

their poor neighbors. In the course of struggling for relief and loans and immediate needs, farmers everywhere will have the opportunity further to discover the power of their solidarity and if there is to be a way out, their solidarity with the industrial workers in cities is that way out, for a control that will be for them, not for the insurance companies or the uppercrust farmers or the bankers, but for the man who owns now only two pigs and a few chickens as well as for the farmer who feels his good base slipping away forever.

The way out is, of course, the way of struggle. The base is there, the need is there, the demand for all that is necessary to rehabilitate the farmer and farming is there. The land, good and rich, is there waiting to be tilled for the benefit of the millions who need food. The strength and skill of the farmer are there. Equipment is in the warehouses. It is all there. The farmer has only to wake up to a realization of his strength. Whatever one may say about this farm bill, the test must come in its applicability to need. It will not solve farm problems, which can only be solved

by a planned economy by and for farmers and workers. But it will relieve the present great distress. It will be a focus for mass struggle. The crying needs of farmers have been ignored and a cockeyed plan has been devastating the base of the farmer's operations. Millions are impoverished and the great debt of the farmers is nothing in comparison to the waste of life and hope and the crippled millions who through the inability of government programs to function for human needs are now victims not beneficiaries of a system of profit never designed for them.

Correspondence

Mr. Vanderlyn Objects

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Because of the seriousness of the charges of anti-semitism brought against so militant and widespread an organization as the Farmers' Holiday Association, I hope THE NEW MASSES will show fair play enough to print my reply to these in full.

In the first place, Milo Reno has most emphatically not preached anti-semitism any place. In a letter to me regarding Mr. Spivak's article, Milo Reno says: "I happen to be a Frenchman, you are likely a Dutchman. I hold the French or the Dutch usurer in the same contempt as I do the Jewish usurer. The Farmers' Holiday Association, the Farmers' Union, or myself, make no distinction as between races or religion. We do attack the things that are destructive to human happiness, wherever found."

Mr. Spivak offers no proof of Mr. Reno's anti-semitic activities, but only hearsay, and how obviously he contradicts himself in citing this hearsay, is evident from his statement that "Mr. Reno's Congressional supporters, farmers in his organization, and liberals who support this farm leader, do not know that he has been one of the foremost disseminators of anti-semitic propaganda in the country. . . ." How it would be possible for Mr. Reno to be one of the foremost disseminators of anti-semitism and yet for the rank and file of farmers to whom almost all of his public utterances are addressed, to remain in ignorance of the fact, we leave to Mr. Spivak to explain.

The second charge that would provoke the entire Middle West to mirth, including even Mr. Reno's worst enemies, is that Reno was in any way influenced by his bitterest political enemy, Henry Wallace. Mr. Reno's campaign against Wallace personally, and the entire Agricultural Adjustment Act, has been one of the chief bases for his continued leadership of the farmers. Mr. Spivak's statement that "When Henry Wallace became Secretary of Agriculture, he had too much power and influence for Milo Reno to oppose too openly," can be proof only of Spivak's ignorance of the farm situation. Reno's radio addresses and his speeches at public meetings since the inception of the A.A.A. have been marked by militant hostility to the Fascist tendencies of this Act, and to Wallace and Tugwell. Milo Reno's reply on the matter of the charges brought by Rabbi Manheimer and Wallace is as follows: "I denounced the Federal Reserve Bank headed by a Jewish banker (who at that time was Eugene V. Meyer) as the most destructive damnable power in this country. I did not leave the impression in this address that it was destructive because it was headed by a Jewish banker, but because a private institution operated for profit, had been given the power to manipulate the currency and credit of the nation, which they had done to the detriment of

the people, and we all realize today that this institution to which had been delegated the constitutional power vested in Congress, has caused more of destruction than the World War." It is altogether too likely that the attempt to give this an anti-semitic twist originated with certain powerful interests, and thus Mr. Spivak has unwittingly made common cause with those interests, as well as with those who are attempting to break the power of Reno's opposition to the Administration's farm program. It would seem to me that THE NEW MASSES would do better to give credit to Reno's activity against the Fascism of Wallace and Tugwell and their Agricultural Administration Act, far more dangerous than all the little fly-by-night hobgoblins in white and black and silver shirts.

The third charge is that Reno was working hand-in-glove with the anti-semitic organization known as the American Fascists (the Crusaders for Economic Liberty). The facts are as follows: An unofficial observer for the Holiday Association here in the east, a position later made official by resolution of the National Convention at Des Moines May 3, 1934, I was in contact with all organizations working for monetary reform. The Crusaders at their inception, were known as the American Reds, and had no program other than a monetary reform bill, H.R. 4747. It was at about the time when this organization came under the Nazi influence, that George W. Christians, who proved to be absolutely unscrupulous in his methods, was spreading it through his organization that Milo Reno was on his bandwagon. Through my connections with the Des Moines office, I knew this to be absolutely untrue, and I wrote Christians to this effect. His representative, Higgins, had been given an interview by Reno but this was the limit of any cooperation between our organizations, except for my own previous assistance to the Crusaders' campaign for monetary reform, which ceased from that time on.

On the night of Jan. 4 to 5, 1935, I had a long interview with Milo Reno in his hotel after his speech at Cooper Union. Among other items of business which I took up, was the advisability of sending an official letter to the Crusaders to end their misrepresentations of Reno's support. Milo Reno resented this misrepresentation, but in addition, he was much opposed to any organization advocating Fascism and religious intolerance. He authorized me to write the letter which appeared in Mr. Spivak's article, but he did so upon my explanation of the situation, and with my recommendation, and how much influence Mr. Wallace had upon his making this decision, will be evident from the fact that his speech of an hour previous had been devoted to a merciless flaying of the Wallace-Tugwell program.

Milo Reno's statement is as follows: "It is a well-known fact that the Farmers' Holiday Association

and the Farmers' Union have been unalterably opposed to Hitlerism and his persecution of not only Jews, but any person or group who did not bow to his dictatorship. I have never had any connection with the Crusaders for Economic Liberty, nor has the Holiday Association or the Farmers' Union. We stand uncompromisingly for the Golden Rule instead of the Rule of Gold. We believe earnestly in the slogan of the old Farmers' Alliance: 'In things essential, unity; in all things, charity.'"

Perhaps as significant as any charge which Mr. Spivak made, is his statement that "Leaders of farmers, unless they want to advocate the overthrow of the capitalist system, must find reasons to account for the farmers' plight . . . leaders like Milo Reno of the Farmers' Holiday Association, for instance." The insinuation is that the Holiday Association is without a program to end the evils of the capitalist system. This too, is absolutely untrue. I hereby formally challenge Mr. Spivak, or any representative of THE NEW MASSES to an open debate, either in THE NEW MASSES, or from the platform of any public auditorium in this city, on the superiority of the Farmers' Holiday Association program to the Communist or Fascist approaches to our economic problems.

LEON VANDERLYN, Resident Secretary,
Northeastern Division,
Farmers' Holiday Association.

An Editorial Reply

Mr. Vanderlyn, appears to be surprised at the charges of anti-semitism and Fascism leveled by John L. Spivak at Mr. Milo Reno, the Holiday Association president. He raises three objections.

First, he says that Milo Reno, president of the National Farmers' Holiday Association "has most emphatically not preached anti-semitism any place." We can add to Spivak's interesting evidence the fact that another of our correspondents attended the recent National Convention of the Farmers' Union held at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in Nov., 1934, at which Milo Reno was a featured speaker. During his speech Mr. Reno said, "We ought to stop talking about the New Deal. We ought to call it the Jew Deal." To our ears this remark before two thousand people has a somewhat anti-semitic twang.

Secondly, Mr. Vanderlyn objects to the portion of Spivak's article which describes how Milo Reno shifted his policy from concealed to open hostility to the Roosevelt administration. Vanderlyn writes: "Reno's . . . speeches at public meetings since the inception of the A.A.A. have been marked by militant hostility to the fascist tendencies of this Act." Let us see. In July, 1933, in Sioux City, Iowa, at a large farmers' picnic, Mr. Reno stated as a part of his speech that since Abraham Lincoln this country has not had a President so great as Franklin

D. Roosevelt. Is not this an endorsement of the administration? Now, just as Spivak stated, we find that Mr. Reno's tune has changed and he now publicly speaks of the Democratic administration as a "debauchery."

Thirdly, we are pleased to have Mr. Vanderlyn assure us, that in spite of considerable correspondence between representatives of the Holiday Association and the fascist Crusaders for Economic Liberty, that the National Holiday Association entirely disapproves of the Crusaders and the fascist program. This is welcome news and we urgently propose that both Mr. Vanderlyn and Mr. Reno publicly brand these fascist organizations as the corrupt strong-arm guard of the business interests.

Mr. Vanderlyn proposes a debate on "the superiority of the Farmers' Holiday Association program to Communist or Fascist approaches to our economic problems." We will not debate this matter with Mr. Vanderlyn for the reason that we know of no body of farmers in his "northeastern division" who look to him for leadership. We will, however, very gladly arrange such a debate, with Milo Reno.—THE EDITORS.

Quintanilla's Etchings

TO THE NEW MASSES:

The review of Luis Quintanilla's etchings which appeared in your issue of Dec. 4, contained some statements regarding Quintanilla's work and also revolutionary art in general, which raise several questions.

1. It is the duty of the revolutionary critic to interpret art from a Marxist-Leninist point of view and give guidance to the artist. It surely must be considered an unsatisfactory procedure to have an arbitrary, individualistic set of definitions by means of which the author of the review, Stephen Alexander, decides whether one is an *artist-revolutionary* or a revolutionary artist. This authoritative, undialectical method is often resorted to by enthusiastic sympathizers, who being outside the vanguard of the revolutionary working class, the Communist Party, fail to see the necessity of laborious, argumentative reasoning in winning over followers to the cause of militant working-class liberation.

I fail to see why we must define a revolutionary artist as one who "makes his art a class weapon." Such a notion introduces a split among the artists, separating the politically advanced from the rest. Is it not more intelligent to appeal to the artist on the basis of his trade and to say that the artist should portray reality as he sees and feels it as a member of the working class, and that consequently, with the revolutionization of himself and the working class, and with the strengthening of economic, political and psychological links between them, the creative work of the artist will necessarily be revolutionary? This seems to me a more healthy, organic and dialectical attitude and politically sounder, because it leads to organizational work among the artists, which Stephen Alexander should work for, and to a firmer basis for further elaboration of theoretical problems of revolutionary art, the attitude of workers toward art, etc. Revolutionary art should be judged by what it contains, not by what the artist wishes it to be.

2. The facts concerning Quintanilla are (a) that he is a most talented, skillful and powerful etcher; (b) that he depicts in a vast variety of compositions the joys, sorrows, moods and lives of the Spanish working class, not as an outsider but as a member of it, proud of his class and full of love for it, and ridicule and hate for its enemies; (c) and that his etchings do not depict the revolutionary struggle.

The reviewer "settles" it by introducing a quibble and calling Quintanilla an artist-revolutionary, thus admitting openly the petty bourgeois notion that a revolutionary who is an artist can have separate compartments for his revolutionary feelings and his artistic ones. It seems to me more accurate to account critically for the absence of the revolutionary struggle in Quintanilla's etchings rather than pos-

tulate untenable assumptions. Why has Quintanilla no trace of the struggle? The answer lies in the analysis of the Spanish situation.

Quintanilla has apparently been under the influence of the liberal, Republican and anarchist leanings of the Spanish Socialists. The Communist Party with its clear political and cultural philosophy has only just begun to exert its influence in Spain, and of course with remarkable success. Quintanilla's shortcoming should bring out clearly to us the need for and significance of a bold and clear-cut cultural, revolutionary program, as THE NEW MASSES and the John Reed Club are offering to the American intellectual and artist. The open struggles of the Spanish working class have only begun with the overthrow of the monarchy three and a half years ago. We must judge Quintanilla in his own times and environment and claim him as our own in every way. His work in prison, I dare prophesy, will prove that a real revolutionary situation will force the artist to produce real revolutionary art even if theoretical guidance lags behind.

MARK LAND.

Reply by Stephen Alexander

TO THE NEW MASSES:

If Mark Land were a practising artist and had a little first-hand knowledge of the problems of the artist and the conditions under which the artist works he would not be misled into spinning theories

out of whole cloth, and using mechanical and meaningless clichés. I find it difficult to understand his rather foggy letter but as well as I can make out he objects to the following points in my review of Quintanilla's etchings:

1. My definition of a revolutionary artist as "one who makes his art a class weapon."

He seems to feel that such a definition will "introduce a split among the artists, separating the politically advanced from the rest." If Mark Land were a bit more observant he would see that there *are* and *have been* artists of different degrees of political development, and that my definition cannot "introduce" something that already exists. It might have been useful for him to explain *why* such a definition "introduces a split," instead of merely asserting that it would.

2. He accuses me of "admitting openly the pretty bourgeois notion that a revolutionary who is an artist can have separate compartments for his revolutionary feelings and his artistic ones." Such a statement is equivalent to accusing me of openly admitting that normal human beings have noses. I didn't "admit" any such "petty bourgeois notion." I asserted it as a true observation of what *actually exists*. If Mark Land will reread the review he will see that I strongly advocate the integration of the revolutionary's art with his politics. It goes without saying that his politics should be that of the Communist Party.

STEPHEN ALEXANDER.



"Poor Harvey. He can't sleep nights on account of thinking up wage-cuts."

REVIEW AND COMMENT

THE NEW MASSES welcomes the call for an American Writers' Congress sponsored by those writers whose names appear below. It fully endorses the purposes as set forth in the call. This Congress, we believe, can effectively counteract the new wave of race-hatred, the organized anti-Communist campaign, and the growth of Fascism, all of which can only be understood as part of the Administration's war program. Unlike the Anti-War Congress in Chicago, and the National Congress for Unemployment Insurance just concluded in Washington, the American Writers' Congress will not be a delegated body. Each writer will represent his own personal allegiance. With hundreds of writers attending from all sections, however, and united in a basic program, the Congress will be the voice of many thousands of intellectuals, and middle class people allied with the working class. In the coming weeks, THE NEW MASSES will publish from time to time articles by well known writers, outlining the basic discussions to be proposed at the Congress. Of those invited to sign the call a few—whose support of its program is unquestioned—were at too great a distance to be heard from in time for this publication.—THE EDITORS.

Call for an American Writers' Congress

THE capitalist system crumbles so rapidly before our eyes that, whereas ten years ago scarcely more than a handful of writers were sufficiently far-sighted and courageous to take a stand for proletarian revolution, today hundreds of poets, novelists, dramatists, critics, short story writers and journalists recognize the necessity of personally helping to accelerate the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of a workers' government.

We are faced by two kinds of problems. First, the problems of effective political action. The dangers of war and fascism are everywhere apparent; we all can see the steady march of the nations towards war and the transformation of sporadic violence into organized fascist terror.

The question is: how can we function most successfully against these twin menaces?

In the second place, there are the problems peculiar to us as writers, the problems of presenting in our work the fresh understanding of the American scene that has come from our enrollment in the revolutionary cause. A new Renaissance is upon the world; for each writer there is the opportunity to proclaim both the new way of life and the revolutionary way to attain it. Indeed, in the historical perspective, it will be seen that only these two things matter. The revolutionary spirit is penetrating the ranks of the creative writers.

Many revolutionary writers live virtually in isolation, lacking opportunities to discuss vital problems with their fellows. Others are so absorbed in the revolutionary cause that they have few opportunities for thorough examination and analysis. Never have the writers of the nation come together for fundamental discussion.

We propose, therefore, that a Congress of American revolutionary writers be held in New York City on May 1, 1935; that to this Congress shall be invited all writers who

have achieved some standing in their respective fields; who have clearly indicated their sympathy to the revolutionary cause; who do not need to be convinced of the decay of capitalism, of the inevitability of revolution. Subsequently, we will seek to influence and win to our side those writers not yet so convinced.

This Congress will be devoted to exposition of all phases of a writer's participation in the struggle against war, the preservation of civil liberties, and the destruction of fascist tendencies everywhere. It will develop the possibilities for wider distribution of revolutionary books and the improvement of the revolutionary press, as well as the relations between revolutionary writers and bourgeois publishers and editors. It will provide technical discussion of the literary applications of Marxist philosophy and of the relations between critic and creator. It will solidify our ranks.

We believe such a Congress should create the League of American Writers, affiliated with the International Union of Revolutionary Writers. In European countries, the I.U.R.W. is in the vanguard of literature and political action. In France, for example, led by such men as Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Andre Malraux, Andre Gide and Louis Aragon, it has been in the forefront of the magnificent fight of the united militant working class against Fascism.

The program for the League of American Writers would be evolved at the Congress, basing itself on the following: fight against imperialist war and fascism; defend the Soviet Union against capitalist aggression; for the development and strengthening of the revolutionary labor movement; against white chauvinism (against all forms of Negro discrimination or persecution) and against the persecution of minority groups and of the foreign-born; solidarity with colonial people in their struggles for freedom; against the influence

of bourgeois ideas in American liberalism; against the imprisonment of revolutionary writers and artists, as well as other class-war prisoners throughout the world.

By its very nature our organization would not occupy the time and energy of its members in administrative tasks; instead, it will reveal, through collective discussion, the most effective ways in which writers, as writers, can function in the rapidly developing crisis.

The undersigned are among those who have thus far signed the call to the Congress.

Nelson Algren	Herbert Kline
Arnold B. Armstrong	Joshua Kunitz
Nathan Asch	John Howard Lawson
Maxwell Bodenheim	Tillie Lerner
Thomas Boyd	Meridel Le Sueur
Earl Browder	Melvin Levy
Bob Brown	Louis Lozowick
Fielding Burke	Grace Lumpkin
Kenneth Burke	Edward Newhouse
Erskine Caldwell	Joseph North
Alan Calmer	Moissaye Olgin
Robert Cantwell	Samuel Ornitz
Lester Cohen	Myra Page
Jack Conroy	Paul Peters
Malcolm Cowley	Allan Porter
Edward Dahlberg	Harold Preece
Theodore Dreiser	William Rollins
Guy Endore	Paul Romaine
James T. Farrell	Isidor Schneider
Ben Field	Edwin Seaver
Waldo Frank	Claire Sifton
Joseph Freeman	Paul Sifton
Michael Gold	George Sklar
Eugene Gordon	John L. Spivak
Horace Gregory	Lincoln Steffens
Henry Hart	Philip Stevenson
Clarence Hathaway	Bernhard J. Stern
Josephine Herbst	Genevieve Taggard
Granville Hicks	Alexander Trachtenberg
Langston Hughes	Nathaniel West
Orrick Johns	Ella Winter
Arthur Kallet	Richard Wright

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and
ISIDOR BEGUN
on **Fascism in the Schools**
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