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# The American Mercury



## Beware the Third Termites!

By EUGENE LYONS

## HOW STRONG IS RUSSIA?

By Erich Wollenberg

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**PRIDE AND PASSION: ROBERT BURNS, 1759-1796**, by DeLancey Ferguson. \$3.00. *Oxford U. Press*. A meaty, albeit school-flavored, portrait of the Scotch bard, with a tendency to drastic generalization. Thus, "Burns's attitude toward women of his own age was the elemental possessiveness which regards sex primarily as a ribald jest." The evidence for this statement is hardly convincing. More characteristic of Burns is his remark that writing poetry was "downright sodomy of soul."

**SARDINIAN BRIGADE**, by Emilio Lussu. \$2.50. *Knopf*. A cool and penetrating record of one year of World War fighting on the Alpine front written by a former Italian officer with machine-gun terseness. Revealing

the stupidity of generals and the agony of their cannon fodder trapped in the dilemma of a reason which cries "enough!" and an emotional impressment which has trained men to stoical acceptance of useless deaths. The author is an anti-fascist who escaped from Mussolini's dreaded Lipari in 1929, after three years there.

**THE DAY OF THE LOCUST**, by Nathaniel West. \$2.00. *Random House*. A bitter little book with those weird, authentic characters that West draws so effectively, but it doesn't come off as well as *Miss Lonelyhearts*.

**LET ME BREATHE THUNDER**, by William Attaway. \$2.00. *Doubleday Doran*. A junior *Of Mice and Men*. Very junior.

**THE HORSE THAT COULD WHISTLE "DIXIE,"** by Jerome Weidman. \$2.50. *Simon & Schuster*. An uneven collection of short stories by the author of *I Can Get It For You Wholesale* and *What's In It For Me?* Clever where Mr. Weidman sticks to the New Yorkers he knows so well and the uncharted idioms they speak. Stuffy outside his preserves.

**IN POLISH WOODS**, by Joseph Opatoshu. \$2.50. *Jewish Publication Society*. This novel, published in Yiddish in 1921, is the first part of a projected trilogy. The religious turmoils which engulfed the lives of the Jews of Poland three-quarters of a century ago are presented with considerable force, but the characters, especially the protagonist, Mordecai, are at best shadowy. Early chapters indicate that had the author set himself a more modest task he might have produced a first-rate work.

## THE CHECK LIST

A BOOK OF MIRACLES, by Ben Hecht. \$2.75. *Viking*. Mr. Hecht who wrote *Count Bruga* and *A Jew In Love* has returned from a prolonged leave of absence in Hollywood to write seven long stories. He still wields a sharp and witty pen but he has become glib, glamorous and even a trifle self-important. The movement of his tales is cluttered with a jangling mysticism and the satire has a pre-Depression flavor. But there are runs of pyrotechnic prose throughout which will thrill those with a taste for such things.

FIFTY BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES, 1915-1939, edited by Edward J. O'Brien. \$3.00. *Houghton Mifflin*. Mr. O'Brien has selected fifty from the five hundred odd stories he has "winnowed" from America's production of short stories in twenty-five years. He notes that in this period the American short story writer "has learned to surprise the mood on the face of the man next door and to transfer it innocently to paper so that it tells us something we need to know about ourselves. That is what writing is for . . ."

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(Continued on page 494)

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# *The American* MERCURY

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## BEWARE THE THIRD TERMITES!

BY EUGENE LYONS

DEFENDERS of haloed tradition are mobilizing everyone from George Washington down to save the third-term taboo. Certain New Dealers are digging in the archives for proof that the first President was speaking only for himself when he declined a third installment. But both sides subscribe to the proposition that the whole thing is a historical accident hardened into a sentimental-patriotic tradition. On that elementary level, it seems to us, the whole debate becomes trivial. The real question, we believe, is not whether the extension of a President's tenure beyond eight years is blasphemous, but whether it is desirable at any time, and in particular at this time. We must go back of the jejune bickerings over what Wash-

ington and his immediate successors, including Jefferson, meant — back to the realities of democratic government expressed by our natural dislike for the third term.

For our own part, we would oppose the third term even if Washington had favored it. We oppose it despite the fact that most of the politicians of the reactionary breed whom we like least also oppose it. We oppose the third term in general because it destroys one of the essential and elementary safeguards of the whole democratic American idea, and specifically because that idea needs safeguarding more urgently today than at any time in our national past.

We live in an age when democracy can no longer be taken for granted. It is everywhere on the

defensive. Its diametric opposite in the realm of political forces — the totalitarian idea — has conquered a vast area of the civilized world and already corroded the thinking and feeling of a considerable group even in America. The core of that totalitarian idea is its exaltation of the State above the people, and the identification of that State with one ineffable, irreplaceable, all-wise Leader. Democracy is a cruder, more haphazard system; a rough-and-tumble, if you wish, of changing moods and popular impulses, often far from wise. Totalitarianism is a rigid, mechanical thing. Democracy, by contrast, is a living, breathing organism, as wasteful, as wilful as Nature itself — but with the marvelous capacity for adjustment and survival that living organisms possess. Change, the continuous displacement of one set of leaders by another (sometimes better, sometimes worse), is the very life-blood of democracy. When this flow ceases, when it congeals, democracy is dead.

The instinctive recognition of this fact by the American people explains how something that began as a generous gesture by our first President was lifted into the domain of unwritten law — stronger, more compelling precisely because it is unwritten.

## II

We like to think of the USA as a young nation. Actually it is the oldest continuous democratic government in the world. When it was hammered into shape more than one hundred and fifty years ago there were no contemporary models or precedents to go by. Naturally much of the normal thinking of the ruling shifts at the time — a certain distrust of the populace and fear of genuine democracy — was put into the pattern of government. It has been the historic task of every succeeding American generation to broaden that democracy, to add dimensions. New, unwritten assumptions, various practices not directly prescribed by the Founding Fathers, have developed to temper the original system and deepen its democratic meaning. The taboo against the third term for any President belongs in this category of our national heritage.

It is well to recognize that our vaunted right of choosing a Chief Executive is limited, attenuated, and indirect. At best we have a take-it-or-leave-it choice between two men, both of whom we may dislike, selected by others through a process of bargaining and political skulduggery beyond our ken or control. The notion, moreover, that



in a country as complex as ours a choice between two men can even approximate a genuine expression of preference on national policies is fit only for the simple-minded who hold it. There are altogether too many policies involved to be sorted into two neat stacks. On the basis of what the candidates stand for, you might logically vote 20 per cent Democrat, 20 per cent Republican, with 60 per cent blank for issues ignored or evaded by both candidates. But you must vote 100 per cent for one or the other — as slapstick a register of your views as has ever been devised.

Stripped of pious pretense, therefore, the high function of voting for a President amounts to a quadrennial chance to clean White House, to turn out the gang which has had four or even eight years of well-nigh autocratic power. It is the quadrennial chance to yank the snouts of the bureaucracy out of the public feed-trough before its immense authority over lesser mortals hardens into divine right.

No executive branch of a national government in any civilized country outside the totalitarian regimes has so much power as ours. No British or French Premier, directly responsible to his parliament, has a fraction of the real authority exercised by the Presi-

dent of the United States. Another thing rarely recognized is that the man in the White House has a permanence of tenure which those Premiers must envy. He cannot be turned out by a non-confidence vote or a special election. Once voted in, he remains master for four years — a long period in an epoch when events move at a dizzy pace. Except in rare and extreme cases, no change in the country's mood or problems, no demonstration of his own unfitness or disregard for popular will, can budge him from his position of almost unlimited power. A British or French Premier who holds on continuously for four years is a miracle of political longevity — eight continuous years are almost inconceivable.

The magnitude of the executive power does not apply only to the President, whose actions are, at any rate, under public observation. It applies no less to the entire vast bureaucracy which derives its power from the President and which, in the nature of things, cannot be kept under scrutiny. When we speak of an Administration we refer to a gigantic structure of bureaus and committees and thousands of individual office-holders through whom government policy must percolate and whose day-to-day

decisions affect the nation's life. Never before in American history has that bureaucracy been larger, more influential, or more determined to hold on to its places and privileges.

Office-holders have always fought to keep their jobs. Never before, however, have there been so many of them or have they been so desperately eager to hold on. "They will fight for his (Roosevelt's) re-nomination as a drowning man fights for breath," Gen. Hugh Johnson wrote recently, "and no person of common sense can blame them." The fact is that few of them have anything to go back to, having been hauled, so to speak, off the national breadline. No doubt many of them honestly believe in the righteous New Deal slogans, but being human and having no business and no career except the government, they want first of all to survive in Washington.

Termites which bore into wood make it at once their home and their sustenance. For the third termites, similarly, the government is both home and daily bread. The most compelling force in their lives is the need to protect the jobs they have dug into. The re-election of a Democrat, even a Democrat of the New Deal stamp, is not enough for them, as the re-election of the

party in power was once upon a time enough for the Washington bureaucracy. Most of them are not Democrats at all, nor Republicans, nor Socialists, nor anything but Rooseveltians. Only the re-election of Roosevelt can satisfy the present swollen Washington bureaucracy. Theirs is the real pressure for "drafting" the President to run again. It's pressure from the bottom up, rather than the top down, in the Administration.

### III

The tremendous power of the Chief Executive and his political retinue, the relative permanence of his position — these provide the real explanation for our deep national prejudice against continuing any man in the Presidency after eight years. It applies as much to "good" Presidents as to "bad" ones. Indeed, it applies more sharply to "good" Presidents since "bad" ones are no temptation to forget the prejudice. But it is no mere sentimental tradition or casual superstition. It is the crystallization of an instinctive distrust of individuals and groups in power. A vigorous pioneer people, conditioned by its whole history to depend on itself rather than on divinely-inspired superiors, must sense that even a

change for the worse is better than no change at all in the upper reaches of its democratic system. It must feel in its bones that the flexibility of government, the certainty of periodical change, is its most elementary protection against petrified bureaucratic domination. Above all it senses that the democracy which depended on *one man* beyond a reasonable length of time, which could not find other agents and spokesmen in its midst, would be confessing weakness and degeneration.

No one will deny that the American electorate may wish on occasion to continue a set of practical policies or the application of a social philosophy beyond an eight-year period, and that it should have the opportunity to do so. But to assert that only one out of 130,000,000 Americans can represent that philosophy or translate it into action is to assert the bankruptcy of the democratic idea. Certainly in the present case those New Dealers who insist that Roosevelt and only Roosevelt can carry on the work dear to their hearts forfeit the right to talk about a social philosophy or a new way of life. They should simply point in mute exultation to a Leader, *the* Leader, symbol and sole repository of their philosophy. We submit that they have reduced

their party and their program to a single and irreplaceable individual — a condition matched only by regimes such as those in Italy, Germany, and Russia.

But the situation is unique, they claim; the country is in a state of emergency. Again such hysteria is strangely reminiscent of the totalitarian temper. In Germany and Russia, too, a feeling of permanent crisis is fostered deliberately as an excuse for "sacrificing" ordinary rights and procedures. Without underestimating the seriousness of the problems facing the country, it can be denied that there is an emergency justifying the sacrifice of democratic safeguards, including our healthy "prejudice" against unduly prolonged Presidencies. The great challenge of the moment is to democracy itself, and hypnotized reliance on one man is the very antithesis of democracy.

Let us not overlook, also, the temptation which faces the New Deal bureaucracy to accept and to deepen any real emergency which would justify a breach of the third-term tradition. We do not believe that any man, high or low, would consciously embroil our country in foreign wars for partisan reasons. Such a thing is monstrous and unthinkable. But human beings are the creatures of unconscious proc-

esses. Stupidly stubborn sabotage by its opponents as well as its own blunders have made the New Deal since 1936 conspicuously a failure. Business remains stagnant, unemployment as large as ever, the national debt and taxes are rising, the glittering formulas for a more abundant life are becoming tarnished. Under these circumstances the international situation provides a convenient diversion of public attention and the army of New Deal hangers-on would be less than human if it were not under the psychological compulsion to make the most of it. Unless the third-term propaganda is stringently ruled out, it will become a dangerous driving power in the direction of American involvement in the European struggles for power.

We submit that the maintenance of our flexible, responsive system of government is vastly more important at the present juncture than any New Deal policy could possibly be. The claim that only Roosevelt can continue the work started during his Administration is a libel on the New Deal, an indictment of the whole enterprise, which its own partisans, in particular, should resent. If the 1940 election is to have any validity as a popular verdict on these last eight years, it should not be complicated by injecting Mr.

Roosevelt again. Otherwise the third-term issue will overshadow and nullify all other issues.

Jay Franklin, who has been one of the most effective spokesmen of the New Deal, recently wrote about "a campaign which will center around principles and ideas rather than machines." But he forgot that that sort of campaign will be impossible if Roosevelt is renominated. The campaign and the voting will then be centered around Roosevelt, rather than the complex of fundamental political, economic, and social attitudes roughly designated as the New Deal. Turner Catledge recently summed up an analysis of the subject thus, in the *New York Times*:

At least this much may be said positively about a third-term campaign now: The issue of a President's continuing in office beyond the traditional two terms would dominate all others not only in the race for the country's highest office but in practically every other race subject to the party system, from United States Senator to County Sheriff. The accomplishments and faults of the New Deal would be forgotten as such. Emotion would take the place of reason.

It is especially deplorable that certain labor unions sponsor the third-term drive. For the sake of conserving immediate advantages, they are too ready to barter those democratic processes and safeguards

upon which, in the long run, labor organization must rely to survive and function freely in a capitalist world. They would do better, we think, to support the New Deal, if that is what they wish to do, without joining the third termites. It is also a commentary upon the bankruptcy of the official liberalism of the country that self-styled liberals should fall for the third-term propaganda. They are thereby demonstrating their distrust of — nay their despair in — democracy.

The third termites want to remain where they are, to burrow deeper. Which is understandable.

Panic-stricken by the possibility of expulsion, they see everything through panicky eyes. The "emergency" of 1936 has ripened into the "emergency" of 1940, and by 1944 it may be chronic. Roosevelt — or doom. That is how their world shapes up. For the rest of us that alternative is not only false and hysterical, but pernicious, in that it is the negation of all the democratic assumptions. We have not yet reached the stage of choosing between a Leader and doom. When that stage is reached there will be no choice — doom will be upon us.

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### SOLO TURN

GERMANY's Reichstag meets once more,  
*"Ja!" says the Reichstag "Ja!"*  
 To hear the speech it has heard before,  
*"Ja!" says the Reichstag "Ja!"*

It has no vote and it has no views,  
 It just comes in on the chorus cues  
 With the only word it's allowed to use —  
*"Ja!" says the Reichstag "Ja!"*

Deputies *Heil* and click their heels,  
*"Ja!" says the Reichstag "Ja!"*  
 Quite as human as well-trained seals,  
*"Ja!" says the Reichstag "Ja!"*

Hitler-herring without their roes,  
 Hitler yes-men without their noes,  
 Hitler's clique for his one-man shows,  
*"Ja!" says the Reichstag "Ja!"*

## SHALL WE ANNEX TEXAS?

BY OWEN P. WHITE

EVER since 1846 Texas has stubbornly refused to swap its visitors' card to the American Union, obtained on its own terms in that year, for a permanent pasteboard obligating it to active co-operative membership. As far as it can manage, it remains an independent Republic — in politics, trade, and commerce, and particularly in spirit. By treating its neighbor, the USA, as a foreign country, Texas can continue to behave like a debtor nation, living high, paying off its current obligations, and at the same time financing its industrial development through vast exports of raw materials to the U. S. This huge raw materials exporting business, especially in oil and gas, sets Texas apart from other states which really belong to the USA. Whether New York, for example, has good or bad government makes little difference to its sister states, even to immediate neighbors like New Jersey and Pennsylvania. But that's not true of Texas. From its tremendous stores of natural resources Texas supplies all the peo-

ple of the nation to the north with many of the essentials of modern life; hence the management of those resources affects those unhappy people directly, and often disastrously. Texas pays no attention to squawks and squeals from beyond its northern border. Its resources, says Texas, are its own, and so — this with a contemptuous gesture in the direction of Uncle Sam — is its government. Wherefore it has exploited those resources and corrupted that government to its wild heart's content — to the point, in fact, where it now stands out as America's foremost practitioner of large-scale waste.

The chief reason why that state remains alien to the United States is the Texans themselves. Their culture and civilization are not those of the USA. Their vocabularies are richer, there is swagger in their psychological make-up. The hats and boot-heels of Texans are higher than those of Uncle Sam's legitimate children, even if their ideals are not. They are a tribe apart, unassimilable; a tribe

whose members, looking back upon the deeds of their extraordinary ancestors, are filled to the brim with a Jehovah complex. They want to step right out and do something equally big and gaudy and lusty. Their grandfathers really were grand old men of action — unscrupulous action if you insist — and no doubt it is their blood which makes the grandchildren behave queerly.

In the early years of the last century, the white population of Texas was composed almost entirely of robust freebooters to whom life and the title to property — when such lives and such titles belonged to the other fellow — were of little value. That was why most of them, having yielded to temptation elsewhere, hastily migrated to Texas. Once there, they liked it. Indeed, the size, lawlessness, liquor, and complacency of the *señoritas* of this new land so appealed to their tastes that in 1836, under the leadership of General Sam Houston, these freebooters suddenly up and took Texas away from Mexico and turned it into their own Republic.

Historians have never adequately recognized the size of that achievement. A handful of unorganized fighting men seized for themselves

a hunk of territory larger than all the New England States, with New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and West Virginia thrown in to fill up the corners. Nor did the original Texans stop there. By direct gift from God their empire happened to belong to the American Indians, but what of that? A Texan with a gun owned everything within range. With never a pause in their career of combat, the progenitors of the present population turned their attention to the task of getting rid of the Redskins. Because it was a bit bloody, the early Texans really enjoyed the job. A couple of outside wars that they butted into — one with the United States against Mexico in '47, and another against the United States with the Confederacy in the 60's — slowed things up somewhat, so not until 1880, after the Texans themselves had been on the warpath continuously for forty-four years, were the Texas Indians finally polished off.

But observe how it was done; it's worthy of a large chuckle. Being wholly without sentiment regarding any tribe other than their own, the Texans settled their Indian problem for all time to come by simply driving all Redmen out of their territory and

into New Mexico and Oklahoma. There that soft-hearted old sap Uncle Sam still nurses them.

If war was the primary diversion of the early Texans, the cow business was next. But do not fall into the error of assuming that they were stock raisers. Their stock, vast herds of long-horn cattle, was already there, roaming at will, and loving freely, over an immense area that encompassed everything from the grassy plains of the *llano estacado* clear on down to the brush country along the Rio Grande. Conquering these animals, which were as mean as the Texans themselves, was a job for men only. The Texans applied for it, got it, made good and made history. At the outset, when the wild Texans went wild-cow hunting just for the meat, the business didn't amount to much. But immediately after the Civil War, when the inhabitants of the U. S. A., prostrate and broke, were wondering where their next meal was coming from, the Texans started northward, herding it along ahead of them on the hoof. It was magnificent, spectacular, daring, tremendous. In a brief span of years, singing their belligerent animals to sleep at night, and in the daytime easing them gradually over a trail that was frequently ninety days long, the Texans drove 15,-

000,000 head of wild cattle and 2,000,000 head of wild horses to "foreign" markets in the U. S.

Again history missed the real size of an achievement. According to historians and scenario writers about all that the trail drivers of Texas did was to arrive in centers of hilarity like Abilene, Dodge City, Hays, and Wichita, cavort with the gals, gamble, drink raw whiskey, wreck saloons, and then head for home with a universal headache. This is all true. But concurrently with hell-raising the Texans were putting away more than a \$100,000,000 in profit for themselves, feeding a neighboring nation, stocking its big Northwestern cattle ranges for it, and incidentally laying the foundations for three useful cities, Kansas City, Omaha, and Chicago.

In the fall of 1887, the last and biggest year of the trail drives, the triumphant Texans went home, sobered up and, for the first time since they had acquired it, made a real check-up of their empire. They were disgusted by the results. Impelled by their own energy they had cleaned out their country so thoroughly that all they had left on their hands was a lot of land that they would have to go to work to develop. They shuddered to think of it, for it meant that they would



have to accept civilization, and would civilization agree with them? They had never had any of it. But they were willing to try, provided they didn't have to give up their hats or their boots, or fumigate their language, or alter their drinking habits, or refrain from philanthropy, or love their neighbors as themselves, or learn to fear God or anybody else. The civilization accepted by the Texans in 1887, and still current in that country, is radically different from that of the United States. There civilization is of a vertical variety, constantly aspiring to higher things. The Texas brand, designed for immediate consumption over a tremendous spread of territory, and cunningly calculated to make all Texans keep their eyes on the ground where all wealth comes from, is entirely horizontal.

For the quick development of Texas this was exactly as it should have been. Book larnin' could wait, but the plowing up of two or three hundred million acres of farm land, the construction of thousands of miles of railroads, highways, and barbed-wire fences, the founding of several great cities, and in more recent years the development of a huge citrus fruit industry and bringing in the largest oil and gas fields on earth, couldn't wait.

## II

The wealth of Texas was developed with such astounding rapidity that before the United States knew what was going on, its big Lone Star neighbor had copped off more firsts than any two or three of its own co-operating states put together could boast of. Texas' mere bulk and hard work, coupled with the fact that God truly loves Texas, did it. It takes hard work, for instance, to raise spinach, and a single farm in Texas, near Crystal City, produces more spinach than any one state in the USA, and Texas thinks nothing of it. Texas is like that. It's a wholesaler which produces for export, in tremendous quantities, an almost endless list of raw products, and it resents being interfered with even by Uncle Sam.

Cotton provides an excellent illustration of that resentment. Cotton is our largest single export item, of which Texas alone produces more than 50 per cent. This means that 90 per cent of all the cotton raised in Texas really goes overseas. Consequently when the Federal Government destroyed the foreign cotton market it so thoroughly destroyed the cotton business in Texas that today more than 300,000 displaced cotton

growers are looking for work. No wonder John Nance Garner stands out prominently among enemies of the New Deal.

The two firsts which provide the principal reasons why Texas wants to be, and actually is, independent, are oil and gas. The story of oil, gas, and the Texans is fully as colorful and as amoral as that of the Texans and their long-horns. In the 'seventies Texan long horns were essential to the happiness of the American people; today it is Texas gas and oil. But is it essential to the happiness of the modern Texans, who still speak the language of the Trail Drivers, and still wear the same kind of moccasins and war-bonnets, that they take orders from the Washington Government as to how and in what quantity they produce and peddle their oil and gas? "Not by a damn sight," squeaks Mr. Garner. "To hell with that stuff," echoes Tom Connally. With this kind of leadership, with oil and gas as the immediate *casus belli*, Texas in 1932 openly declared war upon the United States. It was, and it remains, a dandy war.

By drilling holes into its own hide, Texas discovered that, in addition to dozens of smaller fields, it possessed two, the East Texas oil and the Panhandle gas, which represented the largest compact

aggregations of wealth anywhere on the earth. East Texas held 8,000,000,000 barrels of oil; the Panhandle held, under a pressure of 463 pounds to the square inch, 17,000,000,000,000 cubic feet of gas, all of which, so Texas said, belonged exclusively to itself. The United States, imagining innocently that Texas is a part of the Union, denied this. Thereupon the Texans, happy to be doing something big and lusty again, yanked the proration seals of their own government from all their oil wells and proceeded literally to inundate the United States with illegally produced oil.

That was the hot oil war of 1932, and you will recall that although Texas producers made many, many millions, it almost wrecked the petroleum industry of the USA. The industry was in such a bad way that, before Mr. Roosevelt had been in office six weeks, he had to issue a call to the Governors of all the oil states to send representatives to Washington to discuss the disaster. The Governors all responded, of course, and so did Ma Ferguson. What her representatives did was typical of Texas and highly amusing. At a meeting with Secretary Ickes the gentleman authorized to speak for Ma rose to his feet, announced that until hell froze over and you could skate out

of it, Texas would resist all efforts of the USA to meddle in its production of oil and gas. That was all he had come to Washington to say, and he sat down.

Meanwhile, over in the Mayflower Hotel — I was there and saw the telegram written — a member of the Texas Railroad Commission, which controls oil production in Texas, sent a wire to the superintendent of the East Texas field instructing him to tell the boys to jerk all the caps off and let 'er flow for six hours. They jerked 'em, and in six hours East Texas alone produced 600,000 barrels of *excess* oil. Those six hours dropped the price throughout the United States 17¢ a barrel, and ended that oil conference. If Texas wouldn't co-operate, nothing could be accomplished. Everybody went home mad, except the Texans.

The explosive Mr. Ickes, who said he'd "pop their goddam heads together for 'em," told me exactly how mad *he* was. Later on he proved it by asking Congress to pass a bill giving the Federal Government, through his department, power to control the production of oil everywhere in the United States, *including the independent Republic of Texas*.

No sooner did Messrs. Garner, Connally, Rayburn, *et al*, visiting

Texans who enjoy voting privileges in Congress, get a look at the Administration's oil bill than they killed it. It was a heartless bit of slaughter which they enjoyed. In the House Sam Rayburn demanded that it be referred to a committee of which he was chairman. It was; and that settled it. Despite the fact that Mr. Roosevelt called Sam, personally, on the phone three times, and wrote him two letters, asking him to bring out a favorable report on the bill, Sam never did it. His master's voice was the voice of Texas, not the voice of the USA.

Over in the Senate Mr. Roosevelt's bill got farther but fared worse. It was favorably reported upon, but Vice-President Garner held it out long enough to give Joe Robinson time to go and tell Mr. Roosevelt that perhaps he had better forget it altogether because the Louisiana Kingfish was prepared to filibuster it to death. When the President received this information, so it is reported, he groaned and told Mr. Robinson to withdraw the bill. Observers, however, did not believe that Mr. Roosevelt either believed the tale about Huey Long, or was afraid of him. What he feared was Texas. He was afraid, even that far back, to come to a show-down with Jack Garner. Thus the United States

gave up its claim to sovereignty over the richest prize on the North American continent.

### III

Although this was quite a victory, it was not definite enough to suit Texas, which wanted something positive, and got it by immediately securing the passage of the Connally Hot Oil Bill, still in force. This bill provides that if oil and gas are legal where produced they are legal everywhere. Read casually it seems as harmless as the Beatitudes. In practice it is loaded to the muzzle with Sin, because it gives the Texans, working behind it, the right to determine for themselves the legality of their own oil and gas. And by corrupting their own government and their own courts, and by directly fostering a waste of natural resources almost beyond belief, the Texans have taken advantage of their opportunity.

After prorating its allowed total state production among its thousands of well owners, Texas placed a fine of \$1000 a day upon any man who ran his well in excess of his personal allowable. But what was \$1000 to men who could run off 25,000 barrels in a few hours and think nothing of it? Millions of barrels of really hot oil therefore

continued to flow across the line into the USA, while millions of dollars in fines continued to flow into the Texas treasury. It was a sweet racket. The oil men loved it and so did Texas, which in one week that I know of, because I checked it, took in \$84,000 from law violators.

In time this system became too raw even for Texas. So it adopted a new law under which all excess oil was confiscated by the Republic of Texas and sold for the benefit of its treasury. For about ten minutes that stopped the hot oil boys, and then, with loud cheers for the astuteness of their legislators, they saw the light.

The law sounded tough, but it was really easier to beat than the other one, provided it was administered by the right kind of judges — which it was. Again it's a sweet racket, helpful to everybody. Mr. A, who owns an oil well, calls on friend B, tells him that he has just run off a few hundred thousand barrels of illegal oil, and asks B to go to Judge So-and-So and file a complaint. B winks and complies. The judge also winks, confiscates the oil and the next morning sells it at public auction. B is the only buyer present because he and the Judge are the only ones who know anything about the

transaction. He bids it in for a few cents a barrel, and turns it right back to A who immediately ships it to the United States which *must* admit it now that it has been legalized, or "blessed" as they call it down there, by a Texas court order. Millions of barrels of this blessed oil, produced in open defiance of all laws of common-sense conservation, and also of all laws of the USA, have been brought into this country in the last few years, and there is nothing that can be done about it.

Now look at gas. In the Panhandle field the last time I visited it — and I am informed that conditions have not changed — I stopped at one gasoline-stripping plant which was "popping off" into the air, and forever wasting, *200,000,000 cubic feet of gas per day*, or enough, on the basis of average family consumption, to supply 730,000 homes with all their cooking fuel. In the entire Panhandle area there are, I believe, more than forty of these stripping plants, which for the sake of extracting 3¢ worth of gasoline from every 3000 cubic feet of gas, pop off almost exactly four times as much gas as the pipe-lines carry away and distribute for domestic use to citizens of the United States as far away as Chicago and Detroit.

A quick calculation will show what that means. The big pipe-lines, costing many, many millions, were built on the basis of engineering reports which indicated that the Panhandle could supply all the people in the United States who could be reached by pipe-line, with all the domestic fuel they would need for a century. Texas, however, being at war with the USA, was decidedly unhappy at the thought that the enemy's citizens should get the benefit of its gas, so it issued permits to strippers through whose activities the field, instead of lasting for a hundred years, will be, according to present estimates, exhausted in twenty. The pipe-line companies say that the gas will be all gone before they can get their construction costs back. "But what of it," shouts Texas. "You're nothin' but a dern furrin outfit anyhow, and so to hell with you."

Texas means that. It always has meant it. Ever since the original gang of old freebooters took the land away from Mexico everything in it they wanted has belonged exclusively to the Texans. What they haven't wanted they've palmed off on Uncle Sam. If he wants what's left, why doesn't he just step right down there and annex the Repub-

lic? The answer is simple. He can't. Texas won't have it. Being big, rich, and reckless, Texas years ago made that plain by declaring in its perennial democratic platform that it is unalterably opposed to allowing the USA, which has queer notions anyhow regarding the ownership of natural resources, to interfere with its internal affairs.

Texas today plans other moves in the direction of an even more complete economic independence. Its newly elected singing Governor, with whom I went fishing in the Gulf just a few days after his victory, waved his arm toward the receding shore of Texas and said, "What an empire!" Then he set forth for me a few reasons why Texas must remain free. In substance they are these: Texas contains about 6,500,000 consumers and is able to produce within its own borders, as is no other political entity in North America, enough raw material of all kinds, if it were processed at home, to provide them with practically everything they need. In addition Texas has all the gas and oil that it could ever need for power and fuel. Consequently modern Texas has concluded that it just doesn't make sense for it to ship its raw products abroad to the USA and then buy them all back again in the form of

shoes, clothes, furniture, beef, bacon, canned goods, cellophane, and all sorts of things. It's going to manufacture those things for itself. Having won its oil and gas war Texas now contemplates an industrial war.

I've seen the plans of it. It's all down on paper. In those plans the city of Houston, which has already erected for itself a shaft higher than the Washington monument with a Lone Star on top of it, shows up as the greatest inland industrial city on earth. With its tremendously rich back country, available oil and gas, private waterway to the markets of the world, and its free Texas spirit, why shouldn't it be? Queerer things have happened in Texas.

And yet it will, perhaps, never come to pass, because, unless Texas changes its extravagant habits, all the oil will be gone in twenty, or at most thirty, years. When the big Republic, with its treasury as dry as its gas fields, comes humbly around to Uncle Sam's back door and asks for admittance, what will the old man say about it? I don't know, but being 140-proof Texan myself, I will now warn the soft-hearted old man that if he invites the wanderer in, and forgets to search him, he will, in all probability, wake up the next morning to find his treasury missing.

► *A real-life crime in New England  
follows the pattern of fiction*

## THE HEADMASTER MURDER MYSTERY

By HARLAND MANCHESTER

A FEW minutes after eight on the evening of Friday, September 14, 1934, Dr. Elliott Speer, 36-year-old headmaster of the Mt. Hermon School for Boys at Northfield, Massachusetts, rose from the dinner table in the big brick house on the campus where he lived with his family, and went to his ground-floor study. Tanned and vigorous from a summer at his camp in Canada, he strode to his desk by the unshaded window and set to work. The thriving institution of five hundred boys, which the alert Princetonian was swiftly changing from a place of conspicuous piety into a fashionable modern prep school, was to open its doors on the following Wednesday.

Outside, it was pitch dark and drizzling, and a strong wind swept the forests, orchards, and winding lanes of the 1200-acre school property. Dr. Speer rose, the small-paned study window framing his six-foot-two against the light within. Suddenly Mrs. Speer, who was putting the children to bed in the room directly above, heard a

loud roar and a crash of glass. She ran downstairs and saw her husband staggering toward her, holding his bleeding right arm. She called to her father, who eased Speer to the floor and fiddled with a tourniquet. A maid who had worked in a hospital shrieked something about lemon juice. A school employee jumped in a car and went for the doctor. They phoned the police. Mrs. Speer sat on the stairs moaning "You'll be all right," but within twenty minutes the headmaster was dead. All he said was "Something hit me—I don't know what happened."

The shattered panes of the window, and a dozen buckshot in Speer's arm and chest, clearly showed what had happened, but after five years New England's leading sleuths cannot say how or why it happened, or who pulled the trigger of the 12-gauge shotgun which left its wadding on the grass outside the window. Scores of suspects have been questioned and exonerated, tips have been pursued halfway around the world, rivers

and ponds have been dragged and forests combed, and batteries of crime specialists and amateur detectives have put in their best licks, but the Speer killing remains unsolved. Although state police angrily reject the phrase, it looks like the perfect murder.

Questions of religion and deportment dominated the case from the start. Before the advent of Dr. Speer, Mt. Hermon and its sister school, the Northfield Seminary for Girls, founded by Evangelist Dwight L. Moody some fifty years before, had been bulwarks of fundamentalism. The whole area was a kind of grim puritanical paradise. If a guest asked for coffee in the Northfield Hotel, which was owned by the school, the waitress would whisper that she would have to snitch some from the cook's private stock. The boys and girls of the schools were sternly segregated. Dancing, smoking, and card playing were among the numerous causes for dismissal. Bible study was one of the school's leading courses, and many graduates went out to carry the Word to the heathen.

To the dismay of older members of the faculty, Elliott Speer began to change all this when he took office in the fall of 1932. This was unexpected, for he was born to the

evangelical tradition. His father was head of the Presbyterian board of foreign missions, his mother had led the national YWCA, his sister was a missionary in China, and he married the daughter of a prominent Presbyterian. But he had gone to Princeton, where the boys smoke cigarettes, and further studies at Columbia and Edinburgh had given him new ideas. For instance, he allowed occasional parties where the boys and girls could meet, and he as good as hinted that smoking might be overlooked if not done too openly. He placed less emphasis on Bible study, and he is said to have remarked that "Christ was a good man like Gandhi." On his shelves there were unorthodox books on economics and sociology, as well as trivial detective stories. He promoted a group hospitalization plan under which each student was entitled to treatment for a small yearly fee. And when the boys said they would like to hear Norman Thomas, Dr. Speer invited him to come and speak. This departure from the old-time religion aroused bitter opposition among the fundamentalist teachers — thus giving rise to the belief, still widely held, that the man who fired the shotgun through the window was a religious fanatic.

There were about one hundred



people on the school grounds on the night of the murder — members of the faculty and staff and their families, and students who had returned early. Most of the students were at a meeting when Speer was killed, and many of the others at Mt. Hermon had good alibis. The police set up headquarters on the school grounds, and eventually concentrated on the "inside job" theory. They figured that the killer must have known the grounds to escape so quickly through the maze of paths, orchards, and gardens. And Dr. Speer's black Newfoundland, loose in the grounds, didn't bark when the murderer sneaked to the window. They looked for shotguns and found six; hunting was a popular sport among the teachers. But they satisfied themselves that the murder weapon was not one of the six.

The search for the gun — and for the killer — received dramatic impetus when a state trooper picked up a book in the dead man's study. The book was *The Public School Murder*, an English mystery story by R. C. Woodthorpe. The startled trooper opened the book to this passage:

There at the window . . . the headmaster sat writing. . . . The light shone upon him; he was a conspicuous

target . . . the murderer . . . crept stealthily along the edge of the grass until he was within a yard or two. One shot was enough at such close range. Then the problem became, what was done with the gun?

The trooper read on, and found that in the book the gun was thrown into the lake. Mt. Hermon has its Shadow Lake. The police dragged it, but the gun was not there. Cisterns were explored, drains torn open, and for many days a diver searched the bottom of the Connecticut River near a bridge a few miles from the school; the weapon, essential to a solution of the case, was not found.

The police wondered whether the method of murder had been suggested by the book. They discovered a notebook in which Speer had kept track of the books he lent, and found that several people on the campus had borrowed *The Public School Murder*. They narrowed their circle of suspects, and a few people went through the ordeal of intensive questioning.

## II

The chase was not confined to the school grounds. Many boys had been dismissed from Mt. Hermon, or politely urged to continue their book-learning elsewhere. Some of

them had made threats, among them a Desperate Ambrose who brandished a list of "Twenty-one Punishments." He had driven into town a few weeks before and had shown his list to a local boy. He had crossed off seven. "The next one," he hissed, "means I'm going to get Speer." The police found him in a Southern college, badly frightened and able to produce a reasonable alibi. A mentally foggy youth who had been barred from the school because of sleeping sickness was found thumbing rides in Pennsylvania. On the night of the murder he was at a farm two miles from the school, and there were two shotguns there, he admitted. A deranged painter, who once worked for the school, had argued with the headmaster over religion, and was said to have threatened him.

A woman reported that a red-headed boy had purchased three buckshot shells in a local store a few days before the murder. The hunting season had not begun, and it looked odd. That night she was taken to the big hall where five hundred students and one hundred faculty members were seated at dinner. She peered at each face, but could make no definite identification. There was an involved story of a mid-westerner whose

extra-marital adventure was known to Speer, and who believed that his job and future prospects depended upon the headmaster's silence. A Hearst paper suggested that Speer was slain as a result of a communist plot.

Meanwhile, training of the young proceeded at Mt. Hermon. Speer's job was taken over by a triumvirate consisting of Dean Thomas E. Elder, who had been on the staff for thirty-two years, David Porter, Bible teacher, and Nelson Jackson, who taught mathematics. Dean Elder urged the boys to "carry on and play the game." The students complied after a fashion, but they gazed at their teachers speculatively, and made quiet wagers.

The inquest, which had the aspect of a "John Doe" proceeding against a definite suspect, was held privately. One by one, sixty-three persons — everyone even remotely connected with the case — appeared before Judge Hayes for questioning, and later ran the gauntlet of the press. District Attorney Bartlett explained that the sessions were secret "because if one is criminally involved and learned the testimony of the others, he might frame a defense or abscond."

At the inquest Mrs. Constantine George, the Speer maid, who had studied medicine in Germany

and had a letter from King Boris of Bulgaria praising her needlework, said that from her upstairs room she heard "boom," and then "lots of steps going away," and that a few moments later she heard a car start. A foursome composed of the school launderer, the head of the carpenter shop, and their wives said that at 8:15 an old dark sedan had entered the grounds and disappeared in the direction of the Speer house, that a few minutes later they had heard a shot and thought someone had killed a skunk, and that soon afterward the same car dashed past them, leaving the grounds. Seventy-five-year-old Daniel Van Valkenbergh, campus blacksmith and mail carrier, who had a Buffalo Bill coiffure and used to drive a stagecoach in the West, told of repairing, a year before, a certain 12-gauge shotgun for a man at Mt. Hermon — a gun police had not seen since the murder.

Then there was the matter of the chapel clock. It was stated that several days after the murder this was found to be fifteen minutes fast, and so far as could be established the clock was on time during the day preceding the killing. Campus life revolves upon the hourly booming of the big clock. If the murderer wished to establish a time alibi, what could be

more convincing than to juggle with its hands? And it was said that at least one other clock on the grounds had been speeded up to agree with Mt. Hermon's Big Ben. Another fact which pointed to premeditation was discovered on the evening of the murder when the lights in the Speer garage, which lit up the entire back yard and rear of the house, wouldn't turn on. Someone had removed the fuses.

Police were puzzled by copies of two letters said to have been exchanged by Speer and a faculty member. At face value, they indicated mutual admiration, but their authenticity was questioned. To add to the mad profusion of clues, police found that Speer had fitted up a hideaway study in the garage loft. There was a theory that he hid there in fear of his life, but an ashtray filled with butts suggested he had found a place where he could smoke in peace. A notation in a Bible found on the desk cannot be dismissed so easily. In the margin was penciled Matthew 5:21:

*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.*

The inquest, which lasted two weeks, produced no legal evidence placing a suspect near the Speer house between 8 and 8:30 on the

evening of September 14. Judge Hayes found that the gun which killed Elliott Speer was fired by a person "whose name is unknown to me." Baffled detectives settled down to a long campaign and school authorities put up a \$10,000 reward, declaring that "the case will never be dropped." The reporters went home, and jittery quiet descended upon the campus.

Every now and then a new lead developed. About a year after the killing came a report that an English missionary bound for the interior of India had a letter in his bag that would clear up the case. He had confided in a Boston doctor on shipboard, and the doctor told the police, who used cable, telegraph, radio, and native runner to learn the dominie's secret. His letter implicated a member of the school community, but held no evidence that would stand up in court.

### III

Thus the matter stood on the evening of May 25, 1937, when Mt. Hermon's skeletons were once more rattled in public. S. Allen Norton, 66, who since the murder had retired from his post as school cashier and was living in the city of Greenfield a few miles away, phoned the police and reported

that a man had threatened him with a shotgun. At 11 o'clock that night Norton and his wife had returned from a church affair, he said, and the man had appeared in his garage door, pointing the gun at him. He swore out a warrant for assault with intent to murder, and identified the man as the 57-year-old Dean Thomas Elder, who after the Speer shooting had retired to a New Hampshire chicken farm. Norton's neighbors upheld his charge that a man had appeared with a gun, but could not identify him. Elder was brought to Massachusetts, indicted on two counts — assault with a dangerous weapon with intent to murder, and putting Norton in fear of bodily harm — and placed on trial.

Dean Elder and his wife asserted that they spent the night of the alleged assault in a hotel in Keene, New Hampshire, thirty-nine miles north of Greenfield, that they had registered at the hotel about 6 o'clock after returning from a meeting of cattle-breeders at Brattleboro, Vermont, and that they had gone to bed in their one room at about 8 o'clock, leaving a call for 7 the next morning. These statements were confirmed by the hotel staff, but the jury had to decide whether the night clerk, a fervent reader of love stories, would

have been aware of exits and entrances; whether it was significant that a Keene filling station employee told of selling gasoline to a man in a dark sedan late that night, and how much importance to attach to the chambermaid's statement that when she "did" the Elder room the next morning, she concluded that only one person had slept in the double bed.

There was much public discussion of routes and driving time between Greenfield and Keene, and the community was stirred by reports that members of the Mt. Hermon faculty had received anonymous letters saying "*Repent before you die,*" but the real sensation came when Elder and Norton revealed before a packed court room the cause of their ancient feud. For many years before Dr. Speer became headmaster, Norton had occupied an office adjoining the room where Dean Elder's pretty secretary worked. He testified that he had bored a peephole through the plaster wall and had seen Dean Elder kissing his secretary. He insisted under cross-examination that he had limited himself to "three peeps." Elder's attorney said that it wasn't a kiss, but only a chuck under the chin, and a question was raised as to the moral distinction between kissing and chuck-

ing. The secretary denied both kissing and chucking, but stated that the Dean had once tried to teach her to drive an automobile.

Norton had carried the tale to Headmaster Cutler. Richard Watson, former disciplinary officer of the school, testified that he had gone to Norton's study to test the visibility of the peep-holes, while Dr. Cutler had occupied the secretary's chair, "trying to sit like a secretary would." The incident ended when the headmaster, the dean, and the cashier knelt in a "session of prayer," but Norton insisted that he had not apologized.

This opening of old wounds did not convince the jury that Elder had threatened Norton with a shotgun. They talked it over for five hours, and acquitted the Dean on both charges of the indictment. Dean Elder returned to his farm at Alton, New Hampshire, and at last spring's town meeting his neighbors elected him to the board of selectmen, the pinnacle of rural New England approval. Norton lives quietly in Greenfield, and is seen every Sunday morning in his pew at the Second Congregational Church. Mt. Hermon School is thriving under Headmaster David R. Porter, who continues some of the liberal practices of Dr. Speer. . . . But there is no smoking.

## OUR STATE LAWMAKERS

BY JOHN T. WINTERICH

TO the young man impelled toward a political career we recommend an inspection of the rock-ribbed and sea-buttressed commonwealth in which the light of day first broke over such unsortable characters as Horace Greeley, Daniel Webster, Orison Swett Marden, Leonard Wood, Mary Baker Eddy, and Salmon P. Chase, whose face is familiar to every American through its reproduction on our \$10,000 bills. The state of New Hampshire boasts 451 state lawmakers — a Senate of 24 and a House of 427 — which is the largest legislature of any state in the Union. Its population is 508,000, which means that one person in 1127, tots and gaffers and aliens included, is a state legislator. The biennial hegira to Concord resembles a tribal migration, and there is hardly a hamlet from the classic precincts of Exeter to the wooded wastes of Coos County that does not sustain thereby a temporary loss of some fraction of its intellect and legislative talent. If you are politically ambitious, go Northeast, young man, stick out

your neck, and some day the lightning is bound to hit you.

By the same mathematical token, keep away from New York. Every member of its legislature represents some 64,534 of New York's 12,935,000 souls — and that is a lot of people to mobilize for election. With 201 members — 51 in the Senate and 150 in the Assembly — New York has the smallest state legislature in proportion to population. In absolute figures, however, the tiniest is Nebraska's unicameral legislature with 43 members, each of them answerable to an average of 31,721 constituents. Delaware and Nevada have the smallest among the two-chambered groups: 52 and 57 lawmakers respectively. In each of these states the Senate is a homey little group of 17.

In Minnesota it is no distinction at all to be a state senator. There are 61 of them, an American record, along with 131 representatives. But an Idaho senator probably regards himself as an even smaller potato. There are 49 of him and there are only 59 representatives.

No other state provides so close a balance between the upper and lower houses. Usually the ratio is 1 senator to 2 or sometimes 3 representatives, or assemblymen, or delegates, or burgesses. To discover the greatest disparity we must return to New Hampshire, where the lower house outnumbers the upper not quite 18 to 1.

New England, on the whole, is more legislator-conscious than the rest of the country. New England-on-the-whole has an upper-and-lower-house population of 1639. Rhode Island's chaste Stanford White capitol building at Providence shelters the smallest group (42 senators and 100 representa-

tives) even though there are two less populous commonwealths in the sextet.

All the souls in all six New England states number some 8,500,000 — only a little more than two-thirds of New York's total. On that basis New York would send to Albany . . . the mind reels, and the Albany hotels would reel too. But let no man say that we have utterly thrown overboard in this our land either the theory or the practice of states' rights. Not so long as New Jersey's 4,328,000 residents continue to send 81 of their number to Trenton, and North Dakota's 703,000 maintain 162 on the banks of the Big Muddy at Bismarck.



## MOUNTAIN STREAM

BY ROBERT PHILIP HILLIER

Like a toothless old woman,  
The fretful little stream  
Stops to scold  
At every rock that dares intrude itself,  
Then impatiently gathers in  
Her froth-fringed skirts  
And hurries on,  
Muttering and mumbling with complaint.

## HOW STRONG IS RUSSIA?

BY ERICH WOLLENBERG

Author of *The Red Army*

THE enigma most perplexing to the European diplomats scurrying from one capital to another is the true military power of Soviet Russia. It is the  $x$  in the European equation. Not that figures are lacking; but the problem of estimating a nation's strength today cannot be solved with figures alone. It is complicated by the necessity of weighing factors like national morale, industrial capacity, technical levels, secret resources, and even ideology. The estimate, however, needs to be made. With the German-Italian and Franco-English alignments defined, the strategic importance of Russia has increased enormously. The clock of Europe has stopped on the eleventh hour while all eyes turn to the East. *How strong is Russia?*

Some military authorities hold that the Red Army cannot be considered a serious force in a major war. The opposing school, which includes some experts outside Russia, claims that the Soviet army is the most powerful in the world.

The partisans of the first view point to Munich as proof of Russia's weakness. "Why," they ask, "did Russia allow herself to be entirely eliminated from the negotiations? Certainly the Czechoslovak-Carpatho area is of the utmost military importance to Russia as a first line of defense against Germany." Those who have faith in Russia retort that political objectives rather than fear of military defeat led Stalin to adopt a meek, silent role in the crisis. The writer will attempt to examine these contrasting opinions in the light of his familiarity with the Russian military forces, acquired in many years of active service in the Red Army; as well as familiarity with the political background so vital to an understanding of the Soviet military position.

Speaking in Moscow in March, Marshal Klementi Voroshilov, commander-in-chief of the Red Army, stated that the peacetime strength of the army had doubled since 1934. In the ten-year period 1924 to 1934 the peacetime size of



the Red Army was 562,000, so that a doubling of army strength over 1934 would mean a standing army in 1939 of 1,300,000 men. To this number it is necessary to add about 200,000 border guards who have received military training and about the same number of "Special Service Troops," formerly of the OGPU. Making discounts for a rough term like "doubling," it is fair to place the army strength at 1,500,000. Approximately three-quarters of it is stationed in European Russia and the remainder, about 400,000 men, is garrisoned in Asia, chiefly in the Far East.

As far as human reserves are concerned, the Red Army may be said to have a virtually inexhaustible supply. There are 30,000,000 men between 19 and 40, some 20,000,000 of them suited for military service, upon whom the Army can draw. About 10,000,000 of these, between 21 and 34 years old, have had full military training and represent the first reserves. In theory, the Soviet Union could place in the field in the first months of the war 8,000,000 soldiers in Europe and 4,000,000 in Asia.

But the organization, leadership, and maintenance of such vast armies is a different matter from the simple counting of noses. If old

armies were said to march on their stomachs, modern armies may be said to ride to war on the wheels of industry. In the last decade the mechanization of the Russian Army has proceeded apace. In 1930 each soldier was backed by only 3.07 mechanical horsepower; by 1933 this had risen to 7.4 and today it ranges between 12 and 15 horsepower per man. This refers, of course, only to the standing army of 1,500,000 troops, not to the potential war strength of six, eight, or even 12,000,000 men.

A Soviet regiment (about 2700 troops) today has a rifle strength of 890 and includes 81 light machine-guns, 27 mortars, 36 heavy machine-guns, a complement of anti-aircraft machine-guns, and 6 cannon (76 mm.). A cavalry regiment has a saber strength of 480, mounts 40 light machine-guns, 20 heavy machine-guns, 4 light cannon, and 4 anti-aircraft guns. The artillery strength of the army consists of approximately 10,000 guns of all calibers, including 3000 heavy artillery. This does not include the guns of largest caliber and some 10,000 light tank and anti-tank guns and 3500 heavy mortars. The army, according to latest figures (which far exceed most other estimates) has at its disposition 10,000 tanks of all types, 1000

armored cars, 100,000 military trucks, and 150,000 tractors. The air fleet is estimated at 9000 planes, 6300 of these counted as first-line aircraft. Many planes "counted" as first-line, however, are not so considered by outside experts; about 3500, it may be estimated, are actually assigned to operating squadrons, ready to fight; the rest are held as a replacement reserve.

So far as *quantity* is concerned, the Russian army compares favorably in mechanization and motorization to the armies of the other Powers. The picture is different in regard to *quality* of equipment and the capacity of Soviet industry to augment and replace the machinery of war during a conflict.

## II

Soviet industry has from the beginning been oriented to military needs. Nevertheless, it has been unable to supply even peacetime military requirements. Russian factories have been constructed with war purposes definitely in view and they can, on the outbreak of war, be immediately converted into armament producing units. But even now, carrying out normal peacetime functions, many of these factories must reduce production schedules and in some instances

stop production altogether because of failure in the delivery of raw materials and unfinished goods. The confusion and abnormal pressure of war would unquestionably reduce transportation efficiency further.

The quality of such basic materials as steel, aluminum, rubber, and so on is extremely uneven; it is not unusual when 40 to 60 per cent of the products of certain plants supplying the army are rejected as below standard. Even in the aviation industry, where the Kremlin has made herculean efforts to maintain quality, applying both rewards and drastic punishments to spur the workers, the level is still low. Some time ago the Soviet Government delivered ten airplanes to a nation outside Europe in competition with planes manufactured in Western Europe. Although the Russian planes were rated top-quality in the Soviet Union, eight of them were rejected by the purchasing nation as inferior.

Nor is Russian industry equipped to make the necessary replacements. The airplane industry in Russia in wartime would have to replace at least 3000 planes a month to maintain present air strength. In England approximately 16,000 to 18,000 work-hours are required to produce one plane; in Russia a minimum of

20,000 work-hours is necessary. To keep the front supplied with about 40,000 planes a year Russia will require over 200,000 *trained* men working in her airplane factories. This far exceeds her present potential. Even now she has to import airplane motors.

The situation is analogous in tank production. The Russian General Staff has not been enthusiastic about the quality of its tanks. For a long time a feud has been under way between the army and the tank factories. The first accuses the industry of sending them bad tanks and the factories counter with the charge that the incompetence of army mechanics and chauffeurs disables good equipment. Wherever the blame may rest, it is certain that the tanks break down after slight use. Beyond that, a large proportion of the nation's tractors are idle for lack of spare parts, the life of machinery is short, and spoilage in industry is fearfully high. Such pervasive inefficiency cannot be departmentalized. It makes itself felt also in the military set-up, and will be a critical negative factor under war conditions.

Until a short time ago Soviet naval policy was directed toward defense of the coasts and the Navy concentrated on the building of

submarines and small, swift defense units. Because of this Russia today has 70 U-boats of various types in the Eastern Sea, 50 units in the Pacific Ocean and a few dozen in the Black Sea. With the execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky and Naval Commissar Orlov the defensive naval policy was abruptly altered. A program of constructing heavy war vessels is now under way. But Soviet navy yards strain under a burden they are not equipped to handle and Russia has to make deals even with fascist Italy to obtain warships. The Russian High Seas Fleet cannot seriously threaten — as it is meant to — Germany's sea route to Swedish ores which are so essential to the military plans of the Third Reich.

The army remains Soviet Russia's basic defense. That is why the question of army leadership is so crucial in estimating the country's actual strength.

### III

At the start of the big purge, in June 1937, the Red Army counted about 80,000 officers. Of this number 15,000 staff officers had completed courses qualifying them for positions in the higher command. Since June 1937, it has been relia-

bly estimated, 20,000 officers have been "liquidated," several thousand by execution squads; the heaviest losses, moreover, were sustained in the higher command. For instance, of the 15,000 officers who had finished advanced military courses and who could look back on World War or civil war service, more than half were eliminated. A nation poor in military and industrial specialists creates a most serious, perhaps disastrous, condition when it destroys so large a proportion of its leading personnel.

Stalin's purge wiped out the key strategists of the Red Army — Tukhachevsky, Yegorov, Yakir, Uborevich, Orlov, and Alksnis. Tukhachevsky was succeeded in the supreme command by Marshal Yegorov, then by General Fyedko, who have in their turn disappeared. The brilliant tactician, long commander-in-chief of the Far Eastern Army, Marshal Bluecher, has been arrested.

Two-thirds of the high command today consists of young, inexperienced officers and the constant turnover makes continuous work or planning out of the question. For instance, the Operations Department of the Red Army had four chiefs in two years, liquidated one after the other: Tukhachevsky, Yegorov, Fyedko and Shaposhni-

kov. The Political Department, an essential feature in the maintenance of military morale, was managed in turn by Gamarnik, Smirnov, and Mekhlis. The Navy has been commanded in turn by Orlov, Smirnov, Frinovsky, and Kuznetzov, while the strategic post of Leningrad Military Commander was filled successively by Fyedko, Dybenko, Chosin, and Meretzkov. The heads of the White Russian Military District, on the Polish frontier, were successively Uborevich, Byelov, and Kovalov. The same rapid change of leadership holds for the military districts in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Volga territory. After the arrest of Bluecher the entire Far Eastern command was wiped out and inexperienced mediocrities have taken its place. Division and regimental commanders have also been changed, arrested, changed again — in some instances six times in one year. *Not in four and a half years of World War did the officer corps of any army sustain such losses.*

When Hitler retired several dozen officers from the Reichswehr it was considered a severe weakening of the German army. Yet the German army can look back on a tradition of centuries, while the Red Army has existed only twenty-one years. The execution of the

Red marshals, generals, colonels, and other military men meant the destruction of the whole revolutionary fighting tradition. Stalin is today attempting to substitute the old czarist morale, but the army under the Czar was the most backward in Europe, particularly because of the low level of its officers corps. The writer has personally witnessed the resistance put up by former czarist officers in the Red Army to the introduction of modern forms of organization and tactical principles. A new tradition has been displaced by a return to a backward, hidebound past.

The Russian army today is superior to the czarist army, but that fact in itself does not signify that it is up to the standard of modern Western armies. The Russians have found it possible to pass through the stages of technical development which separated the czarist army from the pre-war German army by importing modern machines and mechanization methods. But they have had to work with human material inherited from the czarist past. It was Tukhachevsky who played the leading role in training this culturally backward human material and building an officers corps. That work has now been largely destroyed. It is doubtful whether the

losses can be made up for many years, since the purge has decimated the staffs of the very military schools in which new officers will have to be trained. At least a decade, the writer believes, will have to pass before the level of army leadership will again reach that which Tukhachevsky had achieved by 1937. Even ten years will not suffice to replace the top command with men of the caliber of the purged strategists. From the *technical* viewpoint it may be said that today 10 Russian divisions are equal to 8 German. But this says nothing about the effect of a new and untried leadership. The greater the mechanization of an army, the heavier the responsibilities of the army leadership. Stalin's purge has meant an incredible weakening of the Red Army in this respect.

No proofs beyond common sense are needed to demonstrate that a depleted and demoralized leadership — one that cannot possibly be replenished and re-trained and remains constantly in fear of further purging — means a military machine gutted at its heart. Long before the sanguinary Army purge, the system of civilian commissars by the side of the higher commanding officers was revived. In effect it meant that a civilian spy watched over the actions of the military

leaders and had power to interfere with military orders. That system remains: a glaring admission of distrust in high places, and a source of jealousy, denunciations, bitterness, and paralyzing fears.

#### IV

The morale of the population is scarcely better, for the Stalin purge was not limited to the military. It went right through every corner of the nation's life — industry, education, science, culture, political organization, and so on. That purge had its roots in the profound social and economic crisis through which Russia is passing. Stalin's measures have served to intensify that crisis. In the next war, which will be a "total war," involving the entire population, he will reap the angry harvest. In present-day warfare, with its mass armies, militarized industry, behind-the-lines attacks, the mood of a people is an important element in military analysis.

During the Russian Civil War, Lenin had the support of the large masses of peasants and workers, who were fighting for something concrete. Today the situation is essentially altered. Forcible collectivization has antagonized the majority of the peasants. The national republics have been de-

prived of all independence and regimented according to the needs of the Kremlin bureaucracy. A flaming nationalist spirit is rising in the vital border republics of the Ukraine, White Russia, Georgia, etc., feeding on the local hatred of the new Pan-Russian nationalism which though officially labeled "Soviet patriotism," actually revives the czarist traditions of subjection to Moscow. Finally, the Russian working class, which was the mainstay of the Bolshevik regime, is today opposed to Stalin. Stalin has deprived the workers of all rights, has destroyed their trade unions in all but name, has forced them to submit to speed-up systems, and exploits them unscrupulously. They cannot be expected to defend the regime except through fear — and fear may not survive when they have guns in their hands. The two preceding Russian wars turned into civil revolutions, in 1905 and 1917.

Soviet Russia allowed herself to be eliminated from the European arena in September 1938 only because the bureaucracy feared that a war would mean its downfall. The crisis inside Russia is the best ally that Hitler has and that, more than anything else, explains the success of his "peaceful conquest."

The question "How strong is Russia?" generally is translated as "Will Hitler be beaten?" But there is no guarantee that in the next war Russia will be found on the side of the adversaries of the totalitarian powers — no paper alliance can give that assurance. It was Stalin who sought desperately to continue relations with Germany under Hitler. Not Stalin but Hitler broke the anti-Versailles Moscow-Berlin axis. In September 1938, while his hired scribblers *outside* Russia were promising aid to Czechoslovakia, Stalin's *Pravda* was speaking of the issue as "a struggle between two bands of imperialist robbers."

Should Russia finally be drawn into war against the Berlin-Rome-

Tokyo axis, despite Stalin's eagerness to come to terms with Hitler, the problem of leadership of the Red Army will be the most difficult to solve. It will be scarcely possible to replace the executed Russian officers with Allied officers; English and French officers will meet great resistance on the part of troops trained to hate the executed "spies and agents of imperialism." There will also be the need to supply Russia with the bulk of her war material and foodstuffs, if the war is long-drawn-out. If Stalin doesn't know it now, he will learn soon enough that there is no magic formula for building an army. But there is a simple way to wreck an army — he has done that.



## LUNACY: RIGHT AND LEFT

Eugene Lyons, the new editor of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY*, is a notorious radical, and consequently we are not surprised to find his magazine printing a scurrilous attack upon Father Coughlin.

— *Coughlin's* Social Justice.

Lyons is the right man to do the dirty work for the fascist *MERCURY* . . . that notorious character who has displayed such remarkable ingenuity in Soviet-baiting has been rewarded by a fine job where his talents will find their full expression.

— *Michael Gold, communist columnist.*

► *How those Pittsburgh Millionaires  
went about spending their millions.*

## ELEGANT LIFE OF THE STEEL BARONS

BY STEWART H. HOLBROOK

ONE fine day in the spring of 1901 the United States Steel Corporation was born in the marble lair of J. P. Morgan & Company, near the head of Wall Street in New York City, and a dazed editorial writer on Mr. Pulitzer's *World* rumbled in ink that the end of the Republic was not far off.

The Corporation was an infant for a Rabelais to describe. Its scores of mills and furnaces glittered and smoked and thundered all the way from Massachusetts to Illinois. Its employees numbered 168,000. Its ingot and rail tonnage mounted into the millions. And it was capitalized at \$1,402,000,000, in those days a figure to stagger anyone but an astronomer. Into its corporate body had gone not whole companies but whole trusts — those of tin plate, wire, sheet, tube, iron ore, Great Lakes shipping — all draped around the main framework which had been the Carnegie Steel Company of Pittsburgh.

Andy Carnegie wanted to retire, so he sold his mob down the river. The lowest slaves did not mind in

the least; one lord was as good as another. But Andy's executives — never were straw-bosses paid so well for wearing a master's collar! At the exact moment U. S. Steel was born in New York, thirty-odd millionaires came into being at the forks of the Allegheny and the Monongahela, in lovely Pittsburgh. This magic was wrought by the use of mirrors, which is to say watered stock. The public ran bleating to buy U. S. Steel, and the miracle was achieved.

Pittsburgh already had a score of all-metal millionaires, most of them recent. The additions to their ranks made a sizable Barony of Steel, and all the barons set about immediately to make it the most elegant ever seen. The new rich were known as the Carnegie Partners, young and middle-aged men who had served the Laird well in the rolling mills and blast furnaces and who still smelled pungently of burning coke. It is possibly apocryphal, but also indicative, that a Penn Avenue barber reported the first shampoo one of these new



barons ever had resulted in two ounces of Mesaba ore and a scattering of slag and cinders. Equally indicative was a scene in Pittsburgh's expensive, but hardly exclusive, Duquesne club. Sprawled over two chairs and a table was one of the young barons. He was as drunk as a fairly well-boiled owl and had covered page after page of the club's embossed stationery with figures. "I am trying to find out," he told a steward, "whether I am worth six million, or if it is seven million." He never did learn.

Seven of the Carnegie partners immediately set sail for Europe, with their wives and families, and at least one included a handsome mistress in his entourage. The way these barbarians lived and traveled founded the myth abroad, that all Americans possess more wealth than any other one thing, except vulgarity. Most of the barons, however, seemed to consider Sewickley Heights the highest possible heaven, so onto the Heights they moved. Architects shuddered at their desires, but obeyed. And presently there arose on the high bluffs north of Pittsburgh some of the gaudiest monstrosities ever beheld.

The architecture of Sewickley was varied and rather difficult to describe. One neat job, set in the

center of forty acres, was patently founded on *Ivanhoe* and carried the Baron Front de Boeuf motif right down to a moat with drawbridge, although the attached sun parlor seemed to stem more from the New York Aquarium. Another started out to be a simple Norman castle, with battlements, but wound up looking like something the Mikado might have ordered in a moment of fancy. The owner of this place wanted comfort as well as beauty. When his architect asked him if he wanted a *porte-cochère*, he replied, "Hell, yes. Better put in five of them; and make sure the flush don't sound loud."

The sudden flood of gold swept old Alex Peacock off his feet. Alex had been sales manager for Carnegie, a good-natured, generous, loud Scotsman who had started life as a dry-goods clerk. Alex didn't move to Sewickley with the main herd. On Highland Avenue in Pittsburgh he built Rowanlea, a terrific country place encircled with a nine-foot fence and entered through gates so massive they rolled on wheels. An iron figure of a lion glared from the top of each gate post. White marble columns stood about everywhere there was room. These were alternating round and square, Doric and Ionic, for Alex liked variety. They were very pretty.

Alex never went high-hat or forgot his old friends. He hunted them up, and if they were not in a happy condition, he paid their debts, paid for their operations, babies, funerals. He threw parties at Rowanlea, and in Pittsburgh hotels, which he took over entire. He traveled around the United States a good deal. Once, in San Francisco, he had a sudden longing to return home. He hired a special train, stocked it with champagne for his many guests, and rolled non-stop across the mountains and prairies. Express trains were sidetracked and the Mail waited while Steel passed.

Into their new mansions the steel barons heaved everything their womenfolk could think of. When a neighbor bought two gold-plated pianos, Alex Peacock installed six of higher carat plate. He liked to sit in his sultan's parlor, take off his shoes, and put his feet up on one of the gorgeous instruments. Then he'd talk about the great days when he sold Bessemer rails to the Union Pacific, meanwhile snapping his galluses, which had solid gold buckles.

On the heels of Steel's incorporation, the barons and their wives high-tailed into New York, where they bought jewelry by the case and sculpture by the carload. They didn't know a Rubens from a

Renoir, but it mattered little; they got few Rubenses, anyway, and even fewer Renoirs, but they bulled the "art" market into a new high. In Europe, the manufacture of "Old Masters" for steel barons became a flowering business. Portrait painters were never in such demand. One partner had his wife painted no less than fourteen times by both American and English artists, each time by a different man. Another heard somehow of a man named Copley and told his secretary to get in touch with this artist. "I want for him to paint the kids," he said.

## II

It wasn't long before all sorts of artists moved to the Steel city in order to be close to the fountain-head. Two smart lads set up as experts in heraldry, and one of their first jobs was to compose a coat of arms which a partner proceeded to have embossed on the bands of his dollar cigars. Heraldry bloomed as it never had before, not even in Chicago's Packingtown families. The two experts had nice British accents and were said to have some sort of connection with the Herald's College in England. Mass-biographers, too, flocked in. They composed huge volumes — called mugg-

books in the trade — that were printed on vellum and bound in leather and gold. In these the barons were pleased to have their steel-engraved portraits and carefully edited biographical notes. These volumes were "by subscription only" and cost from \$2000 to \$5000. Salesmen for nickel-plated bathrooms appeared. So did people who wanted to sell Ming porcelain. Landscape artists showed up to tell the barons to throw all those cast-iron deer out of their yards and put in fountains of Italian marble.

The king of the steel barons never really lived in Pittsburgh. Andrew Carnegie's vast home in New York was his headquarters in the United States, and even before U. S. Steel arrived, Andy had purchased seven-hundred-year-old Skibo Castle in Scotland where a bag-piper played every morning, whether or not the Laird was present. With the birth of the Steel trust, Carnegie devoted his attention to spending part of his incredible fortune. He made sure that his name was carved deep into the spending; if his memory survives another century, it will likely be due to the many libraries that have "Carnegie" over the door, and which are possibly the most civilized gifts ever left behind by a wealthy barbarian.

In Pittsburgh the parties given by the barons often became scandalous. The most celebrated began in a large downtown hotel, but the place wasn't anywhere near big enough. The host of the evening, noting the cramped quarters of six floors of the big hotel, hired the Pittsburgh Natatorium and moved the crowd there. Everybody, a guest remembers, got gloriously drunk. In itself this would have caused little comment, but scores of guests disrobed and went in swimming *au naturel*. It took some doing to keep *that* party out of the newspapers. Greying men who were present at the affair say it was something to have pleased Petronius. No woman seems to remember it.

Several of the steel barons, both partners and others, were known to keep mistresses and were fairly discreet about it. One, however, made no bones about his lady. In the downtown building where he had his offices, this Roman fitted up a large suite in the taste of a late Victorian Messalina. Here, at intervals that seemed not to lessen with the years, he was entertained by a woman of aristocratic bearing. Only one woman: always the same. She was a wholly charming creature, but a constant irritation to the employees of her master. The

old baron had given orders that when his mistress came into the building, she was to be whisked at once to the top floor. No matter who might be waiting for an elevator, the charmer should be taken up first, and alone. Vice-presidents and general managers, as well as clerks and stenographers, fumed and waited in the lobby until the old man's darling had been delivered at "The Harem Floor."

Two years after the arrival of U. S. Steel the term "Pittsburgh Millionaire" denoted free-handed and ostentatious spending to a point well below any vulgarity that had yet been seen. Diamond Jim Brady gave the term wider circulation. He was no Pittsburgher, and he may not have been quite a millionaire, but he sold things made of steel and was usually identified with the Pittsburgh crowd. Brady gave gold-plated bicycles to actresses, ordered champagne in hundred-case lots, and lived in a suite of rooms that would have delighted the Sultan of Sulu.

On top of Brady and the many barons came Harry K. Thaw, not a true baron but son of a wealthy Pittsburgh family whose money had been acquired in steel, coal, and railroads. Young Thaw caused the term Pittsburgh Millionaire to be known in every hamlet in the

land, for on the night of June 25, 1906 he shot Stanford White, America's most famed architect. Lads in the steel mills followed the Thaw case with unusual interest, and remarked, with many another, that you just couldn't convict a really rich man of murder. Socialists and other radicals were happy at the Thaw doings. They declared that such a farce was proof enough that Gold ruled the courts and that working stiff's need not look to the Law in their fight for better conditions.

### III

Charles M. Schwab had been president of Carnegie Steel, and became the first president of the new Corporation. But heading a barony wasn't enough for him. He wanted a barony of his own. So Schwab bought into the Bethlehem Steel Company and made it the Bethlehem Steel Corporation which became U. S. Steel's biggest competitor. In New York Schwab built a castle that wasn't as old as Andy Carnegie's Skibo but a damned sight more elegant. It cost \$5,000,000 without the fixin's, and had a Flemish smoking room, a Louis XVI parlor, a Henry IV library, and a Louis XVI dining room.

Following Schwab as head of U. S. Steel was William E. Corey, called the Iron Chancellor. Corey had come up through the ranks. When he got to the top he did not so much want a new mansion as a new wife. He got his wife to divorce him and went ahead with plans to marry Maybelle Gilman, an actress he met when she was playing Pittsburgh. This move was a genuine shock to Corey's baronial friends. They were crude men and often had mistresses, but their homes were kept intact. They pleaded with Corey not to go ahead with the wedding. It was 1907 and most steel barons had become touchy about their reputation for unlimited vulgarity. They hoped that at least the Corey wedding would be discreet.

It was, to the extent that it did not take place in Madison Square Garden. The supper, Corey told newspapermen, cost \$5000; the flowers, \$6000. His gift to the bride was a \$200,000 chateau in France. He had set aside, he said, \$200,000 for honeymoon expenses. Incidentals leading up to the marriage were put at around \$500,000. (It was known around Pittsburgh that

Corey's first wedding had been accomplished for exactly five dollars, everything included.) The Corey-Gilman wedding made a fine story for the radical as well as the conventional press. Thirty years afterward the costly didoes of the steel barons are still cited by Communist Party organizers in Lackawanna, Braddock, Youngstown, and Gary.

In time, of course, the steel barons aged, some of them gracefully. Many learned to read books. A few learned to use table forks and gave up, sadly, their diamond-studded toothpicks and gold-plated cuspidors. They sent their sons to college and married off their daughters, when possible, into cultured families. The younger generation, for the most part, has been quiet and seemly.

Few besides Charlie Schwab remain of the true barons of the line, who served in the sweating ranks, chewed Battleax, and spat fair into the blazing doors of open-hearth furnaces. One by one they died and were laid away, in stainless steel containers. In their way they were a magnificent show. America would hardly have been America without them.



## CAPSULE WISDOM

THE AMERICAN MERCURY's monthly Stuffed Shirt Awards are gratefully bestowed upon the following contributors to the sum-total of human knowledge:

**Senator H. Styles Bridges** of New Hampshire: "The Republicans have a sure formula for prosperity."

**Charles H. English**, Chief Bar Examiner of Pennsylvania: "The owner of a crossroads garage has more true freedom and independence than the president of a large motor company."

**Count Ciano**, Italy's Foreign Minister: "The alliance concluded between Italy and Germany is an alliance without mental or other reservations."

**James A. Farley**, Postmaster General: "Things are all right around the country, despite what you hear."

**Fritz Kuhn**, German-American Bund *Führer*: "I am not responsible to any District Attorney."

**Hon. William Harman Black**, former Justice of the New York Supreme Court: "The mere fact that the public is so greatly shocked when a judge is found guilty of wrongdoing is in itself a proof of the rarity of such misconduct."

**Gene Tunney**, Chairman of the Board of the American Distilling Company: "I think that alcohol is the greatest boon to mankind if used intelligently."

**Morse A. Cartwright**, Director of the American Association for Adult Education: "We are a more tolerant, better educated, better disciplined people than we were twelve or fifteen years ago."

**Mrs. Ogden Reid**: "It is bad for men to feel superior to the women they marry."

**Jay Downer**, Member of the New York World's Fair Board of Design: "The Panama Canal is just a ditch compared to the World's Fair."

## SEX UNDER THE SWASTIKA

BY S. L. SOLON AND ALBERT BRANDT

IT has been said that all dictators want more people to dictate to, and Adolf Hitler has made his wish in this respect statistically explicit. He has stated that his Nazi Revolution won't be fully successful until Europe can boast 400,000,000 Germans. The combined German-Austrian-Czechoslovak population to-day is under 90,000,000; even allowing for the addition and Germanization of 100,000,000 Slavic and Gallic Aryans by conquest, the Nazi ambition still imposes a sturdy burden on the Germans. So, parallel with the drive for territory has been the drive for a higher birth rate. And up to now the stork has been less amenable to Hitler's threats than have British and French statesmen.

Dr. Ernst Stoezer, Dresden anthropologist, in 1934 proposed the slogan: "In our new Germany beside every swastika there must hang a diaper." This has been the watchword of the Nazi population campaign, and leading National Socialist thinkers have exercised all their resourcefulness to aid its

realization. Since the swastika decorates the homes of spinsters as well as married women, and the sterile as well as the fruitful, the slogan cuts boldly across old-fashioned moral notions. The outside world is acquainted with the rewards for fertile motherhood and the punishments for laggards, but it has not yet realized how deeply the ethics and conventions of sex relations have been affected by the new Germany's fanatical eagerness for more and still more children.

Nazi philosophers have, in fact, even proposed the legalization of polygamy. Professor Ernst Bergmann, head of the Philosophy Department at the University of Leipzig deplores, in his book *Spirit of Motherhood*, the racial consequences of monogamy and offers the alternative of polygamy:

Life-long monogamy violates nature and injures the race. Wherever it has been enforced . . . the race must degenerate. In the ideally constructed state the woman who has not borne children should be without honor. There will always be a sufficient number of men willing and able to fertilize all women and girls. If we only shed

this cultural nonsense of monogamy, nature has made it possible for one stalwart fellow to suffice for ten or twenty girls who have not yet stifled in themselves the will for children.

These ideas are officially endorsed by Dr. Alfred Rosenberg, leading Nazi theoretician, who long ago pointed out that the Nazis must discard Christian morals if the glory that was tribal Germany is to be restored. In his *Myth of the Twentieth Century* Dr. Rosenberg emphasized that, whatever merit monogamy might have, it must be remembered that

without polygamy the great Germanic stream of peoples in former centuries would not have evolved. Without polygamy the great premises for the culture of the West would have been lacking. There have been times when the number of women has greatly exceeded the number of men. Today such is again the case. . . . Shall these millions of women be miserably laughed at as old spinsters and go through life robbed of their natural rights? Shall a hypocritical society smug in its complacency be permitted to hand down its contemptuous judgments upon these unfortunate women?

His answer is a resounding "No!" as he points to the epic days of Teuton chieftains and their blonde harems. Monogamy may remain the central institution of German marriage relations, he admits

But outside of marriage the mothers of German children must be esteemed.

Thus, also, adultery on the part of the male of the species must be regarded in a new light for those relations which result in an increase in the birth rate—in the procreation of more German children—cannot and will not be considered a breach of the marriage contract.

These are not the remarks of a Nazi hothead. They are the utterances of a highly respected and influential Nazi leader, largely responsible for the development of the new Nazi ethics.

"Women must cease to serve as pleasure fillies and again become breeding mares," a Nazi speaker announced bluntly at a rally at Insterburg six months before Hitler took power. The Nazi Dr. Dupre has outlined such a breeding plan in his *World Philosophy and the Breeding of Race*. Biologically-healthy women would choose from a number of selected men put at their disposal by the Council of Teuton Elders, and each couple would then live monogamously until the woman became fertilized. Then the pair must be separated and the pregnant mother supported by the state while her erstwhile spouse takes his place before the Elders to await another unfertilized female. The offspring would be educated in special houses; the sexes segregated. The eugenically qualified female would choose at her leisure six



mates who would in turn father one of her brood of six or more. The race, Dr. Dupre believes, would profit from these diverse combinations. His plan has been seriously discussed and high Nazi leaders have expressed interest in it.

## II

Even the word "chastity" has been redefined in the Third Reich. Agriculture Minister Darre has defined the unchaste woman as the woman who will not bear children! By establishing an etymological connection with the old Teutonic period, Darre demonstrates "scientifically" that chastity has meaning only in relation to the generative spirit. *Züchtig*, chaste, the epithet for the modest virgin is, he points out, derived from *Zucht* — *Rinderzucht*, *Hühnerzucht*, *Schweinezucht*: the breeding of cattle, poultry, and swine — and the word *Zucht* in turn is derived from *zeugen*: to procreate. Thus the Reich Minister who combines in his portfolio the breeding of stock and of humans designates a girl who is prepared to bear children for Germany as *züchtig* — chaste. The woman who feels differently about child-bearing is unchaste — whether she is legally mated or not.

Women leaders of Nazi Germany

have followed orders in advancing the new morality. Frau Scholtz-Klink, addressing the women editors of Berlin, spoke up for sex untrammelled by convention. Said she:

Girls today return to their basic urges. They submit to them humbly and with pleasure, recognizing in them their God-given lawful basis for blood and land. It is the new type of German woman.

All relationships leading to an increase in the birth-rate are encouraged; barrenness alone is stigmatized.

Ideas about the unwed mother also have changed. She is officially lauded as having performed a heroic and praiseworthy act. *Der Deutsche Textil Arbeiter*, published by the Nazi Labor Front, expressed the official viewpoint on illegitimacy in its July 1935 issue. Denouncing the puritanical and hypocritical morals of liberalism, an editorial lauded the superior morals of National Socialism:

In the past epoch of liberalism it was considered a great shame for a young girl to become a mother before obtaining the official consent of the Church and the marriage license from the town authorities. National Socialism has broken completely with this old-fashioned custom. The new ideology greets enthusiastically the true German will to new achievement in every attempt to add to the Aryan race. It is not concerned with whether the chil-

dren are legitimate or illegitimate. We National Socialists esteem every girl who defies outmoded conventions and justifies herself in her child born out of wedlock. We know that it is precisely these illegitimate children, because they are children of love, conceived in love, who are offspring of a higher racial level than those who have been a consequence of intoxication, mere custom or degeneration.

The editorial continues with a lyric description of the pride the Nazi state takes in the unwed mother:

When a young girl resolves to bear a child rather than subdue her wholly natural sex urge it is a beautiful confession of love for the race and the National Socialist principle of increasing the population. . . . It is an honor, a duty of the German girl to co-operate in the blessed objective of national increase and in the National Socialist state this can never be considered a dishonor. If each German father and each German mother will take this fact to heart, then we shall attain our goal—a higher rate of *Züchtung* (birth increase) for the German race and thus for the Aryan race.

Further, a writer in *Race*, organ of the Nazi Nordic movement, declares that,

Every healthy child born of a German mother is a battle fought and won for the existence of the German people. Thus, in an ethical sense, the healthy unmarried woman must not be denied the right to become a mother.

Such pronouncements have distressed many old-fashioned parents and the reverberations have been

felt even in the Nazi ranks. The *Bund Deutscher Mädchen* (League of German Girls) is no longer generally represented at the annual Nuremburg Party Day because parents complained that the pursuit of *Züchtung* had resulted in a wave of illegitimate births exactly nine months after the conference. Government files are filled with the complaints of distressed parents, teachers, and ministers objecting to the behavior of the Hitler Youth organizations. The *Deutsche Kämpferin* (German Woman Fighter) even ventured to protest publicly, indicating how general the discontent must be. Julius Streicher, who has made extreme use of the sex angle in promoting his violently racist journals, was the chief butt of parental bitterness. The *Deutsche Kämpferin* wrote:

It must be seriously considered if the character of our boys and girls is not profoundly affected by the exhibition on every street corner of all sorts of pornography and illustrated sex crimes. Any day they can be seen clustered around the *Stürmer Kasten* [the cubicles maintained by Julius Streicher to advertise his papers]. There one hears the most obscene comments and perverse queries: "What is a sexual murder?" "What are race defilers?" "What do the Jews do when they sell girls into white slavery?" "What is rape?"

Since Streicher is regarded as one of Hitler's closest friends, the

significance of such a protest is apparent. Streicher has a prison record acquired under the Empire and the Republic for various sex crimes involving children. He has also served sentences for the sale of pornography. Many Nazi leaders who formed part of the homosexual circle around the victims of the June 1934 purge still retain their influence over German youth.

Physicians who met in Vogelsang Castle in September 1937 were told by Dr. Robert Ley, leader of the Labor Front, that

In the New Germany private individuals no longer exist. Whether in public life or in their most intimate relations they remain soldiers of the Führer!

*Zuchtwarte*, breeding advisers, have been introduced among certain SA regiments. The Storm Trooper is required to obtain permission from this higher authority before he takes a wife to his bosom. An example of the difficulty of getting this consent in doubtful instances is illustrated by the case of a 20-year-old Storm Trooper who in February 1939 applied for permission to marry. He wrote his commanding officer, enclosing affidavits certifying to the pure Aryan background of both himself and his fiancée, but the Race Settlement Office replied that he must send a doctor's certificate proving that the "pelvic

construction" of his proposed bride would insure childbearing.

If this Storm Trooper finally obtained official consent, he was probably married in the pagan wedding ritual which has been substituted for the former religious services. Known as the "National Socialist Spiritual Service," the ceremony calls for a military greeting to the marrying couple by the Hitler Youth. The medieval Lancaster drum rolls in a stirring crescendo. In the presence of the uniformed ranks, the bride and groom exchange rings and the presiding officer solemnly instructs the man and his maid: "Go home, increase, follow the Führer and be faithful to him."

The Storm Trooper may now apply for a 1000 mark loan which will be written off at the rate of 250 marks for each child born. The birth will be sanctified by the "consecrated visiting cradle" which circulates in the family of the newborn, who is privileged to sleep in it during the first month of life. Introduced by Hitler's Elite SS detachments, the theory is that the honor of being a National Socialist baby will grip the child from infancy. If the Storm Trooper's wife does her duty by the Fatherland and bears at least four children, she will be eligible for the

*Ehrenkreuz der Deutschen Wirtschaft* — Honor Cross of German Economy — which was extended, by a decree issued last December, to include the mothers of large families.

The German male who fails to obey the Nazi injunction to "marry and multiply" is suspect. Indeed, a statement by Andreas Pratje in the *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift* makes it clear that, to the National Socialist student of race, the great crime of liberalism was that "large sections of the population were enabled to satisfy their basic urges without any ethical awareness of their duty to the state."

Bachelor Nazis have scurried to obtain wives to give marital proof of their ethical awareness and the German press is cluttered with ingenious advertisements inserted by Nazis in search of mates. "Aryan Body and Mind" seems to be the stock offer with the added inducement: "Can prove Aryan great-great-grandmother." Well-to-do advertisers appeal to the appetite for material goods by mentioning that they possess an automobile or a substantial cottage ("room for a large Aryan family"). Luckiest of all is the German who can offer a substantial Nazi pedigree ("dating from the Munich Hofbrau Putsch in 1923").

Hitler's military program, his insistence on the expansion of the German State (through war if necessary), his armament needs — all these demand a growing population. "Marriage," he has said, "cannot be conceived of as an end in itself. It must serve a greater aim — the maintenance and increase of the race and of the species." The population policy formulated by a group of Nazi scientists points out that the prolific Russians and their Polish racial neighbors have increased by 20 per cent in ten years and directly challenge the diminishing Aryan population. "At our Eastern border," the scientists warn, "stands the Slav. If we fail to regain our biologic health then the cultural mission of Germandom is finished." Meanwhile the *Völkischer Wille* notes glumly that, "On the average there are three Slavic children and four or five Mongolian children born to every German child."

### III

How successful has Hitler been in achieving his objective of a "fruitful New Germany?" He has banned birth control, established stringent punishment for abortions and taxed the bachelor to the limit. On the other hand, large families have been

feted, prolific mothers decorated, German youth encouraged to "obey the basic urges," sex relations in and outside the marriage bond sanctified as long as they have contributed children to the Third Reich. The mightiest unified propaganda machine in the world has attempted to make this program popular. What has been the result? Addressing the Reichstag at the close of 1937, Hitler reported:

970,000 children were born in Germany in 1932. This number increased year by year until in 1937 it reached 1,270,000. . . . For this we are not only proud of our German women, but we also find reason to be thankful to Providence which advances this living proof of the mighty achievements of the National Socialist revolution.

A more careful investigation, however, discloses that Hitler's claim is not entirely accurate. Actually the number of births in 1937, according to the Nazis' own figures, declined as compared to the birth-rate in 1936. When we compare the period which the National Socialists have labeled "the years of deepest shame" with the period following the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship another interesting fact is revealed: the number of births in the "shameful" year 1919 was 1,260,000, which rose to 1,599,000 in 1920—a rise markedly higher than Hitler's six-year increase.

The marriage rate similarly remains unsatisfactory. In 1936 there were 14 per cent less marriages than in 1935, although special financial assistance was offered to newly-weds. December 1937 showed another decline over December 1936. After straining their propaganda resources to the limit the Nazis were able to announce on May 5, 1939 that in 1938 the marriage rate had increased by a fraction from 9.1 per thousand to 9.4 while the birth rate had inched up from 18.8 to 19.7 per thousand. These are scarcely figures which indicate any chance for a significant increase in the population within Hitler's time limit. No wonder that Dr. Burgdorffer, the Nazi authority on eugenics, in his *Development of the Population in the Third Reich* grumbles that "We are still lacking 9,000,000 children. It is indispensable that marriages should result in three or four children." The *Völkischer Wille* of February 1, 1939 also laments that the

birthrate in Germany for 1938 was 11.2 per cent less than is necessary if the present population is to be maintained. Six hundred fewer babies are born daily than Germany needs to merely hold the population at its present level.

But death takes no holiday in the Third Reich. In the four years fol-

lowing 1933 the German death rate moved upwards by 15 per cent, which compares with Italian statistics showing a drop in the surplus of births over deaths from 1923 to 1937 of more than 20 per cent. The last figures on suicide issued by the German government in 1936 (statistics on suicide are no longer released) showed a suicide rate more than twice that of England.

An investigation by the Nazi Institute of Anthropology disclosed that among the Nazi intellectuals there was more lip service to the population program than actual co-operation. Four thousand German college professors limited their families to two children despite the fact that in the lecture-hall they were promulgating the Nazi teachings on population. Presumably they were prepared to let their students practice while they preached. More and more good Nazis, otherwise obedient and

meek, begin to grumble that Adolf Hitler himself as a bachelor has neglected his biological duties towards the Fatherland.

In the spring of 1932, before Hitler became chancellor, the population question was discussed in the Prussian Diet. The Social Democratic deputy Hedwig Wachenheim declared that a program to raise the birth rate would not be acceptable to German mothers as long as the war aims of the Nationalist parties threatened the lives of their unborn sons. "They refuse to see their sons once again perish in the trenches," she said. The Nazi deputy Kube arose and angrily inquired, "You geese! For what other purpose are sons born to you?" Six years after Hitler it may be said that, whether or not many of them are geese, it is clear that German women have refused to accept the Nazi invitation to become "breeding mares."



## WARNING TO DEMOCRACIES

There is one safeguard known generally to the wise, which is an advantage and security to all, but especially to democracies as against despots. What is it? Distrust.

*Demosthenes* (384-322 B. C.)

► A MERCURY MINIATURE *presenting that  
brawling go-getting Yankee original*

## ETHAN ALLEN: PIONEER REALTOR

BY NATHAN SCHACHNER

WHEN Governor Aiken of Vermont recently defied the lightning of Federal intervention, out of solicitous regard for the interests of certain landholders, he was following the example of Vermont's earliest son: Ethan Allen. Now, Ethan is well known to Americans, but in a blurred sort of way. He took Ticonderoga from the British and said something quotable in the process — and didn't he have something to do with the founding of Vermont? Then information falters. Which is a pity. For Ethan Allen is as lusty, canny, and colorful a specimen of Yankee as our history can show.

The first Allen came over from England in 1630, seeking land and fortune. There was plenty of land, but little fortune. By the time Ethan was born in 1738, the sum-total of his ancestors' possessions was a crude log cabin and a patch of scraggly ground on the Housatonic. As the years rolled by, other children joined Ethan in the cabin — five male Allens with strange Biblical names: Ira, Heman, Heber,

Levi, and Zimri; and two sisters whose names do not matter.

At an early age Ethan became known throughout Connecticut as a brawler and rip-roaring hell-raiser. He used his fists and bludgeons with equal abandon, and helped enrich the coffers of local justice with his fines. His brother Ira, a lesser chip of the same block, was not far behind him in contacts with a hostile magistracy.

Small wonder then that the worthy citizens heaved sighs of relief when Ethan decided to seek fame and fortune elsewhere. For a while he tried respectable methods, iron smelting and lead mining. But these soon failed, and he cast his eyes northward to what is now Vermont — which mountain wilderness was a kind of *terra incognita*, inhabited chiefly by wild beasts and a handful of wilder men. Its very ownership was in dispute.

The Royal Governor of New Hampshire claimed Vermont and sold vast grants to all comers for a pittance. According to the equally Royal Governor of New York,

however, he was selling what he did not possess. New York, declared the latter, held sole title to the land between Champlain and the Connecticut River. Yet his anguished wails did not stop the Governor of New Hampshire or the land-hungry Connecticut men who rushed to buy at bargain prices.

In 1769 brothers Ethan and Ira joined the procession. Ethan was the swaggerer, the bully, the roaring organizer of men; Ira had the canny business head. The combination was irresistible. While Ethan ranged the woods, Ira put tract after tract of "Grants" land into their titlebags. An Onion River Company was floated to increase the tempo. The rest of the Allen boys hurried up to join the orgy of speculation. Huge domains that cost them a few pounds were cut up into subdivisions and peddled to old friends and neighbors at profits of 500 per cent. But the titles were shaky, as the Allens well knew. New York denounced them as squatters and resold their holdings to her own local speculators. This gave Ethan the chance to exercise his peculiar talents.

He gathered the roughest and toughest of the squatters into a gang euphemistically known as the Green Mountain Boys. He bound them, come hell and highwater, to

blast from the earth any blankety-blank with a New York title-deed. Actions followed swift on words. New York surveyors were seized and brought before Ethan at a Judgment Seat in the woods. The town of Durham, full of Yorkers, was fed to the flames, the screaming women and children chased into the forest, and the men sluggish.

New York, outraged, declared Ethan an outlaw and set a price of £20 on his head. Since this reward was obviously too small for such a notorious criminal, it was later raised to £100, and a sentence of death passed upon him *in absentio*.

Thereupon Ethan, in the best Robin Hood manner, clattered into Albany with a troop of armed men, defiantly posted a counter-reward for eminent and respectable Yorkers, and clattered out again. Once he was surprised in a tavern by New York soldiers sent to seize him. But they made the mistake of carousing with their prisoner. Soon they were under the table, helplessly drunk, and Ethan lit out.

He mixed propaganda with bullets, dashing off pamphlet after pamphlet upholding the rights of the settlers against the tyranny of New York. So effective were the pamphlets, and the bullets, that Ira was able to show neat profits on quick turnovers of land.



Then came Lexington. It was a grand opportunity to drown former sins in the torrents of patriotic enthusiasm. Ethan collected his Green Mountain Boys and led them against Ticonderoga, a sleepy little fort whose garrison did not even know there was a war. As, in fact, there wasn't — yet. The story of the capture is familiar enough. Especially familiar — and especially false — is Ethan's grandiloquent demand for surrender, "In the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." What he actually yelled was, "Come out of there, you damned old rat!" and embellished his demand with a string of oaths much too vigorous to print.

## II

Ethan next joined the attack on Montreal. In the hurlyburly of war the New York death sentence was conveniently forgotten, but he fell into the clutches of the British who shipped him off to England, where he narrowly escaped hanging as a rebel. A year later he was brought back to New York on parole, and gained his freedom in 1778. Ever the pamphleteer, Ethan wrote a horrendous account of his Captivity and Sufferings. His style, remarked a contemporary, was "a

singular compound of local barbarisms, scriptural phrases, and oriental wildness."

During Ethan's enforced absence Ira had been busy. He sold land to all and sundry, and helped organize the outlaw settlers into an independent republic, defiant alike of New York, the Continental Congress, and the British.

Not all, however, defied the British. Levi Allen, one of the brothers, was frankly a rogue and a Loyalist. For both these qualities he was denounced by Ethan and Ira, and his lands confiscated. In revenge Levi wrote a doggerel entitled *The Three Brothers*, which is worth quoting:

### *Ethan:*

Old Ethan once said over a full bowl  
of grog,  
Though I believe not in Jesus, I hold to  
a God;  
There is also a Devil — you will see  
him some day  
In a whirlwind of fire take Levi  
away. . . .

### *Ira:*

I think for myself and I freely declare  
Our Levi's too stout for the prince of  
the air;  
If ever you see them engaged in affray,  
'Tis our Levi who'll take the Devil  
away.

### *Levi, wholly unabashed, retorts:*

There is one consolation which none  
can deny  
That there's one greater rogue in this  
world than I.

'Who's that?' they both cry with equal surprise.

"'Tis Iral! 'tis Iral I yield him the prize.'

Levi evidently knew his own kin. For, as the war lumbered to an end, Ethan and Ira began to reflect. The Continental Congress was decidedly averse to their claims, and New York was ready to march troops into the Grants to reclaim its own. Wherefore they opened discreet negotiations with the British. Would England be willing to annex Vermont to Canada, or, as the alternative, recognize its independence on a reciprocal free-trade basis? Even after the peace treaty, the sly negotiations continued. Ethan, as late as 1787, was ready to fight both New York and the Continental Congress, and sought arms from the British. Levi, now at one with his brothers, sailed to England to seek aid and ultimately landed in a French prison. Ira applied to the British government for a private loan of £1000.

In the midst of these intrigues Ethan died, in 1789. New York, on Hamilton's advice, finally yielded its claims and Vermont was admitted to the Union as a sovereign State in 1791. Levi got back from jail too late to stop Vermont's assent. As he complained to Lord Dundas, Ethan was dead and "Ira Allen was silent on account of the land he owned." In fact, Ira's possessions were conservatively valued at £90,000. He founded the University of Vermont and died in 1814 in the full odor of sanctity.

Ethan had not been as fortunate. The clergy looked askance at him even in death. Picturesque ruffian that he was, he had written a most curious volume entitled *Reason the Only Oracle of Man*, which proclaimed a Spinozan pantheism that anticipated Tom Paine by many a year. It is suspected that the redoubtable Tom got some of his most famous arguments from this book of an untutored, semi-literate Green Mountaineer.



## IN MEMORIAM

A Quarter of a Century  
August 1914—August 1939

# THIS IS WAR!

BY CHARLES RUMFORD WALKER

*August 1914 —*

**RUSSIA MASSES 80,000 MEN ON BORDER  
GERMANY DECLARES WAR ON RUSSIA  
FRANCE PREPARES TO JOIN HER ALLY  
ITALY QUITS TRIPLE ALLIANCE  
GERMANS ADVANCE THROUGH BELGIUM  
BRITISH ULTIMATUM TO GERMANY**

*April 2, 1917 —*

"... We are glad, now that we see the facts with no veil of false pretense about them, to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included: for the rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and obedience. The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty." — *Woodrow Wilson*

*Known soldier dead... 10,000,000*  
*"Missing" dead..... 4,000,000*

Barque and Biquet were shot in the belly; Eudore in the throat. In the dragging and carrying they were further injured. Big Lamuse, at last bloodless, had a puffed and creased face, and the eyes were gradually sinking in their sockets, one more than the other. They have wrapped him in tent-cloth, and it

shows a dark stain where the neck is. His right shoulder has been mangled by several bullets, and the arm is held on only by strips of the sleeve and by threads that they have put in since. The first night he was placed there this arm hung outside the heap of dead, and the yellow hand, curled up on a lump of earth, touched passers-by in the face; so that they pinned the arm to the greatcoat.

A pestilential vapor begins to hover about the remains of these beings with whom we lived so intimately and suffered so long.<sup>1</sup>

\*

Two are so smashed that Tjaden remarks you could scrape them off the wall of the trench with a spoon and bury them in a mess-tin. Another has the lower part of his body and his legs torn off. Dead, his chest leans against the side of the trench, his face is lemon-yellow, in his beard still burns a cigarette. It glows until it dies out on his lips.<sup>2</sup>

\*

He looked about, shaken by nausea, his gorge rising. In a dip in the trench he saw a pile of dirty, tattered uniforms heaped in layers and with strangely rigid outlines. It took him some time to grasp the full horror of that which towered in front of him. Fallen soldiers were lying there like gathered logs, in the contorted shapes of the last death agony. Tent flaps had been spread over them, but had slipped down and revealed the grim, stony grey caricatures, the fallen jaws, the staring eyes. The arms of those in the top tier hung earthward like parts of a trellis, and grasped at the faces of those lying below, and were already sown with the livid splotches of corruption.<sup>3</sup>

Fragments become coated with these acids in exploding and wounds caused by them mean death in terrible agony within four hours if not attended to immediately. . . . It can be seen from this that this shell is more effective than the regular shrapnel, since the wound caused by shrapnel balls and fragments in the muscles are not as dangerous as they have no poisonous element making prompt attention necessary.—*Advertisement in American Machinist, May 6, 1915.*

Attacks alternate with counter-attacks and slowly the dead pile up in the field of craters between the trenches. . . . The day is hot and the dead lie unburied. We cannot fetch them all in, if we did we should not know what to do with them. The shells will bury them. Many have their bellies swollen up like balloons. They hiss, belch and make movements. The gases in them make noises.<sup>2</sup>

\*

In the twinkling of an eye the man's entire left side flared up in flames. With a howl of agony he threw himself to the ground, writhed and screamed and leaped to his feet again, and ran moaning up and down like a living torch, until he broke down, half-charred, and twitched, and then lay rigid. Captain Marschner saw him lying there and smelt the odor of burned flesh, and his eyes involuntarily strayed to his own hand on which a tiny, white spot just under his thumb re-

minded him of the torments he had suffered in his boyhood from a bad burn.<sup>3</sup>

*Seriously wounded* . . . 6,500,000  
*Otherwise wounded* . . . 14,000,000

We see men living with their skulls blown open; we see soldiers run with their two feet cut off, they stagger on their splintered stumps into the next shell-hole; a lance-corporal crawls a mile and a half on his hands dragging his smashed knee after him; another goes to the dressing station and over his clasped hands bulge his intestines; we see men without jaws, without faces; we find one man who has held the artery of his arm in his teeth for two hours in order not to bleed to death.<sup>2</sup>

\*

Lunch with Loti and a Lieutenant Simon who had his forearm broken and an eye shot out at the Marne. The horrible thing is that, when he describes how he was wounded, he no longer absorbs the attention of guests. Already (February 1915) indifference is growing. "One can't get away from heroes," it has been said.<sup>4</sup>

Between 1915 and 1918 the French and British made five major assaults on the Western Front, the Germans one. None was decisive. None produced substantial changes in the relative positions of the belligerents. All resulted in

tremendous losses. — *Rose Stein in M-Day* (Harcourt, Brace).

Last winter at Verdun, a regiment of Zouaves had to halt in shell craters, before an attack on a night of bitter cold. The colonel telephoned to the general that his men would soon be frozen and unable to march. The general, snugly ensconced in his quarters, insisted on their remaining where they were. There were 1200 cases of frozen feet, and 600 amputations.<sup>4</sup>

. . . remembering the grey crooked fingers the thick drip of blood off canvas the bubbling when the lung cases try to breathe the muddy scraps of flesh you put in the ambulance alive and haul out dead — 1919 (*Camera Eye*), John Dos Passos (Harcourt, Brace).

They (wounded from the trenches in Serbia) were filthy, a bundle of rags, vermin, and dirt. Clay-caked they came from the trenches with matted hair and beards . . . with skin parched, cracked, and ingrained with filth . . . about their person, over their hands, their faces, their clothing, crawled vermin by the millions; the stench . . . was nauseating. . . . Upon the countenance of each was the expression such as only comes after days of terrible suffering . . . their hands shook with palsy . . . poor starved skeletons, a mere framework of what had once been a muscular, well-nourished, robust man in the

prime of life. . . . Our most repulsive cases were the patients whose entire bodies would fill with pus without any apparent cause, resulting in death in four or five hours — probably a sequela of typhus. . . . About 95% of the gunshot wounds were infected. . . .<sup>5</sup>

*Civilian and non-combatant dead . . . 28,000,000. Dead from hunger . . . unknown millions.*

During the first stage the organism, although having daily a huge deficit in nutrition, lives upon former reserves. Then comes the second stage, that of atrocious, animal, irresistible hunger. The wretched sufferers devour the grass they find along the hedges. . . . They spend whole days turning over refuse heaps and eat everything more or less resembling food. . . . This state is followed by the third and last, the period of exhaustion and apathy, the sufferer becomes completely indifferent. The best food no longer tempts him. . . . Fully conscious, calm and impassive, he waits for the approach of the last hour. When he feels it coming he lies down, covers himself up and dies without a word.<sup>6</sup>

"War is no longer Samson with his shield and spear and sword, and David with his sling; . . . it is the conflict of the smokestacks now, the combat of

the driving wheel and engine." — *Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War.*

*Blockade starved hordes of young and old.*

I couldn't help asking, "Is he twelve?" For this boy was no larger than a boy of eight. The baby got up and walked to us in a friendly fashion, and then I noticed that its frail legs were crooked. A little girl ran in and stood beside her mother looking at us. Under both ears were big lumps — a child with tubercular glands.

What I saw in this house was true of all the families I visited . . . and everywhere swarmed children; pale children, children with blotched and scarred faces, children with skinny, crooked legs.<sup>7</sup>

The American national debt rose from less than \$1,000,000,000 to more than \$24,000,000,000; or, from \$9.88 per person to \$228 per person.

The feeble of all ages were carried off quickly when concentrated foods (fats) could no longer be had to keep them alive, and persons of middle age and old age suffered so much that death in many cases was a welcome relief. . . . Driven by necessity, the several states (Central Powers) practiced wholesale manslaughter of the less fit.

I was greatly interested in the "home" casualties, and discussed them with many, among them life

insurance men, educators and government officials. The first class took a strictly business view of the thing. The life insurance companies were heavy losers.<sup>8</sup>

*Millions were killed by typhus.*

First it developed among the unfortunate Austrian prisoners huddled by thousands in Serbian prison camps. They succumbed daily in hundreds—later thousands . . . (of the 60,000 total, 30,000 died of typhus and 15,000 more on the retreat into Albania). From the prison camps the plague spread into hospitals. Here the havoc was tragic indeed; for 90% of the stricken succumbed, among them physicians and surgeons. . . . Before the epidemic subsided, 75% of the people of Gengelia (Serbian city) died.<sup>5</sup>

A doctor tells me that they have a delousing section behind the lines. The soldiers infested with vermin are sent out of the line since the insect spreads disease. So the louse is treasured. A dozen lice in a match box command a ready sale—the larger the louse, the higher the price.<sup>4</sup>

*And millions more succumbed to Spanish flu, the greatest war pestilence in centuries.*

In the United States alone there were nearly 30,000,000 cases, or one out of every four persons in the country; 400,000 to 500,000 died.

Half as many soldiers died from influenza in the army camps as died in battle. In Philadelphia the death rate rose 700%. In many cities the poor lay unburied through lack of coffins and gravediggers. Mines shut down, shipyards and munitions factories curtailed operations. Telephone service was cut in half.<sup>9</sup>

In our effort to silence those who advocated peace without victory we prevented at the very start that vigorous threshing out of fundamentals which might today have saved us from a victory without peace.—Professor Zechariah Chaffee, in *Freedom of Speech in War Time*.

*Men were trained for the tasks of war. . . .*

“I wish to speak to you this evening about the spirit of the bayonet. . . . You’ve got to get down and hook them with the bayonet. You will enjoy that, I can assure you. . . . You will certainly know what it feels like to drive that bayonet home and get it out again; you will feel that you will like to go on killing. You are here to work on that idea and to work damn hard. . . . That is the spirit to have—to keep on killing. . . . And I say to you, if you see a wounded German shove him out and have no nonsense about it. We are going to have no sympathy with the Germans at any rate. . . .

"Then try to experience what it is to have the feeling of warm blood trickling over your hands. . . . Get hold of your men; whatever you say, see that it is done. But whatever you do, see that these men are taught to kill." <sup>10</sup>

Practical Bayonet Combat: The part of the body to be attacked will be designated by name as head, neck, chest, stomach, legs. . . . The commands are given and the movements . . . thoroughly explained by the instructor. . . . The influence of the instructor is great. . . . He should influence the zeal of the men and arouse pleasure in the work. — *Manual of Military Training*.

*War, the orators said, brings out the best men, as well as the worst.*

We stand on the firing-step and shoot into the closely packed ranks. Every shot tells. My rifle is hot. On all sides of us machine-guns hammer at the attacking ranks. . . .

I am filled with a frenzied hatred of these men. They want to kill me, but I will stay here and shoot at them until I am either shot or stabbed down. I grit my teeth. We are snarling, savage beasts.

Their dead and wounded are piling up about four feet deep.

They climb over them as they advance.

Suddenly they break and retreat.

We have repulsed them again. Their wounded crawl towards our trenches. We shoot at them. <sup>11</sup>

*Diary of an Unknown Aviator:*

It's not the fear of death that's done it. I'm still not afraid to die. It's this eternal flinching from it that's doing it and has made a coward out of me. Few men live to know what real fear is. It's something that grows on you, day by day, that eats into your constitution and undermines your sanity. . . . I haven't a chance, I know, and it's this eternal waiting around that's killing me. . . . I know now why men go out and take such long chances and pull off such wild stunts. . . . I know how men laugh at death and welcome it. <sup>12</sup>

The liberal peoples of the world are united in a common cause. . . . The cause of the Allies is now unmistakably the cause of liberalism and the hope of an enduring peace. — *New Republic*, April 21, 1917.

The three Hofer brothers and Jacob Wipf, members of an anti-war sect, were first sent to Alcatraz Island. . . . They were put in a dungeon below the surface of the water. It was pitch black. Water dripped from the walls. Clad only in their underwear and tortured by a straitjacket and ball and chain, the four Christians were kept in the dungeon for five days, spending thirty-six of the hours manacled to the bars. After five days they were transferred to Leavenworth and again placed in solitary. Two of



them contracted pneumonia and . . . died. . . . As a final irony, the body of one of the men . . . was sent back to his people dressed in military uniform.<sup>13</sup>

\*

"What is the use of a wounded German anyway? He goes into hospital and the next thing that hap-

pens is that you meet him again in some other part of the line. That's no good to us, is it? So when you see a German laid out, just finish him off. . . . Kill them, every mother's son of them. Remember that your job is to kill them . . . exterminate the vile creatures. Murder that vile animal called a German."<sup>10</sup>

*August 27, 1928 —*

The high contracting parties solemnly declare in the names of their respective peoples that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another.

— *Pact of Paris*

*August 19, 1939 —*

**ARMAMENT BUDGETS BIGGEST IN HISTORY  
CONSCRIPTION UNDER WAY IN ENGLAND  
JAPAN BOMBS MORE CHINESE CITIES  
HITLER MASSES TROOPS ON POLISH LINE  
PLACE AMERICAN FRONTIER ON RHINE  
PREPARING FOR SECOND WORLD WAR**

<sup>1</sup> *Under Fire*, by Henri Barbusse (Everyman's Library, Dutton).

<sup>2</sup> *All Quiet on the Western Front*, by Erich Maria Remarque (Little, Brown).

<sup>3</sup> *Men In War*, by Andreas Latzko (Modern Library).

<sup>4</sup> *The Paris Front*, by Michel Corday (E. P. Dutton).

<sup>5</sup> *The Highway of Death*, by Earl Bishop Downer, M.D. (F. A. Davis).

<sup>6</sup> Memorandum of the Serbian Socialist Party, 1917 (Unpublished).

<sup>7</sup> *A Footnote to Folly*, by Mary Heaton Vorse (Farrar & Rinehart).

<sup>8</sup> *The Iron Ration*, by George Abel Schreiner (John Murray, London).

<sup>9</sup> *Our Times*, by Mark Sullivan (Scribner's).

<sup>10</sup> Suppressed Speech by Company Sergeant-Major (Published in *No More War*, London).

<sup>11</sup> *Generals Die in Bed*, by Charles Yale Harrison (Morrow).

<sup>12</sup> *War Birds* (John Hamilton, London).

<sup>13</sup> *Hey, Yellowbacks*, by Ernest L. Meyer (John Day).



## MYSTIC HAPPINESS IN HARLEM

BY CLAUDE MCKAY

A PRODIGIOUS orgiastic wrestling with God is the authentic throb of Harlem, even as the tom-tom in native Africa. With acrobatic stunts and unrestrained mystical emotionalism, the cults challenge the churches in an unabating tug-of-war for control of the spirit of the masses. Many of the churches stage prancing exhibitions to compete with the cults. The fame of Father Divine and a few others has traveled beyond the frontiers of the greatest Negro community in the world, but they represent only the more publicized of a small army of fetishers manipulating jungle magic in New York's jungle of black tenements.

Hidden away from public curiosity, there are also hundreds of occult chapels, burning candles day and night, which attract a secret host by cabalistic symbols and exotic ritual. Necromancers, diviners, prophets, priests, holy and pagan, have created in Harlem a weird domain of spiritism, in which pious and impious living are inextricably interlocked, until the

business of normal existence seems an intrusion necessary only to make possible the world of make-believe.

The lettered device AC—FD ("After Christ—Father Divine") is sacred to the disciples of Father Divine and is affixed to the façade of some of his Kingdoms. But before Father Divine there was a greater and more bizarre Godsmen: George Wilson Becton. College-educated, tall, stout, handsome, Becton was a supreme showman. His success was extraordinary, for he captured the spirit of Harlem in the early 'thirties, at the peak of its most profane period. Harlem was then the widest open wet area under Prohibition, and the secure base of great gangsters trafficking in liquor and narcotics. The common folk were in the grip of the numbers game. Fascinated by rumors of spectacular winnings, Harlemites merrily poured all their spare pennies, nickels, and dimes into the bottomless black pool. The big boys of the community then were not cultists, but numbers bankers.

Into this realm of white and

black iniquity Becton the Magnificent marched his troupe of youngsters, headed by an orchestra playing seductive music. Becton styled his mission The World's Gospel Feast. He invented his own ritual of service. His meetings were not the loose corybantic revels of the later Divine places. They were patterns of order and grace, marked by hushed silences. Becton embellished his service with a procession of pages mantled in crimson and gold, chanting sweetly as they marched slowly up the aisle. Becton himself, grandly robed, brought up the rear. He dominated the congregation with his fine presence and smoothly modulated, far-carrying voice. Women swayed like reeds, moaning under his persuasive voice.

Becton was a superb preacher and ordained ministers welcomed his irresistible evangelism in their pulpits. Only a Becton could provide the spiritual excitement to compete with the ungodly distractions of the times. He invented the phrase "the consecrated dime" which diverted tens of thousands of dimes from the numbers racketeers to the church collections. His own collections were fat enough. He purchased two houses in Harlem, and his own apartment provided Harlemites with the most delectable gossip. Two items were his

golden slippers and his broad golden bed. A golden gate led from an immense music and reception room into his private rooms, which he called the Holy Chambers. His bathroom was a spacious room in white and gold, billowy with cushions, its tub concealed in case-ments. Sometimes he preferred to breakfast there with special guests and disciples.

Life in that household was pitched on a higher level: the cook was called "dietitian," the valet was called "intelligent officer," his chauffeur was "city guide." Becton set Harlem's fashions for years when he paraded through the main avenues in his high-priced car, dressed to kill.

As a prestidigitator of primitive piety Becton was magnetic and magnificent. He was, in Harlem's own phrase, "hot" — but hot! After preaching he never mingled with the congregation nor shook hands. One of his twelve disciples would throw a cape around him as he retreated through a rear door. He increased his prestige by impressive hegiras to other Negro cities, and his return to New York was always triumphal.

Nevertheless, there was undercover whispering about him. There were astonishing rumors about his emotional grip upon

men, and especially upon women. He had enemies. One night in Philadelphia he was lured from a church by a mysterious message and forced into a waiting car, which later was discovered in a sinister side-street. Becton's body was punctured with bullets and he died in agony a few days later. Madame Becton, his wife, still operates a spiritualist memorial chapter in his memory, but the fantasy and glamor of the name died with him. The Sheik of God, as some called him, is no more.

When Father Divine progressed into the territory Becton had conquered so gloriously, he shouted "Peace" and began building a new kind of kingdom. For a decade he had been established in Sayville, Long Island, in relative obscurity, surrounded by white and colored followers. When a judge who sentenced him on a charge of maintaining a public nuisance died suddenly, Father Divine's prestige rose dizzily. This was just about the time when Becton was murdered, and Father Divine moved from Sayville to Harlem. There are many others where Becton luxuriated; Daddy Grace and Mother Horn and Prophet Costonie, and smaller fry in "store-front" churches. But all of them trail far behind Father Divine.

## II

The noisy, steaming contortions of the cults openly proclaim the black man's eternal preoccupation with his primitive psyche. But that extrovert expression is only surface. Behind it is mysticism, secrecy, the shrouded occult. The occult chapels greatly outnumber the cults and are multiplying rapidly. In 1934 there was only one "chapel shop" in Harlem, selling herbs, magical candles, dream books, endless magic stuff. The other day I counted ten such emporia in a short walk. A few of them even advertise in the Harlem paper.

Compared to the cults, the ritual of the chapels is like the strains of chamber music against the sound of a brass band. The chapels are a refined transformation of the diabolic West Indian obeahism and voodooism and Southern conjurism formerly practiced in Harlem. And their evolution coincides with a significant shift in the social and economic habits of Harlem folk. For over two decades the numbers game, the greatest industry in Harlem, created auxiliary rackets, reaching into all phases of the life of the common people. Like those poisonous plants whose roots burrow underground and send up lush shoots everywhere, the game finds

unexpected expression. Harlem's nostrum shops and occult chapels are the rhizanthous shoots of the great grapevine running of the numbers game. For the first business of occultism was to provide lucky numbers.

And one of the first to launch an enterprise complementary to the Great Game we may call Madam Dodo. She promoted the profitable alliance between dreams and numbers, by which Harlem is bewitched. Madam Dodo used to be a notorious voodoo priestess. With snakes coiled round her neck she posed in a latticed booth in her apartment and gazed into a crystal or waved a palm frond. She interpreted to transfixed black souls the secrets of their dreaming. She discovered that many, many numbers were mixed in the phantasies weaving through the unfathomable minds of Harlem's sleeping thousands. So, conveniently, she began discerning many more numbers in the dreams of numbers-game patrons hungering for precious illumination. Sometimes, by chance, her muttered number won, and her fame as divinatrix grew. If she gave out 594 and the winning number came 593, her clients attributed the mischance to evil interference, but never to Madam Dodo.

Then Madam Dodo decided to

hitch her occult powers to the rising star of numerology in Harlem. She conceived the plan which purported to be the scientific prognostication of lucky numbers by the medium of dreams. From being a sorceress, she blossomed forth as a spiritualist. The latticed booth was discarded for a chapel. Thus she reached a more respectable class of patron, hitherto ashamed to resort to a snake-charming voodoo woman. In her chapel they paid for messages from departed friends and relatives and lucky numbers to play. Madam Dodo achieved a material success far beyond the sum of all the dreams of her patrons. Ambitious, energetic, convinced that she was a benefactor, Dodo believed it was her mission to leave to posterity a monument of the insubstantial fabric of dreams and their meaning in lucky numbers. And so Madam Dodo ventured into the sacrosanct field of publishing.

Madam Dodo announced that for many years she had been delving in the science of numerology and at last had perfected a system of divination as mathematically correct as the astral powers would concede. It was an eventful day for Harlem when the Dream Book of Numbers appeared, with Madam Dodo's name as author-

publisher. It was prefaced by a quatrain:

*Dodo foretells the falling star,  
Dodo interprets thoughts of flowers,  
Dodo knows all things near and far,  
Dodo reveals your hidden powers.*

The book became the best-seller of Harlem, dispensed in drug stores, cigar stores, candy stores, news-stands, and beauty parlors. Dreams and numbers and signs and portents became Harlem's obsession. People recounted their dreams to their friends and consulted the oracle for the corresponding number. The author waxed rich and hundreds packed her magic chapel, paying 50¢ for a public reading and a dollar for a private reading.

Harlem folk are haunted by numbers. You move into a hotel and the maid or elevator boy will play the number of your room, if they think the astral powers are on your side. Your laundry tag, your telegram, every conceivable object is searched for numbers. An automobile accident, a fire, a butterfly fluttering by, a street fight, a funeral, any casually unusual thing provides a playing number. Small wonder Madam Dodo flourishes, as do Rajah Rabo, Professor Konje, Prince Ali, Moses Magical, and others. The Dream Book of Numbers hatched many competitors, white and colored.

The occult chapels probably outnumber the churches today. They offer baroque patterns and fantastic ritual, drawing upon all the imaginary mystery and fetichism of Asia and of Africa: Negro necromancers in oriental array; so-called Persian, Indian, and Arabian ritual; plumage of strange birds, wild herbs and flowers and colored stones as symbols. Harlem, to shake off its fears and poverty and insecurity, wallows in mysticism.

### III

I am drawn to Harlem's occult chapels by the same curiosity which impelled me to visit the candle-lit shrines of marabouts in Africa. One I visited recently is situated in the middle sector of Harlem, on the third floor of a tenement. Half the flat has been transformed into a chapel, and now it was crowded to suffocation. I gave the 25¢ offering demanded at the door and found standing room at the back. Burning oils and incense filled the place with heady narcotic aromas. The audience was predominant with women. They whispered excitedly, eyes strangely aglitter, like pentecostal pilgrims awaiting a miracle. The walls, in light blue, were covered with mottos and rubrics — "Trust and

Hope," "Love and Live," "Life Is Mystery," etc. — and embellished with stars, crosses, crescents, and hearts cut out of colored paper.

Up front a white altar, loaded with colored candles burning in little glass jars, and behind it, on the wall, the painting of an elaborate Tree of Life and Hope with strange branches in all directions. The priestess was a brown woman of commanding height and bulk. She was robed in black and white, with voluminous sleeves and a long white train. Her headdress was fitted like that of a woman of ancient Egypt and all her movements were sidelong. She was assiduously assisted by a tall black man, costumed in red and gold. He straightened the train whenever the priestess seemed in danger of being entangled, and handed the magical items she needed. On the altar were the symbols of divination: roses, a cross, a star, a crescent.

When I entered, the priestess was engaged in a pantomime before the altar, claspings and unclaspings her hands, bowing her head and stretching her arms to look like wings. Several times she glided round the altar. Then she began an unintelligible incantation. At last she picked up the star and gazed intently at it. And in dark deep tones she declared: "I can see the

limitless dimensions of omniscience. It is a long straight stroke. Is it the divine whip of the archangel of retribution? Or is it a staff? There is interference. Let mine eyes be as the sight of the serpent." Slowly, she glided again around the altar, one hand thrust out before and the other behind her. "I see through the rose of revelation and I see a fork of lightning. I see a gleaming triangle. I see the letter Y. I hear sweet voices singing. I see little children dancing. The grass is green and tender and I see a silver M. And I see another M. Oh, clear as the sunny water of the stream of heaven, it is the month of May."

There was general sighing. "But there is a blur," she intoned. "There is a long finger poking May. Oh, clear like the jewel of the Madonna, I can see R. It is a name, Mary, a message for Mary." Five women, each named Mary, showed their hands. "It is one message for one person only," said the priestess. "And it isn't you, and it isn't you, and it isn't you," she sing-songed pointing at each Mary. She swayed and swayed and again glided around the altar. She clasped the star to her forehead. Then she flung back her head and threw her hands straight upwards. "I see a garden in the sky, a beautiful garden. Now there is a lady walking in the

garden. Oh, but it is painful, painful, she walks with crutches. Oh she is very painful, but she must walk in that garden. And now she is stooping down, it is painful, but she picks a rose."

As she declaimed, the priestess acted out the part of the lady in pain in the garden. She was a good actress. Now she cried: "Oh light of my vision. My eyes are dazzled by a wonderful flash in the sky. It brings me the name, Rosemary! Rosemary!" A good-looking brown girl fell out of her chair in the front row and writhed on the floor; "Oh mother, my mother, my mother in pain!" she wailed. Women began keening and moaning but, like the priestess, their voices were remarkably subdued, like persons sobbing in a sick room.

The priestess lifted the girl, hugged her and comforted her: "Don't cry. Your mother is no longer in pain. But the good spirits revealed her to me by her life on earth. Those are the ways of the spirits to convey hidden secrets. I saw your mother in pain, but I also saw her uplifted from pain. She is happy and laughing with honey on her tongue. Her message to you is, Walk straight! and beware of the joy-riding lovers in Harlem."

"Thank you, mother, for your message," said the girl. Composing

herself, she extracted a five-dollar note from her purse and handed it to the priestess. "This is mother's gift," said the priestess, holding the note before the altar, "and any of you who feel compensated by the action of my spirit in contacting and revealing the unknown, may contribute something. I feel that my inspiration is boundless tonight and those who desire more personal and secret revelation may wait and see me after the meeting. The fee is \$1. And also I offer you two consecrated numbers, 618 and 901."

The women crowded round the altar with contributions. I wondered if there had been collusion between the priestess and the girl.

So thrives the medicine man, prancing and profiting in Harlem, even as his ancestor in the primeval forest. But perhaps the voltaic exhibition of Harlem's swarthy souls is no more than a part of the primitive revelation of the mystical heritage of all humanity. Trapped in the most depressed area of Manhattan, the dark denizens, despairing of finding work, are looking to lucky symbols for a way out. They play the numbers and resort to the occult chapels with their dreams, avidly drinking the magic potions, which give solace to thousands hungering for happiness in Harlem.



# IN THE BLACK MORNING

## *A Story*

BY IRA WOLFERT

THE first I saw of her, she was standing under the street lamp, just looking out in front of her. She didn't seem to be doing anything or waiting for anything or even thinking. "Taxi?" I called. You could hear my voice three blocks in the empty quiet of the black morning. But she didn't show any sign she had heard me. All she did was stand there.

I swung the door of the cab open and she looked at the warm, lively, noisy darkness inside. It was right in front of her eyes. And after a while she got in — very slowly, rigid, tight, bending in straight lines. As she passed me, I smelled the liquor on her breath, a sour, sharp fuzz brushing against me. I closed the door and shoved down the stick and put the car into gear and sat there a moment with my foot on the clutch waiting for her to say where she was going, but she didn't say anything.

She saw me looking at her and tried to pull herself together.

She tightened her lips and lifted her head high on her stick of a neck and opened her big sad eyes wide. "You know George?" she said.

I knew the place all right. It was around the corner, but I thought I'd try to stretch it. "Through the park, uptown?" I said.

"No," she said. "George. It's on Fifty-fourth Street over a garage. You don't have to be so dumb, really, you know."

I looked at her for a while. The dumb bum, I thought, the lousy round-heeled tramp! And she looked at me, her eyes opened full, her head shaking slightly on her thin neck. "No ma'am," I said, "except I got to be what I am." She didn't answer. I don't think she saw me any more. She was too busy trying to hold herself together.

When we drew up to the joint, I saw that somebody had built a fire in the doorway of a condemned building a few doors up the street and there were a couple of fellows

and a cop standing around over it. Well, that's something, I thought. If I don't get any bookings, at least I'll get warm.

I opened the door, but she didn't get out. She just sat there in the middle of the seat, her skinny legs arched and folded in close. I climbed out and stood by the door. I didn't want that tramp getting sick in the car. I thought, if she starts to look funny I'll yank her out of there so fast she'll get streamlined.

"You're here now," I said.

She had a small gold mesh bag, a very fancy evening bag, in her lap. She picked it up and opened it. She gave me a half-dollar, I think because it was too much for her to count through small change, and as she stooped to get out of the cab, something tipped over in her. She tossed right out and swung against me. I heard the bag drop on the running board, the harsh skush of the mesh and something harder inside that thumped. "Whoop," I said, holding my head back from her breath, "take it easy there, girlie."

It was like being leaned on by a sick child. I held her up with one hand while I searched for the bag with the other. "I'm sorry," she said. "I must have tripped." I could feel the hot, skinny, trembling weight of her and the fever

bouncing in her. She sure had a jag on. When I picked up the bag and handed it to her, I felt a metal weight in it shaped like a gun.

While she walked slowly and stiffly across the pavement toward the stairs to George's tenement joint, I looked around on the floor of the cab to see if she had dropped any money. I once found a dollar that way and a chip out of a diamond ring as well as some change. But she hadn't dropped anything. She had just stunk up the car like a brewery.

After backing my cab into line behind the two others in front of the place, I went over to the fire to warm up. The fire was going in an old garbage pail and I saw Tom standing over it and a fellow I didn't know and this cop who was a friend of Tom. The fellow was in the middle of a story when I came up and he just kept on and finished it and then he asked me how was business. He seemed to like to talk, but I didn't want to talk to him. I wanted to talk to Tom. I was beginning to get an idea about that gun in the tramp's bag. I knew Tom's wife worked for George and I thought if this tramp was taking a gun up there Tom ought to know about it.

Tom had a queer set-up. His wife

had been a chorus girl and in the line in floor shows around different places and finally a hostess before he married her and put her in a nice little place in the Bronx. He met her while he was playing George's old clip joint on Fifty-first Street during Prohibition. Tom used to cruise around up to one, two in the morning looking for drunks and guys to steer to the joint and George gave him one-third of the take on what he brought in. George gave all the guys one-third on what they brought in, but Tom was the only one made a business of it. It was a pretty good business too, I guess, if you like that kind of stuff.

I never got friendly with Tom in those days. He was just somebody I saw around, a big Irishman, tough as beef, with a square, red face and a thin nose and paper-colored, paper-thin lips and little blue eyes. He didn't talk much to anybody. I guess he didn't like his racket much. The fellows used to say he was the kind of a guy who didn't like anybody, not even himself. But I thought he was all right because he wasn't like the others who play joints regularly and get sore when somebody from the outside tries to buck the line. Tom didn't give a damn who came or went on the line. He knew George

would take care of him. He was practically George's partner.

After he married Sara, he quit George and took to working days where it was straight hacking and no larceny except maybe once in a while when you got a greenhorn off a ship. He melted down into something near human and I got pretty friendly with him then. They had a kid and then the kid died and he went around with a black arm-band on his coat and overcoat for more than a year.

We got to talking once in a coffee pot and he told me he was worried about Sara. "She's got nothing to do with herself except go crazy," he said.

"You ought to have another kid," I said. "Women have to have children or there's something goes wrong with them upstairs. Downstairs too."

He looked down at his coffee for a long time without saying anything. Jesus, I thought, that's what it is.

"Every time I come home," he said at last, "I get the same song and dance. Tired of doing nothing."

"Well," I said. "She's got Broadway in her."

"Yes, I suppose so," he said. "She's not like other women. The house ain't enough for her. She's got the lights in her. They itch."

So, after a while, Sara went to work for George again. Tom used to go upstairs a lot to watch her. George didn't like it, but he was afraid to say anything. Tom would go up every fifteen, twenty minutes. He said he was counting the house or finding out if any of the customers were getting fixed to go home. But he wasn't fooling anybody.

## II

The fire was crackling, sparks tossing up in showers, and we stood there tasting the warmth, the cop and this gabby fellow and Tom and myself, not saying anything, looking at the fire, feeling cozy. There was a stale smell coming down the stairs from the condemned tenement and the clean, hot smell of fire. Finally the cop said he'd take a look around the block and see who was beating his wife, and when he had got off a way, I told Tom, "I think that load I brought up here was packing a thing."

He lifted his heavy face away from the fire. "What makes you think so?" he asked.

"I picked up her pocketbook when she dropped it," I said. "It felt like it had a thing in it."

"All right," said Tom. "What

are you telling me for? What the hell makes you think all of a sudden I'd be interested?"

He stood around a while longer, staring at the fire, looking down the block, but I could see he was itching to go. His eyes weren't quiet and his face was pulled tight. "I guess," he said, "I'll have a look upstairs and see if they can't shake somebody out of there." He started off slowly, casually, his hands in his overcoat pockets.

As soon as he had gone Mr. Gabby Guy said "You got any idea who that load was you brought here?"

I didn't answer and he said, "That was Frances Dolan," and waited a moment for me to be surprised and said, "You know, the old time musical comedy star. I remember when she was in the Winter Garden. She had her name spelled out in letters a block long. A whole block — on Broadway. The sign must have cost \$2000 to spell out her name. Now she walks around needing a bath."

"Now she's a bottle-fed baby," I said.

"If you'd been smart," he said, "you'd have dropped her in the river instead of bringing her here."

"I didn't see anything wrong with her money."

"You're supposed to be a friend

of Sara's and you bring her here. Sara's got her meal ticket."

"You talk too much, mister," I said. "You don't know what you're talking about and you talk too much."

"All right," he said. "Frankie was all set up with a guy on Fifty-sixth Street. I got it from the tailor's boy there that I drive around on deliveries. They used to go to George's together for a nightcap. Now this guy comes here without Frankie. He comes every night to see Sara."

"Is he up there now?"

"He went away about an hour ago, about three o'clock. He must be finding out by now what a turnip Sara is with her husband looking in on her every time a guy tries to get anywhere with the dame."

I started to move off. "I'd keep my nose out of it," he said.

"I got some chewing gum for you," I said, "if you want to keep your mouth going."

George hadn't done a thing to his joint since Repeal. He called it keeping the atmosphere, but it was also keeping his dough. He still had the red-checked table cloths and the small bar in the back of the place and the iron door with the peep-hole where you used to stand and get looked over. If George

heard a big party coming up the stairs he'd look through the peephole and laugh before opening the door. That was for atmosphere.

There were about four parties in the place when I came in. I saw Sara sitting up front with a guy who looked like a plain-clothes man. He was so drunk he had to fight to keep his eyes open. Sara was holding both his hands tenderly in hers, which is what she used to do when a guy tried to start things. She was smiling at him tenderly and listening tenderly to every word he said.

I saw Tom standing along the wall by the checkroom. He had his coat and hat on and was half turned away from his wife, half turned to the bar where the tramp was standing drinking. George was over there, too, talking to the bartender and I went over and asked for some coffee.

"Hello," said George. "You take something better than coffee. It's on the roof."

"Thanks," I told him, shaking my head. I like the idea of having a drink only when I'm at a party.

The tramp looked sick. She had the old look of a child sucked hollow by fever. Her clothes were dirty in the light and looked as if she had been sleeping in them and her face was dirty. Almost all the

powder was sweated off and you could see the dirt yellowing her face. She was drinking rye with beer chaser. I thought if I could get this tramp out of here, everything would be all right. There wouldn't be any trouble for Tom. God Almighty to Hell, if a guy ever had enough trouble it was Tom.

"Listen, George," I said, "I see a fellow today selling a new kind of juice to chase away barflies."

George laughed out loud. "Ha, ha," he said, just like that, his mouth spelling out the sound. Then he looked startled and his large, wet, brown eyes began sliding in his face, first towards me, then towards the tramp, then back at me again. "Ha, ha, ha," he said. "That's a good one all right." He started to move away.

"You ought to buy some," I told him.

The tramp turned around. "Are you talking about me?" Her voice was very loud. She took a step towards me. "If you're talking about me . . ." Her eyebrows quivered upward and her face pulled down and she lifted her two thin little fists into the air over my head. "You stinking rat," she said. "Are you talking about me? You're a dirty lousy rat bastard." She said a lot of other things too, until George came running up.

"Miss," he said. "Listen, Miss." He got hold of her elbow and pulled at it. "I don't allow that kind of a talk in here." He began trying to edge her towards the door.

"You take your dirty hands off me," she said.

"Yes," said George, "all right, Miss. Just take it easy now. Just go on home nice and easy."

"I'll finish my drink," she said. "I paid for my drink and I'll finish it."

"All right, Miss. Now don't be like that, Miss. Go ahead finish your drink."

He stood watching her and I watched her. She began to mumble to herself. "I get thrown out because a rat of a taxi driver insults *me*." She spoke low, but her voice trembled. "I don't care," she said. "See if I care. I don't care. I don't care." She was beginning to cry.

### III

I watched her pocketbook carefully, but she didn't make any move toward it. She was just crying over her drink, working herself up. I saw that Sara had left her sucker and was standing over by Tom. The thing hadn't gone the way I thought it would. I thought she'd get into a row with me and George would throw her out be-

cause she was only a tramp and he needed me. He wanted me to work with him the way Tom was doing. But the thing was dragging out too long. She was getting time to pile the anger up in herself and the thing was getting dangerous.

She didn't finish the drink. She suddenly left it and walked out proudly, her head high, and George and I watched her and Tom and Sara and the bartender and the two waiters and the customers watched her, all except Sara's sucker, who had passed out on the table. There was no sound except the slosh of water as the bartender dipped her glass and the small sounds from the street and the steady click-clack of her heels against the linoleum.

When the door closed, we all relaxed. I took up my coffee and said, "Those tramps don't do a joint any good," and George said, "Yes, I try to keep them out but what are you going to do?" Then suddenly she was back in again. She had the gun in her hand.

"You get away from her," she screamed, "if you know what's good for you."

I saw that Sara and Tom were still standing together, facing the door now, facing her, Sara's hand flying up to touch one finger to her husband's arm. I saw George flat-ten up against the wall, his eyes

rolled back in his head, his big belly pulled in so that the vest hung empty over his pants, his head quivering on his neck, and the bartender duck silently out of sight behind the bar and the waiters, pale, twitching, alert as rabbits, edge towards the kitchen in the back. Everything was flopping around inside of me. Everybody was afraid the sound of his breath would blow the whole place up.

"You," she said to Tom, "get away from her. I got nothing against you."

There were ten paces between them, too much to jump her. Tom shifted over slightly to get between his wife and the gun. I could hear my breath go "Aaah, aaah," when I saw him move and I thought, "Now! Now! This is it!" the thinking going like screaming in my head.

"You got nothing against her either," said Tom. He took a step toward her and she yanked the gun up wildly.

"Don't move," she said. "I'll kill you. I mean it. I'll kill you."

"I wish you would, sister," he said in a low tone, shuffling slowly, uncertainly towards her. "Go on, sister," he said in a soft, dull tone, running the words together so that they were hard to make out. "Let me have it. Make it sweet. Let me

have a clean one between the eyes. Just one, sister, a sweet, clean one." When he was up to her, he took hold of her gun by the barrel and slipped it out of her hand.

He put the gun in his pocket and Sara said, "Tom, grab her, hold her; I'll get the cops." She came running up and George with her. The Greek flung himself on the tramp like a dog on a piece of meat, pinning her thin arms behind her, shoving his knee against the small of her back and pushing her body hard while he pulled on her arms. "Get a cop," screamed Sara. "Somebody get a cop."

Tom put the palm of his big hand on George's face and shoved. "Let her go, you greaseball," he said.

George let go in surprise. "Grab her!" screamed Sara. "She'll get away."

Tom was holding the tramp up. She would have fallen otherwise. He turned his head towards his wife and said, "You keep the hell out of this."

"What are you going to do?" she asked. Her voice was a small, surprised squeak.

He didn't answer. He turned to the tramp. Her knees had given way and she had fallen against him.

Her face looked drained. I thought she was out. "Listen," he said, "can you walk?" She didn't answer. "I'm going to take you home," he said. "Can you walk to my cab? I'll carry you if you can't walk."

"Tom!" cried Sara. She had found her voice again. "She tried to kill me!" She pulled at him roughly. "I'm going to put her in jail," she said. "She wanted to kill me."

He just held on tight and turned to his wife, his big, red, square face screwed up with a queer, soft pleading. "Sara, please, for God's sake," he begged.

He walked the tramp gently to the door and I followed him to help. He saw her gold mesh evening bag out on the landing where she had dropped it when she had pulled out the gun and he stooped and picked it up and stuffed it into his pocket. He stood a moment with her looking at the gloomy hole down which the stairs dropped. At the end of the hole the black morning lay waiting.

"This is where we go down, sister," he said. His face wrinkled suddenly and he put his free hand up to cover it.



## MY HOME TOWN'S A DEMOCRACY

BY CHARLES E. HEWITT, JR.

I AM seeing an American small town — my native town — anew against a Europe tormented by conflicting ideologies, racing breathlessly toward war. After five years as a correspondent across the Atlantic, mostly in Hitler's Germany, I have had two years in the familiar town — looking at it with the eyes of a stranger.

In a sense, then, I have been a foreign correspondent in my own home. Unconsciously I have measured the scene against its counterparts in Europe, and have found deep, essential differences which our long-faced commentators normally pass by. I scan the headlines of a big-city newspaper and of a national weekly: "Reds Boss WPA . . . Nazis Drill at Yaphank . . . Little Steel Out-Hitlers Hitler . . . Moseley Slated as Fascist Leader . . ." *Reds, Nazis, fascism, dictators* — such words, and the ideas behind them, are the breath of life in Europe. They are echoed in the large American cities by the political soothsayers with big-city minds, megaphoned by periodicals

which, though national in scope, are products of the skyscraper cities. But I want to report, as I might have done from my reporter's post in some foreign corner, that such words are mere wind in my small town, and therefore, I suspect, in ten thousand such small towns in America. In two years I have not heard Red, fascist, or Nazi so much as mentioned. Few of my neighbors are even sure of the pronunciation of fascism or Nazism. To them the words and the philosophies implied are queer, outlandish, distant noises.

Yet if any small town in America should be responsive to the European slogans, it is the one in which I was born and raised. It is in New York State — a purely industrial town dealt a crushing blow by the depression and with a population one-quarter foreign-born. But the European slogans have not touched its life. I can make this clearest by describing the course of the two most controversial local events since my return.

The city election was a hum-

dinger. The town's chronic underdog finally came in by forty-six votes. Though elected on the Democratic ticket, he had previously run repeatedly as a Socialist. He had lambasted "the interests" for years, and his strength came from uniting all the dissatisfied elements in town. But did his opponents smear him with "Red," or did he find it useful to tag the conservative incumbents as "fascists," "labor-baiters," or "Hitlerites?" No — because these terms have little or no meaning in my town. The Communist Party does not exist there; and Hitlerism means simply Jew-baiting, which is considered cowardly and un-American. The campaign was fought and won on an issue which was locally intelligible: shall we give this youngster, who has claimed for years to have a cure for everything, a chance?

A Relief scandal broke a year later. Republicans claimed that the boy-mayor was subverting the town's entire Relief funds — which amount to a quarter of the municipal budget. The fight to force an investigation raged for six months. But was the Mayor charged with "Soviet practices," with using Relief funds to "build up a Stalinist machine," and so on? And in his counter-smashes, did he call the investigators "fascists, bent on deny-

ing relief to needy workmen?" No, again. Such terms and charges make no sense in my community. They claimed he was a "bossy beginner and a criminal incompetent"; his return punch was simply that they were "playing politics." The Hitler-Stalin ideologies, the diseases of Europe and the nightmares of our own metropolitan press were not drawn into the fights.

## II

The reasons are more interesting than the fact itself. Small towns are realistic because they are small. People live too close together here for mere words to come between them. The labor-exploiter, or any other unconscionable squeezer of his fellow-men, is known as such to the whole town. So is the bad-boy politician or the racketeer labor-leader. There is no need for fancy labels; offenders are damned as individuals, not promoted into symbols of their class or system.

It is hard to fool the town for long about your essential role in its common life. You are discussed every day in the bridge club, the Dom Polski, the beauty parlors, the Elks' Bar, and the weekly meeting of the Daughters of Malta. Most of the town knows as much

about you as you do yourself, and their final estimate is apt to be fairer — in a social sense, anyway — than your own.

If a man is a business gyp, the whole town will know about it and penalize him by automatic boycott before the law ever catches up with him. If he ever turns over his hand in an effort to improve his community, the townspeople know that, too. But — and this is the main thing — though a small town knows who are its heroes and who its villains, who represents capital and who labor, who is a self-seeker and who is public-spirited — it also knows they are all human beings.

Of course, any disciple of Marx could prove to me that my town is split into classes, and that without being aware of it we are all in a class struggle. On the level of academic economics he might be right. But on the level of everyday existence and our social reflex actions, we have no "classes" in my town. There are groups, but the gulfs between them are about wide enough to spit across, and hundreds of lives slip back and forth across them every year. They are not *fixed* classes.

One reason is that the greatest distinction a young man can win in my town is in athletics. And most of the prize-winning school football

heroes are boys from the "foreign section." Somehow these first-generation Americans are consistently the toughest, the best equipped to take it and give it. When the Italian and Polish sections provide the best open-field running and the winning touchdowns, the thesis of class warfare takes a beating along with the losing team.

Maybe it isn't strange that the immigrant sections provide athletes. It took plenty of courage for their parents to break away from the Old World and crash the line to America in the first place. And it isn't only first-rate athletes that these sections provide. In this generation they are giving us the majority of young professional men — doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers, dentists. They and their hard-working parents do not take education lightly; they accept it as a challenge and an opportunity. Probably the two most popular and highly skilled younger physicians in our town today are an Italian and a Pole. This term our county District Attorney, one of our ablest young lawyers, is also a Pole.

Thus there is no genuine "right" and "wrong" side of the tracks here. Too many hundreds shift back and forth. At the same time — and here I know I shall be challenged by earnest class-war advo-

cates — there is no such thing as entrenched privilege in this, the essential America. The bank crash of 1933 brought the town to rock-bottom depression with a terrific jar. It ruined hundreds. But the leading casualty was the honest bank president and his family. Dozens of other “old families” took their medicine, took it so bitterly that the scars still show on the face of the main residential street today. Five former show places still stand empty, with grass and weeds growing tall as corn.

The schools, I believe, are the main expungers of class conflict. I remember clearly that when I was a youngster, the schools were the first place I learned that Catholics and Jews and the boys and girls with foreign accents were people just like myself — except, indeed, that some of them were smarter and stronger. In towns like ours, there are no private schools. Everybody's children sit in classrooms together every day and play and fight together in the schoolyard. The most remarkable result is not that the foreign-born kids adapt themselves quickly to American grammar and American ways. That is to be expected. Really remarkable — though too rarely remarked — is the fact that the melting-pot works the other way round, too. Children

from the older citizenry are no less eager to conform. It may be a matter for despair to a handful of mothers whose children come home talking tough, and full of earthy mannerisms and gossip from factories, saloons, and docks. But it is immensely good for the town. Before I was ten years old, I had learned to think and talk in terms of the whole community, not my part of it. We all spoke the town's language — not private codes of mutually exclusive sections. The Americanization process was a two-way transaction.

### III

In my town the churches, too, help level the barriers upon which, in Europe (and in so much of the American press), the ideological banners are so boldly mounted. There are no private pews in our score of churches. You share the hymnbook with your fellow-communicant, rich or poor, just as your wives sing in the same choir or do some sewing and cleaning side by side at the church rummage sale. You don't think of it that way, but these simple things make it compulsory that you feel toward each other, and treat each other, as equals.

Whatever the statistics about church attendance in America, it is

a fact that several of our town's churches do more to bind up the wounds of the depression than any other agency. Each active church is a little town in itself, a community-within-a-community where the banker and factory manager have known the janitor and machinist and their families all their lives, and help each other in moments of distress.

This elementary democracy of our town, a democracy that doesn't fit easily into the framework of European slogans and current phobias, thrives also on a simple mixture of earth and water, on the geography of the section. The town is industrial, as I have said. Much of it is drab, hard, uninviting. But it fronts on one of America's great rivers and has wide blue lakes within an hour's drive. In the enjoyment of these, the potential fascist can do no better than the potential bolshevik. To the WPAer or the well-fixed citizen alike the environs of the town bring a lot of basic happiness every day. Perhaps it brings more to the workers, on the whole. At least I have noticed that they take more advantage of it and that their children are better swimmers.

It is a cantankerous, competitive, and still "depressed" town that I

have come to as a returning foreign correspondent. In the two years I have seen plenty of struggle. Much of my town's population is tough and virile enough to like a fight just for the joy of getting in a blow. But the fighting is under democratic rules, and the whole community serves as final judge and jury. My essential Americans are not engaged in fighting Europe's battles, or those raging in Washington and Albany. They will not even use foreign battle-cries to cover local struggles.

They are intent on thrashing out their own problems — local unemployment, town politics, back taxes, gyp businesses, absorption of immigrants — in their own way, and will have nothing of the shibboleths invented on the other side of the globe. Wisely or unwisely, they are applying home remedies under home labels. The mere suggestion of foreign prescriptions is enough to disqualify political and social nostrums. I don't say this is good or bad — though personally I believe it is good. I simply report the essential America which eludes the urban calamity-criers.

If you are worried about America, take a trip to a town like mine. You will get a warm welcome. And you will see that it's a cinch that Hitler or Stalin never will.

► *A corrupted version of Social Credit  
has had a four years' run in Alberta*

## UTOPIA COMES TO CANADA

BY STUART SHAW

IT WAS a fateful day for the Province of Alberta when the Reverend Mr. William Aberhart, best-known and most influential radio evangelist in the Province, crier of calamities out of Daniel and Revelations over the air waves, founder and leader of the Prophetic Bible Institute at Calgary, and demagog extraordinary, stumbled on *Credit, Power and Democracy* by Major Clifford H. Douglas. There is no evidence that prior to this time Mr. Aberhart had evinced the slightest interest in politics, economics, or the extra-spiritual condition of the Province, but from that day in 1933 forward his vast energies and rabble-rousing talents were consecrated to the promotion of a vulgarized, emotionalized brand of the Douglas Social Credit theory. He presented his economic nostrum as having received divine sanction, and nobly disclaimed personal political ambition — unless of course he should be summoned to leadership by Providence.

Major Douglas, a retired Anglo-

Indian official and resident of London, had advanced the idea, not entirely original, that financial credit is a costless, intangible thing which financial institutions can expand or contract without any restrictions or responsibilities whatsoever. This credit power, he wrote, if wrested from the exploiting hands of private financiers and restored to the community as a whole, could be used to erase poverty and open the floodgates of economic plenty. All prices would be reduced to the level of consumer purchasing power and the difference absorbed by the public treasury. Despite warnings of "inflationary chaos" issued by old-line economists, the theory gathered considerable popular support in England. Some of the seed dropped on the North American continent and traces of it could be detected in many of the crackpot schemes for automatic prosperity hatched in the USA and in the early rantings of Father Coughlin.

But it was in Alberta, of all places, that the seed flourished

most. The Province was in a bad way in the early 'thirties. A one-crop region, its whole economic structure rested on the export of hard wheat to Europe. But the Liverpool wheat prices had dropped. Moreover, a series of droughts had wilted grain crops all across the prairies, and many a farmer could bring to a collapsed market only five bushels from acres that had produced fifty. In the War and post-War years of big crops these farmers had mortgaged their homesteads to buy land and machinery. Though there was little danger of immediate foreclosure — legislation had been passed to prevent this — interest was compounding at 8 per cent and the average farmer's equity in his land was almost nil.

The Provincial government was not measuring up to the crisis. For thirteen years the United Farmers of Alberta — UFA — had ruled the Province. From a hot Populist movement in 1921 it had cooled down to job-holding conventionality. The UFA was clearly losing its hold. The situation was made to order for a daring and energetic demagog — and there duly emerged the Reverend Mr. Aberhart. A schoolteacher, for many years principal of a Calgary high school, his real-life's interest had been

evangelism. After agitating two local congregations with his amateur theology, he had cast off orthodoxy and launched his own sect — the Prophetic Bible Institute. It combined hell-fire-and-damnation with weird Biblical prophecy, a mixture ever popular on the prairies, and he used the radio to summon sinners to the mourners' bench.

In the evangelist's agile hands Social Credit lost whatever wisdom or subtlety it may have possessed in the original. Aberhart stripped it to bare but inviting essentials. Interest, he proclaimed, was ungodly usury for something that did not exist; and the world's unemployment, depressions, and wars were due solely to the control of the people's credit by "international financiers." Canada's members in this cabal, though never named, he branded as the "50 Big Shots" and the "Money Barons." If private bankers could create credit by making entries in their ledgers, and then lend it out at interest, why shouldn't the State manufacture this credit without limit out of "our cultural heritage" and give it to everybody free? Aberhart called for the State to manipulate credit to punish the wicked few and enrich the blessed many. From there it was an easy step to advocacy of

a "dividend" of \$25 monthly to every citizen of full age, lesser monthly gifts to minors, and interest-free loans to producers. Such is the magic power of credit, he assured the Province, that all this and more could be achieved with a decreasing, and ultimately vanishing, taxation.

Revolutionary change as advocated by communists and socialists was too drastic for the Alberta population, mainly small-property owners. But the new movement promised security for all, without encroachment on property or individual rights. The respectability of the New Utopia seemed attested by the fact that its prophet was no alien agitator but a pillar of local fundamentalism. So the Social Credit movement swiftly overflowed the confines of the Bible Institute and spread into practical politics.

Thus Aberhart heard the call he had been waiting for, and he began planning for the election of 1935. Almost every evening the radio carried his voice over Alberta; his zealous apostles criss-crossed the Province to push the message home. Social Credit groups mushroomed into existence (the prophet had a flair for organization) and the Alberta Social Credit League blossomed forth, centralizing in

Aberhart's hands the activities of all the groups, with an ample war chest provided by enthusiastic members. Monthly dividends were promised only eighteen months after election day, and interest-free production loans were exploited to the tune of *Onward, Christian Soldiers*. According to Aberhart and his followers neither drought, soil erosion, nor the collapse of international trade had laid the Province low: it was a conspiracy stemming from Wall Street, the Bank of England, and the Rothschilds. The voters were assured that a victory for Social Credit would dislodge these public enemies and forever banish want and poverty.

This alluring program, with its high-powered oratory and efficient organization, evoked a mass hysteria without precedent in Canada. Opposition of any kind met with ridicule, and occasionally violence. The suggestion that Social Credit was economically unsound, or that one province could not possibly reform the Dominion's financial banking, credit, and currency system only proved the critic a tool of the capitalists. Just before the election, the UFA Government desperately appointed Major Douglas, over in England, "Chief Reconstruction Adviser to the Alberta



Government" and announced its intention of studying the possibilities of Social Credit. But the voters would have no temporizing. On August 22nd, 1935, the Social Credit League carried 56 seats out of 63 in the Alberta Legislature.

## II

The aftermath of the victory proved a distinct anti-climax. Mr. Aberhart was duly sworn in as Premier, and after selecting a Cabinet of mediocrities, settled down to rule. It shortly developed that he had no plan whatsoever to monetize the people's credit, divide up the cultural heritage, or pay the promised dividend. He had promised to call in Douglas at once, but though the Major waited for the call, it never came. He was invited, however, to submit a plan for Alberta which, when it arrived, had few concrete proposals as to how the projected Utopia was to be brought down to earth. When Aberhart, with an empty treasury and defaulted provincial obligations, attempted to borrow in the Eastern money markets, and engaged a Montreal banker to supervise the Provincial finances, Douglas cast him off.

Thus orphaned almost at the outset, the inexperienced Aberhart

Government quickly turned to courses which exemplified the most venerable traditions of machine politics. It found jobs for a voracious army of the faithful by dismissing hundreds of veteran public servants, and by increasing the number of job-holders in every public department. It launched a program of highway building, so extravagant that it provoked a judicial inquiry. First it defaulted on both the principal and interest of the public debt, then arbitrarily halved the interest payable on its own bonds. Notwithstanding this default the Administration, instead of decreasing taxation as promised, has steadily increased it until in the last fiscal year it extracted from the 750,000 people of the Province over \$24,000,000 — \$9,000,000 more than the preceding administration collected in its last year. In short, despite the religious and idealistic atmosphere in which it evolved, Alberta's Social Credit developed an ominous resemblance to Tammany Hall.

Amid all this happy activity something had to be done to reassure the voters that the Government was earnestly attacking the task of financial reform. To that end legislation was passed designed to enable the debt-ridden farm population to evade payment of

their obligations. Most of this legislation was later held unconstitutional by the courts, but it served its political purpose. The government also passed an act providing for the establishment of "credit houses" through which credit could be issued in the form of basic dividends and interest-free loans if, as, and when the government got around to it. More ambitious was the Prosperity Certificate proposal, which idea probably came from the blocked currency in use in Germany and Italy. The government proposed to issue certificates with a face value of one dollar, to be paid in wages to civil servants and in payment for government purchases. The certificate would only be redeemed in cash if a two-cent stamp had been placed on it by the holder for every week it had been in circulation, so that its actual value steadily depreciated as time passed. By encouraging spending and discouraging saving, this disappearing money was supposed to provide an increase in purchasing power. Enthusiasm for it evaporated entirely when it was announced that under no circumstances would Prosperity Certificates be accepted in payment of taxes, and that while the wages of government clerks and laborers might be paid in the scrip, the

members of the Cabinet proposed to draw their excellent salaries in coin of the realm.

When eighteen months had elapsed and Social Credit had not come, the faithful began to show impatience. In the 1937 session of the Legislature the dissatisfaction came to a head. Government members demanded that Aberhart produce results or get out, and had his hand-picked legislators been men of character the Premier's political career might have ended then and there. But he was able to pacify most of them by appointments to commissions with elastic expense accounts. Then a new Alberta Social Credit Act was passed creating a Board whose function was to recommend legislation and appoint experts to establish "real" Social Credit in Alberta.

The Chairman of this Board proceeded to England (at public expense) to heal the breach with Major Douglas. He effected the reconciliation, but was unable to induce the Major to come to Alberta. As an alternative, however, Douglas agreed to dispatch substitutes to the battle front. Accordingly there arrived two Social Credit wizards who, having arranged for generous salaries and expense accounts, went to work. They summoned the Government

members to a conference and presented a document by which the members bound themselves to realize that they were in a "state of war" and to obey and co-operate with the Board and the experts! For practical purposes the Legislature thus surrendered the province to the direct rule of Aberhart and the Douglas envoys.

The experts went about their duties with much fanfare. A special session of the Legislature was called in August 1937 and quickly passed The Credit of Alberta Regulation Act providing for the licensing by the Social Credit Board of all banks and their employees doing business in the Province, and also giving the Board power to refuse or revoke any license. Local directorates appointed by the Board were to supervise the management of each branch. Bank employees who failed to obtain licenses from the Board or who otherwise disobeyed its orders were liable to a fine of \$1000 or a year's imprisonment. Another statute denied unlicensed bank employees the right to bring or defend any action in the courts, and thus rendered them virtual outlaws. Since this drastic legislation was quite obviously unconstitutional the Government was careful to back it up with a further statute

providing that the unconstitutionality of Alberta legislation could not be pleaded in any court! The Federal government acted promptly, however, and exercising its constitutional veto power disallowed all three acts.

### III

The opposition to Social Credit of the Alberta brand now had an effective talking point. Mass protest meetings were held throughout the Province. The experts were denounced as alien adventurers seeking to tyrannize over a free people. Recall proceedings were started against the Premier in his own constituency. He saved himself by repealing the recall legislation. Meanwhile, the Social Creditors were equally vehement. The Federal government was denounced as a tool of finance. A torrent of abuse was launched against individuals who dared to protest the Government's actions. The press came in for special denunciation. Douglas himself cabled to Aberhart urging that the Alberta newspapers be curbed. Some of the more extreme Social Creditors began to talk about secession.

When the Legislature reconvened in October it substantially re-enacted the disallowed Credit

Regulation Act. It then imposed a confiscatory tax on the reserve funds of all Canadian banks. Finally it heeded Douglas's urgings and passed a Press Act, which empowered the Chairman of the Social Credit Board to demand from the editor of any newspaper in the Province publishing any statement objectionable to the Government the name of the writer and the source from which the information had been obtained. Further, the Board could require the editor to publish in his newspaper, without charge, a statement prepared by the Board "correcting" the objectionable statement. This was not all. As a punishment for any violation of the Act (of which the Social Credit Board was to be the sole judge) a newspaper could be suppressed and the writings of any prescribed journalist forbidden publication in the Province.

This legislation was unquestionably the most serious press gag that had been known in Canada since colonial times, and again the Federal government acted promptly. All three Acts were reserved by the Lieutenant-Governor, and eventually referred to the Supreme Court of Canada where they were declared unconstitutional.

Then, in the midst of this excitement, came the downfall of the expert who was generally believed to be the moving spirit behind the repressive legislation. Following the Douglas technique of "pillorying" individuals who failed to cooperate, a blood-curdling manifesto was issued calling for the immediate extermination of certain prominent citizens. One of the proposed victims informed the police. The expert was among those arrested on a charge of criminal libel, and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. On his release he hastened back to his native obscurity in England. His colleague then dropped out of active politics and contented himself with drawing his salary and lecturing on Social Credit.

With the collapse of its experts the Government was again at loose ends. It was now obvious that neither the Federal authorities nor public opinion would tolerate the coercive measures. Though the Major, from the safety of London, urged the Government to fresh assaults on the banks and the Federal government, they prudently confined themselves to routine matters. In the 1938 session the one Social Credit venture was the enactment of a new "Social Credit Realization Act," a remarkably vague measure copied

from a Goldsborough Bill which had been previously introduced into the United States Congress and had quickly found its way to the ash-can.

The last great effort of Alberta Social Credit came in June 1938. A provincial election was due in the neighboring province of Saskatchewan and it was suggested that the capture of another province would enable the Aberhart government to exert enough pressure to allow Social Credit a free hand. Indeed there were fond hopes of conquering Canada, province by province. Accordingly, Social Credit candidates were nominated in every riding, and the whole Alberta cabinet and most of the legislature went electioneering. All the alluring promises of 1935 were repeated; but when the ballots were counted only two Social Credit candidates were elected. To add insult to injury, one of these promptly turned socialist.

Since this crushing defeat the militant spirit of Social Credit has notably waned. Premier Aberhart still pays lip service to Douglas' principles, but he has made no

further effort to monetize the cultural heritage. Basic dividends and interest-free loans are now mentioned only by the opposition. The voices of Douglas and his "experts" are heard no more in the land. Their followers in London, New York, and elsewhere insist, with much justice, that Social Credit has not failed in Alberta — because the genuine article has not really been tried there, and because the conditions were unfavorable. However logical the alibis, the Alberta tragedy stands as a grim rebuke to demagogic crackpot economists on both sides of the Canadian-USA border.

The Aberhart government still hangs on to office despite a mounting tide of disillusion and resentment. Thanks to its well-oiled machine it may even be re-elected. But it can confidently be said that the much-advertised attempt to bring Utopia to the prairies has gone the way of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life. Albertans, sadder and wiser, realize the truth of Macaulay's statement that "an acre in Middlesex is worth more than a principality in Utopia."



## GROUP MEDICINE AT WORK

BY FRANK J. TAYLOR

**E**LEVEN years ago, Dr. H. Clifford Loos, a prosperous Los Angeles surgeon, laid aside his instruments and closed his office, believing that after two strenuous decades of operating he was finished with the practice of medicine. But he was just beginning. Today Dr. Loos is responsible for the health of 60,000 patients, any one of whom will tell you that he is the man who found the way to distribute the cost of medical care so that even the lowest wage earner can afford the best medical science has to offer.

Shortly after he retired, Dr. Loos began to see his profession through the eyes of those who wanted more service from the doctor but who couldn't afford it. One day he mentioned this problem to a neighbor who worked for the Los Angeles Bureau of Water and Power, and in the course of the discussion expressed the opinion that for \$1.50 per person per month he could provide a group of regular patients with everything — consultations, home calls, opera-

tions, hospital beds, x-rays, drugs, medicines, surgical dressings, and all the rest.

"That's what we want," said his friend, "and I'll prove it."

Within a month he was back with the signatures of five hundred fellow employees who were ready to subscribe for the service. Now it was up to Dr. Loos to make good. Abandoning his intention of taking life easy, he joined with Dr. Donald E. Ross, employed a nurse, and opened a new office known as the Ross-Loos Medical Group.

Today, in its eleventh year, the Group cares for 60,000 patients. Last year it handled 677,313 cases, performed over 2600 operations. Yet neither Dr. Loos nor Dr. Ross, nor any of their associates has ever solicited a patient or spent a nickel for advertising. All patients have been brought in by word-of-mouth recommendations from satisfied subscribers. Experience soon proved that \$1.50 per month per subscriber was too little to cover costs of complete medical service. Other groups came in at \$2 during

the first year, and after that the fee was set at \$2.50. This sum has provided adequately for salaries of the staff, office overhead, medical and hospital supplies, and left a small balance each year to be distributed as a bonus to the doctors in the Group. The Group maintains ten clinics in outlying suburbs, in addition to the four-story main building on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles. The staff of two has grown to sixty-five full-time physicians and surgeons.

The original 500 in the Bureau of Water and Power has increased to 4300 subscribers. The Group numbers 2500 school teachers among its patients, most of the city police force and the fire department. It has 1700 members of the telephone company. There are subscribers from fifty other corporations. The faculties of the University of Southern California, the University of California, the California Institute of Technology, and Huntington Library are subscribers. It is optional in each group whether all or only part of the employees sign up, and any subscriber may withdraw at will. In Milwaukee and Seattle, partnerships of doctors have modeled clinics after the thriving Southern California organization, which appears to be the answer not only to the average

citizen's prayer for adequate and inexpensive medical care, but to the average doctor's prayer for dependable income.

## II

Every doctor on the Ross-Loos staff draws a salary, irrespective of the number of his patients. The lowest salary paid is \$3600 a year; the highest \$12,000. (The average income of all California doctors is \$3577 and out of that must be paid office overhead. All that a Ross-Loos doctor provides is his stethoscope and his little black bag.) Furthermore, the Group has shown a profit annually for the past ten years, and 60 per cent of this has been divided among the staff as bonus. The Group's practice, buildings, laboratories, and facilities now belong to eighteen senior doctors, each one of whom must sell his interest to a younger man on the staff upon retirement.

Finally, Ross-Loos doctors work forty-four hours a week, and no more. Night calls are handled by a detail assigned to emergencies. Each doctor has two weeks' vacation with pay, and the senior partners, who have been with the Group since it started, have three months off each year for rest and research.

For the 20,300 patients who are subscribers, there is nothing in the way of medical service for which they can pay, over and above the monthly fee. Any patient can call on the doctor as many times as he wishes. He is entitled to any operation needed to put him in good health, and there is no charge at the Queen of the Angels Hospital, where the Group uses two entire floors, unless a patient requires more than three months' hospitalization in a year. After that, the bed or room is charged at cost.

If a subscriber's wife, husband, or child, or any other dependent, needs medical care, the Group charges 50¢ for each office consultation and \$1 for each home call. A minor operation at the clinic costs a dependent \$12.50 for everything. A major operation costs \$25. Obstetrics cases cost \$20, including pre-natal care, delivery, post-natal care of mother and baby. Other services are similarly priced.

Until last November, the Ross-Loos clinic refused to accept subscribers who came as individuals. The reason was that dealing with groups circumvented the expense of collecting monthly fees. However, so many former patients, no longer members of subscriber groups, clamored for the service again that last November the ban was lifted.

Now anyone within the area served by the Group can join. However, individual subscribers must take a physical examination, and they are charged \$3.00 per month. The extra 50¢ covers collection costs. Any subscriber may drop out at will, and any group of patients; or the Medical Group itself may terminate agreements on ninety days' written notice. But the doctors may not suspend the service for individuals in groups. The Group can drop doctors, however.

### III

It hasn't been all clear sailing for the Group. Five years ago, without warning, Doctors Ross and Loos were haled before a star chamber session of the judicial council of the Los Angeles County Medical Association and summarily expelled from membership for "unethical practice." Refused an opportunity to defend themselves, they appealed to the California State Medical Association, which sustained the expulsion. Whereupon, the two took their appeal to the American Medical Association. In a stinging rebuke to the county and state medical organizations, the Judicial Council of the AMA, which amounts to the Supreme Court of Medicine, ruled that the



Ross-Loos Group's doctors had been suspended without fair trial for unspecific charges, and ordered them all reinstated to full membership in 1936.

Since then the Group has been besieged by communities all over the state, asking that they open clinics. Some doctors who originally criticized the Ross-Loos set-up have associated themselves in clinics, and the California State Medical Association, which once accused them of "unethical practices," came out last year for a similar group service and authorized its officers to launch the Association's group medicine plan. The Ross-Loos doctors have of-

fered their experience to any other group, rivals included.

"It's the tradition of our profession to make public any new cures discovered by any doctor," explains Dr. Ross. "We feel that we have the economic cure for medicine and that it's our duty to give it to the public. There is no reason why the system we've worked out can't function everywhere to give the average family more medical service for less money and the average doctor more money for fewer hours of work. And this is the greatest preventive medicine there is: if you're going to catch disease before it's serious, you've got to make it easy for people to call the doctor."



## LUNACY: RIGHT AND LEFT

Rumors that Germany will enter into a pact with Communist Russia are part of a campaign to smear Hitler with the communist brush.

— *Fritz Kuhn, Führer of German-American Bund*

The whispered lies to the effect that the Soviet Union will enter into a treaty of understanding with Nazi Germany is nothing but poison spread by the enemies of peace and democracy, the appeasement mongers, the Munichmen of fascism.

— *Daily Worker, May 26, 1939*

The members of the Slavia Football Club who played for Prague against Berlin last week have been cautioned by the Gestapo, the German secret police, that a repetition of the vigorous tactics used in the match would be considered as an insult against Germany and punishable by arrest.

— *AP cable out of Berlin, June 8, 1939*

I guess you folks have noticed that the people who don't want to see Joe Louis win his next fight are mostly Republicans and other enemies of the New Deal. . . . Only a fascist would want to see Galento win.

— *Communist speaker at open air meeting in Harlem, New York City, June 23, 1939*

# AMERICANA

## ARKANSAS

THE editors of Conway *News* strike a philosophical note:

Nothing in this world can be done without thought. Life is like giving a sum to a child. You must calculate.

THE Muse of Poesy comes to a lady in Williford, as recorded in the Sharp County *Independent*:

### TO MY MOTHER

This is the year, that you will be  
Exactly twice as old as me;  
May the first, nineteen ought four  
The Dr. came, knocked at your door  
Said, "Mrs. Cook, I've brought to you  
A baby girl to love and coo."

The name you gave was Ursula Mareta  
So like your own, Ann Areta.  
For thirty-five years, you've loved and  
cared;

My joys and sorrows you have shared;  
So in this year of thirty-nine  
I'll be yours and you be mine;  
For never again will this be true  
That I'll be twice as young as you.

## CALIFORNIA

THE Pasadena *Post* is a stickler for accuracy:

Mr. Duveen arrived in the 1920's, and was a guest of Henry E. Huntington, then alive, at his home.

PROOF that tragedy haunts the life of a cinema star is offered by a syndicated Hollywood column:

Accused of lacking he-man traits, Robert Taylor once shouted: "All right. I *have* got hair on my chest, and I can prove it!"

It was the impulsive cry of a small-town boy defending himself as best he knew how, in a very unfair combat.

A JAPANESE expert lauds the Land of Purity and Extreme Happiness symbolized by one of the Fair exhibits, as quoted by the San Francisco *Chronicle*:

Noritake Tsuda, representative of the Japanese Cultural Society to the Exposition, explains: "All of the inhabitants of the land are perfectly happy. There is no strife and no sexual difference among them."

A MILITARY gentleman discovers Utopia:

"I have been to the Imperial Valley in California," Maj. Gen. George Van Horn Moseley said. "I wish you gentlemen could go down there and breathe that pure, fresh American air. God, it's refreshing. That's the only place in the country where the Constitution is 100 per cent in force."

A POLICE investigator, according to the enlightened Los Angeles *Times*, makes a scientific discovery while looking into the subject of massage parlors:

"It has been found that there is considerable therapeutic benefit to patrons operated on by the opposite sex."

## FLORIDA

A STATE Legislature demonstrates its statesmanships, as reported by the AP out of Tallahassee:

Forty-four Florida House members, including several lawyers, introduced a bill yesterday to "plow under" every third lawyer in Florida twice a year. Its sponsors said the measure was designed to reduce a surplus of lawyers. It was referred to the Committee on Livestock.

## LOUISIANA

COMMENT on civilization in an outstanding Southern city, by Governor Earl Long:

There are hundreds of men in New Orleans who, if they thought they could get out after a few years, would kill their women.

## NEW JERSEY

THE literary urge finds vent in Cowtesting Bulletin Number 145 of the Co-operative Extension Service of the New Jersey State College of Agriculture at Rutgers University:

The smoke-screen of expectation, hope, choice blood lines and pedigree promise is sometimes very dense. So dense in fact that you can't recognize the value of the bull for smoke. Many breeders build their breeding plans around carefully selected young sires, only to see the expected results disappear as blue smoke. The dairyman's hope stock has a tremendous draft and is continually kindled with young promising bulls. However, it is only the occasional sire that can stamp his impression in the form of increased milk

and fat production before the smoke disappears in thin air. If the inferior daughters left behind would only disappear as thin air it wouldn't be quite so bad. However, the low producing smoke cloud lingers in the sky — hides the sun and keeps the dairyman in the dark for years to come.

## NEW YORK

THE low-down on world affairs is brought to a seat of learning, says the Buffalo *Evening News*:

David Goldstein, noted writer-lecturer of Boston, addressing Niagara University graduates today, said the world needs the aid of a higher power for peace; the League of Nations deserves the death it is dying, he said, for starting and ending its sessions without prayer.

THE efforts of a hero to escape his public is told tersely in a New York *Herald Tribune* headline:

**MOONEY ARRIVES  
IN WRONG TRAIN,  
WAITS GREETERS**

**Tom Sits for 2½ Hours in  
Grand Central Until  
Welcomers Come Around**

SEX raises its lewd head on the philanthropic front in an advertisement featuring the strip-tease:

**GYPSY ROSE LEE**

Appeals for CLOTHING for  
SPANISH REFUGEES

. . . and she's not teasing!

This artist who has given her ALL on stage & screen, now asks you to GIVE.

*Socialist Appeal* explains the hidden significance of the trylon and perisphere:

The purpose of the World's Fair — apart from boosting New York business — is to impress upon the working class the might, glory and vitality of capitalism, subservience to which is the need of the hour; revolutionary action the Fair would discourage by its display of capitalism's powerful resources. The gilt face which leers out of the Flushing Meadows declares that capitalism will not suffer intimidation from the working class!

SHERIFF Maurice A. Fitzgerald of God-fearing Queens County draws the line on lewdness at the Fair:

"There is not the slightest question that nudity above the waist is illegal."

### OHIO

How to become a Ph.D. is told in Antioch's *Alumni Bulletin*:

Horace Champney, '32, now a Research Associate of the Fels Institute, has received his Ph.D. in psychology from Ohio State University. His thesis bears the following title: "*A Disquisition on the Quasi-Intuitionist Psychometry of Certain Psycho-Social Environmental Gestalten Postulated to be Casually Efficacious in the Ontogeny of Generalized Social Behavior Patterns in the Adult Homo Sapiens.*"

### PENNSYLVANIA

New trick in horticultural magic is announced by a seed shop on Penn Street in Reading:

(THE MERCURY will pay \$1 for items accepted for Americana. Those found unsuitable cannot be returned.)

Visit our open air salesroom in the rear. We grow our plants from the seeds we sell.

### TEXAS

COLLECTIVE bargaining reaches new heights in Houston:

Local 808, Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, plumped for modesty today and prepared to picket in an "anti-scanty" campaign. Jack Parmley, business agent for the union, said the drive-in lunch stands were the offending places. "Girls working in drive-in stands should be provided with decent uniforms," Parmley said. "One place dresses the girls in shorts. Another put them in grass skirts. Both are non-union places."

### IN OTHER UTOPIAS

#### ENGLAND

A BOOK reviewer in the well-informed Manchester *Guardian* explains the USA to the English public:

The old Republican gentlemen on the Supreme Court may try, with the applause of every true Republican in Park Avenue, to declare the Tennessee Valley Dam unconstitutional, but it is the Tennessee Valley Dam and others like it which will ultimately save America from Park Avenue and all that it means.

### GERMANY

SLOGAN issued by the Nazi Health Bureau, prescribing feeding rules:

EAT NATIONAL SOCIALIST!

# THE STATE OF THE UNION

By ALBERT JAY NOCK

## *America's Too-Public Libraries*

THE blight of the depression has set in on our public libraries. The great library at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, which New Yorkers have so long shown with pride to visitors, is a conspicuous example. Its endowments have shrunk to the point where they can no longer take care of its upkeep. As I write, the announcement is made that certain of its reading-rooms are to be closed earlier on week-days and all day on Sundays to save the cost of lighting and attendance. The city's funds are so heavily mortgaged to other purposes that nothing can be spared for the library. Private contributions may be forthcoming, but this is uncertain, and with present affairs as bad as they are, and the prospects no better, it seems unlikely.

New York's case is not exceptional. Endowed libraries are everywhere in a bad way because their endowments have depreciated, and those which are wholly or partially dependent on subsidies from cities or states have had their subsidies

cut off. Nor does it seem that the circumstances which are crippling our libraries are going to improve; and that being so, the whole policy of our free public libraries will have to be radically revised.

This change of policy ought to aim at saving money — that is obviously necessary — but it also should aim at expressing a better idea of what a library is for, and how it ought to be operated. In line with such a policy I suggest that we have been overdoing the idea that libraries are here to give something for nothing. We have been making our libraries altogether too free and too public. Andrew Carnegie's idea of a free public library was very fine and generous, but I don't believe it was sound; and since all our libraries are operated on that idea, I think now is the time for it to be reconsidered.

Our notion of a public library is that of a place where anybody can go and use any book he wants, and either take it away to read, or sit in the reading-room and read — all for nothing. The library is supposed

to stock reference-books and classics, but it is also supposed to stock all sorts of current publications, novels, children's books, periodicals, and newspapers. That was Andrew Carnegie's idea, and it is the idea we all have. Is it reasonable? I doubt it. I can understand why there should be a place where a serious reader may get the use of serious books which he cannot be expected to have the use of otherwise — they may be too rare, too expensive, or special, technical works which one consults only occasionally. I see no reason, however, why such a place should be either free or public. Still less do I see why it should stock the current best-sellers or any of the ephemeral stuff which our presses turn off in quantity, and which is of no conceivable value to anybody, except as a pastime. Aside from the book-clubs, which do a pretty good business in that sort of literature, we have no end of circulating libraries which furnish ephemera at a very cheap rate, not much more than it is worth. If a person wants something to read merely to waste his time, I cannot see why he should have it at public expense.

It strikes me that we might very profitably consider the European idea of a library. There are eighty libraries in Paris, not one either

free or public. The National Library, for instance, is probably the greatest in the world. Can you wander into it at your own convenience and paw over what they have? You have to go through all sorts of motions before you are furnished with a card of admission, and the card does not come free. You pay only a few pennies for it, but it isn't free.

Then when you are in, can you pick up the *Vie Parisienne* or the *Sourire* or the latest effort of the budding proletarian romancer, and settle yourself for a nice long spell of "light reading?" No. Ask the attendant for something good in current fiction, and he will tell you they aren't running a newsstand. It is a no less formal job to get into the Mazarine, still more so at the Thiers, where you have to be certificated by two members of the Institute of France. The Royal Library at Brussels is equally coy and choosy about you; while the amount of supplication and certification necessary to get you into the reading-room of the British Museum is enough to make a sinner's peace with God. I am convinced that these people have a much sounder idea of what a library is for, and how it should be used, than we have. The difference between the

European system and ours is that they do not think it is any part of a library's function to provide entertainment, and if free entertainment is what you are looking for they don't want you around.

Our system not only wastes money, but it breeds disrespect for books. If you make anything cheap and common, you can't blame people for thinking it worth nothing. Between the libraries and the activities of publishers, America's disrespect for books has become boundless. It is hard to see that either the libraries or the publishers are especially to blame for this result, but the result is nonetheless bad. The libraries are honest enough in their idea that they are doing a great social service, and the publishers are honest enough in trying to keep out of bankruptcy by the only practicable means they have. The publishers cannot change their policy materially. Our libraries, however, can change theirs, and I believe they should.

## II

I suggest, first of all, that everyone interested in the plight of our libraries should do all he can to disabuse people of the idea that a free library is good. The franc or two that you pay for your card of entry

to the Bibliothèque Nationale is not an important sum, but the fact that you have to pay it is important. It marks the difference between a self-respecting person who is willing to pay for his cultural advantages, and a cadger who is after cultural handouts. The amount paid is of little consequence; the fact that you must pay puts you and the library on an entirely different footing. Then, secondly, I think all of us who are interested should do what we can to spread the idea that a public library, in our sense of the term, is not a good thing. At present, the library's only concern with a visitor is that he shall behave decently and not steal books or deface them. This is not enough. Before a person is privileged to take up space in a library, he should show cause; the library should know at least a little something about him, what brings him there and why. This would impress him with the sense that he is approaching a treasury of highly valuable objects, and that the keepers know and respect their value, and that he also is expected to show a few symptoms of similar knowledge and respect. If I am expected to approach an American library as I would approach a free public golf-course or skittle-ground, it is not good for either of us.

This, then, is what we all can do to help the libraries towards a change of policy. We can take every opportunity to discourage the pernicious notion that a library ought to be a charitable institution, giving something for nothing, and we can also take every chance to break down the idea that we have the right to use a library without giving some sort of account of ourselves.

Libraries can do a great deal to strengthen this sentiment if they frankly take the position that this radical change of policy ought to be made. There are also certain practical steps which they might take in the direction of this change. I see no reason why the facilities for pure entertainment might not be cut off at once, and stay cut off. Why run a department to amuse children? Why spend money on any kind of material for "light reading" to amuse adults? If I were in command of a library, I would make a hard-and-fast rule that never should a book be bought which had not been on the market for at least a year. That would give time, in the first place, for a merely sensational vogue to die down without leaving the library with a mess of trash on its hands; and in

the second place, it would give time for someone in the library to read books carefully enough to decide whether they are worthwhile.

These few and short steps would at least be in the right direction, and I see no reason why they might not be taken now. They would save a great deal of money, and they would also introduce a new idea — brand new to this country — of the proper function and use of a library. They would cause dissatisfaction among people who like to get something for nothing, but they can be fully justified on the ground of hard times; and even if times were not hard, self-respecting people would still justify them on the ground of sound public policy — a policy of reason and common sense. Nobody would lose anything by them that is worth keeping, or anything but what he can make up for in other ways if he cares enough for it to take the trouble, and in the long run they would do at least a little something to put the use of cultural opportunity on a basis of self-respect all around. They would help to lift the library's status a little above that of an almshouse, and they would make the reader feel a little less like a panhandler.





## DOWN TO EARTH

BY ALAN DEVOE

### *Shape and Size in Nature*

IN THIS morning's newspaper the first three pages are devoted entirely to a current European crisis. Armies are marching; bombs are exploding; plots and counter-plots are being woven. All these bloody malevolences, I suppose, seem to the editors to be the Big News of the day. But I wonder . . . I wonder, quite seriously, whether our sense of proportion is not warped, and whether we do not give too much attention to effects and too little notice to causes. I wonder, for instance, whether today's crisis-news from Europe is really as significant, in the long view of our race's history, as a tiny four-line item tucked away at the bottom of page thirty-six, which says BLISTER RUST SPREADS IN CALIFORNIA.

A naturalist perhaps views the news from a special angle; but it is a viewpoint that can, I think, be defended. Our human activities are still much closer to earth than we are apt to remember; those non-human aspects of the universe which we lump together and call

"Nature" are still the ultimate rulers of our proud tribe's every enterprise. Herr Hitler may scream and indulge in tantrums, but his war plans must wait for the harvest; Senators are elected and defeated according to the varying ravages of boll-weevils; the whole economy of a state or nation can be upset overnight by a horde of grasshoppers. It is entirely possible to argue that cultures and civilizations stand or fall by the intelligence of their adjustment to the laws of Nature, and that political and military shifts are oftentimes but the remote end-products of a simple failure on man's part to observe the facts and implications of natural history. General Goering's plans for Germany, it may be, will be defeated by a war; but it is at least as likely that they will be defeated by the General's invincible ignorance of the internal economy of cows. All this being so, it may be a good thing now and then to look away from the political and social happenings of the moment and to consider, instead, some of those natural aspects

of our universe which are so very simple and so very commonplace that they have all the charm of novelty. . . . Such simple and elementary aspects, for instance, as the fact that things have shapes.

There is a multiversity of shapes in this world of ours, large things and small things, flat ones and round ones, ovals and squares and hexagons. And, although there is hardly an American alive who cannot discourse on the conquest of Albania or furnish his private interpretation of Britain's foreign policy, there is perhaps not one citizen in a thousand who would care to venture an opinion as to why whales are so very large and gnats are so very small and woodlice are so very flat. It is enough, for most, to say that these things "just *are*." But one of the most solacing things about our universe, and one of the most vital realizations for a thoughtful man to reach, is the fact that nothing ever "just happens." We live in a rational universe, where no happening takes place without a cause, where there is a dependable and intelligible inter-relationship between the smallest dandelion and the furthest star, where it is thus possible for man to make deductions and inferences whereby to guide him. Nowhere is there any

quality of chaos or of accident (except, often enough, in our thinking), and it is not out of chaos or out of accident that the polliwogs are very pudgy and the eels are very thin.

Three forces rule the lives of every creature and every plant — inertia and gravity and the radiant energy of the sun. The concerted effects of these three, in varying combination, are responsible for the length of mice's tails and the vibration-rate of the wingbeat of hummingbirds. They are responsible, in large degree, for the forms and shapes of things. A little examination makes this apparent enough. It is by radiation from its body-surface that a living creature loses heat, and consequently the amount of food which the creature needs for fuel is determined by the extent of its surface. This simple and universal principle of physiology — that food intake is determined by surface area and not by weight — supplies the reason for such disparate phenomena as the absence of mice in the far North and the fact that there can never be a smaller bird than the hummingbird. For mice and hummingbirds alike have tremendous surface-areas in relation to their weight, and thus have to feed themselves almost incessantly. A

tinier bird than the hummer, a tinier mammal than the little burrower called a shrew, could never — even though it devoted every minute of all its days and nights to eating — take in a sufficiency of food to keep alive. No mouse can live in the far North because there is not food enough there for so vast an appetite; no mammal half the mouse's size could live anywhere at all.

In such wise do weights and temperatures de-limit the sizes of things, and also influence their shapes. The animals of any given species are a little larger in the Tropics and a little smaller in the North, and always in the warmer place their tails are longer. For body area serves as a cooling surface, and there is considerable surface to a tail. It is for temperature reasons also that among warm-blooded animals the female, with a higher body temperature, is smaller than the male.

Why is it that a man cannot grow sixty feet tall, and why cannot there be butterflies as big as eagles? There are, after all, reasons for these things. The reason in the case of man is gravity; the reason in the case of butterflies is oxygen-supply. A man sixty feet high would be ten times as tall as now, and also ten times as broad and ten times as

thick, and his weight would thus be multiplied a thousand times; but his legs would only be a hundred times as big and strong, and they would buckle and crumple under him. So slow is oxygen-diffusion through the respiratory tubes of butterflies that any part of the insect which was more than a quarter-inch or so distant from outer air would have a perpetual oxygen deficiency and life could not possibly be sustained. Birds or beasts or men or butterflies — the shape of each restricts, both as to largeness and as to smallness, the size it may attain.

## II

The forms and shapes of all animal creation have sprung from their one common characteristic: the gift of locomotion. A plant — so to put it — can afford to be diffuse and expansive, for it is stationary; an animal is necessarily compact. The animal must spend much of its life in movement, whether through the medium of water or air or earth, and its form is accommodated to this destiny. It is no accident that the worms are pointed and cylindrical, like augers, or that crocodiles are spindle-shaped, or that mackerel are oval-curved to offer minimum resistance to the

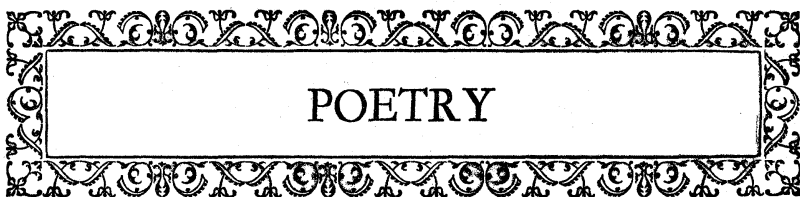
water. The crocodile has lately been our model for a streamlined car; the mackerel has been admirably imitated in making our ingenious underwater war device, the torpedo.

In creatures that are given to fast and frequent locomotion, the compactness is most marked; in more sluggish varieties of beast the structural features are of another order. The skates and rays, for example, are flattened almost into discs, a shape perfectly useless for terrestrial motion or for fast swimming, but exactly contrived for repose on the soft mud of the seabottom. Similarly flattened are the rock-lobsters and sea-urchins. And similarly flattened, too, although not so markedly, are the bodies of our common ducks, that they may have a stability for floating. The lateral flattening of fleas eases their passage amongst the hairs of terriers and collies, and the jungle-fowl are made able, by a similar shape, to force their way through thick-growing vegetation.

The shapes of birds are well enough known to everyone; less so are the shapes of eggs. There are oval eggs and round ones, sharp-pointed ones and blunt ellipses, and for all these diversities there is, of course, a reason. Those eggs that are longest left uncovered are generally the most rounded, for the

rounded egg affords less surface for cooling. And, similarly, the eggs of the cliff-nesting seabirds are the most sharply tapering and pointed, for a pointed egg can roll only in a little circle, and the clutch left by the murre or guillemot is thus always safe on its narrow ledge of rock.

It may be thought, I daresay, that this particular moment in the planet's history — this grisly moment when whole nations of men have apparently gone mad, and when the peace of peoples is everywhere threatened and uncertain — is a strange and inappropriate time to choose for setting down a disquisition on so inconsequential a theme as the shape of mackerel and the dimensions of tern-eggs. But I am not persuaded that these are trivial subjects. I am not at all sure that understanding something about a hellebore is not prerequisite for understanding something about Hitler, and that a sane and simple contemplation of the basic ingredients of our universe, and of their interplay, may not prepare a man to evaluate with a sounder judgment such vagarious happenings as wars and famines and shifts of ideologies. The Dust Bowl, after all, is a political issue now. But it had its genesis when an ignorant man cut down a tree.



# POETRY

## FACES

BY GLENN WARD DRESBACH

FACES . . . at the windows of the years  
Looking out wistfully or with cold disdain,  
Or looking in, with brows pressed to the pane,  
Change and pass, and some of them leave their tears  
Upon the glass.

Melodies are heard in the streets below,<sup>1</sup>  
Laughter, loud-voiced commands, and the shrill cries  
Of children playing, and forever the eyes,  
Alert or dumb, see Change by which they go  
And others come.

Windows open — and curtained with destiny  
Swaying in breezes or blown like streaming hair  
Straight back in the rising wind — are these we share  
With Ages now, whether dark or light may be  
Upon the brow.

Intricate slowness of Time, in its infinite spaces,  
Gathers all things in patterns much as before —  
The leaves for the wind, and waves to beat the shore,  
Rock to resist . . . and forever the changing faces  
Stare through the mist.

## THE WITLESS HEART

BY LOUIS STODDARD

How disciplined to life they seem who plan,  
and lose the reason for it yet adjust  
the crippled hope to match the broken trust,  
and lean upon illusion's crutch again.  
Always desire, the need of loving can  
lay bare the witless heart before the thrust  
of joy that passes to heartbreaking dust  
and leaves its hurt upon the living man.  
Poulticed with time such wounds are soon healed over,  
or the pain dulled with anaesthetic reason,  
until another spring, another lover,  
distracts the mind anew with the old treason  
and each one wakes to find he cannot cover  
the changeless heart against the changing season.

## A MAN MUST LIE

BY JOHN RUSSELL MCCARTHY

“A MAN must lie to his heart,” Enrico said,  
“fashioning gods and heavens in the image  
of soft desire, ignoring old life with rotting  
brain, young death with stinking body. A man  
who might face the timeless Enemy and name it  
with shrieking laughter, who might bed and rape  
night's witch of silence, covers his spirit's phallus  
with warm lies like furtive hands, and walks  
righteous and impotent among his fellows.”

## THE LIBRARY

### *Dos Passos and the Critics*

BY JAMES T. FARRELL

WHEN John Dos Passos' latest novel, *The Adventures of a Young Man*,<sup>1</sup> appeared, a number of the critics went far out of their way to have nothing to say, to make no commitments, to give no genuine impression of the character and meaning of the book. Others treated it in straight political terms, dismissing the book, in the final analysis, because they would have none of its political judgments. There were a few exceptions, notably John Chamberlain and Fred Dupee, who favored the novel, and Harry Hansen who didn't but who criticized it on purely literary grounds. The majority of the others showed a strange unanimity. Two characteristics of their reviews must be noted: first, the novel was attacked because of its subject matter and the type of characters it attempted to portray; and second, irrelevant attempts were made to psycholo-

gize the "disillusionment" of John Dos Passos without analyzing its content and nature, and without explaining why "disillusionment" makes a novel bad although so many generally recognized good books have been written in a mood of disillusionment.

*The Adventures of a Young Man* is a political novel. Glenn Spotswood, its hero, is a young American who revolts against the social injustices so rank in post-war America. He risks life and limb in fighting for a better world. Moral idealism leads him into the Communist Party, for which he helps organize a mine strike in which police terror reigns and strikers are unjustly jailed. When Glenn is arrested he becomes a martyr-hero in the communist press. But in time he bruises his head and his conscience in conflict with the Party's totalitarian ways. For instance, he is interested in saving the jailed miners, while the Party is interested in enhancing its own prestige and making mar-

<sup>1</sup>*The Adventures of a Young Man*, by John Dos Passos. \$2.50. Harcourt Brace.

tyrs to exploit. Though his abilities are admitted, he is rejected as an organizer in Detroit because he will not make a blanket promise of loyalty to the Communist Party.

In episode after episode, his idealism collides with the cynical power politics — and the shifting “party line” — of the comrades. He is ostracized from the movement to which he devoted himself. But he remains a revolutionary. He enlists to fight in Loyalist Spain. There, too, he does not lend himself to the Stalinist game, and is arrested, though he is fervently anti-fascist. In the end he is sent on a front-line mission which no communist will undertake, so that his death amounts to murder.

These are the major political features which have drawn objections from the critics. The novel also deals with Glenn’s love affairs, his family background, his jobs, a summer he spends as a migratory worker, his efforts to work his way through college.

The fundamental meaning to be drawn from this novel is much similar to that in Ignazio Silone’s *Bread and Wine*, although there are many differences between the two books. Like Silone, Dos Passos is concerned with integrity, a theme which recurs in all his novels. Glenn Spotswood suffers and dies

because he fights to retain his integrity. The book raises the same kind of a question Silone does — how is integrity to be maintained in revolutionary politics? Pessimism, disillusionment, the asking of questions such as this one are inevitable for radicals like Glenn in a period when defeats have exposed weaknesses, often producing the degeneration of revolutionary parties. The revolutionary party of Lenin has become the counter-revolutionary party of Stalin, Glenn begins to sense, and he is forced to ask how to defend his integrity against it. It is the worst kind of Philistinism to view the posing of such a question as mere sectarian radical politics. Some critics to the contrary, Dos Passos is not fighting battles of left-wing sectarianism; he is describing a dead end of a historic movement — the Communist Party.

## II

It is nothing short of historical illiteracy when Ralph Thompson, reviewing the book in the *New York Times*, says that “the long and short of what Mr. Dos Passos wants to show is that there are a lot of half-baked doctrinaires making mischief in the world,” and then adds the disingenuous remin-



der that of course some of them belong to "the Stalinist wing of the Communist Party." Another example is provided by the frivolous review by Clifton Fadiman in the *New Yorker*, in which he said: "Whatever representative value the story has is marred by the introduction of a special theme — intra-communist politics." Furthermore, reviewers like Thompson dismiss the novel because the characters are "half-baked" when, as a matter of fact, they are no less baked than other characters in Dos Passos' previous novels which they have praised.

The fact is that there is much less difference in Dos Passos' manner between this book and his trilogy (*USA*) than some, for reasons of their own, have tried to make the public believe. The novel is still another biography of an American. To be sure, Dos Passos has eliminated his Camera Eye, Newsreels, and the separate sketches of the lives of historical figures. But these were never the essence of his writing. They were mechanically introduced into *USA*, rather than integrated into the context of the biographies which made up the major content of the work. They were calculated to reveal general aspects of the times, but that is not literary justification for their use.

The aspects of the times that were important in the novels were those which impinged significantly on the consciousness of the characters. *USA* is a series of fictional biographies outlining the destinies of a number of Americans in a given period of time. *The Adventures of a Young Man* is a fictional biography of one American, over a given period of time, most of which overlaps that in *USA*. Dos Passos builds his fictional biographies out of documentation. The basis of his documentation for *The Adventures of a Young Man* is different in some of its content, but not in kind, from that underlying *USA*. Dos Passos is concerned with unfolding patterns of American life, the course of American destinies, showing by such an unfoldment the character of American society, and the manner in which this society either destroys integrity, or ruins those who struggle to maintain it.

Viewing Dos Passos in this light, we note how peculiarly silly was Louis Kronenberger's review in *The Nation*. He granted that the book is "rich in observation." But his chief objection was that it had a factual basis. He refused "to allow that it proceeded out of a purely fictional impulse." (What, Mr. Kronenberger, is a "fictional impulse?") He complained that "its

crucial chapters rest on a factual rather than a fictional basis, yet create their effects as fiction." In brief, Dos Passos was writing about something real, and the subject itself was "inartistic." If Mr. Kronenberger means this, he must then reject *USA*, because it is open to the same charges. But he does not do this. In fact, he speaks of *USA* favorably. But there is another commentary on Kronenberger. He wrote it himself. In October 1936, in an article in *Partisan Review* on "Criticism in Transition" he defended "social consciousness" in literature, and said that unless we get it, we might even lose our souls. He wrote:

Literature must go where life goes . . . it is more necessary to interest ourselves in an important subject treated without much merit than in an unimportant subject treated with considerable merit. *Culture herself* demands that we put the right social values ahead of the right literary values; and whenever we encounter people who want to keep art dustproof, who bewail the collapse of esthetic values, it is our duty to ascertain just how far their indignation is a screen for reactionary and unsocial thinking.

Strangely enough, he rejects this "social consciousness" when it expresses itself, in Dos Passos' new novel, in a manner unwelcome to the fashionable Stalinists of the moment. Is Mr. Kronenberger really serious?

### III

I think that the pertinent criticisms to be made of this new novel apply equally to its predecessors. Dos Passos' characters are typed, not individualized. Their reactions, perceptions, relationships with other characters are insufficiently individualized. In all of his books, Dos Passos has a tendency to catalog perceptions. When one of his characters goes to a new place, we practically always find that sights and smells are catalogued, and it begins to seem as if all of his characters have the same eyes, and the same nose. Besides, he tends to use vernacular without sufficiently differentiating the speech of one character from another. While his characters are typed, they are not literary conventionalizations in the sense, say, that the grandfather is in *The Grapes of Wrath*. His characters are *social* types. Although he writes with extraordinary skill, he does not create characters. This is a deficiency in his writing. But it does not destroy the truth that he tells us, the revelations he has to make about the life of our times.

The critics of this book sound like a well-trained dismal chorus keening because John Dos Passos is "disillusioned." There was Alfred Kazin in the New York *Herald*

*Tribune*. He asserted that Dos Passos reveals "a growing disaffection with the whole radical movement in America." (Read Communist Party!) It made him feel that Dos Passos "no longer had any choice"; "an artist cannot stifle his own aspirations." But his dirge does not prove that Dos Passos is doing that. In fact, Kazin proves nothing. He has only lamentations to offer, no evaluations to make. If "disillusionment" must disqualify a writer of fiction, we will have to throw out most of the great writers who have ever lived.

Another chirper in this chorus was Malcolm Cowley in the *New Republic*. He defended human nature against the "disillusionment" and excessive idealism of John Dos Passos. Cowley went outside the novel itself to suggest that the novelist wrote it because of a personal episode — because his translator was shot in Spain as a fascist. And Cowley reports that "people who ought to know" told him that this translator *was* a fascist. But the hero of Dos Passos' book was not a fascist; he died at the hands of Stalinists as a fervent revolutionary enemy of fascism. There were many like him in Spain. This Cowley brushes aside. The trouble with Dos Passos, he adds, is that he is "disillusioned" but not "dis-

illusioned enough," and wants to know why Dos Passos is not disillusioned with other kinds of radicals. What Cowley is complaining about, in other words, is that Dos Passos defends the honor of honest anti-fascists like his hero against Stalinist slanders.

Cowley then says that once Dos Passos has reached this state of incompleting disillusionment, "he has no logical stopping point until he finally admits that everybody's actions . . . are based on habits, appetites and the desire for self-preservation." And he has some advice to offer. He wants Dos Passos to "come down from the high mountains of idealism" and to enter "the common morass of human motives." If Dos Passos does this, he might, besides recognizing kindness in the world, "even celebrate the real (if impure and limited) heroism of an organizer risking his life in the Kentucky coalfields or a volunteer dying in Spain." This is the last sentence in his review and it contains his last contradiction. For Dos Passos' hero *is* an organizer who "risks his life in the Kentucky coalfields," and he *is* a volunteer in Spain who dies from fascist bullets. What does Cowley want then?

Further, by making a criterion of judgment out of "disillusion-

ment," Cowley has established a basis for the rejection of all Nineteenth Century pessimistic literature, not to mention Joyce, Proust, and others. This includes books which he himself likes. Apparently what he means is not disillusionment in general. It is a specific kind of disillusionment, a disillusionment with the conduct of the Communist Party which Cowley consistently supports. His review is a political one calculated to discredit Dos Passos' novel. That is what he wants; and that is what he tries to do. And that, of course, is more or less what many of the other "liberal" reviewers also tried to do.

The reception given *The Adventures of a Young Man* reads like a warning to writers not to stray off the reservations of the Stalinist-

controlled League of American Writers to which more than one of the critics belong. What renders these critics suspect is their striking tone of unanimity. The reasons which they offered for disliking the novel cannot be accepted as valid literary ones. They were political reasons. These critics either opposed Dos Passos' revelations concerning Stalinism or else they said these were unimportant and did not constitute proper material for fiction. They even raised the author's "disillusionment" with the Communist Party to the status of a general principle. Here we have the phenomenon of supposedly liberal critics turning themselves into advice-mongers and politico-literary legislators. We could respect them more had they disliked the book because of its binding.

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## THE CHECK LIST

(Continued from front advertising section)

### FICTION

ANNE MINTON'S LIFE, by Myron Brinig. \$2.50. Farrar & Rinehart. A headline-inspired tale about a neurotic lass on a fifteen-story ledge who keeps the yokels gaping while deciding to jump. Incidentally she solves a flock of problems: a playboy reforms, a vacil-

lating showgirl does right by little Frank, a Reliever gets a job and his wife decides against an abortion.

NEXT TO VALOUR, by John Jennings. \$2.75. Macmillan. The publishers of *Gone*

*With the Wind* proudly present their new triple-length super-epic. A deadly earnest story about Scotch pioneers in New Hampshire and their role in the French and Indian war. Valor galore but no brevity and little wit.

**BEWARE OF PITY**, by Stefan Zweig. \$2.50. *Viking*. A finely-spun first full-length novel by the noted biographer. The young Austrian cavalry officer who permits a pity of weakness to enmesh him, with disastrous consequences, in the lives of a crippled girl and her devoted parent is juxtaposed to the healing compassion of Dr. Condor, a magnificent Zweig characterization. Absorbing and beautifully fashioned.

### BIOGRAPHY

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY WITH LETTERS**, by William Lyon Phelps. \$3.75. *Oxford U. Press*. Dr. Phelps' autobiographical gone-with-the-wind contains more sweetness and light than a hymn book, and more letters of appreciation than the guest file of a Virginia gentleman. His visitor to Yale who remarked, "How happy everybody seems in this place!" struck the keynote of this volume.

**A DOCTOR FOR THE PEOPLE**, by Michael A. Shadid, M.D. \$2.50. *Vanguard*. The autobiography of the founder of America's first co-operative hospital at Elk City, Oklahoma: a family may join by paying \$25 a year, receiving for this sum complete medical, surgical and dental care. Dr. Shadid records his tiffs with the old guard medicos who violently opposed his experiment.

**TINTYPES IN GOLD**, by Joseph Henry Jackson. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. Snappy and readable sagas of four western badmen. Black Bart, poet and highwayman, explained himself:

"I've labored long and hard for bread,  
For honor and for riches,  
But on my corns too long you've tread,  
You fine-haired sons of bitches."

**SOLDIER OF THE CHURCH**. The Story of Ignatius Loyola, by Ludwig Marcuse. \$2.50. *Simon & Schuster*. This biography of the founder of the Society of Jesus, told with respect for historical detail and with the verve of romantic fiction.

### MISCELLANEOUS

**INSIDE ASIA**, by John Gunther. \$3.50. *Harper*. Fuel to feed the present rage for the inside story — this time the Orient. In a world awaiting the incident, gossip takes the place of history and hunch proves more exciting than analysis. Entertaining but not important.

**DICTATORSHIP IN THE MODERN WORLD**, edited by Guy Stanton Ford. \$3.50. *U. of Minnesota Press*. A symposium on the origin, theories, and economics of the dictatorships in Germany, Italy, Turkey, Russia, and Latin America. The Russian dictatorship is handled with academic kid gloves and will not offend its thin-skinned "Friends." Rippey's chapter on the dictatorships of our neighbors in South America is well done. The chronology of Dictatorship in Post-War Europe is complete to April 1939.

**BOMBS BURSTING IN AIR: The Influence of Air Power on International Relations**, by George Fielding Eliot. \$1.75. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. Major Eliot has written a competent and interesting layman's guide to the World's Air, 1939. Despite the Sunday supplements there appears to be no immediate need to evacuate New York or dig bombproof shelters in Central Park. "Bombing attacks against targets 3000 miles away are not operations upon which any dependence can be placed as to results."

**WHEAT AND SOLDIERS**, by Corporal Ashihei Hino. Translated by Baroness Shidzue Ishimoto. \$2.00. *Farrar & Rinehart*. A slight collection of letters and jottings by a Japanese writer conscripted into the current war in the East. The trivia shed little light on the Jap soldier and less on the conflict.

MOSES AND MONOTHEISM, by Sigmund Freud. \$2.00. *Knopf*. A remarkable speculative inquiry into the origins of Judaism and Christianity by the octogenarian psychologist. Whether one accepts or rejects Dr. Freud's hypothesis that Moses was an Egyptian nobleman who brought monotheism (the outlawed religion of Ikhnaton) to the alien Hebrew tribes, his investigation provides a fascinating intellectual adventure. He believes Moses belongs not to the Jews but to the world.

BLACK FOLK — THEN AND NOW, by W. E. Burghardt Du Bois. \$3.50. *Holt*. Mr. Du Bois writes with simple fluency about the history and sociology of the Negro. He reminds his readers that, "The proletariat of the world consists . . . overwhelmingly of the dark workers of Asia, Africa, the islands of the sea, and South and Central America. These are the ones who are supporting a superstructure of wealth, luxury, and extravagance."

REORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT: What Does It Involve?, by Lewis Meriam and Laurence F. Schmeckebier. \$2.00. *Brookings Institution*. This volume outlines the problems arising out of the reorganizing of the executive branch of the national government. Written in the Brookings tradition, it is weighty, dull, pedestrian, and pertinent.

SEVEN GRASS HUTS, by Cecile Hulse Matschat. \$3.00. *Farrar & Rinehart*. The adventures of an engineer's wife in South and Central America. The one memorable character is the gaucho who beat his three wives regularly so that they would sympathize with each other and live in harmony.

INDIAN OASIS, by Janette Woodruff, as told to Cecil Dryden. \$3.00. *Caxton Printers*. A glimpse into the Indian reconstruction period of the early years of this century by a government aide among the western Indians. At least there has been some advance made

since the day when Indian women would pummel the stomachs of their pregnant sisters to accelerate childbirth. Illustrated.

NEGRO EDUCATION IN ALABAMA: A Study in Cotton and Steel, by Horace Mann Bond. \$3.25. *Associated Publishers*, Washington, D. C. Dr. Bond gives a detailed picture of the development of Negro education in Alabama from its cotton-dominated, antebellum slavery days to the present time when Cotton yields to Coal, Iron, and Steel.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL THEORY, by Otto von Guericke. Translated by Bernard Frey, Ph.D. \$4.00. *Norton*. A stodgy translation of the classic by the great legal historian; first published in 1880.

ARMIES OF SPIES, by Joseph Gollomb. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. This exposure of "espionage as it is today" turns out to be an unchecked, blotchy mixture of sensation and spinach. Mr. Gollomb cites the discredited forgeries used in the trials of anti-Stalinist leftists in Spain and the Moscow Confessions. Apparently under the impression that the GPU is a Russian boy scout organization, he omits it from his survey.

NO COMPROMISE: The Conflict Between Two Worlds, by Melvin Rader. \$3.50. *Macmillan*. Another "we or they" book for the shelf. "The world," says the writer, "is confronted by a clash between two irreconcilable ideals: humanism and anti-humanism."

EUROPE ON THE EVE: The Crises of Diplomacy 1933-1939, by Frederick L. Schuman. \$3.50. *Knopf*. An elaborately annotated account of the diplomatic maneuvers antecedent to the coming war, but occasionally Dr. Schuman is partial in his selection of sources. Thus, in spite of the fact that it is known today that during the Munich crisis Russia remained aloof, unmobilized, and *Pravda* spoke of the struggle as "imperialist," he writes that "only the USSR remained loyal to its promises."

**WIND, SAND, AND STARS**, by Antoine de Saint Exupéry. Translated by Lewis Galantière. \$2.75. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. The author of *Night Flight* contributes another source book of authentic air adventure atmosphere. Excellent description of bona fide flying experience is combined with such puff as "snarl of destiny keeping its appointment with us" and "those who carry the wound do not feel it." The atrabilious sentiment while the plane nose-dives, the mystic genuflection before the Unknown, make it evident that philosophy and piloting don't mix too easily.

**SECURITY — CAN WE RETRIEVE IT?**, by Sir Arthur Salter. \$3.50. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. Sir Arthur is scared and he shows it. He outlines a policy of further appeasement by restoring to Hitler pre-war Germany.

**THE END OF ECONOMIC MAN**, by Peter F. Drucker. \$2.50. *John Day*. A really original analysis of fascism. Mr. Drucker views European history as a record of the rise and fall of concepts based upon "the old fundamental values of European tradition: freedom and equality." Spiritual Man — the equality of heaven — collapsed in the Thirteenth Century and there was no new order to take its place for a number of years until the concept of Intellectual Man offered a basis. The transition period was one of chaos, panic, witch-hunts and totalitarianism. Now Economic Man has failed and in the interim, before "a new, positive noneconomic concept of Free and Equal Man" evolves, the masses again turn to the negative alternative of totalitarianism.

**WAR IN OUR TIME**, by the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research. Edited by Hans Spier and Alfred Kähler. \$3.00. *Norton*. A heavyweight discussion of the problems presented by the next war. In her lucid essay "Labor in Wartime," Frieda Wunderlich concludes that, "The distinction between democracy and dictatorship tends to disappear during a war. . . . The trend in any totalitarian war will be to trans-

form the country into an immense camp in which no one is free." The publisher cuts down on expenses by omitting an index.

**NIGHT OVER ENGLAND**, by Eugene and Arline Löhrke. \$2.00. *Harrison-Hilton*. A murky account of England in the September 1938 crisis. The authors, optimistic and pessimistic by turn, insist that if Britain were not rotting it would have resisted.

**THE WORLD OVER: 1938**, A Chronological and Interpretive Survey of the Year of Tension, edited by Joseph Hilton Smyth and Charles Angoff. \$4.00. *Harrison-Hilton*. A day-to-day record of the important political and economic events in all countries during 1938. Compact, concise, excellently indexed. A good reference book.

**SWEDEN: A Modern Democracy on Ancient Foundations**, by Nils Herlitz. \$2.00. *U. of Minnesota Press*. Balanced account on the academic side of the popular little country in north Europe. Sweden, like little girls, is made of everything nice, but Mr. Herlitz points out that once in a while a puppy dog tail and a snail get mixed up.

**DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM**, by Arthur Rosenberg. \$3.50. *Knopf*. A history of the development of the two dominant political movements of the past 150 years, showing that no democracy in existence prior to 1914 has succumbed to totalitarianism. Where democracy has developed historically "out of the life of the working people, it exhibits a remarkable power of resistance."

**SOCIETY IN TRANSITION**. Problems of a Changing Age, by Harry Elmer Barnes. \$5.00. *Prentice-Hall*. One more compendious volume by Dr. Barnes. His painstaking scholarship and integration is directed to the contemporary social turmoil and no significant problem is excluded. The failure of modern society in his opinion is the inability of its institutions to progress parallel to its technological advance.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS, by William Saroyan. \$2.00. *Harcourt Brace*. The simple little drama with overtones of fantasy which caused so much confusion among the New York critics searching for deep, dark purposes.

MAULE'S CURSE, by Yvor Winters. \$3.00. *New Directions*, Norfolk, Conn. Seven studies in the history of American obscurantism by one of the subtler critical poets. Mr. Winters discovers and proposes a "lost" literary figure, Jones Very, for a niche in American literature.

HUNTSMAN, WHAT QUARRY?, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. \$2.00. *Harpers*. Her admirers will find here the clear, tintinnabulating lyricism and hurt sensitivity they have learned to expect. Millay is not attracted by the muted obscurantism of some of her contemporaries. She knows what she wants to say and is not offended by her readers' ability to understand her.

CORN, by Paul Engle. \$2.00. *Doubleday Doran*. Paul Engle writes poems about the soil and the simple people rooted on it. His style is more strong than subtle and his strokes are surest when he deals with the elemental. His message is plain: grace and peace will be found in America, not Europe.

PLANETS, STARS, AND ATOMS, by George E. Frost. \$3.00. *Caxton Printers*. A summary of the ABC's of astronomy neatly woven together for adult reading. Illustrated.

A HISTORY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, by A. Wolf. \$8.00. *Macmillan*. Professor Wolf of the University of London carries his *History of Science*, which in his first volume dealt with the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, through the Eighteenth — "the Age of Enlightenment." Fully conscious of the present as well as the past the author concludes with the belief that, "Once more the world ur-

gently needs a Voltaire, indeed a whole army of Voltaires, to fight against the new forms of darkness and fanaticism which threaten to destroy civilization." Profusely illustrated.

MEN CAN TAKE IT, by Elizabeth Hawes. \$2.00. *Random House*. If men will remove collar and tie and suit-coat, Miss Hawes promises that she won't write books about men's clothes. All together, boys.

GOODBYE TO BERLIN, by Christopher Isherwood. \$2.50. *Random House*. Don't expect any political enlightenment from these minor sketches standing half-way between diary and fiction. The author has an intriguing flare for the macabre and enjoys toying cat-like with his morbid cast.

ALEXANDER OF YUGOSLAVIA, by Stephen Graham. \$3.00. *Yale U. Press*. On the basis of first-hand information Mr. Graham traces the political background behind the Marseilles assassination. Real Balkanic atmosphere livens up this eminently readable account.

CONNECTICUT, PAST AND PRESENT, by Odell Shepard. \$3.50. *Knopf*. Mild, scholarly account of the Nutmeg State, with glimpses of its history woven into an interpretative description of the present.

BLOOD IS CHEAPER THAN WATER, by Quincy Howe. \$2.00. *Simon & Schuster*. How high-minded and low-minded alike are pushing us into the "inevitable" world war is told sharply in this little book by an isolationist. Who's Who in the war party and the peace party, and why.

WITH MALICE TOWARD ALL, by Irving D. Tressler. \$2.00. *Stackpole Sons*. See America and laugh: a Bronx cheer for Margaret Halsey's raised eyebrows over those queer Europeans. Mr. Tressler uses an automobile trip South and around for back-firing a volley of wisecracks about our own oddities.



**SECRET AGENTS AGAINST AMERICA**, by Richard Wilmer Rowan. \$2.00. *Double-day, Doran*. Complete résumé of the many reports and established facts concerning the activities of foreign spies, agents, and potential *saboteurs* of American munition plants in case of war, and of the secret assistance they receive from high financial and political circles in America.

**THREE AMERICANISTS**, by Randolph G. Adams. \$1.50. *U. of Pennsylvania Press*. Lectures on the lives and times of Henry Harris, bibliographer, George Brinley, book collector, and phases of Jefferson's life which tie him to the library. Scholarly Americana.

**SATANISM AND WITCHCRAFT. A STUDY IN MEDIEVAL SUPERSTITION**, by Jules Michelet. \$3.00. *Walden Publications*. A translation of the book by the famous liberal French historian of the past century. Michelet's method of writing history as though it were a romantic sensational novel is no longer appreciated by the present more matter-of-fact generation; but it still may give a thrill to lovers of oratorical style *à la grande manière*.

**PENTHOUSE OF THE GODS**, by Theos Bernard. \$3.50. *Scribner's*. A Columbia University Ph.D. who became a Buddhist monk tells of his days in Lhasa, the holy city of Tibet, illustrated by over sixty pages of really striking photographs. On reading the author's description of his rooms in Lhasa, one wonders why he ever came back to New York. But the volume will scarcely make converts.

**I SWEAR BY APOLLO**, by William E. Aughinbaugh M.D. \$3.00. *Farrar & Rinehart*. A mad medley of believe-it-or-not crackpots, healed bodies, narrow escapes, and wide eyes, cheerily told.

**AFRICAN NOTEBOOK**, by Albert Schweitzer. Translated by E. E. B. Russell. \$2.00. *Henry Holt*. Dr. Schweitzer spent many years at a hospital in French Equatorial

Africa, traveling widely throughout the country and studying taboos, customs, and native mysteries. Not the least interesting of his discoveries is, that Trader Horn told, to a great extent, the truth in his story of his adventures.

**PROPAGANDA FOR WAR: The Campaign against American Neutrality, 1914-1917**, by H. C. Peterson. \$3.00. *U. of Oklahoma Press*. This should be required reading for every American who is still eager to do his duty by Mother England. Mr. Peterson substantiates the familiar generalities concerning war-time propaganda with a detailed analysis of the British propaganda machine which functioned in this country during the war period. It tells the dismal story of how the best minds in Europe enlisted for duration to aid in the manufacture of fraud.

**MEDICINE AT THE CROSSROADS**, by Dr. Bertram M. Bernheim. \$2.50. *Morrow*. Earnest, readable study of the physician's problem today, from the social viewpoint, covering organized medicine (the AMA), group medicine (of which the author approves), and socialized medicine (which he regards with some panic). Interesting passages about ethics and fee-splitting.

**THE GARDENER'S ALMANAC**, by Edward I. Farrington. \$1.00. *Hale, Cushman, and Flint*. Together with *The Vegetable Garden*, by the same author, *The Lawn*, by Charles W. Parker, and *Rock Gardens*, by James S. Bissland, this comprises a valuable, up-to-date garden library. The books are uniform in size and price, and practical in purpose. Illustrated.

**MARCY AND THE GOLD SEEKERS**, by Grant Forman. \$3.00. *U. of Oklahoma Press*. Capt. Marcy surveyed the Santa Fé Trail for the Government during gold-rush times, and kept a colorful journal of his activities. As edited by Mr. Forman it tells a stirring story of a stirring time. Superior Americana.

# THE OPEN FORUM

## TELLING IT TO FDR

SIR: Harry Weinberger's idea of "If I Had Your Ear for a Minute, Mr. President," in your May issue, is a swell one. Here is what I would say to FDR if I were permitted in The Presence for a minute:

"Mr. President, your record in office has converted me, after years of being a 'liberal,' to the honest-graft type of government so well typified by New York's Tammany Hall. I know you mean well — and so, I suppose do your advisers, although that is harder to believe — but you are not realistic, and government today demands realism above all things. I think an old-line politician would, in the past seven years, have made a record far superior to yours — would have decreased unemployment, come closer to balancing the budget, and inspired more confidence in government. Old-line politicians know exactly what can be accomplished in politics, and what cannot; and they learned it from experience and not from books. If, while they governed, they lined their pockets too, the public had little complaint, for there were, under old-line regimes, jobs and reasonable prosperity.

"I think, Mr. President, you have mistaken self-confidence for experience, both in steering your own course and in choosing advisers. By doing so you have also made many men like myself see the virtues of honest graft and its attendant 'evils.' The honest grafters always gave business and the public a chance, even if it was a slight one. But that is more than can be said for your New Deal."

ARTHUR LAKE

*Detroit*

SIR: The trouble with Mr. Weinberger's notion is that so many people, if they had the

President's ear for a minute, would bite it. I am not among those, because I think our President has done the most constructive job of social reform in American history. Here, more or less, is what I would say to him:

"Don't let the howling and campaigns of hate against you get you down, Mr. President. Every important change in history has been opposed by those who have a stake of special privilege to protect, at any cost in suffering and despair for the rest of us.

"Mr. President, the very Republicans who attack you most bitterly would, if they got into office — God forbid! — hold on to the main features of your New Deal. They would have no alternative. The New Deal was not something sprung from the Brain Trust — it was forced into existence by economic conditions such as unemployment, low farm prices, bank failures, etc. The 1936 Republican candidate, Mr. Landon, has already made it clear that he agrees with some parts of the New Deal; so have other broad-minded opponents. But even the most reactionary among your critics would not dare to abolish relief — they would face riots and revolt if they tried. Neither would they dare wipe out labor's gains for collective bargaining entirely, or the government control of stock market speculation.

"The New Deal is here to stay, because the things that it started were in line with our national historical development. And your name will be forever enshrined in our history as the President bold enough, wise enough, to put it into effect despite the personal assaults to which you have been subject."

SARAH N. DAHLBERG

*Los Angeles*

## SAN FRANCISCO — ALIVE AND KICKING?

SIR: In comparing San Francisco's tonnage with Los Angeles in your June issue, did Phil Hamilton not use "register tonnage" for Los Angeles and freight tons for San Francisco? Furthermore, while the San Francisco Customs District does cover more territory, the figures are kept separated and we show only the figures over our docks. We of San Francisco are not fighting Los Angeles. The latter has its oil business, which is strictly hers. We have our great valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin, and they are strictly ours. We are competitive only in tonnage originating in the area tributary to all Pacific Coast ports alike, and this is handled by railroads which grant the common point rates.

San Francisco Bay is the largest landlocked harbor in the world. Would it not be silly to try to limit the building of docks to one certain spot? What we are after, and what all ports are after, is efficient and economic handling of commerce. There must be no competition in ports. We serve the entire country — we belong to no prescribed "city limits". San Francisco Port has never used one cent of taxpayer money and does not now. She earns her own way and gives a complete harbor service cheaper than any other port. What other port can say or do as much? And by the way, if the Bay Bridge is losing so much money — its "trade" dropping off — why have we so much more revenue than we anticipated? Why has the toll dropped from 65¢ per car with five persons to 50¢ and now down to 40¢ with excellent chances of an additional reduction of 5¢ per year?

By checking, Mr. Hamilton might have made some comparisons with other ports to see what piers were closed and the reductions in pier lease prices — New York for instance, Philadelphia, and Boston. All suffered, but San Francisco Bay less than the average.

J. F. MARIAS

*President, Board of State  
Harbor Commissioners*

*San Francisco.*

SIR: Mr. Hamilton states that the money for our big bridges was "coughed up" by the Federal Government. The Golden Gate Bridge was built at a cost of about \$35,000,000, not one cent of which was Federal money. The Bay Bridge cost about \$77,000,000 and was financed by an issue of revenue bonds purchased by the RFC. The Federal Government made no grant for this project, not even a 30 per cent PWA grant, and private investors now consider the bridge bonds so sad a risk that the RFC had to be content with a price of 104 (a premium of \$2,840,000) when \$71,000,000 of the issue was sold on June 7 to a syndicate headed by Dillon, Read, and Company.

Mr. Hamilton states that the Bay Bridge carried 483,569 fewer vehicles in 1938 than in 1937. He does not mention the fact that the Bay ferries carried 1,782,216 more vehicles between San Francisco and Oakland in 1938 than in 1937 and that 1,298,647 more vehicles crossed the Bay on the bridges and ferries in 1938 than crossed in 1937. This matter of the facts about the two big bridges may in itself be unimportant, but it seems to fix definitely the extent of Mr. Hamilton's qualification to write about San Francisco.

To answer all of Mr. Hamilton's misstatements would require a letter as long as his article, but may I say without incurring too great risk of being called a "civic salesman" that San Francisco has as low, or a lower rate of real estate tax delinquencies as any city of its size in the United States; that while San Francisco is the eleventh American city in size, it was sixth in the number of income-tax returns filed for 1938, which seems to me to indicate a rather high average income; and that the monthly chart published in the *Dun and Bradstreet Review* has shown the San Francisco area as a "white spot" for some months.

A. R. HAUSMANN

*San Francisco.*

SIR: As a student of economics and political science at Pomona College where much research work was done to learn about San

Francisco, I have come to the opposite conclusions to those of Mr. Hamilton. The U. S. Chamber of Commerce ranks San Francisco's harbor as the second largest seaport in the nation, measured in dollars, and third largest measured in tons. The tonnage figures for San Francisco for 1937 were 28,812,967 as compared with 21,145,075 for Los Angeles. San Francisco had a dollar value of \$1,209,541,226 to \$1,040,902,804 for Los Angeles. He has probably contrasted official statistics covering San Francisco's waterfront inside the city limits with that of the metropolitan area of Los Angeles.

Mr. Hamilton might truthfully have stated that San Francisco has the lowest tax delinquency of any large city in the United States —  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Is that a sign of decay?

In conclusion let me reprimand Mr. Hamilton for having overlooked figures showing San Francisco's tax rate to be the highest in California. San Francisco is a city and county, so when it is compared with the tax rate of any other city in the state it appears larger. But in reality the rate is low — lower than that of Los Angeles, if its proportion of the county tax rate is added to that of the city's.

DONALD L. WHITE

Claremont,  
California.

SIR: I have lived in San Francisco all my life and would like to be the first to defend it, if that were possible. But I have seen it decline, unfortunately, to the state accurately related by Phil Hamilton. However, Mr. Hamilton forgot to make note of one of the causes of Frisco's decline — the press, which is provincial and narrow and fettered. The papers present a solid front against innovation. Absentee ownership is part of the trouble; the other part is editors and writers who are indifferent and wholly unacquainted with a once glorious tradition which their predecessors knew.

San Francisco is sick from its own poisons. It is the plainest case of civic auto-intoxication ever, and those of us here who have nostalgic recollection of the good days feel that the

time is ripe for a purge of a kind that will be even more effective in its way than the four days treatment by fire back in 1906.

H. G. MOODY

San Francisco.

SIR: Thank you for the article on San Francisco. Others here are talking about it; saying Ole Doc Hamilton did a blamed good job; expressing hope that he and you tie into California's tax mess.

OLIVER A. MORRIS

San Francisco.

### THE AUTHOR REPLIES

SIR: In reply to Mr. Marias I should like to point out that I did not use "registered tonnage" figures at all, but did criticize their use. I used harbor cargo tonnage figures for both San Francisco and Los Angeles. It is true that Los Angeles geographically has a larger harbor than San Francisco, but that does not gainsay the fact that figures which include the entire San Francisco Bay lean heavily on the commerce of Oakland and other bay ports including a considerable oil tonnage at Contra Costa points. The State Board of Harbor Commissioners does not use San Francisco Customs District figures, but there is plenty of literature which does.

Regarding the sad fact that freight tonnage discharged and loaded at San Francisco harbor for the fiscal year ending 1938 was the least since 1915, Mr. Marias is aware that these figures are published by his own board and were broadcast this spring by a high city official who has San Francisco's best interests at heart. Mr. White, too, uses figures for the entire San Francisco Bay.

I'm afraid Mr. Hausmann himself is disclosing uncensored information in mentioning that while the Bay bridge carried fewer vehicles in 1938 than in 1937, the ferries carried more. Maybe that has something to do with the attitude of private investors who (says Mr. Hausmann) now consider the bridge bonds a sad risk.

PHIL HAMILTON

San Francisco.

## ABOUT THE COUGHLIN ARTICLE

SIR: "Father Coughlin: Holy Medicine Man," published in your June issue is a concoction of half-truth, distortion, and deliberate misinterpretation. Mr. McCarten, in his zeal to besmirch Father Coughlin and all his works, has not been content to confine himself to the personal. He has indicted the economic and social teaching of the Catholic Church by his description of the curricular subjects at St. Michael's, Toronto. His ignorance of Catholic economic teaching is truly amazing when one considers that it is now fairly well known to even the man in the street, through the encyclicals of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI, through radio discourses of such educators as the Rev. Fulton Sheen, James Gillis, Francis Haas, Edward Lodge Currow, etc. It requires no special study, then, for any person to recognize at once Mr. McCarten's opinion on this subject as of no weight whatever.

JAMES H. KELEHER

*North Adams,  
Massachusetts.*

SIR: By publishing the article on Father Coughlin you have rendered a real service to the country. It is factually and journalistically an outstanding piece of work.

KARL LOEWENSTEIN

*Amherst University,  
Massachusetts.*

SIR: It is alleged in the June MERCURY that Father Coughlin appeals to weak minds. Your author is not satisfied to abuse Father Coughlin only; he must also insult Father Coughlin's audience. Although I am not a Catholic I have a sober respect and admiration for Coughlin and if this indicates mental weakness let me confess that this weakness is attested to by the fact that for over fifteen years I have read the half-baked cynicisms and wishy-washy vapors of THE MERCURY.

Father Coughlin is refreshing and stimulating, so much so that I have decided to buy no more copies of THE MERCURY. Instead I will

buy two more copies of *Social Justice* to give to friends.

M. B. DIEHM

*Ephrata,  
Pennsylvania.*

SIR: I have read your article entitled "Father Coughlin: Holy Medicine Man." In my opinion the article is odious, and I wish to inform you that I shall discontinue to purchase future issues of your periodical.

MRS. GERTRUDE E. J. BASCOME

*Rochester,  
New York.*

SIR: What is especially commendable in Mr. McCarten's article is its fine restraint. He is obviously a reporter first of all and has rested his case on facts and not on rhetoric. The Father is a vicious influence in American life. But those who, from the highest motives, have sought to expose him have too often let their anger get the better of them. The article in your magazine avoids this error. It sticks to facts.

How many of Father Coughlin's followers, indeed, have taken the trouble to consider the contradictions in his views, his constant shift to new issues and new attitudes in line with what is "saleable" at the moment. In the worst years of the depression he talked economic reform, catering to the fears of the populace. Now that hatreds of minorities seem the order of the day, he appeals to that element in our population. What will it be tomorrow?

If only we could get the simple, straightforward truths in Mr. McCarten's summary to the misguided souls who listen to the radio priest and, in their innocence, plump for his shifting demagoguery!

JOHN P. MORRIS

*Des Moines,  
Iowa.*

SIR: In his article John McCarten quotes a statement made by Father Coughlin in 1932 advocating "revaluation of our gold ounce." Since Mr. Roosevelt later took this very step and, in fact, went quite a distance along the

Coughlin silver proposals, it would seem either that Coughlin's views were correct or Roosevelt is as far wrong as the Holy Father.

E. C. WATSON

*Saint Petersburg,  
Florida.*

SIR: Much has been written about Father Coughlin. However I have not yet read an article with as much information as that written by John McCarten. I want to thank you for that article. I thank you because by publicity the activities of such men will be brought to the attention of the populace.

LEWIS STRYKER

*Brooklyn, N.Y.*

SIR: I have seen many articles attacking Father Coughlin on every conceivable ground, but have yet to encounter anything more scurrilous than Mr. McCarten's masterpiece, excepting possibly the gems offered by the *Daily Worker*.

It is so obviously based on half-truth, distortion, innuendo, and outright misstatement as well as misinterpretation, that it does not merit serious analysis for refutation.

KATHARINE H. JOSLIN

*Troy, N. Y.*

SIR: The tone and quality in Mr. McCarten's article put Father Coughlin's own *Social Justice* to shame. Any writer who will dogmatically assert: "Father Coughlin is a man nobody can trust" will not quibble to tell us why anybody does anything.

I certainly believe that Father Coughlin is deserving of much criticism and THE MERCURY was the one place where there was a chance of finding it, but your article was nothing but a concise summary of all the loose talk that has been making the rounds on him. No attempt to be factual or to present new material was even made! It defeated its own purpose by making him so absurd as to be impossible.

LUIGI ROSATI

*North Windham,  
Connecticut.*

SIR: As was to be expected, *Social Justice* has attacked THE MERCURY because it dared tell the truth about Father Coughlin. No doubt you will be receiving scurrilous letters from *Social Justice* devotees. Luckily for you, the kind of people who read the Father's magazine would not read a civilized publication like yours anyhow. Keep up the good work! You have given no quarter either to the lunatics of the Right or the lunatics of the Left. Your feature "Lunacy, Right and Left," is proof of it. It is sanity — I repeat, ordinary sanity — that we need at this moment, when quacks at both ends are pushing their wares.

ZELMA BURROUGHS

*New Orleans.*

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## LIECHTENSTEIN vs. NAZIS

SIR: As a citizen of the free democracy of Switzerland, one of Liechtenstein's neighbors, I feel myself bound to correct the statements in "The End of Liechtenstein," which you published in May.

Liechtenstein hasn't been spared Nazi propaganda, but this propaganda missed its aim. It has brought forth an enormous strengthening of national self-consciousness and unity. This is true for Switzerland as well as for Liechtenstein. I find it unfair to a small country, which is setting its face with admirable courage against the menace of Hitlerism, to spread rumors that must be founded either upon ignorance or malevolence.

DR. ALICE MEYER

*Zurich,  
Switzerland.*

## THE AUTHOR REPLIES

SIR: The tragedy of Liechtenstein is that Nazi rule is being imposed on it by force from the outside in spite of overwhelming opposition by its citizens. I agree with Dr. Meyer that Liechtenstein would be one of the last peoples of Europe willingly to adopt National Socialism or any part of it. The fact is that they have no voice in the matter. They did not want Prince Franz to abdicate, despite his age. Yet Nazi pressure — from

Berlin, not Vaduz — forced him from the throne and Nazi pressure dictated his successor. The new prince gave three government posts to the only Nazis in Liechtenstein. Last month the new prince conferred with Hitler and other high Nazi officials in Berlin and Munich. According to my information, which is corroborated by stories to the *Chicago Daily News*, the Nazis gave the prince his choice of retaining his Bohemian estates and giving the Nazis a free hand in Liechtenstein — or else.

Switzerland is faced with precisely the same situation. German propaganda has made its people solidly anti-Nazi yet combined pressure by the German and Italian governments have produced certain actions by the Swiss government that neither it nor the Swiss people would sanction if left to their own devices. Similarly Switzerland could not stand in the face of a German-Italian ultimatum without French or English support. Liechtenstein's only foreign friend is Switzerland.

ROBERT B. HOTZ

*Milwaukee.*

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### GERMANY IN 1914

SIR: Comparing the German army of 1914 with that of today, Major George Fielding Eliot in your June issue states that, upon mobilization, the equivalent of 121 divisions was then called up by the Germans. This is a gross exaggeration, since the total did not exceed the equivalent of 87½ divisions on all fronts, including the little-known "Northern Army," originally mobilized to protect the Kiel Canal in the event of a landing party from the North Sea. There were only 24 reserve divisions called up — exactly one-half of Major Eliot's figure — and there were no such things as "Landwehr Divisions," but only 17½ mixed *brigades*, none exceeding six battalions. Hence, if the German army today can put 90 divisions in the field, she will have a larger force than in 1914.

Again, the Major states that attacks on the British trade routes by the German raiders,

presumably surface vessels, were the one effective implement found for them during the last war. Well, these raiders destroyed less than 1 per cent of the British merchant fleet before they were driven from the seas. They destroyed only 62 vessels in sharp contrast to the more than 5000 vessels of all kinds which were destroyed by the submarines.

Furthermore, he belittles the effective use of the submarine in the World War by stating that no member of the British Grand Fleet was sunk or even torpedoed by the submarine. This may be true, but three battleships of the German High Sea Fleet and the Battle Cruiser *Moltke* (on two occasions) were torpedoed by English submarines and severely damaged. Besides, four British battleships were sunk by German submarines as well as the French battleship, *Jean Bart*, to say nothing of a host of lesser warships.

The supposed suitability of the German "pocket battleships" as commerce raiders is untrue, in view of the relatively limited "bunker" capacity. The obvious purpose of their construction was to make them as powerful as the 10,000 ton limit would permit, and any suitability for commerce raiding is purely coincidental.

Major Eliot is right in calling attention to the large "Versailles gap," by virtue of which some 14 classes of Germans failed to receive the regular one year or more training. It is likewise true that the Imperial Army was a much more coherent group than the present army, and that the latter is gravely lacking in fully trained officers. However, these points can easily be exaggerated, as is exemplified by the performance of the volunteer divisions which Germany put into the field in 1914. The 22nd, 23rd, 26th, and 27th reserve army corps, while they were badly mauled by the British expeditionary forces at the first Ypres, did no worse than some of the fully trained organizations. On the other hand, the 25th reserve army corps performed brilliantly in the Battle of Lodtz.

GRAHAM MAXWELL

*North Bergen,  
New York.*

SIR: Britain did *not* prove vulnerable in the War against Germany's submarines. History tells us Germany sank the ships *Hogue*, *Aboukir* and *Cressy*. Tell this to Major Eliot, he having made the contrary statement in his article *Germany Can't Win*.

MRS. OSCAR L. SHAFER

Cincinnati.

#### THE AUTHOR REPLIES

SIR: I cannot imagine where Mr. Maxwell gets his ideas as to German effectiveness at the beginning of the World War. After weighing all accounts, the conclusion reached by the Historical Section of the Army War College is that Germany was able to mobilize 123 divisions, the French put the number at 120, while I took the Germans' own figures, and plumped for 121. As to the reserve divisions particularly, Mr. Maxwell says there were only 24. Yet a little later on in his letter he mentions "the 22nd, 23rd, 26th, and 27th Reserve Corps" as having been in the field in 1914! A German corps in 1914 had two divisions, therefore by Mr. Maxwell's own account there were at least 54 reserve divisions in the field at that early stage of the war. I think it is obvious that he has confused divisions and corps in his figure of 24. I am quite aware that there was no such thing as a Landwehr division in the German Army at the outbreak of the war. I said "Landwehr troops equivalent to 16 divisions," which is correct. Mr. Maxwell misquotes me as to "German raiders." His presumption that I meant only surface vessels is unwarranted.

In my observation as to the submarine having been ineffective against the Grand Fleet, my purpose was to show that given proper protective measures and tactics, it is possible to prevent submarines from seriously interfering with *fleet* operations, and particularly that Italy could not hope, by means of the submarine, to break a blockade of the Mediterranean, by direct attacks on the British fleet, any more than the Germans were able to do this in the World War. As to the cruising radii of the so-called "pocket battleships" this is 10,000 miles — quite sufficient

for a good bit of commerce raiding, especially when operating from European ports and not in the vast distances of the Pacific.

I regret to have to point out that Mr. Maxwell is again in error regarding the German volunteer units. He is trying to make the point that a shortage of officers and noncommissioned officers is a defect whose results "can easily be exaggerated", and brings forward these volunteer units as a case in point. But it was precisely the availability of reserves of officers and noncommissioned officers that permitted these volunteer units to be formed at all! Lieutenant-General Balck, who commanded some of these troops in action, does not seem to share Mr. Maxwell's high opinion of them. He says: "Boundless enthusiasm could not compensate for insufficient training. In consequence, the young flower of the nation suffered heavy loss." In regard to the 25th Reserve Corps in particular, which Mr. Maxwell says "performed brilliantly," he is curiously at variance with the views of General Ludendorff, who remarks: "The 25th Reserve Corps was not able to effect any appreciable change in the situation. An army is not made in a few weeks, long training and tradition are required. Courage and devotion could not make up for lack of training."

In reply to Mrs. Oscar L. Shafer's observations regarding the loss of H.M.S. *Hogue*, *Cressy*, *Aboukir*, let me say that (1) these were not capital ships, but old cruisers; (2) they were not part of the Grand Fleet, but belonged to the 7th Cruiser Squadron of the Southern Force, working out of Harwich. Their fate has no bearing on my statement "no capital ship of the Grand Fleet, was even torpedoed, much less sunk, by a submarine" — my purpose being not to show that a single submarine cannot torpedo a single surface vessel, but that *fleets* can be protected against submarine attack and that submarines cannot interfere effectively with the operations of fleets in which proper anti-submarine precautions are taken.

GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT

Brooklyn, N. Y.



## COMMUNISTS IN SPAIN

SIR: Miss Frank in your June Open Forum seems to question that the International Brigades were inspired and managed by communists. Is it not true that their colors were the red flag and the red rosette — their emblems the hammer and sickle and the five pointed star of the Grand Orient — their salute the clenched fist — and their anthem the *International*? As for their agents and officers — André Marty, who organized the Black Sea fleet mutiny during the European war and was imprisoned by the French authorities as a deserter; Cunningham, who led the mutiny of British troops in Jamaica in 1920; Fred Copeman, who has boasted that he played an important part in the Invergordon mutiny in the British fleet; "Commandante" Carlos (Vittorio Vidali), expelled from the USA for subversive activities; Francisco Leone, editor of the Brazilian communist journal; the Russian Kleber "with his record of fighting with the Red armies in Russia and China"; Lukacz (Mate Zalka), one of the directors of the Bela-Kun dictatorship in Hungary.

Louis Fischer, official of the Soviet Propaganda Bureau who was sent to Barcelona, is the author of *Why Spain Fights On*. He states that: "In July 1937 the Republican Army was 520,000 of whom 210,000 were communists." Among those who were not communists, both in the Republican army and the International Brigades, were probably many gullible men who thought, at the start, that they were fighting for democracy.

BEATRICE ABBOTT

Melrose,  
Massachusetts.

## GHOST AS MIDDLEMAN

SIR: I am a graduate student at the University of Michigan; and I was very much interested in reading the article in your June issue entitled "Ghost Goes To College." As a student at Michigan, where Smith took his master's degree, I have heard a good deal of adverse criticism of his work, but I feel that

he is a definite asset to the college student today. Instead of detracting from my education, Smith has stood for me rather as another of my professors. I have come to think of him as a middleman between me and the complex, emotionless institution known as the University.

A STUDENT

Ann Arbor.

## DEFINING OUR LIBERALS

SIR: It seems to me that Albert Jay Nock's article in the May *MERCURY* deserves a little quibbling — especially since it is built around a quibble. The historic believers in political *laissez-faire*, which is merely another term for political liberalism, are still known as "liberals" in those few European countries where their heads are safe. The fact that in recent years Americans who have advocated what Mr. Nock calls "Statism" have come to be known as "liberals" does not mean that believers in the original doctrines of political *laissez-faire* "turned tail" and abandoned their old philosophy. I think it would be fairer to say that they continued to be liberals, and that the new "statists" merely usurped their brand name.

To me, the crux of the matter appears to be that our new brand of American "liberal" has continued to believe in political *laissez-faire*, while attacking economic *laissez-faire* at every point. They appear to believe that you can retain the former and abandon the latter. I think it would help their thought processes to realize that they are wrong. I also object to Mr. Nock's statement that the new "statists" alone are responsible for the continuing growth of governmental economic control. History tells me that our rugged individualist manufacturers were the first to yowl for a protective tariff, and they have been yowling for protection ever since if they have an economic advantage to gain therefrom.

Which brings me to the reason I write this letter. I object to Mr. Nock's statement that "there was more genuine historic liberalism

in Elihu Root's little finger than in all the Wilsons, LaFollettes, Roosevelts, put together." Robert M. LaFollette, Sr., saw clearly that business itself had destroyed, or was fast destroying economic *laissez-faire* — or economic liberalism. LaFollette's political crime, if you would have it so, was an attempt to restore economic liberalism by political action. That has been Borah's point of view as well. Whether this was wise we can have our doubts, but LaFollette's motives, at least, sprang from a sincere belief in the value of economic liberalism, in addition, perhaps, to nostalgia for the old days of small business.

CURTIS FULLER

Chicago.



### SPONTANEOUS EXTINCTION

SIR: I read with great interest "The Triumph of the Gadget," by Albert Jay Nock wherein the author discusses some views of mine. Mr. Nock has expressed very clearly and convincingly ideas with which I entirely agree. The strongest evidence of the deterioration of civilized man is the decrease in the birth rate. This phenomenon is very striking in Scandinavia, England, France, and in the upper third of the population of this country. It is an essential characteristic of this age. This tendency toward spontaneous extinction, observed in the best strains of the white races, is of profound significance.

DR. ALEXIS CARREL

Rockefeller Foundation,  
New York City.



### REPORTERS DRINK — IN WASHINGTON

SIR: I have just finished reading Stanley Walker's rather wistful "Decline of the Newspaper Souse." Hasn't Mr. Walker been in the National Press Club in Washington? I recently had an office there and the place was full of souses. Before that my office was in the Albee Building. There, at midnight, the ice water goes off leaving a powerful vacuum. The first Saturday night after I moved in

(this was during Prohibition) two newspapermen came to call. One carried tenderly, but a bit unsteadily, a small sized drink of whiskey and, generous soul that he was, he offered to split three ways. I had not the heart, so the drink was divided most meticulously into two parts. Then to increase the size if not the potency, one man held his drink under the ice-water faucet. Too late I remembered the vacuum — the whiskey vanished, and the look of utter amazement on the man's face was something to remember. "It's the Prohibitionists," he yelled, "they're attacking through the plumbing." The second man could not believe his eyes, so he too held his drink under the faucet and it too went up the pipe. Enraged he seized my ink bottle and held it under the faucet. As it went up the spout, he screamed, "Drink that, will you, till you are black in the face."

Here in Washington any mortician will take on a Press Club member's funeral at cut rates; he doesn't need to embalm — the corpse is already preserved in alcohol.

MARCH HEREFORD

Washington, D. C.



### ROOSEVELT IN SILVER

SIR: The President's refusal to have a statue erected to him in Puerto Rico as a mark of gratitude for dispensing other people's money there so generously, and the unveiling by his mother at the World's Fair of a three-foot head of the President made of the new, brilliant, non-tarnishing nickel-silver, may cause some people to charge inconsistency on the part of the President. But no such criticism is justified, as the truth of the matter is that a new use has been found for silver, and we may soon hope to see a good part of the thousands of tons of silver which the Government has been buying so lavishly put to a most noble and artistic use. We may soon expect to see replicas of this splendid bust of the President installed in every Post Office throughout the land by his great admirer and friend, Postmaster General Farley, and a large part of the population of this

country will have the opportunity of admiring the pleasant, shining countenance of the most brilliant failure we have ever had as President. When he went into office six years ago, we had over 10,000,000 unemployed, and to-day we have about the same number. Thus the most important issue has not begun to be solved, because the President cannot be made to see that it can only be solved by the co-operation of Government, Business, and Labor.

H. W. S.

*New York City.*

### IN BRIEF

The significant fact about the pile of letters attacking Mr. McCarten and the editors for the article on Father Coughlin is that they limit themselves to name-calling. Not one points to specific misstatements or errors. For a statement on a controversial personality, that article seemed to us eminently calm and factual. The circumstance that not one of the dozens of letters vilifying Mr. McCarten can cite specific mistakes or exaggerations of fact would seem to bear us out. . . . "The exposure of the bed-time thoughts of the pure-minded Nancy Hale in your July issue was in bad taste," avers Wilbur G. Manchester, Winsted, Conn., attorney. He refers, of course, to her short story "Little Family". . . . Jack Geard of Portland, Oregon, citing Major Eliot's remark that it takes years to train an army officer, adds that in the USA "under the present system of training reserve officers it would take centuries." He urges that reserve officers should command maneuvers instead of remaining in the sidelines where they receive no real experience. . . . "Whites who approach Negroes with fancy schemes taken from foreign lands are looked on with a wary eye by colored people," writes Ed. Patterson, Chicago, agreeing with George S. Schuyler. "Negroes will take help

from all sources, but the leadership will be colored not white". . . . Out of Grand Junction, Colorado, Ernest Leaverton comments on the small-town editor who squawked in our columns. Local experience, says he, has been that small-town editors are "out for the dough," and take upon themselves "the duties of peepers, night watchmen and heaters for all kinds of eggs — good, bad, and rotten". . . . Kate H. Tobin, Orangeburg, S. C., in commending William Edgerton's satirical piece about the North, suggests that "Isabelle Post might profit by a study of Mr. Edgerton's good-natured wit". . . . The letter of C. von Wedel, in our June Open Forum, brought plenty of protest. His estimate of a mere 12,000 in German concentration camps, many pointed out, is a striking understatement; 100,000 is the usual figure given by objective reporters, and at the other end figures as high as 200,000 are cited. According to a reader in Seattle, Mr. von Wedel confuses the issue rather disingenuously in stating that there were "more criminals in penal institutions before the Nazis came to power." The question, he writes, "is not about criminals but about political prisoners, racial undesirables, and others in the concentration camps. If Herr Himmler were to jail the criminals who stoned Catholic prelates and conduct pogroms against Jews, the penal institutions might be hard pressed for room." . . . Major George Fielding Eliot's analysis of Germany's military strength in the June number has been among the most widely quoted articles in recent magazine journalism. . . . Editorial comment on Phil Hamilton's San Francisco study was largely limited to the West Coast, and largely unlimited in its vigor. . . . Our private Gallup Poll (slightly biased in our own favor) shows that in general THE AMERICAN MERCURY is more extensively quoted and commented upon in the press than any other magazine. We trust it is because we continue to publish articles that go against the stream of popular enthusiasms and misconceptions.

## THE CONTRIBUTORS

ALBERT BRANDT (*Sex Under the Swastika*) is a German Professor of Philosophy, now in the United States. GLENN WARD DRESBACH (*Faces*) contributes verse frequently to THE MERCURY and other magazines. JAMES T. FARRELL (*Dos Passos and the Critics*) is author of the *Studs Lonigan* trilogy, other novels, short fiction, and literary criticism. CHARLES E. HEWITT, JR. (*My Home Town's a Democracy*) spent five years in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia as Chicago *Daily News* correspondent; he is now associate publisher of a newspaper in upstate New York. STEWART H. HOLBROOK (*Elegant Life of the Steel Barons*) is author of *Iron Brew, the Saga of American Ore and Steel*, to be published shortly by Macmillan. CLAUDE MCKAY (*Mystic Happiness in Harlem*), noted poet and novelist, is working on a Harlem novel, with the cults as background. JOHN RUSSELL MCCARTHY (*A Man Must Lie*) has published three books of verse. HARLAND MANCHESTER (*The Headmaster Murder Mystery*), former newspaperman and radio commentator, contributes extensively to national magazines. NATHAN SCHACHNER (*Ethan Allen: Pioneer Realtor*) decided, after fifteen years as a lawyer, to give his full time to writing and research. STUART SHAW (*Utopia Comes to Canada*) practices law in Calgary. S. L. SOLON (*Sex Under the Swastika*) is associate editor of the *Modern Quarterly*. LOUIS STODDARD (*The Wileless Heart*), a frequent contributor to THE MERCURY, lives in Esperance, New York. FRANK J. TAYLOR (*Group Medicine at Work*), well-known magazine writer, lives in San Francisco. CHARLES RUMFORD WALKER (*This Is War!*), author of *American City*, contributes to leading magazines. IRA WOLFERT (*In the Black Morning*) has had many of his short stories in the O'Brien collections; he works for the North American Newspaper Alliance. OWEN P. WHITE (*Shall We Annex Texas?*), author of many books, for twelve years associate editor of *Collier's*, is a Texan. JOHN T. WINTERICH (*Our State Lawmakers*) formerly was editor of the *American Legion Monthly*. ERICH WOLLENBERG (*How Strong Is Russia?*) is a graduate of the Soviet military academy and served for many years in the Red Army; he now lives in Paris.



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## Recorded MUSIC

\*\*\* indicate an outstanding performance,  
\*\* a competent performance, \* an acceptable performance. ††† denote exceptional recording, †† efficient recording, † poor recording.

### ORCHESTRAL

\*\*\*††† *Concerto for Orchestra in D, K. P. E. Bach:* (Victor Album 559, \$4.50). In structure like the Brandenburg Concertos of Emanuel Bach's father, the present vital work, richly rescored by Maximilian Steinberg, receives a gallant performance by the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. It is a first recording, and has the technical excellence now inseparable from the Boston product.

\*\*\*††† *Bolero, Ravel:* (Victor Album 552, \$3.50). The Boston Pops Orchestra conducted by Arthur Fiedler revivifies the great tune with the grizzling crescendo. It is probably the best, and maybe the last, of recorded *Boleros*.

\*\*\*†† *Symphony No. 5, in B Flat, Schubert:* (Columbia Album 366, \$6.00). Modeled on Mozart, this charming, lyrical work is distinctive early Schubert, whose slender scoring is realized by Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic Orchestra with the mobile transparency that only Toscanini can regularly rival. Easily the best of three recorded versions.

\*\*\*†† *The Swan Lake, Tchaikowsky:* (Columbia Album 349, \$6.00). Eleven excerpts from the Ballet, smoothly played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Antal Dorati. Good recording.

\*\*\*†† *Norwegian Dances No. 1 and 4, Op. 35, Grieg:* (Columbia P-69409, \$1.50). The best versions of these melodious, energetic pieces are created by the rhythmic work of the Orchestra of the Paris Conservatory under François Ruhlmann in a robust and realistic recording.



**\*\*\*††† Overture, The Secret of Suzanne, Wolf-Ferrari; and Slavonic Dance No. 15, in C, Op. 72, No. 7, Dvorak:** (Victor 4412, \$1.00). Another small disk of unusual merit. The sparkle of the two lively works is engagingly brought out by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra, while the quality of the reproduction is high even for this phonogenic band.

**\*\*\*† Suite for Strings, Purcell-Barbirolli:** (Victor Album 533, \$4.50). The six pieces chosen here and there from the theatrical music of Purcell, and arranged for strings by John Barbirolli, are of uneven interest. Other instruments are occasionally interpolated (including a remarkably loud English horn and four fine French horns), but the strings of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra do most of the work — no doubt capably, but obscured and badly balanced in a disappointing first recording. Mr. Barbirolli is the conductor.

**\*\*\*††† Serenade for String Orchestra in C, Op. 48, Tchaikowsky:** (Victor Album 556, \$5.00). Pleasant light music, smart direction (Sir Adrian Boult), deft strings (of the BBC Orchestra) and exceedingly faithful recording.

**\*\*\*†† Danse Villageoise, Grétry:** (Columbia Album X-126, \$3.25). Six dances from five operas, all of simple charm and fluent grace, neatly stylized by an orchestra under the direction of François Ruhlmann. Delectable.

**\*\*\*†† Carnaval Romain Overture, Op. 9, Berlioz:** (Victor 12436, \$1.50). A little marvel of sensitive direction in the first part; insufficiently energetic in the second. Eugene Bigot is the puzzler who negates his own excellence, commanding an anonymous orchestra.

**\*\*\*†† Invitation to the Dance, Weber-Berlioz:** (Victor 15192, \$2.00). An ungracious and angular interpretation by Arturo Toscanini, conducting the BBC Orchestra.

**\*\*\*†† Concerto for Violin, Mendelssohn:** (Victor Album 531, \$7.00). The fragile, buoyant, and unique *Concerto* interpreted orchestrally, by the gifted Yehudi Menuhin and the Colonne Orchestra of Paris, directed by Georges Enesco. One is not used to such large and bold treatment of the accompaniment, such resolute, principled balance of soloist

(Continued on page xii)

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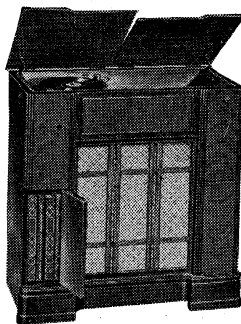
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#### CHAMBER-MUSIC

\*\*\*††† *Two Sketches, Griffes*: (Victor Album 558, \$4.50). Well above the merit of most contemporary chamber-music, the *Sketches* are appealing and resourceful essays on American Indian themes. They are played by the Coolidge Quartet with exalted skill and splendidly recorded.

\*\*\*††† *String Trio in C, Françaix*: (Columbia Album X-130, \$3.50). Lively, rather effective treatment of shabby material, played with gusto by the Pasquier Trio in a very resonant and realistic recording.

\*\*†† *Divertimento in E Flat, K 563, Mozart*: (Columbia Album 351, \$7.50). Mozart's only string trio has six movements, two fast, two slow, and two minuets. As in most divertimenti the sections are of varying value, and auditors' conversation is not prohibited. The Pasquier Trio play this only recorded version with resolute and chaste care; and the reproduction gives a strong impression of their material presence.

\*\*†† *Chorale for String Sextette, Roy Harris*: (Victor 12537, \$1.50). A sweet polyphonic structure somewhat reminiscent of the more effective *Novelettes* of Glazounow, sympathetically played by the Kreiner Sextette and richly recorded.

† *Piano Quartet in E Flat, Op. 16, Beethoven*: (Columbia Album 348, \$6.00). Beethoven's own transcription of the fine Quintet for Piano and Wind with the same opus-number, already recorded by Victor. Here it is prosaically played by Robert Schmitz and three members of the Roth Quartet, and recorded with insufficient volume in an enclosure whose acoustic properties ruin tonal values. Seven surfaces are occupied where six suffice, to complete a successful, but surprising, demonstration of modern recording at its worst.

#### INSTRUMENTAL

\*\*†† *Rondo in A Minor, K 511, Mozart*: (Victor 15421, \$2.00). A curious prescience of Chopin emphasized in the stylized interpretation by Paderewski.

\*\*†† *Affettuoso, No. 1, of Tre Canti ad una giovane fidanzata, Pizzetti; Tarantella, Op. 28, No. 2, Szymanowsky*: (Columbia 69398, \$1.50). Brilliant fiddling by Nathan Milstein and good accompaniment by Leopold Mittmann, in seldom-recorded pieces by superior modern composers. The tone could have been permitted greater reverberation.

\*†† *Andrea Chenier, Giordano*: (Columbia Operatic Set No. 21, \$19.50). The only (nearly) complete recorded performance of this opera echoes the unevenness of the music itself. The conductor, Lorenzo Molajoli, has managed the orchestra with firmness and vivacity, and has even managed to obtain some effect of unity among a group of indifferent singers. Of these Lina Bruna Rasa and Giuseppe Nessi are satisfactory; the best of the others hover near mediocrity. Curiously, the general feeling, thanks to Molajoli and the Scala Orchestra, is much superior to the singers.

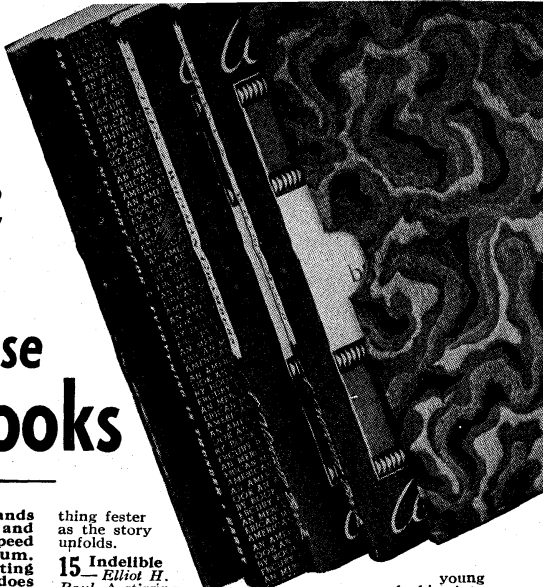
\*\*†† *Don Giovanni: Il mio tesoro, Mozart; and Elisir d'Amore: Una furtiva lagrima, Donizetti*: (Victor 15235, \$2.00). The Donizetti, which many sober critics regard as the worst of all arias, is not good enough for the prepossessing tenor of Richard Crooks; the Mozart, which critical opinion places several thousand per cent higher, should be accorded a little less robust treatment. And no doubt Dr. Wilfred Pelletier, who conducted the orchestra in the accompaniments, will be pleased to explain to Mozarteans why he chose to cut several measures from the beautiful closing cadence.

#### CONCERTI

\*\*\*†† *Concerto for Two Pianos, H. McDonald*: (Victor Album 557, \$6.50). Suggests Tschai-kowsky's American trip; but Tschai-kowsky, even in a Mexican hat, is meat for the brilliant aptitudes of the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski. Jeanne Behrend and Alexander Kelberine are the capable pianists.

(Continued on page xiv)

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(Continued on page xv)

## RECORDED MUSIC

\*\*\*†† *Légende, Op. 17, Wieniawski*: (Victor 15423, \$2.00). Wieniawski, first a virtuoso and then a composer, has no prestige at all in the second capacity. Nevertheless, his *Légende* is well built and frequently moving, melodious, and harmonically apt. Yehudi Menuhin plays the violin part well, Georges Enesco conducts with understanding and the Orchestra of the Colonne Concerts of Paris follows without much finesse.

### VOCAL

\*\*\*†† *Rhapsody for Contralto, Male Chorus and Orchestra, Op. 53, Brahms*: (Victor Album 555, \$6.00). This is the Alto Rhapsody, a favorite of the composer. Marian Anderson's great voice and musical sense, the well-trained University of Pennsylvania Choral Society and the Philadelphia Orchestra directed by Eugene Ormandy unite in a notable performance of Brahms's dark setting of Goethe's *Harzreise im Winter*, eclipsing the disks by Sigrid Onegin. Three familiar Brahms songs are included in the album, with the Philadelphia Orchestra accompanying instead of a piano; but the accompaniments are unobtrusive and acceptable.

\*\*\*†† *Deutsche Volkslieder, Volume I, Brahms*: (Columbia Album X-128, \$3.50). The nine songs in the album are sung in a pleasant baritone with a disarming naturalness by Ernst Wolff who accompanies himself at the piano. A valuable addition to the Brahms repertory and one of Wolff's superior efforts.

\*\*\*†† *Doubt, Glinka*; and *Night* (folksong): (Victor 15422, \$2.00). One of the finest records ever made by the late Fyodor Chaliapin.

\*\*\*†† *Haensel und Gretel: Abendsegen, Volklied and Lied des Sandmaennchens, Humperdinck*: (Victor 1948, \$1.50). A little masterpiece of vocal taste, tone, and control. — In the *Abendsegen* the record reproduces Elisabeth Schumann in both parts simultaneously, a procedure which guarantees the balance of the duet as the employment of two reciprocally envious *prime donne* could hardly do. But it is a pity a piano was substituted for the orchestra in the accompaniment.

\*\*\*†† Oberon: *Ozean, du Ungeheuer!* Weber: (Victor 15244, \$2.00). This is the most successful record of the intelligently conceived and richly executed series of disks made by Kirsten Flagstad with the Philadelphia Orchestra (directed by Eugene Ormandy). The soprano's mastery of the formidable aria reveals a solid beauty of voice throughout an extensive range; and the emotional aloofness that marred to some extent her recent *Komm o Hoffnung* is not apparent here. The recording of such arias, by such a singer and such an orchestra, has a value extending beyond the appreciation of our own epoch.

†† Lodoletta: *Se Franz dicesse il vero, Mascagni*; and *L'Arlesiana: E la solita storia, Cilea*: (Columbia 9151M, \$1.50). The penetrating tenor, Galliano Masini, hides his voice behind such a hedge of lugubrious histrionisms that what seems to be a good tonal quality is practically unnoticed.

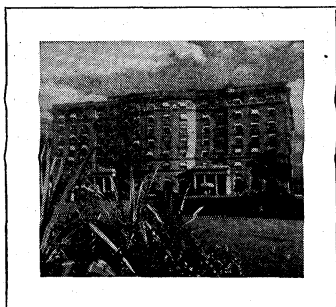
\*\*\*†† Early Choral Music: (Victor Album 535, \$7.50). The nine members of the remarkable vocal orchestra which made these records compose a single family, that of the Austrian George von Trapp. Their singing of polyphonic music of the XVIth Century is as unified in its discipline as a choir can attain. The twelve short works, largely madrigals, in this album, several recorded for the first time, constitute a pretty representative display of their abilities. Among the composers included are Praetorius, Lassus, Arcadelt, Sartorius and Dowland, with some less famous.

†† *Plaisir d'amour, Martini*; and *Santa Lucia*: (Victor 15348, \$2.00). Plebeian operatics have always been the lot of *Santa Lucia*. It is painful to hear a tenor, Beniamino Gigli, inflicting this treatment on *Plaisir d'amour*, one of the most exquisite songs ever written.

\*\*\*†† *Tosca: E Lucevan le stelle and Fanciulla del West: Ch'ella Mi Creda Libero, Puccini*: (Victor, one 10-inch disk, \$1.00). An exceptional tenor, Jussi Björling, lavishes his talents on two lugubrious items from Puccini. Both are familiar: the *Tosca* aria by name, and the *Fanciulla del West* (Cio-Cio San del Bar X) by its ancestors. The orchestral accompaniment is good, but somewhat discreet.

— C. G. B.

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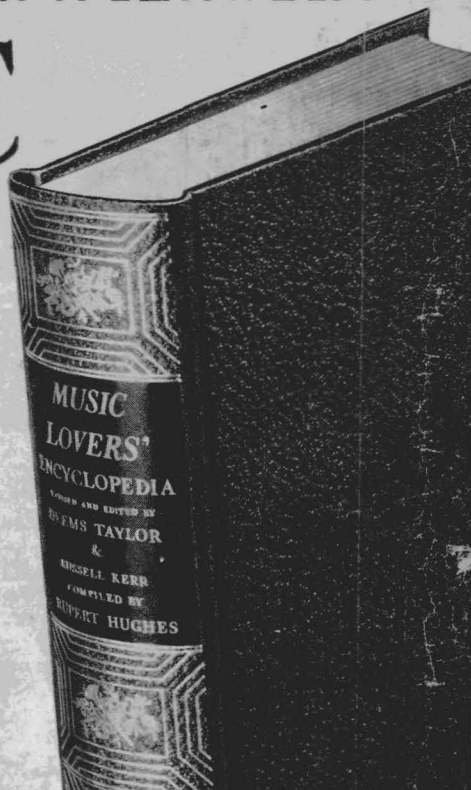
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