new masses

MAY 28, 1946

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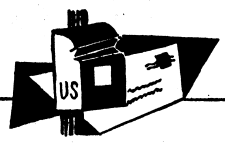
MUSIC FOR EVERYBODY ***by James Collis***

KRAVCHENKO CHOSE TREASON ***by Albert E. Kahn***

WHAT ABOUT THE BRITISH LOAN? ***by James S. Allen***

mail call



VIRGINIA GARDNER was up from Washington last week, looking very handsome in a dusty-pink dress and a black off-the-face straw hat. However, this isn't really a fashion note—she was also wearing a very cheerful expression, and that's what we want to tell you about. It seems she had been reading some of her fan mail which came in answer to a letter she wrote you. You remember, she told you how Gerald L. K. Smith had asked the Rankin Un-American Committee to investigate NM because of some articles she had written that were not exactly flattering to his fascist friends in "American Action, Inc." She asked you for the wherewithal to help her do more investigations and make Smith and those near and dear to him a little madder.

Here are some of the letters you've been writing her:

"Dear Friend: Herewith a small check as a token of my respect for your work. Let Smith have 'the works,' and Bilbo too! All good wishes. D.A.
($5.00) Philadelphia."

"Sorry I can't make it $1,000 but this job pays miserable wages—keep up the good work! E.M.
($1.00) San Diego."

"Hello Virginia: Two bucks is not enough, but it's my best at present. I am a newcomer on the West Coast. What are you and NM doing around this way? Can I help? I want to meet some friends who talk your and my language, Virginia.
($2.00) H.G.
Los Angeles."

"Hadn't planned to send this all at once or even now, but count it my way of writing you a fan letter which I've wanted to for ages. E.A.
($50.00) Montclair, N. J."

"We have just come through a five-month machinist strike so are unable to make a decent donation—we feel we should make a token payment for the extra enjoyment and education we receive from your always stirring pages.
($2.00) W.M.
Berkeley, Cal."

"Sorry I can't send more. Hurrah for you! H.B.
($2.00) Oakland, Cal."

"Carry on, comrade. Give them five dollars' worth of hell for me.
($5.00) S.F.
West Allis, Wis."

"Good luck with your exposes. I enjoyed the last one on Rankin.
($1.00) M.B.
Berkeley, Cal."

"Keep the good work going, Virginia. We readers want to know how the subhuman humans are trying to destroy us and as a byproduct themselves also.
($2.00) A.S.
Montclair Center, Cal."

That's the way they go. Veegee is a goodlooking gal, but with that light in her eye she's absolutely stunning. Help keep it there, and help her go on making life difficult for the subhumans.

ALBERT E. KAHN and Michael Sayers write us:

"The May 14 NM contained an inaccuracy regarding our book *The Great Conspiracy*, which we would like to correct. The statement read: 'Little, Brown issued *The Great Conspiracy* and gave it prominence in their catalogue, but bowed to the anti-Soviet storm and failed to push the book.'

"It so happens that, far from bowing to any anti-Soviet pressure, Little, Brown gave special consideration to *The Great Conspiracy* and publicized it to the very best of their ability."

The original statement in NM was based on misinformation, which the editors are glad to have corrected. It might also be pointed out that unlike the great majority of prominent publishers, Little, Brown & Co. have been issuing a number of excellent progressive and anti-fascist books. For this very reason they have been attacked in the *New Leader* and similar publications. B.M.

new masses

established 1911

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"Firewood," gouache by Jacob Lawrence.

I LOVE THE SOUTH

Yes, there are the Rankins, the Bilbos, the Eastlands. But a Southern poet tells of another South, the common people of toil and struggle.

By DON WEST

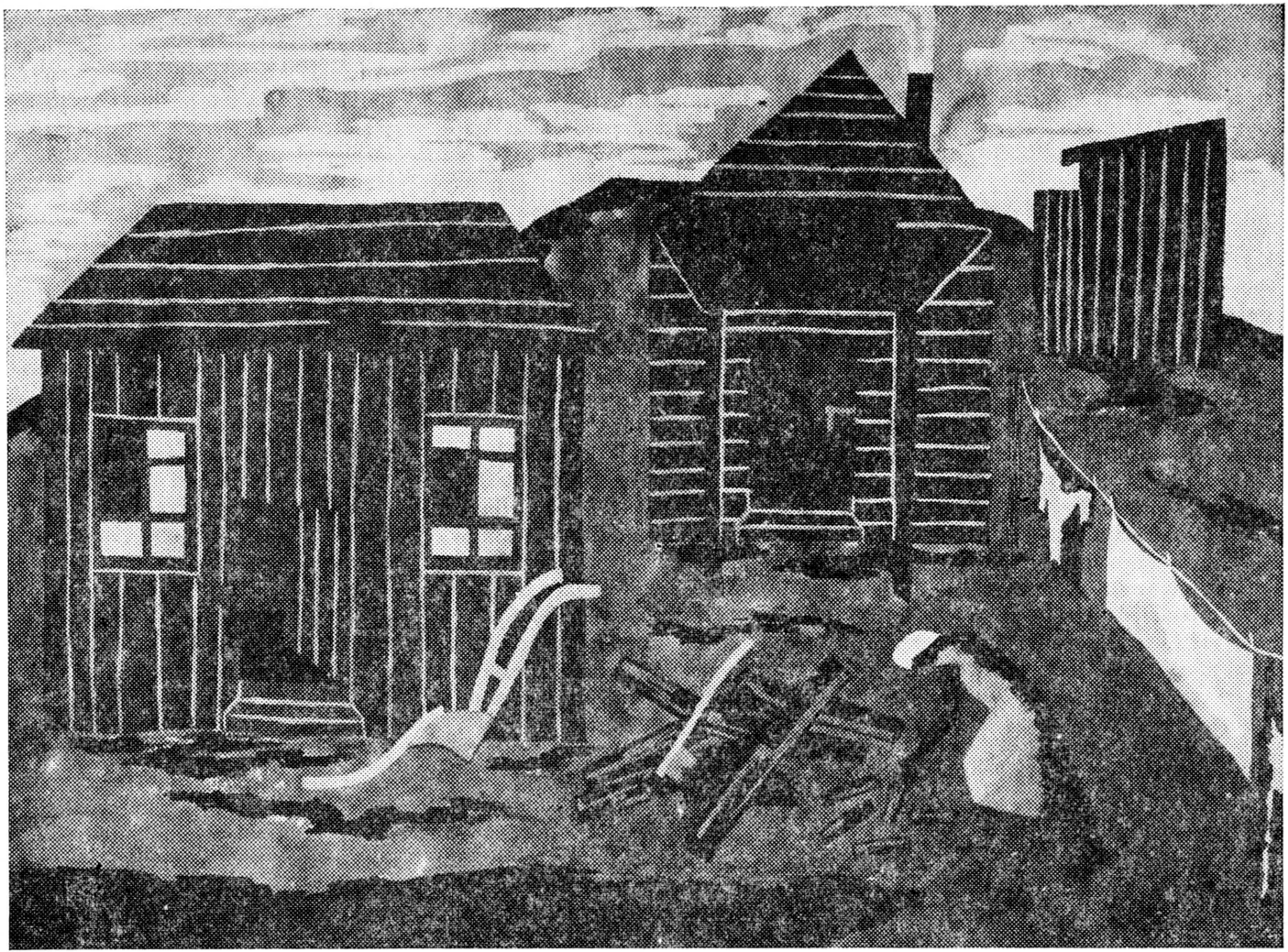
We are grateful to the publishers, Boni & Gaer, for permission to print this introduction and selections from a forthcoming book of poems, "Clods of Earth."

ONCE upon a time, not too long ago,. authors wrote mainly about kings and nobles—the aristocracy. Many stories and poems were filled with debauchery and intrigues. Writers occupied themselves in turning out tales about the purity of lovely ladies and the daring of gallant gentlemen who never did a useful day's work in their lives.

The fact that systems of kings and nobles, of aristocratic ladies and useless gentlemen, were always reared upon the misery of masses of peasants, slaves, or workers, was carefully omitted from most books. The idea that these same peasants, slaves or workers might themselves be fit material for literature would have been heresy.

You may think this a strange sort of way to begin an introduction to a group of poems. You may be one of those Americans who say you don't like poetry anyhow. No one can blame you for that. I've often felt that way, too. Maybe it's because too many poets write in the old tradition. Using an obscure and "subtle" private language, they write only for the little clique of the "highly literate" elite. But in spite of their high and mighty intellectual snobbery, one finds them, after all, concerned mostly with minor themes. Such literary gentlemen, writing only for the "elite" ten percent, spurn the "crude" and "vulgar" masses. They still have their eyes full of star dust. They see neither the dirt and misery nor the beauty and heroism of common folk life.

You say you want a poem with its roots in the earth; a poem that finds



"Firewood," gouache by Jacob Lawrence.

beauty in the lives of common people, and perhaps a poem that may sometimes show the reasons for the heartache and sorrow of the plain folks and sometimes point the way ahead. I don't blame you. I sort of feel that way, too.

Does this sound like a strange notion about poetry? Maybe it is. Some people say I have strange notions anyhow. I don't know. Lots of things I don't know. I've been a preacher, and I've preached the working-man, Jesus, who had some strange notions himself about the poor and the rich and the slaves. I've been a coal miner in Kentucky's Cumberlands and a textile worker in Carolina. I've been a radio commentator in Georgia and a deck hand on a Mississippi River steamboat. I've been a sailor, a farm owner and farmer. I am now a school superintendent. And I've wondered why it always seems that the folks who work less get more and those who work more get less. That puzzles me some. I've a notion it shouldn't be that way, and some say I have strange notions.

Maybe it's because of family background. You know, some people go in for that family stuff. I do come from an old Southern family. You've heard that one before, yes? Well, I don't mean what you think. Mine is a real old Southern family. Oh, I'm no sprig off the decadent tree of some bourbon, aristocratic, blue-blood family of the notorious slave-master tradition.

Funeral Notes

We're burying part of him today
In Hickory-Grove Church Yard.
We can't pull him all here,
For his grave
Spreads over a few rocky acres
That he loved—
Where peach blossoms bloom, and
Cotton stalks speckle the ground
On a Georgia hill.

Forty years he's been digging
And plowing himself under
Along these cotton rows.
Most of my Dad is there
Where the grass grows
And cockle-burrs bristle
Now that he's gone. . . .

We're covering him in March days
When seeds sprout.
And I think next Autumn
At picking time
The white-speckled stalks
Will be my old Dad
Bursting out. . . .

That's what is usually meant. You know — the professional Southerners who claim to be kind to Negroes—the tuxedoed gentlemen, the silk underweared, the lace-dressed ladies coyly peeping from behind scented fans. No, I don't mean that. I'm more Southern than that. That sort of thing represents only the small minority. My folks were the men who wore jeans pants and the women who wore linsey petticoats. They had nothing to do with the genteel tradition. Some were the first white settlers of Georgia, and some were already settled when the white ones came.

Yes, on one limb of my family tree hangs a bunch of ex-jail birds. They were good, honest (I hope, but it doesn't make a lot of difference now) working people in the old country. They were thrown in jails there because they were unemployed and couldn't raise money to pay their debts.

How in the devil a man is expected to pay a debt while lying in prison is hard to see. Maybe it satisfied the creditors to take it out on their hides. Anyhow, there they were, hundreds of them, and a man named Oglethorpe, who had a big, warm heart and a real feeling for folks, asked the old king to let him take a group of these prisoners to the new land.

The king didn't warm up to the idea much at first, but finally he was convinced. These outcasts would make a nice buffer protection for the more blue-blooded settlers of the other colonies, against the Indians and Spanish. The place later to be known as Georgia was just the spot. The colonies warmed right up to the idea, too. Nice to have a gang of tough jail birds known as "arrow-fodder" between them and the Indians. So, you see, Georgia was started. The plan worked.

SOME Southerners love to boast about their families. And I reckon I do too, a little. At least none of mine ever made his living by driving slaves. There's nary a slave owner up my family tree. The old story that we don't look too closely for fear of finding a "horse thief" is commonplace, of course. Indeed, wouldn't it be shameful to find one of our grandpaws doing such a petty theft? Who could be proud

Georgia Sharecropper

Between the plow handles—
Dawn-break,
Soon in the morning. . . .

Stooped shoulders—
Eyes full of hope,
Furrow on furrow
Around a stubble field.
Dirty sweat streaks the belly,
Drips from overalls,
Mixes with dust—
All day, all day. . . .

Dusk time—
Tired bodies,
Smell of mule sweat
And stable manure. . . .

Supper—
Corn-bread
Sow-belly
Pot-licker. . . .

Sleep—
Scent of rye-straw
From a bed tick
And dreams:
Between the plow handles
Soon in the morning.
A deep plowed furrow,
Little cotton plants
Seed still on,
Bursting up . . .
Sweat oozing.
Corn-blades streaking
A newground hill side.

And
Two eyes full of hope. . . .

No Anger in a Dead Man

Anger
Words of the toiling South:

"It came unbeknowence to us.
Don't know when
May have been when death
Gnawed through to the heart
Of our least one
With hunger's keen teeth.
Or maybe when six mouths
Asked for food
And six stomachs staid empty.
Must have been slow,
And we don't know when—
But it stays, and we like it!"

The slow, groaning anger
Of the South—
Born of toil and hunger,
Tearing at a million hearts,
Taken in with bulldog gravy
Or pinto beans,
Sucked up with coal dust or lint
Into the belly of the South,
The great, gaunt belly
Of a smouldering South!

No anger's in a dead man—
But it's in the South,
Slow, groaning anger
In the toiling South!

of a great-granddaddy with ambition no higher than stealing a horse? B'gad, we Americans go in for big stuff! Steal a horse? No! But steal a continent, a nation; steal the lives and labor of thousands of black men and women in slavery; steal the wages of underpaid workers; steal a railroad, a bank, a million dollars—oh boy, now you're talking! That's the real class. Those are the ancestors America's blue-bloods worship. But steal a horse—aw, heck, the guy might have been hanged for that!

Guess I'd better tell you about that other limb on my family tree now. From what I can uncover, it had just two main branches with a few sprigs sprouting off. A forked sort of bush, you know. On that other fork hangs a white slave (indentured servant) in Carolina and a kind hearted old Indian of the Cherokees in north Georgia. To make a long story short—though I think it is a beautiful, if tragic, one—this white slave girl and her lover ran away from their master in the Carolina tidewater country. The girl was pregnant, but the master had been forcing his attentions on her and that was more than her lover could stand. They set out toward the Indian country of north Georgia. Hearing the pursuers close behind, the man stopped, telling the girl to keep going and he'd overtake her if he got a lucky shot. He never overtook her. She went on and finally, weary and near death, reached the Indian settlement around Tallulah Falls in north Georgia. The Indians put her to bed and cared for her. The baby, a boy, was born. The child grew up as an Indian, married into the tribe, and had other children.

This, then, is the other limb of our family tree.

Do you think I'm telling about this tree just because it's mine? You're partly right. But the main reason is that, to a greater or lesser degree, it represents the great majority of Southern whites. And their real story has never yet been adequately told. Some day I intend to do it, to tell about these people with rough hands, big feet and hard bodies; about the real men and women of the South.

That old Southern family stuff that you've heard so much about, always meaning the aristocratic, slave-owning tradition, is worn about as thin as the blood of those families today. Our people, the real Southern mass majority of whites, are the ones the Negroes were taught to call "pore white trash." And we, in turn, were taught the hateful word "nigger." Nice little trick, isn't it? Hitler used it, too. And it is still being used today, by the Southern whites from the big houses, who engineer lynchings and make it seem that the responsibility is the white workers'.

Our people, and the Negroes, made up about ninety-eight percent of the Southern population before the Civil War.

In addition to all this, I'm a "hillbilly." My folks were mountain people. We lived on Turkey Creek. And what a place that is!

Turkey Creek gushes in white little splashes around the foot of Burnt Mountain and down to the Cartecay. The Cartecay crawls and gurgles—sometimes lazily, sometimes stormily—down the valleys and hollows between the hills to Ellijay. Over the cataracts and through the fords these waters have gone on since nobody knows when—except that summer when the drouth saw sands scorching dry, and the river bed looked like a pided mocassin turned on its back to die in the sun.

Mountain houses are scattered along the banks of Cartecay. Mountain people live there, plain people to whom it is natural to ask a stranger to stay all night. They have lived there for generations—since the first white man pushed through the Tallulah gorge, and others came up from the lowlands to escape the slave system. Indians have also lived on the Cartecay. It was once their hunting grounds. But most of them were rounded up and marched west toward the setting sun. Mountain men on Cartecay have gone west too, in search of opportunity, but some have stayed.

Keller.

The men who first settled the mountains of the South were fearless and freedom loving. Many, in addition to the prisoners, came to escape persecution in the old country. They had been outspoken in opposition to oppression and denial of liberties. Some came later into the friendly mountains seeking a few rocky acres they could till and call their own. They fled from the ever-encroaching wave of slave-holding planters in the lowlands. The "poor whites" in slavery days found themselves burdened down with slave labor competition. Their lot in many instances was very little better than that of the slave. In the lowlands of the planters they were considered a blight upon the community. They were pushed off the desirable lands. Left to them were the submarginal, undesirable ridges or swamps. Many, therefore, fled to the great mountain ranges of north Georgia and other states, where freedom of a sort was to be had. Disease, starvation and illiteracy were the lot of tens of thousands of these "poor whites" who were forced to live in the hard, unfertile regions of the South prior to the Civil War.

Now you may have thought, as I once did, that the old South was divided simply into whites and blacks—slave and master—and that everybody supported slavery from the beginning. I was taught in that school, from the history books, about my own state. But I'm going to let you in on a little secret that I didn't learn from the school textbooks. Here it is: Oglethorpe and the first settlers of Georgia were bitterly opposed to the whole institution of slavery. They fought resolutely

against slavery ever coming to Georgia.

I dug this up from some old dusty records. Here is what Oglethorpe himself wrote in a letter to Granville Sharpe, Oct. 13, 1776: "My friends and I settled the Colony of Georgia. . . . We determined not to suffer slavery there. But the slave merchants and their adherents occasioned us not only much trouble, but at last got the then government to favor them. We would not suffer slavery . . . to be authorized under our authority; we refused, as trustees, to make a law permitting such a horrid crime. . . ."

But this isn't all. How deeply this idea of freedom and justice was planted in these early Georgians is further shown by a resolution passed Jan. 12, 1775, endorsing the proceedings of the first American Congress, by "the Representatives of the extensive District of Darien, in the Colony of Georgia." It said in part:

"5. To show the world that we are not influenced by any contracted or interested motives, but a general philanthropy for all mankind, of whatever climate, language or complexion, we hereby declare our disapprobation and abhorrence of the unnatural practice of slavery in America . . . , a practice founded in injustice and cruelty, and highly dangerous to our liberties (as well as lives), debasing part of our fellow-creatures below men, and corrupting the virtues and morals of the rest; and is laying the basis of the liberty we contended for . . . upon a very wrong foundation. We, therefore, resolve, at all times, to use our utmost endeavors for the manumission of slaves in this Colony. . . ."

There it is! These were men who indeed did not fit into a system of power and privilege for a few. But eventually their opposition was beaten down (though never destroyed). There went on a general infiltration of the bluebloods who wanted slaves to do their work. Finally there was a civilization, a "culture," an aristocracy reared upon the institution of slavery, built upon the bent backs of human beings, bought and sold like cattle, and upon the misery of the overwhelming majority of non-slave-holding Southern whites.

This, then, is the so-called and much lamented "culture" of the "lost cause!" The basis of wealth and privilege was the ownership of slaves. This privilege was concentrated in a very few hands. The total population of the South prior to the Civil War was about 9,000,000. There were about 4,500,000 slaves, over 4,000,000 non-slave-owning whites, and, at the most, not more than 300,000 actual slave owners.

Culture, education and wealth were limited to this narrow oligarchy of a few hundred families. Since the overwhelming majority of Southern whites owned no slaves whatsoever, they had little voice in government. The local and state governments were virtually executive committees for the slave masters. For lack of free schools, ignorance and illiteracy were the lot of the poor whites who were bowed down under the heavy burden of taxation of a slave-master government.

And so there grew up in these Southern mountains communities of non-slave-holding farmers, scratching a bare livelihood from the stubborn new-ground hillside patches. They hated the slave system and the slave masters. Many of them refused to fight for the "lost cause" in the Civil War. They reasoned: Why fight for a system that oppresses us as well as the black slaves?

Yes, these were my people. I come from the Devil's Hollow region close by Turkey Creek at the foot of Burnt Mountain in north Georgia. Earliest memories are woven around the struggles of my Dad and Mother to dig a living from our little mountain farm. Life always seemed hard—like an iron fist mauling them in the face, knocking them down every time they tried to get up. But they wanted their kids to go to school, get educated. We went, the whole bunch of us. There were nine kids, three now dead. All of the survivors today are progressive thinkers, working for a better South.

Yes, I got something in schools—Vanderbilt, Chicago University, Columbia, Oglethorpe, University of Georgia, in European schools. But my best education has not been from classrooms and formal professors. My real education has been beaten into me by the everlasting toil and hunger I've seen, by the struggles in textile and coal mining centers, where our people were tolled down from the hills with fair promises of a better life; by the hunger I have seen in the faces of sharecropper kids; by my own sister, wife of a sharecropper, dying young from overwork and worry. It is this education of life—of prisons and jails for innocent men—that caused a determination never to seek to rise upon the shoulders of others; to rise only when the great mass of plain people can also have a richer life. And some day we will!

I LOVE the South. Like hundreds of other Southerners, I dislike some things about its customs and ways. But our folks have lived and died there. Our roots are sunk deeply from generations back. My own Dad died young—toil and hunger, too much work and too little of the right kind of food are the only honest reasons any doctor could have given.

We had big hopes when we left the mountains to become sharecroppers in the cotton lowlands. But those hopes were dead long before we buried Dad in Hickory Grove Church Yard.

So I pass these poems on to you who may care enough to read. They are little pieces of life—and death—picked up along the way. May they help to kindle little sparks that will grow into big flames!

Keller.

BEETHOVEN AND PORK CHOPS TOO

A practical program for immediate action is suggested to benefit the musicians, the composers, and the music-hungry people of the nation.

By JAMES COLLIS

THE past two decades have witnessed an unprecedented growth of activity in music in this country. Today we have eighteen major symphonies, 300 smaller orchestras and 30,000 bands and orchestras in our educational institutions. We have four musical conservatories, which in their comparatively brief existence have won world recognition. A steadily increasing number of music departments in institutions of higher education have grown from relatively unimportant adjuncts of school life to respected departments of professional education. Concrete evidence of the growth of interest and activity in music is the rapid development of musical instrument manufacture to a large industry.

In the face of this growth of musical activity, there is the contradictory fact of mass unemployment among musicians. This, together with the fact that only a relatively small number of people are able to listen to any but radio or recorded performance of music, are the outward symptoms of the acute contradiction in the organization of musical life. Opposed to the growing expression of public need for music, we have the constricting influence of private monopoly in the organization of performance.

Huge agencies such as the William Morris Agency, Music Corporation of America, Consolidated, and the concert agencies operated by the networks, run music on a business basis for profit. And one of the greatest sources of profit in the exploitation of music is in the field of advertising. More and more our major musical organizations are being brought under big business management by way of radio advertising. This tendency, if unchecked by a people's movement in music, can only lead to the degeneration of music as an art, just as the press has degenerated under its control by big business.

Thousands of young people whose interest in music has been awakened in high school bands and orchestras, and whose knowledge of conditions in the field have been gained from periodicals glamorizing the profession, pack their bags and are off to the big city and fame. Then comes the heartbreaking disillusionment.

The musical profession has been wracked with unemployment for years. With the ending of the war unemployment is again reaching crisis proportions—the result of canned music—radio, records and the movies. Wired music has replaced the salon orchestra in restaurants, the juke box has cut out the small dance band; radio and records limit the employment of big bands and orchestras; luscious music of chartreuse and rose on a Hollywood sound track has replaced the small town movie orchestra of violin and piano.

Should we not welcome improvements in reproducing sound? Of course —they have had a direct bearing upon the entire musical advances made in America.

But mechanized sound alone is not the answer to people's need for music. Canned music resembles live music as electric light resembles sunlight. At one time or another most people have heard, through recordings and radio, great symphonic music. A very small number, however, have experienced the full beauty of its sound. When listening to canned music at its best today, the brain must supply the greater proportion of the sound that fails to reach the ear. Without having heard a live performance, the brain cannot supply what is missing in canned music. Consequently, by far the great majority of radio and record listeners never fully experience music. It is precisely this that hampers consolidation of the musical advances we have made in the past two decades. People must experience live music, the real music, with its full density and color of tone and overtones.

The opportunity to hear live music does exist in large metropolitan centers. But throughout the country as a whole people are starved for music. The appearance of a concert artist or orchestra in smaller communities is a gala event. To citizens of such localities musicians are an odd, ephemeral people, arriving in the late afternoon, bringing an all-too-brief and uncommon pleasure in the evening, and gone the next morning.

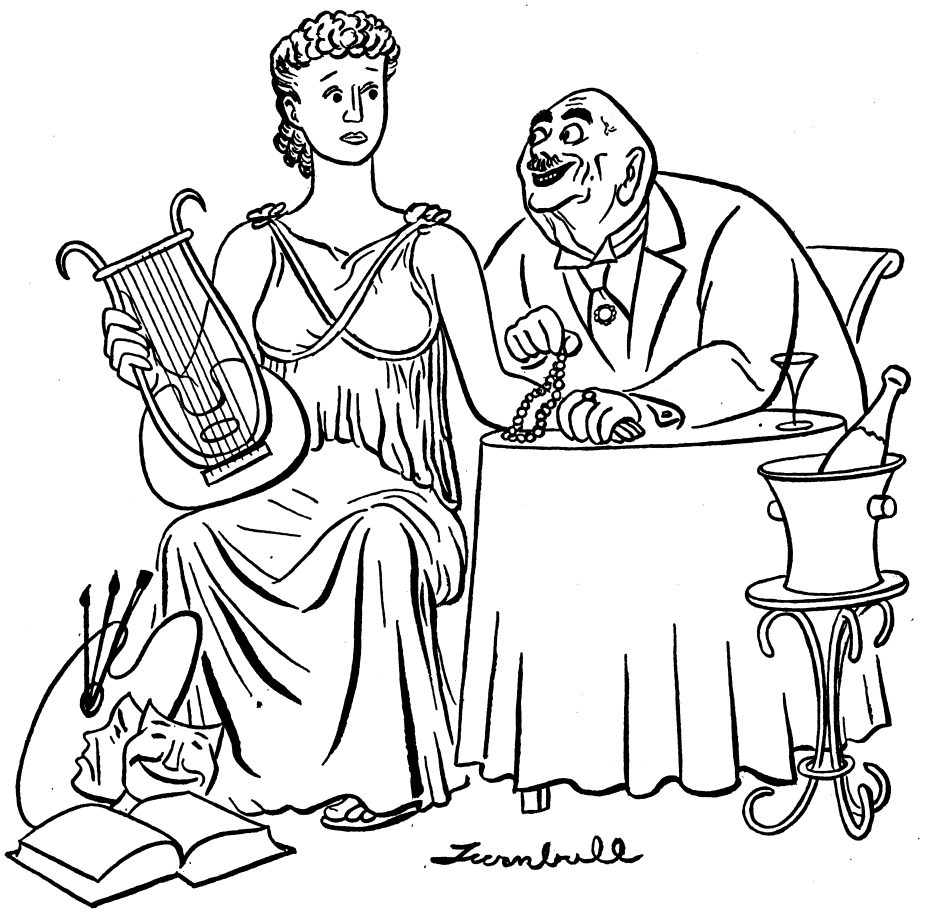
The picture in big cities is somewhat different. In Chicago, Los Angeles and New York there are so many unemployed musicians that they are stumbling over each other. Famous soloists are playing in fiddle sections of orchestras; some of the finest first chair men from the major symphony orchestras are playing musical shows. Many of them cannot secure even this work.

President Roosevelt was so deeply concerned about the problem of bringing music to the people that three years ago, in the midst of leading a nation at war, and as a part of exercising that leadership, he asked James Petrillo to come to the White House to discuss the problem. The result was that Petrillo organized tours by major symphony orchestras through outlying districts, where they were greeted with an enthusiasm unheard of in large cities. The same kind of reception is reported by touring soloists and instrumental combinations.

In such smaller communities a subscription for a series of concerts is given up only to relatives or close friends. It has a value resembling that of an apartment in big cities today.

THE problem in the field of music today is to bring together the vast potential audience and the idle talent—to decentralize music.

Attendance figures for summer seasons and pop concerts in large cities demonstrate the people's interest in music, for these informal concerts attract huge audiences and entirely different audiences than the regular winter series in halls. The Cleveland Orchestra plays to 9,000 people at a single concert; the Detroit Orchestra 5,000; the Mannes concerts in the Metropolitan Museum in New York 8,000; the Robin Hood Dell concerts in Philadelphia 6,500; the Hollywood Bowl concerts 25,000—and most of these audiences are limited by the capacity of the auditorium or outdoor enclosure. Even pop concerts at such



places as Carnegie Hall, with a much higher minimum price, attract capacity houses.

The common threads running through these already successful projects are popular prices and the informality of the programs and atmosphere. Americans do not like the formal atmosphere of the concert hall and opera —they are frightened away. The supervision of symphony orchestras by the social elite as a part of their social life and their patronizing solicitude for the community is a large obstacle in the path of developing musical life for the people.

The type of program that must be developed is one that encompasses large audiences at low admission prices. To ensure its success it must be a genuine community project, organized by labor and other democratic forces such as civic organizations, fraternal societies, educational and church groups. Thus democratically organized, discrimination because of race, color, sex or creed will be guarded against.

A city of 150,000, together with its surrounding communities, is a sufficiently large center to support an orchestra of forty pieces. The proper type of program at an average admission of fifty cents, attracting 9,000 people during a week's concerts, will bring an income of $4,500. At a weekly salary of $65 per man the cost of a forty-piece musical organization amounts to $2,600, which leaves an adequate margin for conductor, soloists, auditorium, administration expenses, etc. Once launched, such a project could soon be self-supporting.

Smaller centers can support smaller combinations, concert bands, etc. Additional support can be gained by short tours to outlying districts unable to support their own musical projects.

A very important feature of this type of community program is the tremendously valuable work it can do for youth. Children's concerts will develop future audiences; and, more immediately important, dance projects under proper community supervision can play an important part in helping to solve the problem of prevention and cure of juvenile delinquency by providing a constructive channel for youthful energy.

Nearly every city of any size has facilities for seating large audiences— auditoriums, sports arenas, armories and museums during cold weather; parks and air-cooled auditoriums during the summer. Wiring for sound is a relatively minor expense.

Most musicians in cities such as New York would prefer to become residents of smaller centers with an income adequate to live in dignity and security. The overwhelming majority of musicians in big cities, no matter how talented they may be, are still little fish, and mostly hungry fish, in a big pond.

A program for such a project of decentralization of music has been outlined by a rank and file committee of members of New York's Local 802, American Federation of Musicians, and has been submitted to the executive board of the Federation for discussion at the annual convention to be held in May. The proposed plan was prompted by the fact that since the winning of the musicians' struggle against the record companies, nearly $1,000,000 in royalties have accrued to the Federation. The funds are earmarked for use to create employment for musicians and discussion of means to that end will take place at the convention.

Since the type of enterprise envisioned by this plan of decentralization could be practically self-supporting, it would seem that the fund could be used to no better purpose than to launch it on a national scale. The financial and organizational power of the Federation would guarantee the success of the plan, thus creating thousands of permanent jobs for musicians. Should the Musicians' Union adopt the plan, it will place itself in the leadership of a developing American culture, for by developing large music audiences the basis will be laid for a great upsurge in creative works.

American music cannot develop if its composers have such few opportunities to have their works performed as now exist, and remain isolated from the people. Composers must have an audience which will listen to a musical with more content than the slick, quick-profit ones about pirates and beautiful girls.

Under present musical conditions, composers have no opportunity to merge themselves fully with the people, which they must do if they are to express people's feelings, give direction and purpose to their strength. Composers who look around fearfully, seeing their world narrowing and crumbling, cannot write poems of strength and courage. Artists who, through union with the people, feel the giant strength within the people—strength that enables common men and women the world over to fight against tyranny and for a better world—these are the artists who will speak in eloquent language, touching America's heart and speaking its mind.

WHAT ABOUT THE LOAN TO BRITAIN?

Dollars to Britain are aimed at consolidating an Anglo-American bloc against the Soviet Union. An investment in insecurity, crisis and war.

By JAMES S. ALLEN

IT IS extremely difficult to understand how progressives in American political life can possibly justify the loan to Britain in the present state of world affairs. Various reasons for granting the loan have been adduced, some humanitarian, others economic. I do not contest the humanitarian principle that the United States ought to use its abundance to relieve those nations which have suffered from Axis aggression. Nor do I question the general principle that a cooperative approach to the solution of world trade problems is preferable to a "lone wolf" approach by the United States. But it so happens that neither of these principles is paramount in the loan to Britain.

As the debate over the loan has proceeded in this country, it has become more and more obvious that it is intended as a master stroke in the world politics of isolating the Soviet Union, and preparing for war against her. One need only listen to the chief advocates of the loan to comprehend fully the politics involved. The economics of the loan are no longer considered important, and if administration spokesmen still talk with tongue in cheek about the advantages it will provide in terms of multilateral trade and the imagined benefits of free trade, this hardly convinces anyone. Senator Vandenberg also used these phrases when he threw his support to the loan on the eve of his departure for the foreign ministers' meeting in Paris. Yet everyone knows that he agreed to go to Paris only after having been assured that the policy of "patience and firmness" toward the Soviet Union is about to enter still another phase in which the element of "patience" will be entirely absent.

There is every reason to believe Joseph and Stewart Alsop's statement in their New York *Herald Tribune* column of May 6 that Vandenberg had prepared quite another Senate speech than the one he delivered. In his unused draft he argued the "real" reasons for the loan to Britain by depicting the "world-wide competition between the American and Soviet systems," but, they said, he had been induced to follow a more "cautious" line in view of the approaching Paris conference. And if the Alsop brothers are to be believed further, Secretary of the Treasury Fred Vinson and Assistant Secretary of State Will Clayton, leading the administration fight for the loan, had been advised to be "cautious," because high circles in the administration had not yet agreed that it was the appropriate time to speak out against the "new Soviet imperialism."

It is hardly an accident that the Senate debates on the loan and on the extension of the draft should overlap so closely, and should take place simultaneously with the Paris conference. American diplomacy saw the Paris meeting as a major *tour de force*, where the astute Mr. Byrnes, fortified with his proposal for a four-power treaty to "demilitarize" Germany and another plan to solve all the economic problems of Europe by excluding the Soviet Union from that continent, would expose the "expansionist" Soviet aims. And this exposure, according to the highest Washington strategy, was to justify completely not only the loan to Britain, but also the extension of the draft and a dozen other projects unwanted by the American people.

If the administration was not yet ready to reveal its hand, others were less cautious. As the Senate debate started, the New York *Times*, which for all practical purposes is virtually the organ of the State Department, declared bluntly that the loan should be granted "primarily on political and social grounds," since it was needed for collaboration between "a strong United States and a strengthened Britain." And as the debate wore on, the argument used by the supporters of the loan in preference to all others was that it is an "investment in security." Is it necessary to ask, security against whom? In the present atmosphere of deliberate anti-Soviet provocation there could be only one answer.

INDEED, the atmosphere surrounding the debate on the loan has been noted with uneasiness in some leading British circles. It does not escape *The Economist* of London, organ of the City, that brighter prospects for approval of the loan "are due in such large measure to the state of Russo-American relations." And with some displeasure this same organ notes that Catholic organizations in the United States are engaged in a crusade for the loan, while the Communists are opposed to it.

From the beginning big business circles in England agreed to the loan only with distaste and great trepidation: they do not relish an American mortgage on the weakened Empire. But having accepted this unpleasant necessity, they do not like to feel that the extension of the loan depends upon the state of American-Soviet relations on Monday or Friday. What if on Wednesday one of the many basic Anglo-American conflicts should for a day overshadow the administration's vendetta against the Soviet Union? What if events in Palestine, for example, or a new massacre in Greece to force an unwanted royal dictatorship upon the people, or new repressive measures against a resurgent independence movement in India should arouse such revulsion among the American people as to endanger the loan? British monopoly wants a more substantial guarantee before embarking on the important commitments that flow from accepting the loan.

Our progressive friends, who have turned multilateral trade into a fetish and insist upon ignoring the political aims of the loan, should note that since the agreement was concluded in December 1945 many "economic isolationists" have moved toward support of the loan. Among them are some who opposed world economic cooperation as it was originally envisioned at the Bretton Woods Conference of July 1944. I have already mentioned the New York *Times*, which originally opposed Bretton Woods because it

might interfere with the freedom of American monopoly capital to impose its own conditions upon borrowing countries. Its present enthusiastic support of the loan to Britain is a far cry from its contention during the Bretton Woods debates that loans "should be granted only when there is a real prospect of repayment, and only on consideration of the adoption of sound internal economic policies in each borrowing country."

Winthrop W. Aldrich, president of Chase National Bank and head of the International Chamber of Commerce, was a leader of the bankers' group that opposed Bretton Woods, and favored instead an Anglo-American settlement as a prerequisite of any other international agreement. Obviously, Aldrich thinks that the loan meets these requirements, for he endorses it, although he would have preferred a large grant-in-aid as a continuation of lend-lease. Most elements opposing Bretton Woods because it had the possibility of cooperation in the economic sphere with the Soviet Union now support the loan to Britain. For this loan seems to guarantee that "world cooperation" will take the shape of an Anglo-American bloc under the leadership of the United States, and help recreate the conditions for an economic and political boycott of the Soviet Union.

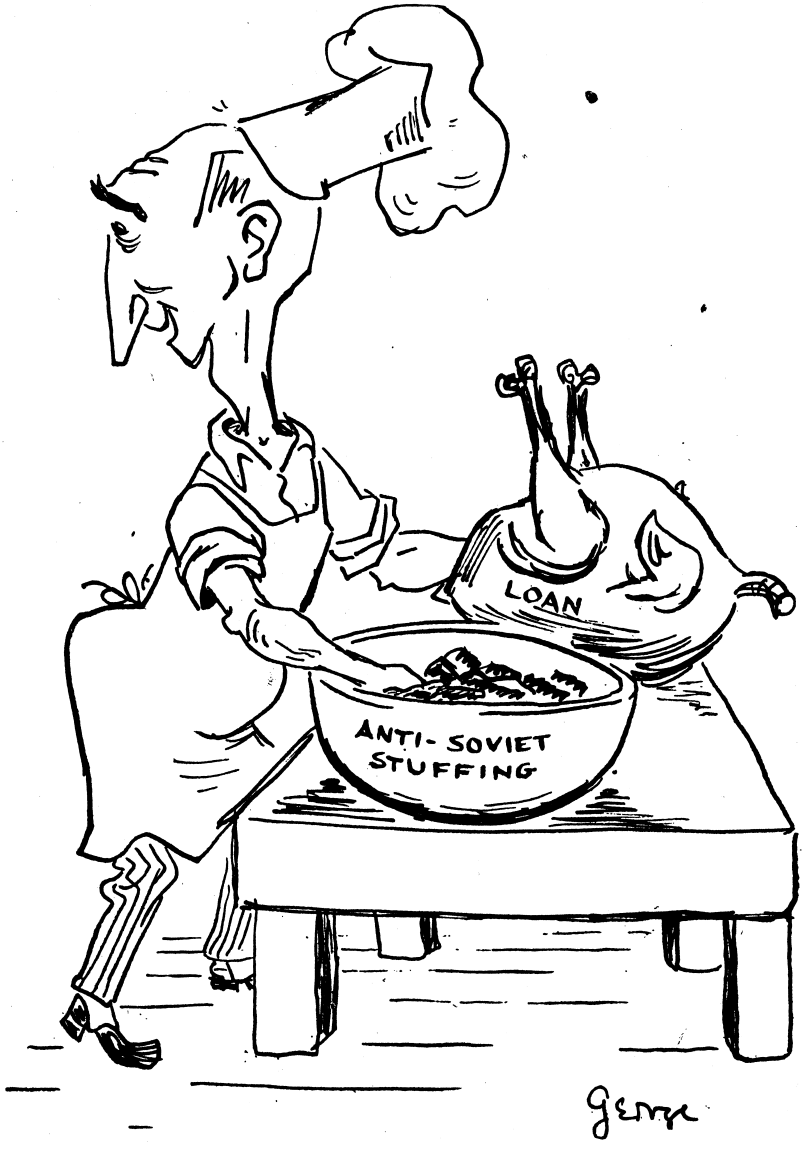
It is true that a number of diehard "isolationists" like Senator Taft oppose the loan as it now stands. Taft belonged to the group led by Aldrich during the Bretton Woods debate, and he still sticks by the original proposition that Britain should receive a grant-in-aid without any obligations of repayment, as a means of obtaining even greater spoils from the British Empire. Others in this obdurate Senate group, who will be joined by even more vociferous Congressmen in the House, insist upon permanent possession of the British bases in the Caribbean, now held on ninety-nine year lease by the United States, and also freer access to Empire markets. In effect, these men are not satisfied that sufficient concessions have been obtained in return for the loan, and are continuing the bargaining which preceded the loan agreement of last December.

Before the debate is over, some additional concessions may be wrung from Britain, and the diehard opposition may be split further. In any case, this group is hardly opposed to the main political objective of the loan, especially as recently stated, stripped of all pretense, by Joseph P. Kennedy, former ambassador to Britain, who also would have preferred Senator Taft's proposal for an outright gift. But failing that, he wants the loan because "the British people and their way of life form the last barrier in Europe against communism; and we must help them to hold that line."

Not only the arguments for the loan, but even more fundamentally all the circumstances which surrounded its negotiation and now influence the debate show that it is to serve as a keystone of the Anglo-American bloc, or, more precisely, that it is intended to consolidate such a bloc directed at isolating the Soviet Union. It is proposed at a time when Britain and the United States are concerting their policies on a world scale, and when a corresponding effort is being made to establish common Anglo-American strategic positions in many parts of the globe. But the economic weakness of Britain and the deep inner crisis of its empire, as well as the imperialist rivalry between a powerful United States and a weakened Britain, are major obstacles to the consolidation of this bloc. The loan is an attempt to regulate this rivalry, on conditions unavoidably favorable to American imperialism but at the same time bolstering the British power as a bulwark against the Soviet influence and the democratic movements in Europe and Asia. It is an attempt to subordinate the Anglo-American rivalry to a joint political policy the essence of which is reaction.

Whether these joint efforts in the sphere of politics, strategy and economics will in the end prove successful is another matter. The point is that as long as this policy is followed, and at every place that it is applied, the forces

of reaction are supported, the wartime coalition of the big powers is each time further disrupted, and the war danger is sharpened. In fact, so great is the crisis of the British Empire that all the king's horses and all the king's men can hardly put it together again. And if to these are added billions of American dollars, this will have to be followed by American armament and



troops, if the attempt is to be made to restore the past position of monopoly-capital throughout the world. Far from being an investment in security, the loan to Britain would be an investment in insecurity, crises and war.

Some proponents of the loan are undoubtedly moved by what they believe would be the dire consequences of not granting the loan. According to some people, failure to approve the loan would lead to intensive economic warfare between Britain and the United States. Actually, this rivalry is so inherent in the world positions of the two powers that it will continue whether the loan is granted or not, but under different circumstances in each case. Some hold that the loan will create more favorable conditions for American supremacy; others believe that the loan will eventually enable Britain to resist American pressure more effectively. In any case, the loan in itself cannot solve the contradictions between the two imperialist powers. At the moment, American reactionaries and expansionists are much enamored with Churchill's vision of the future, and are quite willing to sacrifice a few billion dollars of the people's money to realize it. The British are not quite so visionary. It does not escape their attention that the "idealistic" Americans are pressing their advantage against Britain in between banquets where eternal Anglo-American friendship is toasted. Nor are the British economic royalists to be found napping when it is a question of regaining their lost positions abroad or developing world markets.

Although some real advantages for the American economic expansionists may be obtained as a result of the loan, as a whole the benefits which the United States may expect have been greatly exaggerated. In exchange for the largest credit ever negotiated in peacetime (over $5,500,000,000, when the Canadian loan of $1,250,000,000, which is contingent upon the granting of the American credit, is included), the British give surprisingly little. Although the British hoped for a large grant or at least an interest-free loan, the terms of the fifty-year credit are extremely favorable. The loan totals $4,400,000,000, of which $650,000,000 is to be devoted to the settlement of all outstanding lend-lease accounts. This means that Britain will receive all orders that were placed or about to be placed on V-J Day, and will acquire vast stocks of American munitions and goods, as well as some installations, in the British Isles and the Empire. The balance of the credit, amounting to $3,750,000,000, can be drawn by Britain any time up to the end of 1951.

IN COMPARISON with the usual commercial loan or the Export-Import Bank loan, to which all other borrowing countries are restricted, the terms are very liberal. No interest is to be paid during the first six years. Counting these years, the actual rate of interest, nominally two percent, comes down to 1.65 percent. Even after 1951, Britain will not be required to pay interest in any year in which exports have not been restored to a level of about sixty percent in excess of prewar exports by volume. The maximum repayment in any year would be $140,000,000, which would not have to be paid until income from abroad is fifty times that amount. Export-Import Bank loans carry no moratorium, have a higher rate of interest, and restrict all borrowers to specific purchases in the United States, while the British loan can be expended anywhere.

In return, the British agree to one real concession, and to a pledge which may potentially be of some value to the American trade expansionists. The real concession is the agreement by the British to release the current balances

of the sterling area after the spring of 1947, within one year instead of five years as provided in the Bretton Woods agreement. This means that the countries within this area (officially defined as the British Dominions, colonies, mandates and protectorates, plus Egypt, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Iraq, Iceland and the Faroe Islands) could freely convert their pounds into dollars for trade with the United States, instead of, as during the war, having all their sterling and dollar balances held by Britain and controlled by her.

However, this provision does not relate to the huge sterling balances amounting to $13,500,000,000 accumulated during the war, when the colonies and Dominions supplied Britain with goods and services which could not be repaid by British exports. The loan agreement provides that Britain is to negotiate separately with each of the sterling area countries for the settlement of this debt, some of it to be released at once for purchases in the United States, another portion to be freed over a period of years after 1951, and the rest to be cancelled or revised downwards. It is this part of the agreement that has caused great dissatisfaction in India, Egypt and other sterling countries. They want these balances returned in the form of British machinery and other goods, or made convertible into dollars so that they can purchase in the United States the goods needed for their industrialization. As matters now stand, not only has the United States agreed to the scaling down of this debt, but is permitting Britain to impose her own terms, and thus continue to retard the industrialization of the economically backward regions of the Empire.

How much Britain would actually surrender to the United States by releasing current balances is a moot question. Important breeches into the exclusive British sphere had been made by the United States ever since World War I, and especially during World War II. The British are merely surrendering a position which they had in effect already lost. This is generally recognized in England. The Dominions, especially Canada and recently also Australia, are well along into the American sphere anyhow. As Sir John Anderson, former Chancellor of the Exchequer, remarked during the Parliamentary debate on the loan, if a settlement is not reached with the United States "the temptation not to support us but to go their own way and make the best of their own resources and possibilities would be very strong indeed." And the same point is made by the *Bankers' Magazine* of London, in reply to the British critics of the loan:

"This is denounced as the forcible dissolution of the sterling area, but the short answer is that the sterling area in its wartime structure would break up tomorrow in the absence of this loan agreement or something like it. This is openly admitted by Ministers and fully recognized by all informed observers."

IN OTHER words, after the first anguish in Britain when the terms of the loan were made known, it came to be accepted as one of those unpleasant realities of a declining empire. The undignified spectacle of the once almighty British Empire laying bare its economic weakness in official documents and personal supplications to the United States could not pass unnoticed among the many peoples seeking freedom from the Empire, who had seen one great British bastion after another fall during the war. And this spectacle also turned the stomach of the English people, who had withstood the hardships and horrors of war with dignity and never adopted the whining tone which characterized the British suppliants for an American loan. But the hard-pressed ruling circles do not stand on pride or dignity when it is a question of preserving their privileges and their empire. American aid for this purpose, even at the price of sharing the Empire with the American expansionists a little more freely than otherwise, is by far the lesser evil. As the late Lord Keynes, who headed the British negotiators, pointed out in his report to the House of Lords, the only alternative to knuckling under to the Americans was no alternative at all:

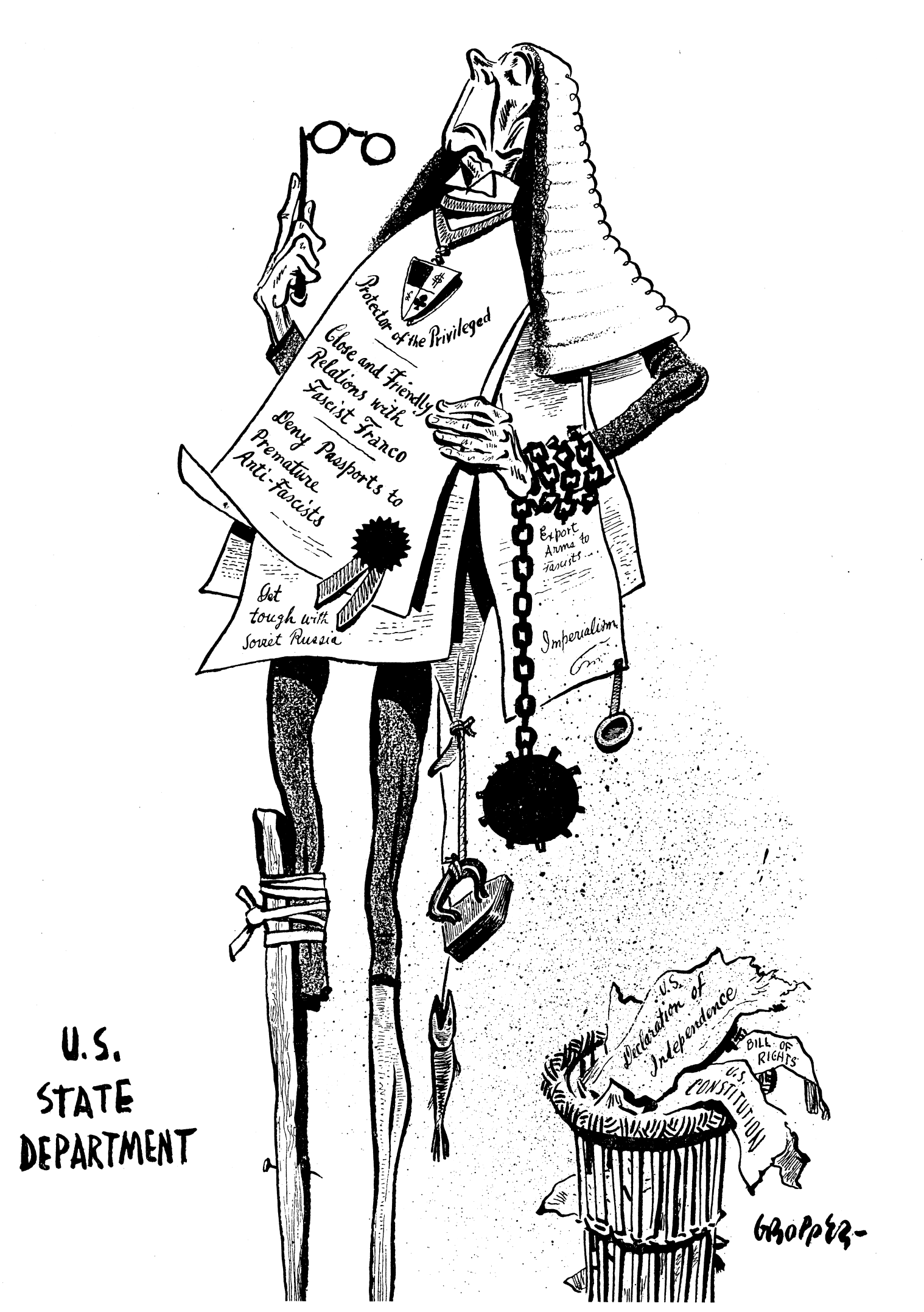
"The alternative is to build up a separate economic bloc which excludes Canada and consists of countries to which we already owe more than we can pay, on the basis of their agreeing to lend us money they have not got and buy only from us and one another goods we are unable to supply."

Churchill was no less perceptive in sensing the essence of the Anglo-American agreement. For reasons of internal political strategy, he advised the Tories to abstain from voting, so as to place the entire burden for a distasteful agreement upon the Labor Party. But he spoke in favor of the loan, both in Britain and in his subsequent trip to America. In the Parliamentary debate he agreed with Keynes that the attempt to set up an exclusive British bloc against American penetration would prove "utterly fatal," since in a sharp all-out struggle with the United States he was certain that Britain "would get the worst of it." On the other hand, he urged his fellow Tories to understand that united, Britain and the United States "can surely double each other's power and safety." Subsequently, in his speech at Fulton, Missouri, Churchill gave more precise expression to the politics of the Anglo-American bloc than he dared to do in England.

The other concession made by the British in return for the loan was a pledge to support the American free trade proposals as a basis for discussion at an International Conference on Trade and Employment. A major principle included in these preliminary proposals is "the attainment of approximately full employment by the major industrial and trading countries." Since no one expects the United States to do this under peacetime conditions, the general prospect for a world trade agreement is not taken too seriously.

In fact, the British do not consider themselves too closely bound by this pledge. They have agreed only to submit proposals to other nations as a basis for discussion. They have not agreed to reduce imperial preferences or duties. All they have done is to agree to discuss the reduction of British duties when and if the Americans are ready to discuss the reduction of their tariffs. This was explained quite clearly by Sir Stafford Cripps, Chairman of the Board of Trade: "All we say is that we are prepared to enter upon this process; we are prepared to consider the bargaining of preferences against tariffs." This is the general interpretation in Britain. Thus, Churchill stated emphatically to Parliament that it was untrue that "we are at this time being committed by the government to any abandonment of imperial preference and still less to its elimination." And with respect to the proposed world trade agreement as a whole, Keynes insisted that "this country is not committed, unless a considerable part of the world is prepared to come into it."

On the other hand, American spokesmen for the loan place great importance upon the British pledge to support the American commercial policy, and apparently intend to hold the British to it. In these varying interpre-


Protector of the Privileged
Close and Friendly Relations with Fascist Franco
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tations of the meaning of the accord, we already see in preliminary outline the form the Anglo-American rivalry will take within the framework of the loan agreement, when it is approved by Congress.

The loan agreement is closely linked to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund of Bretton Woods, and has already changed the nature of these institutions considerably. The currencies of Britain and the United States would become closely associated, as desired by the American bankers; and Britain's ability to repay the loan would be determined by the Fund. Not only is complete control of the Bank and Fund thus guaranteed to the Anglo-American combination, but the loan to Britain would also assure the United States complete mastery of these institutions. This much was already registered at the Savannah, Ga., conference in March, where the Bank and Fund were set up without the participation of the Soviet Union. The conference was run with an iron hand by the United States, which appropriated the key posts. The inferior position of Britain in the Bank and Fund, as well as its willingness to accept the loan, registers something that had already taken place in life—the surrender by the City of the dominant positions in world finance to Wall Street.

I do not intend to suggest either that Britain has already been completely subordinated by the United States or that she has obtained the best of a hard bargain with American imperialism. Britain has been weakened, but not to the point where she can no longer resist American expansion at her expense. If the loan is not forthcoming, the inter-imperialist conflict will undoubtedly be sharper than if the loan is granted, but it will continue in any case. On the other hand, the extension of the loan, with all its political implications, would prove far more disastrous than withholding it.

THERE remains the rather superficial sentiment among some progressives that somehow the granting of the loan to the Labor government would advance socialist principles in England. Certainly, it cannot have escaped their notice that even the most bigoted reactionaries in America, who at first railed against financing "socialist experiments" in Britain, no longer make great use of that argument. Perhaps they have been convinced that the Labor government as it now stands can be much more effective as a bulwark against revolutionary change in Europe, the Empire and within England itself than a Tory government, and have come to understand, together with the Tories themselves, that anti-Communist Social-Democracy may not yet have outlived its usefulness.

One can rest assured that if Britain were really socialist it would find more effective ways to overcome its long-standing inner crisis than promoting a schism between the United States and the Soviet Union, or begging for American economic and political sustenance. And one can be equally certain that a loan application from a socialist England, or even a non-imperialist and democratic England, would suffer the same fate as the Soviet loan application which was buried in the files for twenty weeks without acknowledgement. The point is that the prospects for socialism in England do not depend primarily upon whether the loan is granted or not, but mainly upon other, internal political, factors.

However, the loan does affect the immediate prospect for significant progressive changes. A loan will undoubtedly help the British imperialists stave off for a time disintegration of the Empire; failure to grant the loan will make things more difficult for them. By the same token the progressive forces in England, within the Labor Party itself, and also in the Empire will stand a better chance of changing basic British policy in a progressive direction if the loan is not granted. They cannot welcome the prospect of a senior partner underwriting a bankrupt policy and a decrepit system. If the directors of fading British monopolies and Torified Laborites may seek refuge against bankruptcy with Wall Street, this is certainly not the wish of the English people and the peoples of the dependencies, especially when it can be done, if at all, only at the price of endangering the alliance with the Soviet Union and heightening the threat of war.

OLLIE

Live and let live, was her motto. There's no time for weeping and dying; you have to crow loudly to keep in tune with the hum of life.

A Short Story by NATALIE J. BLONCHE

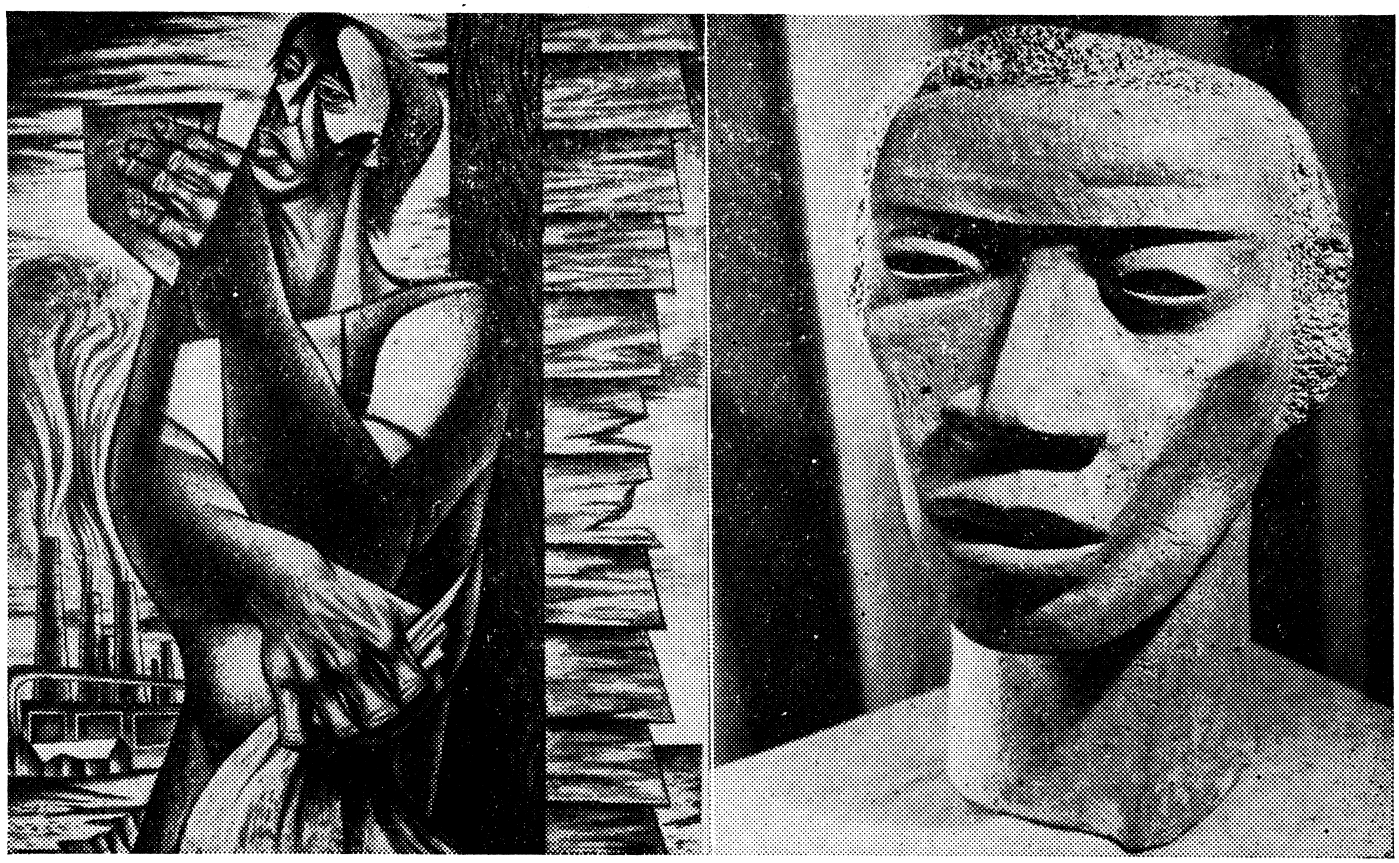
THE girl Ollie looked into her pocket mirror and combed her sunbright hair. Looking at herself in the sharp morning light she saw the gold colored rings that she wore on her ears, half-moon painted brows and mascaraed lashes, her lips sticked red and her fattening chin. She was almost thirty, she was getting older, but she told herself that she was still satisfied with her looks.

And now she turned to look at the other women who sat like shadows on the benches in the ladies' room waiting for the seven whistle to blow. While talking they rubbed the strong sleep from their eyes and outstretched their arms. Someday would she too become as they were and struggle to be living and doing with no thoughts about men and dancing? You are not old enough for that sister, she looked into the mirror face telling herself.

It's so nice outside this mornin', it's so nice, I was just wishing that I could hear a rooster crowing, just once, like back on the farm, Bertha, the one with the cupid's mouth, was saying.

I don' like them roosters crowin', answered Holberg, the little Swede. They's a way for wakin' ya up in the mornin's when they crows an crows. I likes to sleep in the mornin's I doos, I doos. Ya oughta see me sleepin' on Sunday mornin's. I'm glad I ain't workin' housework for no people no more. Now they can't be wakin' me up on Sundays. Sometimes them darned roosters starts crowin' about sis o'clock.

Six o'clock, she says six o'clock, scoffed Essey the lean one. Most of em starts it at four o'clock. Say, you know once when I was a kid, she was laughing, her mouth wide stretching, we had a rooster that crowed all night. That darned rooster would start in about twelve o'clock and crow and crow.



"Letter from the Front," pencil drawing by Charles White, and "Negro Woman," terra cotta sculpture by Elizabeth Catlett. Works of these artists will be exhibited at the art show sponsored by NM and the National Negro Congress in Detroit, May 30 to June 6. A wide representation of noted painters and new young artists will be presented in this exhibition.

I don't know much about chickens getting up, said Ollie, but I sure know I got to bed early last night. I'm going to play tonight though. My boy friend's going to the mechanical school and I thought I'd have to play alone, but this morning on the way to work Bill asked me if I would go out with him and I said I would.

You're going out with Bill? What about Pete? blurted Bertha.

Oh he's going to be busy, he don't care if I go out and drink a little and have a little fun.

They didn't do it in my day, said Holberg. They didn't do it in my country . . . not when you had a ring . . . nooo. Uh uh.

Oh we're just going to have a little fun. She was going to get mad and tell Holberg off if she didn't shut up.

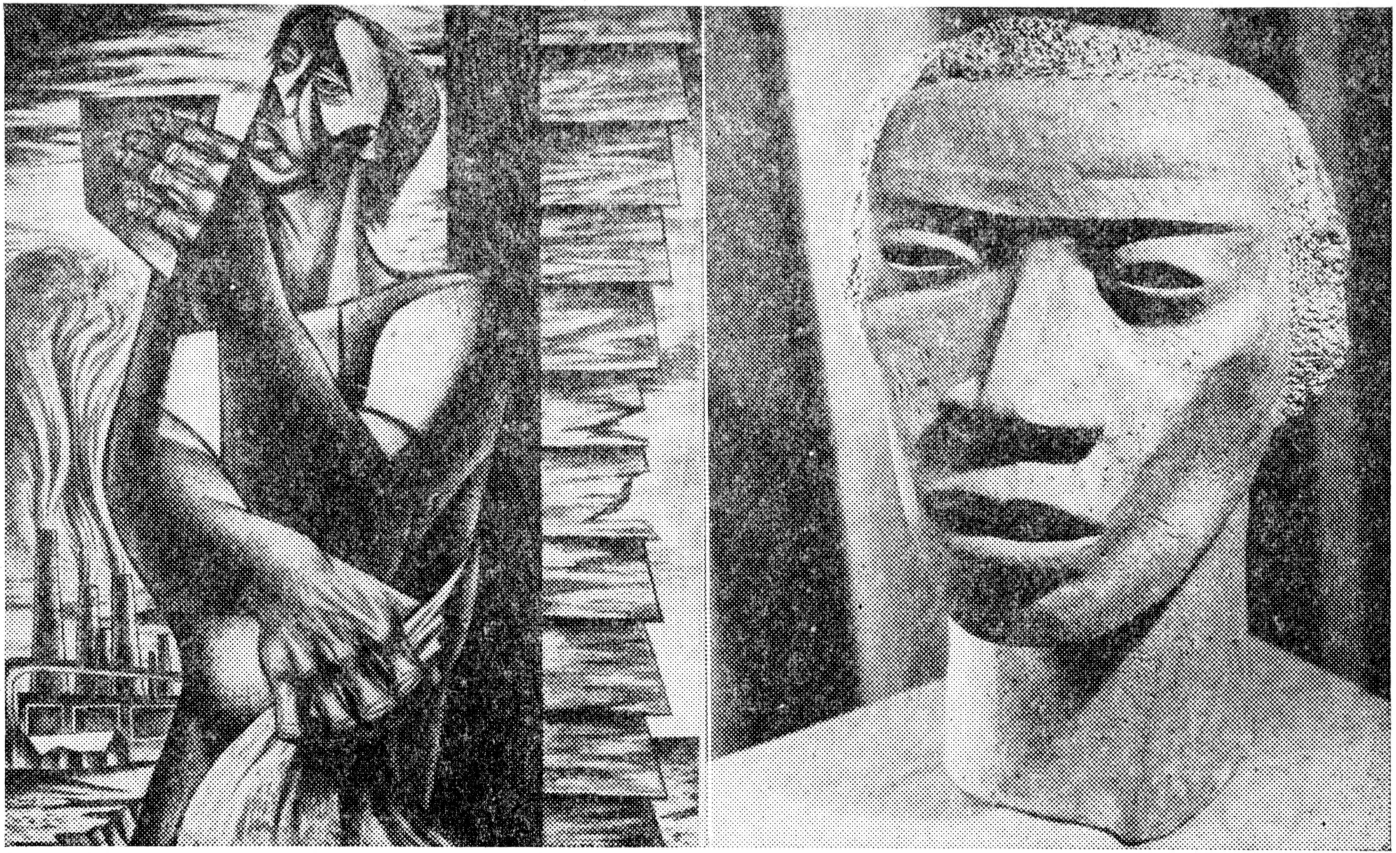
You stay outa them beer joints Ollie! added Essey.

Oh go on! It's good to do a hard day's work and go out at night and play a little. And what's more there's some packing I got to be doing.

Ya got to move Ollie? Ya, I got a room all picked out. I'm mad at my Ma. I said, Ma, damn you, if you don't get rid of that damn boyfriend of yours I'm moving . . . it's either me or him that's going so it looks like I'm going. I just can't stand the guy.

The seven bell sounded and the first sobs of the buzz saws, and the tuneful rawbooms of the presses getting into action warmed her ears. She was glad to get to her machine now and away from the cackling women. Standing shoulder straight placing blocks of wood beneath the plug tooth and pulling fast fingers away just in time, she was kicking hard at the press lever, little Miss Nimble Foot, busy and thinking that her Mama was foolish.

MA WASN'T hard but she had a lot more life in her than most of these women. She had been born on a farm in Iowa and Dad had been a painter and a paperhanger; and after Dad died Ma had traded the house in for a tavern so that she could support herself and Ollie. She used to talk about wanting to listen to chickens crowing in the morning just like these women. After these women who had come from the farms to work had been living in the city for twenty-five years they would know that life is as hard and as hard and as bright as the day and you have to get your knuckles down hard into it and do the best that comes along and live and let live. But now that Ma was making good money from the tavern she had this damn boyfriend hanging around, getting most of it away from her. He was fifteen years younger than she was. She remembered that when they had had the quarrel she told Ma. . . . Now that at last you got something and you're making good money why doncha keep it, instead of givin it all away ta that yellow bastard? But Ma kept saying that he was a "Sweet Babie" and he was worth every cent. He made her feel young again, and having him wiped all of her wrinkles away, and all of those years of struggle and pain. But she didn't tell Ma that she had seen him walking along Hennepin Avenue that time with the cute little blonde who tended bar at Hanna's. Nor about seeing them together once in another tavern. Goddamn him, she could claw his coal black heart out and listen to it bleed and laugh, for treating Ma like that. For treating Ma that way



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Schatz.

she would like to claw out his silly, silly eyes.

Two mudsoaked little urchins were dancing up and down outside of the windows where they could see her working. Wild and clarion calling like little crows, yelling. . . . Hello cutie. . . . Ain't she a queen though. . . . Hello beautiful. . . . Ain't she cute! She's the Rosie o the Posie. . . . She's the queeny of the machinery. . . . Ain't she cute.

She had a feeling that she would like to go outside and lay a hand to their buttocks for keeping her mind from her work, but not hard though. They were cute kids . . . somebody ought to wash them. If you hit a plug the whole machine would go down and it would take Joe a full hour to fix it. She would have to go out into the assembly department and sit down with the other women and help them to assemble the sticks. It was too monotonous, she would rather be doing something hard. She always said that a good, hard day's work never hurt a woman. From sitting too much a woman gets big hipped. It was different, Ma giving money to this guy and her giving money to her guy so that he could go to the mechanical school. After he finished at the mechanical school he wouldn't have to be taking soft little jobs all of his life, like he was doing now. Like taking money out of juke boxes and handing it over to the manager of the concern, like he was doing. . . . Any fool could do that. When he looked down at her she felt like she was hugging her arms around the moon, and when he kissed her she suddenly went as warm as a fire . . . he was her darling of the palarling. She often thought about the neat little house that they would be having and a couple of babies while she was still young. 'Cause a woman's whole life could not go on for nothing. Oh Christ she was almost reaching thirty. She'd better hurry she'd almost forgot. It was easy to be having 'em. Oh Christ it felt wonderful and it was so easy for you to do if you loved. And then you carried them around under your skin for a while, and with a little pain and suffering you dropped 'em and Presto! You had something to show for your living. It wouldn't be like the time when you had the abortion when you were nineteen. Everything was going to be simply swell from now on.

And then she thought about what she was going to do that night and that she was going out with Bill.

At nine o'clock after having dinner in a restaurant with her best girlfriend Gracie because she didn't want to go back to Ma's and eat after their quarrel she waited for Bill in front of Snider's drugstore. She was wearing her new green dress with matching sandals and she wondered if Bill would recognize her as he had seen her only when he came to pick her up in the mornings and take her to work in her work clothes. And then when she saw him he too looked changed in his good clothes and almost as handsome as Pete.

It was easy to keep in step with him as they walked along the beginning-to-be crowded avenue passing shop fronts that offered food, flowers, liquor, entertainment, for a price. Strains of some of the popular songs that she knew such as . . . Oh forget me no-ot . . . Where didja git those beeuteeful bi-ig bloo eyes . . . were leaking out from the night spots and movie houses. Gardenias were caught under a blue glass bowl next to Augie's nightspot. In Augie's window she looked at platters of potato chips and salad that surrounded the flesh of a huge roasted fowl that lay gleaming under the electric light. Propped on a pedestal above the fowl were several bottles of liquor decorated with rosebuds. Standing beside Bill she looked into the window and listened to the sound of the door that was always opening and being slammed shut. In the darkness of the entranceway he put his big arms around her and kissed her warmly upon the lips saying, I think you're an awfully swell kid. That goes for you too Bill, she smiled up at him. Inside were the smells and the sounds that she loved, of people, of liquor, of smoke and of dancing. He found a booth along one of the far corners that lined the wall. Dancers moved about in nervous rhythms pounded out upon a set of drums, a hand organ and a guitar by Filipinos seated on a dais.

She sat down and began to tap her foot in rhythm with the music while Bill ordered a couple of highballs. The music stopped and the dancers left the floor, going back to their places.

This is all right, she looked over at Bill and thought that she might be home sleeping in her little room above Ma's place and feeling lonely because it was Pete's night to be at the mechanical school.

Say Ollie, see that girl over there, Bill was pointing toward a couple sitting farther back near the bar, I used to know a girl who looked just like

her. Ollie saw that the girl was quite good looking and had long black hair.

I knew a girl once who looked just like her, Bill was saying, she sure was a good pal, but she was the kind of a kid you could never trust. Once she copped a ruby ring from somebody she was working for and she came around and asked me to hide her out. I was working at the Honeywell at the time, and the cops came up to my room that night to ask me where she was. And I said that I hadn't seen her and I didn't know nothing. And after they went I told her that I didn't want the cops on me and she had done something wrong and she'd have to go and then she went away and I never did see that girl again. But I always wondered what ever happened to that girl ever since and I sure am glad I never told the cops. I sure would hate to ever be the one to get anyone in trouble. Live and let live, that's my motto.

Mine too . . . Ollie was beginning to feel that Bill was certainly a good guy.

The orchestra began to play again and Ollie watched the girl now, and said to Bill, that's funny I heard a swell radio program like that over station XYZW.

The girl was making little mouths in her mirror now and adding more lipstick and crumpling up her pocketbag for her guy to carry in his suitpocket while they danced. And suddenly the guy stood up and stepped back for the girl to walk in front of him. And then Ollie saw his face, that was Pete. For a minute she could not believe that it was really he and hung tightly to her highball glass feeling the liquor go warm and real in her throat. And then she looked over at Bill and he saw her looking pale and white.

WHATSA matter Ollie, Bill was saying. Did I just say something you didn't like?

No Bill, Ollie said, feeling cold now. You didn't say nothing. I guess I can't just take my drinks like I used to.

She could see Pete and the girl coming. He was nearer. She took another drink and straightened her shoulders. They passed along beside her. She reached out and touched him. Hi Pete. . . . Hi kid, she said.

Hi Ollie, he said. I didn't know you'd be here.

Oh I get around, you do too now, doncha?

He was leaning forward and breathing on her hair. I'll call you tomorrow, goodby Ollie, I'll be seeing you.

Oh no you won't kid, cause I won't be there.

That's what you think. He was holding her wrist now.

O.K. she said, watching him go away.

Let's dance, Ollie, Bill said.

She said, Wait till I finish my drink.

(*Continued on page* 21)

WHY I AM A COMMUNIST

"I come into the Party now because at last I understand that there is a science of politics," declares noted Canadian scientist and writer.

By DYSON CARTER

This is the second and concluding installment of an open letter to Tim Buck, leader of the Canadian Marxist party. The first installment appeared last week. Throughout the world many of the best representatives of the arts, sciences and professions are joining the Communist Party — Haldane, Joliot-Curie, Picasso, Langevin, Nobile, Bloch, Aragon—together with millions of the common people who struggle for security, peace, democracy, for socialism.

A WORD about culture. Only in the USSR, of course, is "culture" fully understood by the people and the intellectuals. Because there culture consists of the arts and sciences unified, given to the whole people, immune to dollar-grubbing, and invigorated by the true historical and international concepts of culture.

Here I would like to say, Tim, that leftist cultural circles tend to take a rosy view of "liberal" literary trends. I had some success as a writer of fiction and was offered a cushy Hollywood job and one in radio drama. The inducements which amused me have been ruinous to many far more talented young Canadian writers. Even in my non-fiction I had to turn from established publishing channels to radically new book outlets, in order to reach the people.

Let us have no illusions. Like science, literature in Canada today writhes under the dirty hooves of capitalism. The individuality of the artist, his dignity, his elementary right to subsist, are battered by the Satan with golden horns. This is more tragic because our talented young people are very tender and the workers have not taken care to welcome and protect them. I want to help change this. It is not enough to recognize that Canadian Communists, as in every country, are the standard-bearers of the cultural heritage of all mankind. We must exhibit that proud standard so that it will give virility and courage to our creators of culture.

You and other leading Communists have always given me priceless encouragement, without the slightest political obligation. Staunch friends of the Party work long and hard with me on manuscripts and publishing arrangements. But above all, the workers, the farmers, the mass audiences I speak to and many who write to me, these Canadians can give the mightiest impulse to workers in the field of culture.

It was logical, of course, that the closer I came to the people the more openly certain elements accused me of being an under-cover Communist. You know, and so did my accusers, that I never had any political affiliations. The upholders of capitalism try to prevent the people from learning what science could give us under socialism, and when I vigorously presented the truth these class enemies fell back on the old strategy of Red-baiting. This experience sharpened my political awareness and brought me closer to the Party.

However, intellectual processes, scientific study and reasoning, have in

my case exerted strong influence in directing me towards membership in the Labor-Progressive Party. I come into the Party now because at last I understand that there is a *science of politics*. This science, founded by Marx and Engels, immensely enriched by Lenin's discovery of Soviet power and the historically unrivalled achievements of Stalin, is thriving now in the LPP.

There is an ultimate test of a science: Are its predictions fulfilled? Reading through Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin today is like following the course of a gigantic predicted experiment carried out in the laboratory of the world. And the same is true for the decisions, programs and slogans of the Canadian Communists. How miserably blind are those who slander Communist leadership in our country! You and your comrades have spoken with astounding foresight on all the vital issues of my generation: Mussolini and Hitler, Japanese imperialism, the crisis of the Thirties, Spain, Ethiopia, British infamy at Munich, the fate of France, and the succession of crises in Canadian politics.

I COME from British patriot stock. My love for Canada, my patriotism, my strong attachment for the people of the British homeland, these also have led me to the Communist position. That Communists are the most trustworthy patriots in any country has been finally proven by this war. Who served Britain best—the Communists who called for an alliance with the Soviet Union in 1935, or the Tories forced into that course in 1941? Who were the better Frenchmen—the plunderers of the Bourse and Petain's rabble of flag-wavers, or the Communists of the FFI?

And here in Canada, who were the defenders of our nation—the Communists thrown into internment camps for opposing Chamberlain's phony war, or the reactionaries who in 1939 and 1940 called for war against the Soviet Union, the one power whose strength saved all civilized nations from disaster?

The answers are self-evident to anyone not duped by the propaganda of those deriving rich profits from falsehood.

You must pardon me for writing at such length. There are many more things I could say. Perhaps the most important is this: I have joined the Party because, having some years ago decided to give what talent and energies I have to the struggle for a socialist Canada, life has taught me that there is no conceivable way to achieve socialism other than following the Marxist program of the LPP.

For my part I shall do everything possible to explain to my thousands of CCF friends what real socialism means for Canada, and how our Dominion can avoid the political calamity of Social Democracy, which in practice serves only to strengthen the people's enemies.

I mentioned Marxism as the science of politics. Above and beyond all other influences, it was *the living political program* of the LPP which brought me into the Party. Here I find the struggle for socialism scientifically and inseparably linked to Canada's immediate burning issues: the fight for jobs, for housing, social security and peace; the battle against disastrous economics of scarcity, to break down shocking discrimination against women workers, to win union security for all, housing and care for the veterans, guaranteed crop prices for the farmers.

This and only this is scientific political action towards socialism. This is the fight to achieve social progress, which has been and can be won even under capitalism, and with every victory in this organized struggle the people advance on the road to socialism.

It seems to me, looking over the past ten years, that we are already well on our way along that road. What is behind the sudden desire of the reactionaries to "forget the war"? As if we can forget that supreme world triumph, the utter destruction of monopoly capitalism's black hope—fascism's gruesome military power! In this triumph the people of the world were united in toil and battle as never in history. With the coming of peace, on whole continents the people have begun their march to socialism. Who can deny it?

Only cynics are frightened by the postwar growling of reaction. We can look forth and see what has never greeted human eyes since the capitalist era dawned: *world-wide the forces of progress, not the forces of reaction, are in the ascendancy today.*

And now, Tim, a thought about membership in the LPP. The Party is growing. But there have always been reasons why certain people have not joined. Not only workers but also professional people often give one outspoken reason. They fear that Party membership will threaten their security.

We must ask them to think . . . what real security can anyone expect from capitalism?

We must urge them to think beyond this. Many European countries are advancing to socialism, the colonial peoples are rising, imperialism is quaking in mortal terror, the momentous peaceful construction plans of the Soviet Union fire the imagination of people in every land. All this hastens the doom of capitalist "security." No longer is it a question of my pay cheque and yours. The question facing hesitant socialists is this: shall we add our strength to the mighty forces of progress here in Canada, or shall we sit back, content to endure heightening miseries?

ONE final word. There is no doubt many sincere people look hesitantly upon membership in the party of Marxism, seeing it in the gloomy light of personal sacrifice. We should ask these friends: Sacrifice of what?

Today, our whole nation is a sacrifice on the altar of capitalist reaction. Think of the squalor of our city slums, the wretched impoverishment of our splendid farming people, the horrifying frustration of medicine and all other sciences, the grim struggling of the workers for subsistence wages! And picture the contrasting obscene luxuries of the rich!

Every man, woman and child—excepting only a tiny minority of rich oppressors—all of us are sacrificing the days, the months, the years of our precious lifetime, to existence under the stupid and greedy reaction.

Meanwhile the boundless health, happiness, freedom, comfort, security and joyous ambition that we can and shall realize under socialism, everything that beckons humanity into the glorious future, is being ruthlessly sacrificed to capitalism. Then who can speak of sacrifice on joining the Marxist vanguard of the people?

For me, Tim, membership in the Party is the highest of honors. I do not understand "sacrifice." I grew up to despise people who caress themselves and their frailties. We need to learn passionately to hate in a single direction —to hate all the suffering and abominations of life, so that we shall nourish the finest of human attributes, our love of mankind.

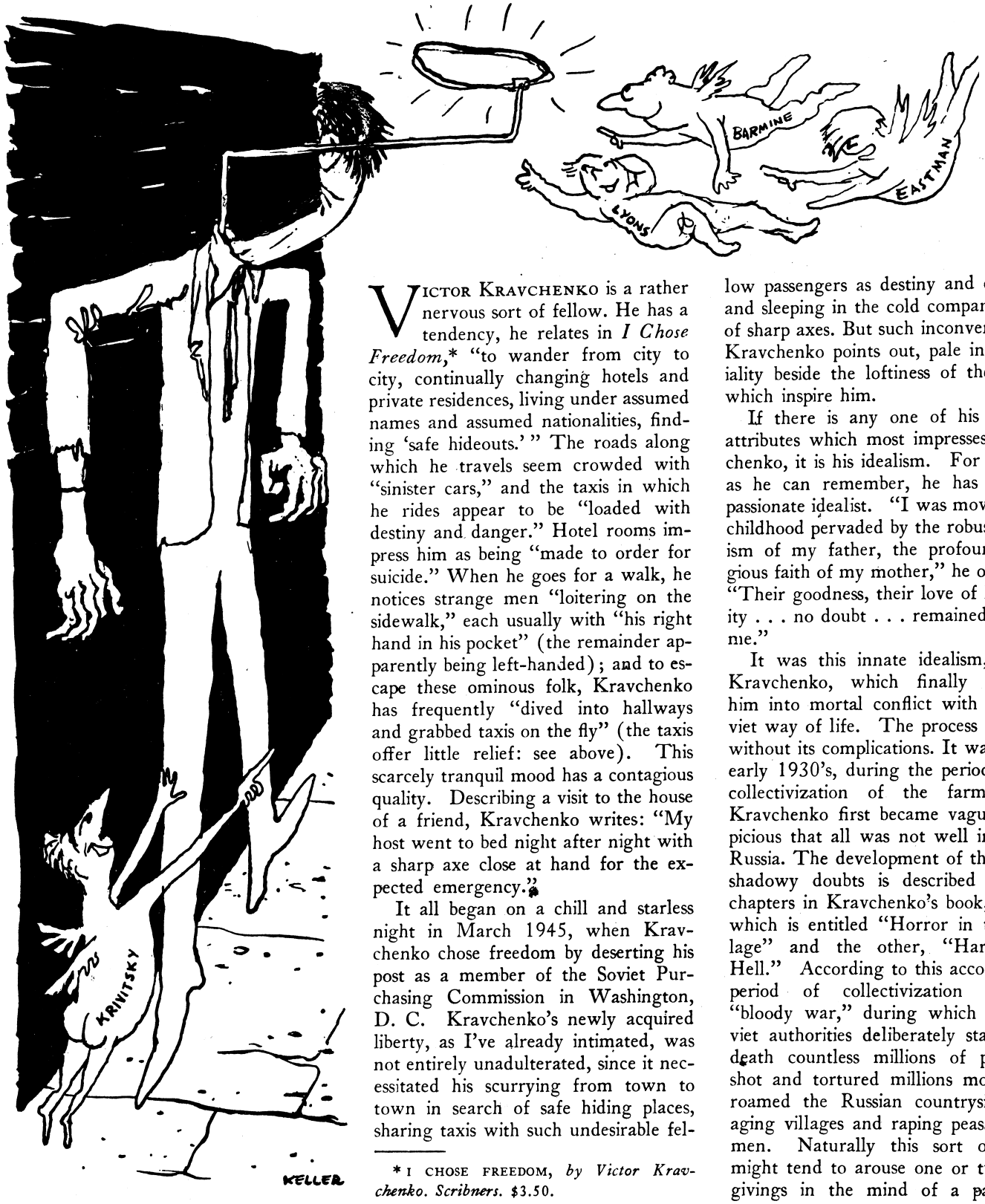
Sincerely your comrade,

DYSON CARTER.

HE CHOSE TREASON

Kravchenko's book mixes anti-Soviet falsehood and sex to whoop up war on Russia. Hailed by Hearst, Dorothy Thompson and Ukrainian fascists.

By *ALBERT E. KAHN*



VICTOR KRAVCHENKO is a rather nervous sort of fellow. He has a tendency, he relates in *I Chose Freedom*,* "to wander from city to city, continually changing hotels and private residences, living under assumed names and assumed nationalities, finding 'safe hideouts.'" The roads along which he travels seem crowded with "sinister cars," and the taxis in which he rides appear to be "loaded with destiny and danger." Hotel rooms impress him as being "made to order for suicide." When he goes for a walk, he notices strange men "loitering on the sidewalk," each usually with "his right hand in his pocket" (the remainder apparently being left-handed); and to escape these ominous folk, Kravchenko has frequently "dived into hallways and grabbed taxis on the fly" (the taxis offer little relief: see above). This scarcely tranquil mood has a contagious quality. Describing a visit to the house of a friend, Kravchenko writes: "My host went to bed night after night with a sharp axe close at hand for the expected emergency."

It all began on a chill and starless night in March 1945, when Kravchenko chose freedom by deserting his post as a member of the Soviet Purchasing Commission in Washington, D. C. Kravchenko's newly acquired liberty, as I've already intimated, was not entirely unadulterated, since it necessitated his scurrying from town to town in search of safe hiding places, sharing taxis with such undesirable fellow passengers as destiny and danger, and sleeping in the cold companionship of sharp axes. But such inconveniences, Kravchenko points out, pale into triviality beside the loftiness of the ideals which inspire him.

If there is any one of his diverse attributes which most impresses Kravchenko, it is his idealism. For as long as he can remember, he has been a passionate idealist. "I was moved by a childhood pervaded by the robust idealism of my father, the profound religious faith of my mother," he observes. "Their goodness, their love of humanity . . . no doubt . . . remained also in me."

It was this innate idealism, writes Kravchenko, which finally brought him into mortal conflict with the Soviet way of life. The process was not without its complications. It was in the early 1930's, during the period of the collectivization of the farms, that Kravchenko first became vaguely suspicious that all was not well in Soviet Russia. The development of these first shadowy doubts is described in two chapters in Kravchenko's book, one of which is entitled "Horror in the Village" and the other, "Harvest in Hell." According to this account, the period of collectivization was a "bloody war," during which the Soviet authorities deliberately starved to death countless millions of peasants, shot and tortured millions more, and roamed the Russian countryside pillaging villages and raping peasant women. Naturally this sort of thing might tend to arouse one or two misgivings in the mind of a passionate

*I CHOSE FREEDOM, *by Victor Kravchenko. Scribners.* $3.50.

idealist. And that is the very reason why the situation became somewhat complicated for Kravchenko. His problem was this: after personally witnessing such "inexpressibly horrible and terrifying sights," how was he to remain completely idealistic and at the same time retain unswerving loyalty to the Soviet government and unimpaired faith in the Communist Party, of which he was a member? Kravchenko explains how he accomplished this difficult feat. "To spare yourself mental agony," he writes, "you veil unpleasant truths by half-closing your eyes—and your mind. . . . Unconsciously, I had protected my faith against corroding facts."

By such devices as using one eye and half a mind, Kravchenko managed to keep his idealism whole and unsullied during the ensuing years. At the time of the "terrible purges," for example, he drove the facts "into the underground" of his mind. When he discovered that Soviet workers were "slaves" living in "lice-infected barracks," his "conscious mind reached out desperately for alibis, for compromises with conscience." When he learned that "hordes of innocent men and women were being herded into prisons and forced labor camps," he "banished such knowledge to the remote regions" of his mind. One cannot help feeling that even Sigmund Freud would have been impressed with the herculean psychological censorship which enabled Kravchenko's idealism to survive this ordeal.

OF COURSE, the entire Soviet picture was not dark. There were, for Kravchenko, certain redeeming and and heartening aspects. In December 1934, for instance, there was the assassination of the Soviet leader, Sergei Kirov. "The assassination in Leningrad," relates Kravchenko, "sent a thrill of romantic hope" through himself and his fellow idealists.

One gathers from *I Chose Freedom,* however, that for Kravchenko the most encouraging feature of Soviet society was his own love-life. In his book, when he is not damning Soviet social, economic and political relations, he is manfully cataloging and detailing his own sexual relations. The latter had a distinctly salutary effect upon his idealism. On one occasion, for example, after Kravchenko and one of his mistresses, Eliena, had been discussing their brutal treatment by the GPU, the following significant events transpired:

"'Let's go swimming,' Eliena proposed. 'Just recalling what I've gone through makes me feel sticky.'

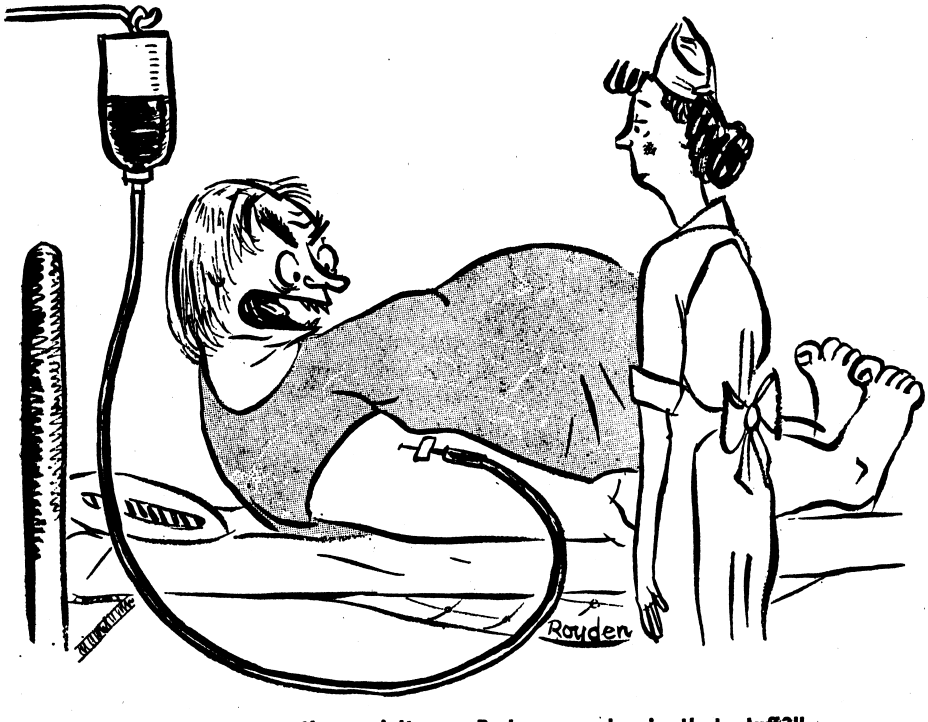
"The water was warm. We swam in the dark, in the rain. . . . It . . . somehow seemed to wash away the horror of her story. I carried her out of the water into a fisherman's shed, and dried her as if she were a child. Then I tucked her in the sweet-smelling hay. Exhausted by the emotions of this strange day, she was asleep almost instantly."

And on the morrow, as a result of this profound experience, Kravchenko and Eliena "feel ever so much better, cleaner," ready to face the Soviet world with renewed vigor and refreshed idealism.

Because of these intimate, down-to-earth observations on life in Soviet Russia, various American critics have hailed Kravchenko's book as a vital document on international affairs. "It furnishes important data on one of our biggest international problems," declared Norman Angell. According to H. V. Kaltenborn, "It should be read by everyone concerned about Russo-American relations." None of these critics is more thrilled with the book than Dorothy Thompson. Not since she championed the cause of Paul Scheffer, the German journalist who was exposed at the 1938 Moscow Trial as an espionage-sabotage agent of the German Military Intelligence and who later came to America as a correspondent for Dr. Goebbels' *Das Reich,* has Miss Thompson been so passionately enthusiastic about a foreign author. Regarding Kravchenko's book, she rhapsodizes, "It is, I believe, the most remarkable and most revelatory report to have come out of the Soviet Union from any source whatsoever."

Of course, the revelations to which Miss Thompson refers do not solely concern Kravchenko's sex life. Other equally unique revelations divulge that the Five Year Plans and the collectivization of the farms have reduced Russia to a condition of utter impoverishment which makes Soviet workers and peasants long for the comparative prosperity of Czarism; and that the Red Army, despite its seeming victories, was actually a hopelessly inept, leaderless conglomeration of "men with one eye, men who limped, consumptives, men suffering heart ailments and stomach ulcers, bearded fifty-year-olds so work-worn that they could scarcely drag their own weight, adjudged fit for the fronts." The German High Command simply failed to realize that the Red Army was

Sen. Rankest Says:



"Are you sure there ain't any Red corpuscles in that stuff?"

little more than a mirage, and because of this careless oversight the German generals allowed themselves to believe they were beaten, and unnecessarily permitted the burial in Russian soil of millions of Nazi soldiers thought to be dead. "The Germans could have taken Moscow during those days virtually without a struggle," reveals Kravchenko. "Why they turned back is a mystery only the Germans themselves can solve for history."

One passage in *I Chose Freedom* best summarizes Kravchenko's revelations about the Soviet Union. It reads as follows:

"For twenty-four years you (the Soviet people) have been living in hunger and fear. You were promised a free life and you got slavery. You were promised bread and you got famine. You are slaves without human rights. Thousands of you die every day in concentration camps. . . . You are not masters of your own country or your own lives. Your master is Stalin. . . . Death to the parasites of the Russian people! Overthrow your tyrants!"

THESE particular words, observes Kravchenko, are not his own. They were copied by him from a Nazi propaganda radio broadcast. But the sentiments are Kravchenko's.

Like the Nazis, Kravchenko feels that something should be done to rescue the Russian people from their "tyrants," since the Russian people themselves seem inadequately aware of their own suffering and enslavement. Undaunted by the mysterious defeat of the German Army, Kravchenko urges the swift launching of a new military crusade against Russia. "The next step toward world security," he writes, "lies not in a world organization . . . but in the liberation of the Russian masses from their tyrants." Kravchenko's eagerness to liberate the Russian masses is shared by various prominent Britishers and Americans. Among the latter is William Randolph Hearst, who is now serializing *I Chose Freedom* in his newspapers.

A Ukrainian by birth, Kravchenko has found in the United States some persons of his national origin who wholeheartedly share his sentiments regarding the Soviet Union. The Ukrainian-language newspaper *Svoboda*, which is published in New York City, enthusiastically acclaimed Kravchenko's book in a front-page article describing it as "the most authentic" work on Soviet Russia. Moreover, I am informed that *Svoboda* has been purchasing the book from the publisher, Scribner's, in quantity lots for distribution among Ukrainian-Americans. It should be mentioned that *Svoboda* speaks for a very small and select portion of the Ukrainian-American community; it speaks for fascist Ukrainian-Americans. In the days before Pearl Harbor, *Svoboda's* offices in Jersey City, New Jersey, were periodically visited by agents of the German Military Intelligence, and the publication featured such statements as the following:

"Hitlerite Germany is alone doing all she can in order to weaken Russia in Germany's own interest. It is engaged in a struggle against Communism and international Jewry. . . . We must have no illusions. We know that we must help ourselves. However, such powers which, without violating our interests, have a desire to ruin Russia—such, for instance, as Japan, Germany or Italy—ought not to meet with our hostile attitude."

The editor of *Svoboda*, who is today supervising the newspaper's distribution of *I Chose Freedom*, is a man by the name of Luke Myshuha. In 1938 Luke Myshuha visited Vienna, was warmly received by high Nazi officials and, at the invitation of the German Propaganda Ministry, delivered a special propaganda address over the Nazi-controlled radio network.

Generally speaking, however, Kravchenko's countrymen now stimulate a certain shyness in him. This is aptly illustrated by Kravchenko's report of a chance encounter he had with a Red Army man in Washington, D. C. "I slunk along the wall," relates Kravchenko, "keeping my back turned to my countrymen."

And there you have perhaps the very best description of the idealistic freedom which Victor Kravchenko has chosen for himself: slinking through life, with his back turned on his countrymen.

Ollie

(*Continued from page* 17)

Oh God you had to keep moving and you had to be gay. You couldn't trust no one and no one could trust you. Sometimes things that were right seemed all wrong and sometimes things that were all wrong seemed all right. But you couldn't take the time to sit down and cry with the darkness leaning over you, like you did once when you were a little girl and Pa died and Ma first moved into the bleak bare rooms behind the tavern on Lancey Street. You had to struggle to be living and doing. To eat and to sleep and to work and to play you had to keep your body in tune standing up to your machine shoulder straight feeding wood blocks into the machine's mouth. You had to toss your cock's bright hair and make your fingers fly. You had to lie close to the different rhythms of things sorting out the beginnings, ending the beginnings of other beginnings. But you had to slowly raise your arms above your head like wings if you wanted to reach the green and secret vine of life. Some girls that she knew were only always thinking about money but she had to keep thinking about everything. Loving a man was like having a job. If you found that he was soft or if he went bad on you, you had to take a hard look around and then take another, just because you were good at it. But if you loved him you had to keep loving him until you were sure that he was lost. And you had to keep thinking about other things, you had to learn to crow, like the girls said about those damned old roosters this morning.

And you had to keep crowing all the day long. You had to crow because you had a job to go do in the morning, and you had to crow because you had a job to leave at night. You had to crow because once in a while you had new clothes to put on. There was no time for weeping and dying. You could crow because you could hold a glass of beer up to your lips and drink from it, the energy going bitter sweet. Oh down by the river the water runs cold in the moonlight along with the terribly green grass. You had to crow loudly to keep in tune with all of the big and little life happenings.

Come on, Ollie, let's dance, Bill said.

And she suddenly realized that she had been neglecting him. The music was shrill now, in the high notes. Holy smokes they were pivoting in loose semi-circles. She would have to hurry up. The older you got the more you had to keep twirling and crow longer and louder all throughout the years. Bill stopped pivoting and guided her out toward the center of the floor. She felt others moving in the same rhythms around her. And then they were lost among the dancers.

AMERICA'S CHETNIKS

An editorial by JOHN STUART

THE American friends of a neanderthal Europe have a new mission. It is nothing short of rescuing from justice the arch war criminal of Yugoslavia, Draja Mikhailovich.

Think of it. A stack of documents —letters, written instructions, photographs—exist proving Mikhailovich's collaboration with German and Italian commanders. There is the testimony of thousands of Yugoslav Partisans who saw and who felt on their own backs the lash of Mikhailovich's Chetniks. The Yugoslav countryside still runs red with the blood of peasants murdered by these marauders. And in the United States there are patent-leather hearts who weep and whimper and whine for the "innocent" killer.

What moves them is a searing hatred for everything new and fresh on the Continent. They have, at least those among them who are not outright dupes, abetted America's enemies for years, and you will need no particular judgment of mine to see that between Mikhailovich and them are the strongest bonds; had they been Yugoslavs instead of Americans they would have comprised a leading Chetnik corps. Here are some of the lovers of justice who have banded together as a "Committee for a Fair Trial for Draja Mikhailovich": Eugene Lyons, Clare Boothe Luce, Sen. Robert Taft, Norman Thomas, Alfred Landon, Isaac Don Levine, Dorothy Thompson, Louis Waldman, John Dewey. What a lethal mixture of Trotskyism, Social Democracy, and Republican flotsam!

In New York they have started a "Commission of Inquiry" and have called witnesses to give "impartial" testimony. The testimony, taken by Arthur Garfield Hays with the honorary assistance of Adolf Berle, amounts to the fact that Mikhailovich's forces rescued American airmen — proving, q.e.d., that Mikhailovich is innocent of any crimes. This, then, is the logic and the foundation on which one of Hitler's leading Balkan henchmen is to escape punishment and perhaps be provided eventually with refuge and glory in the United States. By the same logic Franco is guiltless because American fliers who landed in Spain during the war were not shot or delivered to the Wehrmacht. Yet this is the irrationality presented to Americans to convince them of Mikhailovich's purity of soul.

I have before me a letter written by Colonel Louis Huot, who in October 1943 established an Allied supply line from Bari, in Italy, to the Yugoslav mainland. In the letter, addressed to the "Commission of Inquiry," Colonel Huot declined to appear at a " 'hearing' which imputes bad faith to the courts of a friendly sovereign state in connection with a case which has not yet come to trial. . . . It is not sufficient to prove," he adds, "that men and women in the territory controlled by Mikhailovich saved the lives of American aviators: three times the total number that they cared for were rescued in Partisan [Tito] territory." Colonel Huot continues: "As one who participated in forming the Anglo-American policy of supporting the Partisans and withdrawing our Anglo-American missions from the headquarters of Draja Mikhailovich (in 1943) because of the abundant proof of the former's loyalty to the Allied cause and the latter's disloyalty; [as one] who while serving in the Army of the United States was shot at and threatened with assassination by men serving under the orders of Mikhailovich, I am inclined to entertain some doubts about the innocence of Mikhailovich and believe he should be brought to trial."

I have no doubt that the committee and its commission were encouraged in their rescue mission by the State Department. It too has taken a big hand in saving Mikhailovich from Yugoslav wrath. Only last March in an official note to Belgrade Mr. Byrnes spoke, in effect, on Mikhailovich's behalf. Even the British government, with no love for Tito—in fact, with an abiding dislike for him and his government—would not follow Washington's lead. Said Foreign Minister Bevin on April 3: "By the end of 1943 His Majesty's Government were convinced that Mikhailovich was no longer fighting the Germans and that some of his lieutenants were actively cooperating with them against the Partisans."

Much, of course, has been made of the myth that while Mikhailovich's subordinates were part and parcel of the Nazi military machine, Mikhailovich himself was not implicated. But the facts are clear that Mikhailovich, through intermediaries, did negotiate with Italian and German commanders. I have seen photostats of the documents issued by the United Committee of South-Slavic Americans proving this point to the hilt. But common sense would prove it without documents. At no time did Mikhailovich, as the royal-appointed Minister of War in Yugoslavia, denounce his subordinates for collaborating with the Germans or courtmartial them. Nor did he disassociate himself from them or dismiss them from his service.

THE core of the matter is that Mikhailovich's friends here are eager to remove him from the Yugoslav courts under the camouflage of trying him before an international tribunal. Thus the New York *Times* pleads for him as well as the committee. But Dr. Stoyan Pribichevich, a lawyer and a former correspondent for *Time* and *Life* in Yugoslavia, points out, also in a letter declining an invitation to appear at the mock hearing in New York, that: Mikhailovich "is being charged as a Yugoslav citizen by Yugoslav authorities for acts committed on Yugoslav soil against the Yugoslav state or citizens." There is no more precedent for trying Mikhailovich internationally than there was in the case of Petain.

What this infamous committee is doing with the tacit consent of the State Department is to dictate to Yugoslavia how it shall try a criminal. These are the people who shed bitter tears about the rights and sovereignty of small nations. Actually, they are concerned only with smearing Tito, his pro-Soviet foreign policy and his country's new democracy. Even after Mikhailovich himself rejected the aid of the Lyonses and Luces and Tafts, they persist in pressing it. Who knows but that if they succeed in saving the Yugoslav Benedict Arnold, they may rescue other war criminals? The Mikhailovich incident is only a beginning.

sights and sounds

LYNCHING BEE, NORTHERN STYLE

What the residents "On Whitman Avenue" and the critics do when reality knocks on their door.

By CHARLES HUMBOLDT

EVERY so often a play, novel, movie or poem offers itself as a touchstone for our critical standards. It may do so by developing a strange form, or by using an accepted form for a content which challenges the critic. *On Whitman Avenue,* by Maxine Wood, now showing at the Cort Theater, does the latter. And, as usual, the reviewers are found wanting. While they quibble about its supposed lack of art, the audience is carried away by the play; some people weep, laugh and cheer, while others rush backstage to ask what they can do about the state of things portrayed in the drama. It isn't often that theatergoers behave like the old Athenians, who took their theater seriously, and so one wonders—what's wrong with the critics? Old question.

I believe that *On Whitman Avenue* confronts them with a situation which they all know mainly by hearsay, through newspapers or from the radio. That situation is not presented without "art." But it is projected without the interesting angles, the appeals to conscience, the adornments of psychology to which they are accustomed. Also, it invites them, by implication, to carry its meaning home and into action—and this is cause for squirming.

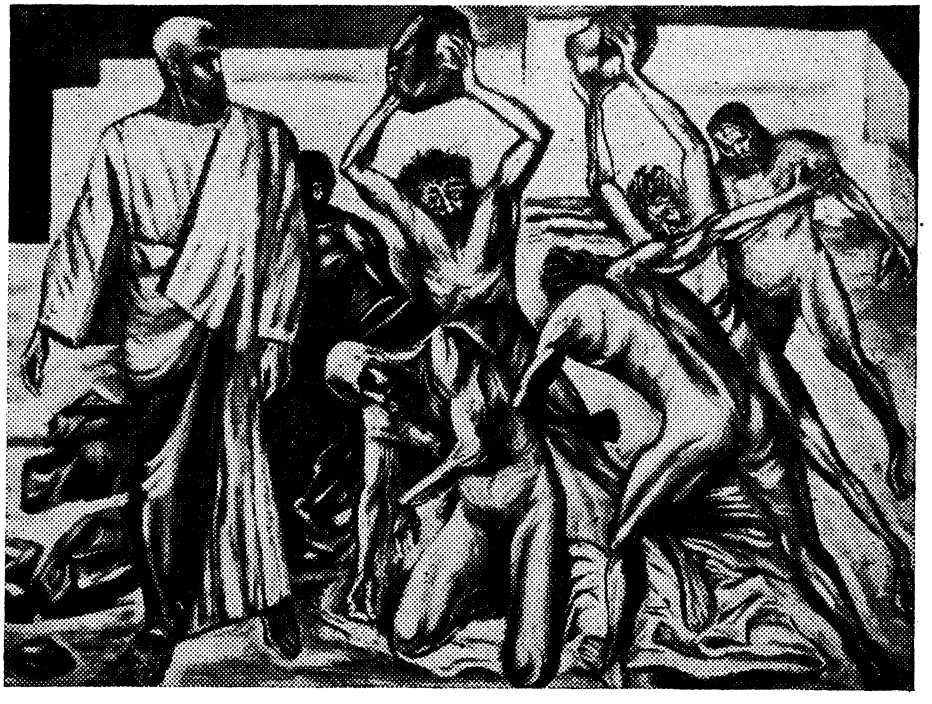
While the Tildens are at a druggist's convention their daughter, Toni, rents the upper story of their suburban house to the family of David Bennett, a Negro ex-Seabee who saved the life of Toni's sweetheart in the Pacific. The Tildens return and speculate pleasantly on the character of their tenants, of whose color they are unaware. Shocked at discovering the "awful truth," they are soon plunged into the storm of neighbor indignation. They are threatened not only with social ostracism, but by the refusal of the real estate company to renew the lease on Mr. Tilden's store. How each member of the family reacts to this pressure is the theme of the play. Its outcome is the departure of the Negro family, with the breakup of the Tildens well on its way. By the irony not of fate but of social development, it is the Bennetts, driven from pillar to post, who are united, while the whites—saved from the "shame" of harboring a Negro veteran, his pregnant wife and his family—are lost to each other. Toni leaves home, enraged at her mother, whose loyalty to her husband collapsed when her security was at stake. And Mrs. Tilden tries frantically to restore love to the eyes of the man whom she has forced to compromise his integrity.

Within this large irony are many lesser ones. The Tilden's young son stamps on the toy plane of the Bennett boy, whose handicraft he admires almost to the point of envy. He comes to hate his parents because they have no spiritual resources to offset the humiliation to which he is subjected by his friends, the neighbors' children.

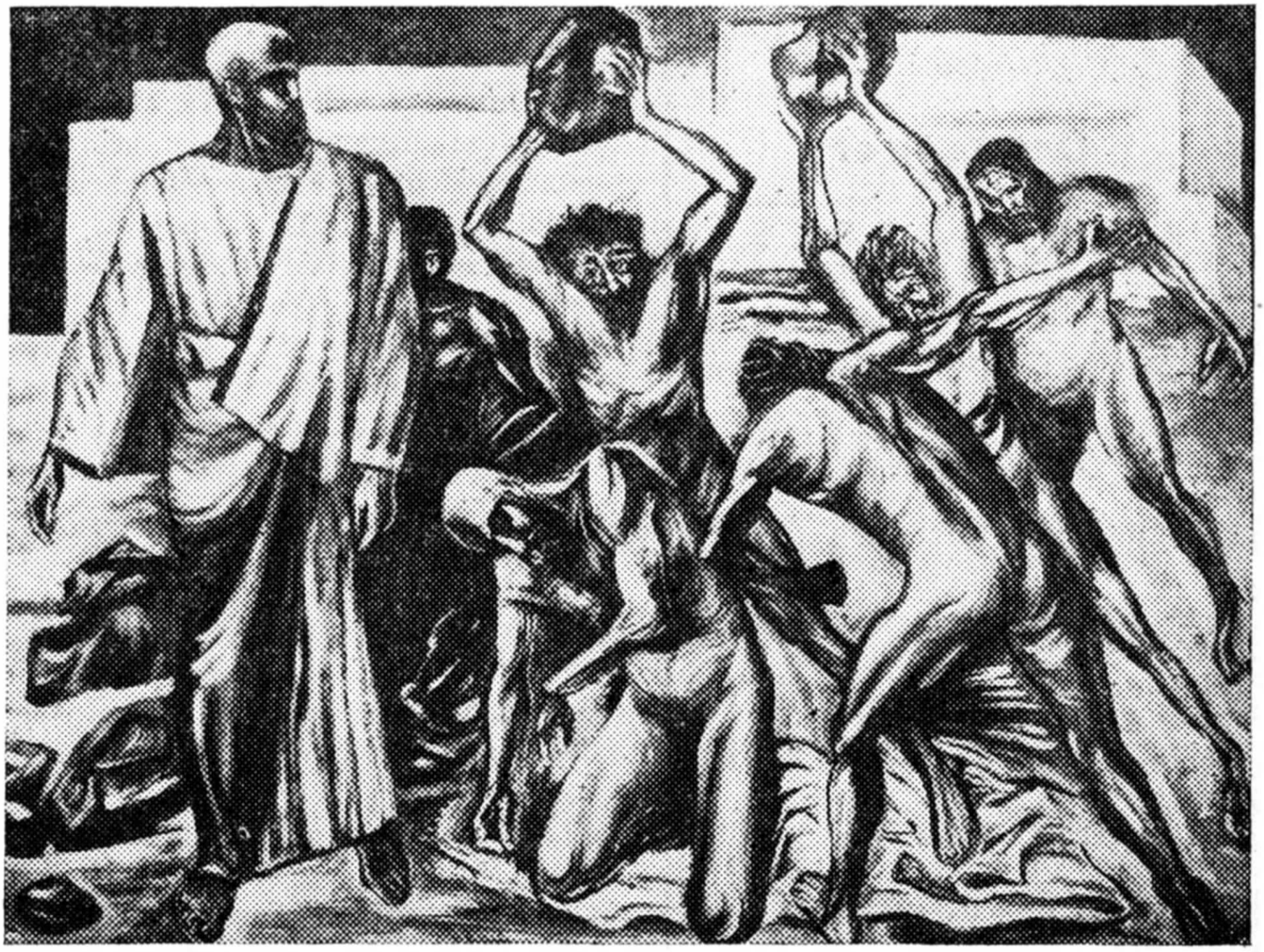
When Ed Tilden begins to wish that all this might have happened to someone else, Toni reminds him of his favorite adage, "No legacy is as rich as honesty." She taunts her parents: "Middle-aged liberals running true to form."

The veneered Mrs. Tilden, insecure and ashamed of her unprincipled surrender to prejudice, abuses David Bennett with foul ferocity. Later she remembers her mistake with horror. But this horror is never more than mortification that she allowed her feelings to show. It is not shame for her feelings.

At the meeting of the neighbors in the Tildens' living room, Christian charity vies with cold cash to convince David Bennett that he should move for his own sake. But it has first become obvious that cash is the principal heartrending force in this comedy of self-deceit. "By an unfortunate mistake in judgment our investments are threat-



"Martyrdom of St. Stephen," oil by Orozco. At the Grand Central Galleries.



"Martyrdom of St. Stephen," oil by Orozco. At the Grand Central Galleries.

ened." The suburban chorus sings its distress not over Oedipus but about real estate values.

David's appearance at the meeting is both hailed and feared. As long as the neighbors think they can convince him to leave "of his own free will," they glimpse his humanity, and their guilt makes them slavishly solicitous of his feelings. Their hopes fading, they become first impatient and then hysterical and savage. Religion flies out the window, replaced by a "lynching bee, northern style." The head lyncher is the real estate agent, Lund, who, in a remarkable scene of provocation, takes up a collection to pay for David's moving, while the latter looks on half crazed.

Such behavior is too much for Ed Tilden, who fights back and is encouraged by his daughter's love and the support of his customers and other townspeople. Yet when the question of the lease renewal comes up and his wife attacks him with hatred, he tells David he must move. Why? To preserve a home which this act will cause him to dissolve, to keep a wife he will come to detest.

Of the neighbors only Aurie Anderson backs Toni and becomes a friend of the Bennetts. Frustrated and enslaved by an impossible, cranky, invalid mother (represented by a petulant bell offstage), Aurie blooms in battle. When the play ends, the audience knows that she, like Toni, is going places. She has even been able to tell the old lady to go to hell.

HERE then is a play which in its minor as well as major characters shows the effect upon human beings of forces which play havoc with their individual wills. It also frames the conditions under which those wills can be freed: through knowledge and action.

The neighbors do not hate David Bennett; they have the kindliest feelings toward him, if he will only move —yet the thought of their investments can set them baying like any bloodhound. This is the blunt material fact that overrides their psychology. Their individuality is not nullified, but it is subsidiary to the course of events conditioned by the power of property relations.

The shadow of these relations hangs over Mrs. Tilden, though she sees them only in the disguise of threats to her carefully nurtured system of family and social relationships. And she is ready to sacrifice her husband, her daughter and her son to them.

But the Bennetts are not deceived. Early in the play David's mother tells him, "The world you young folks talk about ain't the one we live in." Their return to the slums is no total surrender; it is only one forced retreat in a war of thousands of such actions.

Toni, most of all, tears herself out of the grasp of the mental slavery which capitalism seeks to impose upon all classes, on the oppressor to ease his conscience, on the oppressed to keep him quiet. She is the answer to Frederick Douglass' cry: "What man can look upon this state of things without resolving to cast his influence with those elements which will come down in ten-fold thunder and dash this state of things to atoms?"

It is a reflection on the state of our criticism that only a few New York reviewers, among them notably Vernon Rice of the *Post*, realized the full import of this play as drama. While others tried to relate it to their preconceptions of the contemporary Broadway play, Rice saw that *On Whitman Avenue* had something to do with Detroit and other points north as well as south of the Mason-Dixon line, and that it was neither overwritten, repetitious, unfair to the whites, nor lacking in depth of characterization. In fact the degree of characterization seemed to me expertly gauged to the requirements of the theme. A more elaborate psychology, while fashionable, would simply have rendered the action turgid. The delineations are simple, as they should be; they are never unclear, naive or dull.

It is a good, new thing when a play reaches out to engage its audience; the critics might as well get used to it. When reality knocks at the door, the sound goes right through the finger tips they press over their ears.

All the principal roles are handled with fine understanding, those of Ed Tilden by Will Geer, David by Canada Lee, Toni by Perry Wilson, Mrs. Tilden by Ernestine Barrier, and Aurie by Hilda Vaughn. The supporting cast is excellent. Margo Jones' direction shows a correct estimate of the dramatic weight each character bears to the total meaning of the play.

While I liked the set by Donald Oenslager, I felt that it could have been a little less pretentious. The facade must have cost as much as a whole house, plumbing and all.

THERE'S STILL LIFE IN THE OLD GAL

Can theater cure itself? City Center might take a tip from Piscator's New School Theater Workshop.

By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

As FAR back as I can remember, in my reading about the theater, that institution, like poetry, has been dying, or even dead. The autopsies continue—and the theater lingers on.

The phenomenon has a simple enough explanation. The theater is undeniably sick, but with the sickness that afflicts the whole of capitalist culture. It can be diagnosed only from an organic view. Even problems seemingly specific to the theater can only be fully understood in the full context of the capitalist culture within which it operates.

A laboratory demonstration of the interconnection was furnished during the depression decade. Then the theater collapsed as flat as the stockmarket. I remember how positively all the doctors of the drama pronounced it dead. Yet it came through, limping and feeble—but it came through.

I am using the word "theater" here in the limited concept which regards the real-estate-dominated and speculation-motivated output of Broadway as its core. A theater in which real estate holdings and financial speculation are decisive is in a sick social relationship, to begin with.

Living organisms, when attacked by disease, raise up antibodies against it. Our sick theater has been carried through its crises by the aid and influence of antibodies which have supported a peripheral dramatic art, some of whose vitality has flowed over to the diseased part. These antibodies have sustained taste, and held audiences for serious drama when the theater seemed finally reduced to gag and leg.

Here I set down a far from complete list of the rescuing antibodies. It would include the old Washington Square Players, now practically fossilized in the Theater Guild; the vanished Provincetown Players, the Cherry Lane Players and the Laboratory Theater. Then there was the influence of the neighboring Yiddish theater, the Artef, and visiting groups like the Moscow Art Theater, the Chauve Souris, the Habimah, the Vilna Troupe and, today, England's flourishing antibody, the Old Vic.

In the depression decade, when Broadway was flattest, the antibodies were most active. They included, above all, the Federal Theater Projects, which were themselves stimulated and influenced by the theater sections of the left-wing cultural movement—the Theater Union, the Group Theater, TAC, the International Ladies Garment Workers group that produced *Pins and Needles*, and, at a remove, Eva Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory Theater.

In the war years the need to mobilize the interests and emotions of the people, something which Broadway, like the films, normally seeks to anesthetize, brought about a comparative receptivity to serious plays. There has been a spillover into this postwar year. But the need for antibodies continues. And we find them in operation.

At this moment the two most visible ones are Stage for Action, which is in its own reconversion throes, finding peacetime tasks to match its wartime contribution, and Erwin Piscator's Theater Workshop.

IN THE functioning of the sick theater's antibodies, three elements have been important. If we examine the Soviet theater and other national theaters in their most fulfilled periods, these elements appear to be the essentials of a healthy theater. One, particularly in modern times, is relevant social content, the major contribution of the Theater Union and the Group Theater, and the weakening of which, in the latter, was one of the factors in its dissolution. The second is a cooperative, or at any rate, integrated playing company, which was achieved briefly and resplendently in New York by the Washington Square and the Provincetown Players in the boom period, and by the Group Theater during the depression. The third is a repertory, most consistently followed through in the Civic Repertory Theater.

Thus, with different emphases on one or another, all three elements have been a factor in the activity of the antibodies. It was their serious, though fumbling, search for significant content that distinguished the Provincetown Players, and the relaxation of that search contributed to their decline.

But the antibodies, themselves, were subject to the conditions of the disease. Its low admission scale prevented the Civic Repertory Theater, for example, from building a good enough company, a company of the quality of the Old Vic, or the famous Russian companies. The Group Theater's far better company, on the other hand, was raided by Broadway and Hollywood for its actors. This was not, as we have already noted, the sole reason for its disintegration, but one of the several pressures that combined to break it.

The three life-giving elements are present in Erwin Piscator's Theater Workshop of the New School for Social Research, with acting company unity as the least developed. The Workshop is a student-actor organization, and the acting is affected, besides, by the need to provide all the students with roles. The unity in the company comes mainly from the direction which is supplied by the workshop's gifted and experienced head, Erwin Piscator, one of the great theater artists of our time. The social content in its repertory, apart from the director's skill which accomplishes so much with a tiny stage, home-made properties and untrained actors, is the theater's chief distinction.

UNDER the title of "The March of Drama" the repertory has been conceived as a means of illustrating the history of world drama. In it China is represented with *The Chalk Circle*, a play of peasant revolt; ancient Greece with Aristophanes' anti-war satire, *Lysistrata;* France with Moliere's comedy on the emergent bourgeoisie, *The Imaginary Invalid;* old Russia by two one-act plays by Chekhov and Gorky, the first a sardonic portrayal of upper-class "miseries," the other, in contrast, a tragic revelation of peasant life turning on the theft of a few ounces of sugar; Soviet Russia with Pogodin's *The Aristocrats*, dealing with the rehabilitation of antisocial people through useful work; Germany with *Hannele's Way to Heaven* by Gerhart Hauptmann, which deals with the psychological mutilations of poverty but is spoiled by mysticism (this seems to me an aspect of the no-

torious opportunism of its author, who found it possible to accept Nazi honors); Elizabethan England by Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night;* modern England by Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion,* with its insights into the revolutionary beginnings of Christianity; Italy by Pirandello's *Tonight We Improvise,* and America by Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra,* discussed in a previous issue of NEW MASSES, and the premiere of a new play soon to be produced.

There are certain omissions in that list that occur at once. Why no representation of the English Restoration satires, or one of Sheridan's? Why not Gogol's *Inspector General?* But whether or not such alternatives would have proved practicable or preferable, the repertory is certainly rich enough, considering the handicaps under which the theater operates.

On analysis, as already indicated, the repertory, with two exceptions, is a forcible demonstration of social content in the classic theater. The exceptions are *Twelfth Night* and *Tonight We Improvise.* But in the latter, probably the best play about players ever written, there is social content, too, for those who can make their own inferences from the revelations of actors' psychology and the stage conventions satirized during the unconventional course of the play.

Its social content, in fact, is the major source of interest in this repertory —rich testimony from the history of drama to confute the Broadway libel upon the theater that its purpose is to supply sedatives and distractions.

FROM the standpoint of production *Tonight We Improvise* was outstandingly the most successful. The direction admirably caught the off-guard, intimately self-revelatory aspects of the actor's life intended by the author; and in the very inexperience of the actors there was a spontaneity that had a special effectiveness.

From the standpoint of social content, however, the most interesting play of the Workshop's season is Pogodin's *The Aristocrats.* Here is a play which is directly and consciously a thesis piece, a piece for an occasion. The occasion is past but, unlike most plays done for an occasion, *The Aristocrats* has survived it. Important lessons are therefore to be learned from this significant success, in that much debated field of art as direct propaganda.

The play deals with the building by convicts of the Baltic-White Sea Canal, which proved of immense economic importance in peace and equal military importance in war. Murmansk's value as a supply port lay in its situation as the northern terminus of the canal.

The construction constituted two feats of engineering. One was the special engineering feat of building locks, dams and sluices through a rocky, icy Northern wilderness; the other was the still more extraordinary feat of *social* engineering — remaking former ordinary criminals and former engineer-saboteurs into useful builders.

The immediate characters of the play are two groups of "aristocrats," engineers from among the unreconciled, pre-revolutionary intelligentsia who plan to continue their sabotage on the canal construction, and the underworld "artists" who refuse to soil their hands with work.

Pogodin carries them through their slow evolution into the socialist collective. He shows the appeals and challenges to creative feelings and the social pressures of the transformed community working upon the aristocrats and gradually taking effect. It is a tribute to the skill of the author that the changes of two years flow through the stage's two hours with a continuity like that of life itself.

A study of Pogodin's script should be immensely rewarding to the social playwright. What was obvious, even at the comparatively surface level of watching a performance, is that the portrayals are self-consistent; therefore the points they make are immensely effective because they have that most convincing credibility of portrayals which continue in character while making their points.

This is particularly important and effective here because of the very content of the play. Since it deals with "human engineering" it was as necessary to be as accurate about human properties and conditions as about the conditions and properties of the rock strata to be excavated.

It is Pogodin's achievement that he does this entirely in terms of character evolution. Charts and sociological language could have served too, but on a lower artistic level. Pogodin gives us the doubts, resistance, rebellions, conflicts, hysterias, hopes, ruses, wit, defiances, elations and depressions, all the complexities in the souls of engineers who have lived double lives, and the gangster leaders who have lived by their wits in two worlds. Pogodin

makes use of these subtleties and conflicts for dramatic subtleties and conflicts. As Pogodin presents it, the reclamation of these "aristocrats" comes not by a simple erasure of the old and imposition of the new, but by a gradual rearrangement of their qualities, such as enables them to mesh into the surrounding social mechanism.

The production, on the whole, was good. By the visible manipulation of simple screens, on which colored photographic backgrounds were projected, the production itself helped to give a sense of the construction that is the chief point of the play. The acting was capable and well unified. But the use of a chorus chanting the slogans and statistics that Pogodin himself never resorted to is an intrusion. It is not in the script and was not in the Moscow performance I happened to see. But though it is an intrusion, this minor American addition was certainly not enough to spoil the production. There can be no question but that, of the contemporary plays shown in New York this year, this Soviet play is the best.

NEW YORK desperately needs a repertory theater. One has only to see the workshop productions to see the potentialities of such a company; and to see the magnificent offerings of the Old Vic for those potentialities in comparative fulfilment. For New York the Workshop is a lucky stopgap. But it could become so much more. It is a pity that a theater that manages to say so much is so muted in its expression by the handicaps of a stage too small and antiquated, and by other insufficiencies. It seems to me there is an opportunity here for the City Center to provide auditorium and audience for a repertory company of real proportions, directed by Piscator.

Since its inception the City Center has been a stage looking for a function. Its offerings have done it little credit, have shown no enterprise, no imagination, no plan. Why not serve, as the Old Vic does for England, as the vivifying antibody for the sick American theater?

Why not let Mr. Piscator build a company from the unused talent abundant in this town, for a full-time repertory that can extend his vivid history of the world drama? This could become one of the acting companies that are the most vital need of our theater. It could serve that large, waiting audience that has always shown itself ready

to support a people's theater, an audience Broadway has persistently balked.

The Old Vic

THIS review might serve as a long and cheerful footnote to the article above. The Old Vic, on whose production of *Henry IV*, Part Two, I will re-report here, is in New York as the guest of Theater Incorporated, producers of the successful current revival of *Pygmalion*. In the program notes this production of *Pygmalion* is announced as their first move toward a repertory company along the lines of the Old Vic. Plans for the coming season include three productions, not yet finally chosen, from plays by Gogol, Goldoni, Ibsen, Middleton, O'Casey, Shakespeare and Synge, and a new play. The same program also carries an advertisement of the American Repertory Theater, to be inaugurated in the Fall with a series of plays by Barrie, Ibsen, Shaw and Sheridan, and a new play. Since at least one of these groups is proceeding in conscious emulation of the Old Vic, the opportunity to see this deservedly famous model, now on view at the New Century Theater, should not be missed.

Its production of *Henry IV*, Part Two (I have not yet seen Part One), is well worth emulating. With Ralph Richardson as Falstaff and Laurence Olivier as Justice Shallow, the comic in this great historical drama would seem to overweigh the historical. But though there is no individual acting to equal Richardson's and Olivier's among those portraying the historical personages, there is a dignity and grandeur in the direction and the settings that serves to strike a balance.

Performance, directing and mounting of the play have an authenticity that no American production of Shakespeare that I have seen has had. It may come, in large part, from its being a native production. But I am inclined to believe that it is also, in large part, the fruit of the repertory idea, the accumulated experience of the sixty years that the Old Vic collective has been producing Shakespeare.

In the directorial tempo there is remarkable subtlety of modulations and contrasts and seldom have I seen lovelier compositions in the settings, costumes and the placing and carriage of the actors. Some of the scenes had the effect of Renaissance paintings in motion.

All I have to find fault with is the sometimes excessive gesturings and turnings of the actors, deprecatorily called "mugging," which tends to muffle their speech. This is probably a greater drawback here than in England, where historical allusions are immediately caught and where there is no obstacle of an unfamiliar accent. It took me some twenty minutes to accustom myself to the British accent to the point where I could hear the words without straining.

Reading through the program notes it was instructive to learn that the Old Vic, now so glittering and accepted an ornament of British culture, is the product of a social reformer's determination to bring Shakespeare to the London slums. London's poor helped to sustain the Old Vic for many years before Mayfair condescended to acknowledge its existence. Still more significant, its present widespread activities are made possible by that Communistic menace, a financial guarantee from the government, through the National Arts Council. The council itself derives from the wartime, morale-sustaining CEMA (Committee for the Encouragement of Music and Art). These at first volunteer, and later government-sponsored collective activities have given a stimulus to British culture that it has not known for years.

Today the Old Vic operates theaters in London, Bristol and Liverpool. It trains its own actors, who make their debut in the Old Vic's children's theater company. It also maintains an experimental stage. Thus the Old Vic is something not merely for the American Repertory Theater and Theater Incorporated to emulate. It, and the British National Arts Committee which sponsors it—not to speak of the still more highly developed theaters of Socialist Russia—are examples to all America.

I. S.

Youth Theater Alumni

THE pre-war Flatbush Art Theater, which grew into the American Youth Theater and then disbanded for the duration, is back again as the Youth Theater Alumni. It is presenting a variety show Saturday nights at New York's Barbizon-Plaza Theater which it calls *Tid-Bits of '46*. Some of the old faces are gone: Betty Garrett is the life of *Call Me Mister;* Buddy Yarus, as George Tine, is out in Hollywood, snaring an occasional juicy role as in *Walk in the Sun,* etc. But

there are enough old faces back to make their reappearance a real homecoming. Phil Leeds is funnier, more mature, surer of himself than in the past. Others you will recognize are Bob Sharron, Phil Cooper, Sherle Hart, who has marvelous timing and a wonderful comic sense, Mordy Bauman and Jerry Jaroslow, who fills Buddy Yarus' place. Among the newcomers are Josef Marais and Miranda, folk singers from South Africa, whose songs of the veldt will captivate you.

Since the organization wishes this show to be accepted in the nature of a welcome home party, it would be churlish, at this point, to scrutinize its material too sharply. Nevertheless I am tempted to point out that several hundred people sit and listen each weekend, and the addition of meaning would not hurt the spirit of the get-together at all. One or two numbers refer to the OPA and Rankin, but they are warmed-over sketches from the past. This group by now has created a social obligation for itself. Its audiences expect that obligation to be fulfilled at maximum in all its public appearances. Its revues once served as models for such groups as the Teachers Union, Local 65 of the Wholesale and Warehouse Union, the Office Workers and youth groups. The spirited theatrical energy that went into lampooning the enemies of the people is now more necessary than ever.

JOSEPH FOSTER.

Anna Sokolow Dances

ALTHOUGH at her solo recital of May 12 Anna Sokolow was handicapped by a back injury, there were few signs of this once the curtain was up. The same sharp lyricism of movement that has always marked her work was in evidence and, judging from the enthusiasm of the audience, they too found little amiss.

In her dances you see no tremendous leaps into space, no thrilling body extensions, no controlled whirlings. The greater portion of her creative energies seems to go into the dramatic projection of the idea, of the concept, she is handling—almost at the expense of kinesthetic freedom. Yet it it is this very preoccupation with content which is the true measure of her significance.

The program offered proof that Miss Sokolow, unlike the greater number of her contemporaries, has remained steadfast to advanced social

concepts as the basis of her creative endeavors. She makes few compromises with "good programming." Almost every composition is the result of the most intense, direct observation. Indeed, this is her dances' greatest strength—as it must be the strength of every work of art.

Her contact with reality is as penetrating in her earlier works ("Mama Beautiful," based on Mike Quinn's poem, her setting of the two Sol Funaroff poems in "The Exile" and "Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter") as it is in the new items that appear on the program, particularly "Mexican Retablo." And it certainly is a tribute to the sincerity and care with which Miss Sokolow builds her work that compositions created a number of years ago, and answering the social pressures of another period, are still pertinent today.

The two parts of "Mexican Retablo"—"Our Lady" and "Senora, Save Him . . ."—impressed me as first-rate works. Here, Miss Sokolow's qualities emerged in clearest and most brilliant form. In the first, we see the figure of the peasant-made Virgin, seemingly formed of scraps of wood and shreds of wire, yet possessing extraordinary beauty. The dancer's realization in movement of the mechanical and yet almost human qualities of this peasant object was superb. "Senora, Save Him . . ." relates the worshipper to the object of her own creation. This was no conventional prostration to the divine object, no awed surrender, but rather the worshipper demanding salvation from an object created for that purpose. Between them, the two dances possess the completeness of idea that one ordinarily associates with an entire cycle.

The second half of Miss Sokolow's program consisted of dances exclusively on Jewish themes. For me, at least, "Images from the Old Testament," "Kaddish" and "The Bride," although possessing moments of outstanding communication, failed to equal the urgency and completeness of utterance which make "The Exile" memorable.

All in all, Miss Sokolow provided a rewarding afternoon of dance. It is to be regretted that she did not have an opportunity to show her group compositions, for she has always been an outstanding group choreographer.

Miss Sokolow was ably assisted in her performance by Sophie Cait, pianist, and Arno Tanney, baritone.

DANIEL PRENTICE.

be

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GRAND PRIZE: Original Oil Painting by world-famous artist, for group which secures greatest number of yearly subs (minimum of 50);

Second Prize: An Original Watercolor, for group which secures second highest number of yearly subs.

Special Award: A Lithograph or Silkscreen picture will be given to every organization securing ten yearly subs.

make

YOUR OWN SELECTION OF PAINTINGS BY WILLIAM GROPPER, MOSES SOYER, CHARLES KELLER, DAVID BURLIUK, PHILIP EVERGOOD.

win

FOLLOW FIVE SIMPLE RULES

1. Any NM reader or any organization is eligible to enter contest except employes of New Masses and members of their immediate families.
2. Contest began April 16, ends September 1, 1946. All entries must be postmarked not later than midnight, September 1.
3. Only new subscriptions for at least one year count in the contest, not renewals.
4. Only subscriptions submitted in groups of ten or more will be entitled to special rate of $4.00 per year.
5. Print plainly your name, address and organization with the name and address of each new subscriber. Mail with money order or check to: Contest Manager, New Masses, 104 East 9th Street, New York 3, N. Y.

mail

IN YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS AS FAST AS YOU GET THEM!