

right that authors should lament, curse, rail at, and satirize society. This has had a peculiar consequence. When writers began to be conscious of the permanent nature of the capitalist crisis and to organize and consolidate their previous vague and individual opposition to capitalism, they were at once attacked as "conformists" and as "artists in uniform." Having at last found a ground on which their social criticism could be positive they were attacked as having surrendered their functions as social critics.

The leftward turn of writers was as inevitable as the leftward turn of the proletariat. Writers, because of the situation described, have always been revolutionary. As long as this revolution took fantastic, amusing and anarchical personal turns the bourgeoisie applauded; they even laughed at jokes against themselves, allowing the writer the liberties of a court jester. But as soon as writers began to turn their revolutionary expression into something organized and realistic, as soon as they merged it with the general movement for social and political revolution then they met with a different reception.

But the writer had no other course once he realized that his ends could be achieved only through a drastic social reconstruction. As writers they have not even received a bare living under capitalism. Access to the public was barred to the majority of them except on terms that meant their death as writers. The myth of a small cultured audience which they tried, desperately, to assemble and hold together by means of aesthetic "little" magazines has long ago been exploded. In no group is disillusion so complete and profound as among writers. In turning "Left" and giving up bourgeois careers most of these writers realize that they have taken leave of a shadow. Actually there is more to anticipate in the developing culture of the revolutionary movement rising up in the gilt plaster debris of the collapsing capitalist culture. They may have a long wait for financial returns. But they may expect at once an animate audience and one that is rapidly growing in numbers. And they realize that their creative work in this medium has an additionally creative element. It is participation in the one action that can create a society in which they can live as writers and as human beings, in which they can fulfil themselves functionally and economically.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Der Tag

M-DAY, The Day America Mobilizes for War, by Rose M. Stein. Harcourt, Brace & Co. \$2.50.

MANY people are vitally interested in the revealing war data produced by the Senate Munitions investigations. Most of them, especially those active in the fight against war, have not the time to read or even glance at the nearly thirty volumes of testimony and special reports thus far issued by Senator Nye and his committee associates. For this reason they will find the various factual summaries and numerous quotations from the Nye reports published in *M-Day* exceedingly useful. In addition, utilization of such material as the Graham and War Policies Commission reports help to make Miss Stein's book valuable to those in need of factual material in the terrifically important fight against war.

The sixteen-year-old War Department Industrial Plan, "with its stringent controls over labor and public opinion," is characterized by Miss Stein as "one of the most colossal and audacious fascist plans yet tried." This is the background against which American capitalism is shown to be inferior to none in greed, cruelty and fascist potentialities. Yet Miss Stein treats Capital, Labor and the Government as if the last named existed in a vacuum, despite her staggering array of evidence to the contrary showing the interweaving of corporation and government figures. But, willy-nilly, the mountain of facts taken from the Nye reports provides a graphic illustration of the class-nature of government.

The title is well chosen. For *M-Day* symbolizes the precise moment when the present gargantuan military-industrial machine will go into action against the American people—for slaughter at the front and terror in the rear.

E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company stands for war preparations. Where does the du Pont organization end and the War Department begin? One of the letters found in the du Pont files shows how close the relationship is. "Very good progress is being made in the effort to secure support for our interests at the coming national meeting of the American Legion. General C. C. Williams, Chief of Ordnance of the Army, has agreed to introduce a resolution and to speak in support of it. Several other Army officers who have already figured actively in the effort to build up a chemical industry will support him in his efforts." While a member of the War Cabinet, General Williams, according to official War Department records cited by Miss Stein, was a stockholder in the Pan American Petroleum Co., the Royal Dutch Petroleum Co., Southern Pacific R. R., U. S. Steel Corp., Alaska Gold Mines and the Mexican Petroleum Co. He continued his work for du

Pont as N.R.A. Administrator in charge of the chemical code. Indeed, from the war preparations point of view, du Pont is the War Department. The significance of such a situation is apparent when one realizes that the militarists and industrialists who supervise the Industrial Mobilization Plan of the War Department are virtually gearing an entire economy to war ends.

M-Day provides magnificent material for the anti-war fighter. The Navy Department as strike-breaker; the N.R.A. as the projection of the old War Industries Board; the admitted plans of industry and the War Department to smash the labor unions and dispatch bothersome labor leaders to the front lines; the tremendous war profits and the near impossibility of controlling them; the leading role played by the Morgans in precipitating this country into the World War; the training by the Commerce Department of Nanking aviators for action against nearly 100,000,000 people of Soviet China; guaranteed war profits in the next war; the Government as super-salesman for the armament concerns; the patriotism of the rulers of America—"The manufacturers must have reasonable profits in order to do their duty," said Judge Gary, the wartime president of U. S. Steel Corporation; the war role of Samuel Gompers and other reactionary labor bureaucrats. All this and more in the record reproduced in *M-Day* show conclusively that the war machine is being erected with forethought, with care and with premeditated terrorism.

It is unfortunate that Miss Stein's chapter, "Taking Profits Out of War," is weak and quite superficial because of the actual war use to which the Roosevelt Administration and big business are putting this deceptive slogan. She fails to point out, for instance, the difference between the admitted conception of this slogan held by William Green, Daniel Willard, president of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and the War Department—guaranteed "normal" profits in wartime—and the conception of actual conscription of wealth advanced by the rank and file of war veterans from whose ranks the slogan emanated. In summarizing the attitude the War Policies Commission took on this issue, Miss Stein states that "nothing vital happened." On the contrary, several "vital" things did happen. The War Policies Commission took pains to declare, in its report to Congress, that it was firmly opposed to drafting property in wartime. The Commission took this position despite instructions to consider amending the constitution so that property, like life, could be drafted. In addition, the War Policies Commission actually became a war planning body. And today, the Roosevelt Administration, continuing the line of the War Policies Commission, which functioned during the Hoover regime, actually is using the "take the profits out of

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war" slogan as a demagogic screen behind which to rear an unprecedented peacetime war machine.

In the light of these facts and others adduced by Miss Stein, one is justified in regarding her statement that war is "a madman's game" as oversimplification. Madness it is—but there's method to it. For though, as Miss Stein states, it arises inherently from an "economic structure which is so constituted that it cannot function without war," it has been developed into a highly skillful pursuit. Miss Stein would have done well to have developed this thought by showing, much more than she has, the close connection between fascism and war.

She could have used public documents to demonstrate that the people behind the industrial-government war machines are the very ones who are attempting to smash trade unionism and civil rights. She could have shown how the Roosevelt Administration, retreating before the constant attack from Hearst, from the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, formulates and sponsors such fascist measures as the Tydings-McCormack and Russell-Kramer bills, both of which, if enacted, will be used to stifle freedom of speech and crush the trade unions.

When Miss Stein ventures into the realm of foreign affairs, especially in dealing with the Soviet Union, she leaves fact and quotation to present what is clearly an anti-Soviet position. Therein she serves not the peace desires of the masses and the organized peace movements but the war designs of the present chief instigators of war. Her conclusion poses before the "radical parties and the labor groups which support them" the false choice of "saving socialism in Russia" or saving "the remnants of democracy in their own country." She also joins the chorus of Soviet detractors in declaring the Franco-Soviet pact "a military alliance" without any qualification whatsoever. That the fight in this country, in England and France for the preservation of democratic liberties is necessarily a fight against war and therefore connected directly with the fight against war being waged by the Soviet Union, is something which Miss Stein chose not to see. That the Franco-Soviet pact provides for mutual assistance only in the event of aggression from a third European power is a fact which the author of *M-Day* does not care to mention. And certainly it does not occur to her to state that the Soviet Union—the Socialist State—is the only power that is not an imperialist power and hence that the policy of military aggression is alien to its nature.

Miss Stein is insidiously venomous towards the Soviet Union. Her method is twofold. She joins the reactionary leaders of the British Labor Party in echoing Hitler and Herr Goebbels on the colonies and war issues—ostensibly as a means of avoiding war

through appeasing Hitler on Hitler's terms:

An alternative to war for the attainment of these needs might be the recognition by the stated powers of the other group's needs and the peaceable granting of concessions sufficient to satisfy their immediate wants and to placate their whetted appetite for conquest. This alternative has found expression in recent suggestions that what is needed to secure world peace is a redistribution of colonial territory and raw materials on the basis of national need. . . .

At the same time, Miss Stein fails to make any mention whatsoever of the Soviet peace policy although she devotes a section of her book to a discussion of "Forces That Are Postponing War." Such an omission of the most powerful single force for peace on the part of one who comes forward as an expert on foreign and military affairs certainly cannot be interpreted otherwise than as sheerly deliberate. And as to Litvinov, well—Miss Stein has never heard of him. But she has heard of the Soviet-hating Trotsky and the fascist G. Sylvester Viereck, both of whom are listed among the authorities in her "Selected Bibliography."

"In theory," writes Miss Stein, "the suggestion" of placating Hitler's "whetted appetite for conquest" "has been widely applauded by world liberal opinion." To this one can only say that our author reckons without the organized liberal opinion identified with such wide popular anti-war and anti-fascist movements as the People's Fronts in Spain and France and the independent mass movements for peace in the United States and throughout the capitalist world.

Following the line of those who would fasten the false label of "Red imperialism" on the Soviet Union, Miss Stein, in essence, presents the Soviet foreign policy as the present counterpart of the foreign policy of the czars. "Germany," she tells us, "will have to fight virtually the same alliance as she fought in 1914-1918." In Goebbels fashion she declares that there is a "very inexorable need of Germany to fight Russia." And, masters of capitalism, beware, for "a

defeat of Nazism in Germany, according to all present indications, must lead to Communism." What is our author doing? She is presenting a war of aggression on the part of Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union as an "inexorable need," that is, as an historical necessity. What is this but cutting the ground from under the struggle against Nazi militarism? Secondly, by placing the issue in this way she superimposes Hitler's *Drang nach Osten* upon the aspirations of the German people as a whole and virtually identifies and harmonizes the tyrannical dictatorship of Nazism with the interests of the German masses.

This is not a stray remark. It reflects Miss Stein's whole approach to Nazism. It is this approach that serves as the basis for her warning the democratic nations of capitalism that they might perhaps be better off in an alliance with fascism than with Communism. What else are we to believe from the following?

If war comes, the nations fighting on the same side as Russia will have to let down on red-baiting as much for the sake of their own morale as for the morale of Russia the ally. In that case the capitalist nations so aligned must ask themselves this question: Can capitalism without the antidote of anti-radical propaganda escape the influence of communist ideas which inevitably, and without necessarily deliberate effort, will seep through by way of contact between officers and men? If it cannot, then is not capitalism in greater ultimate danger from a communist ally than a fascist enemy? [Italics mine.—S. W.]

It is difficult to reconcile Miss Stein's approach to the war danger with her publisher's blurb which tells us that she "had an unexampled opportunity to study the facts, documents, records." It is regrettable that she did not make the best use of her time—certainly not so far as the interests of peace are concerned.

In conclusion, we can only recommend as a healthy peace antidote to *M-Day* a reading of Maxim Litvinov's recent London reply to the latest Hitler war moves.

SEYMOUR WALDMAN.

Bourbon Radical

REACTIONARY ESSAYS ON POETRY AND IDEAS, by Allen Tate. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50.

THE title of this book announces Mr. Tate as a critic with a program. The program is "reaction." "Reaction," says Mr. Tate, "is the most radical of programs; it aims at cutting away the overgrowth and getting back to the roots. A forward-looking radicalism is a contradiction; it aims at rearranging the foliage."

That Mr. Tate means a return to the old forms of society is certain, supported as it is by the essays throughout. "Overgrowth" correspondingly would mean the present and possible future forms of society. But to stick to the metaphor if there is any meaning at

all in the idea of roots, or any purpose in the pruning away of overgrowth, it is precisely that of encouraging healthier growths, fuller foliage and better fruit. Hence a return to the roots should be forward-looking. If it is exactly a return to the roots and nothing more, what Mr. Tate advocates is not radicalism, but, quite simply, regression.

One aspect of this regression tendency can be seen in his discussion of "Three Types of Poetry." The avowed purpose of this essay is to decry the "heresy" preached by the "school preoccupied with what is called the economic determinism of literature." The "heresy" consists in the preoccupation of poetry with politics and the conception of it as an instrument of the political will. According to Tate's conception the two should

be mutually exclusive. He develops a very interesting theory which places this "school" as the third stage in the history of allegory in Western culture. Allegory, he says, is a manifestation of the "practical will" which conceives of poetry in terms of its social uses and effects. It is this "practical [scientific] will" in all its forms, whether religious, political, or artistic, which is the target of Mr. Tate's attack. With this as a common denominator he identifies in a series of very dangerous and confusing equations, proletarian poetry, medieval allegory, pure science, positive Platonism, romantic irony and romanticism. All this with very little, or no qualification.

But if one untangles this confusion, there still exists a contradiction implicit in Tate's position which illustrates the regressive tendency. It is this: that while decrying the "heresy" of poetry partaking in politics, or any other activity of the "practical will," he still recognizes the poet's need for "self-contained, objective systems of truths," for a society which would be subject to and ordered by, such systems. He further recognizes that "the only technique for the realization of values" is the "religious unity of intellect and emotion." But surely such systems are products of the "practical will." May not, then, politics and economic determinism in particular, constitute a means toward such a system for the ordering of society? If Tate condemns it, why should he not equally condemn all the great systems of the past, whether religious or political, for the like sin of the "practical will"? And why should he call for any ordering of life at all, since it would have to be practical and volitional . . . a "forward-looking radicalism"?

Yet Tate is looking for some such order in life. He recognizes that the profession of letters is strangled by the "cash nexus" between writer and society and further that this situation is a result of "finance-capitalism." He says, in short, that there can be no profession of letters until the important writers can become an "independent class." But he offers no means to this end; and the only movement which could possibly create a society in which the artist would have such security he discards as "neo-Communism . . . the new political mania . . . in which the writer is to be dominated by capitalism." He thus places himself in the contradictory position of recognizing that the ills of literature

are deeply involved with the economic order and that the only means to remedy this must be political; and yet still condemns such means as a betrayal of the arts. What, then, is his solution? We find it in the essay called "Religion in the Old South."

The question asked in this essay is "How can the American, or Southern man take hold of tradition" and what tradition is there to take hold of? To discover such a tradition Mr. Tate turns back to the roots to consider the society of the South before the Civil War and finds it sadly lacking in fulfillment of organized cultural values though rich in possibilities. His conclusion is that if the South had "possessed a sufficient faith in her own kind of God" she would not have been defeated; and hence, we assume, would have realized her potentialities. Here the question is again asked "How may the Southerner take hold of his tradition?" It is significant that this time the American is not included. Mr. Tate's answer is: "by violence." He says "The Southerner is faced with this paradox: he must use an instrument which is political and so unrealistic and pretentious that he cannot believe in it, to re-establish a private, self-contained and essentially spiritual life." This idea was a large part of the ideological program which produced Naziism.

This is the essence of Mr. Tate's regression. He wishes to return to the society of the old South and seems to envision it as completely withdrawn and independent of the world in which it exists. He knows

that this is impossible, for "international conditions . . . have made it impossible for any community . . . to remain spiritually isolated and to develop its genius unless that genius is in harmony with the religious and economic drift of civilization at large." That Mr. Tate can advocate such a program after thus explicitly recognizing its impossibility is token of the dream quality typical of regressive fantasies.

Mr. Tate himself points out the weakness which has led him into such a contradiction: "The Southern man of letters cannot permit himself to look upon the old system from a purely social point of view, or from the economic view: to him it must seem better than the system that destroyed it, better, too, than any system with which the modern planners, Marxian or other color, wish to replace the present order."

I think this makes it conclusively clear that Mr. Tate's return to the roots is emotional nostalgia for a society which never existed outside the romantic imagination. Let us hope that he will see not only the personal danger in such a course, but even more the social peril involved in advocating a program which confesses such a close spiritual kinship with that of Nazi Germany.

Mr. Tate has often demonstrated that he has a fine critical intelligence; but he has yet to prove that it is not becoming the victim of his emotions.

PHILIP HORTON.



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