

New Wealth of Nations

DEMOCRACY REBORN, by Henry A. Wallace. Edited by Russell Lord. Reynal & Hitchcock. 280 pages. \$3.00

AS I write these lines, the author of this book is the center of a bitter battle at the Democratic Convention. By the time you read them the Convention will have determined Henry Wallace's political destiny, and the chances are strong that his political career will be at an end. This book was not edited to explain why, but it does nevertheless. For the man who wrote these fifty-odd speeches and essays, over a period of eleven years, is a man of ideas—and such men are dangerous in politics. He is a man of integrity, who takes his Bible seriously and applies religious values to statesmanship—and such men leave you uncomfortable in politics. He is a growthy man, whose perspectives have moved from correlating hog prices on an Iowa farm to analyzing the conditions of "free world victory"—and such men burst the bounds of politics.

Whatever happens to Henry Wallace politically, however, he has already cleared for himself his significant place in American life, which is an intellectual place and above all a moral one. The chief quality about both his ideas and his ethics is their wholeness. He has re-integrated political and economic values into something that can once more be called *political economy*. He has applied the principles of plant genetics to the superstitions of racism, and the result is a view of the provenance of human qualities which has (to use one of his own phrases) "the strength and quietness of grass." He has arrived all by himself by the hard way—by having to think it through for himself—at the simple truth that the same corrosive institutions which cause soil erosion are also behind human erosion. He has seen, finally and above all, the organic relation between foreign and domestic policy, between the international fascists whom we fight without fear and the native fascists whom we fear without fighting.

In short, what Russell Lord has done in this

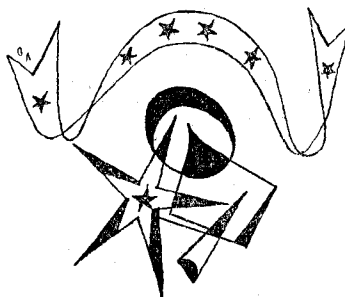
brilliantly edited book of selections from Wallace's papers is to put together the elements of a new *Wealth of Nations*.

One of its merits is its selectiveness. Only a few speeches and essays, and only the outstanding ones, are included from each year's intellectual output. Another is the editor's restraint in providing us with notes that are illuminating without being obtrusive. Still another is the chronological arrangement that enables the reader to understand and measure the growth of Wallace's thinking.

And the thing that stands out here is the fact of growth itself. There is little in the early years that goes beyond the horizons of agricultural economics. The first step, from 1933 to 1936, is the recognition that what has happened to agriculture sheds light on the nature and plight of our whole economy. The second step, starting in 1938, is a growing awareness of the impact of fascism on human values. Through these early years there is a patient, fumbling note. The very phrases that recur most often—"America Must Choose", "The Hard Choice", "Our Second Chance"—show that he was still finding himself at the crossroads of his own thinking. He discovered Latin America in 1939. He did his first hard thinking about the foundations of the peace in 1941. His famous speech at the Free World dinner, *The Price of Free World Victory*, came in 1942, as did also the impact of the Russian experience on his thinking. It was in 1943 and 1944 that his thinking took on not only maturity, but with it also decisiveness. The accents of hesitancy disappeared, and Wallace emerged in all the stature of democracy's angry man, lashing at fascism with whips and scorpions, reaching a prophetic strength that has been given to few figures in our political life.

His book is worth reading and pondering. It will live because it is a living book, hewn out of the blood and body of a man, and because the problems and the dangers and the tasks with which it deals are the enduring problems and dangers and tasks of our time, on every continent.

MAX LERNER



An Unforgettable Figure

WOODROW WILSON, by Gerald W. Johnson. Harper. 293 pages. \$2.00

THIS latest book on Woodrow Wilson with the appropriate sub-title of "the unforgettable figure who has returned to haunt us"—with pictures and cartoons assembled by LOOK magazine, and text and captions by Gerald W. Johnson, a careful student of our political history, could not be more timely. The volume furnishes convincing evidence that high sounding agreements for world security that remain unimplemented are nothing but more of the scraps of paper that in the past led us into World War I and World War II, and may land us in anarchic conditions from which our civilization would never revive.

As the hour draws near for the most fateful decision the people of America have ever been called upon to make it is an unpleasant but inescapable duty to review the circumstances in which the last war was won and the peace lost. As our far-flung battle lines are pushed forward and the cracks in the enemy bastions become more apparent it is wise to recall the words of the great Mazzini, who told those who would listen that: "The morrow of the Victory has more perils than its eve."

These words were little heeded in 1919 but tomorrow, after a tremendous series of disasters, we are to be vouchsafed another chance to save civilization. It is more helpful I think to prepare for this decision than to join with those who debate whether it was Wilson or humanity who lost the peace in Paris or whether it was Lodge in Washington.

Whether he was right or wrong in his uncompromising attitude during the Senate battles over the ratification of the Covenant of the League, it is certain that President Wilson, later, did not take a narrow or personal view of the battles that were to come, that he knew would come. To me and to many others in practically identical language, in December 1921, he said, looking back on the struggle at home and abroad which had relegated him to an invalid's chair:

"We at least have nothing to conceal. I glory in the ideas that we defended in France and they will triumph. Perhaps the world charter which we fashioned in Paris will be redrawn in a happier form, but as to its ultimate acceptance I have not a shadow of a doubt. The world will not commit suicide."

It is devoutly to be hoped, when the day of Unconditional Surrender of the war criminals arrives, we will not be taken by surprise.

While, as becomes our democracy, opposing and even clashing views may be expressed, we shall not fall into partisan groups. Certainly to bulwark our shaky civilization all parties can and should combine and certainly the party of Wilson has not an exclusive copyright on all peace plans. Many good Americans who lived and died before Woodrow Wilson was born planned universal peace which passed the understanding of the men of their generation. As the record shows William Penn was the first to bring the dream to America. Quaker though he was he made it quite clear that in his judgment his peace plan, if it were to survive, should have force behind it.

As a matter of fact both Congress and the Republican Party have an excellent record on the vital problem which is now presented to them again, if you but blot out the war-shocked years of 1919 and 1920. Indeed the record shows that in 1910 Congress passed unanimously a Joint Resolution authorizing President William Howard Taft to invite all nations to unite with us in forming a league to lessen the probability of war and suggesting for this purpose an international police force to be composed of the combined navies of the world. Even Theodore Roosevelt who later was to become an outspoken opponent of all the Wilsonian plans for world peace, while still in the White House and with the weight of responsibility upon his shoulders, said and wrote repeatedly: "It would be a master stroke if those great powers honestly bent on peace would form a league, not only to keep the peace among themselves but to prevent by force if necessary its being broken by others." Later, on several occasions, President Theodore Roosevelt pointed out with insistence and with emphasis that the failure of the plans agreed to at the Hague was "due to the lack of any Police to enforce the decrees of the Court."

Of one thing we can be assured, that unless the United Nations stand together on the day of settlement there will be no peace. It has been argued that even had we entered the League, World War II would have come all the same. And that may be true, but what cannot be denied is that a very few hours after the Versailles Treaty was defeated in the U. S. Senate (November 19, 1919) all but the shallowest of pretenses to carry out the obligations entered upon at the Armistice and in the Treaty were abandoned by the Germans.

I only have space to mention one of these innumerable derelictions but it is an important one and tragically topical today. The Weimar Government in the treaty pledged itself to turn