

# Correspondence

## Sue and Be Damned

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I received from your office, a complimentary copy of the October 23 issue of *NEW MASSES*, which contains an article by John L. Spivak, correspondent of the Communist daily language newspaper, the *Daily Worker*.

This article is as mendacious, scurrilous, slanderous and libelous as usually emanate from a bunch of Godless apostate Jew and Gentile Communists and is in line with the policy of other Communist publications. It is a garbled account, second hand, of an alleged meeting or series of meetings of an alleged "Inner Circle" of the organization which I have the honor to head since 1919, long before Hitler came into power.

I absolutely refute the imputation that I have ever corresponded with Frank Shuller. I did not and do not know of the gentleman's existence.

I deny ever having solicited aid from any Hitlerites, nor have I spoken before any meetings of the so-called Friends of New Germany or for that matter before any other group that has as its single objective, the decrying of the Jew as a race.

Your filthy Communist rag will make an immediate retraction of the statement in the article that we issued confidential instructions, the details of which were conveniently omitted in the article because they did not exist, but yet alleged that these instructions covered attending "Jew and Communist" meetings, or I shall enter suit for libel, take this case into court and make you prove your allegations.

You Communist swine and character assassins, are directly responsible for promoting race hatred between whites and blacks; between Jew and Gentile; between Catholic and Protestant. We know you for what you are, and decent American citizens, having any powers of analysis, pay no attention to your vilification.

One of the principal objectives of the Communists is to attack patriotism and assail patriotic organizations, as anti-something or other, whereas the Communists use the "anti" vehicle to stir up class hatred, race hatred and the overthrow of our Constitutional form of government.

You will also immediately make retraction that I have given circulation to a circular, which you unqualifiedly declare I had broadcast in Chicago, entitled "AMERICANS OF GERMAN DESCENT TO THE FRONT," and, by inference, another poster captioned "DANGER! DO NOT ELECT A JEW FOR REPUBLICAN WARD COMMITTEE-MAN!"

As for distributing that bone of contention—the Protocols—allegedly a world-wide Jewish plot, that document can be purchased in department stores in the City of Chicago, various booksellers, and is printed in a cheap edition at Dallas, Texas.

Ordinarily such a lying scurrilous, libelous article, as is John L. Spivak's, would be beneath the dignity of receiving a reply from this organization, but under the circumstances, the intent of the objectives of you filthy Communists cannot be overlooked.

WHO SAID THERE IS NO COMMUNISM???

A rag, such as the *NEW MASSES*, that has to make a periodic nationwide appeal for funds to continue its existence, needs something sensational for the neurotics to feed upon and we propose to see to it whether the American people will tolerate the continued existence of such literary miscegenates.

A Communist to me is a Communist whether he is a Jew, a Gentile, a Mohammedan, or what have you, and that goes double, if any of you swine want to make an issue of it.

It is unfortunate that you Communists are so adroit in your maneuvering that you imposed upon a Committee of the Congress, whose activities were supported by taxpayers' money.

I have plenty of friends of Jewish extraction—

not Communists—who have no sympathy for their co-religionists who profess to the ideals of a purloined, blood-stained, rotten, maggot philosophy such as Communism.

A copy of this letter is going to certain American citizens of both Jewish and Gentile extraction, mentioned in your scurrilous article, together with a letter, so that they may know exactly what the *NEW MASSES* is.

We have a complete record of the revolutionary activities of all of the Communist editors of *NEW MASSES* and its many nitwit revolutionary writers and lascivious-minded cartoonists.

I have written you in the only language that Communists can understand.

HARRY A. JUNG,  
Honorary General Manager.

American Vigilant Intelligence Federation.  
Chicago, Oct. 23.

[THE *NEW MASSES* has no intention of retracting any of the charges made, for they are all accurate. We have more material about Mr. Jung's anti-semitic and anti-labor activities than we have published, and would welcome an opportunity to put Mr. Jung on the witness stand.—THE EDITORS.]

## For Defense of Chinese Soviets

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The majority of the American people is still not aware that the United States government is involved in a war of intervention against the national liberation struggles of the Chinese people. If the Nanking government were to lose the support of the imperialist powers it could not last for a day before the rage of the masses and the Chinese Red Army.

Munitions, money, and even the actual direction (by "advisers" and the furnishing of a whole general staff, headed by General von Seeckt, to the army) of the terrorist and military campaigns against the Chinese people come from the imperialists. The Chinese masses are the victims: they pay for the intervention; they do the fighting which is intended to be to the advantage of the imperialists; they are the ones who are murdered, tortured.

The United States plays an important role in this intervention. More than 150 American and Canadian aviators have been loaned to the Nanking government. The \$50,000,000 wheat and cotton loan, the proceeds of which went to finance the sixth anti-Chinese Soviet campaign, and \$40,000,000 more in a credit for the purchase of aircraft in the United States, is only part of the financing of the attacks against the Chinese people.

The direct participation of the United States government in the war against the Chinese people cannot be denied. An illuminating incident has come to light in connection with the sale of the Boeing Type P-26 fighter, the "fastest and most formidable pursuit plane ever seen in this part of the world" to the Nanking government. The demonstrator of this plane was "a special pursuit pilot, Edward Dorsey, who has been given a short leave from the United States Army Air Corps to demonstrate in China the new type of military tactics of which this airplane is capable." Certainly a close link!

It is in this setting of actual imperialist intervention against the national liberation struggles of the Chinese masses that the Conference on the Far East, organized by the Friends of the Chinese People, took place on October 28. The Conference was organized to establish a minimum program involving the largest number of organizations on the broadest front for concrete action against imperialist intervention, and particularly American.

More than 189,000 people were represented by 108 delegates from 61 organizations. Resolutions were adopted aiming at action to end imperialist intervention, and to initiate and develop mass ac-

tions in the United States for the support of the national liberation struggles of the Chinese people. The Conference went on record as being for the defense of the U.S.S.R. and Soviet China.

This militant conference should be supported by every fighter against imperialist war. It must be developed into a nation-wide movement demanding the end of American intervention in China by insisting on the stoppage of American loans to Chinese militarists, the cessation of munitions shipments to them, by demanding the withdrawal of all American armed forces in China, and of "advisors" and military experts.

CONRAD KOMOROWSKI.

## A Fake Housing Act

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The National Housing Act is a fake in name and fact. "Housing" here means the government's guaranteeing, up to 20 percent of their face value, loans made by banks to home owners for renovations and repairs. The sum advanced must be not less than \$100 nor more than \$2,500; 5 percent interest is allowed, payable *in advance*; repayments are to be made in monthly instalments over a period not exceeding 3 years. The borrower must have a "stated bona fide source of annual income, at the time of the application, at least equal to 5 times the annual payments." There are some real loan shark penalties such as a 5 percent late charge for each payment more than 15 days past due, 15 percent attorney's fees, and a 5-percent collection charge if a judgment is not immediately paid. The property to be improved must be clear of mortgage and tax delinquencies unless the lender, in its discretion, chooses to overlook the point.

In August, when the act was "put into effect," it was loudly proclaimed as the "keystone of all recovery activities" which would bring "reemployment of millions of men and billions of capital" and would work "like the rolling snowball." The October report of Administrator Moffet shows 10,480 loans amounting to \$4,600,000, an average of \$443. The borrower's income averages about \$2,711 and the maturity is 26 months, making an annual repayment of about \$200. This means that the banks have insisted that the income be 13 times the annual payment and not 5 times as the regulations provide. No wonder, then, that so few have obtained loans, even though 16,000,000 homes are in need of repairs. The disappointing result, says Moffet, is due to the banks' lack of familiarity with the program. That is ridiculous because he sent explanatory circulars to 15,000 banks early in August. The "real" reason is, as Jesse Jones of the R.F.C. says, that there is a lack of demand for "good loans."

The government tells the banks to lend but it is more stingy than they. Roosevelt and the banks have publicly become great pals on the matter of "easing credit" although they keep the purse-strings knotted.

SIMON GOLDMAN.

## An Appeal from Granville Hicks

TO THE NEW MASSES:

For some time I have been working on a biography of John Reed. Many of his friends have generously written or related to me their recollection of him, and have lent me letters. I have not had time, however, to get in touch with all the persons that I know were acquainted with him, and he must have had many friends whose names or addresses I do not know.

I shall be very grateful for whatever assistance readers of *THE NEW MASSES* can give me. I want to make this biography definite, and I shall welcome every scrap of information. Letters from Reed, which I am very eager to secure, will be copied and promptly returned.

I appeal to all those who knew Jack Reed and, indeed, to all friends of the revolutionary movement to help me to make this biography worthy of its subject.

Letters should be addressed to me at 2263 Burdett Avenue, Troy, N. Y.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

# REVIEW AND COMMENT

## *The Vigorous Abandon of Max Eastman's Mind*

IN HER article on "Communism and Romanticism" in THE NEW MASSES for September 25 Genevieve Taggard said a number of exceedingly shrewd things about the romantic temperament and its dangers for the revolutionary movement. It seemed to me that her chief fault was too lenient a treatment of the humanist or, as she called it, classicist position. We have even less in common with the humanists than we have with the romanticists. Perhaps all that we share with them is an understanding of the complete decadence of the romantic movement, and even there we differ since, as Miss Taggard's article shows, we can appreciate the historic importance and genuine virtues of the founders of the movement at the same time that we recognize the sterility of their present-day followers.

In her diagnosis of the romantic nature Miss Taggard said: "This godlike type, this poet who is a law unto himself, who is above life, in his opinion, and above material limitation, this person who pretends to be free of human limitations and free of the need to accomplish realities with his fellows, can only feed his audience with the fiction of personality, the decay of those convictions that once fought for a free market, free competition, laissez-faire, and all the rest of it." "Is there any room in Communism," she inquired, "for the eternal rebel, the Shelleyesque protagonist, the ethereal creature who flies forever in an azure mist away from reality?"

Reading these and similar lines, I thought of various romanticists of the present day, and of what has happened to them. I thought of the poems, pretty little things, about love and spring and love, that Max Eastman used to write at the very time that he was editing the *Masses* and the *Liberator*. I remembered his novel, *Venture*, in which the class struggle somehow gets lost in the lustrous light of feminine eyes and in the meanderings of a Nietzschean businessman. I recalled his recantation at the second *Masses* trial, which Miss Taggard herself has described in her preface to *May Days*. And I thought of him crusading today on behalf of the downtrodden artists of Russia, still the eternal rebel, flying in an azure mist.

These thoughts have recurred to me as I read *Art and the Life of Action* (Knopf, \$2). The book contains two or three book reviews and some travel sketches, but it is interesting chiefly because of the long essay that gives it its title. This essay I have examined with as much objectivity as I could muster, trying to read it as if it were by an unknown writer and not by the author of *Artists in Uniform*. It is a notable statement of the esthetics of romanticism in an age of revolution.

Much of the essay is concerned with describing the various uses attributed to art in the past. For some strange reason, according to Mr. Eastman, men have been unwilling to accept art as its own justification, and they have therefore invoked certain sanctions for it, such as magic, religion, education, and the like. These sanctions, he argues, are no longer valid. It is now seen that art exists "for its own sake and because of the pure desire to have and focus and intensify experience," and only "the dupes of practicality, those joyless adults who can never have been children," will ignore this fact. The "major and defining purpose" of artists is "to live life and communicate it," and they must resist any effort to control the "vivid life and vigorous abandon of a poet's mind."

This notion that art is somehow set apart from the rest of life is not, of course, peculiar to Mr. Eastman. Nevertheless, as his own analysis shows, it has not been and is not the prevailing view. The fact that there have been scores of different conceptions of the function of art is taken by him to indicate that art has no function. It would seem to me, on the other hand, to demonstrate that the majority of men in all times have been aware of the profound and far-reaching influences of art. What they have all expressed, in their various ways, is the conviction that art does something.

Mr. Eastman will say, I suppose, that in his view too art does something: it focuses and intensifies experience, and that is enough. But experience, whenever he speaks of it in this essay, is always treated as if it were made up of isolated, independent experiences. It is a good thing, he says, to heighten the consciousness of any person, and of course this is true; but actually to heighten a person's consciousness of some thing or some event involves the awakening of a perception of the relations of that thing or event to other things or events. Science, says Mr. Eastman, conceives things in their relations, art in their qualities. What qualities are or can be apart from their relations he does not bother to state.

Exactly what is the quality of wine apart from the eye, nose, palate, and brain of the drinker? And from immediate relations such as these one is inevitably carried to more involved relations: the consequences of the wine in the drinker's mood, the responses of his companions to his mood, the effect of their intercourse on their action. The writer cannot reveal all the innumerable relations that define any given experience, but he must portray some of them if he is to be articulate—even Mr. Eastman admits that "pure" realization is "perhaps" impossible—and by and

large the further he pursues his revelation, the more impressive it will be.

It is because art is concerned with relations, and not with some abstraction called "qualities," that it refuses to stay cooped up in the little compartment to which Mr. Eastman relegates it. The artist's perception of relations comes sooner or later to have some effect on our own perceptions. His perception is neither identical with nor yet a substitute for the perception of the scientist. On the one hand it is not limited to the scientist's terms; on the other it is not excluded from using them. (One of the founders of romanticism, William Wordsworth, saw the fallacy of Mr. Eastman's romantic barrier between science and art.) The artist's perception is, of course, more like that of everyday life than that of the laboratory, though at its best it has something of both.

What the artist does to us and for us by setting forth his particular vision of life is not easy to define. He alters, in some degree or other, our modes of seeing and feeling. Thus he changes our response to events, and this in turn affects our actions. I. A. Richards, in *Principles of Literary Criticism*, gives an account of this process that seems to me largely sound as far as it goes. Mr. Eastman does not like Richards' account, partly, it appears, because it bears some resemblance to Bukharin's. Both Richards and Bukharin recognize that a work of art changes us, and that it is necessary for the critic to ask what the change has been and whether it is desirable. They naturally differ on what is desirable.

But Eastman will have none of this. Science, he says, does all the serious work, and science and art are incompatible. It is a splendid idea, for him, for it establishes the complete irresponsibility of the artist. "There is no clearer line of demarcation among human types," he states, "than that between the artist and the man of action." "The art for art's sake formula," we are told, "however meagre as a program, was unimpeachable as a statement of fact." "Artists," he inevitably concludes, "should not only refuse to join a practical organization, but should do so with a reliant pride capable of resisting any attempts upon the part of such an organization to direct their work." He admits, reluctantly, that "art's heroic ages have been those in which it was not conscious of itself as art at all, but was a devoted service to some great aim." He believes, however, that this evidence of artistic backwardness can be outgrown. The artist must learn to devote himself in solitary splendor to pure experience.

Of course Mr. Eastman rejects the Marxian conception of the class basis of art, for that, since he pretends to be a revolutionary, would interfere with his romantic irresponsibility. As evidence that art is neutral he cites