

In the early history of this renaissance, when the fight for the dignity and practicality of a vernacular language was important, Hu Shih played an admirable role; it is natural, I suppose for the writer to dwell upon this, although, it has long ceased to be of great moment, its historical task having been done. Since then the Chinese Renaissance has matured. The groundwork of a popular language having been laid and mass communication having been made possible the Renaissance has passed swiftly through Occidental literature until it

found the literature suited to its revolutionary mission, the Marxist-Leninist literature and ideas. By misrepresenting, and understating the status and influence of this body of ideas and writing Hu Shih's version of the Renaissance becomes a distortion. In this respect he resembles those capitalist historians who write the history of modern China leaving out the most important element of contemporary Chinese history, the growth of the Communist revolution and the establishment of Soviet China.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Making Faces at the Revolution

CHALLENGE TO THE NEW DEAL,
Edited by Alfred M. Bingham and Selden Rodman. Falcon Press. \$2.50.

IT HAS been a matter of note that some of the cleverest and most influential enemies of the working class have been prepared for their careers by a taste at the Marxian spring. The "little knowledge" of these renegades has indeed turned out a dangerous thing—for the masses. It was as "Marxists" that MacDonald, Mussolini, Briand, and Pilsudski learned to know the nature of capitalist society and were thus equipped to advance themselves in it. At some point in the history of these men there came a time when they refused to take "orders" and when it seemed to them that their comrades were not speaking the "British" or the "Italian" or the "Polish" language, as the case might be.

Perhaps it is harder now for renegade Marxists to find room at the top of the capitalist heap. Perhaps it is too obvious that a position on the top of that heap promises no great permanency in the critical present. Whatever the reason, the modern type renegade prefers to continue as a "revolutionary" rather than undergo public conversion to the faith of the enemy, but by these same signs—"independence" and "Americanism"—ye shall know him. As revolutionary, he must, of course, raise up a new group to embody his message. And his main source of recruitment will be those who have already set out on the road to the left. Somewhere this side of the logical goal of these leftward travelers—which is of course in this country the American section of the Communist International—our Scylla-renegade will take up his station to snap up the unwary.

Seen from the perspective of the leftward traveler's natural and inevitable goal, it is remarkable how the seemingly extreme diversity of all these "movements" assumes the uniform white of opposition to a workers' revolution. That this is no mere optical illusion due to the great distance is proved by the eager zeal with which all these partylets, "left" or right, will unite to denounce in the same terms the party of world revolution. From Trotskyite and Farmer-Laborite come the same withering charge: the Communist Party is not American. It takes guidance, forsooth, from the head-

quarters of the Comintern in Moscow rather than from J. P. Morgan's in Wall Street. The imagination falters before the horrendous pictures that would probably be drawn of the "betrayal" of the "white" revolution should the Comintern ever decide to move its headquarters to Shanghai. Perhaps, after all, capitalism isn't so very American either. And perhaps in order to become truly revolutionary the American worker will have to purge himself of a certain amount of nationalism, just as his ancestor in 1776 had to purge himself of British nationalism before he could revolt against the Crown.

Challenge to the New Deal is made up of the various articles contributed to the magazine *Common Sense* by 35 writers between December, 1932 and yesterday. *Common Sense* is dedicated to the pinpricking of capitalism and the search for an "American" way out. Whatever unanimity there is in this volume is exclusively on the score of dissatisfaction with the present complexion of capitalism in the United States. Next in order of agreement among the contributors comes opposition to the Communist Party of the United States, on the grounds stated above, and most of it

more or less crudely implied rather than expressed. It is to be feared that these odds and ends of criticism, to say nothing of the attacks on Communism, will leave the withers of capitalism unwrung. I for one fail to see the "something like a second American Revolution looming ahead" out of the pages of this book, to quote from John Dewey's introduction. All I can see is a confusion of half-measures that would in their turn still have to be solved by "the Revolution" of the "disciples of Marx" whom Dewey disparages.

Part One of the book is the Indictment, and it is good reading when allowances are made for the necessary scrappiness. It begins with an article directed against the bankers by former Governor LaFollette of Wisconsin and ends with one by Lawrence Dennis, avowed Fascist. Of real interest, are Mary Van Kleeck's presentation of the essence of labor's case against the N.R.A.; Richard Child's illustration of this case with evidence taken from the history of the Auto Code; C. Hartley Grattan's bringing up to date of the factual material of Lenin's *Imperialism* with reference to the increasing control of American life by monopoly capitalism; Lillian Symes's account of the starvation of the children of the unemployed; and, allowing for a little bias against "left-wingers," Edmund Wilson's report of how the milk interests wrote the milk code for Pennsylvania.

In Part Two we are treated to a series on Technocracy by the Fathers themselves: Stuart Chase, Howard Scott, Loeb, Polakov. Max Eastman is among them to point out that Marx was a technocrat suffering under the disability ("by an accident of education") of a Hegelian terminology. Selden Rodman, one of the editors, writes an imaginative skit of Roosevelt directing the revolution; let us close our eyes to the fact that under this good, clean fun there is just a tiny trace of serious hope

ALEX BITTELMAN and V. J. JEROME review Lewis Corey's

The Decline of American Capitalism

IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE OF

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that thus it may come about. And Upton Sinclair most frankly tells how he is going to save capitalism through his EPIC plan.

Part Three, of course, is the Contribution, the end to which Prof. Dewey had directed us when he hinted in his introduction at an "increasingly intelligent attempt to solve [America's] own problems in its own way." The keynote is again struck by the editors: "If a radical change occurs in this country . . . it will not come from the scattered followers of Marx but from something more American—in the tradition of 1776." In this section we may expect then that the highly compact followers of Common Sense will enlighten us as to those traditions.

The first to do so is Alfred S. Dale, Treasurer of North Dakota, who writes "Radicals Give Me a Pain in the Neck." We learn that American traditions allow only for an orderly change in the interests of the middle class, and that after the change we must: "Let Ford continue to run his factory, but for the public. Let Swope run his business, but for the public." The second is a truly amazing youth named William Harlan Hale, who patronizingly chides the radicals for not reading Malaparte's case-book on the *coup d'état* and for not learning from the Daniels affair in the Stock Exchange, and who in general shows himself to have a great future as a Fascist provocateur. Our third teacher is Thomas R. Amlie, Chairman of the Farmer-Labor Political Federation. I cannot refrain from quoting this gem from his teachings: "The average American has been taught above everything else to be a good sport. He prizes highly the element of good sportsmanship. When he sees a group of Communists attempting to break up a meeting sponsored by some competitive radical group, he is thoroughly disgusted. As a result, when he sees the American Legion break up a Communist meeting

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and club a few Communists over the head, his sympathies are likely to be with the Legionnaires" (!) Amlie, too, feels that the middle class is the revolutionary class and that Marx, whom he otherwise "accepts," must be revised on this point.

Enough? Well, there is still Prof. Fairchild's plan for buying up all the big corporations, and Amlie back again with a Twenty-fourth Amendment to the Constitution disallowing all absentee ownership, and Lewis Mumford terrifying capitalism with garden cities. Yes, that's right, instead of thinking so much about the question of power, it seems we should build such fine workers' homes that the capitalists will all die of envy. The American Workers' Party gets a bit of a spread in this volume. Louis Budenz has an insufferably self-important little piece on "Strikes under the N.R.A." that turns out to be all about how

he ran things in the Toledo strike. And J. B. S. Hardman has some idea of winning the American worker to a revolutionary movement without telling him anything about its theory. These gentlemen and A. J. Muste take great pride in being able to speak the "American language."

But the editors themselves find their solution in the Farmer-Labor Party, though they admit that it has Fascist and Anti-Semitic tendencies. Strikebreaking Governor Floyd B. Olson is given the place of honor at the end of the book. In view of what has gone before we now know what they all mean by "Americanism." It is loyalty to the interests of the middle class. It is in fact so un-American as to be the same thing fundamentally as Hitler's "Aryanism" or anyone else's chauvinism. Which is what we suspected in the first place.

S. SNEDDEN.

The End Is Its Beginning

THE FOLKS, by Ruth Suckow. Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.50.

RUTH SUCKOW'S familiar field is the Middle-western small town and for a long while she wrote shrewd, quiet stories of that locality for the liberal magazines. All the elements of those stories went successfully together: the form was brief, the prose was terse and the point to be made was small and sturdy. Now, Miss Suckow has come out with a huge novel containing more than seven hundred pages of crowded type!

Times are changing. Sixteen million unemployed. Millions starving or on poor relief. Strikes up and down the country. Thousands of farm foreclosures. Too earnest to go on in the old, placid way, Miss Suckow tries to find some basis to go forward on. As a guage of this change, she takes a small-town Iowa couple, but recently off the farm, and shows the contrast from the careers of their children. The father becomes an officer in the local bank. Excepting a small alcove for his Presbyterianism and another for his family, his life is surrounded by the bank's four walls. His life is serene, healthy and slow-growing as an ear of corn. No problems of conduct exist for him. He is at the bank every weekday, at church every Sunday and in bed every night with his wife. Even such minor vices as the use of liquor and tobacco don't exist for him. He is all corn and kindness and land mortgages at seven percent. His wife's existence is bounded by the house, the church and an occasional "social." She has four children and till they are grown up her life is reflected in their achievements.

But as a way of living, this idyll of dullness and security cannot be handed on. Carl, the oldest child, becomes an athlete and an honors student and though he marries a girl from the local Presbyterian congregation all his promise is betrayed by his wife's frigidity and both their lives are made so miserable that she tries to find a way out by drinking Lysol. Mar-

garet, whose beauty is exotic to Iowa, rebels against her parents' uncomprehending kindness and after a few hectic years in Greenwich Village ends up on Madison Avenue as the mistress of a man who wears expensive tweeds and has "strong, white fingers." Dorothy, the conventionally pretty one, marries a conventional young man from a prosperous family and the conventions are stressed still further when, during the first years of the crisis, they are forced to rent their own house and live in a two-room apartment on the money. But it is Bunny, the youngest, who makes the widest break. From school, he goes to work in a beet-canning factory in Colorado and comes home at the end of the summer with a class-consciousness, proletarian wife.

The detail, the flow of the narrative and the dialogue of *The Folks* are all good. What is lacking is this, that Miss Suckow has made no attempt to find and indicate a basic reason for the break between the generations. Like all writers under the influence of bourgeois habits of mind, she takes for granted that the world's wealth is produced by the people who consume it, not by the millions of farmers and workers whose living never rises above a bare subsistence level. On the basis of representation, Charlotte Bukowska, who spent her girlhood picking beets, is the sole support of the forty-odd characters in the novel, for she is the only wage laborer Miss Suckow presents.

But it must be clear to Miss Suckow that this is hardly the case. As an Iowan she must know that banks in the corn and wheat belts began to crack long before 1932, that thousands of Iowa farmers have been bankrupt ever since the war. And merely as a newspaper reader she must be aware of what effect those seven percent farm mortgages had on the farmers around Le Mars. But the only suggestion that Miss Suckow makes to an underlying cause which would explain the superficial phenomena she presents comes nearly at the end of the book, on page 719,