

PACIFIC WEEKLY

A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

JULY 29, 1935



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PACIFIC WEEKLY
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PACIFIC WEEKLY

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VOLUME III

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(Editor's Note—Owing to the recent illness of Robert Merriman, his fourth "bulletin" from Soviet Russia did not reach us in time for this issue of PACIFIC WEEKLY.)

NOTES AND COMMENT

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

COLLEGE students who had completed their six-weeks' training were the past week handed their commissions by the officer in charge at the Presidio in Monterey. They were handed something else. They were handed some good sound enlightenment in the matter of what is expected of them. "Now you are prepared," the officer said, in so many words, "to fight your nation's enemies abroad and at home." Then, lest the boys, not usually very interested in politics or the Hearst papers (scorned and derided at Stanford), might be a bit uncertain against whom the civil war they were being egged on to was to be fought, the officer proceeded to flay "the scum of the earth—communists". And second only to communists, he declared, were pacifists.

Who is it, they say, encourages the class struggle? Who is it preaches hatred of Americans by Americans?

KEEPING IT DARK

DESPITE the fact that California ranks today as the most Fascist state in the Union, and that vigilante murder of workers is more prevalent here than in any other state, the intelligent, thinking, courageous citizens of this commonwealth were able to prevent the passage of every Fascist bill before the state legislature with the exception of that which refuses the use of school buildings by "radical groups".

This law prohibits the use of the schools, during school hours or otherwise, for the teaching of current history wherein it has to do in any way with Soviet Russia. California law now says that not only must Soviet Union affairs be kept secret from adults, but our school children must not hear of them. The buildings of our elementary and secondary schools are barred to enlightenment on the progress of a nation which is recognized politically and economically by our government.

It so happens that this ridiculous taboo cuts a big chunk out

of education on world affairs because the Soviet Union is today providing humanity with more interesting and vital information in the progress of civilization than all the rest of the world combined. There is nothing wild about this statement. Let us take an issue of one of our metropolitan dailies in support of this assertion. Let us take the issue of the San Francisco Chronicle of Sunday, July 21. Following is an index of material in this issue of the Chronicle devoted to Soviet Russia and Russian affairs:

Rotogravure Section:

Page 3. Picture of six young Russian women who have parachuted 7,053 meters without oxygen equipment.

Page 4. Husky maidens in gigantic sports parade in Moscow.

Page 4. Soviet Broadcast. Official reader giving news dispatches from Pravda to young peasants on collective farms.

News Section:

Page 2. "Soviet Protest Draws Bristling Tokyo Reply."

Page 3. "Post, Russian Trio Mapping Polar Flight."

Page 4. News of the Week in Review: Trade Agreement with Russia.

Page 8. "Reds Order New U. S. Party. Time Ripe Now, Moscow Says."

Page 8. "Cure 17 Tots with Caviar."

World Topics Section:

Page F4. "Moscow Smiles as Daily Life Grows Easier", by William McDermott. (Nearly a column)

Page F5. "Russ-American Trading Now is Stabilized." (Nearly a column)

Page F7. "Pravda finds fault; Offers No Solution", by William B. Stoneman. (Two-thirds of column)

Page F7. "Glider Fuels Train." (Moscow)

Books and Art Section:

Page D3. "Russian Art Next to Go on Exhibition."

Page D4. Russian Justice, by Mary Stevenson Callcott, reviewed by Edward Radenzel.

Quite an array for one issue of a daily paper, and an ultra-capitalist daily paper at that, isn't it? There should be a law prohibiting this sort of thing in Fascist California.

PAGING HEARST

SAN FRANCISCO members of the American League Against War and Fascism are planning to do a little job on William Randolph Hearst at the Building Trades Council this coming Wednesday evening. They have invited him to attend. The following telegram has been addressed to him:

Our organization will place you on trial before the people of San Francisco on July 31. You will be charged as a War maker and a Fascist. Evidence will be presented from your forty year record of fostering racial hatreds and prejudices which has in the past fomented war with Spain and Mexico and today threatens to involve this country in another costly conflict. Your present campaign under the false slogan of Americanism will if successful culminate in a Fascist regime. We will expose your framing of a new Declaration of Independence in conjunction with fifty-six financiers, militarists and politicians which reads like a Fascist manifesto. You are in-

vited to be present in your own defense or send a representative.

A PLACE TO HELP

A REIGN of terror that grew out of the lumber strike in Eureka was climaxed about a month ago by the arrest of 150 workers, the shooting of 11, and the outright killing of two. Following the arrests there has been an epidemic of vigilantism and intimidation.

Of those originally arrested, 51 are on trial on charges carrying concealed weapons, rioting, disturbing the peace, etc. The majority of them are being defended by the International Labor Defense through their attorney, Leo Gallagher.

Expenses of carrying on the defense are considerable. This mass conspiracy of the employers and the law is an attack on labor's right to strike and organize and must be fought by all liberals and radicals.

PACIFIC WEEKLY is glad to be able to appeal for help for the defense of these workers and suggests that those who would like to aid send what money they can to the International Labor Defense, Room 410, 1005 Market street, San Francisco.



CALL TO AMERICA!

BY PETER GULBRANDSEN

THIS is going to be the sixth depression year, as you call it, and all you can think of is to sit at home—if you have any home—waiting for a hand-out. There is no such thing as depression in America. It is your minds and brains and guts that are depressed. You call yourselves a great people; but you do not even know that you have a country. You brag about your patriotism, but what is a country worth, if your neighbors, your countrymen and fellow-citizens rot away with everything around them to make life worth living?

I have been among you for over ten years. I am what you call "an American citizen"; but today you are the most helpless, docile and supine people on earth. You have the richest and best-equipped country in the world. You have everything, and yet you sit idly by forgetting that you once had a country. Aren't your fields American fields? Aren't your factories American factories? Aren't your railways American railways? Aren't your newspapers American newspapers? Why then do you let the only real American thing today be a soup kitchen?

My fellow-Americans! I am ashamed of you. I thought you were a strong, practical, self-reliant people. I knew your Emerson and your Thoreau twenty-five years ago; but where is all your boasted strength, practicality and self-reliance? Aren't you ashamed to sit at home and let the government feed you? You, a great people, living on a Federal hand-out! Why don't you wake up once more and see that you have a country, and that it is all yours? The country demands of you that you wake up and take possession of it, everything that is in it. The country needs you, and you need your country. Why have you let yourselves be hypnotized and deluded so long by the traitors who have come to you disguised as Ameri-

can patriots, telling you the goods of your country were not for you? Why have you let come into your homes voices over the air and voices on paper which filled you with fear and made you timid? An American knows no fear. If he is afraid, he has been doped. And, my fellow Americans, you have been doped. You have been doped to believe that it is all right you have no more a country. Have you become a nation of beggars? Are you going to write a finish to your history because you have been driven into a corner by your hidden enemies within? Have you no more respect for yourselves and for this great country, now hidden behind a veil, than to allow yourselves to be governed by men who buy off revolt and revolution with meal-tickets?

You have everything in America today except spine, guts, courage to act and contempt for those who took your country away from you. For God's sake, take it back. Take it back! Your country is slipping away from you. You who have built it. The fields are all yours; the factories are all yours; the newspapers, the railways, the telephones, the radio . . . it is all yours. But you are asleep now you have made America. And in your sleep the traitors have stolen your nation and taken your means of existence away from you. They have built a paper-wall of bonds and notes around your country, and made you believe it is made of steel. I tell you it is not. I tell you to burn it up. Kill the delusion that you can do nothing. The net the traitors have woven around you is very frail and thin. Why do you want to believe any longer that the net has steel-cables?

Your great composer, John Philip Sousa, wrote marches. Why don't you march? I see thousands of you limber to the soup kitchens; but I don't see any of you march together to burn up the bond-wall or to tear down the money-net, so that you can get your country back. What is the matter with you? Isn't one Sousa enough? I hear America calling for sons and daughters. Don't you hear it, too? Nobody wants to invade America; but you must wake up and invade your own country and bring it back to yourselves. How you have been fooled! That is all that is the matter with you. I feel so lonely in America because you keep on sleeping. I am one of the Vikings and we want to fight. Let me join you in conquering America. I would like to. I never saw a country which was more worth fighting for, than America is worth fighting for. Americans! Wake up! Burn up your paper-walls! You want

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food, not bonds. Your traitors have enmeshed you in a net so dense, that the traitors have—at last—been caught in the net themselves. That is why the fight is easy. If you keep on sleeping, I cannot say for very much longer: this is still your country. Americans! You, the proudest of the earth's peoples, whose achievements brought me to your shores from a land I know was mine, let this land be mine, too, in fact.

I am ready, if you are ready. I like your songs and your literature; but what you call your country is in a mess. Show me your robustness. I know your pliancy only too well, and I have had enough of it. Burn up your bonds and your ballots, your notes and your paper-walls, get out under the sky again, smell the earth again and take back your country. You deserve to have it back. Lift your depressed hearts and minds to the sun and remember, that never was there a depressed American. Your country calls you. Win it back to yourselves. This is your fight, your great American War. You are buying peace at too big a price. You are selling your self-respect and courage for hand-outs. Americans were not born or made to take hand-outs. Americanism is a religion of revolt against absurdities. Americans! The day has arrived when you must practise your religion, throw out your traitors who face you in the masks of patriots, and take over America for yourselves and your children. That is the business of today, there is no other business besides that, and there will be no other business until this is settled. Hand-outs are for beggars, not for free American men and women. Stop taking alms, and re-conquer this great nation which you have lost to the army of traitors in your midst.

LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING--

WHY IS it that people of leisure resent vagrants? Vagrants have a polite attitude toward the leaders of their class.

ANTI-HITLER JEWS in New York kick off the Communists who want to join them. Why? The Communists are more against the Nazis than the Jews are; the Communists are down on the Nazis' graft, too, not only their murders and tortures, but their capitalism. Maybe the Jews would like to save out the graft of German business.

SOME OBSERVERS think that the Japanese want to represent and speak and even fight for all Asia. And, concurrently, they seem to be interested in raising opium in Ethiopia. Frankly, too: sometimes it looks as if they had no respect for our hypocrisies.

HEARST IS still after a reasonable, scientific interpretation of murder. He has Theodore Dreiser doing what he once asked me to do: he has the novelist writing quietly about the choir-leader who deliberately held his wife down to drown in order to clear the way for his love of a young girl. Dreiser explained the atrocious crime so that no one would hate, only pity the murderer and understand him. The model for such a murder is, of course, Dreiser's novel *An American Tragedy*. But what interests me is Hearst's persistence in the search for a just murder story. Nobody has Hearst right, not even Hearst and his friends, servitors, editors and, I'm afraid, not his biographers. He is both better and worse than they all imagine.

I'd like to see Dreiser write William Randolph Hearst.

ROBERT BRIFFAULT, the English scholar who wrote for us that article on "Why They Are So Dumb", has another corking essay in the July *Scribner's*. He raises and answers the question "Is Man Improving?" He says and he makes his readers answer "Yes". His argument is that we humans are using the evolution achieved, the individualist culture to meet and deal with what really forms us, the social system. People intelligent enough to be conscious of their confusion will be glad to get the clearness of this man Briffault. By the way, I called him a Frenchman the last time I mentioned him and he rebuked me for it. My apology is that I did not know by any experience that an Englishman could be so logical and clear-minded. The French had a monopoly of reason among moderns. There must be some French taint in Briffault's blood as well as in his name.

MY FRIEND, your leader Upton Sinclair's slogan "production for use" is being spread all over. Barefooted men in Fresno are taking shoes from SERA and selling them to local merchants, to get things they want to use. The things these citizens want are apt to be drinks but they do use the drinks; and the double transaction makes business. Like Christianity, production for use is practicable only under communism. Upton Sinclair should know at least as well as I do that nothing good will work without a foundation unavailable under a profit system like capitalism. Human nature, you know. It's of no significance that the human natural trader in SERA goods was a rancher. I have heard of bankers and business men who did famous and infamous things for no use but to make a profit. And I'll wager that the Russians would be as mean and mercantile as ever we are if profits had not been abolished over there. It is hateful to have these Soviet Russians constantly thrown up at us. They are no better than we are. If they could make a profit, they would.

RESIDENTS ALL along the Pacific shore—Monterey, Santa Cruz and other places within two or three miles of ocean fog are becoming more or less inflated and spoiled by the observation that the poor devils who pant in vain for breath in the valleys are pouring out here. "We" are in danger of inferring that we attract these invaders. It is well to keep steadily in mind that they are driven hither, not pulled; and they won't stay long. They won't buy an inch of real estate.

THE NAZIS of Germany are broadening their prejudice against the Jews to cover Catholics and certain Protestants. That's a move in the right direction. Maybe they'll clean out of Germany the whole of humanity and none but Germans left. Of course, as an amateur statesman, I think our civilization requires some people, like the Jews, to blame and persecute; I'd be afraid that in a purified Germany, the Germans would begin to loathe and wrong one another, but meanwhile I have to be tolerant.

Maybe it's some Thing that's the matter, not somebody. Said before, this statement may be true. It may be news.

NOTICEABLE IN my neighbors and visitors is a tendency to wish that the Ethiopians would win the war with Mussolini. And these unwarlike critics and observers find pleasure in imagining maneuvers and arms to aid the Abyssinians ruthlessly. They are cruel about it. They would not only kill and torture; my pacifist friends would poison wells and spread terrible diseases to destroy the Italian troops and defend North Africa from civilization. My comfortable inference is

that the coming war down there will prove to be a relief and a release to our just barbarism. The Italian soldiers have nothing to say or gain from the Duce's war; they are as innocent as the black barbarians themselves. I'd like to explain it all scientifically to the only citizens that could possibly understand it: our school children.

A LITTLE GIRL standing up in the front of an automobile remarked that "the car is going where the lights have been". But, another time, she sighed, "I am getting tiresome of this."

TWO SCHOLARS were talking about who wrote Shakespeare's works, whether it was Bacon, the Earl of Oxford, or Will himself. I didn't join the mild debate. I was thinking how I could become the author of *The Jungle* and, say, *Heavenly Discourse*. Lots of people think now that *The Jungle* is mine, and it is quite probable. I was a muck-raker at that time, I was in Chicago then and if you know Upton Sinclair and me, you might well be sure Upton could not have done so

fine a book. No man that was willing to appear on the old capitalist Democratic Party now could have handled the knowledge in that great book; too great for a liberal like Upton. Much more likely that I did it. I sounded Upton Sinclair on my authorship once and, while he made a wry face he did not deny it. I think he'd let it go as mine. He may be ashamed of it by now. My friends might join me in trying it on. The Earl of Oxford put it over. And Bacon, who was a worse crook than I am, and less of a poet.

THIS ERECT column was wrong recently in reporting that the "common front" in Paris, France, against the fascistization of the French had won this third attempt. The struggle is still going on and the "united front" there, still victorious, is still fighting. But with the Socialists and the Communists joined together the triumph is likely to be consolidated. And, I repeat, if the French can do it, we should be able to. The French may be more intelligent than we are but, by the same token, they are not half so good and so wilful.



THE MENACE OF JAPAN

BY L. E. CLAYPOOL

EVENTS in the Far East appear more disturbing to me now than they have at any time in the last ten years.

When the Kuomintang (People's Party) consolidated the achievements of the 1911 revolution in China, brought about largely through the efforts of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, it did it with Soviet Russian assistance.

As a journalist who went to China with the normal American prejudice against Russia I must now admit, to be honest, that the Russians were formally and officially invited to aid the revolution. They aided in two ways.

First, the Russians sent trained army officers to assist the Chinese in perfecting an army that could cope with the warlords of the north. These included independent operators, such as Wu Pei-fu and Japanese-subsidized racketeers such as Chang Tso-lin.

Second, the Russians sent political organizers headed by M. Borodin who showed the Chinese republicans how to appeal to the populace. Both kinds of help proved effective and China would today be strong and united and capable of repelling Japan but for two things.

The first of these is betrayal by Chiang Kai-shek, overlord of the Nanking government, and the banking clique that backs him. The second of these is the interference by foreign powers who sent their gunboats and troops to prevent the Chinese from obtaining control of China.

The great Yangtse river has no more reason for being the international highway that it is than the Mississippi river has. Both are rivers and both bisect a great nation. Had European powers used the Mississippi in 1861-65 to keep the United States divided and ineffective they would have done something analogous to what European powers and America have done and are doing with the Yangtse.

There are two things the Japanese want on the Asian mainland. They want to dominate the trade south of the Yangtse and they want to seize most of the territory north of it. Mark what I predict. If Japan has her way she will become a mainland power. Peiping will ultimately be the capital of Japan and if she can defeat Russia again she hopes to dominate all of Korea, Manchuria (Manchukuo), all of Mongolia and goodly portions of Shantung and Chihli provinces, including, as I said, Peiping.

Japan denies her Mongolian origin for social purposes but insists upon it for economic ones. To win what she wants on the mainland she must inevitably clash with Russia which has long claimed prior economic rights in Manchuria and has a political understanding with Inner and Outer Mongolia.

In all this we lose sight of China's rights. Her rights are paramount to those of all others. All but about two per cent of the population of Manchuria is Chinese. The psychology of the country is Chinese. It has been for centuries. Japan, by invading Manchuria, violated three treaties and all moral dictates. She violated a specific agreement with Russia by invading Jehol province, Inner Mongolia. She tricked Russia into selling her interest in the Chinese eastern railway. Russia did it, however, in the interest of peace.

The question is bigger than a mere squabble between two or three countries for territory. That's an old story and China, especially, is used to it. It is a final clash, as I see it, between two distinct types of civilization.

On the one hand, Japan is the culmination of the feudal-fascistic state which embraces and embodies everything that is inimical to liberty and the rights of the individual, to say nothing of ultimate socio-economic slavery for the masses.

Russia represents at least an attempt at a real new deal in

the world wherein the workers get a break. It is a social order so different that not even a majority of those in sympathy with it, comprehend its full and true significance.

These are the two opposites at grips in the grain fields of Manchuria and the steppes of the Mongolias.

In the west Germany is the buffer between Russia and predatory capitalistic society. Small wonder that England and Italy and even France, her perpetual rival, have acquiesced in Germany's re-arming. Russia must not win. Italy must agree because she has her own designs in Africa. England can't kick because she, too, has robbed China and India of billions.

France took a goodly territory from China and lives in a celophane house.

The only friend Russia has in this world is Russia, plus a few scattered idealists without wealth or strength.

Not because the powers love Japan, but because Japan is about to fight the last stand of a capitalist world these powers must, if not back her, at least not interfere with her. They hope, I believe, that after Japan has licked Russia she will be so thoroughly exhausted that she can then be put in her place and her loot taken from her leisurely.

But will she lick Russia? That I presume to doubt.



GIVE THE CHURCH A BREAK

BY GEORGE HEDLEY

Two teachers in the Workers' Summer School, on successive days:

No. 1—"We must learn to test and modify a hypothesis by the facts, rather than by using the theological method of starting with a rigid conclusion."

No. 2—"We should teach our opinions as opinions only, and not as a sort of Bible handed down to be accepted just as it stands."

I protested (after class) and secured immediate apologies. But the accusation is widespread, and so it seems to me that the reply deserves a larger audience. The assumption that the Church regards Biblical, theological and moral problems as settled in advance is shared by almost all my liberal and radical friends. That Christianity and fundamentalism are identical seems to be taken for granted by contributors not only to *The New Masses* and *The American Mercury* but also to *The New Republic*. That the Church has not changed its ways of thinking and teaching in thirty years is believed by all who abandoned the Church thirty years ago. That these estimates are largely inaccurate and unjust is, to my mind, a fact capable of substantiation. To wit:

I

"Fundamentalism" Less Historic than "Modernism"

That Jesus was an innovator and a rebel is, of course, generally recognized. That Paul was scarcely less revolutionary in his way of thinking is, though not so widely known, equally true. He assailed both the practices and the habits of mind of the Jewish community in which he had grown up. His compatriots in Thessalonica described him and his companion Silas as "these that have turned the world upside down". Writing to the Corinthians, he condemned literalism in the use of the Scriptures, declaring that "the letter kills, but the spirit makes alive", and adding that the reading of the Old Testament usually resulted in mental confusion.

Athanasius and Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, Saints of the Church and authorities in "orthodox" theology, were radicals in thought in their respective generations. Origen said, "Only God knows who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews"; Dionysius roundly denied any common ground for the Fourth Gospel and the Revelation; Theodore flatly rejected the Da-

vidic authorship of the Psalms. Martin Luther called the Epistle of James *recht stroehene*, "right strawy", dismissed the book of Esther as "containing a superfluity of heathen naughtiness" (not an advertisement, Mr. Editor!), and relegated the Revelation to the Appendix of his German Bible. John Calvin completely dissociated the Christian Sunday from Jewish Sabbath regulations. John Wesley wrote, "Many of the Psalms are not fit to be in a Christian's mouth", and explicitly refused to predicate Christian unity on matters of theological opinion.

The plain fact is that "fundamentalism" marks a departure from the central tradition of Christian leadership, a descent from the level of historic Christian thought. Its most virulent form, it happens, appeared in the United States of America in the nineteenth century, and flourished in Protestant circles here as it did nowhere else: the battle of Dayton could scarcely have been fought in any other land since the days of the Inquisition. Even so, as a self-conscious movement designed by a specific name, "fundamentalism" is scarcely fifteen years old; and it arose as a counter-revolution to what its champions had come to recognize as the dominant trend in Christian thinking.

II

"Modernism" in the Intellectual Realm

That dominant trend, true to the spirit of leaders such as those mentioned above, is characterized first of all by an attitude of free enquiry in the approach to the Bible and its theology. Not in the Church, but outside its ranks, occur the most naive acceptances of intellectually untenable concepts. Any theological student can straighten out the columnists who ascribe Proverbs and Ecclesiastes to Solomon, and the novelists who essay biographies of Jesus without any critical acquaintance with the sources. (Specifically: Papini, Ludwig, Middleton Murry). The Kiwanis song-book gives us "Silent Night" with the line,

"Round yon virgin mother and child"; but the *Pilgrim Hymnal*, official publication of the Congregationalists, uses a version which says nothing of Jesus' paternity. The most bitter argument I ever have had over the finality of the Ten Commandments was not with a Presbyterian, but with a pugilist. Last year there appeared my book, A

Christian Year: expressions of amazement over its "radicalism" come uniformly from friends who never go to Church, while quite the most enthusiastic review was in *The Journal of Religion*, over the signature of the President of Chicago Theological Seminary.

It should be realized that dogmas usually are defined only when they have been rejected. Thus, when the Christian Fundamentals League insists that no-one can be a Christian unless he believes in (1) the inerrancy of the Scriptures, (2) the deity of Christ, (3) the virgin birth, (4) the substitutionary atonement, and (5) the physical resurrection and physical second coming of Jesus, that is *prima facie* evidence of the existence of a host of Christians who (1) do not regard the Bible as infallible, (2) consider Jesus to have been uniquely human rather than uniquely supernatural, (3) reject the myth of divine paternity, (4) deny that Jesus' death relieves us of responsibility for our own sins, and (5) dismiss the naive materialism of the first century as being just that.

The extent of this latter host is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that *The Sunday School Times*, arch-defender of fundamentalism, lists as "unsafe" every official theological school of the Baptist, Congregational, Episcopal, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. Those "unsafe" schools teach, just as do my friends in the Workers' Summer School, that hypotheses must be tested and modified by facts, that opinions are to be presented as opinions only. For so doing, they are condemned by the fundamentalists: isn't it about time they got some understanding and support from liberals?

III

Freedom in Social Thought

The declaration that religion is the opiate of the people requires closer definition. Some religion has been, some has not. Some is, some isn't. The priestly cults of Bethel and Jerusalem in the eighth century B. C. were the creatures and defenders of the *status quo*; and it was against them that Amos and Isaiah thundered out their religious, prophetic message. The Sadducean conformists of Jesus' day wished to keep the people in order—and therefore eliminated the disorderly Galilean teacher of religion. The Orthodox Church in Russia was supporter and beneficiary of the Czarist regime; the clearest voice of the Church in America is raised in stringent criticism of existing socio-economic conditions.

Read the declarations on social problems emanating from the delegated councils and conferences of the great Churches; observe Harry F. Ward, professor in Union Theological Seminary, at once head of the Methodist Federation for Social Service and of the American League against War and Fascism; listen to Bishop McConnell reporting on the steel strike, and to Bishops Parsons and Baker urging the repeal of the criminal syndicalism law; see Dillon Throckmorton defending the strikers at Santa Clara, Herrick Lane fighting for the unemployed in San Francisco, and both of them testifying in the Gallagher case; go with Glenn Corbin to investigate Amador, and with Horton Colbert to get the facts at Crockett.

The priest is on the way out—but the sanctuary is increasingly filled with the voice of the prophet. Not to destroy the Church, but to discriminate within it—to support in it that which is worthy of support, in like measure as some of its elder members are now refusing to support it—is not this a reasonable course for those who share with Jesus and the prophets the urgency of a better world?

IV

Limitations

This is not the whole picture? Granted. Fundamentalism

survives, and makes a noise out of all proportion to its real strength. Institutional interests obscure more basic values. Many a minister is afraid to express all his theological opinions; and that is, partly at least, his own fault—as Samuel Angus put it, "We've been so gentle with the weaker brethren that we have few but weak brethren left." Many more are cramped and restricted in their comment on sociological issues, since they are dependent on the "generosity" of their wealthier parishioners. There is an obvious correlation between the two kinds of reactionism—as witness Billy Sunday consigning the Communists to hell, and Rheba Crawford Splivalo's activities at Sacramento and in Angelus Temple. Most Southern Baptists are Democrats, and most Northern Methodists are Republicans.

BUT—the leadership of the Church is being trained in the schools I have described, and the allegiance of the Church is increasingly given to the cause of international peace and human justice. The platform which the Church affords to this leadership and to these causes is not negligible; with all due respect to radical political groups, I submit that more American people hear condemnation of capitalistic greed and Fascist oppression in the Churches on any one Sunday than in Communist meetings in an entire month. There is a real danger that that platform may ere long be denied to the prophets for the sake of profits: a danger which will be obviated in the degree to which the prophets are aided by those who care about the prophetic message.

Ultimately that message may be driven from the Church as it was before—again to be proclaimed on the hillsides of Galilee, on the streets of Firenze, at the pitheads of Newcastle. It may have to abandon the designation "Christian". But it will not be silenced; and it will come to us, not least of all, from these who at present have to endure not only the opposition of the conservative and the reactionary, but also the coolness, if not the contempt, of those who share their religion of freedom and truth. Meanwhile—give them a break!



THE LIVING

LITTLE reckons the hunting owl

That he is death.

Life is hunger and his nestlings.

There is no life in running and creeping things.

But at the nest

Limp bodies quicken the nestlings,

They croak, and brandish their small bald wings.

Little reckons the field mouse

At the freezing call

That life moves in the air

In the hunting owl.

Life is the field mouse,

Life is his quivering fear,

While danger nerveless as the wind

Blows by his house.

—MARIE DE L. WELCH

AMERICAN PAINTING IN SAN FRANCISCO: 1

BY RAYMOND E. F. LARSSON

WHAT seems far the most important exhibition of paintings held on the Pacific Coast since the San Francisco exposition, currently occupies a score or more of galleries in both the Palace of the Legion of Honor and the M. H. de Young Memorial Gallery in San Francisco, a collection entirely composed of American paintings inclusive of the period from the late XVIIth century to the Nineteen-thirties. It is an exhibition of American art that far exceeds in importance the mild attention and the indecisive recognition given it by the newspaper critics. One dare say of it that it is the most important exhibition currently held in America, and of secondary significance, so far as the history of American art is concerned, only to the one assembled at the Chicago Art Institute last summer. That it has not attracted the attention proper to it is doubtless due to that somewhat self-conscious feeling of provincial inferiority and to lamentable lack, on the Pacific Coast, of a competent art criticism. Elsewhere, the exhibition would be recognized for what it is, one of the truly significant exhibitions of American art held in recent years.

Nevertheless, one does not wish to overpraise it. It has certain obvious weaknesses, apart from the absence from the walls of the two museums of certain important painters. The chief of these weaknesses—especially noticeable in the collection of paintings from the late XVIIth to the late XIXth Century, in the de Young galleries—is a lack of balance in the assembled paintings which gives one a distorted idea of (so to speak) "ancient" American art. Portraits are far too numerous, landscapes and still life conspicuously few. "Characteristic" paintings are often hung where one would wish the most distinguished canvas of a particular painter hung. This last fault seems particularly evident in the case of Ralph Blakelock, a late XIXth Century painter, one of the few genuinely distinguished painters of his period, who has not always been given the recognition due him in the presence of such more popular painters as Winslow Homer and Inness. Of Blakelock's great talent, inferior examples are shown, inferior certainly to that superb landscape shown in the exhibition of American art arranged several seasons ago at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, where it was rightly hung next the chief attraction of that show, Whistler's portrait of his mother. There exist in other museums (I remember vividly a superb little "Moonrise" in the Layton Gallery, Milwaukee) far finer examples than Doctor Heil has managed to include in his collection, and one regrets that at least one of these was not secured.

Art in America, if not American art, is of greater antiquity than one would suppose from Doctor Heil's exhibition. Actually, art in America began (apart from aboriginal art) near the close of the XVIth Century. What seem to be the first drawings made in America of which there is a record, and surely the first made in America by an English artist, are now in the British Museum. They are drawings made by John White, Governor of Sir Walter Raleigh's Virginia Colony, grandfather of Virginia Dare, the first English child born in America. They are water color drawings—the earliest graph-

ic representation of a stockaded Indian village, Indian warriors, Indian women, a council fire—and invaluable records. They are at least a century earlier than similar known drawings. Lately, they have been on exhibition in the print room of the British Museum, where they have attracted the attention due them.

The history of American art, not art in America, begins, in Doctor Heil's collection, no earlier than approximately the year 1695, with a portrait, anonymously painted, of Adolphus Philipse, of Philipse Manor, in Yonkers. It is of greater interest historically than as a work of art, showing that severity characteristic of the early colonists. Of greater interest is the "Portrait of the Reverend James McSparran, D. D." by John Smibert, a Scotch painter, pupil of Sir James Thornhill in London, who died in Boston in 1751. Yet the earliest important painting in the exhibition is Smibert's "Portrait of Oxenbridge Thacher, of Milton", from the Chester Dale collection. The English tradition is very evident in it. Yet one does not complain: it is a work of firm painting, showing thought for composition rarely evident in the earliest American art, even some elegance—perhaps because of the importance of the sitter, and greater payment made as an inducement for a greater exercise of talent.

Composition—the deliberate arrangement of form, of mass, line, color—scarcely entered into the consciousness of early American painters. They painted "portraits". "Likeness" was most to be desired, whether the desire found fruition in any particular canvas or no. For this reason, the earliest of the paintings in the de Young exhibition are of less interest as works of art than as historical documents. The two portraits by Joseph Blackburn, who was born in Connecticut about 1700, and was for fifteen years (1750-65) active in Boston, of the Honorable Jonathan and of Mrs. Margaret Lechmere Simpson, indifferent and unreal as "likenesses", nevertheless show regard for composition, even, in the portrait of Mrs. Simpson, a regard for color and for texture, if not for very great reality in the painting of flesh. The Copleys included (there are five) vary from the frank and somewhat gross portrait of Admiral Peter Rainier, as near realism in portraiture as one feels Copley ever got, to the scattered painting, both exquisite and slovenly, of the portrait of Mrs. Nathaniel Appleton, and the firm portraiture of the "Thomas Flucker, Esq." Important as he is in the historical perspective of American painting, Copley was no great painter; his importance is only comparative and, as it were, in his own habitat group. Abroad, he diminishes in consequence, except to the astonishment of those who even now find it difficult to believe the existence of anything like art in the early America. The Ralph Earle in the collection is not without a certain artificial charm, but it possesses less of charm for its greater artificiality. Of paintings by Robert Feke, who was born at Oyster Bay, Long Island, in 1724, who painted his way throughout New England, and is thought even to have studied in Spain, there are three examples, the finest a portrait of the Honourable William Bowdoin (1748), painted with patience, even some elegance. Although the tradition that it manifests is clearly Eng-

lish rather than the "American tradition", which, except for "primitives" cannot really be said to have existed at the time it was painted, it has its value.

The painting of Charles Calvert of Maryland which is celebrated far beyond its merit, now contained in the collection of General Lawrason Riggs, represents that John Hesselius, son of Gustavus Hellius, who flourished in Philadelphia in the mid-XVIIIth Century. It is a curiously asymmetrical canvas, genuinely naive, which possesses a definite, almost a contrary charm. As portraiture, it seems remiss, since it appears that the negro attendant to the young Charles Calvert is of more solid substance and of a more real identity.

There is a surprisingly good self-portrait of Robert Fulton, the inventor of the steamboat, who, like the later Samuel Morse, was a painter of merit as well as an inventor of great importance. But the painting of greatest importance among those of the XVIIIth or very early XIXth Century is a painting by one of Fulton's masters, Charles Willson Peale, the justly famous "Staircase Group" from the collection of Dr. Harold S. Colton, lent by the Pennsylvania Museum of Art, one of the true masterpieces of its period, which possesses that inexhaustible interest, that almost mathematical precision which the conscious arrangement of forms and lines and masses gives. If there is a fine American art of the period, it is in such a canvas.

(NOTE: These comments, for the sake of convenience and of space, are to be continued.)

THE THEATER

STUMBLING IN THE DARK

BY WINTHROP RUTLEGE

THE Drama Festival at the Greek Theater ended in a blaze of glory with brilliant direction and strikingly able performances deluding an ecstatic audience into the belief that Sean O'Casey's *Within the Gates* is an important play.

Peggy Converse, an actress of both charm and intelligence, came pretty fully into her own in a portrayal that was outstanding, even against a background of able performances. As the young whore of the O'Casey opus, she was a warmly human figure. Here is an actress with a sense of the tragic as well as of the comic. It will be interesting to watch her progress in the theater.

Rollo Peters, always the able actor, did all that was possible with the part of the dreamer but, alas, the dreamer proved to be merely a self-righteous pagan out of some neo-Wildian Greenwich Village. Carol Eberts gave a touchingly anguishing portrayal of the old woman and there were worthy bits by Frederick Blanchard, Pauline Stuart, Frederick Stover, Montgomery Mohn, Norman Field and other capables.

O'Casey's drama, however, is a lamentable and pretentious obfuscation piece, revealing painfully its author's mystic and mediaeval conception of the maladjustments of the modern world. He uses some good material, to be sure—the prostitute, the broken-down park attendants, fired when they are no longer able to earn their bread; the stony-hearted policewo-

man, the rotarian-souled bishop and the great chorus of "down-and-outers". But from the picture of their woes he draws the puerile conclusion that the world suffers because people do not seize life in both hands, live it richly and fully, squeeze it to the last drop, etc., etc., . . .

These down-and-outers, O'Casey writes, in his defense of the play, are "symbols of all who are dead to courage, fortitude and the will to power . . . of those, young and old, rich and poor, who in thought, word and deed, give nothing to life, and so are outcasts from life even as they live". With what fine democracy Mr. O'Casey tosses rich and poor together into the camp of his "down-and-outers"!

Of his dreamer, he says "the symbol of a noble restlessness and discontent, of the stir in life that brings forth new things that were not before". He needs to look in such places as the San Francisco waterfront for his dreamers if he wants the kind that will "bring forth new things".

His play must be written down an elaborate failure. His prostitute dies making the sign of the cross and his dreamer fades out yelling for the rich and fearless life from the rim of the Greek Theater. The down-and-outers are still down and out, the Bishop is still unrepentant and the world still being steered toward the shambles by the Morgans, the Deterdings and the Krupps. History is indeed rolling along and leaving Mr. O'Casey, agape and petulant, at the station behind.

* * *

Cinematic exhibits now on view testify eloquently to the intellectual poverty of the screen. By its own choice of avoiding controversial subjects or thinning with glycerine whatever controversies it may hazard a fling at, it is causing itself to be left at the post. It is lowering its guard against the attack of a vital and revolutionary cinema which is bound to spring up and flourish as the public grows more and more satiated with its myriad-told tales.

Front Page Woman is a newspaper story about the stormy rivalry and eventual romance of a young man and a young woman, reporting for opposition papers. They struggle mightily to let the avid public know of the latest murder and suicide; they work long and grilling hours for their bosses and the glory of their profession. The film strives terrifically to envelop the newspaper office with glamor and to picture the scribes as detached souls to whom the flow of life is a river in which they are too wise ever to get wet. And it is all old, trite and subtly untrue stuff.

The biggest romance that has come to the newspaper profession since the days of the Danas and Greeleys is the awakening that gave birth to the American Newspaper Guild. When newspaper men and women began to learn that strikes and violence are things that can reach into their own ranks, a milestone was reached, not only in journalism, but in human history. In the last year newspaper men and women have trudged picket lines, they have been the victims of lockouts, they have spoken to mass meetings and they have felt the strong, silent arm of the power of the suppress. Here is drama, significant and ominous drama. Yet this picture will have none of it, nor, I suspect, will subsequent pictures. Not so long as William Randolph Hearst dictates to Warner Brothers and frightens all the other brothers.

* * *

Sanders of the River is remarkable for its jungle life scenes, for its reproductions of African tribal rituals and for the superb singing and acting of Paul Robeson. Also, I should have added, for the lush periphery of Nina Mae McKinney. But

its leitmotif, which is that great Mother Britain (the film is English) takes care of her children and gives them peace and plenty, is a little too much to stomach. One is more than a little surprised that Mr. Robeson, an intelligent human if there ever was one, should lend himself to the role of stool pigeon and betrayer of his race.

NEW THEATRE NIGHT

BY ROBERT W. STEFFENS

DESPITE an over-taxed and somewhat stuffy play-house and the popping in and out of a couple of "San Francisco's best", the New Theatre League made an excellent start toward revivifying the socially conscious theatre in San Francisco Saturday and Sunday nights, July 13 and 14, when they presented a four-part program in the Pine Street Playhouse, 1609 Pine Street.

"The Scottsboro Boys", a mass chant presented by the Blue Blouse Group, though somewhat marred by imperfections in diction, timing and pitch, was still effective enough to merit a rousing round of applause from the audience.

This critic has always had an innate prejudice against the dance and so considers himself a poor judge in the matter. However, praise is all he can give the Contemporary Dance Group for their number titled "Morning Papers". Particularly impressive was the sketch depicting the lay-off, the speed-up, and the final turning of the workers on the boss. Two suggestions only would we make: a large and heavy blonde might have been better cast or left out, and program notes would have helped many of the audience in their understanding and appreciation of what they were seeing.

"The Dead Cow", a sketch from "Parade", given by the Blue Blouse Group, was an excellent satire on Hearst which "brought the house down". Even the police sergeant, who left after this number, expressed pleasure thereat.

The feature of the evening was Philip Stevenson's "God's in His Heaven", given by the New Theatre Group. A meticulously accurate exposition of the effects of the "depression" (Capitalist term applied to the collapse of its system) on a 20-year old boy who leaves home to seek the work that is not to be found anywhere and on his father who is still working and still repeating the optimistic cant pumped into him by the Hearstian press although a secret doubt is even now gnawing at his mind.

Though the audience accorded the actor who played Jimmie, the 20-year old, that accolade an amateur rarely receives, a burst of applause at his exit, we feel that he must at least share honors with the one who played the very unsympathetic role of Jimmie's father, for, aside from an occasional bit of gaucherie, this difficult part was done with a rare understanding and naturalness.

The rest of the cast carried the play off well and gave the audience a tempting fore-taste of what to expect in the future.

This review must not close without a word of praise for the smoothness and speed with which the whole program was carried out.

The New Theatre has made an excellent start—now all Northern California is waiting for "Waiting for Lefty" to be produced at the earliest possible date.

MUSIC

THE BACH FESTIVAL

BY ERNST BACON

QUITE normally and easily the Bach Festival grew from a hitherto unpretentious community musical enterprise. The project unfolded with the capacities of the participants. Were we to allow but a few more of the seeds of native art to grow like this, we would very soon find it unnecessary to reach back to the works of a master born 250 years ago to discover music worth studying. To allow the life of art is enough. To push it is to impose on it and cause it to shrink away. Most scholarships, organized movements, subsidies and prizes are such impositions.

The fortunate thing about the Carmel festival was the absence of assertive patronage, of interference, indeed of money in large sums.

Bach's music, apart from its vast grace and depth, lent itself peculiarly well to our present limitations. Not only is the Bachian orchestra made up largely of strings, but the music is essentially contrapuntal, which, contrary to most belief, renders it more easy of performance.

For the contrapuntal style is democracy in music. The balance of dependence and independence between the separate voices is that which calls forth from each performer the best in vitality and effort and, which is important, the effort least imposed by the conductor. In these days when the most serious crimes are being committed in the name of music, when the art would seem to exist merely to make a few careers, an aggrandizement which spells wholesale subjection, a democratic art like Bach's becomes the more necessary.

That a local enterprise could flourish as this did goes to show how absurd is the usual dependence of lesser communities on the artistic domination of a metropolis like New York. The increasing centralization of the musical world, no less than in the world of banking, of drygoods, of cement and of baseball, should produce more such counter-eddies of independence and local self-reliance.

We hope to have more summer festivals and to maintain in these the ideals of economy, of intense interestingness and vitality, of the furtherance of native and local capacity, and of the cultivation of exalted music. Thereby will be developed the musical life of California and not by merely the passive acceptance of the art of a few traveling European virtuosi. We are no believers in syndicated art. But we have faith in a native American art, the beginnings of which are here or anywhere they dare to speak up.

MY IMPRESSIONS

BY SARA BARD FIELD

THE following paragraphs are in no wise offered as musical criticism. Charles Erskine Scott Wood and I were drawn to the Bach Festival by an uninstructed love of music and a faith in art rooting and flowering from native soil. By native soil I do not mean the whole United States nor even all of California. I mean the art of a relatively small community

bounded by the possibilities of easy communion.

It is a well known fact that every vineyard produces its unique wine. The wines from the La Tour vineyard in Napa County are utterly different from the Almaden or Sacred Heart Novitiate wines of Santa Clara County. Even within the narrow boundaries of these same counties there is immense variation in vineyard products. In France great effort was made to increase the famous La Fitte vineyards of the Rothschilds but it was found impossible to grow vines producing that delicate rain-water claret a single foot beyond the original boundaries. The experts can not wholly explain this. They only know in a general way it is due to "different chemical conditions of the soil".

Now the art of a community is its spiritual wine and it, too, varies in color, flavor, texture and bouquet with the crossing of invisible boundaries. Just what spiritual chemistry causes this variation is a mystery. Analyzable climatic, geographical and historical factors blend with unanalyzable subtleties. Given an opportunity under right conditions the art of any community in America would differ from that of every other community and in its development would reveal to itself, perhaps for the first time, its own individuality, its own face.

The community that gathers around the San Francisco and Monterey Bays has had the privilege of drinking flagons of a wine of its own making through the music of the Bach Festival. After so much foreign vintage was it not good to discover the possibilities of our own vineyard? Was it not gratifying as we listened to Bach's architectural designs to know that those pillars, arches, spans and domes of sound were recalled into being by voices ranging from ten to sixty-five years of age or by instruments in hands of as variable ages; that these voices and hands belonged to the children or the fathers of our neighbors? Did you not have a sense of amazed pride and unsuspected wealth in this exhibition of the latent possibilities of our locality awaiting the call to life not by a magician's wand, but by the intelligent baton of a conductor like Ernst Bacon?

Looking back on those four days of festival it seems almost impossible that the chorus and orchestra were composed of amateurs with only a sprinkling of professionals. The few participating professionals from beyond our border were integrated with the local singers and players either by continual visitation here or by the artist's swift emotional response to a communal expression, so rich, so joyous, so spontaneous. Indeed, all the professionals seemed to "belong". There was no high-hatting of amateurs by the nationally-known artists who assisted. Sascha Jacobinoff, solo violinist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, gave his solar vitality freely to either first or second violins as well as to his solo in the impressive Concerto in E major.

Everyone who knows the singing of that beloved member of the community, Noël Sullivan, remarked how he caught the color and rhythm of joy in the third of his feelingly-sung song group. Some of us were privileged to hear the flute with the human voice for the first time, a long-desired and a memorable delight. Most of us never have heard and never will hear Bach again in a setting so akin to the spirit and structure of his music as was offered by the candle-lit Carmel Mission on the last Sunday night of the Festival. There, visible arch joined with invisible arch. There the spirit projected from old, high walls mingled perfectly with the spirit breathed from this two-century old high music. Voices of both choir and instruments gained in resonance and richness in the narrower concentration of those historic walls. The unaccompanied vi-

olin of Doris Ballard seemed the very voice of the ancient mission. And what a voice! It is unbelievable that this was Doris Ballard's first public appearance except as she has played before small studio audiences.

It is no wonder that even before this climactic night in the Mission, Ernst Bacon, the conductor, received such an ovation as seldom is extended a "prophet in his own country". And he is a prophet, crying his belief in community art—in the expression that wells up from the heart of a community rather than that poured down upon it from alien sources. Ernst Bacon has lived long in this locality. He has not spent his years here upon a platform above the community. He has moved in and out among the studios, the concert halls, the homes, pouring out his own gifts freely and listening appreciatively to the gifts of others. He has taught and been taught here. He knows the large body of musicians, young and old, not merely as to their technical qualifications but as to their characters. He knows them as human beings. He has meditated on the musical material of this region as a painter on his pigments. That is why he could weld the strangely assorted company of singers and instrumentalists, of artists and amateurs, into joyous unity. He loves his co-workers and they worked with him as a loved leader. Everyone spoke of his patience, his kindness, his generosity. He in turn says; "What could I have done without Dene Denny and Hazel Watrous?" (The organizing co-workers of the festival.)

Whatever technical perfection the Bach Festival lacked it gave the audience something that technical perfection alone never can give. It gave them great music adequately performed in the spirit of joy and love that one instinctively felt had been the spirit of its creator. I doubt if this especial magic could have been achieved with any other elements and under any other conditions than those that prevailed in these triumphant nights of music "of the people, by the people and for the people" of an integrated community.

JOSE ITURBI TO DIRECT FINAL CONCERT IN HILLSBOROUGH

JOSE ITURBI, who, two years ago, supplemented his activities as a pianist of the first rank by adopting the profession of conducting, will return to the Woodland Theatre in Hillsborough next Sunday afternoon to conduct the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra in the fourth and last of the Philharmonic Society's tenth anniversary series.

The Spanish pianist-conductor comes to Hillsborough direct from New York where, during the past five weeks, he conducted the Philharmonic Symphony-Society Orchestra in three weekly symphonic programs at the Lewisohn Stadium. Later this summer he will conduct a series of concerts in the Hollywood Bowl.

In interpreting the Overture to Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, Symphony in D Minor by César Franck, A Siegfried Idyll and Prelude to *Die Meistersinger* by Wagner, and a modern novelty by one of his compatriots (the name of which will be announced later), Iturbi will prove to Woodland Theatre concert-goers that his renown as a symphonic conductor is not without justification.

BOOKS

DEATH RIDES IT OUT

CHALLENGE TO DEATH by Fifteen English Writers,
 Edited by Storm Jameson. (E. P. Dutton) \$2.50.

(Reviewed by Edith Arnstein)

DESPITE the heroic title, this symposium on war will leave Death very little disgruntled. As conscience money, fifteen English intellectuals who took Benda's *La Trahison des Clercs* as a challenge have gone so far as to organize and repeat in chorus, "We don't like war". These men and women who lived through the Great War, who saw and felt its havoc and destruction and waste, are no doubt sincere in their desire to combat and prevent repetition of such disaster. But they are for the most part as inconsequential and unconsciously dangerous as a self-appointed physician who would treat a patient for a rash while he was dying of scarlet fever. The book was meant to represent a wide assortment of opinion but none of the fifteen essays is even slightly left of a mild Socialist position, and almost all look to the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference as a solution to war.

Afraid to assume a new world outlook, committed to the past and consequently incompetent to deal with the future, Lord Cecil, for example, is found identifying revolution and disaster; Storm Jameson referring to the workers and the capitalists as the two "irresponsible" classes. Unable to see the forces that make for war, they mistake manifestation for cause. Unable (or unwilling) to analyze the existing set-up, they do not see the historical mission of the proletariat in freeing society from those contradictions and necessities which cause war. Unable or unwilling to see the machinery of the state as a weapon of the ruling class to insure and perpetuate its power, Rebecca West, for instance, speaks of keeping democracy elastic and susceptible to change, while Ivor Brown writes as if it were a superimposed, impartial system independent of and unrelated to the economic structure on which it rests.

Philip Noel Baker writes on the Conference's Plan for an International Air Police Force the ludicrousness of which can be illustrated by analogy. Suppose the leaders of the "class war" were, at the approach of an open conflict, to call a meeting. Suppose that at that meeting it was agreed upon to reduce the weapons of combat to the more civilized bow and arrow. To insure the sanctity of the agreement there would be formed a neutral force composed of representatives of the *haute bourgeoisie* and the proletariat, all of whom were sincerely uninterested in the ascendancy of their own class. One can picture the equanimity with which the respective combatants would stand by and see themselves so represented, and one can picture the effectiveness of such a mechanism.

There is a marked tendency among these writers to romanticize and to attribute war to "psychological" causes—in G. E. G. Catlin it is the will to power and in J. B. Priestley (in his most inexcusable outburst of chauvinism and philistinism) the lust for adventure. These authors realize in varying degrees that the psychological factors are the material on which the economic operate. But they seek to do away with war by treating the secondary facts about it, not by eliminating the main motive. Instead of attempting to eliminate the necessity of imperialist expansion and the securing of world markets,

they advise cutting down on the implements of war through disarmament, or lessening its available fodder by determining wherein lies the maladjustment that makes men accessible for the job of killing men.

This is a profoundly discouraging book to anyone who cherishes the illusion of any connection between intellect and integrity. These writers deeply wish to eradicate war and their wish has caused many of them to be active in what they believe to be the cause of peace; but their intelligence has not served to lift them from the intellectual confines of their bourgeois heritage nor to examine the facts with honesty, humility and detachment. They have never submitted their world view to critical and trenchant survey. They cling to eternal hopes of national disinterestedness and the attainment of peace through the representatives of that very class whose governments make war. It is with a sense of disgust and disillusionment that one puts down this book.

A GOOD MIRROR

AMERICA FACES THE BARRICADES, by John Spivak.
 (Covici, Friede) \$2.50

(Reviewed by Harry Conover)

IN 1931, Edmund Wilson wrote a book bearing the significant title *The American Jitters* which recorded the nervous apprehension felt at the start of the depression by most people as they read of or saw the brutal realities of a struggle between classes that had been fairly unperceived in the hey-day of middle-class prosperity. Wilson spoke of himself as an intellectual and writer who had come to despise the shoddy pretense of culture among the "best" people long before the crisis and in a certain sense as ready to welcome its destruction. Yet at that time he still had, as had many others, a jittery sense of horror to come and a nostalgic yearning for a more peaceful age.

The change that has come over intellectuals moving nearer to radicalism is illustrated in *America Faces the Barricades*. The mere title shows that the leftward bound are no longer filled with fear and trembling. The stubborn courage of workers everywhere in the face of rising fascist terror has reached the intellectual milieu, driven off the hesitation of some and carried them along to action when they have realized its necessity if they are really to end Wilson's "shoddy culture".

Spivak, once a Hearst reporter, went out to sound the temper of the American people in this sixth year of the depression. For eighteen months he toured the country, asking business men, bankers, editors, the unemployed, farmers, labor leaders and workers their opinions about the causes of their distress and the remedies, investigating their actual circumstances and analyzing the economic effects on them of the Administration's measures. Among the Chambers of Commerce, the molders of public opinion, the "best" people, he found mostly bewilderment or a naive reliance on renewed "confidence" as the way out, coupled with an encouragement of suppression of dissidents in the community by police, vigilantes or grafting labor officials. His conversations with A. F. of L. leaders in the coal fields of Pennsylvania, the lumber camps of Oregon, and the steel mills of Youngstown make it apparent that the most amazing fact about American labor is not that it is so meagrely organized but that it has gotten as far as it has in the face of leaders who have an even weaker grasp of eco-

nomics than the employers. W. L. Donnels, editor of the *Federationist*, organ of the Louisiana State Federation of Labor, could answer no questions about relief work, charity, government jobs or union wage scales in his own city, and he is sadly typical. From Omaha to Fresno, even relief administrators lack statistics on the number of unemployed and in the latter city, G. F. Thomas, secretary of the Fresno Chamber of Commerce, feared to make public information on wages, the loss of farms in the area or the methods of importing migratory workers because "any facts or figures made public will give these reds ammunition". Everywhere Spivak went he found this same malicious concealment on the part of the authorities, this calculated ignorance of vital facts.

Meanwhile, Spivak saw the resentment of the Negro sharecroppers, the Mexican crop-pickers, the miners and mill workers of America slowly crystalizing—not into articulate revolutionary party channels but into a persistent demand for food and shelter. In his opinion, if the government cannot supply this, (and it is beginning to appear extremely doubtful whether capitalism can much longer continue to feed its unemployed) then they will overthrow the government without realizing they are doing so, just as the migratory workers ask for "red agitators", as they call them, to lead their strikes. The employers have always their barricades prepared; in Toledo, Minneapolis and San Francisco they bared them to public view; and the danger is that they may become so familiar a part of the scenery that those who remain in the towers to watch the struggle will forget who are the real assailants.

Radicals today have only to tell the truth for effective propaganda. They do not, as do the capitalists, have to alter, confuse or suppress facts. Jack Spivak has told facts. His revelations of the financial tie-ins between the anti-Jewish drive, the German government and Wall Street brokerage houses is a brilliant though alarming exposé, which might have been given the Pulitzer prize for journalism. His book will give future generations an accurate, succinct description of how the American people thought, acted and suffered in the year 1935. It should be read today by all those who must decide now on which side of the breastworks they will stand.

UNHEARD OF THING

THREE PLAYS, by Clifford Odets. (Covici, Friede) \$2.50
(Reviewed by Rosalie James)

A HITHERTO unheard of thing has happened in the theatre. An unknown young man, Clifford Odets, appeared in New York and electrified apathetic theatre-goers and hard-boiled critics alike with the simultaneous production of three plays. All over the country performances have been repeated, arousing unparalleled discussion and approval. Critics have called for "hat-tossing and congratulations"; audiences of various compositions have cheered. Likewise it is interesting to note that Bill Ghery, producer of *Till the Day I Die* in Los Angeles, was kidnaped and beaten up by the "Friends of New Germany". In many places performances of the latter play have been forbidden. Odets, a member of the recent investigation committee of writers to Cuba, was arrested and denied admittance with the rest of the committee into that country. From a consideration of these plays we shall see the significance of this contradiction: why, on the one hand, Odets has been received with enthusiasm by audiences and critics, and, on the other, with demonstrations of force, violence and repression, by the most reactionary of the authorities.

The Bergers of *Awake and Sing* are a typical Jewish mid-

dle-class family. To them life is a great struggle to maintain a front of respectability and keep the wolf from the back door. Life is a struggle to give the children some education in hope—they will make successes of themselves and repay the debt they owe their parents by supporting them in their old age. Life is bowing down before petty conditions. Bessie Berger, worn out with the long battle against economic pressure, typifies the futility set-up as bourgeois standards have it, with all its accompanying elements of propriety, respectability, exploitation, and domination. Rich Uncle Morty's duck dinner, "taking Tootsie (the dog) out" are more important than Jacob's "sweatshop talk". The juxtaposition of the important and trivial in the lines "By money men the interests must be protected—who gave you such a rotten haircut?" is significant. To these people the little things, the every-day matters, are matters of life and death. The play ends on a high note when the son, Ralph, comes to a realization of the idiocy of such an existence. Perhaps some day, through his efforts, the family will be held together by the bonds of spiritual and social understanding as well as by the accident of physical relationship. As a picture of a family today against its environmental background Odets has made the play a masterful job. There are millions of Berger families.

The play, *Waiting for Lefty*, suggested by the New York taxi strike, deals with a strike committee which succeeds in ousting the labor "faker" who is trying to get hold of and sell out to the strike. The form is taken from the old black-face minstrel show, with end men, specialty men, and interlocutor. The committee remains on the stage throughout the play while six highly dramatic scenes are enacted before it. Each committeeman shows in his episode the circumstances which forced him to make his decision to strike. Through a young Jewish doctor, an actor, a cabman, a lab assistant, the play succeeds in showing that the strikers are neither contented stooges of radical agitators, nor bogey-men to frighten little children, as the newspapers would have us believe, but real everyday people led by actual economic necessity. Each succeeding climax is keyed higher till the final pitch of excitement is reached when Lefty, the strike chairman, is found dead and the committee shout "Strike! Strike!" often pulling the audience to its feet shouting with them. If only because of its original technique, the play is a new and thrilling experience. It is more than this, however. It is so successful in showing the essence of the lives of these individuals that it forces the audience to share in those lives to the extent of coming to the realization that to strike is the only way out. The will to strike is thus shared by the audience, actors and playwright. This collective participation is the ultimate in the theatre.

Suggested by a letter from Nazi Germany, *Till the Day I Die* attempts to show the vicious treatment inflicted on political prisoners in Germany through a series of scenic flashes depicting the arrest and torture of the Communist Ernst Tausig. As a result of inadequate dramatic building there is an impression of too much horror, heroics and sentimentality. The author wrote the play in the unbelievably short time of five days. Undoubtedly he could have done more with it.

It is significant that Odets is the only new dramatist of outstanding potentialities. There is a sharp contrast between his work and the degeneration of the Broadway theatre. When social forces are moving as they are today, Broadway's entertaining farces and individual problem plays are meaningless. Odets has shown that social conflicts today are drama. This is the only alley open to the new dramatist who wishes to establish himself as a positive force in the theatre.

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