search of peace and quiet who finds a simple and good woman who lives in Connecticut, and in the autumn of their lives they are going to settle into the anonymity he has been seeking, but his fame catches up with him. For a while it looks as if Broadway is going to drag him back, until his true nature shows up in his decision to stay with the lady and even marry her.

Walter Hampden, in this comedy by Edward Caulfield, is supposed to seem hammy but in true actor's fashion is afraid to play the part through; instead, he seems to be laughing at the character he is playing. As a consequence the funny lines sound strained—for he is willing to be hammy only during the funny lines—and the big open spaces between the jokes are not sufficiently filled with the charm for which the writing strives. Lotus Robb, the woman, is a very good actress, or at least a good personality. She is delicate in the most life-like way—as Billy Burke would be were she not so silly. The rest of the actors have nothing to play.

A word is due Mr. Arthur Beckhard, who co-produced and directed the play. There were moments when the actors got so twisted up behind the furniture that I wondered how they were going to come free. Broadway directing prides itself on the physical manipulation of actors; indeed in most productions this is all the direction consists of. Here even that minimum mechanical art was lacking.

This leads to an observation some of the readers of this column may have made during their visits to the theater. Our actors, for the most part, are in a bad way. There are many causes for the phenomenon, but the plain fact is that the stereotype has got such a firm grip on acting as to lead our theater toward the formalization and lifelessness of the Japanese theater. Let a playwright set down the lines of a young girl and she becomes an “ingenue” on the stage. The actors cue their performances according to age. All twenty-year-olds, male or female, are the same person by the time the actors get through with them. All mothers fall into three types: the flighty, the worrying or the neglectful. The actors visualize the type and then go about fitting themselves to it. It's a shame, because many of these actors have talent.

NEW MASSES

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A famous European actor, now doing well here, recently told me he thought it might be because all the actors take lessons from the same coach. He claims young actresses especially flock to the coach who happens to be in fashion at the moment, and are forever branded with a single style. This may be partly true, but I think the absence of creation in our acting is due to the general setup of the theater today. A play going into production begins to cost money the day casting begins—and before. The director can't afford to fool around. He saves time by taking a gal who looks the part, and then hopes she can act sufficiently well to pass. If she is something special he becomes very happy. If she isn't good he is not happy.

The actress, on the other hand, is so anxious for a chance to get on the stage that she tries not for any distinctive approach but for one that will be least objectionable. She rounds her corners, she tries to be medium because she only met the director yesterday and doesn't quite know what he likes. He only met her yesterday too, and he doesn't know what she can do. The result is what one Soviet actor observed after seeing every play on Broadway during a period of two weeks. Asked what he thought of our theater, he glanced around to see if any antagonistic newsmen were listening, and said, "I don't understand it. Are they all a continuous play?"

All the productions he saw were so cut-to-fit, so "revised," so successfully the same, that he—who could not understand English, and so could not be thrown off the track by a new joke in one play that was not in another—thought the same director had done all of them, and indeed, that the same writer had supervised them all as well. He went back to his country with a glazed look, I understand.

Be that as it may, there is still hope. There is hope because most actors are longing for a place to experiment and grow. The same holds for many writers and even a few directors who, being closest to the management, are more frightened of anything new. After the war maybe we'll all start getting mad again and make some theater again, instead of this alms-begging that is currently holding sway.

MATT WAYNE.



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