The New REPUBLIC

September 28, 1938

The Great Surrender

Editorial

FIFTEEN CENTS

Yes...the brewers *do* mean business

AN EDITORIAL BY WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE . . .
in the Emporia (Kan.) Daily Gazette

BEER STATESMANSHIP

It has become obvious ever since the repeal of prohibition that the American brewers were determined not to make the mistake that the brewers made in pre-prohibition days. Then they tied up tightly with the distillers and beer was classed indiscriminately with liquor. The brewers are now trying to get away from the distillers, and a year ago they adopted an independent code, pledged themselves to "conduct their business in conformity with established laws and in co-operation with the authorities." Further, they pledged themselves to support "duly constituted authorities for the elimination of anti-social conditions" in the beer business. They pledged themselves to get behind the "great body of retailers who sell beer as law abiding citizens" and also to back up authorities in preventing "beer sales to minors or persons who have drunk to excess." The code aimed high.

It was obvious that Kansas is the one place in the United States where the United Brewers' Industrial Foundation, which was back of the code, with offices in New York, could come and find a fertile field to try out the code. They sent a representative of the Foundation to Kansas. He went to work in a practical manner. He surveyed the beer business in the large counties of Kansas where, if anywhere, the code would crack. He went to the sheriffs and the county attorneys in these counties. He went to the Attorney General of Kansas and told the law enforcing officers everywhere that he wanted their help and he wanted to help them clean up questionable beer parlors, places where they sold beer to minors, to drunks, where they kept open after the hours set down by the local authorities, where the beer dealers permitted hard drinks to be sold or sold them, and in general, this agent of the brewers back of the code made a genuine and certainly an effective campaign in Kansas to weed out the bad practices which tend to grow up where hard illegal liquor mixes itself with the sale of beer.

The Gazette knows definitely two cases where evidence was furnished by the Brewers' Foundation to close up certain whiskey joints. With the full co-operation of the local officers and the representatives of the Brewers' Foundation, public enforcement of the Kansas law controlling the sale of beer can be had. That co-operation should be given.

There is no reason why the beer business should not be conducted as any other commercial business —breakfast food, toothpaste, tenderized ham, packaged coffee or shoes. But it must get away and evidently is trying to get away from the stigma that always will rest upon hard liquor.

The representatives of the Brewers' Foundation in Kansas wrote to The Gazette:

"We stand ready to co-operate with Kansas officials in the enforcement of the law. We have laid before officials evidence of violations of the liquor laws and some definite results have been attained. We pledge our continued efforts."

This is not idle persiflage. Apparently the Brewers' Foundation means business.

(from issue of April 13, 1938)

Here's what we promised:

One pledge from The Brewers Code: "We pledge our support to the duly constituted authorities for the elimination of anti-social conditions wherever they may surround the sale of beer to the consumer."

Here's what we're doing:

As one example (and there are others): our investigators gathered evidence in Kansas that some retail outlets were using beer licenses as screens to sell bootleg liquor. The Attorney General cooperated, prosecuted and won. William Allen White, great American editor, then published the above editorial.

It's true . . . "anti-social conditions" exist in only a tiny fraction of the quarter-million places where beer is sold. Even so, we cannot hope to "police" them . . . unless you too will cooperate.

Here's what You *can do:*

1. Follow up *your* local authorities. Just insist that they enforce *existing laws* against illegal sales of liquor, operation of illicit resorts, sales after hours, sales to minors, sales to persons who have drunk to excess.
2. Patronize only respectable retail outlets.
3. Show that you are behind us . . . buy only beer or ale made by Foundation members . . . identified in their advertising by the symbol shown here.

Do these things, and you help the bulwark of moderation . . . beer . . . and the public interest as well.

UNITED BREWERS INDUSTRIAL FOUNDATION

Correspondence is invited with groups and individuals everywhere who are interested in the brewing industry and its responsibilities. Address: United Brewers Industrial Foundation, 21 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

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A Long Shadow Forward

The action of Britain and France in yielding to Hitler over Czechoslovakia will cast a long shadow forward over the world. This is true even if immediate war does not result. Already, repercussions have been registered in other places. Other minorities in Czechoslovakia are seeking to repeat the amazing success of the Sudetens. Hungary is reported to have asked Hitler's aid, and it is not at all unlikely that in a few weeks Der Führer may be delivering fresh ultimata to Prague. A German newspaper mentions Slovaks, Poles, Hungarians, Ukrainians and Ruthenians as among the victims of oppression who must be aided. Mussolini is known to take a lively interest in the process of remaking the map of Europe in which Hitler has had such an unexpected success. Belgium is deeply troubled about her frontier provinces, Eupen and Malmedy, which contain German-speaking inhabitants who have long been agitating for *Anschluss* with Germany. In every country, the Fascist movement has been encouraged. We may expect all Southeastern Europe to swing away from the democracies and toward the Rome-Berlin axis. In Spain, the news of the last few days is of course disheartening to the Loyalists and a cause for rejoicing among the Rebels. In the Far East, Japan will be encouraged by this evidence that she picked the winning side. All over the world, the forces of cruelty, falsehood and barbarism will take the offensive.

Is Germany Self-Sufficient?

Is Germany now self-sufficient? Hitler boasted in his Nuremberg speech that she is, but American technicians who ought to know are highly skeptical. Science Service asked a group of leading experts attending the recent conference of the American Chemical Society, and reports their replies. They said that in spite of Hitler's remarks, Germany's condition is serious. Her biggest lack is petroleum, which she seeks to make up by taking oil from coal through hydrogenation. In peacetime, she is able to supply only 80 percent of her needs, and under war stress this would drop to 25 percent. Her reserve stocks would be used up in a few months. Two metals essential for making steel are tungsten and molybdenum, both of which Germany lacks. She buys them from Sweden and could be hampered either by a lack of foreign exchange or by the hostility of the Swedes to her policy. During war, she would consume about five times as much iron ore as she can produce. Another serious lack in the German economy, as it was during the Great War, is fats. German officials admit they are already gravely disturbed by the shortage of fats, especially those used in the baked-goods industries. They have been trying oils from peanuts, soy beans and even palm oil and whale oil. None has been satisfactory and most of them, of course, have to be imported. Some of the experts consulted believe that the Germans have already been affected by changes in their diet dictated by the state, and by general food shortage. Hitler's boast was false; either he lied or he does not know the facts.

Tom Wolfe

He had more friends, he had fewer enemies than any other writer of our day. And there must have been thousands who had met him only once or twice, yet

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PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1938, IN THE U.S.A. BY EDITORIAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 40 EAST 49TH ST., NEW YORK, N. Y. ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER, NOVEMBER 6, 1914, AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, N. Y., UNDER THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1879

read the last news about him with a deep sense of personal loss. He talked well, but even more he was a creative listener, with an eagerness that flattered everybody and a bulk that made him respond like multitudes. He was so big and seemed so robust that it is amazing to hear of his death from a disease popularly connected with starveling poets. Pneumonia reopened an old scar in his lungs; the tubercular infection spread through his system, attacked the brain; and two operations at Johns Hopkins came too late to save him.

On one side of his literary self, Tom Wolfe was a dithyrambic poet, a Whitman turned inwards through reading James Joyce. He wrote prose-poetic hymns to America and the Artist in a language copied from Shakespeare—indeed, there are long passages in his first two novels that fall into iambic pentameters, like an Elizabethan tragedy. That is the side of his work most praised and most likely to perish. On the other side, he was an objective novelist with a talent for comic or tragic distortion that goes back to Dickens; that is the side which produced his great portraits, like the Gant family (excepting Eugene) and Uncle Bascom Hawke. There are some indications that this objective side of him was developing in his later work, though we can't be certain until Harpers edit and publish the million-word manuscript of the novel or group of novels he left behind him. Whatever that manuscript proves to be, Tom Wolfe is already a legend.

Peace Among the Auto Workers

It is the best of good news that a compromise has been reached between the warring factions in the United Auto Workers' union. The settlement is the work of Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and Philip Murray of the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee. The question of reinstatement for the suspended or dismissed union officials goes to Messrs. Hillman and Murray for decision, and future disputes will be referred to a special joint committee, including spokesmen for President Martin. The CIO formally recognizes the autonomy of the UAW, which in turn accepts its position in the CIO. The details of the settlement are less important than the fact of peace. From the beginning, the quarrel was chiefly a clash of personalities and not a real struggle over issues. Since it endangered the life of the UAW and perhaps even imperiled the CIO itself, we rejoice that it has been settled. We hope the union will now go to work on its next big job: Henry Ford.

Still a Mess

The Dies Committee investigation of "un-American activities" continues to be a mess. We used that word in our issue of August 31, and we see no reason to change our opinion. The committee assumes every man to be guilty until he is proved innocent and lifts not a finger to help him present that proof. It makes itself a sounding board for every kind of allegation, true, false or crazy, and mostly the second and third.

A subcommittee has been in New York "looking into" the Federal Writers' Project. It "discovered" what its members evidently assumed in advance, that the Project is honeycombed with Communists, and that some of them have been engaged in fomenting revolution. Apparently the members of this committee have actually never heard of the United Front and do not know that, years ago, the Communists gave up all thought for the present of bringing about a revolution, and decided instead to join with all possible democratic forces to fight the rising tide of fascism.

Typical of the committee's methods are the actions of its investigator who went to the headquarters of the FWP. We learn from reliable sources that he made no attempt to see anyone in authority or to gather information that is readily available in printed or typewritten form. Instead, he rushed from one underling to another, collaring each and demanding to know: "Who are you? What do you do?" Snatching a list of field workers he asked: "Where is this worker? What is he doing? How do you know he is working and not parading around some place with a banner?" The photographers' dark room filled him with Stygian suspicion. The proceedings before the full subcommittee were equally absurd. A couple of FWP workers, apparently subpoenaed at random, were asked a weird flock of unanswerable questions. One of them, a timekeeper, was asked whether he had read "American Stuff," which one of the committee vouchsafed was "a lousy book." We should be interested to know how the committee member found this out. The Dies Committee investigation is merely an attempt to smear the New Deal with radicalism, and to enhance the political stature of Representative Dies.

Fit to Print

Readers of George Seldes' article in The New Republic for September 7 on "Treason on The Times" may be interested in another incident portraying how the best of our dailies sometimes colors the news. On Friday and Saturday, September 16 and 17, there was held in New York a convention to organize a New York State Industrial Union Council of the CIO. Some 800 delegates attended, representing about 700,000 union members. Delegates present representing the American Newspaper Guild—reporters themselves—bought an early Saturday edition of The Times and were astonished to read on its front page, top-of-column account of the affair, the following headline: "Lehman Ovation by CIO Rebukes Labor Party Heads." Governor Lehman had addressed the convention and, like all the other speakers, had received cordial applause. When he finished, a delegate in the back of the room had greeted him as "our next Senator"—an outburst which was met with four or five hand-claps.

These incidents had been interpreted by The Times as a rebuke to the American Labor Party heads who had refused to endorse Mr. Lehman's senatorial candidacy, and were picked out for emphasis in the headline, although the convention itself had no such intention. What The Times overlooked, as was pointed out to its city editor by protesting delegates, was that the convention had, at the same session, unanimously endorsed the Labor Party and had voted it financial support. This fact was inserted inconspicuously in The Times story in subsequent editions, but the headline was not changed. The first-edition headline might have been an accident, but persistence in the error after the facts were known indicates deliberate distortion.

On Saturday morning the Newspaper Guild introduced a resolution on Freedom of the Press which carried a passage opposing "distortion of the news by newspaper owners." In discussion of this resolution, what had happened on The Times was made clear. The Times news account on the next day carried this resolution in full, with a summary of the discussion. The paper, under pressure, to be sure, returned to fair play.

Organized Medicine Comes Along

The House of Delegates of the American Medical Association, meeting in extraordinary session, inched forward on the question of social medicine. It endorsed parts of the government's program advanced at the National Health Conference, with the important exception of compulsory health insurance. In place of that, it favored the voluntary hospital insurance which is already an accomplished fact in many cities throughout the country, the expansion of workmen's compensation laws to cover occupational diseases, and a voluntary form of cash indemnity insurance to meet the heavier costs of illness. It still does not favor group or coöperative health plans which involve giving salaries to doctors instead of paying them by the piece. It insists that, to avoid the bogey of political control from Washington, the recommended extension of free services financed by public funds be entirely under local auspices. And it throws doubt on the demonstrated need for additional hospitals in some sections of the country. The Association has only itself to blame for having missed the opportunity for leadership in this field.

Hoboken Justice

Herman Matson, chairman of the Hoboken Workers' Defense League, made a speech recently in which he said that relief in Hoboken is inadequate—a statement true about that city and about almost every other town in the United States. Before Matson could finish what he had to say, eight men ganged up on him and beat him into silence. The police let the eight thugs escape and then arrested Matson for inciting a riot. Two plausible explanations are offered for the incident. The first is that Matson's assailants were acting for the corrupt regime of the McFeely family, which has dominated Hoboken's political life almost as long as Frank Hague has ruled Jersey City and by much the same tactics. This explanation would account for the capricious action of the police. The second theory is that A. F. of L. goons beat Matson because they knew he was about to describe a 40-percent wage kick-back the longshoremen have to pay the A. F. of L. hiring halls for the privilege of keeping their jobs. We have no way of knowing which, if either, of these solutions fits the crime. But apparently the way to get your head bashed in is to speak in Hoboken for a decent order.

Shasta for Our Collection

People collect string, match covers, penguins, swizzle-sticks, blondes and covered bridges. We collect dams. As soon as it is built, which won't be for several years, we are going to collect the Shasta Dam on the Sacramento River in Northern California. The federal government is building it for us at a cost of $100,700,000 and it will be the second largest structure in the world, bigger than Boulder Dam on the Colorado River, bigger than Bonneville on the Columbia and bigger than Wilson on the Tennessee. Shasta will contain 5,610,000 cubic yards of concrete, which will make it bigger, also, than the Great Pyramid of Egypt. Only the Grand Coulee Dam, prize package in our collection, which the government is finishing on the upper Columbia, will be larger. Shasta Dam will serve a number of purposes: the production of hydro-electric power, regulation of the floods and flow of the Sacramento River, irrigation and land reclamation. Work on the site is scheduled to begin soon and contracts have already been let to Pacific Constructors. One of the nicest things about Shasta is what the engineers are planning to do with the Southern Pacific Railroad, which now runs through the Sacramento River canyon. While the dam is being built, the trains will be run through the Shoofly tunnel. Later a new roadbed will be laid and the tunnel will be used as its diggers intended: to divert part of the waters of the Sacramento River.

Record of a Week

The following is the chronology of the chief events during what may prove to have been the most fateful week in human history:

Tuesday, September 13: Czechoslovakia imposed martial law in several Sudeten German areas. Riots had broken out immediately after Hitler's speech at Nuremberg. Henlein, Sudeten leader, presented a six-hour ultimatum demanding that martial law be rescinded. The Czech government ignored the ultimatum.

Wednesday: There was widespread violence in the Sudeten regions, which gave every evidence of being deliberately planned. Prime Minister Chamberlain announced he would fly to Berchtesgaden.

Thursday: Chamberlain and Hitler conferred for

three hours, after which the Prime Minister announced he would return to London and see Hitler again in a few days. The Czech government ordered that Henlein be arrested as a traitor and he fled to Germany. Because of firmness by the government, the riots—actually an abortive uprising—were suppressed.

Friday: Chamberlain returned to London and the Cabinet met the next day. More than 23,000 Sudetens were said to have fled across the border into Germany.

Saturday: The British Cabinet met twice. There were reports from Prague that Czechoslovakia would fight to resist a plebiscite.

Sunday: Britain and France "recommended" to Czechoslovakia a surrender to Germany of the preponderantly German-speaking areas, after an exchange of populations to protect the Czech and anti-Nazi minorities. Czechoslovakia was asked to abandon her present alliances in return for a military guarantee of her new frontier by Great Britain, France and possibly other countries. A cantonal system would be set up like that of Switzerland. Mussolini, perhaps knowing in advance that the democracies would yield, announced that Italy had made up her mind where she would stand. It was assumed that this meant with Germany.

Monday: The Czechs deliberated whether they should accept the terms laid down for the dismemberment of their country. It was reported that Prague had asked France whether she would stand by her alliance if Czechoslovakia decided to refuse.

Tuesday: Chamberlain announced he would leave tomorrow to confer again with Hitler at Godesberg. Armed clashes occurred on the Czech-German border.

The Great Surrender

IT IS DIFFICULT to speak of what has happened in Europe during the past few days without allowing emotion to blind realistic judgment. The decision of the British and French governments to sacrifice Czechoslovakia to the Nazi Moloch seems like the ultimate in cowardice and faithlessness, which it is impossible to justify while retaining a shred of self-respect or trust in the supposed integrity of democracy. But, before attempting to evaluate this action, it is essential to do our best to understand what could have justified it in the minds of those responsible and unhappy statesmen who had to make the decision.

Undoubtedly they told themselves that the sacrifice was necessary in order to prevent immediate war between Germany and their own nations. They must have known that in such a war Germany would be defeated, and that a reasonable man in Hitler's place would know it too, and would not take the risk. But they may have believed that a psychologically abnormal fanatic like Der Führer would not be held back by such considerations. They may also have felt that the agitation of the Sudeten Germans had now gone so far that the question could never be solved without their annexation to Germany, that anything less than this would leave an open sore spreading poison through Europe. And they solaced themselves with the hope that, by enforcing this sacrifice on the Czechs, they could satisfy Hitler and elicit agreements that would safeguard peace in the future.

On such a basis, impressive arguments may be erected. Those responsible for the welfare of millions must not be sentimental or stand on personal dignity. A great war cannot solve anything, but is sure to bring evils worse than those it was fought to cure or prevent. The existence of the Czech nation, even the lives and happiness of its citizens, weigh less in the ultimate balance than the lives and values that a world war would destroy. Though it may seem cowardly to yield before the threat of force, there is bravery in being a coward if the net result in terms of human happiness is better than the outcome of resistance.

This, we believe, is a fair summary of the logically and ethically respectable reasons that could be advanced for the decision of the Chamberlain and Daladier governments. If we hold these considerations in mind, what may fairly be said on the other side? First of all there is the doubt—and the very large doubt—whether the judgment of the British and French rulers is correct concerning the need for the sacrifice. All competent observers are agreed that Germany is not ready to fight a coalition consisting of Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, with the possible addition of minor allies such as Rumania and Jugoslavia. This would be true even if Germany could count on help from Italy, Japan, and possibly Poland and Hungary. It is also reported by those who have the best information that the General Staff of the Reich is fully cognizant of this situation, does not desire to lead the German people into another military débâcle, and has kept Hitler and his advisers fully informed of their position. Hitler, mad though he is, has no lack of shrewdness. There is certainly a heavy probability that in his recent moves he has been playing on the weak nerves of his opponents rather than relying on the strength of his own arms. There is an equal probability that if they had stood firm he would have refused to give battle, or that if he had decided for war, the army would have stopped him.

Another possibility is that the sacrifice may not even prevent immediate war. Our readers will be able

to answer that question when they receive this issue better than we can now. But the Czechs may resist anyway, possibly with the help of the Soviet Union. If so, the democracies of France and Britain may recover from their shock, reverse the decision of their present governments, and go to the aid of the gallant little nation. Once the spark glows into life it can easily spread, and the choice of the assumed peacemakers may really have struck the flint against the steel.

Second, even if the Chamberlain judgment as to immediate war was correct, he has in all probability made a miscalculation of the long-term results. Hitler in "Mein Kampf" laid bare his aims and his strategy, and so far he has followed his program with extraordinary precision. It was, first to enlarge German territory by expansion to the east, and then, with the essential resources of eastern and southeastern Europe behind him, to attack the western democracies and win world supremacy. The sacrifice of Czechoslovakia, if it is successfully consummated, means abandoning southeastern Europe to Hitler at one stroke. The strategic barrier is yielded. The prestige of Britain and France has sunk so low that no country will hereafter depend on them for safety against Nazi imperialism. Hungary and the Balkan states are certain to fall into line. The long series of successful threats that Hitler has employed constitute a guarantee that he will proceed along his appointed course; never again will he believe that anyone dares seriously to resist him. His prestige at home will be unassailable. This crucial victory will in the end yield him most of the resources he needs with which to strike westward. Any promises that are elicited from him by the present surrender will of course be ignored when the proper time comes; he himself has in his book proclaimed the usefulness of lies and of pledges made to be broken. And why should anyone rely on his word, when the French themselves have proved faithless to Czechoslovakia? Nothing is more amazing in the recent collapse of the French Ministers than their apparent intention to rest their security on the pledge of a sworn enemy at the very moment that they were breaking a pledge to a friend. It seems to us a childish day dream that the present sacrifice has done anything but make war more certain in the future.

There is, furthermore, the reflection that the best reasons that may be advanced for the Chamberlain-imposed decision are not all the reasons, and that the rest are far from creditable. A large and influential section of the British Tories is friendly to Nazism and fascism, and would like to encourage them in order to block any growth of socialism. They fear the Russians above all else. For a long time there has been an open movement to bring together Britain, Germany, France and Italy in a four-power pact, leaving Germany free to expand and attack Russia in the East. Czechoslovakia and the alliances with the Soviet Union, both on her part and on the part of France, stood in the way of this consummation. In its worst aspect, the action of the British government, with the compliance of the French, looks extraordinarily like a deliberate betrayal of democracy in order to safeguard the interests of the propertied classes of the Empire. Chamberlain and his associates are not precisely fascists, but they are perfectly willing to use Mussolini and Hitler to pick their chestnuts out of the fire. They could not openly appear as allies of Hitler and retain their power at home, but he made it easy for them to act as his accomplices by a terrific war scare. This interpretation, we admit, is unconfirmed except by circumstantial evidence, but it is as reasonable a possibility as any other. Even if Chamberlain was governed by a mixture of motives, this sort of tendency, which certainly existed in the background, must have played a part.

The question of motive, however, is beside the point for Americans, in comparison with the lessons that we must draw from the event for our own guidance. Since we are not ready to go to war to protect Czechoslovakia, or to threaten war in an effort to defend the democracy or the peace of Europe, it is not our place to register moral judgments on the governments of Britain or France for refusal to do either. (To say this is not to say that we had the same obligations as they, or the same opportunity.) If we look to the future rather than to the past, the question is rather what must be expected and what we should do about it. It is a reasonable prediction that the fascist regimes will gain immensely both in prestige and in physical power. The Western democracies of Europe have been proved, in the eyes of the world, inferior to the dictatorships either in belief in themselves or in capacity to defend that belief by shrewd judgment, courage, steady nerves and good faith. Neither we nor anyone else can in the future rely on their pledges when these pledges conflict with self-interest or involve a major risk.

Faced by the threat of an immensely increasing strength and verve for the chief enemies of democracy in the world, we must rely mainly on ourselves. We must take care not to act as Britain and France have done. We must make no pledges except those we firmly intend to keep; these we must observe with strict scrupulousness. Our foreign policy must be based, not on bluff and weak good intentions, but on clarity and resolution. Most of all, we must take upon ourselves the burden of justifying democracy by its works. We must be swift, resourceful and ready for sacrifice in making democracy deserve the good opinion we should like to hold about it. We need not worry about military attack; that we could surely repel if it should seriously be threatened. We do need to take care that we are not overcome internally by the dry-rot of incompetence, decrepitude, insincerity and lack of social energy that seems to be leaving the older democratic nations a prey to those who scorn and betray them.

Parlor Games on the Ether

THOSE OF OUR READERS who never listen to the radio under any circumstances (apparently a goodly number) may be interested to learn that the quality of the programs offered on the air is substantially better than it was a few years ago. Advertising announcements are still an almost unendurable annoyance, the proportion of false and misleading sales effort is far greater than in the pages of newspapers and magazines, and many programs are appallingly vapid. Yet improvement has been seen. The four great networks now restrict the proportion of time that can be devoted to commercial advertisements, censor the statements made and reject some of the more obnoxious advertisers. Radio has at last discovered that the audience for good music is larger than it had supposed, and is growing—partly, no doubt, because of radio's efforts. While "education by radio" still continues to be mostly just nonsense, serious discussion of serious matters is getting more attention than before and the technique of presentation is improving. With an apprehensive eye on the Federal Communications Commission, which can revoke licenses whenever it pleases, the radio has even gone in ostentatiously for broad-minded "freedom of speech," giving time on the air to Communists and advocates of other unpopular causes, in spite of much public criticism.

The most startling development of the last year or so, however, is in none of the fields enumerated above. It has to do with the sudden vast increase in popularity of general-information contests. In a typical example of these, a studio audience is gathered, a selected few of its members appear before the microphone, where questions are fired at them, to be answered on the spur of the moment. Small prizes are given to those who do the best. Sometimes "teams" appear and work against each other, as in a spelling bee.

At the moment, the most successful of these programs is one which varies the formula slightly. Called "Information, Please," it assembles a group of four men guaranteed to have a wide range of miscellaneous information at their fingertips. Questions are sent in by mail, in advance, from all over the country, and are hurled at this dauntless quartet. A question good enough to be used earns for the writer a fee of $2; and if the experts are unable to answer it correctly, it wins an additional $5. The original procedure, since discarded, was that this $5 was deducted from a weekly sum of $100 and whatever was left at the end of the half-hour program the experts divided among themselves. The proceedings are always literate and sometimes amusing. Clifton Fadiman, book editor of The New Yorker, makes a quick-witted master of ceremonies. Franklin P. Adams, columnist of The New York Post, appears regularly as one of the experts, specializing in identifying popular poetry. John Kieran, sports columnist of The New York Times, is also a regular attendant, with a wide range of information both within and without the realm of sport. The other "experts" vary from week to week.

Just why these programs are so popular is rather hard to say. "Information, Please" provides more spontaneous wit than everything else on the air combined, but some of the other question-and-answer programs that are almost equally popular have very little of this quality. Perhaps the listener who knows the answer when the victim before the microphone does not gets a pleasant sense of superiority, even though he must keep his knowledge to himself. Perhaps he really cherishes the miscellaneous odd bits of information to be acquired from these programs—information about such matters as the pull of gravity on the moon, comparative values in Troy and avoirdupois weight, biographical facts about famous people and whether water boils at high altitudes.

The popularity of these programs should show us that Americans have not changed so much as many people suppose. In an era of radio, aviation, automobiles and movies, we still love the parlor games of three generations ago. We still yearn unceasingly for self-improvement, for capsule culture. A fact is a fact, and we cling to it, whether it is buried in an encyclopedia, enticingly hidden in "Ask Me Another" books or picked out of the ether by the turning of a knob. Europeans smile at our naïveté, though their smiles these days have a good deal of wistful envy in them as well. It is something, after all, in a world like that of today, for eighty or ninety million people to have the time and attention to give to naming the seven wonders of the world, identifying five American birds by their calls or saying what character in what play by what author used the line, "If music be the food of love, play on."

THE NEW REPUBLIC
A Journal of Opinion

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The Letters of Lincoln Steffens

The late Lincoln Steffens hardly needs identification for New Republic readers. For many years one of America's best known journalists, a leader in the "muck-raking" school after the turn of the century, his fame was increased by the publication of his autobiography, which in a few years has come to be regarded as a classic American story.

The selections from his letters that appear in this and subsequent issues of The New Republic are taken from "The Letters of Lincoln Steffens," to be published by Harcourt, Brace on October 20 (2 vols., $10).—THE EDITORS

To Joseph Steffens

New York, November 11, 1900

My dear Father:

I don't believe I acknowledged the check for September, but the checks go canceled to you, so that when I am very busy, as I was electing McKinley, I don't let formal receipts worry me.

Well, we won, didn't we? The hypocrites have beaten the fools, the cowards helping, and Mr. McK., the arch-American hypocrite, will fret along four years more. Stocks are booming, and a lot of new trusts are to be formed. The stock of all is to be elevated and loaded off on the public. Wall Street is gloating over the prospect. Everybody is making money. I am making money. The "Street" is going wild, and the keenest of the big criminals down there say that we shall have such a boom as we never had before, a further rise now, a reaction, then the highest rise of all, then—when stocks are all marketed and overproduction has glutted the market—then, they say, a crash! McKinley is to have a panic just as sure as Bryan would have had one, only later; but fortunes can be made in the market preliminary to the fall, so who cares? Not I. I don't see how any intelligent man can be a partisan. I can't, yet I am joining the Republican organization of my district. They were a bit frightened lest with my "pull" with Roosevelt and other big leaders I was going into it to get something, but I told them I wanted nothing, said it so they understood, and I was welcome. It is all fraud and buncombe, lying and thieving, disloyalty and selfishness. If I ever do want anything I shall get it, for I will make such a deal as Governor Perkins made and bind it as your rivals did. You have served your party faithfully, so, being the Republican Party, it threw you down. The Republicans are worse than the Democrats—but they are not fools; they are intelligent rascals, so I prefer them.

I note the explosion of one lie: Bryan was keeping up the war in the Philippines; him defeated, and Aguinaldo was going to surrender. But General MacArthur reports, after election, that there is a long fight ahead. The Christian in South Africa and in the Philippines is having a hard time bestowing upon the heathen and the Boer the blessings of civilization, good government and religion. Phew! Don't you feel too that we smell bad?

Affectionately your son,

J. L. Steffens

To E. W. Scripps

Boston, January 23, 1909

My dear Mr. Scripps:

I read your letter of January 8 to Professor William James the other day. We had been talking about you a few days before at a dinner at his house in Cambridge. But that isn't the only reason I read it to him. The true reason was that it illustrated the possibility of doing in Boston what we are proposing to do. In other words, your account of your thoughts and your doings are running parallel to my thought and our Boston scheme.

I have noticed for some time that the natural leaders of our cities and states are not in the service of the public, but on the contrary are using their powers, courage and ingenuity against the public interest. There are reasons for that. They have things the operation of which is most successful when it sacrifices the public interest. And one theory of mine is that we cannot get the services of those men until we take away from them those things and substitute an incentive that shall draw them into the public service; not necessarily as office-holders, but somehow, anyhow.

Another theory of mine, however, is based upon the observations you make and, in your own person, illustrate. Big men like big jobs. The biggest, hardest job is the public service. And when big men like Tom Johnson once get a taste of that biggest job of all they are fascinated by it.

Now this latter theory is one of the bases of the experiment we are proposing to Boston. We are seeking out the biggest and often the most selfish men in the community. They all are men who have big corporate or financial interests which they are handling with skill and success. To them we are holding out the vision of the great things that might be done with a city for the people of the city; an idea no less than the actual solution in practice by them of the problem of municipal government. They are attracted. We are not making it look easy; we are showing them how hard it will be to accomplish. No matter; they are drawn toward it as to a magnet. I think you will see in Boston pretty soon some of the leading captains of industry entering poli-

tics with the idea of solving Boston's problem. If they start, I don't see how they will have the face to quit. For some of us will make it known at the right time, and I think we can get everybody looking here to see how it works out. That will put these men on their mettle. . . .

Yours sincerely,

Lincoln Steffens

To Allen H. Suggett

Little Point, February 28, 1911

Dear Allen:

Frenzy and Sandy won't speak. That is to say, Frenzy won't speak to Sandy. They were out on a tramp with me yesterday and as we approached home, they spied a cat. It was an even start. Sandy can outrun Frenzy; the pup is too fat to fly; but the cat dodged his way, and so, when the cat disappeared in a hole under the barn, they arrived there together, the two dogs. And there was a fight. And it was a fierce fight, but Sandy licked the pup a-plenty.

Sandy always can lick Frenzy. But he doesn't. He is a gentle creature, very kind and he loves the pup. He won't eat if Frenzy is away, but waits till they both can fare alike. And Frenzy bulldozes Sandy. He not only eats alone, and gladly, but he bullies him, drives him away from me when I pet them both, steals his bones, and generally is abusive. Sandy puts up with it for months. So far as I can make out, he stands it just about three months at a time. Then, some day for some excess of outrage, he turns around and he certainly does lick that pup. We had to get a veterinary once to sew up the pup's neck. And yesterday George and I had to wash off a lot of his blood before we found that Sandy's fangs had gone clear through Frenzy's ear in two places. . . .

Anyhow, today Sandy is sorry and willing to make up, but the pup grunts and will have none of his charm. We have had to be watchful, all of us, and even so it is only Sandy's considerate patience that saves us more blood. The pup wants some more.

This is all by way of answer to your letter about Dad's teeth. . . .

Yours,

L. Steffens

To Mrs. J. James Hollister

The Players, June 6, 1914

Dear Dot:

. . . Schools and colleges are just about in the state that other institutions are. Education is dead. Teaching is routine and learning is drudgery. This is largely because we have gone over the same things in the same way for so many generations that we have half forgotten what the sciences we teach and learn are for. There is a fascination, there is something akin to poetry in the way mathematics works, always true, always exact; and the laws of numbers are truly wonderful. I can imagine the interest in them to the discoverers of the principles of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, etc. And I can imagine, too, what sport it would be for a student to work out the puzzle of mathematical problems under an inspired teacher who saw the wonder of it all. Jack will find no such teacher. He might look for, and he might himself find, these miracles of nature in mathematics. But he doesn't have to. His mind may not lean that way. In that case he must do the best he can to develop his own interest, and, if he has none in numbers, it is some fun to use the study of mathematics as a sort of battle with oneself: take it as a hardship, and put himself to it; make himself do it. I used to do that, and sometimes I beat myself to it, forcing myself to win. It was good practice for the will power.

But the point is that Jack will find something—some studies that will interest him, possibly at school, surely at college, and in order to get the chance to get at these, he is required to learn certain other things. All right, let him say to himself, I'll do, somehow, what I must to have the privilege of doing what I want. This is hard. Everything required of a student is good; it is interesting. Only it isn't taught so. It is required. Think of having to *require* history when the free reading of it is so full of interest and meaning, even to a boy! Why not read with him the histories called for: American or Greek and Roman? And, if you do, call his attention to the nobility, and the meanness, the efficiency and the sloppy weakness of grown-ups. In other words, let Jack get once the sense of irreverence for—us; for Man in the Making. Show him that the great conquerors were great robbers; that the people were great fools, and—so lead him to look back of the printed page to what's between the lines. And tell him how the historians do not point out, they do not see the meaning of what they relate.

The Puritans, who did to others what they ran away to escape from in England, are rich!

It's no use trying in a letter to go into details. The idea is to get Jack to have his own, extra-legal, unorthodox interest in his studies, so that he can smile and wink at his textbooks, and think.

Ask him questions. Ask him why some boys are born rich, others poor; some strong, others weak? If he gives conventional answers, kick the ground out from under him and them. I don't know what he has to study, but in reading, sing for him the balanced melodies of poetry and the beautiful harmony of good prose. Get him to listen for the sound of it; not only the meaning, the music. That's easy to do. You can give him that in Latin verse, can't you? Or, is your Latin all gone, like mine? But principally, chuck his mind full of big questions and disrespect for the little we know; and tell him that his generation has more to discover than all the other generations together learned. . . .

To Allen H. Suggett

The Players, November 4, 1914

Dear Allen:

The elections are over. We haven't yet the certain returns, but enough to see that the old gangs have won all over the country; excepting only in California. And I can't make out from today's reports whether Heney has won or lost. The first reports were that he had lost, and I had today from his brother, Ben, a letter saying he and Frank did not expect to win. I'm sorry for Frank personally, as I am for La Follette, whose crowd lost Wisconsin, and all the other good fellows who have made the long fight and lost. But that is only personally. In the bigger sense I can't lose any more; not I, myself. I'm not sure enough of what is right to put my heart into any political contest to be stabbed and stepped on. Taking the long-range view I can see progress everywhere and the laws of biology and sociology work out to some other end than mine by other paths than those I have traced out.

Our purposes and Nature's get crossed; our ethics run counter to her physical laws, and so our bubbles break. But my interest now is to find out her ways, not mine, and more and more I want what she wants. Nor is this reverence or religion. It's the scientific spirit; not the scientist's; that, too, is personal and concerned with short measures. I'd like to get back to where I was when a student abroad, twenty years ago. I decided then that what we needed was an ethics and a social order founded upon the laws of biology. But I turned from ethics to morals because biology hadn't laid its own foundation yet; and I studied human conduct as it actually behaved. And it has been a rich study; so rich that I often forgot my ultimate purpose. And that's why I was personal and emotional. And I'm those things yet in some degree; too much so. But at least I can see that I was nearer right at first. We can't solve economic problems with morality; it's the other way. . . .

Affectionately, your brother,

Lincoln Steffens

To Mrs. Fremont Older

Rome, January 3, 1919

Dear Mrs. Older:

. . . Europe is as much worse than we are as it is older. But I long ago ceased to look for results. Growth, change, is all I ask, and I think the President, by his efforts here, may help things on a bit. He will not get all he is after, but he will make the issue clear and other forces will follow it up so that we shall be gradually opening our puppy eyes and seeing where we are going. That isn't much. It means only the slow dawn of a conscious race and the beginnings of applied knowledge, but Lord! the race is young. There are thirty million years ahead of us. There *is* kindness in the human heart now; Fremont shows that in his own; and there is intelligence—some. We all have a little. These good things will grow. I cannot be a pessimist. But I'm an optimist only because I expect so little and I expect it so long. . . .

To Allen H. Suggett

Paris, April 13, 1919

My dear Allen:

. . . We are going to have a League of Nations, weak, wrong, capable of great abuse; and we shall get a peace also, full of dynamite which will burst into war—unless there is something else in sight. The rulers of the world have sat here with the problem of human living before them, laid out on their table by the tragedy of war. That should have opened their minds and hearts too and led them to tackle the job in a new, big way. They wanted to. There was good will here. But their old bad habits of mind, their fixed attention upon things they do not really want, their age, their education—these have made it impossible for them to do their work. Even Wilson couldn't. Even he did not have knowledge enough, and of the right kind, to proceed to the removal of the causes of our troubles.

So they have failed. They have the appearance of success, but—they have failed. And it does not matter. The problem will be solved. Other, newer men, with a fresher culture—the men I have seen lately—they will have their turn now. And they are on the job. Their minds are clear of all the trash which blinds these Paris Conferees. They know that liberty, democracy, fraternity—all these lovely old desires—can come only after men have made sure that there is food enough to eat, safety for themselves and their children, warmth, shelter, work and full pay. And these are the things they are after. They know what the price may be: sickness, death, civil war. How we have been working for the past two weeks to break the line of that civil war! Well, we haven't done it. We still may. But I begin to doubt it. I think now that the stupid class war is inevitable all over Europe.

Len

To Marie Howe

Paris, April 16, 1919

My dear Marie:

. . . The failure here is complete, but that does not matter. What matters is that the President does not see it so. He is going to join in the fight over the Treaty and the League, and so will not help, as he could and should, to direct the attention of the public mind to the cause of the failure. He is righteous. If only he were intelligent, scientific! But the unmoral, scientific, intellectual type is for the next generation to produce. Our part is to use the transition period to raise the questions, point away from all persons and individual guilt to the physical and economic enemies of Man. Some job!

It is pleasant here physically. The life of Paris is gay. They have license here, no liberty; it is vice that is free, virtue is confined. But even that is better than the hard morality of Moscow and, apparently, of Hungary. We are not going to like the Rule of Labor. We are going through it, and we shall have to pray and work to go through it rapidly. We must get out of this. It will cost us heavily, but I, for one, am willing to pay. Only not long. Oh, Lord, not long. The joy of life, of which we hear so little, is the best of life.

Len

To Allen H. Suggett

Paris, June 28, 1919

Dear Allen:

. . . The President gave an interview to all the correspondents for American papers yesterday afternoon. I shall not attempt to go into details. But two comments I will make. The first is that, if the President talks to the public as he did to us, he will win. He was humble, matter-of-fact and yet very positive and, of course, informed. The second is that he showed, as he never has to me before, that he does not see fundamentals at all; not at all; he sees things only politically and morally. He is the most perfect example we have produced of the culture which has failed and is dying out. It will not see the problem and so, of course, it cannot solve it. I had a sort of feeling of finality about it all, both as to him and to what he represents. He has done his best; so has *Kultur*. . . .

Len

Another instalment of Lincoln Steffens' letters will appear in an early issue. – THE EDITORS

Czechoslovakia at the Zero Hour

This article, sent by mail, was of course written befor Mr. Chamberlain's visit to Hitler at Berchtesgaden. – THE EDITORS

PRAGUE is living anxious days and nights. There is no attempt here by the government to disguise the seriousness of the international situation. Every Praguer knows that only a few miles away German airports house swift and deadly bombing machines. Yet the observer finds little change in the life of the Czechoslovak capital. The sidewalks are crowded as usual, the cafés and coffee houses are jammed every evening, the beer gardens ring with song.

The civil and military authorities have taken certain precautions to prevent a panic that would follow a surprise attack on an unprepared city. If the visitor looks carefully along Prague's streets he will see mechanical devices that appear to be part of the traffic or lighting systems: they are air-raid sirens to warn the people of a bombing attack. At street corners he will see loud-speakers that have recently been installed. In case of an air raid, the police and military can warn the inhabitants and tell them what to do. There are underground air-raid shelters to house the population during an aerial attack. Special stores have gas masks for sale, and a municipal law decreed that by July 31 every family must own two of them. The number of members of each family to be supplied with a mask will increase until every citizen of Prague has one. It is not an uncommon sight to see people walking along the streets carrying the round metal boxes that contain the masks.

As part of the national-defense system, the military authorities have worked out methods by which any citizen of the Republic can immediately get in touch with the nearest army headquarters. He need merely tell the operator that he has a national-defense message. The wires are instantly cleared for him and he is placed in communication with the army. The Czechs realize that in the emergency of a surprise attack seconds may be vital to the life of the state.

This crisis finds the Czech army one of the best equipped military organizations in the world. Some observers believe that it has more machine guns per regiment than any other army. In a short war the Czechs could match the quality of their weapons against that of their chief potential foe. But in the case of a long conflict they could hardly keep their munitions plants running at capacity unless they could obtain raw materials from abroad. Under peacetime conditions the Czechs have no difficulty in buying war materials and bringing them in. A glance at a railway map of Czechoslovakia will show, however, that the principal trunk lines have exits through German, Polish and Hungarian territory. The German roads would, of course, be blocked at once upon the outbreak of hostilities; the Hungarian roads would probably be blocked and the Polish rail connection might be. There remains the Rumanian rail line, but it is not yet in first-class order and is far removed from the industrial plants of Bohemia.

Germany, too, would be seriously affected by the blockade of a long war. As far as transportation is concerned, however, the Reich would be able to buy from such neutrals as Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and presumably from Jugoslavia, Hungary and Poland; perhaps even from Rumania. Inasmuch as Germany would probably have control of the Baltic,

she would not be entirely cut off from the outside world.

Military power, natural resources and food reserves, financial strength, civilian morale—all these factors have influenced the bitter wrangling between the Sudeten German leaders and the Czech authorities. A speech in London, a Cabinet change in Paris, is quickly reflected in Prague. Support from abroad for the Czechs stiffens their attitude; a press campaign in Germany increases the intransigence of the Henlein party.

But Herr Henlein is not the most irreconcilable enemy of the Czechs within the Republic. Neither he nor his colleague, Dr. Kundt, is regarded as the firebrand of the Nazi Germans in Czechoslovakia. That role is filled by such extremists as Dr. Franck and Dr. Köllner. The latter were the instigators of the so-called self-defense decree issued by one faction of the Sudeten Germans, a decree that advocated the bearing of arms by these Bohemian Nazis. Compared with Herren Franck and Köllner, Henlein is comparatively moderate, though by this time everybody should be well aware of his Hitler program.

While Czech economy as a whole has felt the adverse effects caused by loss of tourist trade, the loss has hit some of the Sudeten German communities especially hard. Karlsbad, for example, has missed the usual throngs of spa visitors. The war scare has kept them away. In such tourist centers disillusioned Sudeten innkeepers have changed the Nazi slogan, "One Reich, one Führer, one People!" to "One Reich, one Führer, one guest!"

Prague HENRY C. WOLFE

The Ring Around the Ballot Box

NOT SO MANY WEEKS AGO I was lurching my way north through Alabama on a bus, devouring the first newspaper I had seen in a month. It seemed to me then that there could be only two explanations for what I read. Either the entire population of the South was politically moronic, or their elected representatives had been seized suddenly and unanimously with a kind of political masochism.

For if there were two pieces of legislation before the Seventy-fifth Congress that held any promise of much needed help for the South, they were the anti-lynching bill and the wages-and-hours bill. The first is a vital necessity not only for the solution of the Negro problem, but for the protection of organized labor. Every step that is made toward the building of unions today, is made at the cost of the lives and limbs of organizers and sympathizers, black and white alike. The wages-and-hours bill, as originally proposed, would have done more to ameliorate the intolerable suffering of the bulk of the Southern population than any other single measure ever advanced.

Why then was the fight to defeat, or to cripple hopelessly, these two bills led by representatives of the very section which had the most to gain from them?

Who Fought the Wages-and-Hours Bill? – It is possible, perhaps, to understand the fight against the anti-lynching bill on the basis of Reconstruction Day hallucinations about the Negro which still fester in the minds of an unhappily large number of Southerners. But the wages-and-hours bill is another matter. Even in its original and unadulterated form, the maximum wages and minimum hours set were already accepted in many Northern industrial communities. It was the Southern worker who stood to benefit immediately and materially.

And who would have paid the bill for this "ruinous" lifting of Southern buying power and living standards? The economic masters of the Southern politicians. And who are they? The Southern industrialists and landowners? Possibly. If there are any. But it is hardly an exaggeration to say that these classes do not exist in the South today. In the main, both industry and agriculture are owned by Northern capital. The old Southern "possessing" class today possesses only the position of salaried overseer for a Northern landlord, or of salaried official in a corporation controlled by the barons of Wall Street.

Even granting that the interests of the Southern "salaried" class lie with the gentlemen who pay their salaries, how can this pitiful handful so completely control the policies of the Southern legislators? How can the latter vote so brazenly against the expressed wishes of the overwhelming majority of their constituents, and expect to be returned to office? Who returns them to office? Who are the voters?

Who Votes in the South? – In the first place, the Negro does not vote. He is barred by a series of ingenious devices, which in many cases are so successful that they disfranchise some of the whites as well. The devices vary a little from state to state, but the case of Alabama is representative.

Here, as in most other Southern states, the retroactive poll tax is the first obstacle in the path of the average voter. Since there is a tremendous number of families in the state whose total earnings are less than $100 a year, it is not surprising that many potential voters hesitate to pay out $1.50 a year for that privilege. And every year they do not pay goes on to the bill, so that a man who for ten years has been unable to *afford to vote* must pay $15 before he can regain

his right. The cost is prohibitive, to white worker as well as Negro.

For the sake of accuracy, we should note that this law, like so many others, is often applied in different fashions to white and Negro. Many a white man living in a small community can get by for years without paying poll tax if he knows the proper official and votes for the proper candidates. That is, he can get by if he meets the other requirements: if he can read and write *or* if he possesses three hundred dollars' worth of taxable property. And that is asking a good deal in rural communities where universal illiteracy is the natural result of a completely inadequate school system, and where the tenant farmer or sharecropper is lucky to own the shirt on his back.

Ordeal by Questionnaire. – And the obstacles do not end here. "Eligibility," as it is called in Alabama, is a complicated business, requiring the services of a county Board of Registrars. When a citizen reaches the age of twenty-one, he is expected to appear before the Board and establish himself as a qualified voter. He asks for an application, and is handed a two-page, thirty-question affair, full of horrendous phraseology, calculated to terrify and shame the uneducated reader.

This questionnaire may not be sent through the mails or taken out of the office of the Board. In other words, there is to be no studying up at home. The applicant must answer all questions on the spot and without any assistance. Any point he does not understand is his hard luck, and any mistake in filling it out invalidates the application.

It was difficult to procure a copy of the form, but it is well worth studying. I quote at random:

(19) I have no intention of changing my place of residence prior to the next general election.

(22) My name has not been stricken from a list of persons registered. (If name has heretofore been stricken from a list of persons registered in any state or county, then applicant will erase the word "not" and will state in the space immediately hereinbelow facts pertaining to the matter.)

(25) The following two persons whose post-office address is given have personal knowledge of my present *bona-fide* residence at the place stated. (Answer to this and requirement that applicant give name and references is in Board's discretion.)

Woe to the ignoramus who does not know how a residence comes to be *bona fide;* who does not appeal to the "discretion" of the Board; who cannot thread his way through the maze of heretofore and hereinbelow unaided. (N. B. White voters are seldom unaided.)

White voters are also frequently handed their certificates of eligibility as soon as they have filled out the blank. The Negro voter—if he gets this far—is usually put through a series of oral questions, for which there is no basis in the election law. One of the favorites (in Louisiana) is "to read and explain a section of the Constitution"—the correctness of the explanation to be judged by a clerk of the Board. Alabama voters are sometimes asked to recite verbatim different Amendments to the Constitution, the "twenty-fifth" being a frequent choice. One Negro I interviewed had been asked to estimate the number of gallons of water that pour hourly over Niagara Falls.

This device is highly successful in discouraging applicants, but since it is absolutely illegal, it cannot be used in all cases. It is really not necessary anyway. The Negro applicant who has successfully filled out his blank is told that it will be brought before the Board, and that he will be notified if he is accepted. The Board must determine, among other things, whether he has ever been convicted of any one of a number of crimes, beginning with murder and ending with vagrancy. If for this or any other reason he is refused, he has a theoretical right of appeal to the Circuit Court within thirty days. It happens, however, that he is not notified at all if he is refused, so his time limit for appeal has always elapsed before he is certain that he needs it. There is no law requiring the Board to tell any applicant why he was refused. In most cases, it would be superfluous. He knows.

It should be noted here that not every Negro applicant is refused. In fact, special care is taken to see that a few Negroes are admitted to the charmed circle of the "eligible" at every registration. Otherwise there would be *prima-facie* evidence of discrimination, and a Supreme Court investigation might air the fact that practically the entire population of the "black belt" areas is disfranchised.

Voter's Progress. – But to return to the saga of the average voter. Suppose for the moment that he attains the dizzy height of eligibility and can pay for his ballot. Surely now he is the master of his political fate? Possibly. Unless, being illiterate, he has to entrust the marking of his ballot to an election clerk. Unless there should happen to be corruption in the election count—(and this is possible, even as in the enlightened North). Unless some one of the masters of his economic fate decides to tell him what to do with his vote. And this is the second cancer in the body politic of Alabama. There is no secret ballot!

Our duly registered voter goes to the polls on election day and receives a numbered ballot. The number is entered after his name in the voters' book. But the number is not torn off the ballot, as in most states. It is left on and it is therefore a simple matter for any of the counters to check back and find how any individual voted. Or if there is not time for a complete investigation during the count itself, there is always the sixty-day period afterward, when the ballots repose in a supposedly sealed box in the sheriff's office, awaiting the possibility of a recount. The sheriff is obviously in a position of considerable strategic importance.

If there is any doubt remaining as to how this operates, the following example should dispel it. I was able to investigate the primary election of one rural community in northern Alabama this spring. The electorate in this case was made up largely of those lucky farmers who still own their land. Of these, 65 percent are mortgaged to the hilt and in immediate danger of losing everything. Local politics are run by a "machine" which represents the holders of these mortgages. Last April an opposition candidate for state representative appeared in the person of a leader of the Farmers' Union. A farmer himself, a political progressive and a natural leader, he conducted his campaign on issues vital to the people of the community, and won such wide support that it seemed inevitable he would break through the iron circle of the machine.

On the third day before the election, every farmer whose land was mortgaged was informed that unless he voted for the machine's candidate, his mortgage would be foreclosed when the notes come due this fall. The progressive was defeated (although not without considerable finagling at the count). Every recipient of this brazen threat knew that the "bankers" would be as good as their word, and they would have ample opportunity to know whether he was as good as his.

And this sort of practice is not confined to back-country politics, as a few figures on the last presidential election in Jefferson County will show:

Population of the county ...	450,000-500,000
Potential electorate	150,000-200,000
Actual vote in 1936	40,000

This county contains the city of Birmingham, undoubtedly the most enlightened community in Alabama, and the 1936 campaign was of intense political interest. How intense may be seen from the fact that though only 21-22 percent of the potential voters were eligible, between 18 and 19 percent voted.

Can the Machine Be Broken? – Here then, in a word, is the explanation for the behavior of the "gentlemen from the South." They are elected by a hand-picked minority. Even this group of "elect" are carefully and effectively controlled by the bankers and the deputies. The right to vote is incredibly difficult to obtain, expensive to maintain, and as things stand today, not worth either the trouble or the expense. For besides the ills listed above, the South suffers acutely from the common American disease of election fraud. The intrepid voter who can get a ballot and defy anyone to tell him how he shall mark it cannot close his eyes to the probability that it will be counted as the counters see fit. Until the ballot boxes are controlled by the people, there is little chance of breaking the machine. And until the machine is broken, there is little chance of the people's controlling the boxes. Until the election laws are amended and honestly enforced, there is little chance for political articulateness for the people of the South; and until they are made articulate, there is little chance that the abuses will be corrected. The circle is indeed a vicious one.

And yet there are signs that it is being broken. The political death of Heflin of Alabama is a crack in the iron ring. The election of Lister Hill, progressive Senator from Alabama, was an entering wedge. It is significant that his election was the result of a coalition between the CIO and the farmers' and sharecroppers' unions. These organizations are centers of militant work in the political as well as the trade-union field.

Their success has won them the hatred of the old-guard politicians. Representative Cox of Georgia, in one of his tirades against the wages-and-hours bill, thundered that the measure was the result of "a marriage of the CIO and politics." (And quite a success, as modern marriages go.) Even more illuminating was the retort of his colleague, Lambertson of Kansas, who shouted, "That's right. CIO led the parade and politics followed." If so, perhaps the answer has been found. Perhaps the trade and farm unions will provide the leadership that is needed to bring the people of the South out of the political blind alley in which they have been penned. And they are ready to be led.

JANET MARSHALL

Latin America Faces Fascism

FASCISM, both of the imported European and native varieties, has begun its attack upon the nations of Latin America. But the trade unionists in Mexico, Ecuador, Chile, Uruguay, Nicaragua, Brazil and Guatemala are organizing a counter-offensive. Recently a four-day Latin American Labor Congress met in Mexico City to found a new trade-union international. Although the meeting was not sponsored by the Mexican government, it was greeted by President Cárdenas. Delegates fresh from imprisonment and torture at the hands of the secret police of their countries had the Alice-in-Wonderland experience of being fêted at the War College. There an eminent Mexican divisional general told them that "we are the armed auxiliaries of the working class and the people."

This congress and the following World Congress Against War are instances of the Cárdenas "good-neighbor" policy—a policy designed not to soften the hearts of Latin America's despots, but to mobilize public opinion to destroy them.

For the most part the Latin American delegates were the youthful leaders of a nascent trade unionism, growing as a result of the democratic influences seeping from Washington and Mexico City into Central and South America. Because of the industrial backwardness of Latin America north of the Plata River, trade unionism's ebb and flow are determined by the shift-

ing battle lines between the forces of dictatorship and democracy. Thus Ecuador, which destroyed her quasi-fascist regime by the conventional method of army *Putsch*, is now attempting to follow in Mexico's footsteps. The once hunted and illegal trade-union groups of Ecuador are today united in a central workers' and peasants' federation which forms the core of the liberal front. In Uruguay and Argentina the shadow of military reaction is lifting and their well established trade-union movements are regaining the positions of power they formerly occupied. Cuba is another country where democratic and labor forces are gaining the ascendancy. The return of the exiled revolutionaries, Batista's decision to convoke a democratically elected constitutional convention and the recognition of trade-union organizations (without, however, recognizing the right to strike) are all symptoms of a process of "democratization" under the double pressure of the United States Department of State and the Cuban people.

On the other side of the medal, there is Chile, which is threatened by a replica of the Vargas *Putsch* in Brazil last November. The unified trade-union movement of Chile has been the driving force in the formation of a powerful Popular Front which today controls about one-third of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The Popular Front will unquestionably sweep the country if free presidential elections scheduled for October are actually held, according to Salvador Ocampo, leader of the Chilean labor delegation. During the congressional sessions, however, the Chilean Nacistas made an abortive attempt at an uprising which is interpreted in Mexico City as a pretext and prelude to the imposition of military rule by the government. Speakers from Nicaragua, Guatemala and other Central American republics told of the exploitation and slavery of plantation workers and the murder of those who attempt to organize them; of petty tyrants who take their economic mandates from the United Fruit Company and their technique from Germany or Italy.

The new Latin American Trade Union Federation which emerged from the Congress promises to be a powerful organization. Again and again the delegates emphasized that the Federation is being formed as an initial step toward "the unity of the workers of the world in a single proletarian army." The Congress went on record in favor of eventual affiliation to the International Federation of Trade Unions and unanimously urged it to admit the Soviet trade unions.

The chief difference between the Latin American international and the British-Scandinavian-Netherlands bloc in control of the IFTU is that Latin American labor believes the united working classes must take the offensive against fascism all over the world. The growth of fascism throughout Europe has helped undermine the power of the coalition of inactivists who direct the IFTU's destinies. The delegates and fraternal representatives who cheered the decisions of the convention in Mexico City constitute a majority of the organized labor movement of the world.

Almost the entire Latin American labor movement was represented—with the exception of the state-controlled syndicates of Brazil, the small anarchist groups of the Plata region and the Morones splinter group in Mexico. The trade unions of China, Sweden and France were represented. The delegate from British India pledged the solidarity of the Indian trade-union movement. Spain's UGT sent Ramon Gonzales Pena, Minister of Justice in the Spanish republican government. Equally important was the presence of Edo Fimmen, veteran leader of the two million workers affiliated to the International Transport Federation.

The new international is composed of Latin American national trade-union bodies, which must represent a majority of the workers in their countries. Where dual unions exist, the Federation will seek to unite the rival groups. With the headquarters of the Federation in Mexico City and the bulk of the delegations following Mexican leadership in trade-union affairs, Lombardo Toledano emerges as the key figure of the organization, with the representative of the more conservative Argentine labor movement as number-two man. The statutes of the Federation commit the constituent bodies to three political tasks: first, a struggle for freedom of speech, freedom of the press and labor's right to organize, bargain collectively and strike; second, the destruction of fascist influences in this hemisphere; and finally, "winning complete economic and political autonomy for the Latin American nations and liquidating the semi-feudal conditions which characterize their countries."

"Fascism will not triumph," Léon Jouhaux told the delegates, "if we achieve a united front of the democratic peoples of the world. If we achieve this, Republican Spain will be victorious and peace will be reëstablished throughout the world."

The forthcoming anti-war congress in Mexico City will be the arena for definite and concrete proposals to thwart arms and raw-material shipments to the aggressor states. The powerful Latin American delegation to this congress will probably be the moving force in the struggle for direct labor sanctions.

The struggle in Spain is not a remote abstraction to Latin America. It has split the caste societies of South America into two Hispano-American fronts—the alliance between Franco and the dictators and the alliance between Valencia and the people. The victory of Franco would bring almost irresistible pressure from Spain against the nascent democratic movements of this area. Fascism, in the words of Lombardo Toledano, "is a force that is already invading the Americas." It is the opinion of the delegates to this Congress that the invasion must be repelled, not on American soil, but on the plains of Aragon and China.

Mexico City NATHANIEL WEYL

Shoot the Works

Vermont Granite

A YOUNG COLUMNIST, formerly employed on The Rutland, Vermont, Herald, sends me his valedictory. He is not the first nor the last commentator to be canned by an editor because of a difference of opinion. Nor does anybody seriously question the right of a proprietor to retain such features as please him and to discard all others. But the issue in this case is clearly marked by the editor himself and it is of more than local significance. The owner is far more frank than usual in expressing the reason for the divorce, although I think that he is somewhat blind, or possibly insulated, to the implications of the position which he blandly assumes. The rugged granite of Vermont seems to be cracking along all fissures.

The name of the column was "Return of the Native" and it was written by Vrest Orton, who came back to Rutland to carry on, as he explains in a letter, "the liberal train of thought in a conservative state." And for three years he continued to do so until the fence grew more spiky and the sides on either hand less accessible to each other. I do not know in just what manner Mr. Orton defined the creed of a liberal, but his column, which constituted the final straw, will hardly seem to anyone outside the domain of Vermont a revolutionary doctrine. The columnist undertook to say that fascism is actually a present threat in America and that some of its seeds and sprouts are to be found in conservative New England states in spite of their long tradition of free speech and individual liberty. As I remember, Sinclair Lewis, who is "red" only by nickname, wrote a novel to that effect and it was warmly espoused by Mr. Hoover, Governor Landon and Dorothy Thompson none of whom has been listed so far as "communistic." Mr. Orton's specific complaint was that an attempt had been made to show in Windsor, Vt., the film "The Spanish Earth" and that the selectmen passed an ordinance which made it impossible to exhibit it. To Mr. Orton this seemed a fascist manifestation and he wrote:

"Do we want fascism in Vermont . . . in America? Fascism, like a foul disease, breeds in ignorance, despair, perversion and mental and moral decay. Fascism is the collective revival of brutality and barbarism of the Dark Ages. Fascism ends in war and chaos. Yet we have men right in America who shout for it and are paid to write for it. . . . Let us counteract these fascist propagandists and spies as we would prevent a deadly plague by stamping out the rats that carry the germs."

This would seem doctrine familiar to many American readers. But earlier in the same column Mr. Orton made the observation that while fascism was a present menace to America, communism was not in the national picture at the moment and constituted "no danger whatsoever."

At the bottom of the last number of "The Return of the Native" appears the following explanation from the publisher:

"Ed. Note: With the publication of this column, this newspaper and Mr. Orton part company.

"We have now for three years given weekly space to the usually interesting, often brilliant, occasionally infuriating allusions of the returned native to Vermont and Vermonters.

"We do not, however, feel it is proper for us to continue to publish the utterances of one who believes as Mr. Orton today says he does, that fascism is a menace while communism . . . is of no danger whatsoever.

"We do not think it is within the obligations of an American newspaper to buy and pay for propaganda for or against one alien form of government without providing similar propaganda for and against all other alien forms of government."

This attitude is certainly not unknown beyond the borders of Vermont. It has become a formula almost like saluting the flag. A certain degree of frank speaking about Mussolini or Hitler will be permitted to the commentator in the press but only upon the condition that he make it his obligation to add a compulsory postscript: "The same thing goes for Stalin and Soviet Russia." By this device free speech is tethered. It becomes a matter of checks and balances. So many orators have thundered that communism and fascism are twins that many persons are beginning to accept this as an axiom which is no longer subject to debate. And among the tragic circumstances in the molding of public opinion is the fact that certain liberals have adopted this balanced attitude with all the eagerness of the reactionaries. Only static groups are influenced when old reactionary war horses wheel into line to charge the goblins of impending red revolution. But great damage is done when liberals, or former liberals, begin to carry water to the horses.

Much aid and comfort was given to Mayor Hague even by spirited opponents because of their insistence on including in all speeches the statement, "And remember I am just as much opposed to dictatorship of the Left as to dictatorship of the Right." Hague was politically shrewd enough to realize that this was duck soup for him. It vastly aided his rabble-rousing against the danger of Red rebellion in Jersey City. He was able to point out that even those who were his bitter foes agreed with him on the immediacy of the Red menace and today we find newspapers with a previously good record for factual accuracy printing on their first pages testimony before the Dies Committee that a lone radical newspaperman was assigned by "the party" to go to Jersey City to bring about a revolution. Such things would have been laughed out of print a year ago. By a curious irony the more the Communists press for a united front the more they are accused of seeking the immediate overthrow of the government of the United States by force and violence.

And I repeat that the didoes of Dies and the upstream antics of Fish in season would command a limited public but for the aid and comfort extended to them from the sidelines, where the substitutes for progressive causes used to sit. Seemingly, some of them are so impatient to get into the game that they have thrown off their blankets and crossed the field to accept black or white jerseys.

There is a theory that if any individual is criticized by both those on the Right and those on the Left he must be a forthright liberal. However, there is just the chance that he is nothing but an acrobat. HEYWOOD BROUN

Washington Notes

The Purge Will Rise Again

NOW THAT the Democratic senatorial purge has reached a dismal end, Mr. Roosevelt is beset by contrary appeals. The practical politicians of his party, including most of those who will be candidates in the November elections, want the purge forgotten. After all, they say, nothing much really happened. Of the nine Senators originally marked for elimination, Mr. Roosevelt spoke out against only three: Messrs. George, Smith and Tydings. No doubt these three will be soreheads when the next session of Congress meets, but what of it? They have been soreheads ever since the New Deal began.

A majority of White House advisers feel differently. They do not want the purge forgotten. It is one of the best things that has happened in our recent political history, in their opinion, and the apparent inability of Democratic voters to appreciate its meaning is tragic. They want Mr. Roosevelt to maintain henceforth the present hard line between Democratic conservatives and liberals. In his Maryland speech in behalf of Representative David J. Lewis, they think he committed himself to driving the Democratic Mr. A's (the conservatives) from the party.

Much energy in Washington has gone into explaining why the purge bogged down. Militant New Dealers, who spent last winter urging Mr. Roosevelt to grapple with the depression in a forthright manner, fear that a popular movement away from the administration has set in. There is a simpler, more hopeful explanation than this. As these Notes have often pointed out, up until Mr. Roosevelt's attack on Senator George a month ago in Barnesville, Georgia, the purge was a feeble, lame, unplanned affair.

The Lewis-Tydings contest in Maryland is an excellent example of why the purge went wrong. Maryland has a strong Democratic organization, the pride of the late Governor Ritchie. Months ago it was clear that there would be a great fight among the machine leaders over the gubernatorial nomination. Without substantial statewide machine support, Mr. Lewis' chance of victory was remote. The obvious strategy of the purgers, consequently, was to make an alliance with one of the machine factions, offering aid to its candidate in exchange for aid to Mr. Lewis.

Negotiations were authorized by the White House. What happened is still something of a mystery. However, it is still understood that successive approaches were made to the backers of Mr. Howard W. Jackson and Attorney General Herbert R. O'Conor, the two strongest aspirants for the governorship. In each case, the negotiations fizzled out. According to report, the White House emissaries during June and July confessed themselves unable to say how seriously Mr. Roosevelt meant to prosecute the purge. Would he publicly condemn Mr. Tydings? Would he speak in Mr. Lewis' behalf? No one could make binding promises in Mr. Roosevelt's name. The supporters of neither Jackson nor O'Conor would buy a pig in a poke.

A minor—but apparently quite unnecessary—mishap of the Lewis candidacy was the defection of Maryland's junior Senator, Mr. George L. Radcliffe. Mr. Radcliffe is perhaps the closest personal friend Mr. Roosevelt has in the Senate. An executive of the insurance company in which Mr. Roosevelt was one of the New York counsel, he was for eight years the President's nominal boss, a fact of which he is humorously proud. In the Senate he has been a steadfast New Dealer. Early last spring he was asked by Mr. Tydings to take the chairmanship of his campaign committee. None of the White House advisers had troubled to tell Mr. Radcliffe that Mr. Tydings was to be on the purge list. Mr. Radcliffe is a simple, obliging fellow and, in the belief that the campaign chairmanship would be largely honorary, gave his consent. According to friends, he was immensely distressed when he later found he had placed himself in the camp of Mr. Roosevelt's enemies. His formal association with the Tydings campaign undoubtedly hurt Mr. Lewis. Many Maryland New Dealers decided that if as old and close a friend of Mr. Roosevelt as Radcliffe was supporting Tydings, the purge could not be serious.

Belatedly, what appears to be the inside story of Senator Pope's defeat in the Idaho primary has reached Washington. It was not an uprising of Idaho voters against the New Deal. On the contrary, it seems to have been a fine, craftsmanlike job of political mayhem perpetrated single-handedly by the venerable Mr. Borah, and lacking other significance. The story goes back three years, to the Ethiopian crisis of 1935. Senator Pope, it will be remembered, came to the Senate a sizzling League of Nations man. With the blessing of a section of the peace movement, he went to Geneva in August, 1935, with the announced intention of lending American support to the League Council in its attempt to preserve Ethiopian integrity. Mr. Borah, it is now reported, seethed with anger, and is alleged to have promised that Mr. Pope would never be reëlected. When Mr. Pope was still in Europe, Senator La Follette, who for years has had an almost filial relationship to Mr. Borah, introduced a resolution pointedly condemning Mr. Pope's large-handed peace efforts.

Idaho observers believe that it was Mr. Borah who incited Mr. D. Worth Clark, anti-Roosevelt Democratic Congressman, to oppose Mr. Pope in this year's primary, and Mr. Borah's associates that led thousands of Republican voters into the Democratic primary to give Mr. Clark victory. Mr. Borah's alleged sponsorship of the Clark candidacy explains the hitherto mysterious enthusiasm of Idaho Townsendites for Mr. Clark, for Mr. Borah has carefully nursed an alliance with the Old Folks, and, when he himself was running for reëlection two years ago, scraped up a beautiful, if sudden, friendship with Dr. Townsend. Idahoans say that Senator Pope was wholly oblivious to Mr. Borah's maneuvers, and even on election day believed he would beat Mr. Clark by better than two to one.

As these Notes are written, the result of the primary of Mr. Phil La Follette's new Progressive Federation in Wisconsin is still unknown. New Dealers here hope that the nomination for Senator has been won by Representative Tom Amlie, one of the most brilliant members of the House liberal bloc. In the primary campaign, Mr. Amlie has had the active support of the beloved Mayor Dan Hoan of Milwaukee, and Amlie's victory would be received here as

a reassuring sign that Progressive Federation is to follow a genuinely liberal road. Mr. Amlie's rival for the nomination has been Lieutenant-Governor Herman L. Ekern, who is known in Washington chiefly for his advocacy, a few years ago, of Mr. Bill Royster's plan for railway workers' pensions—a plan that railway labor leaders considered as wildly impracticable as $30 every Thursday. Mr. Ekern attacked Mr. Hoan's support of Mr. Amlie, saying that a vote for Amlie was a vote for Karl Marx. He described himself as a "horse-and-buggy Progressive," which would appear to be 1938's most comprehensive straddle.

Washington T. R. B.

Other People's Money

The President's Foreign Policy

WHILE Europe stands on the brink of war, the people of this peaceful if troubled country cannot well avoid wondering what is in the minds of their own leaders. All of us are for peace. But we could work up a many-fronted war among the peace lovers over the manner of escaping war. Hitler himself said at Nuremberg that he was devoted to peace, he wanted only to be permitted to work effectively for the peace of the world. This would seem to make it unanimous. But you can never know what a man has in his mind when he talks about peace. And you can never be sure that the disclaiming pacifist you hear today arraigning the war-makers will not turn up next year with a flag and a sword clamoring for war in the name of that same sweet peace.

We could feel easier about our own security in the presence of the disaster in Europe if we could only know what our leaders who are in power mean by peace. The President has upon many occasions proclaimed his own devotion to the cause of peace. However, not long ago he complained to newspaper correspondents that newspapers and news writers had twisted his words and deeds to make it appear that he had entered into some sort of arrangement with England to fly to her side in the event of war. This he vehemently denied.

The newspaper men who have written most to create this impression are not enemies of the President at all. Indeed they are among his warmest apologists. Drew Pearson and Bob Allen, authors of the "Washington Merry-Go-Round" column, write the best column of inside news that comes out of Washington. Also they can be depended upon not to do an intentional injustice to the President. They maintain a close scrutiny of the State Department.

It will be remembered that some time last October the President uttered his sensational speech about quarantining aggressor nations. At that time—on October 11 and 12—Pearson and Allen printed a story that this speech was written in the State Department and delivered by the President verbatim as written; that before its delivery, Roosevelt called in the admirals and asked their plans. They had a plan for combined action by the United States and Great Britain for an economic blockade of Japan. The United States and England were to place fleets at the Panama Canal and at Singapore to stop the flow of goods into Japan. The British, said Pearson and Allen, had been consulted and approved the plan but felt that at the moment they could not spare vessels from the Mediterranean. Later they suggested they would send two destroyers, two heavy cruisers and one or two battleships to Singapore, but the outbreak of piracy in the Mediterranean forced them to abandon that.

Then in April Ambassador Hugh Wilson delivered a speech in Berlin warning Germany that it was conceivable the United States would come into any future war. This speech, Pearson and Allen reported April 26, was approved in advance by Washington.

Then in May the President seized two Pacific islands near the equator. Britain had claimed the islands, but she was notified in advance and approved the action as conforming to the general principle of coöperation between the two countries.

About the same time Chamberlain made his now famous and discredited Anglo-Italian pact dividing up the Mediterranean. The President approved this. Pearson and Allen reported that this was done by the President at the request of Lord Halifax, British Foreign Minister, and that this request was a duplicate of the one sent to the dominions. This caused critics to chaff the career boys on our attaining dominion status.

In the same month, Pearson and Allen reported that Secretary of War Woodring's provocative speech condemning dictators was approved in advance by the President.

In June, 1937, the two columnists wrote an extraordinary line in one of their releases. They pointed out that the career boys in the State Department had not been very much disturbed by the second neutrality act—although they opposed it—because they felt it would actually favor Britain and France. Under it Britain and France could buy all the raw materials they needed for processing in their own factories. "Walter Runciman," they commented, "arranged all this when he was over last year." But the situation had changed. Britain and France had not been able to keep up with German armament and were contemplating having to buy airplanes here, which would be barred under a wartime act. "That is one of the big reasons for the desire to amend the act." In other words, the administration has been maneuvering all along to make this law not a neutrality act but the very reverse.

These are only some of the pieces printed by them, gleaned from a hasty glance at their past releases, which tend to create the inescapable impression that the President, the Secretary of State and the career men in that department are conspiring to put us definitely on the side of Britain and France in the event of war.

Of course no one has accused the President of making a commitment to England to come to her aid in the event of war. What has changed is that the administration has been acting in concert with Britain in the moves that canny bargainer has been making on the European checkerboard.

Of course if the leaders of our people are working quietly to that end, the American people ought to know it. Nations do not go to war suddenly, overnight. They go one step at a time. The first step is taken quietly and unnoticed. The other steps follow equally unnoticed until a situation is created when no choice is left but war. JOHN T. FLYNN

Impasse on Parnassus

D'Annunzio, by Tom. Antongini. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 593 pages. $5.

SIGNOR ANTONGINI'S BOOK is one of those records of famous men that is sure to look silly at times. The method pretty well guarantees as much. You put down all sorts of details and sections of interest, but are not bound to any final judgments on them, or even to any scheme in their choice. You assume no scale of values for your material, but offer it as life does, and leave it for life and time to pick over, as it were. The man you present is not to appear as your ideal, but rather as the object of your precise and honest efforts, for his readers' sake and for future students. The reward for this amiable inclusiveness—we know some of the opinions about Boswell—is that at times you will seem to be a chatterbox over your head in the life-stream, and to be no better than the worst, and blind to the best, among the things you have somehow collected and set down. The author of this book on D'Annunzio certainly seems to be thus blighted fairly often and never more so, I'm afraid, than when he steps out of the general method and goes in for thought and argument.

Most of these almost six hundred pages were written during D'Annunzio's lifetime, "out of thirty full years," the author tells us, "in common with him; more than seven hundred letters which D'Annunzio addressed to me in the course of a third of a century and which represent, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly—" etc. The relation was that of secretary, manager, agent, publisher, friend; it was not one of a guardian angel so much as something like a general factotum, inner and outer.

The value of such a book, even if it is very good of its kind, will hang, of course, on D'Annunzio himself and what happens to his place in art. Only through that could there be any call for these pages and their voluminous divisions and aspects of the subject. Signor Antongini has chapters on everything: D'Annunzio, the physical man, measurements, skin, eyes, hands and all; the man moral and immoral; D'Annunzio's relations with women, his amours; his opinions of himself and other writers; his houses, possessions, gifts, debts and uses of money; his animals, servants, working habits, correspondence, politics, his relation to France, to the theatre, his military experience, Fiume, his life at The Vittoriale, on Lago di Garda, where he died a few months ago, and where in a retired spot he had had carved the mysterious words in which he tried to describe himself: "*Ego sum Gabriele qui adsto ante deos altibus de fratibus unus oculeus Postvertae. . . .*" Or, to leave out the verse lines, which the translation would have to betray:

I AM GABRIELE WHO PRESENT MYSELF TO THE GODS WITH THE KEENEST EYES AMONG MY WINGED BROTHERS, STUDENT OF POSTVERTA, MINISTER OF THE DIVINE MYSTERIES, INTERPRETER OF HUMAN FOLLY, FLYING MAN FROM ON HIGH, PRINCE AND HERALD

Whatever its fortunes, the book itself is sadly variable. It is full of unnecessary repetitions. It affords us a remarkably close observation here, and only a patter there. Along with a cosmopolitan understanding that this particular subject could get nowhere without, we find a certain operatic exhibitionism that is mere bad luck for D'Annunzio. There are even moments of a certain brand of boasting that make you think Signor Antongini has never grown up and still finds something smart in being naughty. This is a pity, for there is plenty of sophisticated judgment in this volume, and a good deal of the sensible coolness and skeptical rectitude that are characteristic of the Italian mind when it gets down to brass tacks. Often without taste, and always without distinction, this is a very valuable book, nevertheless; and few students, and no biographer, of D'Annunzio can ever do without it.

There is no use in being stupid about D'Annunzio, provided, that is, you want to go in for the literary sort of thing, or gauge matters in the field of this particular culture; which nobody asks you to do, of course. I make no claims to be a D'Annunzio scholar. I have read the plays he wrote, some of the poems, and three of the novels, in Italian; and one of the plays he wrote in French. In the English translations I have tried perhaps fifty pages, but the case seemed hopeless. I may say that I was certainly never a complete D'Annunzio enthusiast, if such a point is of any importance here; and that I am not concerned just now with the word *great*, which will merely spread us all over the place and get nowhere. But it is obvious that D'Annunzio belongs in the realm of the overwhelming, whether we like it or not, or like him or not. When, as a boy, he described himself in a letter—"Prodigal waster, rash, generous, affectionate, egotistical, sad, tameless and untamed, all in the briefest space of time," he was telling sheer dry facts almost. None of that could have been left out, though more and more as time went on could have been added. Whatever we think of his taste, his excesses, his attitudes, his personal history, however *vieux jeu* he may seem to us, we may as well confront his tremendous powers of work, the immense range of his reading and knowledge, the audacities, inventions, prodigalities, his assault on the Italian language and envelopment of its possibilities—Leo XIII, who was a great humanist, said that D'Annunzio was the only man living who could write Italian—and the international reactions, almost upheavals, around his name and fame, for and against.

A combination of his gifts, acts, outbursts and seclusions brought also an unheard-of flowering of legend, the blacker side of which found it easy to travel wide and stick tight. In the course of his long and adventurous career, D'Annunzio was accused of polygamy, adultery, theft, simony, incest, secret vices, sadism, plagiarism, murder and even cannibalism. To these, in the eyes of some of our reviewers, has lately been added fascism, in their opinion evidently the worst of all. And years ago it was published and believed, in spite of the church register at Pescara, that even his name was a fraud, his real name the highly comic one, in Italian, of Rapagnetta. For publicity purposes, or scandalous conversation and its pleasures, all these matters can but add to the joy of life; for literary purposes they are largely a waste of time.

For these purposes it might pay us to remember that many of D'Annunzio's tastes and ways belonged to the epoch in which he grew up, and can very often be regarded to the best advantage—for our own good as intelligent

judges—in such a perspective. We have only, for one example, to think of the recent histories of Wagner, and what our reaction might be to some of his details here if it were not for the great music that we hear and that sustains us otherwise.

And it might pay us to remember that Italian of quality and English of quality are practically untranslatable one into the other, and that in D'Annunzio at his best the content is so orchestrated with words—and at his worst so mucked with them—that the serious translator's case is all but hopeless—*ella clamava, gridava, si lamentava*, for a very tiny example, this, in "La Citta Morta," about Cassandra, anybody who thinks a mere *she called, she cried, she lamented*, translates it may as well give up. In case, then, we do not read Italian, it might be just as well if we let D'Annunzio rest for a while and simply turned to the index for a list of famous people over Europe, in society, the arts and the State, who admired him, often extravagantly, sought him out, wanted to know him, to collaborate with him, and so forth. The list is somewhat overwhelming; and when we decide on what we think of each of these, it might be time to bother with this Antongini record.

At that, there are, even in translation, quotations enough in this book to make up a brochure that might give us pause, things about life, nature, love, his father, his mother; and in the midst of that, certain devastating and unreasonable echoes that cannot be denied their voice. STARK YOUNG

The Bandwagon

There are other Republicans in the Senate who frankly say, in private conversation, that unless there is a marked change in the attitude of the people toward political principles and government in the next year or two, they, too, will not seek reëlection. – *From an article by G. Gould Lincoln in The Washington Star.*

No one questions the right of certain workers to link themselves together to secure fair compensation and decent working conditions. . . . My firm conviction is that when, if ever, unionism comes into the library, then we will lower our standards, our morale, our self-respect, and our appeal to those we serve. – *From an address by Milton James Ferguson, president of the American Library Association, printed in the bulletin of the ALA.*

Latest complaint of the depression harming its business comes from the National Casket Company. As in past depressions a lower death rate reduced the company's sales. – *Richard L. Gridley in The Pittsburgh Press.*

A fight was made against the resolution for the study of problems of youth, a warning being given this was a communistic idea and in the end would cost the state a great deal of money. – *From a Boston dispatch, discussing the action of the Massachusetts State Legislature, printed in The Springfield Republican.*

The Big Clean-up

He [Mussolini] started out with his castor-oil punishments and is improving Italy in an extraordinary way. – *Evalyn Walsh McLean, in her column "My Say" in The Washington Times.*

Please Don't Pray with Dynamite

At a session of Australian and New Zealand delegates, N. A. Barnard, speaker of the Australian House of Representatives, urged extension of the Oxford Movement, saying "It may well be that the Oxford Group will provide the dynamite necessary for world peace." – *From an Associated Press item in The Newark Evening News.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

The California Primary

SIR: I want to commend your articles dealing with the significance of primary elections being held in the several states. The one which took place in California on Tuesday, August 30, illustrates your point very well.

In that election McAdoo, who campaigned strenuously over the state as the only Roosevelt-endorsed candidate for United States Senator, was badly beaten by Sheridan Downey. This was hailed in the conservative press of the nation as another setback for the national administration. But, on the contrary, it is a much better indication of increased New Deal strength in California. McAdoo was recognized among all progressive leaders in California as no bona-fide New Dealer, and the voters generally knew that he was only hanging onto Roosevelt's coattails for the vote-getting value they possessed.

Sheridan Downey, on the other hand, has been an avowed New Dealer from the very beginning of that political program. He wrote a booklet, "Onward America," several years ago which committed him to the principles and program of the New Deal long before he sought the nomination for the Senate. He ran as the team-mate of Sinclair in 1934 on a decidedly New Deal platform. His vote for Roosevelt measures will leave nothing to be desired by the White House. So, to those who supported Downey in California, and to the opposition in the Republican camp, it is clear that a New Deal candidate has been chosen to represent the Democratic Party. The Democratic primary was therefore in no sense a loss of prestige for Roosevelt.

But the final election fight will be a very real test for the New Deal, if, as present counting of votes shows, Philip Bancroft is the Republican nominee for the Senate. He is the most simon-pure reactionary campaigning in the Far West today. He is a member of the Associated Farmers, than which there is no more reactionary anti-labor group of big agriculturalists. He denounces the New Deal and all its ramifications. He stands for a direct and immediate return to "rugged individualism." If Mr. Bancroft can win with such an out-and-out program of reaction, then surely the New Deal may look fearfully toward the future.

DEWEY ANDERSON

Stanford University, Calif.

The Social Symbolists

SIR: Toward the conclusion of his very searching but appreciative review of my "New Anthology of Modern Poetry," Malcolm Cowley took occasion to question the development of what I called, for lack of a better name, Social Symbolism.

Social Symbolism, as I defined it, covers the work of those contemporaries like W. H. Auden and Muriel Rukeyser who have effected a synthesis of the social-regional outlook of such poets as Sandburg, Masters, Frost, etc., and the symbolist technique of the Eliots, Pounds and Yeatses. This synthesis, as I see it, began in the work of such ex-symbolists as MacLeish and Gregory, and is a characteristic of the equipment of almost every promising poet in the still younger generation.

It is Mr. Cowley's contention that this synthesis can lead to no sound conclusion. "The symbolists were actively indifferent toward society at large, and they made themselves difficult to understand partly because they did not care to be understood. How can their style and method be applied by poets who want to speak directly to the broad masses?"

The question is not answered by historical reference to the problems which caused the symbolist poets to write as they did. The fact remains that their style enriched and altered the language in which they wrote—so considerably that a poet today who rejects their heritage entirely cannot escape an antiquarian or diluted flavor. Jesse Stuart and Paul Engle may be speaking more directly to the "broad masses" than Kenneth Fearing and Louis MacNeice, but I venture to predict that the latter will have a larger public ten years from now. It took the "broad masses" quite a time to appreciate Whitman. While class-civilization persists, furthermore, the true poet will be several steps ahead of any audience he may aim at.

Lest this be taken to imply that poets should return to their cozy, personal nests, let me add that the distinguishing feature of the Social Symbolists is their *will to communicate*. Such a will never markedly affected the symbolists themselves. And if the Social Symbolists have not yet succeeded in reaching a wide audience, it is because they have refused merely to "write down"; because the audience has not yet caught up with the new styles; and because the movement itself is still immature.

If Mr. Cowley will develop his contention that social poets might better further their interests and their art by thoroughly rejecting symbolism, a healthy debate may be on. I, for one, would like to be assured first that there is plenty of taxi-ing space and not too much rubbish in the foreground.

New York City SELDEN RODMAN

[This letter is discussed in Malcolm Cowley's review on page 218.—THE EDITORS]

A Conference on the South

SIR: Because it is a progressive movement by the Southern people to seek effective remedies for the social and economic ills of the South as recently outlined in the report of the National Emergency Council, I believe you will be interested in hearing something of the plans for the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. The conference, sponsored by outstanding Southerners representing every phase of the region's life, will be held in Birmingham, Alabama, November 20-23. . . .

The conference will embrace round-table discussions, reports, general sessions and addresses on such subjects as health, education, child labor, race relations, prison reform, labor relations, farm tenancy and constitutional rights. Separate committees composed of the South's outstanding authorities on these questions are already being established and it is believed that their reports to the general sessions will be of invaluable aid not only to the conference itself, but to Southern cities, counties and states after the conference is closed. Our people are going into this movement with the idea clearly in mind that the majority findings of the conference committees must be translated into effective action for the conference to accomplish lasting good.

In addition, as part of the progressive program laid out for the conference, plans are under way for the award of an annual Thomas Jefferson medal to the Southern statesman who is most active in promoting the ideals of human welfare and justice embodied in the philosophy of Thomas Jefferson. Mr. Rockwell Kent, famous American artist, has graciously consented to design the medal as his contribution to the project. . . .

To give you some idea of the Southwide scope of the conference and the remarkable support that is rallying around the banner of Southern progress, I would like to list just a few of the outstanding sponsors for the gathering.

They include Dr. Frank Graham, University of North Carolina president; Dr. W. T. Couch, director, University of North Carolina Press; Dr. Harmon Caldwell, president, University of Georgia; William E. Dodd Sr., Round Hill, Va., former Ambassador to Germany; Virginius Dabney, editor, The Richmond Times-Dispatch; George Fort Milton, liberal publisher of The Chattanooga News; Mark Ethridge of The Louisville Courier-Journal; Clarence Poe, editor, The Progressive Farmer, Raleigh, North Carolina; Dr. Edwin A. Elliott, regional director of the National Labor Relations Board, Fort Worth, Texas; the Rev. Charles Hamilton, Aberdeen, Mississippi; H. L. Mitchell, secretary, Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, Memphis, Tennessee; Hon. Brooks Hays, Democratic National Committeeman from Arkansas; Mrs. Raymond Robbins, Brooksville, Florida, national honorary president of the Women's Trade Union League; Senators, Representatives, labor leaders and a host of others. . . .

MRS. LOUISE O. CHARLTON, Chairman,
Birmingham, Ala. Southern Conference for Human Welfare

Hitler's Orphans

SIR: What Hitlerism leaves in its wake is shown in the letter given below. It was received by the Austrian Self-Aid Organization in London and transmitted to a representative in the United States. N. M. L.

New York City

Three months ago my father, a doctor, was arrested and taken to the Dachau concentration camp. He has not come back. Four weeks ago my mother, also a doctor, who took over my father's practice after his arrest, was arrested and there is little hope for her release in the near future. My older brother had to escape abroad, as he had been threatened with immediate arrest. Now I am all alone with my younger brother and sister. The boy is nine, the girl fourteen. I am only seventeen myself and it is of course hard on me to look after the whole household. I have left school only this year and I have had no experience in running a house. Therefore I beg you to help the two children to come to your country, otherwise they will go under.

Eva, who is fourteen, has just finished the fourth grade of the Real-gymnasium with honors. She has a gift for languages, she speaks English fluently, some French and Italian, she has had Latin in school besides, of course, German, her native language. She also has a talent for fashion designing and has done some work in artcraft. She is fond of children and knows how to get along with small children.

The boy, Harold Michael, is nine, has been attending grade school and has been a very good pupil. He is very well developed and mature beyond his age. He, as well as my sister and myself, is in perfect health. He is intelligent, lively and has many interests.

I, too, would like to emigrate to your country if it were pos-

sible. I have had seven years of Real-gymnasium and have passed with good credits. I can cook and look after children, I speak English and French and Italian, though the latter not very well, and I know Latin. I am very fond of children and have had experience in dealing with them.

I want to beg you to consider my application. It is a very urgent one. L. R.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Martha Ragland of Knoxville, Tennessee, reports that "public courage in the South is rapidly dispelling the bogey of birth control being a highly controversial issue." She says that in Tennessee, North Carolina and other Southern states birth-control information is available at city public-health centers and the fact apparently arouses little controversy or opposition. . . . Headley E. Bailey of Long Island, New York, thinks that blaming Great Britain for what has happened in China, Ethiopia, Spain, Austria and for what is now happening in Czechoslovakia is giving her credit for more political power than she has. . . . Charles E. Stoddard Jr. of East Aurora, New York, deplores the lack of specific recommendations for the problems of employment and production. He suggests a convention of Progressives to discuss the problem "Where do we go from here?"

William Cooper of Fountain City, Tennessee, thinks that a way to preserve the "freedom of the press" and still give the Party in power a fair chance to present its views is to authorize the government to print and distribute free to all voting citizens a weekly newspaper elaborating and explaining its policies and proposals. . . . Nan Golden of the League of American Writers, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York City, announces the opening of the fourth term of the Writers' School beginning October 10. Among the prominent members of the faculty are Leane Zugsmith, Mary Elting, Norman Corwin, George Aness, Jean Starr Untermeyer, Isidor Schneider, Samuel Sillen and Isobel Walker Soule. . . . A. Markoff, director of the Workers' School, 35 East Twelfth Street, New York City, announces the beginning of the fifteenth anniversary term on October 3. Details about the courses offered may be obtained by writing for the catalogue.

Anne Whitney Wakefield of San Jose, California, endorses Mr. L. L. Whyte's "Scientists' Oath" which we printed in the August 24 issue.

What's on the Air?

C. D. Jackson, general manager of Life, William J. Rapp, editor of True Story, and Calais Calbert, motion-picture research worker, discuss the importance of magazines in molding public opinion on "The People's Platform," Sunday, September 25, 7 P.M., CBS.

Herbert Hoover, former President of the United States, speaks on "Morals in Government," Wednesday, September 28, 9:30 P.M., CBS.

Musical and dramatic programs of the week include "The Home Port," an original play by Albert N. Williams, Saturday, September 24, 8:30 P.M., NBC-Blue Network; the American radio debut of Ignace Jan Paderewski, a concert from Lausanne, Switzerland, Sunday, September 25, 2 P.M., NBC-Blue Network; "Sherlock Holmes," presented by the Mercury Theatre of the Air, Sunday, September 25, 8 P.M., CBS; the NBC String Orchestra, Monday, September 26, 9 P.M., NBC-Blue Network; and "Symphonic Strings" conducted by Alfred Wallenstein, Saturday, October 1, 8:30 P.M., Mutual.

All times given (after September 25) are Eastern Standard Time.

Socialists and Symbolists

IN READING Yeats's autobiography, I was struck once more by the close connection between the technique of the Symbolist poets and their attitude toward life and art. They not only hated science and despised public affairs; they even went to crazy lengths in the effort to avoid any sort of generalized or abstract thinking. "I refused," Yeats says, "to read books and even to meet people who excited me to generalization. . . . I said my prayers much as in childhood, though without the old regularity of hour and place, and I began to pray that my imagination might somehow be rescued from abstraction. . . . For ten or twelve years more I suffered continual remorse, and only became content when my abstractions had composed themselves into picture and dramatization." Thus, the style that Yeats adopted, with its wealth of concrete images and its search for "precision of word and sound," was based on his dislike for scientific or political thinking. Even the rhythms of his poems can be traced to the same source, as he explains in a fine passage that has been quoted more than once:

> We make out of the quarrel with others rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry. Unlike the rhetoricians, who get a confident voice from remembering the crowd they have won or may win, we sing amid our uncertainty; and, smitten even in the presence of the most high beauty by the knowledge of our solitude, our rhythm shudders.

There can't be any doubt that this technique based on hesitating rhythms and on images that are precise yet infinitely suggestive has been successful in Yeats's own work and in that of other great Symbolists—Mallarmé, Eliot, Rainer Maria Rilke. The question is whether the same technique can be used convincingly by poets who, unlike the Symbolists, are interested in general ideas and in the social life of our times. Selden Rodman says that the younger poets are using it already. He believes that the most important, the dominating movement in contemporary verse, is the one he calls Social Symbolism. In a letter printed on page 216 of this issue, he gives me a friendly scolding for doubting its success.

Though he brings forward some good arguments and an impressive list of names, he hasn't changed my mind. For I have lately been reading the poets he mentions, and many others like them, and though I am glad to recognize their talent, I am becoming more and more dubious about the value of the movement in which they are engaged. Most of their verse is spoiled for me by a fatal lack of agreement between manner and matter, between their shuddering rhythms copied from Yeats (or Eliot or Hopkins) and their subjects borrowed from the world today. Let me illustrate by quoting a few lines from Muriel Rukeyser, who is certainly among the best of the new writers (though I am using one of her weaker poems to prove my point):

> John Brown, Nat Turner, Toussaint stand in this courtroom,
> Dred Scott wrestles for freedom there in the dark corner,
> all our celebrated shambles are repeated here: now again
> Sacco and Vanzetti walk to a chair, to the straps and rivets
> and the switch spitting death and Massachusetts' will.

Here is a stanza made completely out of books and newspapers, which we are expected to have read, so that each of the names mentioned will press a button and light an incandescent hundred-watt emotion. The poet herself gives almost nothing but this catalogue of names, these faceless apparitions. It is true that even a catalogue can be effective, if presented skillfully. But Miss Rukeyser uses the worst possible meter for her purpose, writing in a long, loose, shambling blank verse better suited to lonely meditations than to the scene in the courthouse at the Scottsboro trial. (And why give us a phrase like "Toussaint stand," with its s's and t's piling up in a traffic jam?)

Or again, let me quote from Stephen Spender, whose early poems I still prefer to anything else written by the younger Englishmen. Last spring he completed a five-act tragedy in verse, "Trial of a Judge,"[1] which was produced by the London Group Theatre and has now been published in this country. It is a dream play at many points suggesting Franz Kafka's dream novel, "The Trial." It is also a political play about Nazis and Communists, which ends with the judge himself executed for trying to sentence the guilty and reprieve the innocent. There could scarcely be a clearer example of the Symbolist method applied to a political subject. The fourth act is a fine dramatic conception, and I have heard from friends in London that the whole play was marvelously effective on the stage. But the verse seems almost as weak to me as the stanza from Muriel Rukeyser's Scottsboro poem. Let me quote two passages:

> We are driven to violence by violence
> Of groups hidden in crowds, like a ripe core
> Packed with black seeds driving outwards.

Here the first line is excellent, but half the force of it is lost because the sense carries over into the second line, which is so weak that it falls apart in the middle. "Like a ripe core packed with black seeds" is a good figure of speech, but why should any seeds be "driving outwards"? At this point, the image grows faint and faltering; the poet has lost interest in it. Or take another passage, a Communist prisoner speaking in the fifth act:

> Winning is our reality; that once gained
> Their freedom will push leaves from victory
> And in the borderless world of the many
> States and separate power melt away.

Here is a four-line passage full of abstractions—eight of them, to be exact—and ambiguous phrases that should have been clarified. I had to read it twice before I realized that "many" didn't refer to "states"; "the borderless world of the many" is simply the workers' world. I still don't understand what Spender means by "separate power" in the last line, or how he pictures freedom pushing leaves from victory: is freedom the sap and victory the stem? Obviously he is rewriting Lenin's "The State and Revolution" in irregular iambic pentameters, but his language is less precise than Lenin's, and less poetic. There is a division or disharmony in the play that Lenin never had to face and Spender has failed to overcome. His theme is the conflict between two mass political movements, but the style in which he wrote the play is that of a lonely intellectual, tortured with doubt and unable to form a clear picture of the visions that throng his mind.

What I have just said about Spender and Muriel Rukey-

[1] Trial of a Judge, by Stephen Spender. New York: Random House. 96 pages. $1.50.

ser applies more forcibly to other poets who, with less talent, are working in the same field. Most of their verse is terribly bad verse, spoiled as a social weapon by its halting rhythms, its mannerisms and its desperate need to be individual; spoiled as poetry by its abstract sentiments and its incurable vagueness.

But what are poets to do if they want to write about the world in which they live? It seems to me that they have a choice between two general courses of action.

The poets who choose the first course will retain much of the Symbolist technique, but will develop it further by applying it to their whole field of interest, instead of confining it to a few subjects, like disappointed love or regret for the past, that are carefully chosen for their esthetic "purity." Their poems will most certainly reveal an interest in social questions, but only at the points where these questions touch their own lives and work deeply on their own emotions. They will avoid the worst vice of their contemporaries, that of writing verses based on what they read in the daily papers. And they will not be social poets in the sense of expressing immediate social aims, in a language directed toward the broad public. Like the earlier Symbolists they will be working for a small audience, which they think of as existing in the past or the future. . . . Muriel Rukeyser and Stephen Spender at their best are poets to whom this description applies. It applies even better to Yeats himself—who, in his later years, has written many poems dealing with political and military struggles ("Sixteen Men," "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen," "Meditations in Time of Civil War"), but has written them without exhortation or argument, in a style that resolves abstract issues "into pictures and dramatization."

There is, however, a second and bolder course for modern poets. Those who follow it will abandon Symbolism altogether, the technical method along with the philosophy, and will become social poets pure and simple. They will write the sort of verse that Yeats dismisses, quite unjustly, as rhetoric—battle songs, laments for the fallen, heroic ballads, satires against their enemies and perhaps ritual verses for a new society. Their rhythms will no longer "shudder" from the knowledge of their personal solitude, but instead will be confident, solemn or exultant, with the strength of a shared emotion. I should guess, for example, that they will largely abandon blank verse, which has become a meditative measure with the variations more important than the pattern; in place of it they will cultivate some of the trochaic and anapestic measures that have been neglected since the early nineteenth century. They will require a great fund of technical skill in order to raise their work above the level of the political jingle-makers. In spite of their skill, they are certain to lose much of the precision and suggestiveness that were achieved by the older poets; yet they will gain immeasurably from their closeness to a vast new audience whose language they speak and whose desires they express. They are the poets most likely to flourish in the hard years that lie ahead of us.

MALCOLM COWLEY

Books in Review

Ten Points for Democrats

THOMAS MANN began it with "The Coming Victory of Democracy." Now comes George S. Counts with another counter-offensive against all totalitarianisms, whether of the Right or of the Left. Our novelists (John Hyde Preston, Leane Zugsmith) may laugh at liberals, but here we have liberalism justifying itself. For Professor Counts's "The Prospects of American Democracy," [1] is no mere defense of liberalism or democracy as a negative "middle way." It is, on the contrary, a heady call to action, complete with program and ideological ammunition. As Professor Counts says, democracy has always been the most venturesome of creeds; it has positive values of its own, and it demands faith and intransigence no less than communism or fascism. At the moment it demands a continued attack on a plutocracy that is bent on denying democratic rights to a large majority of the population. Professor Counts is all for pressing the attack—through unionization, through mass political organization, and through more spade work by the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee. Recognizing that economic collectivism is inherent in the facts of modern technology, Professor Counts is not afraid of saying goodbye to much of our traditional individualism. But he does not believe in the one-party State or in the dictatorship of anybody, which seemingly puts him on the side of those who would like to see the coming economic collectivism assume a syndicalist pattern, with parliamentary institutions left intact.

Just how political democracy (which presupposes the right to form parties around basic differentiating ideas) is to survive economic collectivism, Professor Counts does not say. But he doesn't have to say; the Swedes have worked it out in a small laboratory, with workers' syndicates and consumers' syndicates successfully offsetting the power of those who have title to productive property, and there is no reason why a similar program cannot be made to succeed in any country with democratic traditions. The one thing necessary is the human will to make it succeed, and it is in defense of democratic will and faith that Professor Counts is at his most eloquent. By implication, "The Prospects of American Democracy" is addressed to intellectuals who have been so bedazzled by Marxist theory that they have ceased forthwith to do any original thinking of their own. Professor Counts believes in the principle of the United Front. But he doesn't see how a united front can successfully champion democracy if its leaders, following Marxist theory, secretly despair of the democratic institutions of parliament, free speech and orderly social change.

[1] The Prospects of American Democracy, by George S. Counts. New York: The John Day Company. 381 pages. $3.

It is perfectly true that violence may be forced upon the Left by anti-democrats of the Right. That is what happened in Spain. But Professor Counts notes that Jefferson and Jackson won sizable victories for the people without resort to organized violence, and there is no *inevitable* reason why such victories cannot be won in the twentieth century. Certainly, says Professor Counts, "a practical abstention from and even sabotage of the political process by popular groups and parties in both Italy and Germany contributed to the downfall of democracy in those countries."

Throughout "The Prospects of American Democracy" the accent is on voluntarism, on man as a *conditioned* but not a *fated* animal. Marxists, of course, do allow human beings a choice, but only on an "either-or" basis (either successful revolution or chaos). As a reader of Locke and Jefferson and the instrumentalists, Professor Counts thinks the future *may* be any one of *x* varieties; and it is up to good democrats to pose democratic objectives and then fight like the devil for them. This implicit rejection of dialectical materialism for simple American instrumentalism will annoy those whose reading in political science is limited to Lenin's "The State and Revolution," but it is certainly needed. For, after all, Marx himself made specific exception of Great Britain, the United States and, possibly, Holland from the countries that were fated to a bloody solution of economic difficulties. Whether Marx himself was the first great "exceptionalist," I am not scholar enough to know. But Professor Counts's American exceptionalism makes good sense, which should be enough for anybody.

How does it come about that Professor Counts dares hope for the preservation and extension of American democracy by constitutional means? Well, he's been studying the American "aristocracy," and he has discovered that it lacks a sustaining conviction of moral right to rule. It pays lip-service to democracy and to civil liberties, which means that it must do its dirty work in the dark. Professor Counts doesn't see how a gang of shamefaced epigoni can put up a successful fight to rule; after all, battles cannot be won solely by public-relations counsellors. Following the shrewd lead of Charles A. Beard, Professor Counts notes that the United States has no hereditary army caste, no legalized clergy and no quasi-hereditary bureaucracy enjoying a privileged position in the State. The "aristocracy" thus lacks any assurance that it can command soldier, priest and civil servant to do its undemocratic will. Moreover, while the individual in America can ordinarily be shown to belong to one class or another, the family as a rule cannot. Violent class war thus runs afoul of the cousins and the uncles and the aunts; and the barricades are forgotten amid family squabbles about Mr. Roosevelt. This might be an unfortunate guarantee of do-nothingism, but, luckily, the family votes as individuals on election day, and the sons and daughters of "reactionaries" are as likely as not to belong to the CIO.

Professor Counts has a nine-point program for democrats. It's a good program to paste in your hat. First, he says, the friends of democracy must have faith in political democracy. Second, the ordinary citizen must obtain the knowledge necessary for a free man (which leads Professor Counts into two long chapters on the American school). Third, the masses of the people must be organized as completely as possible. Fourth, the government must carry out popular mandates quickly and honestly. Fifth, government must maintain a monopoly of police and military power. Sixth, civil liberties must be guaranteed to everyone without fear or favor. Seventh, propaganda must be systematically exposed. Eighth, the temper of the democratic process must be conserved and strengthened. And ninth, war must be avoided.

Professor Counts should have added a tenth: the people, as represented by a coalition of workers, farmers, unemployed and "little men," must hang on to the government. That is the big problem shaping up for 1940. With Roosevelt unfortunately taking it on the chin in some of the contested primaries, the real fight for an American popular front is only beginning. No democrat can afford to sit back and philosophize about points one to nine when point ten is in doubt.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

In the Good Old Summertime

The Summer Soldier, by Leane Zugsmith. New York: Random House. $2.50.

BY HER TITLE Miss Zugsmith describes a kind of fair-weather fighter on the side of world betterment. Her book is a study of five people drawn to the cause of social struggle from different habits of life and thought: a radical reverend, a radical writer, a pretty seasoned playgirl, a grayish social worker, a liberal faculty member. Under a veteran organizer they go South to investigate the terror in a struck town and, arriving, get nowhere—the night closes in thick with hostility, silence, squalor and the hint of violence. What is there for us to do and what will they do to us? There is nothing to do (the playgirl and professor get together in bed during the natural excitement, however) because The Men are gathering. The committee is ridden out of town and two of its members are gone over horribly. From the train ride back to New York the aftermath is reconstructed—no help from the Governor or the courts—and the main point comes out: those too weak for action will run upon seeing it and hide under the safe quilts (in this case all but the reverend and the writer); those of good heart will only become tempered under fire, and carry on.

Until the last part, the subtle shifts of outward demeanor and inner motive are made shrewdly visible in the people. The social worker is brought out with delicate sympathy (dumped a bit roughly at the end, though); the professor is a neat ironic hit; the best scene in the book is the evening of the sophisticated babe, and her hangover. A good thoughtful job.

But this is a novel of ideas, written about and for the present time. Perhaps it is because the single-plane, didactic patterns of ideas are hard to make fiction of that the story never pulls itself together; perhaps it is because the subject is not seen or felt with such passion as to give it the warmth and pressure of life (where the violence of action supersedes the normal small-talk to which it is the necessary climax, reality grows dim and I-heard-tell, and the effect seeps off into dry earth). The theory that we should put away the mind and go to battle is intellectually prevalent just now and, whatever may be said for it, keeps many

typewriters going far into these nights. Perhaps it is just this superimposition of a ready-made pattern on characters who for a while seemed to be doing all right that gets in the way of an author more successful in what you might call the novel of intellectual manners. OTIS FERGUSON

Daughters of Necessity

March of the Iron Men: A Social History of Union through Invention, by Roger Burlingame. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 516 pages. $3.75.

THIS BOOK deals with inventions and their relation to human progress. It may be succinctly described as an outline of social history set forth in scientific and mechanical terms. It is interesting to reflect that every inanimate object we touch, or have anything to do with, is either wholly or in part the product of mechanical ingenuity, or has been profoundly affected in some manner by science or invention. In a certain definite sense modern civilization is an artificial creation. Man has even developed an artificial or mechanical memory which uses printed or written words to carry the culture of centuries down through successive generations.

Mr. Burlingame shows that the faculty of mechanical invention is inspired by human needs. An inventor, like an author, a statesman, or a military leader, must appear at the right time and in the right place. If not, he and his contraptions sink into the desuetude of Patent Office museums.

A rather awkward steam engine was used in England to pump water out of mines for sixty years before James Watt was startled by the blowing off of the lid of his tea kettle. The principle of using steam as a driving power was already known, but very little had been done about it because there was little need of steam engines—except to keep mines from flooding. England, like the rest of the world, was a land of household industries; women in cottages spinning yarn and weaving cloth, men making hats or shoes in tiny shops. What use would a steam engine be to them? Watt's invention came into existence just before the Industrial Revolution; just at the time when factories were displacing the cottage industries. Steam and coal became the basis of England's industrial supremacy and worldwide trade.

The idea that inventions flash with a dazzling light and a bang into the minds of inventors is a standard conception of the romantic—or cinema—school of historians, but Mr. Burlingame shows it to be false. The only exception I have ever heard of, and the only one indicated by the author, is Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin. That young Yankee invented the gin in three days, and he said that the idea occurred to him almost instantly after he had learned of the need of such a device.

But that was so unusual as to be almost miraculous. In the ordinary course of events, the creation of a new mechanical device is the result of the work of various inventors who tackle the problem over a period that may run into several generations. It took fifty years to improve the typewriter to the point where it became a practical device.

Many minor inventions—such as the cigarette lighter and the safety pin—are mere gadgets or conveniences which have no effect on the social scheme; in other words,

we could easily get along without them. But there are other mechanical devices which have had a potent and almost incalculable influence on the history of nations. The cotton gin, as the author points out, revived the waning institution of slavery and led straight to the Civil War. The McCormick reaper turned our Middle West into the greatest wheat-growing region in the world.

Most interestingly Mr. Burlingame relates the gradual drawing together of science and mechanics with a consequently enormous acceleration of inventive processes.

Then there are the stories of non-inventive individuals who have the renown for great inventive achievements. Most readers of history know that the steamboat was not invented by Robert Fulton; he was a promoter who organized a steamboat company and adopted the ideas of others. But it is rather surprising to learn that Morse was not the inventor of the telegraph. He certainly has all the credit. Morse, it appears, possessed no scientific knowledge at all, though he had a quick mind and a sense of values. He heard that efforts to communicate by electricity over wires had been going on for years. He went into the subject, studied the various immature devices, got scientists and mechanics to help him and all of them together eventually produced a practical method of sending words over a wire. To this result Morse himself contributed little or nothing.

I have not read such a fascinating book in a long time.

W. E. WOODWARD

Individual and Social Action

The Intelligent Individual and Society, by P. W. Bridgman. New York: The Macmillan Company. 313 pages. $2.50.
The Structure of Social Action, by Talcott Parsons. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company. 829 pages. $6.

A SIGNIFICANT NEW TENDENCY is the interest manifested by natural scientists in social problems. They have given us a whole series of distinguished essays. The present work by P. W. Bridgman, professor of Mathematics and Natural Science at Harvard, is an essay in autobiographical sociology: he is trying to set down those social conditions and precepts which can help him lead an intelligent life. The infelicitous title hides a warm, charming and genuinely constructive book which ought to be read by laymen.

The first of Bridgman's two themes is the operational status of the concepts of natural science and the necessity for clarifying social concepts through breaking them down into their operational validities. His second theme concerns the "inescapably egocentric position" of the individual in society. Here he throws out suggestions which need extensive research and portend a system of sociology deadly to certain contemporary trends, especially sociological idealism and mysticism. Though not technically a philosopher, Bridgman has the instinctive materialism of the natural scientist and uses it with biting effect on social concepts. As a personal confession, his book has the philosophical anarchism inherent in any liberal attempt to find oneself as an individual, even an intelligent one, without a historical community, that is, without a class. But in the analytical

portions of his work he has laid the basis for scientific progress in social theory.

Mr. Parsons' book "is meant to be a monographic study of one particular problem in the history of recent social thought, that of the emergence of the theoretical system which has been called the 'voluntaristic theory of action.'" This aim he has sought to achieve by showing the development of this theoretical strain in four eminent European thinkers—Alfred Marshall, Vilfredo Pareto, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. But the presentation of these four theorists is so indirect as to attract only a narrow audience of initiated narrow specialists. This is particularly deplorable in the case of Max Weber, whose thought needs the delineation in English which Mr. Parsons could so well give it if he would. Mr. Parsons' extraction of a theory of social action from the monumental works of these four thinkers leads to a conclusion in which four mountains give birth to one mouse—a conclusion (the voluntaristic theory of action) which offers no foothold for scientific social research and which does grave injustice to Mr. Parsons' own command of the literature. GEORGE SIMPSON

New Books: A Reader's List

BEN JONSON: SELECTED WORKS, edited by Harry Levin (Random House, $3.50). A thousand pages of Ben Johnson, including six complete plays (reëdited from the first and second folios), three masques, a selection from the shorter poems and seventy pages of Jonson's critical opinions, in verse and prose. Dr. Levin's introduction is vigorous and intelligent, but makes too quaint a show of learning. This is the fifteenth item in the handsomely printed Random House one-volume series, which is on the way to becoming a complete library of the English and American classics.

ROOTS IN THE SKY, by Sidney Meller (Macmillan, $3). The lengthy chronicle of a rabbi, his wife and their gradually Americanized children. The episodes are bare and jerky, often as crudely written as a diary; but the pattern is reinforced by a realistic Jewish atmosphere and a moving set of characters, firm and consistent and thoroughly convincing.

CARIBBEE CRUISE: A Book of the West Indies, by John W. Vandercook (Reynal and Hitchcock, $3.50). A really entertaining guide to the Caribbean. Characterizations of the many islands as distinctive as Cromwell's nose—and the travel lecture on conquistadores, imperial ping pong, romance, industry, beauty, squalor, native life (picturesque as hell if you don't have to live it) is served with verve and wit.

BEAUTY PLUS, by Mary MacFadyen (Emerson Books, $1.96). "The Smart Woman's Key to Beauty, Health and Charm," runs the subtitle. As such books go, this is a very sensible one, being the work of a practising physician; it gives advice on the care of the skin and the prevention of syphilis and everything in between.

ZACA VENTURE, by William Beebe (Harcourt, Brace, $3). Take it neat as a reminder that man isn't all of "Life" by a jugful. Green turtles, whale sharks, barnacles and hundreds of other creatures were studied on this expedition into the waters off Lower California, and Dr. Beebe makes the tiny wrigglers inhabiting a piece of cork bark more interesting than your next-door neighbors.

TRIUMPH OVER PAIN: The Story of Anesthesia, by René Fülöp-Miller (Bobbs-Merrill, $3.50). The search for relief from pain, from the early surgical chamber of horrors to the modern operating room, featuring and overdramatizing the sordid quarrel for honors among the contributing scientists. In large part a memorial biography of Dr. William Thomas Green Morton, the first practical applicant of ether.

THE GENERAL'S LADY, by Esther Forbes (Harcourt, Brace, $2.50). A better than usual Revolutionary War romance, with a seductive and tragic heroine who kills her husband (or did she?) and is hanged in her most beautiful dress. Poignant, sensitive prose; more psychological insight than you might expect; much interesting detail about the life of the time. Would make a swell movie.

THEY WROTE ON CLAY, by Edward Chiera; edited by George G. Cameron (Chicago, $3). Assyriology for the layman. The finding of the Babylonian tablets and their decipherment, and what they revealed of ancient history, religion, art and commoner matters like business practices. Plainly and fetchingly written; numerous photos and diagrams.

THE WINDBREAK, by Garreta Busey (Funk and Wagnalls, $2.50). From free land to fine arts in the Middle West. A family novel treating three generations from the Civil War to the early twentieth century, with the familiar details carefully rendered—paternal tyranny, muddy-footed farming, slaughtering, growing prosperity.

MY PILGRIMAGE FOR PEACE, by George Lansbury (Holt, $2.50). The lovable old man whom Gunther ranks with Gandhi tours Europe and interviews statesmen—including Hitler and Mussolini—pleading for international peace and understanding. Rather naïvely written (he thinks Communists and Nazis ought to be able to live together in peace) but full of genuine moral fervor.

SIX ROOMS MAKE A WORLD, by Gove Hambidge (Whittlesey, $2.50). The simple philosophy of one man, who seldom travels and is no expert on economics, politics or metaphysics, but who believes that the fundamental purpose and destiny of the race is centered about family life and home. Short but very interesting essays suggested by bedroom, kitchen, nursery and living-room.

THE HISTORY OF SCANDINAVIAN LITERATURES, by Giovanni Bach (Dial, $4). A long needed, comprehensive survey (brief enough and simply enough written for the lay reader) of Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Icelandic and Finnish literature. A little *too* brief, as a matter of fact, particularly in the treatment of Ibsen, Anderson-Nexö and Undset. Comprehensive, scholarly bibliography; good index.

Contributors

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