

# new masses



jan. 13, 1948

15¢ IN CANADA 20¢

W. P. S. J.

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# A MESSAGE TO OUR READERS

As we announced last week, we are suspending publication as a weekly with this issue. Instead the great *Masses-New Masses* tradition will be continued in a new form—in a monthly magazine that will mark, we are confident, a new level of achievement. The editors and contributors of NM and of *Mainstream*, the Marxist literary quarterly which is also ceasing publication, will participate in making this new venture a vital force in American life.

The monthly will be an ideological-cultural magazine of a new type. Its range of cultural interests will include literature, the theater, music, radio, films, painting and other fields of the creative arts, as well as politics, philosophy, history, science and other related fields of intellectual activity. This magazine will publish high-level fiction, poetry, art, reportage and criticism.

The new publication will sell for thirty-five cents a copy and its subscription rate will be \$4 per year.

We are enthusiastic about this new magazine and feel certain you will be when you see the first issue. We want every NEW MASSES reader to become a subscriber to this publication. In a letter to all our subscribers we explained how they may apply the unexpired portion of their NM subscriptions to the new monthly.

We urge those of our readers who are not NM subscribers to subscribe now to the new monthly through this office. This is important for two reasons: first, you will help give the new publication a strong start in life through a guaranteed circulation; second, you will make certain that you will get your copies regularly.

We expect to start the first issue of the monthly with the March, 1948, number. With your support, we look forward to an effective, increasingly influential magazine that will maintain and revitalize the NEW MASSES tradition.

THE EDITORS.

## new masses

established 1911

VOLUME LXVI, NUMBER 3

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And Fighting All the Way	Joseph North . . . . .	3
It's Time!	A. B. Magil . . . . .	7
Portside Patter	Bill Richards . . . . .	8
Why Are You Silent?: an open letter . . . . .		10
Letter From the Front: a poem	Anghelos Sikelianos	13
Poland: How the United Front Works	John Stuart	14
Taking Stock	Charles Humboldt . . . . .	17
Book Reviews: What Is Life, by J. B. S. Haldane:		
Jack Shepard . . . . .		19
Entertainment Only	Joseph Foster . . . . .	21
Theater	Isidor Schneider . . . . .	22
Records	Sidney Finkelstein . . . . .	23

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# And Fighting All the Way...

## NEW MASSES' JOURNEY THROUGH A GENERATION

By JOSEPH NORTH

IF YOU were to ask me what I recall most vividly of the weekly NEW MASSES I could reply without hesitation: the conviction held by everyone identified with it—whether he be writer, artist, editor, reader or file clerk—that it could never die.

New York's Fourth Avenue is strewn with the bleached bones of commercial periodicals that flourished in their day, magazines like *The Literary Digest*, *Scribner's*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Bookman*. Each was, as Frank Munsey once described his own *New York Sun*, "an eight percent investment." They disappeared without a trace and nobody mourned. But there is that about NEW MASSES which cannot vanish.

I say that as one who had some part in creating it as a weekly in 1934. I know that that change was possible only because the monthly NEW MASSES, born in 1926, was, in reality, imperishable. Yes, it changed form, but its essence was continuous—for it in its turn had sprung from the *Liberator*, which continued the tradition of the old *Masses* created in 1911. They changed form, but they did not die. As Bill Gropper stoutly contends, "Hell, you can't kill a principle."

The truly central question is to continue the magazine's principle—the battle for democracy, the goal of socialism. Born in 1911, it burst lustily on the scene the year before a million Americans went to the polls to vote for a man who wanted our society reconstructed on human rather than dollar values. That man, Eugene Debs of Indiana, wrote then that the *Masses* "merited the hearty support of all who believe in the overthrow of wage slavery and in social regeneration through working-class emancipation."

The *Masses* editors sought more than muckraking or genteel side-line observation of life and letters. They sensed that history needed more than chronicling: it needed changing. Art Young, one of its founders, told me that some thirty years later. "We called it," he said, "'A Magazine Devoted to the Interests of the Working People.' That was on its masthead." Yes, he said, "we hitched our wagon to a rising star, and that was more than six years before socialism came to the Soviet Union." This spirit accounts for the journalistic miracle—forever threatened by the creditor, cursed by the philistine, renegade and bourbon, the magazine has survived because essentially it never departed from that principle.

I use the term "miracle" advisedly, for it was tantamount to that. I remember, I know. No Park Avenue publisher would give a cent for its prospects. It began as a weekly in the depths of the economic crisis, in the cold winter of 1934, after the monthly had ceased publication in the fall of 1933. None of us could, or would, canvass Wall Street for the supporting kitty, as a Yale man named Henry Luce did some few years earlier. It began *sans* angel, *sans* lucrative advertising. It began on a shoestring and a principle.

YET it caught on. Why? Let me briefly trace the course of the weekly, for I believe it contains lessons for the future. In the fall of 1933 a small group of like-minded writers and artists agreed that the times required a revamped editorial formula based upon the magazine's founding principle. Recall the day: the epic Hunger Marchers had electrified a nation—

swarming out of tenement, Hooverville and mortgaged bungalow to smash the shibboleths of the "dole" and win unemployment insurance. Labor was astray with a dream that was, shortly, to materialize in the sitdowns that initiated the Congress of Industrial Organizations. One section of labor, the Marxists, the Communists, had proved themselves the most selfless and clear-headed of all. I saw William Z. Foster lead the great demonstration in Union Square on March 6, 1930, that began the unemployed movement, and I read his many pamphlets urging industrial unions. Yes, the Communists.

They had a compass. What they said, what they did, made sense to many. They had a philosophy, Marxism. And many then wanted a creative philosophy. The weekly NM came to life within that historic context. The editors believed that the bewildered intellectuals and many others of that time needed a publication that dared give new answers. The people sought light on the confused political kaleidoscope of the times, and the editors decided upon an alteration of the magazine's formula. They would emphasize, in space and attention, the political events of the day. This was not, however, to ignore the cultural and literary issues which had dominated the monthly magazine. But political reportage, analysis, was to take precedence. The editors felt a magazine that crusaded in the interests of human welfare, of peace, of democracy, guided by a Marxist outlook, would take root. It did.

Because Marxism is no dogma and those espousing it no sect, the magazine has ever been the common meeting ground of progressives who seek,

to one degree or another, the advance of our nation, of man. The science of "the emancipation of the working class" connotes the liberation of all mankind; hence it is more than the business of labor alone. The staunchest protagonists of the people—whether they were writers, artists, scientists, labor leaders or students—rubbed shoulders in these pages through the years. NM carried on the tradition which for more than three decades has attracted, at one time or another, such figures as Carl Sandburg, John Reed, Randolph Bourne, William Gropper, Langston Hughes, Ernest Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson, Lincoln Steffens, W. E. B. Du Bois, Michael Gold, Harry F. Ward, Howard Fast, Rockwell Kent, Richard O. Boyer, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, John Howard Lawson, Herbert Aptheker, James S. Allen, Alvah Bessie, William Z. Foster, George Bellows, Boardman Robinson, V. J. Jerome, Genevieve Taggard and hundreds more.

From all corners of the earth came articles, stories, poems by such men as Maxim Gorky, Henri Barbusse, Martin Anderson Nexo, Gabriel Peri, Ralph Fox, J. B. S. Haldane, Sean O'Casey, Michael Sholokov, Ilya Ehrenburg, Mao Tse Tung, Romain Rolland, Jawaharlal Nehru, Heinrich Mann, Pablo Neruda, Jacques Romain, Pablo Torriento-Brau. Wherever men challenged tyranny, there NEW MASSES was known.

I shall never forget that letter from an anonymous Chinese student who sent us a handful of stamps from across the world, from Shanghai, hoping we might sell them and use the proceeds for funds we desperately needed. "I have nothing more to send, dear friends," he wrote. "I send this little for a magazine that stands for China as well as for your own land." He was not the only one. Nor shall I ever forget that the immortal Gabriel Peri, writing his testament in a Gestapo dungeon on the eve of his execution, remembered that he had, in listing all his efforts to advance man's interests, contributed to "the New York magazine, the NEW MASSES."

So we continued a period of fruitful collaboration between Marxist and non-Marxist progressives. A. Mitchell Palmer could not break that in 1918, nor can Tom C. Clark today. Nor can the gumshoeing of J. Edgar Hoover or the browbeating of J. Parnell Thomas.

It was not easy. It never was. We challenged publications that waxed fat on subsidies, or had access to lucrative advertising. We were anathema to Bell Telephone and Seagram's Whiskey. Yet we tackled everything. Domestic issues and foreign issues, strikes and conventions, the dilemma of the student and the doctor, all was grist to our mill. Though our prosperous contemporaries eschewed art work, we were not to be deterred: we published cartoons, reproductions of paintings, innovations in type. Plus short stories, plus poetry, plus literary criticism, plus philosophy, plus economics. All this kept the small staff more than busy, as you can imagine.

And, as though there were idle moments, we were obliged to pay attention to extra-curricular activities, the multitudinous affairs, meetings, art auctions, financial campaigns, personal solicitations. So it was at the outset, so it has been all the grueling way. It began that way from the very first moment: I remember how we sought desperately to raise the munificent sum of \$10,000 to launch the new publication. The date of its first appearance drew near, and we had collected a mere \$1,200. Yet the die was cast. We started the weekly NEW MASSES at a function in the New School honoring Henri Barbusse, who had traveled to America, a frail, sick man, burning to launch a world crusade against fascism. He proved to be a good godfather. For the weekly opened its career with the first of a series by John L. Spivak exposing our native fascists—blazing a trail which most liberal publications failed to pick up for years. Throughout the course of its career as a weekly, NEW MASSES, more than any other magazine in the nation, crusaded against the indigenous Nazi. Charles Coughlin, Gerald L. K. Smith know us well.

The new weekly stirred the imagination of many good men. It was early in 1935 when Lincoln Steffens, who had seen the future and knew it worked, came to our office. A small, slight man with a goatee and a pair of bright eyes that seemed to lose no detail, he looked around our bare offices adorned only with Gropper cartoons. And he said, "I wish I were not too old. I would pitch in with you. But I am old, pretty near the grave. I did the best in my day. But I am afraid it fell short. Your generation will do the job." This great reporter

saw the potentialities of the weekly NEW MASSES, knew it had to be, come poverty, hell or highwater.

AND Steffens was right. Poverty did not deter the magazine from making its mark on the annals of the past fourteen years. Anybody thumbing through its pages today can follow the epic march of the progressive coalition in the Roosevelt era, can trace the advance of labor from its puny size of three millions to fifteen millions, can better understand why Hitler does not rule the world today. Whatever strength the magazine had it gave unstintingly to help achieve the triumphs of the times. Most notably it played its part in the exposure of the indigenous fascist, the advances won by the Negro people, the organization of white-collar workers, the heightened struggle for a democratic culture.

Similarly on the international scene: the campaign against Munich, the struggle for Big Three unity against fascism, the campaign for the Second Front, come readily to mind. Heroic efforts succeeded in raising the necessary funds to send, from time to time, NEW MASSES reporters abroad and first-hand reports came from Europe, Latin America and Spain. Not only did its staff and associates serve as writers on behalf of Republican Spain; some crossed the Pyrenees to take arms as volunteers in the Lincoln Brigade. Arnold Reid, an editor, lies in the Aragon foothills near the Ebro, where NM writers like Alvah Bessie and Edwin Rolfe also fought. Bessie has described the soldiers going into battle with copies of NM in their knapsacks; they read it during lulls in the fighting. I well recall the hearty welcome accorded any man from NM in all Republican Spain. So it was in Paris, London, Havana, Mexico City. . . .

So at home. The continuous revilement of the magazine by the hostile press never successfully beclouded NM's real aims. Wherever men truly believed in democracy, their doors and hearts opened: a Negro minister in Alabama once told me God had a special place for NEW MASSES people. Orthodox Christians, he said, observed the Golden Rule to win a place in Heaven. "You people," he said, "help mankind for nothing." Such love was common among the loyal thousands of plain people in some 1,100 communities in forty-eight states who stood by the magazine through thick and thin.

They recognized the America of which it wrote. For by and large NM was able to picture life in this country more vividly, more accurately, than any other magazine. Lincoln Steffens, the great reporter, praised the reporting in these pages. Even though there was never enough cash in the till to carry through a fraction of the editorial projects the editors had down on paper, much of the reporting was memorable, some truly great. I believe the principal success lay in the magazine's reportage. That was ever the common denominator that appealed to freshman as well as professor. In this field NM yielded to none of the well-heeled publications, even though there were all too many periods when NM missed big events because there wasn't a cent in the office to send a man to the spot.

**S**TILL it was a miracle so many memorable accounts did come through from the places where history was on the move. Who can forget Agnes Smedley's reports from Red China, or Jack Spivak's courageous researches among the fascists here and abroad, or Ilya Ehrenburg's brilliant accounts of the Civil War in Austria, in 1934, and his reports on World War II? Most major strikes through the years found vivid record here. What commercial publications can excel NM's recent reporting by Richard O. Boyer, or Howard Fast, or Meridel Le Seuer, or Virginia Gardner? NM always aspired to have at least one piece of reportage in every issue, and when—all too often—it was lacking, that was the time the wolf howled most evilly at the door. Nonetheless I am certain historians will find fruitful the study of these pages for accurate, moving, three-dimensional reporting of the past fourteen years. Simultaneously NM's political analysis of events at home and abroad always received the respectful, if grudging, attention of the press. I cite at random the work done in dissecting the issues in the presidential campaigns of '36, '40, and '44; Spain, Munich, the Finnish war, the battle for the coalition in World War II, the exposure of the Marshall Plan. Names like R. Palme Dutt, A. B. Magil, Alter Brody, Joseph Starobin, John Stuart come to mind.

Though the magazine occupied itself primarily with the topical through all these years—until the past eighteen months—it kept alive the stirring cultural and literary tradition of the

monthly *NEW MASSES* and old *Masses*. It was, as Samuel Sillen has written elsewhere, "the workshop of proletarian literature of the Thirties." It sought to carry on in the tradition of Mike Gold, who had, in the monthly, combatted with brilliant vigor the efforts of some of the contributors, most notably John Dos Passos, to abandon realism, to run from life and from fight. Gold, Sillen emphasizes, "urged writers and artists to abandon the ivory tower and closet passions. He pointed to the working-class theme and attitude which would bring them close to the earth and love and social reality." Practically every issue, particularly in the earlier years

of the weekly, and again in the past year or so, has been preoccupied with one or another phase of this question. At times the heartsblood of the contestants filled these pages. And one must come to the magazine to trace the inspiration and sources which resulted in such epochal work as *Waiting for Lefty*, *The Cradle Will Rock*, *Ballad for Americans*, *Native Son*, *Grapes of Wrath*. Who can forget the first short stories of Albert Maltz, "Man on the Road" and others? Or Richard Wright's "Bright and Morning Star," his first noteworthy short story that appeared here? (His work had major significance when he ac-



## Why?

The "Liberator," successor to the "Masses" which was banned during World War I, published this cartoon in March, 1919, in protest against the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia. In his historic speech in Chicago, Dec. 29, 1947, Henry Wallace declared: "The bigger the peace vote in 1948, the more definitely the world will know that the United States is not behind the bipartisan reactionary war policy which is dividing the world into two armed camps and making inevitable the day when American soldiers will be lying in their Arctic suits in the Russian snow."



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cepted the viewpoint of these pages.) Barbara Giles' fine novel, *The Gentle Bush*; was begun after hours as an editor of this magazine. Ben Field and many others first won respectful attention in NM. Despite chronic poverty, the magazine contrived for a considerable period to publish a monthly supplement for longer creative works, short stories, poetry, reportage. It sponsored, with the John Day Publishing Company, a contest for the best proletarian novel. Throughout its course hundreds of new writers and artists first saw their work published here. In 1947 alone, NM introduced some sixty new short-story writers and poets. Encouraging and introducing new writers and artists has, despite the harrying press of other obligations, ever been a cardinal responsibility with NM. This policy bore fruit; it played a part in providing the contemporary elements of a new literary renaissance which Charles Humboldt describes elsewhere in this issue.

WHILE NM continued as the proving ground for new and young writers, it sought to aid and guide them to quickened achievement. NM brought to our readers the work of Samuel Sillen, whose contributions as literary editor over seven years left a memorable mark. In the past two years we have introduced to our readers the criticism of Charles Humboldt and of Sidney Finkelstein, whose book *Art and Society* is enjoying widespread attention.

Not only did the magazine thresh out literary controversies; it carried many significant articles on philosophy and Marxism. The abstruse flum-dum-mery of the idealists, the purveyors of pessimism and obscurantism, got their due from men like Dirk Struik, Howard Selsam, V. J. Jerome, A. B. Magil and others.

A recital of the magazine's years, no matter how brief, as this of necessity is, must recall its splendid tradition of political cartooning which graced the old *Masses*. New cartoonists arose to pick up where Robert Minor, Boardman Robinson, Art Young left off. Gropper, veteran of all the reincarnations of the *Masses*, has continued his unswerving march in these pages, establishing a quality unmatched since the days of Daumier.

A big bill, isn't it, for a penniless magazine with but thirty-two pages (and lately, twenty-four)? We hope

soon to publish an anthology of the weekly *NEW MASSES* which will, I trust, afford ample space to encompass the work of fourteen years. Such a book is presently being compiled and is scheduled to appear within the coming year.

In retrospect, though I warm to the spirit that launched and pervaded the weekly, I am critical of some of its aspects. In its initiation and throughout, NM displayed the shortcomings of all too many intellectuals. Aside from other deficiencies we were faulty organizers. The magazine should have been founded on an organized base: some group should have sponsored it. Lacking funds, it needed manpower to promote it, build its circulation, assure, to some degree at least, the wherewithal to carry plans into reality. Instead the editors were obliged to depend on the loyal, enthusiastic staff and the relatively small circles about the maga-

zine. That was a grievous mistake. It resulted in a harmful, constricted way of life for all on the publication. The editors were so preoccupied with keeping the publication afloat that they sacrificed time required for editorial duties, and even time for their own development as writers and as editors. That plagued the magazine through the years.

YET it was ever an irresistible challenge to keep going. The magazine had won the loyalty of many thousands who saw it as home. To them I pay loving and respectful tribute. I have met many of them, in the course of my travels through the years, and I believe I know why they loved the magazine despite its—ours, the editors'—limitations. First, they had confidence in its integrity. They knew it sought no profit except for the good of man. They shared or respected the



"After Twenty Years," by Art Young. In the first issue of the weekly "New Masses," Jan. 2, 1934. The great cartoonist was one of the founders of the "Masses" in 1911.





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Marxist outlook and awaited it in these pages. They knew we did our best to live up to it. They knew the magazine made its mistakes, plenty of them, and they knew that when we detected them we were not loath to say so. They respected that. They forgave us our mistakes for they saw they were honest, and they knew that practically all others of our contemporaries were based upon a lie.

That trust, that confidence, will, I know, carry over into the new magazine.

Based upon the best of the NM tradition, learning from the invaluable experience of *Mainstream*, it has splendid potentialities. Many objective factors favor it: once again millions are asking questions. The people are girding their strength, they will be in motion again for peace, for economic well-being. The formation of a people's coalition about Henry Wallace, the third party fight, are earmarks of the times. This will manifest itself inevitably in the cultural and ideological fields, in which the new publication will do its principal plowing.

It will be guided by a group of editors from NEW MASSES and *Mainstream* whose inclinations and talents eminently suit a publication of that nature. Some time ago I accepted an invitation from the *Daily Worker* to join their writing staff, for I found increasingly that Mike Gold was right when he warned me, some years ago, that you cannot write and edit at the same time. He had made the choice to write, and I long ago made a similar choice. The magazine, however, will always be close to my heart, and whatever I can do to aid it in my new capacity I shall do unstintingly.

I have no doubts. I know the tradition of the *Masses* and NEW MASSES will continue, and will be enhanced by the new publication. NEW MASSES is undefeated: its record is a proud one. It helped rear a generation of Marxists and other progressives whom I encounter wherever I go, in every part of the land. Many of its readers, as well as its writers and artists, have grown into capable, undaunted leaders. It left its indelible mark on the culture of our time, won the respect and love of thousands in many lands. America, to some degree, I know, is the better for it.

It was well worth the grueling, uphill fight and I am infinitely proud to have had some part in it.

# It's Time!

**The faint-hearted say "No." The Lernalers who never learn cry "Not now." But millions in America are stirring to the challenge of '48.**

**By A. B. MAGIL**

IT'S TIME, America.

Some people cannot hear the clock strike, are unable to sense the heat of the iron, or feel the breath of history racing toward the future. They say: not now, it's too soon, we may fall and hurt ourselves, not all our enemies may fail to become our friends.

But in Chicago the other day a man named Henry Wallace said: it's time. It's time to give the people a real choice between peace and war, progress and reaction. It's time to place before the country a people's candidate for President and a people's party. And a lot of other Americans agreed: it's time.

The reaction to the Wallace announcement is a curious melange of ridicule, venom and fear. He is being accused of being a tool of the Communists—and of the Republicans, though of course he's nobody's tool, and as for the Republicans, Col. Robert McCormick's radio station barred his broadcast and GOP leaders have vied with most Democratic spokesmen in heaping filth on the former Vice President of the United States. The bipartisan political oracles and their liberal echoes are predicting that only a corporal's guard will vote for Henry Wallace on election day—yet every New York newspaper found it necessary to devote its leading editorial to this impotent candidate (the proud Republican *Herald Tribune* did so two days in succession).

Behind the Wallace movement lie issues—the major issues of our time. These issues exist irrespective of Wallace's candidacy, irrespective of whether there had emerged any satisfactory means of fighting them out in

the 1948 campaign. Wallace and the forces behind him didn't create the issue of the Taft-Hartley Act, or of rocketing living costs, or of housing, or of civil liberties, or of the Truman Doctrine-Marshall Plan. On the contrary, these issues created the movement that has gathered around Wallace and around the perspective of a third party.

The differences that have arisen over the Wallace announcement are in essence differences over these issues. His candidacy is the catalyst that has accelerated the process of defining and clarifying this conflict. Thus it isn't Wallace and the PCA that have split the progressives. It is the issues which have divided them into those who are for or against the Marshall Plan, for or against genuine cooperation with Russia and the new democracies, for or against a real fight for civil liberties and lower living costs—and consequently for or against the reactionary bipartisan cabal which is running the country and attempting to run the world according to the blueprints of Morgan, Rockefeller and du Pont. It is those who have covered the features of Franklin D. Roosevelt with the mask of John Foster Dulles that must bear the onus for this schism.

Max Lerner in *PM* (December 30), arguing against Wallace's decision, asks: "Will the election of Dewey or Taft bring Americans either peace or prosperity, will it avert war, will it avert depression? That is one of the central issues Wallace does not face or answer." Now that's a stumper! Not to be outdone, after careful cogitation, I've thought up one of my own: "Will the election of Truman bring

America either peace or prosperity, will it avert war, will it avert depression?"

THE two-letter answer to both these questions has of course been given by Wallace, not only in the broadcast announcing his candidacy and in a splendid article in the current *New Republic*, but in many earlier speeches. But because Lerner embraces (with dutiful misgivings) the Marshall Plan for remodeling western Europe after the Greek "pilot plant"; and because, despite his frequent criticism of the Truman-Dulles foreign policy and its big-business parentage, he thinks the Truman Democrats are not "beyond redemption," he finds it convenient to gloss over the dismal alternative to an independent Presidential ticket.

Ah, he hastens to add, "This does not mean that the Truman administration and the Democratic Party bigwigs can take for granted the support of the non-Third-Party progressives. The Democrats must win that support—and keep it won—by what they do in foreign and domestic policy and by the way they behave in the election campaign."

Lerner and those of his mind are in the position of a man who, after his pockets have been picked for the hun-

dredth time by the same thief, wags his finger at the crook and says: "Now, you'd better behave or I'll . . . I'll really get angry!"

After the year of the Taft-Hartley Act (passed by Republican and Democratic votes, with only token opposition from Truman), of the nakedly imperialist Truman Doctrine and its fatter, more respectably-clothed twin, the Marshall Plan, of bipartisan assaults on the Bill of Rights by both the executive and legislative branches of the government, shall the American people give nothing but this pious, forlorn-hope answer to the question: "Had enough?"

Our people aren't fools. Hundreds of thousands already agree with Henry Wallace when he writes in the *New Republic*: "Neither the Republican nor the Democratic Party can act for the welfare of the American people, for the primary concern of both parties is for the profits of monopoly."

Wrote Harold L. Ickes—no partisan of Wallace's—regarding his earlier meetings: "My own analysis of the undoubted and widespread enthusiasm which has attended Mr. Wallace is that the people are looking for leadership. More than this, they are looking for leadership that has at least an appearance of ideality. They are look-

ing for leadership with courage. . . . The people just do not have the confidence in President Truman to which the 'Missouri Gang' and its camp-followers have been hoping that he could attain." (*New York Post*, June 2, 1947.)

Wallace of course believes the problems of the people can be solved in a fundamental way within the present system and he clings to certain illusions and misconceptions which were evident in his Chicago broadcast. Marxists do not share his faith that prosperity in any wide and permanent sense is possible under capitalism. And to speak of "Russian imperialism" is to express a contradiction in terms since imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism and hence cannot exist under socialism, any more than there can be wet fire.

The decision to launch an independent Presidential ticket "could not possibly be worse timed," moans the *Nation*. On the contrary, not to launch it would have been the worst timing of all. One can of course conceive of more favorable circumstances for an independent ticket and a third party. It would have been far better, for example, if Philip Murray of the CIO, instead of promising European workers in a broadcast sponsored by the State Department that American workers will prevent the Marshall Plan from falling into the hands of Wall Street (as if it wasn't there in the first place), had spoken the truth about the Plan and pursued the political implications of that truth. It would have been better if Jacob Potofsky and other leaders of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, who had helped build a third party in New York State, the American Labor Party, hadn't been seized with sudden vertigo at the thought of such a movement becoming nationwide and genuinely independent. It would have been better if Dr. Frank Kingdon, who at a pro-Wallace PCA meeting in Madison Square Garden only a few months ago declared that what America needed was not a third party but a second party, hadn't suffered from a sudden disintegration of that part of his anatomy on which his neck rests. No, this is not an "ideal" time for the people to fight for independence from the two parties of monopoly, just as 1776 was not an "ideal" time to fight for independence from Britain.

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## portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

The President's personal physician has been listed as a grain speculator. He evidently finds stock market fluctuations more exciting than Truman's blood pressure.

Princess Anne says she is ready to go anywhere with ex-King Michael of Rumania. Any suggestions?

Secretary Marshall has been named the man of the year by the Conservative press in England. This honor was formerly held by Chamberlain—but that's another Tory.

The Chicago "Tribune" agrees with Tojo that FDR was principally re-

sponsible for World War II. They're just bitter because their side lost.

Liquor prices will be raised because of rising labor costs. The industry has adopted the slogan "Hic, hike, hokum."

J. Edgar Hoover urges Americans to return to the practice of a daily family prayer. This practice has never been known to keep either the wolf or the FBI from the door.

The FBI chief also asks "Can we build homes without God?" Several million veterans will agree that we obviously need outside help.



"But is it quite fair to call Congressman Dies a prize ass, when you don't know whether he's ever won a prize or not?"—Garner Rea's comment in NM, Sept. 6, 1938, on J. Parnell Thomas' predecessor.

To the fainthearts of his day who pleaded that the time had not yet come, Patrick Henry in his famous speech to the Virginia convention replied: "They tell us, sir, that we are weak—unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemy shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir,

we are not weak if we make a proper use of those forces which the God of nature hath placed in our power."

**T**HIS movement will obviously have to do without a number of leaders who in the past have supported Wallace's program, but who have now decided to go elsewhere. This makes the battle more difficult, but it must be waged. There already exists some initial organization behind the Wallace cause: PCA with its branches in twenty-two states, the new Chicago Progressive Party, which made such a brilliant showing in the last election, the ALP in New York, the Independent Progressive Party in California

now gathering signatures to place itself on the ballot, hundreds of individual trade union leaders as well as various unions, and outstanding leaders of the Negro people. But this is only a beginning. Much more will have to be done to reach the millions in the unions, among the farmers, small business and professional people, who want peace and a better life and are not at all content with their present or future in "free enterprise" America. Much will have to be done to unite behind progressive candidates for Congress both Wallace voters and others who are not ready to back him.

Every third party movement has had to contend with those factors in current political relationships, in social consciousness, tradition and law which retard a mass breakaway from the two old parties. The weakness of socialist understanding in the labor movement, for example, is one such obstacle. Various state laws which actually limit the franchise—I have in mind not only the poll tax but laws which make it difficult for new parties to get on the ballot—are another such obstacle. Terror will undoubtedly play a role in 1948 as in no previous election. All these factors operate to cut down the vote of an independent Presidential candidate or of a new party on its first try. Yet with proper organization and aggressive struggle on issues, the Wallace vote can number millions. Even so inadequate a gauge as the Gallup poll found about a year ago that ten percent—or about 5,000,000 on the basis of the 1944 electorate—would vote for a new party. This is the bedrock on which an effective campaign can build an even more impressive structure—a structure that will not crumble the day after the election. It will take sweat, guts and vision.

The charge of "Munich" has been hurled at Wallace and his supporters—though Munich represented the very forces Wallace is fighting. Yes, there is the smell of Munich in the air. It envelopes those who make their peace with the warmongers, who find a "lesser evil" in the accomplices, protectors and paymasters of the Kuomintang assassins and the Greek fascists. Our nation is stained with the crime and corruption of its betrayers. But the men and women who will redeem our country are on the march.

Yes, America, it's time.

# WHY ARE YOU SILENT?

## An Open Letter to American writers from Soviet novelists, playwrights and poets

THE following open letter to American writers appeared on Sept. 20, 1947, in the Moscow *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (Literary Gazette), organ of the Union of Soviet Writers. It is titled "With Whom Are You, American Masters of Culture?"—the same question posed by Maxim Gorky a decade ago in his open letter to the writers of the world. Twelve of the most prominent Soviet novelists, playwrights and poets signed the letter, which is directed to those American writers who are silent on the new dangers of war and fascism.

When the letter appeared in the *Literary Gazette* it was noted in some press dispatches from Moscow. The editors of *NEW MASSES* felt that the letter in its entirety should be brought to the attention of American writers. Accordingly they asked the *Literary Gazette* for the full text of the manifesto, with the aim of publishing it together with comments from leading American writers, playwrights and poets. We hoped in this way to initiate a discussion in the pages of *NEW MASSES* among American writers, and between them and Soviet writers, on the main issues facing the world today. Unfortunately, we have to forego this more ambitious plan, since this is the last issue of the weekly *NEW MASSES*. However, we do hope that the Open Letter, presented here for the first time to the American public, will receive the serious attention of the writers to whom it is addressed, and will result in a wide discussion of the inescapable issues presented so clearly and dynamically by the twelve Soviet writers.

For some time *NEW MASSES* has also been asking why many of our leading writers and creative workers who played so prominent a part in the struggle against German fascism now remained silent when the fascist enemy raises its head in our own country. Not only the Soviet writers but many in other countries, the present or prospective victims of the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine, are troubled by the same question.

Is it not a fair assumption that fascism has already made great inroads among us when many of the outstanding spokesmen in the cultural field who led the fight against fascism abroad now fail to lead in the struggle against fascism at home? This is the assumption being made abroad, as shown by the Open Letter of the Soviet writers, who however, distinguish between the fascists and the American people, and between those who have spoken out against the new fascist danger and those who have kept silent.

Lack of information is hardly an excuse for an intelligent person. Anyone capable of reading the newspapers or listening to the radio can easily supply his own documentation. To men of special sensitivity, such as writers and poets, it should be readily apparent that we are now losing many of our constitutional liberties. They undoubtedly are among the first to recoil from the deadening and brutalizing weight of the warmongering and political bigotry which has become the daily diet on the radio and in the press. Even without a special study of foreign affairs they should be among the first to sense the pressure with which our monopolies and their political spokesmen are seeking to intimidate the entire world.

Many, of course, realize all this. Some speak, others remain silent. When is the point reached when silence becomes complicity? This is a question that each will undoubtedly determine for himself. But the time for decision cannot be long postponed. Some may never speak out and will be lost to the cause of world humanity. The future of America will rest not with them but with those who refuse to remain silent, who carry forward the great tradition of our writers and poets who fought and died in Spain, who became more complete human beings in the hard decade of struggle against Hitlerism and who today also will fight for their native land against our warmongers and home-grown fascists.

—THE EDITORS.

TO WRITERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES: We address this open letter to you because we are concerned for the future of culture and of mankind. We do not wish to conceal our alarm from you nor close our eyes to the new dangers for the destinies of culture, dangers which arose one after another immediately after the war against mankind's bitterest enemy, fascism.

We more than other are sensitive to these dangers. Our country has experienced such incredible ordeals, has suffered such privations and losses in defense of culture that we cannot and have no right to ignore this new menace.

We wish to speak to you frankly and plainly, leaving nothing unsaid, speaking with you as honest people who only two years ago fought side by side, all of us representatives of great nations who but recently gave their blood in the struggle against the common enemy.

Being concerned for the future of culture we cannot but feel alarmed by much that emanates from leading public circles in your country, reaching out far beyond its borders and affecting the whole world.

We ask you to consider this: In your country, after the war against fascism, there are people who advocate and practice on an ever-increasing scale what amounts in essence,

though cloaked in different forms, to the same inhuman ideas advocated and practiced by German fascism defeated by our nations.

Fascist ideas have of late invariably found champions and advocates among prominent statesmen, diplomats, military men, industrialists, journalists and even scientists of your country. We are referring to ideas arising from worship of brute force, from racial discrimination, from theories advocating world domination by a "chosen race," from deliberate incitement of contempt for other peoples because of their history, culture and state structure. They include negation of national sovereignty for other nations and direct intervention in the internal life of other peoples.

Is there no affinity between fascist ideas and the refusal to tolerate in other countries the existence of ideals and systems different from those prevailing in the United States? Is not the new warmongering heard in your country akin to fascism? Perhaps some of you have ceased to notice the full monstrosity of these appeals for war because, alas! they have become daily occurrences.

Do not claims to world domination, in the form of the so-called "American Century" and the establishment of a "new order" in the world—claims reinforced by threats and in some cases by use of brutal violence against peoples—do not such claims threaten an open repetition of fascism? Do we not hear day in and day out utterances by many representatives of your country to the effect that the American social order must be introduced throughout the world, as the only good and useful order for mankind? And is not this a reproduction of the shameful theory and practice of fascism? Is there no resemblance between the ideas of fascism and appeals for the speedy use of the atom bomb against countries with different systems than the United States?

We are deeply convinced that in their overwhelming majority democratic Americans do not share and do not wish to share opinions loudly proclaimed and advocated in their name by American supporters of old fascist ideas. If we were not convinced of this it would have been senseless to write this letter.

We know that your people have been and will be opposed to fascism whatever its forms and manifestations may be. We have no doubt that the finest representatives of culture—and they always side with the people—have always been and always will be enemies of fascism in theory and practice.

But we are addressing this letter to you because we are alarmed by the silence of many of you. Defenders and friends of fascism in your country have become quite outspoken and loud but the voices of the spokesmen for genuine American culture, of the enemies of fascism, reach us less frequently.

**W**RITERS, masters of culture, are the conscience of mankind. Can they maintain silence at a time when war, which should have come to an end two-odd years ago, is still continuing? More than two years ago documents were signed proclaiming an end to bloodshed in the world, yet for more than two years blood has been flowing every day in different corners of the globe, blood of children, men and women, of plain people, their sole guilt being they had the misfortune to be born in Greece, Indonesia or China. And is it not clear that a large share of responsibility for the human lives already destroyed and still being destroyed in different parts of the world rests with those who are now pursuing fascist ideas in the name of your people?

Since the debacle of Hitler Germany new victims are



**Q: Where were all the latter-day opponents of "appeasement" on March 21, 1939, when Gropper drew this cartoon in NM? A: Supporting Munich against the "Red menace."**

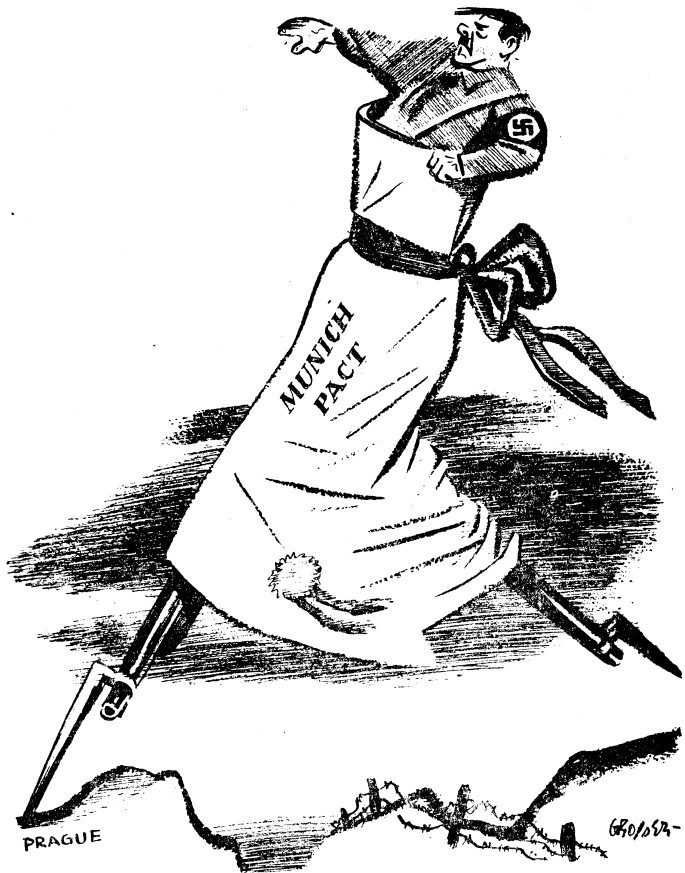
added daily to the millions of victims of German fascism. Is this a fitting monument to your compatriots and ours who honestly laid down their lives in battle against Hitlerism?

The dead cannot be recalled to life. It is only possible to desecrate and debase the memory of their heroic exploits, to try to make senseless that for which they died. But the living can be safeguarded. And every voice raised by representatives of culture in defense of peace and friendship between nations is raised in defense of the memory of the dead and of the life of the living.

Silence is impermissible when after the anti-fascist war we see, not as a nightmare but in real life, the heads of Greek children exhibited in Sparta by fascist swashbucklers who are maintained in power by the grace of American dollars. Dare one remain silent when the world is a roar with cannon, and Dutch troops backed by dollars burn the homes of six million Indonesians, when patriots are beheaded in China and Republicans executed in Spain, when fascists throw bombs into the courthouse at Nuremberg and in New York an American delegate to the United Nations declares "the struggle against fascism is no longer in fashion"?

An American general praises a bacteriological weapon as convenient because it "cannot be controlled . . . and may be tested and developed in small laboratories." Hitlerites have been smashed but there still are people acting in the tradition of the Hitlerite criminals who are practicing atomic blackmail, which is the blackmail of a new world war. Is there a more shameful form of blackmail than the threat of a new devastating war, a threat used to force upon nations the will of new pretenders to world domination?

Real fascists will find in every language an adequate



Q: Where were all the latter-day opponents of "appeasement" on March 21, 1939, when Gropper drew this cartoon in NM?  
A: Supporting Munich against the "Red menace."



vocabulary from which they may select synonyms for a word so completely compromised by history. "Democratic" pseudonyms are now in fashion. Indeed even Hitlerites thriving in western Germany under Anglo-American patronage call themselves democrats, desecrating what is dear to mankind.

Nevertheless mankind knows only too well that fascism means war. Is there a real difference between fascists and those who now shout for a new war and are actually preparing for it? American generals who speak of the need to develop military bacteriology are not merely devout lovers of their profession. American admirals and air marshals who after the war continued to experiment with the atom bomb, which had already been tested during the war, are not merely experimenting for the love of art and for the purpose of recording scientific results. American military leaders who insist upon standardizing armaments in nearly every country of the Western Hemisphere do so not out of a special fondness for uniformity and symmetry. These are men who are preparing a new imperialist war.

**M**EN of letters, art and culture cannot easily be silenced by police gags or by batches of banknotes. The peoples of the world want to hear their voices from the pages of magazines, newspapers and books, from the stage and screen. They expect this from those who spoke in defense of progressive mankind during the Second World War, and who before the war, when the air was full of the raving of

fascists and all enemies of humanity, replied to Gorky's question, "With Whom Are You, Masters of Culture?" by stretching out their hands to Gorky across all barriers.

The best writers of the world have always raised their voice in protest against everything inimical to the life and happiness of the plain people, against reaction in their own country or in other countries, just as Emile Zola denounced reactionary militarists in France in his *J'Accuse*. Just as Leo Tolstoy ruthlessly denounced Russian reaction in his *I Cannot Keep Silent*.

We are well aware that there are people in your country who speak up clearly in defense of peace, culture and democracy. Glory to them! Our letter is not addressed to them. We are addressing those American masters of culture whose voice is not heard today, the voice of love for millions of plain people in all countries whose labor creates all that is valuable and beautiful on this earth.

*For the sake of the plain and honest people the world over we urge you, leaders of American culture, to raise your voice against the new dangers of fascism, against the incendiaries of war, in defense of peace and brotherhood of nations, of the common bond of culture and of the happiness of mankind.*

Signed: W. WASILIEWSKA, B. GORBATOV, A. KORNEICHUK, N. POGODIN, A. TVARDOVSKY, K. FEDIN, V. VISHNEVSKY, V. KATAYEV, L. LEONOV, L. SIMONOV, A. FADEYEV, M. SHOLOKHOV.



"His idea is for the government to print a lot of six-dollar bills that can be turned upside down and cast as nine-dollar bills. Sounds crazy. He's against Roosevelt, though."—Malman in NM, Sept. 13, 1938.

# LETTER FROM THE FRONT

*By Anghelos Sikelianos*

*(Translated from the Greek by Rae Dalven)*

I write you . . . and yet, so great is the silence surround-  
ing me,  
That I say, if I opened my lips, you would hear my voice. . . .

Up to yesterday, the cannon kept booming  
Like lions roaring about the summits  
In wild slaughter, and over us steely  
Vultures whirled, incessantly whirling,  
Casting the shadow of Death, holding  
Death in their claws. . . .

But of all things  
Most awful is the silence that follows  
The battle, as deep within us  
The walls separating life and death  
Crumble and our naked souls,  
Seeing the living and the dead  
Wrapped only in a shroud,  
The shroud of the snow, expect  
No awakening as before, but some  
Loud trumpeted resurrection,  
A resurrection in horizons that at first,  
Awakening, we hadn't lived. . . .

And do you  
Think that up here we hold dim  
Traces of time, or our soul cares  
If sometime the snows will melt,  
If we are to return to the same  
Spring that we knew? . . .

As we pass from one  
Height to the other, the enemy crawls  
In the chasm, but now we have reached  
A summit which I tell you faces  
The future . . . for truly, whether ours  
Or the foe's, each day the cannons  
Demolish the narrow horizons before us,  
And our thoughts, like our spears, broaden  
The frontiers . . . and see tonight, as I stood  
Guard like a sheep-dog and I had  
About me a flock of clouds (if you should  
Ask me if it were sunset or noon  
I couldn't tell), a sudden ray  
Pierced the space, and as at first  
Reflected in my spear, gilded  
Whole peaks, uncovered  
The depths of the abyss, valleys,  
Waters, rivers; but over all,  
As if broad sword had passed through my heart  
Turning it back all at once,  
From the peaks of redemption to the care  
Of all of you remaining down below,  
In secret agitation awaiting  
Spring from us . . . for, woe to us,

If you await a spring as before,  
And not the spring I say will come  
Carrying a two-edged sword, coming  
With victory's wings, reaping  
What is unworthy among you,  
To revive it. . . .

And this is what makes me  
Write you at this hour, friend,  
To ask you: "Are you or aren't you ready  
To receive such a spring?"

Perhaps  
You will say some may expect her  
As I describe her, snatched from the furnace  
Of battle, glowing from battles  
Like smelted copper, with the belt  
Girdled for war, with the eyes  
Aflame, and on her lips  
The voice of the people, asking for an answer  
In the same language, from all of you. . . .

So you  
May say to me, some await it,  
And for him who is ready, the miracle  
Of its strength may descend all at once,  
As in this hour I write,  
I don't know from where, facing me, on the  
Barbed wire of the foe, that yesterday we cut,  
To pass to the other side,  
A tiny bird flew down,  
And for a moment it stood and left  
A moment's warbling, you'd say it poured  
Everywhere, reaching everywhere, spreading  
Everywhere, Truth deep in the world. . . .

But the others? Are there many others down there?  
Those who in their warm beds  
Tremble if they dream of the snow,  
But suddenly spring like ghosts  
From their thick mattresses, to hide in  
Their camouflaged tomb, to save  
A miserable life whose horizons  
Are no wider than this tomb?  
Those who tremble at the voice of the people  
Like a signal from the siren?

Tell me friend . . .  
But no . . . but no . . . I know what you will say!  
Naked spirit! Aroma of the sword washed  
In the cowardly blood of the foe! Victory,  
Victory over scarecrows from end to end . . . terror,  
Yes, terror to phantoms!

Greece  
Will return to find Greece!  
Friend, farewell!

**Poland:**

# HOW THE UNITED FRONT WORKS

**With Communists and Socialists working together, what is the outlook for merging the two parties?**

By **JOHN STUART**

Warsaw.

THE ebb and flow of Poland's mixed economy is visible in the three-year plan. Poland cannot plan completely. A sector of the economy is in private hands, although the big landowner and finance capitalist are non-existent. Nor can planning cover the cooperative sector in the same way that it does the nationalized industries where state control is direct and without qualification. The cooperative sector is autonomous but its own plans dovetail with the goals of the general plan. And between the cooperative and the state sectors there is enough economic strength to keep the development of private business from getting out of hand.

No one is afraid that the private sector will ever again resemble the classic forms it took in the prewar years or that it will ever become an outpost of foreign influence. Poland's little capitalists are certainly not discouraged from using their funds for useful purposes but they are decidedly not encouraged to be greedy. The control of the state over them is expressed in a number of key economic and political measures that determine the course of their investments, their influence on the market and their whole process of accumulation. No doubt from time to time these little entrepreneurs try to leap over the walls surrounding their allotted grounds but the sentries outside are too vigilant for any wholesale escape. If you listen hard you can hear these little monied men grumble, or see them pirouette over the dance floors with their overdressed and overstuffed ladies. They are the great habitués of those joy emporia expressly designed to relieve

them of their excess cash and excess energy.

I have compared in my mind the first Polish plan with the early Soviet plans. The Polish plan differs from the first Soviet plan because, among other things, Poland has obtained in its recovered Western territories a large industrial plant which can be renovated at a price lower than what the price would be if Poland started from scratch.

"This heirloom," observed Hilary Minc, Poland's Minister of Industry and master planner, "will enable us to carry out a task of exceptional value. It will allow us to concentrate on increasing consumption with the help of the production apparatus of the recovered territories." And in connection with defense needs, Minc continued, "we are fortunate in not having to arm feverishly. From now on we do not stand alone. The help and support of the Soviet Union will allow us to develop and equip our armed force without having to strain overmuch, without having to rebuild a large-scale armaments industry immediately."

These factors are responsible for some of the main differences between the Polish and the first Soviet plan. A more rapid conversion of the country's structure, from that of an agricultural to an industrial-agricultural community is possible. Above all, the Polish plan envisages the maintenance of full employment. Today one of Poland's big problems is a labor shortage, especially in the skilled occupations. This fact has called forth plans to draw women into industry and to train skilled personnel.

But all plans, no matter how carefully prepared, are subject to unforeseen shifts, particularly in the international sphere. A good plan is of course always flexible enough to allow for these shifts but some miscalculations are inevitable, and I suspect that the Polish three-year plan will encounter some difficulties as a result of delays and failures in foreign trade deliveries, as well as in the quantities of things needed from abroad. Moreover, there is alarm over the disproportion between industry's rate of development and agriculture's. If agricultural production is not speeded the whole economy may be harmed. The fact is that Polish farms are not producing enough to feed workers or to supply industry, especially its consumer sector, with raw materials.

But whatever serious economic problems arise will be manageable if only because the opposition which would exploit them has been decidedly weakened in the past year. The former Polish ruling class had so compromised itself in the eyes of the people that its remaining heirs find it difficult to gain strength.

Nationalization of industry and the agrarian reforms did not rout all the prejudices and handicapping ideologies which are still strongly felt in Poland. The first wave of fresh surging tide does not always sweep clean the debris littered on the beach. But the two basic reforms did break the back of the forces which would make Poland once more the tattered tail of a larger imperialist kite. It has taken protracted struggle. Step by step as the Mikolajczyk camp revealed its plays it discredited itself with the very mass of the people to whom it tried to appeal and made the democratic bloc's persistent work of exposure and counteraction that much easier.

IT is notorious that the former British ambassador in Poland was up to his neck in espionage and had to be withdrawn after the facts became public. But what is not too well known is the involvement of the American legation in Warsaw under former Ambassador Bliss Lane. Mr. Lane, who practically single-handedly smashed the new Poland in an article in *Life*, left behind him more empty bottles than friends. To be sure Mr. Lane was a superb diplomat whenever high spirits were required, and I have heard

that he could construct brilliant alliances in a night-club; but no matter. What does matter is the espionage work of an American by the name of Lieutenant Thonnesck. He was close to Bliss Lane's secretary. Thonnesck, the Cracow trials of underground leaders last summer revealed, met a Professor Ralski in the home of a Polish spy. (Ralski was under prosecution at Cracow for having aided the spy network.) At the spy's home, Thonnesck expressed great interest in the underground and Ralski was informed that Thonnesck could use spy material. At the trial Ralski testified that he prepared such material, which was turned over to Thonnesck through an intermediary. In a deposition Ralski declared: "I conclude with regret that the evil spirit who led me astray, from the path of decency to the dock, is Lieutenant Thonnesck."

The Catholic hierarchy is the nucleus of anti-democratic intrigue in Poland. The hierarchy shields itself from these charges with the protective armor of religion, but it is to all intents and purposes an unofficial political party. Not all priests agree with the hierarchy's politics, nor do they desire the Church to step beyond ecclesiastical bounds. But Cardinal Hlond, who takes an uncompromising position against the government, more or less rules present Church political policy. He is disliked by those Polish priests who were forced into concentration

camps by the Germans while Hlond lived in a luxurious cloister in Germany. There also has been friction between Hlond and Cardinal Sapiecha of Cracow, who is somewhat more willing to make adjustments to the new Polish developments.

The whole strategy of the hierarchy is intended to provoke a knockdown battle with the democratic bloc of parties in order to drag into the fight people who are now neutral but who in an open struggle would join forces with the reactionary hierarchy.

I had a half-hour's talk with a disciple of Cardinal Hlond's brand of Church politics—Monsignor Zygmunt Kaczynski. He was formerly Minister of Education in the London government and now writes frequently for the Warsaw Catholic weekly, *Tygodnik Warszawski*, on matters of high policy. Monsignor Kaczynski is sophisticated and fluent in a half-dozen languages. When I spoke with him his black cassock was enlivened by a red waistband, and around his neck he wore a beautiful gold chain, from the end of which was suspended a blue enamelled crucifix. We met several days after Mikolajczyk had fled but before his whereabouts were known.

"Monsignor," I asked, "what is your opinion of Mikolajczyk's flight?"

"Flight?" he answered. "What makes you think he fled? I have no opinion because no one really knows whether Mikolajczyk left." The good

Monsignor was one of those who tried to give the impression that Mikolajczyk had been arrested and summarily executed.

"But what would your opinion be," I continued, "if there is definite evidence of Mikolajczyk's departure or if he arrives, let us say, in London tomorrow morning?"

I received no answer. I asked whether it was true that the Catholic Church in Poland was trying to form a political party. Monsignor Kaczynski's answer was of the circuitous kind. "The Catholic Church," he said, "is always interested in a Christian Democratic party." Then he confided to me that Poles were opposed to the government "because it interfered with their personal liberty."

"Personal liberty," I remarked, "seems to me to have been increased by the distribution of land and the nationalization of industry."

"That does not matter," he answered.

**S**TANDING as a mammoth block against reaction are Poland's two working-class organizations: the Polish Workers Party (PPR-Communist) and the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). Their relationship and the expanding cooperation between them is undoubtedly among the most advanced in Europe. It has not been an easy task to weld this cooperation but the tragedy of war has etched on the Polish worker's mind its absolute necessity. To continue divisions would mean disaster, the strengthening of internal and external opponent forces. The Poles had had enough of this misery to know that it must not be repeated. The fact that a coalition government exists has not lessened the need for working-class cooperation but made it more urgent. For the working-class parties, especially the PPR, are the backbone without which the coalition would collapse.

Unity of action between the parties goes back to pre-liberation days. The unity has been practical and has made itself felt in the formulation of every decision affecting the country's politics and economy. To the mass of Polish workers it would be an unforgivable act if either party undertook a major project, or even many minor ones, without consulting the other. Joint action has also expressed itself in joint schools, such as the one conducted in



"Tell the gentlemen of the press how perfectly satisfied all you loyal workers are."  
—Ned Hilton in NM, July 6, 1937.

Lodz, the textile city, some time ago. About 400 active members of the PPR and PPS lived and studied together in an atmosphere of confident cooperation despite obvious difference engendered by different party histories and traditions. The students went into the Lodz community during the national election campaign and helped to batter down some of the walls dividing the local organizations of both parties.

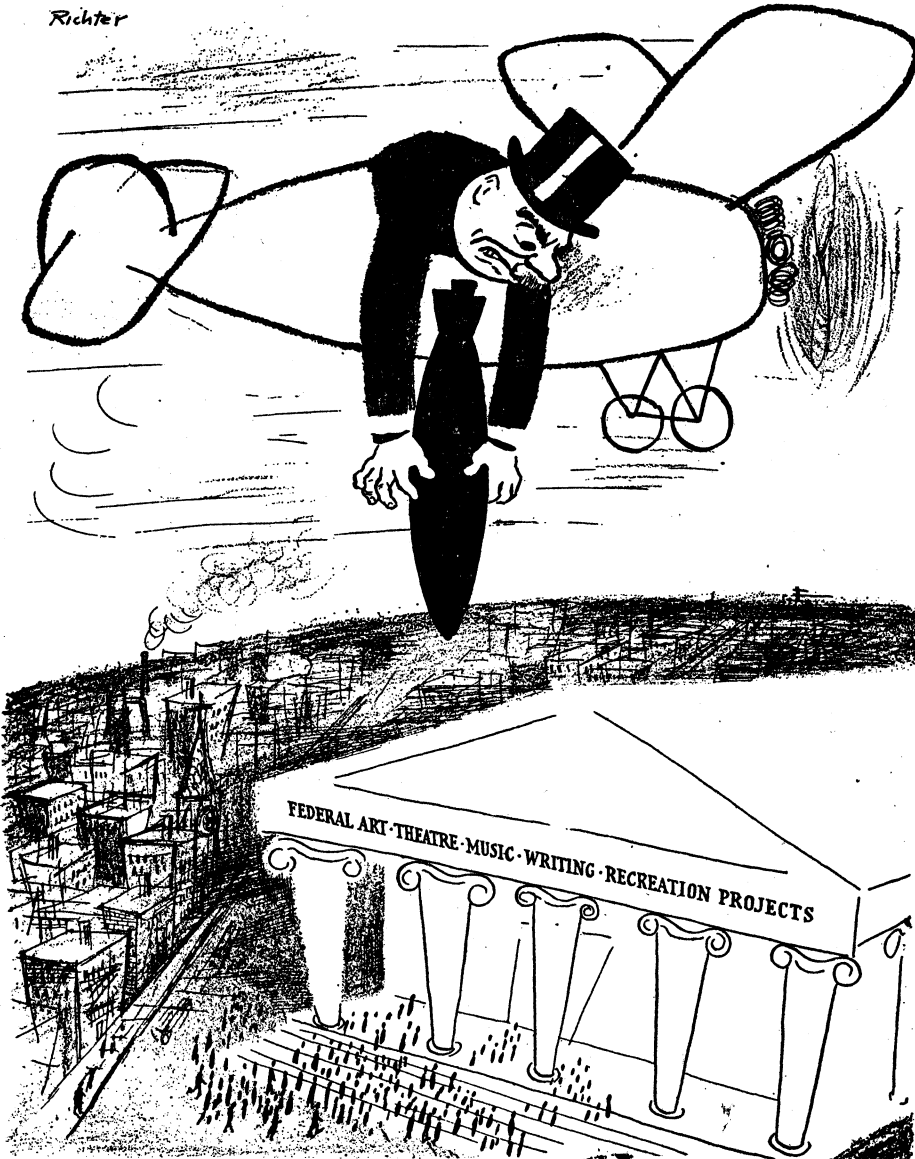
Organic unity, however, still remains an unsettled issue. It has been hindered by elements among the Socialists who are even opposed to a united front on the ground that it would strengthen the Communists and weaken the Socialists. The charges are baseless, if only because the Socialist rank and file knows well that it was the Workers Party that helped the

Socialists organize themselves shortly after the war. Never was there an attempt made to raid the Socialist Party membership. Opponents of unity attempted to form an alliance with groups in Mikolajczyk's Peasant Party as a counter-measure against the Socialist leaders who fought to expand practical relations with the Communists in fulfillment of the united front pact signed in October 1946. The opponents of joint action now form the right wing of the Socialist Party and they attract to themselves migrants from other parties who look upon the PPS as an instrument of opposition not only against the Communists but against the trends of the people's government.

Without doubt the Socialist right wing has held the party from closer collaboration and from the organic

unity proposed by the PPR in a speech by its general secretary, Wladyslaw Gomulka. In reply to that speech Socialist leaders answered that it was hardly the time for organic unity because such unity would amount to "mechanical fusion" — which, of course, the Communists did not suggest. Gomulka's approach to the issue was to point to organic unity as a goal to be reached only after ideological unity between both parties had been attained. Although both parties have socialism as an objective there are differences in evaluation and approach to various political and economic problems reflecting the separation in ideology between PPR and PPS. For a time the differences in ideology were kept within the confines of both parties and were not public. But they recently came into the open and a flurry of joint meetings have taken place throughout the country where differences have been threshed out and the area of agreement enlarged. Mutual criticism conducted in a most friendly atmosphere has narrowed the gap between the two sides.

THE differences have centered in large respect on the relationship between the cooperative and the nationalized sectors of the economy. The Socialists have insisted that emphasis be placed on the development of the cooperatives to the neglect of the state industries. The Communists have taken the position that cooperatives have a specific and important role to play in trade and manufacture but cannot serve as foundations for the new Polish society. In a brilliant piece of polemical writing Hilary Minc, Minister of Industry and a PPR leader, pointed to the fact that under certain conditions the cooperatives "may become a form of struggle in the hands of the small producers, and especially of small capitalists, against control by the state. . . . A move which would mean progress for small producers would spell retrogression as far as the most highly socialized, the state means of production are concerned." And Gomulka has also made it clear that while the PPR's attitude toward the cooperatives is positive it is also realistic. "In any case," he said, "there are no cooperative social systems in the world and there is no science—be it Marxist or capitalist—which until now has found the existence of such a structure possible."



"First Objective," by Mischa Richter. NM, Jan. 24, 1939.

# review and comment



## TAKING STOCK

By CHARLES HUMBOLDT

The disagreement over the cooperatives and over the functioning of a state trade system, which Socialists oppose, has not been entirely resolved; but discussion has pared away many misunderstandings, with the position taken by the Communists emerging the dominant one. There are other differences revolving around questions of the state and parliamentary democracy. The Socialists contend by and large that the Polish revolution is complete and that there need be no fear of embracing what amounts to liberal bourgeois parliamentary forms and procedures. They seem to forget, say PPR members, that Poland must evolve its own democratic forms and the world scene is such that the new democracy cannot be considered so secure as to become tolerant of the enemies, at home and abroad, who would destroy it.

These sharp but cordial exchanges have lifted the ideological level of both PPR and PPS memberships. For all the howling from abroad, this is real democracy. The problems of the country have been brought to the workers for their decision. They participate in more than elections: they shape policy and engage in a form of struggle which raises and freshens their consciousness. The more than 1,500 meetings that have been held in the past months represent an enormous educational project around basic theory that cannot but speed the country toward its goal of socialism.

The Workers Party of Poland is a brilliant phenomenon. The traveler feels its prestige and influence everywhere. Born out of the war, it is a new Communist Party. It has waged a great struggle against all the encumbrances of rote, while retaining the best traditions of the Polish Marxist movement. It is a mass party—as new as the new Poland—that began with about 20,000 members and is approaching the 900,000 mark. More than three-quarters of the membership are workers and about twenty percent are peasants. Out of its struggles the PPR has won the friendship and collaboration of thousands of non-party Poles. These people are as cherished as though they were members. It is in this sense of people and their needs, this immersion in masses of people, that gives the PPR its dash and imagination and makes it the first party of Poland.

WRITING has always come hard to me. It's never been tougher than this time. As you are bound to know, the decision to suspend publication of the weekly *NEW MASSES* could only have been dictated by unavoidable necessity. None of the staff wanted even to face the thought of its discontinuance. Still, what we told ourselves a thousand times must not happen has come about.

It is simple to regret. It is better to plan. We are in the middle of a war for the mind of the American people. Our enemies do not allow us much time to bury our dead. They press us with their money and slander and we are forced, whether we like it or not, to melt down the past and make a new weapon rather than preserve and mourn for the old one. In Homer the Greeks did not rest for ceremony. The sharpest fights took place over the bodies of the wounded and the spears lying beside them. We are not going to pause either. By the end of next month we will have a new magazine.

Some of you may ask: but what of the *Masses* tradition? Well, there are two kinds of tradition. One kind enshrines the blizzard of '88, the diploma from Stuyvesant High, the day Yale beat Penn 63 to 42, and the company banquet in honor of the ten best salesmen. A cult of dates and percentages.

The other, that of the *Masses*, is a tradition of human beings. Will our writers now cease writing, our readers stop thinking just because we must reach them in a new form? If we represented nothing but ourselves, if we were an old magazine dissolving into wistful memory, if we were the sole, and now dried-up, channel of expression for revolutionary and progressive thought in America, we could be truly disheartened. But we are part

of a movement of workers and intellectuals, infinitely rich in resources and energy, flexible to change and need, devoted to the truth and justice of their aims, men and women to whom defeat is unthinkable. Our tradition is people and so it cannot die.

Let's see what this means in terms of writers alone. Some friends have questioned whether we and our allies among America's progressives have the forces to put out a cultural-ideological magazine twelve times a year. Are there enough short-story writers and novelists, poets, critics, reporters, essayists and polemicists? To answer this question I've made a very limited survey of the books reviewed by NM in the past year. Remember that this represents only a fragment of the total production in 1947. There were dozens of books which space restrictions prevented us from mentioning. And so every group in the following list must have appended to it the phrase "among others," since it is so incomplete. Here then are the books written and plays produced in America and reviewed in these pages during 1947 which come within the orbit of our thinking and our values:

Among novels and collections of stories: Isidor Schneider's *The Judas Time*, Barbara Giles' *The Gentle Bush*, Sinclair Lewis' *Kingsblood Royal*, Willard Motley's *Knock on Any Door*, Nelson Algren's *The Neon Wilderness*, David Alman's *The Hourglass*, Millen Brand's *Albert Sears*, Howard Fast's *Clarkton*, Martin Abzug's *Seventh Avenue Story*, Ira Wallach's *The Horn and the Roses*, Fielding Burke's *Son of the Stranger*, Erskine Caldwell's *The Sure Hand of God*, Nedra Tyre's *Red Wine First* and Sam Liptzin's *In Spite of Tears*. And since he now lives in

the United States, Lion Feuchtwanger's *Proud Destiny*.

In poetry there were Langston Hughes' *Fields of Wonder*, Eve Merriam's *Family Circle*, as well as Walter McElroy's translation of Tristan Corbiere and H. R. Hays' rendering of Bertolt Brecht. To these must be added Thomas McGrath's *To Walk a Crooked Mile*, which was scheduled for the end of the year but met trouble at the binder's.

Of plays produced there were Edward Mably and Leonard Mins' *Temper the Wind*, E. Y. Harburg and Fred Saidu's *Finian's Rainbow*, Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*, Theodore Ward's *Our Lan'*, Donald Ogden Stewart's *How I Wonder*, Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* and Barrie Stavis' *Lamp at Midnight*. Also, the recent resident Bertolt Brecht's *Galileo*.

In criticism and esthetics there were two major works: Sidney Finkelstein's *Art and Society* and Edwin Berry Burgum's *The Novel and the World's Dilemma*. To these may properly be added Hanns Eisler's *Composing for the Films*.

In philosophy there was Barrows Dunham's *Man Against Myth*, and in historiography Joshua Kunitz' *Russia, the Giant That Came Last*.

The field of biography includes two fictionalized lives of Frederick Douglass: Edmund Fuller's *A Star Pointed North* and Shirley Graham's *There Was Once a Slave*, Karl Oberman's *Joseph Weydemeyer*, Matthew Josephson's *Stendhal* and Philip Foner's study of Jack London, *American Rebel*.

There were six important works of labor reportage and history: Elizabeth Hawes' *Hurry Up, Please, It's Time*, Richard Boyer's *The Dark Ship*, Henry Kraus' book on the United Auto Workers, *The Many and the Few*, Philip Foner's *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, William Standard's *Merchant Seamen*, and William Z. Foster's *American Trade Unionism*.

The history, accomplishment and problems of the Negro people were dealt with in Herbert Aptheker's *The Negro People in America*, Earl Conrad's *Jim Crow America*, Bucklin Moon's *The High Cost of Prejudice*, W. E. B. DuBois' *The World and Africa*, and Edith Isaacs' *The Negro in the American Theater*.

The political aspects of the American scene were considered in Stetson

Kennedy's *Southern Exposure*, John Spivak's *Pattern for American Fascism* and George Seldes' *1,000 Americans*. Its cultural aspects were discussed in V. J. Jerome's *Culture in a Changing World*, its educational outlook in Benjamin Fine's *Our Children Are Cheated*, and its press in A. J. Liebling's *The Wayward Pressman*.

There were two contributions to folklore: *Midland Humor*, edited by Jack Conroy, and *The Treasury of New England Folklore*, edited by B. A. Botkin.

Finally, in the field of foreign affairs and policy there were Victor Bernstein's *Final Judgment*, Richard Sasuly's *IG Farben*, Bartley Crum's *Behind the Silken Curtain*, Israel Epstein's *The Unfinished Revolution in China*, Bernard Stern and Samuel Smith's textbook *Understanding the Russians*, and William Z. Foster's *The New Europe*.

Of these sixty-three books and plays nearly forty-five are the work of writers who have been at one time or other contributors to *NEW MASSES*, the greater part of them at present or in the recent past. The list includes four of its associate editors: Fast, Boyer, Aptheker and Jerome; three of its contributing editors: DuBois, Giles and Schneider; and its music critic, Sidney Finkelstein. Many others have been consistent writers and reviewers for the magazine, such as Alman, McElroy, McGrath and Merriam.

THIS is an astonishing record. One need not make a detailed critical evaluation to see that both in quantity and in the quality of the best work listed here, as well as that in *NEW MASSES* and *Mainstream*, there are the elements of an intellectual renaissance, and the promise of great writers. For great writers do not rise up like pinnacles in the desert. They emerge from and are sustained by the warmth and strength of their fellow artists, by the climate of courage around them, and by the greatness of their audience. A magazine has to help bring together all these elements—writers, artists and audience—in common cause, and give them a permanent place to meet. This is the job of the magazine that will replace the weekly *NEW MASSES* and the quarterly *Mainstream*.

We are fond of using the phrase "Art is a weapon." It is one of which we can justly be proud. But sometimes it seems as though we had our doubts. Sometimes we act as though it were

not really a weapon. Friends ask us: can a cultural-ideological magazine really do the job? Yet the Italian and French liberation fighters had no such doubts. *Les Lettres Francaises* was issued clandestinely throughout the German occupation and the Italian Communist Party issued *Rinascita* as a cultural-political monthly some weeks after the taking of Naples. The Chilean Communist Party has no such doubts, since in the midst of the most bitter trials, it recently offered Senator Pablo Neruda a leave of absence to complete his historical poem on Chile (though it must be said in all fairness that he declined the offer).

We can have no doubts either; in fact we cannot even afford to harbor doubts of our cultural accomplishments in the face of the attacks to which those accomplishments are being subjected. Four editors of *Mainstream* are under indictment for their defiance of the Un-American Committee: Alvah Bessie, Howard Fast, John Howard Lawson and Dalton Trumbo. A mural of Anton Refregier's is censored in California because it contains a portrait of Roosevelt. The gutter press persuades the not-unwilling State Department to cancel its traveling shows of American artists, among whom left-wing painters occupy an honorable place. It is hardly necessary to speak here of the happenings in Hollywood.

On the literary front, our writers have been subjected to the most contemptible unprincipled attacks on the part of incompetent or dishonest reviewers, chiefly renegades from the progressive movement. The elegance of such criticism may be judged from the *Partisan Review's* critique of Burgum's *The Novel and the World's Dilemma*, where the author was called "a vicious fool." There has been for years an almost total boycott by the New York weekly review sections of books issued by International Publishers. They shriek about the Iron Curtain while shutting their own steel doors.

The work of our novelists, our poets, our artists, our critics and polemicists is something to be proud of. It is time for us to cherish them with all our love and to provide them with an organ of expression for their creative work, their thoughts, their controversies and their assaults on the enemy, who honors them with hatred. A fighting, daring fully-rounded cultural and ideological organ can be of inestimable significance at this time, when the

Wallace candidacy expresses the yearning of millions of Americans for a life freed of the filth with which the people's enemies try to debase their minds and their country. We have the forces for such a publication to reassert our finest thoughts and values.

## Science of Life

WHAT IS LIFE? by J. B. S. Haldane. Boni & Gaer. \$3.

SCIENCE writing for the layman dates back to Newton's time, but it can boast no more distinguished a practitioner than the British scientist J. B. S. Haldane. He writes with no trace of patronage or superiority. He can infuse his warm personality into so abstruse a subject as "Life at High Pressures."

In *What is Life?* Prof. Haldane has allowed his inquisitive mind to range over a wide diversity of scientific subjects, all connected by the underlying thesis that "the struggles between classes and nations are phenomena susceptible to the same kind of analysis as the phenomena of nature, and, therefore, capable of control and ultimate elimination when we understand them scientifically."

The knottiest social problems of our time, Haldane urges, will yield to a rigorous application of Marxist theory, just as the problems of nature are amenable to the applications of scientific method. Haldane is aware of the dangers of this analogy, and he does not push it too far. What he believes is that society, like nature, can be studied and controlled scientifically, and that Marxist theory is a powerful scientific instrument which can be used for just such purposes.

I have never seen the statement, recently attributed to Haldane, that the reading of Engels had cured his gastritis. Sidney Hook said the statement caused laughter (including his own) on two continents. If Hook wants a clear statement of Haldane's views on the efficacy of science I recommend that he read *What Is Life?* Marxism, says Haldane, cannot solve the problems of nature, but it can create a social atmosphere (and he points to Soviet science) where scientists can direct their energies most economically, most directly, and with the people's needs rather than a corporation's aggrandizement in mind.

His book contains brief essays on such topics as: "Is Man a Machine?"



"Unemployed," by Adolf Dehn. In the first issue of the monthly "New Masses," May, 1926.

(Haldane thinks not); "Are Cousin Marriages Harmful?" (one out of 120 such marriages produce defective children); "Race, Religion and Crime," "Blood Donors," etc. Haldane's curiosity is insatiable. "The oddest thing we found out," he writes, "was that oxygen has a taste. The textbooks say it is a colorless, inodorous, tasteless gas. At six atmospheres I described its taste as 'like dilute ink with a little sugar in it.'" And in another place he writes, "after I had two severe fits and crushed some vertebrae I remained more resistant [to oxygen poisoning] than the average person."

Professor Haldane's zest for nature, in all its forms, is almost incredible. "Nebulae and earthworms both please me. . . . If my portrait were painted today I should like the painter to add one of the small insects with which I work. They are, in my opinion, extremely beautiful creatures." Thinking about "the vast hosts of beautiful species which are now dead" saddens Haldane. "I particularly mourn," he writes, "for the beast called Thoatherium, one of the Litopterna, which I suspect was the most beautiful animal which ever existed. It was like a racehorse, but considerably more streamlined."

Though he likes nature Haldane does not worship it. Worships of that sort, he says, led to Nazi morals. Nor is he such a slavish admirer of nature that, like the late George Apley, he could be moved by the plight of birds and indifferent to the plight of men. Haldane takes a rare, expansive view of the world, oriented outward to in-

clude those aspects of nature which the majority of us seldom consider, but responsive also, and with a sensibility that is also rare, to the needs of human society. It is the perfect balancing of these two attitudes that makes this book the very valuable volume that it is.

JACK SHEPARD.

## In Brief

SOVIET BALLET, by Juri Slonimsky and others. Philosophical Library. \$4.75. Aside from the illustrations (pictures of dancing are always interesting), and three brief articles—one on statistics, one on folk dance and one on the Leningrad ballet during the blockade—together all of thirty pages—this book is a hastily-assembled pot-pourri of superficial journalistic pieces by various Soviet dance critics. There is no editorial excuse for the contradictory assertions, boring repetitions and sticky blurbs which fill its 176 pages. A twenty-four-page pamphlet could have covered amply what this book has to offer. Too bad, because, as everyone who has witnessed the Soviet ballet can tell you, here are some of the greatest dancers in the world, the most dynamic innovations in the ballet's use of folk and national dancing, and the most creative preservation of a classic ballet tradition which has been completely lost everywhere else in the Western world.

THE WAYWARD PRESSMAN, by A. J. Liebling. Doubleday. \$2.95. If your specialty is the question of the press, you may think books like the Chicago University report throw most light on the subject. But if you want to know what our dear old newspapers are really doing, Liebling is the man for you. This is one of the most entertaining dead-serious books you'll come across in a blue moon. What it does to the New York Times and Col. McCormick is worth the price alone. Mr. Liebling's cure for what ails our organs of information and opinion is not too valuable, since it presupposes the same property relations that cramp us now. You won't find a better diagnosis, though. And he does suggest that the labor movement break into the field to give the bosses a run for their money. He makes them pant quite a bit himself.

WALK IN SHADOW, by Julius Fast. Rinehart. \$2.50. A fast-moving murder story carrying a philosophical point. The protagonist's desire to make himself a "man" in the eyes of the girl who once rejected him combines with his unbounded brutal individualism—the reflected philosophy of free enterprise—to turn him into a cold-blooded killer. The material is somewhat cramped by a flashback technique and the use of the first-person narrative, which limits the perspective of the novel. There is, however, much excellent psychological



observation. Julius Fast is a successful writer of mystery books. It is no small feat for him to break through the technical limits of his bread-and-butter genre, and the degree to which he has done so marks him as a serious writer to be watched.

MAN AND THE STATE, edited by William Ebenstein. Rinehart. \$6.50. An anthology of most of the major ideas which have animated the political thinking of Europe and America in the modern period. It is divided into four parts: The Foundations of Democracy; Anti-democratic Thought; Capitalism, Socialism, Planning; and From Nationalism to World Order. A good reference work. It is refreshing to find that Mr. Ebenstein, unlike various and sundry political science hacks, does not identify communism as anti-democratic. The section on the national question would have benefited considerably by the inclusion of Stalin's contribution to the subject.

MILTON CROSS' COMPLETE STORIES OF THE GREAT OPERAS. Doubleday. \$3.75. A conscientious job of summarizing the libretti of

the seventy-two operas most frequently performed in the leading houses in the past fifty years, from *L'Africaine* to *Die Zauberflote*. Appended is a brief history of the opera and a selected reading guide. It is unfortunate that the obvious usefulness of such a book is offset to a degree by the influence of the standard cliches employed in opera synopses. Why, for example, is Masetto in *Don Giovanni* described as "a thick-skulled but amiable bumpkin"? In Mr. Cross' defense it must be said that in such lapses of style and taste he is only following a tradition, not deliberately creating one.

THE SCIENTISTS SPEAK, edited by Warren Weaver. Boni & Gaer. \$3.75. Here are the intermission science talks of the Sunday Philharmonic Concerts, collected, with some minor corrections, for the reading public. The talks are described by the advisory committee that prepared them as a "large-scale experiment in adult education," and the committee shows a great deal of self-satisfaction over the results. The truth is, though, that this committee of scientists

missed the boat. Eighty-one experts told a vast audience how science works, but they failed to tell them why. The social sciences, and the social functions of science, were largely ignored. The best that was offered was a concluding talk by Raymond Fosdick called "A Layman Looks at Science," which offered the pious hope that we will use science for constructive purposes. We all join in that hope but we find nothing concrete in the present volume to implement it. The US Rubber Company, guardian of the public interest, sponsored the talks, and tried a wee bit to keep its nose out of the proceedings. It failed.

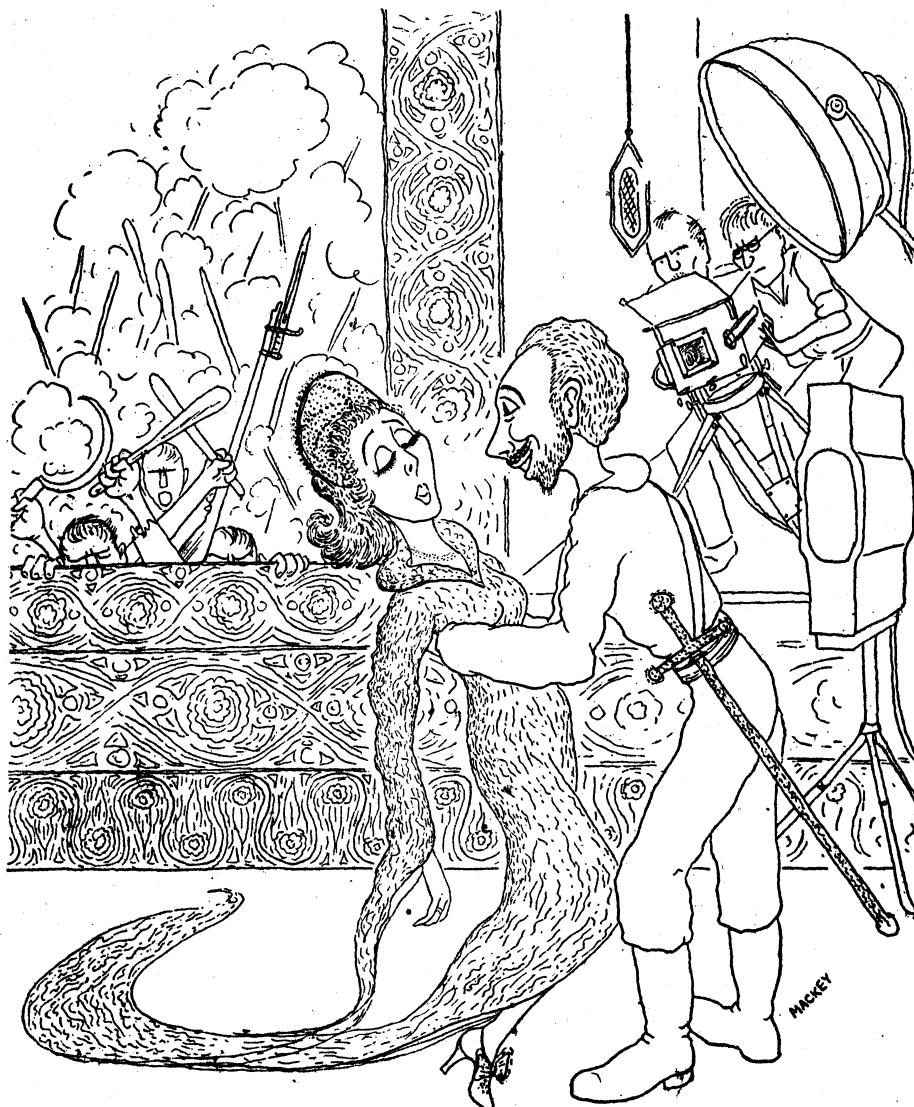
GENERAL EDUCATION IN THE NEGRO COLLEGE, by Irving A. Derbigny. Stanford University Press. \$3. The Administrative Dean of Tuskegee presents a highly specialized analysis of the curricula offered in twenty schools chosen as representative from among the 118 Negro colleges at present functioning in the U. S. Technical, but informative, and the only book extant on the subject.

NILES' WEEKLY REGISTER, by Norval N. Luxon. Louisiana State University Press. \$5. *Niles' Register* was published in Baltimore from 1811 to 1849 and for much of this period was unquestionably the leading weekly depository of news and commentary in the nation. As such its history is of interest to the specialist and the general reader will find Luxon's book a handy introduction to the flavor and character of early nineteenth-century "safe and sound" opinion.

RELIGION AND THE RISE OF CAPITALISM, by R. H. Tawney. Pelican Books. 35¢. This reprint is a tremendous buy. Tawney's book, comprising a series of lectures delivered in 1922, is already a classic. It examines the influence of social and economic change on religion and investigates the causes and consequences of the religious mentality as manifested in the Middle Ages, the Reformation and the Puritan movement.

GOOD READING. A GUIDE TO THE WORLD'S BEST BOOKS. Pelican Books. 35¢. This enterprise was edited by the Committee on College Reading and sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English. It contains a descriptive guide to one thousand books "selected for solid worth and pleasant readability" prepared by forty-four professors, librarians and editors. What can you lose?

A PATTERN OF POLITICS, by August Heckscher. Reynal & Hitchcock. \$3. A well-written and serious exposition of some problems of modern politics. Philosophically idealistic and therefore not deeply concerned with the impact of socio-economic realities upon politics, but of interest in emphasizing the conviction of early progressive thinkers that unanimity was vital for a functioning true democracy.



"Kiss me, my queen, and I'll call off the revolution."—John Mackey in NM, July 27, 1937.

# sights and sounds



## ENTERTAINMENT ONLY

By JOSEPH FOSTER

THE annual game of movie tiddlywinks, or selecting the "ten best" films of the year, I have always held to be a futile if traditional pastime. The three or four bearable films produced yearly by dint of great independent effort no more reveal the Hollywood mind than a speech by Wallace reveals the average American politician's mind. But what does offer us an index of the collective industry genius, its taste, sensitivity and ability to think, is a recent editorial by Billy Wilkerson, editor and publisher of the *Hollywood Reporter*.

On December 2 this paper, one of the most influential trade sheets of Hollywood, printed, smack down the center of the page, an "appeal to reason" by its guiding brain called "Let's Go to the Movies." Like the other official blobs of grey matter that worry over the financial state of the box office, Mr. Wilkerson wrings his hands over the bad taste of the former movie patrons who now prefer to spend their time at home. Why has attendance fallen off? Mr. Wilkerson will tell you.

Once upon a time, he says in his edit, the film industry was different. "A group of *contented* [my italics—J.F.] men were providing entertainment for the people of our country. They had no ax to grind; no hidden motives or desires. No messages to deliver, no course to promote. Entertainment was their business. They simply made good pictures. . . . Then came the destroyers. They weren't labelled as such. They came in the guise of 'intellectuals' — serious-minded writers, directors, producers and actors who told us the screen owed a duty to the world. Entertainment was not enough. We must become 'realistic.' . . . All life is a struggle, they said, and we must present it as such. . . .

Slowly at first, feeling their way, they brought their ideas into being. Pictures that were 'real.' . . . The lines were good lines — dramatic lines. The direction was good direction. The acting was superb. Any doubts that may have come to the studio heads were dispelled by the rave reviews. . . . Unhappy men themselves, the picture critics praised the new trend with hysterical adjectives. "The screen has come of age," they cried."

Such horrifying and treasonable conspiracies against the public and against the poor duped studio heads soon reaped the grim harvest. In a burst of anguish Mr. Wilkerson points out that "each week the box-office returns fell low and lower. Given another year and all would have been gone without recall. . . . But God was good. The minds that built the motion picture industry were still great minds. And *suddenly* [my ital.] they awoke to the treachery that had been practiced on them. Overnight the order was given to clean house. . . . Get rid of the so-called 'realists.' Ignore the critics! Listen to the people of America. . . . And today the order of the industry is—make pictures that will entertain . . . make pictures that tell of happiness, contentment and promise."

This editorial is such a perfect expression of all the cliches, complaints and yearnings for happiness that it reads like a tongue-in-cheek satire on Front Office doxology. What year the malevolent forces took over in Hollywood, this fugelman of entertainment doesn't say. The only year that I can recall wherein no single serious picture was filmed was possibly the first year of the talkies, in which a number of musicals called *Sonny Boy* were produced. As for box office, it is known far and wide that receipts had been

mounting steadily for years, reached phenomenal totals during the war and begin to decline only when the producers decided that the people had had enough serious themes, and now wanted only to forget. Thus the reference to falling revenue can relate only to the postwar period when the Un-American Committee began to harass the studios, and particularly to the past year when the Thomas Committee got its fingers in up to the elbow.

OFFHAND it would appear that the conclusions drawn by the *Hollywood Reporter* were the ravings of a lunatic. It is no secret that the trash Mr. Wilkerson longs for, represented in the past year by *Abie's Irish Rose*, *As You Desire Me*, *Foxes of Harrow* and other such harbingers of a life of promise, lost heavily at the box-office. The year *deserved* to be marked in red. Except for such lightning flashes as *Verdoux*, *Crossfire*, *Gentleman's Agreement* and possibly *Body and Soul*, the murk was uniform and undisturbed. As for the critics, those bold bad man who incurred Wilkerson's wrath, they attacked *Verdoux* furiously, and in the current best ten lists nearly all of them preferred such bags of treacle as *Bishop's Wife*, *Yearling*, *Miracle on 34th Street* and *Life With Father to Body and Soul*, a picture containing many fine elements. Lately, too, many critics have been taking potshots at the wartime films, films favorable to Russia, as though suddenly aware of how the butter got onto their bread. But the editorial under discussion was anything but uncalculated and if you substitute the indictment of the ten writers, directors and producers for contempt of the Thomas Committee in place of the word "suddenly," and the Un-American Committee in place of the "people of America," then all becomes clear.

The Wilkerson editorial, which appeared soon after the Un-American attack on Hollywood, can be viewed as the official expression of the fifty studio heads who met at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York to back up the action of Thomas and his colleagues. The editorial reveals the complete corruption of the men in charge of our film-making. It shows once again their cowardice in yielding to their critics, the futility of looking to these men to make films of realism and honesty. As a matter of fact they regard the

word "realism" as one of the abhorrent "isms" imported from abroad. Many honest Americans were shocked by the unseemly haste of the Fifty at the Waldorf in their condemnation of the Ten even before they were cited for contempt by Congress. But this action was consistent with a whole history of such behavior. They yielded to the first criticism by the Catholic Council of Bishops and other censorship groups. They never so much as lifted a finger in defense of their work when confronted by any censorship, no matter how narrow the interests represented by that censorship, and their shameless abdication of any independent position in the face of the Legion of Decency is history. Their hasty formation of the current Schlaifer committee to keep themselves pure—that is, free from the Red taint—is consequently of a piece with their customary subservience to their money masters, to the Cagouards of culture and to any group with ammunition for even occasional sniping.

NOR is the cry of "entertainment" as innocent as it sounds. Let the Catholic hierarchy decide to make a film selling, not religion, but Catholic ritual to the Lutherans, Jews, Baptists, Methodists, Unitarians and Congregationalists of America, and the film would be done quicker than you could say Joseph Breen. I do not have to go into the past to show the hypocrisy behind this cry of entertainment. I need only dwell for a short while on *Fugitive*, one of the latest films of 1947. This film appears to be built around the pursuit of a lone individual by the forces of authority. Since the fugitive is a priest, the notion is planted that the film is a defense of religion, or the freedom of religious worship. On close examination, however, it turns out to be something else.

In the introduction to the film an off-screen voice informs the audience that the story it is about to witness is a true story. The events of the story have happened before and are happening right now. Although the action is laid in Mexico, the events can happen anywhere in the North as well as the south. Thus is planted the idea that priests are being victimized right now in an anonymous northern country. The leader of the priest-hunting posse is dressed in military uniform. At the head of a gang of howling cutthroats he rides down simple villagers, tramples on their meager goods, hounds and

harries them. The gangsters make speeches like this: "Why do you give shelter to the priests? Why do you listen to them? Don't you know that they are backward and superstitious? We want to help you, improve your condition, while the priests hinder the revolution." In case you still don't get it, the soldiers wear an emblem showing a hand clutching a hammer. This obnoxious and incredible distortion thus attacks indirectly but unmistakably you-know-what country as an enemy of religious freedom. Does anybody want to wager that this film, built upon a monstrous lie, will never make the Legion of Decency *verboten* list or disturb the Hollywood definition of entertainment?

Thus the outlook for 1948 is not difficult to predict. Even before the "purge" the censorship on writing and thinking was so thorough that even the most daring would think twice about doing a script attacking Jim Crow, for instance, because the likelihood of having such a "commercially unfeasible" film produced was practically nil. How much more difficult will it now be to write adult scripts with the Thomas Committee, aided by the producers, riding herd on all originality, realism, honesty, and protest against social injustice? Unless the men in charge are seriously challenged by the film-goers themselves, we will be in for an increasing number of happy-ending escape films, enough angel-at-my-shoulder charmers to satisfy the supernatural hunger of the hierarchy, and enough anti-Soviet, Red-baiting films to satisfy the fascist hunger of our Wall Street monopolists—the clatter for pure entertainment notwithstanding.

## THEATER

FOR five or six years Barrie Stavis' fine drama about the persecution of Galileo by the Catholic Church, *Lamp At Midnight*, has been hunting a production. Finally scheduled by the Experimental Theater, it was set aside for the Brecht play on the same subject. NEW MASSES not having been accorded review courtesies, I missed the Brecht play and can make no first-hand comparison. Most reviewers were better impressed with the Stavis version of the story. From their comment I gather that the substitution was determined by a preference, on the part of the Ex-

perimental Theater, for technical innovation, for Brecht's "epic" narration as against Stavis' episodic realism.

Stavis, it turns out, was fortunate in this mishap. The Experimental Theater would have shown the play only for a week. Its present producers, New Stages, will probably show it to the whole of the not inconsiderable New York audience that does not mind going off Broadway and into an unupholstered auditorium to see a good play.

It is performed by the New Stages cast with absorption and verve. The actors submerge themselves in their roles in a manner seldom seen on the commercial stage, where the submergence is generally in the reverse order. Particularly effective were Peter Capell as Galileo, Leon Janney as Cardinal Barberini and Paul Mann as the Inquisitor. These advantages were somewhat offset by a creaking revolving stage and a seemingly lead-weighted curtain. Between them the stage illusion was nearly ground to dust at every scene shift. Boris Tumarin's otherwise adroit direction might have taken an example from Kazan's scene-changing in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, where the curtain came down only once to separate the two acts. The scenes were marked off by the dimming of lights, a means that involved a minimum of sensory intrusion and is somehow, in its effects, close to the natural process of transition in the mind.

Mr. Stavis' script is occasionally rhetorical but it stands out as one of the most eloquent and intelligent dramas of recent years. That such mature and effective playwriting has so long and continuously been denied presentation on Broadway is in itself an evidence of the continuing power of the Church hierarchy to interdict. There may not have been a single official gesture but the pervasive shadow cast by the Church over American culture has undoubtedly helped to block off *Lamp At Midnight* from Broadway. To dramatize the Galileo persecution is in itself damaging to the Church hierarchy. In little else in its all-too-human record of paltriness and error is the Divine Church so vulnerable. It is almost as if Galileo had been created to personify the victim of the unending clerical antagonism to progress.

*Lamp At Midnight* begins in a joyous mood. Galileo, has perfected his telescope and has therewith extended man's vision forty thousand miles into

the heavens. With it he makes visible the truth of the new Copernican system and the error of the old Aristotelian system. Astronomy, via the wonder-working telescope, becomes a craze of cardinals and princes.

To Galileo's straightforward scientific mind the next step is for the watchers to acknowledge what they see. But this the Church will not allow. Behind its refusal is a swamp thicket of personalia—inertia, cowardice, jealousy, opportunism, vanity, ambition, the sadism that goads fanatics and, above all, the Church fear of the counter-authority of Science, which it sees as one of the chief forces threatening the Church-centered feudal world. For these reasons the Church forced the conflict on Galileo, who never conceived of challenging its authority. He had sent his own daughter to a convent. In his devout mind the mission of science was to reveal the wonders of creation, to make manifest the divine order and harmony. Ironically it was the Church that opposed to this a conception of God as arbitrary and anarchic!

Hypocritical and debased clerical concepts of man's relationship to God are expressed in several mordant scenes, among them one where it is fittingly epitomized in the "holy" torturer's rationalization of his function as a bruising of the flesh to purge the soul: destruction equated with salvation. It is implied that God, like the Church

bureaucrats, feels safer with castrates than with whole men.

The Church forced Galileo to recant but it could not stop the evolution of his ideas. Galileo need never have uttered his despairing protest, "But it *does* move!" It thundered, inevitably, from thousands of minds.

Stavis' portrayal of Galileo's torment is eloquent and moving; and his version of the heroic battle of reason against the trained subtlety and arbitrary assumptions of the Church sophists is a high intellectual achievement.

*Lamp At Midnight* can be added to the still slim list of social drama. It has obvious relevance to our time. Another science, Marxism, is making other dogmas and practices of the Church anachronistic. Again the Church persists in disastrous but futile opposition. But the world does move!

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

## RECORDS

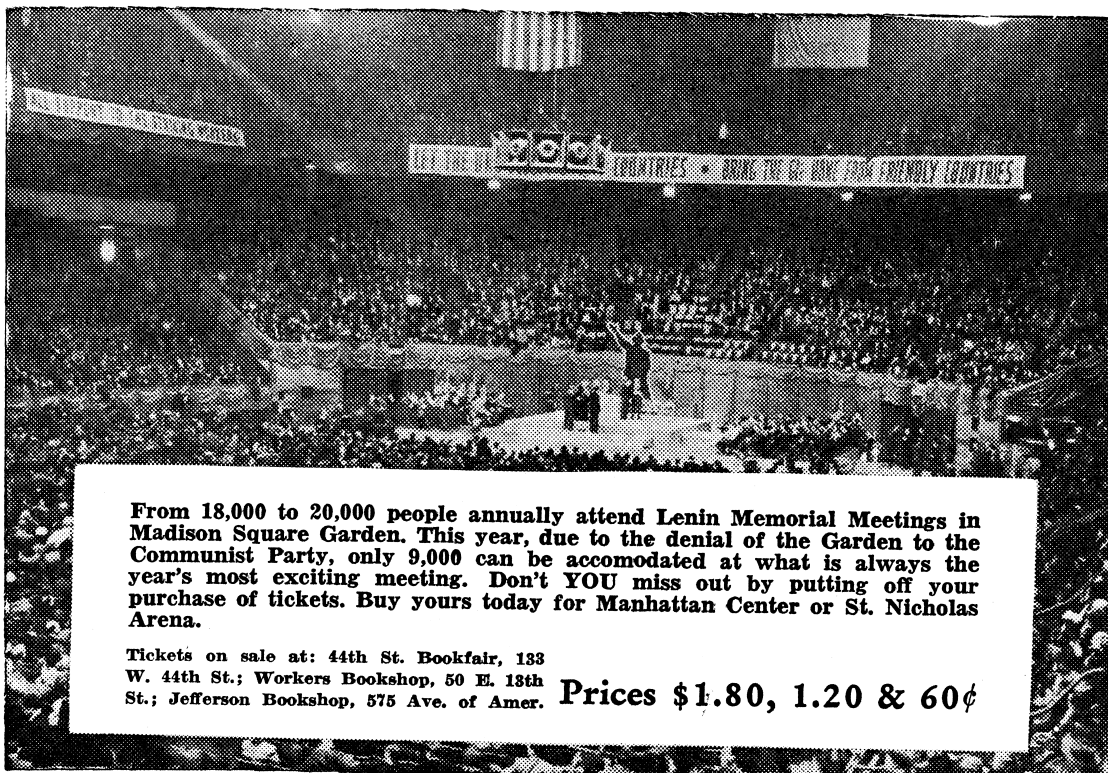
GUSTAVE MAHLER's Fifth Symphony, recorded by Bruno Walter and the New York Philharmonic (Columbia 718), is one of his more unrestrained emotional outbursts, reminiscent of his second symphony and foreshadowing his ninth. Every movement but one, the lovely *adagietto* for strings, is a wild fantasia: first a dead march, then an untitled Faustian tone poem, then a sardonic take-off on the

Viennese waltz, and last a gigantic fugal rondo. It is, like all his work, too long—not because he is anything less than a consummate craftsman, but because, never making a proper adjustment between himself and the real world, he can never make a proper adjustment with musical form. Always unsatisfied that he has fully expressed himself, he must always repeat and try again. Mahler is properly looming up, two generations after his death, to replace the fading Richard Strauss as the most characteristic composer of post-Wagnerian German music. It is music impossible to love in every note, but also music that demands knowing. The performance and recording are first quality.

Fritz Busch conducts, and Helen Traubel, Hertha Glaz and Torsten Ralf sing, the love music from "Tristan and Isolde." It is the first two named who make the performance especially admirable (Columbia MX 286). Irra Petina sings an aria from "Pique Dame" and eight Tschai-kowsky songs with excellent voice and style. Orchestral transcriptions, intelligently done but hardly necessary, replace the piano parts of the songs (Columbia 712). The Franck sonata for violin and piano, one of his best works, is given its finest recorded performance by Zino Francescatti and Robert Casadesus (Columbia 717).

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN.

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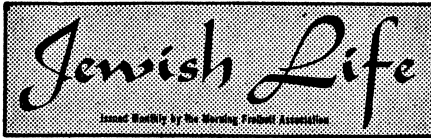
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