HOW FRANCE WAS SOLD *by Rene Labastide*

NEW MASSES

THE CONVOY CONSPIRACY

A first-hand report from Washington.

By Joseph Starobin

CONSCRIPTING THE NEWS

The administration's censors at work.

By Julian Webb

SENOR MACLEISH'S FAUX PAS

By Samuel Putnam and Carlos Benitez

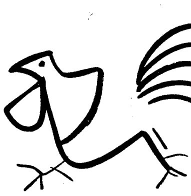
MAY 20, 1941 *FIFTEEN CENTS*

Between Ourselves

We really don't go around prodding people in the ribs and insisting that they tell us exactly what they think of every issue of NM—but we do want to know. So when they tell us, we usually report it here in the hope of encouraging others to come and do likewise. Last week Joseph Starobin, our foreign-affairs editor (some job these days), spoke in Washington at the Cooperative Book Shop and brought back a number of interesting items in addition to his article on page 4 of this issue. There was a newspaperman who particularly liked Samuel Sillen's review of Michael Gold's *The Hollow Men* and, in fact, was enthusiastic about the quality of Mr. Sillen's writing in general. One woman felt that Alvah Bessie's pointed remarks about William Saroyan's latest opus could have been softened with a little more justice. Another criticized us for the "fiction desert" in our pages although she admitted we had been doing better lately. And, Joseph North's reports from Detroit on the Ford strike still get a hurrah from all sides. The Washington Book Shop, Starobin reports, is a thriving institution and the people who come to its lectures are full of lively questions and a talent for vigorous agreement and disagreement.

Leading all comments this week were those on Ruth McKenney's "No Market for Atrocities." It made one man "so mad I cried, only this time I didn't wind up with the puny cry of 'Why'?" And a woman writes us: "I lost my son in the last world war. He enlisted, because he had heard and read of 'Hunnish atrocities' in Belgium until he couldn't rest unless he was 'doing something about it.' Well he did something—and for that he died mutilated and burned. After the war the truth finally came out, about how the Creel committee and others had faked those 'atrocities' to get us in. I should like to send Ruth McKenney's fine piece to every mother with a son of fighting age. It would be a pretty grim Mother's Day present, but I think it might save them a lot of worse grimness later."

Now and then our readers tell us about themselves instead of the magazine, a proceeding that we find just as valuable and considerably more enjoyable. We haven't space to quote the whole of a lengthy letter from a small town that had better remain nameless, but we offer some excerpts: "For years I belonged to a woman's club, consisting of fifteen members, and calling itself originally the Shakespeare Society. It started a great many years ago when the fashion for women's clubs was to pick an eminent writer, look up his biography in the encyclopedia, and recite portions of his works, etc. Along about 1925 we began to branch out into studying gardens and, by 1933, we had gotten around to preserving fruit for needy families and supplying hot lunches at school. Four years later we went so far as to hold forums on national questions. When the war came we could hardly think about anything else, but no one suggested that we do anything more than discuss it and pretty carefully at that, because of course there was a lot of feeling one way and another. . . . It wasn't until some seven months later that we discovered that we agreed on one thing anyway—we all wanted peace so far as this country was concerned. So we've been talking peace, to our friends as well as ourselves, and writing letters to newspapers. Now we're thinking about joining the American Peace Mobilization. . . . I'm writing you this because I saw a copy of your magazine when I was visiting in Chicago recently and you're the only magazine I know that would be interested."



We are very pleased to tell our readers that Herbert Aptheker's series of lectures on "Rediscovering American History" has been extended through May 24, instead of May 17 as originally planned. In other words, there will be seven lectures instead of six. They are held, remember, at the Malin Studios, 135 West 44th Street, New York City, on Saturday afternoon at 2:30. The lecture this coming Saturday will deal with the uprisings of Negroes and poor whites in the period immediately preceding the Civil War. This is a little known period of American history and it throws a good deal of light on the meaning of the Civil War itself. Admission to the lecture is twenty-five cents.

NM is planning a "theater evening" that will include samples of drama as well as a symposium on the outlook of the theater. New Theater of Manhattan will present a scene from the Sklar-Maltz play, *Zero Hour;* the American Negro Theater will show the revival scene from *Natural Man;* and there will be several excerpts from Marc Blitzstein's *No for an Answer.* The foregoing will be offered as examples of straight theater, Negro theater, and theater and music. In addition the Almanac Players and Singers will demonstrate Folk Theater, and a well known group of radio actors, writers, and directors will show how the radio produces its brand of special theater. Ruth McKenney, Alvah Bessie, Albert Maltz, Marc Blitzstein, and others will participate in the symposium, discussing this season's Broadway offerings. The date is Monday evening, May 26; the place, Manhattan Center, NYC. Tickets, ranging from fifty-five cents to $1, can be obtained at NM, the Workers Bookshop, Bookfair, and the New Theater League.

Hugo Gellert and Rockwell Kent are among the NM artists who will take a leading part at a symposium, "Whither American Art?", being held Thursday, May 15, at 8 PM, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City. Mr. Gellert is chairman of the Artists Coordination Committe which is sponsoring the meeting, and the symposium will feature the Art Center of the City of New York, the Government Art Projects, and Inter-American Cultural Relations. The symposium is for the benefit of the Citizens Committee for Government Arts Projects. Admission is fifty cents for artists, $1 for others.

Who's Who

Julian Webb is a free lance writer and research worker in the field of national affairs. . . . Rene Labastide has long been active in French politics. . . . Robert Ramsey is a graduate of the University of Arkansas, now living in Memphis. One of his stories, *Flight,* recently appeared in NM. . . . Samuel Putnam is an authority on Latin-American affairs.

THIS WEEK

NEW MASSES, VOL. XXXIX, No. 9

May 20, 1941

There Is Still Time *An editorial* 3
The Convoy Conspiracy *by Joseph Starobin* 4
Gropper's Cartoon 6
Ballad of October 16 *by The Almanacs* 8
Conscripting the News *by Julian Webb* 9
How France Was Sold *by Rene Labastide* 13
Defeat in the Forest *by Robert Ramsey* 15
Editorial Comment 17
Readers' Forum 20

REVIEW AND COMMENT

The Spanking of A. MacLeish *by Samuel Putnam and Carlos Benitez* 21
Heywood Broun *by Daniel Todd* 25
Pathetic Prelude *by Barbara Giles* 26

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

End of a Season *by Alvah Bessie* 28
Three Films *by Joy Davidman* 30

Artwork by Jamison, Michaels, Rodney.

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.

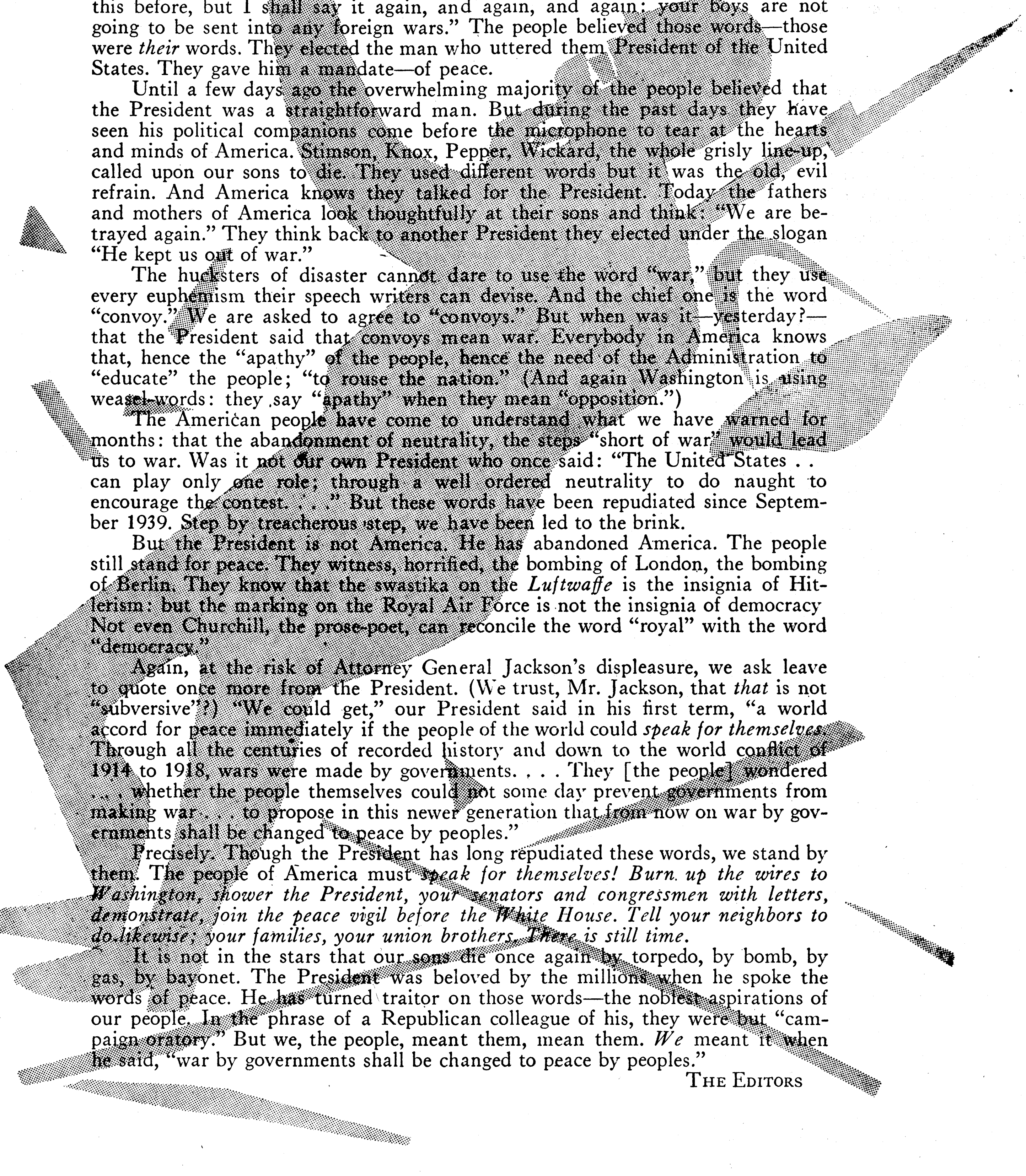
Published weekly by WEEKLY MASSES CO., INC., at 461 Fourth Ave., New York City. Copyright 1941, WEEKLY MASSES CO., INC. Reg. U. S. Patent Office. Drawings and text may not be reprinted without permission. Entered as second-class matter, June 24, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies 15 cents. Subscriptions $5.00 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico. Six months $2.75; three months $1.50; Foreign $6.00 a year; six months $3.25; three months $1.75. In Canada, $5.50 a year, $3.00 for six months. Subscribers are notified that no change in address can be effected in less than two weeks. NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers and artists. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by stamped, addressed envelopes. NEW MASSES does not pay for contributions. 20

THERE IS STILL TIME

Dear Friends:

And so they have maneuvered America, over the grave of the Unknown Soldier, back to April 1917. We are asked to make a decision when we had thought we had already made our decision. A generation of Americans had yearned to spare its sons the wild tragedy of another world war, another AEF, another parade of Gold Star Mothers. But pick up the papers, turn on the radio, and everywhere you meet the fine, tumultuous, empty words again. They ask us to choose when we have already chosen. They call us to war.

But we have answered the question they now pose. Was it yesterday that a man stood before the men and women of this land and said: "And while I am talking to you, fathers and mothers, I give you one more assurance. I have said this before, but I shall say it again, and again, and again: your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars." The people believed those words—those were *their* words. They elected the man who uttered them President of the United States. They gave him a mandate—of peace.



Until a few days ago the overwhelming majority of the people believed that the President was a straightforward man. But during the past days they have seen his political companions come before the microphone to tear at the hearts and minds of America. Stimson, Knox, Pepper, Wickard, the whole grisly line-up, called upon our sons to die. They used different words but it was the old, evil refrain. And America knows they talked for the President. Today the fathers and mothers of America look thoughtfully at their sons and think: "We are betrayed again." They think back to another President they elected under the slogan "He kept us out of war."

The hucksters of disaster cannot dare to use the word "war," but they use every euphemism their speech writers can devise. And the chief one is the word "convoy." We are asked to agree to "convoys." But when was it—yesterday?—that the President said that convoys mean war. Everybody in America knows that, hence the "apathy" of the people, hence the need of the Administration to "educate" the people; "to rouse the nation." (And again Washington is using weasel-words: they say "apathy" when they mean "opposition.")

The American people have come to understand what we have warned for months: that the abandonment of neutrality, the steps "short of war" would lead us to war. Was it not our own President who once said: "The United States . . can play only one role; through a well ordered neutrality to do naught to encourage the contest. . . ." But these words have been repudiated since September 1939. Step by treacherous step, we have been led to the brink.

But the President is not America. He has abandoned America. The people still stand for peace. They witness, horrified, the bombing of London, the bombing of Berlin. They know that the swastika on the *Luftwaffe* is the insignia of Hitlerism: but the marking on the Royal Air Force is not the insignia of democracy Not even Churchill, the prose-poet, can reconcile the word "royal" with the word "democracy."

Again, at the risk of Attorney General Jackson's displeasure, we ask leave to quote once more from the President. (We trust, Mr. Jackson, that *that* is not "subversive"?) "We could get," our President said in his first term, "a world accord for peace immediately if the people of the world could *speak for themselves.* Through all the centuries of recorded history and down to the world conflict of 1914 to 1918, wars were made by governments. . . . They [the people] wondered . . . whether the people themselves could not some day prevent governments from making war . . . to propose in this newer generation that from now on war by governments shall be changed to peace by peoples."

Precisely. Though the President has long repudiated these words, we stand by them. The people of America must *speak for themselves! Burn up the wires to Washington, shower the President, your senators and congressmen with letters, demonstrate, join the peace vigil before the White House. Tell your neighbors to do likewise; your families, your union brothers. There is still time.*

It is not in the stars that our sons die once again by torpedo, by bomb, by gas, by bayonet. The President was beloved by the millions when he spoke the words of peace. He has turned traitor on those words—the noblest aspirations of our people. In the phrase of a Republican colleague of his, they were but "campaign oratory." But we, the people, meant them, mean them. *We* meant it when he said, "war by governments shall be changed to peace by peoples."

The Editors

THE CONVOY CONSPIRACY

It was a week of high drama, a crucial week in Washington. The President's dilemma. Why he called off his speech. How many ships really were sunk? A firsthand report by Joseph Starobin.

We deliberately decided not to revise Mr. Starobin's article when the last minute news came in that the President had called off his speech to the Pan American Union. We think that this latest development emphasizes the accuracy of our editorial two weeks ago—"Where the War Stands"—and it confirms our correspondent's description of the acute crisis confronting the administration.—THE EDITORS.

Washington.

BY THE time these lines are read, the President should have delivered his speech to the Pan American Union. It is to be the climax of a whole series of boasts and blasts, of yelps and imprecations, of brazen *pronunciamentos* which have been emanating from administration spokesmen in such bewildering volume during the last fifteen days. The most considered judgment is that the President will lay it on thick. In truth, unless he intends to sound anti-climactic after Secretary Stimson's demand for convoys last week, he will have to beat all the drums and tilt the brass instruments high into the air. The speech to the White House Correspondents dinner some weeks ago was intended, as people say here, to "kick the American people in the pants." It is probable, therefore, that what Mr. Roosevelt intends to do this week is to bat the American people over the head. It is a remarkable commentary on the crisis which confronts the administration that the best language to describe their intentions must be borrowed from the vocabulary of cave-men.

But the plain fact is that the men who are running the show in Washington are confronted with a most serious crisis. If our Founding Fathers had provided for a more parliamentary form of government, this is the sort of crisis which might already have forced a couple of Cabinet members to resign. One or two under-secretaries might have jumped into the Potomac by now. Here and there, somebody's mistress would have been found poisoned in an obscure boudoir. And the chief of state would have been fighting for his political life.

The situation can be put as follows: after a full year of a most concentrated "educational" campaign, systematically encouraged from the White House with the energetic cooperation of the newsreels, the radio, the Gallup polls, the press, the pseudo-liberal intelligentsia, the American people still aren't terribly keen about getting into the war. Nobody is losing any love for the draft. There are no demonstrations for the tax program, and nobody is really excited about convoys. Mr. Herbert Hoover is understating the case when he admits that the nation is very much divided. The very best that can be said from the administration's point of view is that people are reluctantly resigned, apathetic to the Roosevelt crusade. To be more accurate, the White House is being deluged with mail against war and against convoys every day of the week. I heard one wisecrack that letters were coming in for Woodrow Wilson telling him to beware, that somebody was following his footsteps. Mr. Hillman's activities notwithstanding, the labor movement is not hepped on the war. Nor have many Negro citizens been aroused by the urgency of a "defense" program in which they are forbidden to participate. Sizable sections of the electorate are beginning to suspect some kind of hoax. They supported Mr. Roosevelt on the assumption that by helping Britain (which most folk see in its humanitarian aspects) we would nevertheless stay out of the war. But Mr. Roosevelt and his closest friends never really believed this "short of war" business. Of course, statesmen are never supposed to believe exactly what they themselves say: the trouble is that the great majority of people are less sophisticated and really believed their Chief Executive. As somebody put it to me, this short-of-war propaganda was too good. "It was over-sold."

MR. ROOSEVELT has come up against this realization at a most delicate moment in his international poker game. For one thing, the British seem to be exploiting their own difficulties, using their own setbacks as a diplomatic weapon. Dark rumors circulate in Washington that unless FDR comes across, the British may come to terms with Hitler; usually such rumors come in the form of statements that a negotiated peace is unthinkable. All winter long, Sumner Welles was trying to determine just how many barrels of flour would suffice to cajole General Weygand from the idea of closer cooperation with the Nazis. This policy also seems to be reaching a point of visible fiasco. Out in the Far East, the Japanese are working harder than ever for a *de facto* truce with the Kuomintang, while in the midst of discussions about joint naval operations around Singapore, observers who ought to know suggest that Churchill may be talking things over with the Japanese ambassador in London. This kind of doubledealing, it will be recalled, gave Mr. Stimson, then the Secretary of State, some rough going during the Manchurian incident, back in the days when Stimson was a younger and a stronger man.

I find in Washington that most American military men do not expect the British to make a very strong showing in the Near East. Churchill's boast of a half a million men in Egypt is generally considered to represent a specimen of the British prime minister's legendary command of the English language. It is impossible to judge how much of this kind of thing is real, and how much of it is a form of pressure on the United States. At any rate, the President is faced with an international picture in which everybody is playing his cards very close, and while FDR has a lot of aces up his sleeve, the rest of the gamblers in Berlin and Tokyo and London are playing their deuces wild. On top of it all, the Soviet Union is taking care of itself very well.

Thus, at the very moment that the President hoped he would have complete control of the American public, which in itself would be a very strong card, he discovers he does not have that control. Some newspapermen tell me they really think he has lost the initiative both at home and abroad. Malicious minds even suggest that Mr. Roosevelt called off his two press conferences last week for more urgent reasons than a slight gastro-intestinal *malaise* and two-tenths of a degree of fever.

In the last fifteen days, therefore, the administration has been trying to "wake people up." Almost every Cabinet member, and even the under-secretaries, have made at least one speech. It looked for a while as if Colonel Knox would have his say twice, since he usually speaks twice as much as anybody else, but Stimson outdid them all with his demand for immediate convoys. John D. Rockefeller lent a hand, or rather his handwriting. Claude Pepper, the senator from Florida, who had such successes in Canada a month or so ago, charged out on the Senate floor demanding no less than the Azores, the Canary islands, and Dakar. He also wanted to bomb the cities of Japan into shambles, and the White House watched with suppressed excitement what the effect of throwing some pepper in people's eyes would be. Happily enough, there was some sort of banquet in Dorothy Thompson's honor up in New York, which provided the occasion for still more speeches, and Dorothy herself insisted on the declaration of a national emergency. The Fight for Freedom committee got together and went over the top, and Mr. Willkie contrived to have his article in *Collier's* published just in time. He professed to wonder why the American people were so frightened of this American Century.

REFLECTING the general sentiment among Navy men, Colonel Knox actually intended to call for a declaration of war in his last address, and he was a bit angry when his Chief decided that was going too far just now. The President evidently believed that his Secretary of the Navy was going overboard. Some columnists have accused the President of cowardice, while others suggested he might be becoming the American Chamberlain. But the President himself held back.

Why? The answer lies in the internal

opposition and the international dilemma confronting American imperialism which I have described above. But it should also be remembered that the President is a politician, the titular head of the Democratic Party. Colonel Knox can always go back to Hearst where he came from; Jesse Jones owns a couple of banks and some newspapers in Texas; and Harry Stimson has the best of his career behind him. But it would make quite a spectacle for the man who wanted three terms and got them, the man who "was not going to let the British do to me what they did to Wilson," the man who was going to run the whole world from Washington—it would be quite a spectacle to suffer defeat at the moment when his political career was at its zenith. The President wants to get into this war, of course, and he has confidence that he can run the whole world. But he is afraid to try until more people are behind him.

The issue of convoys was an ideal instrument to fathom the popular feeling, an ideal peg on which to hang American entry in the war. Last summer the main idea was that our national soil was about to be invaded, and that got some response. The "short of war" line won the election, although even there Mr. Roosevelt and Tom Lamont had to resort to a dangerous stratagem of buying out the Republican candidacy. (By way of an aside, it is always interesting to watch the House of Representatives these days when Wendell Willkie's name is mentioned. The Democrats invariably get up on their hind legs and cheer. The Republicans gnash their teeth and scowl in silence.) In mid-winter the lend-lease bill was jammed through Congress on the argument that it was only good neighborliness to lend the British our garden hose. But the basis for convoys was a natural. What was the good of sacrificing our living standards, etc., only to have the fruits of our labor sunk in the north Atlantic? Et cetera.

And so the convoy argument came into currency in a big way. The newspapers picked it up and circulated the figure that some forty percent of American goods was being sunk on its way to Britain. Out in Pittsburgh some weeks ago Willkie repeated that figure, and it came to be used in every speech. The British propagandists in this country were a little worried, of course. The British have the rather embarrassing job in Washington of making their picture look bad enough so that people can be aroused; on the other hand, they can't make things look so bad that everybody will say, as Lindbergh has been saying, that the whole situation's too far gone to do anything about. The President was letting his underlings carry the ball, encouraging them by his speech at Wilson's shrine in Staunton, Va. At one press conference the President helped the convoy campaign by discovering that the Neutrality Law does not prevent our battleships from entering the war zones or patrolling the seven seas. It applies only to merchant shipping.

Thus, when the sound and fury about convoys was at its height, Senator Vandenberg of Michigan last week arose on the floor of the Senate. The prayer was over, the announcements were all made, and the Senator asked for two or three minutes to "present some rather important figures, with a very brief comment." The Senator cleared his throat, and then cited that morning's editorial in the Washington *Post* to the effect that some forty percent of our shipping was being sunk in the north Atlantic; he presented a letter from Rear Admiral Emory Land, of the United States Maritime Commission. Between January 1 and April 1, 1941, Admiral Land wrote, some 158 vessels were reported sunk in all parts of the world "according to our composite records, which we believe to be complete." Of these 158 vessels, only twelve were cleared from American ports, that is to say, only twelve could have carried any kind of American goods, and the goods ranged from canned soup and prunes to chemicals, ammunitions, rifles, and airplane parts. In other words, *of the 158 ships sunk all over the world, only twelve came from the United States and only eight were going to Britain.* Then the admiral went on to include a list of some 205 ships which had left the United States for the United Kingdom in the same period of time, and concluded that "only a very small proportion of these vessels failed to reach their destination."

At that point the convoy conspiracy was smashed, the bubble exploded. It took the Rear Admiral a full day to issue a very lame statement explaining that perhaps the Commission's records were not quite accurate. Even the British marine experts, when they came to Land's rescue, were only able to point out that after all some American goods are shipped by rail to Canada, and therefore get sunk in Canadian or British boats. The British reiterated that their shipping situation as a whole was difficult, which is, of course, very true. And the British want more American ships, without sacrificing their own shipping trade in the colonies, which is another matter. But convoys were exposed as a political, not a technical, necessity.

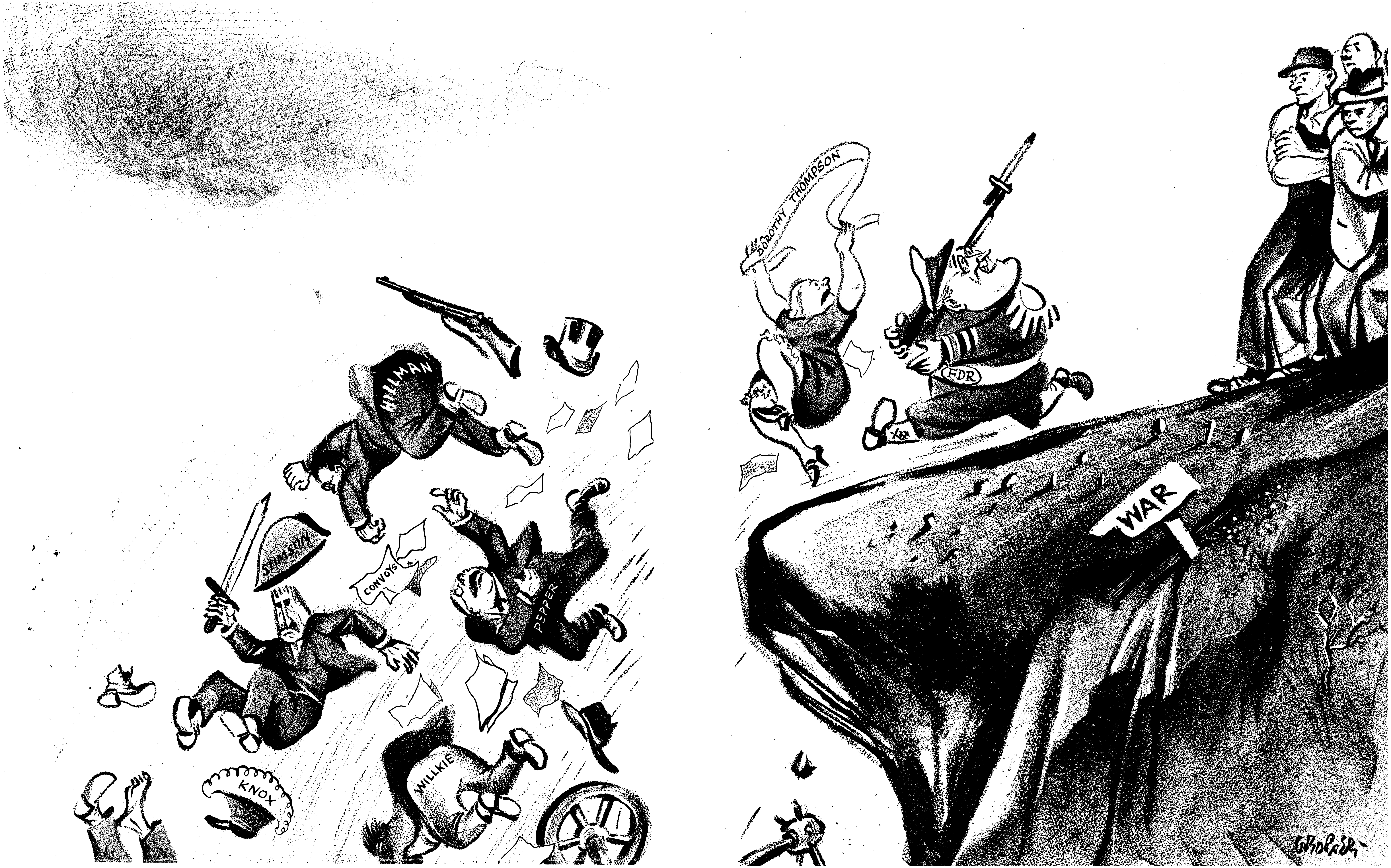
Some circles in Wall Street are supposed to be so worried now that the President may not be able to get into the war immediately that they have even been caught in a contradiction of contradictions. I got the story that these circles, although bitterly anti-Soviet, are nevertheless momentarily worried that Soviet-German relations may deteriorate. The logic is that if Hitler actually appeared to be keen on tangling with the USSR, the big business appeasement crowd would turn on such strong heat against immediate involvement that the President would never get in! Frank Kent, the Baltimore *Sun* columnist, who has excellent pipelines in Washington, suggests in a recent column that the convoy idea can only be saved if Hitler obliges FDR by sinking a couple of our battleships.

So it has been a week of very high and complex drama in Washington. If it were not such a deadly comment on the kind of leadership which this nation is getting, the situation might have its colossal irony and even humor. The men who are running the show are caught on the horns of their own deceptions, in all the back-alley intrigues of their imperialist calculations in an imperialist world that is simply going to the dogs. And the truth is that precisely because of the dilemma that confronts our rulers, the dangers to the people have been multiplied. Desperate men are always extremely dangerous. The President and his advisers are desperate men. It must not be assumed that they will let themselves be thwarted by complications of their own making. They may be expected to take unusual steps to hew their way through the tangled underbrush of the jungle in which they operate.

Because they know that sentiment against this war is contagious and retroactive, because nothing is so important for them as to maintain the appearance of integrity and strength before the public, they can be expected to multiply in devious and indirect ways the stimulants to hysteria. For example, Attorney General Jackson's dramatic arrest of the German and Italian seamen in American ports is one kind of measure that tends to create the atmosphere of urgency and hysteria which the President needs so badly. Other moves of this kind, and of other kinds, may be expected. The labor movement as a whole can hardly rest on the laurels of its spring organizing campaign, and its successes in gaining wage increases. The President does not feel strong enough to rest with mere fatalism among the people, and that is why he has tried to create something much more positive. But fatalism can be an even more serious enemy to the people's movement against war. As it is, the America First Committee, motivated by the most reactionary considerations, is extremely active. Its propaganda is at least contributory to Roosevelt's hesitations. Its spokesmen have been getting real response in the Midwest. The America First crowd is well financed and cleverly directed and has concentrated its main fire on the White House.

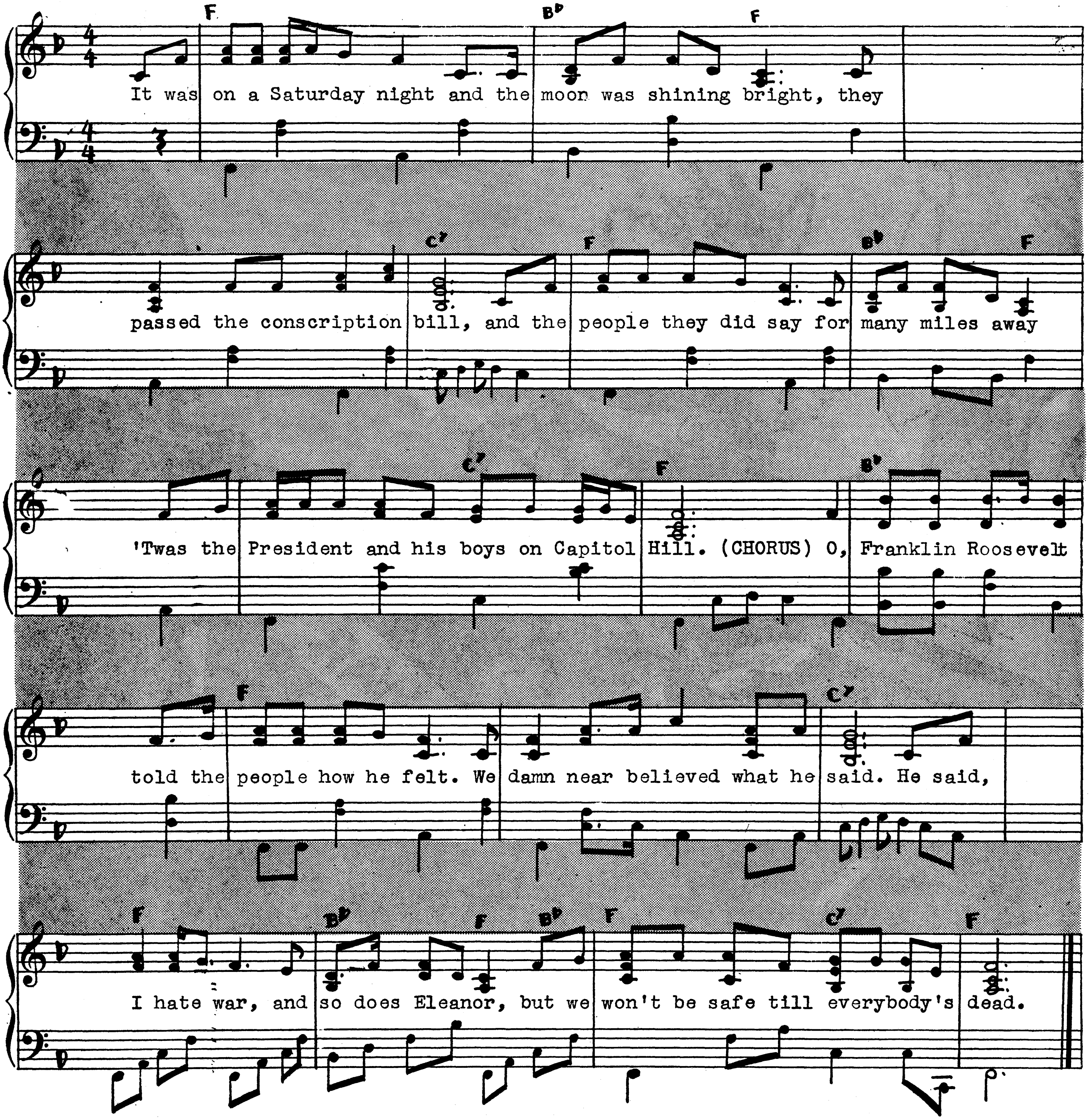
Very positive and very dramatic actions by the progressive opposition to war are certainly felt necessary here in the Capitol. The Permanent Peace Vigil which the American People's Mobilization has thrown around 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue comes only just in time. Much more of that is necessary on a national scale. What is needed is a renewed clarification among the widest sections of the people of the third, the most practical alternative to both Lindbergh and Roosevelt. The crisis in Washington is a great opportunity for those who understand it, and can make its lessons intelligible among millions.

JOSEPH STAROBIN.


HILLMAN
STIMSON
CONVOYS
PEPPER
WILLKIE
KNOX
DOROTHY THOMPSON
FDR
WAR

BALLAD OF OCTOBER 16

words *by The Almanacs* ***tune:*** *Jesse James*


F
B♭
F
It was on a Saturday night and the moon was shining bright, they
C7
F
B♭
F
passed the conscription bill, and the people they did say for many miles away
C7
F
B♭
'Twas the President and his boys on Capitol Hill. (CHORUS) O, Franklin Roosevelt
F
C7
told the people how he felt. We damn near believed what he said. He said,
F
B♭
F
B♭
F
C7
F
I hate war, and so does Eleanor, but we won't be safe till everybody's dead.

When my poor old mother died I was sitting by her side
Promising to war I'd never go.
Now I'm wearing khaki jeans and eating army beans
And I'm told that J. P. Morgan loves me so.
(Chorus)

CONSCRIPTING THE NEWS

What the brass hats are trying to keep 100,000,000 newspaper readers from learning. The censorship technique and the men behind it. Shades of the Creel committee.

> Members of the inner White House circle are already saying privately that the time has come to invoke more than military censorship, that criticism has had its full day and national security requires it be impounded until the emergency has passed. Among the activities mentioned as fit for suppression are the speeches of non-interventionist senators and representatives against the successive policy steps under the lend-lease bill.—Arthur Krock, New York *Times,* April 2, 1941.

AN EXAGGERATION? Do not be too sure. During the past year there has been established in the United States a system of press controls potentially as sharp and effective as any that exist in warring nations. The President is demanding in effect that newspapers stop printing the truth. He has suggested that "ethics" should lead publishers to suppress facts which point to the imminence of war. Because a few publishers and editors have refused to participate in this deception, the administration feels the need of a more drastic censorship. The danger is not that details of military secrets will fall into enemy hands—for it is assumed that potential enemies are already well informed. The real danger, from Roosevelt's standpoint, is that the people will learn what Washington and Wall Street officials are saying in private.

The first threat of compulsory restriction on news came during the early months of the war. Months later, during the conscription drive, the press got hold of government data showing that the US Navy was stronger than Britain's, that America was not in danger of invasion, and there was no need of forced military service. Publication of this data made passage of the Burke-Wadsworth bill more difficult. So Army and Navy heads sent to the White House last June a censorship plan which would have placed under the control of the Military Intelligence services all news relating to defense. Only carefully expurgated news was to be released. News obtained independently was to be rigorously edited, and unsanctioned news branded as without foundation. Only a portion of the plan was put into effect last summer, but the President himself offered a good example of news-control technique. For the files show that Roosevelt announced his secret destroyer-bases deal with Churchill even while newspapers were still printing his denial that such a deal was so much as being considered.

IN JUNE 1940 Secretary of the Navy Edison had the task of pushing through Congress bills providing $10,000,000,000 for naval expansion. Congressmen would have been much more resistant had they known that the US fleet far surpassed any other afloat, and that with the ships then under construction, this country's naval tonnage would outweigh that of Germany, Italy, and Japan combined. Navy bureau chiefs appearing before the Naval Affairs Committee of the Senate had made it clear (in the words of the committee's report on HR 8026) "that the United States should not participate in the present European war under any circumstances now conceivable and that United States soldiers should never again be landed on a foreign continent." Statements of this sort by naval experts resulted in a ruling by the Secretary of the Navy which banned all public utterances unless made with the permission of the Department. This censorship at the source dried up the flow of information regarding the superfluity of naval expansion.

Secretary of War Stimson issued similar instructions governing speeches by army officers, and the Marine Corps banned comment from within. Last July Marine heads compelled the resignation of a major whose writings criticized internal policies. In that same month, the administration partially succeeded in forcing secret sessions of congressional committees considering bills related to the war program. Even General Johnson, fond as he is of heavy-handed military procedures, labeled this secrecy a form of press censorship.

By midsummer of 1940 the commercial newspapers forgot their usual cry for "freedom of the press." Meeting in New York in June, the editors were instructed by Col. Julius Adler of the New York *Times* to play up conscription. They applauded editors who emphasized the need for "self-censorship." How this worked in practice was speedily demonstrated by the *Times* censorship committee. This group of petty press dictators, which often establishes editorial policy for other New York non-labor newspapers, promptly began censoring peace advertisements. In one case they deleted all references to the munition profiteers of the last war, as well as to the Nye committee's revelations. Nearly every New York paper joined in this ban on the truth.

The tendency toward suppression grew with the war drive. Last autumn news about the newly created Defense Commission was curtailed, with a former newspaperman placed in charge to see that no employee was interviewed without permission. The Commission censorship worked well until Knudsen imported a brace of expert press agents from New York to keep his name in the headlines. Then other dollar-a-year men hired press agents and the Commission censors relaxed enough for the public to learn something about the war makers' activities.

This breakdown led, in the early months of 1941, to the revival of plans for controlling news at the point of publication. Secretary of the Navy Knox, ex-Hearstling and publisher of the Chicago *Daily News,* sent a confidential letter on January 15 to newspaper editors and publishers, radio and photographic agencies, and all Washington correspondents urging them to adopt a vigilant self-censorship. He requested suppression of certain facts relating to "defense" and listed subjects that he held taboo. Knox also urged the press not to speculate on facts when exact information was unavailable. The American Newspaper Publishers Association met in New York February 4, and drew up pledges of full cooperation in voluntary censorship. A picked lot of publishers entrained for Washington that night and spent two-and-one-half hours privately conferring with Knox the following morning. It is understood that Knox told them he and the administration were not trying to impose an ordinary censorship; they asked only a "voluntary" development of techniques which would condition the public mind toward certain aspects of war participation. The Secretary found his publishing colleagues adequately enthusiastic; he commented that the press was behaving in a "very gratifying manner."

FBI and Secret Service men set about fingerprinting, checking, and photographing all White House press correspondents. But the censorship takes on more specific forms. Already it is common knowledge that FBI agents had been assigned to investigate the ideas, political affiliations, and backgrounds of newspaper writers and editors. Wrote Walter Davenport, associate editor of *Collier's,* in the February 15 issue of his magazine:

> The Federal Bureau of Investigation is reported to have made a rather wide inspection of the American press and to have compiled an interesting mass of dossiers on editors and writers. . . . We have it on authority that we trust that journalism has had quite an inspection by the FBI lads, *with particular attention being lavished upon editors and writers who do not always regard the status quo as holy.* [My italics—J. W.]

The next censorship flare-up took place two weeks later, after Chief of Staff Marshall appeared before a secret session of the Senate Military Affairs Committee. Senators told newspapermen Marshall had testified that matters in the Pacific had taken a war-like turn and that the situation was of the utmost gravity. He was also said to have made vague references to the massing of US fighting planes in the Pacific. The senators' version of Marshall's testimony was carried by the wire services and widely printed in the press. President Roosevelt devoted nearly all his press conference of February 21 to railing about the publication of this story. He told reporters that Congress had always had ready access to the plans of defense agencies, but that since 1776 (the year, not the bill) there had been the problem of keeping this information from the public. It was still a problem, he said. The President added that the time had not yet arrived for censorship, with the obvious implication that censorship was in the offing. When someone asked him if it were not the press' duty to keep the nation informed on national defense, the President appeared surprised and annoyed. In reply he asked: do you mean to say it is the duty of the press to print military secrets? Pressed for a definition of military secrets, Mr. Roosevelt said that the test was what Army and Navy officials thought would be harmful to give out. And he revealed that Army-Navy censorship proposals had been presented for the second time. The President also expressed the opinion that no secret testimony by administration officials before congressional committees should be made public. Asked if this applied to taxes, he said that no distinction could be drawn between taxes and battleships.

The President's irritation over publication of pending war maneuvers in the Pacific was ostensibly directed to the revelation that the US air fleet was being strengthened there. However, on February 20, the day Marshall appeared before the Senate, the British Embassy had announced that Lockheed and Consolidated bombing planes were being flown to Singapore and Australia from California. The same story was released on the West Coast, while a representative of the Dutch East Indies government stated that twelve American air pilots were being sent for service at the Dutch naval base in the Netherland Indies.

With the signing of the lend-lease bill, Washington correspondents had to function in a partial blackout of news which has continued in effect. To indicate the scope of lend-lease censorship, one correspondent jokingly sent his paper the following dispatch:

> **President Roosevelt today sold, loaned, leased, gave or otherwise disposed of an unnamed amount of unspecified articles of defense which, he said, were ready to go to unmentioned ports for shipment some time and in some way to Britain and Greece.**

In the first week of April the heavily-armed British warship *Malaya* steamed into New York harbor, presumably for repair in accordance with lend-lease provisions. The press in general ignored the ship's arrival, but a few papers carried photographs and stories. The resulting furor in Washington illuminates the real reasons behind the administration's censorship. The *Malaya* arrived in a busy part of New York's harbor at noon, in plain view of hundreds of thousands of people, including the staff of the German consulate. After anchoring, half the crew streamed ashore wearing caps bearing the ship's name, and many talked freely of naval actions in which the ship had fought.

The British apparently had no thought of any need for secrecy. They seemed to feel that publication of details of the ship's arrival would bolster English morale. Apparently they were not displeased, either, that their enemies should see them enjoying the fruits of Roosevelt's war cooperation. It was Secretary Knox and President Roosevelt who rapped the press for daring to notice a strange boat in New York's harbor. The administration knew very well that the arrival of a foreign battleship could easily serve as the rallying point of anti-war feeling and talk. It wished to prevent the presence of such a battleship becoming generally known. Only censorship could accomplish that result. As the editors of *Time* put it on April 14:

> . . . The press's self censorship merely concealed from the U. S. public a fact that was not even mildly camouflaged from German officials. . . .

That the British had no intention of suppressing news of the arrival of the *Malaya* is attested by the pro-administration columnists, Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen. In their Washington Merry-Go-Round of April 28 they wrote: "The British had a press release prepared, telling America of the arrival [of the *Malaya*]. When they showed the story to the US Navy officials, they squelched it. (The Navy announced that in opposing publication they were only acting on behalf of the British.)"

The airplane pilot who flew photographers over New York harbor to photograph the *Malaya* now finds himself in danger of losing his license as a result of charges brought in Washington at the personal instigation of Secretary Knox. But on the day following the filing of these charges, apparently to punish the New York newspaper which broke through the Navy's mailed-fist censorship, the Washington correspondents of the New York *Post* (April 24) reported the administration's readiness to supply usually confidential production figures to Hitler's ally, the dictator of fascist France:

> An administration official yesterday overheard a subordinate in Undersecretary Welles' office call the OPM to request a report on production.
>
> "It's very important that we get all the figures as soon as possible," the subordinate stressed. "They're to be sent to Marshal Petain."

Four days after the *Malaya* incident the Navy threw a cloud of secrecy over matters relating to offshore bases and possessions. During the previous week it had been announced that certain facts concerning war construction contracts would be suppressed. The ban on the truth was thus extended to a lot of new territory comprised within three general types of restrictions for defense news in general. "Secret" information was defined as that "vital to national defense." "Confidential" information was defined as information whose publication is "prejudicial to the best interests and prestige of the United States." "Restricted" information is that "ordered kept within the military service until its disclosure is no longer premature." The imposition of these new, sweeping regulations came exactly one day after Steve Early had told White House newsmen that censorship of press and radio would be avoided, and after he had issued assurances that the President did not want censorship, he did not want censorship, and neither did Lowell Mellett, director of the Office of Government Reports.

The Army's ruling, which the *Christian Science Monitor* described as "designed to extend an effective blackout to news," was supposedly linked to the US assumption of control over Greenland, announced at the same time. Newsmen have been able to learn, however, that the ruling resulted in large part from frustration of the War Department's plan to send a labor battalion to Hawaii to counteract union organization of workmen there. Under-secretary of War Patterson classed as "confidential" all information regarding the strength of troops sent to American overseas points, the identification of specific units, or information which in any way might reveal the strength and character of the garrisons established abroad. This classification provides ample scope in which to keep all details of the transportation and use of labor battalions from the public. It is not difficult to judge whether this particular aspect of the censorship is aimed at enemy agents or at labor in general. In the present case the CIO was able to discover what was afoot, and the resulting publicity prevented the military authorities from carrying out the reported plan. When discovered, the labor battalion was said to have reached Astoria, Ore., and was awaiting transport overseas. It is understood that Army and Maritime Commission authorities had planned to use conscripts at twenty-one dollars a month for an unlimited working day, while 200 longshoremen in Hawaii had been the victims of a ten-month-old lockout. Prompt protests by Harry Bridges, the CIO Maritime Committee, CIO and AFL unions in Hawaii, and a Hawaiian delegate to Congress were successful in this instance. But with the new censorship provisos in effect the War Department may be able to use the forced labor of conscripts against union labor. The Nye committee's reports showed that this was a regular army practice during the last war.

The Army and Navy censorship staffs have grown vastly larger and are more firmly under executive control. The Army press section has increased to nearly 100 workers who are functioning in close touch with the FBI, Military and Naval Intelligence services, and the Office of Emergency Management under Knudsen and Hillman. On April 12 Secretary Knox enlarged and re-organized the Navy press section and placed it directly under his thumb, though nominally it is in charge of Rear Admiral Hepburn, ex-director of Naval Intelligence. Knox has installed Hal O'Flaherty, managing editor of his own Chicago *Daily News,* as his personal watchdog.

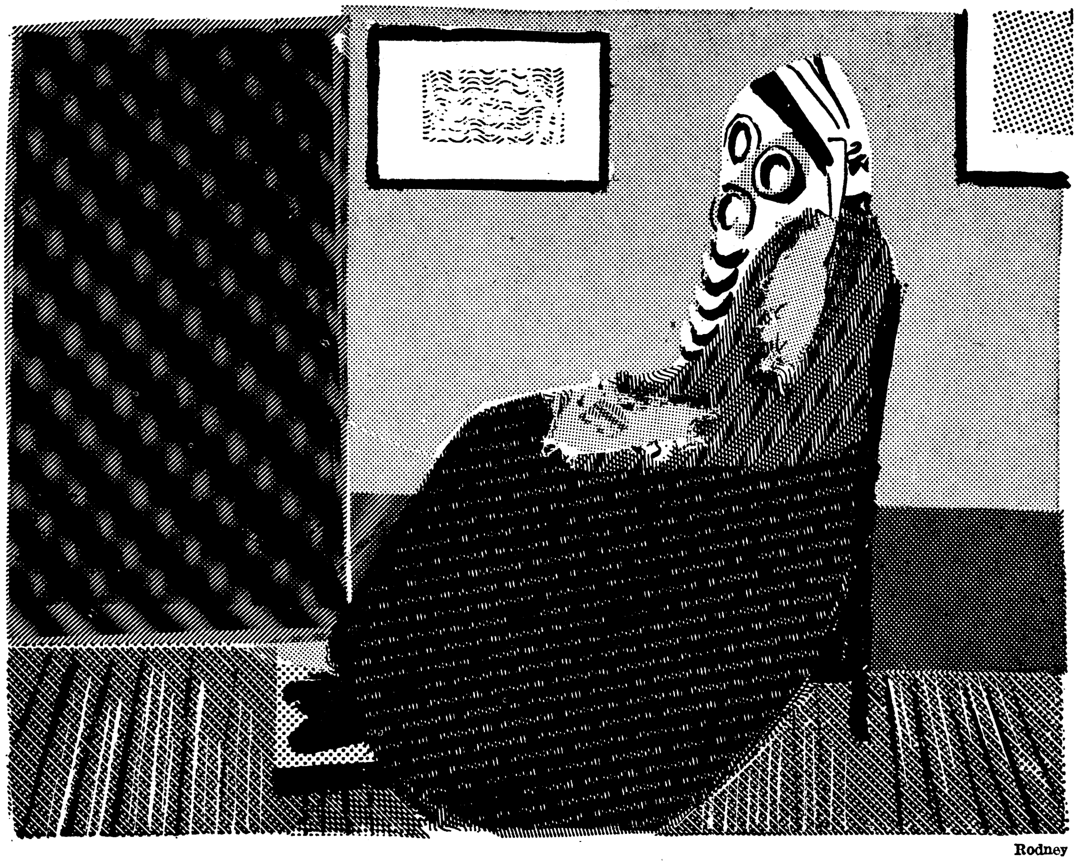
These functionaries are able to exercise an effective "censorship at the source" by editing news or withholding it altogether. If newspapers print news independently gathered they may be kept in line by threat of action under the notorious Espionage Acts of 1917-18, still in effect.

OF THE 5,000 or more cases of persecution for expression of opinion during the first world war period, over 1,000 were brought under these Acts. Though this legislation was not applied in a single spy case, in less than a year some seventy-five papers were interfered with, others were summoned to court, and still others were enjoined not to mention the war in their columns. Even the *Midweek Pictorial,* a publication owned by the New York *Times* which was then as now chummy with the War Department, was accused of violating the Espionage Acts. The *Masses* was forced to defend in court its right to existence before a federal judge recently sent to prison for conspiring to obstruct justice—Judge Martin T. Manton.

Under the Espionage Acts, the administration's slightest wish can be reinforced by penalties which may range up to twenty years' imprisonment in case of disclosures made either involuntarily or by design. So-called voluntary censorship, therefore, is quite as effective as the more dreaded European variety of blue-pencil gestapo-ing. Under voluntary censorship any newspaper can easily be frightened into confining its stories to government handouts.

In 1917 George Creel, chief of Wilson's Committee on Public Information, loudly protested against censorship and propaganda and promised "unparalleled openness" and "expression not repression." Then he built a vast news-control machine. While true details of US airplane construction, for example, were known to German Intelligence officers, the American press was allowed to print only prefabricated stories of planes rolling off assembly lines. World war censorship concealed government fraud and corruption. The Creel committee handcuffed expression with the aid of the Post Office and Justice Departments.

Lowell Mellett seems destined for Creel's role in this war. Since 1937 Mellett has been head of Roosevelt's super-press bureau, formerly known as the National Emergency Council, now the Office of Government Reports. The OGR was set up by a presidential order of July 1, 1939. Mr. Mellett, who is also one of Roosevelt's six executive assistants, is a close associate of the President. His activities have included keeping an eye on the labor press, preparing press digests of newspapers and magazines, drafting fireside chats, advising on radio broadcast matters, and maintaining a careful scrutiny on backgrounds and purposes of White House callers. Sometimes mild, sometimes hot-tempered, blindly devoted to Roosevelt, convinced that Britain must be saved whole at all costs, Mellett—Washington predicts—will loyally put aside any lingering scruples over censorship as soon as Roosevelt issues the requisite executive order.


Rodney

Whistler's Mother: 1941

Some say such an order may be expected the day the O'Leary bill gets through the Senate. This bill, giving OGR a doubled appropriation of $1,500,000 with which to consolidate Washington publicity functions, narrowly squeezed through the House after congressmen showed how it would enable OGR to suppress criticism of the administration. The minority report of the House Committee warned:

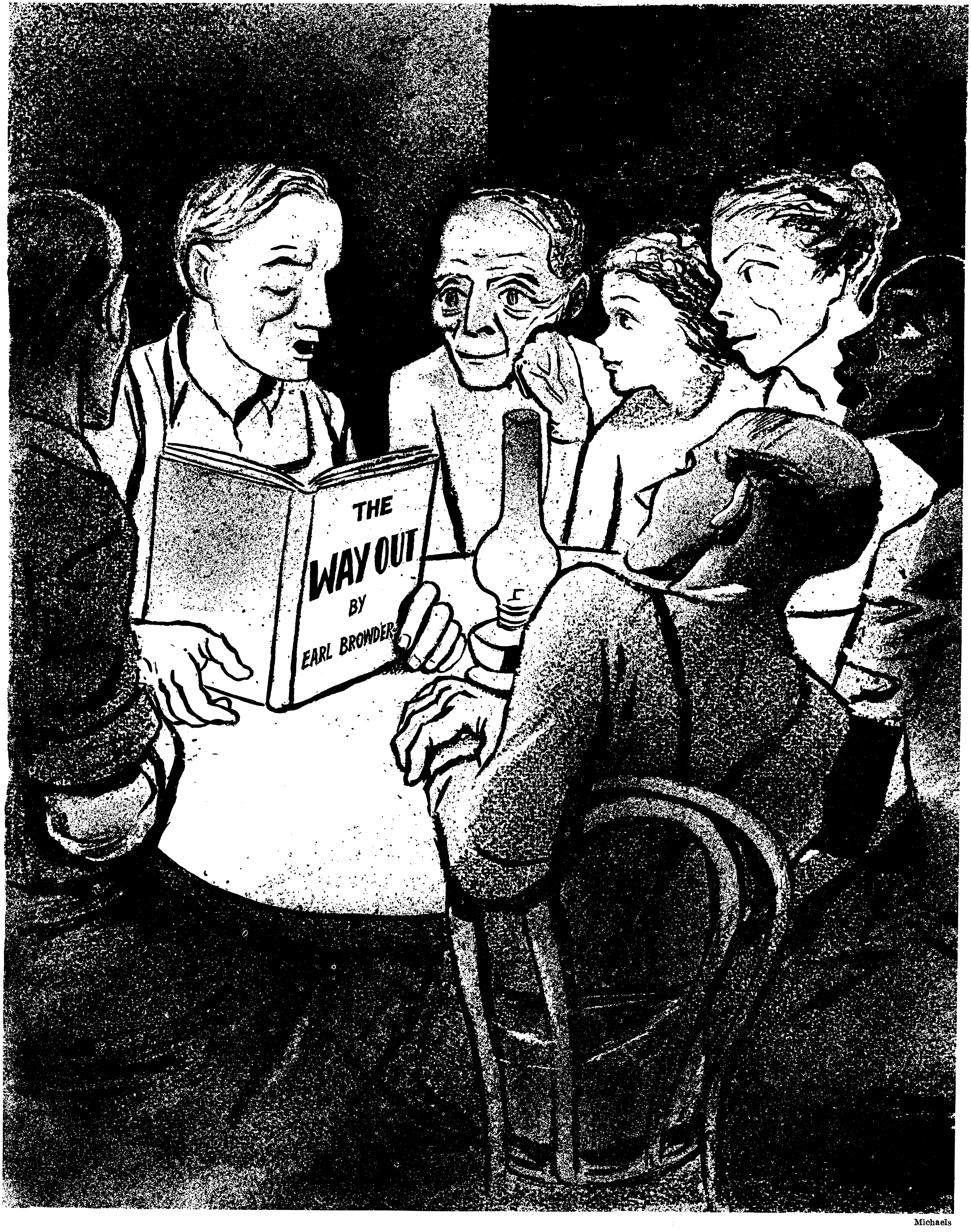
> Should events across the seas create emergency conditions even more acute than those which now exist, such an office of reports would provide an ideal method for imposing a complete and rigid censorship on every kind of news, military and civil alike. These are weighty considerations. We do not believe the people of our country are prepared to accept the establishment of a potential ministry of propaganda. We do not believe they desire an agency for the concealment of facts or the "coloring" of information. We believe that our nation does not need the creation of an official censorship.

Mellett has told Congress repeatedly that he does not believe in censorship; he has conceded, though, that "there always has been and I presume there always will be military censorship in certain respects." His organization is now feverishly expanding, with an increase in personnel from 366 to 507 employees. It is planned to open a branch in every state "because of the defense program." Committees will be set up in each region in conjunction with the Army and Navy Intelligence services, the FBI, and other government agencies to facilitate distribution of authorized information. Mellett is also scheduled to be named by President Roosevelt to work with Stanley Richardson, newly appointed coordinator of US short-wave radio broadcasting. OGR's head is now reported to be investigating the various aspects of newspaper control over radio stations.

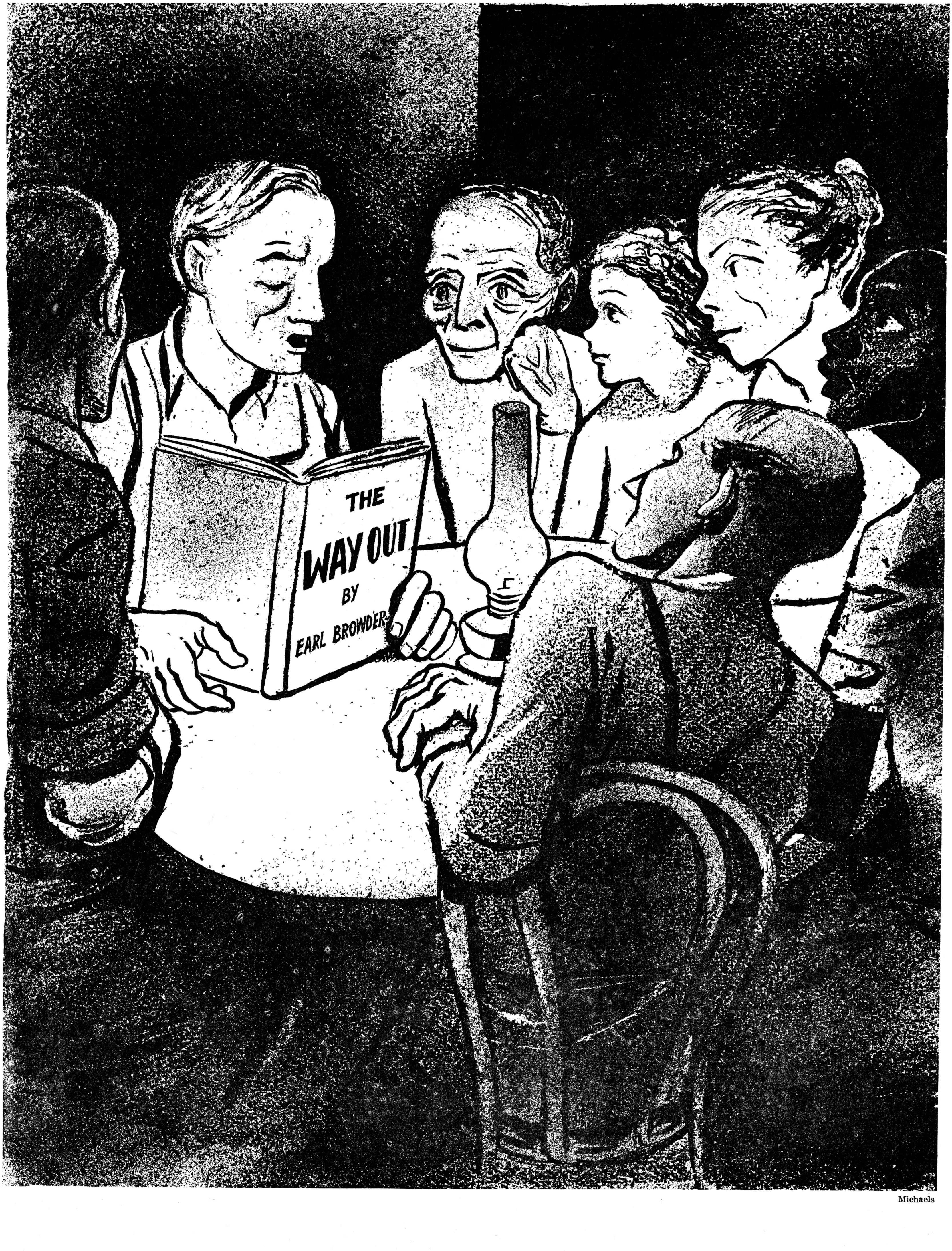
Last year, while censorship was still only a vague threat, a well known liberal university professor who is sympathetic to the administration, prepared a semi-confidential memorandum on the defense program which was extensively circulated in government circles. It said in part:

> . . . The nation confronts the fact that censorship is a routine part of modern war. It applies both to the sources of information and to the expression of dissent. And, under fascism, the military utility of the systematic propagation of rumor has been tellingly demonstrated: optimistic rumors disseminated at home and demoralizing rumors reported to the enemy. In view of the manipulative cynicism of many high administrators regarding the limping quality of public opinion under our naive traditions, there is every likelihood that censorship and propaganda will be used to an unparalleled extent in the present emergency. Criticisms and protests from labor and dissenting or minority groups will be systematically played down or suppressed in the interest of a falsely propagated national unity; and the average citizen will know less than usual about what is happening, both within his own community and outside it. . . . The wholesale cynicism in the United States regarding the last war springs directly from the discrepancy between the things our people were told they were fighting for and the actual situation as revealed in the Treaty of Versailles. . . . In places high and low, at the nation's capital and in local county-seats, persons taking unwonted authority from the emergency and seeking to outdo themselves in a patriotic cause and to make a record will tend in their zeal to slip into excesses of control and suppression. . . . Such a procedure is recklessly destructive of the central strength of democracy.

JULIAN WEBB.


THE
WAY OUT
BY
EARL BROWDER

Michaels


THE
WAY OUT
BY
EARL BROWDER

Michaels

HOW FRANCE WAS SOLD

A veteran of May 1940 says the betrayal took place "in a little house on the Rue de Pressbourg." The government's labor policy. The treachery of French Big Business.

THREE weeks after I left France, I found myself surrounded by things I had not seen in many months: coffee, milk, butter, and an American newspaper. The food was enjoyable, but the first editorial of the American newspaper was a revelation. It dealt with France, and explained why we had lost the war.

Like every other able-bodied Frenchman under fifty, I had been a soldier "for the duration." Then, for about six months, I wandered over post-war France. I covered thousands of miles and met thousands of people. I talked with farmers and shopkeepers, workers and housewives, teachers and priests. I listened to them as they talked among themselves in barracks and plants, along the roads, during the June retreat, on the farms, in front of the relief bureaus, and in breadlines. Since basically our experience had been the same, we usually arrived at the same conclusions. We worded them differently, each one according to his general outlook, temperament, and vocabulary. But there was one key word that we all used, and never disagreed about, and that word was "betrayal."

The newspaper editorial, which I have mentioned, took a different view. France had lost the war, it asserted, because back in the spring of 1936 the French workers had gone out on strike, had raised their wages, gained a forty-hour week. This was news to me, for in France even the most reactionary newspapers did not dare to print such charges. They may have blamed our defeat on the Jews, on Freemasonry, on Great Britain, on our parliamentary system, on the Communists—but nobody dared to say that the war was lost because working people gained a forty-hour week and a few more francs in their pay checks in the two brief years of the Popular Front.

I decided that this was the blunder of an overworked editorial writer, but after a few days it became clear that such is the point of view of the National Association of Manufacturers, the US Chamber of Commerce, your most vocal congressmen. Former Ambassador William C. Bullitt, confidant of the President, has also repeated the idea that the unionization of the French workers in the honeymoon days of the *front populaire* was responsible for France's defeat.

No one has produced any details or facts. No one has been able to show, for example, that French production of war materials, or production generally declined during the Popular Front as compared with other periods in French history, because that is not true. No one can say that if the workers had given up their unions, their struggle for shorter hours and better pay, then France might not have been conquered. The fact is that we heard this latter argument, not prior to the war, but immediately afterward. It came from the same newspapers and politicians who were the first to sign the armistice, and now work hand in hand with the invaders. It is the inescapable fact that the most bitter anti-unionists, the counterparts of your patriotic employers, were the men who negotiated the capitulation to Hitler.

THE STORY of how France was defeated is the story of how the popular morale was demobilized. And the story of how the popular morale, the spirit of the working class, was destroyed, will be found in the mobilization program which the government pursued before and after the war began.

Some two years before the war, the mobilization plans were changed. By the end of 1937 hundreds of thousands of reserve soldiers, including myself, were notified of the new depots to which they were to report, if and when they were called back to colors. This was a thorough job, but it had nothing to do with "preparedness." Its chief purpose was to prevent people who had worked together as civilians or got acquainted during the military training periods, from meeting again in the army. Special attention was paid to those whose names, in the army files, were followed by the mention "P. R." That meant *propagandiste revolutionnaire*—revolutionary propagandist—and included militant Socialists, trade unionists, Communists, and Leftists of every description. They were the backbone of the Popular Front, whom Edouard Daladier was representing in the government and betraying in private. These men were shifted to the most exposed units and disciplinary battalions, or given a "deferred assignment," a euphemism which later on came to mean "concentration camps." Thus, the bourgeoisie made sure in advance that, should it wage war, the elements it feared most would be isolated or segregated.

The mobilization itself was rehearsed more than once before war was declared. Several hundred thousand men were called to colors in the days preceding Munich, and again in March 1939, when Hitler completed the conquest of Czechoslovakia. The decisive rehearsal, though, had taken place a few months earlier on Nov. 30, 1938, when the Daladier government broke the general strike by mobilizing the railroad workers. The idea itself was not new, but once more it convinced the bourgeoisie that the only way to impose its will upon the French people was to shut them in barracks. When a worker is striking, all you need is to clothe him in khaki. He then becomes a "rebel" and can be dealt with accordingly.

That such was the guiding spirit behind all the official "preparedness" measures became evident a few weeks after the beginning of the war. By that time, the government had completed the mobilization of practically every able-bodied man from twenty-one to forty-nine years of age, a thing which Britain and Germany have not done even today, after twenty months of warfare. From the military viewpoint, this was nonsense. From the economic viewpoint, it was suicide.

The high command had no use for 5,000,000 men, and could not dress, arm, shelter, or feed them. With the exception of those sent to man the Maginot line and protect the Belgian and Italian borders, we were stationed all over the country, in barns and schools, loft buildings and public halls. For weeks, we were dressed in mufti, with maybe an army cap or an armband, or in torn uniforms left over from the first world war. Of course, this ragged army, doomed to forced leisure, was not given a single weapon. Many regiments received their first rifles in May 1940.

IN MODERN mechanized warfare equipment is more important than sheer man power; the mobilization of industry is just as important as the mobilization of men. As a matter of fact both had been prepared in advance, with the armed forces given precedence. But war industries are essentially metal trades industries. And the French metal workers happened to be almost 100 percent unionized, with the strongest union in the CGT—the General Confederation of Labor. The metal workers were the vanguard of all the economic and political struggles. A large number of them were members of the Communist Party, or its sympathizers. Of the 30,000 employees of the big Renault auto works alone, some 7,200 were members of the Party. As long as they remained organized and united, the French employers could not defeat them. The war was a great opportunity. The government had either to leave these men in the factories, and prove by its attitude toward the French working class that the war was really a war for defense of democracy; or it had to play into Hitler's hands, mobilizing the workers into the army, but disrupting the defense industries. *This choice was made in advance.* Blast furnaces, iron ore mines, arsenals and steel plants, aviation works and tank factories were thoroughly emptied of their working force. Thousands of metal workers found themselves scattered all over France, North Africa, and Syria. Instead of working their forty hours per week, plus overtime, they were not working at all.

Between September and December 1939, I visited many an arms plant. Around the machines, along the conveyor belts, one could see only old men, women, and children. The latter offered a particularly pathetic sight. In their white, wrinkled faces, the eyes were ringed with blue. Like the grown-ups, they worked ten hours on a day or night shift, with a thirty minutes' rest for lunch. They did adult jobs, too, in smithshops, at pneumatic hammers. They lacked the necessary strength and skill, and so did the women and they all were paid reduced wages—that was the important thing. Meanwhile, highly skilled smiths and mechanics, pressmen and toolmakers, assemblers and draftsmen were forced to sweep barracks' yards, peel potatoes, play cards.

In order to refill the factories, the government resorted to several tricks. It released thousands of loyalist Spaniards who for many months had starved in the concentration camps, and made them work. All Algerians, aged thirty-two to thirty-five, were mobilized along with the others. They were kept in the army for two months, subjected to a ruthless discipline, drilled to death, and then sent to work in defense plants. I remember visiting a large foundry at St. Denis, a northern suburb of Paris. All the help was Algerian. I spoke to one of the men. Covered with sweat, suffering from burns, he was pushing scrap into the melting furnace. "It's better than the fifty-two days I spent in my regiment, at Avignon," he said. "Compared to soldiers, we can't complain. Sure, we don't make much money. But when I remember my fifty-two days. . . ." At the slightest breach of discipline, Spaniards could be sent back to the camps, Algerians back to the army, and they were made only too conscious of it.

After a few months of such tactics, the government announced its decision to release many industrial workers from the army. It would have been simpler not to have mobilized them in the first place, not to have pushed them around, not to have replaced them with women and children, with Spaniards and Algerians. But the mere fact that they were mobilized and again demobilized emphasizes that all this was done with a purpose—the deliberate disorganization of the working class movement preparatory to the introduction of fascism.

And the way the men were rehired from the army is even more significant. A few skilled workers were granted a permanent leave of absence from the army, all the others a temporary one, subject to renewal if the man did "behave." It involved an incredible amount of red tape. The first selection was made by the managers of the defense plants who had to fill a special application for every individual they wanted to get back. Each application was made in five copies, passed by several ministerial and military commissions, checked and rechecked, and, if eventually granted, sent to the man's unit, the commander of which still could veto it. It took weeks and months to get a worker actually reinstated. Of course, those who had been active in politics or in their union, however skilled, were left in the army. By Oct. 15, 1939, the industrialists of the Paris area alone had made 350,000 such applications, which were waiting, in the folders of the Paris Regional Command, their turn to be examined.

Very often the factories did not ask for their former employees, but simply for men of the same crafts. The officials favored this procedure, because it prevented the workers from returning to their former jobs and meeting again. These shiftings were quite common. At the state-operated Cherbourg Arsenal, for instance, 3,000 men out of the 6,000 total were mobilized right at the beginning of the war and at once replaced with workers who had been recruited in Southern and Eastern France.

Thus, the government created an army of "special assignees," as they were called, half-civilians, and half-soldiers. They were forced to work sixty to eighty-four hours a week, received only sixty percent of their normal wages for every hour exceeding the fortieth and, in addition to all other taxes, paid a special fifteen percent tax. They were deprived of every means of protest or defense by the simple trick of subjecting them to the army discipline. The whole spirit in these plants was military. I remember seeing two bulletin boards at the gate of a large rolling mill in Normandy. The first was of the management, and the second, right alongside, spoke for the army. I read that an army doctor was going to check on the workers who were ill, that the personnel was advised not to protest excessive taxes and restrictive legislation. A notice, prominently displayed on the second board, described the case of two working men who had worried about these things, had been sentenced to some sixty days in jail, and afterward sent up to the front.

As a result of these, and similar measures, the workers were left with a halter around their neck. The "special assignees," when they were lucky enough to go back to their old jobs, found but few familiar faces. They were surrounded by strangers whom they could not trust right away, Spaniards who did not even speak French, terrorized colonials, women, and children. Their trusted leaders were in jail or in hiding. The only unions left had been sold lock, stock, and barrel to the government. Their oldtime comrades were still in the army or working elsewhere—under the same conditions. They were badly paid, overworked, pushed around, spied upon, threatened to be returned to the army. If they found a better job and left their factory, or simply did not report for work one single time, they were considered deserters, prosecuted, and sent to jail.

The immediate purpose of the mobilization was achieved.

It had, however, an inevitable sequel. At a time when the industrial production of the country should have been brought to its peak, the factories were deprived of adequate help. When at last the "special assignees" filled certain gaps, the damage was already done. It takes weeks and months to organize smooth "gang" work, men must get familiar with each other, learn their exact place in the shop. On the other hand, the disparity between professional smiths, for instance, and their fourteen-year-old helpers was too big; turners often had to leave their lathes to help a woman carry a piece of steel too heavy for her to handle.

In addition to everything I have described, the government was so anxious to break down the eight-hour day that it decided on two shifts, ten hours per day. But heretofore, the factories had been working two shifts of eight hours each. Instead of putting on three shifts, it increased the working day. The result was a loss of four hours per day—as though the workers had been on strike, let us say, for twenty-three minutes out of each day. It represented a loss of some sixteen percent in production at the price of saving some twelve percent in the employers' payroll. Its purpose was to teach the working men, who remembered their eight-hour day, a good lesson. Later on, when aircraft plants went on twelve-hour shifts, the loss in each working day was overcome—but only at the expense of wearing the worker out.

IT WAS IN SUCH WAYS that French production was disorganized. The weakness of French capitalism in relation to both its British and German rivals, the mortal fear of social revolution which haunted Big Business left it with no choice except the war against the French people. In order to weaken the working class, it sabotaged production. Because it was incapable of introducing fascism by itself, and because a setback for Hitler would have been a victory for both the French and German peoples, the French ruling class *welcomed* the victory of the Nazis. If things had been otherwise in France, the war itself might have been prevented. If the government had truly represented the interests of the French people, it would never have betrayed Spain; Munich would have been impossible; the "fifth column" would have been wiped out; the fulfillment of the mutual assistance treaty with the Soviet Union would have altered the entire political situation in Europe with profound effects in Britain and the colonial world. If then, Hitler had attacked, a war under these circumstances would have had a different *conduct,* and a different *character.* No, France did not lose the war on the fields of Flanders, on the banks of the Meuse, or beside the Maginot line. She lost it—contrary to the propaganda of your American press—in a little, inconspicuous house in the Rue de Pressbourg, Paris, a few steps from the Place de L'Etoile. That is the seat of the General Federation of French Employers.

RENE LABASTIDE.

DEFEAT IN THE FOREST

She sat there trying to think, trying to tell him before it was too late. If only Minifer would come. A short story by Robert Ramsey.

Mrs. Barner made her daughter Minifer keep all the neighbors out on the front porch in the cold while Asbury was dying. She turned the lamp down low and sat over by the bed and watched the blood frothing up out of his mouth every time he breathed. He kept fighting the cover; and every time he pushed it back down far enough for her to see the place where the log had crushed his chest in, she was nearly sick again. It was not that he was too hot beneath the cover; it was mid-January, and the tin stove never put out enough heat to reach over as far as the bed. He wouldn't have known then whether it was hot or cold in the room; he just had to fight something, and the cover was the only thing his hands felt.

"Git Minifer for me," he said, and she pulled the cover to his chin again.

"Hit won't be no time till she's here now," she said.

She just sat there trying to think. The green wood in the stove popped at intervals with a startling loudness, and she could hear the tin alarm clock in the kitchen hammering the minutes away. She sat in the dim room listening to the loud sound of the clock and to the sound of the green sap stewing and crackling in the fire, and to the harsh breath of her husband; and suddenly she became frightened; not by the presence of death, but by the terrific and overwhelming burden of thinking that she ought to tell Asbury something before it became too late.

He had only been there in the bed about thirty minutes, although it had been nearly three hours since the log fell from his wagon and crushed him. His wagon had been loaded in the woods, the logs already secured for the ten-mile journey to the railroad; then he went around to inspect the chaining again, and he took his cant hook from the ground and thrust it under the chain to fasten it there for the journey, and as he stood there beneath the load, the team fretted and jerked the wagon and the chain which he had secured a thousand times without failure came unleashed and the oak log came thundering down to crush him to the ground, while the heavy chain whipped the cant hook from his hands and flung it back at him and struck the razored point into his back and gigged it there to impale him as the log came down above him. He lay there on the ground screaming, with his back broken and the needles of crushed ribs piercing his lungs and the steel of the hook in his back; and the mules were frightened by his screams and they jerked frantically at the wagon and the chain pulled the hook more deeply into his back, until the rest of the logs came loose and freed the chain, the thunderous weight of the logs crashing about him, by some chance missing the egglike fragility of his senseless head and bounding on beyond him.

He lay there beneath the log with the cold steel warmed by his blood and his labored breath frosting before his face until a teamster came by with a load of cross ties and rolled the log off his body and loaded him on top of the ties and hauled him over the frozen mud road to his house, and left him there at nightfall with his wife.

She had looked at him one time, knowing then that even if there had been a telephone within five miles to call the doctor with, and if he could have come over the twenty miles on the knifelike edges of the frozen ruts in the roads, there would have been nothing then that he could have done, and she put Asbury in the bed, and walked the half mile to the nearest neighbor and asked him to send word to Minifer; then she came back to the house, and put fresh wood in the stove, and brought out Asbury's jug of whisky to make his dying easier. The neighbors came soon, and she told them to wait on the porch; she said it would not be long, that she wanted to speak with Asbury for a time in private.

But she sat there dumbly by the bed, and she couldn't think what it was she ought to tell him. The clock pounded monstrously in the silence; suddenly she started from the chair and went in the kitchen and took up the clock and shook it angrily to silence it. But it would not stop, and she looked around the kitchen for some place to put it to muffle the sound; there was nothing to put it in that she could see at once, and then she saw the meal sack and she thrust it down deep into the sack, feeling the rough texture of the meal upon her arm.

Asbury had not moved when she went back to the bed; his eyes were glazed and listless. They stared up unceasingly at the ceiling. There was a wasplike, withered look about the man and the woman, as if a fierce heat had been turned upon them both and held there unwaveringly until they were both drawn up and parched to the texture of seasoned leather.

"Git Minifer," the man said, his voice muted and liquid, coming through the bubbling blood.

"All right, Asbury," she said, although she knew that he didn't hear her, that he hadn't even seen her since he had been on the bed; and she went out to the porch. Minifer sat there on a cane-bottomed kitchen chair, a sixteen-year-old girl with her face already the face of a woman of forty, bearing the same weather-seasoned hardness of her mother's.

There were four men and three women and two small children on the porch. None of them spoke to Mrs. Barner. Minifer did not look at her.

"Will you come on in for a little while, Minifer?" Mrs. Barner said.

There was a silence, while she was embarrassed because even in the face of death her daughter would not talk to her about Asbury. She cleared her throat; she said again, "Will you, Minifer?"

Then in the silence one of the men said, "Is hit going to be long before we can come on inside, Mrs. Barner? To tell the truth, we ain't exactly none too warm out here."

He laughed, but it was a stifled, awed sound, more a sign of courtesy than of mirth; and Mrs. Barner said, "Why, sure, now; I don't reckon I know what I'm thinking—" And she went back into the room and brought out Asbury's whisky jug and the two-gallon water bucket and set them down on the porch, by the man who had spoken.

The night air was chill and bitter; the stars looked low and intense in the clear sky, and the barren limbs of the leafless trees in the yard were raked coldly by the wind.

"Will you come now, Minifer?" Mrs. Barner said again. "He keeps saying he wants you, and even if he don't know, I—"

"Like I told you already, when I come, I'll do what I can to help you. But I won't come in there and set by him yet," the girl said, and her voice was not hard, only placid, mild, and final.

There was another silence, and one of the children whined suddenly with a plaintive voice of fatigue, and a woman hushed it savagely. A man lifted the jug to drink. Mrs. Barner was embarrassed again by the way Minifer spoke in front of the neighbors. She wanted vaguely to do something that would bring Asbury and Minifer together again before it was too late, and to have the neighbors witness that she had done it. But she could think of nothing at all to say, and she went back in to Asbury.

His breath came hard; it was drawn slowly, and the liquid sound ended with a twisting gurgle at the pause between each breath. She could hear the heavy sound each time the men put the jug back down on the porch, and the metallic rattle of the bucket handle.

She tried desperately to think of something she could say to Asbury, something that would soften and alter the complexion of the life they had borne together for sixteen years in a raw and desolate land of hard seasons; but out of all that length of time she could only remember one thing, and that had been near the beginning of it, when she had been carrying her second child. Asbury had come home from town drunk, and he had forced her on the bed, while she knew that it was going to destroy the child. Minifer had been five then; she was playing in the yard outside, and when Asbury left the house, Mrs. Barner watched him from the bed where he left her, until he was out of sight on the road. Then she got up and went out in the yard and took Minifer to the young garden Asbury had planted a few weeks before; together they tore up all the young plants Asbury had planted, and afterward they went to the barn and turned out his team and two cows and a yearling calf and drove them off into the woods. When Asbury came back to the house at dark drunker than before and found the stock gone, she told him that she had done it, and he struck her to the floor and whipped Minifer with his belt and left again. He stayed away a week that time, and she knew that he was in town drunk, and she wanted him back again, while she had only the child to help her through the miscarriage; all that week, after she was out of bed again, she was in desperate fear that he would never come back, and her pride kept her from sending word to him.

"Minifer," the senseless man said; Mrs. Barner didn't move. She wondered dully why he remembered only that word, the name of the daughter, when he had driven the girl away himself by his drunken beatings before she was ten years old, so that she ran away to work on a neighboring farm, and Mrs. Barner for six years had only seen her on furtive trips when Asbury was gone to the woods.

She listened by the bed; she couldn't hear the movements on the porch. The low voices had ceased. In the room there was only the rasping sound of Asbury's breathing, and the stewing of the sap in the stove.

She kept trying to hold her attention back to the nearness of Asbury's dying; but it kept slipping away. Her mind kept turning away from the past to look forward, and she thought with a fierce rush of motherpride how she would bring Minifer back to live with her again, and how together they would get the upper hand of the land, how they might have chickens and a garden, or maybe a whole truck farm to grow vegetables and sell them to the market in town. They might do that a while and make enough money to pay down on a piece of land of their own, and pay it out year by year until they owned it, and then no man anywhere could tell them what to do. Thinking this, she forgot the time of Asbury's dying, she forgot the whole fabric of their life, and the hardness that had grown upon Minifer. She thought of Minifer as a child, and all she could remember of the past was sifted away like dust and borne off by the swift surge of her knowledge that she had for an antagonist only one thing now, the land. Before she had Asbury and the land both, and now there was only one, and she and Minifer would defeat it together.

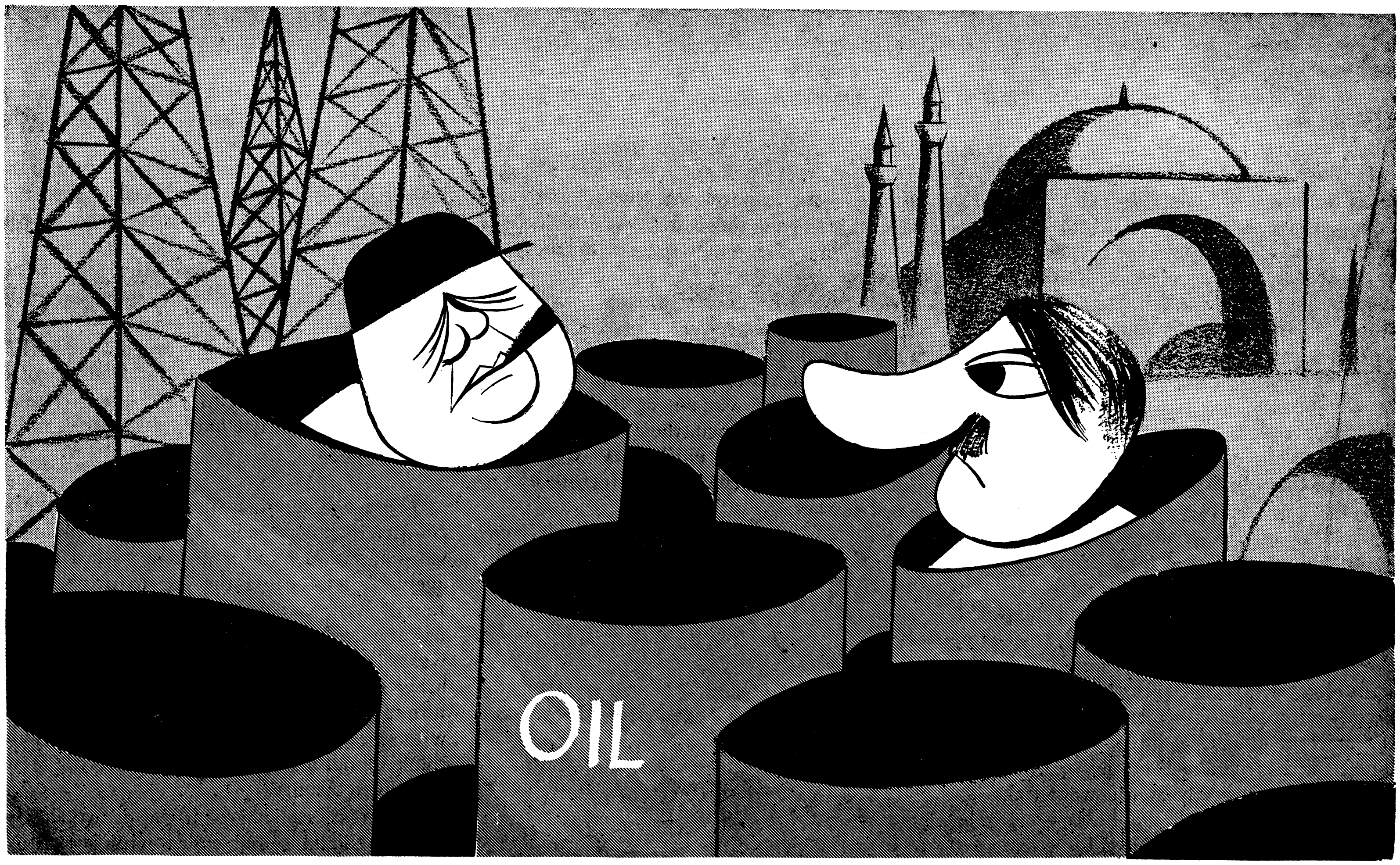
Then she heard Asbury's breathing cease; quite suddenly and unmajestically the labored heaving stopped, and his chin sank slowly and the lip drew back a little over his browned and broken upper teeth. His eyes still stared up coldly at the ceiling. She reached over to pull up the cover once more, and just before she laid it over his face she looked at him once; she looked at him intently, and the only feeling she had then was that she was looking at the face of a stranger, that she was seeing someone she had never known. The last thing she saw was the drying rivulet of the blood that had coursed down his chin. Then she dropped the cover and stood up from the bed and went out to the porch.

She stood there for a moment without speaking. All the neighbors had gone. Only Minifer sat there alone. Mrs. Barner filled again with the forward looking joy at the presence of her daughter.

"He's done passed away," she said quietly.

She bent over to pick up the bucket of water. The cold stars were pale and hard; they swam icily in the dark pool of the water as she lifted the bucket.

ROBERT RAMSEY.



A. Jamison

The Thieves of Bagdad

NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

Editors
BARBARA GILES, A. B. MAGIL, RUTH McKENNEY,
BRUCE MINTON, JOSEPH NORTH, JOSEPH STAROBIN,
JOHN STUART

Business Manager
CARL BRISTEL

★

Premier Stalin

SPECULATIONS as to the motives behind the designation of Joseph Stalin as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars are singularly fruitless, and most of those we have read cancel each other out. Dorothy Thompson has delivered herself of a column in which with her usual abandon she predicts the details of a forthcoming "deal" between Stalin and Hitler. But since Miss Thompson likewise tells us that an earlier column she wrote on the Soviet-Japanese pact was all cockeyed, she gives us the right, if not the duty, to be generous with the salt. The official explanation for the change in the Soviet government, that the job of being both premier and foreign commissar of a nation of 200,000,000 people in these critical times was too difficult for even so good a man as Molotov, seems infinitely more plausible to us than the "theories" and conjectures of the commercial press.

There is, of course, something more that might be said. Stalin is the outstanding leader of the Soviet peoples, recognized as such in his own country and throughout the world. Since the outbreak of the war, though not formally the head of the government, he has found it necessary to participate personally, together with Molotov, in many of the important conferences with foreign diplomats. By naming Stalin chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, the presidium of the Supreme Soviet ends the dichotomy between his official and actual position and makes legal acknowledgment of the fact that he is the most authoritative spokesman of the Soviet government. To foreign governments this may be a hint that the Soviet Union, pursuing its policy of peace and neutrality, is prepared for all eventualities. To the advanced workers and their allies throughout the world this change is a symbol of the fact that the Soviet government, whatever diplomatic forms its foreign policy may assume, is based on the principles of Communism and is inseparable from the party of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin.

Soviet Diplomatic Relations

THE Soviet government has sent notes to the ministers of Yugoslavia, Belgium, and Norway, informing them that their ministerial status has been terminated. This is being interpreted in certain quarters as evidence of a new (yet again!) pro-German orientation. Those who conceive of Soviet policy as shuttling back and forth between pro-German and anti-German moves are unable or unwilling to recognize the simple truth that today and ever since Nov. 7, 1917, the Soviet Union serves the interest not of this or that imperialist power, but solely of the Soviet people and of socialism everywhere. We do not profess to know the reasons for the step taken in regard to these ministers, but it is evident that the governments they were originally appointed to represent have in fact ceased to exist. Since those governments no longer hold any of the territory of their respective countries, they now have a purely symbolic significance, while in actuality they function as auxiliaries of British imperialism. The Soviet government did everything in its power to prevent the attack on Yugoslavia. It lent its moral and diplomatic support to the struggle of the Yugoslav people. In the night of horror and oppression that has descended on that brave people, the USSR remains their friend. But in carrying out its policy of non-involvement on either side of the war, it is compelled to deal with political realities, however unpleasant, and not with juridical fictions. In the not-so-long-run the cause of the genuine liberation of peoples will be the gainer.

The establishment of diplomatic relations with Iraq is in consonance with traditional Soviet policy of maintaining friendly contacts with all countries. The USSR, moreover, has regarded with special sympathy semi-colonial nations such as Iraq. Negotiations were begun at the end of last year when a pro-British government was in power at Bagdad. This government refused to establish diplomatic relations unless the USSR simultaneously issued a declaration recognizing the independence of the Arabian countries. It is a well known fact that the Soviet Union sympathizes with the efforts of all subject peoples, including those in the Arabian countries, to achieve independence. But in the context of present world relations the demand of the Iraqi government was provocative, to say the least. For the Soviet government to have issued such a statement would have meant considering Palestine and Syria, both Arabian countries, independent, respectively, from Britain and France. Furthermore, the Soviet government has never made the establishment of diplomatic ties contingent on action it may take with respect to other countries. With the withdrawal of this demand by the new government of Rashid Ali Beg Gailani, it became possible to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Chamberlain Tried It Too

THE differential treatment accorded the Soviet Union and Japan by the Roosevelt administration is evidence of what NEW MASSES has repeatedly emphasized: that dominating all imperialist calculations and rivalries is hatred of socialism, of that giant force from which the democratic peoples' movements in all countries draw strength. In no other way can this aspect of American foreign policy be explained. The administration has now crowned months of studied rebuffs and elaborate stalling with an order definitely barring all further shipment of machine tools to the USSR, including tools already paid for. The pretext given for this action is that they are needed for our own "defense" program, but it is an open secret that the real reason is political.

The ban on machine tools came on the heels of an Associated Press dispatch from the Netherlands Indies announcing that British-American oil companies have renewed their sales contracts with Japan, continuing an agreement made last November. That agreement increased the oil shipments to Japan three and a half times. This is in addition to the oil which Japan imports directly from the United States, the value of which for the first two months of the year was $8,106,000, compared with $7,928,000 for the first two months of 1940. Japan buys many other valuable war materials from the United States and may still be getting machine tools (during the first ten months of 1940 machine tool shipments to Japan were valued at $15,908,000). Thus the United States government is helping Japan kill Chinese today and perhaps Americans tomorrow. The reason for this tenderness toward the Far Eastern aggressor is likewise political: the oil, scrap iron, etc., are designed to bribe Japan into accepting a partnership in plunder with the United States at the expense of China and the USSR.

This game is by now a bit cliche. It was played in Europe by a gentleman named Chamberlain with no brilliant results. By arming and appeasing its most formidable imperialist rival in the Far East and alienating the country which has given the greatest assistance to China and had the least conflict of interest with the United States, our government is inviting the same kind of disaster which has overtaken Britain.

Iraq and Syria

THE whole focus of the war now centers on the Near East. An intense diplomatic activity is going on among the Axis powers, France, and Turkey, while the British have made the first military moves by their large-scale operations in Iraq. Last week, the Nazis offered to reduce the price which Vichy is paying for quartering German troops on French soil, and it is not difficult to surmise that in return they expect permission to land their forces in the strategic French colony of Syria, which lies just north of Palestine, just south of Turkey, and just west of Iraq. The German occupation of the Greek islands surrounding Turkey assumes the character of preparatory moves to gain stepping stones to Syria.

It is highly significant that Sumner Welles, the Under-secretary of State, announced last week that Vichy would continue to get regular monthly shipments of wheat-flour only on the condition that the armistice terms with Germany and Italy remain unchanged. This action in Washington thoroughly exposes the political motivation of our "humanitarian" food shipments to France, but it is also an indication of how close to settlement French and German relations are, how desperately Sumner Welles and his chief are trying to prevent a complete fiasco of their policy toward Marshal Petain. Simultaneously, diplomatic activities are proceeding over the question of Turkey's future. It is quite possible that the Nazis will be compelled to avoid Turkey altogether; if so, that would represent a considerable achievement for the Soviet Union as well as Turkey.

The American press has utterly failed to discuss the political and military meaning of the British operations in Iraq. The issue is too dangerous and too delicate for them. It was one of the most illuminating shafts on the whole nature of this war that in the same week in which the Nazi air force smashed the British Museum and the House of Commons, the Royal Air Force was energetically destroying the airdromes and the outskirts of the city of Bagdad—that ancient metropolis with a population of 400,000 people. When one surveys the picture as a whole, it is obvious that the British have more or less anticipated the next phase of the struggle. For they chose to violate their own treaties with the Iraq government in order to bring up thousands of troops to the borders of Turkey and Syria, evidently intending to influence diplomatic crisis there, and perhaps even undertake an invasion of Syria before the Axis arrives. Such things have been talked about freely in the British press.

But the prolonged and stubborn resistance of the Iraq armed forces is only one indication of the political dynamite in the British empire. We are getting stories of how prominent Moslems vow fealty to the British, but underneath it all, there must be a profound stirring in the Arab world. One of the reasons for the German and Italian hesitation toward Syria is the nationalist-revolutionary movement there, which, as our editorials have noted, is taking on more and more active forms. You get a glimpse of what must be happening in the form of a brief despatch that the American University in Beirut was closed down because 600 students had been expelled for demonstrating their sympathy with Iraq. Keep an eye on the Near East.

Hallucinations About Hess

At least three reasons suggest themselves to explain the fantastic flight of Rudolph Hess, the No. 3 Nazi, from Germany to Scotland. The Nazis themselves say that the deputy fuehrer and chief boss of the Nazi party organization suffered from strange maladies—hallucinations and heart trouble. They make it appear that he went up in his plane against orders, and in their first reports the Nazis write him off as a death by suicide. The press speculates on a second reason, namely that Herr Hess anticipated a big purge within the Nazi apparatus of the sort which "eliminated" several hundred of his pals back in June 1934. Hess' flight is attributed to the intense Wagnerian atmosphere which surrounds Nazi affairs. Here and there a note of admiration creeps in, the kind of admiration and hospitality which accompanied the flight of August Thyssen, the big Nazi steel magnate, earlier in the war. Perhaps, *Life* magazine will have its photographer there, and Hess will soon be telling us how lovely things would be in a Hitlerized Germany, minus Hitler.

The third possibility flows from the second. It is suggested that Rudolph Hess, one of der Fuehrer's oldest cronies, is really a Nazi envoy. He is not out of his mind, he simply has something on his mind. He did not send a calling card, but he managed to land on the Duke of Hamilton's estate, which is just where he wanted to go, and he brought his hairbrush and comb, his vitamin pills and all, along with him. It is possible that the Nazis are trying to get some kind of deal with Britain; a spectacular one-man invasion if it succeeds, or just the babbling of a frustrated lunatic if it fails. Who knows? Perhaps tomorrow Anthony Eden will be found in a baby carriage rocking his way toward Hitler's retreat at the Berghof.

We don't pretend to know the answer. But obviously some big things are in the offing. For all its vaunted power, powerful differences of opinion seem to be wracking the Third Reich from within. As in Italy earlier in the year, there are rifts and schisms and scissions and terrific stresses and strains, reflecting enormous profound dilemmas for the ruling elite. Maybe the curtain is rising on the last scenes of *Gotterdammerung.*

Taxing the Jalopy

In America automobiles cannot be regarded as a luxury. Even to thousands of very poor people, especially in rural areas, they are indispensable to daily life. To raise the price of automobiles, both new and used, by a sales tax of twenty percent, would mean cutting the very lifeline of many families. Yet that is just what Leon Henderson, the OPM's Price Control Administrator, proposed to the House Ways and Means Committee. Mr. Henderson has curious ideas of the meaning of his title. His proposed automobile tax, for example, is six times the present tax. And he also suggests price raises through further taxation of various items, such as electric refrigerators, in which the raw materials are needed for war. This, says Mr. Henderson with a candor that is not at all engaging, would curtail production—by cutting consumption. Which is exactly what all the administration tax proposals thus far are designed to do. The only variety among them is a slightly different idea as to just where the consumers can be pinched hardest to pay for "defense" expenditures—which, Mr. Henderson testified, will soon be running at the rate of a billion dollars a month.

Perhaps Mr. Henderson was inspired by the arrival in this country of an old friend, John Maynard Keynes. Mr. Keynes is adviser to the Bank of England and author of the notorious Keynes plan to pay for war through forced savings from workers' income. He brought the cheery word that in Britain the workers are bearing their extraordinary taxes "wonderfully" and "It's amazing what regulation people will take in wartime." We suspect that the British people might have something else to say about this, through their own spokesmen. Aside from that, it isn't complete "wartime" for the people of America—not yet. And not even in wartime do they want their jalopies taxed while manufacturing profits kite upward—the highest since 1929, according to a recent survey, with 1,019 concerns showing a combined net in 1940 of no less than $2,164,153,819.

Despite Hillman

For some weeks, Sidney Hillman was in the dog house. Hired to do a job, he didn't deliver. Poor Sidney Hillman, who had finally worked himself to the very top—or right near it, right up next to Knudsen and Stettinius—saw his title of co-director in the OPM endangered just because the workers wouldn't play the game his way.

Then the break came. He "put over" a fine deal, an agreement for the shipbuilding industry that contained an A-1 Social-Democratic no-strike clause. His AFL friends, William Green and John Frey, and all the other "respectable" if not too numerous leaders, called the contract epochal.

How shortlived was the triumph. The shipbuilding workers on the West Coast refused to accept the contract, saying they had not been represented when the agreement was drawn up and had not been consulted about its contents. They demanded double pay for overtime as their former contract provided, and not time-and-a-half as Mr. Hillman had agreed. They insisted upon $1.15 an hour, not $1.12 as Mr. Hillman had arranged. They struck—AFL and CIO united—defying the "labor spokesmen" handpicked by the administration, resisting pressure exerted through government strikebreaking machinery. The rank and file repudiated Hillman, Green, and Frey as the longshoremen in 1934 repudiated Joseph P. Ryan. To the West Coast shipyard workers, the words of John L. Lewis told their story: Hillman and his AFL friends "do not represent labor in government. . . . Their business is to chloroform labor so that it will be voiceless and supine and go along with any policy in the interests of those who would make a financial killing."

The action in the West must pain and surely frighten Walter Reuther, Hillman's man in the automobile union. For Reuther finagled a postponement of a strike against General Motors for better wages and working conditions. The union had negotiated for months; the corporation had stalled. And just as the unionists lost patience, Reuther stepped in to have the dispute certified and handed over to the National Mediation Board. While in Washington the runaround continued, General Motors gratefully used the delay to prepare means of breaking the threatened strike. This week, automobile workers, weakened by Reuther's policy, will walk out of

TO MAKE OR BREAK . . .

The hard facts are these: $25,000 stands between us and solvency! To date, only $16,450 has come in. We have five more weeks before the deadline the creditors have set for us. And we still must raise $8,550.

Considering the annual financial turnover of the magazine, it is a small sum. Yet that small sum can make or break us.

We do not believe that $8,550 is an impossible goal. You saw to it that the immediate crisis in which $5,000 was needed by May 15, was overcome. We are sure you will help us raise the final $8,550 which will make this drive successful.

To date, only 3,254 of our thousands of readers have participated in the drive. This appeal is directed primarily to those who have not yet given the magazine a hand.

Will you ensure the continuance of NEW MASSES for the coming year? Parties for NEW MASSES will do it. Subscriptions for your friends will do it. A day's pay, or even a few hours of your day's pay, will do it. Is that too much to ask for peace, for democracy, for all that your magazine stands for?

(Please turn to page 26)

the shops, unless the corporation suddenly changes its tune. Their victory will be that much harder to win.

Each move by Hillman and his cronies reveals more clearly to the working class for whom and for what the "leaders" are straining. The Social Democrats put the employer-administration wishes above the needs of the membership they supposedly serve. Theirs is no easy task, for every agreement they approve exposes their motives all too clearly. But then, they do meet the best people.

Reversing an Injustice

The frameup fell through. Oscar Wheeler is a free man, freed by the unanimous decision of the West Virginia Supreme Court, overturning the verdict of a lower court. Oscar Wheeler had been sentenced to jail for fifteen years, under charge of securing signatures to the Communist ballot petition last fall through "false representation." It was a familiar charge at that time and highly useful to both Democratic and Republican leaders who preferred a ballot which wouldn't register any anti-war protest. Many citizens were arrested under it—in Pittsburgh twenty-eight were sentenced at one time and are still in jail. Wheeler's trial also followed a familiar pattern: state witnesses terrorized by vigilantes and police, an arrogantly prejudiced judge, extremely shaky evidence. The Supreme Court declared in its decision that the very indictment against Wheeler was insufficient to charge a crime. It further declared that the trial judge was in error when he failed to grant a defense motion for a directed verdict of acquittal.

No doubt the freeing of Wheeler, while strictly in accordance with the tenets of judicial impartiality, also reflects the growing revolt in this country against pushing civil liberties around. The Philadelphia "bomb scare," by which Moe Annenberg's *Inquirer* framed Adolph Heller and Bernard Rush of the Workers School, has also collapsed. The judge, who had shown his own bias against the defendants, felt compelled to set aside the jury's conviction, so slight was the evidence. Such victories for justice are particularly encouraging to the progressive forces which are waging a sturdy battle in behalf of the imprisoned Pittsburghers and other victims of Roosevelt's war. These, let us not forget, include three Oklahomans already sentenced and nine awaiting trial for the "crime" of possessing progressive literature. The cases of the three sentenced—Bob Wood, Alan Shaw, and Eli Jaffe—will soon be given a hearing in the state Criminal Court of Appeals. These cases contain even more reversible errors than Oscar Wheeler's did.

Pie in the Sky

As in the spring of 1917, the Negro people are being wooed with promises of a golden future in return for sacrifice on the battlefield. To 12,000,000 Negroes, Jim Crowed in the army, segregated in decaying tenements, denied job opportunities and civil rights, the sudden talk of "democracy" has a particularly hollow sound. In no area of American life is there such a gap between the facts and the pretenses of this war. The function of the sixty merchants of alibis who signed a statement last week in behalf of Negroes in defense industries is to bridge this gap with glittering words.

The release of this statement, and its wide publicity in the press, indicates the terrific pressure from both the Negro and white masses which the war leaders must somehow deflect. Yet how clumsy is the technique, how blatant the hypocrisy. For example, Marshall Field, one of the signers, is himself the scion of a family which refuses to employ Negroes in its large Chicago store. Mr. Field's newspaper, *PM,* forgets to note this fact in its uncontrollable hysteria. Similarly, the New York *Times* and *Herald Tribune,* which hailed the statement as evidence of an era of good feeling, omitted the news that not a single member of their own editorial and reporting staffs is a Negro. Chancellor Harry Woodburn Chase of New York University, another signatory, will have difficulty explaining how he reconciles his fine phrases with the discrimination against Negro athletes in his university and the recent suspension of seven students for protesting such discrimination. Among the other signers were two publishers of Southern Jim Crow newspapers, the president of a university which bars admission to Negro students, and the champion of intolerance in the AFL, Matthew Woll.

Few will be deceived by phrases this time. There is a deepening appreciation of the fact that Jim Crowism is imbedded in the very fabric of capitalist relations. While every effort should be made to bring about equality of job opportunities in the defense industries, and in other trades and professions, it should never for a moment be forgotten that the powers thrusting us deeper into the war are the very ones which created and seek to perpetuate the oppression of Negroes and national minorities.

Readers Forum

In England Now

To New Masses: During the past weeks I have received several letters from friends and relatives in England. I am sending some excerpts from them to you, thinking perhaps that your readers will be interested in the descriptions of day-by-day life in London and elsewhere, the things average men and women are thinking about during this terrible war.

B. W.

Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear——: The die-hard shelterers remain faithful to the tubes, raids or no raids. My own impression is that they are the people whose homes are in any case less comfortable . . . either because of poverty or because of air-raid damage. After ten o'clock it still has the old dreadful morgue-like impression, with rows and rows of pale sleeping corpses in dirty blankets. It is terrible to see the children, how pale and excitable they all are. Most of them even now cannot sleep until the trains have ceased running, and they scamper about, the older ones, adventurously playing on the escalators or snatching thrilling rides between stations, all giggles and excitement, summoned to their tired mothers' sides from time to time to eat a sandwich or drink a cup of tea either from a thermos flask which the family has brought, or from the women who now serve tea and buns and pies down there every night, dressed in green overalls and red handkerchiefs round their heads. The babies wail and are taken for a tottering walk the length of the platform, or bounced and hushed and bounced and hushed. Round every group is a little pile of possessions—the mugs, the pillow, the straps or the rope with which to tie their blankets to cart them home again each morning; the books, the bag of knitting, the babies' napkins. The smell, of humanity and disinfectant, stays there throughout the day. At first it made me so sick that I used to ride on buses, but now I am getting used to it as one forgets to notice the smell of the tube itself. When I first came to London the smell of the tube used to hit me in the face every time I passed the door of a tube station, but now I no longer notice it. Numbers of derelict old men sleep on the stairs, feeling, I think, too useless to demand platform space or bunks. I get so sorry for their poor old backs . . . have you ever tried sleeping on a stone staircase? . . . and so angry for the life of the children and the babies and so awe-struck at the patience of the mothers that I always walk out and find my fists are clenched again until the fingers are hurting. Every night.

S. M.

North West London.

Dear——: You will by now have received my letter telling you that my home was bombed. At last after weeks of living in other people's houses I have found a room. It is furnished and very nice and quite cheap. Before the blitz began it used to be two guineas a week, but there have been so many bombs all round that people will no longer pay so much and they have reduced it by half.

The other day I got six eggs! I saw a crowd in a street outside a shop and went to see what it was and it was two crates of new laid eggs. I got home with four because I met a friend and she was having a birthday the next day and I gave her two for a present. I haven't dared eat them yet. Eggs! Oranges, onions, lemons, and now cheese are practically off the market. Odd and surprising things have odd and surprising shortages; there have been no size ten stockings in the shops for weeks and I am thankful for my foresight in buying three good wool pairs earlier.

Workers like me, who have no one to shop for them, have to rely very much on luck and Saturday afternoon to get enough to live on. About twice a week I go without a proper lunch to scour round the local shops for things I can't get on Saturdays. Yesterday by this sacrifice I got a pound of sultanas. I have a very nice supper dish consisting of: one pound of rolled oats, half a pound of sultanas, or preferably raisins (but we can't get those), and a cupful of olive oil (I should just say oil, because real olive oil is unobtainable). Just mix them up and let them stand a day; the oil soaks up the oats and brings the sweetness out of the fruit, and it lasts you a week or more . . . a little bowl every night; no sugar required. Very nourishing. The sultanas were one shilling and eightpence a pound. Do you remember when they were only eightpence?

V. B.

Central London.

Dear——: We cannot get the things we should like, especially at the cooperative stores, because the government is serving them disgracefully. They will not allow them to have the goods, while capitalist shops get their places filled. Saturday morning there wasn't an ounce of meat in our shop, not even a bone, and of course we cannot go to another shop if we are not registered there. They will not serve you.

Wonder if you know about the suppression of the *Daily Worker?* There's freedom for you! They are not allowed to print it now, and would not be permitted to sell it if they could. I think it is abominable. Everybody has a right to his opinions, whether they differ from the government or not. Another proof we are fast losing our freedom and that I value more than anything.

There was a magnificent meeting at Holborn Hall. It was so large they had to get two more halls to accommodate the audience, and they were all delegates from trade unions, co-op societies, guilds, the CP, and political circles, etc. They could have filled the Albert Hall easily. This was an effort to establish the movement launched at the People's Convention, and a marvelous idea, but the daily papers said very little about it. They and the well-off labor people opposed it. We are having a lively time discussing it. But I don't think they will try to suppress it—if they do there will be "hell let loose."

The teachers have been commandeered to serve as fire extinguishers of incendiary bombs during the night. They will only have to serve one night a week but that means R will have to leave home at 7:15 a.m. and stay there watching all night, then start teaching next morning and go on all day. They will be expected to put out the fires if they come. No extra pay, of course. Madness I call it, while there are still hundreds of men out of work who should be employed and paid to do jobs like that.

We cannot go out in the evenings yet because of the blackout. It is still very dangerous at night in the streets. The accidents are appalling and getting worse.

I wish I could know what your opinion is of the political situation in your country. I could tell you what mine is about our government and leaders —I could say some very hard things, but better not. You understand.

Excuse the paper. It is so dear and short now.

G. H.

Central England.

Charitable Johnny, Jr.

To New Masses: We find it so hard these days to keep up with the great minds. Just recently, the Senate Committee held an investigation. Before it appeared Mr. E. B. Lyman, publicity director of Standard Oil. He told the committee that his company was even now delivering oil to Teneriffe Island for the use of the Germans and the Italians. He was asked how the Standard Oil could continue to aid the nations singled out by the administration as enemies. Mr. Lyman answered: "First of all you must understand that we are an international company and we must keep an international viewpoint. . . . As a general rule we sell to anyone who wants to buy and can pay for it."

Another member of Standard Oil's family—the most important member—also expressed himself on world affairs a few days later. His name is John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Mr. Rockefeller is a philanthropist on money inherited from his father who was a go-getter and who in his time was the most hated man in America. Mr. Rockefeller is a charitable man; some years ago, he condoned the Ludlow Massacre of miners on strike against the Standard Oil.

Mr. Rockefeller wrote to Mr. Sulzberger, publisher of the New York *Times.* He had been doing some thinking, and he had reached "certain definite conclusions." After prefacing what he had to say with many fine sentiments expected of a great philanthropist (condemning war and force and intolerance), he went on to remark that nevertheless and notwithstanding his hate of violence (he didn't mention Ludlow), "I would rather die fighting the brutal, barbarous, inhuman force represented by Hitlerism than live in a world which is dominated by that force." He felt that it was most important, since he was willing to make the above-mentioned sacrifice of his life, for labor to stop striking. He asked that Communists be persecuted —because to fight Hitlerism, it seems, we must follow Hitler's lead. He demanded that Americans "act today." He is all for war.

We want to assure Mr. Rockefeller that his wish to die for the country is very generous—but it is highly doubtful that he will be asked to do so in the front lines. The offer is nevertheless noble. We also want to let New Masses readers know that they should not worry, because even though Mr. Rockefeller is opposed to Hitler and Mussolini, his Standard Oil Co. is still making handsome profits from the sale of oil to Germany and Italy—and we might add, Japan. Mr. Rockefeller can continue to be a philanthropist by donating a part of these profits which accrue from arming what he calls the "brutal, barbarous, inhuman" forces. Mr. Rockefeller is an internationalist. He will sell oil to the US Army so that America can fight a war and our youth can be butchered—and to keep things sporting, he will sell it to the other side, so that fascism can be strong and their youth can be butchered. In any event he will increase his fortune and thereby be able to continue his charities.

Harry Oberg.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

THE SPANKING OF A. MACLEISH

The story of an embarrassing "manuscript session" at the hand-picked writers' conference in Puerto Rico. A "nation of stammerers" talks back to the irresponsibles.

WEDNESDAY, April 16, was a rather humid, sultry day in San Juan, the "capital" of Puerto Rico; but in the cool precincts of the Hostos Library at the University of Puerto Rico, an academic calm prevailed. Outside, in the by-streets and suburbs of the town, men, women, and children might have been seen, half clad and three-quarters starved, rickety, tubercular; but inside the library there was no hint of this. Here, all was decorum, a well fed, self-assured decorum that was emphasized by the natty white linen suits of the audience, amid a sprinkling of North American pin stripes. Mr. Archibald MacLeish's hand-picked—and Jim Crow!—"Inter-American Writers Conference" was in session, and for one session at least had graciously condescended to admit to a "manuscript discussion" any member of the public who might be "desirous of participating"—including even Puerto Ricans.

It was then that a young Puerto Rican student took the floor. He was not so well dressed as most of his listeners, his trousers were a bit baggy around the knee, and his tousled hair was tossed back with an angry gesture; his hands trembled as he held his manuscript, but his eyes blazed fire as he arose to speak. He had no sooner begun than a subdued shock ran around the room, a rustle of horrified disapproval which strove to conceal itself and pass the matter off with a disdainful shrug; in other words, the characteristic reaction of our "better" classes always, and of "liberal" democracy-saving intellectuals, when someone speaks out in a meeting. The audience felt that something unpleasant was about to happen. It did.

Young Carlos Carrera Benitez, as his name turned out to be, began by announcing that he was going to speak in the name of his own downtrodden country, Puerto Rico. That was a *faux pas,* to start with. It was, to say the least, in extremely bad taste to bring up the subject of Puerto Rico in connection with democracy. That sort of thing just isn't done. Worse yet, here was this young upstart—who was he, anyway?—reminding Mr. MacLeish and his "delegates" of the supreme affront they had offered the country which was their host, by utterly and superciliously ignoring all the many native writers and intellectuals, for whom this "manuscript session" had been arranged as a kind of sop, an easy way of getting rid of them.

The whole implication, of course, which no Puerto Rican intellectual could help seeing in the thing, was that Puerto Rico is the chattel property of the United States, which may do what it likes there, without regard to the feelings of the "natives." As for recognizing native intellectuals—

SENOR CARRERA BENITEZ might have gone on to point out that this was quite in keeping with the character of the Conference, *which did not invite a single Negro writer,* although there is a great Negro literature in Spanish, in the West Indies, with some of the best poetry in the world today being produced by Negro bards like Nicolas Guillen and others. Similarly, the literature of modern Spain, which now lives in exile in the Hispanic Americas, was completely ignored—of necessity, inasmuch as Mr. Hull and his State Department have said that these distinguished victims of fascism may not so much as set foot on American soil; they might interfere with the "fight against fascism"; and Puerto Rico, of course, *is* "American soil."

The speaker, however, was at no loss for material. With an annihilating sarcasm he discussed the professed aim of the Conference: the fostering of literary expression. This in an island whose inhabitants are now *practically without a language;* since by President Roosevelt's ukase they have been robbed of their own, while no provision has been made for the proper teaching of English. The result, as Carlos Carrera Benitez puts it, is: "a nation of stammerers," with a race of "tongue-tied" intellectuals, who, as they admit, fear trying to express themselves because they no longer have a sufficient mastery of the language of Cervantes.

This language problem in Puerto Rico is a grievous one; it is, with Puerto Ricans, probably the sorest spot of all at the moment. Most of us in the United States do not even realize that it exists, for in this as in other matters pertaining to "our island possession," we are carefully kept in ignorance. And so it is almost impossible for us to conceive of an entire people actually reduced to the condition of *tartamudos,* stammerers. As one San Juan writer phrases it: "This fight which we Puerto Ricans are waging for the preservation of our vernacular is equivalent, on the moral plane, to any of those great liberation struggles which were waged on the Continent for the freedom of the Spanish-American peoples."

The hypocrisy behind the Conference was glaringly brought out by the refusal of the heads of the University of Puerto Rico, Dr. F. O. Bissell and Dr. Concha Melendez, to permit a discussion of the language question. It was in their names that the call for the Conference was issued, though no one was deceived by this; for everybody knew that it was the work of Nelson Rockefeller and his "coordinator," Mr. MacLeish. By this time, when the speaker came to tell of the little game of buck passing between Dr. Melendez and Dr. Bissell, some of the white linen suits had begun to look a trifle wilted around the collar, and the temperature of the library was perceptibly some degrees higher. This was really telling tales out of school.

But the white suits and the pin stripes hadn't heard the half of it yet. It was when he came to discuss the second aim of the Conference, "an atmosphere of friendly cooperation and good will," that the author of this most unusual "manuscript" grew eloquent. He pulled no punches here, as anyone can see by reading his paper. Conjuring up the names of Marti and Bolivar, he made them live again, made them mean something in the face—literally in the face—of the "Colossus of the North"; and he ended with a stirring demand for the recognition of Puerto Rican independence.

THE EPISODE was rendered still more significant by the fact that presiding at this "manuscript session" was Dr. Jorge Manach, a Cuban senator and author of the standard biography of the great Cuban liberator, Marti. Dr. Manach was indeed in an uncomfortable position, and during the rest of his stay in San Juan had to do some tall squirming. Was he or was he not in favor of applying the principles for which Marti lived and died, to Cuba's sister island, Puerto Rico? There was no doubt as to Marti's own views; what about those of his biographer? That was what Puerto Rican intellectuals wanted to know.

GREATEST SALE IN OUR HISTORY

Spring Clearance

BOOKS

150,000 Books

Drastic Reductions

International Titles Included

20—80% Off

Reg. 2.00
Price Sale 1.29

Reg. 1.25
Sale Price 1.00

Reg. 2.00
Sale Price 1.29

Reg. 2.50
Sale Price 1.98

Workers' Book Shop

50 E. 13th St., N. Y. C.

and all Workers and Progressive Bookshops

by mail

Workers' Library Publishers

P. O. Box 148, Sta. "D," N. Y. C.

Send for Our Sale List

The discussion broke into the columns of a local newspaper, *El Imparcial,* with Dr. Manach endeavoring to justify his position by proffering the rather lame excuse that, being an invited guest at the Conference, he must refrain from interfering in Puerto Rican politics.

From this time on, Mr. MacLeish's Conference went into a decline. It had got off to a bad enough start as it was, with the issuing of a manifesto against it by the students of the very university at which it was being held. The San Juan weekly, *Verdad,* had also exposed the imperialist aims of the gathering. So far as that goes, it needed little exposing, with its eight cautiously chosen "delegates" from all the Americas for a ten days' "congress"! They did have a good time seeing the sights of San Juan, and the luncheons, banquets, and fiestas were all that could be desired. If there was a gap anywhere, it could always be filled in with a "round table discussion." But Mr. MacLeish in the future will beware of *manuscripts.* They are sometimes deadly things.

Possibly he was thinking of this, as he hurried away that evening to catch a plane for home. He didn't look too cheerful at any rate, if all reports are true.

SAMUEL PUTNAM.

The following is the speech, translated from the Spanish by Mr. Putnam, made by Carlos Carrera Benitez at the "manuscript session."

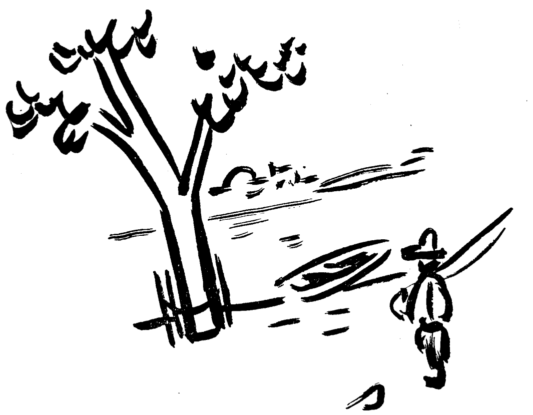
IT MAY be that you are wondering who I am, that I should come to a place like this to expound ideas which ought to be expounded by others. I want to clear that up before we go any further. I am a Puerto Rican, that is all. I want to make this plain, because in Puerto Rico those who are not brave enough to act bravely, live petty, paltry lives. They will tell you I represent this or that fanatic and violent group, and that you should pay no attention to me. That is not true. In speaking to you here, I am the anguished voice of a Puerto Rico that has been betrayed a thousand and one times by her sons. It is, then, in the name of Puerto Rico that I speak.

When I say that there are others who perhaps ought to be here in my stead, I am referring to the many writers and intellectuals of Puerto Rico. They should long since have raised their voices against a conference which ignores them completely. Is it your opinion that there is in Puerto Rico not a single writer who is capable of representing his country in worthy fashion? Otherwise why have you shut them out? They are the victims, in this instance, of that official Pan Americanism which has undertaken to make a bridge of Puerto Rico; and so you walk over them as you would over a bridge. But in speaking to you here, I am also the voice of these *tongue-tied* writers and intellectuals who by their silence give consent.

It has been said that in Puerto Rico you can get away with anything, and this would surely seem to be the case; and so it is we have had the temerity to come here and say in behalf of Puerto Rico the things that Puerto Rico wants said, which on the present occasion are the following:

ACCORDING to the program this purports to be a session "for stimulating interest in the practice of the art of writing on the part of university students and other persons that may be desirous of participating in this phase of the Conference." Gentlemen, what naivete on your part! May we ask, in the first place, in what language the students and "other persons desirous of participating" are going to practice the art of writing? There is an answer to this question which would seem to be logical enough. At least it should appear so to you, the representatives of the Spanish-speaking countries, of which Puerto Rico is one. In the language of Cervantes, naturally. But we cannot look for the same answer on the part of the gentlemen from the north. They live in a country in which the language of Shakespeare is spoken, whose President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the absolute ruler of this unfortunate colony of ours, recently recommended in an open letter to the present Commissioner of Education, Dr. Gallardo, that emphasis be laid upon the teaching of English, and upon teaching *in* English, in Puerto Rico.

This conference might, therefore, be compared to a gathering of physicians, who, without knowing—as how should they know?—that the patient is rapidly losing his voice, should undertake to stimulate his interest in oratory or in song, when he has lost the ability to express himself by means of his vocal chords. Or it might be compared to an athletic instructor who endeavors to stimulate an interest in running on the part of an athlete who has lost one leg and is about to lose another. For this is nothing more or less than Puerto Rico's tragedy. Teachers will all bear witness to the fact that the present system of education in Puerto Rico has been reduced to an absurdity, and that our people are losing their own language without acquiring another. We are becoming a nation of stammerers. We are unable to express ourselves any longer. And, ladies and gentlemen, is it for me to remind you that a knowledge of language, along with clear thinking, is an essential factor in worthwhile literary production?



Ladies and gentlemen, we all know in Puerto Rico that our school teachers have certainly not distinguished themselves as leaders in the life of their country. Don Gerardo Selles Sola, one of the oldtime leaders of the profession, answered his own question as to why it is that teachers shun leadership. "Because they throttle them," he said. Everybody in Puerto Rico knows what happens to a teacher who expresses his opinions freely on any subject that seriously concerns his country. For one reason or another, and scarcely knowing how it comes about, he finds himself out of a job.

But what I started out to tell you is: these same teachers, who are usually so timid and peaceful, at their last convention adopted a resolution which read as follows:

> The teaching in English of the subject matter of lessons, in the elementary school, has turned out to be a calamity, not only from the point of view of the subject matter to be taught, but also in so far as the mastering of the English language is concerned. Most authorities are agreed that teaching *in* English in the elementary school is contrary to sound pedagogic principles; for in its zeal to impose English as the teaching medium, the Department of Education has not given due attention to the teaching of the language as a subject in itself, but has left this important branch of study to be conducted without plan or direction; all of which has led to the present chaotic state of affairs, with millions of dollars being spent annually on public education, and with no really effective results, owing in large part to a badly directed and unscientific policy with respect to bilingual instruction.

It was at this same convention that Don Gerardo Selles Sola, of whom I was just speaking, said:

"Here within us [and he struck his bosom] we must raise a violent protest; for education in Puerto Rico is in a very bad way. The situation in regard to public education is the worst that our country has ever known." He went on to describe the educational plans now being put into practice as "ridiculous." Each "reform" that is made, he pointed out, results in an increased hardship for tax-payers, teachers, and above all for the pupils.

And yet, ladies and gentlemen, this Conference, without discussing or knowing anything about the problem, proposes to stimulate interest in literary production in Puerto Rico? When the question was put to Dr. Melendez as to whether or not the Conference would take up this subject, she referred the matter to Dr. Bissell, who replied that it would not be taken up, inasmuch as it was a "purely local" issue. What an absurdity, ladies and gentlemen! Here you have a conference being held in Puerto Rico, which cannot discuss a Puerto Rican problem because it is "purely local"! What is the upshot of it all? The old, eternal soft-speaking and colonial cowardice. I could say more about this, but my time is short.

I SHALL NOW go on to consider the second of the two aims of this Conference, as set forth by the program: "to foster a better under-

NEW MASSES

Presents

THEATRE NIGHT

An evening of provocative discussion and progressive theatre. The significance of "Watch on the Rhine," "Native Son," "No for an Answer," and other plays. An evaluation of the theatre. Various types of theatre will be demonstrated. Prominent people representing the actor, the playwright, the producer, the critic, the playgoer, etc., will participate in a review of the theatre today and where it is going. . . .

PRESENTATIONS:

Straight Theatre

Scene from "Zero Hour" . . . *New Theatre of Manhattan*
Scene from "Natural Man" . . . *American Negro Theatre*

Music and the Theatre

Excerpts from "No for an Answer"

Folk Theatre

Almanac Singers and Players

Radio Theatre

Presentation of a skit under exact conditions of the radio studio.
Original script presented by well known radio director and actors

plus

"Outlook for the Theatre"

A SYMPOSIUM

with

RUTH McKENNEY

ALBERT MALTZ

MARC BLITZSTEIN

ALVAH BESSIE

and others

MANHATTAN CENTER
34th St. & 8th Ave.

MONDAY, MAY 26th, 8:30 P.M.

Tickets—$.55—$.83—$1.10—on sale at New Masses, 461—4th Ave., Workers Bookshop, 50 E. 13th St., Bookfair, 133 W. 44th St.

FAST TENNIS COURTS • BADMINTON • HANDBALL • BOATING • BASEBALL • TABLE TENNIS • SOLARIUM • DRAMA • GAY COMPANY • "NAME BAND" SWING • TALKIES • DANCING • HORSES • BASKETBALL • FISHING • SWIMMING

OPENING DECORATION DAY

Spend glorious spring days away from it all . . high on a mountain plateau . . invigorating sports under a warm sun . . glamorous nights under the stars . . sparkling entertainment. Don't miss Decoration Day week-end three full days of fun . . . nor beautiful June days to follow When folks say Allaben is "tops" they don't mean merely elevation.

All expense Decoration Day week-end — $16.50 including round-trip transportation and taxi to and from camp. June rates—$21.00 per week.

Write or phone for new folder
N Y Office. 55 W 42nd Street
LOngacre 5-4685

ALLABEN ACRES
ALLABEN, N. Y.
(Tel. PHOENICIA 75)
THE INFORMAL ADULT CAMP

HILLTOP LODGE
A Perfect Delight!
ON SYLVAN LAKE, HOPEWELL JUNCTION, N. Y.
65 Miles from New York City. R.R. Station — Pawling, N. Y. Tel. — Hopewell Junction 2761.
MAY RATES TO MAY 28
$20.00 per week — Weekends $4.00 per day

Special Decoration Day Rates
1 Day $ 6.00
2 Days $11.00
3 Days $16.00
All Activities on Premises. TENNIS, HANDBALL, PING-PONG, SWIMMING, BICYCLES, HORSEBACK RIDING, BOATING, CANOEING. FREE 9-HOLE GOLF COURSE.
Superlative Cuisine
Directors:
PAUL WOLFSON
SOL ROTHAUSER
New York Office:
170 Broadway
Phone COrtlandt 7-3958

Telephone Ulster Park 591M-1
WELCOME . . . *for* . . . VACATION *to*
AVANTA FARM
ULSTER PARK, N. Y.
- Good Resting Place
- Plain, Fresh Food
- Plain, Healthy Country Life
- Swimming, Ping-pong, Sports

RATES: $14 per week., $2.50 per day
$9 for children
JUST TAKE WEST SHORE AND COME AT ONCE
Directions—By train is the best. Take West Shore train at West 42nd street. By bus: Shore Line bus to Restful Inn on 9-W highway at Ulster Park. By boat: Hudson River Day Line to Kingston. By auto: 9-W route.

An Inexpensive Vacation for the Entire Family!

Newly furnished Bungalows on sturdy structures. Beautifully landscaped. Kitchenette facilities. Lake on premises. Tennis, Handball, Rowing, Canoeing, Fishing, Bathing, Horseback Riding, etc. Write or phone for Booklet.

Somerset Bungalow Colony
★ FORMERLY CAMP CARLISLE ★
SYLVAN LAKE • HOPEWELL JUNCTION, N.Y.
N.Y. OFFICE • 261 BROADWAY • REctor 2-4319

standing and mutual esteem between writers and intellectuals of the American republics, by bringing together a group of notable writers from Spanish America and the United States. If the nations of the Western Hemisphere are to achieve a unity of culture and traditions, the success of their efforts will in good measure depend upon a mutual understanding and appreciation on the part of intellectuals of both the Americas."

Something is then said about "an atmosphere of friendly cooperation and good will." What I should like to ask is: are friendly cooperation and good will possible, if they are based on anything other than mutual *respect,* respect for the dignity and rights of others, for personal dignity and national dignity, for individual rights and the rights of nations? Are this friendly cooperation and good will possible, when what comes to us Puerto Ricans —to Puerto Rico—from the north is humiliation and oppression? Are friendly cooperation and good will possible for peoples south of the Rio Grande, toward the Colossus of the North, when it is the strangle-hold of that Colossus which is preventing the realization—the writing of the last line—of that superb poem begun by Bolivar, which Marti strove to bring to a close on the same note of dignity and heroic vision? The thought and life of Marti live today in Puerto Rico, but Bolivar still has a work to do in the Americas. And he will do it.

I shall not say more. It is a subject on which one can and must go on talking—talking and doing—until the United States fulfills its one duty toward us: by recognizing the independence of Puerto Rico.

IN CONCLUSION a few words to you, sons of that America which "still prays to Jesus Christ and still speaks Spanish." In Puerto Rico there is no recourse left us but to struggle for our freedom. We are under the moral obligation of raising ourselves to the stature of Marti, Bolivar, Betances, and all our other far-seeing forbears. "America shall not be a land of colonization." I urge you to struggle, that you may come to sense the reality which lies behind the ideas of human brotherhood and respect for human life. And on this day I invoke the spirit of Diego, which does not rest in peace; for there can be no repose for the spirit of a just man, so long as on the earth the cold gravestone of tyranny rests on the freedom of his fatherland.

There is much that is great and noble to be done in America. We have had our fill of suffering and injustice. Love and courage are what we lack. Let us take unto ourselves lovingly all the suffering and the injustice, and to the measure of our abilities let us build, out of our sacrifices, our courage, and our integrity, for ourselves and for our posterity, a great, strong, proud America, a complete America, an America that belongs to all, where none shall longer go "with the sorrowing countenance of those Americans who are outcasts from America."

CARLOS CARRERA BENITEZ.

Opening May 29 with special festivities for Decoration week-end. New theatre, lounge, cocktail bar, sun-decks. Log Cabin Clubhouse, each room with private bath. Private golf course, lake, 13 tennis courts, all on premises. Attractive June rate includes free use of golf course.

LENA BARISH : SAM GARLEN
Directors
N. Y. C. office: 11 W. 42nd St.
Telephone: BRyant 9-1738

Write for Booklet NM

Green Mansions
In the Adirondacks - WARRENSBURG, N. Y.

There is something new in camps. Luxurious—charming — spacious — magnificent — yet simplicity prevails — no ostentation.

CAMP COLEBROOK
COLEBROOK RIVER, CONN.
DIANA & ABE BERMAN, formerly of Uncas Lodge, are pleased to announce their new location in the center of the Berkshires, alt. 1500, formerly an exclusive country club.
- Beautiful mountain lake, surrounded by 320 acres of pines, hemlocks, poplars, etc.
- Artistic lodges—facing lake—beautifully landscaped, each with fieldstone fireplace.
- Excellent clay tennis courts and new cement handball courts.
- Ping-pong, croquet green, archery, baseball field.
- Orchestra and social activities.

DECORATION DAY WEEK-END, $12, 3 full days
N. Y. Phone—AL 4-0063

plum point
the year 'round vacation resort
[On the Hudson, 53 Miles from New York]
Features for Decoration Day, the return of:
- *Tony Kraber—American Folk Songs*
- *Margo Mayo & American Square Dance Group*

Plus:
- *Exhibition of paintings by Chuzo Tamotzu*

And of course:
- *Tennis, swimming, badminton*
- *Free bicycling, bowling, billiards*
- *Arts and crafts, recordings, library*

WRITE P. O. BOX 471, NEWBURGH, N. Y.
PHONE NEWBURGH 4270

Camp CHI-WAN-DA
FOR BOYS and GIRLS
ULSTER PARK, N.Y.
On the Mountain Lake Esopus overlooking the Beautiful Hudson River.
We present a modern cultural environment for your children. All cabins with latest improvements. Reasonable rates. For full information, write or call for booklet.
JACOB I. DOROSHKIN, *Director*
545 Fifth Ave., MU 2-4218 — DI 6-8055

Sacks Farm
Saugerties, N. Y. Telephone 82 F. 5
Intimate. Informal. Unusually beautiful countryside. Picturesque hiking trails without number. Acres of pine woods. Finest home cooking. Sports. Low rates. Open all year.
MAKE EARLY RESERVATIONS

Heywood Broun

THE COLLECTED EDITION OF HEYWOOD BROUN, *edited by Heywood Hale Broun. Harcourt Brace. $3.75.*

HEYWOOD BROUN never spent more than a couple of hours a day earning a living. The columns collected in this book give a meager impression of him, for writing columns was only a part of his life. When the Newspaper Guild held a memorial meeting after his death a year ago, it heard the testimony of seedy wits who had played poker with him and lunched on Scotch at the Algonquin in the 1920's, of militant labor leaders, of reformers, of liberals who had urged him to fight for the civil liberties of their set, of the Catholic priest who converted him, of a taxi-driver, a bartender, of theatrical and sporting persons, of his successor as president of the Newspaper Guild, of his colleagues on the *World-Telegram,* the *Connecticut Nutmeg,* and a hundred CIO picket lines. They all told stories about him and all but the priest admitted that they never knew what made him tick.

All his life, like Gandle in his early novel, Broun followed his nose. He followed his nose from the *Morning Telegraph* to the AEF, to the New York *World,* to the *Telegram,* to the *Post.* Without apparently expending much effort, he produced many millions of words of clear, predominantly sensible, humorous, occasionally moving, occasionally indignant newspaper copy, and organized one of the most successful and respected unions in the CIO. Even in his early days, when he was endeavoring to foster the impression that he was in fact nothing more than a frivolous sports writer with simple tastes and an enormous capacity for liquor, he was alert to injustice. In this book are some of the columns he wrote against the Ku Klux Klan. He was lazy and amiable and he had a dislike for giving people offense. When he followed his nose into uncompromising support of the Bill of Rights and industrial unionism and found himself to his astonishment at the head of an industrial union, he began for the first time to use his hatred of injustice as an instrument to destroy injustice. He was still as lazy and amiable, which to many labor leaders was the strange thing about Broun, but he was constantly obliged by his position, his honesty, and just the drift of the times, to become more staunch and uncompromising. The Bill of Rights had powerful enemies, and when he died he was hated by many important people and mistrusted by his employers. At one time, just after a public-opinion poll showed that he was the second most popular columnist in the country, it began to seem probable that he would not be able to find a job in the newspaper business. Roy Howard never seemed more insignificant than when he fired Heywood Broun. Ralph Pulitzer fired him from the *World* for "extravagantly" condemning the murderers of Sacco and Vanzetti instead of writing comically about his infant son, and Howard fired him for what amounted to union activity,

Opening with a summer *melody!*
Of Unity's Sun and Fun

SHOUTS of delight for the top notch facilities for tennis, handball, ping-pong, baseball, volley-ball and horseshoes.

MURMURS of contentment for the delicious food (and plenty of it), comfortable bunks and Berkshire air and scenery.

SPLASHES of pleasure for the sparkly, clear water of Lake Ellis, ideal swimming and rowing. (This lovely lake is nice just to look at too.)

SIGHS of happiness for the outdoor life, hikes and picnics in the gorgeous woodland, the light of a camp fire in the evenings . . .

APPLAUSE for the entertainment, dancing with old friends and new to a first-rate band, films, theatre, the city's pleasures in the country air.

Opening DECORATION DAY Week-End
With a gala sun and fun overture
Rates: $22.00 per week $3.75 per day
Includes efficient chambermaid service

CAMP UNITY
WINGDALE, N. Y.
Wingdale 2461
For further information write to Camp Unity, Wingdale, N. Y., or to Camp Unity office, 1 Union Sq., N. Y. C. GR 7-1960.

MOUNTAIN LAKE FARMS
400 Acres
2500 Ft. Elevation
LIVINGSTON MANOR R.R. STATION
2 LARGE BEAUTIFUL LAKES (on premises)
SADDLE HORSES (on premises)
TENNIS COURTS
HANDBALL
PING PONG TABLES
HUNTING (we provide the guns)
FISHING
GRAND MEALS (not strictly kosher)
NO SOCIAL STAFF
Miles of Wooded Mountain Trails
RATES $20—$22—$24
Special June Rate—$18
Write Jack Keiser
Union Grove, N. Y.
Wire or Phone
Livingston Manor 182-J-2

HILLCREST
ON BEAVERKILL LAKE
Livingston Manor R.R. Union Grove, N. Y.
Telephone: Livingston Manor 218J11
Ideal Location. Elevation 2500 feet
Bathing, boating, fishing, hunting, tennis, handball, billiards, etc. No social staff. Delicious American-Jewish meals.
May and June $17 weekly
Decoration Day weekend $3 per day
N. Y. Office MO. 2-8243

VACATION ON A FARM
Relax in the quiet and simplicity of your own country home. Play amidst the beauty of Candlewood Lake and magnificent rolling country. Small congenial crowd. Home cooking you'll like. Only 65 miles from N. Y. City. Swimming and Tennis on premises. For reservations call New Milford 756-J-3 or write to
STANLEY LAPINSKY, BARLOW FARM, SHERMAN, CONN.
$3.50 per day — FREE BOOKLET — $18.00 per week

LOCUST GROVE FARM
SYLVAN LAKE, HOPEWELL JUNCTION, N. Y.
Greet Spring at an artist's farm dedicated to good food, good fun, good fellowship. . . . Complete sports including handball, pingpong, bicycles, tennis, etc. Informal entertainment—barn dances, fireplaces—just 55 miles from N. Y.
Special Decoration Day Rates—3 full days $10 and $11.50
George A. Podorson, 250 Park Ave., PL 3-8926

Birdland
OPEN ALL YEAR
Formerly Lewisohn's Estate. 1 hour from N. Y. 225 acres in fascinating hiking country. Tennis, Golf, Handball, Riding, Bicycles, Roller Skating. Library, Musical Recordings. Open Fireplaces. Congenial atmosphere. Excellent Cuisine. Tel.: Highland Mills 7895.
Mgt.: FANNIE GOLDBERG CENTRAL VALLEY, N. Y.

Solve Your Summer Problem!
GOLDEN'S BRIDGE COLONY
Golden's Bridge, N. Y.
Westchester County
(via N. Y. Central just one hour from N. Y. C.)
Build your own Bungalow on an acre of land in this ideal colony. A beautiful 8-acre lake. Social, educational, recreational facilities; children's playgroups. You are invited to participate in this unusual environment. Visit us this weekend. A committee will help you with all information. For further particulars write to:
OSCAR REITER
68 Nassau Street, N. Y.
Tel. BOwling Green 9-0107
Motorists: Use Route 22; in Golden's Bridge turn right to Route 138. No tolls, bridges or ferries

THE WOODLANDS
the four-season resort
makes its debut in as breathtaking a setting as you ever saw—315 acres of wooded land, trout-filled streams and vistas of natural beauty that meet the eye everywhere. For the Spirited Sals, there is swimming, tennis, handball, etc.; and for the Lazyboned Larrys, recordings, shady trees, spacious lawns and books galore. The food is tops and plentiful. $14.50 for the Decoration Day weekend (3 days).
M. Siggie Goldner, the Woodlands, Phoenicia, N. Y.

ARCADIA *YOUR YEAR 'ROUND RESORT*
FISHKILL, N. Y.
1100 acre estate. Spacious, comfortably furnished rooms, fully heated for chilly nights. Indoor and outdoor sports including tennis, handball, bicycling, ping-pong, etc. Symphonic and dance recordings, cozy library and lounge. Unexcelled cuisine. Special to NM readers—$21 per wk., $3.50 per day through May and June.
Special Rates to Groups
Phone: Beacon 727 R. R. Station: Beacon, New York

THE SPORT CENTER OF THE EAST
TRIPLE LAKE RANCH
SUCCASUNNA, N.J.
MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW!!
It's riding time and Spring. Enjoy both in a Western atmosphere ● Free Horseback Riding Instruction ● All Outdoor Sports ● Teachers' Discount on Full Holidays ● Only 37 miles from N. Y. (Route 10 above Dover) New York. Phone: TRiangle 5-2163.

Unquestionably the Most Outstanding
SUMMER COTTAGES
in the Mountains
Comfortable, Attractive and Efficient, with Every Modern Convenience. Three Rooms (Bath), from $125.00. Larger from $150.00 to $180.00.
Write Muldainville, North Branch, Sull. Co., N. Y.

CHESTERS' ZUNBARG

RELAX!

Bring your country togs and have a fling at Spring in this delightful mountain hideaway. All summer sports including TENNIS. Indoors: Table Tennis, Dancing, Recordings, Library, Open-hearth Fires, Delicious Food, Cozy Quarters, Genial Company.
Early Bird Rate: $22.50—$25.00, May and June
WOODBOURNE, N. Y.

CAMP FOLLOWERS of the TRAIL
OPEN WEEK-ENDS
BUNGALOWS CAN NOW BE RENTED FOR THE SUMMER.
FOR INFORMATION—WRITE
C/O FOLLOWERS, BUCHANAN, N. Y.
Telephone Peekskill 2879

Rediscovering American History

HERBERT APTHEKER
will speak on
Negro and poor white uprisings prior to Civil War
SATURDAY AFT., MAY 17th, 2:30 P.M.
25c per lecture
MALIN STUDIOS
135 West 44th St.
Auspices: New Masses Readers League

THE MUSIC ROOM
presents new releases on
KEYNOTE RECORDINGS
NOW IN STOCK
EARL ROBINSON'S
"SPRING SONG"
sung by **PAUL ROBESON**
10" record K 513........75c
THE MUSIC ROOM
UNION SHOP
133 W. 44th St., N. Y. C. LO 3-4420
Open evenings Mail orders filled promptly

THE DECISION IS TO LIVE . . .
My Immediate Response
NEW MASSES
Established 1911
THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY
FUND DRIVE FOR $25,000

NEW MASSES
461 4th Avenue
New York, N. Y.
Gentlemen:
I enclose $.................. as my donation to the NEW MASSES thirtieth Anniversary Sustaining Fund Drive for $25,000.
Name..................
Address..................
City & State..................
5-20-41

which is a measure of how far Broun had come in thirteen years.

The truth was, Broun's columns could not have been printed at any other period in the history of American journalism. Broun flourished at a time when it was becoming impossible for journalists with integrity to spend all their time watching race horses. The Newspaper Guild would have been organized if Broun had never set foot outside the Algonquin, for newspaper unions were springing up without urging all over the country, but Broun, with his national syndication and his easy-going reputation, was a dramatic figure who could start things going and hold them together. These were the great days of Broun's life. The Dies committee and the ignorant, bigoted Southern poll-tax politicians never had an opponent like Broun. He knew that he was for the labor movement, and he had a sharp eye for its enemies. It gave pith and sinew to his writing. The columns he wrote in this period are worth reading now. At the end, after he had made up his mind too quickly about the German-Soviet non-aggression pact, there was no strength or purpose in his columns. In the last few months of his life he was sick and angry. I remember one of the subjects he used to feel strongly about was the sterility and degradation of the Broadway theater, and he wrote many columns about it. One of the last columns he wrote for Roy Howard attacked, not the theater, but first-nighters who came to the theater late. His last fifty or sixty columns were like that.

I think the present volume, which has been carefully collected by Heywood's son, Heywood Hale Broun, now writing sports for *PM,* would have told more about Broun if the section covering 1935 to 1939 had been expanded to fill the book. As it is, it gives the sketchy outlines of a picture of an honest American who believed in himself and the future of labor.

DANIEL TODD.

Pathetic Prelude

FLOTSAM, *by Erich Maria Remarque. Little, Brown & Co. $2.50.*

ERICH MARIA REMARQUE'S latest novel will make you sharply aware of the current tempo of history. Was it only four years ago that men and women fleeing the Gestapo could take refuge in Austria, Czechoslovakia, France? Was it as late as 1937 that the only refugees were from Germany and their problem of survival was uncomplicated by bombs?

NEW MASSES Classified Ads

50c a line. Payable in Advance. Min. charge $1.50
Approx. 7 words to a line. Deadline Fri. 4 p.m.

CHILDREN BOARDED

Progressive, intelligent mother of 12-yr.-old daughter would like to board 2 or 3 children around same age in her charming, spacious country cottage July, August, September. Acres of fruits and flowers and shade trees. Lake nearby. Private swimming pool on premises. For details write NM, Box 1759.

FOR RENT

Group of 4 **MODERN BUNGALOWS, 2-3** rooms, screened porches—near lake, sports. Quiet country, 25 miles from George Washington Bridge. $150 to $250. Mrs. S. Kirshman, New City, N. Y., phone 2297.

Several **ROOMS** in quiet, modern **FARMHOUSE** near Barnegat Bay for rent by month or season. Cooking facilities or board. Reasonable. Write NM, Box 1761.

STUDIO BUNGALOW, overlooking lake, 25 miles from George Washington Bridge. Fruits, flowers, shade trees. Private swimming pool on premises. $200 long season. Large living room, kitchen with gas, hot and cold running water—screened sleeping porch, shower room. Call GRamercy 3-6540, weekdays 10-5.

Large **ROOM,** lovely view and surroundings in **DOUGLASTON, L. I.** 2 blocks from **BEACH.** ½ hour N. Y. $6 per week. Write New Masses, Box 1762.

Attractive, **FURNISHED,** modern 4-room **APARTMENT,** opp. Central Park. Cross ventilation. $55 month. **SUBLET,** June, July, Aug. Call AC 4-6757 betw. 6-8 P.M.

APARTMENT TO SUBLET. 3 Rooms and kitchen. Light, airy, nicely **FURNISHED.** $45. Apt. 12A, 8 Barrow Street, CH 3-2536.

FURS

PARISIAN FUR CRAFTSMAN in wholesale district can give you 35% below retail rates on **REMODELING, REPAIRING & CUSTOM MADE COATS & JACKETS.** Storage facilities, minimum $2.50. **ASK FOR MR. ARMAND. ARMAND ET SOEUR, 145 West 30 St.,** N. Y. C. CHi 4-1424.

INSURANCE

Whatever your needs—**PAUL CROSBIE,** established since 1908—**FREQUENT SAVINGS,** 42 Broadway, **TRADE UNION AGENCY.** Tel. HAnover 2-3435.

VACATION RESORTS

Decoration Day weekend—$2.50 per day at quiet, secluded farmhouse 100 miles from New York. Comfortable, all modern improvements. Radio-phonograph with good records. Milton Bass, Eureka, New York.

ELMWOOD FARM invites you to spend your vacation or weekends in the Switzerland of America. Comfortable rooms, excellent food, congenial company. Hiking, bicycling, fishing. **ELMWOOD FARM, HUNTER,** New York.

TANGLEWOOD—For a delightful vacation, week-end. Informal atmosphere, delicious food; sports; special Decoration Day weekend—$10.00. Call Woodstock 14 F 13; or write Tanglewood, Woodstock, N. Y.

Hollowbrook Lake. Beautiful high Westchester lake region limited to 65 progressive families. Two **MEMBERSHIPS** open. Private lake, living brook, Catskill water, electricity. Dr. L. A. DeSantes, Pres., 1271 55th St., B'klyn. WI 8-2291.

WANTED FOR NEW MASSES

CAMPUS AGENTS WANTED by **NEW MASSES.** Enterprising students can earn high commissions through sale of subscriptions and individual copies. For details write: Promotion Director, **NEW MASSES, 461 Fourth** Avenue, New York City.

NEW MASSES would be grateful for **VOLUNTEER** clerical **HELP** in circulation campaign. Apply Room 1204, 461 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.

JANUARY 2nd, 1940 ISSUE for our own files. Please send to Circulation Department, 461 Fourth Avenue, Room 1204, New York City.

GOINGS ON

MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE WEEK'S NEWS, by Si Gerson, Sunday, May 18th, 8:30 P.M. Workers School, 50 East 13 Street. Admission 25 cents.

SOCIAL WORKERS HOBBY SHOW AND DANCE. Sat. Eve. May 17, Manhattan Center, 34th St. & 8th Ave. Exciting hobbies exhibited by 75 prominent social workers. Dancing to music by Ralph Hayes. Auspices: **SOCIAL WORK TODAY,** 112 E. 19th St., N.Y.C. Adm. $1.

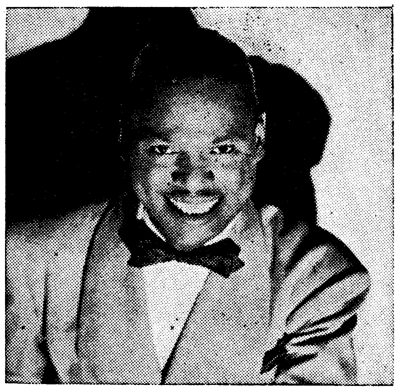
The people in *Flotsam* seem almost to belong to a past era. So many exiles have since joined Mr. Remarque's little band, so fearfully many others have been killed or jailed. The plight of these 1937 refugees becomes a prelude—sad and moving but still a prelude—to the savage tragedy that absorbs most of the world.

Mr. Remarque might have gotten around this disadvantage, in part at least, by giving his characters a meaning that would foreshadow their membership in the nearly universal fraternity of misery. This he does not do. There is a certain comradeship of necessity among his refugees, but nothing more. At times they seem almost like ghosts flitting back and forth across borders in a brutally real world of customs officials, jailers, passports, and work permits. The author has not failed to provide them with human qualities: hunger and terror, frustration, cunning, even humor. Things happen to them—they escape and are caught, escape again, peddle trivial articles, beg, gamble, fall in love, starve. . . . Yet they remain more pathetic than real, more symbolic of tragedy than genuinely tragic. Their personalities are subordinated to the daily routine of survival. Resisting their fate in individual ways, they do not ask how it came about or to what more permanent solution they might direct their wits and courage.

In his zeal to keep his refugees apolitically "pure," Mr. Remarque never so much as indicates the nature of the political beliefs for which one of his major characters was expelled from Germany. A Communist is dragged in briefly, for the sake of a mild sneer at people "involved in politics." Apparently it doesn't occur to the author that leaving politics to the Hitlers of the world is the best short-cut to concentration camps, exile, and Anderson bomb-shelters. Who, in these times, is not "involved in politics"? And what would Mr. Remarque offer us as a way out—suicide or everlasting exile, the destinies of most of the people in *Flotsam?*

One or two of the minor characters are more interesting than the chief actors: Father Moritz, for example, the veteran and patriarch of the refugees; and Oppenheim, the wealthy German Jew, who is so terrified for his possessions that he dare not oppose the Nazis even verbally in his Swiss retreat, but soothes his conscience with niggardly gifts to the destitute wanderers. There are also passages in *Flotsam* that go deeper than pathos, and promise more than tears. The real trouble with the book as a whole is that the title is too fitting.

BARBARA GILES.



FRIDAY ★ MAY 23 ★ 9 P. M.

MANHATTAN CENTER

PROMENADE BALLROOM, 34th ST. & 8th AVE.

dance to

EARL HINES' ORCHESTRA

AMERICAN PEOPLE'S FESTIVAL★

Sponsored by the **AMERICAN PEACE MOBILIZATION**

381 4th Ave., N. Y. C. Murray Hill 6-9157

CANADA LEE	Star of "Native Son"
JOEY FAYE	Road Show "Man Who Came to Dinner"
ALMANAC SINGERS	A.P.M. BALLADEERS
TED ARKIN—DOROTHY ROBERTS	Jitterbugs of "Meet the People"
WILL GEER	Star of "Tobacco Road"
MORRIS CARNOVSKY	Featured in "My Sister Eileen"

TICKETS $1.00 in advance, $1.25 at door

United American Artists
tender a

Testimonial to Rockwell Kent

for his achievements and contributions as an

ARTIST · WRITER · TRADE UNIONIST · HUMANITARIAN

Sponsors & Participants		Program
Max Weber William Gropper	★	Ray Lev
Helen Tamiris Lewis Merrill	★	Joshua White
Joseph Curran Paul Manship	★	Burl Ives
V. Stefansson Muriel Draper	★	Earl Robinson
Lionel Stander Louis Untermeyer	★	Eli Siegmeister
Robert Josephy	★	Almanac Singers

SATURDAY EVE.—MAY 17

The Pythian

135 West 70th St.

Admission: $1.10, 83c, 55c. Boxes from $10-$25

Tickets at: Bookshop, 50 E. 13th St.; Bookfair, 133 W. 44th St.
Book & Mag. Guild, 31 E. 27th St.; ACA Gallery, 52 W. 8th St.
United American Artists, 206 West 23rd Street, CH 2-3028

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

END OF A SEASON

The Alvah Bessie awards for Broadway's best plays. Two trends and some solid entertainment.... Marlene Dietrich in a surprisingly pleasant affair.

THIS seasonal tabulation of the theatrical pros and antis cannot, of course, achieve the validity or the *cachet* of the Critics' Circle Award. For one thing, we are not a member of that august body; for another, there is no scotch-and-soda to sip during the pontifical process; for a third, it has been impossible (we regret) to arrange for a radio hookup, and as for a silver plaque, there is a distinct shortage of engraved silver in this office. Let it go.

With the ending of the season on Broadway, certain definite trends have appeared. Just as some people's tendencies toward defeatism in the face of the gloomy world situation should be considerably mitigated by the stimulating victories on the labor front, so those who feel that the theater is dead for the duration, should take a more perspicacious glance about and feel encouraged. The drive toward war is, of course, manifest on Broadway as well as in Hollywood (which can be more influential along those lines). That drive is expressed by plays of a definitely anti-social nature, or by the purest forms of dramatic escapism. But there is also a parallel tendency, and it is no accident that those plays and spectacles which take a progressive view of human life come closer to achieving validity as art forms. For just as it is impossible for fascism (and proto-fascism) to produce vital art, so it is almost impossible to write progressively without saying something of permanent value. (Talent being equal in both instances.)

Currently on show we have four distinctly advanced plays: Lillian Hellman's *Watch on the Rhine,* the Wright-Green *Native Son,* Emlyn Williams' *The Corn Is Green,* Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma.* In varying degrees they illustrate and exemplify the persistence and the health of forward-looking people.

In the case of Lillian Hellman's latest play, a distinct effort has been made to warp its "message" to the uses of the Churchill-Roosevelt brand of anti-fascism: imperialist war. This was to be expected, and Miss Hellman through the shortcomings of her drama made it possible. The citation which accompanied the Critics' Circle Award is fairly innocuous: ". . . a vital, eloquent, and compassionate play about an American family suddenly awakened to the danger threatening its liberty." This danger, as the "Critics" saw it is the very real threat of expanding German Nazism; but when you examine the individual critiques of the gentlemen who cited *Watch on the Rhine* for their annual award, you understand what they want the audience to see in the play. Brooks Atkinson wrote, ". . . hardly one political fact is mentioned. [She] does not beat the drum in favor of any cause. She does not incite to action. For she is writing a play about human beings in America and the evil of fascism abroad is only a black shadow that crosses the sun. . . . An intangible political idea from abroad hovers over an American living-room and brings a feeling of sadness, apprehension, and restlessness there." Other critics were more specific in their appraisal of this aspect, understood it as a call for action; as a call, more specifically, for *men of action* (like Kurt Mueller, its hero), to *take up arms* against the spreading evil of Nazism. Where the *Times'* critic attempted the usual demagogy of citing fascism as a "foreign" ideology, an "intangible" European evil that need only sadden us, the others called for expeditionary forces. Miss Hellman must have learned a lot from the reasons adduced by her enemies (and ours) for liking her well-intentioned play. And she can no longer doubt that had her hero uttered a warning against *American* fascism as well, her reception by the daily critics would have been something else again. But even as it stands, *Watch on the Rhine is* a vital, eloquent, and compassionate play, and the more alert theatergoer will learn from it something of the nature and the origins of all fascisms—American and British, as well as Nazi, Italian, or Japanese.

In the dramatic version of Richard Wright's *Native Son,* we have the American Negro back on Broadway in a play that, whatever its shortcomings, points in the right direction. I happen to feel that its shortcomings are very serious, but its positive aspects won it only one vote among the critics—that of Burns Mantle, of the *News.* Here is a play derived from a powerful novel of the Negro people that must, of necessity, have translated some of the novel's drive and direction to the theater. It is not a masterpiece of stage craft, but many people have found it compelling, and it is a solid hit. Therefore, its exposition of the status of the black man in our white society should influence many people toward a more sympathetic understanding of the road that must be traveled before the Negro in America achieves the freedom envisaged for him by Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

The Corn Is Green should shake the complacency of those who still feel that Great Britain is the repository of democracy; for its exposition of the hard lot of the "depressed areas" in Wales possesses integrity and honesty of emotion. And its appeal to the innate decency of human beings is unequivocal. Bernard Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma* reveals the persistent vitality of the Old Man's Socialist ideals, in its ruthless dissection of the medical profession as an instrument of reaction. Never one of his best works, it still has point, some poignancy, and considerable intelligence.

Typical of our difficult times was the fact that Marc Blitzstein's new opera, *No for an Answer,* was unable to achieve more than three special performances in the unsuitable auditorium of Mecca Temple. No producer would have anything to do with the work of this outstanding young composer-dramatist who, in his earlier *Cradle Will Rock,* gave evidence of the emergence of a new, fresh and extremely vigorous talent. Well received by all the critics, *No for an Answer* must await the private subscription of a sum sufficiently ample to assure it a run in a regular house. It pulled no punches in its evocative treatment of present-day life among the working people of our country. It made its point plain; it signalized the nature of the forces at work here—forces that make for progressive development, forces that make for reaction. But *No for an Answer* will be seen again.

On the debit side of the ledger we find the conscious forces of appeasement, escapism, and reaction. Mr. Sherwood's anti-Soviet fable, *There Shall Be No Night,* shared the Pulitzer honors with Westbrook Pegler, and it will interest you to know that the critical fraternity now considers (and labels) it an "anti-fascist" play. The Messrs. Philip Barry and Elmer Rice rushed into production with ill-considered and half-baked war mongering plays; Barry's *Liberty Jones,* which was a high-school charade, died almost immediately, laughed off the stage even by the Broadway critics, who want stronger meat less susceptible of misunderstanding; while Mr. Rice's attempt to sell his *Flight to the West* to the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union at a one-dollar top, went into a tailspin that reveals the essential skepticism of the working man toward the goals of this world war. Maxwell Anderson made a flight to the east in his *Journey to Jerusalem,* and fumbled impotently with the hallowed legend of the Prince of Peace. Irwin Shaw, who once wrote *Bury the Dead, Escape(d) to Pleasure.* There was the usual plethora of purely escapist fare that ranged from the bilge-water of three plays about Hollywood, to the solid entertainment of the mystery-farce *Arsenic and Old Lace,* the dramatic version of *My Sister Eileen,* the colorful musical *Lady in the Dark,* and the not to be forgotten *Meet the People.*

And we now have, as predicted, the emergence of William Saroyan, that Great Bleeding Heart, as a full-fledged (if poorly disguised) reactionary. In his *The Beautiful People,* he thumps the drums for transcendental mysticism and a baby-blue vision of the world. (It got six votes out of the critics—those of the *Post, Journal, Esquire, Nation, New Republic, Commonweal!*) Nor is it any accident that he is numbered among the other Big Names in the new Creel committee of the air, that calls itself "The Free Company." (They are, of course, as free as the Federal Bureau of Investigation permits them to be.) On this dishonor roll, that is currently trying to sell the American people the Roosevelt-Churchill war as a defense of the Bill of Rights, there are such names as the novelist James Boyd (dollar-a-year man), Robert ("anti-fascist") Sherwood, Yankee-Doodle-Dandy George M. Cohan, Archibald "Irresponsible" MacLeish, Marc Connelly, Elmer Rice, Maxwell Anderson, and a host of Hollywood actors who have heeded the siren call of Washington and everlasting bank accounts. The boys may find a wider audience on the air than most of them have found this season on the boards. Unless, as I suspect, the radio public has enough sense to tune in on Charlie McCarthy, who even if he is also a ventriloquist's dummy, does not yet insult its collective intelligence.

IN THE old Provincetown Playhouse, Alfred Saxe and his Popular Theater have rewritten the moving anti-war fable of Paul Green's *Johnny Johnson,* and are presenting it with an energetic cast of semi-professional youngsters. It loses much by the absence of Kurt Weill's nostalgic music, but it still remains a worthwhile evening in the theater, with wit, poignancy, and immediate application to our time. In Peter Heywood and Tom Pedi, Mr. Saxe has discovered two young men who have a future in the theater; but the entire cast demonstrates the fact that there is a lot of talent in otherwise untrained people, especially when they can get their teeth into a script that possesses emotional intensity and a topical reference that is startling in its immediacy. Without even the proverbial shoe-string on which to operate, the Popular Theater deserves your support, not only for what it is trying to do, but for what it is actually doing to bring pointed theatrical entertainment at low prices. *Johnny Johnson* will reward your visit.

HEAR WM. Z. FOSTER
ROBERT MINOR
JAMES W. FORD
ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN
ISRAEL AMTER
PETER V. CACCHIONE

50th Birthday Celebration

EARL BROWDER

Sunday, May 25th—2 P. M.—Coney Island Velodrome

Neptune Avenue and West 12th Street, Coney Island

(Take any B.M.T. train to Coney Island) ADMISSION 20 CENTS

Auspices: New York State Committee Communist Party

In case of rain meeting will be postponed to Monday, May 26th—8 P.M.

OPENING FRIDAY, MAY 23
The New Theatre of Manhattan presents
The 1st Time in N. Y.
ZERO HOUR
by ALBERT MALTZ and GEORGE SKLAR
Previews May 18 and 21
PLAYING MAY 23, 25, 30, 31 & JUNE 1, 6, 7, 8
". . . the most important play for this period in America that I know of."—*Theodore Dreiser*
". . . a sharp instrument in the fight for civil rights."—*Morris Watson*
TRANSPORT HALL, 153 W. 64th St.
TICKETS AT FEDERAL THEA. PRICES: 35c-$1
at New Theatre League, 110 W. 47 St., Phone: CH 4-8198

"Hits high note of excellence." Coleman, Mirror
"A lot of fun." Kronenberger, PM
AMERICAN YOUTH THEATER
presents
YOU CAN'T SLEEP HERE
Final Performance
Saturday Eve., May 17—8:50 P.M.
BARBIZON PLAZA HOTEL — 58th ST. & 6th AVE.
Tickets: 55c, 83c, $1.10 at Bookshops

★★★★—BURNS MANTLE—*Daily News*
A Mercury Production by ORSON WELLES
NATIVE SON
Play by PAUL GREEN & RICHARD WRIGHT
ST. JAMES Thea., 246 W. 44 St. LAckawanna 4-4664 Evgs. incl. Sun. 8:40. Mats. Sun. & Sat. No Mon. Performance

"The first completely gay comedy of this season"—*Atkinson, Times*
"Uproarious comedy . . . shook the Biltmore like an earthquake of laughter"—*Brown, Post*
MY SISTER EILEEN
A New Comedy by
JOSEPH FIELDS and JEROME CHODOROV
Based on the stories by RUTH McKENNEY
Staged by GEORGE S. KAUFMAN
BILTMORE THEATRE, 47th St. W. of B'way CI. 6-9353
EVENINGS, 8:40—MATINEES WED. & SAT. 2:40

The Biggest Soviet Film of the Year!
Artkino Presents, Starting Friday, May 16
VOLGA-VOLGA
Directed by Gregory Alexandrov
Featuring LYUBOV ORLOVA
A rollicking torrent of lusty comedy, biting satire and sparkling music
MIAMI PLAYHOUSE 6th Avenue near 47th St.
Cont. daily from 10 A.M.—20c till 1 P.M. weekdays

LILY PONS
Only N. Y. Concert This Season!
Selections from Handel, Liszt, Debussy, Bishop, Faure, Hue, Alabieff, Poldini, Rossini and others
(Baldwin Piano)
LIN YUTANG
will speak on China Today
Benefit for China
Auspices of the China Aid Council
CARNEGIE HALL
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 8:30 P.M.
Tickets $1, $1.50, $2, $2.50, $3 on sale at:
Carnegie Hall Box Office
CIrcle 7-7460
China Aid Council
200 Fifth Avenue
ALgonquin 4-3162

SEE YOUR LAWYER AT PLAY!
in "STRICTLY LEGAL"
★★★★The four-star original musical hit, produced by the National Lawyers Guild is playing a popular demand return engagement at the Heckscher Theatre, Mon., Tues., and Wed. evenings, May 26th, 27th and 28th, 1941.
The prices are $.55, $.83 and $1.10. Tickets are available at the Guild office, 16 E. 41 St., NYC, CA 5-4478.

Two Outstanding Contributions to Musical Film
BEETHOVEN CONCERTO
A story of child prodigies in the USSR
and
BALLERINA a stirring film of the French Ballet
Cont. from 10:30 A.M. till midnight—15c till 1 P.M. weekdays.
IRVING PLACE THEATRE—Irving Place at 14th St.
Benefit Block Tickets at Reduced Prices GR 5-4049

BASKETBALL GAME & DANCE FOR SPANISH REFUGEES

★ Furriers Joint Council vs. Local 16 UOPWA
★ Local 64 Fur Merchants vs. Local 125 Fur Clerks

Dance to Ralph Hayes & his radio band
on
SATURDAY EVE., May 17, 8 P. M.
at ROYAL WINDSOR, 66th Street & Columbus Ave.
Subscription: 55c—Auspices Furriers Joint Council, N. Y., 250 W. 26th St.
Proceeds to United Spanish Aid Committee 425—4th Ave., N. Y.

If You Can't Bend OVER!

Subscribe to a course of sensible exercise at Goodwin's. Get in nice shape NOW before the summer season.

REDUCE OR GAIN
RELAX—KEEP FIT

- SWEDISH MASSAGE
- VAPOR BATHS
- BICYCLES
- POSTURE CORRECTION
- SOLARIUM
- HANDBALL—PADDLE TENNIS
- TENNIS INSTRUCTION, ETC.

COMPLETE TRIAL VISIT $2.00
GOLF LESSONS MEN AND WOMEN 6—$10.00
ON THE ROOF WISC 7-8250
GOODWIN'S GYMNASIUM
1457 BROADWAY (42 ST.) WOMEN ONLY

BELLE POLITI
Imports

HANDWOVEN
HOUSECOATS — JACKETS — DRESSES — COATS
from India & Central America

jewelry—art linens—scarfs—handkerchiefs
19 West 8th Street New York

CHICAGO
ANNUAL BOOK SALE
Workers Library, International Publishers and other progressive literature at
GREATLY REDUCED PRICES
We carry "Songs of John Doe," Earl Robinson and all other worthwhile Phonograph Records.
Send for price list of special bargains.
MODERN BOOK STORE
231 S. Wells St., 2nd Floor
Webster 7996 CHICAGO, ILL.

BUY DIRECT from FACTORY
Weser PIANO CO.
NATIONALLY KNOWN MANUFACTURERS selling consumer direct. Tremendous savings. New, used, Spinets, Grands, Steinways, Chickerings, Knabes, others. Bona fide values. Payments.
5[illegible]1 W 4[illegible]d MEdal. 3-3512

NEW MASSES, 461 FOURTH AVE., N. Y. C.
Please enter my subscription to *New Masses* for the period indicated by the checkmark.

☐ $1.00—10 weeks
☐ $5.00 one year
☐ Special 2 year Rate: $8.00: SAVINGS $2.00
☐ Special 3 year Rate: $11.00: SAVINGS $4.00
☐ Special Life Rate $100.00

Name . . . .
Address . . . .
City . . . . State . . . . .
5-20-41

THE ENERGY of little theater groups is endless, and in the case of the American Negro Theater, which performs in the 135th Street Library Theater, hard work has been rewarded by a creditable and frequently moving performance of Theodore Browne's *Natural Man*. This company of working people contains a high level of native talent, and an honesty of approach that speaks well for valuable future work.

In *Natural Man* they have a liberal transcription of the legend of John Henry, the Negro Paul Bunyan—a mighty man who loved his work, but hated oppression and died, symbolically, in an effort to outwork the white man's technical innovations. Mr. Browne's version of the story is closer to the feeling and significance of the original folk story than was Roark Bradford's miserable rewrite, which provided so poor a vehicle for Paul Robeson last season. But either the legend does not lend itself readily to dramatic terms, or Mr. Browne has not completely succeeded in so translating it. For there are long stretches in his play which are quite static, and where the author has permitted choral singing and chanting to take the place of dramatic action, rather than to complement it.

S. Sanford Engel's designs for the tiny stage (where you may see the show any Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday evening) constitute a thoroughly professional job. There are some excellent characterizations by members of the largely non-professional cast: Stanley Greene in the title role is vigorous and sympathetic; Ruby Wallace as Polly Ann, Frederick O'Neal as the Preacher, Letitia Toole as a Beale Street singer, and Kenneth Manigault as the Creeper, all objectify the Negro people's extraordinary talent for relaxed projection of mood and character. Benjamin Zemach, as director, has not completely released the talents of this generally excellent ensemble, but the limitations of his script were sometimes quite impossible to overcome.

We welcome the American Negro Theater as a long-needed addition to the American scene.

ALVAH BESSIE.

Three Films

From insurance salesmen to Hollywood orphanages.

"THAT Uncertain Feeling" is a souffle that has been left standing too long. It starts out beautifully fluffy with Alan Mowbray and Burgess Meredith, but it gets soggier and soggier with Melvyn Douglas and Merle Oberon. Its final consistency is such that you could sell it as an old rubber tire, and not even a goat would notice the difference in taste.

Let us not discuss the plot; we are too full of the milk of human kindness. A hard-working insurance executive . . . an idle wife . . . a fascinating musician . . . Fill in the blanks yourself. This sort of thing *can* be funny, but perhaps not just now. There is some laughter in the sequences which follow the idle wife through a case of the hiccups to a psychoanalyst and a surrealist art gallery. Once she falls into her lover's arms, however, the picture falls to pieces. We are expected to admire the endless and dull efforts of her husband to recapture her, efforts too obviously foredoomed to succeed—for besides being Melvyn Douglas, is he not a red-blooded American insurance man? At times, indeed, the Lubitsch touch suggests the Bruce Barton touch.

Particularly fish-witted is the treatment of the musician, portrayed as a bumptious and ill-mannered Bohemian of the 1920's. Being a pianist whose hands are his career, he cannot use his fists. Consequently the husband is enabled to knock him all over the place without fear of retaliation. This is supposed to prove that insurance men are much, much nobler and manlier than artists. To quote one of the film's brighter lines: Pfooey.

Burgess Meredith deserves a life-saver's medal for the charm and skill with which he handles the hopeless role of the musician. Alan Mowbray, the bland psychiatrist, is so good that after his few brief scenes I spent the rest of the film wishing he'd come back. Instead I got Melvyn Douglas in his usual leaden performance, and Miss Oberon, who, although a small and dainty person, manages at times to be as heavy-handed as the horsiest English gentlewoman.

AT LAST Marlene Dietrich is almost as funny as Donald Duck. Under the direction of Rene Clair she makes her masquerading adventuress an engaging wench. *The Flame of New Orleans* is not much in itself; certainly it is little enough to get from the director of *Le Million* and *The Ghost Goes West;* but acting, timing, and certain merry caperings of the camera combine to make the trite story a surprisingly pleasant affair.

The tale of a fake countess with her eye on the cash in men's pockets, it admirably fails to endow its heroine with the traditional heart of gold; she is wicked, though amorous, till the end. And there are no renunciation scenes, no attempts to turn a romantic comedy into a sodden tear-jerker. *The Flame of New Orleans* is remarkable among Hollywood products not only for impeccable taste but for the clarity and economy with which it gets its story told, without confused scenes or wasted lines. A more positive virtue is the light satiric handling of pre-Civil War Southern gentry, who by the merest touch are made to look silly. They march out to save the family honor—and the family jewels; they eternally challenge each other to duels which don't take place. They carry their gentility as if they were balancing a book on their heads, constantly afraid it will fall off.

Clever acting supplies a good deal of the picture's charm. Miss Dietrich slyly satirizes her own affectations; Bruce Cabot is pleasant as a lovesick sailor. Best of all is Roland

Young, who, as a banker and a fatuous ass, is all that we expect of both. The minor characters are acidly presented, notably Mischa Auer's nitwit of the Russian nobility, and the banker's auntie, a somewhat worm-eaten monument of family pride. There is a beautiful moment in which she instructs the all-too-experienced countess in the facts of life. Amusingly and prettily photographed, the film offers no technical novelties except a rather coy commentator at the beginning.

ALL THAT you can get from *Penny Serenade* can be obtained more economically by slicing an onion. Besides, an onion doesn't smell that bad. A shameless tear-jerker, the film heaps up tragedy until it becomes meaningless. It pretends to deal with the struggle of an impecunious young couple to raise a child—any child—yet it manages to be consistently unreal; the Sunday funnies are a good deal truer to life.

The film's tinny quality is achieved in a variety of ways. An appalling story-telling device has been resurrected to smear on the sentiment; Irene Dunne, on the verge of leaving her husband, droopily plays a set of phonograph records (the music is bad), calling up fond memories. Fade out the phonograph record, fade in Baby's first tooth. Fade out this reviewer.

The story itself is pulled about incoherently to provide Big Emotional Scenes. Poor Irene is dragged to Japan just so an earthquake can make the house fall on her and cause a miscarriage. (They don't have earthquakes at home in Southern California, of course—ask the Chamber of Commerce.) Back in Los Angeles immediately afterward, she and her husband adopt a child, and at the crucial moment for the adoption, Cary Grant's income disappears. Presto: Big Emotional Scene in which Cary pleads with the judge to be allowed to keep Baby on nothing a month. He keeps Baby (need I say); the economic difficulties instantly vanish and are never heard of again. I wish *I* lived in a movie.

More trouble's coming, though. Baby dies at the age of six of our old friend, Unspecified Complaint. The marriage instantly flies apart. Irene sniffles over her records and packs her bag—when lo! a miracle. The orphanage calls up and says, "Have another baby!" Irene and Cary kiss gleefully and start out to kill off another one. . . .

The grotesque bad taste of regarding children as something you can replace at a moment's notice is a fitting ending to the film. Its acting is also in keeping. Irene Dunne is oh, so brave, and very, very dull; Cary Grant, sadly miscast, struggles in vain. The pair are allowed to show their genuine comedy talent only once, in the film's single good sequence. This is an hilarious account of the agonies of the inexperienced, on being suddenly handed an almost brand-new baby, and is realistic as well as funny. The rest of *Penny Serenade,* however, is phony enough to earn a Pulitzer Prize.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

FIVE NEW READERS
for New Masses
A FREE BOOK FOR YOU!

NEW MASSES, embarking on a drive for 5,000 new readers in 2 months, offers you a fine opportunity to build your library while you aid NM. For each five $1 (13 weeks) introductory subscriptions which you secure, you may have your choice of one of the following splendid books absolutely free.

This offer will last for the duration of the drive only.

HERE ARE THE BOOKS:

1 ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY, PRIVATE PROPERTY AND THE STATE by Frederick Engels
2 AMERICA IS WORTH SAVING by Theodore Dreiser
3 THE WAY OUT by Earl Browder
4 THE FAT YEARS AND THE LEAN by Bruce Minton and John Stuart
5 ENGLAND'S MONEY LORDS (TORY M.P.) by Simon Haxey
6 THE TORGUTS by W. L. River
7 CAPITAL CITY by Marie Sandoz
8 MARXIST PHILOSOPHY AND THE SCIENCES by J. B. S. Haldane
9 THE CHUTE by Albert Halper
10 BORN OF THE STORM by Nicholas Ostrovsky

HERE ARE YOUR COUPONS:

NEW MASSES,
461 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.
Gentlemen: Enclosed find $1 for which please send 13 weeks of NM to
Name . . . .
Address . . . .
City . . . . State . .

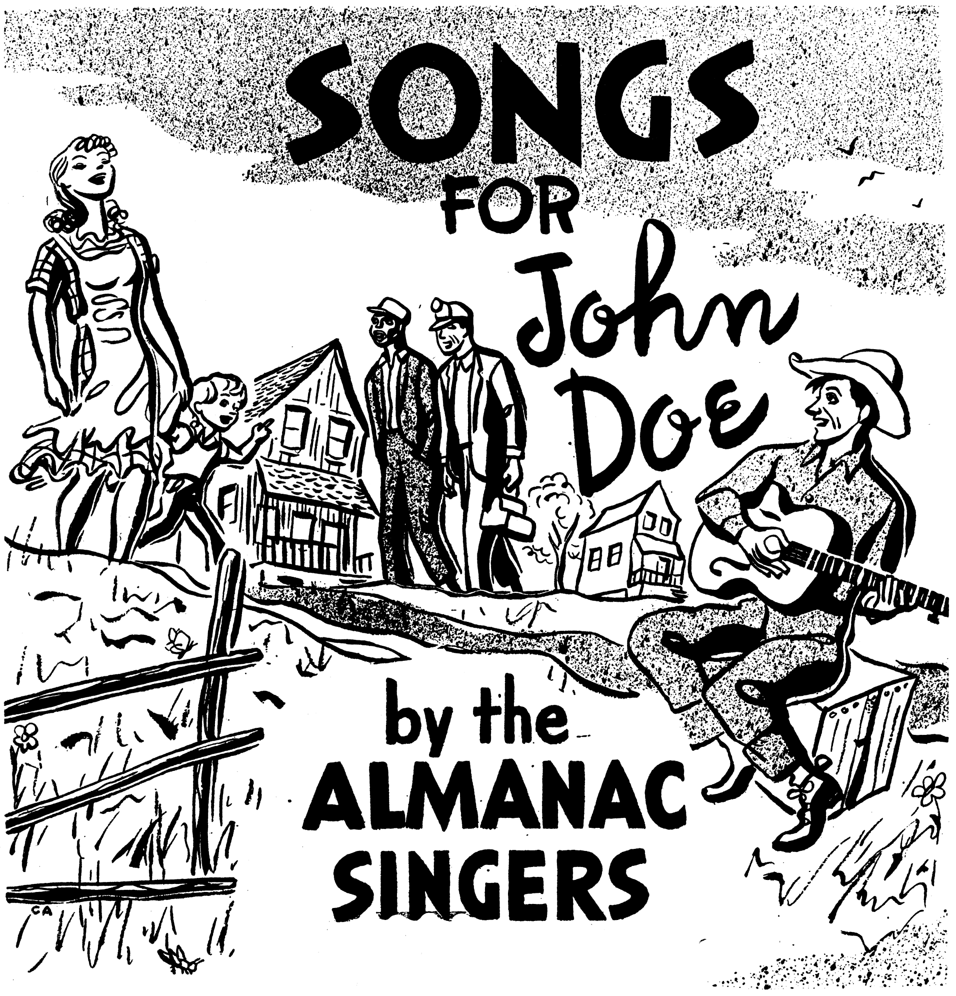
PLEASE SEND BOOK
NO. . . . . . . TO
Name . . . .
Address . . . .
City . . . .
State . . . .
5-20-41

NEW MASSES,
461 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.
Gentlemen: Enclosed find $1 for which please send 13 weeks of NM to
Name . . . .
Address . . . .
City . . . . State . .

NEW MASSES,
461 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.
Gentlemen: Enclosed find $1 for which please send 13 weeks of NM to
Name . . . .
Address . . . .
City . . . . State . .

NEW MASSES,
461 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.
Gentlemen: Enclosed find $1 for which please send 13 weeks of NM to
Name . . . .
Address . . . .
City . . . . State . .

NEW MASSES,
461 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.
Gentlemen: Enclosed find $1 for which please send 13 weeks of NM to
Name . . . .
Address . . . .
City . . . . State . .



WHOEVER you are—wherever you come from—these are your songs. The music has grown out of the stalk and roots of America. The words have risen out of the lives and struggles of America.

The Almanac Singers aren't polished, professional artists. They're just working people who had something to say and said it in music. One of them is from Arkansas, another from West Virginia, another from New York. An Oklahoma farm boy and ballad-maker had a hand in the writing of some of the songs.

Most of the tunes have been sung across America for many years. The words are the people's language, and the thoughts are what the people are thinking.

These songs are for America, for Americans to sing.

NEW MASSES is happy to offer the Almanac Singers' remarkable records. You may have them and a one-year subscription to the magazine (regularly $5.00) for $5.50, or for $3.25 with a six-month subscription (regularly $2.75).

The records, three 10-inch discs, are packed in an attractive envelope with a booklet containing the lyrics of the seven songs.

Tear off the coupon below, attach $5.50 or $3.25 to reserve your records. Please indicate whether you will call for them at our office or wish them mailed to you. Only a limited number of these recordings is available. We will fill orders as they arrive so don't delay. Our offer expires on June 15, 1941.

NEW MASSES, 461 Fourth Ave., New York City.

Gentlemen: Enclosed find $..for which please reserve for me a set of the "Songs for John Doe," and send NM to me for......................year.

☐ I will call at your office for the records.

☐ Mail the records (postage charges collect).

Name . . . .

Address . . . .

City . . . . State . . . .

5-20-41