

politics

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A Monthly Review

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The France of Tomorrow *What the French Underground Wants**

Louis Clair

At the end of 1943, the Commission on Economic Affairs of the Algiers Provisional Assembly unanimously adopted the following principles for postwar France:

1. Complete freedom of operation cannot be granted to all industries on the day of liberation.
2. Enemy holdings in French industries [i.e., a substantial sector of the whole economy—L.C.] must be confiscated by the state.
3. Certain industries must be operated by the government in the common interest.
4. Certain other industries may be operated by private interests under strict governmental control.
5. The rest may operate free from government interference.

A few months later, the Socialist delegates (15 out of 80 members) submitted to the full Assembly a program embodying substantially these proposals. The final text has been signed by about 50 delegates, and is thus assured majority support. This text went even further than the original: thus the original proposed "nationalisation of all economic, financial and commercial enterprises essential to the life of the nation"; in the final draft, on the insistence of delegates who wanted their position clearly de-

fined, "nationalisation" was replaced by "socialisation". The signatories included, in addition to the Socialists, a Dominican monk, an army officer in active service, half a dozen "Radical Socialists" (i.e., bourgeois liberals), an equal number of conservatives, six or more "Social Catholics", and four or five progressives with no party affiliation. (See Jules Moch's article in *The Nation* of May 27.)

In a programmatic speech before the Consultative Assembly on March 18, 1944, De Gaulle stated: "The government will not tolerate coalitions of interest, private monopolies, or trusts, whose existence at the outset of this new period would imperil the economic and social reforms desired by the great majority of Frenchmen. . . . The wealth earned in the midst and sometimes because of the general suffering . . . will be quite simply taken away. The new France considers fair profit as useful, but will consider illicit any concentration of business undertakings which might throw the State's economic and social policy out of gear. . . . French democracy must be a social democracy—that is, a democracy . . . that will ensure to every one the right to freedom of work and which will not work to the advantage of private interests. The great sources of national wealth will belong to the Nation, and the direction and control of this wealth will be undertaken with the assistance of workers and employers."

Why do we now find conservative and bourgeois liberals, militant Catholics and reactionary military figures put-

*This article is based on a study of about one hundred copies of French Resistance papers.



THE PATTON OF THE PACIFIC

Above: Admiral William F. ("Bull") Halsey, who is to the Navy what Patton is to the Army only more so. Below: one of Bull's current beatitudes is inscribed on a sign overlooking Tulagi Harbor. (Snapshot sent in by a sailor-reader, Halsey's picture from Press Association.)

Last month we printed another of Bull's apothegms: "We are drowning and burning the bestial apes all over the Pacific, and it is just as much pleasure to burn them as drown them." I have been told that at a recent "off-the-record" dinner for Washington newspapermen, Bull whimsically remarked during an after-dinner speech: "I hate Japs. I'm telling you men that if I met a pregnant Japanese woman, I'd kick her in the belly."

Bull is a top-ranking naval officer, which gives him the privilege of talking in public in a way which would cause lesser citizens to be locked up in the dangerous ward of Bloomingdale Asylum. One has only to study his intelligent, humane countenance to understand why we Americans are entitled to regard the Japanese as barbarians whom we must teach (the accidental survivors of Bull's ministrations, that is) the fundamentals of civilization.



a warm smile flashing every now and then as he talked. He told of what Germany looks like today from the air, solemnly, with awe: "You cannot imagine such destruction. It was the face of hell." Perhaps I was wrong about Patton, I thought. . . . Then the fatherly voice continued: "After that we flew over the ocean. It was disappointing. There were no Germans to kill down there." And the warm, shy smile spread slowly as he stooped over the microphone, waiting for the laughter and clapping of 70,000 people to subside. A friend whose job is putting together newsreels tells me they had difficulty getting enough footage for exhibition out of this speech of Patton's, it was so full of "goddamn" and other secular expressions. The few minutes of it I heard was thus probably only a mild echo of the real thing.

General Patton made another speech, to the men of his Third Army, on the day before they took off for the landing in Normandy last spring. OWI operatives recorded the historic utterance on the spot and rushed the precious disks across the Atlantic by air, for use at war-bond rallies and other consecrated gatherings. But the speech was never released. For when the records were played over here, with a dozen topflight OWI experts listening, pencils poised, despair settled down over the gathering. Speaking to his men, the good grey general was completely uninhibited (or at least, played the part—I suspect Patton's toughness is mostly theatricalism and neuroticism). The four-letter words fell like rain: Molly Bloom and Studs Lonigan would have blushed. The speech was completely unusable: the general had, in his martial ardor, sabotaged the war effort.

Just what Patton said on D-Day-Minus-One will be known only when the OWI releases the speech: that is to say, will not be known. However, it is possible to construct a reasonable facsimile here, from two sources: an alleged text published by a *N. Y. Daily News* columnist on May 31, and some notes sent me by a friend who jotted them down from the OWI recordings. The two check pretty well. Patton's speech, shortened for space reasons and also edited with regard for the sensibilities of the postal authorities, ran as follows:

GEORGE PATTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO HIS TROOPS

Men! This stuff we hear about Americans wanting to stay out of this war—not wanting to fight—is a lot of

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which follows policies not determined by the needs or tendencies within France, but dictated from the outside. What the French CP says today does not allow conclusions as to what the French people want; it is an indication primarily of the line which happens to be followed in Moscow. A study of the French CP would appear under the title "The Application of the Stalin Line to France," not under the heading "What does the French Underground want." (The reasons why French workers are still attracted by Russia as the country of October would have to form a part of a special study.)

Maybe the greatest danger for the Socialist Underground lies in a complete misunderstanding of the character of stalinism. Everywhere have I found the opinion that French Communists are now—after the dissolution of the Comintern—an authentic part of the French revolutionary movement, nowhere realization of the true counter-revolutionary role of stalinism. If this is not recognized in time, it might well be that the French revolution—as the Spanish—will perish from this mortal illusion.

From the Third to the Fourth Republic

The first thing that impresses the reader of the papers listed above is the bitterness with which they criticise both liberal capitalism and the whole record of French politics between World Wars I and II. The criticism applies to every French government in that period, Right or Left; all of them are seen as the dupes or the tools of the trusts, the banks and other reactionary forces. "The true culprit is the capitalist regime and it must disappear. Capitalism, which played its role in the 19th century, has been unable in the last 25 years to resolve the problems created by a civilization of machines, it has been unable to maintain economic order, incapable of creating a human order, incapable of preventing wars. Capitalism must go, but the class which it represented must go also." (*Bir Hakeim*, June-July 1943). "France does not belong to the banks, to the trusts, to the politicians, to the direct representatives of certain international tendencies. She is not the property of a bourgeoisie which has led us into ruin by technical incapacity, political blindness and social egoism, and which now—after trying to save itself thru collaboration with Berlin—turns its eyes to the City and to Wall Street." (*Les Informations Sociales*, June-July 1943. "We must understand that a whole world—economic, political and social—is now in decay. . . . Institutions have to disappear, and not only a few hundred men who directed them." (*La Revue Libre*, December 1943.) "*Libération* deems that it would be really scandalous if the terrible years which have recently convulsed the world should result in there being some miserable restoration in France of pre-war institutions and pre-war men." (*Libération*, March 1943). "Individual punishments cannot solve the problem posed by the existence of a class which from now on can live only as against the Nation. This class must disappear as a class, it must abandon the function of directing the French economy. The great private monopolies . . . and other large industrial enterprises must return to the Nation, if one does not wish that they make of the nation a slave." (*Cahiers Politiques*, January 1944.)

'Monopolies must return to the nation.' . . . The 'Nation' . . . What is hiding behind this equivocal and magic word? It is here that profound divergences appear. *Les Informations Sociales*, a trade union paper, says: "It is time that something is done no longer for the working class but with the working class," but an article in *Les Cahiers Politiques* (July 1943) answers: "Everything for the people, much by the people."

There is agreement on the necessity of nationalisation of trusts and monopolies in a new economic system. But the motives behind this new faith are manifold. All groups stress that the new regime has to be democratic, nearly all want "socialism," but this agreement on terms only hides a real divergence of views on the matter. A recent study by Eugene Shreyder rightly points out that "there are certainly forces operating under the De Gaullist label which neither the working class nor more numerous sections of the popular classes can visualize as future allies." (*International Postwar Problems*, Vol. 1, No. 3) And one of the leading trade union underground papers says very correctly: "The fact that in the same organisms of the resistance movement there are people who have social interests which are opposed to each other may, by close cooperation today, reduce personal prejudices. But it cannot make antagonisms disappear which are based on social organization itself. The French worker cannot tolerate that people who serve the interests of the big bosses and of social reaction take power tomorrow, even if they resist the invader today. We stand for complete cooperation in the resistance movement. We express today the wishes and the will of the French working class—and we reserve for tomorrow entire liberty as to the action of the workers." (*M. O. F.*, June, 1943).

Authoritarian Tendencies

A strong authoritarian tendency forms one part of the Underground, a tendency recruited mostly from former rightist elements. This tendency feels correctly that France can hope to play a role among the great imperialist powers only with a strongly centralized and regimented economy. It considers that an authoritarian political regime is required, with as little interference as possible by popular movements. There exists, for example, an "Organisation Civile et Militaire" which the official bulletin of the *French Information Service* (New York City) describes as follows: "It includes many officials, technicians and military men. It is strongly organized, although not very widespread. Its members want a strong executive power to lead France during the period of anarchy which may follow liberation." The program of action of the *Défense de la France* group states: "The principles for the reconstruction of French society may be grouped under the following headings: 1. To reestablish the sense of public morality; 2. to give a solid political armature to France; . . . 6. to assure security by a strong army and sure alliances; 7. to give to France an imperial consciousness and give her back her will to greatness and expansion. The Fourth Republic will be a democracy with a strong executive, the Chief of the State will also be head of the government. Parliament will make laws but not govern. The continuity of political life

will be assured by the stability of the executive power and a statute limiting the number of parties. The independence of the state must be assured against all dictatorial pressures, the pressure of the demagogues as well as the pressure of the powers of money." The same group proclaims (February 25, 1944): "The Third Republic suffered from a crisis of authority. Authority should therefore be re-established above all. . . . What we need is a non-parliamentarian and yet democratic regime; we need a presidential regime." Another group states: "A certain authoritarianism is necessary at the beginning. A full regime of liberty cannot function immediately." (*Résistance, Le Nouveau Journal de Paris*, February 17, 1943.)

Since the atmosphere in the Underground is overwhelmingly democratic and leftist, this authoritarian tendency is careful in its means of expression. It proclaims the necessity for authority while in the same breath paying tribute to liberty. A study by the *Comité National d'Etudes*, published in the Algiers edition of *Combat* (March 19, 1944), says: "We must impose an authoritarian direction on the French economy so that France may reconquer her power and wealth. . . . We must commit ourselves daringly to the road of planned economy. France feels the need to be guided, but she craves also to regain her past liberties—economic and political alike." The same study also points out that "one cannot look without apprehension toward an immediate taking of power by the working class alone. Its economic education is still insufficient. . . . One must not look toward the complete elimination of a class, but rather to the selection and promotion of a working class elite which will have to reinforce and to complete what has remained of the former bourgeois elite."

Since, as we said before, much of the thinking in the Underground is not yet sufficiently clarified, divergences which exist in fact do not appear quite so clearly in writing, and may not even be conscious to all. The above mentioned study, for instance, also contains warnings against totalitarianism which might result from too much centralization. It is not uncommon to find, in the same paper, a revolutionary socialist article next to one advancing authoritarian views. In recent months, however, according to Eugene Shreyder, a decided effort has been made—evidently under impulsion from Algiers—to regroup the underground and to "centralize the direction of the underground, independently of all democratic and working class controls, transforming it into a hierarchical movement. A 'National Liberation Movement' was set up, consisting of the three old De Gaullist organizations and the *Défense de la France* group. Neither the political parties nor the working class organizations are represented in this movement, which is De Gaullist in tendency and favors centralization." That this tendency has been able to draw on the widespread resentment which both in Algiers and France herself has been caused by the American and British policies, there can be no doubt. Roosevelt's and Hull's treatment of De Gaulle—professedly inspired by high regards for democracy and what not—has immeasurably increased both De Gaulle's popularity and nationalistic feelings within France. The authoritarian tendency in the Underground seems to be as yet less strong than the socialist tendency, but it is growing.

Moderates and Socialists

The great stabilizing force of the Third Republic, the moderate center, hardly exists in the Underground. This is not to say that it does not exist latently within France herself. There are certainly many Radical-Socialist or moderate politicians who are waiting for a chance—with the help of the allies—to again come to the fore. But in the underground press the voice of these moderates is seldom heard. There has been a polarization of political tendencies such as never existed during the Third Republic. Awareness of the end of liberal capitalism and thus of the political tendencies which it represented is general. A caricature of the Third Republic could perhaps be temporarily imposed by the allies, it would certainly not be rooted in French realities of today.

The chief reformist socialist group is, of course, the S.F.I.O. (Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière), i.e. Leon Blum's Socialist Party. It has lost much of its former strength; many of the younger elements have gone into other resistance groups. Reorganized in 1942, it is still strong in the traditionally Socialist Northern Departments, while in the rest of France it does not consist of more than vaguely connected local organizations. The Socialist Party has been very much pro-DeGaullist since its re-emergence. It stands for "a temporary dictatorship presided over by De Gaulle" (*Le Populaire*, June 15, 1942) and a "rejuvenated ordered and strong republic" (manifesto published in Cherbourg after the expulsion of the Germans). The SFIO demands nationalisations, as do nearly all other resistance groups: "Industry, credit, the stock exchange, distribution of raw materials and supplies, should not be given back to private industry and to competitive trading." (*Le Populaire*, November 1942). It stresses the necessity for a reconstruction of the old parties and has been engaged in a number of polemics against those resistance groups which—like *Combat*—have said that "The Republic of tomorrow will count, apart from the CP, two or three great parties. These will be new parties, with new men, not those ill-smelling mummies." It is still very much attached to the parliamentary institutions of the Third Republic and might be called the most conservative among the forces of the Left. The issues which I have been able to see are rather pedestrian and uninspired, *Le Populaire* of 1943 is nearly as boring as *Le Populaire* of 1937. ✕

The De Gaullist organizations *Libération* and above all *Franc-Tireur* (with its theoretical organ *La Revue Libre*) stress the necessity for a humanist and libertarian socialism. These organizations emphasize that the working class will have to carry the main burden of the social transformation of the future. They draw much of their inspiration from a sort of Jacobin ideology. Many of their writings are reminiscent more of St. Just than of Karl Marx. While the right wing De Gaulle press, like *Combat*, carries on its masthead: "One Chief: De Gaulle," the masthead of *Libération* reads: "'Our only aim is to give back to the people of France its own voice' (De Gaulle)." These papers, nevertheless, are strongly De Gaullist and are part of the new centralized De Gaullist organization of which we spoke earlier. The following quotes may convey an

idea of this tendency: "Socialism is not the dictatorship of a party, a class or a clique. Socialism can exist only if the individual is free to express himself without constraints and can develop his faculties and aptitudes at the utmost. Socialism and democracy go together." (*Franc-Tireur*, February 1943). "The working class is the only one whose profound class interests are permanently in accord with the principles of a dynamic responsible democracy. . . . The working class is the principal basis and the motor of a democratic revolution, it is the pole of attraction for all the classes of the democratic camp." (*Revue Libre*, December 1943). "We understand, of course, that democracy needs authority and leaders. But these leaders, freely chosen, must be subject to change by the nation to which they are responsible. . . . From now on, for the revolution which is to be made, we offer the people of France the mysticism of freedom. . . . (*Franc-Tireur*, March 20, 1943) "The working class is—more than any other class—profoundly hostile to technocracy, state-bureaucracy, and the permanent choking of liberties." (*Revue Libre*, February 1944).

The revolutionary temper of much of the Gaullist press—not to mention, of course, the Socialist papers—is suggested by this statement in the December, 1943, *Revue Libre*: "When the legal forms of oppression break down, the voice of the street will be heard. . . . From Algiers to Milan events will put the seizure of power on the order of the day. It is with the masses that we shall take power. We must learn how to speed up the rhythm of mass movement and how to take our directives from it." The same issue characterizes the war in these terms: "This war is revolutionary because it must decide between two world-ideas, and because the victor will develop its logic to its uttermost extreme, whether this victor be the Idea of Authority or the Idea of Liberty."

The Revolutionary Socialist Left Wing

The main group in the revolutionary left wing, and one of the strongest of all groups, is the *Libérer et Fédérer* movement.* Since its foundation at the end of 1941, it has acknowledged De Gaulle as a war-time leader but it has also stressed that "once peace is restored, popular sovereignty will be exercised and the generals will again become citizens." (June-July 1943). The members of the group come from extremely different political horizons: there are revolutionary Marxists, syndicalists drawing their main inspiration from Proudhon, and also Christian Socialists. The movement is above all distinguished by its rejection of state nationalization and by its stressing of the necessity of grouping the working masses of France in workers and peasant councils. Many of its ideas are close to Guild Socialism. The movement stresses the federative aspect of socialist organization as against the centralized state. Since *Libérer et Fédérer* (which was re-

cently amalgamated with the *Insurgé* group of revolutionary Marxists) seems to me to be by far the most promising tendency, I feel justified in quoting some extensive passages from its manifesto and program of action (April-May 1944):

"The Revolutionary Socialist Movement is a popular movement for the liberation and rebirth of France—as a part of a unified Europe—rebuilt on the foundations of a socialism guaranteeing to the individual the full development of his personality within collectivities founded on a community of interests, and enjoying the largest possible autonomy within this framework. The realization of this aim is conditioned by the defeat of Hitlerite Germany. The Revolutionary Socialist Movement will therefore participate in the Resistance Movement under the direction of the French Committee of National Liberation. . . . After victory, the Revolutionary Movement is ready to join its forces with all other revolutionary forces of the nation, especially the trade-union movement, the Communist Party, the Christian Social movement, for the realization of the following program: (a) Liquidation of the consequences of the war; (b) Construction of a new political and economic framework which will suppress the exploitation of men by men, insure the management of economy in the interest of the people, and guarantee to each individual the full expression of his personality by real participation in different social activities and responsibilities. . . .

"To attain these goals the following measures will have to be taken:

"1. Nationalization of all those enterprises which have acquired the character of public services (mines, coal, hydraulic energy, oil, railways, shipping lines, air transportation, insurance, banks).

"2. All other large industrial, agricultural and commercial enterprises will have to be given to the communities of workers. The enterprises will be directed by councils elected by the assembly of workers and technicians. Individual property will be respected for small enterprises and for handicraft undertakings.

"3. The small farm property will be safeguarded; agricultural affairs will be managed by peasant councils, elected directly by the farmers of each rural district; farmer cooperatives will be developed.

"4. Organization of French economy as a planned economy and its adaptation to a functioning within a European framework.

"5. Control of foreign trade. . . .

"8. Organization of a new political framework through the election of councils of the different enterprises, institutions, establishments expressing the various other activities and collective functions (industrial, agricultural, educational, cultural, spiritual, moral and mutual aid). Federation of these councils on the communal, departmental, regional and national level, in connection with a representation of the people established on the basis of universal suffrage and the civil equality of both sexes.

"9. Integration of France into the United States of Europe."

An article in *Libérer et Fédérer* of May, 1943, illustrates the tendency of this movement: "We must know that it isn't sufficient, if we want to build a durable and human construc-

*I have seen no Trotskyist publication since early 1942. There are very probably still Trotskyist groups in France, but it does not seem that they have achieved widespread influence. The "Insurgé" group of revolutionary Marxists (now merged with *Libérer et Fédérer*) undoubtedly includes many who were formerly organized in Marceau Pivert's Socialist Workers & Peasants Party (PSOP) and may also contain former Trotskyists.

tion, to institute a sort of state paternalism which will take into account the legitimate aspirations of the producers and will concede to them a certain number of reforms so as to avoid social conflicts and popular movements. This method, which has been inaugurated by the totalitarian regime and has been adopted with so little success by Vichy's "National Revolution", is related to the enlightened despotism of the 18th century. It presupposes that one can make men happy without their participation, often in spite of their wishes, and sometimes against them. Theoretically this can be successful if the scale of the experiment is large enough. It could lead to a relative unification of the classes on an economic plane, but it would still be based on the existence of governed and governing. And consequently, on the political and social plane, of a class of privileged and one of serfs. What the proletariat wants is not so much bread, physical security, satisfaction of natural needs, as intellectual and moral independence, the liberty and the dignity which it will acquire through the participation in the riches which it has produced, its accession to the means of production, its liberation from the proletarian condition.

"The political, economic and social regime of tomorrow must therefore be created not only for the people but by the people.

"For too long already has the life of the nations been a comedy played by the governing few for a mass audience of citizens who, after having paid at the box office, have had no other rights than to applaud or to hiss, or to ask for a change of actors."

In spite of many inconsistencies, many unclear formulations, this movement undoubtedly represents by far the most advanced revolutionary socialist tendency. Its insistence on the role of councils, its rejection of the idea of state direction and state paternalism—i.e. of the main ideas of the New Deal, French or American variety—make it remarkable. Its stressing of the importance of the human individual and of his development within the framework of a new community, its insistence on real participation of the citizen in political affairs—all these are new and encouraging attitudes on the left.

Germany and Europe

The Underground as a whole is not chauvinistic. One of the most encouraging features of the underground press is the almost complete lack of hatred for the German people as a people, and the insistence in nearly all papers that a solution for Europe's problems can only be found in a European Federation.

While in this country, and also in Algiers, far removed from the horrors of occupation, more and more voices of hatred are heard; while more and more employ Hitler's logic about the racial bastardy of a whole people; while plans for the dismemberment of Germany are current food for the discussion of post war planners: I have found in a close examination of about one hundred issues of French Underground papers only one article, one single article, in which the permanent annexation by France of the left bank of the Rhine is demanded. Most papers,

dealing with international problems, state that France as well as Germany has to be integrated into a vast European Community or Federation of Nations. Very few speak about an "imperial mission of France." Here are some examples:

"It would be a great misfortune if the odious exploitation of a just idea by the Nazi regime should make us forget the necessity of a great federation of the peoples of Europe. This is a political, moral and economic necessity. Compartmented into small states, with their obsolete custom barriers, the Europe of yesterday had to die of asphyxiation. This was one of the causes of the war. . . . The revolution to come will not refuse to Germany her just part of the world economy. . . . Maintain the states within the frontiers which respond to the aspiration of their citizens, but at the same time see to it that the frontiers do not hinder the circulation of men, ideas, goods; that is the program of the truly European revolution. (*Résistance*, February, 1943)

In an article entitled "This is a revolutionary war," *La Revue Libre* of December 1943 draws the balance sheet of the whole Versailles era: "It was the fear of Germany's industrial power that guided the fathers of the Versailles treaty. Incapable of conceiving a Europe in which the different nations could collaborate on a federal basis, they cut Europe into rival economic cells, which had the tendency to protect themselves by custom barriers. . . . The economic chaos which followed the war and the fact that the Versailles treaty looked for the solution of this global problem on the plane of nationalist capitalist nations, produced in the vanquished countries and especially in Germany a rapid renaissance of chauvinism and the spirit of revenge. Hitler thrived on this soil. . . . German nationalism, Prussian war spirit would have had no chances to triumph if the masses would have found in a rational social order the satisfaction of their needs. No Nazism without permanent unemployment in Germany, without ruined middle classes. It is from these sources that sprang the desperate and blind armies which Nazism mobilized. . . . Hatred is healthy if it contributes to assure the defeat of the invader. But we must lift ourselves above national hatreds if we want to avoid cycles of war and of social convulsions."

Combat of March, 1944 says: "We neither believe in the plans for the reconstruction, in the midst of the 20th century, of a Germany divided into small states modelled on the treaty of Westphalia, nor do we believe in the idyllic re-establishment of the impotent Weimar Republic. A federated Socialist Europe will include a Socialist Germany. We have not forgotten that the German resistance movement was the first to rise against the Nazis and the first to be martyred. We have not forgotten Dachau and the many militant Socialists, Catholics and Communists who 'disappeared without trace.' We shall not forget you, our murdered friends. We shall try and help your children to create a new fatherland."

(I have not quoted from the revolutionary socialist or SFIO papers because their opposition to the dismemberment of Germany and their advocacy of a Socialist United States of Europe goes without saying.)

De Gaulle and the Underground

The controversy about De Gaulle has now been raging for a good number of months. I hardly feel it necessary to rehash the old arguments. That those who speak for the State Department or are inspired by it have been attacking De Gaulle as undemocratic should not be too surprising. They are, of course, none too perturbed about the special brand of democracy represented by President Vargas of Brazil or General Chiang-Kai-Chek of China,—but these gentlemen did not make any difficulties about giving more or less permanent bases to the United States; De Gaulle has been much more reluctant on this score. Those on the other hand, who have defended De Gaulle against the official and semi-official spokesmen have tried to make him appear a pure, lily-white democrat animated only by the intention to give full democracy back to France as quickly as possible. Both interpretations are, of course, equally erroneous. X De Gaulle has a reactionary background: he clashed with his superiors in the French army on technical-military questions, hardly on matters of politics. His books, written before the outbreak of the war, proclaim over and over again that what France needs is a strong man to direct her destinies. Hardly did De Gaulle use the word democracy in the first two years of his radio speeches from London. The conversion of De Gaulle to democracy and to the Fourth Republic dates only from 1942. That year also marks the beginning of a clearer formulation of ideas on the future within the Underground. De Gaulle has felt the temperature of the French Underground and has acted accordingly. He was able to beat Giraud above all because he could rely on the support of the Resistance. He has succeeded in getting the underground to endorse his authority for the coordination of its activities. There can be no doubt that nearly the whole resistance movement recognizes him today as the leader of "France at War." On his post-war status, the opinion of the Underground is divided. Even a De Gaullist paper like *Combat* (December 1943) states: "Our movement is not at the service of a single man, therefore of a new fascism, like the French militia. It is at the service of the France which that man is defending. De Gaulle knows that we will rise against him, as against all dictators, if it should happen that he would, in his turn, install his personal government." X

Nevertheless, De Gaulle has succeeded in creating a mysticism around his name, and a De Gaulle cult is cleverly built up. In Algiers, where the whole press is government controlled, it is not uncommon to find articles like the one in *Rafales* (March 23, 1944) which said: "With De Gaulle, politics have returned to their mystical origin."

In North Africa De Gaulle now wields more power than any Frenchman since the days of Napoleon. He is chief of state and chief of government. He has legislative and executive powers and is also commander-in-chief. The Provisional Assembly does not have any real power. At the end of last year, serious difficulties arose between De Gaulle and the Assembly. The official London organ of De Gaullism, *La Marseillaise* (January 1, 1944) was quick to warn the recalcitrant deputies: "The Assembly is only consultative, it cannot be anything else: it does not hold

legislative power. It cannot hold it. It possesses no part of popular sovereignty. It cannot possess it. For it did not issue from an election. Not having been elected, it is not responsible to anybody. The whole responsibility has never belonged to any one delegate but successively to General De Gaulle, to the National Committee of London, and to the Committee of National Liberation."

X The entourage of De Gaulle in Algiers is extremely varied: there are many SFIO Socialists, but there are also, in the inner circles, even more who come from the right; there are people like Charles Vallin, former second in command of the Croix de Feu; there is the mysterious Colonel Passy (alias Waverin), a sort of grey eminence, now second in command of the French Forces of the Interior, formerly a secretary of the Cagoulaards (i.e. the Hooded Ones, the secret fascist organization of pre-war days). There are also, as has been charged repeatedly by Louis Levy, a well-known French Socialist in London, representatives of the Comité des Forges (i.e. the Steel Trust). X

That De Gaulle has recently endeavored to set up a more closely knit organization of the outspokenly De Gaullist Underground, that he has in fact tried to organize the Underground along strongly hierarchical principles, is another case in point. Behind the façade of long tirades for full democracy and socialism and a people's France, it is none too difficult to discern an attempt to set up some sort of French national-socialism. After all, the coins circulating under the French Empire also have the inscription: "*French Republic * Napoleon Emperor*". The *Economist* recently said very pertinently: "Like Louis Bonaparte, De Gaulle defeats his traditionalist opponents by the appeal to popular will, popular sentiments and popular prejudice. Louis Bonaparte—emperor by the grace of the people—established his empire on the basis of universal suffrage, which he had introduced against the opposition of his traditionalist opponents."

Recent statements by De Gaulle for a sort of state-captivism or state-socialism are sincere, his advocacy of democracy is less so. De Gaulle knows that under liberal capitalism France would necessarily become an annex of Anglo-American imperialism; he knows that the only possible defense against Anglo-Saxon encroachments is strong state control of the economy and of politics as well. His spokesmen now often explain that this or that none too democratic measure is warranted for an intermediate period of exceptional crisis, but there can be no doubt that for many years to come France will continue to live in such a situation of permanent crisis. If France wants to rearm, if France tries again to play the role of a great power, she cannot at the same time pay high wages to her workers and adopt measures of social security. An authoritarian regime becomes necessary to combat the claims of the working class. For a certain period it might be possible to win large masses with the bait of nationalisation and state control; it might even be possible to build some sort of Labor Front with the help of docile trade unionists; but how long can this last if the watchword is "cannons instead of butter?"

The Socialist forces, opposed to imperialism, stress time and again that the only solution for France is her inclu-

sion in a Socialist United States of Europe. And indeed, either France, with a regimented economy and regimented politics will remain isolated within her frontiers, perhaps with a string of small satellites bound by uneasy alliances, the whole under the overlordship of England and America, or she will be a part of a Socialist United Europe. There is no third solution. The United States would like a revival of some sort of liberal capitalism, she is afraid of De Gaulle's national and social appeal, but it seems doubtful she will be able to create such a regime. It would be nothing but a regime of Quislings.

The socialist forces are extremely powerful within France, they have more vitality today than they have had in the last fifty years. Society in turmoil is receptive to revolutionary ideas, the stagnation of the inter-war years

has been definitely overcome. France will be the theater of immense social struggles in the years to come. It may well become the battleground of the two political and social systems which have to fight it out in our period: the authoritarian state and libertarian socialism.

Much of the dogmatism of the past has been overcome, new realignments have been made. Socialist thought has made a return to its humanist source; some of the best have come to reject the statist idea and to re-discover the essentially democratic conception of a federation of councils grown from below, not imposed from above, but many theoretical problems remain to be solved. Too many in the socialist underground still fight the enemy of yesterday: liberal capitalism; too few see clearly the enemy of tomorrow: authoritarian national-socialism.

X *Italians and Fascism: Testimony and Comment*

Testimony, by Pfc.

After four months of Army Special Training Program courses in Italian (no previous contact with the language or culture, except in the usual liberal arts way) I have spent three months here with Italian prisoners, training them to serve as "co-belligerent" labor battalions. The chief reason, so far as I can see, for these battalions is in order to have a cheap labor supply. Of course, it is possible that some Washington liblabs have a mystique of "educating fascists to democracy", or some such nonsense, but I have seen little to support such hopes. Quite the contrary: the American cadres tend to adapt all too easily to the Italian Army's more undemocratic features (batmen for noncoms, etc.); and the Italian enlisted men, who mostly loathe their officers and suffer them only so long as Americans are standing by, protest quite rightly that their officers are shown undue favoritism as to pay, privileges, etc. Many say they only obey their officers because the American officer is behind them—and, indeed, for disrespect to an Italian officer, an enlisted man can be sent back to the Prisoner-of-War camps. And while it is true our commanding officer here is extremely loath to send any men back to PW camp, it is also true that a disproportionate amount of care is always taken by him to salvage a "difficult case" among the Italian officers—and just how "difficult" some of them are is perhaps known only to the Italian-speaking American enlisted men. . . .

But what I want to write about mainly are the personal contacts, none too many, I have had with the prisoners here. And I must confess that, from a progressive point of view, it is not enheartening to talk to them and get to know them. The pleasant Italian personality, with its sense of individual dignity and honor is as unfitted for first-class success in the world today as the Italian nation is ill-equipped economically for being the first-class nation Mussolini tried to make it. They are too sentimental, have too immediate and personal a sense of justice, for the world they live in—my friends and I get extremely depressed when we compare their own hopes and dreams with the realities they face. Even in the Latin context of cynicism (from the Anglo-Saxon point of view) about politics generally and everything involving money, they are still, both officers and men, looking for a good master, looking indeed for the Savior, though the Christian outline is a bit blurred as you go from man to man. (This is

something I have discovered, not something they told me to look for in ASTP.)

I have not found one officer or man who finds anything wrong with Mussolini prior to 1936 (unless they fought in Ethiopia or Spain, and then it is in terms of an error in judgment—the turning point is usually given as when he thumbed his nose at Eden and allied with Hitler.) To any such remark as "Well, of course to us it seems as though you lost control of your own government, and the trouble started *then*" they register blankness, quite genuinely not understanding. They have so uncritical an eagerness to accept what they feel is our "help", are so completely centered emotionally and intellectually on Italy as home and family. One of the more self-conscious younger officers (to whom America Is Promises indeed) confided coyly after I asked him to tell me wherein Umberto differed from his predecessor, "Oh—we can even do without a King, if you want us to!" The career officers are very disappointed by our treatment of Badoglio, but are extremely polite and inoffensive about confessing so, probably would only do so to an enlisted man. To them Fascists are hoodlums, and Mussolini erred by putting hoodlums in the Army and by not listening to Badoglio, who, it seems, is a really good general, technically. People who are not hoodlums are not Fascists. (Everyone agrees the Germans are hoodlums, and worse.) The enlisted signees, as the prisoners who sign a paper to work for the US Army are called, are extremely unclear about what is a Fascist: it was the stuff you signed in order to get a job and bread: the confession is invariably accompanied by an eloquent gesture combining worldly cynicism with apology.

The boy who drove me around last night (he had two medals in North Africa, refused a German one, has been in uniform 5 years—born in 1917, like me) had been an industrial worker in Milan and done his military service reinforcing the line of fortifications across the Austrian border. He attached great significance to Mussolini's closing of the borders, making it impossible for industrial workers to look for work in France or Switzerland. So his criticism of the regime at least went further than Mussolini's series of disastrous military adventures, the usual limit of the theme. But politically what did he think? Exactly what all his life he had been permitted to think: the leader made a mistake, is all. Enough mistakes and he is proven a bad leader. Too many people die and the

country doesn't get richer (in 1936 it seemed it would be better for everybody)—the intimation is that if the country got richer even the dying would be all right. Well, maybe the Allies will help. Certainly Hollywood films are full of promise, and they see them every night. Boy, that's the life!

Three months of this and you feel you are in the bottom of a well, a well of history. Daylight is very far overhead. Like the Merchant Marine chap I know who picked up a drawing by an Old Master near the ruins of the Naples Museum—he kept it too long and now he's afraid he'll get in trouble if he gives it back. And who should he give it to? Sort of a frustrated Prometheus.

Comment, by Nicola Chiaromonte

It is with reluctance that I add a footnote to this letter. A written comment can so easily sound like arguing; and with this young American soldier I would much rather have a conversation, ask questions and be questioned myself. Anyway, I suppose he will be pleased if I tell him that to an Italian the few sketches he draws of the attitude of Italian officers and privates sound absolutely true to life.

For example, I would be very suspicious of any testimony about a considerable number of Italians which would claim that a majority of them, or even a large minority, were conscious that the beginning of their misfortunes was the constitutional rape of October, 1922. Misfortune and mistreatment has been the lot of the overwhelming majority of them from a much earlier date indeed. Furthermore, if taken as a group, people are empiricists of the old Doubting Thomas stock: until objective evidence covers at least the largest part of the field of any general statement they might hear (such as "Fascism is bad"), they remain unconvinced and, being unconvinced, they apply the method recommended by Descartes in the matter of morals: they provisionally resign themselves to existing conventions. The only excuse they have for being so slow is that, after all, they (that is, the numerical majority of them) are always the first to suffer the consequences of whatever they do or fail to do. Which is more than can be said of the quick minority.

What I mean to say is this: 1936 was indeed the earliest possible date at which the Italian people, as a whole, could become fully aware that Fascism was a nonsensically bloody business. And this for the very simple reason that only at that date did Fascism really come into the open. Until then, in many respects, it had been busy fooling around, and confusing the issue as much as possible by thoroughly exploiting the disintegration of the opposite ideologies: Fascism was social justice and corporatism, Fascism was real liberty, Fascism was peaceful construction, Fascism was respect for the downtrodden Italian people. Fascism was everything possible, and in the meantime it was actually committed only to the persecution of a very small minority of stubbornly deductive people, who had decided that Fascism could not possibly be good because its ideas were too twisted and its methods too rotten. For the majority, however disgruntled on account of the generally oppressive atmosphere and of the general but shrewdly distributed improverishment, this kind of situation couldn't possibly make a clear picture. And this was especially true of those who had been children or adolescents at the time of the great political crisis, between 1919 and 1924.

But, in 1935, Fascism committed itself in the eyes of

the mass of the people in a most crucial way: it waged war. And not only did Fascism wage war, but it did it on the proclaimed assumption that war was going to provide the total justification for all past sacrifices, as well as the dazzling revelation of what Fascism really was about: glory to the Nation, land to the peasant and profit for everybody, without any class distinction. And it said so not because Mussolini liked bombast, but because it was true. By 1934, war had become a material necessity for the dictatorship which otherwise would have had to settle accounts at home, where people were becoming dangerously inquisitive.

With a certain amount of looseness, it could well be said that the Italian people at large took Mussolini at his word. All right, that was going to be the crucial experiment. And by 1936, the meaning of the Fascist war had become perfectly clear: it was just war for the sake of war (and, presumably, of Fascism), *nothing else*. The Italian peasant saw the Dankal desert and had the unmistakable, complete evidence that those who had pushed him there were beastly idiots.

Among those beastly idiots there was not only Badoglio, the "technically good general" so dear to Italian career officers, but the bulk of the Italian upper and middle classes, who saw in Haile Selassie the hereditary and sinister enemy of the Italian nation and in Mussolini the avenger of the burning national shame of Adowa and—even more electrifying—the great genius who defied the British Empire. Swept by Ancient-Roman emotions, their wives went to the Altar of the Fatherland to sacrifice their wedding-rings, while, more soberly, they themselves discussed geopolitics and hoped for the best. There were, it is true, some subtler shades of opinion among those people: as, for example, that of senator Albertini (a "great liberal") who opposed the Ethiopian war, because it put Italy at odds with England, but approved of Fascist intervention in Spain, because it was directed against Bolshevism.

The results of the definite conviction reached in 1936 by the Italian people about the nature not only of Fascism (which is a vague and deceptive term, one of the many deceptive terms current in our time) but of their ruling class and of their State organization as well, were to be observed on a large scale throughout the war, and finally in the gigantic military strike of June-July, 1943, not to speak of what came after.

It is remarkable that it was precisely in 1936, while the Italian people were clearly realizing that Fascism was a murderous lie, that the ruling classes of Europe and other places started rushing more and more frantically to the support of Mussolini, the "wise dictator". But this is another story.

The point I want to make is this: when the Italian prisoners were explaining to the American soldier that the trouble with Mussolini had started about 1936, it seems to me that they were conveying in the form of scattered and vaguely expressed personal opinion, a simple and important fact about their social history. I think it is more important to understand it as such than to take it as a political opinion to be examined in the light of general principles of political consciousness. It is, among other things, the kind of fact which the various antifascist parties tenaciously failed to understand, precisely because it was not "enheartening" to them, as it is not enheartening now to this young American.

As for the rest, I cannot of course be sure of what was in the mind of the young officer who, when questioned about Prince Umberto, gave the answer: "We can do even without a king, *if you want us to*". But I cannot help

thinking that the implication might have been something like: "We can do without a great many things, *if the only question left is to do what you want us to do.*" Or maybe he just meant to be obliging.

But by far the most significant testimony is that of the young worker. Here is a perfect example of life under Fascism. The man was 5 years old in 1922. No wonder if he knew little else except that in Italy there was a "leader" who did everything for the best. What did he care about politics anyway, when there was no trace of politics around, except for some bitter memories of failure among the old? Far more important was the closing of the border, which prevented him (as it had probably prevented his father, and most certainly a great number of his fellow workers, from 1926 on) from going elsewhere to look for a more decent living. That was definitely bad, however far-sighted the Leader. Life in general was not cozy for the young man, I gather. Otherwise he wouldn't "attach great significance" to such a fact. "In 1936, it seemed that it would be better for everybody", thanks to the wonderful tricks of the Leader. But it went wrong. In 1939, he was in the army. That was probably the second call to the colors: he must have done his regular period of military service (18 months) in 1937, when he was twenty. Some six months of freedom, and then the barracks again. That was certainly not taken gladly, although it is not impossible that, on the whole, army life, with its absence of worries, did not look much worse than life at home. War came, he was a good soldier and they gave him medals. Then there was a moment when it be-

came clear that "the Leader made a mistake". As a matter of fact, the mistakes were discovered to have been many, enough to make him decide that the Leader was definitely a bad leader. Conclusion: "Too many people die and the country doesn't get richer".

In all this, I daresay, the intimation is not—as the young American thinks—that "if the country got richer even the dying would be all right". This is simply a logical inference which a listener (even a most understanding listener, I assume) is only too easily led to make. The intimations are many and complex. How many and how complex, the man himself evidently does not know, being as he is in desperate need of the help of friends in whose company he could learn to speak again an articulate language. But, as a point from which to start a conversation, I wouldn't despair of his conclusion. After all, it is clear, simple, and most human. While I would really feel alarmed if somebody should start giving him a speech about his having "lost control of his government" or, for that matter, of his class-consciousness. Not to speak of what he is actually getting: Hollywood films, and the insolence of his own commissioned and non-commissioned officers supported by American authority.

I hope all this will not be suspected of being even in the faintest degree a "defense" of the Italian people. I most firmly maintain that peoples do not need advocates: they are their own judges and their own avengers. There is no other tribunal. I only wanted to insinuate a couple of doubts about expecting people to give answers that fit the type of questions we have in mind.

The Life and Death of Max Hoelz (p. 2)

Ruth Fischer

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ruth Fischer's sketch of the career of a great popular leader seems especially pertinent at this moment for three reasons. (1) As the collapse of Nazism draws near, it is instructive to see how a politically unconscious common soldier in the Germany army became a socialist leader, and also how the German masses behaved in a revolutionary situation. (2) The spontaneity with which the German workers, and their wives and children, backed up Hoelz, once he gave them a lead, is one more demonstration—if such is needed—of the falsity of the widespread notion that the Germans are robot-like automatons, capable only of marching in step behind a kaiser or a dictator. (3) Perhaps the greatest problem in contemporary leftwing politics is how to avoid too much centralization of authority, how to tap those resources of spontaneous direct action by the masses themselves which are the best guarantee against the kind of bureaucratic degeneration that has taken place in the Russian revolution; popular leaders like Makhno, Villa, John Brown and Max Hoelz, who are never completely differentiated from the submerged masses who throw them up as symbols, incarnations of their needs, desires, talents—such men can teach us much today, if not by their books then by their lives.

Max Hoelz was born in 1889 in the Vogtland, a district of Saxony which was one of the most poverty-stricken regions of Germany. His father was a farmhand who worked on a big Junker estate and was thus among the poorest of the poor. Cold, sickness without medical care, a diet literally of "dry bread and water", work in the fields from the age of five—this was Hoelz's childhood. As he grew up, he became possessed of one great ambition: to escape from the country and get to the "city"—which for him was the town of Riesa. This ambition he finally realized

by becoming a bellhop in one of Riesa's best hotels. After a round of menial jobs, which he was taught mostly by flogging, the young Hoelz ran away again, this time really out into the wide world, making his way via Cologne and Rotterdam to England.

In London, after a period of loneliness in which his fellow-countrymen cheated him out of his last penny, he got a job as kitchen boy in the home of two American ladies. This was the turning-point in his life: he began to read in the public libraries, studied drawing and engineering at a polytechnical school in Chelsea, and learned practical geography from a railroad engineer for whom he worked. In his autobiography, *From the White Cross to the Red Banner*, he writes with pride that he not only studied very hard but that he also became a champion swimmer. He joined the "polar bears" club, whose members chopped holes in the Thames ice to take a dip. When he returned to Berlin, where he got a job with a railroad construction company, Hoelz joined an association of young Christians called the "White Cross". (At this period, he was a devout Protestant.) The members had to make daily confessions of sexual transgressions to their leader . . . and poor Max had to confess every day. Beside the White Cross, his life centered upon his ambition to get ahead in the world. He felt a justifiable pride in the distance he had travelled already—for in imperial Germany it was quite

an achievement to become an engineer if one had been born a farmhand. His political consciousness was nil: when he moved to Dresden, he was not even aware of the existence of the majestic Social Democratic Party, which was especially strong there.

At the outbreak of World War I, Hoelz was drafted into the Hussars Regiment of the King of Saxony. After only a few months training, he went to the front with the 27th Army Corps under the command of the Saxon Minister of War, General Carlowitz. Coming as he did from the provinces the non-political Hoelz seemed so "reliable" to the General that he chose him for one of his personal bodyguard.

The first battle of Ypres was another great turning point in Hoelz's life. It was not so much the battle itself which made an impression as the cruel treatment of the Belgians. In the village of Ledeghan, he came across the bodies of twelve inhabitants, including two little girls. For the first time in his life, Max Hoelz asked a political question: "Why did you kill the children?"

His commanding officer replied: "Franc-tireurs." But Hoelz investigated for himself and found that the children were killed by drunken officers, who in their intoxication had mistaken the peculiarly formed chimneys of the village for civilian snipers. Curiosity is the mother of wisdom: Hoelz ran around in the Belgian village, found a house on the door which was written in chalk: "*Here live the children of the murdered—twenty orphans of all ages are living alone.*" From now on Hoelz asks many questions—and gets no answers till the last day of his life.

Hoelz was sent home a few months before the war was over, honorably discharged after having participated in twenty-four battles on the Western front. He was still a political illiterate, had read no books, and didn't even know the names of Karl Marx, August Bebel, Karl Liebknecht, and Rosa Luxembourg. His contact with the Socialists was almost accidental. George Schumann, editor of the Left Socialist *Leipziger Volkzeitung*, had been arrested for seditious activities and Hoelz was ordered to be one of his guards. In spite of severe orders not to speak to the prisoner, the guardsman Hoelz got from Schumann his first lesson in Socialism. Hoelz at this time was full of emotional protest against the terroristic methods of war, the inequality between soldiers and officers, and the suffering of the civilians, whether they were "enemies" or not.

The Russian Revolution transformed this emotional protest into something which approached political consciousness. The soldiers themselves knew little about it and what they knew they didn't understand. Hoelz was fighting on the Western front and Russian propaganda had not penetrated that far. But the news of Russian workers' and soldiers' councils did reach him, this was an idea which Hoelz could grasp immediately.

In October and November, 1918, Hoelz was working as a foreman on fortifications near the French front, in Alsace. His wife became ill and he got a leave to visit her in a small village in the center of Germany. Sitting in a train on November 7, 1918, Hoelz learned, from conversation with soldiers and workers through the window, that Germany was in the midst of a revolution. He forgot his private life immediately, didn't go to see his family, but

changed his itinerary and went to Falkenstein, where he had lived at the time he was drafted. He arrived in Falkenstein on the ninth of November, wrote leaflets by hand, and called on the workers in the factories and the soldiers on leave to form a workers' and soldiers' council. Now the traditional labor movement and soldier Hoelz met for the first time. The Social Democratic organization of Falkenstein had come over to the Independent Social Democratic Party, under pressure of the radical mood of its members. The president of this organization, a certain Storl, was alarmed by this unknown soldier, who upset organizational routine. But when new workers' and soldiers' councils were formed, both Storl and the 29-year-old Hoelz were elected.

Hoelz had one leading idea—we must have arms to defend the revolution. He knew the generals and didn't trust them. He also knew where the arms were kept, in army headquarters at Leipzig, and he went to get them. By the time he returned with a small group of armed workers—his first "command" in revolutionary warfare, so to speak—Storl had succeeded in excluding him from the council. But Hoelz, without personal ambition, accepted the demotion cheerfully. Joining the Independent Social Democratic Party, he set to work enthusiastically on small "Jimmy Higgins" tasks: distributing party literature, organizing meetings, founding new locals in and around Falkenstein, the region he knew so well.

Falkenstein at this time had 70,000 inhabitants and was an important center of the embroidery, lace and curtain industry. It was in a state of economic collapse—no business, no bread, no coal, no jobs for the thousands of soldiers flooding back from the front. In such a situation, Hoelz could not long remain submerged. He improvised a demonstration before the City Hall, dramatically calling on the starving girls and children to take off their shoes and show their toes, frozen from standing all day in breadlines. The demonstration turned into the city's first hunger march; the women captured the Mayor and forced him to march with them for two hours.

This action, which delighted Hoelz with its spontaneity, made him popular and famous overnight. Frightened, the Mayor issued a warrant for Hoelz's arrest and set a price of 2,000 marks on his head. He also called in a regiment of soldiers and had all the members of the committee of unemployed arrested—all except Hoelz, that is. Hoelz took to the hills.

What did they want, these terrible Hoelzian troopers of the unemployed? Increased relief allowances and kindling wood from the Falkenstein forests. There was no coal to be had in this corner of defeated Germany with its disorganized railroad system; and the forest administration of Falkenstein did its utmost to protect the beautiful German woods and their picturesque landscape from destruction. The military authorities, more concerned with the hunt for Hoelz than with the needs of the people, looked for him everywhere. Hoelz gathered together twenty unemployed workers and led them directly to the City Hall, where the troops were quartered. The entrance was decorated with machine guns, but Hoelz had seen machine guns before, and they didn't impress him. He demanded a word with the officer, and asked brusquely why the commit-

tee of unemployed had been arrested, and what the siege of Falkenstein meant. Seeing Hoelz with twenty men around him, the perplexed officer stuttered something about having been told by his commanding officer in Zwickau that: "the unemployed want to plunder Falkenstein and demolish the shop windows."

As the news that Hoelz was at the City Hall spread, the unemployed of Falkenstein, all of Falkenstein, gathered around the building. Hoelz's reputation grew from minute to minute. He issued an ultimatum to the officer: retreat of the troops within an hour. Trying to save face, the officer asked for two hours. The masses milling outside the City Hall lost patience, stormed the building, carrying away the rifles and machine guns, which, in their innocence they didn't use against the troops, but threw instead on the trucks to hasten the withdrawal of the hated imperial military. The soldiers, delighted with this happy ending, jumped into their trucks and disappeared.

The unemployed hated one man even more than they hated the officers: the Mayor of Falkenstein. They arrested him as the instigator of the incident. Again Hoelz interfered. He took several influential citizens as hostages to the City Hall and forced the Mayor to telephone the District attorney of the City of Plauen and tell him that they would be held as long as the members of the unemployed committee were not released.

A torrential rain poured down, but the people didn't go home. They stood around in the rain from 8 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock in the evening and greeted the freed members of the unemployed committee with tremendous joy and shouts of jubilation. That was the end of Hoelz's first action. After that, the military authorities preferred to leave Falkenstein to Hoelz—for the time being.

Hoelz began organizing the battle against hunger. The unemployed committee sent representatives under the protection of city policemen into the homes of the wealthy inhabitants to requisition food supplies. All the supplies—ham, sausages, preserves—were stored in the City Hall and distributed publicly to war widows, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and the sick. Hoelz took over the City Hall and the wretched and miserable came from everywhere to ask for his help. He solved all problems empirically; if a blind man wanted money to buy straw for basket weaving, Hoelz sent to a rich businessman for the money, and got it. The farmhands on the estates outside the town demanded a raise in wages. The noble Junkers were opposed, but they granted it immediately when Hoelz wrote them a letter stating that he would come with a group of unemployed and take their horses out of the stables. Hoelz soon became the idol and symbol of action throughout the countryside.

These golden days of improvised people's government lasted exactly as long as the central power in Berlin was insecure. In June, 1919, another regiment marched into Falkenstein, arrested hundreds of people, and took Hoelz's house under fire. But Hoelz escaped once again to the hills and lived as an outlaw, in and around Falkenstein, harrassing the authorities with all kinds of tricks, making them appear ridiculous. The military were furious. Once they forced a bridal couple out of their decorated carriage, maintaining that the bridegroom was Hoelz's adjutant

Gruner and the bride was Hoelz. The boys on the streets had a battle cry: "You are looking for Hoelz? We have him in our pockets."

One Hoelzian exploit followed another as civil war flared up and down this isolated corner of Germany. His followers were sometimes arrested, but Hoelz always found ways and means to free them. At the time of the Kapp Putsch, when the generals tried to overturn the new republic, Hoelz was in hiding. Hearing the news, he at once appeared at his headquarters in Falkenstein. His first question was, "Have we disarmed the Reichswehr?" Every one was hesitant, but Hoelz insisted and led a raid on police headquarters in another town to get arms. After the police, who showed no fight, were overpowered and arrested, Hoelz looked over the booty with the tender eye of an expert: hand grenades, rifles, machine guns, pistols. Seizing some police cars, the now armed guerilla fighters sped down the road to Falkenstein. Hearing that Hoelz was on his way, the troops in Falkenstein at once withdrew to the more peaceful city of Plauen. Once more, Hoelz found himself installed in the City Hall, this time not to distribute sausages but to organize a Red Army. From all parts of Germany, workers swarmed to Falkenstein to enlist in Hoelz's army, which gained control of a number of neighboring cities.

One of Hoelz's most famous exploits was his raid on the city of Plauen, in the course of which he freed 24 workers who had been imprisoned there since 1919. Capturing the District Attorney, he took him to his headquarters in Falkenstein and sent a messenger on a motorcycle to the District Attorney's wife: "I want the police records of the city. If they are not delivered to me by tomorrow at noon, your husband will be shot." On the dot of twelve the next day, the District Attorney's wife appeared with some clerks bringing vast stacks of criminal records from the Plauen courthouse. Hoelz ordered the clerks to pile up all the records in the Falkenstein market place. He harangued all the officers of the judiciary body of Plauen, as well as the cops who were standing on duty at the entrance of the building. "Now the workers have power. We do not need bourgeois legislation. I order you to bring out of the building all records and files and to pile them before the building on the main square." Thus the Falkenstein records went to join those from Plauen.

The judges thought this was some kind of joke on Hoelz's part, but Hoelz ordered a large bonfire to be made of the records. Judges and clerks were in despair. The chief justice actually began to weep and implored Hoelz not to destroy "his life's work." Around the fire stood three judges of the superior court, each in a corner of the city square: Max Hoelz stood in the fourth corner. Hoelz proudly relates that the gigantic pile of records burned three days and three nights and shone through all the suburbs of Falkenstein. The people of Falkenstein marched around it jubilantly.

By this time, the bureaucrats of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany were trembling with indignation at the irresponsible deeds of Hoelz. They were called anarchism, Blanquism, Bakuninism, every kind of "ism", and were denounced as violating every sacred

tradition of the German labor movement (as in fact, they did). Hoelz remained a member of the Communist Party of Germany but he was confined to his provincial quarters in Saxony and his name was mentioned with a contemptuous smile in the headquarters of the Central Committee in Berlin.

The Central Committee in Berlin manoeuvred very efficiently to keep Hoelz in his provincial corner. They didn't invite him to make propaganda tours through Germany, they prevented any contact with political leaders of the Communist movement and above all, they avoided carefully any meeting between Max Hoelz and leading Russian Communists. Hoelz was handicapped as a "theoretician." He had read a lot of pamphlets but had never gone through serious training. He took a special six weeks course under Otto Ruhle, a left Communist, opposed to the war from the beginning, and a co-fighter of Karl Liebknecht's. (Ruhle, who represented a very anti-totalitarian shade of German communism, died recently in Mexico in exile, one of the last big figures of revolutionary Germany of 1918.)

Hoelz wanted to break out of his provincial sphere. He went to Chemnitz to meet the Communist leader, H. Brandler. Hoelz wanted to open the fight against the Reichswehr, concentrated near Chemnitz, but Brandler put him off with all kinds of pretexts and sent him back to Falkenstein. Brandler, who didn't want to interfere too much with Social Democratic tradition, was principally concerned with the organization of fire alarm squads in case of emergency and the avoidance of clashes with the military. And so Hoelz's Red Army went to defeat. Hoelz had to withdraw. In withdrawing he threatened to burn down the houses of the rich as a preventive against the occupation of the Vogtland by the Reichswehr. This early "scorched earth" policy caused a great outcry against Hoelz, who was called a brigand, a bandit, a terrorist. Hoelz had to flee to Czechoslovakia, where he was jailed. He was expelled from the Communist Party of Germany by Brandler for "putschist activities" and any Communist group which tried after that to exercise any initiative of its own, was severely reprimanded for its "Hoelzian deviations."

After a few months Hoelz was expelled from Czechoslovakia, went back to Germany and lived there illegally under many aliases, with a wonderful talent for conspiracy. He went to Berlin, where he met another activist, Ferry, and together they planned to organize a series of terrorist actions as a symbol of the continuation of the revolutionary struggle. Hoelz and Ferry wanted to blow up police headquarters in Berlin-Charlottenburg. Ferry wanted to destroy the execrable "Column of Victory," standing in the center of Berlin, symbol of German imperialism. Both attempts failed but the two partisans won more and more sympathy in all activist working class groups, more hate from the authorities, and caused a furore among the "theoreticians." Hoelz went back to his home town and made a series of attempts there too, hoping thus to provoke a new revolutionary movement.

On March 20, 1921, in the soft coal region in the center of Germany, the Mannsfelder district, a revolt against the Prussian police broke out. Hoelz went there to organize

the resistance. During the miners' strike, Hoelz, with his remarkable military talent, organized armed troops. He started out with empty hands. Attracted by his personality the miners streamed to him; he organized them in regiments, requisitioned arms and cars, and marched through the industrial region, a modern Robin Hood, a little Pancho Villa, defender of the poor and real menace to the counter-revolution in the making. Again he was defeated in spite of many successful skirmishes, for he had no support from outside. The philosophers of the Communist Central Committee in Berlin were discussing whether or not they should do something. They decided to do nothing. The workers in the big chemical plant, the famous Leuna Works, near Hoelz's headquarters, sat heavily armed behind the closed factory doors, revolutionary in spirit but waiting. They had studied the "military theory of the Central Committee", and so Hoelz was beaten, a few hundred yards from this armed fortress. His troop was broken up again.

This time Hoelz was arrested and condemned to seven years in jail. He fought a hundred battles from behind the walls of the different jails in Muenster, in Breslau, in Sonnenburg, in Brandenburg; he was close to insanity, close to committing suicide, but survived, nourished by the warm love and admiration of millions of German workers. In prison, Hoelz was unable to follow the political development within the German Communist Party or within the Russian Communist Party. When he came out of jail in 1928, he was taken back as a member, honored and flattered by the new Central Committee and the Russian authorities. He went to Moscow, was tremendously celebrated, spoke at super-meetings. Factories, streets, children's homes, and plants were baptized in honor of Max Hoelz. But he was, of course, not included in any serious political work. It was the time of Stalin's battle against Bukharin, which completed the disintegration of the Communist Party of Germany and of the Comintern. Very soon Hoelz began to understand the situation, learning about the "Russian Question" through personal experience. The authorities, quickly sensing his critical attitude towards Stalinism, began to make life difficult for him.

The Moscow German emigration was divided for the most part into two sections. In the Hotel Lux on Twerskaya Street lived the high party bureaucracy. They had nothing to say, got high salaries and had to vote correctly at the appropriate moment. In much poorer apartments lived the workers' emigration, those who had to leave Germany because they had worked for the Russian or the Communist apparatus and were persecuted in Germany, or those workers who offered their skills for the construction of the Russian Socialist State. These pilgrims, who had come to Russia full of illusions about the Socialist Fatherland, were treated very badly in Moscow. They all ran to Hoelz, who became their defender and the defender of their women and children. It was Falkenstein all over again, except that Stalin's army and police were much more efficient than those of the bourgeois republic had been. Friends have told me that Hoelz, the indomitable fighter, lived in constant fear of the GPU during his last years. He saw no way out.

But the GPU had arranged something special for Max Hoelz, not just the ordinary shooting in a prison cellar.

During an excursion on the river Oka in 1939, his boat was somehow overturned and he was somehow drowned. The news of this sad accident was announced by the party: the prize swimmer of the Thames drowned in a Russian river. Nobody believed the GPU's fairy tale; even party members knew that he had been killed. The soldier of revolutionary fortune who had survived the jails and police of capitalism had found a police system he could not survive, the genius of popular uprising had found a people he could not help to freedom.

Soldiers' Poetry Department

Editor's Note: These verses were accompanied by the following communication: "Enclosed you will find several poems of a soldier who has recently become politically mature by reading 'The New Republic', well-informed from 'PM', and made confident of a new literary renaissance by reading the poetry of Merrill Moore and Karl Shapiro. His fountain pen has barely tapped the wellsprings of a tremendous love for humanity and confidence in the future of the present social order. . . . Should they come to publication, I should appreciate it if you were to mention me merely as J.L., 1st Lieut., Medical Corps."

there are two jews in our outfit, joe,
two donkeys and a jackass, joe,
and three small toucans, also named joe
and we treat them all just like men
they all are men
they bleed
they fight
they hate
they are our buddies and our allies
like the chinese
yugoslavs
and recently, but only recently,
venezuelans.

last night my toucan came back with a japanese eye,
two days ago, joe (the jackass) brayed at the right time during
a morale lecture
and i know he understands and hates fascism too;
he knows that beneath a dictatorship
he would have less chance of coming into his own
than under a democracy.
some men will have it the japs are human,
but are they?

joes are more human than japs any day
and no japs are named joe
q e d
have you ever seen a jap in a px
or in g i shoes
or defended in yank?
have you?
ever?
no?

our joes do all these things and they are americans
red-blooded and fighting heroic americans
cocky khaki
alive drab americans
just like you too. maybe. you jew who reads my poem
or you, you jackass.
or even you, you toucan.

glossing's gloss

you know why there are no atheists in foxholes?
because there is no god in foxholes;
true there are pits in the sands of the islands of the south pacific
and there are men in the pits in the sands of the islands of the
south pacific

and there is grace in the hearts of the men in the pits in the sands
of the islands of the south pacific
and the commanding officers of the camps put the grace in the
hearts of the men in the pits in the sands of the islands of the
south pacific
since the division neuropsychiatrist told the commanding officers
of the camps to put the grace in the hearts of the men in the
pits in the sands of the islands of the south pacific,
because by general directive of the surgeon general's office which
itself is subject only to the will of god so far as we know
this was a good thing.
actually the men do not exist to be either religious or atheist
and the foxholes are not put there to try their faith
the men are there to fight
by general directive
emanating from almost the same sources
and for almost the same reasons.
perhaps they are fighting for the grace which enables them to
fight for the grace for which they are fighting.

et iterum venturus

you must know, sean, that last night
as i lay beside the new hay i saw a vision of golgotha
where beloved jesu had become old and wizened
and white-bearded and moustached
and had thick glasses
with rims;
and the men round him were armed not with spears
but with sickles and hammers and ukases
surrounded they him and hung
beside him two thieves
on double crosses
bukharin
zinoviev

and when he died a red star appeared in the east over bedlam
they held sponges to his lips and these were moistened
with the bitter blood of betrayed workers
and he cried out saying,
szob tze beh cholera bisabralyeh, i am the insurrection and the life.
and again,
ich hob dir in bod—no taxation without representation
and even further,
a bas, a bas, a bas, a bas, abavit abat, abamus abatis.

his suffering was past all n duhring
the engels of the dead came and comforted him
saying, lo, we are the agents of historical necessity,
we are very small, formerly
we were very large our quantity having been transformed
into quality.

the women came to take him to the tomb
thesis took his right arm
antithesis his left
synthesis

his feet
and he
was
carried away.

glory to him who was washed in the blood of the lumpenproletariat.
i have seen the signs of the imminent class wars
(curry a liason, curry a liason—a crisis has risen)
they are pulling down the settings where the grapes of wrath
was filmed.

and whether you call him marx or trotsky
abraham lincoln or lenin or artemus ward
or william dean howells or bret harte
it is all the same
it is all the same
and he will come again
just watch and see.

War as an Institution (1)

Notes on the Psychology of Killing

Dwight Macdonald

ONE of the things which make it possible for a modern civilian to participate in war without more psychological resistance than he has is the fact that the murderous aspect of war is depersonalized. Most of the killing is done at such long range that the killers have no sense of the physical effects of their attack. It is true that they themselves are often on the receiving end of such attacks, and might be expected to realize what happens to the enemy by analogy with their own experiences, but the ordinary man, perhaps mercifully, is not especially imaginative that way. And anyway, it is one thing to know that one may be responsible for the death and mutilation of invisible people ten miles away or five miles down, and another to cut a man's throat with one's own hands.

Thinking along these lines, one finds three levels of warfare.

Level No. 1: aerial and artillery bombardment, whether of troops or cities; robot bombs, where the principle of indiscriminate blind destruction becomes dramatically clear, although actually robot bombing is no more indiscriminate than the saturation bombing with which the British night raiders obliterate German cities; mines and booby traps, where time as well as space draws a curtain between killer and victim; naval warfare, in which the opposing fleets often cannot see each other. On both the giving and the receiving end, all these types of warfare seem to be as impersonal as a thunderstorm. This kind of killing by remote control makes up the great bulk of modern warfare.*

Level No. 2 is combat in which soldiers fight against individual and visible antagonists, but separated by distance, which they bridge by firearms. Aerial dogfights, sniping, rifle combat come under this head.† As in No. 1,

*"The majority of casualties are now inflicted by artillery fire," writes Col. Lanza, "and may amount to 80% or more of the total." (See his comment on Napoleon's "Maxims" in "Napoleon and Modern War", Military Service Publishing Co., \$1.)

A recent dispatch from France gives an idea of the terrible impersonality of this kind of fighting:

"My vantage point was an observation post for saturation artillery that had been pounding Jerry all night and the previous day. The valley stretched away to both flanks like a huge football stadium. An area of about 20 square miles was visible. . . . Spasmodically, like torches, flares would burst on the horizon as the shells found targets.

"At intervals of 20 or 30 minutes, the observation spotters would halt the fire from batteries located four or five miles to the rear. Then in the distance, out from the small forests and hedgerows, would appear a minute figure with a white flag. He would be followed by other small figures almost indistinguishable through the glasses. Another white flag would pop up from the green and soon the column of figures would grow large—20, 30, maybe 60 or 70 marching men carrying 10 to 12 white squares of cloth. They would make the long trek to the American lines with upraised hands.

"When the catch was bagged, the merciless pounding would commence anew. The prisoners protested: 'It's nothing but butchery.'"

—N. Y. World-Telegram, Aug. 23, 1944

†Although the popular idea of warfare is still soldiers shooting at each other with rifles, fighting at Level No. 2 is today unimportant, at least from the standpoint of bloodshed. "In 1918," writes Col.

the killing is done mechanically at long distance, without physical contact. The psychological effects probably resemble those of hunting, which is what it is, with the roles of hunter and hunted being constantly reversed.

On Level No. 3, one kills or cripples another human being by one's own personal efforts, in close physical contact, aided only by a knife, string, club or other simple tool. Here the essence of war cannot be concealed, and comes out nakedly in a way shocking to the normal Western individual. To perform successfully this kind of killing requires a brutalization far beyond that called for by No. 1 and No. 2. Even within level No. 3 itself, the rule holds: if one has no tool at all but just bare hands, the business of killing reaches its peak of horror so far as the killer is concerned. Thus the psychological and the statistical aspects of modern war move in opposite directions: the more powerful the weapons the greater the slaughter and the less the killer's consciousness of it. (This is possibly a factor of some importance in the survival of modern warfare as a social institution.)

THE above generalizations were suggested by a little book titled *Kill—or Get Killed; a Manual of Hand-to-Hand Fighting*, by Major Rex Applegate (Military Service Publishing Co., Harrisburg, Pa.; \$2). This is a quasi-official manual, for the use of officers in training troops. After reading it, I'm not sure I should not, if pressed, choose the second alternative; there are limits even to self-preservation. The field is covered systematically, with chapters on such topics as "Strangulations" (by stick—"very efficient"; and by cord—"the thinner the diameter, the more instant the effectiveness") and "The Fighting Knife", with a discussion of the more efficient types—"efficient" is a favorite term of the author—and of the relative advantages various parts of the body offer for cutting, stabbing, hacking and ripping.

But much the stiffest chapter, in line with the rule noted above, is the one with the mild title, "Unarmed Offense." Here we learn the most "efficient" methods of eye-gouging ("best accomplished by placing a thumb on the inside of the eye socket next to the nose and flicking the eyeball out toward the edge of the cheek"), lip-tearing ("hook your thumb in the corner of the mouth and tear towards the hinge of the jaw"), sitting-neck-break (best undescribed), ear concussion blow ("approaching your opponent from the rear, you can rupture his eardrums by cupping both hands and simultaneously striking them against his ears"), kicks-to-kill ("After your opponent has been downed, the kill can be made with a kick. . . . It is best to

Lanza, "only 11% of the casualties occurred from infantry fire; and in 1942 Russian statistics indicated that only 10% were due to this cause. . . . Some infantry soldiers in 1918 belonging to regiments which suffered heavy casualties in the six weeks' campaign in the Argonne, never fired their rifles, for they never saw any enemy to fire at."

be wearing heavy boots.”), and, above all, the proper exploitation of the testicles. The author becomes positively lyrical about these “most vulnerable and sensitive parts of a man’s body. . . . Any strong foot or hand blow delivered in the crotch will enable the weakest man to knock the strongest senseless or to disable him to the point where he is easily finished off by some other means. The strongest holds can be broken at any time by grasping an opponent’s testicles and pulling and twisting them.”

There is an anatomy of mayhem as well as of healing.

Major Applegate’s general rule is simple enough: study the Marquess of Queensberry rules carefully, and then do the opposite. Hit below the belt and always kick a man when he is down (with “heavy boots”, if possible). “Ruthlessness is what we seek to achieve. It is best defined in two words: speed and brutality. . . . Forget the rules and use the so-called ‘foul’ methods.” The author recognizes that draftees from civilian life usually have strong prejudices against this sort of thing, prejudices which must be overcome by careful psychological conditioning. “The average American doughboy when shown a fighting knife for the first time, will have an aversion to its use as a killing implement. This same feeling is apparent in preliminary stages of bayonet training.” The situation is by no means hopeless, however. Proper training methods can recondition the soldier until “the killing instinct becomes aroused to the point where he has confidence in the weapon and is not averse to using it.”

The chapter describing one of these methods—the operation of a “practical indoor course” for hand-to-hand fighting—reads like the account of a Pavlovian experiment in conditioned reflexes, combined with elements of a parlor game and an Eden Musée. The course is laid out in a basement and consists of a series of rooms, pits, tunnels, and corridors in which dummies and targets, in enemy uniforms, are arranged to appear and disappear, to the accompaniment of various colored lights and sound effects, as the “student”, armed to the teeth, makes his way over the course. Sample directions:

“When the student and coach reach the foot of the stairs, target No. 1, which is a bobbing target concealed behind a pillar illuminated by a red light, is exposed. After firing at this, the man and coach continue around target No. 1. . . . Target No. 4 is next encountered and is concealed behind a curtain. This is also illuminated by red light and when the curtain is pulled exposing it, the target, which is equipped with a blank pistol, fires at the student. . . . Before entering the tunnel, the coach exposes dummy A and the student uses the knife on it. While the student is proceeding from target No. 1 to target No. 4, the ‘Gestapo Torture Scene’ or the ‘Italian Cursing’ sequence is played over the loudspeaker. . . . Target No. 9 is in darkness, and as the student enters this compartment, the ‘Jap Rape’ sequence is used. [This is described as “Jap talking to an American girl followed by her screams and his sinister laugh.”] While the coach is reloading the student’s pistol, the ‘Get that American son-of-a-bitch’ sequence is used. As the coach and student pass through the curtain into the next compartment, they are confronted by a dummy which has a knife stuck in its back, and represents a dead body. This dummy is illuminated by a green light

and is not to be fired at by the student, although practically all of them do.”

Thus by a combination of shock, fright and induced rage the subject’s civilized inhibitions are broken down and he is conditioned to stab and shoot by reflex action. “There is no limit to the possibilities of this range,” writes the author proudly. “The only limitation is the ingenuity of the builder.” This is an exaggeration: the British used similar courses in training their commandoes several years ago, with additional improvements such as booby traps, collapsible stairs and showers of animal blood, but they had to be toned down, apparently because the effect on the students was too severe. Perhaps by World War III, mankind will have progressed far enough to permit the use of these more realistic devices. By World War IV, it may be possible to substitute live prisoners for the dummies.

There is one rather interesting problem in operating the course. Although the writer never states so directly, it would seem there is danger that the student’s inhibitions will be broken down so thoroughly that he will shoot or stab the coach who accompanies him. (“Your guide and confessor,” as the instruction-sheet issued to the students terms him—a kind of Virgil leading his charge through a sordid Inferno.) The coach is advised to keep himself in a position to grab the student’s gun arm “at any instant”; after the three dummies along the course have been stabbed, “the knife is taken away from student to prevent accident”; and finally: “There is no place on course where total darkness prevails while instructor is near student.”

The author gets into an ironical conflict between ideology and practicality when he has to admit that the Japanese soldier is in many ways the ideal hand-to-hand fighter. As a patriot, he is inclined to see this as one more proof of Japanese barbarism, but as a technician, he views it in quite a different light. The whole chapter on “unarmed offense” takes off from the Japanese technique of jiu-jitsu. The Japanese soldier is perhaps the world’s most skillful bayonet fighter; he spends almost half his training time at bayonet practice, and practice of a more effective kind than the American soldier usually gets: “Japanese bayonet training is most interesting because the personal element is injected into everything the Japanese soldier does. Three fourths of the bayonet drill is given over to personal combat between men.” As for using the knife, the Japanese soldier generally has his own personal fighting knife, which is handed down from father to son and “revered with all traditional Japanese rites.” Finally, to crown his virtues, “The Jap is extremely testicle conscious.” The inhibitions about physical cruelty which have been built up in the Western psyche through centuries of Christian morality and bourgeois humanitarianism are one of the real points of superiority of Western over Eastern culture. (Need it be said that there are equally real points of inferiority?) From the military viewpoint, however, and this is the viewpoint that has come to dominance in our age, this is an element of Japanese superiority, whatever the ideologues say about “Jap barbarism.”

BUT this is making a good deal out of a little book on what is, by my own account, a very limited aspect of modern warfare? Listen, then, to the late General

McNair, who was until lately in charge of the training of all American troops. Speaking on November 11, 1942, over a nation-wide hook-up, General McNair outlined his philosophy:

"Our soldiers must have the fighting spirit. If you call that hating our enemies, then we must hate with every fibre of our being. We must lust for battle; our object in life must be to kill; we must scheme and plan night and day to kill. There need be no pangs of conscience, for our enemies have lighted the way to faster, surer and crueller killing; they are past masters. We must hurry to catch up with them if we are to survive."

Such sentiments are not to be regarded as indicating any personal bloodthirstiness in General McNair, any more than Major Applegate's competent discussion of the best method of gouging out an eye necessarily convicts him of any lack of humane feeling. Quite the contrary, indeed. The more decent human beings one assumes the General and the Major are, the more strongly the point comes out that war is murder on a big scale, and if one's war aims are simply to defeat the enemy, as is the case on both sides in this war, then it is unreasonable (or hypocritical) to boggle over moral issues. There is still a certain apologetic note in statements like General McNair's: our enemies started it; we have to adopt such methods in self defense; once the enemy is crushed, we can go back to decency. A decade or two of armed "peace", however, with new enemies materializing, new wars taking shape—already Roosevelt has said we can "never" relax our vigilance against future Japanese attacks—will change all this, and we shall come to accept war and its logical consequences with the same ease with which we now accept the carnage wrought daily in the Chicago stockyards.

THE Army Air Force Medical Corps has developed a new technique for psychiatric treatment called "narcosynthesis", in which the patient is thrown into a "synthetic dream state" by the use of drugs. He then talks freely about the anxieties he represses in a conscious state. (The Freudian theory, by the way, that neuroses are the result of repression has been remarkably confirmed by psychiatric experience during this war. The chief technique in treating battle neuroses is getting the victim to talk about his experience—and to realize that every soldier is horribly afraid in battle, so that there is no reason to suppress the expression of fear.)

"One of the most amazing revelations derived by our uncovering technique," states a paper read before the American Psychiatric Association on May 16 last by Lt. Col. R. R. Grinker and Major J. P. Spiegel, "has been the universality of guilt reactions, not only in men who have been removed from combat because of anxiety states but also in those who have successfully and honorably completed their tour of duty." It is immensely significant that these guilt-feelings are apparently connected not, as the civilian would expect, with the slaughter of enemy soldiers and civilians, but rather with the soldier's own comrades. The report continues:

"These guilt reactions are related to the most varied, irrational and illogical experiences. A comrade was killed during a mission which he took instead of the patient. . .

We hear often the guilty cry, 'I should have got it instead of him.' . . . At first, the soldier's love is for his country, but soon he comes to love his outfit, his commanding officer and his friends. . . . He transforms a considerable share of his personal self-love to affection and pride in his outfit by the process of identification, and thus is enabled to overcome many obstacles to the performance of his military duties.

"Another source of guilt feeling begins as the flyer approaches the end of his duty. He becomes intensely anxious on his last, or next to last, mission, feeling that he will never reach his goal. This is the initial displaced manifestation of guilt over the anticipated desertion of his squadron. . . . [After leaving the squadron on completion of a tour of duty] many become chronic alcoholics, others develop gastro-intestinal pain and vomiting. Some cannot bear to eat, thinking of how the boys back in the squadron are living, and punish themselves by refusing all oral gratifications. They feel as if the real self, the essential person were still overseas. In this concept they are correct, because they have suddenly subtracted their individual ego-spans from the group and left behind the greater part of their combat personalities. But unfortunately, they have not been able to so easily slough off the group super-ego which now punishes them for their soft and easy life. . . ."

Thus to the process of conditioning described above in considering Major Applegate's treatise, we may add another psychological explanation of how men can endure modern warfare: the identification of the individual soldier with his "outfit" and the loyalty, pride, self-sacrifice, cooperation, and comradeship which this identification brings into play. In some wars, the soldier identifies himself with a great principle: the Rights of Man, revolutionary socialism, the liberation or defense of a nation. These great impersonal political convictions aroused the common soldiers of the French Revolutionary armies and of Trotsky's Red Army to a pitch of fanaticism which swept all before it. In this war, as we shall see below, the complete absence of any such emotion in the ranks of the American armies is the first thing that impresses most observers. Simple group loyalty thus becomes the most important factor in morale. "I've been around war long enough to know that nine-tenths of morale is pride in your outfit and confidence in your leaders and fellow-fighters," writes Ernie Pyle. A *Time* correspondent is even more explicit: "I think men fight for two reasons: (1) ideals; (2) *esprit de corps*. Since we in the United States have done such an abominable job of educating a generation, few of our men fight for things they believe in—they don't know what to believe in. The Marine Corps, which must be the finest organization of fighting men the world has ever seen, does not know what to believe in either—except the Marine Corps. The marines fight solely on *esprit de corps*." (Robert Sherrod in *Time*, Dec. 27, 1943.) The reason there are not more nervous breakdowns among bomber crews, who are "living beyond their psychological means" much of the time, is partly *esprit de corps* and partly "the strong common love of the plane itself." (Lt.-Col. J. W. Murray, of the Air Surgeon's Office, quoted in *PM*, May 15, 1944.) The airman's fatherland is his plane. }

There are thus important psychological offsets to the

boredom, horror and futility which war means to those forced to engage in it. Lt.-Col. Murray, noting that it is impossible to tell in advance what type of soldier will crack under strain, adds that some draftees who in their civilian life had suffered severe neurotic symptoms get along very well in a military environment. "Army life and combat seem to fulfill important emotional needs and thereby to stabilize these individuals." One of the psychological advantages of army life over the competitive dog-eat-dog environment of capitalist society must be the sense of comradeship and of cooperative effort. Just as war releases the productive energy of industry from the bonds of property and profit, so it also allows expression to some very fine traits of human nature which have little outlet in peacetime society. An army psychiatrist who went along as an observer on a bombing mission, for example, gives a really inspiring picture of men working together:

"During the violent combat and in the acute emergencies that arose during it, the crew were all quietly precise on the interphone and decisive in action. The tail gunner, right waist gunner and navigator were severely wounded early in the fight, but all three kept at their duties efficiently and without cessation until the combat was over. . . . The burden of emergency work with the controls, oxygen, wounded men and reparable battle damage fell on the pilot, engineer, and ball turret gunner, and all functioned with rapidity, effectiveness and no lost motion. . . . The decisions, arrived at with care and speed, were unquestioned once they were made, and proved excellent. In the period when disaster was momentarily expected, the alternative plans of action were made clearly and with no thought other than for the safety of the entire crew. All at this point were quiet, unobtrusively cheerful and ready for anything. There was at no time paralysis, unclear thinking, faulty or confused judgment, or self-seeking in any of them."

The object of all this cooperation, skill, and unselfish, even heroic, behavior was to blow to pieces other human beings and their homes, in a war whose purposes the bomber crew—if it was typical—didn't believe in and indeed took little interest in. The domination of modern man by his own creations, his involvement in processes beyond his control and contrary to his desires, the contrast in our society between noble means and ignoble ends, and the dissolution of ends into means, so that the Marines fight for the honor of the Marines—all of this is summed up here.

IT would be a cheerless outlook if this were all that can be said about the psychological reactions of men to modern warfare. Fortunately, however, these positive factors which make possible adjustment to war do not as yet seem to be dominant, at least not in the American armies. I have emphasized them because one tends to overlook them and therefore to expect more resistance to the process of war from soldiers than actually takes place. But the big fact is still that among American troops psychological disorders are running at a higher rate than in the last war. Although the Army screens out at the induction centers as many potential psychiatric cases as possible—one out

of every ten draftees is rejected for psychiatric reasons—the incidence of neuropsychiatric disorders in the army is *twenty times that in civilian life*, and within the army itself it is *ten times greater in combat areas than in non-combat areas*. A Presidential medical board which examined causes of army rejections last winter was "astonished" and "concerned" at the number of "N.P." (neuropsychiatric) discharges from the Army, "particularly those occurring in the first six months of service." (*Time*, March 13, 1944.) What worried the Presidential board seems to me, on the contrary, cheering news. I should be concerned if the N.P. rate *failed* to increase sharply within the armed forces. Is it unreasonable to speculate that, blocked from political expression, outraged human nature seeks out this back door, so to speak, of protest?

It is good news, also, that the rate of N.P. rejections is running high. On July 10 last, General Hershey told a Senate committee: "Out of 4 million disqualified, over 1 million draftees were rejected because they were found mentally unfit, and though three-quarters of that number at first sight seemed to be sound, they showed on examination that their emotions were in such a state that they could not stand modern war." This seems to me a pretty good state to have one's emotions in. No doubt most of the million draftees rejected as "mentally unfit" were neuropsychiatric cases by any standards, but may we not assume that a good proportion of them were simply too sane to fit into the lunatic pattern of total war?

There is meaning, also, in the contrast between the N.P. rates in this war as against the last. According to the *U.S. News* of January 14, 1944, 35% of all rejections by the army in this war's draft have been N.P., as against only 3% in the last war. Furthermore, 50 men per thousand develop N.P. disorders in training camps, and a higher percentage overseas; as against 30 per thousand in World War I training camps and only 20 per thousand in the A.E.F. Part of the increase is probably due to advances in psychiatry since the last war, which have resulted in more accurate diagnosis and in more attention being paid to mental disease. But it seems safe to assume that some of the increase comes from: (1) the increasing incidence of mental disease in the United States since 1917—an index, by the way, of the inhuman quality of our present society; and (2) the general lack of enthusiasm for this war and its aims, as against the naive patriotism and idealism which was widespread in 1917.

THIS last is an especially interesting point. One would expect the degree to which the soldier believes in the war he is fighting to be an important factor in his morale (which is an old-fashioned term for his neuropsychological health). Ardent political convictions can enable the individual to survive experiences he might otherwise crack under. I have seen no studies of this rather delicate question. There is, however, a suggestive passage in the report which Col. Leonard G. Rowntree, chief of the medical division of the selective service system, gave before the American Psychiatric Association on May 14 last. Noting an increase in psychiatric rejections by the army examiners between December, 1942, and December, 1943, Dr. Rown-

tree added: "The most striking evidence is the marked increase in incidence of psychosomatic disease in the Negro, *who in peacetime appeared relatively immune.*" (My emphasis) Rejections of Negroes for peptic ulcer, for example, have been running at $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the peacetime rate, while neurocirculatory asthenia ("soldier's heart") doubled for the whole group of draftees (white and colored) between December, 1942, and December, 1943, but went up *five times* for the Negroes alone. "This may represent the influence of war stress and strain, and to some extent it may also reflect the desire of the registrants to avoid service." Thus the group which above all has the most reason to reject the democratic slogans under which the war is being fought is also the group which shows the greatest increase in psychiatric symptoms when confronted with conscription into the armed forces.

THESE psychiatric rejections indicate not only the individual's desire not to enter the army but also, often, *the army's desire not to accept the individual if he obviously does not want to serve.* From what I gather from people who have been through the army examination routine, as I have not, the doctors usually reject draftees whose general "attitude", personality or overt statements during the psychiatric examination indicate they may cause "trouble" in the army. And a marked unwillingness to enter the army seems to be regarded, reasonably enough, as threatening future "headaches". Here the authorities confront a nice question of morality vs. expediency. The draftee who clearly wants to avoid service is, of course, a socially reprehensible person, a "draft dodger" psychologically if not legally, who should be punished by being shoved into uniform at once. But this moralistic approach is not expedient, since a single cog with an antagonistic will of its own can cause all sorts of friction in a mass production machine like the army. So, "for the good of the service", it seems better to keep out such cogs. Thus we get the curious result that individual rebellion is in one sense hopeless but in another effective in causing a degree of friction out of all proportion to its size—and both for the same reason: because the military machine is so big and so well organized. Here we may have an important principle of action against the authorities in control of great totalitarian institutions like armies: the cooperation, whether willing or just submissive, of the individual is necessary if he is to be useful as a slave-citizen or as a soldier. It is just not worth the trouble to punish or to reshape individuals who refuse to fit into the pattern. Here is the last line of battle for the dissenter; he is of no use to the army if his dissent goes deep enough. In the total state, the issue cannot be avoided by "rejecting" the dissenter; there is no area to which to reject him. Prison or the firing squad has to be *its* 4F.

Too great willingness to serve, in some circumstances, may cause the authorities as much worry as too little. The good soldier Schweik found himself in jail, one recalls, when he had himself wheeled to the recruiting office in an invalid's chair, waving his crutches, and shouting "Long live the Emperor Franz-Joseph!" and "On to Belgrade!" That was in Prague in August, 1914, and the Austrian au-

thorities seem to have suspected Schweik's patriotic ardor of a tinge of irony. A more modern instance is the story that is told of a wellknown Surrealist painter who escaped military service in Paris at the beginning of this war by excessive manifestations of military ardor and patriotism when he was called up for service. Entering his draft headquarters, where every one was plunged in the deepest gloom, he threw out his chest and saluted smartly on all sides, shouting "Oui, mon capitaine!" and "Vive la France!" They rejected him as mentally unbalanced.

Popular Culture

MORE BY CORWIN—16 Radio Dramas by Norman Corwin. Holt. \$3.

Recently Norman Corwin returned to radio. He had been in Hollywood for some months, receiving \$2,000 a week for the effort. But he gave this up for the sake of art, honesty, political consciousness, and \$500 a week. Obviously, we are dealing here with a popular artist of importance, a man with vision. Clifton Fadiman, in his introduction, confides that Corwin's "central interest is in the projection of important ideas"; and that his thoughts are "clear, lofty, and inspiring." In advertising praise of the present book, the *New York Times* reviewer has this to say: "His feeling for words is that of a poet, which in fact he is . . . with the joyous enthusiasm of Whitman, whose sweep of vision and abiding respect for humanity he often suggests." But Corwin's work is not like *Leaves of Grass*. It is more like straw.

For instance: the first of the sixteen radio-scripts in the book, a bit of bad whimsy called "Mary and the Fairy", concerns "an office girl whose true qualities are unrecognized" (audience: 10,000,000 at least). Mary wins a contest sponsored by the Crinkly-Crunkly Co. The prize is three wishes, to be granted by a salaried, job-weary Fairy who is exploited by the Crinkly-Crunkly Co. In a heart-to-heart discussion by Tyrone Power, the Fairy confesses to Mary: "I wouldn't mind getting my wings around *him* . . ." This sort of thing typifies the non-political half of Corwin's scripts. His writing has its source in the slang-jargon of the movies and newspapers, and in the meanings and attitudes which constitute our advertising-culture. Through a flashy tricky use of words, he produces, in the terms of this medium, "original" work. For this he is hailed a genius, radio's fair-haired boy. I maintain that his use of words *tends only to dry up dead weeds.*

Immediately following a dramatic yea-Allies! section of "Cromer" (from his "American in England" series of propaganda pieces), he writes this music direction:

JOE. . . I slept like a rock on the Norfolk coast.

Music. *Mighty like a rock, segueing to a glass of tomato juice in the morning.*

Corwin's originality lies in his development of the technique of *dramatic advertising* for radio. He is a copywriter, a re-write man; and a director of sound programs. He possesses the cleverness and active insincerity prerequisite to both jobs. Beyond the mere use of the qualities of conversation, sound technique in radio today achieves a fullness of image in the following way: a feeling of actuality is added to words by their being coupled with

sound(s) from the context of the act or thing; the words are reinforced and made to 'fill space' by the sound, while the latter, otherwise only vague noise, is defined by the words. (The music in radio-dramas is extremely programmatic, and its meanings are conventional. Music is used to fill out 'sound-space' when nothing more definite is available.) Using the sounds of things behind words—and this only—is a technique of trebled efficacy: the impression is had of God speaking; with the whole world behind Him; and at His control. Especially political pieces which are narrated lyrically, and given dramatic body by a montage of heterogeneous vignettes, have this effect.

The technique of this grotesque "Whitman" can be called *sentimental-dramatic*: sentimentality is the qualitative effect, in dramatic emotion, of leaving out significant elements; of shortening and making shallow the rhythms of life. For example, certain necessary conflicts are included technically, *but not really felt*; mentioned, not expressed. Conventionality, poison in the system of art. The basic method of art is the creation of connections between previously unjoined objects and meanings. Now Corwin brings together little things (kitchen clock, etc.) with big things (Hitler, Thyssen, Nazism). But *what* things: with him they are always symbols of Home, Daily Life, etc., etc.—never creative. This manner of synthesizing artistically—that is, sentimental-dramatically—is a means of thinking for the people; a very effective rhetoric-for-the-masses. And therefore dangerous. Plato was mistaken to legislate the banning of the poet from 'ordered' society. Better to hire him.

Simply put, Corwin functions politically as a lib-lab safety-valve. He sells a pro-Roosevelt concoction of righteous indignation plus a future just *stuffed* with the victories of Good over Evil. A number of programs in the "This Is War" series are his responsibility. Typical: "We've been concerned not with owning everybody, but with everybody owning." His greatest success was "We Hold These Truths", part of a program celebrating the Bill of Rights—which had an audience of 60,000,000, probably the largest in history! The play, performed by a huge quantity of Hollywood untouchables, was followed immediately by a presidential address. (I guess that's about tops in art.) Corwin is of course enthusiastic about the Four Freedoms. (In "A Moment of the Nation's Time" he even has a chorus of hollow voices from the graves of dead soldiers stand up and bark for the four delicious freedoms.) He defines freedom, essentially, as the right for society to be as it is, and the right for people to have happen to them what has been happening to them.

Aside from the pieces in which he popularizes harmless facts, "Samson" is Corwin's only respectable performance. In this script, he is not fulfilling political orders; he is not acting, vulgarly, as a pressure-release from too many commercials (in an attempt to copy a successful filling of this role by Jack Benny); and he is not basing himself on elements in our popular culture. . . . "Samson" is a simple re-write—an adaptation for radio—of the biblical story. (But even here he can't control his dull impishness: Delilah is recounting the injuries inflicted by Samson upon the Philistines—"Wrecked the city gates of Gaza, carried them away upon his shoulders. . . ." And then Corwin offers this note: "Judges 16: 1-3. Certainly raised hell when he got drunk, didn't he?")

Corwin may prostitute and wisecrack himself up the ladder to \$500 a week and huge audiences—that's the way they built the country but why get everything all dirty by calling him an artist?

DAVID T. BAZELON

IN DEFENSE OF SHOSTAKOVICH—A Communication.

Kurt List, in his "The Music of Soviet Russia", and in his review of Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony, seems to have begun with a strong political bias, and expended all his energy in justifying his bias, to the exclusion of a more complete critical presentation. His review of the Symphony is of the type of the newspaper review, written quickly and carelessly, attempting to give a final judgment immediately, in a minimum of words; and dealing in crude and unsupported generalizations, in order to present the public with an impressive condemnation, or extravagant praise. Without any reference to the accuracy of the musical judgments, the review is unsatisfactory and incomplete. Some of the phrases present attitudes which are confused, vague, or quite meaningless. For example, there is a reference to "modern harmonic devices", and the texture of the "traditional Russian school". The tendency in present day music is towards less dissonance, and an increasing dependence on folk and archaic material. The recent works of such prominent American musicians as Randall Thompson and William Schuman abound in such influences, while the work of Vaughn Williams and his followers also indicates the same tendency. The "modernism" of Schoenberg and Hindemith is rather antiquated now, and abandoned to a great extent by Hindemith himself. The "traditional Russian school" is a very vague expression. All the Russian music that we know stems from the pioneer work of Glinka. The tradition may be either that of Moussorgsky, or that of Tchaikowsky, neither of which can be truly called traditional. Wagner is said to be present, and Mahler to have disappeared. I find it extremely difficult to distinguish between the influence of Wagner and that of his ardent disciple, Mahler. . . .

We are also told that Shostakovich is a plagiarist, and that one meets old friends in his music. This is an odd criticism to make of a composer who, in spite of this reputed imitateness, has managed to develop a style original enough to be recognized, and important enough to influence many younger composers. I should like to know whom he imitates. Giving this as a reason for crowd appeal is cheap intellectual snobbery, and completely incorrect, because Shostakovich has not the popularity that Mr. List affords him. Primitive and monotonous rhythms, orchestrations using high flutes and mumbling bass figures, all this is the most bald faced jargon; while such phrases as animalistic character, charm of the cocker spaniel, primeval (primitive, I suppose) robustness, and vitality of the beast (in Stravinsky, our most sophisticated and complex composer) are vulgarisms. . . .

I've heard the Symphony twice, and was more impressed the second time than the first. It marks a reversion to the style of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, and exhibits the same elements as these do. However, it has more tonal beauty than the others, and evidences an all-pervading melancholia to a somewhat greater extent than either of the other two. His long, slow cantilena passages in the strings have taken on a clearer melodic outline, and as a result the slow movements gain in coherence and expressiveness. He still retains his talent for vigorous march-like movements (I should like to hear the incidental music to which Mr. List compared these passages; it must be rather good). The only Bach he sounds like is the Stokowski Bach, and that's not a great fault. The ponderousness and dogmatic, hortatory quality of the Seventh Symphony has been forgotten. The Seventh is a work which seems to have been written to political order, and as a result aims towards simple combinations and obvious

patterns. It exhibits many faults, and yet still remains an important work by a very significant composer. However, the Eighth Symphony should satisfy any admirer of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, the String Quartet, or the Piano Concerto. It is also an interesting commentary on the state of the Soviet Union. After the insistent assertiveness of the Seventh, written under harassing conditions, and evidencing a stubborn desire to trust and believe, the pensive slow movements, and the very interesting movement for unison strings of the Eighth, show a disillusionment and desire for new beliefs which is an important commentary on our ally.

The article on the music of Soviet Russia is better only because it deals primarily with political matter. As a survey of changes in official opinion on art, it may be competent. Musically, it hides itself behind names unfamiliar to American audiences, and restricts its comments on well known composers to the bare essentials. Some of the statements on musical structure are completely misleading. His over-simplification of Sonata form completely ignores the philosophic meaning of the form, the remarkable innovations of Schubert and Beethoven, and the fact that the form was used successfully by Vaughn Williams, Shostakovich (in his quartet), and others in our times. The symphony of the classics can have a very limited meaning at best: classic and archaic relationships, as well as the equivocal "new harmony" are used by all present day composers.

The editor seems to condone Mr. List's tawdry method of attack by his comment on the over-inflated Shostakovich and his reference to the opinions of the "esthetically reactionary" Olin Downes. He should know that Downes has no musical perceptions, accepts and supports whatever ideas seem most prevalent, and is no criterion of judgment for musical values. A work praised or condemned by Mr. Downes may be either good or bad, trivial or important, radical or reactionary, or none of these. Shostakovich may have been given more political and social publicity than is customary for art work, but this does not mean being over-rated.

NEW YORK CITY

S. SHER

Rejoinder by Mr. List: "There are two sorts of people; those with ears, and those with ears that are horns."—Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

THE LITERARY LIFE

Joseph Auslander has also been speaking for the bond campaign and is especially proud of a \$5,000 bond sold at Gimbel's. After his talk, a man approached him and voiced his disappointment at seeing no poem on the Free French in "The Unconquerables". Mr. Auslander's book of poems on the oppressed peoples of occupied Europe (Simon & Schuster, \$2.50). Mr. Auslander replied that the poem to Jeanne d'Arc was intended to cover the French situation. . . . "Perhaps," said the man, "but I will buy a \$5,000 bond right now if you will write a poem to the Free French."

Mr. Auslander barely hesitated:

When the coward cried out, "France is dying,"
Who kept the flag of Jeanne d'Arc flying,
Who rallied her immortal soul?
DeGaulle, DeGaulle, DeGaulle.

—"N. Y. Times", Sunday Book Section, Feb. 27, 1944

—Cf. Mr. Toad's song, composed by himself, in Kenneth Grahame's "The Wind in the Willows". Sample stanza:

The motor-car went poop-poop-poop
As it raced along the road,
Who was it steered it into a pond?
Ingenious Mr. Toad!

"Where Are You Going?" said Reader to Writer

Politics Writers

A FRIEND of mine said of the first issue of POLITICS, "It is completely right—that is, it is never in error.

Yet how enervating!" Exactly: the social and political defects which it lays bare undeniably exist; yet the emotion it inspires is despair.

It seems to me that the writers of POLITICS represent a large enough group of radical intellectuals in America to be worthy of some analysis. They are extremely sensitive persons who have been rejected by (and reject) their society and culture. If they could have come to any terms at all with this society, they would certainly have been artists, as most of them have been from time to time. However, their society offers them impermanence, vulgarity, sexual repression, hypocrisy, and a subtle cruelty which they register with peculiar sensitivity. The important qualification to be made here is that *none of these hostile elements is as unmitigated as these neurotics maintain*. The dominant attitudes of POLITICS' writers are pity and hate: hate of the waste, brutality and indifference of the world and of its rejection of them; pity for the victims, pity that tortures, that urges to something beyond estheticism, that finally vitiates their effectiveness. The particular channels of these attitudes are avant-gardism, destructive criticism and lack of social organization.

Politics and Capitalistic America

American Culture

POLITICS winces at current American culture. Two prevalent forms of self-protection used by these disinherited against all hints of vulgarity are habitual concern with the esoteric in art and literature, and insolent flippancy in dealing with any manifestation of crudity, intellectual simplicity or philistinism. (See the article "The Cause That Refreshes" or the editorial comments to the letter on "The Battle of Petersburg"). They indicate an attitude which is fairly common in the non-analytic portions of the magazine.

POLITICS feels a strong sense of depression when it contemplates American culture. A few of the evidences of this depression are: that in the past only a few Americans (like Henry James) resisted compromise; that there never was a valuable folk art here; and that, at present, High Culture is commercialized and vulgarized by and into Popular Culture. Particularly clear in Macdonald's "A Theory of Popular Culture" is this emphasis on the depressing in American culture. It is obvious also in Mary's "Letter from Petersburg, Va." and in articles by Paul Goodman, Ruth Fischer and others. In Macdonald's essay, which was intended to summarize the sources and future of the main trends in this culture and so should have tried to encompass them all impartially, he mentions no good instance

of American folk art and finds High Culture virtually non-existent; both, according to Macdonald, have been debauched through having tried to compete with Popular Culture in the "the crude tastes of the masses". He relegates modern jazz to a parenthesis, disposes of the popular detective story by dispatching Sayers and refuses to consider at all the artistic possibilities of sound film. Possibly he is right, but I am more inclined to believe that Macdonald simply cannot participate in public forms of pleasure. In the manner of intellectuals for some time now, he deplores the methods by which the middle masses amuse themselves and bases a cultural theory in part upon his own aversions. The reader of this article finds himself protesting: *things aren't as bad as Macdonald thinks they are* and the reader is justified when, with the knowledge that he is not debauching himself, he honestly enjoys the lines of a '41 Ford convertible or the Golden Gate Bridge and enjoys riding over such a bridge in such a car, when he finds sound musical pleasure in George Lewis and Bunk Johnson and Meade Lux Lewis, when he lets himself perceive the vitality and imagination in Popular Art writers like Raymond Chandler, James Cain and Dashiell Hammett, and when he believes that such poets as Shapiro and Jarrell are creating a style and an atmosphere of excellence in which a major poet can find the means to express himself in full dignity and to as large an audience as Yeats found. Macdonald's portrait of American culture is recognizable but there is something wrong with the proportions.

His conclusion that "Popular Culture is . . . a potential new *human* culture" is a hopeful statement completely belied by the body of the article. There is no example in his essay to back up this conclusion, and his whole attitude forces us to believe not that he thinks our Popular Culture will evolve into a Human Culture worth a god damn but that he is premissing an altogether new and wonderful Democratic Society from whose immaculately impregnated body will spring the Masses, complete in aesthetic understanding and perception.

The War

POLITICS is dead against the war, especially the stupidity of its prosecution and its essential horror. It is not possible to quarrel with this attitude very wholeheartedly; most readers of POLITICS and magazines like it are emotionally appalled by the war. However, one expects more than affirmation of one's horror from a journal which purports to survey the specifically political world. I am sure that the politically effective individual has made his pity conceptualistic, not personal—has insulated his nerves with the strong sense of historical inevitability; this applies also to the politically effective magazine. Direct raw pity, warm human sympathies, will undermine the political worker as it will the doctor, make him too vulnerable for his role, dissipate his intellectual energies, and finally render him an object of distrust to all but the very simple. Lenin, I believe, allowed himself pity for the masses, regret for individuals. That was safe. Straight pity is of value only for some artists and religious leaders, and even them its colossal cost reduces to despair or madness or mysticism;

only rarely does it involve itself in a man of action like Debs, and his importance was perhaps more symbolic than political.

I assume that POLITICS is concerned with being a politically effective journal; hence the foregoing criticism. Hence also the criticism of POLITICS' preoccupation with large, general human issues over specific political and social issues about which something can be done. The splendid rhetoric of a Debs, a Babeuf, a Socrates on trial is of timeless human value, not of political value; nothing happened directly as a result of their statements. Nor would anything happen directly as a result of stating the universal values at stake in the Lynn case before the Supreme Court (as POLITICS advocated). It might produce great rhetoric, but Mr. Hays' method is much more likely to win the point under argument. (Milton Mayer's "How to Win the War" isn't even good rhetoric.)

The general belief expressed in POLITICS that the American system is tending towards a Permanent War Economy, supported by imperialism in Latin America and control over labor unions, with the ultimate decisions emanating from big-business-men modern style, is a belief with which I cannot seriously disagree. But I regret, and I expect that many of POLITICS' readers also regret, that this magazine suggests not the narrowest channels for action against the disaster.

Politics and Socialism

POLITICS presents the USSR as a complete sell-out. It presents—at some length too—its reasons for believing that Russian Communism is a statism scarcely distinguishable from German Fascism and the Future American Capitalism. Mr. Taylor pointed out the possible limitations of this belief in his letter in the April POLITICS declaring that there were and are significant and particular differences between Soviet Communism and German Fascism. Mr. Taylor got the brush-off; I can't personally feel much sympathy for him since he ought to have anticipated precisely this response from a journal which featured Peter Meyer's "The Soviet Union: A New Class Society".

Mr. Meyer's article may be soundly grounded in facts—although I don't believe his cost-of-living estimates—but my reaction to his conclusions is: *What did he expect?* Is there any evidence in history or in his own experience to indicate that a large group of men who have a certain homogeneity and great power would *not* do precisely what the Russian bureaucrats have done? They entrench themselves and their friends with every means they can. Yet the economy they direct, however bureaucratically, can only be called socialistic. There is waste and misdirection in the USSR, but evidence fully as weighty as that cited by Meyer makes me slow to believe his whole story; certainly the economy of the USSR doesn't approach the human and material waste of capitalistic production methods. If Lenin had survived until today, I very much doubt if the major decisions in Soviet policy would have differed radically from what they are today, simply because world politics have made them necessary. Less brutality, more regret; the rigidity of the bureaucracy deferred for a time, but ultimately the bureaucrats would have established

themselves and maintained themselves in the only ways politicians have used for a long time now—intrigue, pre-ferment, coalition, suspicion, repression. The Revolution is indeed betrayed if you expected total political democracy out of it, but capitalism was destroyed in Russia and an economy established without private profits and private exploitation of working people.

When the writers of *POLITICS* cry out for political democracy in the USSR one wonders how well they have contemplated the appalling task of implementing a democracy in modern terms, on a national scale. How quickly does *POLITICS* think the Russians could have been made democratically responsible—and by what specific means? At the risk of appearing cynical I would say that in the event of a revolution in this country, even Americans would prefer a bureaucracy loosely controlled by a “representative” democracy to the rigors of direct democracy, and that the relief of economic security and the absence of an obvious despotism would quite satisfy the needs of the first generation.

In brief, the Soviet Union represents as much socialism as there are any rational grounds to expect in our (or their) stage of development. The government offers organization, and no political party can pretend to adequacy unless it guarantees to organize the colossal labyrinth of a modern nation's affairs; and it absorbs responsibility for everything. Some day, in Russia as in America and every other bureaucratized country, the benefits of that bureaucracy will be so much less than the evils, and the awareness and unification of the people will be heightened, that they will revolt. If the next major change establishes political democracy even in so modified a form as this one is establishing economic socialism, it will be well worth the pain. That day will be hastened in America by the tradition of freedom and democracy to which we are now nominally committed; even a nominal commitment is a toe-hold. The contradiction of socialist theory and the actuality of bureaucratic control will produce its own sequence, political democracy, and not even high-powered totalitarian propaganda will be able to counteract it. Bureaucracy can never disappear from a large organization, but the control of it must be in the hands of the people. And how this is to be done should provide material for the most fruitful political speculation of our time, it seems to me.

Politics' Readers

The function of *POLITICS* is not to make anything happen but to keep intellectuals, many of them now bureaucrats, aware of the necessity to be democratic. Some of these people will bequeath the power to those who will lead the next revolution; there will be something unhuman about them in turn, and future men full of humanity will arise to criticize, men over-sensitive, full of pity and hate. *Ad infinitum*. Of course these men will not act—any more than do the writers of *POLITICS*—out of pure humanity, but quite as much out of destructive motives, jealousy, ambition, despair and a sense of personal failure. The writers of *POLITICS* are similar to Swift both in human intent and failure to effect any direct results. Like Marx

in 1848, they expend great energy in trying to bring about a change which they know, really, history is not ready for.

What does *POLITICS* offer, for example, to that sizeable group of leftish intellectuals of loose political orientation, intellectual enough to feel foreign to the people in their tastes and needs, leftish enough to worry about the part they are going to play (if any) in averting catastrophe in this country after the war? What does *POLITICS* offer them? A center for leftwardness? Rather a nucleus about which various ideas describe conflicting ellipses: sensitivity, rejection, hate, pity. No party, no course of action, no unity. Shall these liberals help start a third party, work for the unions? Their effectiveness is dubious in either project. The Communist Political Association, however, offers a large, disciplined organization, the absolute *sine qua non* of a political party today. But the leftish intellectual is usually repelled by the C.P.A.'s rigidity and hypocrisy, the incredible stupidity of its official leaders' public statements and the superimposition of Russian techniques and decisions upon American problems. What will these liberals do? I don't know, but I can guess: they will be uneasy but ineffectual, worried but without power to oppose what they distrust; they will become bureaucrats themselves.

On the surface of things, *POLITICS* will do most of its readers very little good. But they ought never to be without it.

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

“Here Lies Our Road!” said Writer to Reader

JUDGING from letters that come in, many readers react to *POLITICS* in much the same way George P. Elliott does. Many others seem to agree with him as to the general attitude of the magazine, differing in that they look on this attitude with approval. (Though he, too, judging by his last sentence, is by no means entirely hostile; the moderation and seriousness with which he analyzes the magazine's policy shows that clearly enough.) Both the approving and the critical reaction to *POLITICS* thus seem to indicate that at least the magazine is acquiring a definite character, which is encouraging.

Elliott's chief objection to *POLITICS*, recurring in his analysis of our treatment of such diverse themes as the war, popular culture and the Soviet Union, is that it is ultimatic, setting up impossibly pure and elevated standards and refusing to compromise enough to be able to act effectively. He admits that the evils exist and that our analysis of them is accurate, but, as he remarks (in italics) of Peter Meyer's critique of the Soviet Union: “*What did he expect?*” Since *POLITICS* constantly expects more than frail human nature and the present state of the world can possibly deliver, it makes everything seem even blacker than it is and inhibits action along the modest lines which

today are the only ones promising success. "The emotion it inspires is despair."

Whether *POLITICS'* reaction to the evils of modern society is excessive or not cannot be decided without a lengthy discussion of values, aims, historical possibilities, and the requirements and possibilities of "human nature", all as related to the great events taking place around us today. It is the function of the magazine itself to provide this discussion, and each article may be considered a contribution to it. Here I only want to explore the general theory behind the magazine's policy and to try to define its area of disagreement with the dominant school of thought on the left today, to which Elliott belongs. (To throw around the term "neurotic", by the way, gets us nowhere: I could just as well describe Elliott's state of mind as the euphoria characteristic of the manic period of manic depression, in which the patient resents any attempt to point out to him the difficulties of a course of action.)

I think there has developed in the last decade among American leftist intellectuals a most significant split, which might be termed Half-a-Loafers v. Whole-Loafers. The almost unrelieved sequence of left defeats and of horrors which this period has witnessed has caused the majority to lose faith in any very radical reform of things and to conclude that half a loaf is better than no half at all. Their banner is inscribed: "*Long Live the Lesser Evil!*" Those of us who continue to insist on the kind of uncompromising radicalism, in culture or in politics, which characterized the revolutionary movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries appear to the Half-a-Loafers as foolish Utopians. (I am, of course, presenting the split in terms favorable to my own viewpoint. But, however described, the split is a real one.)

Now it seems odd that we should be accused of despair, when it is precisely because we still believe in the possibility of large-scale progress that we react so violently to the imperfections of the present. While it is precisely because the Half-a-Loafers have given up hope of anything radically better that they accept the present with more cheerfulness.*

At this point, it may be enlightening to introduce part of a letter I received recently from a soldier now in a New York State camp. It very well expresses the reactions to the magazine of those readers who would pretty much agree with Elliott's description of its tendencies, but who put a plus sign where he puts a minus:

"I have received the first five numbers of *POLITICS* and

*I have heard the same criticism, that "Politics" is negativistic and despairing, from certain Trotskyists. Although the political angle from which it comes is quite different, I think the mechanism at work is the same. "If 'Politics' calls itself a socialist magazine," one of them said to me recently, "it should defend socialism. Instead you are all the time criticising Marxist ideas and organizations, and you print a lot of stuff complaining about the workingclass and expressing petty-bourgeois despair and disillusion." He was not at all satisfied when I replied that (1) the best way to "defend" socialism today seems to me to be to criticise it and reshape it in the light of the tragic experiences of the last thirty years and (2) disillusion seems a more creative political approach today than the continued application of orthodox Marxist formulae to situations to which they no longer apply. I think my Trotskyist friend, like the Half-a-Loafers, was impatient of free criticism because he too had serious inner doubts about his system, and I even venture to say that it shows more confidence in the basic soundness of Marxism to test and rethink its principles than to "defend" them.

read them with the greatest interest and enjoyment. My 27 months in uniform have so depoliticalized me I had almost forgotten the excitement and stimulation that association with congenial and independent minds can give. I may say that it was your essay in *Partisan Review* on "The Future of Democratic Values" that made me alert to mention of your name, and led me to subscribe to *POLITICS*—it had been the only glimmer of honesty up to now that I had seen, since the start of the war. Before that—but I am not in a confessional mood.

"As for *POLITICS*, I could best criticize its policy (from my own personal point of view—I follow no party) by wishing you had answered the "What are you *pro*?" question in the June "Intelligence Office" a little more fully: emphasizing in addition to the positive political values of the most thorough-going criticism, the blackness of the progressive future, the necessity in terms of contemporary history for breaking with the lesser-evil policies of the Stalinists, the lib-labs and the other professional jesuits: *not* to achieve the contemplative perfection of being just the Very Most Correct splinter-group but to be a storm center and rallying point for outraged consciences and minds revolting at the debauchery of Allied propaganda. This, it seems to me from my own experience, must be at least one very important psychological basis for any success you may have: only on a far broader basis than in the past can the left march again, broader, that is, than the Trotskyites have so far been in this country, but as certainly *not* on a liberal basis. Probably the war is the only issue sufficiently terrific to lead large numbers of people to become radicals and act radically.

"But dramatize the blackness of the picture, even more than you are doing, and at the risk of being called calamity-howlers. Your Popular Culture section, and such articles as Mills on "The Powerless People" and Chiaromonte on Croce are, for this reason, particularly valuable, I think, because they emphasize the aspects of contemporary activity that progressives least well understand, and fail for the lack of understanding. Liberal undemocracy is to most people the paradox, and, at the moment, certainly, seems a long way from being shown up. I am not saying "Imperialism" is not extremely pertinent, even basic, possibly, but in our Anglo-Saxon context it is the political aspect that is always sacred, more sacred at least than the economic, about which a certain amount of cynicism is even possible, especially so long as everybody gets *something*, if only the booby prize. You well realize this, I think, and the Negro issue is unquestionably *basic* at this time, for these reasons. It is extremely *uncomfortable*, as is all news that indicates collapse of the Walt Whitman mystique on the part of Europeans, due to our policies in occupied countries."

Popular Culture

Since most of Elliott's remarks on this head concern my article in the February issue, perhaps a personal answer will be permitted. To begin with, I reject, with some indignation, the notion that I "cannot participate in public forms of pleasure." I go to the movies often; I read detective stories; I was simply enchanted by the New York

World's Fair and went there on every possible occasion; I think Bob Hope, Red Skelton and Jimmy Durante are very funny; I enjoy several comic strips—Moon Mullins, Krazy Kat, and above all Segar's Thimble Theatre, starring Wimpy and Popeye; I have been following Westbrook Pegler, whom I consider the most brilliant living technician of personal journalism, ever since his wonderful sports columns in the *Chicago Tribune* some twenty years ago.

Then why not admit all this in my article? As a matter of fact, I originally had a paragraph in it on such manifestations of Popular Culture, the ones that are good in themselves. But I cut it because my purpose was not to evaluate Popular Culture in qualitative terms, but rather to analyse it as a historical phenomenon. If I dwelt exclusively on its bad qualities, it was because these are predominant; one is grateful for the living stuff here and there that somehow escapes the mechanism—life, thank god, is pretty tough and can never be wholly crushed even in Hollywood—but it is the inhuman mechanism that is historically significant not the few seedlings that sprout in its crevices.

Elliott describes my reaction to Popular Culture as a mixture of depression and aversion, just as he writes that "dominant attitudes of POLITICS' writers are pity and hate." These reactions are there, all right, and they are important. But what Elliott misses is that a thing can be depressing and hateful *and also extremely interesting*. To try to understand a historical phenomenon is an exhilarating experience in itself quite apart from one's personal valuation of it; in fact, I am really fascinated by Popular Culture and my emotions in considering it are not at all the unrelievedly gloomy ones Elliott attributes to me. (The same, doubtless, goes for most POLITICS writers.) In the Louvre or the Uffizi—or even the Corcoran Gallery in Washington—I used to derive pleasure and interest, for different reasons of course, from the bad as well as the good paintings. Indeed, a really mediocre painting is in some ways more historically significant than a masterpiece, since it expresses more the common level of taste at the time and less the individual vision of a unique personality.

Of course I was "premissing an altogether new and wonderful Democratic Society" when I concluded that Popular Culture is "a potential new human culture." I stated that myself in the article. It is significant of Elliott's whole approach, however, that he thinks any such fundamental change is absurd on the face of it and can describe it only in ironical terms.

On Raillery

In pointing out that POLITICS writers go beyond pity and hate, I do not mean to underestimate the value of those reactions today. Such human protests against the inhumanities of our age seem to me well worth expressing. They are found too infrequently in the over-rationalistic and routinized responses of most liberal and radical journals. We are in danger of taking for granted—and this can be done even if one is in the opposition—the barbarism of much of our social relations today, of accepting them at least as premisses on which to build. But we should not build on them; society has reached such an

extreme of rationalized lunacy that one sometimes feels the only adequate comment is a moan or a yawp. The old art of "railling", valued so highly in the Elizabethan theatre, should be revived; we need specialists in abuse, technicians of vilification, expert mud-slingers.

It is odd that Elliott should compare POLITICS' writers to Marx in 1848, in that they "expend great energy in trying to bring about a change which they know, really, history is not ready for." I don't think Marx knew, "really", that 1848 was too early for socialism (and I certainly don't know that 1944 is). But the reference is odd because Marx did write something at that time which is much to the present point. Writing of German society in the 1840's, ruled by petty feudal princelings, a time like our own in that reaction was dominant, radical politics almost non-existent, and the whole tone of official ideology mean and banal, Marx gives this description of the kind of political criticism needed:

"Grappling with them [German social conditions], criticism is no passion of the head; it is the head of passion. It is no anatomical knife, it is a weapon. . . . Criticism has already settled all accounts with this subject. It no longer figures as an end in itself, but only as a means. Its essential pathos is indignation, its essential work is denunciation. . . . It is thus imperative that the Germans should have no opportunity for self-deception and resignation. The real pressure must be made more oppressive by making men conscious of the pressure, and the disgrace more disgraceful by publishing it. . . . The people must be taught to be startled at their own appearance in order to implant courage in them." ("A Criticism of the Hegelian Philosophy of the Right", in H. J. Stenning's translation of Marx's *Selected Essays*, pp. 16-18.)

In Defense of Negativism

Elliott's letter objects to "POLITICS' preoccupation with large, general human issues" to the exclusion of "specific political and social issues about which something can be done." He cannot "seriously disagree" with the dark picture we give of the postwar world if things run along their present lines, but regrets "that this magazine suggests not the narrowest channels for action against the disaster." This is in the main true, though exaggerated. In fields where there seems some hope of radical progressive action, we have printed "positive" material: the new Michigan Commonwealth Federation was chronicled in detail in POLITICS, alone of non-party leftist magazines; and in race relations, especially Jimcrow policies in the armed forces, I think it can be said the magazine has indicated courses of action that might be pushed. But in general, it is true that POLITICS has not gone in much for issues on which immediate action is possible. This is because it seems to me, and I daresay to most POLITICS writers, that there is at this time in this country little that *can* be done in the way of action to advance matters in a radical direction. The job that seems to need doing over here is rather the destruction of the illusions and hypocrisies of the liberals and the labor movement. "The disgrace must be made more disgraceful by publishing it, the people must be taught to be startled at their own appearance."

I am glad to see that this job seems to have been accomplished effectively enough so far as our critic himself is concerned, since he does not "seriously disagree" with our negative analyses. This is the first big step American leftists must take towards future effective action: the realization that not New Deal II but a Permanent War Economy lies along the road our economy is now travelling, that not union-management cooperation but state control of unions will be the result of present CIO policies, that not democracy but imperialism, not peace but war will be the result of the present policies of the United Nations. Until we are clear about these perspectives, we will not do much effective thinking about how to make progress. More than that, until we recognize that these perspectives all lead to the same general conclusion: that a revolutionary, basic alteration in our economic and social institutions is required if we are to avoid these postwar disasters. Here there seems to be still a job to be done of educating our critic, for he evidently is not conscious of the inconsistency of agreeing with our gloomy predictions and refusing to follow out the logic to its revolutionary conclusion. His objection that *POLITICS* suggests not even "the narrowest channels for action against the disaster" reveals this; for clearly narrow channels for action will be of no use against disaster on this scale. Only the broadest kind of approach will be effective if the threatening catastrophe is of such a magnitude, and the situation over here today is that this approach is only possible now intellectually, not in practice. If one tries to be "positive" and "effective" in action today, one finds one's self working with the PAC to nominate Wallace—or voting for Norman Thomas. (More on this latter, incidentally, next month; I don't mean to be flippant—or at least, not *only* flippant.)

The opposite pole to "negativism" is *Realpolitik*, which is pretty much what I termed earlier "Half-a-Loafism". A letter of Marx written in 1865 apropos the original *Realpolitiker*, those followers of Lassalle who hoped to introduce socialism through cooperation with Bismarck, is to the point here. "I think that Schweitzer & Co. have honest intentions," wrote Marx, "but they are *Realpolitiker*. They want to accommodate themselves to *existing* circumstances and not to surrender this *privilege* of 'real politics' to the exclusive use of Herr Miquel & Co. (The latter seem to want to keep for themselves the right of intermixture with the Prussian Government.) . . . Since I am not a *Realpolitiker*, I have found it necessary to sever all connections with the *Social-Demokrat*." Also to the point is a letter of Engels written in 1880 criticising another group of *Realpolitiker*, the reformist wing of the German Social Democracy led by Bernstein: "They come out in the Reichstag . . . in such a tame way that they discredit themselves and the Party before the whole world, making 'positive proposals' to the existing government as to how to do things better in small questions of detail."

"Negativism" is a charge often made by those who accept a social system basically (and hence can be "positive" about ways to improve its details, that is, to make it work better) against those who reject it basically (and hence are interested in its destruction, not in its improvement—which anyway they don't believe can be carried far enough to achieve their aims). The *Realpolitiker* always appears

to be more realistic than the revolutionary, since his goals are modest and hence more easily obtainable—also because, except at moments of revolutionary crisis, his behavior conforms more closely to what actually exists. But it is precisely such historical crises which the revolutionary thinks and lives for. When they come, the caution of the *Realpolitiker* appears as the wildest romanticism, his little "positive" proposals seem very negative indeed, and the really "practical" politician is the revolutionary, who negates the crumbling status quo as a condition of creating a positive alternative.

Even if one is opposed to revolution, or has no faith in it, the negativistic approach has a pragmatic importance: it enables one to analyze modern society more accurately and profoundly. The revolutionary can afford to look at social processes more objectively than the *realpolitiker*; sacred cows don't exist for him. Where, for example, can one learn most about the evolution of Soviet Russia—from the "positive" writings of Stalin's supporters, or from the "negative" writings of the Trotskyists? The fact is that to an extraordinary degree we are dependent on the negativists for an understanding of, even for simple information on, the political development of Soviet Russia. And who is better prepared to understand the counter-revolutionary role of Russia in world politics today: Elliott, who is satisfied by the fact there is "no *private* exploitation of the workers" (my emphasis) or Peter Meyer, who understands that exploitation can be public as well as private?

Elliott agrees with Arthur Garfield Hays' method of conducting the Lynn case and says the ultimatic method I propose (see *POLITICS* for May) would lead to nothing and would lose the case. But what has actually happened since I wrote my criticism? The Supreme Court has refused to hear the case, disregarding all Hays' technicalities and attempts at appeasement, and indicating it is well aware of the social dynamite in the case by resorting to the most fantastic technicality to avoid hearing it. Hays has not, to date at least, "won the point under argument" by his method, and has indeed only succeeded in demonstrating my basic contention: that the case involves great issues which cannot be evaded. Whose approach better prepared one for the Court's behavior—that of Hays-Elliott, or my own?

The Russian Issue

Our critic's objections reach their climax, as usual, in the matter of the Soviet Union. Here is the issue which today seems to be the catalyst separating the Whole-Loafers from the Half-a-Loafers. Nothing has provoked so many hostile letters as our treatment of the Soviet Union. This has rather surprised me, as I had thought that the accumulation of evidence as to the reactionary direction of the Soviet Union since 1929 had long since become so overwhelming as to convince any one but a hardshell Stalinist. Yet, it would seem, the question is still open for many people who are not Stalinists. (The letters I refer to don't sound as if they were written by Stalinists; indeed, I think it doubtful that a Stalinist would bother to write in at all—or would read the magazine, for that matter.)

The next issue will contain a long letter by William Palmer Taylor (whose earlier note Elliott refers to) stating the case for the Soviet Union, together with a rebuttal. Therefore, I shall not go into the question here. There

is one point I want to make now, however; namely, the significant change that has come over the whole debate about Russia.

Up to about 1939, arguments about Russia revolved mostly around matters of fact; both sides accepted—verbally, at least—the same general criteria of good and evil. Thus the critics said the Moscow Trials were frame-ups, and the defenders said they weren't. The critics said Stalin and his followers were conservative bureaucrats and the defenders said they were proletarian revolutionists. The critics said the masses had no political freedom, and the defenders said the 1936 Constitution guaranteed full democracy. The critics said the people lived in poverty, and the defenders said they had a high standard of living, and so on.

Today, however, the defenders have pretty much given up denying the facts alleged by the critics. They admit them, as Elliott does and as Taylor's forthcoming statement does, and go on to say, with Elliott; "*But what do you expect?*" Combining economic determinism with Original Sin, they argue that Russia is as close to socialism as the historical circumstances and the imperfections of human nature will permit, and hence that, "for all practical purposes", it is socialist.

I think this interesting shift of the terms of argument has taken place partly because the critics have been able to pile up an extraordinary amount of data on their side, but chiefly because, as the forces of the left have been defeated everywhere, the Soviet Union has more and more come to be regarded as the last great hope of the "practical" leftists. If that is gone, good night! (For whereas Whole-Loafers can get along for long periods, like camels, without their loaf; Half-a-Loafers must have their half-loaf regularly.) Hence they cling desperately to the idea that somehow the Soviet Union is on the side of socialism (even against the conscious wishes of Stalin, according to some of them). Defeat has engendered the usual psychology of "realism"; the same thing happened in the decades after Napoleon and Metternich had liquidated the Great French Revolution.

POLITICS has, at present, modest aims. It is not a substitute for a political party. It obviously is not written for a workingclass audience, or for any kind of mass audience. Its paid circulation is now slightly over 3,000; double that is probably the ceiling in this country today for a magazine that tries both to swim against the current and to maintain a certain intellectual level. I have no illusions that POLITICS will overthrow capitalism. But I think it can be a force in American intellectual life, presenting information and perspectives which find inadequate expression elsewhere, offering a forum for the discussion of political ideas, debunking and satirizing what is mistakenly revered (a vast deal, today), examining the existing creeds, parties and programs with a fresh eye. Naturally, the extent to which one welcomes such a magazine will depend largely on the extent to which one is unsatisfied with existing parties and programs (though not entirely: it does even the most convinced enthusiast good to have his convictions shaken up a bit every now and then). POLITICS is directed chiefly at those who feel that new ideas

(or new interpretations of old ideas), new methods, new groups and programs must be found. (The *Libérer et Fédérer* group in France, for example, described in Louis Clair's article in this issue, seems to be groping towards a solution of one great problem: how to combine economic collectivism with political democracy.) The task now seems to be one primarily of criticism. This is in one sense a modest aim, but not in another sense: for the critical analysis of old ideas and institutions is a precondition for the construction of new ones.

DWIGHT MACDONALD

Books

A HISTORY OF DEEDS DONE BEYOND THE SEA. By William of Tyre. 2 Volumes. Translated and Annotated by Emily Atwater Babcock and A. C. Krey. Columbia University Press. \$13.50.

William, Archbishop of Tyre, worked off and on for nearly twenty years on his history of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Participants in the First Crusade had written accounts of the founding of the kingdom, as had some men of letters, but all were incomplete. William drew on these and on oral tradition, added an introduction covering the history of Jerusalem from its loss in 614 to the launching of the First Crusade, and carried his narrative forward through his own time almost to the holy city's capture by Saladin in 1187—an event which William's own death, presumably early in 1185, spared him the pain of witnessing.

In the seven and a half centuries since it was first circulated, William's chronicle has been freely drawn on by later historians and widely translated. The present edition has been prepared as Number 35 in Columbia University's Records of Civilization series. The translation is unstilted and preserves the clarity and grace said to have characterized William's Latin style; and the foot notes, neither pedantic nor too frequent, supplement the text usefully.

Religious duty and economic advantage combined happily to sanction the First Crusade. Not only was there the land of the life and death of the Savior to be wrenched from pagan dominion and eternal life to be secured by all participants in the pious enterprise. There were also rich cities to be seized and dukedoms to be established by the stronger nobles (the very names of some of them—Walter the Penniless, Lambert the Poor—suggest that their piety had a nagging auxiliary in want), military careers to be forged and land to be won by younger sons left landless by the law of primogeniture, trade routes to be secured and emporia established by merchants, the foreign policy of the papacy to be advanced, and, for the common soldiers, the poverty and plague of Europe to be escaped and wealth to be snatched in captured cities. With the riches of both heaven and earth beckoning, it is no wonder that the First Crusade was a mass movement into which all classes of people, from princes and prelates to paupers, fervently threw themselves. As William expressed it, "... the Lord was not with all in this cause . . . Some Crusaders joined the others that they might not leave their friends;

some that they might not be regarded as idle; others for frivolous reasons only, or because by going away they might escape their creditors . . . Thus, for divers reasons, all were hastening toward the same goal."

The armies of the First Crusade proceeded by various routes to Syria. Some butchered Jews in Germany; some shamefully requited the hospitality of the Christian Bulgarians "like a snake in the bosom, or a mouse in the wardrobe"; others were massacred in droves in ill-considered battles; some quarreled fiercely among themselves. Those that survived seized Antioch, Tripoli and other cities from the Turks who, insecurely established as recent conquerors and at odds among themselves, were unable to defeat the combined hordes. Finally, on July 15, 1099, the invaders reduced Jerusalem itself after a strenuous siege, and committed such disgusting slaughter "that even the victors experienced sensations of horror and loathing." The Holy Sepulchre—and a good deal of the wealth of the Holy Land—was in Christian hands. The Latin states set up by the conquerors then went through military ups and downs, but it was not until their Mohammedan neighbors were united by Nureddin and Saladin that their power was effectually broken. Meanwhile, the period of their ascendancy was one of chronic warfare against the infidel, in which booty became the thing, salvation a sort of *lagniappe*.

The usages of medieval warfare, as they are mentioned by William, emphasize its character as a perfectly normal instrument of acquiring wealth. Kings and dukes of the new kingdom, burdened by debts or merely avaricious, attacked cities under Mohammedan rule, often selecting the likeliest prospect much as a professional writer, on finishing one book, selects another in the expectation that it will pay off. The besieged city, assuming it did not force the Christians' withdrawal, might buy off the attackers, in which case they would go away, perfectly satisfied for the time being and laden with bushels of gold coin and other valuables; or it might surrender on terms, to the annoyance of everyone in the siege army (except the leader, into whose possession it came) since the terms precluded looting; or, persisting in "a just war for the sake of their wives and children, nay, more . . . for liberty . . . and for the defense of their fatherland against robbers" (the infidels had a disquieting way of cooking up perfectly good reasons, the validity of which fair-minded William admitted, for resisting the spread of the Christian faith and rule), the beleaguered would fight to final defeat. While "it was regarded as the supreme reward to be bathed in the blood of the foe," more negotiable reward was not slighted. When some of the citizens of captured Tyre tried to save their valuables by swallowing them they made it easy for the ardent Christians to achieve both rewards at once. War was, in short, not so much a bane (Tyre had been "enervated," William said, by long peace) as a popular paying profession in which high and low took part. Coming home from the wars then was comparable to coming home from a hard day at the office now. One of the accepted commonplaces of life in the middle ages, war was deplorable only when one's own side lost. Perhaps it is symptomatic of some slight progress that today even those who are likely to win profess to see in war only a calamity best avoided.

Contemporary lay readers, strangers to the religious raptures that inspired medieval men to the holy wars, may find William's references to the religious motive merely curious; they can still, however, be interested in his comments on some of the economic conditions and problems surrounding the Crusades. The problem, for instance, of supplying the hosts straggling through Europe

was considerable. On arriving in a new country the Crusaders generally asked the ruler to set up a market at which they could buy supplies from the natives at reasonable prices. If friendly, the ruler would accede to this sensible demand; if hostile or slow-witted, he would refuse it—with the result that the Crusaders would take what they needed, and more, by pillaging. Regions through which "this people beloved of God" passed every few years had to develop regular places of exchange in self-defense.

When the Crusaders reached Syria they were supplied to some extent by merchants of Italian maritime cities, who crossed the Mediterranean with goods and sometimes, on the promise of special rights and privileges in a quarter of the city under assault, would assist in the siege operations. Those who remained held a preferential place in the city; those who returned to Italy with Oriental goods established the trade route from Venice over the Brenner Pass and up the Rhine to Bruges along which some of the great towns of the middle ages developed. Thus an important by-product of the Crusades was the stimulation of market towns and of a mercantile class. And it was with the rise of the mercantile class, that (in general) worked and took risks for its gains instead of snatching them by naked force, that the complacent medieval acceptance of war as a legitimate and routine, if somewhat hazardous, method of acquisition began to fade. The Crusades were at once the high water mark of feudal society's religious ardor and also a contributing force in the dissolution of feudalism itself and in the development of capitalism.

LAURA WOOD

THE FRENCH RIGHT AND NAZI GERMANY 1933-39. A STUDY OF PUBLIC OPINION. By Charles A. Micaud. Duke University Press. \$3.50.

This careful study of the ideologies of the French Right in the 1930's underscores the current conception of many publicists that a majority of the upper bourgeois leaders of France "feared a victory over Germany as much as a defeat." This was almost equally true of numerous other democratic countries, but in France one could see the conflict in sharpest contrast, since there the gulf was greatest between the right-wing ruling classes and the growing left-wing laboring classes.

The French Right was determined to block social and economic reform and to maintain the status quo at all costs. In part it tried to accomplish this through repudiating the entire Left as a mere tool of Russia. It argued so persuasively that even the author himself has failed to distinguish clearly between Stalin's "communism" and other left-wing movements. The Right chose to ignore the fundamentally nationalist nature of Stalinism, and ascribed to Russia's cats-paw, the French Communist Party, all the revolutionary militancy of Trotsky's earlier Third International.

The great hope of the French Right, as Charles Maurras argued in *L'Action Francaise* (February 1936) was that Germany and Russia might clash and wear each other out while France with her armies intact remained on the sidelines until the last moment—but Hitler and Stalin refused thus neatly to solve the dilemma. Even with the outbreak of war, "only a small minority of Rightist leaders subordinated their class prejudices to their traditional nationalism." The majority were to see in a Nazi victory and the introduction of the Vichy brand of fascism their greatest opportunity to maintain their privileged position.

FRANK FREIDEL

HOW NAZI GERMANY HAS CONTROLLED BUSINESS.

By L. Hamburger. The Brookings Institution. \$1.00.

An excellent study, packed with data from original sources. Should be read in conjunction with an earlier study by the same author, *How Nazi Germany Has Mobilized and Controlled Labor* (Brookings, 1940, 25 cents). Hamburger reaches this conclusion: "It is true . . . that . . . the Nazis have not nationalized business; the bulk of enterprise in Germany continues to be privately owned and operated. However, it is apparent that private ownership and operation of business under the Nazi system of total regulation is not private enterprise as the term is generally understood. Private ownership undoubtedly yields income, but income so derived has been increasingly absorbed or canalized by the state. As to private operation, all major decisions required for the conduct of business enterprise are imposed by, or made within the framework of, government directives. . . . Total regulation has done a job equivalent to nationalizing. . . . The choice of regulation as a method had a distinct advantage as a political strategy. Regulating rather than nationalizing business enterprise, it was possible for the Nazis to preserve private ownership of the means of production as an institution, while in reality reducing it to a meaningless legal concept. . . . Ostensibly, they were conservative; before a world haunted by the fear of communism they could pose as a bulwark of law and order. Actually, they accomplished a revolution. Henry George was referring not only to the past when he wrote: 'It is an axiom of statesmanship which the successful founders of tyranny have understood and acted upon—that great changes can best be brought about under old forms.'"

D. M.

WITH THE LABOR STATESMEN

I have repeatedly stated in the columns of our journal that the International office will not answer letters coming in from individual members. In the first place, we do not know whether the individual is a member or not. Next, even if we did, we could not take care of the communications from over 600,000 members. Next, the laws of the organization provide that the seal of the local union must appear on any letter to receive the consideration of the International Union.

If an individual has some appeal or grievance, he should take it into his local union, and if it is worth-while, I am sure the local union will, through its secretary, forward it to the International office. Of course some members give you the old excuse that they cannot get any action in the local union.

We cannot accept that as an answer, because any man who has a cause that is worth consideration can go to the local union and get recognition in the meeting of the local union. We do not want local unions to endorse or place their stamp of approval on protests and grievances and complaints brought up by cranks or those who are considered chronic objectors.

—Daniel J. Tobin in the "International Teamster", May 1944

FROM AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES WE LEARN:—

"We have lived and we are living in a rotten world."

—Sumner Welles, former Under-Secretary of State, quoted in TIME, Oct. 25, 1943, p. 18.

HISTORY IN THE REMAKING

John L. Lewis is mentioned just once in the current "Labor Fact Book" (No. 6), which is published by the Stalinist-controlled Labor Research Association under the title, "Labor and the War". The United Mine Workers is not mentioned at all.

The Intelligence Office

Question Period

Dear Mr. Macdonald:

Granting POLITICS' patent superiority over other political magazines now being published, certain aspects of its orientation leave me bewildered. Perhaps these questions reveal me as a political innocent. Anyway here they are:

(1) How, given your opposition to what you call "bureaucratic collectivism", do you regard the present—rather the perennial—controversy of states' rights vs. federal centralization?

(2) Have you any precise conception of a "popular revolution which will be socialist as to economics and democratic as to politics"?

(3) Do you believe, as you seem to imply, that the New Deal must necessarily lead to fascism? Do you see any difference between federal control within the framework of a democratic, parliamentary tradition, and federal control within the framework of an anti-democratic, anti-parliamentary tradition? Or do you believe, as your last article in *Partisan Review* seemed to say, that socialism is the only kind of *democratic* collectivism, and that fascism, Stalinism, and the New Deal are all varieties of "bureaucratic collectivism"?

(4) Admitting the fact that this war has been to the strategic advantage of big business and reaction, what practical alternative, since you admit the impossibility of a socialist revolution in America in the foreseeable future, do you offer? Haven't you, with your "critical non-support" of the war, impaled yourself on the other horn—opposite the liberals—of the dilemma? Isn't there a choice, after all, between fighting off the certainty of the colossal reaction Nazi invasion would lead to, even if in so doing we strengthen domestic reaction—between this and standing by passively since we cannot fight for a democratic socialist revolution as well?

(5) In the July "Comment", you write: "The chances of anything like that [a socialist revolution] happening in this country in the foreseeable future would seem to be as close to nil as at any time in our history. . . . Politically, as one might expect, the temper of the American masses has rarely been more conservative." Yet you go on to say that, in view of the President's more conservative policies and the Republicans' more liberal gestures towards labor, "an ideal opportunity for a Third Party movement" exists. How do you reconcile this?

(6) What is your opinion of the CIO's Political Action Committee as a possible Third Party? In the probable event of a depression, isn't the PAC, with its broad workingclass base, the logical organization around which a Third Party movement could be built?

You've elaborated the liberal dilemma well enough. Now let's see whether we haven't a POLITICAL dilemma. It can't be possible, as some statements of yours seem to imply, that you're content simply to "understand" and needle on the sidelines.

ASTORIA, L. I.

MORRIS MOSKOWITZ

—(1) *States' rights are an obstacle to the further centralization of power in Washington, which is a precondition of the development of an American bureaucratic collectivism. So, formally, they play a progressive role. But only*

formally. The fact is that the division of the country into states corresponds neither to economic nor social nor cultural realities (as, for example, division by regions or by industrial areas does). It is an archaic survival which is exploited by reactionaries to defend their interests. The Republicans are raising the states' rights issue now in order to prevent the exercise of Federal powers for higher relief standards. Likewise, the periodic Congressional revolts against the President formally are attempts to weaken the power of the executive, but their political content is always reactionary. In both instances, we have the paradox of the forces which tend towards an ultimate fascism trying to break down the organizational instrument by which this fascism will control things.

(2) My conception is: (1) no one to own more property of any kind than he can use or work himself; (2) all other property to be controlled by those who work on or with it; (3) political power to be allocated on a soviet, or works' council, basis, with groups of people who perform the same kind of work in a certain area or plant the basis, instead of the location of their homes; (4) all those in authority—politicians, judges, military officers, industrial and governmental executives—to be elected, subjected to recall, limited to a maximum continuous term in office; (5) the only limitation on political activity and parties to be a veto on overt attempts to overthrow the government by force. (This is, of course, a sketch for the period immediately following a socialist revolution. The ultimate communist society would differ much more from present society, would have no government, no "authority", no politics, and, above all, no army.)

(3) Yes, the New Deal, I think, will lead to fascism, though probably not directly but in the same way the Weimar Republic did, by paralyzing the forces of the left. I do see a difference between parliamentary and democratic federalism and anti-parliamentary and anti-democratic federalism (the difference is indicated in the definitions themselves) but this difference is constantly narrowing. Yes, I think only socialism can give us democratic collectivism.

(4) I don't advocate standing by passively in this war. I am merely interested in different aims from those of the governments conducting this war, and I think these aims cannot be achieved by supporting this war. In England after Dunkirk, for example, I would have advocated a seizure of the government by the labor movement and the establishment of socialism without regard to its effect on the war effort. The result of such a revolution, I think, would have been either the collapse of Nazism from within or else the conversion of the war into a revolutionary war in which the masses of occupied Europe would have played a decisive role on England's side. In this country, there is and has not been any "practical alternative" to supporting the war if by that you mean large-scale political action. But the smallest action against the war is more "practical" than the largest action for it if one believes that fighting this war will not advance, and will in fact hinder, the achievement of one's political aims.

(5) You miss the point, which was that the present conservative temper of the American people is indicated precisely by the fact that, although the Democrats have retreated from the New Deal so far as to become indistinguishable from the Republicans, no Third Party has materialized to fill this vacuum and put forward a progressive program. This is probably because there exists at the moment no mass demand for such a program. To deplore the failure of a Third Party to materialize is not to be unaware of the reasons it didn't. The "ideal opportunity" is a formal, not a historical, concept.

(6) See the August "Comment" for my opinion of the PAC (insofar as it can be sent through the mails). It is quite possible, given a postwar depression, that the PAC will develop into a Third Party movement. Its present leadership will do its best, however, (1) to prevent this, and failing that, (2) to steer it in the most conservative possible direction.

Finally, let me add that to "understand and to needle on the sidelines" does not seem to me a small thing. How can we act unless we first understand? And one of the biggest obstacles to understanding, at present, is the temptation to act at all costs. (See my reply to Mr. Elliott earlier in this issue.) I think we are in a mess today partly because both the revolutionary and the liberal left have continued to act on the basis of 19th century formulae which no longer fit the situation—indeed which often produce the opposite result from what is intended by those who in all sincerity use them.

D. M.

SOLDIERS ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

Sir:

The July issue, notably the pieces on Conscientious Objection and Negro segregation in the armed forces, interested me greatly. I wonder if your answer to Calhoun is the right one, if military service is preferable to the isolation of the C.O. Theoretically, I find your choice sound, but I know now that I regret having allowed myself to be pulled into this thing. Pressure from family, friends, well-wishers—I suppose—convinced me, but somehow I know I was wrong. But what's the difference, they'll make it miserable for you some way. . . .

I think you're completely wrong or hopelessly optimistic about the Negroes in the armed forces. My experience here has led me to a directly opposite conclusion. The Northerners, incidentally, impress me as little better than the Southerners in this regard. . . .

PFC. X

P.S.—I hope you find a publisher for Serge's autobiography. The excerpt you printed was beautiful.

Sir:

. . . As a soldier and a socialist, I read with interest "The Political Relevance of Conscientious Objection" and the editor's discussion of Calhoun's ideas. My opinion, for what it is worth, and the opinion of a small group of other servicemen can be summed up as follows.

The draft caught us, and although we were not stupid enough to believe the commonly accepted blarney that is given out, we only slowly began to realize how untrue are the propagandized "ideals" behind the war. As we observed the stupidity, the bigotry, and the undemocratic basis of the army, and added to that the apparent trend of reaction in the war and in world politics, we began to question ourselves. We saw that this wasn't a war "to save democracy", nor a war to free the oppressed peoples of the world, nor a war of justice, nor a war of freedom, nor a war to bring us a more bountiful life. Since those were the things we believed in and those were the things we were willing to fight for, then just what were we doing in the army? The all too true answers floated before our eyes, and we began to realize that this wasn't our war, that this wasn't the war for the majority of the American people.

We hated fascism—after all friends of ours had died at the Ebro in Spain. We still hate it, but we don't want to destroy one form of fascism merely to strengthen another form of it.

Those are the opinions of a few of us, some still train-

ing in this country, some dead at Buna Mission in New G. We, in our opinions, however, are not so far distant from those of thousands of other soldiers, soldiers who wonder why they get punished when they complain about stupidity, prejudices, and injustices to their superiors, soldiers who wonder about brothers and friends that died in the second Ranger Bn. in Italy, and then read about the reactionary politics in Italy, and about American aid to the forces of reaction. After all one of the few true generalizations about the average American soldier is that he is cynical, he doesn't believe what he is told by those in power.

Perhaps I've rambled on too long on this ancient machine, perhaps I have irritated you too long with my atrocious grammar and spelling, but I have been trying to bring out what I believe is an important factor for all of us to keep in mind. Slowly but surely many Americans are beginning to realize that something about the war and something about their government smells, and smells badly. They don't know just what it is yet, but the odor keeps getting stronger and stronger.

To conclude, your magazine, even with some quite apparent weaknesses, is helping to point out the direction of that stench. Keep it up, keep improving, keep moving in the right direction, and your efforts may yet do the people of this nation some concrete and lasting benefit.

PFC. Y.

ANTI-STRIKE LAWS IN BRITAIN

Sir:

I waited a long time to see you make some comment on the anti-strike legislation passed in Britain at the end of last April. This legislation is, to my mind, of the most fundamental importance because it declares illegal all strikes *except those sponsored by recognized trade unions*. . . . Thus wildcat strikes and true independent unions springing spontaneously from a disgruntled and increasingly class conscious workingclass become practically impossible. As far as I know, this is the first instance in the so-called Western democracies where the established unions have become official instruments of the status quo.

In retrospect, it is interesting to note the relationship of this matter to the Tory-Labor coalition formed in Britain in 1940. Canadian liblabs (and that includes the C.C.F.) hailed this as a great victory for labor, while the more rabid capitalist papers, like the *Toronto Globe & Mail*, felt that Churchill had gone against his better judgment. However, the clever arch-conservative *Montreal Gazette* commented on May 11, 1940, that neither the cheers of the liblabs nor the groans of the "free enterprisers" had any foundation in fact. "It would be difficult to find anywhere," observed the *Gazette*, "a group of men more conservative than the British trade union leaders." It looks as if the liblabs are wrong again!

And, of course, the anti-strike law was introduced by "Ernie" Bevin, Minister of Labor and leader of the big Transport & General Workers Union. Ernie is one of the idols of C.C.F. officialdom.

MONTREAL, CANADA

H. C. F. SHATAN

UNIONS AS CAPITALIST INSTITUTIONS

Sir:

I read the July issue of *POLITICS*. I would like to inform you that this is one worker who through study and experience cannot consider you part of the "radical" movement. The article picturing the revolutionary haze in the Italian situation and exposing Allied intentions there was interesting. But your "radicalism" evaporates when you get

home on American soil. I refer particularly to your approach to the union question.

Capitalism implies the wages system. Present day unions are based on the wages system. They support the wages system. They are labor-selling machines. They organize jobs and disorganize workers. They sell their merchandise to capitalists like the flour merchant sells his merchandise to the baker. Labor "leaders" sign contracts for the disposal of their commodity, discipline workers with the check-off, maintenance and membership, etc. All for the good of capitalism. . . . In the words of Clare Booth Luce "the future of capitalism is in the hands of the labor leaders". How can anyone claim to be a socialist when he supports capitalist unionism and the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class?

I equally condemn your magazine for your lack of reference to the Socialist Labor Party, the only bonafide Socialist organization who by principle is working for the erection of unionism with socialist principles and structure.

In view of the present efforts of the capitalist class to shackle American labor with forced labor via National Service and decrees of War Manpower Commission, your silence in this most urgent matter condemns you as capitalist auxiliaries whether intentional or not.

NEW YORK CITY

SAUL DAVIS

—Surely unintentional.—ED.

THE BREWSTER SHUT-DOWN

Sir:

What happens in the labor movement nowadays is hair-raising enough without having to read uncritical, approving accounts in *POLITICS*. The article by G. De Angelis of the UAW on the Brewster shut-down sounds more like material for Niccolo Tucci's files, to be given a good going-over when he gets around to it, than the sort of analysis of a labor event to be expected from a radical magazine. It is a perfect example of the crawling attitude towards the ruling class ideology which you have pointed out again and again as the most typical feature of present-day American trade union leadership. The gulf between De Angelis' solicitude towards the war effort and his pride in labor's war production record of the last two years, and your own opening "Comment" in the same issue is so obvious that elaboration is unnecessary. All in all, it would have been a happier situation if the article had appeared in the *New Masses* and been attacked in your magazine.

De Angelis' thought patterns are so perverted that he is proud of the fact that his union was never once "recalcitrant". He considers it heartwarming that workers went back to work without pay after being laid off, or, where they couldn't help out "sat around, or sang songs or played games", all the while "making certain not to interfere with the work going on and maintaining strict discipline. . . .". The picket line outside the Brewster plant, which tops all this idiocy like the nuts on a sundae, since it has no connection with preventing workers from going inside, is for De Angelis a glorious protest. All this is called a strike-to-work, a new form of militant action. I submit that it is closer to comic opera. Nor was it in the least successful, unless you identify success, as De Angelis does, with nation-wide publicity. Not only did the workers end up by losing their jobs and being forced to accept others at lower wages where they could find them, but as far as the possible educational value of their action is concerned, they were left confused and discouraged, by De Angelis' own account.

There can be no doubt that more effective protest is possible. Refusal on the part of labor to fulfill war needs

without the guarantee of uninterrupted employment during the reconversion period would be one form such protest could take. This would mean, in the Brewster case, for example, refusal to complete planes still on the assembly line unless provisions were made for other war contracts, or for the release of materials for civilian production of either airplanes or other commodities similar enough to be produced in the same plant. This is, of course, a pipe dream. The unions as presently constituted are incapable of such action on any significant scale and capitalism is incapable of planning a continuous flow of production.

There are many features of contract termination which a radical magazine could have concerned itself with instead of reporting the antics forced upon the workers by their trade union leadership. For example, it is a definite policy of the army and navy contract-terminating agencies to cancel contracts without advance notice. In many cases there is simply the receipt of a telegram stating that all work shall cease immediately. Deliberate or not, the effect of this is to foster a permanent state of insecurity among the workers, and to make meaningful long-range planning on the part of the trade unions difficult if not impossible. Furthermore, there have been no indications of any attempt to link contract terminations and reconversion. Again, as far as the Brewster case is concerned, it could be pointed out that the New York area, with the reputation for radicalism on the part of its workers, was among the last to receive war contracts and is being more rapidly closed down as a war production area than most sections of the country.

You are rather self-conscious in your insistence that you are a radical and not a liberal magazine, but publishing an article like De Angelis' and certain others in recent issues shows that there are still residues of liberalism left. Perhaps your motive is to establish some sort of labor tie-up. If, however, a consequence of having a trade union tie-up is the publication of articles by pro-war labor bureaucrats, it seems to me you must sacrifice a good deal of the clarity your magazine has maintained up to now.

NEW YORK CITY A CRITICAL SUPPORTER

—I don't like to print letters unaccompanied by the author's name and address, but this one seems worth an exception. With many of "Critical Supporter's" points I agree: his objection to De Angelis' pride that his union was never "recalcitrant"; his conclusion that the strike-to-work, for all the ballyhoo, didn't accomplish its end; and, of course, his criticism of the win-the-war flavor of some of the article. On the other hand, I don't see his alternative method of protest as working any better. (He himself calls it "a pipe dream.")

Why did I print the article? Because its main point was not ballyhoo for the war or for the UAW leadership, but rather (1) a factual expose of the anti-workingclass policies of the Navy, and (2) an account, from the inside, of how the Brewster union tried to meet this issue. It seems to me sectarian to exact of contributors any given general philosophy or any particular "line" even on issues as crucial as the war. Purity and "clarity" obtained by excluding material by active progressive trade unionists on the grounds they are not revolutionary anti-war socialists does not seem worth much. The unions are cut off too much from left intellectuals anyway, and vice versa—and I think, personally, Mr. De Angelis showed both originality and courage in submitting an article at all to *POLITICS*. I might add that he has seen the above letter, and has agreed, at my suggestion, to write a follow-up on later Brewster developments in which he will also reply to "Critical Supporter." This will appear next month.

—ED.

CONTRIBUTORS

LOUIS CLAIR writes for *The Call*; he lives in New York. . . . NICOLA CHIAROMONTE who has contributed to *Partisan Review*, *View* and other magazines, is the author of "Croce and Italian Liberalism" in our June issue. This article, incidentally, was reprinted in *Italia Libera*. . . . RUTH FISCHER, a former leading figure of the German Communist Party, now lives in New York City and edits *The Network*, an information bulletin about Stalinist activities. . . . GEORGE P. ELLIOTT lives in Berkeley, California. "I am 26," he writes, "married, one child, an M.A. in English from the U. of California, just spent 2 years as a shipfitter in the Kaiser Richmond yards, and have for the last 3 months been a wage analyst for the War Labor Board. I have had some poems in *Poetry*, *Accent*, *The Circle*. I have 2 ambitions: to write poetry and to make a living. The latter seems to be winning out recently". . . . LAURA WOOD, who has contributed to *Politics* before, lives in Washington, D. C. . . . FRANK FREIDEL teaches history at the University of Maryland.

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