Polling America: The Midwest *Simon W. Gerson*

NEW MASSES

FIFTEEN CENTS

November 12, 1940

USA—USSR Cooperation?

23 Years: A World Remade

by Joshua Kunitz

The Dean of Canterbury

on the USSR: Nation of Scientists

Somewhere in France

by Ilya Ehrenbourg

Between Ourselves

You Can Still Vote . . .

THE elections are over, but you still have the chance to vote to continue the life of NEW MASSES.

Six weeks ago we appealed to you to raise $6,000 to enable us to continue publication. Earlier in the year we had raised about $20,000. That additional $6,000 was absolutely necessary to cover our total annual deficit.

These figures are cold in type. But every reader surmises how big with life they are, and many have responded splendidly. Dollar donations particularly have been numerous — and hundreds of heartfelt letters tell us how much NEW MASSES means. As we go to press our fund stands at $3,950. This week, in order to conserve our resources, we were compelled once more to reduce the size of the magazine to twenty-four pages. Much valuable material had to be omitted, articles so timely that had you read them in manuscript, you would have dug down into your pockets to see to it that they got into the magazine. But we couldn't do it this week. We don't want to be compelled to retreat again next week. We, you, all of us, don't want to miss any issues. Our nation's future must have the truth NEW MASSES brings.

Though many of our readers have pitched in, there are still thousands who have not. We urge those of you who haven't to consider the following:

1: Could you send us a minimum donation of $1? If each of you did, NEW MASSES would be out of danger immediately.

2: Could you get similar donations from your friends?

3: Could you arrange a freedom-of-the-press house party for the benefit of NEW MASSES? If we had 500 such affairs from coast to coast during the next few weeks we would be out of danger for many months.

This is the final appeal in this autumn drive. The fate of your magazine is in the balance. You have the final say.

The Editors.

(Please turn to page 20)

BECAUSE our printers do not work on Election Day, NM went to press a day earlier in order to reach subscribers and newsstands at the usual time. Analysis of the results of the national elections will appear in the next issue.

Our novel quiz program "Interpretation, Please" will take place, we remind you, Thursday evening, November 14, at Webster Hall. A panel of experts will answer questions submitted by the audience on domestic and foreign affairs. The panel will consist of Joseph Starobin, A. B. Magil, William Blake, Joshua Kunitz, Victor Yakhontoff, and Ruth McKenney who will act as interlocutor. All tickets are 50c, but those buying them in advance will be seated in the reserved section.

Tickets are available at NM's office or at the Workers Book Shop at 50 East 13th Street. More details on the back cover.

Joseph North will speak at the New York Workers School November 9, 2:30 PM, on "What's Happening in Mexico and Cuba?"

Corliss Lamont who frequently contributes to NM will be one of the participants in a meeting sponsored by the American Committee for Friendship with the Soviet Union. The topic will be Soviet-American collaboration. Other speakers include Dr. Harry F. Ward, Julia Church Kolar, and Dr. Thomas L. Harris. The meeting takes place at Manhattan Center, November 15 at 8:15 in the evening.

Who's Who

JOSHUA KUNITZ is a prominent authority on the Soviet Union and the author of *Dawn Over Samarkand.* . . . Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury Cathedral, is the author of the book, *The Soviet Power,* to be published this month. . . . Simon W. Gerson is on tour for NM. . . . Ilya Ehrenbourg is a famous Soviet author and correspondent who has written for NM for many years. . . . Isidor Schneider was formerly literary editor of NM and is the author of *From the Kingdom of Necessity.* . . . Herbert Aptheker has often contributed to NM and is the author of *The Negro in the Civil War, The Negro Slave Revolt in the US,* and *The Negro in the American Revolution.* . . . Hy Kravif is on the staff of Labor Research Association. . . . Ed Falkowski is a former Pennsylvania coal miner who has worked in pre-Hitler Germany and in the Soviet Union. . . . Ralph Ellison is a young Negro writer and critic.

This Week

NEW MASSES, VOL. XXXVII, NO. 8

November 12, 1940

Two weeks' notice is required for change of address. Notification sent to NEW MASSES rather than to the post office will give the best results.

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NEW MASSES

VOLUME XXXVII NOVEMBER 12, 1940 NUMBER 8

Twenty-Three Years: A World Remade

Despite all the calumny, the USSR is a beacon to the world. What happened in one year to the liberated Bielo-Russians. The concluding article in Joshua Kunitz' series.

THE Soviet truth, despite calumny and lies, finds its way to the hearts of the oppressed of the earth. On the twenty-third anniversary of the establishment of Soviet power this great truth shines more brightly than ever.

In the spring of 1936 I was in a Polish train on my way back from the Soviet Union. Opposite me in the coupe sat a young man in his late twenties who kept on staring disconcertingly at the Soviet paper I held in my hand and the box of Soviet cigarettes that lay by my side. I felt he was consumed with curiosity, but having once had an unpleasant experience with the Polish comic opera police, I was careful not to encourage conversation. I kept my eyes buried in the paper, but I held it in such a way as to enable the fellow opposite to read it without much exertion and without attracting the attention of the other occupants of the coupe. This silent play lasted a long time. Finally, when the other passengers left the coupe at one of the stops, the fellow bent over and diffidently, in broken Russian, asked me to let him try one of the Soviet cigarettes. Certainly, help yourself. A warm, grateful smile lit up his face. The reverent way in which he took up the box; the caressing, loving, gentle manner in which he handled it, turned it, twisted it, examined every detail of the design, read every word on the label; the glow of anticipated pleasure with which he finally opened the box, pulled out the long-stemmed cigarette, and put it in his mouth; the expression of happiness with which he leaned back and inhaled the first puff, gave me the very distinct feeling that I was witnessing not an ordinary everyday act but a rare and solemn rite of consecration. "A fine cigarette, a very good smoke," he soliloquized. I was sorry I could not share his enthusiasm. For I was a "Camel" addict, and even the best Soviet cigarettes were for me but a poor substitute. Nevertheless I nodded assent, feeling that it would be downright cruel to suggest anything that would reflect on the supreme virtues of the Soviet product.

The train started, our fellow passengers sauntered back into the coupe, and the two of us lapsed back into sympathetic though silent communion.

It was a long journey from Slonim to Warsaw. The train was crowded most of the time and the sought-for opportunity for intimate conversation never came. But I did manage to learn that he was a Bielo-Russian, a textile worker two years unemployed, and that he was going to Warsaw to relatives in pursuit of a job. Finally, we reached Warsaw. All the passengers in the coupe were getting off, but the young fellow lingered on. During the last minute's rush when everybody was busy with his own bundles and things, the young fellow leaned over and whispered to me embarrassedly, "I see your cigarette box is almost empty. Would you do me a favor and give me that box as a souvenir? I want to show it to my father." He looked longingly at the paper, too, but did not dare ask for it. I caught his glance, and gave him both. He quickly tucked box and papers into his breast pocket, meticulously buttoned his coat to the very neck, casually raised his hat, and lost himself in the general exodus. About five minutes later, when the car was completely deserted, he suddenly reappeared, carrying a paper bag filled with oranges. "Please take this as an expression of my deep gratitude." I felt a little silly, for I had done nothing to merit the fellow's gratitude. His manner, however, was so winning and touching, that I yielded, though I was quite certain he could not afford such an expensive gift. As I accepted the bag, he brought his face very close to mine, grasped my hand and shook it vigorously, and whispered: "Tell me, when are they coming?" Before I had a chance to confess my ignorance, the whistle blew and the fellow dashed out of the train.

Maligned and misrepresented, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics shines like a beacon to the oppressed of a capitalist world darkened by war and reaction. This indisputable fact occasionally is admitted—with much reluctance, to be sure—even in the capitalist press. Of late, since the eyes of the world have been fixed on the Balkans, we have had such admissions from Cyrus Sulzberger in the *Times*, Leland Stowe in the *Post*, and from various other Balkan correspondents. The most recent recording of this fact comes from G. E. R. Gedye of the *Times:*

> To speak Russian in Varna [Bulgaria], coupled with the explanation that one had come ashore from the Soviet ship, seemed a password to the hearts of all the inhabitants. . . . At one place a cloakroom attendant whom I addressed in Russian glanced to right and left, then thrust his hand into mine saying, "Tovarisch, Tovarisch, when are you coming, you Russian brothers? . . . He asked for some Russian money as a souvenir and I gave him a few kopeks. "I shall keep that, Comrade," he told me, "and never spend it until the Red Army is here."

But Mr. Gedye would not be true to his dual self if he let this tribute to the USSR slip by unchallenged. After mollifying his conscience by reporting the fact, he indulges his resentment by trying to mar the impression. So he discusses the question of what actually happens in a country that joins the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. The answer he provides is the yes and no answer (with heaviest and final emphasis, of course, on the no), characteristic of his entire series. He admits that hours are shortened, that land is "confiscated and distributed to the rejoicing peasants," that no " 'racial' lunacy" or persecution of the Jews is tolerated. But, he insists, the peasants are happy only until collectivization is launched; the workers until the hours of labor are lengthened; the population as a whole until the "illusory" character of Soviet democracy is grasped; and everybody until the "shortage of goods became chronic and leveled the country with the Soviet Union."

Mr. Gedye's distress over the soul-destroying effect the Soviet system might have on personal liberty—that, only several paragraphs after he tells how the Bulgarian cloakroom attendant "glanced to the right and left" before he ventured to express his enthusiasm for the Soviet Union—is rather puzzling. But we will not be too upset by his melancholy forecast. Having noted his defects in perceiving the present, we cannot place too much trust in his visions of the future. Furthermore, history has fortunately provided ample opportunity to find out what sovietization has actually brought to the populations of other countries.

Let us take for example, Western Bielo-Russia, the homeland of the fervent young fellow I had met in the Polish train, and Western Ukraine, two countries which have long since passed the "few months" limit set by Mr. Gedye. Since Sept. 17, 1939, when Red Armies moved into Poland to rescue 13,000,000 Ukrainians, Bielo-Russians, Poles, and Jews from the threat of Nazi enslavement, the following progress has been made in Bielo-Russia:

Unemployment has been liquidated. As compared with 1938, the total industrial output has increased by 195.7 percent. The production of woolen goods has grown by 169.2 percent, of leather shoes by 243.5 percent, of matches by 351.4 percent. (In Poland matches were highly taxed and were considered a luxury. Peasants would split a match into four parts, and whenever possible, they used flint to obtain fire.) The production of peat, of agricultural machinery, of sport goods, and kitchen utensils has increased manifold. Fifty-six million rubles have already been put into the reconstruction of the textile industry of

Bielostok. Under the Polish regime, the Bielostok textile industry produced between five and six million meters of goods a year. Since Jan. 1, 1940, the reconstructed plants have already produced 10,500,000 meters, by the end of the year the total will exceed 13,000,000 meters, and the plan for 1941 is between fifteen and sixteen million meters. The Dnieper-Bug Canal, the completion of which attracted much attention in the world press, was built in seven months—202 kilometers!

During this year, over 1,000,000 acres of arable land were distributed among poor and middle farmers. Fourteen thousand poor peasant households have received horses, and 33,400 cows. Thirty thousand peasant households have already joined in 605 collective farms, and everywhere new cottages, barns, stables, and cattlesheds are springing up as if by magic. In a region where the use of any language, except Polish, was suppressed, there are now 4,278 Bielo-Russian schools, 173 Russian, 932 Polish, 150 Jewish, and sixty-one Lithuanian and Ukrainian. In the same region, six new professional theaters have been opened: three Bielo-Russian, one Polish, one Russian, one Jewish. One hundred new movie houses, and five palaces of folk art have come into existence. Since January 1, 110,000,000 rubles has been spent on public health.

I could go on citing such figures ad infinitum. But even the few already cited should throw some light on the worth of Mr. Gedye's prophecies of "leveling down," "chronic shortages," etc.

Analogous progress has been accomplished in Western Ukraine. I do not wish to overload the article with statistics. I will cite a few, although many more are available. During 1940 in Western Ukraine, seven pedagogical institutes have been opened, one medical school, and one conservatory of music. New schools for the liquidation of illiteracy among adults have been opened, accommodating 440,000 students. Of the sixteen existing professional theaters, thirteen have been opened since last year. Of the 226 cinema theaters, 117 have been opened under Soviet rule. Fifty-five houses of culture, 3,058 district and village clubs, 460 libraries, 21 museums have sprung up since September 1939. Also 106 new hospitals, twenty maternity homes, 331 clinics and dispensaries, 108 permanent and seasonal nurseries, 241 kindergartens. The kindergartens alone cost the state 21,000,000 rubles. Unemployment has been practically abolished. Industries that had not been working for ten or fifteen years have been restored—altogether 978 such enterprises, and many new factories have been built. Over 250,000,000 acres of land have been distributed among the poor and middle peasants, and scores of thousands of horses and cattle distributed among those who could never have hoped to possess them in the old days.

In one year, the farms of these two newly liberated territories have been enriched with 2,180 tractors, over 100 combine harvesters, 1,172 complex threshing machines, over 2,000 motor trucks, 1,119 sowing machines, and numerous other types of modern agricultural machines.

But statistics, however exhaustive, can scarcely convey the hope, the vision, the fervor, the exultation, that a year of Soviet power has brought into the lives of these peoples. Read the letters that have been appearing in the Jewish *Morning Freiheit* and the magazine *Soviet Russia Today* sent by people from those regions to their relatives in this country; look through the hundreds of available pictures recording the life of those peoples; examine the daily reports in the Soviet press from Grodno, Bielostok, Lvov, Tarnopol, Borislav, Baranovichi, Slonim, Brest; read the poems and songs and stories that are now being created by this liberated folk, and, if you are no stranger to human emotion, your heart will glow with pride, pride in man, in his irrepressible spirit, in his vast powers of creation and rehabilitation.

As against Mr. Gedye's dire prophecies of a future he knows nothing about, I should like to present to the reader the testimony of natives who have both seen and lived in the future, and who know whereof they speak.

Here is Wanda Wasilievska, the famous Polish novelist and short story writer. A left liberal of a well-to-do aristocratic Cracow family, her creative work was mainly concerned with the life and struggles of the peasantry. When the choice had to be made whether to remain in the part of Poland that was being ravaged by the Nazis or to take her twelve-year-old daughter and escape in the direction of the advancing Red Army, she naturally chose the latter.

In peasant disguise she traveled several hundred miles from Warsaw before she finally reached Lvov where the Red Army was about to enter. Vast throngs were crowding the streets. Everywhere a sense of expectation, anxiety, misgiving, fear, hope. What will the Red Army be like? How will it behave? What kind of a life will it bring in its wake? Reassuring rumors had already reached the town. Yet people were worried. And so was Wasilievska. Then the first Soviet tank came rumbling up the street, and another, and a third. Soon the town was filled with Red Army men, gay, laughing, friendly, simple, communicative, informed, courteous, sympathetic, ready to answer questions, to tell about life in the Soviet Union—to explain, to reassure, to console. "If the Soviet Revolution produced nothing but this type of man," exclaims Wanda Wasilievska in her first article, written a couple of days later, "then the Revolution has created a miracle."

Or take the venerable old Ukrainian, Professor K. O. Studinsky. He appears in the notebook of the famous Soviet Ukrainian playwright, Alexander Korneichuk, who had entered Lvov with the Red Army:

> The next day, early in the morning, someone knocked at my door in the hotel.
>
> "Come in!"
>
> On the threshold stood a very old man. Nervously he clasped his hat, tried to say something, but couldn't. He was so excited that it took several minutes before I understood who was before me. He was mumbling something in a subdued voice—"Joy . . . happiness . . . sacred."
>
> It was Professor Studinsky. He was weeping.
>
> I will never forget those moments.
>
> A few days passed, and at a meeting I saw a young inspired face, and heard a ringing voice, and was amazed at the change. That was rejuvenation, the greatest festivity in the history of the Ukrainian people. That man, full of strength and energy, with overwhelming enthusiasm was calling upon the people to build a new life under the banners of

The Truth of Our Cause: Stalin

THE chief conclusion to be drawn is that the working class of our country, having abolished the exploitation of man by man and firmly established the socialist system, has proved to the world the truth of its cause. That is the chief conclusion, for it strengthens our faith in the power of the working class and in the inevitability of its ultimate victory.

The bourgeoisie of all countries asserts that the people cannot get along without capitalists and landlords, without merchants and kulaks. The working class of our country has proved in practice that the people can get along without exploiters perfectly well.

The bourgeoisie of all countries asserts that, having destroyed the old bourgeois system, the working class is incapable of building anything new to replace the old. The working class of our country has proved in practice that it is quite capable not only of destroying the old system but of building a new and better system, a socialist system, a system, moreover, to which crises and unemployment are unknown.

—From his speech "From Socialism to Communism" delivered before the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March 1939.

Lenin and Stalin. That man was Professor Studinsky.

Youth is born in action. It triumphs over time.

In March 1940, during the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Wanda Wasilievska and Professor Studinsky were among those elected by the Ukrainian population of Lvov to represent them.

And several months later, now members of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Wasilievska and Studinsky were at the great Kremlin Hall, receiving the delegations from Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bukovina, and Bessarabia who had come to apply for admittance into the great Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Space does not permit the reproduction of the full text of the greeting Studinsky and Wasilievska delivered on the occasion. Here are but a few brief excerpts:

Studinsky: "I greet you, long suffering Bessarabia, you who have groaned under the heavy Rumanian yoke. I bow my head before those thirty thousand killed and tortured in the Rumanian prisons only because they wished to be free citizens of the Moldavian Socialist Soviet Republic.

"I bow my head in reverence and greet you also because it was on Bessarabian soil that Ukrainian culture once flourished, and that it was there that the great writer Michael Kotziubinsky lived and created and drew his subjects from the life of the Moldavians.

"And I greet you, my own, long suffering, verdant Bukovina, which produced our great writers Urii Fedkovich and Olga Kobylianskaia.

"I greet you, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, in the name of the entire Soviet Ukraine, as one who from his earliest childhood dreamed of the unification of all Ukrainian lands, as a scientific worker, who for decades has contributed his knowledge and research to the Ukrainian treasure house of culture.

". . . Increase your strength, develop, build a new culture, national in form and socialist in content. Remember, no one will ever again succeed in violating your land, no one will destroy your native schools as was the case in Poland of the *pans* and in Rumania of the *bojars*. In the Soviet Union all nations are equal, free, assured of the right to a free and cultured life. . . . 193,000,000 citizens of the Soviet Land, united in the friendly family of Soviet peoples, will follow and assist you in your labors. . . ."

Wasilievska: "Not so very long ago—or was it long ago?—I too had entered this Hall for the first time. With a beating heart, with a choking breath. One who had lost her country, only to find it. And now I too feel like a hostess here. . . . Listen, listen attentively, you have come from afar, hear how our country is growing. Learn the pride that fills our hearts. Learn the love that throbs in our breasts. Come to feel yourselves as solidly, as much at home here as the rest of us do. . . ."

In describing the occasion in the Soviet press, Wasilievska notes that the chairman asked: "Who wishes to speak on Comrade Molotov's report?" Her comment is:

But what more can be said? Everything is happening just as one fervently hoped. Only still more joyously, still more magnificently. All one wants to do is to rise, and to clap one's hands, and shout—and be happy with a deep happiness, and to straighten out with pride. And to vote Yea. A hundred times, with pride and joy, to vote Yea! . . .

How bleakly unimaginative seems Mr. Gedye's projection into the future, how lacking in humanity, how paltry and mean. But even more inspiring and moving is Wasilievska's address to her countrymen, written on the first anniversary of the sovietization of Western Ukraine. Unfortunately, it is much too long to be given in full. After a retrospective glance at the miserable life of the workers and peasants in old Poland, at the helplessness and cowardice of the ruling class during the Nazi onslaught, at the joy that came in the wake of the Red Army's advance, the author comes to the present:

You are free!

Days pass, and the first, the most important year in your life comes to an end. The first year that you are in your fatherland, for the Soviet Union is the fatherland of all those who struggle. The first year that you have been in your own home, working for yourself, forging your own destiny. You are your own master, you yourself give orders to yourself and you yourself carry them out. You yourself are building for yourself.

Every hospital founded in the liberated lands, every new school, every kindergarten, every factory—is testimony of your truth; every collective farm formed on the land which once belonged to the nobility, the landowners; every state farm which enhances the well-being of your country.

No masters and no slaves. No injured and no injurers. No exploited and no exploiters.

Turn round and see what has been accomplished.

You will see the destroyed barriers of hatred which loomed among people of different nationalities. You will see hundreds of schools in places where they never existed. You will see hospitals and sanatoria in places where men died without help and without anybody attempting to save them. You will see kindergartens where heretofore the only playground was the gutter. You will see hands busy at work, where heretofore unemployment reigned. You will see peasants' ploughs on land which heretofore belonged to one man.

Look round and rejoice at what has already been done.

Michaels

And give an account to yourself as to what has *not* been done or has been done *badly*. A conscientious, harsh account of an honest man. You are the boss, you are in your own household, and you are responsible for everything that takes place. If there is something that isn't yet quite so—seek the fault in your own self. In your own, perhaps too feeble, will. In your own, perhaps too sloppy, work.

And look into the future. From the perspective of a year's work and experience look into the coming days.

My thoughts wander back to the fervent young fellow I met in the Polish train. What has happened to him? Was he among those who have been rescued by the Red Army? Was he among those thousands who threw flowers at the speeding Soviet tanks, and raised their fists in revolutionary salute to the red harbingers of a new life? Or was he blown to bits by a Nazi bomb, or killed by a counter-revolutionary Polish bullet? I cannot know. But one thing I do know. If he is alive, if he is in the Soviet Union, if he has eyes to see, a heart to feel, a brain to think, and hands to work, he is happy, happier than he ever dared to dream on that dreary job-hunting journey to Warsaw more than four years ago.

As to Mr. Gedye, I do not know any greater tribute to the potency of the Soviet truth than the fact that after twenty-three years of steady glow even an inimical reporter like him can summon neither the skill nor the zeal to conceal it wholly. For all the sophistry and weasel words, for all the acrid murk with which he tries to envelop it, the socialist truth breaks through vibrant, luminous, intense. And that truth is:

After twenty-three years, "a spirit of real, classless comradeship which takes account of neither age, sex, or income" has come to dominate the social relations of 193,000,000 people spread over one-sixth of the land surface of the globe.

After twenty-three years, the Soviet school, and home, and social milieu have created a generation of children which for the spirit of confidence, self-reliance, independence, and trust is unique among the children of the world.

After twenty-three years, the Soviet lesson of absolute equality and fraternity of peoples—of all peoples, all races, all nationalities—has been firmly and indestructibly established among 193,000,000 people over one-sixth of the land surface of the globe.

After twenty-three years, "no Soviet citizens would contemplate a return to capitalism in any form among themselves and any threat of that would doubtless unite them in resistance as nothing else would."

And I will end as I began: If in the infinitesimal, historically speaking, span of twenty-three years the Soviet Union had accomplished nothing else but these four things, its right to eternal glory would be assured. And those who have had the vision of a united, free, confident, exuberant socialist humanity and have succeeded in making that vision a reality are assured of the gratitude and reverence of endless generations to come.

JOSHUA KUNITZ.

STATE EXPENDITURES *for* PUBLIC HEALTH

1937 — 10.3 BILLIONS *of* RUBLES

1942 PLAN — 16.5 BILLIONS *of* RUBLES

EACH COIN REPRESENTS 500 MILLION RUBLES

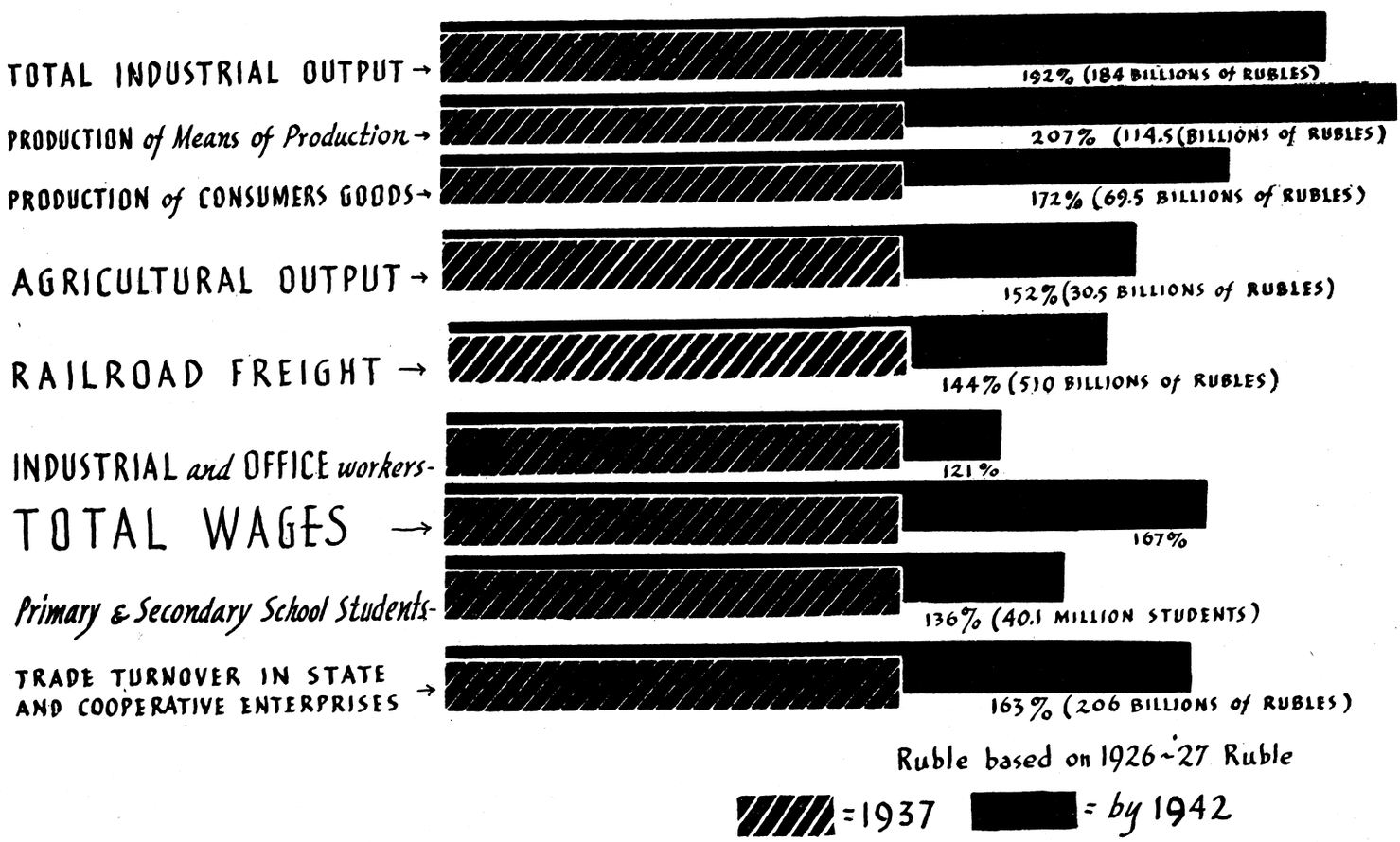
NURSERY *and* KINDERGARTEN FACILITIES

1937 — 1.8 MILLION CHILDREN

1942 PLAN — 4.2 MILLION CHILDREN

EACH SYMBOL REPRESENTS ACCOMMODATIONS FOR 600,000 CHILDREN

THE SOVIET UNION LOOKS AHEAD. While all other countries slid backward in employment, production, wages, public services, socialism strode in seven-league boots. There's no "market" or "surplus" problem here. These charts show a peaceful and prosperous one-sixth of the earth.



COTTON GOODS

1937  3,442.4 MILLIONS OF METRES

1942 (PLAN)  4,900 MILLIONS of METRES

EACH BOLT REPRESENTS 100 MILLION METRES IN ROUND NUMBERS

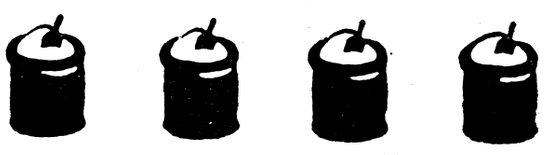
LEATHER SHOES

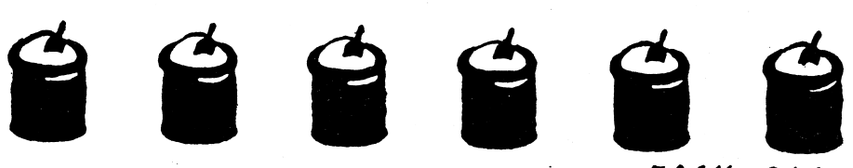
1937  164.2 MILLIONS OF PAIRS

1942 (PLAN)  258 MILLIONS

EACH PAIR OF SHOES REPRESENTS 40 MILLION PAIRS

GRANULATED SUGAR

1937  2,421 THOUSANDS OF TONS

1942 (PLAN)  3,500 THOUSANDS OF TONS

EACH BAG REPRESENTS 600,000 TONS

CANNED GOODS

1937  873 MILLIONS OF CANS

1942 (PLAN)  1,800 MILLIONS

EACH CAN REPRESENTS 110 MILLION CANS (OF 400 GRAM CONTENT)

All figures are in round numbers

A Nation of Scientists

The Dean of Canterbury says science in the USSR is not frustrated. The connection of science with Soviet state planning. How it differs from other countries.

THE Soviet Union sought and seeks the aid of science in every branch of human activity. No country in the world holds science in higher esteem or provides its scientists with better and more ample equipment.

This is natural and inevitable in a land where the conception of the role of science in the organization of society is new and different. In Western countries science is not regarded as a necessary part of social organization. Merchants, soldiers, lawyers, landed proprietors, or clergy have little understanding of the principles or practice of science. They distrust it or ignore it. Factory operatives join in the distrust: science for them is the source of wealth-producing and labor-saving machinery where others get the wealth and they the unemployment.

Czarist Russia was many steps behind even the Western countries in its attitude to science. It had, indeed, its scientists and its Academy of Sciences, founded by Peter the Great about 1724, and could boast many famous names — Mendeleev, Pavlov, Lomonosov, Karpinsky, and the like. Czarist science, however, lacked financial support and evoked no popular enthusiasm. It was an elegant ornament and a private enthusiasm. Scientists worked on, pinched by the state and unheeded by the masses. Science was not fundamental in the czarist state.

Soviet social philosophy, on the other hand, finds its very roots in modern physical and biological investigation. A scientific mode of thought permeates the innermost consciousness of its leaders and percolates among the masses.

This different fundamental attitude to science naturally reveals itself in government policy and practice. Industrial and agricultural problems are carefully considered in their relation to scientific possibilities and needs, and the appropriate research is concentrated on their solution. Hence the multitude of research stations which spring up side by side with industry and agriculture in industrial and agricultural centers.

There were 2,292 of these research institutes in the USSR in 1938, as compared with 211 in 1918, and there are 41,000 research workers in institutes, schools, and colleges, of whom 4,000 operate in the Academy of Science alone.

UNIFIED RESEARCH

Research in the Soviet Union is unified as well as extended. This marks a most important advance, avoiding the overlapping which duplicates work without duplicating results. The secrecy which refuses, for financial and competitive reasons, to pool inventions and discoveries, is likewise avoided, and gives place to an openness which makes knowledge acquired in one section of the field immediately available elsewhere. Science in the Soviet Union is coordinated from top to bottom, and all its results are pooled. Its tasks are wide and its encouragement is generous. The English chemist, G. C. Eltenton, declared, while he was studying the production of hydrogen carbons by ion guns, that he found opportunities for pure research wider than in England, where the majority of chemists are in the main restricted to immediate problems, and to problems selected by their masters.

In the Soviet Union, again, science brings tangible benefits to all workers and disasters to none. Consequently, the people are at one with the administrators in the new enthusiasm. The whole community is eager for new knowledge and desires to keep in touch with its leading scientists. Scientific conferences, or the election of Academicians, vie with sport as front-page news, and speakers on science require the largest auditoriums when they address the public. Academician Keller says that 200,000 young collective farmers used his "Plant Life" and his "What Is Chemistry?"

FRUSTRATION OF SCIENCE UNKNOWN

This popular enthusiasm for science is fostered at the very point—the village and peasant community—where it has ever been most weak. The cottage laboratory movement spreads like a prairie fire. It is now common to find, as the normal equipment of a village community, a laboratory, where experiments in the vernalization of seed—that is, the stimulation of development before planting—and like work proceeds by specially trained members of the village community.

"Frustration of Science" in the sense in which Prof. P. M. S. Blackett uses the term is unknown in the Soviet Union. The cry "A moratorium on science" never arises in Russia, as in England or America: nor need it do so, since production is regulated and a glut is impossible so long as human need is still unsatisfied. Every man, woman, and child, therefore, in the Soviet Union, is interested in increasing the aggregate wealth which provides for the amenities, securities, and opportunities of life, and all the younger generation at least welcome science as the best instrument for achieving increased productivity.

It should be noticed with care that the Soviets have not created special sorts of science or scientific method. The Soviet scientist uses the same telescope, microscope, and spectroscope as the Western scientist. Soviet science differs in its relation to social life rather than in its technical methods or appliances. Among the Soviet people it is fundamental and encouraged with resolute enthusiasm; among capitalist peoples, after being tolerated with condescension, it is now frustrated without misgiving.

The intimate connection of science with Soviet state planning can be seen at a glance. The size of industry, agriculture, and machinery is calculated on the estimate of need. Machines require metals, railways, and motive power. Material resources will be in constant demand; human resources, too. Hence the many research institutes directed by exceptional men within the structure of a planned research system and the deliberate quest for a development of the particular abilities of individual scientists.

The Soviets could not rely permanently upon foreign scientists and technicians, nor accept blindly the results of foreign experiment and practice.

Soviet engineering problems differ from ours and demand different solutions. Take an example from Soviet railways. The Soviet gauge is wide because land is cheap. The English gauge is narrow because land is dear. Trains are heavier, but traffic is less frequent in the Soviet Union than here. Consequently Soviet rails must stand a heavier blow at less frequent intervals, but need less general strength than ours. The constitution of Soviet rail steel must differ accordingly. That is a problem for Soviet research. It is one problem out of many. Hence the State Planning Commission equips each industry with its own research institute to solve its own routine problems.

There is an interesting tendency to go further. Rehbinder, for instance, the director of the Laboratory of Chemical Physics in Moscow, believes that the primary function of applied science is to create new industries, not to get production out of present difficulties. It must lead, not follow. It must discover new possibilities.

In his own researches on surface chemistry Rehbinder seeks indications of new industries in his discovery of new phenomena. Rehbinder is an expert in the study of surface chemistry. Surface hardness vitally affects the strength of materials. The strength of glass increases ten times if the crevices of its surface are appropriately filled up. Theoretically, solids should possess an immense strength, which they lack in practice.

At the Leningrad Physico-Technical Institute Joffe does fine work in examining the root of this weakness. Explaining it is a step toward removing it. Removing it may give humanity materials thousands of times stronger than those now in use, with revolutionary effects on architecture, industry, and the whole world of human construction.

Many illustrations may be mentioned of


U.S.S.R.
XXIII
YEARS
THE
BLACKOUT
THAT FAILED
GROPPER
CREDIT TO
ART YOUNG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encouragement given to, and assistance received from, Soviet scientists.

In 1881 Professor Ramsay suggested a means by which, with immense economies and social benefits, coal could be turned into gas as it lay unhewn in the seams of the earth. But Ramsay was a lone scientist. The coal seams were in private ownership. Practical tests needed large expenditure. Success was uncertain. The owners would not take the risk. The government was apathetic.

Ramsay's ideas received on Soviet soil a welcome denied to them in the land of his birth. Lenin, "the dreamer," had said:

> Under socialism the application of Ramsay's method, through "liberating" the labor of millions of miners, and so on, will permit the reducing of working hours for everyone from eight hours to, say, seven, or even less than that . . . will render conditions of work more hygienic, will relieve millions of workers of smoke, dust and dirt, will speed up the conversion of filthy, abhorrent workshops into clean, light laboratories worthy of man.

In this respect, as in so many others, nothing connected with actual life and with the material well-being and comfort of the workers was unimportant to the Soviet Union, and in 1931 the Central Committee of the Communist Party decided to make experiments. They did so, and by Feb. 4, 1938, gas from underground gasification had been supplied to the furnaces of a chemical coking plant and had begun to heat its boilers. The Gorlovka station in the Donbas, at present supplying 15,000 cubic meters of gas an hour, will double this output. A much larger plant at Lisishansk is designed to supply 100,000 cubic meters per hour. Underground gasification of coal has become a practical reality.

AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE

Take next an instance of the enthusiastic use of science in agriculture and horticulture, arising from the Soviet Union's determination to increase and add to the richness of its plant life.

From the earliest years of Soviet rule, Soviet expeditions have been dispatched throughout the whole world, ransacking every land for new plants and new varieties of old plants.

The President of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Science, Prof. N. I. Vavilov, has been largely in charge of this botanical work.

Vavilov is a most remarkable man. Under his direction the science of botany has been approached for the first time in a really comprehensive manner, and the Soviet Union now possesses the world's richest collection of different plants. In number, variety, and exhaustive completeness it is unsurpassed. The sixty expeditions which have been dispatched have returned with 300,000 specimens of plants.

This vast collection has supplied information as to the frequency of different sorts of plants in different parts of the world. Some regions are found to possess more varieties than others. A natural inference follows. Any region which possesses the largest number of any particular species of plant has presumably had that species for the longest period of time. We may assume, therefore, that such a region is its natural and original home.

These lands of origin are thus the most promising ground for collecting specimens for experimental research, and from these lands the Soviet Union has steadily collected her material.

In a noble room in an old palace in Leningrad, called "The World's Wheat Safe," the Soviet Union has collected 30,000 varieties of wheat.

Immense attention is paid to wheat; for wheat is a staple food. To extend the areas of wheat cultivation farther north, or into regions ravaged by wheat disease, is to increase the food supply. For there is no burning of wheat in the Soviet Union. Increased production means increased riches for all.

Russian wheats have excellent qualities. But they can be improved by crossing them with suitable foreign varieties and ridding them of defects such as small grain, low yield, or susceptibility to fungus attack. Thus, for example, Abyssinian wheats are early. Some Transcaucasian wheats resist rust and mildew. Dutch wheats have large grain. Afghanistan wheats resist drought.

Intensive research proceeds; crossing and counter-crossing take place in numerous farms and experimental stations throughout the Union.

One of the younger agronomists, as the scientific investigators are called, N. V. Tsitsin, set himself the task of crossing wheat with a hardy wild plant of the wheat family in order to procure a new variety capable of withstanding cold and drought. Stalin gave him practical personal encouragement with the words: "Go on with your experiments boldly: we shall give you every support." Tsitsin has at length produced a hardy annual wheat, not only yielding excellent harvests and capable of withstanding cold and drought, but at the same time immune from devastating wheat diseases.

FURTHER EXPERIMENTS

In 1937, Nikolai Tsitsin, now President of the Academy of Agricultural Science, produced something more startling still—a hardy perennial wheat, a wheat which needs no sowing, but comes up from the same root year by year like hay. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of such a discovery, though it may take time to reap the fruits of it. I happened to be in Russia with Professor Hanson, the American horticulturist, in the year he received sample seeds of the new variety. His enthusiasm was as great as it was natural. He spoke much of the "Red Magic" of Soviet horticultural science. He and his father, the older Hanson, had an especial admiration for work of the late Ivan Vladimirovitch Michurin, the Union's greatest horticulturist.

Michurin was the magician who could produce, it is said, raspberries over two inches long, currants as large as cherries, giant black gooseberries, seedless barberries, tangerines that remain unaffected by the frost, and peaches that will grow under natural conditions in regions where the thermometer will fall 40 degrees below zero. In the extreme north, in a latitude nearer the Pole than Iceland, you may stand in a field where the ripe grain touches your face.

When Michurin desired to keep snow on the grain fields of northern lands, he grew as a catch-barrier for the snow a stunted form of cherry tree which was itself, when covered by the snow it intercepted, immune against the icy blasts. The fruit of this cherry, which is delicious, is picked without the aid of ladders.

Michurin crossed a strawberry with a raspberry and produced a strawberry which now grows on bushes. Apple hybrids were crossed with varieties of plum and cherry.

Michurin tamed wild plants and forced them to bear fruit in a cultivated state. His fragrant roses bloom on the shores of Arctic seas.

The Soviet Union grows vast quantities of mandarin oranges without pips, due entirely to the advice of plant scientists.

Further instances come from the realm of medicine.

Crushed under a fallen tree-trunk on a remote mountain side a man lay bleeding to death. He had lost pints of blood.

His companions carried him back to the village.

Within an hour or two of his return a plane—summoned by radio—circled low overhead. A package supported by a small parachute descended, and the plane sped off without alighting.

The package contained bottled blood.

A life was saved.

In 1926 Moscow organized a special Institute of Blood Transfusion, the first of its kind in the world. Similar institutes have been opened in Leningrad, Kharkov, Odessa, Minsk, Kiev, Tbilisi, and Tashkent. There are now 830 district blood-transfusion stations as well.

The President of the International Congress on Blood Transfusions emphasized the fact that the Soviet Union occupies a leading position in the science of blood transfusion. It was Soviet scientists who first discovered how to keep blood for future use. Before that discovery blood transfusion was only practiced by direct contact of giver and receiver. The Soviets sent the knowledge of their method to help the Spanish republicans in their struggle.

Research in the Soviet Union is both general and specific. And nowhere in the world do theory and practice walk hand in hand so easily as in the Soviet Union.

HEWLETT JOHNSON.

This article is condensed from a chapter in the Dean of Canterbury's forthcoming book, "The Soviet Power," to be published soon by Modern Age.

The Midwest: Big String of Zeros

Many zeros in munitions' profit figures; another kind for the unemployed and those on relief. Simon W. Gerson continues his poll of America.

Chicago.

AERIAL bombs may scream in Europe but champagne corks pop gently on Chicago's Gold Coast. The swanky South Shore is ablaze with glory these nights as blast furnaces further down the lakefront redden the skies. No doubt about it, Midwest economy got a terrific shot in the arm from the defense program. The Lord and Roosevelt are good. Inland Steel declared an extra $1 a share dividend in addition to the usual distribution of $1. Good old Inland made nearly $10,000,000 in the first nine months of 1940, or $6.07 a share, as compared with $3.92 a share for the same period last year. Operations in the third quarter of the year were 101.2 percent of theoretical capacity. "Defense orders," said board chairman Edward L. Ryerson piously, "are, of course, being given precedence in our schedules wherever special attention is needed."

Boy, pass the blood. This is hot.

US Steel, operating at 98 percent capacity, reported the largest third quarter earnings since 1929, making more than $33,000,000 for the three-month period ending September 30, or $3.07 a share on common stock as against $1.48 a share for the June quarter. Business hasn't been so good since those never-to-be-forgotten days of '29 when US Steel paid $5.57.

Yes sir, things are picking up in Chicago. Marshall Field & Co. stock paid 32 cents a share on common stock as against 24 cents for the same period last year. Who says business is bad? Trade loans in Chicago were up $24,000,000 as of October 29, the furthest new high since late 1937 . . . steel output in ingots for week highest on record . . . orders received by manufacturers second highest on record . . . carloadings up 10,000 for September as compared with the same month last year . . . Cook County telephones in use rose to 1,017,762, a jump of 38,605 as compared with the same date last year . . . who's kicking?

UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS RARE

There *are* a few kicks, however, quite a few. The suave gentlemen of the Chicago Association of Commerce tell you that the job index for the city stands at 110.9 as compared with 100.7 in September of last year and that the manufacturers' payroll index rose in the same period from 107.2 to 123.5, but carefully ignore unemployment. Despite a 4 percent drop in the relief load, Cook County still has 92,000 cases on the relief rolls. Downstate the caseload rose from 68,000 to 74,000 in the same month. In nineteen Illinois counties 25 or more percent of the population is still on relief. No statistics on this subject are distributed widely by the Association of Commerce. Nor is there any discussion of Chicago's South Side with its Black Belt.

But there is considerable talk about war orders. Europe's blood and tears and America's future blood and tears mean millions in profits and a few cents in wages to Chicago. Steel, packing, and farm equipment, to mention a few basic industries of the region, are running virtually at peak. If they are not all currently producing war orders, theirs is the fever of the danse macabre, for their activity is predicated on war. Steel-using manufacturers, for example, are frenziedly piling up inventories, anticipating early American entrance into the war and a consequent inability to obtain steel for domestic peacetime production.

BRITISH ORDERS

In packing, defense orders are only a partial explanation. The slaughtering season is at hand and there is considerably more livestock available than there was during the drought and the New Deal little-pig-killing days. However, there are also British orders. The Armour lard plant is working night and day supplying England. International Harvester recently got a $500,000 order for ammunition machinery and now employs 7,000 men as compared with a normal 5,000. This is comparatively unusual since technological progress has made it possible in steel, for example, to dispense with literally thousands of men. Chippers in South Chicago steel mills, according to union leaders, are being displaced in the ratio of twenty-six to one.

One difference between this business upswing and the wartime boom is particularly remarkable to veteran observers here. That is the keen awareness of the workers that huge profits are being made and their absolute refusal to fall for the "sacrifice" hogwash of William Green and Sidney Hillman. Explained a young Democrat politically active among the steel workers: "They get the *CIO News* with those stories on profits and all they can see is that big string of zeros and they say, nuts. No sir, these guys ain't gonna stand for any wage cut. They're gonna get wage raises, mister."

They are, too. The demand for increased wages is practically unanimous. Wherever there is militant leadership this mood takes on organized form. Nowhere could be found any theory of or sentiment for "sacrifice." While the Steel Workers Organizing Committee is not as strong in this area as around Pittsburgh, primarily because of the Van Bittner "appeasement" leadership, according to rank-and-filers sentiment for more militant action, particularly in regard to wages, is rapidly crystallizing. Strike situations may very well develop here shortly. Typically enough, the Detroit workers have coined a new slogan. They want a "CIO dividend," that is, a vacation with pay, or a bonus equal to that.

A growing issue with the Midwest workers, even though not as widespread, is the draft. The agonized shriek of Mrs. Mildred C. Bell of Washington, D. C., mother of No. 158, first draftee whose number was drawn out of the goldfish bowl, was heard on the radio here and echoed in the hearts of a million Midwest women.

Begun almost gaily on registration day, October 16, the draft has become a matter of real concern to people in the Midwest who stubbornly refuse to see the Rooseveltian danger of invasion and the consequent need for a peacetime army. There is a growing, albeit inchoate, feeling of apprehension here expressed in the common rumor that Roosevelt will lead the country into war by April. The women are the first to show a chill of horror; the young men, particularly the employed, are showing little enthusiasm about the prospect of becoming human hamburger in the service of Wall Street. Despite all the artificial stimulus administered by the local press, the "lucky number" boys seem to be far from happy. The married ones among them are generally frank about their desire to get deferred status.

It has been said that among the unemployed, unmarried youth there is some zest for the draft. I haven't seen it and I haven't met anyone who has seen it. The fact is that the Midwest is accepting the draft reluctantly without any observable surge of patriotism. The biggest whoopee hollerers are still the over-age Legionnaires and the pro-war newspapers.

Concern with the effects of the draft is beginning to be felt most clearly in the organized labor movement. Practically everywhere there is objection to the local draft boards, union men feeling that they are overloaded with anti-labor business men, jingo Legionnaires, and hack politicians. Demands for draftees are being made upon employers and in some cases inserted into union contracts. The most dramatic case of the sort was the recent one-hour stoppage in the huge Allis-Chalmers plant in Milwaukee where 7,000 workers struck for guarantees of seniority rights to drafted workers. The large International Harvester tractor local of the CIO Farm Workers Equipment Organizing Committee is seeking $1,000,000 pay for a possible 1,000 draftees in the plant. Bargaining committees of the Armour slaughter house and Armour soap works recently laid the following demands for draftees before plant and national officials:

1. That for the first four months of the draftee's army life the company make up the difference between his Armour wage and his $21 monthly army wage; for the rest of the year the company match the army dollar for dollar.

2. That the company maintain group insurance payments for draftees.

3. That government service count as plant service; no loss of seniority by reason of the draft.

4. Absolute guarantee of a job upon the draftee's return no matter what his physical condition.

The demands are still pending, the employers not having agreed to protect the draftees. It can safely be said that the same demands are being made or will be made in every Midwest local union, particularly in the CIO unions, where there are many of draft age.

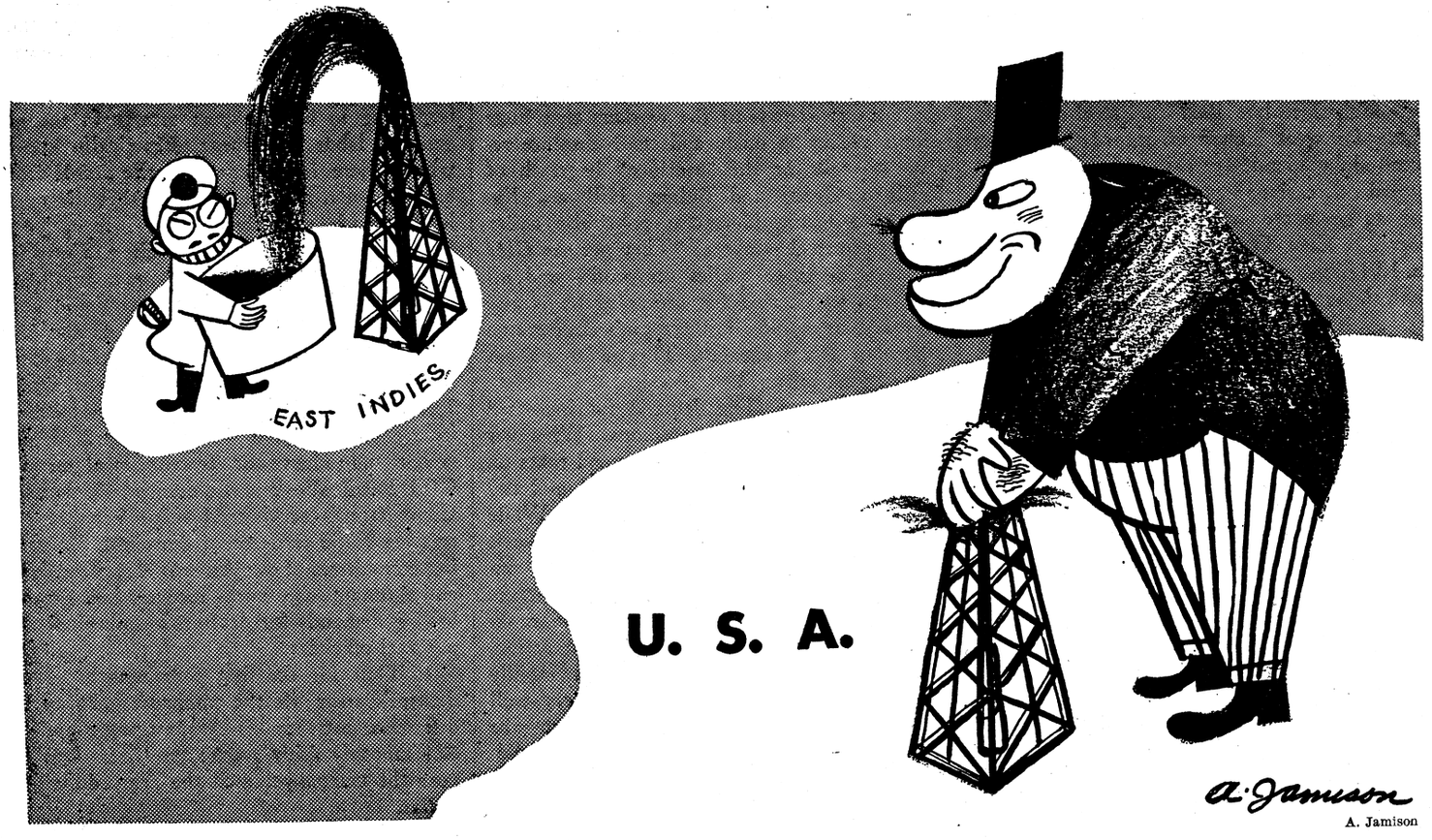
Sentiment against American participation in the war is powerful throughout the Midwest although it is not particularly well organized. There is observable nothing like the Eastern seaboard attitude on aid to Britain, although Col. Frank Knox's Chicago *Daily News* plays the interventionist tune with all the stops out. Literally scores of local labor bodies have adopted resolutions against involvement, although the large Polish-American element here, particularly heavy in steel and packing, is violently anti-German. The recent Emergency Peace Mobilization met a good response here and when I visited the stockyards I saw men still wearing EPM buttons. Indicative of the real feeling of the people is the fact that every political candidate who has stressed the keep-out-of-war note has gained at the expense of his opponent. This was particularly true of Republican senatorial candidate C. Wayland Brooks, actually an appeasement candidate, who stumped the highways and byways of every Illinois county with loud declamations against involvement and conscription. He made so much headway with his arguments that the Republican Chicago *Daily News* editorially urged Willkie supporters to vote against Brooks!

Midwest reaction to John L. Lewis' bombshell endorsement of Wendell Willkie was varied but on the whole bad. The pro-war, pro-Roosevelt faction in the CIO, headed by the Hillmanites, immediately seized the opportunity to renew their struggle to lambaste Lewis and everything progressive for which he has stood in the labor movement. Downstate, however, the official United Mine Workers organization, headed by Ray Edmundson, immediately lined up behind Lewis.

Thoughtful progressive CIO unionists here as elsewhere were faced with a serious situation but adapted themselves quickly. Above all they seek to keep the CIO united. In this respect the fine and prompt resolution adopted by the leaders of the Farm Equipment Workers Organizing Committee was of yeoman service to the whole Midwest labor movement. The resolution, pledging full support to the leadership Lewis has given to the workers on the labor front, dissociated itself completely from support for either candidate, gave full freedom of choice to all members and, above all, stressed the need for independent political action on the part of labor. A similar position is being taken by various other labor organizations and is helping unite the CIO in the face of the obvious splitting policy of the Hillman crowd. For the progressives realize most clearly here that the CIO must remain united despite political differences and that the CIO cannot be united around Willkie any more than it can be unified around Roosevelt. Here they come head-on with the Hillman forces who are evidently preparing here as elsewhere a phony labor unity, i.e., a "unity" between the executive committee of the AFL and the Hillman crowd. This can only have the objective of delivering the entire labor movement, bound and gagged, to the war machine and can be achieved only by driving from the CIO John L. Lewis and everything progressive which he symbolizes.

Local labor is on the whole for Roosevelt, although downstate the miners are traditionally Republican. But it is the New Deal Roosevelt and not the war Roosevelt labor supports. The recent huge Chicago Stadium meeting, featuring a mugging, clowning LaGuardia, was a case in point. The crowd, made up principally of Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union members, roared applause at every reference to past social and labor gains but lapsed into a thoughtful and worried silence when one speaker mentioned the draft early in the program. No speaker thereafter discussed conscription and LaGuardia's sole reference to the defense program was by way of argument that it was designed to keep us out of war.

That was the way they kept the crowd, by talking 1936 and not 1940. But it *is* 1940 and the ugly issues of today are becoming more and more apparent to the people. When they become aware of the real nature of the 1940 Roosevelt the disillusionment will be terrific and will profoundly affect our whole political life. SIMON W. GERSON.



Somewhere in France

Ilya Ehrenbourg was there when the Parisians were saying "Some war." Arrests of Communists were announced as though they were military victories. Why France lost.

On September 2, 1939, a little shop on my street closed. A notice outside read: "Closed for annual mobilization." The proprietor was not a wit. He merely remembered September 1938. He had seen mobilization staged every year, but no war had occurred.

The war, nevertheless, did occur. At first Parisians were visibly confused. Many left the city, and summer vacations were resumed considerably off season. It was difficult to find a room in the Auvergne mountains or even in Brittany. Paris was deserted. French housewives pasted up their window panes with strips of thin paper. Prostitutes stood on Montparnasse in gas masks. Public monuments were covered with sandbags. As soon as a German plane made its appearance over Nancy or Metz, the sirens in Paris shrilled. Parisians obediently ran to the cellars. Many immediately donned gas masks, hastily lowered their window blinds, and held in readiness some magic liquid with cotton.

Soon everybody tired of these alarms. Parisians returned to Paris. Prostitutes carelessly lost their gas masks. Nobody ran to shelters any more, and the sirens were stricken mute. Enterprising people put out powder puffs shaped like miniature gas masks, and the newspapers' headlines reported: "Today is the forty-sixth day of the war." But really and palpably the people did not notice the war. They said: *"Drole de guerre!"* Which may be translated, "A funny war!" or "Some war!"

Business men were the first to evaluate the implication of "some war." French Babbitts were buying everything: land, canned goods, pictures, socks.

Wartime had given rise to new forms of coquettishness. Ladies carried handkerchiefs inscribed: "He is somewhere in France" (secret!). Phosphorescent heels and illuminated brooches were in particular demand during blackouts. The best chefs were busy preserving special delicacies for fastidious consumers on the Maginot Line.

In the first days of the war, foreigners were registered and fingerprinted. I beheld a curious scene in the police station; a storekeeper was yelling: "They want to take away my cellar for a shelter." The police official tried to rouse his humanity, and pleaded: "First of all, human lives must be saved." The storekeeper was unmoved, and argued: "But this will hurt business."

In the business world, German patents are considered excellent. French firms, therefore, supplied themselves with German patents via Switzerland during the war. The war emerged as a huge business enterprise. Loudspeakers shouted: "Yesterday the Germans sank so many thousand tons. The British captured so many thousands. The French so many!" "Ton" became the most popular war word.

In one military hospital a demented man kept repeating: *"Rien a signaler"* ("There is no merit in being conspicuous"); the content of the war communiques: one soldier lost his mind after an artillery bombardment. Some people were killed practically every day but nobody remembered it. And the loudspeakers bawled: "So many thousand tons!"

In the cafes, the strategists of non-draft age studied geography. They did not conceal their satisfaction that the war was happening somewhere far away: now near Warsaw, now beyond the Arctic Circle. The strategists puffed ecstatically, "Some war!" Some of them opined that the "some war" would last three years. Others, with an air of connoisseurs, objected: "No, four." Rare daredevils suggested that the French army was ill prepared and that it was threatened with defeat. They were met with contemptuous silence or with warrants for arrest.

On February 7 of this year the Chamber of Deputies voted to approve, among other minor legislation, a treaty with Germany governing bridges across the Rhine. The bridges had long been destroyed, but no one had given it any thought.

THE SOLDIERS ARE BORED

The newspapers wrote, "Our soldiers must be amused, they are bored." Whereupon balls, dominoes, and detective novels went forth to the soldiers. Officers mingled little with their men. They had different tastes, different incomes, and different political convictions. The officers spat in disgust recalling the days of the People's Front. The soldiers spat in disgust looking at the officers.

The soldiers played dominoes on the Belgian frontier with wretched fortifications as protection. The military command was reassuring: "The Maginot Line is impassable." The generals apparently thought that since there was a Maginot Line, the enemy simply had to attack this line. The British asked: "But what about Belgium? . . ." In reply the French newspapers gallantly intimated that the grandmother of the late Maginot was English, and that the old lady was fond of telling her grandson old English fairy tales.

Shortly before the war, one Cabinet minister made this pronouncement at a dinner sponsored by the tabloid weeklies: "I cannot understand who is likely to be disturbed by such an insignificant event." The minister was referring to the entrance of the Germans into Prague. Another minister admitted casually: "When the question of war and peace is to be decided, it is best not to consult with the military." These ministers continued to function as ministers during the period of the war. All of them thought a great deal more about parliamentary majorities than they did about anti-tank guns. Of the twenty-nine ministers, sixteen were lawyers.

PROPAGANDA AGAINST COMMUNISTS

"Some war!" the French kept repeating. At times they didn't even understand whom they were fighting. In August 1939, Marcel Deat had won fame for writing an article titled: "Why Die for Danzig?" He declared that under no circumstances must the French die for Danzig. In January 1940, Marcel Deat came out with an article in which he told the French people to die for Helsinki. After that, society ladies began to knit warm socks for General Mannerheim. The winter in France was then unusually severe, and not a few French soldiers lay dead from cold, with frostbitten feet.

France was supposedly at war with Germany; but the government's propaganda was preferably directed against the French Communists. Even the most hidebound chauvinists displayed a suspicious lack of chauvinism by regarding the word "boches" as most impolite.

The newspaper *Epoque* suggested that the uncomplimentary reference to kings be eliminated from the song of the French Revolution, *"Chant de depart,"* because the British and Norwegian kings were allies. Incidentally, it was not *"Chant de depart"* or even the greeting of Tommy that was sung, but the song of Maurice Chevalier, "Paris Remains Paris."

The restrictions appeared to be unbearable: "Goodness gracious, on Mondays you can't sell beef and on Wednesdays you can't sell pastry!" On Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays strong drinks were not served in the cafes. To the cafe habitues this was a demonstration of terror worthy of 1793. Paris indeed remained Paris. . . .

The government feared the peasants, and the lawyer-ministers constantly talked of the "sacred rights of the landtillers." When the court-martial tried the Communist deputies, those defendants who represented peasant districts were meted out lighter penalties than the workers' deputies. Yet the peasants disliked this business of "some war." They complained of a shortage of working hands in the family, of new taxes, of the high cost of living. Unwilling to part with their wheat, they mixed it with millet. Then they slaughtered the cattle. In the Lot district the price on farm land increased sixfold, for the peasants had no confidence in paper money.

The manufacturers were determined to settle accounts with the workers. All the rights that the French proletariat had won in 1936 were instantly abolished. The bosses lengthened the working day by three, four, and even five hours. In the shops, policemen in disguise

were on duty. The trade unions were disintegrating. The organ of the manufacturers' association wrote: "The workers must forget the bad times of the People's Front and prepare to make new sacrifices." The manufacturers sacrificed nothing. They avoided payment of taxes, fulfilled no orders, and shipped their money to America.

COMMUNIST COURAGE

At times, when one turned to the newspapers, it was possible to forget that France was at war with Germany. The government, it seemed, was preoccupied with only one thing: war against the Communists. The trial of the Communists was conducted in a judge's chamber. Yet everybody talked of the courage of the Communists. The metal worker Crouse remonstrated: "I have been delegated to the Chamber of Deputies by 100,000 workers. How can five hundred politicians deprive me of my mandate?" Present at the trial were the writer, Jean Richard Bloch, and several professors. They bore witness to the courage of the French Communists.

Last autumn the police smashed the offices of the *Editions Sociales Internationales* publishers and seized novels by Sholokhov and Gladkov, articles by Romain Rolland, the work of the biologist Marcel Prenant, and reminiscences of Mayakovsky. The manager of the publishing house, Moussinac, who is also a writer, was arrested in April.

In its repressions the government was manifestly hysterical and jittery. The judges who were trying the Communist deputies did not know until the very last minute whether the defendants were going to be convicted or acquitted. Conviction of Communists usually carried a sentence of four to five years imprisonment. At the front Communists were not arrested. The soldiers were feared.

Public opinion occasionally showed defiance. For example, while the reactionaries were baiting Louis Aragon for his loyalty to Communism, *Nouvelle Revue Francaise,* the most important literary magazine, was publishing his new novel. An echelon of Communists stood waiting at the Noisy station; they were being taken to a concentration camp. "Deserters," was the information solemnly passed on to the crowd. The prisoners began to sing, first the *"Internationale,"* then the *"Marseillaise."* Immediately, clenched fists were raised on the platform. It was soldiers and workers saluting their comrades.

Arrests were made on the basis of informers' tales, suspicion, and inspiration from on high. On February 9 a worker in Paris was arrested for raising his clenched fist. On March 8 the court at Orleans was trying a railroad worker for singing the *"Internationale"* on the street. The charge against him was "dissemination of military information." On April 17 a man named Perrault was convicted of "uttering defeatist thoughts." At the trial it was revealed that Perrault was a deaf mute. On April 30 a man in Paris was arrested for carrying a biography of Lenin. The police declared my camera was a secret radio set.

News regarding arrests of Communists read like reports of military victories. On April 9, when the Germans took Oslo, the French press consoled its readers: "The police 'took' seventeen Communists." On April 16 the press reported the arrest of fifty-four Communists. On that day the Germans took Narvik.

Next to arrests, the newspapers were preoccupied with the important question of renaming streets. In some workers' sections there were Lenin streets, Paris Commune streets, Barbusse streets, Vaillant-Couturier streets. All these were hastily renamed. In some places the cleanup was so general that Jaures streets were rechristened; even Curie streets.

At the end of April 34,000 were in concentration camps. In the south of France, one lieutenant was ordered to equip a concentration camp. "Over one hundred enemies are coming," he was told. The lieutenant did not stint barbed wire. When he saw the "enemies," he said with indignation: "But these are French workers! Take away your entanglements." Near Paris, in the Roland-Garros Stadium, there was a concentration camp. In it were kept French procurers, German writers, commanders of the Spanish people's army, Italian workers, and Czech artists. Their treatment was terrible.

ANTI-SEMITIC PROPAGANDA

The country began to reek with incense. Ministers of "atheist" France suddenly became devoutly religious, and there was service after service. The lawyers were praying. The "Jacobin" Daladier stood between two apertures and spoke of the "defense of the Christian spirit."

A Polish sheet published in Paris carried anti-Semitic propaganda by refugee Polish aristocrats. In General Sikorsky's Polish divisions anti-Semitism was not a mere theory. I know Jewish artists, natives of Poland, who, to forego the impact of anti-Semitic fists, registered with the foreign legion when they were called up for military service. The aged Claude Farrer, on the other hand, when making a report on Poland, kept crossing himself solemnly almost after every phrase.

The "Socialists" exhibited a special hatred towards the Communists. Their paper *Populaire* carried articles pointing up easy ways of uncovering "concealed Communists." The Socialist Barthelemy joined the staff of the reactionary *Matin*. The born reactionaries, however, had little confidence in their neophytes, and de la Roque continued to refer to them as formerly "pernicious Marxists." I saw a curious correspondence. Minister for Communications de Monzie requested the Minister of Justice to transfer the prisoner Semard, a Communist railroad worker, to the political prisoners. Serol, the "Socialist" Minister, curtly refused the request: "No leniency toward Communists."

There was little paper, and the newspapers were reduced to two pages. But it was often difficult to fill even two pages; besides arrests of Communists and registration of gross tonnage, apparently nothing was happening in the world. Stories began to be concocted. *Paris-Soir* reported the invention of an electrical contraption which was alleged to interfere with the sleep of guards. The newspaper *Aube* opined: "France will be saved by a motorized Joan of Arc" (nothing was ever reported about the motorization methods of the Maid of Orleans).

"WHY ARE WE FIGHTING?"

The journalist Beraud, the former Minister Flandin, the "syndicalist" Belin, and finally the pride of the renegades, Doriot—all of them declared in unison: "It would be a good thing if the French got licked a little."

The refugee magnate from the Ruhr, Fritz Thyssen, became the darling of the bourgeois mob. While German writers were held in French concentration camps, Herr Thyssen took up quarters in the best Paris hotel. The newspapers were publishing his photographs, letters, memoirs. The average Frenchman who read this "literature" asked in amazement: "Then why are we fighting?"

In April, the "Fifth Column" emerged. And whom did the French journalists include in the "Fifth Column"? Communists and all political emigres. Only one serious paper was published in Paris, the weekly *Canard Enchaine*—something like the *Krokodil* (Soviet satirical journal). There, indeed, the Fifth Column was correctly described: "Fifth Column? Why, that is simply the French government." The people were kidded: "The Germans will be stranded somewhere near Narvik." Terrible weeks were approaching, but no one thought of the denouement. The "some war" still continued. On the first of May workers were compelled to work, and *Canard Enchaine* described the thoughts of the French bourgeoisie: "Since 1918, this is the first quiet first of May!"

A strike broke out in Curviere, near Paris; workers were being sent to the front. When an army was dispatched to Norway, several companies mutinied. The soldiers were promptly disarmed and sent off to a concentration camp. By that time the newspapers already carried advertisements of summer resorts—vacations were approaching. The women's journal *Marie-Claire* was publishing letters from readers. Here are the questions which preoccupied these ladies: "Should I marry my fiance who has lost an arm in the war?" "I am sixteen, but my mother does not let me flirt with the soldiers. What shall I do?" "What dress shall I wear to meet my husband returning from the front?" "Has 'he' a right to be jealous if I occasionally go dancing with others when 'he' is on the Maginot Line?"

The people, the great, unhappy people, knew nothing. The theaters were having rehearsals of new plays. Tailors were busy with summer styles. On May 9 one writer said to me: "There will be no Trojan war. The war is over, although it didn't even begin." On May 10 the German army entered Holland and Belgium. ILYA EHRENBOURG.

The Plot Against the Teachers

The assault on their rights in New York threatens labor nationally. Why Messrs. Coudert and Rapp want the union lists.

TRADITIONALLY, white-collar and professional workers are considered the most difficult groups to organize into trade unions. They supposedly consider themselves part of the middle classes—who, unlike the working and owning classes, have no common economic interest. But psychological resistance to unions, which in the past has impeded the action of both white-collar employees and professionals, has been increasingly sloughed off in the last five years.

The teachers were one of the first groups to awaken to the vital need of self-protection. For years a small, impotent union had existed in the field, but not until crisis settled into permanent depression did the union make real progress. Today in New York City, 8,000 teachers have organized, sinking roots deeply into the soil of unionism, surviving frontal attacks and disruption from within, learning to play their part in the march of labor. Today, when they are called upon to fight for the preservation not only of their own union, but of organized labor as a whole, teachers respond unhesitatingly to the test.

At first glance, the attack on the union in New York City appears to be a relatively local matter. But that is the time-honored method of the open-shoppers—to attack if possible from behind a smokescreen of deception, and so to catch the union movement unawares. What is happening now in New York is of national significance.

CALLED UNION "RED"

Throughout its recent history, Local 5 of the Teachers Union in New York City has been called "Red" both by the usual employer and reactionary cliques and, more important, by disrupters within the union itself. During the last year, William Green talked much of "Communist control," and disruptive elements within the union baited the New York organization and attempted to break its militancy. The stage was gradually being set for an attempted coup that would decimate the local and weaken the trade union movement everywhere.

The general in charge of the coup was one Mr. Frederic R. Coudert, New York state senator, whose passion was to prevent education from becoming too widespread. Consistently Mr. Coudert spent his time in Albany introducing legislation to "balance the budget" at the expense of the schools. He fought with furious courage against such "Red" innovations as nursery schools. He attacked the tenure of teachers, and he advocated cutting their far-from-adequate salaries. Mr. Coudert is a crusader. His fear of the undermining effect of nursery schools helped to convince him that laws against child labor were equally menacing to the safety of the democratic process. On the other hand, he advocated that religious instruction be made mandatory in all public schools in the state.

Mr. Coudert has a friend in the state assembly by the name of Mr. Rapp. The two cronies managed to obtain authorization from the legislature for a committee to inquire into the character and cost of education in the state and to recommend corrective legislation. To facilitate this noble end entailing further cuts in state educational aid and teachers' pay, Mr. Coudert was authorized to form a subcommittee to investigate "subversive activities" in New York City schools.

Superficially Mr. Coudert was engaged in a mighty patriotic service to his state and country. The "waste" of school funds is horrible to contemplate, says Mr. Coudert, what with every cent needed for the protection of New York state against hostile enemy aircraft. Moreover the expenditure of school funds for such useless purposes as the purchase of books and other luxuries that tend to "soften" the younger generation was clearly part of the plot by Communists within the school system. All Communists who had wormed their way into the teaching profession, were undoubtedly members of Local 5, or of Local 537, the organization of college teachers. Therefore if Mr. Coudert could expose and get rid of the Communists, the state would again be safe against the inroads of the termites. Of course, Mr. Coudert had nothing against the New York union of teachers in and for itself; all he wanted was to purge it of elements guilty of dangerous thoughts and devoted to the nefarious proposition that education is important and therefore must be supported by adequate funds.

Mr. Coudert summoned his sub-committee, called the roll, and answered "Here." No other member of the sub-committee bothered to attend the meetings. So Mr. Coudert, vested with a lonely grandeur, ordered Charles J. Hendley, president of the Teachers Union of New York City, to present himself, and then further commanded that Mr. Hendley hand over all union records, including membership lists, to the committee on which Mr. Coudert acted in all capacities.

Mr. Hendley produced most of the union's records, at the same time protesting that the committee was exceeding its power. That is, Mr. Hendley handed over all records except the membership lists. Mr. Coudert was angry. He cited Mr. Hendley in contempt. Mr. Hendley appealed the case. The legal procedure was complicated—let it suffice to record that the appeal instituted by Mr. Hendley is, at this writing, still pending.

The question is, what did Mr. Coudert want to do with the membership list? He stated that he merely wished to ferret out the Communists. But, Mr. Hendley pointed out, the union had no record of the religious, political, or dietary proclivities of the teachers, and a trade union had no business prying into these matters. Therefore the membership list could be of no value to Mr. Coudert, and besides there was no reason to hand over the list since the union itself was not under investigation. But Mr. Coudert, with a battery of lawyers at his disposal, was adamant in his demand for the union's lists.

What Mr. Coudert is up to, despite his reassuring words, is quite obvious: if he succeeds in obtaining the list, then any employer can go to any state legislature, persuade that body to set up a committee to investigate "subversive activities" of any militant union that is annoying to the employer, and thereby obtain the names of all union members. Such names would look very well adorning a blacklist. What Mr. Coudert hopes to do is to establish a precedent for the open-shoppers which would be more valuable than a whole trainload of tear gas.

EDUCATING AMERICA

The teachers, however, have proved tough and resourceful unionists. Their fight is a fight against methods that would seriously endanger the stability of all unions. Local 5 in the past has been in the forefront against teachers' pay cuts and reductions in appropriations for education. Hence Mr. Coudert's concern in seeing to it that all subversive elements are eliminated. "Subversive" can be defined in the words of the anti-Semitic Merwin K. Hart who is so anxious that the good work of Mr. Coudert succeed: all men and women are subversive, intimates Mr. Hart, who do not struggle to reduce public expenditures (read: appropriations for education, public health, social security, etc.), unless those expenditures be made for "defense." Mr. Coudert's outlook is the same as that of Mr. Hart. It is all very noble on the surface. It is less noble if one is interested in public welfare, or if one is concerned with the preservation of the trade union movement in America.

Organized labor has responded well to the plight of the teachers. Both CIO and AFL unions have made their support clear enough, though such support must become even more unified and determined to beat back Mr. Coudert and his friends. But the Teachers Union of New York City deserves the greatest credit. Its officers risk jail sentence for the greater protection of all labor. Its membership has responded wholeheartedly, supporting the decision to resist Coudert's inquisition and persecution with every means available. The "middle-class" teachers prove to be first-class unionists. This is no great surprise—except perhaps to Mr. Coudert. It is nonetheless extremely heartening to the rest of the labor movement. The teachers have entered into a struggle that is crucial in the history of trade unionism. They are educating America in more ways than one.

BRUCE MINTON.

USA—USSR Collaboration

AN EDITORIAL

As the war spreads and new peoples are threatened with annihilation, it becomes more than ever clear that peace for America and for the world depends in large measure on close collaboration between three great powers, the United States, China, and the Soviet Union. In the Far East especially it is evident that the democratic interests of the peoples of these three countries are conjoined.

The arguments in favor of American-Soviet collaboration are so overwhelming that those who oppose this course have been unable to counter them with anything more substantial than empty Red-baiting and the crude distortion of Soviet policy. It is a fact that between the United States and the USSR there are none of the traditional disagreements over strategic borders, none of the problems of minority populations which have loomed so large in the troubled history of Europe. Efforts have recently been made to manufacture such a conflict by tall tales about the alleged Soviet fortification of Big Diomede Island off the coast of Siberia, not far from the American-owned Aleutian Islands. But even that veteran Soviet-baiter, William Randolph Hearst, was compelled to admit in his column in the October 5 issue of the New York *Journal-American* that these reports were entirely fictitious. There is, in fact, reason to suspect that these stories have been spread in order to justify the very ambitious American fortification of the Aleutian Islands.

Nor is there any commercial rivalry between the United States and the USSR in any part of the world. Having eliminated the profit system, the Soviet people themselves absorb almost the whole of their constantly expanding production and do not participate in the imperialist struggle for foreign markets, raw materials, and spheres of investment. In Latin America, for example, American, British, German, Japanese, and Italian business interests have for years engaged in bitter competition for the control of raw materials and markets and for political domination of the various governments below the Rio Grande. In the Far East American, Japanese, and British business interests have engaged in similar rivalry. It is such conflicts which lead to war. But the Soviet Union has had no part in any of them. That is why it has been able, despite the outbreak of war on its borders in two continents, steadfastly to pursue the ways of peace.

Far from competing with American capitalists, the USSR has always sought friendly trade relations with this country. Despite the hostile attitude of the Roosevelt administration, the Soviet Union during the first six months of 1940 bought $42,000,000 worth of goods in this country, and its purchases for the full year will probably exceed the 1931 peak of 103.9 million dollars.

But there is something more than mere absence of conflict; there are between the *peoples* of the two countries (and in the USSR people and government are one) important fields of common interest. One of these is the struggle of the Chinese republic. The overwhelming majority of Americans favor support of China and an economic boycott of Japan. They see in the victory of Chinese democracy greater security for American democracy. The Soviet people feel the same way. The difference is that while the Soviet government, pursuing the interests of its people, has been generously providing China with munitions and credits, the American government, pursuing the interests of its big business groups, has been helping Japan far more than China. This has created such a difficult position for the United States that recently even sections of the capitalist class have begun to question the wisdom of this policy and to consider the possibility of an agreement with the Soviet Union.

The obstacles to such an agreement are entirely American made. Some insight into their nature was recently given by a conservative magazine, the *United States News*. In its issue of October 11 it wrote:

> If Russia and the United States are natural allies in event of trouble in the Far East, why are these two governments not more friendly? If China is an ally of the United States in event of Far Eastern trouble, why does the United States currently give much more aid to Japan than to China?
>
> With regard to Russia: The wary attitude of the American government is due to hostility toward the Russian form of government.

In other words, not the interests of the American people in the Far East, but fundamental class hatred of socialism dictates the Roosevelt administration's hostility to the USSR. And the counterpart of this policy is appeasement of Japan.

That is why the "moral embargo," imposed on the basis of fake newspaper stories that Soviet planes were bombing Finnish civilians, has never been lifted. And that is why the State Department, in an effort to bluff both Japan and the Soviet Union, is going through the motions of conducting negotiations with the Soviet ambassador while actually making no serious efforts toward a rapprochement. This is the old Chamberlain game over again, and it may ultimately prove as disastrous for the American people as it did for the British. One more point needs to be made clear: as Earl Browder emphasized in his recent radio address in which he urged a Washington-Moscow-Chungking axis: "It will be worse than useless for the United States to approach the Soviet Union in the hope of finding an ally in a war, the aims of which are to redistribute colonies and subject peoples among the great powers. The Soviet Union will never participate in such a war."

In a speech in the House on October 1, Representative Sabath of Illinois said:

> Regardless of what the Nazi, fascist, or capitalistic groups in the United States may say about Russia, I reiterate that the best interests of the United States will be served not by criticizing and assailing Russia, but by taking just the opposite course and seeking her friendly cooperation.

To that, millions of Americans will say Amen. If we want peace for ourselves today and peace for the world tomorrow, we must urge the speediest improvement of relations with the Soviet state, the cancellation of past irritations, the broadest, most imaginative program of cooperation in defense of China. All this demands the isolation of the ulcerous elements in American society whose hatred for the Soviet people reflects only their contempt for American democracy.

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The Solution

AS THE campaign came to a close, it was clear that two major questions animated the electorate: foreign policy and domestic recovery. On the issue of peace or war, Mr. Roosevelt committed himself only reluctantly to peace while every one of his actions was clearly a preparation for entering the war. Mr. Willkie fully endorsed those measures but in the latter stages of the campaign attempted to capitalize on the President's hypocrisy, undoubtedly with some success. On the issue of domestic recovery and social reform the Democrats conducted their campaign on the basis of what they had already achieved, not what they were going to do, although the administration's armaments economy has already blasted away the achievements of the New Deal. The President pointed to the Federal Reserve Board index of production which stood at 125 in September, higher than a year ago, higher than in 1929. And he accused his opponents of hypocrisy, attempting to take the credit for the boom in production figures and windfall of profits. Mr. Willkie on the other hand hammered away at what he called "New Deal defeatism." He promised jobs; he promised that business would prosper; he voiced demagogically the popular desire not to tread water but to go forward.

But what are the facts? Production is booming, but only in the industries manufacturing for death. Export is zooming, not in farm products but in the machinery of death. Employment has risen by close to 1,000,000 but at least 9,000,000 remain unemployed, with no prospect of employment even if industrial capacity expanded still further. Retail sales have not made their seasonal rise, and consumers' goods manufacture lags far behind. Why is this so? the people were asking. A "dangerous question."

Neither candidate answered these questions. And why couldn't they answer? Because the truth is that a handful of men and their families have monopolized American industry. They have introduced machinery so that more work is produced with fewer workers at the same or lower wages. They have persuaded the government to give them $16,000,000,000 out of the people's treasury for war preparations to make sure that a couple of million young men can be killed off before they get wise to the racket. All this has been accompanied by the most reactionary developments in all phases of American life, and whoever thinks otherwise faces jail on seventy-six counts.

Yes, indeed, no matter what the outcome of the election, it was a great educational experience for millions of Americans. More of them know now, and will know shortly, why socialism is their answer. There will be jobs for everyone; there can be expansion of production with higher wages and shorter hours for everyone; it is possible to make war a barbaric memory—but only when the hardfisted, mean-faced men who have robbed the American peoples of their resources and the great industries built with the people's labor, have been pried loose from their deathgrip on all of us. Capitalism has gotten us into a terrific stalemate, and its next move is war. Only socialism can get us out of it, and bring us peace.

A Kick from Stephen Early

VIRGINIA-BORN Stephen Early, secretary and close friend of Franklin D. Roosevelt, fell back on an old Southern ruling class custom the other day: when a Negro failed to move out of his way fast enough Mr. Early kicked him in the groin. The Negro, who was confined to bed as a result of the injury, was Patrolman Sloan, one of the New York policemen guarding the President's train during FDR's campaign trip to New York. Of course Mr. Early apologized—forty-eight hours later, when the protests began to mount and the political damage to the administration became more threatening. But that kick will not be forgotten. It represented more than the overflowing of Mr. Early's mint-julep culture, more than the overseer traditions of "the party of the South." For Republican leaders—who have made capital of Early's blunder—as well as Democratic, kick the Negro people of America. They kick them through Jim Crow, exploitation, political and social hostility, or plain physical brutality. The refusal of Congressmen in both parties to pass the Anti-Lynching Bill, the presidential order segregating Negroes in the army highlight the attitude of the dominant class. Mr. Early is simply an undiplomatic representative of that class.

Gestapo Vengeance

A SPIRIT of vindictiveness, a personal cruelty akin to the Nazi psychology or the mentality of a Southern lyncher, becomes more evident in the current persecutions of the Communist Party's leadership. The latest example is Attorney General Jackson's order to deport Mrs. Earl Browder on charges of "violating the immigration laws." Mrs. Browder has been a resident of this country for the past seven years; she is the wife of an American citizen. Suddenly, last August, the administration brought its charges against her, and on October 31 Mr. Jackson issued his deportation order, denying her application for a suspension. What is the purpose of this? What political aim, even, is served by separating a woman from her husband and three children—except a mean harassment of Browder for his leadership of forces that oppose the administration's war plans? Browder's own comment, we think, best characterizes this piece of inhumanity: "Mr. Robert H. Jackson seems to be as handy with his knee as Mr. Stephen Early."

In Pittsburgh virtually the entire Communist leadership of western Pennsylvania was included in the conviction of thirty men and women on charges of "conspiracy," "fraud," and "perjury" in connection with soliciting signatures to ballot petitions. The jury found them "guilty" on *all seventy-six counts* in the indictment! We need not repeat here the story which Simon W. Gerson told in his NM dispatch from Pittsburgh (October 29 issue) of terror-stricken witnesses, a prejudiced judge, forced testimony. It is, essentially, the same story that Bruce Minton told in last week's issue concerning the New York "hearings." In the Pennsylvania case the Communist Party was allowed to remain on the ballot, but most of its candidates were sentenced to prison. Perhaps this is the Pennsylvania authorities' idea of a good joke. If so, it will fail to amuse vast numbers of people besides the victims. Persecution, combined with transgression of constitutional rights, is a mighty grim matter to a democratic citizenry.

The truth is that this administration will not tolerate even mild criticism, let alone opposition. Last week it was revealed that letters sent to the White House disagreeing with some of the President's views are not only turned over to the Department of Justice for reply, but are filed in the Department's Criminal Division! It seems that J. Edgar Hoover could teach Herr Himmler a thing or two.

Black Tuesday

A GROUP of men gathered around a huge glass bowl filled with blue capsules. A hand went in and drew out a capsule. It was opened and the number read—158. A woman screamed. Over the air in millions of American homes that mother's scream was heard. Peacetime conscription had begun. And with the drawing of each new number, tragedy entered thousands of American homes.

Smiling photos and rapturous newspaper headlines seek to cover up the tragedy. But in a few papers the truth trickles through. Wrote the New York *Sun* of October 29: "The common reaction of all whose numbers were drawn was to become serious and for the most part to regret that fate had picked them out. In thousands of homes today mothers, sisters, wives, and sweethearts wept."

Thus an unwilling people is being prepared for an unwanted war. The next day a delegation from the American Youth Congress visited Clarence A. Dykstra, national selective service director, and his aids and presented a seven-point program designed to protect the

interests of conscripts. They were given evasive replies, and both Dykstra and his chief assistant, Brig. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, defended the army's Jim Crow system. They also admitted that there was as yet no plan to assure that conscripts would get their old jobs back.

The conscription act is law and must be complied with. But every trade union and every other progressive organization has not only the right but the duty to demand that evils in the application of the law be eliminated. And the American people have also the right and the duty to work for the repeal of this anti-democratic measure.

Ships and Planes

TWO issues ago, in NEW MASSES for October 29, one of our editorials began with the observation that "all signs point to new measures by Mr. Roosevelt to assist Britain." Last week, in his Boston speech, the President announced that the British were ordering 12,000 more planes in this country, on top of some 14,000 already on contract. A day later came the news that England is seeking shipyard space for the construction of a whole fleet of 10,000 ton freighters. Evidently the British are not merely deficient in planes but the "Mistress of the Seas" is suffering severe shipping losses, which begin to approach the disastrous levels of February, March, and April 1917. In the first fifty-eight weeks of the war, 3,036,000 tons of shipping were sent to the bottom, the bulk of it British. This is an average of 53,000 tons per week, and means a loss of one-sixth of the British merchant marine in a year. But in the week of October 14-21, the rate of loss more than trebled, reaching 198,030 tons, which if it continued for a year would take *almost half* of the British merchant fleet. And although England has seized the Norwegian, Dutch, Belgian, even Latvian and Estonian shipping, and now prepares to take over the substantial Greek merchant marine she is evidently compelled to rely on American production to banish the specter of starvation on the island.

The United States has been committed to a weakened ally indeed, as the whole summer's development has shown. British weakness may be a source of profit to the buccaneers of American big business but for the American people it creates an obligation which leads only to war. Undoubtedly these new demands for help are part of a developing political situation: the Axis is working itself into a bargaining position in Europe so that the British ruling class will either be forced to reconsider the German terms, or else call upon Mr. Roosevelt to bail out the empire by coming into the war.

Chinese Victories

ONE of the most hopeful signs in China's great battle for independence is the report of renewed and successful military activity on widely separated fronts. The latest and most dramatic report says that Japanese forces have evacuated Nanning, the capital of Kwangsi province in southeast China. Nanning is the city which the Japanese took earlier this year, and it served as a base for their penetration of French Indo-China. Tokyo news agencies explain this withdrawal on the grounds that new Japanese positions in Indo-China make control of Nanning unnecessary. And it is true that in recent weeks Japanese bombardments have intensified throughout Yunnan, China's southwestern-most province, through which runs the Burma road. Nevertheless it is obvious from the 74,000 casualties in dead and wounded which the Japanese forces suffered at Nanning, out of 114,000 troops used, that their withdrawal was made necessary by irresistible pressure from Chinese armies, which had recently been reinforced.

Similar heartening news comes from central China in Anwhei, where Japanese forces are reported withdrawing from Ichang, an important port far up the Yangtse river. Troops of China's New Fourth Army are reported active all along a front from Nanchang to the coast. This should be taken together with the news NEW MASSES reported some weeks ago of renewed guerrilla activity in north China, reaching even to the gates of Peiping, where the invasion began in July 1937. The Japanese command is literally being compelled to fight second battles for areas captured earlier in the war while large forces are necessary for the protection of railroad communications.

How about India?

THE arrest of Jawaharlal Nehru, the great fighter for the independence of India so well known in this country, emphasizes once again the true meaning of British imperialism and the real objectives for which Great Britain fights. Nehru's arrest at Allahabad is attributed to several recent speeches against the war, but it is only the latest of a whole series of arrests which have swept India since March. In Bengal alone, a thousand individuals are reported in prison; persecutions are equally severe in the United Provinces, Madras, Bihar, and Punjab. Other well known figures recently arrested include Ram Manohar Lohia, whose pamphlets on Indian freedom occasionally reach the United States. Members of the Forward Bloc, composed of Socialists and Communists, have particularly suffered while earlier in the year the arrest of Jai Prakasch Narain, the socialist leader, aroused the widest protest, even hunger strikes in Lucknow and Allahabad.

All these things go on under the "Defense of India" regulations, but as Prakasch Narain remarked with regard to the ironic word "defense": *A slave has no obligation to defend his slavery.*

These repressive measures are connected with the intensified mobilization of India for the war. Large orders have been placed for jute bags for earthen fortifications; steel production has been expanded, huge contracts placed for shoes, and the native armies enlarged for service in the Near East.

From a bombshelter in London the war may appear to be in "defense of the homeland," exactly what it appears to be from an underground shelter in Berlin. But *it is in India that the true character of the war is revealed;* from a prison hole in Allahabad there can be no question about it. Mr. Harold Laski, and his kind, have been chattering about the need for a "European revolution," led by Mr. Churchill, we suppose. But will Mr. Churchill order the freedom of Jawaharlal Nehru and his comrades to lead their own people to freedom and independence? How about it, Harold Laski?

Greek Campaign

AFTER ten days of warfare, Mussolini's legions have made less than dramatic progress, but enough to indicate their superiority over Greece. Barring a capitulation in Athens, this campaign is likely to take at least several weeks. Mountain warfare is slow and arduous. Greek defenses at the "Metaxas line" may delay the invaders, but Italian communications via Albania are good; the Italian airforce is much superior to the Greek; and if Mussolini heads southward toward Prevesa, as he seems to be doing, his troops may emerge on the plains and head north to Salonica. Apart from everything else, Mussolini can always secure cooperation from the Germans. British help for Greece, on the other hand, proceeds with great caution. The naval occupation of Crete and various Aegean islands tends to strengthen the general British position in the Mediterranean far more than it actually assists the Greeks. "What we can do, we will do," says the first lord of the Admiralty, A. V. Alexander; but obviously with all their worries at both ends of the Mediterranean, their shortages in men and materials, it is a far cry from those days of 1917 when British troops occupied Salonica as soon as Greece joined the war.

Meanwhile, diplomatic developments have taken the stage, most significantly in Turkey. The Italian objectives, as we said last week, are harbors and airbases that would facilitate landings in Syria and coordinate with Marshal Graziani's attack on Suez through Egypt. But should such a campaign require large land forces, they would have to go through Turkey. Behind the headlines, therefore, the Axis is trying to isolate Turkey, or bring it to cooperation with its own objectives. That is why last week's statement of the Turkish president, Ismet Inonu, assumes a defiant implication. Inonu affirmed a cautious sympathy for the Greeks; he warned Bulgaria against a joint campaign with Italy through Grecian Thrace; he emphasized Turkey's alliance with Britain and expressed in warm terms Turkey's improved relations with the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Evidently, the Axis campaign in the Near East faces many complications.

In the Bosom of the Bourgeois Family

Christina Stead's new book, Isidor Schneider writes, might be considered a novelization of Engels' "Origin of the Family." One of the season's "truly notable books."

THE MAN WHO LOVED CHILDREN, *by Christina Stead. Simon & Schuster. $2.75.*

THERE is little resemblance in the style —Miss Stead's exact grace is remote from Emily Bronte's wild rhetoric; and in the treatment of character Miss Stead dissects where Bronte makes heroic enlargements. And yet, steadily through the reading of *The Man Who Loved Children* I was reminded of *Wuthering Heights.* Perhaps because it keeps so much within the atmosphere of an obsession, Sam Pollitt's preoccupation with his children being as aberrant as Heathcliffe's unhealing pride—and as grimly absorbing to follow. And perhaps, too, because both writers, despite the highly colored romanticism of Bronte and Miss Stead's sustained and fascinating stylization, stand on a solid realistic base.

That base is an understanding of a social truth, the plasticity of the human "soul"; and of what mutilated images are pressed out of it in the decomposing molds and under the crooked stampings of a class society. And so, added to the other resemblances we see Sam Pollitt, the pulp of love, abandoned within his own housewalls by his wife, frustrated in his work, and forced upon his children for attention and love, as foredoomed as the vengeful Heathcliffe, the clot of hatreds, clenched by the miseries and humiliations of his foundling upbringing.

Pollitt's fate is the common one that few escape, that most of us to a greater or less degree of anguish have to endure, the tragedy of the bourgeois family—or rather the family in bourgeois society. *The Man Who Loved Children* may in a sense be considered a novelization of Engels' *Origin of the Family,* and it is a rare distinction of the book that it should succeed in this without prejudice either to the integrity of the ideas or to the embodying art.

The tragic source in the book is the Pollitt family's insecure and inelastic economy. Out of it flow the petty maneuvers that lead to the unallayable suspicions; the disappointments that lead to the angers, that lead to the unforgivable charges; that steadily break the adults and fissure the children in the manner they later learn, if they can afford a psychoanalysis, as one or another neurosis.

We can see it even in the simple "plot." When Sam Pollitt, poor-born protege of the wealthy David Collyer, is left a young widower with a baby daughter, he is "given" Collyer's last unmarried and very spoilt daughter, and is "established" by an appointment in a government bureau in Washington secured through Collyer's influence. The wife, Henrietta, is a typical bourgeois daughter, pampered and extravagant. Sam's salary is not small, but he wants a large family. Henrietta does not manage, runs up debts which she conceals, and because concealment is trying and painful, nurses grievances against her husband, regards his "principles" as brutalities and hypocrisies, resents his man's economic and legal advantages. The rift festers, develops morbidities. Both seek escapes. Henrietta's is chiefly invalidism; her "affairs," for fear of divorce proceedings that might deprive her of her children, are too furtive. Sam's escape is into the lives of his children from whom, by a combination of clowning and bullying, he coaxes and extorts the love denied him at home and the admiration denied him in his office.

The terrible thing is that each knows how the other is deformed, and with primitive heartlessness—how nakedly the primitive is preserved in the bosom of the bourgeois family! —preys upon it, uses it to erect a little platform of superiority. Henrietta knows the twists given to Sam's poor-boy aspirations and moralities by his sycophant relations to old Dave Collyer; and Sam knows the helpless mess in which Henrietta's parasitic rich-girl upbringing has left her.

The final phase of the tragedy occurs when old David Collyer dies insolvent. This destruction of the remaining Pollitt hope follows a freakish sudden and last reconciliation between Sam and Henny, whose fruit is a seventh child. With his protector Collyer gone, Sam is railroaded out of his job. The family moves to a house in a rundown Baltimore suburb. Under the further horror of unrelieved poverty the mutual hatred and disgust seethe to their climax and the conflict begins to take on an edge of desperation.

Christina Stead

The edge is most keenly felt by Louise, Sam's child by his first wife, who enters her adolescence in this dreadful period. The portrait of Louise, the account of her brave and pitiful and blundering struggle to build a life apart, secure from that maniacal conflict, the recurring struggle of youth to escape the family, is an extraordinary achievement.

An especially violent phase of the endemic quarrel brings Louise to the resolution that since children are innocent sufferers and their sufferings can only increase if the parents live, she, as the oldest and most responsible of the children, must act for them and destroy the parents. She prepares poison for both but bungles the attempt. Henny, however, divining the intention, seizes the opportunity to achieve her often threatened and long desired self-destruction. The book ends with Sam Pollitt reigning in almost absolute idiocy and power over the children, and Louise on the road, a runaway.

This outline will be misleading if taken as the pattern of the narrative. The book begins with a "Sunday-Funday"; and ends with a day when, through Sam's joblessness, the week is all Sunday-Fundays. The opening section builds up the past with subtle thoroughness—a few pages serve to bring us deep inside the characters. The closing section is spacious not only with the tragedy but with long evocations of the future. The effect is powerful.

Miss Stead's achievement is unique. She has taken a social fact and given it artistic embodiment. She has accomplished it without sacrifice of her individual literary gifts. Her book assumes immediate stature among social novels. It is hard to think of a novel where the narrative is so solid and where, at the same time, sheer literary texture offers so much pleasure. As an example we may take the baby talk which is one of the elements of the dreadful infantile world created by Sam Pollitt with his children as living props. Into its composition go marvelous word play, rhymes, rhythms, alliteration, verbal inventions. But every effect serves the novelist's purpose. And through these very effects, which delight us in the reading, we hear the exasperating silliness, we feel the trivial pretentiousness, dullness, infantilism, and finally the sheer helplessness,

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which makes Sam repulsive and infuriating. Thus the realist end is attained without violation of the literary means. And this quality characterizes, and distinguishes, the writing of this truly notable book.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

The Hague Machine

THE BOSS: THE HAGUE MACHINE IN ACTION, *by David Dayton McKean. Houghton Mifflin Co. $3.*

OTHER notable political machines have toppled; those of Long, Pendergast, and Vare, for example. But Boss Hague's has endured more than a score of years. Early in his career the Jersey Hitler realized the importance of controlling the armed forces and he proceeded to do so after smashing AFL unions of firemen and policemen. Hague built his machine locally and then in Hudson County, of which Jersey City is a part, but found that courts and the state government could yet upset him. So he reached out to control the courts and later the state government.

One of Jersey's two legislative houses has always been Republican and in those years when a willful GOP governor was elected, Hague had his difficulties. Nothing daunted, he had his henchmen vote in the local Republican primaries so that they could name either satisfactory Republican candidates or those so weak as to be defeated easily. Out of this later grew the notorious alliance between the Democrat Hague and the Republican Governor Hoffman. Thus Hague now operates through both parties and not only dominates his city, county, and party, but is in effect the political boss of the state. It is but another manifestation of the fundamental sameness of the two major parties. The alliance with Roosevelt has given Hague federal patronage in return for support of the President's policies by Hague stooges in Congress.

The secret of his survival lies in more thorough organization than that of other political machines. He has added his own touches, down to controlling organizations of veterans and of the bar, the church, newspapers, and that part of the labor movement he permitted to exist (before the CIO). Those he has been unable to bribe outright he has silenced in other ways, including use of force.

As a factual and clinical work, Dr. McKean's study has its value. But there are certain limitations. His introductory reference to Hagueism as a "sort of brown bolshevism," is indulgence in the cheap, catchpenny phrases of a political scientist like Pegler. But his failure to see Hagueism as an integral part of capitalism is the greatest weakness of this book. Dr. McKean writes: "The thesis . . . that the business men of Jersey City like the regime because of its anti-labor policies cannot be sustained. . . ." But many years ago Lincoln Steffens, in his study of political machines, found that for every bribe taker there was a bribe giver. Hague has made of Jersey City a haven of sweatshops, and many of the nation's largest corporations have branch plants in Jersey City. Dr. McKean writes that Hague used many of the methods of fascism before fascism, under that name, was recognized. But like many other recent writers on fascism, he does not see it as the instrument of big business that it is.

HY KRAVIF.

The McKenneys Again

THE MCKENNEYS CARRY ON, *by Ruth McKenney. Harcourt Brace. $2.*

RUTH MCKENNEY, like Gaul, is divided into several autonomous parts. There is a serious McKenney in *Industrial Valley* and in the weekly NEW MASSES feuilletons, an active trade unionist in the McKenney who helped organize the Newspaper Guild, and of course a funny McKenney for the *New Yorker. The McKenneys Carry On* is the latest collection of her magazine pieces about the young McKenney rips, Ruth and Eileen.

It is as funny as *My Sister Eileen* and that means that provincial newspaper reviewers will have a good day appreciating it, and a considerable public who never heard of this magazine, or for that matter, the *New Yorker,* will eat it up.

The characterizations of the McKenney girls are one of the triumphs of comic literature, even if every word is true. You have only to read the sketch about Ruth, the sweating young reporter, arranging a pony race for the glory of her newspaper, and finding her cozy kiddy outing turned into a desperate affair with gamblers and shady horses riding roughshod over the infants. The piece is as good as George Milburn's delicious story, *Catalogue.*

Miss McKenney's is humor of characterization. It does not depend on gags or plot devices, but on the trenchant development of character. That is rare enough in contemporary humor and the economy with which she recreates her characters is worthy of Ring Lardner. You can recall only a handful of living humorists who rival her in this department—maybe Fred Allen, Chaplin, Art Young, Arthur Kober, Bill Fields, and a few others.

The McKenneys Carry On is a nifty little book. Despite Ruth's misgivings about fiddling while Rome burns, I'm afraid the public will not let her quit writing about the McKenneys.

JOB SMITH.

Southern Children

CHILDREN OF BONDAGE, *by Allison Davis and John Dollard. American Council on Education. Washington, D. C. $2.25.*

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Orleans and Natchez, Miss. Their findings, in *Children of Bondage,* represent a pioneer attempt at a scientific study of the problem.

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And let them read—and quake as they do —of the spirit of resistance already rooted in these children, of the yearnings that never leave them and their determination that this is not the final way of life. Those who are possessed of the true "American dream," which is also humanity's dream, of brotherhood and peace, honorable labor and universal abundance, will find fresh courage in *Children of Bondage.* For the book proves again that the dignity and vitality of a people can resist all the humiliation and terror visited upon it by its exploiters.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

An X-Ray of Calamity

MEN ON THE MOVE, *by Nels Anderson. The University of Chicago Press. $3.*

NELS ANDERSON, who directs the labor relations section of the federal WPA, here surveys the human wastelands that result from technological improvements in American industry and agriculture. It is the story of how men and women find themselves torn from their formerly stable lives in the community and cast willy-nilly upon the casual labor market to hunt for bare subsistence.

Where can those people hope to find work or discover new territory in which to strike root? Anderson cannot answer this. Technological unemployment takes place on a nation-wide scale today; even the states that once could be regarded as meccas for the job-seeking migrant now boast of new "efficiencies" which make men and women superfluous appendages of our body economic. Starvation is the lean shadow of heightened industrial productivity.

The migrant of today, Mr. Anderson finds, is no longer the road-lusty hobo brimming with song and defiance, challenging hardship with a robust flair for adventure. More often he is confused and despairing. He travels in a battered jaloppy, accompanied by wife and children, seeking in state after state for a chance to earn his living. These people crave neither adventure nor scenic exhilaration. What they want, what they must have, is work.

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The author concludes that since private industry has failed to reabsorb this uprooted citizenry, federal agencies should undertake the job, substituting national-scale planning for the haphazard, clumsy efforts of state and local agencies. And greater effort should be made to provide the wanderers with some means of rehabilitation now denied them in most states because of stringent residential qualifications.

Mr. Anderson's copious data testifies to the fact that the profit motive can continue to operate only at a steadily increasing cost in terms of community welfare and stability. The author, however, does not mention that only socialism—the creation of an economy based on production for the common use and enjoyment of all instead of for the privileged few—can really solve the social problem which his useful book attempts to diagnose.

ED FALKOWSKI.

Sights & Sounds

"Big White Fog"

Ralph Ellison reviews an outstanding play of Negro Playwrights.

TO REVIEW the recently organized Negro Playwrights Company's production of Theodore Ward's *Big White Fog* is to do more than say a few words about a vital and entertaining play. For with this presentation a fresh source of incalculable possibilities has begun to pour its strength into the stream of the American theater.

The Playwrights Company was formed to probe that neglected area of American life occupied by Negroes. Negro actors have been appearing upon the American stage for many years, but usually in stereotyped roles which ignore Negro problems and Negro reality. As a rule they are cast in parts which burlesque the Negro people and present them either as clowns, brutes, or blundering children. Even the range of emotions allowed Negro actors is strictly limited; it was long a Broadway tradition that the Negro should never be shown as capable of the universal emotion of love. On the other hand, Negro playwrights, who might have written plays in which the Negro could have appeared in a more dignified light, have been rigidly denied an opportunity to secure that working knowledge of their craft, which until recently was only to be acquired through contact with the commercial stage. Their plays were also ignored by producers and most critics have shown no concern with the role which Negro writing should play in American culture.

Clearly, the creation of a Negro theater was indispensable for the solution of the problem of Negroes and the stage. This has long been recognized by Negro intellectuals; now at last, with the help of men like Richard Wright and Paul Robeson, a group of young playwrights has launched in Harlem the most advanced attempt yet made to establish a Negro theater. *Big White Fog* testifies to the soundness of their efforts and makes a fine start in the direction in which such a theater will have to go. Its theme is the Negro people's striving for a world in which they can exist as a nation, with the full freedom which this concept implies. It is also a rejection of any utopian attempts to fulfill these strivings. Victor Mason, the play's chief protagonist, has lived through the agony of the war. By 1922 he is disgusted with the condition of Negroes in the United States and, unable to see a solution, becomes an ardent follower of Marcus Garvey and his dream of an African empire. An idealist, he has given up the struggle for freedom in this country to the extent that he is willing to endanger the welfare of his family by investing his life savings in Garvey's fleet of obsolete ships. He sees this enterprise fail; Garvey is arrested for fraud and deported. Mason's wife turns against him because he persists in following his idealistic path in face of the bitter economic pressure of 1929. In 1933, after watching the steady disintegration of his family, Mason is wounded by policemen while resisting an eviction and he dies, seeing life as "just a big white fog."

In his study of Victor Mason, Theodore Ward reveals greater social insight than has been shown by any previous Negro dramatist. Against the main action of Victor's story, Ward has counterposed the problems of members of Victor's family: that of his son, whose scholastic career is blighted because of his color; that of his daughter, who leaves school and slips into prostitution; of his brother, who takes to night-life and alcoholism because he cannot come to grips with his environment; and that of his middle-class brother-in-law who seeks to grow rich off the brutal exploitation of his people. Through these counter motifs, Ward attempts to develop his theme in a larger perspective than that offered by the story of a single individual. The decade encompassed by the action, the most trying in Negro experience since slavery, was a time when, out of the lynching and rioting which preceded and ended the war, the Negro people were seeking to devise new means of struggle. Out of this period came the growth of the Negro reform movements, of which the Garvey movement was the most important. It was during this period too that more advanced groups among the Negro people began to turn toward Communism. Despite the impracticality of the Garvey movement, most of the people attacted to it were sincere and regarded it as an answer to their most profound yearnings; some held to the plan even after Garvey had been shipped to Jamaica.

Victor Mason is one of these. Not even the steady decline of his family can make him see the error of his position. And symbolically, when 1933 brings him a notice of eviction, the sole garment he possesses to wear to court is the jacket of his old Garvey uniform; ironically, the jacket causes the judge to call him a trouble maker and order him out of his home.

Yet, while Victor follows Garvey in pursuing the dead-end utopia of Africa, his son, Lester, finds his way to Communism and tries to teach him the techniques of realistic political struggle. Lester is unsuccessful until the eviction order angers Victor and he decides to resist with the aid of Lester's friends in the relief fight. When Victor resists, he is killed; he dies failing to see the unity of black and white forces upon which his first realistic action was based.

In its three-act attempt to probe the most vital problems of Negro experience, *Big White Fog* is like no other Negro play. The author takes a movement which has been passed off as a ludicrous effort by Negroes to ape British royalty and reveals in it that dignity of human groping which is characteristic of all oppressed peoples.

Big White Fog is not without its weaknesses. The play is too diffuse; Ward has sought to illustrate his theme with that variety of incidents which is better suited to the novel. The play form does not allow for the successful development of these many aspects of his problem and hence Ward sometimes throws his dramatic machine out of gear. Thus the play moves slowly and some aspects of the problem are left unresolved.

To some, the characterization of Victor will seem off key. Which is not to deny the existence of this type of Negro; certainly Negro people exhibit the emotion which fired Victor's idealism every day. But the impact of American life upon Negroes is so immediate and sustained that their expressed feelings are cloaked in quite graphic and realistic imagery—even their idealism. This imagery is missing from Victor's passionate and moving speeches, as it is missing from Ward's dialogue in general, and in Victor it comes across as a flaw of characterization. Its inclusion would have given *Big White Fog* a poetic shimmer similar to that of the best work of Odets.

Finally, Ward has left the solution of his play undramatized. While Victor Mason's sense of life is drawn in terms of his basic emotional drive—a confused Negro nationalism—the solution of his problem is presented in the character of his son, Lester, who has been formed by a different set of circumstances. Yet while we see Victor's struggle, Lester's transformation comes in the form of abstract speeches. In his failure to have Lester develop on stage, Ward misses one of his most easily accessible dramatic opportunities: that of contrasting the father with the son, the illusory with the realistic, the utopian with the scientific. Without this contrast, Ward runs the risk of having his theme, here projected mainly through Victor, seem a bit dated: the Negro people discarded long ago the utopianism of the Garvey movement. And when Victor's weaknesses are compared with Lester's strength and decision, it becomes plain that Lester's story, of how he evolved, is that which should have been in

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ALFRED GOLDSTEIN, popular political analyst, reviews THE NEWS OF THE WEEK every SUNDAY EVENING at Workers School, 2nd floor, 50 East 13 Street. Admission 25c.

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the foreground of the play. Nor is this to say that Victor's story is without vitality; it has vitality because the conditions which produced his tragedy still prevail (if this were not true *Big White Fog* would not possess its tremendous power). It is to say, however, that the Negro people's consciousness of these conditions has increased; increased to the point that they have produced a writer who can objectify those elements once shrouded in a big white fog.

What is valid about this play among other things is its sincere emotion; it offers an evening of theater wherein satisfaction comes not only from viewing a gripping drama, but from the contemplation of what the very existence of this theater means to American cultural history as well. *Big White Fog* cannot be accepted without accepting the things for which it stands, or the people from which it comes. Shadowing the actors upon the stage of the old theater named after Lincoln are the forces of American history, going resolutely through their paces. And if the play has certain flaws, these are forgotten during those gripping moments which bring that hush over the audience, followed by enthusiastic applause.

NEW TRADITION

With this fine start we can be sure that the Negro Playwrights Company will give us even more exciting plays in the future. For just as *Big White Fog* triumphs despite its flaws, the Playwrights have found the historically necessary means of overcoming their long exclusion from Broadway. Historical conditions have produced a group of white dramatists and theater technicians who, feeling no allegiance to the rulers of the commercial theater, and seeing themselves as stewards of culture dedicated to labor, will help these writers bridge any gap that might exist between their talents and their craftsmanship. Thus out of this collaboration a new theater tradition will emerge from the old.

The Playwrights have shown their willingness to accept the implications of Negro life and make them the stuff of their writings. How correct they are is witnessed by V. J. Jerome, who, in commenting on the play, stated that "Seldom in literature or on the stage has the inner dignity of an oppressed people struggling to affirm its nationhood risen so indestructibly, so magnificently, as in the Negro family portrayed in *Big White Fog.*" All who know the play will agree with Jerome. To see the play, and to support the Playwrights Company is not just a privilege, it is a necessity.

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