The New REPUBLIC

Published Weekly

Wednesday November 16, 1932

The Democrats Win

Hoover and Nemesis
by ELMER DAVIS

Russia Revisited
by MICHAEL FARBMAN

FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY

FIVE DOLLARS A YEAR

VOL. LXXIII. NO. 937

Second Class matter, November 6, 1914 at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. under the act of March 3, 1879.

The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. LXXIII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1932 NUMBER 937

Contents

The Week

ALTHOUGH no Republican candidate for President has ever been so overwhelmingly defeated as Hoover, except Taft, when his own party was split, the result should occasion no surprise. Indeed, the reaction of the American people to the calamities which have befallen them is astonishingly mild, when we remember that many nations have had revolutions, that Germany is wavering between Fascism and Socialism and would undoubtedly have gone Left long ago had it not been for the division in the ranks of the workers, and that even in the other countries where serious disturbances have not occurred, those who want to abolish capitalism altogether are far more numerous and more powerful in politics than they are in this country. The proportion of our working population which has been unemployed is larger than in any other great industrial nation except Germany, and our farmers are carrying as heavy a burden of deflation as any farmers in the world. The contrast between the conditions prevailing when Hoover entered office and those existing at present is so striking, and the failure of the Republicans to carry out their promises is so dramatic, that anything less than a landslide against them could be accounted for only by immeasurable stupidity and sluggishness of the electorate. The really difficult thing to explain is why Hoover succeeded in capturing the few states he did win, especially Pennsylvania and Connecticut. Only the existence of cynical and deeply entrenched Republican machines can account for the slender margins of votes which were counted for him there.

IF Franklin D. Roosevelt has the least trace of common sense, he ceased being elated concerning the magnitude of his victory almost one hour after the returns rolled in. Even from the point of view of the practical politicians, it is a sobering thought that Hoover also had an overwhelming victory four years ago. All informed observers agree that the country did not vote for Roosevelt; it voted against Hoover. A large proportion of the successful candidate's majority does not even consist of Democrats who can be counted upon to feel any loyalty to the party if it does anything to displease them. The extremely rapid growth of discontent with both old parties is revealed by the jump of the Socialist vote. It is now up to Mr. Roosevelt to earn by performance the support which has, by the fortunes of politics, come to him. Whatever line he takes is certain to be disapproved by a large group of his followers; the Democratic party is one of the most ill assorted coalitions in the history of constitutional government. Add to all this the fact that the President-elect has been called upon to lead a nation out of difficulties greater and more perplexing than any which have been faced by this people since the Civil War at least, and you have something which ought to make him call off the celebration and beg his party to embrace humility.

THIS is an election in which we can find more satisfaction in rejoicing at defeats than at victories. Aside from the rejection of Hoover himself, the most welcome result is the elimination from the Senate of Smoot, Moses, Watson and Bingham. These reactionary Republicans have done more to keep the government of the United States from

living up to the responsibilities of a new age than anyone else in Congress. Smoot is the leading protectionist, Moses the chief anti-progressive. Both are, of course, personally preferable to Watson and Bingham because they are able, intelligent and frank. We are also glad that Chapple, the young Red-baiter in Wisconsin, was so promptly squelched. The victory of Senator Wagner of New York is richly deserved; he has persistently and capably championed the standard measures to deal with unemployment. Almost equally we regret the defeat of Representative La Guardia, who was carried off by the Democratic flood. Incidentally, we see no great cause for glee at the fact that the Democrats have large majorities in both House and Senate. While technically this may unify party responsibility, everybody knows that Congress is not really Republican or Democratic, but is, and is bound to be, composed of a series of minor blocs which work together only on the basis of coalitions similar to those in almost all other parliaments in the world. You don't suppress real divisions of interest by covering them with the motley cloak of a party victory in a presidential election.

THE landslide for Roosevelt was also a landslide against prohibition. No one expected anything else; the drift of the country away from the Eighteenth Amendment was indicated in the two party platforms, in numerous referenda and straw votes and by all the other customary indices of public opinion. Particularly striking is the success of anti-prohibitionists in the South, once the center of Dry sentiment. Not a single avowed prohibitionist was elected from Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas or Virginia, though some successful candidates had refused to commit themselves one way or the other. The Wets have more than a two-thirds majority in the House, and a bare majority in the Senate; undoubtedly they would have had two-thirds of the Senate as well, if more than a third of the places in the upper house had been filled this year. Repeal of the Amendment would require a two-thirds vote in the Senate and is therefore probably impossible at present; but modification of the Volstead Act to permit the sale of light wines and beer, on the thoroughly hypocritical pretense that they are not intoxicating, may reasonably be expected at the first session of the new Congress, which will probably be held early next spring.

THERE was apparently only one sudden last-minute shift of the voters in this election. The famous "ground-swell toward Hoover" seems to have been mainly a myth; but there appears to have been an eleventh-hour desertion of Norman Thomas, the Socialist candidate, which cut down his vote. The explanation undoubtedly is that many persons, disgusted with both the old parties, intended early in the campaign to vote for Thomas; the Literary Digest poll, which was strikingly accurate in other respects, indicated that he would receive not much less than two millions. But at the last minute, when Hoover seemed to be gaining ground, undoubtedly many "protest voters" became frightened and shifted to Roosevelt. Since in the long run, socialism can only be advanced by those who actually believe in its doctrines, the result is not so disappointing as it might seem. An oddity of the election is the tremendous vote for Morris Hillquit, Socialist candidate for Mayor in New York. But here the explanation seems to be that confronted by two obnoxious choices on the Republican and Democratic tickets, many New Yorkers, without endorsing Socialism, voted for Hillquit as the best of the three.

WITH the aid of the Roosevelt landslide, Tammany retained its grip on New York City; there is no doubt that the Governor aided the Tiger, and not vice versa. John P. O'Brien, willing servant of the Tammany machine, ran far behind Governor Roosevelt, but he got more than double the vote of Lewis H. Pounds, the Republican candidate, and four times that of the Socialist, Morris Hillquit. The two candidates for the Supreme Court, Samuel Hofstadter and Aron Steuer, whose nomination was the result of a thieves' bargain between Republicans and Democrats, were both elected, although the protest candidates who ran independently rolled up a respectable total. The name of Acting Mayor Joseph V. McKee was written in on the ballots by many people as a protest against the high-handed way in which Tammany had thrust him aside; but just what good this did it is a little hard to see. It is argued that Tammany will be frightened by the rebuke, and will behave better; but those who suppose this is true are ignorant both of Tammany's attitude and of the workings of national politics. The New York City campaign is another example of the hopeless ineptitude of "good people" and their sporadic, brief attempts at reform.

WHEN Hoover filled Madison Square Garden, with overflow crowds milling about in the streets outside, it was taken by loyal partisans as a sign that he had regained his popularity. But a few days later Norman Thomas, with far less organization and press ballyhoo, did exactly the same thing. Sunday night even the Communists filled the Garden. Seasoned political observers know that the size and enthusiasm of meetings give little indication of a candidate's total vote.—A minor trend of the campaign which was worth noting was that straw votes in colleges, while they revealed an overwhelming Hoover sentiment in general, brought Thomas in first at Columbia and N. Y. U., second to Hoover in many other colleges and a close third in still others. A natural explanation is that the traditional conservatism of American colleges, which is still dominant, reflects

the drift of the privileged classes whose children can afford to attend college, and hence favors Hoover, but that many of those students who really learn to think independently have largely come to the conclusion that socialism, not Democracy, is the logical alternative to Republicanism. Communists would also point out, probably, that Norman Thomas's converts have come largely from the middle and professional classes.—It is said that the Socialists actually made money for the campaign fund out of the tour of Norman Thomas, by charging admission and organizing money-raising groups in the localities visited. And yet the old parties charge the Socialists with being impractical!

THE closing weeks of the Republican campaign were in one respect almost identical with the closing weeks of all the former Republican campaigns which most people now alive can remember. There was the attempt to create panic by saying that the Democrats would reduce the tariff and throw people out of work. There was the assertion that the Republican party contained the only men sound and wise enough to run the country. There was the warning against change which would endanger the good old way of doing things. This is the sort of campaign climax resorted to by Coolidge, Harding, Taft, McKinley, Benjamin Harrison and all the other undistinguished Republican Presidents. The old elephant, whose trick has earned him so many bags of peanuts, has not learned any new ones. But in retrospect one almost has to wipe away a tear at the spectacle of the familiar performance, trustingly repeated at a time when a tempest had blown down the circus tent and all the spectators were running for cover. No doubt we shall see Jumbo try it again before he dies, but surely the time is approaching when the poor old fellow ought to be put out of his misery.

THE Supreme Court's decision in the Scottsboro case makes an important forward step in the interpretation of the Constitution—the application of the "due process of law" clause to the matter of proper representation by counsel in court. Much more important for the present, however, is the sheer social and political effect of the decision. Millions of Americans must have breathed a sigh of relief, feeling that a failure to save the lives of these seven Negro boys would have been one of the most appalling miscarriages of justice in this generation. To be sure, the previous similar decision in the Arkansas case made it seem almost impossible that the Court should have refused a new trial; but the degree of relief experienced is an adequate indication of the danger which it was generally felt that the defendants were in. To Mr. Walter H. Pollak, who pleaded the case before the Supreme Court, are due the thanks of all who are concerned that justice should be done in America even to the humblest. While the Court's decision orders a new trial, there is some chance that this will never be held, and that the defendants will be set free. No reasonable person can doubt that this would be the most satisfactory solution of the whole matter.

WHILE the United States was changing the leaders of its capitalist regime, Soviet Russia was celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the revolution which established socialism. Russia, like this country, is now in trouble; it has no unemployed, but it has serious difficulties of its own. The food shortage which now exists is of course no more serious than others which the nation has suffered since the civil war, and it is not so bad as the famine which immediately followed it; nevertheless it puts a severe strain on the long suffering of the population. The standard of life of those who till the soil and of those who work in industry is still far below that enjoyed by farmers and workers in the United States who have any means of livelihood at all. In spite of these facts, however, the Soviet Union has far more occasion for rejoicing than we have. She is far better off than fifteen years ago; we are immeasurably worse. Her pains are growing pains, ours seem to be those of dissolution. Her scarcity is distributed with some degree of equitableness; our relative plenty is so highly concentrated that millions have nothing at all. She knows where she is going and is obstructed only by the steepness of the grade; we do not have our way charted or our powers under control. Russian socialism is young; American capitalism is old.

THE Reconstruction Finance Corporation has at last made two loans for housing, one of them, in New York City, for about $9,000,000 and the other, in Newark, New Jersey, for $7,000,000. The New York loan is being fiercely protested by real-estate interests, who have persuaded Acting Mayor Joseph V. McKee to come to their aid. The group of houses for which the loan is to be made is to be situated on land now unoccupied, fairly far out in the Bronx; and the complaint is made that R.F.C. loans should be for slum clearance, that the rentals of about $11 a room a month will be too high for most of the poor, that there are 40,000 vacant apartments in the Bronx already, etc. While a few of these objections have some merit they do not, in our judgment, outweigh the advantages of the proposed construction. Under the skillful designs of the architect, Clarence S. Stein, and with the advantages of large-scale construction, the housing to be built will be infinitely better than anything else available at the same price, or a much higher price—better in some regards than almost anything else available at any price. It will be an object lesson in good housing. Moreover, every new apartment made available at $10 or $12 increases the amount of older space available for the very poor, better than they now occupy, which is a clear social gain. Finally, the

R.F.C. loans are intended to create employment and help bring prosperity back. The half-bankrupt building trades will benefit more by a restoration of prosperity than they possibly can by preventing a few small enterprises (small in comparison with the total amount of housing) aided by government money.

WHEN President Hoover dispersed the Bonus Army with bayonets, tear gas and tanks, he did not put an end to the visits of troublesome delegations to Washington. At least three more groups will descend upon the national capital next month. One of these will consist of unemployed from the cities, under Communist leadership. A second will be composed of delegates from the Workers' Ex-Servicemen's League, once more demanding the bonus. The third will be a delegation of farmers from all parts of the country, attending the Farmers' National Relief Conference, called for December 7. This pilgrimage of farmers grows out of a mass meeting held in Sioux City, Iowa, during this summer's farm strike. Any group of twenty-five farmers, anywhere, is entitled to send one delegate; each farmer donates forty cents, which gives the delegate a minimum capital of ten dollars. The delegates will travel in groups of ten, each of which will borrow a truck (presumably from a farmer who can no longer afford to operate it). Since the delegates will camp out, or will be entertained by farmers along the way, the capital of $100 for each truck ought to cover the expenses of the trip to Washington, if not the return. Among the demands which these farmers are prepared to make of President Hoover and the Congress are the following:

1. A moratorium on debts, rents, taxes and mortgages.
2. An end of foreclosures, tax sales and the evictions of farmers.
3. A deep cut in "the swollen profits" of dealers, middlemen and "food trusts." The farmers demand that the price of their products be increased at the expense of these middlemen, and without making the price of food higher for the city consumer.
4. Cash relief is demanded for "all poor farmers."

As will be seen from the nature of these demands, the Communists have also played an active part in the organization of the Farmers' Crusade. It would be wrong to assume, however, that all of the paraders are adherents of that party. The sufferings of the American farmer in the past few years have driven him to the point of desperation, and there is every reason to believe that many men will participate in the march on Washington in the same spirit as did the main body of conservative Bonus Army men—sincerely believing that when citizens of this country are in desperate trouble it is right and proper for them to appeal to their national government for assistance.

Taxation and Tyranny

A MIDWESTERN agricultural authority wa recently quoted as saying that the grievance of the farmers were now more substantial tha those of the American colonists who revolte against George III. In the matter of taxes alone this statement is not an exaggeration. Direct an indirect taxes paid by farmers are estimated to b 226 percent greater in 1931 than in 1913. In th former year they were 9 percent on gross agricu tural income; in the latter, 19 percent. This income be it noted, is not what the farmer has to live o but refers to money he gets for what he sells, wit no costs deducted. Direct taxes alone have in creased 166 percent since the pre-war period, whil gross agricultural income is now only about 4 per cent larger. The squeeze exerted by these ta pincers has been felt suddenly, for the most part during the depression. Agricultural income wa nearly cut in half between 1929 and 1931, drop ping about 42 percent, while taxes paid on farm property fell only 9 percent.

A recent report of the Bureau of Interna Revenue indicates that agriculture and allied indus tries paid in taxes 65.3 percent of their profits— excluding from the reckoning all federal taxes. Fe large classes in history have been so heavily taxe without rising against their oppressors. Whole salers and retailers paid 16 percent of their profi in state and local taxes, while manufacturers pai only 13.9 percent. Farmers are in fact revoltin against this burden in many parts of the country They are doing so by direct action—they are no paying their taxes. The authorities are, in man of these cases, not trying to collect. That is wh armed resistance has not followed. The tax debtor simply have not the money. The state could, legall take the land, but it doesn't know what to do wit it. Even in cases where there might be a marke for the tax-delinquent farm, a crowd of neighbor is sometimes present to see that the owner is no evicted.

A cure for this tax crisis is now being sought b pressure for government economy. Taxpayers leagues are springing up all over the country. Th farmers' resentment is being capitalized by cit groups, who also have suffered. But the outcom of this agitation is likely to do the farmers mor harm than good, for the following reasons:

The agitation is directed largely toward a reductio of federal expenses. But farmers pay very little t the federal government directly—their incomes ar not large enough. As a matter of fact, more federa aid to states and localities would decrease the farm ers' tax burden.

The largest single item in most state and loca budgets is that for debt service, which cannot b reduced by ordinary economy measures.

Other, current, expenditures from these budgets ar made in great part for the benefit of farmers them

selves. Even the debts were largely incurred for schools and roads.

The result is that only insignificant reductions in public expenditure can be made without default or other means of writing down public debts. What other reductions are made are likely to hamper necessary public services and intensify the economic crisis.

There are only two main roads to genuine tax relief—reduction of debt charges and equitable readjustment of the tax burden.

The first is likely to happen automatically and with great loss to those dependent on public expenditures as well as to bondholders, through default, if the present situation continues. Already we have a whole series of local governments which are virtually in the hands of bankers, and must submit to banking dictation in order to eke out their financial requirements from month to month. Chicago and New York are the most publicized examples, but there are many smaller ones. If the credit of cities, counties and states were good enough, refunding the debts at lower interest rates would be possible. There may be some way of using federal credit for this purpose. The Socialist proposal of a capital levy would offer more substantial relief. A systematic, controlled way of dealing with public debts would be greatly preferable to the present confusion.

At any rate, taxpayers, and especially farmers, should not allow themselves to be diverted from the main fact that their tribute is, in great part, being paid not to bureaucrats, or politicians, or undeserving recipients of governmental charity, but to owners of bonds. In so far as falling prices have made tax burdens insupportable, it is the bondholders who have benefited at the expense of the taxpayers, and it is the return on capital which must be deflated if taxpayers are to be relieved.

Readjusting the tax burden itself, whatever it may be, would be justified as a permanent measure, not merely for the emergency. Here the ills of the farmers, and of delinquent city taxpayers as well, are caused by the unduly large proportion of the tax burden which falls on real property—land and buildings. State and local governments derive most of their revenue from general property taxes; in nearly all important agricultural states the proportion of revenue thus levied is more than two-thirds. Farmers pay most of their taxes to state and local governments, since their incomes do not average large enough to be subject to the federal income tax.

What they do pay to federal revenue is levied for the most part indirectly, through tariffs and excises, which also bear unjustly on the person of small income. Detailed studies in fourteen states, extending from New Jersey to Washington and as far south as South Carolina, indicate that the farmer pays every year approximately $1.50 on each $100 of actual value of his real estate. The real-property tax is unjust, because it bears little relation to ability to pay. A man who may receive a large income from stocks and bonds or from his own work does not pay it at all if he owns no property—except as it may be passed on to him through rent—but a farmer who owns property assessed at, say, $10,000, but is carrying on his operations at a loss, has to pay the tax or lose his farm and his home. Because the general property tax is unjust, it is also inefficient, especially in depression. A modern nation like the United States can no longer rely so largely on a means of taxation appropriate only to a more stable and primitive society.

Farmers are almost universally conscious of the injustice of this tax, but they are likely to be misled as to the remedial action which should be taken. Their support is being enlisted for general sales taxes as a substitute for property taxes. A federal sales tax would scarcely help them at all, unless the federal government turned over the proceeds to state and local governments. On the contrary, farmers who now pay no federal income tax would have to hand over part of their earnings to the federal government, in addition to the taxes they pay locally. State sales taxes would afford some relief, but are open to the main objection to any sales tax. In so far as it is passed on to the consumer, it bears more heavily on the poor in relation to their ability to pay than on the rich. It would be difficult to plan a general sales tax to lighten the property tax which would not take away from farmers about as much as they pay to governments now. They would simply be more unconscious of the taking and less able to protest against it.

The one just and feasible method of relieving the burden of property taxes is to substitute progressive taxes on incomes, profits and estates. Some states have already entered this field, and others can do so. The only valid objection arises from the duplication of federal and state taxation. This is confusing and burdensome to the taxpayer, and limits strictly the extent to which any one state can levy income taxes. But the objection may be removed by a simple device, already in effect on estate taxes and previously recommended in our columns with regard to income taxes. The federal government could pass a law allowing an exemption in the payment of federal income taxes to residents of states which also levied income taxes. The exemption could be placed high enough to permit states greatly to enlarge their revenue from this source. It would also serve to encourage states to seek this type of revenue, since it would make no difference to the individual whether he had to pay to the national government or to the state. At present, individuals living in states which have income taxes are at a disadvantage, and exert strong pressure against any increase in state income-tax rates. Any loss to the federal government arising from this plan could be made up, if necessary, by higher rates and lower individual exemptions.

Here is a measure which the farmers ought to be pushing with all their might. It is one which

ought to be adopted by the new President and the new Congress. Lower property taxes and higher income taxes would greatly relieve the burden on agriculture, on the hard-pressed inhabitants of cities and on all local governments. The oppressors of the farmer-taxpayer, the modern counterparts of George III, are those who oppose deflation of capital obligations and those who bar any increase of taxes on incomes and profits.

The German Election

AT FIRST sight, the fact that the National Socialist party lost thirty-five and the Hugenberg Nationalist party gained thirteen seats in the Reichstag, appears as the most significant aspect of the German election held last Sunday. The loss of twelve seats by the Social Democratic party and the gain of eleven by the Communists seems of much less immediate importance, since it has no direct bearing on the parliamentary situation. That a Brown-Black majority coalition of the Nazis and the Centrists, the two parties which had an absolute majority after the last election, has now become impossible, is undoubtedly a source of great satisfaction to the von Papen government, but it presents no practical way of solving the existing impasse.

An adequate review of the shifting strength of the major parties necessitates comparison of the present election results with those of September 14, 1930, as well as those of July 31 of this year. Such a comparison will show that the National Socialists, in spite of a loss of 2,000,000 votes since July, still have 5,300,000 more votes than two years ago, that the Hugenberg Nationalists, though they have increased their vote by 800,000 during the last three months, show an increase of only 200,000 since 1930, that the Communists have won and the Social Democrats lost 1,300,000 votes, respectively, since the Reichstag election two years ago, that the Centrist party and its Bavarian branch, the Bavarian People's party, which lost 400,000 votes since July, still have 70,000 more voters than in 1930. The recent drop in the Centrist vote represents no real loss in strength. The disintegration of small middle-class parties in the recent past had driven a not inconsiderable non-Catholic element, including a large number of anti-Fascist Jews, into the arms of the Centrist party. This element, last Sunday, returned to the German People's and the Hugenberg German Nationalist parties to strengthen the hands of the allegedly anti-Fascist government.

The continuance of the Papen-Schleicher government was the issue in this election. The Chancellor had openly urged the friends of the present regime to vote for the German Nationalist People's party as an indication of their desire to maintain it in power. In spite of the moral influence and the pressure the government was able to exert through its huge newly appointed bureaucracy, it gained very little—thirteen Hugenberg Nationalists, plus four People's party and possibly four Christian Socialist votes, making at best a total of sixty-five supporters for the present regime out of 575 deputies in the new Reichstag. Fascists and Communists have already announced that a motion of non-confidence will be the first business of the Reichstag after its constitution. The dissolution of the parliament in August, therefore, will have brought the government only confirmation of its overwhelming defeat. Having failed to obtain the approval of the German voter, the von Papen government now faces the question: will the influence of von Papen prevail upon von Hindenburg to sign another dissolution order, or will there be a reorganized Cabinet based on a parliamentary coalition?

What parties would enter such a coalition? The National Socialists, under the leadership of their more radical wing, have lately been coöperating with the Communists, but these activities have alienated thousands of middle-class Nazis, and there seems to be much likelihood that the more conservative leaders of the party will regain control of it. In that case, a renewed visit to Hindenburg will find Hitler far more tractable and perhaps willing to have his party represented in a coalition Cabinet. Such a reorganization of the government would eliminate von Papen in favor of either von Schleicher or Dr. Bracht.

This "solution" of the political situation would obviate the likelihood of a Fascist "Putsch" for the time being. It is equally unlikely that the Communist party will attempt to exploit the present highly critical situation in the interests of an immediate revolutionary uprising. Soviet Russia needs German machinery, credits and technicians; a revolution in Germany at this moment would retard its progress. The Communist party of Germany is therefore bending its energies to the task of breaking down the Social Democratic movement —which is losing its following from election to election—in an effort to become the mass party of German labor.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1932, IN THE U. S., BY THE NEW REPUBLIC, INC., 421 WEST 21ST STREET, NEW YORK CITY. BRUCE BLIVEN, PRESIDENT. DANIEL MEBANE, TREASURER.

EDITORS

BRUCE BLIVEN MALCOLM COWLEY R. M. LOVETT
GEORGE SOULE STARK YOUNG

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JOHN DEWEY WALDO FRANK ALVIN JOHNSON
E. C. LINDEMAN LEWIS MUMFORD GILBERT SELDES
R. G. TUGWELL LEO WOLMAN

RATES: SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN, FIVE DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS: FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR.

Hoover and Hubris

A RECENT article in The New Republic was entitled "Hoover's Tragedy." Some of us thought at the time that the tragedy was rather that of the people who had believed Mr. Hoover's campaign speeches of 1928; but he was probably one of those people, and there is no doubt that his personal career has been a tragedy, objectively if not subjectively, in the grand Athenian manner—almost a perfect exemplification of the doctrines of Aeschylus and Sophocles.

This generation has little faith in the patterns by which its forefathers tried to interpret human experience; but the ancients were not always wrong. An age which has been totally unable to evolve any pattern of its own might reflect that none of the discarded patterns of the past came into being by accident or sheer caprice. They all seemed, at the time, the most plausible explanation of certain observed phenomena; even if it turned out later that they did not explain everything, they seemed to explain some things. And the pattern of Greek tragedy, the Hubris-Nemesis scheme that was borrowed from the tragedians by the greatest of Greek historians, fits admirably the case of Herbert Hoover.

The crime that brought retribution on the heroes of Attic tragedy was *hubris*—pride, presumption, overweening insolence. A man who rode high and hard in the conviction that nothing could stop him was overthrown eventually by Nemesis, which essentially was the principle of proportion in the universe. "Pride that has blossomed bears the fruit of ruin," says the ghost of Darius in "The Persians." Originally, the idea seems to have been merely a superstitious feeling that the gods were jealous of any mortal who rose too high, and cast him down for the same reason that made Yahweh confound the tongues at the Tower of Babel. But the powerful intellect of Aeschylus could not long be satisfied with this theory. In "The Persians" he seems to accept it; but a few years later the Chorus in "Agamemnon" observes, "There is an old saying among men that great prosperity engenders insatiable woe. But I have my own opinion, that evil brings forth offspring in its own kind." And you can search all of Aeschylus and Sophocles without finding a better example of the *hubris* that brings forth offspring in its own kind than Mr. Hoover's behavior in 1928.

II

Our manners, in some respects, are better than those of the Greeks; the outward manifestation of Mr. Hoover's *hubris* was not the wanton violence of the ancient tragic heroes, but a smug arrogance. One or two matters, trivial in themselves, that happened to come under my personal observation early in 1928 were the mark of a man who had the bit in his teeth, who had come to believe his own publicity and thought that any interference with him, intentional or not, was the sin against the Holy Ghost. And no one could miss the inference from his studied refusal, during the campaign, not only to mention the name of his opponent, but even to acknowledge that any individual was running against him at all. He was the only candidate; against him were arrayed malign but disembodied forces that somehow plotted evil against American prosperity and the American home.

Nor will you find in Greek tragedy any better instance of overweening presumption than in his campaign speeches. He did not have to promise the abolition of poverty to get elected; with Republican prosperity behind him and an Irish Catholic running against him, his election—or that of any other Republican who might have been nominated—was a certainty. He could have said nothing in the whole campaign and still have been elected. Yet he chose to promise the abolition of poverty.

Did he believe it? If you accept his Detroit speech of 1932, with its ascription of the economic disaster to the inevitable consequences of the War, he could not have believed it; he was deliberately deceiving us. It is hard to credit that, even though he deliberately deceived his Madison Square Garden audience in 1932 by professing to repeat his 1928 pledge of the abolition of poverty, and omitting the essential and damning phrases that promised it "soon" if only Republican policies were continued. More plausibly, he deceived himself; his immense personal success had made him an easy victim to his own publicity.

At any rate, his campaign promises ran to that excess which above all things offended the Greek temperament, which seemed above all things to invite the correcting interposition of Nemesis. Recall that acceptance speech. "Our problems of the future are problems of construction, of progress. . . . The poorhouse is vanishing. . . . There is no guarantee against poverty equal to a job for every man. . . . Our farm-relief program adapts itself to the variable problems of agriculture, not only to those of today, but to those which will arise in the future. . . . With impressive proof on all sides of magnificent progress, no one can rightly deny the fundamental correctness of our economic system. . . . Our whole business system would break down in a day if there was not a high sense of moral responsibility in the business world."

Why did a candidate have to go beyond the needs of the occasion to offer this tribute to the purity of American business ethics? He would have got the votes of the devotees of the bull market without that. But it was not enough to advertise the high morality of American business: at the Garden, that year, he added that "never in history was our economic life more distinguished in its abilities than today." There was prosperity in 1928, or what looked like prosperity; but Mr. Hoover did not want any voter to suppose that this was due to accident—to our great natural resources, to the fact that we had suffered relatively little from the War. No, our prosperity was the fruit of our own virtues—of our industry and intelligence, of "the capacity for far-sighted leadership in industry and the abolition of the saloon." If you did not vote for Hoover, you were setting yourself down as opposed to the abolition of poverty. So he was elected; and in his inaugural address he declared that "in no nation are the fruits of accomplishment more secure. I have no fears for the future of our country; it is bright with hope."

Never in American history did a candidate so recklessly walk out on a limb and challenge Nemesis to saw it off.

III

Well, Nemesis sawed it off. Four years later Mr. Hoover had to explain to the country why it should reëlect him, and continue what he had called in 1928 "the policies which have made and will make for the prosperity of our country." If he had been a little more moderate in his first campaign, if he had made the ordinary speeches of the ordinary candidate, his explanation of the collapse as due to inexorable economic forces might have been more plausible. But in 1928 he had told us that "as never before does the keeping of our economic machine in tune depend on wise policies in the administrative side of the government." Subsequent events had cast some doubt on the wisdom of those policies, as well as on the high morality and distinguished ability which Mr. Hoover had noted in American business leaders. Mr. Hoover had a great deal to explain away; and here, it must be confessed, he fell considerably short of tragic grandeur.

Compare him, for example, with Oedipus. Oedipus, like Hoover, thought very well of himself, and was highly regarded by his constituents. We first see him when his country is suffering from a severe and unexpected depression, and his fellow citizens think that he can straighten matters up if anybody can. To their appeal Oedipus responds, in substance, that it would be a malignant slander to suppose that he has sat in the White House all this time without suffering as his people suffer; he has wept for their sorrows and put on the hair shirt. Immediately after which he announces that he has already taken steps to alleviate the depression; he has appointed Kreon as a fact-finding co mission.

Kreon's subsequent experiences—and those the expert, Teiresias, who was later enlisted in t business of fact-finding—are reminiscent of M Wickersham's. When their conclusions are repor to the Theban White House they are immediat thrown into the wastebasket; and Oedipus accu the expert whom he himself had called in of try to smear him in the interest of his political enemi "I would not have sent for you," he says in su stance, "if I had known you were going to t nonsense." And Teiresias puts into words what t economists who advised Mr. Hoover about t tariff, and the jurists who made the suppressed r port on the Mooney case, must often have though "Knowledge is a terrible thing when the man wh knows cannot get any results." And what ma this man, so disinterestedly solicitous for the we fare of his constituents, fly off the handle? Wh it was being intimated that the Executive was r sponsible for the depression, and that things wou go better if there were a change of administrati

So far the parallel is fairly close, but in th latter part of the play it must be admitted tha Oedipus behaves better than his modern analogu He does not misquote his past promises; he do not say that it might have been worse; he does n tell his constituents that grass will grow in th streets of Thebes if they turn him out; he mere goes. But then Oedipus was not a very flagra example of *hubris;* in his case the depression th had befallen his people was really the consequen of inexorable forces whose operation had begun the distant past. He had not affronted the pri ciple of proportion in the universe by making pro ises that no man could fulfill; he had not, like Aja and Hoover, dared the gods to strike him dow

IV

But this, you may say, is merely a pattern o fiction. It was not fiction to the men who wro it, or who saw the plays performed; they thoug these plays dealt with actual figures of past histor —as in many cases they did. So it was with n sense of artificiality that Herodotus and Thucydide could apply the dominant thought pattern of the time to recent history, and ascribe the outcome o the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars to Nemes operating against the overweening insolence first o the Persians and then of the Athenians.

To the scientific historian of today that theor is nonsense. What beat the Persians? Difficultie of transport and supply (already noted by Aeschy lus who had himself fought against them) probabl played their part; but the fact remains that Xerxe came up to the decisive battle with a bigger flee than the Greeks could bring against him, and he was beaten chiefly because there was a man named Themistocles—a leader more daring and resource ful than the Greeks ever had before or afterward

There is some excuse for a historian who sees the hand of the gods in that.

As for the Athenians in the Peloponnesian War, they could have defended their city and their food supply and the essential parts of their empire indefinitely, if they had not thrown away their fleet in the Sicilian adventure. The state of mind that convinced itself that all the troubles of the nation could be cured by this plunge into the remote and obscure has its points of resemblance to the bull-market psychology; there never was a brighter Cloudcuckooland than the one that was built in Wall Street in 1928 and 1929. At any rate, the Athenians—after their classic demonstration of *hubris* over the Melians—invited their own disaster by attempting the impossible. The Hubris-Nemesis pattern may have its flaws, but at least it does express this much truth—that there are some things that cannot be done, and that only a fool would attempt them, or promise them, unnecessarily.

Tragic heroes ought to be drawn larger than life—at least so thought the Athenians, who had not the advantage of our enlightenment and were accordingly unaware that only degenerates and half-wits are the proper material for art. When Euripides depicted the average man in Admetos, his fellow citizens thought he had lowered the dignity of the tragic stage. If Mr. Hoover in his hair-shirt moods resembles Admetos more than the other heroes of classic tragedy, that is the difference between realism and the grand manner.

Precisely how he will take his downfall remains to be seen; during the campaign he had to assume that the electorate would never be so foolish as to fail to reward his services with another term, so that some of his speeches approached the hardihood of Prometheus chained to his rock, and still shouting his defiances at Zeus. No doubt, to his admirers, the President has his Promethean aspects; for Prometheus, after all, was the first Engineer of Human Happiness. By his gift of fire he stepped up industrial production and he enabled men to escape the prevision of their fate by putting hope in their hearts. But that hope was "blind"—*i. e.*, obscure, deceptive; Prometheus knew it was little if any more than an anodyne. There was nothing blind about the hope of the abolition of poverty which Mr. Hoover put in his hearers' hearts; it was a clear promise, conditioned only on the continued operation of the "individualist" system under the business leaders whose ethics and intelligence Mr. Hoover admired so highly.

And accordingly, by an irony finer than any tragic poet ever conceived, Mr. Hoover, who in 1928 was denouncing his unnamed "opponents"—on extremely scanty evidence—for plotting to introduce state socialism, was compelled to ask for reëlection in 1932 as a reward for his own success in introducing state socialism. (Let us hope that the Reconstruction Finance Corporation will prove a brighter star in his crown than the Federal Farm Board.) The man who promised the abolition of poverty had to ask for another term of office on the ground that it might have been worse. In Mr. Hoover's record of the year preceding election there was a good deal of sound campaign material, especially by contrast with the record of the Democrats in Congress. As an ordinary President who had done, even if belatedly, the best he could, he might have asked for reëlection with better grace and better prospects.

But he was not an ordinary President; he was the man who had promised what no President had ever promised before—the abolition of poverty. He had promised it needlessly, superfluously; and any man who questioned his ability to abolish poverty was an enemy of the Light. It is a long time since we have seen, and one may hope that it will be a long time before we see again, such an instance of the overweening presumption that invokes its Nemesis.

ELMER DAVIS.

"No Previous Social Service Record"[1]

THERE is an air of formality about a kitchen containing not a scrap of food and with clean newspapers spread over a cold stove. Santo Casale, laboring at his signature on the food order, did not wish to be impolite, but it was necessary to speak his mind. "It is not enough," he said, laying down the indelible pencil, "three dollars and seventy-four cents for seven people for a week!" He threw out his hands. "I tella you, Miss Mitch', I take nothing now for six days but coffee—giva the food to the chil'. Now I am no more hungry. But the eyes—everything look yellow, water all the time." He mopped them with a grubby handkerchief. "Twenty years in this country and never before like this. Never before charity."

The weary investigator for the Home Relief Bureau said that next week there might be more money, and she hoped they would get two orders as before. He did not brighten. His prematurely wizened little wife darted to the next room and reappeared with a pair of men's shoes, absolutely soleless, which she held up before the investigator with a flood of broken English. "I walk them off looking for work," said Casale, "now only these," He pointed to his rags of carpet slippers. "No use, no use. No can getta work."

[1] The name of every person applying for aid to the Home Relief Bureau of New York City and some other communities, and a list of the members of his family, is sent to the Social Service Exchange and the slip returned by them with notation of the welfare agency, if any, to which the family had previously applied.

The investigator, closing her briefcase, was trying to figure how, with no time to bring this case history up to date, she could get the supervisor to O. K. a shoe order. "I was crazy in the head," muttered Cassale, "not to take that three-day-a-week city job last fall."

"What!" She sank back in her chair. "You turned down a job!" Surely "crazy in the head," for if she put this in her report, the family would be cut off from even the meager aid they were receiving.

"But wait," said Santo Casale, "it was this way: I had a horse. For years I maka good living peddling fruit on the street with that horse and wagon. I sella the wagon for food but the horse still mine. You gotta take care of a horse, clean his stall, feed him right. I aska the man there at the big place to giva the job to my son so I could take care of my horse——"

"Of course they wouldn't do that," interrupted the investigator impatiently. "They give jobs only to the heads of families. Why couldn't your son take care of the horse?"

"He is too big a fool. But he could work in the parks. And when times are better, I with my horse. . . . I would not have to ask for this." He pointed scornfully to the food order. "Unnastand, Miss Mitch'?" he asked anxiously.

Yes, Miss Mitchell understood. Understood the difference between Casale the business man and "Casale, Santo, Case No. — of the Department of Public Welfare," whose social-service exchange slip showed that he had never before applied for aid. "The horse was called Hope," she said moving toward the door.

"No, I name him Carus'," said Casale. "He die two weeks after I turn down that job."

Had it not been for the landlady, herself a poor woman, the Falangas would have starved. As it was, the two small children had had almost no milk for three months and were wizened and yellow. It would take a long time for starvation to show its inroads on the sleek health of young Mrs. Falanga or for distress to sour her good nature. She had come to the relief office in the schoolhouse that morning crying, with the baby in her arms. They had been registered for a month and no one had called. An investigator carrying sixty cases grows callous about opening new ones. The name on the list is ignored, even the anxious face at a window. It is the indifference of exhaustion.

But now that she had brought out the emergency food order for a dollar and a half, the investigator did her best with the elaborate information she must carry back to the office, thankful that this new case spoke English fluently. She tried not to look at the man as he gave the names of his former employers; there was the look in his eyes of one leashed and frantic. He was terribly frightened about the rent. "She says she'll throw us out," he said, "and us living with her ever since we was married." The landlady's philanthropy had snapped under the strain of taxes and insurance. After all, when you've had no rent going on seven months. . . .

"I'm not so sure about this," said the supervisor the next day. "It's very strange that the landlady should have carried this family so long, unless she's a relative. And you know we're not allowed to pay rent to a relative. You must find out about that."

A hurried visit to the landlady two days later disclosed the fact that she was Irish, married to an Italian. It was necessary to reproduce her accent before the supervisor was convinced. "And now can I have another food order for them," asked the investigator anxiously. "Both children are sick."

"But wait," said the supervisor. "You have here in the history that they owe the grocer twenty-three dollars. And the man says he has been out of work for six months. They couldn't have lived on twenty-three dollars that long. They must have resources they are concealing. You'll have to make further investigation before we accept this case."

Mrs. Falanga was abstracted in her answers the next day for she was very worried about the youngest child, who had taken a severe cold the day she brought him to the schoolhouse. Her husband had saved thirty dollars from his last job; he had also found night work for three or four nights in the last six months. They had lived on greens and spaghetti.

As the supervisor was too busy to give her a conference, it was the last of the week before the investigator appeared in triumph at the Falanga's with both a rent and a food order (five dollars for a week's supply). Mr. Falanga was not in and Mrs. Falanga seemed strangely apathetic to her good fortune, though she did say "Thank you," as she signed the voucher.

"And now things will be better," said the investigator brightly. "I've got your case in the regular files at last. Let's see, how long ago did you register for relief?"

"Nearly six weeks," said Mrs. Falanga unsmilingly.

The investigator had her hand on the door. The place was very quiet without that fretful crying of the child in the next room. "And the baby is better now?" she asked.

"We took him to the hospital day before yesterday," said Mrs. Falanga. "He died last night."

Vito Salmieri and his German-American wife sat at opposite sides of the kitchen table, on which lay half a loaf of Italian bread, when the investigator arrived. "Well, he was just asking me," said Mrs. Salmieri, "what we are going to have for dinner. And I point to that. That's all we have in the house. I sent the children out to play in the street so they wouldn't notice it was time to eat."

"Yes," said Mr. Salmieri, a nervous, harried

man, practically toothless, "that's all there is here —you could look for yourself." He seized the loaf of bread, held it aloft dramatically, and extended it to the investigator. "Feel it," he ordered. "Feel how hard it is!"

She dodged the bread and got out the food order. Mr. Salmieri broke the point of the pencil with the violence of his signing. "And now I suppose you'll cut us off because I have that job, that rotten city job!"

Two weeks before, Mrs. Salmieri had said pridefully that they wouldn't need this much longer, because her husband had work in the park four days a week, from the City Commission Work Bureau. They were exultant till the following week, when it developed that the job meant four days *every other week*, a week of work, a week of idleness. The wages of forty dollars a month automatically cut him off from all aid. The food orders were to be delivered until he had received his first pay check.

"What do they think—that a man can support a family of eight, and her due to have another this month, on ten dollars a week? They're crazy! Who's running this country anyway? That's what I'd like to know! We owe five months' rent and lights and gas. How can you pay that and buy food and clothes on ten dollars a week? I'd like to see some of them big fellows try it, them fellows at the top. It can't be done. And now I suppose you'll cut us off."

"If only," said his wife, "it could just be till after I get over the baby. Then I could do cleaning halls in the house around here where my brother is janitor, like I did before. But this way, I haven't been able to work for months. You know you can't bend over good when you're like this."

The investigator put the carbon duplicate of the food voucher in her briefcase and got up. "I don't know you've got that job," she said. "The report may not come through, and even if it does, I think I can get away with it, at least until you've had the baby."

They did not say good night. They were mute with stupefaction and gratitude.

The war veteran, Gulotta, was in a bad way, for his report about the City Commission park job came through promptly and was noted by the supervisor. The Gulottas followed the investigator around the streets, pleading, when she was in their neighborhood. Gulotta was a frail little man who had been a shoemaker.

"It would have been better if I hadn't got this job," he said.

"Before you pay some rent, you give us food. Now the landlady wants to turn us out. But how can I pay her? She wants twenty-five this month and something on the four months' back rent. And the kids need shoes and my wife she's got no dress to wear on the street. The children got to have milk, they so small, and. . . ."

"I know, Mr. Gulotta, but there's nothing we can do."

Little Gulotta stopped by an ashcan, pounded its top dramatically. "This is the thanks I get from this America! I a citizen. The war wasn't no picnic for me like it was for some. They put me in the front lines in France. And this is the thanks I get!"

The Pascali child, the defective one with the big head and the sticklike arms and legs, had chewed up and swallowed the week's food ticket. As a consequence, the family of nine had had nothing much to eat for four days and called the investigator in as she was passing. Mrs. Pascali, gray-haired at thirty-five, had been ill with worry over it. The twelve-year-old girl interpreted her flood of sob-punctuated Italian and the plea for another order "quick."

The uncanny child with the old wise eyes and the fleeting smile had always stared at the investigator penetratingly as she laid the two slips of paper on the table, saying, "This is coal. *This is food.*"

Old Anthony Campiglia, forty-three years in America and owner of his own house, is about to have his food order cut off because he cannot give the names of three previous employers. Few laborers of the non-reading-and-writing class do know the names of the construction companies for whom they swung a pick and shovel.

"The last job"—he smiles at being able to oblige —"it was a big building down by the river. They called the foreman Bill."

As the investigator tries to impress upon him the extreme importance of knowing the name of the biggest boss, the boss of all the bosses, he looks bewildered, runs a great muscular hand through his sandy, graying hair. "But I worked, Miss Mitch', I always worked. How else you think I own this house and bring up all my children? This last year is the first time in forty-three years I have not work. When I first come to this country I make dollar-fifty a day, and it is good money. Then up and up the wages go, till finally it is fifteen. They couldn't keep it up. That make this depression. *I always knew it was too much.*"

The Mayor's Official Committee discovered in the spring that they had sufficient funds to take over some cases from the Home Relief Bureau. The investigators were ordered quickly to make lists of the largest families. And then, for weeks, the receiving office was filled with the lamentations of these largest families, some of them numbering thirteen. For four dollars a week was the maximum food allowance from the police station, and no rent was paid, no lights or gas. The supervisor, incredibly overworked and at heart a humane woman, in spite of her respect for red tape, made arrangements with the police by which the largest families were later returned to the Relief Bureau.

The Pompilios were a small family, only four, so they must continue going to the police station for their three-dollar-a-week orders. "Please help us," begged frail Mrs. Pompilio, shaken by the dry, hollow cough she had had for months. "I am seeck. The doctor at the clinic, he say I must have good food or I not get well. I would not mind to die—I am so tired—only for leaving my children."

But this is impossible, for Mr. Pompilio has been lucky enough to get one of the forty-dollar-a-month city jobs, and soon will be cut off from the police list also.

"If it were only fifteen a week," says Mrs. Pompilio, "three days instead of two, we could somehow manage. But this way—the children must have milk—there is not enough that I should have the red meat the doctor orders."

A case history does not include the appeal in the death-shadowed eyes of a Botticelli madonna living four flights up in Queens, but it remains to haunt the investigator. MARY ARBUCKLE.

Russia Revisited

II: *The Agrarian Revolution*

HOWEVER official and unofficial estimates of the results of the operation of the Five Year Plan may vary, there has been general agreement, until recently, that the most spectacular success has been achieved in the reconstruction of agriculture. Considering that the original agricultural program has been carried out in less than two years; that over 15,000,000 peasant holders have pooled their holdings and have enrolled themselves in about 25,000 large-scale farms; that Russia in this short period has been transformed from a land of cultivation on the smallest scale into a leading country in large-scale cultivation; and that almost a third of the sown area is now being ploughed, reaped and threshed by the most modern technical methods, we are bound to declare that it is the agrarian aspect of the Plan which is likely to invest it with historical importance. The Bolsheviks, in the past at any rate, have proclaimed the success of collectivization as their greatest achievement and the inauguration of a new era. Stalin himself has called the year 1929 "The year of the great turning"—that is, the year in which the peasants, by joining the collectivist movement, laid the foundation for the development of socialism in Russia.

And yet, such is the irony of events that this sweeping victory for the Plan is responsible for the most crucial and obstinate difficulties now being encountered. In the first place it has most gravely upset the basic estimates of the Plan. These provided for the collectivization and mechanization of 20 percent of the sown area in five years, and the claims of that so-called socialist sector of agriculture on metals, machines and capital investments were framed accordingly. But when in the first year nearly 60 percent of the area passed under the new system, the estimates of the Plan lost all meaning. Only two courses were open: either to dissolve the *kolhozi* forthwith or to bring about a radical readjustment of the provisions of the Plan. The first idea could not, of course, be entertained, for it would have meant the abandonment of a long cherished project, the dream of a century. The only alternative then was to supply the needs of collectivization and mechanization regardless of cost. This meant that the incidence of the Plan became more onerous and that capital investments provided by it, already heavy enough, had to be very considerably increased.

It has been generally accepted that the Russian villages constitute a huge market. But it was usually assumed that this market was limited to the light industries, to textiles and simple agricultural implements. It was scarcely realized that the villages must become the greatest market for the heavy industries, for oil, iron, coal and electricity. But now, although the process is only beginning, it can be clearly seen that the key industries are working for the benefit of the villages. It is sufficient to mention the manufacture of tractors and other agricultural machinery, produced directly for the peasants.

Industries, almost without exception, are dependent on the villages. Their output specified in the Plan has been increased year after year, and even month after month, and each time almost solely under the stimulus of the awakened village market. Take iron, for instance. In the first draft of the Plan the output was fixed at 7,000,000 tons for the fifth year; and this was largely to be devoted to railway and machine construction and to general building purposes. But the first success of mechanized agriculture in 1929 compelled a revision of this estimate. Mass production of tractors became imperative. Seven million tons of iron—an exaggerated program a few months before—then became inadequate. It was decided accordingly to make a determined effort to increase the output to 10,000,000 tons.

The further progress of mechanized agriculture and the employment of tractors revolutionized

the entire production of agricultural implements. Horse-driven machines gave way everywhere to heavy tractor-driven machines; the heavy disk plough and the combine harvester replaced the native plough and the wooden harvester. Mechanized agriculture, in fact, demanded millions of tons of iron and steel. The domestic supply of these metals could not keep pace with the demand, and the needs of agriculture were met only by a drastic appropriation of supplies originally intended for transport and general building and by the importation of one million tons of steel from Germany.

The technical equipment of agriculture in Russia has then made very considerable strides. During 1929-30, agriculture was supplied with no less than 42,000 tractors, but only 30 percent of these were manufactured in the country. In 1931 the supply reached 70,000, of which more than one-half were turned out by Russian factories. In the current year the number will reach 90,000, all of which will be made in Russia. A similar tale can be told of agricultural machinery. It is sufficient for me to state that the total value of this machinery which is expected to be turned out this year will equal the entire stock in the country in 1928. Moreover, it is an entirely different kind of machinery, no longer hand or horse driven, but almost entirely tractor propelled.

Meanwhile the demands of the villages have grown more and more insistent. The 100,000 tractors and other machines now working on the land need thousands of repair shops, and these in their turn need tens of thousands of lathes, presses, motors and tools, to say nothing of an incessant supply of spare parts. Nor is the tale yet complete. Mechanized agriculture in its most intensive form depends as much on motor cars and motor lorries as on tractors and combine harvesters. The haste with which the Moscow motor-car factory has been enlarged and the Nishni works erected is due mainly to these new demands. In short, Russian agriculture, although only partly mechanized, already owes as much to heavy industries as to the muscles of the peasants.

Serious as the difficulties caused by the success of the agricultural revolution were in all quarters, their full impact was felt in the necessity for reorganizing and readjusting social and economic relations in the villages themselves. The problems which the *kolhoz* movement raised were grave and manifold, involving almost all the relations of the peasants to one another and to the state.

The first of these, still unsettled, is the social nature of a *kolhoz*. Is a *kolhoz* simply a coöperative society or is it a commune with no differentiation of class and no conflict of interest? As is well known, the younger Communists jumped to the latter conclusion and proceeded to act on that assumption. That is, they incontinently socialized not only the holdings, implements and draught cattle, but even the cows, pigs, poultry and other domestic animals. That this was a false interpretation of the peasant mind and of the nature of a *kolhoz* soon became clear, and was demonstrated in a dramatic fashion. The illusion that the *kolhoz* is a commune or that it can easily be transformed into one, was dispelled in the early stage of the movement. Moreover, the difficulties proved not only that all attempts to impose Communist organization on the *kolhozi* are doomed to failure, but that even when their organization is on an *artel,* or purely coöperative basis, a certain differentiation of interest is bound to arise. In fact, today, it is a recognized principle in the movement that a member who has contributed more cattle and more implements to a *kolhoz* must get a larger share of the profits.

The social nature of a *kolhoz* cannot be said to have been settled, but controversy on the subject has ceased and the matter stands in abeyance, partly because only time can solve it and partly because other problems are more acute.

Foremost of these are the organization of labor and the distribution of income. These questions seemed at first simple and easy to solve; it was only necessary that everybody should work and then everybody would be entitled to a share of the produce. But it was soon realized that the manifold activities involved in agriculture demand different effort and therefore must be remunerated accordingly. A solution of this problem seemed to be reached when remuneration was made to depend on the amount of work done. The measure applied was a so-called "labor day," and every man was paid according to the number of days he had put in. But after a season or two, this more realistic basis of payment proved defective, for a "labor day" was found to be an inadequate standard for measuring the amount and quality of work actually done. One man would be slow, another quick; one would perform a skilled job demanding a great effort and concentration, while another would perform an unskilled or a comfortable job. Payment by result was therefore advanced one stage further. The "labor day" was made to register not only the *amount* but the *quality* of labor. Here, too, it can hardly be said that the solution taken is final; but it is workable at any rate and controversies on the *kolhozi* have now shifted from remuneration to the question of responsibility for the care of cattle and implements.

As might have been expected, this responsibility was so widely distributed that it ceased to exist. Breakage of machines or ill treatment of animals could not be laid to anybody's charge. I shall make no attempt to describe the many and various measures designed to raise the sense of responsibility in a *kolhoz*. I will only say that their spirit is the creation of a closer and more personal connection between the cultivator and the land and of a greater interest of the cultivator in results. Every member of a *kolhoz* is to be made more responsible for the work he is performing and

more interested in the result of his work. In other words, the introduction of a greater measure of differentiation in tasks and in rewards is expected to provide a greater incentive to the raising of the scale of production.

Today, labor in a *kolhoz* is so strictly divided that every group of members is made responsible for something, under a new arrangement called the "Migade System." Every member belongs to one or another Migade, which is collectively responsible for some important branch of work. Any neglect in farming or in the use of cattle or implements can thus be brought home and penalized. On the other hand, as in every sphere of labor in Russia, prizes and premiums are awarded to encourage industry and proficiency.

What is going on in agriculture now is in fact similar to what is going on in industry. Here, as there, the basis of a great development has been laid; but here, as there, the directing and controlling power has been improvised and has yet to be rendered adequate. One essential difference is that, while in industry a small technical staff already existed, in the new large-scale and mechanized agriculture there was not a trace of one. And another is that, while in industry the state can easily call in foreign technical aid, in collectivized agriculture it is a pioneer and must help itself as best it can.

The relations of the *kolhozi* to the state have created another set of problems which await solution; and here too the short history of the movement is associated with quite a variety of policies. Yet these vacillations were due not only to the unexpected growth of the movement, but to the uncertainty of the social nature of the *kolhozi*. To any recent observer it is clear that the Communist party has a maximum and a minimum program for these farms. The former envisages a complete socialization of the villages and a transformation of agriculture into what has been crudely described as "factories of grain."

Russian Communists are unshaken in their belief that agricultural production can be run on the same basis as industrial production. They expect this development chiefly as a result of the application of mechanized technique. As large-scale industry developed from handicraft under the influence of machines, so it is inevitable, in their view, that large-scale agriculture should acquire all the characteristics of a modern industry. It is evident that the initial success of the collectivization of agriculture made some of them believe that this maximum program was susceptible of immediate realization. But this illusion was no sooner entertained than it was abandoned as both hopeless and harmful.

The Communist party is at present satisfied that only the minimum program can be carried out under present conditions. This program rests on two plans. One—*the method*—is large-scale cultivation, with no concession to the principle of small-scale individual farming. The other—*the aim*—is the increase of agricultural production. All other problems which turn up for solution are regarded as problems of expediency. In questions of the internal polity of the *kolhozi*, the Soviet government would appear merely as an arbiter. The solution of such questions as the division of labor and the division of profits is based solely on whether it is likely to strengthen or weaken the movement or whether it will increase or decrease agricultural production.

It must be obvious a-priori that such a colossal transformation, achieved as a result of a most ruthless class struggle, must have brought about a tremendous disorganization of agricultural production. As a matter of fact, this disorganization was even greater than could have been foreseen. That agricultural production should not only have survived, but have shown in certain respects an improvement, was due to the introduction of the new machine technique and also to the two better-than-average harvests of 1929 and 1930.

But in 1931 the new system was exposed to the test of unfavorable climatic conditions for the first time, and stood it rather badly. In some areas, notably in the Ukraine and in the middle Volga district, the success of the new technique was only a slight compensation for the ravages of drought. And everywhere it was difficult to pass the great test of success—the increase of yield per acre. The yield may have been slightly better than it was under the old system, but it proved out of proportion to the investments made and to the possibilities of large-scale cultivation. It became clear that the quantitative success of collectivization was not enough: to bring about the new era it had to be accompanied by as considerable a qualitative success. Accordingly the slogan was raised: "Consolidate the gains of collectivization!"

The measures the government is now taking to consolidate the gains of the new system have been interpreted in some quarters as "concessions to the individualist instincts of the peasants"—as, indeed, a sort of neo-N.E.P.

This seems to me a delusion. The agricultural policy of the U.S.S.R. has not been defeated. Without doubt the concessions the government has made in its April and May decrees are of a serious nature, but they cannot be said to encroach upon the fundamental principles of collectivization. Large-scale cultivation on a collectivist basis remains the incontestable aim of the Soviet state.

The marketing of grain is, of course, a serious business for the Soviet government; and its retention of this as a state monopoly has always been a cardinal article in the Bolshevik creed. But in a limited sense private trade in grain has been carried on ever since the promulgation of the New Economic Policy in 1921. And today an individual farmer is quite free to dispose of his surplus grain

as he pleases, either to sell it to the agent of the government or to bring it to the nearest town and sell it in the open market. The collective farms have seemingly always retained this right in theory; actually, however, this surplus production has been looked upon as earmarked for sale to the state. The heavy investments made by the state in these farms, the privileges the cultivators have enjoyed in exemption from taxation and the preferential treatment they have received in respect of supplies of industrial goods, have all contributed to the idea that members of the *kolhozi* must abandon all attempts to sell their surplus grain in the open market. For ten years, in fact, they strictly kept out of the market, and had the government been able to supply them with all the industrial goods they wanted, their absence from the market might have become instinctive. But they must from the first have realized the fact that in the all-important point of the disposal of their surplus grain they were treated worse than the individual peasants.

The concessions now promulgated are in the first place designed to conciliate this resentment, but their chief purpose is to encourage a higher productivity both in the collective and individual farms. The increase of agricultural production still remains the highest aim of the Soviet government, an aim to be realized at all costs, whether of concession or coercion.

Post-revolutionary Russian agriculture has generally been regarded more or less as a domestic problem. Interest in it outside the U.S.S.R. has been limited to a consideration of Russia's food situation and of the expected antagonism between the peasants and the state. It was only in the autumn of 1930, when the sudden reappearance of Russia in the wheat market created something of a scare, that the outside world began to realize that Russian agriculture possessed an international significance. The failure of the Soviet government to develop its initial success in the market seems, however, to have lulled capitalist apprehension. I cannot help thinking that this complacency represents an extremely short-sighted view. It would be absurd to try to map out the economic future and to fix a time at which Russian agricultural produce will make a bid for supremacy in the market. But anyone who realizes what is going on in Russia today must confess that such a time cannot be long delayed. To increase agricultural production is the main preoccupation of the Soviet government. All the resources of the state, technical, financial and intellectual, are being and will be mobilized to achieve this object. The development of engineering, of chemistry and of electrification is all bound up with the development of agriculture. A 30 or 40-percent increase of the yield is the immediate program of the Bolsheviks, who, however, will not be content with anything less than the doubling of the present output.

These people, as is known, are optimistic, and a large part of their expectations may be discounted as sheer optimism. But to ignore the fact that the tremendous effort now being made to develop agriculture in Russia is bound before long to make itself felt in the world market would be sheer folly.

Moscow. MICHAEL FARBMAN.

In his third article, to be published next week, Mr. Farbman will discuss the balance sheet of the Five Year Plan.—THE EDITORS.

A College in Rebellion

THE USE of police on two occasions to break up student meetings on the campus, the suspension of eleven students and the threat of wholesale expulsions and suspensions against those students who venture to protest the disciplinary actions of the administration—these mark the autumn offensive in President Frederick Robinson's annual war against radical opinion at City College of New York. All this is unfortunately far from unprecedented. What *is* unprecedented is the response of the students. A large portion of the student body has allied itself openly with its suspended radical leaders. Mass meetings have been held at the City College gates in angry protest against the president's high-handed actions. The halls of C. C. N. Y. have been invaded illegally, and students have held indignation meetings in defiance of the administration rulings.

The background of the City College disturbance is a perpetual conflict between the various radical organizations on the campus and a reactionary administration. This conflict has centered about the questions of freedom of speech and compulsory military training. When Felix S. Cohen, as editor of Campus, attacked the military-training system of City College, reprinting the more sadistic portions of the R. O. T. C. Manual, when the Student Council carried out a poll of the students and alumni on this issue, the administration took prompt disciplinary action and Campus was flatly forbidden to discuss the military-science question.

The issue was thus raised. Again, in the spring of 1931, two students were suspended for printing and publishing an anti-militarist student journal without faculty permission. The technical charge was "insubordination," a favorite term of President Robinson and one which gives as clear an idea of his conception of a liberal education as a whole paragraph of comment.

Out of this matrix of conflict, a set of rules has been drawn up at City College which produces a maximum of repression of student opinion with a minimum of repressive appearance. Student clubs are obliged to obtain a faculty supervisor who must approve meetings, speakers and subjects. The administration pressure is exerted primarily through the faculty supervisors, so that the C.C.N.Y.

Liberal Club has had to get a new supervisor every term. The last supervisor of the Liberal Club refused to resign when requested to do so by Dr. P. H. Linehan. He was "not reappointed" this year.

This supervisor was Dr. Oakley Johnson of the English Department. The administration's alleged reasons for his dismissal have been peeled away and exposed like the leaves of an artichoke with every fresh disclosure of the facts. The real reason for the dismissal appears to be that Dr. Johnson was prominently engaged in Communistic activities which could hardly have escaped the attention of the administration or its disapproval.

With Dr. Johnson's dismissal, the Liberal Club was unable to obtain another faculty supervisor, and hence could hold no meetings.

The students rallied to the defense of Dr. Johnson, forming a broad autonomous committee to carry on the fight, a committee which recruited its membership at every student mass meeting on the case, whether at Columbia, City College or elsewhere.

On October 19, the Defense Committee called a citywide mass meeting near the college. The meeting sent a delegation to Dr. Linehan, who refused to discuss matters with the committee. The meeting moved on to the campus and was met by police night sticks, clubbed and dispersed. A new precedent in college administration was formulated: police are to be used to keep the student body off the campus.

The following Wednesday another demonstration took place. The students again marched on the campus, entering the Main Hall. Spontaneously the students opened classroom doors and called on their comrades to join them in protest. To quiet the tumult, the police ordered them into a vacant auditorium where an orderly meeting was held. At the same time student delegations with police escort visited the various classes and asked their fellow students to join them. Dr. Linehan became alarmed and the police were ordered to disperse the meeting. The students refused to move. The police again dispersed them, making four arrests, including the guest speaker of the evening, Donald Henderson, instructor of Economics at Columbia.

The student body soon realized what was happening. That evening about a thousand students marched to the Fifty-fourth Street Night Court where Donald Henderson and the other prisoners were held, and demanded their release. The police answer was twelve additional arrests.

In the next two days, President Robinson played his favorite role of academic dictator more boldly. Ten students of the sixteen arrested were suspended on the first day. Then a student was suspended for posting a notice on one of the bulletin boards announcing an unauthorized meeting. The authority for this action came from a Student Council ruling, but the Council checkmated President Robinson by a unanimous demand for the student's reinstatement. The administration had overreached itself and backed down.

The following Sunday a mass meeting was held at which a preponderantly student audience of 1,400 people tried and convicted Dr. Robinson and Dr. Linehan *in absentio*. The day before this, the Board of Higher Education, President Robinson's official spokesman, had promised "to discipline immediately any students who participated in the affair." More than thirty students gave testimony, but the students' resistance had attained such proportions that the administration failed to carry out its threat.

The issue at C. C. N. Y. has been broadened so that it now includes the entire question of the freedom of student expression in the university.

NATHANIEL WEYL.

Title To Be Announced

IT IS announced that Mr. Franchot Tone, who up to last week was playing in the Group Theatre's "Success Story," has gone to Hollywood with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. I am not on the inside with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer nor do I even know what the film is into which they are putting Mr. Tone. That leaves me free in posing what seems to me an interesting issue. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in diverse productions has been ambitious of serious regard. The variety and scope of these have been notable. Mr. Tone is the best of the young actors in the New York theatre and the most promising in his chances of development. He is not an old and familiar stage warrior, or a new, fortunate and ripe young leading man, going out to Hollywood to cash in on a reputation already made, to exploit some play in which one has made a hit and a long run, to sell one's art at a better price, or to put the *coup de grace* on what little art may be left to one. He does not have to go to Hollywood to get a good role, many roles in the theatre are open to him. And for the same reason he does not have to stay in Hollywood when he gets there. He is not hardened, blasé, or without a faith any longer in the theatre. The combination, therefore, of such a player and the films might serve as a curious kind of test of Hollywood.

That the moving pictures are at the crossroads is generally admitted. Their public has dwindled. The hopes of the more serious patrons and believers in the possibilities of this art are lessening somewhat. The financial swell of the films has greatly ebbed from what it was, so that great studio plants emerge like rocky, sterile islands where once the rich waves ran of profit and expense. The chances for the films lie in one direction only, which is to seek more intelligent matter, better art and less mere expense, more real relation to the life around us and less crudity, monkey show and reckless splashing—all of which is easier said than done. It can do no harm to muse on some of the things that a young actor like Mr. Tone might bring to the uses of the screen.

So far as playing goes, one of Mr. Tone's gifts is that of responsiveness. He has to a singular degree the power of giving back, of give and take. The player in the scene with him is led outward, and responded to, with a kind of delicacy, respect, generosity, that makes up one of the most

necessary but one of the rarest qualities in acting. It is a quality creative in two directions, for both the actor in whose gifts this responsiveness lies and the actor who is eased and completed by it. Such responsiveness, such rapport, though the stage lives by it, is not to be had for the mere asking, it is a form of talent. Such give and take, such purity of intention toward the scene and actors in it, is a natural and inner gift, however greatly stage experience may in time perfect it. One of the garish shortcomings of the films, in the most serious films very often, is the impression of gaps, a sort of no man's land, among the actors. They seem merely to have been pushed together. Moving pictures are full of conversations, clutches, gazings, amorous clinches and what-not, but you might often think that photographs had been cut out and then arranged together, for all the current of drama exchanged between the actors. Even last-act idiotic bliss, if registered by the leading lady, needs something from her opposite besides his photograph, though that be blissful also; exactly as she, if he be slated to express it, must give him back some of his national sweetheartness. More rapport among the actors in most moving-picture scenes is at least one way toward a real advance in the films as an art.

Mr. Tone has stood out among the younger actors by the seeming ease or good fortune of his course, role after role, with a steadily growing sense of him among audiences. They see, watching him play, that he is an actor who is open to the teaching, the suggestions and technical examples of other people in the theatre, but also fresh in his own study of a part. Before he has done with it he gives a part real texture and shading, but he finds also a strong outline for it; these are the two secrets of the distinctness that each of his characterizations these last three or four seasons has had. His performance of the morose and passionate son of the Connellys, essentially right in its Southern and its dramatic qualities; of the young don in "Night over Taos," with its austerity, heat and elegance; his workman in "1931—"; his business man in "Success Story," were every one, in its different character, remarkable. And they were played from a solid, flexible and imaginative basis such as no other of our young actors, and few of the older, can show. He has also progressed considerably in a method that is built on the actor's control and reproduction at will of emotion and effect, a method that should be an economy over the practice of a great many of our actors in the films, who get their final effects by chance inspiration, repetition of shots, in sum by trial and error, to an extent that is both extravagantly wasteful and in part avoidable.

It will be interesting, if Mr. Tone should come off well in his first film, to see what moving-picture publicity can build up in his case. Certainly, it is true that the common varieties of publicity, with their Barnum technique, are losing their hold: a perpetual blast of wonders, stars, mysteries and pinnacles drowns too much in its all too inclusive deluge; some of it amounts by now to little more than sideshow barkers, dazzling or monstrous marvels falling on doubtful ears. This same publicity problem leads to that of roles. Can an actor with such particular possibilities in range as Mr. Tone has evinced, be put over if he plays various and different kinds of roles? Or should he be for a while the leading man, the juvenile, or whatever is the right word for all those well fanned young men who are the lovers, heroes, leads, of countless movie dramas? The theatre once made much of an actor in a wide variety of parts, rather than the personality exploitation that flourishes today. We might wonder if the films could some day recover that field at present so lost to the theatre. By this I do not mean character-acting, which on the stage and in the films is common enough. I mean an actor who, passing from part to part, creates genuinely but without the specializing that character-acting implies; he portrays of course whatever external facts are necessary to the role, but what he chiefly portrays is the soul of the character, in the colors natural to it.

Or suppose, for instance, that the actor, instead of doing the leading young role in every film or taking different roles in many films, were to do the same man in different roles in many films. We might have a poetic exploration of the American scene through homely American life, by means of some character out of the American scene (the hobo, for example, or what you will), to reveal the poetic material in our culture. We might create an actor, a character in sum, as recognizable as Charlie Chaplin. The greatness of Mr. Chaplin is beside the point, which is that this type American of whom we have spoken could pass endlessly through emotions, places, societies, situations, out of our almost untouched American life, this life supplying the broken lights and endless variety, to which the character himself would provide the outline of legend.

In such a scheme or creation as this the films might, at the very least, solve one problem that so far has beaten them: the actor might even age. No retirement, no desire for a home, no new teeth, no face-lifting, no critics driven to speaking of dignity and fine restraint: our hobo has the span of life as he draws it to him and as his own capacity attracts.

STARK YOUNG.

A COMMUNICATION

A League for Municipal Socialism

SIR: In city politics I voted this year for Tweedledum. Last election I voted for Tweedledee. Some of my friends have voted for the Man in the Moon, and I have seriously considered following their example. But in the many years in which I have studied politics I have never been able to find one single instance in which the protest vote accomplished anything at all. The evidence is not all in, but there is enough in to make me doubt the efficiency of this method of political action.

Yet I am sick of the political inaction to which I appear to be condemned this year, and I am convinced that there are hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who feel exactly as I do. We are profoundly concerned over the future of our city. The municipal debt grows constantly heavier; taxes grow constantly more burdensome. The city government steals some money and wastes a lot more: all of which we might forgive if real progress were making toward a better ordered, more livable, more humane city. But so far as I can see, no sufficient progress is making to assure us against decadence and decay. New York's position in the world is by no means so secure that we can be complacent about its handicaps.

Unquestionably our municipal government grows more and more extravagant. Nevertheless, I doubt that extravagance is the nub of our political problem. The difficulty lies deeper, in fundamental economic conditions. We have permitted, and continue to permit, private business to create centers of extreme congestion which impose upon the city, directly or indirectly, enormous costs for transportation and traffic control. We have permitted, and continue to permit, a huge proportion of our working population to live in mousy-lousy tenements, with no access for their children to safe and adequate playgrounds. The results are known to all: the production of an enormous contingent of the economically unfit: invalids and semi-invalids, persons apparently normal but mentally unstable, delinquents, racketeers and robbers. We have neglected, and continue to neglect, the collective duty of organizing the employment field and finding jobs for those who need work.

No one, I think, will deny that these charges lie against us: dissent from the implications of my recital will spring from fear of increased financial obligations. Decent housing for the working class, for example: how can it be financed? There is not a financier or builder who can show us how workers' apartments can be supplied in Manhattan for less than ten dollars a room, even with tax exemption. Remove the workers to the suburbs, where land is cheaper, and we have to increase our facilities for rapid transit, at enormous cost, direct or indirect, to the budget. Assume the obligation of feeding and sheltering those who are out of work: the burden on the budget may seem to be crushing.

All this is true, but we never escape for long the burdens of a natural obligation. We find ourselves supporting in institutions the victims of our housing abuses, or we support them through rackets that weigh heavily on us. We keep the out-of-works alive through charity, or we let Tammany do it—for a price. We pay. The goods we pay for are second rate, delivered in sloppy condition, at excessive prices, but for all that, we pay, and ought to pay, until we have the resolution to manage our obligations more intelligently.

Suppose we have the resolution: what can we do about it? We can act only through political parties, and what party can we trust to give us in return for our efforts anything more than breakable promises? The things that need to be done lie beyond the area of party divisions. Republicans and Democrats and Socialists could approve them. They lie beyond the essential conflict of economic interests. Property owner and day laborer alike desire a better ordering of our social-economic life.

The case, then, is not one for party politics, but for pressure politics. I propose that we form an organization for the specific purpose of realizing these fundamental aims, an organization agreed, in local affairs, to follow the well tried technique of helping our friends and punishing our enemies. We can build up a pressure group that can compel the city of New York to put its house in order, according to its best judgment. A group of one hundred thousand persons would go far toward this end. Three hundred thousand would be irresistible. And certainly there are a million voters who would join in such an enterprise if we could but reach them.

Let me offer a tentative statement of principles for the contemplated organization. Later we can rewrite it to the heart's desire, but this may suffice for the present:

We the undersigned have associated ourselves in an organization to be known as the League for Municipal Socialism.

We accept the ambiguous and contentious term Municipal Socialism without any commitments as to the general doctrines of Socialism, but with the intention of making it absolutely clear that we will not be bound by the traditions of laissez-faire in any policies we advocate for the realization of healthful and decent conditions of urban living.

We hold it to be self-evident that haphazard private development of the urban terrain, both in respect of business and industry and in respect of housing, results inevitably in intolerable waste and disorder, economic and social.

We hold that experience has abundantly proved that private enterprise in urban development cannot be trusted to protect the public interest or even the larger interest of private enterprise itself. We therefore demand a reconstitution of the building authority as a bona-fide city-planning department, with the duty of withholding building permits where there is no satisfactory case for public necessity and convenience.

We hold further that experience has proved that private enterprise is incompetent to provide healthful and decent housing for the mass of the city's working population. We therefore demand that the city itself shall undertake to clear out slum areas, relocate streets and open spaces and erect sanitary and properly lighted tenements to be let at rates not exceeding a reasonable proportion of the average unskilled working-class income, with freedom from eviction in case of involuntary unemployment.

We regard it as self-evident that urban transit is an integral part of city planning and that in the development of a unified transit system the dominant consideration should be not financial return but the expeditious and economical conveyance of passengers and goods between the business or industrial areas and the residence areas. Therefore we demand the creation of a transit department to operate in close relation with the building and town-planning department, and as soon as financial conditions permit, to take over in behalf of the city and operate all transit agencies within the city limits.

We reject as wasteful, barbarous and dangerous the doctrine that workers must be driven to industry and thrift by the menace of sheer starvation. We therefore demand that the city be prepared at all times to supply bread for all who are destitute, milk for all children whose parents or guardians are unable to purchase it, and the necessary minimum of shelter.

To the end that the municipal bounty in these respects may not be abused, we demand the assumption by the city of all employment-agency services, except for very special forms of professional and highly paid labor. The employment service should be organized expertly, to determine the qualities and competence of each applicant for a job and the reliability and fairness of each employer seeking labor. Municipal relief, whether in the form of abatement of rent or in the form of bread and milk cards, should be granted only on certification by the employment services that no suitable work can be found.

We recognize that no complete program of municipal socialism is possible without amendments to the state Constitution permitting the city to extend its activities as widely as considerations of public welfare demand. Specifically the city should at once be granted the authority to condemn private property required for systematic rehousing of the working class.

We pledge ourselves to work energetically toward the realization of this program of municipal socialism, by constitutional amendment where necessary, by acts of the state legislature and the municipal authorities where these would be effective. We are committed to no political party, and are prepared to throw all our influence on the side of the party which agrees to advance our program, except in so far as superior considerations of political duty forbid.

I would join such an organization if it existed. I can think of two-score of my friends who would join it. You would join it and bring in your friends. Then in Heaven's name, let us start the organization at once. You will say no organization has ever been started in this way through the association of a writer and a reader who have probably never heard of each other before. An organization should by custom start with a committee of notables, and a banquet, and speeches, and publicity in the daily papers. Well, let's set up a committee. You, as a charter member, will nominate as committee members persons whom you know to be energetic and public spirited. I will do likewise, and if there are more charter members we will hold a referendum.

Then we must supply ourselves with a literature, for the enlightenment of our members and for use in enlisting new members. We should need a fifty-page pamphlet giving an honest account of what Vienna, Berlin and London have accomplished in rehousing the working class. We should need another pamphlet on European methods of tying employment agencies and relief together in a rational administration scheme. We should need a pamphlet on building costs in New York; one on the town planning involved in slum clearance. Others will readily suggest themselves to the reader.

Of course we should need money, and at present nobody has much money to give. But you and I could afford dues of, say, two dollars a year. A thousand members paying dues would give us all the funds needed to set out on the campaign for ten thousand more.

Reader, you are one of a hundred thousand. Fully ninety-nine thousand of you agree with every word I have written here. Ninety-nine thousand of you would write me, "Count me in," were it not that just now we are all terribly discouraged about the possibility of social man being master of his fate, captain of his soul.

But one thousand of you feel with me that if man's social fate never yielded to direct assault before, now is the time for us to prove that it can be made to yield. If one thousand of you respond to this appeal of mine, there will be two hundred thousand of us in two years, and the city of New York will begin to reshape itself under our hands.

New York City. ALVIN JOHNSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

Earth to Earth

SIR: In reply to my review of "The Good Earth," Mr. Lee Simonson, the designer of the production, has written a letter which charms me to reply. It is true that a mighty stream of implication about ignorance, average misconceptions and esthetic darkness enters into every sentence almost, but we will let that pass as private and friendly thunder; it is a good thing for a designer to come back thus at his critic, and our theatre in general would profit by more of such exchange. The pattern of thought in the letter falls so distinctly into paragraphs that I am tempted to take them up separately as they come, together with my little answers.

My dear Stark Young:

The "curse" of stone gray, which you and some others have complained of in my settings for "The Good Earth," provides an excellent instance of the dubious value that the authentic has in the theatre when it is too far removed from the average experience of an audience, its preconceptions and its stereotyped notions of what China is like.

I had originally planned to paint the unit (and all its inserts) a mellow mixture of wethered orange and pink. It was Mrs. Buck herself who vetoed this (I gladly agreed), pointing out that this color was typical of only palaces and temples, that rural lords' "palaces" were of gray brick, thinly whitewashed, so that the general effect was that of a more or less pearly gray.

Your point is well taken, dear Lee Simonson, about the theatric value of the authentic when it is too far removed from the average experience of the audience; it is the designer's business to dramatize the authentic so that it expresses to the audience what the play needs to have expressed. What I said in my review, however, was that the sets "were sadly cursed by that *notion* of stone color prevalent in our theatre, when we are going to be ingenious about using the same wall or shift for more than one scene." "Stone gray" (your phrase) is quite another thing; certainly no substance is more alive than stone. What I was talking about were those walls, in the palace especially, with that sickening stippled effect that no designer in our theatre seems, sooner or later, to have avoided. It is a sloppy and very messy surface that has none of the austerity or wide application of stone gray, nearly always when lighted it looks only soft and foolish. For this play of "The Good Earth," in so far as it is a problem at all in Chinese simplification, I can imagine nothing more boring than this dabbling and smearing by a scene painter. I can only congratulate you that Mrs. Buck herself liked both your settings and China.

As to the magnificences of Chinese design, again at her suggestion, I carefully avoided most of them. Even the few I introduced, such as the scroll stonework over the door, are, if anything, too elaborate for the house of an up-country lord.

As to magnificence of "rich luxury" in the costumes, bright satins are not used, as they were in the old costumes, nor any embroidery whatsoever. The silks are rather like our taffetas, self-figured. I happened to use the few imported pieces that were to be found in New York.

The furniture both in the poor and rich households was based upon data furnished me by Mrs. Buck, who happens to have an almost photographic memory.

You must not assault me like that on the bright-satin theme, which we all know belongs, to an extensive degree, in musical comedies and restaurants. I was asking for no embroidered wistarias, dragons or flying cranes; I was only saying that a certain dramatic truth, namely, the hero's passage from poverty to riches,

should be registered in the costumes, an obvious theatre point. I think, however, that I should add that magnificence, as I use the word, means to me an essential characteristic. The most magnificent costumes, for example, that I have ever seen are the coronation robes of Japan, which would have in their essential character a great magnificence, so far as the theatre is concerned, if they were made of burlap.

When the theatre is involved, as to furniture, for example, a photographic memory has somewhat the same value as a photograph: in sum, it is only a starting point for dramatic design.

> In short, our whole effort, pictorially, was to put on the stage an accurate echo of the modern China that Mrs. Buck knew rather than the more magnificent and picture-book China which she was particularly anxious to avoid.
>
> But it is only a few friends of mine who happened to have traveled extensively in Mrs. Buck's China, and a few of Mrs. Buck's, who appreciate the fact and enjoy its (to them) dramatic value.

I am not sure that I myself am familiar with the China of the picture books, the China that the settings for "The Good Earth" avoided. The idea in my mind was simply this: that very often in the line of a tower's silhouette, in the rhythm of a roof's slant, in the mystery of a tone, I have found in Chinese things an old austerity, an elegance, a poetry, so simple and inexhaustible that all our Western design is humbled before it. It was this magnificence, not gilt or costly complications, that, if you will allow me to say so, the settings so well avoided.

We must remember that the pleasures of exclusive acquaintance in travel (as elsewhere) have in themselves dramatic possibilities.

> I give these details because they raise another problem of style or rather of method. Perhaps the theatre is so theatrical in the traditional sense that one must tell traditional and pictorial lies even when one's program is a realistic one.

The kind of lie you mention, as regards the work of art and the reality it portrays, can exist only in so far as a comparison is implied between that reality and that work of art; which (since every work of art has its own truth) is otherwise free of everything outside itself. In your "program" your style problem was to be *both* Chinese and theatrical.

> In contrast take Marco. The Khan's minister was in the household garb of a Sung emperor, some 300 years before the Mongol conquest; the summer place of the Ming period some 400 years or so later. This was like putting President Lincoln in a room by Frank Lloyd Wright and dressing his Secretary of State in a Pilgrim steeple-hat and knee breeches. There were even wilder discrepancies. Some of the attendant nobles were in Mongol costume and headdress. But some of the women were attired like Bhuuddisatvas from Chinese Turkestan. But such is the average ignorance of historic China that to our audiences the total effect spelled China of the fabled Cathay type. Which it would not have done if I had made the ensemble even remotely Mongolian.
>
> This is the problem. Some day I hope you'll write a piece about it.

As to Marco, I should have said let sleeping dogs lie. Esthetically, I think your audience was wise in preferring these settings to the more strictly historical, provided, that is, they "spelled China of the fabled Cathay type." It, I think, is a sound principle in theatrical esthetics to say that the absolutely historical is important only in plays in which the historicity is a leading dramatic element. In the "Marco Millions" scene at the Great Khan's court, it was splendor that was to be expressed, not museum detail. The audience was therefore right in direction, however uncertain in taste. I have looked up my review of "Marco Millions" and find that I used the word "munificent," spoke of handsome color, and said that the design was at least as good as the scene; it was a compliment to neither. The audiences' enthusiasm about Cathay —which most of them, I fancy, had never heard of—may have include the Benares brass bowls or spittoons or whatever they were, which sent up a slender stream of smoke at your Great Khan's court. Quite as easily, I believe, they would have embraced the remotely Mongolian if you had used it, plus an explanation in the program; I was immediately struck with their understanding of the Biblical quality in "The Good Earth."

This is, as you say, the problem and so together we have written a piece about it.

STARK YOUNG.

New York City.

The Natural Resources of Russia

SIR: In his clever indictment of my "Red Smoke" [The New Republic, Ooctober 19], your reviewer, Mr. Joseph Freeman, wisely refrains from citing any of the Soviet authorities named in my book. He produces alleged new "evidence," not against my evidence, which he carefully sidetracks, but against my conclusions. But how does this new "evidence" stand up against the Soviet's own?

According to Mr. Freeman, it is my assertion that the Soviet Union is one of the poorest countries in the world in iron resources, which, he claims, is flatly contradicted by the Soviet authorities. Does he quote these? No. Instead, he quotes some unnamed and only one named American engineers without stating whether these men are geologists who conducted surveys in Russia or visitors who received their information from political sources.

The members of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and Russia's leading geologists, A. Archangelsky, A. E. Fersman, K. I. Bogdanovich, who are cited in my book, seem to be totally ignorant of Mr. Freeman's astronomical figures. They hold that "the European part of the Soviet Union must be qualified as a country relatively poor in iron ore," that Siberia's "supplies of minerals are insignificant," and that the deposits of iron ore in the Urals are extremely limited. In fact, V. L. Tukholka, in the official "The Wealth of the Soviet Union," asserts:

> The iron-ore deposits in the ground of the Soviet Union amount to 1,836,000,000 tons, with an iron content of 774,000,000 tons. . . . As regards iron-ore deposits, the Soviet Union occupies a place which is not to be found among the leading countries. In size of these deposits, the Soviet Union is surpassed by the United States, France, England, the West Indies and Sweden.

Since neither Mr. Freeman nor the writer can lay claim to being a geologist, it is simply a matter of choice between American observers and the leading Russian authorities. It is encouraging to find Mr. Freeman align himself with Americans as against the Soviet experts.

The most "devastating" part of Mr. Freeman's article charges me with distorting out of text the statements of the Five Year Plan on Russia's fuel situation. Again he takes care not to cite these statements. Instead, he reproduces a sweeping generalization as to the sufficiency of the fuel resources of the Soviet Union, essentially political in nature. It was not my purpose to translate the Five Year Plan. I set out to give the public the sections of pertinent data included in the Plan but *suppressed* by the Stalinist editors in America, such as:

> The well known fact can be emphasized once more that the majority of our industrial centers do not have sufficient [fuel] bases of their own and are considerably removed from the fundamental and high-quality regions, the Kuznetzk and Donetz coal fields.
>
> With regard to fuel resources, the condition of the Soviet Union differs substantially and unfavorably for us from that of the United States, England and Germany.

Mr. Freeman cites figures to show the limited quantity of coal imported into Russia, but fails to add that the lack of fuel in the northern provinces is partly responsible for the woeful delinquency in production. He might just as well cite figures for the limited number of food parcels imported into Russia and the large quantities of grain exported, to prove that there is no famine in the southern provinces!

My "Red Smoke" is a broadside not against Soviet Russia, but against the Asiatic Tammany ruling it. I think that Mr. Bukharin could have fired a more effective broadside against it, but then, he has just been gagged and jailed by Stalin. Perhaps that is the first spark. Mr. Freeman will recall the militant legend on Lenin's "Iskra": "From a spark a flame will rise." Where there is smoke . . . there will be a conflagration.

New York City. ISAAC DON LEVINE.

SIR: My review of "Red Smoke" stated that Mr. Isaac Don Levine tears citations out of context, distorts their meaning and falsifies the main line of the Five Year Plan. These are precisely the tendencies revealed in Mr. Levine's letter.

Mr. Levine claims that several leading Soviet geologists maintain that Russia is relatively poor in iron ore. One of these, K. I. Bogdanovich, left Russia years ago. His book, "Iron Ores of Russia," was published in 1911. Hence all of Mr. Levine's conclusions based on Bogdanovich are irrelevant; they ignore the extensive geologic surveys and discoveries made by Russian geologists since the War. From Bogdanovich's pre-war data, Mr. Levine concludes that the Magnitogorsk region contains 93,000,000 tons of iron ore. But the Five Year Plan, allegedly Mr. Levine's main source of information, estimates the iron-ore resources of Magnitogorsk at 275,000,000 tons (Vol. III, p. 191).

Similarly, in citing V. L. Tukholka in "The Wealth of the Soviet Union," Mr. Levine omitted two important qualifications. First, this book was published in 1925 and contains no data later than the fiscal year 1922-23, when Soviet geological surveying had hardly begun; second, Tukholka himself cites as his authority the pre-war figures of Bogdanovich which he was compelled to use because of the extremely undeveloped state of Russian geological survey at this time. Furthermore, Mr. Levine misrepresents Tukholka's position by citing only the first paragraph of his article and omitting the significant paragraph which immediately follows it: "One should, however, keep in mind that . . . the territory of our country has as yet been investigated geologically to a very slight extent. . . ."

Perhaps Mr. Levine's most startling misrepresentation involves Professor Archangelsky. Mr. Levine's letter cites this Soviet scientist as saying that "the European part of the Soviet Union must be qualified as a country relatively poor in iron ore." Yet Mr. Levine's book, giving this quotation more fully, shows that Archangelsky added: *"If you except the Urals."* . . . The words which Mr. Levine cites may be found in reports by Archangelsky in Izvestia of June 19 and 28, 1931. But instead of proving Russia's lack of iron ore, these reports prove the precise opposite. Archangelsky says that the as yet only partially surveyed Kursk region contains billions of tons of iron ore suitable for exploitation, and adds: "These colossal accumulations of metal are in the Central Agricultural Region, 300 kilometers from Tula and 450 kilometers from Moscow. This evidently assures the almost unlimited development of metallurgy in our central industrial regions." . . . Thus, Mr. Levine's own witnesses destroy rather than support his contentions. . . .

I must repeat that Mr. Levine distorts the Five Year Plan when he says that it provides for coal imports from abroad. The official document categorically states (Vol. II, Part I, p. 117) that "the Plan is founded on the premise that the fuel provisioning of the country is based *exclusively on the utilization of its own resources without recourse to the importation of foreign coal.*" Incidentally, the Five Year Plan, allegedly Mr. Levine's chief witness, is by no means the mysterious, inaccessible and "suppressed" document he pretends it to be. The complete Russian version is as accessible to the interested reader as it is to Mr. Levine, and authoritative summaries are available in English translations.

Since Mr. Levine has not scrupled to misquote Soviet scientists and the Five Year Plan, there is no reason why I should fare better at his hands. He claims my review quoted "some unnamed and only one named American engineers without stating whether these men are geologists who conducted surveys in Russia or visitors who received their information from political sources." On the contrary, the review specifically stated that "Soviet figures regarding iron-ore deposits have been checked and verified by twenty American engineers who for the past *two years worked in the Soviet Union as advisers to the iron and steel industry.*" Had Mr. Levine looked up the reference I cited, he would have found that these Americans were in the employ of Oglebay, Norton and Company, and that they did indeed "conduct surveys" in Russia as technical assistants in the development of iron-ore deposits. The issue, then, is not between Soviet scientists and American "visitors"; it is between scientists, Soviet *and* American, whose business it is to develop natural resources on the spot, and Mr. Levine, whose business in this case seems to be to distort quotations.

New York City. JOSEPH FREEMAN.

In Defense of the Relief Administration

SIR: In The New Republic of November 2 there is an article "Stealing from the Unemployed." The Emergency Work and Relief Administration, of which I am chairman, is charged with the responsibility for work relief in the city of New York. The Commissioner of Public Welfare is charged with the responsibility for administering home relief. He is a member of the administration. We will be grateful for any charges of improper conduct on the part of employees or misuse of funds accompanied by names and dates so that an investigation can be made and proper action taken.

We both receive many communications, signed and unsigned, making various charges. These are always investigated carefully. Frequently there is no foundation for the charges. Sometimes there is and proper action follows.

I am sorry to see such a charge as this: "Nobody expects honest government at present in New York." This is a charge of bad faith and not merely a charge of inefficiency. I do not think many informed persons of New York will believe that, but The New Republic circulates throughout the United States and I should be sorry to have that charge widely spread without denial.

The legislature of New York of 1931 made a state appropriation of $20,000,000 and provided for a state administration which should have supervision over emergency relief throughout the state and pay a proportion, generally 40 percent, of moneys locally expended for work or home relief. To obtain a refund of money expended for relief, a city or county was obliged to accept the provisions of the act and to set up a local committee subject to supervision by the state. In November, 1931, the city of New York accepted the act and a committee was appointed by the mayor, headed by Mr. Cornelius N. Bliss. He happens to be a Republican and the city administration is Democratic. Associated with Mr. Bliss were men of distinction in various walks of life.

Mr. Bliss and his committee started work relief under the terms of the act on December 28 and at the same time the Commissioner of Public Welfare started the Home Relief Bureau which had been organized with the advice of the most experienced social workers in the city. Since then the Bliss Committee and its successors and the Commissioner of Public Welfare have carried on work relief and home relief and extended aid to more than 130,000 families. To organize and administer such a work is a task of almost appalling magnitude.

Work relief and home relief have been investigated by the State Temporary Emergency Relief Administration. I know that these investigations were carried out intelligently and in good faith. The state administration made helpful criticisms and suggestions, but as to both work relief and home relief it reported that there was no evidence of any discrimination or favoritism upon any ground whatever.

The gravamen of the charges in The New Republic is not that mistakes have been made and some employees have been faithless, but that the conduct of this great work has been lacking in good faith and intelligence. That charge is disproved by the report of the state administration.

New York City. LAWSON PURDY.

[Our statement which Mr. Purdy quotes in his third paragraph of course referred to the city government as a whole.—THE EDITORS.]

Decline and Fall

Decline and Fall, by Evelyn Waugh. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

Vile Bodies, by Evelyn Waugh. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

They Were Still Dancing, by Evelyn Waugh. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 317 pages. $2.50.

Black Mischief, by Evelyn Waugh. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

EVELYN WAUGH is a young writer whose first two novels were praised by good critics and neglected by the public at large. He is often confused with his older brother Alec, the industrious author of fifteen books in which it is hard to find either salt or substance; Evelyn has both. His favorite theme is the Bright Young People of 1927-28, children of King Edward's Best People, inheritors of wartime frenzy without the sobering hardships of war: they rush from parties at Lady Metroland's to parties at the Prime Minister's, to parties in a furnished room over a chemist's—everywhere parties, absinthe, caviar, checks drawn against nonexistent bank accounts, love affairs with Maharajahs and Negro singers—everywhere music and international glitter, a life enjoyed because "it's all too too utterly bogus." Evelyn Waugh describes this side of English society in a fashion that makes Aldous Huxley seem evangelical and the Sitwells pedantic.

"Decline and Fall," his first novel, is the story of a divinity student expelled from Oxford as the result of an unfortunate meeting with Sir Alastair Digby-Vane-Trumpington. Suddenly the timid and amiable young student discovers himself among the Bright Young People, engaged to Mrs. Beste-Chetwynde, about to be arrested as a white slaver: it is first-rate comedy; the author enjoys himself and his characters. In "Vile Bodies," a much better novel, many of the same people are plunged into wilder adventures, but this time a hard-boiled pathos is mingled with the wit, and there is a new mood of ennui and revulsion. The story ends abruptly with the declaration of another world war, biggest and best in history; it is as if the author had suddenly grown tired of these bright puppets, had determined to sweep them aside and abolish his own past. As an ending, it is arbitrary and disappointing, but it left one eager to read what Evelyn Waugh would write and see where he would go. . . . He wrote "Bachelor Abroad," an unimportant travelogue. Then he went to Africa and wrote "They Were Still Dancing," another book of travels.

Scratch an Englishman and, if the scratch goes deep enough, you find an Englishman. Take the brightest, hardest, most cosmopolitan of England's Bright Young People, ship him out to an English colony, expose him to any hardship, fleas, garlic, customs officers—and suddenly he goes native, goes Trollope-and-Kipling, talks of the Anglo-Saxon heritage, looks down his nose at Hindus, Somalis, French and other niggers. That is what happened, briefly, to Evelyn Waugh. In his long journey from Abyssinia to Zanzibar, thence through the East African plateaus and the Congo south to the tip of the continent, he saw perhaps as little as any traveler has ever seen, being afflicted with a congenital blindness toward landscapes and foreign customs. But he had two encounters that revealed two sides of his nature and contributed to the triumph of one over the other: he met an Armenian trader and he visited Kenya.

The Armenian represented the cosmopolitan side of him, the side expressed in his first two novels. M. Bergebedgian kept a sort of hotel at Harar, in southern Abyssinia, where he impartially cheated Europeans and natives. "I do not think I have ever met a more tolerant man; he had no prejudices or scruples of race, creed, or morals of any kind whatever; there were in his mind none of those opaque patches of inconsidered principles, it was a single translucent pool of placid doubt." M. Bergebedgian was a proper guide and companion for the Bright Young People; and the Armenians as a race, Mr. Waugh reflected, were the only genuine men of the world; in his own life or books he could not hope to equal them. "Sometimes when I envy among my friends this one's adaptability to diverse company, this one's cosmopolitan experience, this one's impenetrable armor against sentimentality and humbug, that one's freedom from conventional prejudice . . . and realize that whatever happens to me and however I deplore it, I shall never in actual fact become a 'hard-boiled man of the world' . . . then I comfort myself by thinking that if I were an Armenian I should find things easier." It was as if, in comforting himself, he had decided to put away the cosmopolitan, the sophisticated, the Armenian side of him and revert to another nature.

That nature was objectified in Kenya Colony. There, in the African highlands on the sharp edge of the equator, he found two thousand English families reliving "The Chronicles of Barset" (with just a touch of Michael Arlen) —riding to hounds, inspecting their vast estates, keeping open house for their English neighbors, amiably cuffing their servants, then motoring into Nairobi for a grand binge at the Muthaiga Club—in a word, perpetuating "the traditional life of the English squirarchy . . . to which, now that it has become a rare and exotic survival . . . we can as a race look back with unaffected esteem and regret." But Barset-on-the-Equator survives as a system of exploitation. Below the two thousand county families are nearly three million natives, who furnish them with low-priced agricultural labor and servants to be treated with "half-humorous sympathy." In an intermediate position there are forty thousand Hindus eager to exploit the natives in their own dingier fashion. The domination of the English settlers is continually threatened, like that of the slave-owning families in the South before the Civil War. Evelyn Waugh became their partisan, "going a little mad," as he said, on the color problem. He began seriously to consider "the possibility that there may be something valuable behind the indefensible and inexplicable assumption of superiority by the Anglo-Saxon race."

On his return to England, Mr. Waugh completed his book of travels and—since he is almost as industrious as his brother Alec—determined to utilize part of his adventures in a novel. The scene of "Black Mischief" is laid in a Negro empire, an imaginary island which combines Abyssinia with Zanzibar while retaining the worst features of each. The natives are described with a half-humorous contempt which suggests the author's adventures in Kenya. As for the story, it deals with Basil Seal, one of the Bright Young People. Hearing that a Negro he knew at Oxford is about to ascend the throne of Azania as Emperor Seth I, Basil takes the next boat for the island and becomes its Minister of Modernization; with a very unscrupulous and polite Armenian he runs the country. There is a lot of superior comedy; Seth is deposed and murdered; Basil's mistress, the daughter of an English diplomat, is captured by the natives. This young lady represents qualities by which the author is attracted, others by which he is obviously repelled; and her fate is more interesting psychologically than artistically. Basil makes a last hazardous journey into

he interior and discovers that he has helped to eat his mistress in a cannibal stew.

Back in London, the decade of the Bright Young People is ending. Lady Metroland has gone to America; Sir Alastair Digby-Vane-Trumpington is married without clamor and living next door to a pretty shady sort of chemist. "D'you know," says his wife after a dull evening with the former Azanian Minister, "deep down in my heart I've got a tiny fear that Basil is going to turn serious on us too." Evelyn Waugh himself has turned just a little serious; next year it wouldn't be surprising to learn that he had entered the diplomatic service or become a Member of Parliament speaking in favor of a strong imperial policy (and no misguided mercy to the Hindus). He has abandoned an attitude which produced two brilliant novels; he has resumed old loyalties which, in their day, gave themes to Kipling and Trollope; I don't know what they'll do for Evelyn Waugh. His latest novel is no fair test of their value, since it belongs to a period of transition. It is fairly amusing to read, if you don't read too carefully, but it's the sort of book a gifted author shouldn't have written, or at least should have published under a pseudonym.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

Backstairs in Europe

Not To Be Repeated: The Merry-Go-Round of Europe, Anonymous. New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith. 531 pages. $3.

NEITHER title nor subtitle does justice to one of the most valuable books on Europe in many years. While traveling abroad last summer, Mr. Ray Long persuaded half a dozen insiders in as many of the chief foreign capitals to describe anonymously Europe's outstanding personalities and their policies. If the contributors are not themselves Hearst correspondents, then Mr. Long has added to their work the Hearst touch which he mastered while editing the Cosmopolitan, for the hash all has one flavor. In elegance of style and loftiness of purpose the book does not compare with the writings of Sir Arthur Salter and Walter Lippmann—it has not even an index—but it is an honest and entertaining performance with more information and less scandal than the exposés of Washington on which it pretends to be modeled. Even the League of Nations is spared, the author of the brief concluding chapter on Geneva confining his criticisms to men like Briand who have used a great institution to promote their personal prestige.

The section on Germany is the best in the book. It explains the parliamentary deadlock, analyzes the different social groups, attacks Brüning's policy while praising his character, and points out the glaringly simple fact that the whole country is united in its detestation of the Versailles Treaty. The section on Italy does not leave Mussolini a leg to stand on and comes to the conclusion that a new revolution may be expected at any moment. Russia is treated sympathetically and France is given more credit than she usually gets for being reasonable. The opening section on Great Britain romanticizes MacDonald but ignores the British Intelligence Service, which has been in the hands of the Tories since Lloyd George fell. The spiciest chapters deal with Central Europe.

By leaving off where most studies of foreign affairs begin, "Not To Be Repeated" fills one void and escapes falling into another. It nourishes the reader with first-hand information about statesmen and their policies; it does not turn his stomach with colored pills in any of the popular shades of Red, Pink, Black or White. Mr. Long's loyalty to the more gaudy hues of Old Glory may be ultimately pernicious, but it is so much more definite than the communism, internationalism, fascism and monarchism of other enthusiasts that it has helped him to prepare a really effective book. Being convinced that America must understand the wickedness of Europe, he has been content to let certain facts speak for themselves. Not all these facts are new and not all of them can be guaranteed to turn the reader into a jumping Jingo, but they can be counted upon to provide enlightenment and stimulation.

QUINCY HOWE.

Heredity—and Its Prevention

The Scientific Basis of Evolution, by Thomas Hunt Morgan. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. 296 pages. $3.50.

Genetic Principles in Medicine and Social Science, by Lancelot Hogben. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 230 pages. $3.75.

Human Sterilization: The History of the Sexual Sterilization Movement, by J. H. Landman. New York: The Macmillan Company. 341 pages. $4.

IN HIS shrewd little essay, "What Is Darwinism?" written four years ago, Thomas Hunt Morgan correctly traced most of the disputes about evolution to "uncertainty concerning the factors" responsible for it. Himself a firm advocate of the determinist position, the distinguished American geneticist has consistently refused to befog the issues by reference to final causes, as has been done by Driesch, Lloyd Morgan, General Smuts, Bergson, J. B. S. Haldane and others of a "vitalist" complexion. Readers of his latest book will quickly learn that Professor Morgan rigorously discriminates between the *facts* of evolution, which are readily accessible to trained observation and controlled experiment, and their ultimate *explanation*, which may be a metaphysical but is certainly not a present scientific need. They will further discover that the mechanist attitude so disturbing to the naïve is simply an economizing of thought which might otherwise run to seed in the unkempt garden of a-priori speculations and of what Morris R. Cohen has called "crypto-rationalism."

Professor Morgan's book is of great value also for its lucid and skillful presentation of the material that is basic to genetics. In its closely packed and well documented pages, helped out by numerous illustrations, the facts bearing on the science are reviewed, with frequent references to the experimental work on plants and animals. The immense significance of the chromosomes and their gene-contents (Morgan's special field) is well brought out, and there are excellent discussions of such pivotal questions as variations and mutations, sex linkage, embryonic development, hormonic and glandular activity, and that *bête-noire* of biologists, the inheritance of acquired characters. In his summing up of the larger human and social implications of genetics, Professor Morgan, while granting "the plasticity of man's physical and especially of his psychic nature," takes issue with the premature optimism—and pessimism—of some of the die-hard Galtonian eugenicists. In particular he warns against the delusions of "pure" stocks, racial animus, superior types and other emotional contaminations of a subject which, largely through his own brilliant labors, "has become sufficiently advanced to rest the case for its acceptance on the same scientific procedure that

has led to the great advance in chemistry and physics."

Lancelot Hogben's valuable monograph is inspired by a similar attitude. "The operation of the hereditary mechanism," he says, "is subject to publicly demonstrable laws. The terms 'good' and 'evil' invariably imply private values." Thus he reminds us that these amazing atoms of biology, the *genes,* are as little responsive to ethical values as the possibly related atoms of physics and chemistry. When we read further:

> If social genetics is to take its place among the exact sciences, it is important that biologists should undertake the self-denying ordinance of making it quite evident whether they are speaking in their capacity as biologists or in their capacity as private citizens,

we will, if we are wise, be grateful that so keen a mind as Professor Hogben's should concern itself with these things.

His latest volume will mean very little to those who like their information in "outline" or tabloid form, and very much to those who actually want, and will make the effort to obtain, genuine knowledge. In its compact, well documented and well written pages will be found a wealth of material in certain fields where genetics vitally concerns society. The problem of twin resemblances; gene-substitution, particularly in relation to disease conditions and mental deficiency; the "blood group" theories of Landsteiner, Snyder and Bernstein and their effect upon heredity; genetic selection in social groups and the extreme complexity of the factors involved; the ubiquitous and equivocal problem of race; the decline of populations and its genetic significance, if any—these are some of the questions treated by Hogben with fine professional skill, dry humor and a terrifying profusion of mathematical and statistical analyses. From these last there is, unfortunately for the layman, no possible escape: genetics, by aspiring to the rank of a science, submits to the yoke of precision—and who says precision says mathematics.

Writing in the last chapter as a private citizen, Hogben suggests the term "genetic therapy" in place of the much-abused Galtonian "eugenics," which, as he shrewdly remarks, "has become identified with ancestor worship, anti-semitism, color prejudice, snobbery and obstruction to educational reform." This leads to a very intelligent discussion of the medical and sociological implications of genetic research, particularly as regards the questions of race discrimination, environmental influences, miscegenation and mental deficiency—on all of which issues the author maintains a reasoned neutrality highly deserving of emulation by reformers, educators and statesmen.

Professor Hogben's remarks on sterilization as a technique of social control, especially as practised in the United States, add to the timeliness and value of Professor Landman's volume on this subject. The author, attached to the faculty of City College, has assembled an extraordinarily large body of information relating to this movement in the United States, and, although he employs the term "eugenics" freely, it is clear that he gives to it a cautious and non-invidious meaning.

The titles of the five parts into which the book is divided indicate its range and thoroughness. "Eugenics and Social Legislation" includes a brief history of eugenic reform, methods of population control, statistics on the mentally defective and a detailed abstract of sterilization laws in the United States. "Human Sterilization and the Courts" gives an account of three test cases and summarizes the present legal status of the movement; "The Biology of Human Sterilization" analyzes the various types of defectives and psychotics, and reviews the evidence for and against inheritance, Mendelian and neo-Mendelian. This important section is followed by one on "The Surgery of Human Sterilization" which describes the main operations for each sex, their comparative merits and their after-effects. From the medical point of view the subject is treated in a much too perfunctory manner, but here, as throughout the book, numerous references to authorities will compensate for omissions in the text.

A final part on "Human Sterilization and Social Policy" considers such questions as, Whom shall we sterilize? the status of therapeutic, punitive, malicious and voluntary sterilization; the genetic competence or, more usually, incompetence of physicians, psychologists and psychiatrists; and the administration of sterilization laws. The author specifically recommends that "every state should have a department of eugenics and euthenics, officiated over by a capable eugenicist and sociologist"; cases of proposed sterilization would be submitted to "a jury of disinterested citizens," whose decision, presumably guided by sound expert opinion, would be binding on the judge. It is recognized that great care must be shown in discriminating between those who are merely socially maladjusted and the true "cacogenics," those who would transmit socially dangerous qualities to their offspring. In practice this would often be extremely difficult. What, for example, would be the correct verdict for such a family as the Lesters, in Erskine Caldwell's "Tobacco Road"? HAROLD WARD.

The Osage Nation

Wah'kon-tah, by John Joseph Mathews. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 359 pages, illustrated. $2.50.

THERE is no stranger story in history than that of the Osage Indians. Some phases of it have often been garbled by alien writers—Edna Ferber, for example—and it is especially fitting that one of the tribe's own members should appear with an authoritative book about his people. Although his narrative is based on careful notes left by the late Major Laban J. Miles, who became Osage agent in 1878, the material is treated in a distinguished prose style that marks Mr. Mathews, in his first book, as a writer of national rather than local prominence. It would have been difficult for any historian to have made the Osage saga uninteresting, but Mr. Mathews' straightforward narrative is infused with life and beauty.

Sunday-supplement readers will recollect that the Osage tribe, through the discovery of oil on their reservation, became the richest people per capita in the world. But this Mr. Mathews considers as a tawdry, pathetic epilogue to the glories of a proud and beleaguered nation reaching always toward "Wah'kon-tah"—in succinct English, "that which the children of the Earth do not comprehend as they travel the roads of the Earth and which becomes clear to them only when they have passed on to the Great Mysteries." The depth of the Osages' poetic feeling is peculiarly revealed in their personal names: Wah Tze Moh In, the famous Osage orator whom the whites called Bacon Rind, was really "Star That Travels." Typical Osage names were "Eagle That Dreams," "Moon Head" and "Arrow Going Home."

Bit by bit, as Mr. Mathews focuses the story through his central figure, the sympathetic, intelligent Major Miles —a pointed anecdote here, a scrap of dialogue there

(Mathews' ear for colloquial expression, both white and Indian, is extraordinary), a keen descriptive passage or a bit of revealing action—there emerges the communal character of a noble people. The author never romanticizes, but the reader is inclined to reflect sadly that the white man scarcely improved upon the Osage mode of life. "Wah'kon-tah" is a November choice of the Book of the Month Club. It is illustrated with ten pencil drawings by May Todd Aaron, who is a resident of Pawhuska, the Osage capital. GEORGE MILBURN.

Cleveland's Public Life

Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage, by Allan Nevins. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. 845 pages. $5.

MR. NEVINS' book is a distinguished piece of political biography, exhaustive, apparently, in its research, scholarly and skillful in its management of a great wealth and variety of material, and frank as well as judicious in awarding honors and demerits. The Cleveland who emerges from Mr. Nevins' examination is certainly not a super-statesman in either domestic or international affairs, nor a commanding intellectual force in the profounder aspects of politics. The problems that tested his powers most exactingly were either immediate, calling for prompt decision and vigorous action, or such as seemed immediate in the circumstances in which they were presented; but Cleveland could be hasty as well as energetic, and superficial as well as informed. What gave him something of the quality of greatness was his courage in the face of formidable opposition or at moments of widespread popular delusion and hysteria, and a stalwart honesty where selfishness and corruption needed to be attacked. It is significant of the low level of American culture in the period of his presidencies that some of the episodes which touched most closely the welfare and repute of the nation were those in which his course was most bitterly assailed, and that popular applause was quickest and loudest for other acts which, as we now see them, are at least open to serious doubt.

Cleveland's troubles, Mr. Nevins remarks, "never came as single spies but as battalions." Few of the Presidents have had so many serious troubles to deal with. Civil service reformers alternately praised and blamed, but Mr. Nevins points out that Cleveland was "a strong believer in government by party," that he "never made any really sweeping promises to the reformers," and that some of his bad appointments were due to "inexperience and reliance on poor advisers." One gathers that the reformers themselves, like political liberals generally, were more critical than helpful, and that Cleveland's anxiety lest his party should be disrupted was emphasized as weakness where he was recognizing a practical political necessity. The pension-veto messages, Mr. Nevins thinks, sometimes went too far; they "were so good that it was a pity he weakened their effect by occasional gibes or ridicule." The famous tariff message of 1887, on the other hand, seems to Mr. Nevins to have been chiefly notable for its "unflinching attack upon one kind of duties—the duties upon necessities"; and the praise which he bestows upon Cleveland's course with Hawaii is for its demand for honesty in international relations, and not for Cleveland's abandonment of his earlier opposition to imperialism or for the politically impracticable plan of repudiating the Dole government.

Mr. Nevins' searching study of the Pullman strike leaves Richard Olney a sorry figure. "Any observer who possesses a due sympathy for the rights of labor must feel that Cleveland was led sadly astray at several points by his impetuous and bellicose Attorney General." Olney planned a legal situation in which an injunction could be used, and although Mr. Nevins thinks that the injunction was "proper under the circumstances," it was "quite improperly drastic in its terms," since the right to outlaw physical violence did not carry with it a right to outlaw the strike. The use of federal troops was "premature," for although Governor Altgeld "did not move fast enough, the President moved too fast." Olney's "unfortunate influence" was again shown in the Venezuelan imbroglio, a rasping message much of whose "truculent language" was Olney's, not only involving "an unjustifiable risk of war" and precipitating a stock-market break, but starting also a jingo wave which gave the Monroe Doctrine a new extension and swept the country toward imperialism in a way which Mr. Nevins thinks Cleveland found "thoroughly distasteful."

The silver controversy and its related financial issues have been too attentively studied to allow Mr. Nevins to add much of importance to what was already known about them, but he nevertheless brings out both the strength and the weaknesses of Cleveland's course. His account of the income-tax case, "one of the unhappiest decisions" of the Supreme Court, is enriched, in an appendix as well as in the text, by interesting evidence tending to show that it was Justice Brewer, and not Justice Shiras as has commonly been said, whose change of mind caused the tax to be set aside on a rehearing.

Mr. Nevins passes more lightly than does another recent biographer, Denis T. Lynch, over some of the personal incidents of Cleveland's life which the scandalmongers magnified, and instead lets slip no opportunity to dwell upon what was fine in Cleveland's character and tastes, his power, his sincerity and, most of all, his courage. The result is a balanced estimate, novel in some of its features but grounded in learning, reflection and a determination to be fair. The generosity of the picture will perhaps be challenged, but not, I think, the essential accuracy of its lines. WILLIAM MACDONALD.

Book Notes

MEMOIRS

A FRONTIER LADY, by Sarah Eleanor Royce. *Edited by Ralph Henry Gabriel. New Haven: Yale University Press. 159 pages. $2.*

Accounts have been written of many early journeys across the plains by those who accomplished them, and California is rich in a personal literature of the gold rush. Few of these memoirs have the almost classic quality of that written from her "pilgrimage diary" by Sarah Royce, the mother of Josiah Royce, thirty years after the close of the epoch. Characteristic events seem to have lain deep in her memory, there to be transformed by something more than personal emotion into generic portraiture. The journey of the Royces with their little girl lay across the plains by wagon to Fort Bridger and Salt Lake City; they traveled late in the season; many vicissitudes were met and overcome by the way. Mrs. Royce has told of her wish to leave a little heap of stones—sign of Ebenezer, stone of help—in the mountain wilderness at that high point in the Rockies where the tiny caravan passed through great solitudes from the Atlantic to the Pacific slope; the brief account is deeply affecting, both at the moment and in retrospect, as are others of simple revelation. There were no stones, not a pebble even, not a stick, a shrub, a tree, within reach. Before them in the Carson desert was the possibility of

death by thirst or starvation; and the Sierras might soon be barricaded by snow. A last slender chance was finally seized, and California reached in late October, '49. Life at a camp near Hangtown followed, at Sacramento during the great flood, in San Francisco while it was still a cloth and paper town. Finally Grass Valley claimed the family, where Josiah Royce was born. One could wish that the narrative had been sustained through a few later years when Mrs. Royce kept a little private school there: but this perhaps would have been another story. These remembrances maintain a bold and natural outline to the end, with the unconscious achievement of style.

History

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, by Pierre Gaxotte. *Translated with an introduction by W. A. Phillips. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 430 pages. $3.*

In a work which makes no claim to the independent study of sources, M. Gaxotte sets himself to "debunking" the French Revolution from the Catholic-Royalist-Classicist point of view. To sneer at an earthquake may be diverting, but scarcely profound; certainly it does not illuminate us as to the nature and underlying causes of earthquakes. With shallow irony and but little respect for documents, this historian judges the Encyclopedists who advanced revolutionary doctrines as "busybodies" or "ignoramuses." Rousseau is psychoanalyzed as a "sordid soul" invoking chaos out of personal spleen. Robespierre, in his attempt to build a socialist republic, is seen as the fool of revolution. The capture of the Bastille is an affair of the criminal elements, rather than an action in defense of the National Assembly by the people of Paris who had learned that it was to be arrested. Behind all these revolutionary incidents, the late Albert Mathiez, in his great history, revealed the pressure of a nascent capitalism; and Gaxotte pursues this thesis, in a sense contrary to the socialist sense given by Mathiez, in order to glorify the Bourbons as defenders of spiritual things! One thing that seems to be forgotten by all the latter-day Royalists, including M. Gaxotte, is how their forefathers, the nobles of the eighteenth century, participated in great force and *con amore* in the first efforts to tear down the old regime.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF HISPANIC AMERICA, by J. Fred Rippy. *New York: F. S. Crofts and Company. 597 pages. $5.*

Professor Rippy of Duke University begins this broad survey of Latin America with a description of conditions in the southern half of our hemisphere during the colonial period. He then discusses the achievement of independence and the historical development of each of the leading nations. A final section deals with the international relations of Latin America—particularly the rivalry between European powers for control. Chapters on Hispanic-Americanism and Pan-Americanism led to a discussion of why Latin Americans distrust the United States. Professor Rippy does not attempt to deal with the conflict of cultures in the Western hemisphere, as does Waldo Frank; nor does he give more than an extremely elementary treatment of the fundamental political issues between the United States and its southern neighbors. Sometimes he falls into errors, such as stating that the United States practised military intervention in Costa Rica in 1919. Nevertheless the volume on the whole is well balanced and well written. It should make an admirable text for a college course in Latin American history.

Philosophy

ESSAYS ON THE LOGIC OF BEING, by Francis S. Haserot. *New York: The Macmillan Company. 641 pages. $4.*

The persistent problems that every student of philosophy must continually be prepared to state and answer—the nature of being, of universals, of space-time, the value of pain, etc.—are once again stated and answered in these essays with a good deal of metaphysical sense and directness; the answers are finally concentrated into a complete *Weltanschauung*. Not alone in method, but in content, the essays bear a striking resemblance to Spinoza. The nature of reality for Spinoza and the author is neutral; for the author, being and the truth are relations obtaining within the structure of reality, and Spinoza might easily, discounting terminologies, be construed to agree with the position. The book exhibits softness only in the later stages, when the more hazy

roblems of "esthetic expression, appreciation" are dealt with. As contribution to metaphysics, these essays are notable.

FICTION

A BROKEN JOURNEY, by Morley Callaghan. *New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.*

Morley Callaghan's latest novel is similar to his early work, ut it is better organized and the successive climaxes are driven ome with greater effect. The story revolves around a trip that Marion and her lover and his brother take into the Canadian wilderness, and the tragic sequence arises from an accident in which the lover's spine is injured. The prose is pleasing; the hysical appearance of the country is communicated by mention f apt and unusual details of the scene. But the characters are lmost unbelievably passive; they have no control over their ctions and no desire to have control over them. The element f drama is consequently missing; at best the characters are mere eceptacles for sensuous impressions and there is something cold nd glassy about them, even in their moments of greatest intensity.

THE SCANDAL MONGER, by Emile Gauvreau. *New York: The Macaulay Company. $2.*

Mr. Gauvreau, formerly editor of The New York Graphic nd now editor of The Mirror, introduced scandal columnists to greedy public; it may be assumed, therefore, that his story con- ains its minimum of verisimilitude. The scandal monger of the ovel, Roddy Ratcliffe (born Willie Goldfarb), bitter enemy of is editor Bill Gaston, is "not and never would be," Mr. Gauvreau careful to state, "a Winchell." Ratcliffe has "libidinous, watery yes . . . a clammy grin . . . a scavenging beak"; he is "a an without character, a blusterer, a coward and an ignoramus"; nd the havoc he works is not only catastrophic; it is also a ecognition of the slimy mire into which the American people have nthusiastically sunk, for without their public (to be numbered in he millions) Roddy Ratcliffe and his prototypes would have to etire to the unhealthy obscurity which is their birthright. Inspired y a cheap subject, the novel is cheaply written on the whole, hough in one episode—the tragic death of the editor's mistress— Mr. Gauvreau shows a gratifying power to evoke true emotion.

Contributors

ELMER DAVIS, who migrated to New York City from the Middle West, specialized in Greek at college and is the author of "The Keys of the City," "Morals for Moderns" and several other books of fiction and criticism.

MARY ARBUCKLE, who came to New York some years ago from Waco, Texas, has written stories for various magazines and during the past year acted as an investigator for the Home Relief Bureau in New York City.

MICHAEL FARBMAN is an economist and writer on international problems whose most recent book, "Piatiletka: Russia's Five Year Plan," was published in The New Republic Dollar Series.

NATHANIEL WEYL is studying for a Ph.D. degree at Columbia University.

ALVIN JOHNSON is director of the New School for Social Research, an associate editor of "The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences," contributing editor of The New Republic and a member of the editorial council of The Yale Review.

QUINCY HOWE has been editor of The Living Age for the past three years, in which position he selects, translates and reprints articles from the foreign press.

HAROLD WARD, who has contributed reviews to various literary journals, is a student of the method and philosophy of science.

GEORGE MILBURN, author of "Oklahoma Town" and "Heel, Toe, and a 1, 2, 3, 4," which many critics regarded as the best short story of 1932, has contributed frequently to Harper's, Vanity Fair and The American Mercury. He was formerly a resident of Pawhuska, Oklahoma, in the Osage Nation.

WILLIAM MACDONALD, formerly on the editorial staffs of The Nation and The Freeman, is the author of "A New Constitution for a New America" and other books.

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