

sell himself to big business as an anti-labor storm trooper, he will soon find that fascism destroys not only the rights of labor, but proceeds to destroy the rights of the salaried employe and small professional. As in Germany and Italy the destruction of the trade unions would be accompanied by the destruction of all independent organizations including those of the middle class.

Fascism has nothing to offer to the poor and middle farmer, the small salaried employe, the impoverished professional, the petty shopkeeper, all the lower sections of the American middle class. They are in acute distress and fascism seeks to turn their discontent against their own fundamental interests by mobilizing them against labor. In fighting against labor they would fight against everything that they themselves have struggled for all their lives: economic security, participation in cultural activity, peace and progress. For the success of fascism means the destruction of all of these middle-class ideals.

It is at this point that Mr. Corey makes one of his most important contributions. He traces the history of the American middle class—its struggle for a society of small property owners and enterprisers, and its crushing defeat by the trusts and the financial oligarchy. He reminds them of their revolutionary past and traditions, how they transformed economic and political grievances into revolutionary struggles and drove on to independence. They utilized demonstrations and boycotts, exactly the forms of mass action so distasteful to the property patriots of today. They boldly declared that "whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends (life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness) it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it."

The lower middle classes must unite with the workers and conduct actions that are in line with the best revolutionary traditions of American history. The only chance of survival for the so-called small man is to break the chains of the capitalist relations that frustrate and enslave him, and go forward to the establishment of a new social order. These actions will take place under different conditions than those that prevailed in 1776. The middle-class people will be fighting for a different goal. But they can only be true to their revolutionary traditions and their old ideals of progress, democratic rights and liberty, if they ally themselves with the workers against their common enemy—capitalism.

Many middle-class people are still unconvinced of this. They point to the present lack of unity within the ranks of labor as proof that the middle class must look elsewhere for allies. The answer to this is a broad Farmer-Labor Party, a coalition party of workers, poor and middle farmers, and the masses of urban middle classes. Such a political party would be the practical expression of an alliance which would enable middle-class people to fight for their interests with the workers achieve the advance of

fascism in the United States. The workers are forging the unity of labor and therefore offer an alliance that will be of immediate benefit.

About such important tactical problems Mr. Corey is silent, usually mentioning them only in a footnote. But the whole line of the book leads to the fundamental question: what are middle-class people to do? and he fails to give a programmatic or a reassuring answer. There are other shortcomings in the book. For instance, Mr. Corey fails to define the middle class with any degree of exactness. Thus in one place he incorrectly lumps clerical workers with the middle-class groups. At another place he contradicts himself and goes to great lengths to prove that they are really members of the working class. He continues as in his previous book to at-

tribute the decline of capitalism to a mysterious exhaustion of so-called long-time factors of expansion. And in his treatment of fascism he makes some curious points that do not make for clarity.

But these are errors that do not lessen the value and wide appeal of the book for middle-class audiences. Mr. Corey has made many valuable contributions to the discussion of middle-class problems. The conclusions can be made broader and sharper by further discussion and above all they must be linked with the practical program of a farmer-labor party.

It should be emphasized that here is a book that you should get at once and one that you should persuade all of your middle class acquaintances to read.

DAVID RAMSEY.

The Eye and the Mind

COMRADE GULLIVER, by Hugo Gellert. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York. \$2.50.

FOR years the dominant impulse behind the work of nine out of ten of our artists has been a decorative impulse. This is true both of the purveyors of simple rhythms in line and color and of those who, eschewing decoration as such, concern themselves with representing life or rendering form. In either case the prime aim is to call forth in the audience a sensation of beauty. This may be superficial or it may be profound, it may be obvious or obscure, but the differences are of degree and not of kind. Because of this domination, it is the rare artist today who does not find himself in a dead-end street, struggling with the surface of his time, bewildered by an onrushing world. Hugo Gellert is one of the rare ones. Long ago he found the one road that today can save the artist from the dead-end street: the will to understand the central fact of the life about us, the impulse to express that understanding, the conviction that in that expression lies one of the means of changing the world.

Anyone who builds on this foundation soon finds that the old vessels do not always hold the new fire well. He is faced before long with the necessity of developing new forms to work in, forms better suited to the expression of the life of our times and capable of reaching larger numbers of people. The picture book is such a form.

As a modern medium it is still young. On the technical side much more progress has been made in its use for children, but there are enough examples of its powers of communication for an adult audience to enable us to see that as it emerges it has definite characteristics. It is not to be confused with the illustrated book or the book of drawings or photographs done spasmodically on random themes, then edited, reproduced

and printed together. It requires judgment by its own standards and not by standards that may apply to prose or picture separately.

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This change in the composition of the middle class has important social and political implications. At first the new salaried groups identified their interests with monopoly capitalism. They did not join in the fight of the independents against the trusts, since the latter created their jobs and gave them the possibility of advancing up the economic and social ladder. But when the crisis hit them, these salaried groups began to realize that their interests did not dovetail with those of the big capitalists. They found themselves sacrificed to increase profits. They began to understand that like workers they were completely dependent upon Big Ownership for a chance to earn a livelihood, a chance that was withdrawn when it interfered with profit-making. The skilled salaried employees were not subject to speedup, salary cuts, technological unemployment and other blessings of capitalism that formerly were more exclusively reserved for the workers. The new middle-class groups who used to snub the working class now found themselves being rapidly proletarianized.

With a wealth of statistical material Mr. Corey shows that these middle-class people are "propertyless." They are the natural enemies of the working class which also has no property. This section of the middle class is property conscious," and has as Mr. Corey says it, a bias for rights of ownership. But why stand property rights when you have no property of your own to defend? he asks them. When Big Ownership appeals to these people to rise in defense of property, it is merely using their illusion of sharing in this ownership to pull its own irons out of the mire.

Unfortunately, through the use of unprecise terminology, Mr. Corey does not make an important point clear to the reader. When he says that the great majority of the middle class is propertyless he means that they do not own the means of production. The factories, mines, mills, all the instruments of production, are in the hands of a small number of capitalists. However, middle-class people and the higher-paid workers own homes though they are plastered with mortgages, they own autos and other personal property. The amount of this personal property grows smaller as the crisis drives the lower classes into greater ruin. But it is precisely at this sore point that fascist demagogues appeal to the prejudices of the petty bourgeoisie by playing on this confusion of personal property with ownership of the means of production. It is a bromide by which that what is needed is the socialization of the instruments of production and not the ownership of toothbrushes. Nevertheless, the fascist ideologue frightens the salaried employee by telling him that he must want to take his pipe, his garden, etc. The consequences that flow from the loss of personal property with capital ownership are of tremendous importance.

There is a wide gulf between the mass of propertyless members of the middle

class, on the one hand and the small manufacturer and higher-salaried personnel, on the other. The majority of the small exploiters, seeking to stave off inevitable doom, support fascism and its policy of organizing capitalist decay in the hope of survival. They have utopian dreams of a return to small property, forgetting as Mr. Corey aptly points out, that under capitalism small capital breeds bigger and bigger capital. The little exploiter tries to gain concessions from his big rivals by offering to join them in a drive against labor. The higher paid personnel in big business have even more intimate connections with Big Ownership. Most of them are the capitalist planners, the "efficiency experts," the apologists of restricted production, the leaders of the storm troops of reaction.

It is because the various groups composing the middle class have antagonistic economic aims that a unified middle stratum does not and cannot exist. Their vacillating character is due to this disunity of aim and class connections. The upper layers of the petty bourgeoisie contact the big capitalists and are their main social and political props. The lower layers are being proletarianized and thrust down into the ranks of the working class. They have little or no property to defend and their interests dovetail with those of the workers.

Mr. Corey thus concludes that the middle class is "a mere aggregation of intermediate groups, whose fundamental interests are not identical." Having no clearly-defined class interests such as the workers possess, the petty bourgeoisie are incapable of carrying out decisive actions that would enable them to impose their rule upon society. Their revolt against capitalism must therefore take place either within the orbit of reaction or of labor. This role is their historic destiny and is the key to what they can do in the fight against capitalism. It is clear, then, why the ruling

class deliberately overemphasizes the size and importance of the lower middle classes. The big bourgeoisie comprising less than one percent of the gainfully employed are too small a group to uphold their rule without the aid of other strata of the population. Hence they overstress the importance of the lower middle class in order to win them as allies. Mr. Corey shows that the working class today constitutes 75 percent of the gainfully employed, an overwhelming majority. It is not torn asunder by the irreconcilable conflicts that plague the other classes in capitalist society. It is the workers, the most homogeneous and important class, who must be the spearhead in any successful combat against capitalism.

The arguments of the Chases and the Bingham, who claim that it is the middle class that must lead the attack against the big bourgeoisie, are completely refuted by Mr. Corey. You cannot abolish the class struggle or the working class by invoking the image of a mythical public. Such appeals only play into the hands of the Hearsts and the Liberty Leaguers. It is to the advantage of these organizers of American fascism to pose as non-class or super-class representatives. Thus they can pretend to be opposed to the "selfish class interests" of radicals and progressives. No anti-fascist movement can hope to defeat fascist reaction unless it recognizes the leading role of labor.

To defeat the fascist danger there must be unity between labor and the lower middle-class groups. They have common interests and common goals. Yet these middle classes feel themselves superior to the manual worker, and have in the past displayed open hostility to labor. These snobbish feelings are utilized by fascist demagogues who try to convince the lower middle classes that their white collars have been soiled, not by capitalism, but by labor. If the middle-class person should

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