

politics

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VICTORY!!!



VICTORY. Comes, lights up the horizon and the hearts, and before you know it, it's gone; you have just the ashes and the dead, and instead of ambush, hostage-killing, fight and vengeance, a good chance to grieve, to starve, to see your children die in peace. Makes me sad for those soldiers who are there, in the line, with ideals all theirs, reserved to the military, "requisitioned for the exclusive use of our boys", and forbidden to everybody else at home or abroad. Their job is that of transforming a torture-chamber into a cemetery; a place of terror and of hope into a place without terror and without hope. VICTORY.

(Niccolo Tucci in "Politics", November, 1944.)

The Two Horrors

By the time this appears, the Nazi Government will probably have formally surrendered and the European phase of World War II will be over, so far as large-scale military operations go at least. In its last years, the war became a war of annihilation, by mutual choice of both sides. The Nazis realized they had no hope of surviving defeat and calculated that their policies, if not themselves, had the best chance of being revived later on if Germany were devastated so thoroughly as to prove to every German that Hitler was right when he warned of the dire plots of international Jewish-Bolshevik-finance-capital. They also probably preferred to go down, if they had to go down, in the melodramatic glory of a Wagnerian *gotterdammerung*. The Allies also wanted to prolong the war as long as possible so as to do the maximum damage to German cities and industry, and also, as Clair points out in this issue, to reduce the German people by intensive bombing to such a state of chaos, misery and impotent despair that no alternative revolutionary regime to the Nazis can come into existence.

The result has been a war which in destructiveness of lives, property, and civilized values has had no equal since the religious wars of the 16th century. To say that civilization cannot survive another such war is a truism; the question is whether it can survive this one. Two horrors confront each other in Europe: the dying Nazi horror and the surviving Allied horror; the horror of conscious, rationalized destruction of the fabric of Western culture and ethics; and the horror of vast technological power exerted in warmaking by nations with no positive aims and little social consciousness, the result being the maximum devastation and the creation of conditions in which another such phenomenon as Nazism seems all too likely to arise.

We have heard a great deal of late weeks, as the Nazis' main concentration camps are overrun by American troops, of the first horror. Without in any way minimizing the terrible significance of these reports, which confirm and elaborate the more fragmentary data which I summarized in "The Responsibility of Peoples," one must note that for many years camps like Dachau and Buchenwald operated entirely on the living flesh of *Germans*, both Jews and political opponents of the Nazis,* that in all those years the American press showed little concern about these atrocities, and that in the present spate of horror-stories, many of them grossly sensationalistic and propagandist, almost nothing is said about the main victims of these camps having been Germans, the impression being deliberately given that the camps represent the German people's united policy against other peoples. In a word, the American Government is exploiting the death-camps in order to swing public opinion behind a "hard peace" for defeated Germany.

Perhaps I read these reports with a prejudiced eye, but I have been struck with how often they confirm the point made in "The Responsibility of Peoples": that the atrocities were committed by specialized SS and Gestapo formations and were not in any sense actions of the German people.

"I found that German soldiers did not like this cruelty," said a French sergeant who had seen frightful things during his captivity. "It was the SS and Gestapo and Ukrainian volunteers who did the murdering." (*N. Y. Times*, April 10).

*Dachau and Buchenwald were the camps in which Bruno Bettelheim was confined and which he described in "Behavior in Extreme Situations" (*Politics*, August, 1944).

In *Time* for April 23 there is an account of how the citizens of Ohrdruf were taken on a tour by the Americans of a nearby camp which "few had ever been allowed to see." "The Germans found it hard to believe. Conceded one: 'It's the work of beasts.' That night the Burgermeister and his wife hanged themselves."

A German girl, member of the Hitler Maedchen, was taken on an enforced tour of Buchenwald. "She moaned, with tears running down her face: 'It is terrible what they have done to these people.'" The reporter comments, in evident disapproval: "The pronoun she used was 'they', not 'we'."

But the British General Montgomery showed a more realistic appreciation of the German people's situation when he summed up the concluding phase of the war: "Destruction is now going on wholesale. Every single big and little town is being blown up. That is why our progress to the North is slow. . . . German public opinion cannot say they are sick of it. So it's got to go on. If there were any public opinion, it would rise up and say, 'Finish!' But if any one does rise up, he gets bumped off." (*N. Y. Times*, April 14)

So it's got to go on. Here we come to the other horror, the one that is also reported in our press, but with all the moral indignation left out: the horror of what Allied warmaking technology has done to the people of Germany.

The destruction of Germany is on a scale which one simply cannot conceive. This morning's paper (May 2) reports that since the war began British and American planes have dropped the incredible total of 2,454,000 tons of explosives on German "targets" (the quotes are used advisedly). "For every ton the Germans hurled at Britain by bomber plane or V-bomb, they received 315 in return." A month ago, it was estimated that twenty million Germans had fled their homes, and that most of the 250 cities of Germany were in ruins; today the damage must be much greater. In the first three weeks of March, it was estimated that 50,000 German civilians had been killed by Allied bombings. (*N. Y. Times*, March 24) Cologne is more completely wrecked than Stalingrad.

These are general statistics which are hard to visualize. The human meaning of bombing on the scale the Allies are now able to inflict may be suggested by three specific instances:

(1) On March 3, planes of the RAF's second Tactical Air Force arrived over The Hague in the early morning hours for a routine bombing of German V-Bomb launching sites. "Because of an error in judgment," the bombs fell instead on the "peace city" itself. Result: 800 Dutch

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Editor: Dwight Macdonald

Business Manager: Nancy Macdonald

Circulation Manager: Dorothy Brumm

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civilians dead, 1,000 injured, 20,000 homeless, and one-sixth of the city in ruins. This was, note, just a routine raid, not a specially mounted mass bombing.

(2) The British *New Leader* of March 3 summarizes a "reliable report from a neutral country" on the effects of the first great RAF raid on Dresden:

"It states that the bombers dropped thousands of incendiaries as soon as they were over Dresden and followed these up with high explosives. As in earlier raids on German cities, the incendiaries started immense fires which created such an intense heat that shelterers were driven from shelter. They were still rushing through the streets looking for fresh shelter when the explosives fell. They and the thousands of others for whom there was no shelter accommodation and who were crouching in shop doorways were blown to pieces.

"After the raid many streets were carpeted with corpses and fragments of corpses. Dozens of people, their clothes blazing, jumped into the river which flows through the city—floating bodies filled the stream.

"Shattered bodies lay everywhere. Many, killed by the heat, had shrivelled up to half their normal size."

(3) In the *N. Y. Times* of April 10, John MacCormac described the effect of 18 minutes of bombing on the German city of Hildesheim: "In that 18-minute attack, and by the fires that burned for days after it, this town of 65,000 inhabitants had been destroyed. It had been a cradle of art in Germany. Its series of half-timbered buildings of late Gothic and Renaissance period design had been unrivalled in the whole of the Reich. The most modern buildings in it were 300 years old. The oldest—a Catholic basilica—had been built on a still older foundation in 1054-1079 by medieval craftsmen who gloried in their work. . . . Its Protestant Michaelis Church was rated as one of the grandest Romanesque basilicas in all Germany. . . . So Hildesheim, along with so much else in the Reich that was part of humanity's common treasure, was thrown into the scales of war. Weighed in that balance, Hildesheim was important only for its marshaling yards. Hence the 18-minute bombardment from 2:00 to 2:18 on the afternoon of March 22. . . . Hildesheim is 95% destroyed."

Another Dark Ages has come to Germany, to Europe. In Frankfurt, a correspondent found a pencil-scrawled piece of cardboard stuck up on the ruins of Goethe's birthplace: "HERE WAS THE HOUSE WHERE THE OLD GREAT POET GOETHE WAS BORN."

Letter from a Sergeant

SOMEWHERE-IN-GERMANY
APRIL, 1945

Dear Dwight:

. . . I have read your article on "The Responsibility of Peoples" and I think it is fine and true. I should say that everything I have seen or heard in Germany would only serve to reinforce your arguments and add almost nothing that you didn't at least suggest.

Only the other day I happened across a diary of a German soldier. One excerpt will interest you: "The big chemical factory Merck was completely demolished in the morning raid. Some 15 fire engines were fighting the flames. There were so many bomb craters on Frankfurterstrasse that I had to carry my bicycle for 300 meters past the plant. 'WALLS MAY BREAK, BUT OUR HEARTS NEVER WILL!' was scrawled on one wall. A woman pushing some belongings in a pram said: 'He must have smeared that on at night. During the day, we would have hanged him.'"

The non-fraternization policy is, as you know, in effect for the invading and occupying forces. It is not an easy thing to live with. For most of the troops it means 1) no source for souvenirs and street-life, for everything is off-limits; 2) no women, and in every outfit but a combat line company most of the day is devoted to hopes, reminiscences, jokes, plans, doggerel, art-work, and assorted folk-lore of fornication; and 3) a rather uncomfortable feeling, staring past passers-by on an avenue, coldly ignoring occasional smiles of old folk and the playful greetings of children waving at the columns going by. For a few it would seem to be a properly harsh uncompromising personal attitude toward barbarians (they did use rubber hoses and flush them with hot water until your bowels burst! . . .) For a very few others it is politically futile and wrong-headed, and morally part of the deep and terrible emptiness of the whole war. We are all isolated here, and it is very difficult to know anything about life in these rubble-choked towns. (Darmstadt and Frankfurt, among the great cities I've seen, are unspeakable—how can I tell you how one feels to ride through street after street, hungering for the glimpse of a house, a window, a sign of human habitation?) The correspondents are almost to the man dishonest people and are contriving stories most of the time.

I have been out, and I have spoken to Germans. That I have not (naturally) found Nazis does not, of course, prove or tell you anything. But I have been very moved by the mere spectacle of these people on the roads and on the ruined avenues, and from my conversations with assorted characters and personalities I am quite convinced we made no mistake in our understanding of Hitlerism and Germany, the relation of the State and the people, the responsibility and guilt for criminal terror.

The so-called "Werewolf" campaign is almost pure bluff, and with very rare exceptions there has been no trouble. Military governors have told me that the "people were fine"—even "anti-Nazi"! (And that from a G-5 is evidence enough, for on the whole they are a rather depressing insensitive lot). And if the hard-hearted unbelievers should care, I suppose I could give the names and addresses of casual acquaintances in a half a dozen places east of the Rhine. There was a doctor in Frankfurt who helped me find the old museum at Goethe's birthplace (which was shattered bricks and stone, with not even a fragment of a wall standing). For an hour on the rubble we talked, and his earnestness and passion (and broken heart) touched me more than perhaps anything I have ever known. (But then he was something of a political or developed person.) There were two simple fellows in Darmstadt who understood little beyond the outline and substance of the events which had rained in on them; but the events themselves had been instructive and tragic enough. Even they, non-Nazi and petty-bourgeois, left me full of hope—not perhaps for a new Germany or a healthier European order, but for something much more practical and even immediate: a returning sense of the dignity of people, of the independence and honesty and character of a human being. . . .

The guilty have, of course, fled. Many of the Kreisleiter are suicides. But the problem of guilt is, as you very properly put it, complicated and as profound as any question the war has posed for us. The other day I helped the Inspector-General interview some witnesses in a war-crimes investigation. The correspondents had picked up a story of a "horror hospital", and the War and State Departments wanted some kind of dossier. Well, for hours and days we tried to piece together a story, asking questions, going through the documents. But it came to something which bewildered the poor old IG, and left me only with the

small satisfaction of a lesson learned. In modern war there are crimes not criminals. In modern society there is evil but there is no devil. Murder has been mechanized and rendered impersonal. The foul deed of bloody hands belongs to a bygone era when man could commit his own sins. Now innocence or guilt is a problem beyond the scope of court and legal decision. Here, as in many other cases, the guilt belonged to the machine. Somewhere in the apparatus of bureaucracy, memoranda, and clean efficient directives, a crime had been committed. Men died in a hospital, of starvation, of medical neglect. But the witnesses were very "unsatisfactory"—*who* was responsible, the IG would never discover. *What* was responsible could, I think, be established, and convicted, but I am afraid the old man is searching for a 'suspect' he can sit down in the witness chair and ply with the routine of cross-examination. The chair will remain empty, and the crimes will go on. . . .

It is very late, and I haven't even begun to tell you the things you want to know. But as I say your essay was sound and sensible to all the subtleties and difficulties of the problem. For my own part I can only plead some strange inner weakness which baffles me and has effectively stopped me from ordering my own impressions. I feel lost and isolated, and cut off even from myself. There has been, I must admit, a shock: the largest events of the world have been for so long essentially intellectual and imaginative matters, so much dramas and fables of the mind, it is not easy suddenly to assimilate them to one's personal course of sight and hearing.

SERGEANT

EUROPEAN NEWSREEL

AMG in Wasteland

"Paderborn, that pleasant town, died in twenty minutes. The RAF did the job." (N. Y. Times, April 12)

"The American Army finally found an admitted Nazi today—and the astonished Lt. Col. Louis Kelly named him acting burgo-master in the city in the absence of any other candidate." (U.P., March 21, from Saarbruck)

Our victory over Germany is complete. American armies stand near the gates of Berlin. German organized resistance has nearly crumbled. This is the military victory.

But we have won another victory also: we have prevented the emergence of any effective revolutionary opposition movement within Germany. The Germans have been bombed and shelled until all contact that might have existed has been destroyed. What the Nazis began has been completed: the population now is an atomized mass of docile, isolated individuals, helplessly craving for protection, tired and benumbed, mere puppets waiting for anybody to pick up the broken wires. This is the political victory.

Last time, when Workers' Councils sprung up all over

Germany, when occupation authorities in the Rhineland had to deal with this rabble, we made a mistake. Think of the difficulties in Belgium and France! No such danger here: "Officials have not had the least trouble with them"; "All have been orderly and cooperative."

Liberal columnists worried about German cartels, industrial monopolies. We have solved the problem completely without so much ideological mish-mash: we simply bombed the plants out of existence. With 60 per cent of Germany's industrial capacity destroyed, how can she dream of the world market? DuPont and Standard Oil need not any longer indulge in the dangerous business of cartel agreements. This is the economic victory.

Rejoice! We have created a vast no-man's land in the center of Europe. What is to become of it? How do we know? How does anybody know? This isn't our business right now. First problems first.

Leon Henderson had been asked to become chief economic advisor to Gen. Eisenhower for Germany. After a visit to Europe he refused the appointment. Asked by a Treasury official upon his return which of the different and divergent plans for Germany, advocated by the various government agencies, would finally win out, Henderson replied: "The Morgenthau plan will win by default. The Treasury plan means chaos and that's what we're going to have." Henderson decided therefore to accept the far easier job of helping to reorganize the Chinese economy. . . .

It is pathetic to read about the utter helplessness of the AMG officials who are locally in charge. Neither their training in the Military Government Schools of West Virginia and other places, nor the reading of *A Bell for Adano* have prepared them for this job. At best they are bewildered youngsters, powerless in face of a tremendous catastrophe which they are not able even to assess, less to control. At worst they are cynics who do not take any initiative and watch the chaos grow . . . "they had it coming to them". . . .

And the chaos grows and grows . . . the tasks become more gigantic every day.

Remember the descriptions of the floods in the Mississippi Valley? This is not one valley but a whole country. What is a flood compared to a bombardment? The catastrophe surpasses imagination, the inferno that is Germany today exceeds so much everything we have known that we have no longer any frame of reference.

This chaos the AMG is supposed to govern. The AMG is expected to be stern and severe; it is expected to root out Nazism, yet it must also prevent any kind of political regrouping, any political activity.

The AMG is helpless in this wasteland that was Germany. It is looking around for helping hands—and is not slow to find them. All those who are part of the "better society", all scoundrels who grew fat under the Nazis, all those who raised their hands everytime the Nazis wanted them, they now crawl out from their dugouts and are received with open arms. "They belong neither to the working class nor to the Nazi military class, but to a newly emerging pseudo-'unpolitical' technical and business group that is determined to keep democracy from being born in the new Germany." (PM, February 18, 1945)

This is how officials are chosen. A town near Aachen has been under heavy artillery fire for 7 days. After it has capitulated, the U. S. major in command slowly drives in a jeep through the main street. People begin to emerge from dugouts and cellars, they are bewildered, dirty, in rags. The major notices an elderly man in a neat black coat with a black bowtie. He stops, hails the man. "Who

are you?" "I was the bookkeeper at the coal mine here." "Are you a Nazi?" "Well . . . well, I am really a member of the *Deutsche Volkspartei* (conservative middle-class party), but one day I found a membership card of the Nazis on my desk, so I signed it, but I have really never been a Nazi at heart."—"Hm, all right, you are now the mayor of this place."

Or this: "In Aachen the AMG dissolved the Nazi party, but it relied on men who had been Nazis to establish a government under American control. Recently it was discovered that we had destroyed Nazism only to supplant it with the domination of a clique that the Germans themselves called the *Herrenklub*, meaning the elite. These businessmen and industrialists were running things to suit themselves and their friends until the workers of the town protested." (*N. Y. Times*, March 26)

In Eschweiler near Aachen, the American authorities appointed a new mayor. A delegation of factory workers explained that in recent years this man had been head of forced-labor camps for Russian and Polish slave workers . . .

The official newspaper of the SS, *Das Schwarze Korps* for February 15, wrote: "In 1933, many suddenly presented receipts certifying that on December, 1932, they paid 75 pfennig into the Party fund. In their drawers they had other certificates of similar content issued by the Conservatives, etc. Only in 1934 were the other parties' certificates reluctantly flushed down the toilets. Now these people have reappeared. They have a new set of statements all prepared. If they have a Russian or Polish servant, they let her confirm that she always was treated well and her employer always listened to the clandestine radio . . ."

Indeed, these people have appeared in droves. They are the ones who now earnestly state to the American authorities that a Rhenish State would be a very nice thing indeed, they are the ones who now are "eager to cooperate."

"Dr. Rudhard Duisberg, manager of the Chamber of Commerce of Frankfurt, is now cooperating with the Allied Military Government . . . W. C. Boehnert, an official of the vast I. G. Farben enterprises, now advises the AMG." (*A.P.* dispatch from Frankfurt, April 7)

"Captain Denison of the G-5 division of the First U. S. Army stated that it might turn out that those who profited most in the early stages of American occupation were those who had done the best under the Nazi regime. He conceded that it would be difficult to curb the activities of these men, since their property and money were their own." (*N. Y. Times*, March 17)

The AMG, set up supposedly to re-educate the Germans in the sweet ways of democracy, already now scouts the horizon for a substitute Fuehrer:

"It is a vision of this chaos that moves some [in AMG] to speak hopefully of 'a German leader' through whom orders to the Germans could be issued and whose prestige would be able to mobilize the German civil service and public services . . . Since there are no civilian leaders in Germany other than the Nazis and it is doubtful whether the people of the United States and of Britain would swallow a former Nazi official . . ., it is probable that the Western allies would favor the selection of some German general." (*N. Y. Times*, March 11)

It has been said of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy that it was a police dictatorship somewhat mitigated by sloppiness. Increase the doses of both dictatorship and sloppiness and you have a fair description of what the AMG regime means in Germany.

Some accounts of the new city Administrations installed by AMG state that they remained only until "the workers

of the town protested." But in how many cases can they protest? In how many cases are they even given a hearing?

The papers have reported that in the days before Frankfurt was taken there had been large-scale riots. According to Gene Currihan of the *N. Y. Times* for March 29, "Several groups of citizens started a revolt. They marched down to the Main river where the troops were dug in and started to disarm them. SS-troops followed them and ended the revolt by shooting down most of the participants." Yet, when U. S. troops finally occupied the city, none of those who had fought against the Nazis were installed in the city hall. Instead "a representative [sic!] council of 15, including a Catholic priest, a Protestant minister, a Jew and a number of businessmen and shopkeepers cooperates with the AMG." (*N. Y. Times*, March 31)

Even Max Lerner had to admit in his recent articles from Germany that it is among the workers that anti-Nazi feelings are strongest. Yet there is hardly any instance of workers' representatives having been allowed to participate in the provisional city administration.*

The ban on any kind of political activity hits the workers and only the workers. For them political groupings are the only means to make their voices heard since trade unions cannot function when industry is at a standstill. The industrialists or the upper crust of Nazi profiteers do not need political organizations: They have their Chambers of Commerce, their industrial organizations, their "loyal" civil servants. The workers have nothing.

There have been numerous strikes recently, the most important one in Bremen in which thousands of war-industry workers, both German and foreign, participated. Yet these strikes never spread. The combined effect of Gestapo terror and Allied bombing saw to that. The workers are standing alone, isolated, powerless, abandoned. And U. S. commentators notice with evident glee that workers' opposition to the Nazis was a myth . . .

. . . Yet it was not a myth to the Nazi People's Court which handed down, in 1943 alone, 5,336 death sentences, of which 1,853 for high treason.

And German youth? It is of a horrible and tragic significance that we receive the first reports of the extent to which German youth has opposed Nazi indoctrination during all these years, at a moment when Allied bombers are sowing the seeds of hatred so deeply that these very same youngsters who bravely opposed the Nazis might easily fall prey to some new Leader who promises to lead them out of the darkness.

Reports which have been published lately (especially in the London *Tribune* and also in a special issue of the *Inside Germany Reports* of the American Association for a Democratic Germany) tell of active oppositional youth movements known by a variety of romantic names, of which *Edelweiss* appears to be the most frequent. This movement apparently had no connection with the old underground but has grown spontaneously out of the Hitler Youth. These youngsters have no definite political program. They are against regimentation, against the state, against the Hitler Youth, against all society. They beat up Hitler-Youth members, they steal weapons, they slash tires. "They want to destroy the Nazi state and they dream of some kind of a new world which they cannot describe more concretely than by saying it should be 'free'." An ONA dispatch from Aachen describes them: "They don't know a thing about democracy, cannot define it, don't know what it is, but they will tell you that they want some kind

*Miners in the little miner towns around Aachen asked the army authorities to allow them to constitute a town council from their ranks, since these are miners' towns and only the miners had refused to join the Nazi party. Request refused . . .

of liberty." One of them, asked why he didn't want to be in the Hitler Youth, replied: "Who the hell wants to spend all his time marching, drilling, doing service and the rest of the damn foolishness? That's no life!"

These boys rebelled instinctively against the lack of freedom and cultural values in the Nazi system; they somehow vaguely felt the need for "doing what you want to do." The existence of such a movement is the living refutation of the pessimists who thought that a totalitarian regime could completely regiment youth and abolish independent thinking.

The Nazis became extremely worried about the *Edelweiss* movement after a number of large-scale raids had not succeeded in stamping it out. Thus, special "Police Camps for the Protection of Youth" had to be established, which are explained in a German police publication as due to "the inclination of juveniles to form cliques, the members of which very soon indulge in an accentuated indifference and indolent attitude to contemporary events, soon become opposed to the Hitler Youth, in certain instances even to National-Socialist philosophy, and finally aim at committing punishable acts." One of these youth concentration camps at Neuwied-on-the-Rhine has a thousand inmates.

But what is to become of these youngsters? They were persecuted by the Nazis and in some vague sort of way hoped that the Allies would bring democracy to Germany. Now they will find that they too are guilty, that they too have to live at sub-standard conditions because they are "evil," that their organizations will be tolerated just as little as before.

They again will be a lost generation and eventually will turn against the world that is enslaving them, to follow a Leader, as their elders have done. Which in turn will give a future Max Lerner or Ehrenburg the occasion to editorialize on the inherent guilt of the German nation.

Germany is a rubble heap. Not a conquering army in quest of living space, but famine and disease will spread from there. Just as war could not be localized, so this disease cannot be localized. It will further and further eat away at the body of Europe. It will attack the very lifestreams of European civilization.

Godspeed, Brave New World!

LOUIS CLAIR

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BABIES

One man from the audience asked Major Lessner: "Would not the punishment of all Germans inflict needless hardship on millions of German children who can in no way be held responsible for the crimes of their elders?"

Major Lessner answered: "Of course it would. These innocent German children are the potential soldiers of World War III, just as the innocent German children who had been fed after 1918 later served in Hitler's army and did remarkably well."

—from a report in the April "Bulletin of the Society for the Prevention of World War III" on a Town-Meeting-of-the-Air debate between Dorothy Thompson and Major Erwin Lessner.

THAT INDISPENSABLE MAN IS HERE AGAIN

It is far easier to get into a war than to get out of it. . . . Do we realize at all how much we lose when we lose Hitler?

—Sir Bernard Pares in "N. Y. Herald-Tribune" for Jan. 18, 1945.

SOCIAL ERROR IN WALL STREET

Shocked by the sudden death of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the stock market experienced on Friday a short interval of indecision at the opening, accompanied by some nervous selling. The reactionary feeling soon evaporated, however, and the list resumed its recovery. . . . There was some doubt in Wall Street about the good taste shown in the heavy buying of public utility stocks, which pushed some to new tops for several years.

—Financial Department of "N. Y. Times", April 16.

Comment

Death of Father Of all the reactions to Franklin Roosevelt's death—including the little girl in Spartansburg, N. C., who said, "Mummy, I believe that with President Roosevelt up there with God, we'll soon win the war"—none struck me as more significant than the remark some one told me one liberal journalist made to another: "Now we'll have to grow up."

The unexpected, to me at least, violence of the public reaction to Roosevelt's death seems to show that he had indeed become the Father of His Country, using the term in the Freudian rather than the Fourth-of-July sense.

A reader sends in a letter from an Ensign in the Navy, which reads in part:

"The word of our President's death still shocks me, three days later. . . . It is not the shock of familiarity suddenly disappearing, nor is it the sadness of seeing people cry. It is a deep and terrifying distress, both at the personal loss and of the consequences. Roosevelt believed in us—as we believed in him. He fought for us, as we fight for him. This is the greatness of democracy.

"He is dead. The steps he made forward must now be marched again, step by step. We and other Americans spent time arguing fine points of ideas. . . . The fine points must now be forgotten. . . . We must mass behind Truman. . . . How much did Roosevelt mean? He was a great friend, and his loss has murdered sleep. It is the end of an era. It is the beginning of a refrigerated, bathtubbed, toastered, newsreel society that runs on electricity alone, without a soul, without a leader, without life.

"I have been amazed at my sorrow. Suddenly I see the collapse of Liberalism, the end of a United World, the death as well of Henry Wallace, of Labor, of Human Rights. We must fight—harder and more sincerely than ever before. And we must try harder to understand, because we are more alone. . . ."

In its sentimentality and its panicky Leader-worship, the Ensign's letter is a naive expression of the liberal reaction to Roosevelt's death. For Roosevelt had become the Father especially of the left-of-center section of American society. This was an unhealthy state of affairs, both politically and psychologically, and would have been objectionable even had Roosevelt been a far wiser and more benevolent Father than he was. Rebellion against paternal authority is the road to maturity for society as for the individual; in this sense, while one naturally is sorry to see any one die, one must regard Roosevelt's death as a gain. Perhaps the American labor movement will now grow up—though the removal of Father by sudden death seems a little too easy a solution.

The Myth of Roosevelt The "New Deal" ended in 1937, when three great turning points occurred: (1) the defeat of the "Little Steel" strike when the

CIO foolishly relied on Roosevelt's support—and didn't get it—against the terrorism of the steel companies, a defeat which crippled the union movement until the outbreak of war caused a labor shortage; (2) the severe depression which began that Fall and lasted until the war refloated the American economy, a depression which came about when Roosevelt, yielding to rightwing pressure, drastically cut down Government spending earlier in the year; (3) Roosevelt's "Quarantine the Aggressor" speech

a few weeks after the first stock-market break, in which he announced a pro-war, interventionist policy. After 1937, with the exception of the Wages & Hours Act the following year, no more major social legislation was enacted. Maneuvering the country into the war (which was, of course, essential for America's national interests under a capitalist system), preparing for war and then fighting the war—these made up the content of Roosevelt's policies in the last eight years of his life. By the time he died, he had emerged as the Commander-in-Chief, the implacable executioner of the Enemy peoples (his last State document, appropriately enough, dealt with the necessity for punishing and controlling Japan for generations), the originator of the appalling "unconditional surrender" policy, which he forced on the reluctant Churchill at Casablanca. He is often compared to Lincoln and Wilson, but there was in him little of that humanity which the former, for all his unscrupulous politicking, often showed, or of the genuine liberal idealism of the latter. In the last few years, he had even grown cynically weary of the pretense of humane and progressive aims, declaring the New Deal was dead, and the Atlantic Charter not to be taken seriously.

Yet when he died, he was mourned as a great humanitarian and the Father of the common people. The myth was still intact. By this, we may measure the deterioration of our politics in the last two generations.

Whither Truman? The political results of Roosevelt's death I think will be all to the good. Because of his charismatic hold over the labor movement, Roosevelt

was able to put over policies, such as the wage-freeze and the No Strike pledge, which a less charming and trusted President could not have. The very fact that Truman is obviously conservative, with few ties with the labor movement and many with Congress, the Democratic machine politicians, and the South—this may be expected to sharpen class antagonisms, light up clearly the real nature of the Administration's labor and social policies, and divide the country more than in the past along the lines of actual economic interests. For the liblabs and the Communists, of course, whose craving for National Unity has become positively lecherous, this is a dismal prospect. They are trying hard to pretend that things are going to be all right. I. F. Stone wrote in *The Nation* of April 21:

"I hate to confess it, but I think Mr. Roosevelt was astute and farsighted in picking Mr. Truman rather than Mr. Wallace as his successor. At this particular moment in our history, Mr. Truman can do a better job. Mr. Wallace's accession might have split the country wide open, not because of Mr. Wallace but because of the feeling against him on the Right. Mr. Truman has the goodwill of both sides. . . ."

It is true that Wallace's accession to the Presidency would have sharpened class conflicts, but it would seem obvious that so will Truman's. For if Wallace is to the Left of Roosevelt, Truman is to the Right. The person of Roosevelt was able to "unite" Left and Right, which in actuality meant to put over Right policies without fatally alienating the Left. But Truman has neither the prestige, the subtle skill in maneuver, nor the personal *charisma* Roosevelt had. With the best will in the world—and Stone's comments shows there is plenty of will—the Wallace-PAC wing of the Democratic Party will probably be unable to hold their followers in line as Truman's undraped Rightist policies evolve.* The result may be a Third Party in 1948.

*It is significant that Truman has already taken advantage of Vinson's leaving the Federal Loan Administration to give that key economic post to a St. Louis banker and a former RFC direc-

This will certainly make our politics more interesting, and possibly even more progressive.

The Erostratian Theory In connection with Lionel Abel's dissection of James Burnham's "Lenin's Heir" elsewhere in this issue, I may note that I

have done a critique of that article myself, entitled "Beat Me, Daddy . . .", in the Spring *Partisan Review*. Burnham may be said to have developed the Erostratian Theory of History, an achievement in no wise inferior to his concept of the Managerial Revolution. This is, briefly, that the bigger crime, the greater the man. My Larousse gives the following on Erostratus: "An obscure citizen of Ephesus who, wishing, after the example of the great conquerors, to make himself immortal by a memorable act of vandalism, burned down the temple of Diana of the Ephesians, one of the seven wonders of the world." It should be added that the reaction of the good citizens of Ephesus was much more sensible than Burnham's: "Indignant, they passed a law which forbade any one to mention the name of Erostratus, on pain of death."

The Freedom Press Case to Date Since George Woodcock's letter in the last issue on the arrest of four leading London Anarchists and the persecution of the Anarchist publishing house, Freedom Press, the preliminary hearings have been held and the trial is just commencing. The hearings showed only that certain soldiers in the British Army had had copies of *War Commentary* and other Anarchist literature in their possession. No attempt was made to show that the soldiers committed any overt act as a result; the mere fact that a journal with a revolutionary line was circulated among soldiers seemed to be considered by the prosecution a punishable offense. (A cable from the Defence Committee has just come in: "Three comrades sentenced nine months defence work continues.")

The prosecution, or rather persecution, of the Anarchists stimulated a group of English intellectuals to sign a letter of protest which has been widely published. Excerpt: "We desire to express our disquiet at the increasing tendency in England today toward the restriction of the liberties of statement and persuasion. This tendency has been demonstrated recently in an instance of arbitrary police action and of other methods of indirect coercion. . . . Most of us do not subscribe to the political theories held by Freedom Press . . . but we respect their right to propagate opinions and regard any attempt to curtail their freedom of speech and writing as a general threat against these liberties. . . ."

Among those signing this statement were T. S. Eliot, Alex Comfort, Stephen Spender, D. S. Savage, Herbert Read, and E. M. Forster. A recent letter from Woodcock notes that Eliot "in spite of his High Church Toryism has shown a remarkable indignation over the whole affair," and continues: "A defense committee has been set up, and again the response has been gratifying. Among the sponsors are, in addition to the writers named above, painters like Augustus John, composers like Michael Tippett, publishers like Victor Gollancz, and politicians like Harold Laski, Richard Acland, and Aneurin Bevan. Thus it looks as though the case will possibly be a major battle in the struggle against totalitarianism over here. It looks as

tor; as I pointed out last month, Roosevelt made Vinson FLA head in order to keep control out of the hands of both the Left and the Right and in his own hands; now Truman has given FLA back to the Jones crowd—"could not have made a better appointment," said Jesse himself.

though we're being put so far back nowadays that we shall have to spend our immediate energies in refighting the liberal campaigns for elementary liberties—and that we shall have to be grateful for the fact that at least many of the liberal writers and radical politicians realize their own ideals are being attacked and are coming out to defend them."

All checks for the defense fund, incidentally, should be made out to "Freedom Press Defense Committee" and sent to: 17 St. George St., Hanover Square, London, W. I., England.

A Banker's Suicide The recent suicide of Leon Fraser, president of the First National Bank of New York and one of the country's leading financiers, is a tragedy which shows once more how acute Marx was when he noted that not the least of the evils of capitalism (and the same could be said for other class systems today) is the way it frustrates the human instincts of the bourgeoisie themselves. I have always heard Fraser spoken of as exceptionally decent and intelligent among Wall Street personalities.

He left a note reading in part: "Except for this mental depression, I have everything to live for. Good friends, lovely business associates, and a good future in this world, with financial ease. But I am unhappy—mentally." Why this "melancholia that I have fought for years?" I suggest a clue may be found in the following from his biography in the *Times* (April 9): "In 1914 . . . he became an instructor in public law at Columbia. . . . Mr. Fraser, then a pacifist, organized a group opposed to the Plattsburg training camps. As a result of his activities, he was dropped as an instructor by the Columbia Board of Trustees. When this country went to war with Germany in 1917, he enlisted in the Army as a private. Sent overseas at his own request, Mr. Fraser emerged from the war as a major and a judge advocate in the A.E.F. He received the D.S.M. and was made a grand officer of the Legion of Honor . . ."

Is it far-fetched to speculate that this sudden abandonment of his pacifism once the United States entered the war, with the accompanying swift rise to the heights of military success, produced a feeling of guilt which Leon Fraser never overcame, which grew deeper as he rose to the heights of business success, and that it finally became too much for him as World War II showed him what kind of a system he had recklessly invested his human capital in? For the evolution from the discharged pacifist instructor to the international banker was as reckless in human terms as it was prudent in worldly terms—a conjunction not so infrequent as one might suppose, though it rarely shows itself so dramatically as in Fraser's case.

Silone and the Communists Elsewhere in this issue we print an article sent us from Rome by Ignazio Silone. Its central thesis is an admirable one, and much in need of being stressed today: that we Socialists must recapture a sense of fraternity and human solidarity. "Socialism that becomes an end in itself," writes Silone, "and ceases to act as channel and instrument for a radical humanization of our earthly environment, has not escaped contamination by nihilism. Such socialism is in danger of degenerating into a horrible technocracy." Very true. But what foot does this shoe fit, exactly? Silone is at pains to indicate his disapproval of the Catholic Church, but he never mentions that much more menacing form of modern reaction, the one whose Pope lives in the Kremlin.

The reason for this reticence is, of course, that since his return from exile, Silone has become one of the leaders

of the Italian Socialist Party and has gone along with Nenni's policy of a united front with the Communists.

Perhaps the fullest expression of his present attitude is the following, from an article printed in *Avanti* on October 31 last:

"The varying historical forms which the working-class movement has taken in different countries by no means alters the basic truth that it is merely a question of differentiated forms of the same general problem. This truth gives meaning to, and guarantees the continuation of, that unity of action which has joined Socialists with Communists. . . . In countries like England, Sweden and Switzerland, unity of action means an agreement with Soviet Russia. . . . For countries like Italy, unity of action is a matter of both domestic and foreign policy. One of the most urgent present-day problems is to give organic and permanent form to the collaboration of Western democratic socialism with Soviet Russia."

This is a shocking statement coming from the author of *The Seed Beneath the Snow* and the coiner of the phrase, "Red Fascism." To consider the totalitarian regime which Stalin has created in Russia, with its police terror, its forced labor camps, its huge and increasing class differences, its denial of the most elementary civic and individual liberties, its monolithic political structure, its crude nationalism—to consider this as a variant of socialism is to strip the latter term of any meaning. And to recommend "permanent and organic" collaboration between democratic socialists and Stalinists is to try to create a political centaur, half man and half beast. As my articles on Greece have shown, I am not opposed to working with the Communists under certain circumstances—though in Italy, where they have consistently backed monarchy and reaction (they recently opposed divorce!) and are now the backbone of the disgraceful Bonomi government, I should say a rupture with them was long ago indicated for the Italian Socialists.

But Silone goes much farther, in the above, than merely advocating tactical cooperation on certain specific issues; he speaks of "organic and permanent" collaboration. Why has he changed his evaluation of Stalinism? (I assume he has changed it, since otherwise his failing to mention Stalinism in his denunciation of modern leftwing nihilism would be due merely to his present tactical collaboration with the Communists, and would painfully suggest his own sentence: "The more sincere and modest politicians justify these falsifications in the high name of tactics.") For the sake of Silone's own reputation, as well as for our enlightenment, let us hope he will soon tell us frankly why he has come to include Stalinism in the socialist movement.

WE COULDN'T HAVE PUT IT BETTER OURSELVES

The TVA . . . was constructed at a cost of \$750,000,000—the cost of waging this war for less than four days.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt, message to Congress, January 6.

NO! NO! NOT THAT!

To the Editor of the New York Times:

I was startled by the letter of Anita De Mars when she suggested using German prisoners' blood plasma for our wounded American men. Please, anything but that! We women will hurry to the nearest station to donate all the blood that is needed. Good pure blood, full of clean corpuscles of love, charity and kindness. But never must we permit our menfolk to be injected with the fiendish and ruthless blood of the enemy. Spare them that humiliation.

Wallingford, Conn.

Marjorie Dugdale Asho

—"N. Y. Times", Jan. 2, 1945.

Hurry! Hurry Hurry! Get your good pure American blood! Chock-full o' that nutty vitamintested love and kindness! Each and every corpuscle is cleaned, tested and cellophane-wrapped! Accept no fiendish substitutes—look for the red, white and blue label!

F. D. R.

The best brief evaluation of Franklin D. Roosevelt as a political leader that I have seen is the one in George S. Schuyler's remarkable weekly column in "The Pittsburgh Courier" for April 25. It is so good, in fact, that I reprint it here. As is his wont, Mr. Schuyler says just about all there is to be said on the subject. It might be added that Mr. Schuyler is colored, and "The Pittsburgh Courier" is the leading Negro newspaper in the country. Nothing approaching his article in intellectual acuteness and moral courage has appeared in any white journal of comparable circulation. I refrain from deducing from this the racial superiority of the colored people. But I'm sorely tempted.—ED.

The death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt was the signal for such a hurricane of mushy sentimentalism, sheer bunk, sugary platitudes, and assorted hokum as America has not seen in many, many years. This sort of thing occurs whenever a person of great prominence passes away, and realists have learned to bear with it and remain calm and detached until the flowery obituaries are driven from the public prints by the march of time. Now that the statements of leaders have been printed, the columns and editorials written and read, and the pictures of the funeral ceremony widely circulated, we can get down to calm appraisal of the fruits of Mr. Roosevelt's long tenure at the White House, especially as they relate to the colored brethren.

The general trend of his administration was toward centralization of control of national economy through the various alphabetical agencies with the announced objective of ending unemployment, poverty and want. When the war economy got under way—under the euphemism of defense measures—there were more people actually unemployed than there were when Mr. Roosevelt entered the White House. Decreases in poverty and want were brought about by gigantic Federal financing of "made" work at public expense, resulting in a staggering national debt, now greatly increased by war expenditures which will require generations to pay off, if at all. It is absolutely fair to state that not one of these efforts was administered without color discrimination, concerning which Mr. Roosevelt made no statements, wrote no documents, and used none of his great political power to diminish or avert.

I am thinking now of the National Recovery Administration, the various public works bureaus, Boulder Dam, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the NYA, the National Housing Administration, the Home Owners Loan Corporation, the AAA, and sundry other agencies which were supposed to benefit all citizens alike, regardless of color. As one familiar with the files of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People during the entire period, I am sure that no one can show where the jim-crow pattern was abandoned or any steps taken to eliminate racial segregation. What concessions were won by Negroes toward the goal of full equality came as a result of terrific pressure on their part. This was especially true of housing and the FEPC.

Mr. Roosevelt's Department of Justice did next to nothing in prosecuting officials barring qualified Negroes from the polls, although the NAACP supplied numerous affidavits. In at least two instances when Negroes were kidnapped and transported across State lines, this department refused to invoke the Lindbergh Law.

There is no record that F. D. R. used his vast powers

and prestige to influence his Party in the South to change its traditional policy of disfranchising Negroes. If so, I would like to see it.

If he used his prestige to get Negro cripples admitted to Warm Springs Sanatorium, there is no record of it.

Unthinking and ignorant people tend to confuse what a man says with what he does. Mr. Roosevelt, a charming man with a remarkable and demagogic gift of phrase, had an unusual faculty in this direction.

One of the worst of his acts which set a most dangerous precedent for all minorities was the herding of over 100,000 Japanese-Americans—mostly native-born citizens—into concentration camps solely on racial grounds—since citizens of Italian, German, Austrian and Hungarian extraction were not treated in this manner, although many of them carried on active aid to the enemy.

This is equally true of his failure to inaugurate a new military and naval policy with regard to colored Americans. When he started building the new Army in 1940, we were not at war, so there was no reason why the Commander-in-Chief could not have ordered "no segregation." No national interest would have been imperiled. Although repeatedly begged to order such a policy, he refused. It is ridiculous to state that his orders would have been disobeyed by high Army and Navy officers. He simply catered to Southern prejudices.

Nor is all the whoopde la about his marvelous foreign policy justified by the facts. His State Department (and he was always his own Secretary of State) followed its traditional policy of power politics and dollar diplomacy. While Latin-American dictatorships that had defaulted on their loans were given new ones by the Export-Import Bank, little Liberia was compelled to pay the interest on her debt promptly.

In sum, Mr. Roosevelt was an enlightened representative of America's Sixty Families, who are more strongly entrenched than ever. Undoubtedly he was personally without color prejudice, but as an ambitious and extremely capable party politician, the record shows that he was unwilling to sacrifice mundane interests to high principle. He gave the Nation new hope by his policies and pronouncements, and fostered greater national unity. He appointed many Negro officeholders, but almost exclusively in segregated offices. Practically speaking, he probably went as far as he could for the Negro—but it was not nearly as far as many gullible Negroes thought. Nor does what he did justify the fulsome praise which colored American leaders gave upon his passing.

GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

THE MILITARY MIND (Cont'd.)

The world rings with your praises; better still, Generals Marshall, Eisenhower and Bradley have all personally commended you.

—Order of the Day issued by General Patton to 19th Tactical Air Command, March 30.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTREMELY MILD PANIC

With the U. S. Ninth Army in Germany, April 10: American and British armies will go to Berlin, or as far eastward in other parts of Germany as may prove necessary before the Reich capitulates, even though in doing so they will be entering the zone that the Red Army will eventually occupy. . . . This will be a great relief to the feelings of the fighting men of the Ninth Army, as no doubt of other American armies that had been in a mild panic lest international considerations require them to put a full stop to the vivid page of history they have been writing with their steel pens clenched in armored fists.

—John MacCormack in "N. Y. Times" for April 11.

WITH THE HEAVY THINKERS: BENES DEPT.

The way to liberated Czechoslovakia, leads through Moscow. Soon all Europe will be free. [Pres. Benes of Czechoslovakia, in Moscow, March 17.]

NIHILISM

A TRAGIC element is implicit in the situation of every new governing class. This is already apparent in the situation of us Italians in this transition period.

Are we now to forget the honorable goals we set ourselves during the years of oppression? To allow our ideas for a regeneration to evaporate in after-dinner phrases? To reward the proud and courageous actions of those who resisted the dictatorship with . . . good-conduct medals? Once tyranny is overthrown are we to yield to that so-called law according to which every popular uprising begins as freedom and ends in slavery?

In short, shall we be released from the role of victims of arbitrary force, only to become persecutors ourselves? And the acts we called criminal when they came from our enemies and were damaging to us—shall we begin to hail them as virtuous when we or our friends perform them?

These questions involve the whole outcome of the revolution now in progress in Italy. They must be dealt with boldly, however uncomfortable or shocking this procedure may be for bigoted antifascists. Scandals of this sort have got to occur. Our present job is to learn how to recognize the symptoms and forms of the decadence, and to take energetic measures against its spread.

Nobody expects a democracy to develop without competition among parties, ideas and interests, or safe from the dangers implicit in all competition. But no struggle will yield the healthy fruit of liberty so long as each participant—or the majority—conceals his private objectives and means, and reverses the order of gravity of the questions to be solved, by putting fictitious, misleading or secondary goals before concrete and urgent human needs. Unfortunately it is more difficult every day even for the expert observer of the Italian scene to decide which of the competitors is *not* playing with false cards. Democrats masquerade as socialists, reactionaries as liberals, clericals as free-thinkers, reformists as communists, foreign agencies as ultra-patriotic parties. The more sincere and modest politicians justify these falsifications in the high name of tactics. Indeed, in most of the parties, today, tactics has supplanted thinking and planning. "Tactics" is the first word that sucklings learn to lisp in party foundling-homes.

In estimating the seriousness of this decadence we must note that it is not confined to Italy, but affects all countries. It is not limited to the sphere of politics, but is universal and all-embracing. A widespread and deep-seated phenomenon of degeneration, it was first defined by Nietzsche, who called it nihilism.

Nihilism is the most conspicuous trait of contemporary life. Nihilism is sacrificing oneself for a cause one does not believe in, while pretending to believe in it. Nihilism is the conviction that there is really nothing behind any faith or doctrine, and that therefore success alone matters. Nihilism is the identification of the good, the just and the true with one's personal interests. But where there is no shared spiritual order, the foundations of social living

are absent; the life of society then becomes a question of force, politics a savage contest. Without doubt fascism has been the most radical and fullest manifestation of nihilism in our times. The public life to which it has given rise displays heroic sentiments that have no root in conscience—a pompous and noisy expression of sham feelings. But fascism was not dropped upon us from heaven. It was a product rather than the cause of the old Italian nihilism.

In this respect as in others, however, it has been outdone by German fascism. German national-socialism has deservedly been called the nihilist revolution. Its most lucid visionary, Ernst Junger, forecast the hero of the nationalist-socialist palingenesis in a new type of proletarian: depersonalized, standardized, brainless, heartless, soul-less—a true living robot. For this creature, the fullest liberty would consist in his mechanical enrollment in the coming sequence of civil and imperialistic wars. Heroism, for him and his fellow-robots, would grow really sublime as it departed from the traditional human realm and approached that of the more perfected machines.

The military defeat of fascism would not, then, mean the suppression of nihilism. Nihilism is not an ideology. It is not an aberration affecting only a few groups and classes. I cannot name a single contemporary movement or institution that is entirely immune from it.

The following confession comes from the writings of a Catholic priest: "We have reduced the virtues to a single one: Prudence; and the tactics of militant Christians (even they have their tactics!) to the avoidance of persecution." Utilitarian religiosity is nihilistic. Those who urge a return of man to God because this would contribute to the maintenance of public order, those who say "We need God," as a general might say "We need armored trucks," are preachers of nihilism. And many of those who claim a moral authority superior to all partisan divisions, are in practice nihilistic authorities. We have heard vehement protest and anathema flung down from the most authoritative pulpits of the Church whenever the interests of the clergy have been offended. But we have never heard any condemnation of the violence and tyranny used in Catholic States by Catholic authorities against their own non-Catholic opponents.

And how differently have we ourselves behaved? The truth is that we are not immune from the same sickness. Socialism that becomes an end in itself and ceases to act as the instrument for a radical humanization of our environment, has not escaped contamination by nihilism. Such socialism is in danger of degenerating into a horrible technocracy.

And liberty itself may be nihilistic. Liberty not at the service of life is transformed into slavery; it operates in the void and culminates in madness, suicide and crime, as happens with Dostoevsky's nihilistic heroes.

No wonder the more sensitive artists have shrunk from contemplating the reality surrounding them. Look at it carefully and it reveals itself as mere appearance, synonymous with nothingness. No wonder they have looked for a way out through creation of a separate world of pure form. But their art has added a new feature to the nihilistic portrait of our era, and the best among them are, without being aware of it, mere sepulchre-whiteners.

It is clear that salvation, the rediscovery of the sacred value of life, the recognition of a common scale of values intimately and sincerely acknowledged by everyone, the founding of a common civilization, of a common solidarity, of an evident and undeniable brotherhood—such salvation cannot, will never be the outcome of a theory or a technique, or of legislative or pedagogic expedients. These things are the tokens of great and true revolutions. These things advance by bitter, dark and painful paths, as has always been the case, and they end in a reconstruction *ex novo* of human relationships in accordance with a reconquered sense of earthly life.

It is not a mere act of faith when I insist that the nihilist gangrene has not corrupted the entire social body. Let me tell you a story. An old peasant woman from the

province of Piacenza was arrested by the Gestapo for having sheltered an escaped Croat prisoner. The cross-examination of this woman showed clearly that she had not known the nationality of the prisoner, had not known what or where Croatia was and did not know why or with whom Croatia was at war. But she had known that she ran considerable risk in helping that hungry, shabby man. "Then why did you do it?" the judge asked her. To which the old woman replied, "Isn't he, too, a mother's son?"

In the midst of war this episode may seem absurd. But such is the absurdity of wheat fields lying between enemy trenches.

IGNAZIO SILONE

(Translated by Irma Brandeis)

The Political Lag of Commonwealth

Daniel Bell

Author's Note: This article was written in early April and set up in type before the death of President Roosevelt. While the political perspective shifts considerably with the emergence of Truman, the basic problem, I feel, remains the same and the body of the article has not been altered. At the end I have added a short note, attempting to project this analysis into the future.—D. B.

THROUGHOUT the country, small numbers of articulate, independent-minded labor and left individuals are uniting in political action as "Commonwealth Federation"—or talking about it. In Michigan, a political party has been active for nearly a year. And while it failed to obtain more than a tiny percentage of the votes in the sole district where it entered a Congressional candidate, this can be ascribed, in the main, to the tremendous pressure of the official labor leadership for the Democratic party as well as the campaign immaturity of the MCF. Another party has been formed in the state of Washington; a third, which aborted early, was founded in Chicago last year; a fourth group has been started in Wisconsin; discussions are under way among small groups of people in Ohio and upstate New York.

At this writing, there is a will, if not yet the way. But although these movements are slight, they are encouraging. They reflect the restless mood of rank-and-file elements with the Administration's policies, while the top labor leadership still clings to the illusion of being on the "in" of big-time politics. They seek independent action, with no commitments to Roosevelt or the old-line parties. Their programmatic statements, mildly socialist, avoid the traditional and doctrinaire slogans, and emphasize the utilization of our productive capacity for full employment.

I.

In its origins, the "Commonwealth" movement resembles such movements of social protest of the nineteenth

century as the Workingmen's Party of George Henry Evans, the National Labor Party of William Sylvis and A. C. Cameron and similar groups. It stands in this native radical tradition and draws historical nourishment from it.

Yet, even at this early stage in its development, Commonwealth shares another, tragic, resemblance to these earlier men of good will: a failure to understand the historical development of American capitalism and to define a realistic relationship to it.

These earlier social protest movements saw exploitation, economic crises, and poverty. Their solutions, however, were agrarian reform, cooperatives and labor bank schemes, money tinkering, etc. Sylvis, one of the best of the early labor leaders, could write cogent analyses of the growing concentration of wealth; yet he believed that the need for trade unionism would disappear when monetary reform was achieved. Weitling could appreciate and translate into American terms Marx's theory of classes, yet his solution was to bypass the power of capital by creating labor exchange banks organized on the principle of a 'super-market.' Some proposals were quite ingenious, such as Edward Kellogg's plan to free capital from banking control and make it available for productive use, interest-free, through a scheme that can roughly be described as a 'single-tax' on interest. But all this was merely chipping at the scaffolding of capitalism while the towers of corporate America rose, untouched, from within.

Any 'left' movement arising in America today must have a clear image of the world we live in. The basic social fact, although there are certain subtle ramifications, is that America is entering a new historical phase, an age of Imperialism made more sophisticated and streamlined (and, parenthetically, with a 'liberal' face) by the conscious role of the State in taking the lead in defining the areas of interest and trade and in underwriting loans and credits, functions formerly performed by private groups—

a period where the American economy is coterminous with the world economy.

In our past, the politics of the United Fruit Co. and the economies of the Banana Republics had little impact on the internal structure of the economy. Today Imperialism straddles the country from ocean to ocean and pulls us beyond. Our political frontiers are no longer the Atlantic and the Pacific, but the Vistula, the Bahrein Gulf and the wastes of Tibet. And the historical point is that there can no longer be any purely domestic issue for America. Foreign policy is the drag anchor of all policy today. Everything else is linked to it in a great chain of political being.

None of this consciousness seems to have impressed itself on Commonwealth. The Michigan Commonwealth Federation, the most developed of the groups, issues a twenty-four page statement of principles and platform with just one short paragraph devoted to international affairs. Lip service is paid to the idea of a "world organization of free nations", without any reference to the specific political contexts of today. Even in its avowal of a world organization, the formulation is disembodied and abstract, with no reference to the foreign policy of any nation, let alone America. It is simply, let us have one. The section reads like a clumsy attempt to 'get this danged thing out of the way and let's get down to real business' sort of thing. And the 'real business' is that old devil Monopoly, little more.

The reasons for this, lie, I believe, in the origins and intellectual influences of Commonwealth. The movement has arisen as a political tropism to the Administration's labor policy. Its initial focus, therefore, is the domestic scene. In hammering out a policy, it has few places to turn. The top labor hierarchy is tied to the Administration; the radical parties either talk a strange, quarrelsome gibberish, or have been compromised by past mistakes and failures. Yet there is an obvious inspiration, the vigorous and growing young Cooperative Commonwealth Federation just across the border in Canada. Its energetic leadership has fused the intellectuals, labor and the farmers; it operates independently of the old parties; it has made striking gains by offering a socialistic domestic program in crisp, new language. The workers in Windsor, where the CCF is quite strong, just across the river from Detroit, are little different from the American workers. Many are American auto workers who crossed the river for jobs. Why would not an American Commonwealth appeal to Detroit workers as the Canadian Commonwealth appeals to the Windsor workers. So the effort, mechanical and unimaginative, to imitate the CCF.

Yet the American situation is hardly comparable to Canada. The CCF is an opposition party to a conservative regime; it loosely unites the labor leadership with disparate elements, because it is in opposition. In the United States, the labor leadership forms part of the Administration. Its role is to stultify protest rather than direct it. In Canada the CCF can utilize, as it has skillfully, the resentment which the traditional opposition can muster. Here

the labor groups are bound to the Administration, share responsibilities for the policies of the war agencies, and play politics with various Administration wings. The second-string labor leaders who do not have the political and social obligations that the top layer has, and consequently are more ready and eager to build a Commonwealth movement, are in a dilemma. For the men who block them are their own leaders, and usually the men who control their jobs. During a political campaign, these second-string leaders are forced to toe the mark and accept a laid-down political line, whether they like it or not. The political logic of the situation would be either to convert the top leadership to their policies, or else to organize to oust them. In the UAW, where the situation is most acute, they have done neither. And the Michigan Commonwealth Federation reflects in part this impasse. Its active leadership logically must be drawn from the UAW. But many men on the international payroll fear to join because they might be fired, or forced to work for PAC. MCF's chairman Matthew Hammond is able to carry on primarily because he has an independent 'base' of his own. And even then, he is subject to repeated pressures by the top CIO leadership.

In Canada, under the impact of the war, a new industrial revolution is only first beginning — Canada is the 'Urals' of the British war economy, its expanded steel and aluminum production is building planes and tanks for the Allied armies—and many of the major political issues there are still along populist and agrarian lines, a throw-back to the America of the 1890's and early 1900's. Significantly, the main strongholds of the CCF are in the agrarian west, in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, etc. Moreover, Canada's role in world politics, at this historical juncture, is entirely different than that of America. This has allowed CCF to fend off foreign policy as an electoral or programmatic issue. The CCF was committed to a pro-war policy by only one vote, I believe, and for a long time it sidestepped the issue of drafting soldiers for combat overseas by demanding conscription of wealth, although in the "zombie" crisis this year it backed overseas conscription. Its emphasis, however, has been, and naturally so, on domestic issues.

On this side of the border, when the wage freeze, the big business domination of the war departments and war agencies and the War Labor Board straitjacket became repeated stimuli to independent labor action, the success of the CCF was a magic lure. Commonwealth's lack of opinion or interest in foreign policy, therefore, was no accident, but a mechanical reflection of the immediate irritant at home and a mechanical adaptation of the CCF model. On an unthinking basis, the Commonwealth groups have gone along.*

* I am ignoring, as out of the context of this article, a discussion of the domestic platforms of the Commonwealth groups. In their general enunciations they differ little from the proposals of the National Resources Planning Board or the mixed economy planks of the Liberal Party. The MCF's major statement on postwar national issues repeats almost verbatim a proposal made last year by Walter Reuther, calls for a "Peace Production Board composed of representatives of government, labor, management, farmers and consumers to direct the planning of total production for peace." This represents to a large degree an uncritical acceptance of the Hansen theory of government as the balance wheel of the economy.

II.

Commonwealth is being organized because "Roosevelt has moved to the right."* Curiously, though, there has been no discussion or evaluation of the motivations of this action. Roosevelt has been pro-labor. He has earned the hatred of a large section of the upper classes—and this cannot be glossed over as mere stupidity or "not knowing their *real* interests." Now he has moved to the right. Surely this is not a matter of whim or belated capitalist conscience. The reasons derive, I believe, from the institutional pulls of foreign policy. And only from an analysis of this development can a realistic left program develop.

Throughout its early career the Roosevelt administration was a case history in political schizophrenia. It was not only the obvious pulls between labor and capital, but as important, the subtle conflicts caused by an internationally-minded Administration creating, as Roosevelt did in 1933, a closed national economy operating on a near-autarchic pattern. The sabotage of the World Economic Conference is a clue to our role in the world economy then. The Lend-Lease reports of today show a complete 180 degree turn of the wheel, from provincial industrialist to world banker. The two events are, I feel, perhaps the most significant landmarks of Roosevelt's economic policies.

The war forced a social crisis. Either the Nazis would dominate Europe, threatening the balance of forces created after the last war, or the American-Anglo forces would have to fight. And if it was the latter choice, the economy had to be overhauled and all sections geared to war. Two rigorous alternatives were posed by its immanent logic: Roosevelt could seek to carry through a social revolution, subordinating the economic power of the capitalists to the political direction of the New Deal, or move into a political marriage with the forces that had opposed him. Roosevelt was certainly unprepared for the first; if not only ideologically, it was also the social fact that the New Deal was a heterogeneous grouping without a solid class base of its own. The second path which Roosevelt took as the line of least resistance, brought to the fore the economic oligarchies.

In this shift, Roosevelt had the backing of an important section of American capitalism—the finance groups. Finance capitalism had always been strongly internationalist. It had strong ties with The City; after the last war it had sought, unsuccessfully, to take over the role of private world banker. In the early New Deal years, a large number of finance functions had been taken over by the State, internally by the R.F.C., externally by the Export-Import Bank, while the narrowing investment areas of industrial expansion, made the finance group more dependent upon government bonds. The financial groups were ardently interventionist, their interests linked with the fate of the world economy; provincial industrial elements, with no such ties, supported America First. Wall Street was largely for Willkie in 1940, but by 1944, when it seemed as if Dewey were straddling on foreign policy, it swung largely behind Roosevelt. (Public expression of this swing

can be checked in the editorial views of the *N. Y. Times* and Walter Lippmann, the major pundits of finance capital, both of whom came out for Roosevelt in the last weeks of the election). Soon after the war began, the major steel, oil, and aluminum interests dominated the key war agencies and their representatives have been placed in key positions dealing with the future of Axis industry.*

To carry through the war Roosevelt now had to demand "national unity", i.e. the subordination of labor to capital. The image of Roosevelt's America became a "democratic corporativism" which locks together through contractual compulsion the trade unions and industry. But *national unity* and *war economy* had a certain dynamic of its own: it meant the creation of a rational over-all plan which would flatten various vested interests, labor or industrial, to achieve production goals. Two groups worked out these rational implications. One was composed of certain financial elements, whose thinking was not limited by the need to maintain competitive positions of particular vested interests. (The key Controlled Materials Plan, which regulates the allocation of basic raw materials through a series of priority spigots was drawn up by Ferdinand Eberstadt, a Wall Street man then in W.P.B. The *N. Y. Times*, with a "longer view" called, and rationally so, for a labor draft to allocate manpower; after all, in the capitalist process manpower as well as materials are commodities.) The second group was the Communists. With no basic loyalty to labor or radical social change, and an interest only in the mechanics, not the morality and equity, of efficient production, the Communists have consciously lined up on the same side of the fence with the finance elements on a whole range of issues, from foreign trade and Imperialism, to no-strike pledges, the labor draft and postwar military conscription. (Browder's *Teheran*, is, I believe, the perfect blueprint of The Monopoly State.)

National Unity however, is no longer purely a war measure. It is a vital postwar need if America is to assume a dominant imperialist position in world affairs. This monolithism is necessary if Roosevelt is to bargain with Stalin and Churchill, and have those agreements retain any permanency. Both Stalin and Churchill are carrying out foreign policies long shaped by historical considerations. America is only now formulating some continuing sense of national interest, defining those areas in which it is to hold sway. Dissenting voices cannot be allowed to question those decisions if the partitioning of the peace is to be carried through. So the State Department mobilizes the entire war propaganda apparatus to sell a partisan policy to the country, while everywhere the smear word *perfectionist* assumes the same odious connotation as isolationist did in prewar years.

Thus in a Big Power world, external relations in all countries becomes all important, and domestic issues every-

* On this point, I can't resist adding a footnote on Samuel Grafton, the pro-Administration columnist whose writing is as colorless as his black-and-white judgments. Seeking to answer the charge that the President has moved to the right, he evolved this neat dialectic: "Roosevelt's actions [in appointing Stettinius and Clayton, and later at Yalta] prove that he is moving neither left nor right, but forward."

* Various publications have reported that key OSS posts and intelligence reports dealing with Germany have been written by important finance and industrial representatives; *vide*: Allen Dulles of Sullivan and Cromwell and Paul Mellon of the Mellon Empire. A War Dept. Commission announced early in April to deal with the results of bombing on German factories contains J. P. Morgan and Standard Oil representatives. General Lucius Clay, who will be Eisenhower's deputy in charge of Germany took along as aides Ralph Cordiner, Vice-President of General Electric and Graham Howard of General Motors.

where are judged by their relevance to and its effect on the external power structure. This is as true for France as it is for Britain, for Russia and the United States.

III.

What does this mean for Commonwealth? Its orientation is almost completely around the labor issue at home. It charges that labor has been discriminated against while industry rolls up huge profits, that the War Labor Board has usurped the functions of trade unions etc. But all this is merely description, not analysis. It assumes, in a startlingly ingenuous fashion, that the labor issue is an independent chain dangling loose on the home front while the President is preoccupied with other matters. But the decisions on labor are not made in an independent frame of reference; nor is any social issue today autonomous; they are all linked to the drag anchor of foreign policy. Labor must be kept in line because of the marriage with the dominant economic groups, *a marriage which will not end in divorce at the end of the war*. The usurpation of labor's function in wartime is no chance event, but a logical outgrowth of the need to prevent it from setting its own conditions of work. And this will carry over too: the social power of unionism must not be allowed to interfere with the political designs of Imperialism.* And more than likely, the labor movement will be beguiled or bribed by the lure of "expanded foreign trade," assured jobs and guaranteed incomes.

For American capitalism, extensive foreign markets are an imperative necessity. It seems likely that the domestic market may not be able to absorb the expanded gross national product; larger profits can be obtained abroad than at home; in a crisis, foreign markets offer the only basis for a reasonable level of employment, if the profit system is to be maintained.

If we are to plan for 60,000,000 jobs and a gross national product of \$175,000,000,000 — the magic figures supplied by Henry Wallace — then the other side of the ledger has to be balanced too, for in that case *we have to find markets for \$90,000,000,000 more goods than were absorbed in 1938-9*. In 1938-39, the gross national product was \$85,000,000,000. It is proposed that we more than double this figure to achieve the \$175,000,000,000 gross national product which goes along with the 60,000,000 jobs. How much of this can be absorbed in the domestic market? Even the most optimistic economists — those who believe that foreign trade and employment will bloom under the Teheran-Yalta sun, and I take as a specific case in point F. J. Meyers of the *New Masses* — do not think we can absorb more than an additional \$50,000,000,000. *This leaves \$40,000,000,000 for which foreign markets have to be found*. (Or leaving the Government as the major purchaser, a condition which if long existent means the end of private capitalism.)

U. S. Foreign trade up to 1939 never went much over 10 percent of the total product. This new state of affairs,

* The ideology for this is already fashioned, and the appealing line that "Labor is now Big Business and must realize its responsibilities to the 'community'" is not only tailor-made for the middle class, but has trapped a number of liberals such as Stuart Chase and others.

the finding of foreign markets for \$40,000,000 worth of goods, means that *almost 25 percent of our production would have to go into foreign trade*. This has vast and tremendous implications for the nature of the economy. If this vastly expanded trade is not possible — and at the moment it seems likely only at the expense of the British, which would be a political disaster for the U. S. — then the alternative path would seem to be a Permanent War Economy.

Can Labor maintain an independent role within the framework of an active American Imperialism? Equally important, can unionism as an integral part of the capitalist economic process maintain its economic position without the crutch of Imperialism? The old-line AFL Boilermakers, the progressive CIO Shipyard Workers and the Communist National Maritime Union are committed to and are actively working for a big Navy and merchant marine program for postwar jobs. The NMU is considering a postwar no-strike pledge on the invitation of Basil Harris, President of the U. S. Ship lines, who promises them stable contracts in return for such a pledge.* Harry Bridges' Longshoremen's Union is evolving a scheme whereby it would eliminate the stevedore contractors, take over all relations with the shipping lines, set up a yearly contractual fee, and then set wages and hours for its own membership. The union itself becomes the employer and makes direct its stake in the expansion of freight and shipping. It is doubtful whether the Steel union can achieve the guaranteed annual wage it demands, without the steel industry requiring a steady backlog of foreign orders to maintain production, for industries dependent on steel have those foreign markets. Even the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, in an industry on the fringes of the economy, is looking to foreign markets in South America, to stabilize and preserve the New York dress industry.

Foreign trade and foreign markets means the creation and maintenance of "stable social regimes" in Latin America, the Middle East, the Orient and Europe. And the definition of "stable regimes" does not mean those that can command the loyalty of the people, but those willing to play ball with the ruling powers. Now that Ibn Saud has granted oil concessions to American companies, it is in the interest of "stability" to see that Ibn Saud's regime is preserved. And it is in the similar interests of stability that Ibn Saud's fanatical anti-semitism is listened to and becomes a determining factor in the disposition of Palestine.

All this means a basically conservative mold to the world, and a conservative mold at home. It means a "responsible" labor leadership, one that may quibble on Little Steel, but not challenge Yalta. It strengthens further the growing "official" quality of American life, the increasing bureaucratization of controls and the making of decisions on the top, with no opportunities for those below to challenge or alter those decisions.

* Basil Harris is an interesting example of the new imperialist businessman. His shipping line takes space in hundreds of newspapers to feature testimonials from John W. Davis, Hugh Gibson and other prominent men on the need for foreign trade. At the same time, Mr. Harris, as an enlightened businessman serves as chairman of a dinner for the Communist Ferdinand Smith and attends the NMU leadership school.

These are the real problems Commonwealth faces. One can no longer break down Roosevelt's policies and accept one part and reject the other. All have been integrated behind the driving force of foreign policy. Protests on the labor issue alone are meaningless. In fact protests in this form are welcome, for increasingly, over the past years, the forms of resentment have been institutionalized. A type of organization such as the I.W.W. is no longer possible in American life. As more and more areas of living become organized, each organization deepening its own stake in the society, the resentments are channelized into these organizations.* Labor's protests and militancy are drawn into the big labor organizations where it goes through the innumerable and formalized routines for settlement.

The choice then is either to go along with the whole of Roosevelt's Policies — an acceptance of the Big Power world and an imperialist role, with its ever constant provocation for war — or a political decision that rejects it completely and works out the only meaningful alternative, a program of democratic and internationalist Socialism. That is the historical issue for Commonwealth.

Mrs. Roosevelt once asked David Lewis, national secretary of CCF, "To what do you attribute the success of the Commonwealth Federation in Canada?" "To the fact," replied Lewis, "that we have no President Roosevelt there."

Now the "left" energies have been released, and the question is, will they be set into motion. It was apparent from the first that the accession of Truman meant that the organizational Democrats would return to control. (Drew Pearson reports that the direct wire from the White House to the Democratic National Committee Office, which had been disconnected shortly after the campaign, has been reinstalled.) National Chairman Robert Hannegan will be able to use freely the patronage whip to consolidate his control. This means that Henry Wallace, Sidney Hillman, the CIO and the assorted liberals will be forced to seek a new home, unless they make a last, desperate effort to capture the primaries and the convention.

More important, Truman will not be able to give Labor any more than Roosevelt gave—and in recent years it's been damned little—nor can he offer them the patrician hand of friendship which charmed some parvenu labor leaders into the feeling that they were sharing power. This is likely to force an early crisis soon after V-E Day.

Similarly, Truman cannot evade the basic problem of the postwar economy, a problem which was shrewdly analyzed by Roosevelt in his budget statement early this year—the headache of managing the colossal national debt and insuring a national income high enough to meet the crushing interest burdens. This means a managed economy, with the government as the gyroscope. Roosevelt was committed to that neo-Keynesian role, and was pulling busi-

ness and labor in that direction. It is doubtful whether Truman is strong enough politically to carry through that decision.

All these are the objective factors in the picture. The subjective elements show a totally different face. While a third party is on the political agenda, all around there is a tremendous tiredness and political apathy. The death of Roosevelt, has, for the moment, not inspired any re-evaluations but has heightened the despair, and the swing against politics continues.

If a third party is in the offing, it seems likely that it will be one organized from the top, by the "official" labor and liberal forces who cluster around Wallace-Hillman. This third party would share all the ideological shortcomings of the Commonwealth movements, with little of the real militancy and the genuine attempts at rank-and-file control. More, it would be committed to the "liberal imperialism" established by Roosevelt: foreign trade as an escape from domestic capitalist crises; the stabilization of the world economy (Bretton Woods) by enrolling Britain as a 'junior partner,' etc. While politically there would be a separation from the Administration, programmatically the alternative that Wallace-Hillman could offer would be the illusion that the capitalist economy could provide full employment.

We may be entering the phase of Weimar, with Truman in the role of Brüning.

The MCF Meets

Sir:

Members of the Michigan Commonwealth Federation want neither "free enterprise" capitalism nor socialism, but a multiple economy with increasing emphasis on public ownership. This was indicated by the group which discussed Program and Policy at the special conference held January 28 in Detroit. Listening to the discussion I did not hear one person in the room evince any faith in the ability of capitalism in its present form to provide full production and employment in the postwar period. Particularly revealing was the debate over what to do about the Center Line Arsenal in Macomb County.

You probably know that the Navy Department announced that it would take over the Arsenal and replace the union contract with civil service. A seven-page question and answer bulletin concerning the proposed transfer of the plant to Navy Management as of July 1, 1945 leaves no doubt as to the status of the employees under Navy control: "There is no place for 'collective bargaining', in it's generally accepted sense, in the government." How wage rates would be affected under Navy supervision was disclosed by union spokesmen, who pointed out that earnings for plant protection men would drop from \$190 to \$160 a month. Logically, the Arsenal workers are steamed up, and at a union meeting recently held to discuss the matter, many demanded that the CIO pressure the government into leaving the plant in private hands, declaring that "if this is government ownership, we want none of it!"

Prevailing view in the MCF panel was that the CIO should urge government—not the Navy—to take over the plant without in any way impairing legitimate union contractual relations. At this juncture delegates launched into a lengthy discussion on socialization. There was no consistent body of opinion, no clearly defined perspectives, yet the dominant trend of the thinking can, I believe, be summed up with a reasonable degree of accuracy as follows:

Socialization of industry should begin with public utilities, such as the Edison Company in Detroit. Public

* The growing bureaucratization of American life and the siphoning off of resentment into dead-end channels, is one of the strongest impetus to a fascist movement which will proclaim a "know-nothingness," an anti-intellectualism, and a violence to smash this stratification. That is why the formation of a "left" opposition to an Administration which in the middle-class mind itself labelled "left" is so very important right now. Otherwise, most of the reaction to the Administration will swing to the right. A Fascist movement which arises in America after the war, will, I think, parallel most of the "left" militancy, and offer in addition, a program of race prejudice to appeal to the American workers. Without a tradition and training in political thinking, both working-class and middle-class America is likely to accept the simple and narcotic devil theory that "the Jews" are responsible for the war and the political acts of the Administration.

Corporations are to be preferred to outright government ownership, since the latter tends inevitably to bureaucracy and totalitarianism. Public Corporations will be supervised by administrative boards representing management, labor, consumers, farmers and cooperatives. (Every MCF conference, by the way, seems to have its quota of enthusiastic co-operators who have convinced themselves and do their best to convince others that co-ops are the answer to society's economic ills.)

Public Corporations would not nullify genuine collective bargaining. Unlike the glorified national compulsory company unions of Germany and Russia, American unions operating in a public corporation system would continue their legitimate functions in struggling to improve hours, wages, and working conditions. In addition to collective bargaining, workers would enjoy a large measure of "democracy on the job," where deliberations would take place over policies of factory management. These discussions would be carried on jointly with top management and supervisory personnel, but once policy was agreed upon, supervision would be given enough authority to exercise its technical functions.

For some time to come society would have a "mixed" economy—that is, there would be private industry operating simultaneously with public corporations to insure maximum efficiency. Socialization alone might lead to stagnation. At any rate, it might slow down technological development, since administrators notoriously take the easy way out, are reluctant to try out new ideas, prefer the routine way of doing things. Hence the need for a certain amount of private enterprise, motivated by the quest for profit in order to stimulate industrial progress, bring out new products, improve existing ones, accelerate the tempo of output, lower labor costs. Of course this private enterprise sector also would have to observe union wage standards and working conditions. To spur the workers in public corporations to the point where they would become as efficient as those in private industry, it was proposed that they be given an annual bonus in the form of higher wages, or lower hours, or extended vacation periods, depending on what is most expedient.

With proper safeguards, private enterprise would offer the little business man opportunities now closed to him by restrictive monopoly practices. Among the inducements opened to him would be interest rates low enough to encourage investment. Here the money reformers stressed nationalization of banks as a sure way to guarantee low interest charges.

This, then, is the substance of the long range program discussed by the panel. In terms of immediate action the panel recommended a list of the usual run of reforms: child labor laws, minimum wage and hour measures, a full employment bill, etc. Considerable controversy arose over these immediate demands, and some of the delegates raised the objection that no amount of reforms could eliminate the basic evils of a profit economy: poverty, depressions and wars. Moreover, reform opponents thought that the proposals threshed out at the conference would leave fundamental social relationships unaltered, since all the paraphernalia of capitalism would still remain in effect: wages, the price system, rent, interest, profit, stock and bond dividends. As one delegate said: "The law of value would still exert its influence, pull down the rate of profit, impel managements to rationalize industry and displace workers."

But many of the MCF members, I venture to say, have not heard of the law of value, or, if they have, think it is of little importance. They seem to think that by the inauguration of sweeping reforms capitalism can be made to work

non-capitalistically. They have no patience with "theoreticians". They want to be practical and "do something now." Paraphrasing Engels one might say that they have yet to learn that nothing is less practical than these "practical solutions," and the first real practical job consists of acquiring a correct knowledge of the capitalist mode of production from all its various sides. People who have this knowledge will never be in doubt in any given case against which social institutions and in what manner their main approach should be directed.

What I am trying to say is that the MCF's first job should be to inform its active members about the real nature of our economy so that they will be less inclined to pursue social chimeras.

FRANK MARQUART

Detroit, Mich.

IS THERE A PSYCHOANALYST IN THE HOUSE?

One mortar shell struck the paving within the Parthenon, but, unfortunately, did no damage.

—Dispatch in the "N. Y. Times" of Jan. 18, 1945.

WITH THE LABOR STATESMEN

February, 1945, will go down in the records of mankind as a month of glorious history. In February of 1945, for the first time in the story of the modern world, it will be recorded, governments and peoples saw eye to eye. . . . Previous congresses have talked about security, about justice and lasting peace. Inevitably, however, each conference, no matter how loud the fanfare, turned out to be the prelude to new exploitation of the peoples—exploitation followed by wars.

The World Trade Union Congress recently held in London CANNOT produce these results. There is one abiding reason why that cannot happen. The February conferences were conferences of the PEOPLES as well as of the governments. And for once the ideals and aims of the governmental spokesmen were identical with the aspirations of the peoples. While the spokesmen of the democracies met at Yalta, the spokesmen of the working people . . . met in London. . . .

We now have an invincible combination—democratic governments working hand in hand with democratic labor movements. This combination raises on the world horizon a new beacon, a light that illuminates the road toward achieving the dream of centuries, the hopes of the world's toiling millions—our hopes for a world without want, a world without injustice, a world without war.

—R. J. Thomas, President of the UAW-CIO, in "United Automobile Worker" for April 1.

Uh-huh.—ED.

A TEXAN IN ROME

A friend of ours, just arrived from Rome, has told us some anecdotes about Maj. Gen. Johnson (from Texas) who was for a while AMG Military Governor of Rome:

Winston Burdette of CBS and Homer Bigart of the Herald Tribune called on Maj. Gen. Johnson as part of a series of assignments for biographical sketches of Allied "personalities" in Rome. One of them mentioned the Vatican. Said Johnson:

" . . . Boys, I want to tell you: you don't want to underestimate the Vatican. This Vatican is quite an institution. It's done a lot of good. Catholic charities have done a lot of good right here in Rome. After all, there's no reason why the baptists and the catholics can't get along—at least during the war.

" . . . After all, they worship Christ, and so do we. They worship the same Christ that we do . . . and furthermore . . ."

The correspondents stirred in their chairs, decided that the time had arrived for their departure, and did so, thanking the general for a "very inspiring talk" etcetera . . .

Outside, Bigart (who stutters badly) turned to Burdette, and said: "Fffflash; Vvvvvatican rrrrun bbbby Cccchistians, says Johnson."

—"Free Italy", February 1945

YOU CAN'T LOSE—IF YOU'RE AN ELDER STATESMAN

He was against reparations to the extent imposed at Versailles because he was sure Germany could never pay and that the economic burden would breed another war. By Washington account, Elder Statesman Baruch will join this time in the proposition that if reparations are heavy enough, Germany will never be able to go to war again.

—"Time", April 2.

The Last King

THE bulldog tenacity with which the Government of Great Britain is trying to revive the monarchical principle transcends the vulgar issues of conservatism and imperialism. Its protective attitude toward the Italian, Greek and other dynasties betrays a passionate concern not only on the part of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the proud scion of a ducal family, but also on the part of the King-Emperor himself. For there is a serious danger that, unless the tide of republicanism can be stemmed, His Majesty King George VI may find himself in the unpleasant role of the last monarch of an important European country.

Ever since the French Revolution, which promoted many

VI, reigning in a lonely splendor, and surrounded by the surviving majesties of minuscule states (who are all in London at the moment) may soon assert not merely a divine right but his own divinity and, like Jehovah, become a "king of kings."

Unlike Jehovah, however, he will have to be a fairly silent ruler: a garrulous and nagging Edward VIII could not be tolerated. An indolent, deistic king would allow the leaders of his subjects to manage mundane affairs. But occasionally, as even Sir Isaac Newton allowed, it might become necessary for the divinity to intervene miraculously to set a degenerate world to rights. Precedents for



an upstart to royal and even imperial thrones, legitimate kings have maintained a closed-shop and have stuck together with a tenacity and loyalty the proletariat might well emulate. Yet monarchy has constantly lost ground. Should the Savoy dynasty have to give up Italy, George VI will be without a true peer.

Although the British glory in uniqueness, such a position might be entirely too singular for comfort. The only escape would be to revive the idea of the divine right of monarchy, probably in a new form. The old theory was based on the Lord's grant to Adam of "dominion . . . over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." But George

supernatural intervention by the British monarch are already at hand; only a few years ago George V did much to persuade the Laborite Ramsay MacDonald to save the country by forming a conservative government.

With the new doctrine of a divine monarchy, Great Britain will crown her contribution to civilization. Having conferred upon mankind the double boon of the most economical method of production and the perfect system of government, she will now bestow her greatest gift, the answer to man's ultimate need: a true religion with a visible god.

SOLOMON F. BLOOM

THE LITERARY LIFE

The Reader's Press, Inc.
220 Fifth Ave., New York City 1
April 2, 1945.

Dear Mr.:

. . . The American reading public places great value on your judgment concerning these important issues and it is obvious that my book would carry much more force and be more likely to accomplish its purpose if it included a short comment from you. . . .

Since the book is still on the press, no copies are available as yet but the enclosed cover page, introduction, and table of contents suggests the essence of my manuscript.

My publishers would appreciate receiving a few words from you about your opinion of "Wallace and 60 Million Jobs" at the above address, and he joins me in sending his gratitude for your assistance.

Gratefully yours,

Frank Kingdon

P.S.—I shall take the liberty of sending you a complimentary copy as soon as it is printed.

BEAT ME, DADDY . . .

This is in a way a confession. For years I have been guilty of a prejudice against professional soldiers. . . . Naturally, what I resented most about the professional soldier but refused to admit at the time, was that he knew the world was nuts. As a world citizen, I rebelled. . . . I resented them in much the same manner that any nut must resent his keeper. [Goes on to say he didn't like Patton at first, and the "Old Blood and Guts" nickname, and the ivoryhanded revolvers and the soldier-slapping all confirmed his distaste, but then Patton began to win victories.] Pictures showed him smiling. He seemed to be having a wonderful time. How could Patton smile amid death, blood, tears and pain? Gradually the answer came. Patton had been waiting for the Nazis for a lifetime. He knew the world was nuts. He knew human nature was treacherous and couldn't be trusted too long. He knew that when the world went berserk, his life of preparation would be vindicated. And it is. But don't call that guy crazy. He knew you were crazy first. And he's from West Point. And I'll never again try to kid a professional soldier. Salute!

—Tom O'Reilly, columnist in "P.M.," March 26.

Stalin's Advocate

Lionel Abel

James Burnham wants us to believe that what he believes about Stalin is not what he *wants* to believe and that what he denies about Stalin he would like to be able to affirm. Burnham would have us think that he is attracted to Trotsky's characterization of Stalin as 1) a traitor to Lenin and 2) a mediocrity, and repelled by his own view that Stalin is 1) the rightful heir of Lenin and 2) a great man.

This is what Burnham must want us to believe about his beliefs about Stalin. For in "Lenin's Heir" (see the winter issue of *Partisan Review*), Burnham, after arguing for the "true" propositions that Stalin is 1) the rightful heir of Lenin and 2) a great man, goes on to express considerable distaste for these "truths", as well as for certain corollaries flowing from them, terming them "extremely unpleasant", though "indispensable" since "established beyond reasonable doubt."

Now my hypothesis is that Burnham, far from submitting to his "unpleasant" propositions because of the irresistible logic of their truth, actually *wants* them to be true, while his feeling of unpleasantness arises from the fact that they are false. This hypothesis can easily be tested by examining the arguments on which he rests his case.

I

Even Burnham's organization of his case has a certain absurdity. For his basic contention, that Stalin is the rightful heir of Lenin, he advances only *one* argument, and for his second, and clearly secondary contention, that Stalin is a great man, he advances no less than *seven* arguments.

Let us look first at these seven arguments. Burnham contends that:

(1) Stalin is great because he is a great glutton and a great brute. As if replying to the cynical question of some modern Cassius:

"Upon what meat doth this our Stalin feed,
That he has grown so great?"

Burnham gives an awed account of Stalin's transcendence on the plane of menus. It seems that Stalin eats "sturgeon and roasts and fowl and sweets" and consumes "streams of liquor" at the stupendous banquets staged in the Kremlin for visiting dignitaries. In serving up these meals against the background of "starving multitudes", "dying millions at the front", and "jammed concentration camps", Stalin evidences an "insolence and indifference and brutality" which place him beyond the human level.

Now Lenin was neither gluttonous nor brutal, but ascetic and humane. Instead of striving to elevate his material condition of life to a pinnacle beyond the ken of the suffering millions, he had legislation enacted to keep the standard of living of the Soviet elite within hailing distance of the average worker. So if from Stalin's gluttony and brutality we must conclude that he is in some sense great, we must also conclude that he is the antithesis of Lenin, and certainly not his rightful heir.

(2) Stalin is great because he is a great "military cap-

tain." But the only evidence Burnham can cite to prove Stalin's military greatness is the fact that in the darkest days he accepted "full and open responsibility as military chief", symbolizing this acceptance by donning a marshal's uniform. This is true, and shows that Stalin has political intelligence, which nobody ever doubted, but does not show that he has military talent, for the acceptance of responsibility and the donning of a marshal's uniform were *political* and not *military* acts.

So the argument is a poor one. The probabilities are that Stalin is not a great military leader but clever enough to understand that it is not necessary to *be* what by means of propaganda one can *seem* to be. Most people will not say like Hamlet, "Nay, I know not seems!" Witness the fact that the empirical scientist Burnham is convinced, or at least is not ashamed to say he is convinced, of Stalin's military talent, when there is no valid evidence to show that he possesses any. And if Stalin can be held a god for what he eats, why not a Napoleon for what he wears?

While it is unlikely that Stalin is a great military chief, it must be admitted that he has been able to impersonate one with great success. But this does not make it possible for us to identify him with Lenin, who never tried to obtain credit for any act which he had not performed, never tried to deflect to himself the glory Trotsky and others had won on the battlefield, and to whose spirit nothing was more alien than the exaltation of the mirror world of opinion at the expense of the real world of fact. So if from Stalin's successful impersonation of a great military chief it follows that he is in some sense great, it also follows that he is the antithesis of Lenin and not his rightful heir.

(3) Stalin is great because of his great "mastery of practical political techniques" and "freedom from conventional restrictions", qualities which have enabled him to bear false witness against and successfully frame not just a few people, but tens of thousands — in fact, whole strata of society including his own comrades, and to deport, or reduce by starvation, not a few paltry thousands, or even tens of thousands, but some fifteen to twenty millions of persons. In other words Stalin is great because he has been able to pest and harry the Russian people like some "great" catastrophe.

But Lenin was a deliverer from the social catastrophe into which the Russian people had been thrust by the utter nonentity, Nicholas Romanoff. So if from the above argument it follows that Stalin is in some sense great, it also follows that he is the antithesis of Lenin, and not his rightful heir.

(4) Stalin is great because his political moves are characterized by boldness and dash. Now the most bold and dashing of all the political moves Burnham can cite was Stalin's signing of the pact with Hitler. The curious thing is that Trotsky, on the basis of his (according to Burnham erroneous) hypothesis that Stalin is a traitor to Lenin and

a mediocrity, (a hypothesis Burnham wants us to set aside so that we will be in a better position to anticipate events), was able, long before the event, to predict that Stalin would sign a pact with Hitler. Had Burnham known at the time, as he does now, that Stalin is really the rightful heir of Lenin and a great man, would he have been better equipped than Trotsky was to predict the signing of the Hitler pact? But all those who at the time believed that Stalin was a great man and the rightful heir of Lenin, indignantly denied Trotsky's contention that Stalin would sign a pact with Hitler. Let us not dwell too much on this point. From the evidence of the Hitler pact it seems to follow that both of Burnham's propositions are false, and up to now from Burnham's arguments to prove that Stalin is great it has only followed that Stalin is not the rightful heir of Lenin. A rather neat pattern of illogicality in Burnham's thinking is gradually emerging, which I would like not to blur.

(5) Stalin is great because he is a great hypocrite. By means of "an unexampled propagandistic wizardry" he has led "the bulk of world public opinion into the acceptance of a double standard of political morality. There is now one code for the judgment of Soviet affairs, and its opposite for all other political judgment."

However Lenin not only practiced a single standard of political morality, but to some extent forced his imperialist enemies to conform to this standard, and instead of capitulating to their hypocrisy, imposed on them some of his own frankness. Lenin employed political candor with greater effect than other men have the conventional weapon of dissimulation. He was one of the great anti-hypocrites of history. So if Stalin is great for his hypocrisy, he is Lenin's antithesis and not his rightful heir.

(6) Stalin is great because he is a great geo-politician. This is proved by the "clarity and concreteness" with which he has "specified what might be called a geo-political vision", and "translated into a realistic political perspective the dream of theoretical geo-politics—domination of Eurasia". According to this argument Stalin is great not merely because of what he is doing, but also, and *mainly*, because of what he thinks about what he is doing, the assumption being that Burnham is somehow privy to this thought. For we have no way of knowing whether or not Stalin thinks in terms of theoretical geo-politics.* We do not know whether Stalin has geo-political vision; all we know is that he has a good part of Eurasia. The Ukraine he had to start with. Poland and the Balkans fell to him

* Instead of showing a connection between Stalin's aims and the theoretical goals of geo-politics, Burnham shows a connection between the Soviet power and the One of Neoplatonism. He conjures up a picture of the Soviet Power, "strongest in the magnetic core of the Eurasian heartland," overflowing like the One, in a descending series of "emanative progressions," irradiating influence into the countries adjoining Russia, until dissipated in the outer material sphere of "momentary appeasement and infiltration", England and the United States. This pompous analogy masks a perfect platitude. A great power like the Soviet Union will, of course, influence other countries and have a maximum influence on the countries adjoining it. As far as the One is concerned, being by definition the most general thing in the universe, a connection can be shown to obtain between it and anything or anyone—including Burnham. Thus: in his classroom at N.Y.U., Burnham's influence may be said to be at a maximum. Just outside this sphere Burnham's intellectual power irradiates influence among university graduates, until finally dissipated in the "outer material sphere" of "momentary appeasement and infiltration", the *Partisan Review*.

as a consequence of the Red Army's military successes. But if Burnham is somehow right, and Stalin does in fact think in geo-political terms, then it must be concluded that he is not the rightful heir of Lenin, who was so far from regarding lumps of land as dynamic political entities that he was ready to surrender to the Germans at Brest-Litovsk the chief object of German geo-political aspiration—nothing less than the heart-land itself, the Ukraine.

(7) Stalin is great because he is a great creative thinker. He has invented the theory of multi-national Bolshevism, which as a creative political idea "ranks with Marx's theory of the state, Trotsky's theory of the permanent Revolution, or Lenin's analysis of capitalism in the final stage of finance-imperialism".

What is the theory of multi-national Bolshevism? There is in fact no theory at all. There is only the present practice of the Communist parties, a practice which consists, as everybody knows, of sacrificing in any country the interests of that country and its working class in order to further the interests of Moscow. Multi-national Bolshevism is simply a fancy name for political shamelessness and the complete lack of *any* theory. (To understand the present practice of the Communist parties we cannot turn to "multi-national Bolshevism", which is only a word, but must go to Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet bureaucracy based on his theory of the permanent revolution.) So from Stalin's promotion of multi-national Bolshevism we cannot conclude that he is great in any sense but only that he is a traitor to Lenin, and not his rightful heir.

II

So much for Burnham's seven arguments to prove Stalin a great man. Let us now look at the single argument on which Burnham rests his contention that Stalin is Lenin's rightful heir.

"Stalin was the best Bolshevik", Burnham states, "just for the reason that he did not try to impose on history an *a priori* conception of the nature of the revolution, but was ready to accept the revolution, with all its historical consequences, as it revealed itself to be in real life." So Stalin is the rightful heir of Lenin because, just as Trotsky affirmed, he never tried to control events in terms of a theory, but allowed himself to be determined by events "like the mill-horse, that thinks that he is moving up when really he is only pushing down the belt-wheel". But this is why Trotsky insisted that Stalin is a mediocrity! In case it may be urged that Trotsky was biased because of his tendency to Platonism, and did not understand that greatness can be manifested by a man who is not a cause of events but a mere effect of them, let us consult on this matter Mr. Jesse Jones, the former Secretary of Commerce, who I think can be absolved in advance of any trace or taint of Platonism. At the recent hearings in Washington, Jesse Jones, speaking before Congress, characterized the men in his department as "business men", "men experienced in business", "men who haven't any ideas about remaking the world. Plodders—not smart; just plodders. . . ." So even Jesse Jones understands that a man who has no ideas about remaking the world is not smart, but just a plodder—in other words, a mediocrity.

Let us sum up the results of our analysis. Burnham, in

trying to prove Stalin a great man, has proved that he is not the rightful heir of Lenin. On the other hand, in trying to prove that Stalin is the rightful heir of Lenin, he has argued that Stalin is a mediocrity. So his whole case is unsound. He not only does not have to believe his two propositions about Stalin, which he claims are unpleasant, but has no right or justification whatsoever for maintaining them, seeing that his arguments are illogical beyond any "reasonable doubt".

III

My hypothesis was that Burnham does not find his propositions about Stalin unpleasant, and put up with their unpleasantness because of the perfect logic on which they rest, but that he puts up with bad logic for the sake of the propositions, which can scarcely be as unattractive to him as he protests they are.

This hypothesis is further confirmed — if further confirmation be necessary — by an extraordinary passage in his essay in which he tries to justify the attribution to Stalin of "qualities belonging more literally to the group of him and his associates", in other words of attributing to Stalin qualities which he may not "literally" possess. This of course means mythologizing Stalin, but Burnham argues that we *have* to mythologize the historical record, which otherwise would be "as flat and dull as unilluminating". So the function of the "extremely unpleasant" truths about Stalin is to make him interesting, and not flat and dull as he would otherwise be, and as Trotsky, who did not mythologize Stalin, contended that he is. But how can "extremely unpleasant truths" about Stalin also be myths designed to make him interesting?

Burnham remarks in passing that we learn far more of the human psyche from great myths than from psychology. This too is incorrect. We learn only from science, and from the great myths only insofar as they embody scientific insights, or are the objects of scientific study. But myths have another function than that of informing us on matters about which psychology must be silent. They are our means of self-revelation, being imaginative prolongations not of our illogic and error but of our positive values and our dreams. We mythologize not to make the "record" interesting — that is a pedant's idea of poetry — but because the "record" is often inadequate to revealing how interesting we in fact are.

In myths we assert not the facts, but our values in regard to them. And Burnham, in mythologizing Stalin, has, I think, told us not what Stalin is but what Burnham would like to be. He has told us that Burnham in his imaginative projection of his values comes to rest in the person of a dictator, who eats big meals, pretends to military greatness, bears false witness against tens of thousands and reports millions, has foolish geo-political visions, is a great hypocrite, promotes treacherous policies, and has no ideas. Burnham has told us that he admires Stalin, and I see no reason why he should not continue to admire him. When Trotsky characterized Stalin as a mediocrity he did not mean that Burnham should feel superior to Stalin, but that he, like Lenin, did.

Commonnonsense

STRANGE, that this man should have left us all so lonely Thursday night when he died. This may sound like an obituary in *PM* and I certainly hate to admit it, but I don't see any reason to conceal my feelings, and those of the people I saw in the streets of New York, all haggard, scared, many of them in tears. Of course the notion of death is always disturbing, and in these days every one of us borrows someone's death to mourn his own dead. But then the general reaction to Roosevelt's death has another meaning: this man had really become indispensable. Not because he was a genius, but simply because anyone who stays too long in power on the wrong assumption that he is indispensable, becomes so in the end. Vicious circle of politics. His power lives at the expense of the people's independence of thought. He solidifies his position, and that's all we see and therefore we don't think anything else happens because we hear almost nothing about the people, except through him, but what happens to them is that they sink lower toward the prone acceptance of anything that is given them. In private life this state of affairs is very common; everybody has seen men who had lived for too many years under the authority of an intelligent and loving father. Underneath the people's grief last Thursday there was resentment: they were all angry that he had died, as if it had been his fault that all that blood should have invaded his brains. In fact, in a way this absurd reaction is more logical than the many explanations given in terms of the world, the coming peace, etc. A man who deems himself irreplaceable has no right to die like everybody else.

Now we have reached the state of national confusion which existed in Italy after the first war: anyone who dares sneeze or utter an opinion, any opinion under the sun, will be called a dangerous Red. And rightly so, because, if it is true that nobody on the left has a clear idea of what he should do to bring about revolution, or even thinks of shouting Boo to a cat, it is nonetheless true that the conservatives are in constant danger of death, because their ideas are so idiotic, their future plans so void of all reality, that ANY idea, ANY opinion, by its mere presence, will expose the hopeless void in them. Now this is a serious peril, similar to that which confronts all dictators: that anyone should sense the unreality of the "emergency" which justifies their presence. Roosevelt has gotten us all used to the idea that his presence was necessary at the helm, and we, liberals who supported the war, (I changed in 1943) have seen in him an extraordinary man, and are therefore greatly responsible for the present confusion. It is only logical now that, he having gone, he who knew all and concealed all to avoid "disunity," there should be a strong temptation hanging in the air over Washington, to have recourse to plain police methods. No one has his personality (this too is a matter of habit in a way: we are all used to his voice, his eloquence, even his ponderous nonsense, cooked up in such lengthy and repetitious phrases); no one has his capital of acquaintances, influences, etc. Therefore no one will be able to suppress so much of the truth. Military security will do the trick. It will be deemed "dangerous" to let the people know (and rightly so, from the point of view of prestige). Now, even if the new president were an incorrigible idealist, which he is not, he would find it difficult to practice his ideals. This is why I fear that the days of the opposition press are numbered.

A WAR correspondent may conceal things from his readers, but he will never be able to conceal what he wants them to know. There is, for example, A. C. Sedgwick, the Athens correspondent of the *N. Y. Times*. Those who know his Greek wife and her admiration for fascism see right away how much his articles owe to her. Another example from the *Times*: Herbert Matthews, the Mystery Man behind the Italian puppet show. Those who have seen him melt like butter in the sunshine at the mere sight of a titled fool, easily recognize the political theories of many a distinguished Roman nobleman behind his articles. If they also happen to know his servility in front of British noblemen, whose intelligence is even more famous than that of the best Italian bluebloods, they recognize the lies of the Allied Control Commission in what Matthews advertises as his own lies.

But now, what must the poor ignorant American reader do? He cannot become an expert on each European country before he trusts what he reads. It takes us Europeans as long as a month at times, before we find the truth behind a certain story. All the same, here is the average American with his three cents worth of news, and there must be some middle course between becoming an expert on all the countries in the world and throwing away his paper before reading it. Here is something we Europeans can do for him. We have been trained to read between the lines ever since we were born. At times we read only between the lines, and fail to notice that we are reading on a white page just out of the paper-factory.

Let us examine, for the benefit of the American reader, one of the most innocent articles by Matthews, containing no controversial subject and requiring no knowledge of history. Here it is: an article in the *Sunday Times* with a big picture of the Pope surrounded by beaming journalists: *HAPPIER DAYS FOR POPE PIUS*. (Nice title by the way). It begins: "One of the most overwhelming convictions held by Pope Pius XII is a belief in the desirability of peace. Yet all but seven months of his Pontificate were spent in the midst of a world at war."

This brief sample will suffice for our purposes. Our first reaction will be: What a tragedy! All but seven months of his Pontificate. . . . Where did I or you spend our pontificates? In peace, of course. Only the Pope, poor devil, was caught in the midst of a world at war. And what strikes our imagination next? The "overwhelming conviction" that is his "belief in the desirability of peace." This is news too. So it is not only true that the Pope believes in the desirability of peace, but this is a "conviction" and, more than that, it overwhelms.

Now, what the American reader doesn't know is that there were millions of people in Italy who felt that peace was desirable. If, on the strength of this plain and un-overwhelming belief they decided to dodge the draft and go into hiding, they were told by their local priests, or by their Bishops, Cardinals and Popes, that Obedience to the laws of the State is a Christian virtue, while insubordination is a sin which God marks down in His black book for later action. Extremely few priests advised the poor people to become overwhelmed by such dangerous beliefs which did not at that time overwhelm the Pope and the Fascist Government; and the Pope as well as Cardinal Pacelli, then Secretary of State and brother of a fascist lawyer as well as uncle of a fascist good-for-nothing, blessed those wars in Ethiopia and in Spain, making it pretty hard for the poor wretches to be overwhelmed by anything but fear of death at the hands of the police. The home front having become so dangerous, they chose war, where at least there was a chance to avoid death, and

a fine opportunity to emigrate as a prisoner, since the Great Democracies gave no admission to those who could not prove, with passport at hand, that they were on excellent terms with the fascist government. But who would want to know such old, uninteresting facts about obscure, utterly unpontifical people? The Pope's belief in Christ (Personality-value plus the Sensational Novelty-Angle), that's worth giving the American reader, that's right from the horse's mouth, that's fit to print.

NOTES FOR A POLITICAL DICTIONARY (2)

Cause: "worthy . . ."; "noble . . ."; "our . . ."; usually referred to as "the . . ." without further specification. Although a great many people die for it, the Effect is far more deadly. One never dies for the effect, but only owing to or of. The Effect is never "worthy" or "ours" (in fact we had nothing to do with it), and to speak of the "great Effect" or the "noble Effect" is regarded as very bad form, both grammatically and politically. In the best of cases, when the Effect is not simply unmentionable, it is irrelevant.

Yes: affirmative for "no."

Criminal (War): any one who applies military methods to the attainment of other people's property or their enslavement or slaughter without receiving a medal.

Jews: some of our best friends. May be persecuted and even killed if they refuse to be great mathematicians, composers, violinists, or to discover the bacilli of syphilis. Also liable to the death penalty if they insist on talking with their hands and acting like smalltime J. P. Morgans.

Common Man: Mythological figure. Also expression used by Common Statesmen to mean "nobody." Ex: "The . . . shall have a fair chance"; "a better world for the . . ." Plural: obscene term in British politics.

God (Almighty): substance used for the furtherance of churches. Blesses battles.

World: is free. Has been freed by World War I as well. Shall again be free, if there is anything left of it.

NICCOLO TUCCI

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Free and Equal

Jim Crow in Uniform: Current Notes

The discriminatory racial policies of the armed forces have been dealt with in previous issues of *POLITICS* (see Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, 9). The matter will not end with VE-Day. As the *Nation* recently pointed out, if the "G.I. Bill of Rights" is administered without racial discrimination, it will mean a considerable gain for the colored community. "These rights are of such substantial character that they can radically transform the status of 1,000,000 Negro veterans and their dependents; they entitle veterans to vocational and other educational opportunities, to decent homes, to loans for farms, and to other benefits." It goes without saying both that heroic efforts will be made to keep the Negro veteran from getting these rights and that he will put up a fight to get them. Nor will the issue disappear even after that: Jimcrow in uniform will continue to be an irritant in race relations so long as (1) the military establishment remains large, and (2) present racial policies are continued. For a long time, in a word.

¶ *POLITICS* readers will recall Isaac G. McNatt's "I Was a Seabee," in the June issue, which told the story of 19 colored Seabees who were thrown out of the Navy, without honorable discharges, when, *on the invitation of their white commanding officer*, they complained about their treatment. On April 2, a Navy Board of Review, set up in accordance with the provisions of the G.I. Bill of Rights, after hearing the cases of 15 of the Seabees, changed the discharges of 14 of them, including McNatt, to "honorable." This reversal shows that when Negroes put up a fight against discrimination, as the Seabees did, they can sometimes win justice. McNatt's case and that of four of the other Seabees was handled by the Lynn Committee to Abolish Segregation in the Armed Forces, which revived the case last Spring and gave it national publicity.

¶ On April 3, another victory was won by Negroes in uniform who stuck up for their rights. It began when 60 out of a company of 99 colored WAC's stationed at Lovell General Hospital in Fort Devens, Mass., went on a sit-down strike, complaining that they got all the menial jobs to do, and that the white Colonel in charge of the hospital had stated he didn't want "black WACs" in the motor pool or as medical technicians. "They are here to mop walls, scrub floors, and do all the dirty work," he was quoted as saying. After Negro and white officers had talked to the strikers, all but four went back to work. The names and pictures of these four courageous women appear on the opposite page.

These four stood by their guns, so to speak, even when Major General Sherman Miles personally read them the 64th Article of War. They were court-martialled, convicted and sentenced each to one year at hard labor. Then, according to *Time* (April 11), "The Negro press, Negro and radical leaders started a furious protest. . . . The troubled War Department hastily went into reverse." On a technicality, Washington voided the conviction, and the four WACs were restored to duty. Thus a combination of firmness on their part and aggressiveness on the part of the Negro community scored at least a tactical victory. It is

painful to have to add that two of the eight officers who sat on the court martial were colored, and that the ranking colored WAC officer at Fort Devens, Lieutenant Stoney, when asked during the trial if she had observed any difference in the treatment of white and Negro WACs, replied: "I have not." These racial renegades were indirectly rebuked when the white Colonel they sided with was removed from his command as a consequence of the case.

¶ An overseas soldier reader sends in a feature article from the March 19 *Stars and Stripes* (Paris Edition) on the first break, in this war or the last, with the policy of racially segregating combat infantry. Negro platoons have been assigned to rifle companies in the First and Seventh Armies. "The plan," the report is careful to state, lest any one get the idea that the Army was trying to do something decent, "was launched not as an experiment in race relations but as an answer both to the needs of the military situation and repeated requests of Negro service troops for an opportunity to get into the war as combat men." About 2,500 Negro soldiers were accepted for this mixed combat duty, many less than volunteered. (Colored troops in Europe are almost wholly used as stevedores, truck drivers, and laborers. One might wonder why Negroes want this particular kind of racial equality—that of dying in action; yet in this perverted society, the combat soldier has a higher status than the laborer, as both the Negroes and their white enemies realize. This mixing of races on the battle front may be a significant innovation; it is more likely that it is a last-hour token gesture which the military authorities hope will appease the colored community.

¶ Early this year some seventy Negro soldiers, members of a Negro labor battalion stationed in Hawaii, were court-martialled for mutiny and sentenced to terms of fifteen or more years in prison apiece. Walter White of the NAACP has told the story behind these savage sentences. The battalion had some Negro officers; when white officers were promoted over their head, they protested; they were transferred and replaced by white officers. "When the enlisted men heard that their Negro officers were no longer to be with the regiment, they refused to leave their barracks to work." The mutiny lasted only a short time (and would seem to have been amply justified considering the injustice of the treatment given the battalion's Negro officers) and yet the court-martial handed out 15-year sentences to all concerned. (See *Pittsburgh Courier*, Feb. 17.)

¶ In March one thousand Seabees, veterans of 21 months' service in the Pacific, went on a hunger strike at Fort Hucheme, Calif. The issue was the same as in the Hawaii mutiny and in the case of the 19 Seabees: the upgrading of white men over the heads of more qualified Negroes. The demonstration was peaceful: for two days the men refused to eat, but continued to perform their duties. This would seem to be a type of passive resistance which the military authorities would find it very hard to deal with, since there is nothing in the Articles of War that includes eating among a soldier's duties.

¶ The only Negro bombing unit, the 477th Bombardment Group, is in an uproar again, and this time things look even more serious than when we printed "The Story of the 477th Bombardment Group" last June. The issue is exactly what it was then: the attempt of the Group's Colonel Selway (white) to deny access to the officer's club to the Negro officers under his command. In June the issue arose at Selfridge Field, Mich., and ended in the

FOUR COURAGEOUS WOMEN



PVT. ANNA MORRISON
(Richmond, Ky.)



PVT. ALICE YOUNG
(Washington, D. C.)



PVT. MARY GREEN
(Conroe, Tex.)



PVT. JOHNNIE MURPHY
(Rankin, Pa.)

Credit: Pittsburgh Courier.

Group's being "exiled" to Godman Field, Ky. The current dispute arose early in April at Freeman Field, Ind., when 61 of the Group's officers invaded the local club en masse and had to be put out by Military Police. Later on another 43 took similar action. All 101 officers have been removed to Godman Field and are being held in confinement pending a War Department investigation. The attempt by Colonel Selway thus to discriminate against his own officers is especially flagrant in view of the Presidential order issued last August barring racial segregation in canteens and other amusement facilities on Army posts. (As this goes to press, word comes that all but three of the 101 officers have been released. It is also reported that Col. Selway has been removed.)

¶ The Army is so short of nurses that a bill drafting

all nurses for military service (an unprecedented and very possibly unconstitutional piece of legislation directed against a specific group in the community) is already on its way through Congress. Yet at recent hearings in Washington, Rep. Clare Luce (R.) brought out the fact that there are 8,000 Negro registered nurses in the country, of which only 300 have been accepted for military service.

¶ "Earl Browder, Communist leader, tells us in the *Sunday Worker* that 'it has been the studied policy of American Communists to refrain from public discussion' of the Jimcrow issue in the armed services. That is also the studied policy of Bilbo, Rankin, McKellar, Ellender, George, Connally, et al." (George Schuyler in *The Pittsburgh Courier* for March 31.)

D. M.

Greece (4)

THE Plastiras government fell early in April. The final push came—unexpectedly to me, I must admit—from the Right, not the Left. Plastiras fell when a royalist paper published a compromising letter he had written several years ago, during the Italian invasion of Greece, indicating little hostility (to put it mildly) to the Axis. The new premier is Admiral Voulgaris, who put down the mutiny in the Greek fleet last year. His government, with the exception of Foreign Minister Sofianopoulos, who is held over from the Plastiras cabinet, is even more Rightist than its predecessor, consisting mostly of military and naval figures. It is one of those "technical," "non-political" governments set up in times of crisis to make sure that a Rightward evolution continues; the Badoglio government was another such.

The royalists wanted to get rid of Plastiras because (1) although conservative, he has always been personally anti-King; (2) he was not subservient enough to the British. The royalists' hopes rest on British support, and vice versa. The usually well-informed *London Tribune* for March 30, shortly before Plastiras fell, commented: "The Leeper-Plastiras honeymoon has been prematurely broken off. The general has assumed again his normal anti-British outlook and the antipathy is fully reciprocated by the Foreign Office. Plastiras is somewhat clumsy as a politician. He is now at loggerheads with EAM on the Left, with the

Royalists on the Right, and with Greek finance (and its London connections) in the center. To get some sort of support, Plastiras has surrounded himself with a number of unofficial American advisers." The general's political ineptness is revealed by this last stratagem—to think American influence would cut any ice in Greece today!

The extraordinarily complex nature of political struggles in a small nation enmeshed in a big power's imperial strategy is well illustrated by the above. The British imported Plastiras because he had the prestige—based on his anti-monarchist activities of two decades ago—needed for the final mopping up of the Left. Now that this job has been completed, they have to get rid of him—the details as to what wires were pulled by British Ambassador Rex Leeper (recently made a knight for his fine work in Athens) will no doubt be coming out before long—in order to gain further ground in a royalist direction. The British are for the Greek King not from any sentimental attachment to the monarchical principle but simply because they can control an unpopular king better than they can control even the most conservative republican, who of necessity would base himself to a greater degree on Greek national forces, both popular and capitalist. Also, as the *London Economist* accurately predicted on December 23: "In all probability, the republic can only be revived as a republic of the Left. The alternative is not a Republic based on

the Center or Right but the restoration of the monarchy. The monarchy must base itself on forces that have come to be regarded as anti-national. It can, therefore, reassert itself only as the dictatorship of a minority." As the Gratsos Memorandum printed elsewhere in this issue shows, many Greek capitalists—perhaps most of them—are anti-royalist because they want a government that will put up a fight for *their* interests against London. Their fatal dilemma is that, as the *Economist* says, "the republic can only be revived as a republic of the Left." The popular forces represented by EAM were the only ones that could really defend Greek national interests; the Greek capitalists backed the British in liquidating EAM; now they are themselves feeling the heavy hand of The City.

ON the extreme right wing of the Tories is the Imperial Policy Group. Its spokesman, the notorious pro-fascist Kenneth de Courcy, recently wrote in the IPG organ: "The government was clever in sending Sir Walter Citrine out to Greece. He is such an honest man that Mr. Churchill knew he would speak out, whatever he saw. He always tries to live up to that standard, does Sir Walter. He is a really good man—one of the very best the Labor movement has ever produced. He has a great flair for politics, and is a simple, good, honest Labor man, untouched by doctrinaire restraints. . . . Book-loving Sir Walter would do extremely well at No. 10." The interesting thing about these observations is that they were made *before* the Citrine Report had appeared. However deficient in other departments of political intelligence, the Tories have developed over the centuries a remarkably keen instinct for detecting their real friends.

MAX EASTMAN, the editors of *The New Leader* and all other believers in Churchill's Bolshevik Bogeyman are respectfully referred to the January-March issue of *The Philhellene*, the Bulletin of the American Friends of Greece (30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City 20). The lead article, "The British and the Civil Strife in Greece" is a scholarly and objective 10-page survey of the origins and course of the recent fighting in Greece. It tells precisely the same story, and evaluates the role of the British in almost exactly the same way as our own articles on Greece. I am told that its author is the organization's vice-chairman, Professor T. Leslie Shear, of Princeton, who directed the well-known archaeological excavations in Athens. Neither Professor Shear nor the American Friends of Greece, which was founded in 1923 and whose Trustees are overwhelmingly conservative, can be accused of being either C.P. fellow-travellers or "cerebral revolutionists."

DREW PEARSON told the following story in his column for March 22:

"WASHINGTON—Former Governor Lehman's UNRRA is frantically trying to hush up a very strange happening in Greece. A British UNRRA worker was killed, and in his possession were found receipts for money paid by the British to Greek factions, to encourage them to fight each other. The Near East branch is under a British director. "The worker killed was L. F. R. Shepherd, chief of Greek Mission Intelligence, listed as 'Mr.' Shepherd, but a colonel in the British Army. He joined UNRRA right after liberation of Athens, but until his death acted for Britain, though using our flag on his car.

"Officials who listed property in his room found receipts

for large amounts in gold sovereigns, dated October 22 to November 29, four days before the trouble broke.

"The receipts said: 'I have received from Mr. L. F. R. Shepherd a sealed bag said to contain 1,000 gold sovereigns.' They were signed by Greek leaders of various organizations. Amounts mentioned varied from 100 sovereigns to 2,000.

"After fighting started, Shepherd, as a UNRRA man on missions of mercy, could travel freely between the British and ELAS zones. Under cover of the American flag he went into ELAS territory ostensibly to discuss food distribution, but actually to get military information."

On March 30, Pearson added that a British news agency had called up the UNRRA public relations office in Washington and asked for comment on the above story. "What comment?" asked the UNRRA representative. "You're going to deny it, aren't you?" "No," replied the UNRRA man, "the story's true."

IN the N. Y. *Herald-Tribune* for April 6, Dorothy Dunbar Bromley told another story which Lehman also vainly tried to suppress: the narrative of Marie Berger, an American member of the UNRRA mission to Greece, who is now recovering over here from wounds received during the fighting. (Incidentally, Miss Berger was not surprised at Drew Pearson's revelations about Colonel Shepherd; she said Shepherd was a mysterious figure, travelling about constantly on undisclosed missions, and that there was much speculation among the UNRRA people as to what he was up to.) Miss Berger tells how the British tried to incorporate the entire UNRRA mission—which included 20 Americans—into the Third British Armored Corps. The Americans refused, but were forced to wear British uniforms just the same. She tells of visiting a Red Cross hospital in Athens during the fighting and finding that the British were using it as a fortress, mounting machine guns in the patients' rooms. (The Citrine Report had a lot to say about the ELAS's "dirty fighting.") She also saw Red Cross trucks being used to transport British machine-guns. "So the ELAS fired on all Red Cross trucks"—which must have pained British moral sensibilities no end.

The most sensational revelation is that the British put the Papandreou government up to announcing, late in November, that wages would be lowered 20% and prices raised. Miss Berger thinks that this move was the immediate cause of the EAM demonstrations which led to open fighting a few days later. She thinks, on the basis of confidential minutes which she read herself, that the British forced the government to take this unpopular move in order to make possible speedier repayment of British loans. This interpretation, in my opinion, does too little credit to the intelligence of Leeper-Scobie-&Co., and too much to their ethics. They must have realized that such a policy would result in serious trouble for the Papandreou government, which they were backing; and I doubt if they would have risked the government's fall at such a ticklish moment merely in order to strengthen its far-distant future ability to pay its debts. I think their calculations were much subtler: that they *wanted* trouble, in order to have an excuse for armed intervention against EAM-ELAS. This notion is supported by this from the Bromley story: "The American members of the UNRRA Economic Control Division argued to no avail that the people could not live on this scale, and warned that they would strike. The British answered in Miss Berger's hearing that they could easily break the strike."

It is quite a policy which forces one to act the Shylock as a cover for one's real motives!

A BRITISH SOLDIER WRITES FROM GREECE.

Editor's Note: The following two letters were written by a member of an RAF ground crew which landed in Greece last October, after the Germans had evacuated, and stayed through the recent fighting. They give an intimate sense of the reactions of both the Greek common people and the rank-and-file British soldiers in the liberation period and then the tragic civil war period.

*Wing, RAF, Somewhere-in-Greece
October 7, 1944.*

We had another of our fantastic journeys coming over. "We" being my little crew of three, as an advance party. We were among the early arrivals, though we were not bothered by the Germans. The journey was tough in more ways than one but the reception we got was wonderful. After landing, and helping unload the landing craft on which we travelled, we set off late at night and travelled all night to our destination. The journey provided quite a moving experience. Somewhere around two in the morning, we halted at a small town for a bite to eat. Soon after we stopped, a man approached me, with a small girl, took my hand and shook it, said something in Greek, and went away. That's all he wanted — to shake hands with the English! I gave the girl a piece of hard chocolate, and they nearly hugged me with gratitude. A minute or two later, a middle-aged woman, with two daughters, came along. They looked lean and hungry. The woman gave us a piece of paper. On it, in large letters, was printed: "HAVE YOU PLEASE TEE. WILL YOU GIVE ME A LITTLE THANK YOU." We laughed a little, I'm sorry to say, though more out of embarrassment than anything else. It so happened that we had not much tea in our rations for the trip, and some of the lads did not want to give her any. But the three women stood and watched us as we ate, and (I suppose I'm sentimental or something) I felt very awkward. These folk have had such a thin time these last few years and a little tea is small payment for the comparatively easy time we have had. I shouldn't like to think of my mother being short of a little tea. So I dipped into a little private stock that we three had saved up for emergencies and gave her a handful. It was well worth it just to see the gratitude on the face of that woman and her daughters. I noticed some of the lads quietly slipping the woman a few biscuits and a bit of chocolate, too. She did not hurry away but waited until we'd finished, then took our tea can and mugs and things, and brought them back a few minutes later, well cleaned. A few more folk had gathered by then; and — first big surprise — as we moved out, practically the whole town's population lined the roadside — men, women and children at two o'clock in the morning (I don't know how the word got around) — and clapped and cheered and even threw flowers, as we went by. From then on, at every village the people turned out to clap us and shout, "Long live English!" (or words to that effect). How they knew of our approach, I don't know, but there they were, young and old, in the small hours, most of them fully dressed, smiling and laughing, and one or two even weeping with joy; cheering us and clapping us. Mostly clapping — that seems to be the popular method of expressing enthusiasm in this country.

Once when we halted at a village, several girls and young women (mighty pretty some of them were, too) came up and just touched us. One or two stroked my sleeve. At another place, even the village priest turned out and moved among us, blessing us; and an old woman went methodically round, shaking each of us by the hand, and murmur-

ing one word, "EFKARISTO", which we later learned meant "Thank you." Just outside a tiny hamlet, one of our trucks went into a deep ditch and almost turned over. In no time at all, the whole village was at work with shovels and branches, and hauling and shoveling, until the truck was back on the road again; and then came the loudest clapping of all. One little lad, no more than nine or ten, ran after us for nearly a mile in his enthusiasm.

So it went on. When we finally arrived, soon after dawn, the officer leading the convoy had a wreath of flowers, and several chaps had bunches of them. There's no doubt which way these folks' sympathies lie, and I must confess to feeling a little proud; and I don't suppose I was the only one with a lump in his throat at times. These people have had a tough time these last few years, but they are still proud and independent, and fighting. . . .

Your
JOHNNY

*Somewhere-in-Greece
January 19, 1945.*

I hope you will forgive me for not writing for so long, but, as you can guess, recent events in Greece have kept me rather busy, and now I am feeling very tired and disgusted with the whole business.

Last time I wrote everything was in a state of tension here, and we were expecting things to happen any minute. The position was not made any easier for me by finding myself on what I considered the wrong side in a struggle which, after all, is an affair the Greeks alone can settle. I won't pretend either side was quite right or quite wrong. The EAM made big mistakes and adopted some unworthy tactics, without doubt. Nevertheless, I think they had the better case. Now, for the time being, things are quiet, and the royalists and reactionaries are enjoying their little day, the collaborationists are breathing easier and coming out of their hideouts, and the profiteers and chisellers are reaping a rich harvest from both Greek and British troops. Prices are soaring and the black market flourishes.

In this town, after all our preparations and lessons in street fighting and preliminary exercises, things went off without a shot. We had our "D Day", when we were to take the offensive and clear the town of ELAS troops; but they moved out during the night, and there were only minor skirmishes outside the town. I was practically a member of the "General Staff", working in battle headquarters among the brigadiers and colonels, keeping radio contact with cooperating aircraft and ships. It was very interesting and instructive, and the most impressive thing about it was the quiet, calm, almost casual air with which everything was done. Yet there was something terrible about it all, something terribly and efficiently callous. One thing my experience of seeing the conduct of a battle from the inside has impressed on me is the utter hopelessness of a struggle by ill-equipped, under-trained men, however enthusiastic, however brave, however numerous, against the cold efficiency of a modern war machine and its tanks, its planes, its ships and its radio.

Well, that's that. At least we can take our clothes off, and sleep well at night, and relax a little. The "feel" of being in a town on the verge of civil war, when the first shot might come from anywhere at any time is oppressive and nerve-wracking in the extreme. . . . Small wonder that many of our chaps went a little wild occasionally, and got uproariously drunk — as most of us, I confess must confess, did at Christmas time. . . . Things looked very grim for us for a while. There were but a handful of us on our remote airfield, and we were expecting an attack any minute

from any direction. Our strategic position was hopeless, and we could only hope to hold out as long as possible had anything developed. As it happened, we were ordered to evacuate the airfield, and one night we moved into the town where we now are. We were housed in an old warehouse, and for a time our job was to defend the power station next door. . . .

In spite of all this, we managed to have a very good Christmas. Our two cooks excelled themselves with hastily improvised equipment and, as there are plenty of turkeys, fruit and wine in this part of Greece, we managed to have a very good Christmas dinner. After dinner we organized a dance, and all of us who had the slightest acquaintance with any of the local folk went out in jeeps and trucks scouring the town for girls: to our surprise, quite a lot of them came along quite willingly, and the dance was a great success. But I think the great attraction was the food, for the moment the buffet was opened, it was besieged by a crowd of girls who forewent the custom of being waited on by their hosts, and in a very few minutes swept the board clean of cakes, biscuits, sandwiches and fruit. And many of them when they left went with pockets and bags bulging with titbits for their young brothers and sisters and their mothers—and, I suspect, themselves. We have organized two other dances since—one of them, of course, on New Year's Eve—and the same thing has happened each time. I suppose it was to be expected, for these folk have been absolutely without such little luxuries for four years.

I went on from our New Year's Eve dance to a party at a Greek house. Here there was queer music, queer dances, queer food, but some pretty girls and good wine, and I quite enjoyed it until 4 A.M., when I began to get tired and left the party. God knows when it ended, for it was going strong when I left.

And all this in a town preparing for civil war! But some very queer and quite farcical things went on: as when two of us found ourselves, rather drunk I'm afraid, in "enemy" headquarters on Christmas night, bargaining with their commander, equally drunk, for their grand piano. And if we had had a truck, we could have taken the thing away for fifty shillings. Right up to the local "D Day", in spite of the fighting in Athens, our relations with the ELAS troops remained friendly. We drank with them in cafes, greeted one another cordially in the streets, and there was even an instance when they helped some of our men to search a suspected house for arms! Yet each side was waiting for the other to strike. . . .

Your

JOHNNY

"The Responsibility of Peoples"

Dear Dwight,

This letter is in answer to your request that I state in greater detail my objections to your article "The Responsibilities of Peoples," published in the March *POLITICS*.

1. Everybody has the right to quote Marx and Hegel even if he insists on misinterpreting them. But to open a discussion on the "responsibilities of peoples" with the letter of a little child, which is not "convincingly authenticated," is an unpardonable literary trick. We should try to avoid impressing readers with sadistic details of torture as an introduction to a serious discussion. We do not need such details in order to prove that the Gestapo or SS troops consist largely of professional torturers, sadists, de-

humanized beings capable of any and every crime against humanity. But such reports are hardly convincing evidence of typical behavior of "the Germans," especially when they come largely from Russian sources (though sometimes via Switzerland) and written by propagandists with a great deal of imagination, like Ilya Ehrenburg. At the time of the great campaign designed to prove that the average German has some special ability to indulge in sadistic war atrocities, it is indeed distressing that you include such reports as the above in a serious discussion of the "Germans."

You write: ". . . the German atrocities in this war are a phenomenon unique at least in modern history. . . . The Germans have done in politics what other peoples have up to now dared only to think. . . ."

Later you write that "it would be erroneous to confuse a particular kind of Germans, specialists in torture and murder, with the general run of the Germans." In other words: "the Germans" are more brutal and dehumanized than other peoples. And then again: they are not.

2. Terror methods that are "unique" have been applied by every totalitarian regime—Nazi atrocities against the Jews as well as against German Volksgenossen, Japanese atrocities against the Chinese, Russian treatment of slave labor in Siberia, concentration camps in "liberated" Poland, etc. It is the system that produces such methods of terror, that puts into uniform a stratum of dehumanized "elite" troops organized from the scum of the earth. One of our great experiences of this war is recognition of the fact that atrocities and dehumanization have become a matter of policy without special distinctions of nationality or race. Yesterday German Nazis enslaved Russians or Poles, today Russian GPU troops enslave Germans and Poles. Such conditions are the product of a decaying society and can be found all over the world.

You try to relate the fascist terror methods to the special history and traditions of "the Germans". However, such a regime always represents the dictatorship of a small minority. This very fact makes it necessary for the regime to organize special troops of well-armed gangster elements, willing to commit any crime against humanity and at the same time trained to follow orders of their commander without any independent thinking. Thus the SS or Gestapo killed Jews in special camps in Poland not because of a special hatred against the Jews, or because the German people were antisemitic, but because the order was given to them to kill. They killed German fellow-citizens, or people of other nationalities with the same obedience, or without any special feelings. Specially trained Gestapo torturers may derive as much sadistic pleasure from the torture of Jews as from the torture of German Volksgenossen.

3. I cannot agree with you that the Nazi regime was ever irrational in its policies—even in its anti-Jewish measures. A study of the various phases of antisemitism in Nazi Germany would reveal how rationally the Nazi leaders oriented their policies toward "non-Aryans" to social conditions in Germany and to their foreign policies.

Irrational myth is a necessary by-product of very rationalist imperialist policies of a totalitarian state, everywhere. Every totalitarian regime has to have its "Jews"—and if they do not exist they must be created. Most Jews in Germany wanted to stay in Germany when Hitler first came to power for there were few countries in the World with less antisemitism than Germany. One of the reasons that Nazi antisemitism had to go to extremes was precisely the unpopularity of this campaign inside Germany.

4. It is not true that the German character has been cor-

rupted by successful imperialist conquests. Such conquests were made during the war. But the Nazi regime was unable to use them to create a German labor aristocracy or to mitigate the class antagonisms inside Germany to such an extent that the Nazi regime could create a new German national character.

5. You quote Marx and Hegel in support of the thesis that the Nazi atrocities are related to the special character of "the Germans". What Marx wrote about the German nation has nothing to do with fascism, with the Nazi terror, or with the war atrocities. Marx referred in particular to the German bourgeois society of the middle of the nineteenth century when the working class was a small minority and when the bourgeois revolution was still a political issue for Germany. This is no longer true today. Further, the Nazi dictatorship relies (or relied) less on national traditions than did any former German regime.

6. Your article on "the Germans" in many ways recalls the yes-no writings of many liberals. Yes—we are better than the Germans, more democratic, more liberal, more humane; we were never under feudal rule. (This, incidentally, implies that we are fit to play the role of "liberator" or conqueror.) No—we are for democracy and liberty everywhere; we are against an imperialist policy. Yes—the German people are less humane than other peoples, they like war and militarism, if not as a matter of racial distinction then as a matter of historical background and traditions. No it is the system and not the people that is responsible for war, militarism and fascist terror.

From the psychological point of view, we cannot find an answer to the problem of the effect of war crimes on the human mind and character. But we can say that the average man in every country has more personal experience with the war atrocities committed by the armed or police forces of the enemy country than of those committed by the forces of his own government. This psychological effect of one-sided experience of war atrocities has to be balanced by an understanding of the nature of the system responsible for atrocities and war.

FOREST HILLS, L. I.

GUENTER REIMANN

(1) *If the Nazi death-camps have no place in a "serious" discussion of German war guilt, then what in the world has? Reimann further implies that the accounts I quote are mere propaganda, mostly from Russian sources (which I agree are not reliable). He does not, however, demonstrate any Russian connection with the main Swiss source I cite, nor do I think he can. Furthermore there are many non-Russian sources which also may be cited: "The Black Book of Polish Jewry"; the first-hand account, "A Year in Treblinka"; just put out by the General Jewish Workers Union of Poland; the current news stories by American reporters. As for the quotation from the child in the Polish death camp, that was given me by a scholar to whom I have every confidence. But if Reimann prefers, he may substitute the reply of 9-year-old Andor Gutman, a Jewish child from Budapest, who was found by Gene Curran of the N. Y. Times on April 16 in the Buchenwald camp's "Hygiene Institute of Waffen S.S." (where prisoners were injected with typhus germs for the production of serum—Andor had had "only the first few injections" and "seemed quite chipper.") Asked where his parents were, "he replied, without any emotion: 'My father was killed and my mother was burned to death.'"*

(2) *In the article, I compared at length the Nazi atrocities with other modern atrocities and explained why I think them unique. Reimann does not try to refute me; he merely*

reasserts the point I took considerable pains to demolish. His second point, that the Jews were slaughtered by the SS and not by the German people, is simply a repetition of my own Section 3, where I showed this at length.

(3) *I did not call the Nazis' anti-semitic propaganda irrational; its political use is well known to me, as to any other student of Nazism. What I said was that the killing of millions of Jews in death camps was irrational, that it served neither a military nor a propagandistic purpose. Anti-semitism is one thing, the extermination of all Jews is another.*

(4) *I don't recall having made the point that Reimann objects to.*

(5) *Hegel is quoted not as a German but as the great philosopher of the "organic" conception of the State, a concept which I show that non-Germans Stalin and Roosevelt share. As a matter of fact, I consider Hegel to be seminal both for revolution and for reaction. I'm also well aware that the quotation from Marx is a century old (and that Marx died a long time ago), and I'm surprised that Reimann should want to deprive Marx of credit for one of his most brilliant historical insights.*

(6) *It is simply perverse to suggest that I have ever stated in this article or elsewhere, that we Americans are "better than the Germans . . . more humane, and hence more fit to play the role of 'liberator' or 'conqueror.'" On the contrary, the article constantly states the opposite view and was written primarily to show that we cannot feel superior to the German people. As for Americans being "liberators", this is a notion I have debunked almost monthly in the pages of this magazine.*

From the above, it would seem that Reimann's objections are either quibbles or misconceptions. There is, however, a real difference of opinion between us, I think, one that is unfortunately hinted at or implied by Reimann rather than adequately stated. If I read his letter aright, his basic objection is that my article does not draw a sufficiently sharp line between the Nazis and the German people. It is true that I have a "Yes-No" attitude toward the German people, if by this is meant "Yes, some Germans are Nazis" and "No, all Germans are not Nazis." This is perhaps complicated and unsatisfactory; but reality is to blame, not me. If anything, on reflection, I think my article stressed the "No" too strongly, gave too much the impression that the German people have no responsibility of any kind for Nazis. This was because the problem I was dealing with was that of moral responsibility, with the consequent idea of punishment; in that sphere, responsibility can only be an individual matter, and is also related closely to the individual's freedom of action. But the German people have a political responsibility for Nazism, both in that they permitted Hitler to come to power, and in that they endured his rule without revolt. For to absolve the German people of this kind of responsibility is to regard them simply as victims, dupes, or slaves, with a slavish irresponsibility. But if one believe, as I do and as I am sure Reimann does, that the masses are not the inanimate raw material which Fuhrers and demagogues mould at will, that they are capable of initiative and have in fact intervened on the stage of history with decisive results at certain moments, then they must also be held responsible for not intervening. If, for example, one applauds the Spanish people for their heroic fight against fascism in 1936-38, then one must also condemn the German people for tamely submitting to fascism in 1933-34. This kind of responsibility cannot be enforced by outside powers, cannot be called to account by outside powers and is not a matter of crime & punishment. It means that the Germans

should not regard themselves simply as slaves and victims but should accept political responsibility for Nazism as the first prerequisite to accepting the responsibility for themselves creating an alternative society to Nazism.

D. M.

Modern Texts

The Gratsos Memorandum

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following document was put in our hands by a friend; there is no question as to its authenticity. The italics are our own, and it has been cut by about one-third, for space reasons. Otherwise, it is reproduced exactly from the typed carbon copy in our possession.

Shipping is one of the chief industries of Greece—mostly “tramp” steamers (ships that operate on no regular schedule but go wherever they can pick up a cargo). Britain is the only country which has more tramps under its flag than Greece. Since the war began, 80% of the Greek merchant fleet has been sunk. The Gratsos Memorandum deals with the problems this fact presents to shipowners: (1) how to get their hands on the insurance payments for their sunk ships; and (2) their chances of picking up a new fleet on easy terms from the American government after the war.

Both these questions are aspects of the great problem facing private capitalists everywhere: the ever-widening scope of State control. Since Italy invaded Greece, the Greek merchant fleet has been taken over by the British government; when ships are sunk, the Greek London Greek government impounds the insurance funds; the unhappy shipowners have been deprived of control over both their fixed and their liquid capital. They don't relish this at all, as the Memorandum below shows. They hate the Royal Greek Government in London with EAM intensity, though for very different reasons. The rich confusion of politics in this era of State capitalism is suggested by the following editorial on the recent Vergottis Decision (by which a London Court allowed a shipowner to get his insurance money, despite the Royal Government's objections). It appeared in a local Greek-language paper, The Free Press, an organ of the more reactionary shipowners.

“The verdict . . . is a slap in the face to the fashionable ideas that make a travesty of ‘economic democracy’ by attempting to plunder private property. It is well known that that despicable, abominable, most destructive and politically most dishonorable of Greeks, the principal willing slave of the Metaxas dictatorship, the so-called financier, M. Varvaressos, at the time of the Tsouderos administration laid hands on the funds belonging to the Greek shipowners. . . . The verdict gives back to its legitimate owner his funds. . . . International Leftism is suffering a defeat, and a most salutary one for Greece, with the beachcombers and the criminal parasites of the London Greek Government now learning that there are courts in Britain which will not allow outright plundering even though such looting may be disguised as one of the ‘socialistic ideas of our times.’”

Thus the Royal Greek Government becomes an agent of “International Leftism”. The political cross-currents are especially choppy here because not only the simple State-

v.-private-capitalism struggle is involved, but also British imperialism's control over the economic life of a semi-colonial power. The Greek shipowners object to the Royal London Government because it is a puppet of the British, and hence unable and unwilling to stick up for Greek capitalism against its masters in London. The “abominable” and despicable” Varvaressos is Finance Minister of the Royal Government and also Governor of the Bank of Greece. He is persona grata with the British to such an extent that, according to the London Tribune of March 30, they “toyed with the idea of appointing him as a kind of economic controller to put Greece on her feet. Mr. Varvaressos would have had the confidences of the large business community, of Hambro's Bank in London (which has a great many financial irons in Greek politics) and also of the King.” But Plastiras vetoed the idea, probably because his attitude toward the British is more like that of the Greek shipowners than it is like that of the Royal Government. The British may well have worked behind the scenes to cause Plastiras' downfall. It is also significant that in his last weeks of office, Plastiras appointed as his Minister of Merchant Marine one George Moatsos, who is closely connected with various powerful big shipping interests. And that Moatsos was not reappointed by Plastiras' successor, the pro-Royalist Admiral Voulgaris. Between their fear of “the socialistic ideas of our times” and their smalltime-gangster resentment of the Big Shots in London, the Greek shipowners present a spectacle that is tragic or ironic depending on one's point of view.

The Memorandum below, which suggests Balzac's businessmen in its somewhat melodramatic ruthlessness, shows a realistic understanding of this dilemma. It recognizes that the best way to avoid nationalization is not to try to remove all State controls, since this might in itself afford a “demagogic pretext” for nationalization. But rather for the shipowners to get into the government themselves, make it their government, even possibly going so far as to subsidize a political movement, “preferably an agrarian party.”

It remains to be added that C. Gratsos is one of two brothers who inherited a few ships from their father, and that he is considered one of the shrewder and more reactionary of the local Greek shipowners. He lives mostly in San Francisco, where he looks after the family whaling interests and also functions as Greek vice-consul. On occasion, he has served as emissary of his fellow-shipowners to the Royal Government in London (“that clique of idiotic crooks”—see below). His viewpoint is a minority one in the New York Greek Shipowners' Committee, which is dominated by the more liberal Emanuel Kulukintis, head of the big R. & K. Line. However, one should remember, as I wrote in February: “A modern Greek liberal would be a Dewey Republican over here.”

Furthermore, all these conflicts are essentially family quarrels: when it comes to the basic class struggle, the royalist tools of Britain and the anti-British Greek capitalists stand together. The shipowners are glad to use British courts to keep their crews in order: Greek seamen are frequently arrested in New York and transported for trial and imprisonment in England. The Greek Government, while keeping a tight hold on the insurance funds, is happy to oblige the owners in other respects. “Seamen called up at the Piraeus to be taken off to America to man Liberty ships,” reported Stephen Barber in the London News Chronicle for February 20, “are being combed out for political views before sailing. In one shipload recently, over 40 were thus weeded out at the last minute. The same sort of thing happens to the Piraeus dockers and stevedores.”

Willkie was right: it is one world—their world.

C. GRATSOS

8-10 Bridge Street
New York 4, N. Y.

February 16, 1945.

Messrs. The Greek Shipowners Committee,
44 Whitehall Street, New York, N. Y.
Gentlemen:

Edgar Allan Poe in one of his strangest tales, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar", narrates in his most hallucinating style, how the corpse of a dead man retained, over a considerable period of time, all the attributes of a living organism including speech, not through any mechanical or chemical processes, but only because Mr. Valdemar, the man in question, was put in a state of deep hypnotic sleep a few days prior to his death.

There is a definite similarity between the cataleptic life of the hero of that story and our own long reptilian narcose . . . An uninterrupted and continuing accumulation of mistakes, a baffling indifference towards our vital interests, the lukewarm attention shown by us regarding the immense problems concerning the reconstruction of our country, the lack of solidarity and of a collective conscience, have already jeopardised the fate of our cash reserves in England and killed Greek shipping . . .

Even the Italian invasion of Greece failed to awaken us. The first moments of panic and passive resignation were succeeded by a tidal wave of optimism and patriotic frenzy that did not leave room for any rational thinking, while we all knew what the inevitable end of that twilight of glory would be.

During the six months that elapsed between Mussolini's ill-fated adventure and the German occupation, we had ample time to organize ourselves for the coming emergency, establish a fully empowered managing committee in the U. S. A. and prepare our defenses, through political influences, against any radical interferences of the government into our financial affairs.

After the fall of Crete, when the derelict, spineless, and penniless government in exile reached London, we were in a position not only to bargain with them, but to take in our hands many an important ministry, thus nullifying the nefarious activities of that clique of idiotic crooks, responsible for all the subsequent misfortunes of our country, who later appropriated our funds and abjectly surrendered our ships to the British Ministry of War Transport. . . .

It is time now, although perhaps too late, to start a vigorous and coordinated campaign for the recovery of the full control of our funds and the rehabilitation of our industry.

THE RELEASE OF THE FUNDS IN ENGLAND.

The impeachment of our Bank and other deposits in England by the Greek authorities, is only one of the major obstacles we shall have to overcome prior to getting full possession of those funds. Because even if we had actually succeeded to liberate them from the control of our government, those assets would continue to be useless for us owing to the prevailing strict British Exchange control regulations completely blocking for an unknown, but most certainly long period of time, any attempt to transfer the whole or parts of those monies to the U. S. A. or Sweden, where they could be used to the best advantage.

For that reason we must study separately the two aspects of our problem, their intricate relationships and the steps that should be taken in order to recover reserves and transform them from a highly hypothetical wealth into actual purchasing power.

THE LIFTING OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS.

Upon my return from London last year, in a report to your Committee dated August the 28th, 1944, I tried to give you a more or less clear picture of our position at that time.

As you all remember, the first part of the legal opinion as to the possibility of recovering full control of those funds was unfavorable for us. The second part of the lawyer's opinion, based mostly on our insurable interest and affecting the funds accruing from losses of ships, was supposed to be more favorable than the first. Unfortunately, to my knowledge, that second part never reached us, and no effort was made to have it here.

Concurrently and although privately, Mr. B. M. Mavroleon sought the opinion of Mr. S. F. Howard, an eminent solicitor specializing in such cases. At first, Mr. Howard was rather optimistic, but in a subsequent meeting he had with Mr. Mavroleon, after a careful study of all the documents at hand, he entirely changed his mind and Mr. Mavroleon telegraphed to Messrs. R. K. here last September that Mr. Howard's opinion was definitely pessimistic as to the outcome of any litigation. Consequently, if we choose to fight our case in the English courts, the probabilities are that we shall lose it. This assumption is corroborated by the fact that the Greek Government, who were reluctant at first to bring to the courts the case of Mr. A. Vergottis, decided to do so lately, and, as I understand it, it will be tried towards the end of February. . . .*

From August to January of the new year, many a fateful event happened to our country. Greece was liberated, the Minister with whom we were dealing was replaced by Mr. Rallis, the civil war broke out, the Papandreou Government fell and General Plastiras formed a new Cabinet, which has some chances of survival until the elections.

If we miss this opportunity to settle our affairs at the present time when a fairly conservative, with the exception of John Sofianopoulos, body of men is in power, it is difficult to believe that the Leftist Government which will in all probability succeed them, shall even consider the relinquishment of their hold over our funds.

Therefore, we must strike now in a swift campaign.

Such a campaign, in order to be successful, must be well coordinated, backed by ample financial resources and must be undertaken in behalf of all the Greek shipowners, who forgetting for once, united, fight with all imaginable weapons for their unquestionable rights.

THE PLAN OF ACTION.

Prior to the liberation of Greece, it was almost impossible to find any effective approach to the problem confronting us, owing to the lack of a central Greek Authority upon which depended then as it depends now the ultimate decision. *Today, it seems that at last Greece has a fairly stable Government, composed of men with whom we could eventually come to terms.*

Consequently, it is imperative that we send immediately

*The author is too pessimistic. There is more justice in the world than he realizes, even for shipowners. On March 28, a British court decided that Vergottis—who lives in New York, incidentally, and can usually be found lunching on Saturdays at the Hotel Plaza with other Greek shipowners and patriots, including Kostas Kotzias, the former Mayor of Athens and Metaxas minister, and Diakos, the "emince grise" of the Metaxas regime—could retain the 80,000 pounds insurance money paid for his torpedoed ship, the *Emmy*. This is a big victory for the shipowners, as up to now the Greek Government has been impounding the insurance payments on their sunk ships (which, indeed, have been one of the few financial resources of the hard-pressed George II).

to Athens, an emissary with full powers to negotiate not only the lifting of the Greek Government restrictions, but also discuss the methods of transfer of those funds to the U. S. A., the coordination under a central Greek Shipping and Trading Mission—an enlargement of the United Greek Shipowners Corp.—of all lend-lease foreign trade and shipping activities and the inclusion in the present Cabinet of one or more shipowners. . . . Nothing will be accomplished unless we clearly understand that we must be prepared to accept some sacrifices and assume certain responsibilities, and that the sacrifices will be in inverse ratio to the responsibilities assumed, because *in the new European world now emerging from chaos, capital, as an abstract entity, will undergo such radical changes that it will be unrecognizable.*

In all our previous contacts with the various inarticulate Governments in exile we rarely did more than play the broken record of "we want our money", carefully avoiding to give even a hint as to what we were going to do with it.

Our reluctance to accept any commitments regarding the replacement of our lost tonnage, and the unwillingness to establish a relationship between the latter and the lifting of the restrictions were well founded. We were afraid that such a move might have had two results, both equally disastrous for us: The Government could either demand the immediate purchase of ships at exorbitant prices, or decide, misguided by the inept intellects of the Portuary Corps, *to nationalise shipping and use our deposits in England to put our plan into execution, relegating us to the status of General or T. C. Agents for the rest of our natural lives.*

Therefore our representative will have two alternatives; either bargain for an unconditional removal of all Government control which, barring a miracle, would entail a considerable sacrifice in the form of taxes, super-taxes, etc., or correlating this purely financial transaction with the future of our Merchant Marine, present a coherent plan of at least a partial but effective replacement of the lost tonnage, in a manner eliminating the grave dangers inherent to such action.

The first alternative, although the most attractive, will encounter very strong opposition owing to the dire economic situation in Greece, the collapse of the national currency system and the emergence of strong Leftist groups that are likely to play a decisive role in the political future of the nation.

Moreover, as we have already indicated, a favourable settlement would only restore to us the full ownership of those assets but not the freedom of use of them, owing to the British Foreign Exchange regulations.

The second approach, if skillfully planned, would not only remove the Greek Government restrictions, but eventually, through complicated international agreements, could actually result in full use of our deposits, through purchase of ships, drydocks, fishing boats, etc., and will be based upon the coordination of the liberation of our funds with a rehabilitation plan based upon the lend-lease agreements between the American and Greek Governments on the one hand and the British and American Governments on the other.

That seemingly unorthodox solution requires a lengthy explanation, sometimes confusing and necessarily occasionally inaccurate as depending on many factors unknown to us.

Fundamentally that line of action will capitalize upon the rapidly growing importance of the status of our country in the silent but merciless struggle between the Anglo-Saxon powers and the U. S. S. R. for supremacy in Europe and the conservation of the Mediterranean lifelines of the

British Empire. Greece must be kept at all costs, as the latest events have proven, within the orbits of the capitalistic system as sponsored by Britain and the U. S. A., and this cannot be done unless the country recovers financially, socially and commercially, the soonest possible. In the Greek National Economy, shipping was one of the main sources of income and consequently its rehabilitation would be of paramount importance. And, as the shipping industry could recover at least part of its strength in a very short space of time, we can easily see what the pattern of our campaign will be.

As obviously Britain, with her depleted Merchant Marine, will not be able for many years to either sell ships to us or build for our account, her own needs coming first, we shall necessarily have to turn to the only available markets of supply, Sweden and the U. S. A. . . . For simplicity's sake, let us forget for the moment the possibilities offered by the Swedish market and examine the unique opportunities arising from the international policies of the U. S. A.

There is no doubt that the U. S. A. will dispose of a great number of war built ships, especially those not likely to be able to compete with the post-war Merchant Marine of the country, and that the American shipyards, especially those on the West Coast, will do their utmost to press the Government for financial support for the continuation of their operations after the war.

How can we, as individuals, practically without any American funds, fit into that picture? Only in two ways; either by the eventual purchase of ships lend-leased to the Greek Government, or by an agreement enabling us to purchase or build ships in the U. S. A. payable in Sterling.

The First Method. At this moment the U. S. A. have lend-leased to the Greek Government, thirteen ships, all Liberties, the number of which, I understand, will be increased later.

We could first see, through our Government, that this number be increased to fifty or more if possible. At the end of the Japanese war and after the dissolution of the U. M. A., the status of those lend-leased ships will be clarified: They will be either transferred to Greek ownership at highly reduced values or they will be simply given away. We would then buy those ships from the Greek Government, paying them in Sterling in London. . . . *At the same time, and in order to avoid any possibility of ultimate nationalization of our Merchant Marine to which such a process might lead us, the structure, scope and powers of the United Greek Shipowners Corp. should change in a manner described in a subsequent chapter.*

The second method, applicable either independently or in conjunction with the first, is more advantageous to us and superficially simpler, but actually is more complicated as it presents, to a greater degree, the difficulties emanating not only from the probable unwillingness of the U. S. Treasury to accept any increase of their Sterling assets, but also because of the obvious reluctance of the British to increase their already heavy indebtedness to the U. S. A. by allowing the transfer of those funds.

The mechanics of that second solution of our problem will be roughly as follows:

1) The Greek Government will approach the U. S. Treasury and try to induce them to accept British Sterling deposited in England as a collateral security for loans for the purchase of ships by Greek citizens. This collateral security will be an additional guarantee of good performance to those already afforded by the mortgage on the ship and/or the ownership of the title of the vessel by the U. S. M. C. or by any other American agency until full payment of the debt.

2) If the Treasury accepts such a proposition, they will in turn guarantee the loans given to either Greek citizens buying ships or to the shipyards who will undertake to build ships for their accounts. These loans might be given in some instances by the Lend-Lease Administration and big Banking or Insurance Trusts, but mostly through the numerous Federal Loan Administration Agencies.*

In December, 1943, at the request of Mr. W. Minehan, Vice President of The Bank of America, I prepared for him a memorandum dealing in detail not only with the above, but also with shipping finance in general. This memorandum is now in the hands of Transamerica, who are much interested in the subject. In January, 1944, in San Francisco, I handed to Admiral Vickery, Vice-Chairman of the U. S. M. C., in the presence of Mr. J. Moore, one of the most influential shipbuilders in the West, another memorandum treating the closely related problems of the disposal of war built ships and post-war shipbuilding. . . .

THE REHABILITATION PROGRAM.

In July 1944 we prepared a rehabilitation program, to be used for such negotiations which was based upon two memoranda on the subject, one by Mr. N. Kulukundis and one by myself. This program was bold, comprehensive and expensive, but would certainly appeal to any Government anxious to reestablish employment and prosperity in the country.

It can be adopted fully or in part, or altered to suit the latest international, financial and local developments.

In addition to the purely shipping program outlined in that project, both the basic memoranda contain various other subjects which require the Government's immediate attention, such as international treaties, tariffs, free zones, air services, coastal shipping, fishing, insurance, cargo movements to Greece, period of transition, all of which have to be brought forward by our delegates.

THE POLITICAL ANGLE.

"To undertake such a vast program involving huge expenditures, highly technical issues, and grave dangers in the form of potential nationalization of the shipping industry, reckless expenditure of our funds, etc., without participation in the Government of the Country and the control of the Purchasing and Economic Missions abroad, would be tantamount to suicide."

For this reason, the primary objections of our campaign must be:

a) *To obtain at least two Cabinet posts, the Ministry of the Merchant Marine, and another Ministry, preferably the one of Reconstruction.*

b) *Reorganize the Ministry of Merchant Marine along the lines of the U. S. Department of Commerce, so as to include the fisheries and civil aviation.*

c) *To either organize a political party or to be affiliated to and subsidize an existing one, preferably an agrarian party, so that we assure for us some representation in the future Government of Greece.*

d) *Reorganize and extend the scope and jurisdiction of the existing New York United Greek Shipowners Corp., so that it becomes a central shipping, trading and purchasing organization similar to its Norwegian prototype. . . .*

Our shipping Community in New York is not only large, but very representative of our race and of our profession. It is composed of older men who have gone through the astounding experiences of two wars, of now middle-aged

men who performed the miracles of the depression period, of still younger men fresh and untried, of very rich and relatively poor, but all possessing to varying degrees, the same ability, the same dogged will to survive, that saved us through many vicissitudes.

All of us must be drafted, and forgetting our petty jealousies, our differences, and overcoming that hypnotic daze produced by a Sybaritic and idle life, so foreign to our tradition, try in a supreme effort to help our country and firmly establish our right to survive. And this effort, however brief or perhaps futile, must be done.

Because the history of men is like a long polar night, whose abysmal darkness is very rarely illuminated by flashes of lightning—And although those flashes are as short as they are blinding, they are everything.

Sincerely yours,
C. GRATOS

The Intelligence Office

SUMMARY

Sir:

What I've learned about our new President from newscasters and columnists whose words if placed end to end would—and no doubt do—girdle the world 67 times at the Equator:

Truman's
Human.

BETHEL, CONN.

TRAVERS CLEMENT

BOOKS WANTED

SIR:

In this town of 1,800 people, of whom about one-fourth are Negroes, there is one public library—for whites only. I have been cooperating with some of the Negroes in an attempt to establish a library for Negroes. At present what books we have been able to collect are in the office of the Negro Government Housing Project and the manager of the Project is in charge of them. We hope to secure permanent quarters later.

Perhaps you and your readers may have some books, pamphlets or magazines they would like to donate to this library.

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA.

MRS. LUELLA S. HALVORSEN

P.S.—Please send books to: I. W. Mizell, 325 Dixie Court, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

FRENCH LITERARY POLITICS

Sir:

Victor Serge, in his letter in the February *POLITICS*, complains that I didn't stick the proper label on those writers whom I mentioned as having fought in the French Underground. Now I do not quite see why the fact that somebody has been or is a Stalinist or a fellowtraveler minimized the fact of his having fought the Nazis in France (which is evidently Mr. Serge's implication). But if Mr. Serge thinks that labeling is essential, then this should at least be done properly. André Malraux, whom Serge includes in his list of Stalinists or fellowtravelers, is actually labeled a "Trotskyist" by the French CP because of his outspoken opposition to Stalinism (*vide* his recent speech at the convention of the National Movement of Liberation), Jean Guéhenno is on the editorial staff of the Central Organ of the French Socialist Party *Le Populaire*

*Early in April, the Greek Government appointed the author of this memorandum a member of its Lend-Lease Commission.

and Jean Paulhan, the former editor of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, may be an "innocent" but is certainly not a Stalinist. Jean Cassou was De Gaulle's personal representative in the Toulouse region.

NEW YORK CITY

LOUIS CLAIR

CORRECTION

Sir:

There was a bad mistake in the translation of my letter in the February issue. I did not write what was printed: "The French Resistance is completely dominated by the Communist Party." But rather that this is the case in the mass section of the Resistance—for there is also the bourgeois section, smaller but socially very important.

MEXICO CITY

VICTOR SERGE

LOST GENERATION #2

Sir:

Acknowledging receipt of November, December, and January "Politics" . . . They came floating in a few days ago from the APO sound and secure in that rugged manilla envelope. . . The Belgian relief is really snafued and the people are beginning to realize that the bare necessities of life were more plentiful under the Nazi occupation. If they start thinking too hard, a fine time will be had by all and it won't be a merry one. The Allies are milking Belgium for labor and material and giving nothing in return. These people have suffered enough and it is time something were done. Right now, they are the forgotten 'liberated country.'

A lot of G.I.'s are doing some thinking and if it keeps on its present course, lost generation number 2 will be upon us before the war is over. It won't be quite as literary as the last one, though.

SOMEWHERE-IN-BELGIUM

PFC.

THE POSITIVE SIDE OF "NEGATIVISM"

Sir:

Jean Malaquais is right. POLITICS is fulfilling, in an excellent way, the mission of questioning the validity of all the half-truths and three-quarter lies generally consumed at face-value by everybody, from liblabs to lolblips.

NEW YORK CITY

CUNNAR LEISTIKOW

THE "RESPONSIBILITY OF PEOPLES"

I want to thank you for the copy of *Politics* containing Mr. Macdonald's article on "The Responsibility of Peoples".

I should like to express my warm concurrence with the conclusions of his article. It is entirely realistic, it faces all the facts and at the same time it presents the most balanced and statesmanlike verdict. It will be a great pity if those in the seats of power fail to make the same essential discrimination that Mr. Macdonald so well perceives in his excellent statement.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

R. M. MACIVER

WESTERN UNION CABLEGRAM

MAY I REPRINT YOUR BRILLIANT RESPONSIBILITY OF PEOPLES WITH FULL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS IN NEXT ISSUE LEFT NEWS? VICTOR GOLLANCZ, BRIMPTON BERKSHIRE ENGLAND

—Permission was gladly given.—ED.

"The Responsibility of Peoples" is one of the sanest and profoundest analyses of the problem of individual and collective guilt which I have read. It is a wholesome antidote to the terrible rot which is written on this subject. I am not sure the article does full justice to the infinite varieties and degrees of complicity in a group evil and to

the possibility of an evil regime corrupting even the saner elements among non-political sections of the public. But on the whole, the article is wise and helpful.

NEW YORK CITY

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CONTRIBUTORS

Daniel Bell, an editor of "Common Sense", is working on a book to be titled: "The Monopoly State" . . . Frank Marquart is Educational Director of Local 212, UAW-CIO . . . Solomon F. Bloom is the author of "The World of Nations", a study of Marx's views on the national question; he teaches history at Brooklyn College . . . Lionel Abel has contributed poetry and criticism to "Partisan Review", "View", "The Miscellany", and other magazines . . . Guenter Reimann is the author of "Germany, World Empire or World Revolution" and "The Vampire Economy" . . . C. Gratsos owns ships.

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