

THE OPEN FORUM

ABOUT AMERICA FIRST

(John Roy Carlson's article, "Inside The America First Movement," in the January *MERCURY* aroused exceptional interest, moved newspapers to editorial comment and elicited many letters of praise and condemnation, a few of which we quote. There were two minor errors in the article. One was typographical: the number of a patent for a police club, taken out by James True, should be 2026077, not 2026777, as it was given. The other was a mistaken reference to the Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith, an error which Mr. Carlson explains in the following letter. — THE EDITORS.)

SIR: I was in error in charging that the Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith was a speaker for the America First Committee. The Reverend Smith heads the "Committee of 1,000,000." In all likelihood, references to his Committee in my research work were interpreted as references to the America First Committee.

Nevertheless, on March 2, 1941, Senator Gerald P. Nye spoke for the "Committee of 1,000,000" at the Masonic Auditorium, Detroit, and Nye was a ranking spokesman for the America First Committee. This meeting and the Reverend Smith were praised highly by the *Nationalist Newsletter*, organ of the National Workers' League, an organization whose membership numbered former members of the notorious Black Legion, the Bund and the Ku Klux Klan. Further, Congressman Stephen A. Day, another ranking America First Committee spokesman, addressed the "Committee of 1,000,000" at the Class Technical High School in Detroit on Sept. 4, 1941. Mr. Day's book, *We Must Save The Republic*, was published by Flanders Hall. The record shows that, although the Reverend Smith had no official ties with the America First Committee, he made prominent use of America First spokesmen.

As for the Reverend Smith himself, he is former associate of Huey Long. He has been an integral part of the America First movement since July, 1933. A letter written by H. E. Martin, Executive Director of *Pelley's Weekly* and dated August 5, 1936, states that the Rev. Smith was a member of the Silver Shirts of America. His registration number was 3223 and his wife's number was 3220.

JOHN ROY CARLSON
New York City.

SIR: Both Mr. Bates and I read the article in your January magazine, "Inside The America First Movement," and think it the most smearing, scurrilous, anti-Christian article ever written, and protest against it very much. What the idea is of writing such lies is beyond the thinking of loyal Americans. Now, when we need unity more than ever, your magazine comes out with an article that can do more harm and make for disunion than anything that has been written since we got into the war.

Both Mr. Bates and I were America Firsters and darn glad and happy to have been able to belong to such an American organization. We didn't want our sons to be sent to foreign soil to fight, knowing our unpreparedness, etc. Certainly all this has been proven in the Philippines.

Now that we are in the war, I defy you and your rotten writer, Mr. Carlson, to prove how un-American we American Firsters are. Investigate, is our challenge to you and yours. Every one of us has sisters, sons, husbands, sweethearts in the army, navy or marines. Giving them with all our hearts to defend our America. We women are doing our bit and doing it as only American women know how to do their share in war times. The mere fact that the America First Committee disbanded

the very next day after war was declared refutes the very thing Mr. Carlson says. I think an apology from your magazine is needed as the article written by Mr. Carlson is certainly a very unpatriotic and *un-Christian* one.

MRS. CHESTER E. BATES

*Plandome, Long Island,
New York.*

SIR: This is just a line to say what a swell job I think you're doing with the *MERCURY*, especially the article on the America First outfit. More power to your elbow!

LOUIS BROMFIELD

*Lucas,
Ohio.*

SIR: That was an extraordinary fine and factual article on the America First movement by John Roy Carlson. I have been intimately connected with organizations fighting America First and know that the fight is by no means over despite the present apparent love-feast.

Nazis are born, not made. I have no doubt the honest and self-deceived people who belonged to America First have quit and are all right, but the majority are still exactly where they were.

STRUTHERS BURT

*Southern Pines,
North Carolina.*

NOTE ON CLAMOR BOYS

SIR: "Hollywood's Clamor Boys" wasn't the sort of thing most of us here have come to expect of the *MERCURY*. Badly written, inaccurate, undocumented and sleazily put together, the piece was knocked out by a poor lad who had his feet on the ground not once during his short, ill-fated and confused hitch as a unit man.

Of course, exaggeration helps put over a yarn, as we who lie for a living know best of all, but any good showman (or editor, for that matter) will tell you you can't burlesque a burlesque. "Hollywood's Clamor Boys"

(swell title) tried to do that. The author of your article is vinegared on the town, which is his due and luxury, a luxury in which most of us indulge most of the time. And because he got the heave-ho, he's sore as only writers who aren't appreciated can get sore. He feels better now, no doubt.

The thing about his yarn that needles those of us who've read it is that if enough pieces such as this, written in high rash, get out about our racket, no one will believe the real story which, if more truthful, is far funnier.

ANOTHER UNIT MAN

*Burbank,
California.*

PURIFYING STALIN

SIR: I want to thank you for your admirable article in the current issue of the *AMERICAN MERCURY* on "The Purification of Stalin." Therein you have expressed ably and frankly the point of view which I and many other citizens of the United States have entertained for some months. As a matter of common sense and expediency, we accept and welcome the aid which Russia is now rendering the cause of freedom, but we need not condone, much less whitewash, the things for which Bloody Joe has stood since he came into power. He is the same man now that he has always been, and no amount of sophistry and soft-soap can change that. All that Stalin stands for is the negation of what we believe in the United States. There has been no change of heart on Joe's part, nor will be.

Your realistic attitude, based upon intimate knowledge, is most refreshing and I hope it will have a salutary effect upon American public opinion. The writers who, for one reason or another, are trying to make us think that Russia is now fighting in defense of an ideal, and who seek to excuse the awful atrocities and general misdeeds of the present Russian regime, are doing us a disservice, for which they deserve condemnation.

JOHN THOMAS LEE

*Chicago,
Illinois.*

SEX IN THE ARMY

SIR: The article by Irwin Ross ("Sex In The Army") is certainly well meant, well written, but factually not quite correct, and in its viewpoint not very mature.

Mr. Ross explains that the Army tries to suppress prostitution, "assuming" that soldiers would then "simply abstain." Doctors Parran and Vonderlehr, of the U. S. Public Health Service, however, blame the Army for not suppressing prostitution with all the power at their command, and editorials in various papers have pointed to this criticism of the Army by such prominent authorities

This is one point of confusion, but it appears to me not as an issue between the Army on one side, and Doctors Parran and Vonderlehr on the other, but I see the issue rather, between the emotional approach to the problem as opposed to the strictly scientific one. The former is an "Anti-Vice" crusade and the latter an "Anti-Infection" campaign. Both attitudes, the emotional as well as the scientific, are represented among Army men as well as among public health administrators.

It strikes me as a forceful truth that the mere attempt to suppress prostitution around Army camps, as part of the fight against venereal diseases, leaves a very important aspect of the question out of consideration. Supposing that the Army should succeed in suppressing professional prostitution, as Congressman May wants it, what are the soldiers likely to do? Repress their sex instincts, live abstemious and "pure" (as it is "assumed")? I do not think that any reasonable person, and certainly not Doctors Parran and Vonderlehr, can believe that people can be made "good," or human instincts be abolished by force of laws. Therefore, substitutes will be resorted to.

These substitutes can be dangerous to the individual and dangerous to society. I do not wish to discuss here whether sexual abstinence is harmful or harmless to the individual, because the definition of abstinence would have to be given first. Is a man who relieves his sexual tension by more or less frequent auto-eroticism abstemious, or not? Mr. Ross

does not say. He does mention — most commendably — the fact that homosexual practices are encouraged through enforced abstinence, and yet he endorses the measures of suppression advocated by the American Social Hygiene Association.

Prostitution can never be completely suppressed. That is generally admitted. But even with a partially successful repressive policy, society runs certain dangers which concern not only more frequent venereal diseases among the so-called "good girls," but also more frequent abortions, seduction, attacks on children and sex crimes in general. Anyone doubting these statements should ask the authorities in Butte, Montana, what happened in this town when the red light district was temporarily closed during a reform wave. Mr. Ross calls these facts, established by experience, merely a "quaint notion," but he has no other argument to disprove them. . . .

The inexperienced amateur, the clandestine prostitute, is the greater danger, not the professional prostitute, especially if the latter is under supervision and has acquired knowledge of prevention. While, therefore, suppression of professional prostitution may greatly satisfy a puritanical mind, it will not answer the purpose for which it is undertaken.

There is, to my mind, only one effective method to prevent venereal disease, and that is the teaching of prophylaxis. Everything else is useless and dangerous. Teach every soldier the best methods of prevention, supply him free of charge with the necessary means for such prevention, and real progress will be made.

Venereal disease is too important a problem in these critical times to be approached by emotional reactions of the "Anti-Vice" variety. The only justified approach is a strictly scientific one: Anti-Disease. Much progress has been made along this line, not the least thanks to Dr. Parran's medical efforts. It would be tragic if we would replace an attitude of detached logic by one of moralizing, and wishful thinking, or by ineffective measures of persecution.

HARRY BENJAMIN, M.D.

New York City.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

"NEMESIS" is the title bestowed upon Dr. JOSEPH STRASSER by a recent biography of him. He has indeed been cast by fate in the role of Hitler's Nemesis. He has been hunted relentlessly by Gestapo agents since his escape from Germany. As head of the underground "Black Front," he is the one German most hated by Hitler. He now lives in Canada.

Traveling correspondents appear in this issue of *THE MERCURY*. WILLIAM BAYLES, who has covered Europe for more than a decade, is now in London. Currently in the same capital is L. SOLON, recently arrived from Lisbon from the Continent.

MICHIGAN is represented by two writers in this issue. Karl Detzer is the free-lancer whose *Friday Evening Post* stories made the Michigan State Police famous. James S. Pooler, a *Fort Worth Press* writer, has written for *THE MERCURY* and appeared in the O'Brien anthology.

ROY CARLSON has studied the native imported fascist organizations in America for many years — the last three of them as an investigator. Posing as a fanatic "believer," he joined eleven pro-Nazi organizations and several took a supposedly active part.

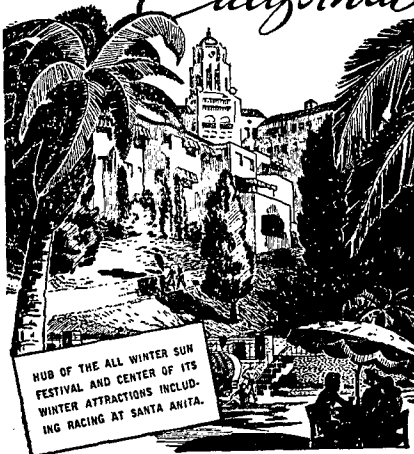
WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN, for twelve years the *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent in Russia, is recognized as an outstanding authority on the Soviet system and its personalities.

BEL CURRIER is a former newspaperwoman whose first novel, *The Young and the Immoral*, was recently published by Knopf.

OWEN R. EMBREE has been president of the Julius Rosenwald Fund since 1928. He is the author of *Brown America*.

JOHN E. LAWES, the celebrated ex-warden of Sing Sing Prison, has probably dealt with more murderers than any living man.

The VISTA DEL ARROYO PASADENA California



■ Forget winter in the sun-bright 25 acres of this beautiful hotel, in California's loveliest city. Golf, tennis, riding, lawn games, and two outdoor swimming pools! Varied social events. Ideal climate at this 900-foot elevation. Finest schools near by.

■
400 DELIGHTFUL ROOMS IN
HOTEL AND BUNGALOWS
AMERICAN PLAN from \$8.00 PER DAY
■

For reservations, write to LEROY LINNARD
**VISTA del ARROYO HOTEL
AND BUNGALOWS**

PASADENA, CALIF.

D. M. LINNARD, President
S. W. ROYCE, Managing Director

Also:
in Pasadena The Huntington
in Coronado Hotel del Coronado
in San Francisco The Fairmont

12 THRILLING MINUTES ON THE NEW NON-STOP SPEEDWAY FROM LOS ANGELES