

# politics

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## EDITORIAL

### (1)

Mr. Rhys Davies asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of recent complications in international affairs, His Majesty's Government, in conjunction with their Allies, have reconsidered their policy of unconditional surrender against the Axis powers and the proposal to transfer from their homes by force millions of people in Central Europe, in favor, as a beginning, of the encouragement of a new and democratic regime in Germany in which the United Nations could have faith, so as to bring the present conflict in Europe to a close on the basis of the Atlantic Charter.

The Prime Minister: No, sir.

(Official Report [Hansard], Parliamentary Debates, Jan 16, 1945.)

### (2)

Front-line correspondents report that posters have been put up everywhere in the British and American occupied territories of Germany announcing that 52 different Nazi organizations are to be disbanded. This figure does not, however, include all Nazi organizations. Some of these are not to be dissolved but ordered to their stations and barracks to await further orders. Among the latter figure the Hitler Youth, the Nazi Police, and the S.S.

(London "Tribune", Nov. 24, 1944.)

### (3)

"In Germany there will be no fraternization. We go in as conquerors."  
(General Eisenhower, as quoted in "N. Y. Times", Oct. 13, 1944.)

### (4)

Press Association





## Comment

**Resistance—a Semantic Note** It is a commonplace that general political terms have become "devaluated" in our time. Churchill suppresses the Greeks in the name of "democracy"; Mussolini sets up a "republican" regime in North Italy; the official name of the Nazis is "National Socialist Workers' Party." What price "socialism" when the British Labor Party props up Tory imperialism, and what price "communism," which had so daring and free a ring in 1848, when it means totalitarianism at home and conservative power-politics abroad?

But two new terms have emerged in this concluding phase of the war which are not (as yet) devaluated, which retain all their sharpness and moral purity: "collaboration" and "resistance." I think it deeply significant that these are becoming the great political watchwords in Europe today, since they indicate no specific, positive ideology, no aspiring faith, but simply the fact that people either "go along" or that they "resist." The terms arose, of course, to describe attitudes towards the Germans. But they are coming to have the same sense vis-a-vis the "liberators" (another sadly devaluated word, by the way).

These terms could be described as "positive" and "negative"—a fact I'd like to commend to the attention of the critics of this magazine's "negativism." To resist, to *reject* simply—this is the first condition for the human spirit's survival in the face of the increasingly tighter organization of state power everywhere. That this is not a sufficient condition is true: only a general, positive faith and system of ideas can save us in the long run. Such a faith and system are no longer held by significant numbers of people. But they will only develop, if they do, from the seeds of "resistance," which is as positive in this sense as "collaborationism" is negative and sterile. Salute to those in Greece and Poland and Belgium and France and Norway who are *resisting*, who were successfully eroding and corrupting the Nazis' "New Order" long before D-Day, as "Gallicus" showed last issue, and who are now making headaches for the "liberators"!

I am compelled to add that how long "resistance" will remain undevaluated is a problem, as the following dispatch in the *N. Y. Times* suggests:

"BERNE, Switzerland, Jan. 19: . . . According to reliable first-hand information, a 'Resistance Congress' of Balkan, French, Belgian and Netherlands Quislings has just ended in Ober-Salzburg, where it adopted measures for the coordination of the exiled governments' activities with those of the eventual "white *maquis*" now being organized in German hands. One outstanding representative at this congress was said to have been Archduke Joseph of Hapsburg, who attended as 'the representative of the Austrian Resistance movement'."

Thus here we have a Neo-Resistance movement arising to resist both the Resistance and the "liberators" whom the Resistance is now resisting. It only remains for the United Nations to dress up *their* Hapsburg, Otto, in a Resistance costume.

### The 1944 Election Returns

The minor-party vote has at last been published (next to the classified ads) and it shows that the Socialist Party got its all-time lowest vote: 80,500; while the Socialist Labor

Party got its all-time highest vote: 45,300. (The previous SLP high was the 36,400 polled in 1896. The SLP's showing is all the more impressive because it was on the ballot in only 15 states, as against 25 for the SP.) Just what the rise in the SLP vote means it is hard to say. Some possible explanations: (1) a growing response to the Simon-pure revolutionary-Marxist doctrines of the SLP—considering the routinized and unimaginative nature of the SLP's propaganda and the many other evidences of an increasingly *conservative* temper of the American electorate, this seems unlikely;\* (2) the fact that the SLP concentrated its campaign, in however uninspired a fashion, on domestic issues such as the labor draft and postwar unemployment, as against Thomas's campaign, which stressed international issues—this would be one more indication of the deeprooted "isolationism" of the American public; (3) a friend suggests that many voters might even have thought the SLP was a *fascist* outfit, especially in New York State, where it had to appear on the ballot as the "Industrial Government Party".

If the SLP's rise is hard to explain, the SP's decline is not. The party that once polled almost a million votes with Debs barely nosed out the Prohibition Party, whose candidate got 74,800 votes. In New York City, with the most politically advanced population in the country, the SLP got almost double the SP's vote: 11,900 to 6,100. (This is perhaps even more significant than the comparative national showings.) Such a sensational decline may mean that the radical voters are tired of the SP's milk-and-water "socialism", its wobbly compromises on matters of principle, the incredibly low intellectual level of its press, and, above all, the stale liberal banalities of its only national

\*A friend describes the SLP's radio propaganda: "It was calm, Olympian, ultimate Socialism, in Eric Hass's tutorial voice. Everything said was orthodox. Of course there was no program of immediate demands. . . . There was nothing urgently anti-war, but the statement was repeated that capitalism had caused the war and that if capitalism continued, there would certainly be a third world war. . . . Now if the SLP, with its leisurely gospel of socialism some day and all in good time, dear sir, was able to do as well as it did electorally, it's probable that another party, with a better program, stressing an anti-war position, could have done much better." Apropos radio, it might be added that the fact that the Army was forced to permit the minor parties equal access with the major parties to broadcasts to the troops seems to have made little difference. A member of the SP tells me that the response to Thomas's broadcasts to the soldiers overseas, as gauged by letters coming into party headquarters, was far below what they had anticipated. The SLP may have done better—if their press is to be trusted on the point—but its total vote was still so low as to suggest that, as is hardly a secret, the American soldier's personal war aim is to go back to an unchanged USA.

## politics

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figure, Norman Thomas (who, as Trotsky once observed, "became a socialist through a misunderstanding"). Recognizing the decisive nature of the SP's 1944 vote, Thomas himself has stated that the party is "finished as an electoral factor", though he thinks it still has an educational job to do in helping lay the foundations for a Third Party movement. He has also said that he is "tired", and will not run again for president. This is good news, but it is too bad he did not realize he has been "tired" in a political sense for a great many years; it would have saved us a lot of confusion and wasted effort.

**Footnote on UNRRA** A friend of mine from Washington tells the following story. A college friend of hers, an American girl of Greek extraction, wanted to go to Greece this fall to help distribute UNRRA relief. She sent in an application form, and presently received a phone call from an executive of UNRRA. He told her they needed personnel badly, and that her qualifications were quite impressive—she had had a brilliant college career, and she was then holding down an important administrative job. But he wanted to ask two questions, he said, which he hoped she would answer "the right way." If she did, he could practically guarantee her a job at once. First, did she know many people in Greece? Second, did she understand the language well enough to communicate freely with the natives, to get to know what they were really feeling? With some pride, the applicant said that, Yes, she knew a lot of people in Greece, old friends of her family and such; and that she spoke Greek as fluently as English. "Oh . . ." said the UNRRA man, and there was an embarrassed pause. "Well . . . we'll let you know if by any chance there is an opening. Your other qualifications are very good." That was the last she heard from UNRRA. It would appear that that humanitarian organization is as vigilant to prevent "fraternization" as the military chiefs always are, and for the same reason: the less human contact with The Enemy, the better from authority's point of view. That the Enemy is the native peoples UNRRA is supposed to so nonpolitically minister to is just one more turn of the ironical screw.

**Gide and the Communists** A recent issue of *New Masses* contained an article by Louis Aragon, the former surrealist who has long since become a laboratory attendant in the Stalinist *pissoir*, which charges that Andre Gide became a collaborationist after the Germans occupied France. Proof? Gide wrote an article which quoted Goethe respectfully! No apology for quoting Goethe is, of course, necessary—but it might be noted (to give an idea of the fantastic mental climate of Stalinism, an atmosphere in which a surrealist might well feel at home) that Gide's references to Goethe were in reality an extraordinarily courageous defiance of the Nazis, since his point was precisely that the Nazis had no right to speak in the name of either German or European culture.

All this gives especially interest to a passage from a letter which Jean Malaquais recently received from Gide, and which he has kindly given me permission to print:

"My *Pages from a Journal*, printed in *L'Arche*, have been furiously attacked by the Communists. In the Consultative Assembly, one of the party's deputies asked for my imprisonment and my execution—for, he said, I had 'insulted the French peasant', just as in the past I had 'insulted' the Russian people. Everywhere an excess of patriotism, through fear of being thought a 'traitor', and everywhere an exces-

sive ferocity toward those who chose the wrong side. But in spite of everything, France is being wonderfully reborn, and I must give credit to a younger generation which has been able to show such great courage."

**The Historians Make History** Carlton J. H. Hayes, the Catholic historian who in his recently concluded term as U. S. Ambassador to Spain put himself on record again and again as an ardent admirer of France, is the new president of the American Historical Association. But not without a fight. For the first time in the long history of the Association, there was a contest for the presidency. When the machine that runs the A.H.A. nominated Hayes for this year's president—always in the past nomination has meant unanimous election—a group of "Young Turks" got up a counter-petition nominating Sidney B. Fay the official vice-presidential candidate. The conservatives who run the Association did not seem to object so much to the Young Turks' criticisms of Hayes' fascist sympathies (they didn't seem to object to the fascist sympathies either) as to their temerity in proposing an unofficial candidate. At the annual convention, the machine sprung a coup: A. M. Schlesinger got up and read a letter from Fay, his colleague at Harvard, which praised Hayes, denounced the move against him, and stated that he, Fay, would not serve as president if elected. Undaunted, the Young Turks pressed the attack on Hayes, their leader, Dr. Gewehr, documenting the charges of pro-fascism in a half-hour speech which made a sensation. Then they insisted—and, after a long and bitter debate, succeeded—in being allowed to vote for Fay anyway. The vote came out: 110 for Hayes, 65 for Fay. "We were well pleased," a participant writes. "Considering that many people had read Ernest K. Lindley's whitewash of the State Department (and of Hayes especially) in the December *Harpers*, and that our candidate, Fay, had written he would not serve if elected, we felt it was a splendid showing. It was due largely to Gewehr's quotations from Hayes, and to general indignation over the way the big-shots were trying to gag us."

## Warsaw (4)

☞ On January 18, 1945, the Red Army captured Warsaw. This was almost six months after it had reached the suburbs of the city and the Polish underground army in Warsaw had opened its tragic and heroic battle against the Germans. It took just four days of fighting for the Red Army to capture Warsaw. The rest of the six months, Soviet troops were merely camped outside the city, waiting for the Polish underground to be wiped out by the Nazis, and for the bulk of the Red Army to establish Russian political dominance over Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary. Long live the Fortress of International Socialism! All hail to the Workers' Fatherland!

☞ The first survivor of the Warsaw uprising to reach London has now told his story. He is 30-year-old Lieutenant Jan Novak, and the *N. Y. Times* of January 26 reports his story:

"On August 1, when the Polish patriots rose, the sound of a great battle on the East bank of the Vistula River could be heard, Lieutenant Novak said. But on August 2, about 8 P. M., there was a 'sudden, complete, terrible silence.' The Red Army's guns stopped firing and the Russian air force halted its activity over Warsaw. Not until the second week in September, when the Russians sud-



denly captured the suburb of Praga on the east bank of the river, did they resume the battle, he added. Still masters of the west bank of the Vistula in one section, the Poles could see Russian tanks and soldiers across the river, 'and we could not understand why they did not cross.'

"When the Russians took Praga, there were telephone and wireless communications between the capital and its suburb. But, Lieutenant Novak said, the Russians, while acknowledging that they were receiving messages, refused to answer. On the day of his surrender, General Komorowski sent Marshal Konstantin K. Rokossovsky a message saying that the Poles' position was hopeless unless the Russians could break into Warsaw quickly, and asking

how soon this could be done. General Komorowski said that he needed an answer within twenty-four hours, but there was none.

"After what has happened,' Lieutenant Novak said, 'the Polish people are terribly afraid of what is coming.'"

"Lieutenant Novak and his wife, whom he married in a Warsaw chapel on September 7 'when we thought that we had only a few more days to live,' were among five people chosen to try to escape and 'tell the people the truth' about Warsaw. With bandages covering faked wounds, they left Warsaw in the civilian evacuation and escaped from the civilian camp established by the Germans. His wife, who also served with the underground army, is here with him."

## The Stalintern Over Europe

Louis Clair

On January 21, Maurice Thorez, leader of the French Communist Party, announced that the Patriotic Militia had served well against the Germans but that now, the situation being different, "public security should be assured by the regular police force and local Committees of Liberation should not substitute themselves for the local governments." He thus adopted exactly the same attitude as that of De Gaulle, whose stand the CP had violently assailed until that day.

The naive fellow-travellers wondered. Yet this and similar turns are surprising only to those who consider the CP a party of the Left (a mistake we also sometimes make by old habit). Only when it is recognized that the CP is neither of the Left nor of the Right, but a *totalitarian* party can its policy be correctly assayed.

In one of the best descriptions of the other great totalitarian party of our times, the Nazi party, Herman Rauschnigg stresses that its strength lay in its lack of ideological commitments. The leadership has definite plans and aims. Yet it considers ideological commitments unnecessary and positively harmful ballast on the road to power. Ideology is an indifferent wrapping like the label on canned goods. What makes the content of a genuine political party becomes here mere form. All this applies to the Communist Party as well. Ideology is extraneous; power becomes the only content; propaganda replaces ideology; theory loses all dignity; ideas are looked upon with the utmost scorn and contempt.

Nothing is too stupid for the masses.

Thus *Pravda* for December 18 carried an article by Dr. Stefan Jcarichowski, member of the Lublin Committee. Excerpt: "Silesia, Western Pomerania, the Oder territories, and the mouth of the Vistula are primordial Polish territories, inhabited since ancient times by Poles, and constituting part of the Polish State at the time when Polish territories were united under the Piast dynasty. At the end of the 14th century. . . . Casimir the Great was forced to adopt a compromise which sacrificed these territories. . . . At present, the new democratic Poland is striving to correct the mistakes of the past. . . ."

[Why then, let's turn over Russia to the Tartars, rightful descendants of the Golden Horde!]

Skill and efficiency in conducting the political game are the sole criteria. All inhibitions still operative in the non-totalitarian world are discarded. "Who gets what how" remains the only political question.

This accounts for a startling surrealist cocktail of hitherto alien ideologies like the following:

"A Catholic priest, too modest to give his name, composed and played a musical work in which he has mingled the *Marseillaise* and the *International* at the final session today of the *National Front* made up of several resistance groups mostly with *Communist* leanings. The musical medley fits the political situation in France. The composer had much recourse to the soft pedal." (*New York Times*, Feb. 3)

The various national CP leaders are officers of a disciplined army, completely removed from the influence of their own society, its needs, demands, ways of thinking. They live in a different mental sphere altogether. They are mere agents without ideology or political initiative. They are salesmen of Russian wares; promotion is their only concern.

CP lines and shifts can be understood solely in terms of the demands and requirements of Russia's policy.

Stalin wants a Europe directly or indirectly subservient to Russia. Since not all of Europe will be dominated directly by the Red Army, it is of the utmost importance to have friendly governments, closely allied to Russia. These governments must however not only be friendly, they must also be stable. Since existing social structures have been shattered and little remains of the old connecting social tissue, it is essential to refortify and rejuvenate this tissue. Therefore, a new amalgam must be found between the old ruling class (with its experience in dealing with rebellious movements from below) and younger forces, either directly imported from the CP apparatus or newly attracted by it. Existing totalitarian institutions can often be used to good purpose:

"A good many Italian Fascists seek refuge in the Communist Party. In villages, Communists take over party headquarters and institutions of the former regime like the Balila, etc., thereby smoothing the transition from the old to the new." (Anne O'Hare McCormick, *New York Times*, Sept. 11, 1944)

Social revolution is the ever present danger; the institutions of domination must therefore be strengthened and popular movements must be directed into safe channels. Quentin Reynolds reports the following revealing interview with a young Russian officer:

"Look back over every speech Stalin ever made—you will not find one paragraph in any of them which would



give support to the charges that he wishes to make the world communistic. He is interested only in Russia. . . . Why should we want France and Germany and the other countries to be communistic? To become communistic each country would have to have a revolution. A revolution would leave each country weaker than it will be when the war ends. We don't want weak countries torn by internal strife after the war. We want unified countries which will be stable, so that we can deal with them and when we deal with them know that we are dealing with the government the people support. Only then can order come out of chaos."

The above would however be misleading and incomplete if we should omit to analyze the character of the party membership. More and more members of the new totalitarian type are being recruited, yet the CP still attracts masses for quite different reasons: millions in Europe still consider the Communist Party the Party of the Revolution, the Party of the Extreme Left and of Socialism. This cultural lag is all-important, basic for any understanding of European events. The CP in France, Belgium, Greece, probably also in the Balkans, still contains a majority of men to whom it represents a definite socialist ideology. No action or words of the leadership have as yet disillusioned them.\*

This curious situation places the CP leaders in delicate positions. They always face the danger of a split among the discordant elements of the membership, and must constantly fear a breaking off by those who are still in the party "by mistake".†

This explains the almost pathological hatred of "Trotskyists"; it also makes left turns the most dangerous phases of activity, because then the danger of the masses overstepping the bounds is greatest. (Belgium, and above all Greece, have been a case in point.) One false step might release energies which can not be imprisoned in time. That is why the general trend of CP politics tends more and more toward blackmail of and accommodation with the powers-that-be, other means to be used only as sparingly as possible. Left turns are now the *ultimo ratio regis*.

And yet a mass following must also be maintained "on tap" so as to serve as a political threat to the governing. The CP leadership in Europe is therefore perpetually under the compulsion to keep the masses in expectation, yet without ever "delivering the goods". Thus the importance of a well-adjusted propaganda. In France, the CP press clamors every day against the "Fifth Columnists": There is no food—Fifth Columnists! Bridges are not being rebuilt—Fifth Columnists! The Black Market flourishes—Fifth Columnists! Such slogans, like similar Nazi phraseology, aim at filling the consciousness of the masses to the exclusion of everything else. They aim at the prevention of thinking, yes, at the abolition of independent thought.

\*Revolt against existing authorities is not necessarily revolt against all authority. Craving for leadership is a deep-rooted tendency in modern man. To transfer one's craving for authority from one powerful force to another demands less psychological energy than to stand freely in rebellion against existing conditions. This is especially true of sections of the working class which have suffered through starvation and unemployment and who carry the burden of many previous defeats. Many of those, tired by scores of battles, now tend to await passively liberation to be brought from the outside.

†"In the Consultative Assembly lobbies, delegates freely remarked that the Communists had found the modification of the line laid down by Maurice Thorez essential because many Communists, dismayed by their new role, were switching to the more progressive Socialist Party. It was also said that the Communist Party organ *Humanite* had in three weeks lost 20,000 readers." (*N. Y. Times*, Feb. 16)

Those who think are bad party members per se, and should be watched. Only sloganized thinking is useful thinking.

It is impossible to enumerate here even the most important turns and twists of the Communist parties in the different European countries. The papers report new examples daily. I shall therefore only relate a few indicative stories, showing clearly that, in Anne O'Hare McCormick's words, "in the political field Russia is moving fast . . . but nowhere is she moving ideologically. The star she follows is not the Red Star." And that the aim is not to overturn existing structures but rather to control from within: the ideal is a GPU-man in the *préfecture* rather than the overturn of the *préfecture*.

#### —But the Generals Remain: (1)

**Hungary:** General Bela Miklos de Dálnok was the first Hungarian to receive personally from Hitler the Knight Grand Cross of the Iron Cross for services rendered to the Reich on the Russian front.

At the end of last year a Hungarian government was formed in Russian-occupied Hungary under the protection of the Red Army. The Prime Minister is . . . General Bela Miklos de Dálnok. He had gone over to the Russians two months before.

General Janos Voeroes, until lately chief of the Hungarian Army general staff, is Minister of War. He also had fled to the Russians in October.

The rest of the government is made up of various more or less well-known members of the Communist, Social-Democratic, and Small Peasants Parties, plus a number of "non-party" intellectuals. The London *Economist* well describes the government as "a queer collection of the local Darlans and the parties of the Left."

But the best is still to come: This government, far from opposing Admiral Horthy, still considers him the legitimate ruler of Hungary. Gen. Voeroes ended his first speech over the Russian radio: "*Long live a free and democratic Hungary under the leadership of Admiral Horthy.*"

And here are some excerpts from the first declaration of the new government as broadcast by the Russian radio on December 24: "The regent of our country, Nicholas Horthy, has been seized by the Germans. The mercenaries now in Budapest are usurpers. The country has been left without leadership at a moment when the reins of government must be taken in strong hands. . . . Vital interests of the nation demand that the Armed Forces of the Hungarian people, together with the Soviet Union and with other democratic peoples, should help in the destruction of Hitlerism. [*This is Knight Grand Cross of the Iron Cross Miklos speaking, L.C.*] The Provisional National Government declares that it regards private property as the basis of economic life and the social order of the country and will guarantee its immunity."

**Add Horthy:** Stalinist policies are never embarrassed by contradictions. In spite of the above, the Belgrade radio of Marshal Tito proclaimed on February 11th: "Admiral Horthy has been classed as a war criminal by Yugoslavian decree. He is accused of ordering mass crimes against the Yugoslav people."

#### —But the Generals Remain: (2)

**Bulgaria:** When in 1944 Bulgaria was occupied by the Red Army the Russian-sponsored Fatherland Front government took over. It is headed by Colonel Khimon Georgev



with Colonel Demian Veltchev as Minister of War. Who are these gentlemen?

In 1923 the great Bulgarian peasant leader, Stambuliski, was assassinated and his progressive peasant regime overthrown. The coup d'état was organized by the Military League, a Fascist organization sponsored by Mussolini and headed by Professor Tsankov, Volkov . . . and Colonel Demian Veltchev. The Military League initiated a regime of terror such as had not yet been seen anywhere in Europe. Scores of thousands of Stambuliski's followers and Communists were murdered.

In 1928 when Tsankov had already been overthrown, Demian Veltchev split from the dominant clique of the Military League. He founded a new military secret organization, the Zveno (the "Link") which seized power by a putsch in 1934 and immediately proceeded to forbid all free newspapers and all opposition parties. The constitution was abolished. There was, however, a very significant difference between the Tsankov and the 1934-35 Veltchev-Georgev regimes: Veltchev was pro-Russian in foreign policy whereas Tsankov had been pro-Italian. The whole affair was however shortlived. A new putsch overthrew Veltchev.

Now Demian Veltchev and Khimon Georgev are trying leading Bulgarian democrats as war criminals and Fascists. . . .

P.S. When Molotoff met with the Bulgarian Armistice Delegation, he made the following declaration: "If certain Communists continue their present conduct we will bring them to reason. Bulgaria will remain with her democratic government and her present order. . . . You must retain all valuable army officers from before the coup d'état. You should re-instate in service all officers who have been dismissed for various reasons." (*N. Y. Times*, Jan. 16)

### Churchill—A Plagiarist?

When the Red Army marched into Rumania, it was confronted with the problem of guerilla armies which had been fighting the Germans. These guerillas, organized by the Rumanian Peasant Party, were known as the Rumanian National Guard of Transylvania. Maniu, leader of the Rumanian Peasant Party and a member of the new Rumanian government, called on the guerillas to turn in their arms and to disband. Commented the Moscow radio: "Maniu's declaration is extremely tardy since even before this order the Red Army Command had liquidated all bandit groups styling themselves volunteer detachments, battalions or volunteer guards."—Bandits from the mountains, in other words. . . .

### The Azzi Case

Early last December the Italian Communist Party joined the Royal Government of Churchill-Bonomi-Umberto. It broke its original pact with the Action and Socialist Parties to "watch the interests of the masses from inside the government."

On December 24, one of the few Republicans in the Italian officer corps, General Arnaldo Azzi, published an article in the Action Party paper *Italia Libera* demanding that the Italian Army discard all its monarchist emblems, the prayer for the king and the oath of allegiance to the House of Savoy. Within 48 hours, Azzi was deprived of his command, which comprised the area around Rome. All Left parties immediately demanded the reinstatement of Azzi and in their turn stressed the necessity of discarding old-time reactionaries and monarchists. They stated that many of those still in command were responsible for

cruelties and massacres committed in Yugoslavia during the Italian occupation—while Azzi, after the downfall of Mussolini, had joined the Yugoslav Partisans in their fight against the Nazis. It looked as if the Azzi case would bring a show-down on the question of the monarchy. . . .

On January 2, Reuter sent the following dispatch from Rome: "The Italian Communist Party issued a statement fully approving the Italian Cabinet's action in removing General Azzi from his post. The Communist Party bases its attitude on the necessity for discipline and unity in the army in order to secure the destruction of Germany."

### Moscow's "Free" Junkers

To what ultimate purpose Stalin plans to use his "Free" Germans is not yet certain. There have currently been rumors that the Committee is to be disbanded. Nevertheless, too few know the character of the Free German Committee's propaganda.

Artillery General von Seydlitz: "The goal is to end the war soon and to prepare the peace. . . . We must lead back the Reichswehr to the frontiers to preserve it for the people. An honorable peace can be in store only for a people whose Wehrmacht is not disintegrated. . . . We must conclude a truce to anticipate the disintegration of the Wehrmacht." (October 1943)

Colonel von Hooven, chief of the Intelligence section of the German Sixth Army: "The Wehrmacht must be preserved to keep order within Germany and to represent the German interests."

Brigadier-General Lattman: "Prevent the ruin and disintegration of the German Army. Save it for the new Germany as an instrument of peace."

The Free German Committee defines the Germany it wants after the war: "This government must be strong and wield the necessary power to render harmless the enemies of the people. We must establish firm order in Germany and represent Germany before the outside world with dignity." (Jan. 1945)

Besides officers, priests conduct the main propaganda. Recently a Franciscan monk addressed the population of Breslau summoning them to surrender. Here is a specimen of a religious broadcast to Germany: "The continuation of the war will not only mean the end of Germany but the end of the Kingdom of God in Germany. Rise up and overthrow the regime. No Christian can keep his duty to God nor keep his conscience clear by just sitting and waiting for a miracle."

Nor are the leaders of industry forgotten. On July 22, 1944, a Moscow broadcast said: "Appeal to the leaders of industry to support the movement. Appeal to the leading men of the Catholic Church."

### The Way Back

#### I.

*Veith von Golsenau*, German Junker who had fought as an officer in the first World War and later served in the German police force, joined the Communist Party in the twenties. He then wrote a powerful anti-war novel, *Krieg*, and since he no longer wanted to carry a name designating him as a scion of a Junker family, he changed it to: *Ludwig Renn*. Ludwig Renn fought in the ranks of the Communist Party against the Nazis. Ludwig Renn left Hitler-Germany, Ludwig Renn fought in the Spanish Civil War, Ludwig Renn lived in exile in Mexico.

Last month, a booklet appeared in New York bookstores: *Manifesto of the Union of German Officers*—with an Introduction by . . . *Veith von Golsenau*.



## II.

From a recent article by Aragon: "In these five years how often did I close my eyes imagining a new landing of Russian sailors visiting Toulon, as they used to do for those celebrations of which my grandmother spoke so often . . ." The French Catholic paper *L'Aube* comments: "This thought from the pen of Aragon defines the profound reasons for the Franco-Russian pact. That an orthodox Communist should seek the roots in tradition, not in doctrine, that he thinks of his forefathers and not of his party, that he links the Franco-Soviet alliance to the Franco-Tsarist alliance, shows the victory which the idea of the nation has really carried off."

*The French C. P.—A Headline History*

- Sept. 8, 1944: COMMUNISTS SEEK POWER IN FRANCE. AGGRAVATE POLITICAL SITUATION BY DEMANDING MORE CONTROL.
- Sept. 13, 1944: FRENCH COMMUNISTS STILL FIGHT DE GAULLE.
- Oct. 4: DE GAULLE SPEECH IRKS COMMUNISTS. THEIR ATTITUDE IS LIKENED TO THAT OF COMMUNARDS AND JACOBINS.
- Oct. 14: FRENCH REDS WANT FFI UNITS LEGALIZED. CP SECRETARY SAYS: RESISTANCE GROUPS REPRESENT THE PEOPLE.
- Oct. 20: DE GAULLE SPLIT WITH REDS DEEPENS.
- Nov. 3: REDS OPENLY DEFY DE GAULLE REGIME
- Nov. 19: DE GAULLE TO GO TO MOSCOW ON INVITATION FROM STALIN
- Dec. 1: THOREZ ASKS UNITY IN PLEA TO FRANCE. LINKS "NATIONAL UNION" TO DEMAND FOR RUTHLESS PURGE. HITS DE GAULLE MILDLY.
- Dec. 11: DE GAULLE MAKES PACT WITH RUSSIA.
- Jan. 22, 1945: THOREZ BACKS CABINET ON DISARMING MILITIA.
- Jan. 27: LIBERATION MOVEMENT REJECTS FUSION WITH COMMUNISTS, NOW TOO CONSERVATIVE.
- Feb. 2: CATHOLICS AND COMMUNISTS DE GAULLE'S MAIN SUPPORT IN CONSERVATIVE PROGRAM.

**Letter from North Africa**

SIR:

French North Africa is ripe for native insurrection. Armed uprisings will probably occur as soon as United States and British troops are withdrawn, which will, presumably, take place when the war in Europe ends, unless the United States propose to maintain naval and air bases there. Such a rebellion can look forward to a reasonable chance of victory, as the only army France would be capable of mustering to suppress it has a large majority of Arab and colored personnel, who would not be favorably disposed to fighting their blood brothers on behalf

of a detested French hegemony. The natives are looking to the Arabian kingdoms of the Middle-East for spiritual guidance and to the United States for material succor (the Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter—sic). This feeling seems to be universal among the Arabs. In any case they are arming themselves with supplies and equipment either stolen from the Allies or abandoned by the Axis.

French oppression of the native population is increasing as the colonials sense their grasp of the local political and economic situation slipping. Spanish republican refugees are providing an excellent haven for the incipient revolutionary movement. Since its seizure of power the De Gaulle Government has promised some concessions to Arab labor and half-heartedly sought to remove some of the more vexing color disabilities in the army (increased rations and equal pay). But it rejected any suggestions to implement existing legislation to provide relief for the natives. Reluctantly, it must be conceded that French labor is the bitterest foe of economic equality with the Arabs. The "white" workingman fears a decline in the standard of living, as Arab labor is very much cheaper. It may not have occurred to the authorities that the way to obviate this difficulty would be to raise the standard of living of the natives, instead of using Arab labor to squeeze the wages of French. Such a scheme would naturally cut dividends and is consequently unwelcome.

The native farmers are being rapidly reduced to serfdom or peonage. Unable to market their products, the growing of which is becoming increasingly exacting due to the exhaustion of the topsoil and erosion, on account of transportation shortages and lack of labor (which has for the most part been conscripted into the army and is at the present time fighting in France) these small freeholders cannot pay their crushing taxes and the charges on their mortgages. They end by some agricultural combine buying them out, and are reduced to the status of wage slaves on these great farming trusts, similarly to their brothers in the cities. This situation plays into the hands of the French administration. The large colonizers are able to get cheap labor; while the authorities need have less fear of a popular revolt, hence require fewer garrison troops, and can draft the unnecessary farm labor into the army for use in Metropolitan France and the Empire. Wages are driven down because the native would almost literally work for any pittance rather than enter the military service. (This does not apply to the nomadic tribesmen of the interior, who make excellent mercenaries.)

It is particularly odious to hear Algerian French criticize the natives for their indolence and lack of initiative. The former first rob the country of all it possesses and subsequently complain of the natives' hopeless degeneracy. In comparison with what the French have extracted from North Africa it is ridiculous to mention the improvements they introduced. Educational possibilities for the Arabs are very limited. Their native university is operated by servile adherents of the French tyranny. Notwithstanding Lyautey's so-called "achievements," sanitation and hygiene are non-existent. The Catholic Church is one of the largest exploiters of native labor. The White Fathers, for instance, own a tremendous winery located on the outskirts of Algiers. The wages paid by them are, even relatively, very low. The more the French fear the Arab, the more guilty their consciences and the more savage their measures of repression.

None of the political parties—with the exception, possibly, of the Communist Party—has any influence on the natives, who regard them as political quacks and sinister agents of the exploiting "mother country."



The presence of large allied armies and the operation of Lend-Lease have aided the position of French labor in North Africa very considerably. There is work for all who are willing to work and, within certain limits, the worker can dictate his salary. The black market is rampant of course, but huge quantities of military and food supplies are entering the country, and one can usually succeed "in getting a share." Employers are realizing scandalous profits, so they can well afford to pay good wages. But an undercurrent of feeling is abroad, that the general picture will rapidly deteriorate as soon as the war finishes. The export market will die and North Africa will once again resume her real status as a mere colonial dependency of the French Empire. The propertied class is playing on the racial prejudices of the workers to forestall any move on the part of French labor to join forces with the depressed Arab peons.

The North African economy is far from self-sufficient, but is mainly geared to the production of semi-luxury foodstuffs. This economy should be rounded out in order to render the country more independent. At present it is tied very closely to the French national economy and fluctuates with the latter, although there should be no necessity for this if the economy were properly balanced. No major industries have been developed in North Africa because the French feared competition for their home industries. Cheap commodities could be produced locally rather than having to import them all the way from France at dictated prices.

The saddest tale of all is the truly tragic decline in the productivity and fertility of the rich soil of the coastal plain. Improper rotation of crops and exploitive methods coupled with natural erosion and unfavorable climatic conditions, are rapidly exhausting the soil or what is left of it. The French landlords do not care, they just move on and colonize elsewhere; the native farmers are compelled to migrate along with the latter as their land has become worthless. In the meanwhile the countryside is being completely denuded.

A colonial rebellion would very probably succeed, were the French regime alone to attempt to repress it; however, other colonial powers, with similar vested imperial interests at stake, would not accept the establishment of any such dangerous precedents, and might consequently intervene, in the absence of effective French action.

FREDERICK PEARSON

#### IT'S NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT.

He is saying, essentially, that this is a great time to be alive because in the midst of death, man is always more alive . . .

—Review of a tome by the Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick in the N. Y. Times for Nov. 5.

#### DEPARTMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS

During the interview it was revealed that Norden bombsights are used exclusively by United States airmen. Great Britain and Russia, it was said, have asked repeatedly for the instrument but without success.—"N. Y. Times," Nov. 25, 1944.

#### INTER-STELLAR BROADCASTING SYSTEM "SUPERMARKET"

##### A Three-Minute Sustaining Drama

Available to Interested Sponsor

MEMO: Copy sent to London-Lunar Line

*Music: Dramatic, Announcitive, Heralding but not obviously Fanfarish. Brief and down under.*

#### TICKENS SISTERS

TRIO, unaccomp. A tisket, a tasket, a casket in the sky,  
A picket, a pocket, a pocketful of pie.

ANNCR I: RISING YOUNG EXECUTIVES . . . Buy your  
space in time.  
Rocket-ship to market . . . On the LONDON-  
LUNAR LINE!

ANNCR II: Solar trips and stellarships,  
Surrealestate and Market Tips,  
SATURDAY EVENING PLANETS here!  
SUPERSTAR and COMET STRIPS!

ANNCR I: Rocket-ship to heaven on the LONDON  
LUNATEER!

*Music: (Short sock bridge)*

ANNCR II (Interphone): The solar trip is slipping! Paste  
a ticker on the tape.  
Keep the supertaxes posted,  
there's a tripper at the gate!

ANNCR I: Step to the wicket, folks, slip a profit in the  
slot . . .  
Tourist tickets cheap, and a chance to win  
the pot!

TICKENS SISTERS: A racket, a rocket, a pocketful of  
moon,  
A slicker, a slacker, what makes  
you come so soon?

ANNCR II (Interphone): STEP FORWARD THERE,  
You lucky plucky visionary  
schemer,  
You level-headed death-defying  
empire-building dreamer!

VOICE: Who, me?

ANNCR II (Interphone): YES, YOU. STEP LIVELY.  
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

*Music: (In tremolo and rise behind DREAM EFFECT)*

#### TICKENS SISTERS

(Filter): A raffle, a rifle, a blue and yellow trifle,  
I had a number for my name, but on  
the way I lost it . . .

" ANNCR II: YOU LOST IT!

" VOICE: I lost it . . .

" ANNCR II: LOST YOUR ZERO, HERO!

" VOICE: I had it, but I lost it . . .

*Music (Rise  
nervously  
to)* Lost it . . . LOST IT!



*SCREAM (Filter):* NAME . . NAME! . . NAME!!

*Music:* (Sock in like Chorale and swell under STORY NARRATION.

*Terrific surge up to unresolved Climax).*

*NARR:* And now a man in an olive coat  
With a nickel and a split  
Ticket to the moon in his pocket  
Boards the rocket,  
Bowing, rises  
And with comical surprise  
Bursts into fame.

*Fade Theme*

*10 seconds*

*This is ISS . . . The Inter-Stellar Broadcasting System  
London . . . Mars . . . New York*

MARJORIE FARBER

## Commonnonsense

"TURKEY DECLARES WAR ON THE AXIS TO GET SAN FRANCISCO PARLEY SEAT." (Headline in the *N. Y. Times*). My first reaction when I read this was: Let's hope those rascals don't have a second motive such as the destruction of fascism and aggression for all time. Because it would be terrible if they did. But then I thought: Why always be suspicious? Can't there be honest people in the world, who just want a first-row seat at a certain show? Indeed, this must be the case. I waited in vain for Roosevelt's speech calling it a "stab in the tail", but nothing came. It must be for the seat, then. Roosevelt must have given strict orders: "No tipping of the waiters, to get a reserved seat. This is a good-will conference, to insure eternal peace to the world. If you wish to join it, declare war."

¶ It's too bad we cannot listen in to the discussions in the War Crimes Commission. But it's lucky, too, in some ways: for we would just throw away the pen and cry over our illusion that we could write satire. What satire can hope to reach the heights which a group of statesmen attain with no effort at all?

The little we read about it in the papers is good enough to make a hit vaudeville show. Imagine, when they all get together from their various Foreign Offices, People's Commissar's Offices, State Departments, Navies and Armies and Intelligence Offices, where they do nothing but worship the law and think lofty thoughts all day long, where lies and falsehoods are strictly forbidden—imagine when they start playing Divine Justice, from five to seven thirty. Everybody has his pet war criminals, but of course there arise difficulties here and there. Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, who has Badoglio as Number One on his list, is taken into a corner by Eden and told: You can't have Badoglio; I need him. I shall let you have as many wops to punish as you wish, but not Badoglio. In another corner, Molotoff explains to Roosevelt that all those Junkers who have joined the Communist Party belong to him. We gave them the Absolution and the Communion; they are pure. Take all the German people if you wish; we shall drum on their heads together, I can promise you.

Earlier in the day, they had decided to oust the Hon. H. C. Pell, of the USA, a career diplomat who had somehow gotten into his head the notion that the Nazis ought to be punished for killing "their own" Jews. The British

were especially disturbed by this plan, which called for a most unseemly intervention into the private affairs of other countries. The German Jews, after all, were indisputably German citizens, and there was no law to punish the Germans for killing Germans. If a ruler can't kill even his own citizens, what becomes of the Principles of International Law? For that matter, didn't the German Jews, as citizens of the Reich, have a *right* to be killed in an orderly fashion by their own lawful government? Only an anti-Semite would exclude the Jews from this privilege of citizenship.

The U. S. State Department agreed with this thesis, but not so much on the basis of non-intervention as on the even subtler grounds that to punish the Nazis for slaughtering their own Jews might awaken anti-Semitism in the United States. (The Department has not yet progressed to the even subtler thesis, which follows logically, that the existence of the Jews is a constant provocation to anti-Semitism. The Nazis have considerably reduced this danger of late years.) The resolution adopted by the War Crimes Commission, therefore, specifies that the High Contracting Parties deeply regret the unfortunate fate of the German Jews, but feel bound to state that they had no moral right to get themselves massacred in a manner that was at once atrocious and in strict accordance with International Law. The High Contracting Parties also trust there will be no more such provocative acts by the Jewish community.

¶ Every now and then the *N. Y. Times* prints accounts of the fascist murder trials in Rome, under such titles as "ASSASSINATIONS LAID TO MUSSOLINI." (Mussolini is the only licensed garbage can of Italian War Guilt. It took lots of red tape to get that one license, but now they have it and everything is dumped into it). But the defendants make it clear that they were obeying orders, and if the judges don't go the whole way asking *whose* orders, it's because, well, they are in the pay of the King's Government, and the Allies have forbidden them to touch on certain matters. Badoglio was then Chief of Staff, and anyone who knows the pettiness of the Military in general and of Generals in particular, will understand how great his responsibility must have been. The *Times* correspondent received copies (which he took care *not* to print) of such interesting documents as the tariffs for the assassination of a big, medium-sized or small-fry personality, for placing time-bombs on railroad tracks, for injecting microbes into the sacks of flour awaiting shipment to Republican Spain (these noble deeds were organized in France, by the followers of Petain and Darlan in 1936). The *Times* did not consider these documents fit to print, since they were found in the files of the Big Three's good friend, Marshal Badoglio. When one sees, as I have recently, photostats of those tariffs and the corrections in ink and the inter-office memos accompanying them, one feels that there is something eternal about bureaucracy.

¶ The trials themselves, of course, are illegal. No one can be tried for acts which did not constitute an offense at the time of their commission. The retroactivity of the law is a fascist innovation, sanctioned by Victor Emmanuel III. Funniest thing is that the judges of the present trials are accusing a few people selected from those least protected by the Allies, for the offense of doing exactly what the judges are doing now: obeying a dishonest government of traitors under the auspices and protection of the House of Savoy. If the judges came out with the full truth today and denounced the Allied Commission and its proteges, they would be tried for treason.

This is all done—supreme insolence!—to defend such



victims as the Rosselli brothers, who were killed because they would not come to terms with anybody.

¶ It is known among British and American officials that Count Sforza (who until recently presided over this buffoonery) tried to blackmail the Allied Control Commission more than once with a threat to reveal all the facts and to indict Badoglio, Carboni and a few others, thus exposing the dirty story behind the Italian surrender. Then, God only knows why, he piped down and agreed to prosecute just a few, for just a few crimes, and in a limited period of fascist history. In other words, instead of a sphere of influence he got a sphere of purification, a sort of concession in which Purity and other Noble Virtues shall prevail. It's the Zoo of Democracy, something we are going to see in all the war criminal trials from now on. The trials are in fact confined to those guilty of keeping fascism in power until 1939. Indeed, the Government of the King should reward those honest servants of the State, because if fascism had fallen before the arrival of its rescuers (the British and the Americans and the Russians) it would have carried the monarchy down with it into the abyss. If the judges may be called Amgoths, the defendants are honest Ostrogoths, and its all a Gothic family quarrel.

¶ Funniest juridical conclusion of the trials is that one is tried for *not* being a Marshal or a King, or for *not* having a rich American wife with millions in the Standard Oil Co. of N. J. I am referring to the fascist-made Count Leonardo Vitetti, a pet of London and Washington society, and one of the closest and most powerful advisers of Mussolini, so close in fact as to cause a great deal of discomfort and worry to Ciano; I am also referring to Augusto Rosso, former Ambassador to Washington and then to Moscow, who knows a great deal more than Suvich, now a defendant; I am referring to Ambassador Fontana,

former Gestapo official and now representing the Amgoths with the same immunity with which he represented the Ostrogoths before; to Luigi Federzoni, president of the Senate, sent to Libson directly from his Vatican hiding place; to Bottai, one of the worst fascist gangsters, now safe in Calabria; to General Gazzera, ex-War Secretary, also ex-prisoner of war in the U. S. and sent back home on special request from Badoglio.

Indeed if Count Sforza and his colleagues who started the "legal procedure" against the forerunners of Amgot, were people with any guts at all, they would say, openly, in fact they would shout to the four winds, (known also as the four freedoms): *"Much as we hate these agents of assassination who murdered our friends, we refuse to try them if we are not allowed to try the entire gang. In the U. S. this interfering with justice would be punishable with long prison terms, and there is no reason why the Allied Commission should not be exposed for interfering with justice in Italy. The immunity granted the head criminals Badoglio, Carboni, Victor Emmanuel and others, should be extended to their small henchmen too, and ALL the worst fascists should be allowed to retain power too, under the protection of the Allies, so that what is now only a dirty game behind the scenes would become a public scandal, and the people's ire would be aroused to a point where justice would be made instantly and in the open. A smoke-screen trial is the ONLY POSSIBLE WEAPON the Allies have to reinstate fascism in power, and we will not help them betray the Italian people that way."*

But Sforza is an old diplomat, senile and vain; and Bonomi is the man who armed the first fascist bands when he was Minister of War. If he didn't have to be called a swine first and foremost, he might even be called a monumental fool.

NICCOLO TUCCI

## The Danger Was Within (1)

# "War Communism"

## Victor Serge

That was the period we now call "War Communism". But then we called it just "Communism", and those who, like myself, ventured to consider it a temporary phase, were looked at askance. Trotsky had just written that the system would be continued for several decades, thus assuring the transition to a genuine free socialism. Bukharin was writing his *Economy in the Transition Period*, a work whose Marxist dogmatism irritated Lenin. He considered "War Communism" a normal form of economy. However that might be, living under it was becoming simply impossible—not, to be sure, for those in power, but decidedly so for the bulk of the population.

### The Commissarocracy

The magnificent food-supply system which Tsurupa set up in Moscow and Badayev in Petrograd operated in a vacuum. As one orator exclaimed, speaking in the Soviet: "The organization is first-rate, but the soup is terrible!" And Angel Pestana, commenting on the elab-

orate charts, illuminated with green circles and red and blue triangles, smiled derisively: "I think some one is putting something over on me. . . ." To eat, one had to buy on the black market, day after day, without ever stopping; and Communists did this just like everybody else. Paper money no longer was worth anything, and naive theorists predicted the imminent suppression of money. Since there was neither paper nor colored ink for postage stamps, a decree was promulgated establishing free postal service—another socialist dream realized! But when street-car fares were abolished, it led to disaster, for the worn-out equipment simply fell to pieces.

The rations supplied by the cooperatives, now State-operated, were meagre: black bread (or, as a substitute, packaged oats), once a month a few herrings, a tiny measure of sugar for persons in Class I (manual laborers and soldiers), almost nothing for persons in Class III (non-workers). The words of St. Paul, "He who will not work, does not eat," were printed on posters and stuck up everywhere; but to feed yourself, precisely what you



had to do was *not work*, but rather explore the resources of the black market. The workers killed time in the silent factories, working machine parts into knives and transmission belts into shoe soles for the black market. All in all, industrial production had fallen to less than 30% of 1913. To get a little flour, butter, or meat, you had to hand over either dry goods or manufactured articles to the peasant illegally peddling them. Fortunately, the city apartments of the former bourgeoisie afforded a not inconsiderable supply of rugs, drapes, linens and china-ware. You could make a pretty good pair of shoes out of leather taken from a sofa, clothing out of the drapes. As the speculators had completely disorganized the railways, the authorities prohibited the transportation of food by private persons, placed merciless special guards in the stations to seize the housewife's sack of flour, and threw around the markets cordons of soldiers who fired their guns in the air and, amidst the weepings and wailings of their victims, confiscated everything they found. Both the special guards and the militia got themselves hated. The word "commissarocracy" was soon making the rounds. Religious folk were proclaiming the end of the world and the reign of Antichrist.

Winter brought with it, for the urban population, real torture. Neither heat nor electric light! Gnawing hunger! Children, old men and women, the weak, died by the thousands. Typhus—louse-borne—claimed numerous victims. All this I saw and lived through. In Petrograd, people would crowd into a single room in one of the large deserted apartments, and one on top of another would spend day after day around a small stove made of cast-iron or brick. The stove, its flue smoking up a corner of one of the windows, rested right on the floor, and was kept going with planks ripped off the floor, with pieces of furniture which had somehow escaped destruction, or with books. Whole libraries disappeared in this way. I myself, to provide heat for a neighboring family, set a match to the collected *Laws of the Empire*—and I thoroughly enjoyed doing it. For nourishment in those days you had a short ration of oats every now and then—or some half-spoiled horsemeat; and if you came by a bit of sugar, you broke it up into tiny pieces and shared it with the rest of your family. Every nibble taken out of turn gave rise to a dramatic scene. The Commune tried hard to make food available for the youngsters; the results, at best, were ridiculously inadequate.

In the interest of the cooperative food supply—ministering (as it did in the first instance) to the needs of the embittered and harassed proletariat, the army, the navy, and the party cadres—requisitioning details were sent out into the country. As often as not the muzhiks would drive them away with pitchforks, or sometimes lynch them. On several occasions the enraged peasants slit the commissar's belly, stuffed it with wheat, and left him lying at the side of the road, so that nobody would miss the point. One of my own comrades, a journeyman printer, met just this fate not far from Dno, where I went not long afterwards to explain to the despairing villagers that the imperialist blockade was to blame for what was happening to them. That was true; all the same, the peas-

ants insisted, with reason, that requisitioning cease and buying and selling be legalized.

### War Communism

"War Communism" might have been defined as including the following: 1) requisitioning in the rural areas; 2) strict rationing for city folk, who were divided up for this purpose into various classifications; 3) complete "socialization" of production and labor; 4) a highly complicated system, snarled in red-tape, for distribution of the remaining stocks of manufactured articles; 5) monopolistic concentration of power with a tendency towards a single party and the suppression of dissidence; 6) martial law—and the Cheka. Such a system had been authorized, in March-April of 1920, by the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party. Nobody dared admit that it wouldn't work; and the party did not know that Trotsky had proposed the prohibition of requisitioning as early as the previous February (1920). The Marxist historian Rozhkov wrote Lenin that things were moving to catastrophe, and that economic relations with the rural districts had to be changed without delay. Lenin replied that he had no intention of taking a first step along the path of capitulation before the rural counter-revolution, and the Central Committee designated Pskov as Rozhkov's compulsory place of abode.

The winter of 1920-1921 was dreadful. On the lookout for living quarters for our colleagues, I had occasion to visit a number of properties in the heart of Petrograd. In one of the elegant old Morskaya mansions, not far from the huge edifice occupied by the General Staff and the triumphal arch which leads into the Winter Palace Square, I saw whole apartments filled with frozen excrement. None of the toilets would flush, and the soldiers billeted in these places had improvised privies on the floors. This was the situation in a good many of the houses; with the coming of spring, when the sewage would begin to seep down from floor to floor, what would become of the city? Forced labor details were immediately organized to clear out the mess. One day, I went to Vassili-Ostrov in search of a sick acquaintance, and pushed open the door of a pesthouse for typhus victims—a squat little house with drawn blinds, facing on a quiet sunny street which was white with snow. Inside it was strangely cold and dark. I finally made out human bodies stretched out on the floor like so many logs. . . . Whoever had been in charge, unable to bury them, had simply skipped out and left them.

I remember how, walking through the snow one day with one of the military officers of the district—Mikhail Lashevich: at 35 an old and tried revolutionary, a fearless soldier, and one of the architects of the seizure of power—I spoke of the changes that were needed. Lashevich, though not a tall man, was sturdily built; his fat face was all creased with wrinkles. Wherever there were problems, he saw only solutions by force. Speculation was rife? Well, we will kill off the speculators. "I am going to have the black markets wiped out of existence. If there are public meetings, I'll break them up—and that's that." He subsequently did just that; and the situation only got worse.



## The End of Free Opinion

In the sphere of politics, it was much the same. It couldn't have been otherwise. The tendency to smother economic difficulties by force added to the already widespread discontent, which in turn made all free (that is, critical) expression of opinion dangerous, so that the critic had consequently to be treated as an enemy. I was in an excellent position to follow the progress of the malady; I was in Petrograd, and moved in the circles in which policy was made. Moreover, I enjoyed the confidence of several opposition groups: Anarchists, Mensheviks, Left Social Revolutionaries, even Communists — specifically, those belonging to the "Workers' Opposition", which was already protesting against the bureaucratization of the regime and the condition of the workers. This was not only miserable *de facto*, but also—what was worse—*de jure*, since the bureaucrats denied the workers freedom of speech. Except for the Workers' Opposition, these dissident groups—by no means agreed among themselves—had behind them a whole series of failures. The Mensheviks had simply opposed the seizing of power by the Soviets; that is to say, they had come out in favor of maintaining a bourgeois democracy which had already shown itself to be unworkable (certain of their leaders, indeed, had favored a vigorous repressive policy against the Bolsheviks). The Left Social Revolutionaries, led by Marie Spiridonova and Kamkov, had begun by boycotting the authority of the Bolsheviks, had then collaborated with it, and, still later, had fomented a rebellion against it in Moscow, by proclaiming their determination to govern alone (July, 1918). The Anarchists had split up every which way, some of them tending to support the Bolsheviks, some of them tending to oppose them, the rest adopting an intermediate position. In 1919, at a plenary session of the Moscow Communist Committee, a bomb thrown by those opposing the Soviets had claimed some fifteen victims.

But these passionate dissidents from the Revolution, beaten and hunted though they were, were not for that reason the less right about many things; and they were dead right in demanding for themselves and for the Russian people freedom of opinion and the restoration of liberty for the Soviets. The truth is that the Soviets, so full of vitality in 1918, were now merely secondary tools of the party: stripped of their power to initiate measures, controlling nothing, they now spoke only for the local party committees. But so long as "War Communism" continued to be unacceptable to some nine-tenths of the population, there could be no question of extending freedom of speech to anybody—either inside the Soviets or elsewhere. A state of siege was declared even within the party, on every level of which the secretaries more and more had the say-so; swamped by the opportunists, the adventurers, the people with an eye to the main chance, who fell all over each other in their haste to get on the side of those in power, we were hard put to it to find a remedy. Inside the party, the only remedy for the existing evil state of affairs was, and had to be, an unproclaimed dictatorship by the old-timers, by those whose sincerity and probity were beyond question—in a word, by the Old Guard.

## Among the Anarchists

I paid especially close attention to the drama of the Anarchists, which was to acquire historical significance at the time of the Kronstadt rebellion. During the Second Congress of the International I had kept an eye on the negotiations between Lenin and Benjamin Markovich Aleynnikov. The latter, an old emigre, a mathematician, once a Soviet businessman in Holland, was one of the shrewdest of the Anarchists; and the subject under discussion was collaboration with the Libertarians. Lenin was clearly attracted to the idea. A short time before, he had welcomed a visit from Nestor Makhno; and later, much too late (in 1938, I think) Trotsky was to disclose that Lenin and himself were then on the point of granting autonomy to the Anarchist peasants led by Makhno in the Ukraine. That would have been not only equitable, but expedient too; farsightedness of that kind might have saved the revolution from the tragedy towards which we were travelling. Two pro-Soviet Anarchists, both of them active and capable men, were working side by side with Chicherin in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs: Herman Sandomirsky, a young scholar who had spent many years in prison and had once been sentenced to death in Warsaw; and Alexander Shapiro, a man of moderate views and a keen critic. Kamenev, Chairman of the Moscow Soviet, had offered the Anarchists complete legalization of their movement—newspapers, clubs, bookshops and all; in return, they were to impose a certain amount of self-discipline, undertake a purge of their membership, which swarmed with firebrands, irresponsibles, and near-madmen, plus not a few badly camouflaged counter-revolutionaries. The majority of the Anarchists rejected with horror the idea of organization and discipline: "What, We form a party? We too?" They chose rather to lose both their press and their locals, and disappear.

Of their leaders in the stormy year 1918, one was now concocting a new universal language, all monosyllables, to be called Ao; another, Yarchuk, who had a great reputation among the Kronstadt sailors, was dying of scurvy in a Butirky prison; a third, Nicolas Rogdayev, was in charge of Soviet propaganda in Turkestan; a fourth, Novomirsky, a seasoned terrorist who had spent many years in prison, had joined the party and was now a colleague of mine—displaying, under Zinoviev, the strange zeal of the neophyte; a fifth Grosman-Roshchin—once (1906) the theoretical exponent of "indiscriminate terrorism," which was to strike at the old regime wherever and whenever the opportunity presented itself, later a Syndicalist and a friend of Lenin and Lunacharsky—was now working away at a theory of the libertarian dictatorship of the proletariat; and, finally, my old friend, Apollon Karelin, a fine old man who when I first met him was living in a little room in the Rue d'Ulm and studying the problems of cooperation, was now a member of the Pan-Russian Executive of the Soviets, and lived with a white-haired companion in another little room, at the Hotel National (Soviet House). Crushed by years, his sight failing, his beard grown long and white, he was pecking out with one finger on a worn-out typewriter a big book entitled *The Case Against Capital Punishment*, in which he was extolling the virtues of a federation of free communes.



One group, which had practically gone over to the Communists, was now contriving a "universalist anarchism" (Askarov); another group, under Kropotkin's influence, saw no hope except along the lines of free cooperation (Atabekian). Boris Volin—though in prison—was unwilling to accept the post of director of education in the Ukraine when it was offered to him by some of the Bolshevik leaders: "I will not make a deal with the autocracy of the commissars!" All in all, a lamentable chaos of sectarian good intentions—and a doctrine which owes far more to emotion than to thought. When the Anarchists got together for meetings at this period, it was simply to issue a manifesto, in which they would say: "We shall struggle for the annihilation of frontiers and national boundaries! We proclaim: the whole earth for all the peoples!" (*Conference of the Moscow Anarchist Union, December 1919*). Would extending them freedom of thought and expression have endangered the Soviet regime? Only a madman would have thought so. It was only that most of the Bolsheviks, faithful to traditional Marxist teaching, regarded them as "petits bourgeois Utopians" who had nothing in common with "scientific socialism." In the eyes of the Cheka, and in those of certain bureaucrats suffering from the psychoses of power, these "petits bourgeois" were becoming a mob of involuntary but none the less genuine counter-revolutionaries; it was, therefore, necessary to do away with them.

### *Under the Black Flag*

The character of the Russian people, as Gorky often pointed out, was formed on the one hand by resistance to despotism and on the other by submission to it; as a result, one of its elements is an anti-authoritarian complex—a kind of spontaneous anarchism which, at intervals in the course of Russian history, has expressed itself in revolt. As for the Ukrainian peasants, their spirit of rebellion, their capacity for self-organization, their attachment to free local government, their having to depend only upon themselves for defense against the Whites, against the Germans, against the yellow-and-blue nationalists, against the commissars from Moscow—all these things had combined to produce among them a movement of extraordinary impetus and vitality: the insurgent peasant armies. These armies were organized—in the vicinity of Gulyai-Polye—by an Anarchist schoolteacher named Nestor Makhno, recently back from prison. Together with Boris Volin and Aaron Baron, the Anarchist Confederation of the Tocsin (*Nabat*) gave the movement an ideology—that of the third libertarian revolution—and a flag—the black flag.

These peasants demonstrated a truly epic capacity for organization and combat. The untutored, idealistic Makhno, a hard drinker and a swashbuckler, proved himself a natural strategist. At times he had at his command tens of thousands of soldiers. He seized the weapons he needed from the enemy. Sometimes his insurgents marched into combat with one rifle for each two or three men, which would pass from the dying to the living. Makhno invented a new kind of infantry, mounted on light covered wagons, which proved highly mobile. He it was who conceived the idea of having troops bury their weapons and

disband momentarily—to pass unarmed through the enemy's lines, dig up other machine-guns, and strike where nobody could possibly be expecting them. . . . Makhno, who was called "batko", "the little father", "the Old Man", defeated General Deniken (at Uman in September 1919) so decisively that he never recovered from it. When the unemployed at Ekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk) asked him for wages, Makhno replied: "Organize yourselves and operate the railways. I don't need them." He enjoyed great popular prestige all over Russia, and kept it—despite some atrocities committed by his troops, and despite the persistent libels of the Communist Party, which went so far as to accuse him of having made a deal with the Whites, at a moment when he was fighting them tooth and nail. In October, 1920, when Baron Wrangel still held the Crimea, the Black Army and the Red Army signed a treaty of alliance. Bela Kun, Frunze, Gusev acted for the Reds. The treaty provided for an amnesty for the Anarchists all over Russia, for legalization of the Anarchist movement, and for the holding of an Anarchist Congress in Kharkov. The Black cavalry proceeded to pierce the Whites' line, drove a wedge into the Crimea, and gained a victory which, along with that won by Frunze and Blucher at Perekop, decided the fate of White Crimea, which Great Britain and France had recently recognized.

Meanwhile, in Petrograd and Moscow, the Anarchists were getting ready for their Congress. But the common victory had hardly been won when, without a moment's warning, the Cheka arrested them *en masse* (November 1920). Karetnik, Gavrilenko, and others of the Black conquerors of Crimea were treacherously arrested and shot. Makhno, surrounded at Gulyai-Polye, defended himself like one possessed, fought his way out, and continued to resist until August of 1921. (After being interned in Rumania, Poland, and Danzig, he was to live out his life as a factory worker in Paris.) The results of this incomprehensible policy—this refusal on the part of the Bolshevik holders of power to honor their commitments to a revolutionary peasant minority which had shown infinite courage—were viciously demoralizing; I consider the policy one of the underlying causes of the Kronstadt rebellion. The Civil War was about over; and the peasants, already outraged by the requisitioning, concluded from all this that any agreement with the "commissars" was out of the question.

Another disturbing fact was that many workers, not a few of them Communists, were of about the same opinion. The "Workers' Opposition", led by Shlyapnikov, Alexandra Kollontai, and Medvedev, held that the revolution would be lost unless the party introduced radical changes in the organization of production, restored both liberty and genuine authority to the trade unions, and began to move at once in the direction of true Soviet democracy. I had many long talks about this problem with Shlyapnikov, one of the few Bolsheviks who had taken part in the revolution in Petrograd in March 1917. He had formerly been a metal-worker, and he retained, in power, the cast of mind, the worn clothing, the interests of a worker. He had a healthy contempt for the bureaucrats ("that ravening horde"), and looked askance at the Comintern, where he saw too many hangers-on with itching fingers. I found him very bitter, this stout, clumsy man with the



big round head and the moustache. The debate about the trade unions, in which he participated enthusiastically, yielded scant results. Trotsky favored fusing the trade unions with the State. Lenin upheld the principle of trade union autonomy and the right to strike—but with the unions completely subordinated to the party. We were getting nowhere. I got into the debate in one of the Petrograd locals, and was shocked at seeing Lenin's and Zinoviev's "majority" falsify the vote. That wouldn't solve any problems. (November-December 1920). At Smolny, day after day, you heard of nothing but incidents in the factories, strikes, and Bolshevik agitators hooted into silence.

### *Kropotkin's Funeral*

In February, the aged Kropotkin died—in Dimitrov, near Moscow. For fear a conversation with him would be painful, I had avoided him: he still believed that the Bolsheviks had accepted German gold, etc. Knowing, however, that he was living in discomfort and without adequate light (working away on *Ethics* and playing the piano now and then for relaxation), we had sent him a huge bundle of candles. I was familiar with the text of his letters to Lenin on such questions as intolerance and state control literature. If those letters are ever published, the world will see how cogently Kropotkin demonstrated the dangers of regimented thought.

I made the trip to Moscow—it was during the great famine and the coldest time of the year—to be present at his funeral. It was a moving experience. I was the only member of the party whom the Anarchists received as a comrade. In spite of Kamenev's tactful and well-meaning efforts, incident after incident occurred beside the body of the grand old man as it lay in state in the Hall of Columns at Trade Union House. The shadow of the Cheka was everywhere; but the crowd was large and responsive, and the funeral was on the point of turning into a significant demonstration. Kamenev had promised a day's freedom to all the Anarchists then in prison. Aaron Baron and Yarchuk were there to stand guard beside Kropotkin's body. With his austere head, smooth high forehead, chiseled nose and snowy beard, Kropotkin looked like a sleeping prophet, while around him angry voices whispered that the Cheka was breaking Kamenev's promise, that the hunger strike in the prisons was about to be settled, that such and such persons had just been arrested, that shootings were still taking place in the Ukraine. . . . The black flag, the speech, the frightened whispering, whipped the crowd into a sort of frenzy. The long funeral procession, led by black flags with slogans denouncing the tyranny and surrounded by an unbroken chain of students marching hand in hand, moved off towards the Novo-Devichy cemetery at a pace set by slow choral music. In the cemetery, a grave had been opened under a birch which glistened like silver in the clear winter sunlight. Mostovenko, representing the Bolsheviks' Central Committee, and Alfred Rosmer, representing the Executive of the International, spoke in conciliatory tones. Next came Aaron Baron, who had been arrested in the Ukraine and was to return to prison that night—to spend the rest of his life there. Emaciated, bearded, wearing

gold spectacles, he stood erect and cried out in defiant protest against the new despotism, against the butchers at work in the dungeons, against the dishonor which had been brought upon socialism, against the violence by which the government was trampling the revolution underfoot. Bold and passionate, he was preparing the ground for yet further violence. . . . The government established a Kropotkin Museum, named a few schools after Kropotkin, promised to publish his writings. (February 10, 1921.)

(Translated from the French. The above is the first part of Chapter IV of Victor Serge's as yet unpublished memoirs. The second part, "Kronstadt", will appear in the next issue.)

## *Popular Culture*

### *Freedom Road.*

By Howard Fast. Duell, Sloan and Pearce. \$2.75.

### *Strange Fruit.*

By Lillian Smith. Reynal & Hitchcock. \$2.75.

Both these novels are tendentious, conspicuously *about* a contemporary social problem of vast emotional power and intellectual concern. One feels their authors' attitude to Negro-white relations in the United States was fixed long before they took up the weapons of the popular novelist's art to carry it to a wider public. Reaching as wide an audience as possible is, in fact, one of the principal aims of the didactic novelist, and Miss Smith is especially to be congratulated for having succeeded, no matter how, in achieving best-sellerdom.

Nor is it necessarily carping to point out that neither book holds the slightest grounds for interest beyond its express tendency. Neither provides a wider frame of reference than that of our own interest in the subject (as Forster provided, to some degree, in *A Passage to India*). Neither affords aesthetic or intellectual gratifications of a very high order organically or even "incidentally", as, for example, Malraux and Silone have done in novels easily as tendentious.

Two questions, however, are relevant to the case of a popular novel whose subject and "stand" on the subject are its justifications. First, "What effect would this have on me if I didn't agree with the author's position?" and second, especially provocative in the case of a very popular book that lines up in a particularly explosive and unpopular cause, "What makes people read a book that requires sympathies they certainly don't possess?"

If I did not believe, as I do believe, that the white man's treatment of the Negro in the United States is an outstanding modern instance of civilized cruelty and beastliness, and the greatest single failure of our civilization, I think I should still be somewhat impressed—read "influenced"—by Howard Fast's fictionalized account of the South Carolina Reconstruction experiment. The basis of appeal here is historical, and very rationally so. This all *happened*, Mr. Fast is saying, see, Negroes and whites *can* live together on a basis of equality, making their laws together, cooperating at every social level (save one), proving by example that racial "differences" are principally the fictions of a selfish, cruel, and power-hungry white caste. I would be impressed by this example from our own history, but as a Negro-hater I could accuse Mr. Fast of evading one



serious aspect of his "history", and as a reader I could snipe at several defects of his art. The more important charge is that *Freedom Road* evades the ultimate issue of its theme: sexual equality. To Gideon Jackson's assertion, "But we have lived here for almost a decade, and that has not happened. Our children have set in this schoolhouse together, and that has not happened," our Negro-hater would merely wet his lips to hiss, "And in fifteen years, twenty years, fifty years—?" Also, while *Freedom Road*, after a long, instructive exposition, slips easily into the formula set in Mr. Fast's earlier novel about racial persecution, *The Last Frontier*, with formal interest lying in the melodrama of events rather than in the conflicts of three-dimensional characters, one is less apt to make the charitable reflection that history certainly repeats itself, than the critical one that with repetition of the formula the historical appeal loses some of its power, especially in melodrama of which so important an ingredient is suspense.

Now the plot of *Strange Fruit* centers on the crucial issue that *Freedom Road* evades: sexual equality, or rather, inequality, between a white man and a Negro girl in a small town in Georgia in the 'twenties. It is unfortunate that this truly noble theme serves as merely the center-door-fancy (miscegenation, you know) by which enter a procession of Southern small-town types, black and white to take up most of the pages of this impressionistic, sentimental, *Our Town* of the emancipated Southerner. Perhaps "Hollywood" is really more just as an epithet than "impressionistic." For the single serious thread — the author's conviction that genuine love is possible between white and black and that society, not "racial differences", destroys it — drops out of the pattern on page 135 of this 250 page novel, just as the League of Nations issue in the movie *Wilson* disappears under period shots. To say the very worst, it is easy to imagine the Messrs. Reynal & Hitchcock "in conference" like a couple of producers: "Ever hear Billie Holliday sing that song about lynching? Come to think of it, hasn't been a good lynch novel in a couple years. Maybe we could get the title, dig up some Southern writer—South's full of writers—?" Well, even if the Messrs. Reynal & Hitchcock got all that and a bit more besides, the Hollywood curse is unmistakably on *Strange Fruit*, and I think the circulating library regulars would have caught the scent even without the dirty word. Nonnie and Tracy are weak, star-crossed lovers who never for a second face up to the social difficulties of their love: she is a romantic waif, without personality or color (in any sense) like nothing so much as Rima, the Bird Girl of Hudson's fancy. But, since this is a "realistic" novel (all popular novels currently are "realistic"), and Tracy's are familiar, masculine, middle-class weaknesses, most of our reading time is taken up with character parts and local color which serve to excuse Tracy's stupidity and utter spinelessness by making these traits general to the whole of Maxwell. Nothing builds to, although everything is assembled for, the obligatory scene: a lynching. And, although the wrong man is killed, it serves as a "development" whereby each town character — being a type, incapable of changing—may be seen somewhat differently, as under a different arrangement of lights, or a fresh camera angle.

It has been pointed out, in connection with Hemingway, that there is as sentimental a fallacy in the formula of "nobody wins" as in that of "everybody wins". Miss Smith is never sufficiently distant from her highly recognizable Southern small-town types to let us see who gains by the failure of Tracy's and Nonnie's love, by the lynching of Big Henry McIntosh and the terrorizing of the entire

Negro community. The trouble is, Miss Smith's one constant intention is to reject Maxwell, Ga., and all its works. At page 250 we leave the unhappy surviving population exactly as we found it, a little sadder and imperceptibly wiser. It is difficult to see what educational effect this has been having on, say, the Book Committee of the Women's Club, unless: "Well, that's what happens when you try to mix black and white", or, "Gosh, I guess we're lucky to be Yankees."

Just what positive value can we assign to *Freedom Road* and *Strange Fruit* as examples of the tendentious novel? The former, were I a high-school teacher, would be required reading in my 9th grade American History course to supplement official accounts of the reconstruction period. If it is harder to be as kind to *Strange Fruit*, that is because the sheer courage and nobility of its central situation are so effectually betrayed. If no other proof were needed, after the literature of the thirties, Miss Smith's novel could serve as a horrible example of the insufficiency to a writer of good intentions, and a reminder that not all the liberals who aren't in the advertising business are in Hollywood. Shall we merely hope that *Strange Fruit* may yet serve as an incident for rebellious adolescents in Southern families?

EDWARD SELDON

**INFANTS WITHOUT FAMILIES.** By Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham. International University Press. \$2.

This work is a little classic, even better than the authors' *War and Children*. Its aim is to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages in the (residential) institutional care of small children, and there are conclusions of great practical importance for both nursery and home. As in the previous book, the evidence is compiled from the several institutions that the authors have directed in war-time England. The observation is direct and convincing to any one who knows children at all; the speeches are exquisitely recorded.

What I should like to point out is that this material is organized with a simplicity and continual relevance only possible in orthodox psychoanalysis. Starting from the conviction that emotional attachments in the first years are of chemical importance and that these fulfill instinctual predispositions, the authors inquire after the fate of these attachments and predispositions in circumstances where the ordinary family is non-existent and the Oedipus-complex cannot operate in the familiar way. The success of their hypothesis here is important evidence against the line of argument inaugurated by Malinowski that Freud's doctrine is an accident of Viennese bourgeois society; but it will be overlooked by those who repeat the argument for political rather than scientific reasons.

It is found that in matters where routine, sanitation, space, equipment, etc. are paramount, the objective impersonal world of institutions is advantageous. The first six months are healthier; walking and muscular control come sooner; meals are eaten for themselves without emotional disturbance. On the other hand, speech is retarded; toilet training is slower and easily disturbed unless force is used. In everything that concerns communication, intellectual growth, social response, and the attainment of voluntary self-control, the infant is at a disadvantage who does not have a grown-up whose face he recognizes, whose attention he is sure of, and whose love is his superior gratification. Of pleasurable body-contacts, both beneficial and corrupting, there is also a lack, but the institutional child does not then simply do without but tries to get substitute pleasures. Finally, the authors show remarkable evidence of



satisfaction thru fantasies, e.g. father-fantasies, in which children puff up the least hints into elaborate family constellations for themselves.

All this is strong evidence for the inheritance of a social disposition grounded in the primary family group: this is not unreasonable considering the dependency of the human infant and that therefore, to have survived, such dependency must have its safeguards.

Practically, they advocate setting up "artificial families" in nurseries,—a group, as permanent as possible, of a few children with an exclusive mother-nurse. This results, of course, in jealousies, possessiveness, and other nuisance-situations, but—and this is a capital point—*what is inconvenient to the institution is often well-being to the child.* A similar practical proposal is to keep the doors continually open to visits of the real parents and to avoid a clean rupture with the past. Any one who has worked in a place where children are boarded will realize what difficulties this creates: after every parental visit the child is distressed and unruly for days; his beautiful adjustment is quite shattered. But like good psychoanalysts the authors argue that *it is better for the distress to be abreacted consciously than for it to retreat into unconsciousness in the interests of an apparent adjustment.*

On a single point I am not sure that I can agree with this book. This is the acceptance of the "normal super-ego", formed especially by imitation and fear of the grown-ups, as the right basis for later social and moral good behavior. This position is indeed the Freudian orthodoxy in social philosophy, but it is contrary both to the Freudian therapy and to the Socratic tradition in ethics, which strive precisely to destroy such a super-ego thru understanding.

Now I feel that I ought to use this excellent little book as a means of saying something against the new wave of Freudian revisionism that has now swept the field of social psychology and pedagogy, with results whose political implications should be made clear to readers of this magazine. This is the school of Horney, Fromm, and company. They argue that Freud's doctrine is biological, individualistic, and fatalistic; cannot be the basis of a social psychology; and stands in the way of the adjustment of the individual to his social role. That Freud's doctrine begins in biology in the sense of being instinctual is certainly true; this is in fact his great power as a psychologist and a social-psychologist. (For every great scientist makes clear the *continuity* of his subject matter with what is not his subject-matter; and every great moralist and political philosopher rejoices in the possibility of drawing on natural forces to attain an ideal.) That the doctrine is individualistic is simply absurd; one is endlessly astounded that critics so well-trained can read so ignorantly. Nearly every fundamental concept of Freud—ego, anxiety, Oedipus-complex, etc.—is already social, is defined as a social function. The individual as such is not even a primary notion but is developed during the first years, especially, quasi-pathologically, because of instinctual deprivation. It is in the Freudian doctrine that there is precisely no problem of individual vs. social psychology, but we pass systematically from the early pattern of the family, on to the school, etc. Lastly, his doctrine is fatalistic: Yes, if the idea of human progress is to impose upon original nature a strait-jacket called "adjustment to society"; then according to Freud the soul will sullenly non-cooperate and (God willing) will eventually rebel. But no, if human progress is conceived as the continuous revolutionary readjustment of institutions to existent human-beings so as to release the powers and the inventiveness that are in us all.

In progressive education, which may be taken as one of the first social testing grounds of these matters, the orthodox ideal was "creative expression", which meant the drawing-out of instinctual drives in social groups into plastic and verbal communication, self-government, etc. This program has been almost completely defeated by the ideal of "adjustment", which means the sterilizing and hygienizing of instinct in the interests of "citizenship". In the words of a recent writer: "The study of human beings as organisms with instinctive tendencies is important as a reminder of the probable limits of educability"!! In the more general formula of Mannheim's *Library of Social Reconstruction* the ideal is "education for democracy in the conditions of mass-industrialization."

This formulation brings us to the heart of the issue. If, with or without the profit-system, the political mechanism is to consist of (1) centralized big-factory technology of the present kind, (2) mass-distribution and the present conception of the standard of living, (3) bureaucratic centralism in government,—then indeed there is need for more and more efficient devices for social adjustment and the sterilizing of rebellious instincts. If this is Civilization there will be more and more of its Discontents. For social well-being of this kind, whether on the American or the Russian plan, Horney, Fromm, etc. can hope to be the engineers. But what a dishonest thing it is to try to palm off this politically convenient technique as if it were the nature of Man! to use the theory and method that Freud originated to liberate men, precisely in order to inure them to slavery—and then to claim that he had no social psychology!

PAUL GOODMAN

"The Red and the Black" by Manny Farber. *The New Republic*, November 6, 1944.

In this review of a current Russian war film, "The Rainbow," Farber suggests the esthetic and human degradation of art in Russia today. He sticks closely to the film, but his analysis is so acute that it explains also the feelings aroused in one by Soviet war cartoons and by a book like Ilya Ehrenburg's latest.

The film, he writes, "shows as little tolerance, love, mercy, dignity, breadth of understanding or nobility as any work of art I have ever seen. . . . The Nazis are shown only as craven murderers, who confine their killings to babies, children, mothers and wounded prisoners. . . . "The Rainbow" suggests that most of these Nazis are fools, but doesn't bother to explain them any further; they are hardly even placed as fascists. By carefully spreading the outrages throughout all types and ranks of German soldiers shown and implying that there are no exceptions, the movie suggests that all German soldiers are psychopathic killers, and by carefully planting a sentence at the beginning of the film—"These Germans behaved as Germans"—the movie also implies that their brutality is the trait of a nation. The characters of the Russians are taken just as coarsely for granted: They are given one characteristic—fearlessness; one face—hateful; and one desire—to revenge themselves on the Nazis. . . . And the facts themselves of cruelty, killing and revenge are so oversimplified that one is left with the idea that anybody can become cruel and can kill, given the provocation, without any complication, and without, presumably, experiencing any effects in himself."

The political implications of the above are all the more convincing for *being* implications, arising naturally and unobtrusively out of the analysis of the human content of the film. This is, by the way, a good opportunity to recom-



mend Farber's weekly column in *The New Republic* as a constantly intelligent coverage of current movies; much the most scrupulous and perceptive thing now being done in its field.

D. M.

**"Fortune Press Analysis: Labor". *Fortune*, September 1944.**

Henry Luce Discovers Content Analysis! Boy Meets Girl! Liver Finds Bacon! Here is the first of a series using "a new technique of press reporting", and the only mystery is why Luce didn't fall for it years ago.

Luce's Content Analyzers begin by acknowledging their debt to Harold D. Lasswell, who is simply described as "chief of the experimental division for the study of war-time communications of the Library of Congress." Lasswell is a sociologist who has achieved a great reputation by uttering banalities in oracular pseudo-scientific accents. Thus he might discover—and perhaps has—that it can be safely asserted that mothers in general have a tendency, or tropism, on the whole and disregarding certain individual variations, to react positively to their own children. For Sam Goldwyn, the discovery of Mother Love means a super-production. For Lasswell, it means a new word—let us say, "matrilatry"—and a new set of statistical tables showing irrefutably, on the basis of questionnaires to representative mothers (Do you love your child? Check proper description: Passionately . . . Very Much . . . A Good Deal . . . Not So Much . . . Indifferently . . . Not at all.) and a Content Analysis survey, conducted by five graduate students, of the references to mother-child relationship in the *Ladies Home Journal* from 1895 to the present—I say showing beyond any possible doubt that mothers on the whole (disregarding individual variations) tend to be fond of their children. Naturally, such a cultural tool fascinated Archibald MacLeish during his ill-starred interlude as head of the Office of Facts and Figures, and naturally, as his contribution to the war effort, he installed Lasswell in an office suitably equipped with adding machines and graduate students.

But to get back to Luce's Content Analyzers. After an agonized sifting through of the entire U. S. labor press—almost 1,000 trade unions organs in all—they selected, by a process too complicated and much too boring to go into here, a representative group of fifty to really go to town on. They then "read and annotated" the four most recent issues of each of the fifty, clipping out and putting into folders 1,498 "items" having to do with national affairs. They then made tables showing (1) the frequency with which various subjects and names were treated, and (2) the kind of reaction shown in each case to the given topic—favorable, unfavorable, or neutral. They then laid the results on Henry Luce's desk and sneaked out to the nearest bar for a quick one.

The results? I'd almost forgotten. Well, it seems that the labor press in the fall of 1944 discussed mostly, believe it or not, (1) "labor's causes before top Federal agencies or Congress", and (2) the coming presidential election. This sensational disclosure—I can see the headlines already: LABOR PRESS SHOWS INTEREST IN LABOR—is followed (after several minor revelations, as that the labor press is much interested in postwar employment policy) by the climactic disclosure that practically all the references to Roosevelt were favorable and practically all those to Dewey unfavorable. (They didn't have the heart to compile a table showing that the labor press had a "positive" attitude toward "labor's causes"; appar-

ently, there is a limit to the brass even of a Content Analyzer.)

The rumor is about that *Fortune's* next project is to be a Content Analysis of *The Chicago Tribune* to determine the percentage of favorable, unfavorable and neutral references to (a) Roosevelt, (b) King George VI, (c) Falla. (It seems that Luce has heard rumors that the *Tribune* is hostile to Roosevelt and the British Crown.) A group of stockholders of Time, Inc., including myself, is organizing an economy move to replace the entire Content Analysis staff by one office boy. Our contention is that a reasonably bright boy could arrive at the same conclusions with a much smaller expenditure for salaries, paper clips, manilla folders and upkeep on adding machines.

D. M.

**"Reflections of Social Disorganization in the Behavior of a Schizophrenic Patient", Robert E. L. Faris. *The American Journal of Sociology*, September 1944. (5750 Ellis Ave., Chicago 37, Ill.; single copy—\$1; one year—\$5.)**

Faris' main point is that it is not accurate to term this patient's condition "mental disorder," because in his psychosis "he constructed an order more elaborate and symmetrical than is characteristic of most normal persons."

When confined in the early 1930's, the patient was a young commercial artist who had been unemployed since 1929. His personal problems were—a homosexual attachment to his father; having been violently anti-Semitic and later discovering his own Jewish descent; the feeling that the practice of commercial art was a prostitution of his talent; the continually frustrated attempt to dramatize himself as a Poesque character; the collapse of his economic position; a conflict between ideal and physical love; an addiction to alcohol. As these complexes worsened, he retreated into reading, searching for solutions. In Remy de Gourmont's *A Night in the Luxembourg*, he found his solution, thus resolving his conflicts and ridding himself of the feeling of having a dual nature. It was a philosophical system, entailing a mission to bring the truth to mankind. But this new knowledge, and his actions following from it, were not acceptable to others, and he was confined. He had the secret, he said: "The Secret of Life is Love."

The confusion of society provoked personal confusion. The patient's mistake, which produced his psychosis, was attempting to convert this chaos into order. ". . . His personality was made of components which were assembled from a variety of sources and no social group could be found to understand and accept it." No soil existed for the maturation of such a personality. As Faris concludes, "The disorganized social system plays a part in producing such marginal and inappropriate personalities and at the same time presents an environment which is severely unsympathetic and inhospitable to them."

D. T. B.

**A ROSE IS A ROSE IS A ROSE IS A ROSE**

London, Jan. 16: Prime Minister Churchill refused to concede today that the Allies' demand for unconditional surrender was prolonging the war, but he said that if it were, the war would have to be prolonged until Germany surrenders unconditionally.

—"N. Y. Times", Jan. 17, 1945.

**SILVER LINING DEPT.**

A new form of virulent jaundice has been ravaging Allied forces in the Mediterranean area in recent months. Physicians say that this malady has no parallel in medical history. So far no effective treatment has been discovered. The one bright spot in this picture is that the disease is also endemic in Germany.

—"Human Events", Jan. 11, 1945.



# The Responsibility of Peoples

Dwight Macdonald

*We talk of the Turks and abhor the cannibals; but may not some of them go to heaven before some of us? We may have civilized bodies and yet barbarous souls. We are blind to the real sights of this world; deaf to its voice; and dead to its death.*

HERMAN MELVILLE

*Germans have thought in politics what other peoples have done. . . .*

*"Although Germany has only accompanied the development of nations with the abstract activity of thought, without taking an active part in the real struggles incident to this development, she has, on the other hand, shared in the suffering caused by national development without sharing in its enjoyments, or their partial satisfaction. Abstract activity on the one side corresponds to abstract suffering on the other side.*

*Consequently, one fine day Germany will find herself at the level of European decay before she has ever stood at the level of European emancipation. The phenomenon might be likened to a fetish-worshipper who succumbs to the diseases of Christianity. . . .*

*The only liberation of Germany that is practical or possible is a liberation motivated by the theory that declares man to be the Supreme Being of mankind. . . . In Germany, no brand of serfdom can be extirpated without extirpating every kind of serfdom. . . . The emancipation of Germans is the emancipation of mankind.*

KARL MARX (1844)

*Nun heisst es abschied nehmen. Morgen kommt mutter in die gaskammer und ich werde in den brunnen geworfen.*

*Now I must say goodbye. Tomorrow mother goes into the gas chamber, and I will be thrown into the well.*

FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY A CHILD IN A POLISH "DEATH CAMP".

"WE were a little nervous when she was taken," the girl's mother said afterwards. "You never know what will happen when they start to use the electric needle. But we should not have worried. She never gave the Germans a single name or address and no one was arrested."

The girl was a member of the French underground; she was caught by the Gestapo; she was tortured, while her mother was held in a nearby cell so she could hear her daughter's screams; and she died. This was Europe under the Nazis: the matter-of-fact reference to torture; the technological modernity of the instrument; the mother's politicalized attitude—"we should not have worried", since "she never gave a single name." Something has happened to the Germans—to some of them, at least; something has happened to Europe—to some of it, at least. What is it? Who or what is responsible? What does it mean about

our civilization, our whole system of values? This is the great moral question of our times, and on what our hearts as well as our heads answer to it depends largely our answer to the great practical questions.

In this article, I want to consider this question as an aspect of the general problem of what my friend, Nicola Chiaromonte, calls "the responsibility of peoples."

In the last war, we believed many "atrocious stories" which later turned out to have been propaganda. Compared to the German atrocities which are reported by the press in this war, those of 1917, however revolting in detail, were (1) quantitatively negligible (rarely involving more than a score or so of alleged victims), and (2) deeds done in hot blood by individual soldiers using bayonets or guns rather than the systematic tortures and massacres with specially designed instruments that are now reported. So tender was the civilian mood of those days that the British were able to arouse great indignation over the execution of Edith Cavell, who by all the rules of warfare "deserved" her fate. Today we are more tough-minded—we have to be, or go crazy, so severe are the shocks administered to our moral sensibilities, indeed to our very nervous systems, by each morning's newspaper. Yet even so, one's heart fails at some of the reports.

The French War Crimes Commission recently estimated that between 200,000 and 250,000 French civilians had been killed by the Germans during their occupation of France. The Commission has also assembled a museum of torture devices: branding irons, pincers for pulling out fingernails, an "electrical shoe", a steel helmet studded with screws that can slowly be tightened. . . . Not since the Spanish Inquisition has such an array been seen. Who would have dared predict, in the 19th century, that one of the most advanced nations in Europe would employ such instruments? Marx himself might well have shrunk from the supposition. His epigram of 1844 must now be reversed: the Germans have *done* in politics what other peoples have up to now dared only to *think*.

In the last war, all this could have been dismissed as propaganda. But the great difference between the "atrocious stories" of World War I and those of World War II is that the latter are as convincingly authenticated as the former were not. To disbelieve the accounts of today, one would have to assume that almost every war correspondent is a liar on a Munchausen scale, that various neutral observers are liars, that certain internationally known religious and charitable institutions have fabricated detailed reports. We know, also, from the Nazis' own theories and from what they did in Germany itself that such horrors are not improbable.

Let us not only accept these horrors; let us insist on them. Let us not turn aside even from the greatest of all: the execution of half the Jewish population of Europe, some four million men, women, and children, in Silesian



and Polish "death factories." In the last war, the farthest our propagandists ventured was to fabricate the tale of the German "corpse factories", in which human bodies were alleged to have been boiled down for their fat and chemicals. Not only was this untrue, but it would never have occurred to any one in 1917 even to *invent* a story about abattoirs in which human beings took the place of cattle. And yet we now know, from irrefutable evidence, that *these things have been done*. They are part of our world and we must try to come to some kind of terms with them.

Detailed reports about the "death camps" have only come out within the past year. The chief ones I have seen are the descriptions of the camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau in Upper Silesia which appeared in the *N. Y. Times* of July 2 and 5, 1944, sent in from Switzerland; the stories in the *Times* (August 27) and *Time* (Sept. 11) based on a Russian-conducted tour of the former death camp at Maidanek; and the report, based on stories by three eyewitnesses who were able to escape, of the Auschwitz and Birkenau camps that was released by the War Refugees Board, a Government agency, on November 26 last. The first report is the most impressive, because it was put out by the well-known Swiss relief organization, the Fluchtlingshilfe of Zurich, whose head is the Rev. Paul Voght. It is also sponsored by the Ecumenical Refugee Committee of the World Council of Churches. But in all the reports, the atmosphere is the same: rationality and system gone mad; the discoveries of science, the refinements of modern mass organization applied to the murder of noncombatants on a scale unknown since Ghengis Khan.

These camps, which the Nazis called "model extermination camps" and which were operated by specially trained *Judenvernichtung* (Jew-killing) experts, were literally "death factories", often with railroad sidings running into them for the transport of their raw materials. These "materials" were processed in an orderly fashion: shaved, bathed, deloused, each given a slip of paper with his or her number typed on it, then routed into another room where this number was tattooed on the body—on the breasts of the women (So in Kafka's "The Penal Colony", the mechanism executes the criminal by tattooing the record of his crime on his body—one of too many modern instances in which reality has now caught up with Kafka's imagination.) The cooperation of the victims was necessary to save time (and make production records possible). By experiment, it was found that death came quicker when the body was warm, washed and wet. The execution buildings were therefore sometimes given the appearance of bathing establishments, the illusion being methodically carried out by having two attendants in white jackets give each victim a towel and a piece of soap. There were even

simulated shower-entries in the death chamber itself: a concrete room into which as many naked persons were packed as possible. "When everybody is inside, the heavy doors are closed. Then there is a short pause, presumably to allow the room temperature to rise to a certain level, after which SS men with gas masks climb the roof, open the traps in the ceiling, and shake down a preparation in powder form labelled 'Cyklon', for use against vermin, which is manufactured by a Hamburg concern. It is presumed that this is a cyanide mixture of some sort which turns into a gas at a certain temperature. After three minutes, every one in the chamber is dead." The bodies were then taken to the crematorium (which at Maidanek looked like "a big bake shop or a very small blast furnace") where they were cut up by butchers, loaded onto iron stretchers and slid on rollers into the coke-fed ovens. With such methods, death was produced on a mass scale: at Birkenau alone, over a million and a half persons are estimated to have perished between April, 1942, and April, 1944.

As in the Chicago stockyards, no by-products were wasted. The clothes and shoes were shipped into Germany to relieve the shortage of consumption goods. "We came to a large warehouse. It was full of shoes. A sea of shoes. . . . They were piled like coal in a bin halfway up the walls. Boots. Rubbers. Leggings. Slippers. Children's shoes, soldiers' shoes, old shoes, new shoes. . . . In one corner, there was a stock of artificial limbs." Also: "Near the ovens were the remains of a room with a big stone table. Here gold fillings were extracted from the teeth. No corpse could be burned without a stamp on the chest: 'INSPECTED FOR GOLD FILLINGS'." The ashes and bones of the burned bodies were used to fertilize cabbage fields around the camps. Nor did the Germans, devotees of science, lose the chance to advance human knowledge. All identical twins that passed through Birkenau were removed for "biological examination" at a German scientific institute. In the Vosges section of France, a "laboratory camp" was recently discovered, where thousands of persons were experimented on, always with fatal results. Some were vivisected, some were given leprosy and plague, some were blinded (to see if their sight could be restored), many were put to death by gas while observers watched their reactions through a window. Perhaps the most humanly appalling details of all were certain juxtapositions which one would be tempted to say showed a typical Germanic tastelessness, were it not for our own "war-theme" advertisements. Thus at a Dutch camp, there were found certain cells so constructed as to cause death by slow suffocation—and a nursery for prisoners' children whose walls were decorated with scenes from fairy tales. And at Maidanek, the camp loudspeaker blared out all day over the country side. . . . Viennese waltzes.





But enough! We may say that those who planned and carried out such things were insane. This may have often been true, in a medical sense. But once granted the ends, the means were rational enough—all too rational. The Nazis learned much from mass production, from modern

business organization. It all reads like a sinister parody of Victorian illusions about scientific method and the desirability *in itself* of man's learning to control his environment. The environment was controlled at Maidanek. It was the human beings who ran amok.

## 1. The German War Crimes Are Unique.

A considerable portion of the atrocious acts of the Germans in this war are chargeable rather to war in general than to any special inhumanity of the Germans.

There was much moral indignation, for example, about the robot bombs. But the effects of "saturation bombing", which the British and American air forces have brought to a high degree of perfection, are just as indiscriminate and much more murderous. "The Allied air chiefs," states this morning's paper, "have made the long-awaited decision to adopt deliberate terror bombing of German population centers. . . . The Allied view is that bombardment of large German cities creates immediate need for relief. This is moved into the bombed areas both by rail and road, and not only creates a traffic problem but draws transport away from the battle front. Evacuation of the homeless has the same result." The only mistake in the above is to say the decision has just been adopted; actually, the Allies have used "terror bombing" for several years. We might also recall the indignation we felt, in 1940, at the strafing of refugees by the Luftwaffe. "How typically Nazi!" we exclaimed—but we were more tenderminded in those days. The first contracts have already been let for the manufacture of our own robot bombs, and no one at all conversant with modern warfare doubts that the robot bomb will be a key weapon in World War III.

The ruthless economic exploitation, accompanied by mass starvation, to which the Nazis subjected Europe when they held it was deplorable. But our own press for many months now has carried articles about the failure of the Allies to provide any more food to the "liberated" (and hungry) Europeans than the Germans did (and often, as in Italy and Belgium, not as much). "Military necessity" apparently rules "us" as absolutely as it ruled "them", and with the same terrible results for the peoples of Europe.

Some of the most horrible brutalities chargeable to the Nazis have been committed in their attempts to deal with the maquis. Throughout military history, franc-tireurs have always been dealt with severely; the Hague rules of warfare even authorize the shooting of civilian hostages in reprisal for franc-tireur attacks on the invading soldiery. One should not forget that the Germans occupied almost all of Europe for four years, and that our own armies are only just beginning to occupy enemy territory. If a German resistance movement materializes that is anything like as determined as the one the Nazis had to deal with, we shall probably see our own armies climbing down a bit from their present pinnacle of moral superiority.

Even the extermination of large numbers of helpless people is not so unknown in modern times as our own propagandists would have us think. Great numbers of the colored races have been wiped out since 1800 by the whites: the "rubber atrocities" of the Amazon and the

Belgian Congo (cf. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*); the large scale executions that followed the Boxer Rebellion in China; the slaughter of the bulk of the Australian black-fellows and the American Indians; not to mention dozens of lesser "episodes" throughout Asia and Africa. In England itself, furthermore, in the first half of the last century, millions of men, women and children of the workingclass were starved and worked to death in conditions which were often almost as brutal and degrading as those of Maidanek and which had the disadvantage of prolonging the victims' suffering much longer (cf. the Parliamentary "Blue Books" of the period, Engels' *Condition of the English Workingclass in 1844*, or J. L. and Barbara Hammond's *Lord Shaftesbury*). And in Soviet Russia in the last fifteen years, millions of peasants and political prisoners have been starved to death in State-created famines or worked to death on forced-labor projects.

After the acids of sophisticated inquiry have done their worst, however, a considerable residue remains. It is this residue which makes the German atrocities in this war a phenomenon unique at least in modern history.

It is partly a question of the intimate individual cruelty shown in much of the Germans' behavior. That the Allied forces will execute hostages and burn down towns if "necessary" I have no doubt; but I should be surprised if they do it on the scale the Germans did (50 lives for one was the lowest "rate of exchange") or with the brutality and sadism shown in the extermination of whole villages and the common use of the most revolting tortures.

But it is mostly what might be called the "gratuitous" character of the worst atrocities. What has been done by other peoples as an unpleasant by-product of the attainment of certain ends has been done by the Germans at Maidanek and Auschwitz as an end in itself. What has been done elsewhere in violation of the doer's code of ethics, and hence in a shamefaced way draped over with hypocritical apologies, has been done here in conformance with the avowed Nazi moral code, and thus done as publicly and proclaimed as exultantly as the winning of a great battle. The Allied bombing of German cities killed many innocent civilians (though not as many as a single one of the German death camps), but there was at least this much humane rationality about it: that it was thought necessary to the winning of the war, which in turn was thought necessary to the self-preservation of the Allied nations. Furthermore, some kind of an argument could be made that it *was* necessary. But the extermination of the Jews of Europe was not a means to any end one can accept as even plausibly rational. The Jews constituted no threat to their executioners; no military purpose was served by their extermination; the "racial theory" behind it is scientifically groundless and humanly abhorrent and can only be termed, in the strictest sense of the term,



neurotic. The Jews of Europe were murdered to gratify a paranoiac hatred (as the robot bomb was christened "V" for "Vengeance") but for no reason of policy or advantage that I can see.

Or consider the Stalin regime's massacres, the only other ones of our day which have been on the Nazi scale. In Russia today there is much less respect for human life and less ideological resistance to acts of violence on a mass scale than there is in the bourgeois democracies. Yet even here, there is at least the justification for, say, the State-induced famine of 1932 that it represented the carrying out, by brutal and abhorrent means (which of course corrupted the ends—but that is another story) an agricultural policy whose aim was to increase productivity. This may not be a good end in itself, but it is certainly not a bad one. It is, in any case, rational. And the kulaks were starved incident to this aim, not because there was any desire to exterminate them in themselves.

## 2. German Anti-Semitism Is Not a "People's Action."

If we can conceive of a modern people as collectively responsible in a moral sense at all, then it must be held accountable only for actions which it takes spontaneously and as a whole, actions which are approved by the popular *mores*. It cannot be indicted for things done by sharply differentiated sub-groups.

How does this apply to the Germans and the Jews? It is true there was and is widespread anti-Semitism in Germany, as in this country. But anti-Semitism is one thing and violent persecution of Jews is another. If the German people as a whole had approved of the Nazis' Jewish policy, one would expect that between 1933 and the present, a period in which the Nazis used the State power to place the Jews outside the pale of legality and indeed of humanity itself, there would have been many mob attacks on Jewish institutions and individuals. Actually, as far as I can recall, the American press reported none. And I remember distinctly that in 1938 when the Nazis took advantage of the assassination of their Parisian diplomatic agent, Vom Rath, by a Jew to intensify the anti-Jewish terror in Germany, the press reports stressed that there was very little hostility shown by the street crowds against the Jews. The controlled German press was filled with incitements to anti-Jewish violence. Storm troopers and S.S. men arrested thousands of Jews with great publicity, wrecked Jewish stores, burned synagogues; but the crowds that watched these organized atrocities were silent and withdrawn when they did not venture to express their disapproval. There were many more cases reported of Germans who dared to help Jews than of those who helped the Nazi pogromists—and this, too, in papers like the *N. Y. Times* which were not at all friendly to Nazi Germany.

In contrast, the constant and widespread acts of violence against Negroes throughout the South, culminating in lynching, may be considered real "people's actions", for which the Southern whites bear collective responsibility. As Dollard showed in *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, the brutality with which Negroes are treated is not the work of a differentiated minority or of individual sadists but is participated in, actively or passively, by the entire

It may be said, justly, that it makes little difference to the dead kulak or to the dead Jew what the motives of his executioners were. But it makes a great deal of difference to the executioners, and to our evaluation of their act.

To put it briefly: the English mill-owners in the last century and the Russian bureaucrats in this one showed a disregard for human life which was shocking enough. But the Nazis have not *disregarded* human life. They have, on the contrary, paid close attention to it. They have taken it for the pure, disinterested pleasure of taking it. There was no ulterior motive behind Maidanek, no possible advantage to its creators beyond the gratification of neurotic racial hatreds. What has previously been done only by individual psychopathic killers has now been done by the rulers and servants of a great modern State. This is something new.

We now come to the question: who is responsible for these horrors?

white community. "White aggression against Negroes and the social patterns which permit it are forms of social control," he writes. "They are instrumentalities for keeping the Negro in his place and maintaining the supraordinate position of the white caste. . . . It must not be supposed that the major or perhaps even the most significant part of white aggression against Negroes consists of the few dramatic acts of lynching featured in the newspapers. *Massive and continuous pressures of other types are far more important in achieving social stability.*" (My italics)

So too with the 1943 Detroit race riot, in which hundreds of Negroes were killed or horribly beaten up by large mobs of whites, in the very heart of the city. This kind of behavior has the general support of the Southern white people, and has enough popular support even in a Northern city like Detroit to allow it to be carried out without interference from the police. This latter point suggests that whereas anti-Negro violence in America is a real "folk" activity, carried on *against* the State and its police (which, of course, wink at it); in Germany it is the reverse: pogroms are carried out by the State and the forces of "law and order" *against* the folkways:

But *some one* killed the Jews of Europe? And those who did were Germans. True. But a particular kind of Germans, specialists in torture and murder, whom it would be as erroneous to confuse with the general run of Germans as it would be to confuse the brutality-specialists who form so conspicuous a part of our own local police forces (and who occasionally burst out in such sensational horrors as the Chicago Memorial Day massacre) with the average run of Americans. It is of capital significance that the death camps for Jews and the mass killings of Russian prisoners of war have apparently not been entrusted to regular German Army units but rather to specially selected and trained SS squads. The Swedish journalist, Avid Fredborg, for example, has this interesting description in his book, *Behind the Steel Wall*:

"SS soldiers forming the execution squads in the East are carefully chosen. They are recruited from the most brutal elements and are gradually trained to become harder



and more ruthless. At first they may only have to take Jews out for street cleaning and snow shoveling. After a time they are assigned to perform single executions. Only after this training is completed are they ordered to do mass executions.

"Many have refused to take part in these and have been shot. . . . Others have had nervous breakdowns and have been sent to asylums. Even the most hardened have at times caved in. Time and again, physicians have been called to attend soldiers on leave who have had severe attacks of hysteria or prolonged insomnia or delirium tremens (soldiers in the firing squads often get intoxicated before executions, and many stay so continually). . . .

"The chief instrument for these ghastly practices is the SS. Sometimes it seems that the SS is driving the policy beyond the intention of the Party leaders. In any case, it is certain the German public has little real knowledge of what is going on."

Bruno Bettelheim's article on Nazi concentration camp life in the August issue shows in detail how, *given complete control over the individual*, it is possible to condition even anti-Nazis to accept Nazi values. Major Applegate's little treatise, *Kill - or Be Killed*, which I discussed in September, indicates that it is not only the Nazis who are consciously trying to break down the civilized individual's inhibitions against taking life. But if the Nazi can thus condition their SS men and their concentration camp prisoners, cannot they—and have they not in fact—so condition the German people as a whole? To some extent, of course they can and have, especially in the case of the youth. Hitler said in 1937:

"We still have among us old-fashioned people who are not fit for anything. They get in our way like cats and dogs. But this does not worry us. *We will take away their children.* We will not permit them to lapse into the old way of thinking. We will take them away when they are ten years old and bring them up in the spirit of nationalism until they are eighteen. They shall not escape us. They will join the Party, the SA, the SS and other formations. Later on they will do two years of military service. Who shall dare say that such a training will not produce a nation?"

But we must remember that the great majority of present-day Germans were adults when Hitler came to power, and that even what the Nazis called their "conquest of youth" (a revealing phrase, by the way) is not complete, judging

from reports of executions of university students. More important, it would seem probable that the kind of extreme *behavior* required of mass-executioners and torturers can only be psychologically conditioned by extreme *situations*, as Bettelheim calls them, involving either complete physical control of the individual in a prison camp or else his willing cooperation in a lengthy and rigorous training process. Neither of these conditions is possible in the case of the average German: eighty million people, or even ten or five million can neither be subjected to concentration-camp control nor can they be put through any elaborate training course (even if they consented to be.) Propaganda and force are not adequate substitutes for the more intimate types of conditioning; their effect is weakened and even negated constantly by the family and working life of the individual, which goes on still along the traditional lines of Western civilization.

Nazi Germany is often called "one big concentration camp", but one should not forget that this is a metaphor and not a literal description. Misled by the metaphor, some POLITICS readers have drawn from Bettelheim's article, for instance, the unwarranted conclusion that the whole German population—and even that of the occupied Europe of 1940-1943, which journalists also have called "one big concentration camp"—was being conditioned by the Nazis as effectively as the prisoners Bettelheim writes about. The fallacy in the case of Europe is apparent at a glance: as "Gallicus" showed in the January issue, the Nazis failed to make much impression even on the youth, and soon found themselves confronted by an overwhelmingly hostile population—and, worse, corrupted by it. In Germany itself, the Nazis obviously could make more progress, since the German people were offered superior material rewards and since national hatred of a foreign conqueror was not involved. But even there it seems unlikely that propaganda and terrorism applied to a population still working and living in comparative (by concentration-camp standards) freedom have been sufficient to effectively Nazify a people the majority of whom were definitely anti-Nazi when Hitler assumed power in 1933. The very fact that concentration camps have continued to exist on a large scale is one proof of a continued popular opposition to Nazism, as are the scores of executions for "treason" which are still announced daily.

### 3. Things Happen to People.

All this is not to deny that Nazism has had a great effect on the German people. It is simply to deny that this effect has as yet changed the average German's attitudes enough to cause him to commit pogroms or to approve of them when his Nazi rulers commit them; and to indicate the limitations on Nazi indoctrination outside the concentration camp and the special training schools. The Germans have been changed by Nazism, but it has been a slower process and has gone less far than concentration-camp analogies would suggest, and certainly less far than our own Teutonophobes claim.\*

\*The more virulent of them, like Vansittart and Rex Stout, have concocted a theory of German "responsibility" which is just the reverse of the one discussed here: that the German people, far from having been conditioned to Nazi attitudes by external pressure

It is a process, furthermore, which is also going on in our own society, in England, and in Russia—in the last-named perhaps even faster and farther than in Germany itself. Modern society has become so tightly organized, so rationalized and routinized that it has the character of a mechanism which grinds on without human conscious-

(which of course implies they were decent people *before* Hitler) have been warlike barbarians throughout European history. This is such an obvious inversion of Nazi racial theory, and is so wide open to the same scientific refutations that it does not seem worth wasting any more space on here. Combatting it is a task for the propagandist, not for the analyst: like the Nazis' ideas on the Jewish people, it is as easy to refute on the scientific plane as it is difficult to combat on the psychological level. It seems more fruitful here to discuss a more sophisticated and tenable theory of German collective responsibility.



ness or control. The individual, be he "leader" or mass-man, is reduced to powerlessness vis-a-vis the mechanism. More and more, things happen TO people.

Some examples, mostly drawn from the "democratic" side in this war, may suggest what I mean:

**A.** *The New Yorker* of August 12 last ran a profile of a 22-year-old lieutenant in the Army Air Force who had just completed thirty bombing missions in the European theatre. He seemed to be of superior intelligence, not politically radical; his main personal interest was in jazz music. "Whatever I tell you," he said to the interviewer, "boils down to this: I'm a cog in one hell of a big machine. The more I think about it, and I've thought about it a lot lately, the more it looks as if I'd been a cog in one thing after another since the day I was born. Whenever I get set to do what I want to do, something a whole lot bigger than me comes along and shoves me back into place. It's not especially pleasant, but there it is." The lieutenant's personal aspirations would seem modest and attainable enough: to live with his wife, to have a home, to play and hear good jazz. Our society has been unable to give him these satisfactions. Instead, it puts him in the plexiglass nose of a bomber and sends him out to kill his fellow men and destroy their homes, at the most terrible psychological cost to himself, as the profile makes clear. Society is not ungrateful, however: the lieutenant wears the Purple Heart, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal with three oak-leaf clusters.

**B.** At the Mare Island, California, naval base last summer two munitions ships blew up while they were being loaded. In a twinkling, the blast levelled everything for miles around and killed some three hundred sailors. The next day, the admiral in charge issued an Order of the Day in which he paid tribute to the "heroism" and "self-sacrifice" of the dead.

Now obviously the men who were killed were killed because they happened to be around when the explosives went off, and not because of any decision or action of their own. (So, too, civilians die in air raids; and so, too nine out of ten soldiers die in a modern battle because they happen to be around when a bomb or shell lands.) The dead had no choice but to be "heroic", in the admiral's concept of heroism: TNT offers no surrender terms. These particular sailors had not had even a choice about being around so dangerous a neighborhood: they were mostly Negroes, and they were assigned to this dirty and dangerous work because of their race (about which they had had no choice either). Indeed, they most definitely did not want the job. The fifty Negro sailors who were recently convicted and sentenced to long prison terms for mutiny were all employed at Mare Island unloading munitions and most of them survivors of last summer's blast. They felt so strong a disinclination, after the tragedy, towards sharing their dead comrades' "heroic" fate that they risked a possible death penalty for mutiny.

The admiral's Order of the Day was thus a fantastic distortion of reality. Yet the administrative reflex which prompted him to issue it was sound. Instinctively, he felt it necessary to give to something which was non-purposive and impersonal a *human* meaning, to maintain the fiction that men who die in modern war do so not as chance victims but as active "patriots", who heroically *choose* to sacrifice their lives for their countries. It was his misfortune that the Mare Island explosion did not even superficially lend itself to this purpose. It is the good fortune

of our war correspondents that battle deaths can be given at least a superficial plausibility along these lines.

**C.** The people of London are constantly being applauded for their "heroism" by the war propagandists, and doubtless many individual Londoners did show heroic qualities during the bombing raids. But others doubtless also showed mean and cowardly traits. Insofar as the concept of heroism can be applied, it must be used on an individual not a collective basis. But when journalists salute the "heroism" of the Londoners or of the Russian people—they really mean a kind of collective heroism which can never exist actually, since as a collectivity the people of London had no alternative except to endure the bombings. As a Cockney retorted to a war correspondent: "Everyone's sticking it? And just what the bloody hell do you think any one can do? You'd think we had some bloody choice in the matter!"

**D.** Perhaps the most heavily bombed community in this war is the strategic British-held island of Malta, which in a 28-month period had 2,315 air-raid alerts, or an average of three a day. One in 200 of the civilian population died during these raids. Some time ago the British Government awarded a collective Victoria Cross to the people of Malta for their "heroism"—which, once more, consisted in simply enduring what they had to endure—for their British masters would not have allowed them to leave the island anyway. And only the other day the same Government issued a booklet on the "siege of Malta" full of the usual nonsense, on which the *N. Y. Times* commented with the usual idiocy: "The island remained unconquered, a light and a symbol."

An incident reported in *Time* of August 7 last illuminates the myth of Malta. It seems that on July 14, 1943, a British army captain caught a Maltese citizen looting his parked car. He took him to the Maltese police, who promptly freed the thief and put the captain in jail—for false arrest. When it appeared that the Maltese authorities planned to keep the captain in jail indefinitely, his commanding officer appealed to the British Governor (without result) and finally direct to London. The British Government replied that "in view of the present tense relations with the Maltese population and urgent military necessities, it is impossible to intervene." The captain remained in solitary confinement for nine months, until April, 1944, when his case came up in a Maltese civil court. He was then sentenced to thirteen *additional* months imprisonment at hard labor. Lord Gort, the British Military Governor, ventured to reduce the sentence, on appeal, to three months.

"We walk on tiptoe in Malta," explained an English officer. "We dare not cross a Maltese citizen in any way. Military experience demands appeasement of the pro-Fascist population." Whether the Maltese are pro-Fascist or anti-British or both is not the present point. The thing is that the collectively decorated people of "heroic Malta" detest their British "allies". We may be sure that the British don't allow their Army officers to be treated this way by "natives" unless there are compelling reasons.

**E.** With their customary thoroughness, the Germans have carried what might be called "collective irresponsibility" to its logical extreme. To cope with the Anglo-American armies poured into France after D-Day, they impressed great numbers of Poles, Russians, Frenchmen, Italians, Czechs, Georgians, Mongolians—most of them war prisoners given a choice between starvation and service in the Reichswehr. In some German regiments, the colonel needed an interpreter to make his commands understood.



Even crack SS divisions were filled out with these foreign conscripts, all of whom, even the Mongolians, were officially listed as "Volksdeutsche." The Allies in France found themselves confronted by a veritable International in Reichswehr uniforms. Many of these "Volksdeutsche" shot their officers and came over to the Allied side at the first chance, giving our High Command a typical modern problem. Were they allies? (But they wore the German uniform.) Or were they prisoners? (But they hated the uniform they wore.) All that could be said with certainty is that they were fought on the German side. The passive verb is intentional: the modern soldier does not "fight"; he "is fought", like a battle ship or other inanimate mechanism.

The following story was related by George Orwell in his column in the Oct. 13, London *Tribune*:

"Among the German prisoners captured in France there are a certain number of Russians. Some time back two were captured who did not speak Russian or any other language that was known either to their captors or their fellow-prisoners. They could, in fact, only converse with one another. A professor of Slavonic languages, brought

down from Oxford, could make nothing of what they were saying. Then it happened that a sergeant who had served on the frontiers of India overheard them talking and recognised their language, which he was able to speak a little. It was Tibetan! After some questioning he managed to get their story out of them.

"Some years earlier they had strayed over the frontier into the Soviet Union and been conscripted into a labour battalion, afterwards being sent to western Russia when the war with Germany broke out. They were taken prisoner by the Germans and sent to North Africa; later they were sent to France, then exchanged into a fighting unit when the Second Front opened, and taken prisoner by the British. All this time they had been able to speak to nobody but one another, and had no notion of what was happening or who was fighting whom.

"It would round the story off neatly if they were now conscripted into the British Army and sent to fight the Japanese, ending up somewhere in Central Asia, quite close to their native village, but still very much puzzled as to what it is all about."

## 4. Political Animism – The Theory of the "Organic" State.

The above instances suggest that the difference between "civilized" and "primitive" social organization is growing less. The great circle is slowly closing, and a contemporary Soviet or German citizen would feel more in common with an Australian bushman in many ways than with, let us say, a French *philosophe* of 1780 or a Jeffersonian democrat of 1810. In place of the rigid, unexamined customs which determine the individual's behavior in primitive communities, there is substituted today a complex politico-economic organization which is equally "given" and not-to-be-criticised in its ultimate aims and assumptions, and which overrides with equal finality the individual's power of choice.

The parallel goes farther. As primitive man endowed natural forces with human animus, so modern man attributes to a nation or a people qualities of will and choice that belong in reality only to individuals. The reasons are the same in both cases: to reduce mysterious and uncontrollable forces to a level where they may be dealt with. The cave dweller feels much more comfortable about a thunderstorm if he can explain it as the rage of some one like himself only bigger, and the urban cave dwellers of our time feel much better about war if they can think of the enemy nation as a person like themselves only bigger, which can be collectively punched in the nose for the evil actions it collectively chooses to do. If the German people are not "responsible" for "their" nation's war crimes, the world becomes a complicated and terrifying place, in which un-understood social forces move men puppetlike to perform terrible acts, and in which guilt is at once universal and meaningless. That the world is in fact such a place is quite beside the point.

One of the reasons anthropology is so interesting to the politically-minded today is because its method of observation, already used successfully on primitive societies, can be applied very usefully to contemporary society, and is

already being so applied by Dollard, Benedict, the Lynds and others. May we not, indeed, expect some future historian to write of us as one scholar has written of the ancient Hebrews:

"They explained nearly all phenomena by the direct action of superhuman and invisible persons and powers, resembling the human spirit. Like the 'primitives', they recognized no essential difference between the spiritual and the material. Like them, too, they conceived of a solidarity, or more accurately, a practical identity, between many beings, events and things which we regard as absolutely distinct."

This animistic confusion marks the common man's thinking (with plenty of help from his political rulers) not only on relations between nations but also on the relation of the State and the individual citizen. Precisely because in this sphere the individual is most powerless in reality, do his rulers make their greatest efforts to present the State not only as an instrument for *his* purposes but as an extension of *his* personality. They have to try to do this because of the emphasis on the free individual which the bourgeois revolution has made part of our political assumptions (for how long?).

Hegel, who developed an anti-individualist theory of Statism while the cannons of the Napoleonic wars were still echoing, saw the problem clearly and tried to meet it in such terms as these:

"In the State, everything depends upon the unity of the universal and the particular. In the ancient States, the subjective purpose was absolutely one with the will of the State. In modern times, on the contrary, we demand an individual opinion, an individual will and conscience. The ancients had none of these in the modern sense; the final thing for them was the will of the State. While in Asiatic despotisms, the individual had no inner self and no self-



justification, in the modern world man demands to be honored for the sake of his subjective individuality.

"The union of duty and right has the twofold aspect that what the State demands as duty should directly be the right of the individual, since the State is nothing but the organization of the concept of freedom. The determinations of the individual will are given by the State objectivity, and it is through the State alone that they attain truth and realization. . . .

"To the complete State belongs, essentially, consciousness and thought. The State knows thus what it wills, and it knows it under the form of thought. . . . The State must be regarded as a great architectonic edifice, a hieroglyph of reason, manifesting itself in reality. . . . That the State is the self-determining and the completely sovereign will, the final decision being necessarily referred to it—that is easy to comprehend."

(Hegel: *"The Philosophy of Law"*)

We may be sure, at any rate, that Stalin—or Roosevelt—would find these animistic formulations of the great philosopher of modern reaction "easy to comprehend." Nor would they be at all fazed by another passage in the same essay:

"The people without its monarch and without that whole organization necessarily and directly connected with him is a formless mass, which is no longer a State. In a people, not conceived in a lawless and unorganized condition, but as a self-developed and truly organic totality—in such a people, sovereignty is the personality of the whole, and this is represented in reality by the person of the monarch."

Will, consciousness, conscience, thought, personality—these are the attributes of the Hegelian State, the whole theory culminating in the "person of the monarch" as

the symbol and expression of the "organic totality." The "responsibility of peoples" is direct and all-embracing, according to such a theory.

"Lives of nations," said Roosevelt in his 1940 Inaugural Address, "are determined not by the count of years, but by the lifetime of the human spirit. The life of a man is three-score years and ten. . . . The life of a nation is the fullness of the measure of its will to live. . . . A nation, like a person, has a body. A nation, like a person, has a mind. . . . A nation, like a person, has something deeper, something more permanent. . . . It is that something which matters most to its future, which calls forth the most sacred guarding of its present."

Francis G. Wilson has commented acutely on the above:

"When Burke was rejecting the violence of the French Revolution and the revolutionism which was sweeping Europe, he turned to the moral continuity of the nation. Society was a contract, but it was a contract for the future—an implicit, necessary and unbreakable agreement between the dead and the living, and those yet to be born. When Roosevelt speaks of the mind, the body and the future of the nation, he is speaking as Burke might speak today were he again to face the swelling tide of revolution and try to stem it with his own torrent of words and patriotic emotion. . . . Roosevelt's doctrine is a doctrine of conservative nationalism. . . .

"Theories of the political community vary with conditions. Just as political pluralism was a phase of the late mellowness of liberalism, so the organic theory of the State is suited for more heroic moments."

(*"The Revival of Organic Theory"*; *American Political Science Review*, June 1942.)

## 5. We, Too, Are Guilty.

If "they", the German people, are responsible for the atrocious policies and actions of "their" (in the possessive and possessing sense, again) government, then "we", the peoples of Russia, England and America, must also take on a big load of responsibility.

We forced defeated Germany, after World War I, into a blind alley from which the only escape was another blind alley, Nazism; this we did by throwing our weight against socialist revolution. After Hitler took power, more or less without blessing as a lesser evil to revolution, we allowed him to rearm Germany in the hopes we could turn him against Russia, and we used "non-intervention" to aid him and Mussolini to overthrow the Spanish Republic in the "dress rehearsal" for World War II.

In the present war, we have carried the saturation bombing of German cities to a point where "military objectives" are secondary to the incineration or suffocation of great numbers of civilians; we have betrayed the Polish underground fighters in Warsaw into the hands of the Nazis, have deported hundreds of thousands of Poles to slow-death camps in Siberia, and have taken by force a third of Poland's territory; we have conducted a civil war against another ally, Greece, in order to restore a reactionary and unpopular monarch; we have starved those

parts of Europe our armies have "liberated" almost as badly as the Nazis did, and if we explain that the shipping was needed for our armies, they can retort that the food was needed for *their* armies; we have followed Nazi racist theories in segregating Negro soldiers in our military forces and in deporting from their homes on the West Coast to concentration camps in the interior tens of thousands of citizens who happened to be of Japanese ancestry; we have made ourselves the accomplice of the Maidanek butchers by refusing to permit more than a tiny trickle of the Jews of Europe to take refuge inside our borders; we have ruled India brutally, imprisoning the people's leaders, denying the most elementary civil liberties, causing a famine last year in which hundreds of thousands perished; we have—

But this is monstrous, you say? We, the people, didn't do these things. They were done by a few political leaders, and the majority of Americans, Englishmen and (perhaps—who knows?) Russians deplore them and favor quite different policies. Or if they don't, then it is because they have not had a chance to become aware of the real issues and to act on them. In any case, I can accept no responsibility for such horrors. I and most of the people I know are vigorously opposed to such policies and have made our disapproval constantly felt in the pages of the



*Nation* and on the speaker's platforms of the Union for Democratic Action.

Precisely. And the Germans could say the same thing. And if you say, but why didn't you get rid of Hitler if you didn't like his policies, they can say: But you people (in America and England, at least) merely had to vote against your Government to overthrow it, while we risked our necks if we even talked against ours. Yet you Britishers have tolerated Churchill for five years, and you Americans have thrice re-elected Roosevelt by huge majorities.

It is a terrible fact, but it is a fact, that few people have the imagination or the moral sensitivity to get very

excited about actions which they don't participate in themselves (and hence about which they feel no personal responsibility). The scale and complexity of modern Governmental organization, and the concentration of political power at the top, are such that the vast majority of people are excluded from this participation. How many votes did Roosevelt's refugee policy cost him? What political damage was done the Churchill-Labor government by its treatment of India, or by last year's Bombay famine? What percentage of the American electorate is deeply concerned about the mass starvation of the Italians under the Allied occupation? As the French say, to ask such questions is to answer them.

## 6. If Every One Is Guilty, No One Is Guilty.

Let us return to the "organic theory of the nation, dominant in Germany and Russia and making great progress in this country and Britain. From this conception, it follows that no individual citizen or group of citizens may think or act otherwise than in accordance with the policies laid down by those in control of the State apparatus. When cells in a biological organism cut loose from their organic function, the result is cancer. Similar behavior by the citizen-cells of the Organic Nation is political cancer. The old Roman fable of the belly and the members by which the patricians defended their position against the plebs, this is still the basic argument of the "organicists."

In an organism, obviously no line can be drawn between the whole (the nation, or the people) and the parts (the individual citizens, the specific classes and interest-groups). The hands that strangle are no more guilty than the belly which nourishes them; the specialized "jew-killing experts" are no more guilty than the peasants who raise the food they eat or the metalworkers who forge their instruments.

Thus the theory is convenient for those in power on two scores: internally, it preserves the ladder of hierarchy, making rebellious behavior treason not only to those in authority but also to the alleged common interests of everybody, to what is reverently termed "national unity" these days; in time of war, it makes it possible to treat the enemy population as a homogeneous single block, all of them equally wicked and detestable. This second use is what concerns us here: it is the theoretical underpinning of the concept that the German people are responsible for the horrors of Nazism.

But if every one is guilty, then no one is guilty. The dialectics of this are wonderfully illustrated in an anecdote quoted by Hannah Arendt ("Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility", *Jewish Frontier*, January 1945) from *PM* of Nov. 12 last. An American correspondent interviews an official of a "death camp" who had fallen into the hands of the Russians:

Q. Did you kill people in the camp? A. Yes.

Q. Did you poison them with gas? A. Yes.

Q. Did you bury them alive? A. It sometimes happened.

Q. Did you personally help to kill people? A. Absolutely not. I was only paymaster on the camp.

Q. What did you think of what was going on? A. It was bad at first, but we got used to it.

Q. Do you know the Russians will hang you? A. (bursting into tears) Why should they? What have I done?

*What have I done?* These words ring true. One feels that the worthy paymaster—imagine the civilization that has produced the job of paymaster in a death camp!—is sincerely outraged by the proposal to hang him for his part in killing several million human beings. What had he done indeed? Simply obeyed orders and kept his mouth shut. It was what he had *not* done that shocks our moral sensibilities. But from the standpoint of the Organic Nation, he is no more and no less guilty than every other person in Germany and deserves hanging no more and no less. Soldiers must obey their officers, just as citizens must obey the law. Stalin and Roosevelt would certainly not permit their own soldiers to discriminate, on the frivolous grounds of personal conscience, between one military order and another. Harold Denny in the *N. Y. Times* of Feb. 17 tells about a captured noncom who had witnessed the execution of forty Jewish men, women and children in Brest-Litovsk. "The only thoughts I had about it," he said, "were that it was ordered from above and that those who ordered it must have had their important reasons. By now we have been educated in such a manner that we no longer discuss given orders but agree to them without question." Asked whether he himself would be capable of carrying out such an order, he replied, after reflection, that he thought he would be, adding: "I cannot say I would have had fun doing it—not the least little bit. It could only be under the compulsion of an order. To volunteer for it, that I could not do."

It is not the law-breaker we must fear today so much as he who obeys the law. The Germans have long been noted for their deep respect for law and order. This foible, which one could smile at as an amiable weakness in the past, has assumed a sinister aspect under the Nazis. One of the most hopeful auguries for the future of this country, with the Permanent War Economy taking shape, is that we Americans have a long and honorable tradition of lawlessness and disrespect for authority.

Only those who are willing to resist authority themselves when it conflicts too intolerably with their personal moral code, only they have the right to condemn the death-camp paymaster. Certainly those who preach, or practice, the Organic Nation have no such right. (For all that, the Russian authorities, untroubled by such nice points,



have probably long since hung the fellow — while we agonize over the rights and wrongs of the case.) Yet can even we really condemn the paymaster? For the Organic Nation is by no means only an ideological slogan devised by those in authority; it also corresponds to the real arrangement of things in the modern world. The principles on which our mass-industry economy is built—centralization of authority, division of labor (or specialization of function), rigid organization from the top down into which each worker fits at his appointed hierarchical level—these have been carried over into the political sphere. The result is that, as we have seen above, the individual has little choice about his behavior, and can be made to function, by the pressure and terror wielded by the masters of the Organic State, in ways quite opposed to any he would voluntarily choose. I have been told that the Nazis created a Jewish section of the Gestapo and that these creatures were much more feared by their fellow Jews than were the regular Gestapo men, since they would never dare take a bribe or show the slightest good nature. There were also Jewish policemen in the Warsaw ghetto, working loyally with the Nazis. We may imagine the pressure against these individuals, and their families, which produced this behavior. And doubtless some Jews refused to play the role, and took the consequences. But probably not very many, for such Jews were heroes, and there are not many heroes among the Jews or among any other peoples today (except primitive folk like the Greeks and the Poles). Our paymaster was not a hero, and the Russians hung him for not being one—as they would have hung him for being one in *their* State.

With their usual unerring cynicism, the Nazis exploit this moral weakness in the German people—that they are not heroes. In words which echo our own propaganda, the official SS organ recently editorialized:

"There are no innocents in Germany. We have not yet met a single German who for political reasons had refused marriage, children, family support, reductions of taxes or paid vacations only because National Socialism had made them possible. On the contrary, they grew fat and stout under the prosperity of National Socialism. They felt no pangs of conscience at the 'Aryanization' of Jewish businesses. They had their full share in the prosperity. And they shouted 'Hurrah' to our victories. . . . There were, it is true, lamblike innocents who did not want to declare

war upon any country and who did for the German war effort only as much as they had to. But even these did not object to making money from the war or from National Socialism. They liked to ride in their new cars on our new highways and to travel on our 'Strength through Joy' excursions. Nobody, after all, has preferred a democratic death to a National Socialist life."

(Editorial in "*Das Schwarze Korps*", quoted in the "*Neue Volkszeitung*" (New York City) for Feb. 10, 1945.)

The *Schwarze Korps*, of course, exaggerates: as we shall presently see, scores of Germans every day "prefer" (at least get—which I admit is not necessarily quite the same thing) a "democratic death" to a "National Socialist life." But, from the Organic standpoint, it is quite true that "no one is innocent." With their customary political logic, the Nazis of late have deliberately tried to involve the whole German people in the moral responsibility for their crimes. In her brilliant article in the *Jewish Frontier*, Hannah Arendt describes this process and its political consequences.

"The terror-organizations, which were at first strictly separated from the mass of the people, admitting only persons who could show a criminal past or prove their preparedness to become criminals, have since been continually expanded. . . . Whereas those crimes which have always been a part of the daily routine of concentration camps since the beginning of the Nazi regime were at first a jealously guarded monopoly of the SS and Gestapo, today members of the Wehrmacht are assigned at will to the duties of mass murder. These crimes were at first kept secret by every possible means and any publication of such reports was made punishable as atrocity propaganda. Later, however, such reports were spread by Nazi-organized whispering campaigns and today these crimes are openly proclaimed under the title of 'measures of liquidation' in order to force 'Volksgenossen' whom difficulties of organization made it impossible to induct into the 'Volksgemeinschaft' of crime at least to bear the onus of complicity and awareness of what was going on. These tactics resulted in a victory for the Nazis, as the Allies abandoned the distinction between Germans and Nazis. . . .

"National Socialism's chances of organizing an underground movement in the future depends on there being no visible signs of distinction any longer, and above all on the victorious powers' being convinced that there really are no differences between Germans."

## 7. The Political Meaning of Collective War Guilt.

The theory of the German people's collective responsibility for Nazi policies not only (1) ignores the deep cleavages between the Nazis and the people, but also (2) cements these cracks up again.

(1) If the theory were correct, one would expect to find the German people following the Nazis' war leadership with docility if not with enthusiasm. Actually, according to official German figures (*N. Y. Times*, Dec. 20, 1944), "People's Courts" executions (mostly involving treason and other offenses against the State) rose 5,000% in the first four years of the war: from 99 in 1939 to 1,292 in 1941 to 5,336 in 1943. These figures don't include the death sentences passed in the regular courts, nor the thou-

sands of Germans executed annually without trial by the Gestapo, the Elite Guard, etc. The 1944 figures are unavailable but are probably much higher than 1943: estimates of the executions after last summer's attempt on Hitler's life run into the tens of thousands. "After the proclamation of total mobilization as a link in 'the holy war of the entire people,'" writes a neutral correspondent just back from Germany (*N. Y. Times Magazine*, Sept. 24, 1944), "Nazi leaders ordered all Nazis to report immediately to the Gestapo any defeatist utterances. . . . Well above a hundred of my worker friends and their acquaintances have recently disappeared, 'spurlos versenkt'." Facts like these, even if we grant there is little organized



opposition to the Nazis inside Germany, suggest the fuel is ready from which might spring the flames of an anti-Nazi revolution, if the right spark were provided. But it would be difficult to say which dreads such a spark the most, the Nazi or the Big Three.

(2) It is likely that not since 1934 have the Nazis commanded the popular support they have today. Goebbels and Roosevelt are agreed on one thing at least: that the German people's destiny is identical with that of the Nazis. On the one hand, we have the Nazis organizing a popular *maquis* to carry on the struggle against the Allies for years after the war, pointing to the Morgenthau Plan as conclusive evidence of the Jewish plot against Germany, and telling the German people—with the novel advantage that the propaganda is true—that there is no alternative except a fight to the bitter end under Hitler's leadership. On the other hand, we have the Big Three insisting on "unconditional surrender" (a formula, let us note, which was evolved not by the totalitarian Stalin nor the Tory Churchill but by the common man's friend, Roosevelt), proposing to enslave millions of German males, to reduce Germany to a semi-agricultural status, etc. Thus from both sides of the battle-lines, the German people are told that the Nazis' survival is their only hope of survival, that the Nazis *are* Germany (a claim they have long made but up to now have been unable to get generally accepted).

For one curious result of the "all-are-guilty" line, which is put forward by those who profess the utmost detestation of Nazism, is that it makes Nazism (or its equivalent called by some other name) the logical *postwar* form of regime for defeated Germany. This comes out nakedly if one considers the most fully developed "organic" theory on Germany—that, fittingly enough, propounded by the Nazis' fellow totalitarian regime in Russia. One finds Moscow promoting hatred of Germans as Germans (not only as Nazis) and proposing the most Draconic treatment of Germany after the war, and at the same time encouraging German military nationalism through the Von Seidlitz officers' committee. A contradiction? Only superficially. The "organic" theory leads precisely to the retention of the Nazis and *junkers* as the German people's rulers. The logic: all are guilty; therefore no one is more guilty than another; therefore, the Nazis and the *junkers* are no more guilty than their opponents; therefore, if it is convenient—and it *is* convenient—it is permissible to keep the Nazis and *junkers* (except a few that are hung for demonstration purposes) in power. Thus we have Stalin using the generals, and Eisenhower using the SS and the Nazi police (see front cover). Some all-are-guilty enthusiasts even insist that the German people are so despicable that they *deserve* to be ruled forever by the Nazis! Thus the most extreme anti-Nazism turns into its dialectical opposite.

So much for the effect on the German people of the collective responsibility theory. It is equally disastrous for the Allied peoples. Last summer every one thought the war in Europe would be over by the fall. The Anglo-Americans had broken out of Normandy and were racing across France in pursuit of the disorganized German armies; the Russians were advancing on all their fronts; an attempt on Hitler's life was almost successful; the popu-

lar mood inside Germany was one of panic and loss of confidence in Hitler's leadership. At that moment, it would not have taken much political pressure to pry loose the people from the Nazis and to bring the whole structure down. Instead of applying this pressure, the Allies reiterated the "unconditional surrender" line, embellished with such grace notes as the Morgenthau Plan. They succeeded in convincing the German people, as Hitler's most frenetic orations could not have convinced them, that their only hope was to stand firm behind the Nazis. To make sure the Germans didn't miss the point, the American High Command staged a special demonstration at Aachen, the first sizable German city our troops reached. Aachen was defended by a single second-rate division, reinforced by one SS unit and a few fortress troops. The defenders cooperated splendidly with the attackers: for one week, the city, ringed with American divisions and artillery units, was bombed and shelled. It was finally taken "the hard way", by an all-out infantry assault backed up by tanks and God knows what else. Militarily, not exactly brilliant. But politically sound enough, for the city was reduced to rubble, thousands of its inhabitants were killed (and a good many American soldiers, too), and notice was served on all Germany (and on the Americans) of what was in store for it (and them).

It is not worth wasting printer's ink to prove that, militarily, the "Aachen policy" is inferior to a policy which would split the German people from the Nazis, and that such a policy would save an enormous number of American, British and Russian lives. But when have military considerations been allowed to interfere with the more serious business of politics (except, of course, when be-starred generals urge strikers not to interfere with the "war effort")? The Big Three want things to be done in an orderly way, with the masses' properly constituted rulers remaining on top; they don't want any unauthorized popular movements behind their own lines and they don't want them behind the enemy lines either. Only a liberal editor would seriously point out to them that military victory could be had more rapidly by encouraging the internal break-up of Germany. They are well aware of that fact, but, as responsible ruling-class leaders, they are unwilling to abandon their principles for the sake of military expediency.

"Modern war," wrote Simone Weil, "appears as a struggle led by all the State apparatuses and their general staffs against all men old enough to bear arms. . . . The great error of nearly all studies of war . . . has been to consider war as an episode in foreign politics, when it is especially an act of interior politics, and the most atrocious act of all."

The common peoples of the world are coming to have less and less control over the policies of "their" governments, while at the same time they are being more and more closely identified with those governments. Or to state it in slightly different terms: as the common man's *moral* responsibility diminishes (assuming agreement that the degree of moral responsibility is in direct proportion to the degree of freedom of choice), his *practical* responsibility increases. Not for many centuries have individuals been at once so powerless to influence what is done by the



national collectivities to which they belong, and at the same time so generally held responsible for what is done by those collectivities.

Where can the common peoples look for relief from this intolerable, agonizing contradiction? Not to their traditional defender, the labor movement. This no longer exists in Russia, and in the two great bourgeois democracies, it has quite lost touch with the humane and democratic ideals it once believed in. Last fall, the British Trade Union Congress endorsed, 5 to 1, a statement that the German people are responsible for the crimes of Nazism; and a few weeks later, the CIO convention over here resolved: "The German people must . . . atone for the crimes and horrors which they have visited on the earth." Such international workingclass solidarity as once existed has vanished, and the workers of the world, including and especially those of the Soviet Union, are as brutally and rabidly nationalistic—in their capacity as organized workers—as their own ruling classes are.

We must look both more widely and more deeply for relief from the dilemma of increasing political impotence accompanied by increasing political responsibility. To our essential humanity and to a more sensitive and passionate respect for our own and other people's humanity.

Harold Denny in the *N. Y. Times* of February 18 last tells the story of a captured SS private. He was a young Ukrainian farmer who was impressed into the SS when the Germans retreated from Russia last summer. Fed up, apathetic, without interest even in tracing his family, he "appears to have no hatreds, no likes and little resentment. . . . To all questions he replies, 'I cannot know anything about that. Everything's so mixed up.' He looks and acts like a man in a profound state of shock." But the Ukrainian-farmer-SS-man had learned one thing, and he gave it as his only value-judgment:

"We are all human beings. If we had peace, if people would work together, they'd perhaps be comrades. But now—."

#### FOOTNOTE ON THE COMMUNIST MENTALITY

Somebody else said that the most critical day [of the siege of Leningrad] was the 14th of September. "That day our various high-school students held together with the Komsomol an enormous meeting, as a result of which every single young man still in town volunteered for immediate service . . . Only one thousand did not volunteer. We said, 'We want no cowards here.' And we—said goodbye to them." That was Vishnevsky speaking, and he said the last phrase in a very ominous tone.

—"At the Leningrad 'Writers' Union'"

by Alexander Werth, in the *October*, 1944, "Tricolor".

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## Books

**POLAND AND RUSSIA: *The Last Quarter Century.***  
By Ann Su Cardwell. Sheed & Ward. \$2.75.

The reader of this history of Polish-Soviet relations from the fixing of Polish boundaries after the last war until early in 1944 will be enlightened, excited, pitying, and perhaps fearful. He will not be amused. The author is an American woman, not a Catholic, who lived for 17 years in Poland and travelled widely in both countries. She writes lucidly and with restraint. It is a grisly story, in which the USSR again demonstrates that having scorned "bourgeois" virtue it cynically embraces bourgeoisie vice with enthusiasm.

The author in her foreword suggests that once the historian has ascertained the facts, it is sufficient that he present them in a precise and direct manner. But to the average person, facts, and especially political facts, are no different from opinions. Any disturbing idea is met with hostility and suspicion, and the person's desire not to believe is so strong that he will discover a dozen plausible reasons for disbelief. To believe is to see! If finally the disturbing fact is admitted to be so, all humanitarian feeling is carefully suppressed, as if the heart might make too vivid the truth, and excuses found in the objective language of academic theory.

The stalinist, liberal, and conservative apologists for Soviet policy may challenge some of the facts described in this book and "patiently explain" the others. We may imagine the telling retorts:

The looting of warehouses, factories, and farms in occupied Poland with the same disregard for international law as was shown by the Nazis? ("To build socialism in Russia!")

The "plebiscite" organized in Eastern Poland with the most efficient totalitarian methods—with one name on the ballot, the voter was told to "drop the paper in the ballot box or retire behind a screen and make whatever changes he desired"? ("Why should they want to vote against their own representatives?")

The forcible "sovietization" of this same area, under the control of the GPU (now NKVD), comprising the abolition of all existing trade unions and workers' organizations, the institution of a retroactive penal code, the lowering of wages and lengthening of hours, etc.? ("The stabilization of economy," perhaps.)

The arrest, torture, and deportation of persons suspected of hostility to Soviet rule, including the arrest of 12-year-old school children who disagreed with the Soviet interpretation of history introduced in the classrooms? ("Enemies of progress must be liquidated.")

The deportation to forced labor of about 1,500,000 persons, including women and children, and transported under such shocking conditions that the roads were strewn with frozen corpses? ("You cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs.")

There is a review of the almost-forgotten Erlich-Alter case and that of the "missing" 15,000 Polish prisoners. One interesting glimpse of the much-advertised recognition of racial equality: after Hitler attacked the USSR and Polish-Soviet relations were resumed, the Soviet government refused to restore Polish citizenship to former inhabitants of the occupied territory who were Ukrainian,



White Ruthenian, or Jewish, on the grounds that being members of these "nationalities" they could not be considered Poles! Naturally they remained Soviet citizens.

This is an important book. For obvious reasons, it has failed to receive the publicity it deserves.

LILA ROTH

**SOCIAL DARWINISM IN AMERICAN THOUGHT, 1860-1915.** By Richard Hofstadter. University of Pennsylvania Press. \$2.50.

Few scientific ideas have captured both the popular and the academic imagination so completely as did the Darwinian theory of evolution in the last century. "Social Darwinism" refers to the impact of the theory on psychology, sociology, ethics and philosophy. Hofstadter traces the development of "Social Darwinism" against both the historical and the cultural background. The result is a fine interpretative study of American intellectual development throughout several generations, and also a case history of what happens to a scientific concept when it is exploited ideologically.

His description of the vogue of Herbert Spencer (who first elaborated the social implications of Darwinism) in this country exhibits his method at its best. A few sentences may give the flavor: "With its rapid expansion, its exploitative methods, its desperate competition, and its peremptory rejection of failure, post-bellum America was like a vast human caricature of the Darwinian struggle for existence and survival of the fittest. Successful business entrepreneurs seemed to have accepted almost by instinct the Darwinian terminology which had emerged from the conditions of their existence. Businessmen are not the most articulate social philosophers, but a rough reconstruction of their broad social outlook shows how congenial to their thinking were the plausible analogies of social selection, and how welcome was the expansive evolutionary optimism of the Spencerian system."

Hofstadter shows that "survival of the fittest" may be taken to mean the "fittest" individual in a competitive society (the prevailing sense up to about 1900) or it may be applied to the collectivist competition of races and empires (the sense that came to the fore after American imperialism flowered with the Spanish-American War—and the sense which a modern Nazi would understand perfectly).

For the sociologist, this study is a contribution to the relatively new but as yet inadequately defined field known as the "sociology of knowledge". For general readers, it offers a broad survey of an important phase of American intellectual life, interspersed with more detailed treatment of a few focal thinkers and ideologies. Of special interest are the chapters devoted to Sumner and Lester Ward, who are usually known only to those concerned with the origins of American sociology. There is also an excellent chapter delineating the "current of pragmatism", and illuminating sections on the eugenics "craze" and on the little-known "social gospel" movement at the turn of the century.

JOHN BRUMM

**Nazi-Deutsch: A Glossary of Contemporary German Usage.** By Heinz Paechter. Frederick Ungar Co. (105 E. 24th St., New York City). \$2.50.

Mr. Paechter's *Nazi-Deutsch* for the first time conveys to the American reader an idea of the extent to which the Nazis have transformed and corrupted the German language. His glossary of Nazi-terminology will be invaluable to all those who have to deal with Nazi publica-

tions and who, in the past, have only too often been baffled by the complete change of the meaning of words. But this glossary can serve a wider function as well, as in social and political analysis. As Mr. Paechter states in his excellent introduction: "The language that is spoken in a totalitarian country conveys the climate of the totalitarian mind. It is more than a vehicle of communications. It is a vehicle of command which helps shape the pattern of a social structure into its ritual." "... The ambiguities of this paralogical language serve ... as an instrument of social control."

It would be interesting to extend such research into the impact of increased mass regimentation upon the English language (for example an analysis of the language of official Washington or of the military). Mr. Paechter's introduction to his *Nazi-Deutsch* would provide very valuable clues for such an analysis.

The theme of this little volume is deeply interwoven with the reality of Nazi society. Thus a recent issue of *Kieler Zeitung* carries an article entitled: *Der Karteimensch* (*The Card-Index Man*): "Human beings are being 'mass-fed,' 'mass-schooled,' rushed through training courses, 'mass-drilled' (*bekocht, beschult, durch Kurse geschleust, cusgerichtet*). A fashion has gripped the country and is growing with exuberant and dangerous vigor. Is all this really nothing but a mere ephemeral linguistic fashion or do such terms imply a deeper change? Is technique presenting us with a new language by extending its own terms which were hitherto used only for dead material, to what may be called human material? Our talent for organization should not degenerate into an organization-mania and discipline should not degenerate into letting oneself be over-organized until it reduces the people to a state of herd-mentality. ... There is more at stake than a mere linguistic sophism: if this mislanguage expands still more, we may gradually slide down into a linguistic and even mental poverty which must be prevented particularly now. ... We refuse to become a registered 'card index people' (*Karteimenschen*) who possess no faces but only labels."

The author of this article clearly tries to cover his hidden attacks against the totalitarian state behind a protest against its language. This is possible only because the Nazi state has indeed endeavored to refashion the German language according to political necessities. Language reflects the structural changes in society and, as Mr. Paechter puts it: "transforms the categories of Nazi thought into the folklore of the community."

LOUIS CLAIR

## The Intelligence Office

### "NEGATIVISM" ONCE MORE

Sir:

The frequent complaints from certain readers about your "negativism" are, it seems to me, the result in part of a misunderstanding of the technique of critical thought applied to social processes, and in part of an overestimation of the magazine's aims. It would seem obvious that *POLITICS'* role is not so much to elaborate a complete and coherent theoretical platform (together with the modes of action such would imply) as to *contribute* to the ideological enlightenment of those who, active in some political group are or will be called upon to formulate a program. The



charge of "negativism" has a whiff, also, of "denial for denial's sake", a kind of tame nihilism suitable to the embittered, which seems to me absurd when applied to POLITICS. All analysis implies certain rules of procedure, as old as the mechanism of logic itself: one proceeds from effects to causes, from phenomena to principles, from the particular to the general, the complicated to the simple. A Dumbarton Oaks conference appears to be a whole, a gathering to discuss a kind of "collective security"—at least so it looks to millions of pettybourgeoisie—but along comes an analyst equipped with the acids of Marxism and dissolves the whole into its parts. And if, lifting up the showy artificial flower, he finds that it is there simply to hide a basket of crabs, then all those who thought they saw living flowers growing between the claws of the crabs make a great fuss about "negativism." "What do you propose to put in its place?" they ask. "It's better than rat poison anyway!" As if it were a choice of only that or rat poison; as if it were one's business to prescribe pills for keeping in good health the status quo—instead of making a hammer to smash it! (The same profound idea as that with which the Negro-haters confound one: "Yes, yes, of course they're human beings—but would you yourself marry one?")

May I add that, for honesty of thinking, I consider POLITICS beyond praise. Its attitude toward the war and the postwar problems seems to me almost unique among existing publications, and I subscribe to it with all my heart.

MEXICO CITY

JEAN MALAQUAIS

### ANTI-NUMBIFICATION

DEAR COMRADE MACDONALD:

One cannot avoid noticing, and with increased despondence the utter lack of morality, indeed the utter lack of almost any kind of response to external events that has become so characteristic of the temper of the American "liberals and leftists"; so recently Warsaw, and now Greece!—and no press unduly excited, no demonstrations, no picket lines flung around the British Embassy.

No one—: the SWP keeps their Stalinized corpses rotting underground; the SP is busy laying out its shroud; the SLP is still recounting its presidential votes; the WP will comment in passing "Ah, revolutionary situation!"

It is glimmering consolation that POLITICS will be morally indignant, will give a penetrating analysis as in the excellent Warsaw article. To what avail—when there is no mass indignation? POLITICS may be correct in program and perspective (even in a discussion magazine); we may recognize the necessity for socialism, we may all at least oppose imperialism—so what? When you consider the conscience of the world two decades ago in the Sacco-Vanzetti case, and now, how can you continue mustering up even the necessary amount of optimism required for the publication of POLITICS?

Except for a small group, who as I do, eagerly await POLITICS each month, all my friends and acquaintances have become zombified. This numbification I know to be general. What does POLITICS possibly hope to do or become? Do you consider the war the prime cause of this horrifying level of political consciousness of the American proletariat, liberals, and radicals? Do you envisage another "liberal era" after the war in which you might hope to gain influence? I do not believe so; the dominant tones today are cynicism or apathy. There is no indication that anything else will supersede this kind of reaction in the future.

The worst aspect of the British intervention in Greece

is not the act itself; we fully expect such a course to be pursued by British imperialism and its crude spokesman, Churchill. What appalls us most is that there is no moral conscience left to protest this action.

How is it, for example, that Churchill can use the British army and navy to put down the Greek uprising, when we have heard so much of the higher political level of the British armed forces and of their close ties to the radical (?) British working class? Why have there been no workers' demonstrations in Britain against Churchill's policies? Moreover, how is it that Churchill can take the offensive in Parliament?—and come off with no outspoken opposition?

We, who still believe in *democratic* socialism (as opposed to the totalitarian collectivism) feel that it is imperative that socialism be re-established as a moral idea. While it may seem naive to be lamenting the lack since the war of the traditionally dependable moral conscience of the critics and revolutionists in society, nevertheless, this lack is a most important phenomenon to be examined. How is it that socialism, that incorporated within itself, in its rise, all the moral indignations and aspirations of society, has now fallen to that low estate where "socialists" deny that socialism is a moral idea (that is, when they are not proclaiming that they are the only moral people), and in practice, function on the amoral basis of power politics?

One of the most recent escapees from The Only Moral People,

NEW YORK CITY

DACHINE RAINER

—The very fact that a letter like the above is written seems to me a cause for optimism—and many others, of similar tenor, are coming in. So long as a minority rebel violently against the "numbification" that is undoubtedly going on in modern political life, we may still hope. The human spirit is tougher, more resilient and tenacious than the more mechanical varieties of bourgeois and Marxist thinking might indicate. It is indeed imperative to reestablish socialism as a moral idea (see Savage's discussion, January issue), and we cannot, I think, look to the existing Marxist parties to do this; but it will be done, we may be sure, so long as even a handful of people really want it to be done. Let us not be too much impressed by numbers, or depressed by lack of them. The main thing is simply not to Put Up With Things—and Comrade Rainer's letter, in its very pessimism, is a good example of just this.

Coming down to more mundane matters: as my piece on the Greek affair showed last issue, there WAS plenty of protest against Churchill's Greek policy in the House of Commons (largely unreported in the American press), as well as in the British press. And although there were no workers' demonstrations (so far as I know) the big trade unions apparently felt much pressure from their rank and file. This mounting hostile public opinion was one factor in forcing Churchill to travel personally to Athens. As for the British troops obeying orders, I am told that the troops the Churchill-Labor government is using in Athens are not the leftist Eighth Army (which would normally be the ones chosen, since they are based on nearby Cairo) but are special paratroop units and native Indian regiments. Whether this is true, I do not know. If not, then one would certainly expect some kind of mutinous protest from Eighth Army troops against such a dirty job.—ED.

### Letter From France

Sir:

I received the following from an airborne-infantryman fighting in France at the time he wrote the letter:



"This is the first break in a period of more or less unrelenting routine. Even so, it is always a struggle to write, aside from fundamental psychological factors of one's own making, because of the intolerable onus and direct interference of the censor. On my own account, the only thing of much note was the short time I spent working with a group of Frenchmen. . . . Freedom from the secondary yoke of Nazism has been so abrupt and superficial a change that there has been little in the way of hosannahs. When a convoy of German prisoners goes through the streets, the towns-people lining the streets are fairly quiet and show a kind of curiosity which is a bit detached in the manner of a critical audience. There is some talk here and there with a justified core of bitterness. But very little of the exhibitionist hatred toward the German soldier himself, which is played upon by the press. I have had a few remark to me with some rancour, not too violently, on the fact that German soldiers were smoking cigarettes given them by the dough-boys. To which I pointed out that it was the natural feeling of one dog-face for another, regardless of the different style of embroidery in ideas and uniforms. There was no resistance to this explanation. I have seen a Frenchman to spit or clench his fist at a prisoner, but always one feels the taint of exhibitionism here. One accepts much more naturally and heartily the kind of coarse, direct, business-like laughter with which a workman will unburden himself at the sight of an unusually woe-begone specimen. I think all of us must be slightly shocked to see how much these German dog-faces resemble our own.

"The cost of living has out-distanced that of the U. S. The Nazis have added to the natural weight of the war upon the backs of the average consumer, by requisitioning and short-rationing of the country. Paris has perhaps the worst of it, where I read by *The Stars and Stripes*: 1 egg—30c; 1# of coffee—\$40; 2# of butter \$20.; I pack of French cigarettes—\$3.; 2# of sugar—\$3.; meat (when they had it) 2#—\$7. With the departure of the Germans the black market has momentarily thinned away—but not for long.

"Now that the spirit of France is awakening and finding itself in the weaponless arms of the man in the street and in new barricades, taking the heart out of German garrisons and paving the way for the phenomenally rapid advance of the Allies, the French 'resistance' must be recognized now as an internal 'offensive'. . . . By all signs, the revival of the historic heroism of the Parisian workers, with and without arms, must undoubtedly have been a terrifying object-lesson to the conquerors. It has certainly become a source of inspiration to the whole of France, and a motive for the respect of the American soldier. . . . I want to note before I forget, irrelevantly here, that the French worker makes a decided distinction between the treatment he had at the hands of the German SS officers and the like, and that of the German soldier.

"We note that a government spokesman in post-war planning fears a permanent state of war, which is one more indication that an Independent Labor Party is the need of the day back home."

AKRON, O.

JEAN CORBETT

#### Letter From Belgium

Sir:

. . . We are stationed in a large city here in Belgium and except for the bitter weather and the Jerries who give us a good deal of trouble in one way or another, things could not be better under the circumstances. . . . The situation

is so screwed up over here that it is hard for any one to come to any definite conclusions, especially one with not too much experience in judging political situations. The French are a lost people, hopelessly lost. I don't think myself that you have to be a skilled observer to see that. That feeling comes to you everywhere you go in France. The Commies have posters plastered everywhere, even in small villages. They didn't waste much time in getting started. There are also a great many Frenchmen who were glad to see the Americans and there are some who weren't so glad. The Belgians were happy I suppose to see us but when Von Rundstedt began his counter-offensive, they didn't seem to be so glad. They blame us for a great deal of their present grief. They were sorry to see the Nazis leave. What can you make out of such a mess as this? The whole picture is too complex: it cannot be reduced to a few simple statements, there is too much variance among the people. God only knows what we'll find when we move into Germany itself.

SOMEWHERE IN BELGIUM

PFC.

#### Fraternization—One Soldier's Query

One of our overseas soldier readers sends in the following clip from the letter column of the Thanksgiving Day, 1944, *Stars and Stripes*:

I've been a soldier 44 months, 24 spent overseas. I never failed to obey an order.

Recently it has been circulated down through channels that we must not fraternize with the German civilians. Well, it is difficult for me to follow this order for I am anxious to prove to the German home folks that we're human. Of course, I will never trust any of them with anything which would affect the life of an American soldier, but I find it hard to resist the temptation to speak to them.

The real story is that I have met a young lady and have promised her that I will return after the war to become her husband. She isn't "any soldier's girl," but a sincere young lady with whom I've known only respectful conversation and companionship. Now I cannot speak with her if I follow my general's orders. What can I do?—*A Worried Soldier.*

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