

What Is Happening in the Saar

A First Hand Report

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IT IS a quiet morning in Geneva. The air is fresh and invigorating. The diplomats smile. They slept well last night and they are satisfied with life. They say: "The danger is avoided. The contesting sides are equal. The question of the Saar will be solved by the free expression of the people's will." They speak nicely, the diplomats—that's why they are diplomats.

When I came to Saarbruecken the first thing I did was to look for a newspaper stand. There was a great variety of papers on the stand: The Saarbruecken Gazette, The Saarbruecken Evening News, The Saar Gazette, The Call to Struggle, The Bomb, The German Front, The League of Nations News, The Young Saar Fighter. I glanced through these papers: "Down with the traitors! Long live Hitler!" I asked the woman who was selling them: "Have you any other newspapers?" She smiled: "Here are papers from Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt—choose anyone you like." But I did not stop to choose. "Perhaps you have other papers, papers that express a different point of view. Don't you understand me? Speaking the language of these gentlemen, I mean—newspapers of the 'traitors'." The woman looked at me, as though I were mad. "What are you saying! I should sell such horrible papers!" I decided that she was a fanatical Nazi. I went to another newspaper stand. Alas, there, too, all I could get were Nazi sheets.

It soon became clear to me what the first condition is for assuring the "free expression of the people's will" in the Saar. All the newsstands in the Saar belong to one trust, and this trust, of course, reeks with Nazi sentiments. In the whole Saar region there isn't a single stand where one can buy an anti-Nazi paper. Daring young men sell anti-Nazi sheets on street corners. Everywhere else news vendors are news vendors, but in the Saar they are heroes. They have to be prepared for death at any moment. In the little towns and villages the Nazis hunt them as though they were wild beasts. In the village of Altenkessel I saw a worker with a bandaged head. I asked him: "Are you a Communist? Perhaps a Socialist?" He smiled sadly: "No, my father was selling Die Arbeiterzeitung."

There are thirty-two bookstores in Saarbruecken. In twenty-nine of those only Nazi books are being sold: *Moscow Shrieks*, *The French in the Saar*, *The Song of the Young Stormtrooper*, *The Return of Levy from Jerusalem* and other works from the country that gave to the world such men as Baldur von Schirach.

All the movie houses are in the hands of the Nazis. Every night they put on the operettas of Ufa, after which Goebbels, with his hand raised to the sky, delivers one of his impassioned speeches. On holidays one can see educational pictures, as, for instance, *Horst Wessel* and, instead of Goebbels, Herr Goering raises his hand to the sky. One of the small movie houses wanted to show a Marxist-political film based on a story by Alphonse Daudet. But the owner was warned that if anything of that sort happened his life would come to a sudden end.

Every evening the German radio stations devote many hours to the Saar. They mention the names of the "traitors" and speak of punishment. They frighten the wavering. To the good "patriots" they promise rewards. Whom do not the Nazis drag to the microphone! A five-year-old girl lisps imploringly that the good fathers and mothers should vote for the return of the Saar to Germany. She babbles about her Christmas tree, about how good it is to live in Germany and that she is only five years old: the truth out of the mouth of a babe. Following the five-year-old patriot, Herr Severing, the former leader of the Social-Democrats and retired police chief comes to the microphone. Sighing, he exclaims: "Comrades! . . ." Herr Severing implores the Saar workers to return to the German fold: It is so nice and congenial in Germany. Even a former revolutionist like Herr Severing receives a pension for life.

On the houses one finds many slogans painted: "Long Live Hitler!" "The Saar Is True to Germany!" "Death to the Red Traitors!" True, the Governing Commission has decided to erase these slogans but the Nazis have covered them with a thin coat of white paint so that everyone can see underneath, the enormous black letters.

It is possible that the Geneva diplomats will say: "Why don't the anti-Nazis paint slogans on their own houses—'Down with Nazism'?" It has always seemed to me that the diplomats, despite their make-believe scepticism, suffer from a great deal of naivete. How shall one explain to them that a worker has no house on which to paint: "Down with Nazism." Looking out of his window he sees right in front of his nose the slogan, "Death to the Red Traitors." The house belongs to Herr Mueller or Herr Schultz. The owner has the right to write on his house whatever he pleases, but the worker who rents a room in the house has only to bring in his rent regularly.

The workers have neither bookstores, radio stations nor cinemas. All they have are their

hands and hearts. Such is the equality of the contesting sides.

I used to think that Chicago gangsters were great masters of their art. Having been in the Saar, however, I realize that Germany is, indeed, a country of geniuses: The Chicago gangsters should take lessons from the leaders of the "German Front."

A meeting of anti-Nazis. According to the decision of the Governing Commission, all meetings are closed; before gaining admission one has to show a card with his name on it. Sunday: It is an ordinary meeting, held in a small hall adjoining a beer garden. Two men with cameras, apparently reporters, stand near the entrance. Why is the local press so much interested in this small meeting?

This happened on the first day of my visit to the Saar. I was not yet acquainted with the customs of the local German gangsters. I thought that these men with the cameras really were reporters. Suddenly it occurred to me that they were only pretending to use their cameras. Smiling significantly, they watched the people. A man approached the hall. It was obvious that he wanted to attend the meeting. Seeing the photographers, he turned about and left. Undoubtedly he remembered the words of the leaders of the "German Front": "All those who attend the meetings of the traitors will, on Jan. 14, be placed in concentration camps." The photographers were there, of course, to scare the people away. Nor were they alone. They were surrounded by several Saar policemen whose business it was to see that no worker should take it into his head to break their cameras. After all, it is necessary to guarantee the freedom of the plebiscite.

At night, instead of cameras, the gangsters use searchlights. The searchlight is placed in a window opposite the house where the meeting of the "traitors" is to take place. Everyone, says the Governing Commission, can do in his house as he pleases, and there is no law prohibiting one to illuminate the streets.

The Saar Governing Commission has recently issued new stamps with the inscription: "The Plebiscite of the Year 1935." These stamps are rapidly bought up, not only by the philatelists, but also by the gangsters. The Saar Post Office cannot complain of the crisis. Those who are suspected of "treachery" receive letters practically every day. In these letters the good Nazi patriots express their innermost thoughts in the language of Goethe and Schiller. I saw hundreds of such epistles. They are much more characteristic for their expressiveness than for their variety.

I shall cite one of them, having deleted some passages in it:

You stick your dirty nose where you shouldn't. The Saar is true to Germany and you are a dirty dog. You have only twenty-nine days left in which to live. If you want to save your lousy skin go at once to your filthy Frenchmen or we shall cut open your belly and play a march on your intestines.

The signature, as usual, is not legible.

Sometimes the envelopes containing these letters bear German stamps. The inhabitants of Merzig receive from Germany two hundred letters a day. The workers of the city of Altenkessel received through the post office filthy pieces of toilet paper. It is disgusting to write about this, but what can one do? In dealing with German fascists one must forget many of the elementary accomplishments of mankind. Here a veterinary would undoubtedly be much more useful than a psychologist.

A miner's wife goes into a store. She is told: "We don't sell to traitors." She returns home. Her nine-year-old son awaits her in tears. He had just returned from school. Did he fall and hurt himself? No. What happened? The teacher asked him to name the tributaries of the Rhine. The boy named all the tributaries. Then the teacher told him: "You are a young ass. Why prepare lessons? Don't you know that on Jan. 14 your father will be put behind bars and you will be thrown out of school? If I were in your place, I would run around and have a good time. . . ." His classmates laughed. The son of the traitor couldn't stand it and ran out of the classroom. The mother tried to console him, but there are tears in her eyes too. Thus it is from day to day: insults, jeers, scorn. . . .

I met an invalid: He had lost an eye in the War. He was receiving a small pension. Now the Commission has decided to review his case. The examining doctor is a good patriot. The doctor says "Heil Hitler!", and as far as he is concerned, even a glass eye can become a real one. "I haven't received my pension for two months," the invalid told me. "I asked them: 'Don't I need something to eat?' They replied: 'Let the French and the Soviets feed you.'"

Unemployment relief is distributed according to whether one is a patriot or a traitor. There have been recently organized commissions for "Winter Relief." The members of these commissions are not at all like the Geneva diplomats. They say rather laconically: "Become a member of the 'German Front' and then you will get two sacks of potatoes." Not always do they threaten; they also know how to bribe.

Representatives of Germany have recently bought from the peasants of the village of Picard all their potatoes. The peasants were overjoyed. "A crisis," they said, "but our people helped us. Not at all like the Frenchmen." The peasants delivered the potatoes—which were at once used to bribe the unemployed. Then the peasants came for their

money. They were supposed to get francs. But the German representatives only shrugged their shoulders: "Why such impatience? Who said francs? Valuta we need ourselves. Here are receipts. In a month we shall be the Government and then we will pay you in good German marks."

In the village of Vorweiler I went into a small tea-room. The proprietress ran to meet me: "Are you a foreigner? Save me! I can't live like this any longer. . . ." She pointed to the broken windows of her shop. Every night the patriots throw stones into her house. Near the tea-room the patriots have placed a Saar gendarme. The gendarme wears the uniform prescribed by the League of Nations and he is apparently subordinate to the Geneva diplomats. Surely he was placed here to protect this woman from the nightly raids? No, the gendarme is himself a "patriot." He warns prospective customers: "Go some place else. You shouldn't drink here. She is a traitor. She has sold herself to the French." But in the little tea-room you can find neither French capital nor French wine. The crime of the proprietress consists of the fact that in reply to "Heil Hitler," she answered: "Good morning—this is a more pleasant greeting."

In Altenkessel I know a miner. He has been working in the mines for the last twenty-eight years. He tells me: "I was born here and I shall die here. Before, I thought that I should die in bed. Now it seems I shall be put to the wall." This miner is a Communist. The leaders of the "German Front" do all they can to torture him. They set their gang upon him. The old Saar miner was declared to be an "immigrant." A few days before he had been called out for emergency work. The mine was flooded. He

worked longer and harder than anybody else. He saved his comrades from an imminent catastrophe. Afterwards one of the young Nazis told him: "Thanks. When you are placed behind barbed wire I shall sometimes bring you a package of cigarettes." But another who overheard this remark became indignant: "Why give him our cigarettes? Let him smoke French or Soviet."

In cooperation with the "German Front" in the Saar works the local division of the secret fascist police, Gestapo. At the head of the Saar Gestapo is Willie Steinbach. He secretly deports Communists and Socialists to Germany; he organizes night raids upon anti-Nazi leaders. Even the small newspaper dealers come within the scope of his activities. He is a jack of all trades. On Dec. 1 an elegant automobile stopped in front of the Saarbruecken headquarters of the Communist Party. Mr. Steinbach alighted, surrounded by Storm Troopers. He took a burglar's jimmy out of his pocket and opened the door. According to the police, the license plate on the automobile in which the raiders came was "Saar 16636," the license plate of Mr. Steinbach, but Willie is not in jail.

"The free expression of the people's will?" The diplomats in Geneva have quite a sense of humor. In order to fight against fascist Germany in the Saar, one has to be a hero. Much will become clear when the representatives of the neutral powers count the votes Jan. 14. Of course, we shall never find out how many people preferred a peaceful life under the protection of the League of Nations to the gay pranks of the boys in brown, but we shall know how many people there were in the Saar capable of committing heroic acts.

The Interested Parties

PLANNING the technical details for the plebiscite, Geneva speaks of "two interested parties": Germany and France. No one will doubt the interests of the German Fascists: for them it is the beginning of revenge. They killed Dollfuss in vain, they concentrated thousands of Storm Troopers upon the borders of Austria; they delivered militant speeches. All in vain. How could they justify all of that? The Saar plebiscite came in time. A slip of Clemenceau's pen has become for Hitler a great event: Germany will become great.

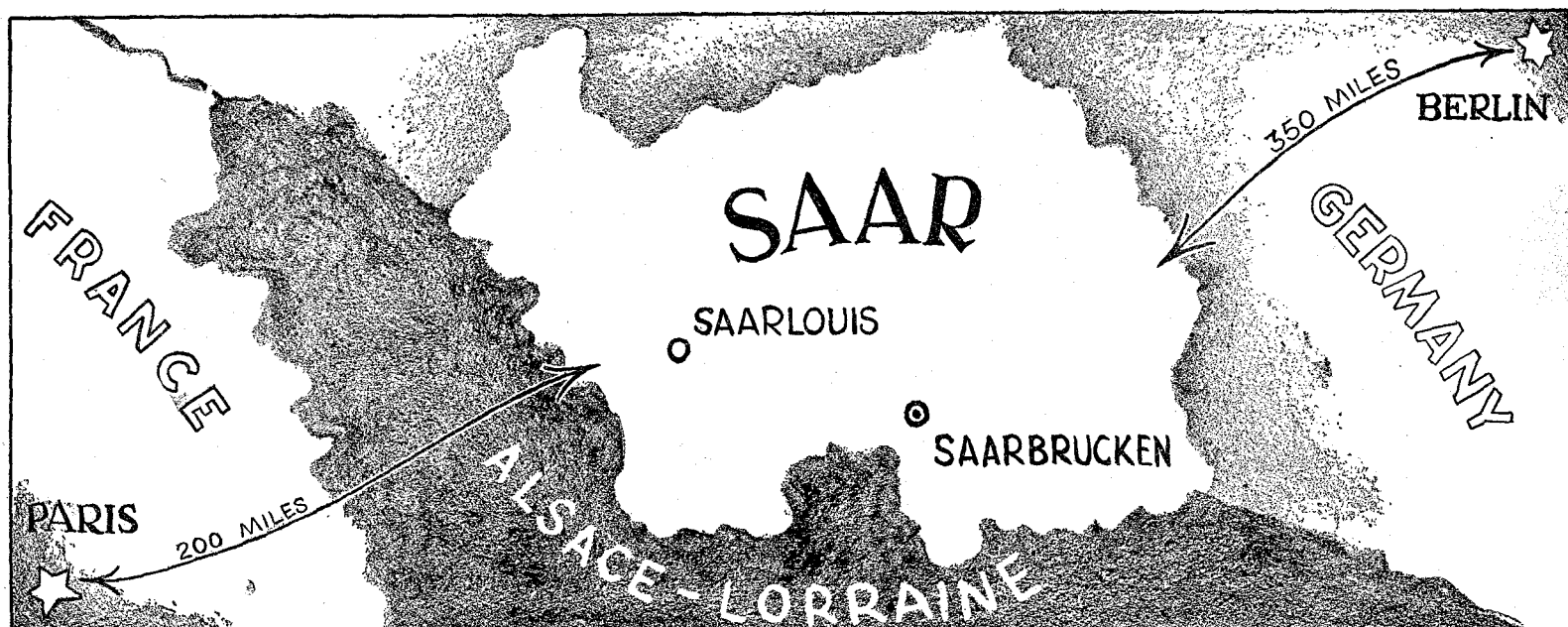
A few kilometers from Saarbruecken stands the French city of Forbach. The custom official there does not think about the fate of France. He is concerned about one thing: have we hidden Saar cigarettes in our pockets? In Forbach, people read Paris newspapers; they read about new bank swindles, about the crash of Citroen and about how Colonel La Rocq decided to go in for literature. All this is steeped in a kind of French provincialism, with its aperitifs, gossip, card playing, its desire to lengthen a pleasant day, without any historical events.

Of course, several very honorable Frenchmen are very much interested in Saar coal. But these gentlemen are much more interested in figures than in banners. The leader of the "German Front," Herr Herman Rechling, was sentenced by a French court to ten years' imprisonment. However, the gentlemen from the Comité des Forges do not bother with such trifles. To them Herr Herman Rechling is an important client: they can buy from him and sell to him. Moreover, he is not a Saar miner—he's one of them; it is easy to come to terms with him.

I was in France during the war. I know how a rank and file Frenchman, be he a Gascon wine-grower or a Picard miner, loves his country. I know how courageously the Frenchmen went to fight, but I also know that M. Thiers was not loath to ask the Prussians for help. "Business is business."

The French have carefully protected their interests in case the Saar goes to Germany. Discussing the Saar mines in Rome, they were indeed "an interested party." They debated figures and dates.

Clemenceau had at one time sworn that



Frenchmen live in the Saar. There were years when the Frenchmen tried to capture the hearts of the Saarlanders: they built schools, published newspapers and spread proclamations of the so-called "autonomists," but when the question came to its final solution they forgot about the inhabitants of the Saar. They were interested only in one thing: the coal. And the people? . . . Well, let the Germans go to the Germans: this is the "free expression of the people's will!" The question is solved: peaceful dividends to some Frenchmen and a new proof of France's pacific intentions: "We don't want to fight." French engineers in the Saar are already packing their valises. "The interested party" is stepping aside. This is not so much a question of tactics, as of a historical sweep, the realization of one's historic role. Barthou was one of the last representatives of old republican France. The bullet of a fascist removed him in time from the political scene.

There are quite a few papers in France that repeat word for word the statements of the German fascists. Not knowing the French customs, this is difficult to understand. An ordinary theft in France is punished more severely than treachery to the country. A man who sold military secrets to a foreign power has been given only a few years in jail. On the other hand, a man who has threatened a jeweler with a gun is sentenced to hard labor. The newspaper *La Presse* publishes daily articles about the Saar. In one voice it cries: "The Saar must go back to Germany. The whole trouble lies with the Saar Marxists. One must save France from invasion by these criminals." The newspaper, *La Presse*, is published not in Berlin, but in Paris. It is not alone in its hysteria. It is no exaggeration to say that a good half of the French journalists have learned, if not the German syntax, at least the German terminology. The question of safeguarding the borders has long since been forgotten. In its place there now looms the worry of the scared middle-class: What will happen if these "Marxists" or

Catholics should decide to come here after the plebiscite? . . . That is how the great-grandsons of Danton understand the role of a great state.

Hence, long live peace, peace at all costs!

But the sorcerer of the swastika is not a bit sentimental. He knows his business: again and again he calls forth the shadow of France. This is his main trump. Not long ago the leader of the Saar Communists, Pfordt, was supposed to speak in Paris. The French would not let him cross the border. This, however, did not prevent the Nazis from depicting Pfordt in the uniform of a French general.

The patriots refer constantly to the years of occupation: "We were ruled by Senegals!" It is not my purpose here to defend the French. I know what military occupation is. But I saw the Germans in the Ukraine and I am convinced that the Senegalese in comparison with the white Prussian lieutenants are chivalrous knights, gentlemen, humanitarians.

In Berlin the Nazis told the workers about "Jewish capitalists." In the Saar they tell them about "French exploiters": Don't the mines belong to the French? "Comrades, remember how you are being exploited by French capitalists." . . . In the offices of the mines' officials there usually hangs a French flag: This flag is not a symbol, not a promise or militant challenge—it is simply a legal detail. But this little flag has helped the Nazis more than thousands of flags with swastikas which the inhabitants of the Saar have brought out into the streets, at the order of the "German Front."

The struggle against Hitlerism is carried on under difficult circumstances. The slogan of "Status quo" was not chosen by the workers. Indeed, it is necessary not only to be politically mature, but to be able to harden oneself against conflicting emotions to fight for an ephemeral state, with ministers appointed somewhere in Geneva, with a Yugoslavian as Minister of Justice, and Dutchmen

enforcing order—a state which because of its proximity to the country infested with a brown epidemic resembles more a quarantine than a normal country. "Status quo"—against these foreign words the Nazis parade the thrice-besmirched, yet deeply meaningful word, "Fatherland."

The fate of words is as strange as the fate of people. There was a time when the word "Fatherland" to the Russian workers meant barracks, masters, priests—the monstrous injustice of old Russia. This word seemed dead forever. It was resurrected by the builders in Magnitogorsk, by the Komsomols, by the kolholzniks, the Chelyuskin heroism . . . but in the countries where the working class still has to pay with its blood for the profits of Krupp and Schneider, the word "Fatherland" is a dead word. If this word can still be paraded before the miners and steel workers of the Saar, it is because the fate of the Saar for the last fifteen years has been unlike that of any other country.

For the last fifteen years, while most of the countries were living through historical dramas, the Saar was an island where nothing happened. Saar workers experienced neither the defeat of the German revolution, the treachery of Loeb, the tricks of Hugenberg, nor the purge of June 30. It is not wrong to say that ideas and sentiments were preserved here just as they were on the day when the Armistice was declared. The patriotism of a part of the Saar workers is not so much the militant outbursts of the Stormtroopers as the old, semi-lyrical, semi-hypocritical songs which the Social-Democrats sang in the summer of 1914 when they clothed the workers in military tunics. The Communists in the Saar have to struggle not only with the gangsters of the "German Front," but also with the shadows of the distant past. It is not easy to convince an ordinary worker or peasant that if he hates Fascism, he should vote for the status quo. The patriots tell him: "But you are a German. Why do you need this strange government? Don't the

French own the mines? Are you going to vote for the French! . . ." One has to struggle against childhood memories, attachments, instincts and contradictions.

The inhabitants are too scared by the patriotic gangsters to believe in the secrecy of the ballot box. One thing is clear: a great

section of the Saar population will be for the status quo. How the Saar Germans must hate the kingdom of brown shirts to vote for two Latin words, for a state that does not even resemble a state, for Dutch infantry, for anything you please so as not to fall into the hands of the real-German hangmen!

Their Propaganda

AN ordinary German restaurant. Tables cluttered with beer steins. Thick cigar smoke fills the room. The inimitable heroes of Grosz who, towards the end of the evening, turn purple from the numerous beers they have consumed and from an overflow of patriotic sentiments, sit around the tables. A flag with a swastika decorates the door. There is no mistake. I came here purposely. I felt like being a guest of the Saar gangsters. Entering, I did not raise my hat and say "Heil Hitler." The patriots became interested in me. One came over and asked me severely: "Are you a Frenchman?"

I answered, laughing condescendingly.

"No, of course not, I am a Spaniard."

The patriot was delighted. He began to laugh, sputtering at me with his beery breath.

"Ha ha! I like what you did to your Marxists. I am glad that you finished with Catalonia—those are all French tricks. . . ."

I wiped my face and agreed with him. The patriot began to complain: "These Frenchmen of the League of Nations have spoiled the workers." He has a hat factory and his workers asked for an increase of wages for Christmas. They threatened to strike, and now is just the busy time. . . . "But on the fourteenth of January we shall talk with these good-for-nothings differently. Near Hamburg there is a concentration camp all ready."

A taxi-driver, on the other hand, tells me: "On Jan. 14 we shall know how to deal with the capitalists. Hitler is for a new system. Hitler is for the workers. He is against the capitalists."

I asked: "And Rechling? Is he against the capitalists, too?"

"Rechling we shall throw out as soon as we are victorious. Then we shall have real German Socialism."

The Nazis tell the worker:

"If you are a Communist, you should vote for Germany. Then your party will be stronger. And then, is it comradely—your comrades sit in jail in Germany and you want to hide yourself behind French backs?"

To the unemployed, they say:

"There is no longer any unemployment in Germany. You don't believe it? Here are statistics. You don't believe the figures? Very well, come with us to a workers' camp and we will show you. Here are fifty francs."

To the Catholics they say:

"We have destroyed Godless Communism. The Bishop of Trier calls upon you to vote for Germany."

To the Protestants they say:

"We are against the Catholics. We are

for Luther. If Hitler is a Catholic, it is only an accident. In his heart he is a real Protestant."

To the young girls, they say:

"Look how handsome Adolph is. Here is a collection of picture cards: he is with his favorite dog, he is with a little girl, he is on the shore of a lake, he looks at the dawn, and lastly, he helps a peasant woman sow seeds. What a bearing he has! What eyes! He, too, loves beauty. . . ."

To the small storekeepers they say:

"We shall close the big department stores."

To the peasants they say:

"We shall close the border and will not permit pigs from Lorraine to be imported."

To the French they say:

"We shall buy your Lorraine pigs."

To the blondes they say:

"We don't like brunettes. You are real northern types."

To the idiots they say:

"Exercise is a much more noble occupation than reading."

To the sausage makers they say:

"National Germany adores national sausages."

They do their best to arouse jealousy, cruelty and greed. But more ardently they appeal to one's stupidity. Here they are at home. I have before me a heap of books. It is hard to realize that these are not the drunken ravings of a Storm Trooper in a saloon, but literature—magazines, books, albums, printed in the best shops, on excellent paper.

The magnificently bound book *Saar*. At first the author proves that all French are natural usurpers: they have always tried to conquer Germany. As for the Germans, they have always sat peacefully at home. Take for instance the Thirteenth Century—the French brazenly occupied Germany. As to what happened in the Twentieth Century—about that the author prudently keeps silent. The year 1918 follows the Thirteenth Century: The French in the Saar. The author deals with three French crimes: they sent German children to school free of charge; they once sent invitations to Germans to attend the premiere of a French sound film; and finally they opened up a book store where they openly sold the works of Bergson and the novels of Maurois. "The whole Saar adores the Fuehrer, except the immigrant, that is, the Marxists from the Communist Party and the Jews." This statement is illustrated by photographs of Marxists: a man with a criminal face and a little girl sticking out her

tongue at him. Why do Marxists exist? Because the French, the very same French who were insulting the good Germans in the Thirteenth Century again want to conquer Germany. The terror of the French and Marxists reigns in the Saar: These cut-throats have forbidden the showing of the national German film, *The Black Hussar*. But you can't scare the patriots. The patriots are photographed in various poses, about fifty times. They are brave like the ancient Teutons. Heroically they raise their hands in salute, exhibiting the closely shaven napes of their necks.

Economic conditions of the workers of various countries are particularly well illustrated. The French sleep in the streets, stand in queues for a bowl of slop, organize Marxist demonstrations, burn automobiles and are killed by bullets in the filthy streets. The Germans, with spades, march sturdily, dig the ground, laugh, play with the children and parade before their much-beloved Fuehrer. The strength of France? A photograph of a Negro: "Comrade Senegalese." The photograph of a burlesque dancer: The Negro dances with a burlesque dancer. An inscription full of pathos: "In France the Negroes have equal rights with the whites. The Negroes are allowed to dance with white women. The white race is degenerating because of the mixture of bloods."

Saar was published in Germany. The Saar Governing Commission has prohibited its sale, but the book is sold everywhere.

The almanacs are designed for the consumption of the whole population. To lovers of poetry, one can recommend for instance the collections of poems *The Saar People Sing* or *The Song About Levy*. In the first of these books one can find the best works of the local poets: "Glory to Eternal Germany," "We March One-Two," "Hurrah, Hurrah, Hurrah!" As to *The Song About Levy*, it was written by Dr. Swechten and according to him it is an imitation of Schiller's "Bell." The most pathetic lines in it are the following:

However, in the cheap Jewish pants,
There is eternal fear.

I don't want to insist that all the Nazi poets are just as epical as the creator of fear in the Jewish pants. There are also among them pure lyricists. I cite the following excerpt from a poem, "The Fuehrer Goes":

We wait from hour to hour.
Our ranks are solid.
It is whispered from lip to lip:
"Today we shall see the Fuehrer."
He's coming. He will come to our city.
We know it for certain.
"Will he find a minute for me?"
Asks the blonde.
Perhaps he will find a minute,
Then he will call me: one, two, three.

With this touching image, I shall finish my discussion of the Saar literature.

There is also an exhibition devoted to the Soviet Union. Photographs of girls. The girls laugh. Inscription: "Thus they are de-



THE SAAR WAR HOUSE

from Simpl

picted by the Bolsheviks." Alongside of this photograph, there is another group of photographs: corpses. Inscription: "This is the true fate of the Russian women—they have been raped and killed." Of course, if you look closely at the bodies, you will notice that they have beards, but why look too closely? True, one inquisitive reporter of the Volkstimme has proven that the bearded bodies are taken from a book describing the massacre of Armenians in Trebizond. But why be inquisitive?

The high point of the exhibition is obviously the "Decree issued by the Saratov Marxists." Some paragraphs of this decree, in spite of their familiar tone, deserve careful consideration.

According to paragraph 4: "All women are declared to be the property of the people." Paragraph 8 explains: "Every worker has a right to use any woman he feels like, three times a week, every three hours."

So, then, girls of the Saar, take your choice! If you vote for Germany, you will see the Chancellor. Perhaps he will even find a minute for you. Then you will meet a good and honest Storm Trooper like the popular movie hero, Hans Westmar. And although you have no dowry he will understand your Aryan soul and will say: "You are my bride. Heil Hitler!"

If you vote for the status quo, you shall be declared the property of the people, that is, the hybrids of the Mongol-Semitic type, and they shall annoy you three times a week. In a year you will lose not only your teeth, but also your hair. You will become an old woman. The G.P.U. will shoot you, and moreover, when you become a corpse you will grow a long beard.

I often think about the fate of Germany. I know and love this country. Months and years pass—what will the Nazis do to this country that was at one time justly proud of its culture? I fear that the first decree of the victorious German revolution will be a decree to fight illiteracy: Under the Nazi regime they have already forgotten how to think; they will also forget how to read.

I visited this miner towards the evening. It had been raining unceasingly for a long time. I was drenched. He read the note I brought him and said:

"Sit down. How is it in Saarbruecken?"

I told him all the news: The English had arrived. On Jan. 6 there would be a demonstration of the "Common Front." Last night the gangsters killed a comrade. The diplomats speak about a division of the Saar. The Nazis have brought over several hundred patriots from America.

He said: "So the little people are afraid."

I related an incident about a tailor in Saarbruecken. This tailor hung out a sign on his establishment: "Tailoring and Alterations for Men and Women. Ludwig Christopher Israel. I can prove my Aryan origin from the year 1600." The miner laughed, but suddenly became troubled:

"The people are afraid. They will do anything out of fear."

I looked at him and saw eyes full of sorrow. I wanted to cheer him up, so I told him the story about old Kaas. Kaas had told me: "I shall leave everything, my house, my land, but I wouldn't live with them."

The miner replied:

"To run away is probably the easiest way out, but do you think I am like that tailor? Did Johann tell you anything about me? Well, tomorrow I am going to speak at a meeting. The miners know that I have been working here for thirty-two years. Then, I am not a Communist—I am non-partisan. It is better to die than to go with the Nazis."

Having said this, he became silent. I attempted to learn from him the attitude of the miners. He did not reply very willingly.

The early December dusk entered the room. Outside the rain was pouring. It was cozy in the little house. But the miner was sad and gloomy.

I knew that many of the miners had their own little houses with small truck gardens, and a cow or a goat. I asked him: "Is this your house?"

He sighed and answered, "Yes."

His wife entered. She was about fifty years old: a little skinny woman, with gray hair tightly combed back. She brought the coffee pot. We drank the coffee in silence. Somehow our conversation lagged. I asked him:

"What have you, a cow or a goat?"

He couldn't stand it any longer and began to talk rapidly.

"I had a goat. I sold it. Now I will tell you how it all happened. You can tell it to Johann, too—let him know. The devil take it.—I became a coward. I simply got scared. I got a desire to live. I am fifty-four years old. I have lived enough, yet I don't feel like dying. Just look what a man wouldn't do to live. I used to subscribe to AIZ. Mueller told me in October: 'Cancel it or we shall know how to deal with you on January 14.' . . . So I canceled the subscription."

"One day Scheller arrived. I stopped him. It was near the dentist's house. Mueller runs to the dentist about five times a day. They have their headquarters there. Of course, it was foolish to stop him—either you hide yourself or speak at all the meetings. I had a short talk with Scheller and the next day when I met Mueller in the store he said, 'Here is another traitor.' I decided that I was through. They will kill me. Don't laugh—do you think they find it hard to kill a person? Are they human beings? I didn't say anything to my wife. This happened on Wednesday, and on Friday I sold my goat. In the evening I said to my wife: 'Listen, I sold the goat. I have 320 francs. Tomorrow we shall go to Forbach. Here they will kill us. They say that the French let people in. Maybe I'll find some work. We shall live somehow.' Look at my wife."

"She's very quiet, but you should have seen

how she jumped at me and began to shout: 'So you are going to leave your comrades? And who is going to vote against them if everybody is going to run away. You're a deserter. If you sold the goat, buy a rifle. When they come it will be your duty to shoot. I'm telling you right in front of her, if it wasn't for her I would have run away. She made me feel ashamed. Yes, you can say, 'Rot Front' to her.'"

The little old woman with her hair tightly drawn back, said:

"Only we can't go against them with empty hands. They train every morning. I saw myself. Mueller has many rifles in his stable. If they come to kill you, you've got to shoot at them. Don't listen to him. He only says: 'I'm afraid, I'm afraid.' And if he will not shoot, I will take the rifle myself. I can throw stones at them."

When I was leaving, the miner said: "Goodbye"—and after a short pause, added, "Comrade."

His wife took me to the door. In bidding me goodbye she raised her fist and exclaimed in a broken voice: "Rot Front."

Someone was standing opposite the house. It may have been Mueller. . . .

The rain continued to pour. I was both happy and dejected. Yes, we don't lie when we speak proudly of our people. How much human warmth, how much heroism is hidden in these tiny little houses in the miners' vil-

lage. But it is horrible to think about the personal fate of each one of these people. They, too, were created for happiness. It was just as cold and dreary a day when I arrived at Vienna and saw a white flag over the ruined Karl Marx Hof. There, too, were good and heroic people.

I was thinking about the fate of the European workers, about my friends in Berlin and Madrid. About how horrible it had become to live among these ancient stones that at one time seemed to me the eternal pillars of humanism. I came to this land as a little boy. Now, I can no longer look upon it as an outsider. Every little house in the Saar village is my house. Here is the German border. On the other side you have neither English soldiers, ballot boxes, or shooting at night. There they don't ask anymore. They kill people peacefully. The boys in brown look with hatred and impatience at these little houses.

The headlights of the automobile illuminate the facade of a little house. Here, too, lives a miner. This is undoubtedly the last house on the German border. On the facade a hammer and sickle is painted: "Long live the Fatherland of all toilers." I stopped the automobile. I wanted to see the owner of the house, but I couldn't find him. I don't know whether he has a gun. I know, however, that he will sell his life dearly.

The battle may be lost. The war—never.

Aviators

Looking through the clear lens of sunlight
this wonderful struggle of hills and sky

is a flashing signal of rhapsodic fragments
in the storm of wings released and flying.

The flock of aerial birds cleaving the blue air, the
mechanical arrows with a twang of cut air

over the bright constellations of hotels and cinemas
and cables strung in the air like steel nerves

somersaulting the slightly visible bridges
over the groaning and snoring tugboats.

Silver zeppelins carrying war makers, the daredevil
stunt makers ballooning a mushroom canvas.

Most of all the air designs swiftwing cloudward
(someday to carry bombs and disaster).

Miles of clear blue billspace photographed
a platinum streak roaring through altitudes,

the slight framework of new steel
the "blue duraluminum" and the "chromo molibden."

And a windy fugue thundering the control strings

not for sport
but for murder.

WILLIAM PILLIN.

Correspondence

"Man on a Road"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I have just finished reading Albert Maltz's story *Man on a Road* in the THE NEW MASSES. And I've got to immediately let you know, I'm so excited about it.

I've read THE NEW MASSES for a long time and much revolutionary literature, but never has there been an article that can even compare with this in emotional drive. Pardon the superlatives, but I've just blinked away the tears in my eyes, and loosened the lump in my throat, and unclenched my fists, and ceased muttering "Oh you bastards, you heartless, greedy bastards," after reading that poor miner's letter.

Honestly, the stark tragedy of the simple truths of that document, connected with the rest of the story, has a terrific propaganda punch. For the comrades who weary with the routine and exactitude of the movement I say: Let them read this story. You will soon be toeing the mark again with a will to go and do.

For the writers of revolutionary literature I say: Here! You are groping for expression in proletarian fiction. Grope no further. You now have a model, a guide in this vivid piece of earthiness—*Man on a Road*.

It is a pity the editors of THE NEW MASSES could not be financed to scour the country far and wide, and come back with a whole batch of stories like these. For can fiction ever hope to duplicate this heartbreaking tale?

Comrade Maltz! I gratefully salute you. My deepest appreciation for this story. May many more come from your pen.

LEON LAPIN.

(One of the "Karlsruhe Case" prisoners.)

Suffolk County Jail,
Boston, Mass.

Feminism and Facts

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The article "Feminists and the Left Wing," by Grace Hutchins in THE NEW MASSES interested me greatly, as I was for many years a member of the National Woman's Party, and thoroughly accepted their point of view. The National Woman's Party has a fine record, and merits everyone's respect. They led a gallant, militant struggle, facing the usual forces of reaction, slander, opprobrium, misrepresentation, social ostracism, all kinds of indignities, finally arrests, police brutality, and prison terms. They won the vote, and have since kept up the struggle for equal rights for women. This is wholly to the good, for the age-long oppression and exploitation of women constitute one of the great injustices of human history.

Feminists, however, refuse to accept the fact that their right for freedom is but a part of the whole great struggle for human emancipation. Capitalism, especially now in its decadent stages when it is struggling to survive, will exploit and discriminate against minority and weaker groups, against women, against Negroes, Indians (an old story), the foreign-born, the Jewish people.

The National Woman's Party is not composed wholly of "upper and middle class women." They have also working class groups. I believe they are right in their contention that special legislation for women, under the guise of protection, turns out to be a discrimination against women. For laws which apply to women and not to men, and which regulate hours and working conditions, really close many occupations to women, and limit their opportunities. Protective legislation should apply to men and women alike. And I hope that in Soviet Russia those few occupations that are still closed to women will soon be open to them on the same terms as to men. The old argument of closing doors to women for the

sake of protecting their health we have heard advanced against every single forward step for women. I hope it will end in Soviet Russia. The husky women I saw there last summer do not, I am sure, need special protection.

But why do feminists, and they always do, pick out this one tiny vulnerable spot in the whole magnificent scheme of things in Soviet Russia? Why do not all the feminists in the world rise up and shout with joy that at last a great victory has been won? That in a great country covering one-sixth of the earth the principle of equality of men and women has been definitely established? Why do they not extend cordial hands to Soviet Russia, and help in the task of spreading the truth about her?

I cannot tell. For myself, I experienced a great joy in reading Lenin's words, that "every cook should help to govern Russia"; and the famous edict, "Get the women out of the kitchen, fling out the pots and pans," etc.

Women the world over should acknowledge the magnificent leadership of the U.S.S.R. in calling to women, large numbers of whom were ignorant peasants, many of whom were still wearing veils, to come forward and take their part in building the life of the country. And how splendidly the women are responding!

It somehow seems a long way from the National Woman's Party.

Philadelphia, Pa.

ANNE M. PENNYPACKER.

In the Kuomintang Prisons

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The white terror raging in the Far East is threatening to claim eight more victims. Yu Chi Chuan, Chinese anti-imperialist leader, and seven others held with him in Nanking are faced with the danger of execution by the Kuomintang police. The eight were arrested on April 26 and turned over to the Kuomintang hangmen by the English Settlement police.

The eight anti-imperialists were arrested for their participation in the anti-Japanese boycott and for having been active in the movement for armed self defense against the invasion of Japanese imperialism.

Another group of Chinese anti-imperialist leaders is being held in the prison of the International Settlement in Shanghai. These prisoners are subjected to the most brutal treatment by their jailers. One of them, Pen Chen-Sen, died early in November from the suffering and torture he was forced to undergo in prison. His funeral on Nov. 12 was made a gigantic demonstration against international imperialism and the Kuomintang.

These are but two examples of the joint terror campaign of the Kuomintang and the imperialists against the liberation movement, to crush which Chiang Kai-Shek and his imperialist supporters are striking out against every progressive element in Chinese society. American imperialism is one of the most active supporters of this terror.

A committee for the defense of the two groups of prisoners has been formed in China. Help, however, is urgently needed from the outside if the conditions of the prisoners are to be improved and the eight held in Nanking saved from the executioner's block. We should like to urge your readers to protest the threatened execution of Yu Chi Chuan and his companions and the imprisonment and torture of the anti-imperialists in the jail of International Settlement. Protests should be addressed to Chiang Kai-Shek, Nanking, China and to Dr. Alfred Sze, Chinese Embassy, Washington, D. C.

The International Labor Defense is launching a broad campaign against the terror in the Far East and in support of the International Delegation being organized by the International Red Aid, parent body of the I.L.D., to investigate conditions in China and report back its findings. The readers of THE NEW

MASSSES can help greatly in the fight against the brutal reign of terror in the Far East by supporting this campaign.

LUCILE PERRY,
Colonial Department,
International Labor Defense.

The Farmer as Proletarian

TO THE NEW MASSES:

John Latham's admirable word-pictures of the Middle Western farm problem in American capitalism have not so far included a portrait of our tremendous agricultural proletariat—the workers in lettuce and pea fields of California, in the orange and grapefruit groves and truck gardens of Florida, the peach groves, asparagus and cabbage fields of South New Jersey and the Eastern Shore of Maryland, etc.

Readers of THE NEW MASSES should know that the New York Committee to Aid Agricultural Workers has been formed to aid those sections of the farm proletariat in the region of New York City. Some of the aims of the organization (which includes such prominent persons as Margaret Lamont, Justine Wise Tulin, John Haynes Holmes, Heywood Brown, Donald Henderson) are:

1. To fight for the civil liberties of agricultural workers.
2. To support financially these workers in their struggles for better working conditions and wages.
3. To publicize the struggles of the farm proletariat among city intellectuals and industrial workers.

A plan for a broad nation-wide organization of agricultural workers, and an attempt to create a feeling of solidarity between unions of farm workers affiliated with the T.U.U.L., the A.F. of L., and independent unions, were features of The National Conference of Agricultural, Lumber and Rural Workers, held at Washington, January 8 and 9. Okey O'Dell, leader of the bitter strike of Ohio onion-field workers; Bill O'Donnell, Seabrook and hunger striker, were among the speakers at the Conference.

The first report of this Conference is to be given in New York City at Union Methodist Church, 229 West 48th Street, 8 P. M. January 18. Bill O'Donnell and Donald Henderson will be among the speakers. Local readers of THE NEW MASSES are urged to join the Committee to Aid Agricultural Workers, and to come to the meeting.

RUTH JENKS, Secretary.

Room 534, 156 Fifth Avenue,
New York City.

A Correction

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I would like to correct an error in my article in THE NEW MASSES for January 4, which somehow escaped me in reading proof.

The quotation from the Washington Post, in the article about the exclusion of Crawford's "Confession" reads:

"It had been generally admitted that if the prosecution had been unsuccessful in introducing the Boston confession the case against Crawford would not have collapsed." It should of course be "would have collapsed," the point being that there was so little evidence against Crawford, that without the confession he could not have been convicted. The judge practically stated this in admitting it in evidence and also said that while he believed the confession to be admissible, if he were wrong about it, his error could be corrected on appeal. As NEW MASSES readers know, the opportunity to test the question by an appeal was not taken by Crawford's lawyers.

MARTHA GRUENING.