

# Cause Not Their Own"

A. S. COLLINS

The Olympic Games belong to the athletes and not to the politicians. . . . Germany's political policy within or without its borders has no bearing on the subject. The American Olympic Committee will never allow our athletes to be made martyrs to a cause not their own. . . .

—AVERY BRUNDAGE.

THE first time I met my friend Andrew was during the trouble over military training up at our college. Some one in the War Department had offered the trustees a big Assembly Hall that we needed very badly but the college had to promise that it would make the R.O.T.C. course compulsory. That was seven years ago and the police department down off the hill was still tolerant of what the students did so we were able to get a permit for an open-air meeting. Our star speaker was a notoriously liberal lawyer from the town. Just as he mounted the ladder we heard the college cheer and the college song all at once from different directions and then we saw marching columns across the campus. They were carrying flares and all kinds of makeshift weapons over their shoulders, hoes, rakes, brooms and barrelstaves and they were advancing in formation. When they came nearer we saw that they were the whole football team in uniform, the baseball squad, the track team and the crew. They did nothing until our speaker opened his mouth and then they broke into the college yell.

We might have been deadlocked that way a long time, but after about five minutes of steady noise, a man stepped out on the balcony across the way and we saw that it was the President. We all gave him a cheer and he called for silence. Then he said he was an old man who had done his best for the school and he didn't like to see such scenes, he was retiring soon and he hoped his last year would not be troubled. As for military training, he would rather postpone the issue in face of opposition one way or the other. As much as we could hope for. We heard a roar of applause and broke up as we were going down to the dorms, where we recognized a fair-haired six-footer among the trackmen. It was Andrew, who roomed in my corridor.

We didn't say much that evening except exchange names but early next morning he knocked at my door and showed me the college paper. On the front page was a black headline announcing that the trustees at their meeting had voted unanimously to accept the War Department offer.

Andrew was never an articulate person but didn't have to be to reveal the changes wrought in him by his brooding over this debacle through the following week. He is only eighteen and ending his sophomore year. His family were North Dakota homesteaders, grandchildren of German refugees

of '48. They grew wheat and his mother raised pheasant, partridge and quail. There may be something in prenatal influence or in babyhood familiarity with wings and flying things. Already Andrew had distinguished himself in all the field sports which took the body from the ground, he had what astrologers call an affinity for air. His body seemed formed for the flying end of the hop-step-and-jump or the pole vault. He wasn't much of a swimmer (he only learned at college) but his diving was a thrill to watch. I was still overcoming the effects of cadavers and anatomical charts which showed tissues being peeled off skeletons and cloven sections of bone or brain and I remember how pleasant it was to recover the sense of the naturalness of the human figure the afternoon I first saw him dive into the pool. Perhaps he would never be a world's champion in any one athletic feat; his was the body of the classic athlete and sport was part of it. These soarings, jumps and flights were natural to him and would always be, they were not the thin-edged product of coached technique. He was high-grade material, an all-round field man for our team. It was quite a shock to the coach when Andrew wrote him a brief note at the end of the week rejecting the "confidential" scholarship which had been offered to him for the next term. The following year, he did not come back at all.

When he came to New York several years later, I managed to get him some work modeling for a sculptor I knew. The next summer he picked up a job on a tobacco farm in Connecticut. It was near a railroad yard. One of the engineers taught him a good deal about steam engines and locomotives. Before the end of the summer, he was running one of those mammoth derricks which swing whole cars at roundhouses and embarkation piers. He found that his union had a sports affiliate; he became its outstanding performer. His work and the years had strengthened him and his assurance in the air. Slowly he gained regional and state championships. Competition was restricted however for labor-sports organizations and in order to enter major tournaments, Andrew accepted a "sponsored" membership and wore the colors of a prominent New York club.

Andrew looked in on me three weeks ago. What had I been reading about the Nazi Olympics? On demand, his club had given him spectators' tickets to the Amateur Athletic Union convention over at the Commodore. We spent the afternoon there. During the roll-call which side-tracked the debate, we overheard conversations among the delegates about us. One paunchy old soak was berating a reference to "the social implications of sport."

"Social implications my eye! The New York Athletic Club fought for human liberty

by keeping open the longest bar in New York right through prohibition!"

We were not there the next day when the convention endorsed the Nazi Olympics, but at dusk Andrew raced to my room with the morning paper in his hands. It was a very black headline. College papers don't use the bold types that you find in tabloids. He grasped eagerly at the few sentences censuring Hitlerism, jabbing with the elbow while greeting with the hand. He recited them aloud. He read the resolution which urges the Olympic Committee to be wary that "democratic principles" are observed in Berlin. He volunteered to serve on an investigating jury at his union's expense. He was back the next day with a letter from some A.A.U. official. It was a nice letter saying nothing. Then scrawled in longhand as P.S. was "You're a queer duck!"

He has been in town ever since, on leave from his job as union representative in sports matters. Whenever I see him these days, there's a flash in my mind, a montage you might call it, of all the dives I've seen him do, of all the graceful flying over high marks, spiked soles dripping with sweat and clearing a wand sky-high, the purple arms and his yellow hair against a blue sky. That's how he looks in The Sunday Mirror picture of Potential Members of the American Olympic Team. But he doesn't walk that way. He might be wearing irons for the way he walks. And to see that slender boy stoop makes a liar of the light.

Editorials and exposes seem rather wan. Nobody appears to have been deceived by the scandalous sellout. But we are able to protest, to make our words into lead, to share them. We have our indignation. I watch Andrew writhe with a barb in his own body. A temple is beleaguered, a temple with a mysterious virtue, a knack of flight. After the years Andrew has struggled to preserve the almost lyric purity of his body's flight, after sacrifice because he could not array his body in a uniform and march it with a drill corps, after privation because he could not just go for hire, he now finds himself helpless, master of a propaganda device, raising money for the arch-enemy of all devotion, the day nears when he is to exhibit himself as a performing freak in order that thousands of visitors may spend their millions on Nazi railroads, goods, hotels. He doesn't fit in the endless military formations which I read are on the Olympic schedule.

Already he has been threatened—"Wind up in an ashcan same as Jesse Owens might have!"—if he goes getting ideas in his head. He's being bullied, he'll be a slacker and weaken the American team if he doesn't go over. What's become of his democratic ideas? Andrew is asked. That's the way things are done in this country, be a good sport.

I don't know what Andrew is going to do about it. He walks furtively and hides away. He is like a man defending his little treasure. Not even this one youthful talent, this small joy, is exempt from greed.

# Correspondence

## Discrimination Against Artists

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Nobody need be surprised in these days of an advancing hysteria for nationalism, to find an increase of repressive acts against the foreign-born. Last week, however, it cropped up in an entirely new quarter.

When those interested in art heard the announcement a year ago of Mayor La Guardia's hand-picked committee of 100 to lay plans for a municipal art gallery it was welcome news except for those members and friends of the Artists Union who had cause to be a bit skeptical. The union had long agitated for such a gallery and art center and had carefully planned how it should be carried out. Not trusting artists to know anything about art, the Mayor announced the idea as his own and proceeded to place the project in the hands of people he knew he could trust. That his faith was justified was shown a week before the scheduled opening of the first exhibition.

Yasuo Kuniyoshi, one of the country's best known painters, was the first to discover how well the committee had worked. Although from the beginning of his art career Kuniyoshi has been identified in the art life of the city as an American and a New Yorker, his Japanese birth forever prevents him from becoming a citizen, and according to the ruling of the committee, an exhibitor. Such is the city's reward to a painter who has done as much as any one to enrich the cultural life of his community.

Hitler and his Nazi gang have long made the purity of race the sole condition for participation in the arts, but on hearing of this joker that the Mayor's Committee had inserted in its plans, a large group of leading artists has already swung into action to see that "it can't happen here." Letters of protest have been sent to La Guardia and Mrs. Henry Breckenridge, chairman of the committee, demanding the removal of the alien clause and doubtless the next week will see further steps taken to make the gallery an institution of which New Yorkers need not be ashamed. R. T. L.

## Drolette on Trial Jan. 7

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Last July the German liner Bremen steamed into New York Harbor flying the swastika, emblem of the Nazi butchers of Hitler's Germany. Incensed by this flaunting of the "Black Flag of Piracy" thousands of Americans stormed the docks, and ripped the swastika from the ship and flung it into the river. The police swooped down upon the crowd, and six of us were thrown into jail.

The Nazi government demanded an apology from Washington—and got it. The "Bremen incident" was an international topic of conversation. It was front-page news in all the papers, and the radio carried the story into millions of homes.

The five of us, whose names are attached to this letter, were taken into court, where Magistrate Brodsky dismissed our cases, and handed down his famous "Black Flag of Piracy" decision, which again aroused Hitler to protest to Washington, and to issue a decree making the swastika emblem of the Nazi party the national flag of Germany.

For a time the papers kept the story alive. Then, under the stress of new events, dropped it entirely. They forgot that the most heroic of all the "Bremen Six," Edward Drolette, still faced serious charges. On board the Bremen a Jewish detective was beaten by members of the Nazi crew who mistook him for an enemy of Hitler because of his Semitic features. Edward Drolette was accused of beating this detective with brass knuckles. On January 7, he goes to court, charged with assault.

We who have been freed of the charges against us know Eddie Drolette, and recognize in him the champion of all who believe in the American tradi-

tions as opposed to the barbaric and brutal forces of the Nazi regime. We shall do what we can to see that he does not go to prison because of his anti-Nazi activities. But we cannot do this alone.

We appeal to all who believe in democratic freedom and civil liberties to support Drolette in this case. Pack the court room on the day of his trial. Send protests. Rush funds to the International Labor Defense, 112 East 19th Street, to help pay the cost of the defense, printing of minutes of former hearings, etc. Show your solidarity with this young seaman who had the courage to demonstrate his hatred of Hitler's degenerate brutality. With your help we shall win.

WILLIAM BAILY, GEORGE BLACKWELL,  
VICTOR MCCORMACK, ARTHUR BLAIR,  
WILLIAM HOWE.

## Mother Bloor's Anniversary

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Among all the leaders in the labor movement today, Mother Ella Reeve Bloor stands out as one of the most loved, the most militant, the most remarkable.

Seventy-four years old—and yet she takes vigorous part in the sharpening struggles for workers' rights, against war and fascism. At an age when so many women resignedly accept the sweet inactive role of grandmother, Mother Bloor travels long distances, shares the discomforts of workers' lives, goes to jail to speed the organization of women and men for decent living conditions and for the fight against war. This year she completes 45 years of active participation in the American labor movement.

In honor of this remarkable woman and as an affectionate tribute to the invaluable service she has given, a group of her co-workers and friends have arranged a Mother Bloor 45th Anniversary Banquet, to be held Friday evening, January 24, 1936, in the Hotel Lismore (73rd St., west of Broadway), at seven o'clock.

This banquet could never be a fitting tribute to Mother Bloor without the active support of the trade unions and other labor organizations, of which this militant working class leader is such an intrinsic part.

PAULINE ROGERS, Secretary,  
Mother Bloor Anniversary Committee.

## Far, Far Away

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Stark Young, in reviewing Clifford Odets' *Paradise Lost* for The New Republic, complains that he could not accept the characters as middle-class people because they were not *soignés*\* which to him the bourgeoisie apparently always are. May I suggest that this is because Mr. Young is such a professional representative of the territory which is way down upon the Soignés River?

Birmingham, Ala.

T. S. GLASGOW.

\* Well-groomed.

## Boycott Nazi Dance Meet!

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Your readers are of course familiar with the international campaign to boycott the Olympics, but attention should be called to another Nazi ruse which is connected with the Olympics.

The Nazi government is campaigning to hold an International Dance Festival next July, in conjunction with the Olympics. In this campaign they are being aided by Mary Wigman and Rudolf von Laban, whose names are used as an attraction and assurance to the artists whose participation they are soliciting.

To anyone, even remotely familiar with Nazism, the very idea of the Festival is a nauseating joke. But we can be quite sure that the Nazis will move heaven and earth to inveigle the support of

dancers everywhere. It is therefore essential that everything possible be done to boycott the Festival.

The New Dance League's program against war, fascism and censorship will direct its major efforts against this International Dance Festival, according to their announcement in the current New Theater Magazine. They are requesting the support of all anti-fascists everywhere. Readers of THE NEW MASSES can function effectively in this matter if they write personal protests against this latest threat to art by a regime which has consistently proved itself the arch destroyer of art. Such letters should be sent to the Committee to Boycott the German Dance Festival, c/o New Dance League, 55 W. 45th St., New York J. G. WATERBURY.

## Letters in Brief

The Executive Committee of the Anti-Fascist Association of the Staffs of City College has sent a strong protest to Dr. Rightmire, President of Ohio State University, for his exclusion of the American Student Union Conference from the University's campus. "In attacking the liberal student movement you attack all Americans who believe in freedom of assembly and discussion," was the Committee's indictment.

Lola de la Torriente, refugee from the Battista terror in Cuba was arrested in Miami, Florida, for deportation to Cuba where the Mendieta-Battista regime is prepared to imprison and persecute her for activities against the governmental tyranny now prevalent there. The American Committee for Protection of Foreign-Born asks NEW MASSES readers to protest to Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor, against this denial of asylum to refugees from Cuba.

A League Against Yellow Journalism has been organized in Berkeley, Calif. The League has issued a million stickers with the caption "I DON'T READ HEARST." The stickers are a little larger than postage stamps and may be pasted on letters.

Sentences totalling twenty-six years at hard labor against five Burlington textile workers were upheld by the North Carolina Supreme Court. The men are accused—on what has been exposed as a frame-up—of dynamiting a mill during a strike. The explosion occurred in an abandoned part of the mill causing damage estimated at \$12.50. The defense charges that the dynamite was planted by agents wishing to gain convictions against active members of the United Textile Workers Union. The I. L. D. asks for funds to carry an appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court.

## NEW THEATER NIGHT

SUN. JANUARY 12

At the CIVIC REPERTORY  
"Let Freedom Ring" Actors Troupe  
in

PRIVATE HICKS

Prizewinning play by Albert Maltz

Hymn to the Rising Sun

By Paul Green

ANGELO HERNDON

By E. England and J. North

UNTO SUCH GLORY

By Paul Green

TICKETS: 35c—\$1.50

NEW THEATER, 156 W. 44th. BRy. 9-8378  
NEW THEATER LEAGUE 55 W. 45th.  
LOn. 5-9116 • BOOKSHOPS.