

# NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

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## Again for Catholics

THREE weeks ago we published on this page a statement by leading Spanish Catholics, including Ambassador Gallardo, Spanish envoy to Belgium; the Canon of Segovia; the Canon of Granada; the leading priest of the Madrid cathedral, and various Catholic writers and professors. These men said that as Christians of various social positions, and despite differences of political opinion, they protested against the "injustice and cruelty" of the fascist invasion of Spain. They were convinced that "all human beings who are decent and sincere" are on their side.

The side they were referring to was that of the republican government of Spain. And one of the most important implications of their statement was that *Catholics had united with Communists, Socialists, Anarchists, and Republicans* in defense of Spain against the reactionary assault of Franco, Hitler, and Mussolini.

This is highly significant. Men and women who are divided along religious lines find it not only possible but *absolutely necessary* to unite upon the far more pressing issue of defending democracy against fascism.

This particular Catholic position found its counterpart in the statement of the Mexican Communist Party which we also published three weeks ago. That statement denied that Communists attack "sincere Catholics." It made clear that "we attack no believer who bases his faith on the fraternity of mankind; we condemn only those men who bless the arms of the fascists, the conquerors of Ethiopia and the assassins of Spain."

In view of these statements from both sides by men who are united in a great cause affecting the future happiness of mankind, there is something both ridiculous and criminal in the Hippodrome ballyhoo of ex-governor Smith and George U. Harvey. Fortunately, that meeting was not a striking success. In a city inhabited by millions of Catholics, the Red-baiters failed to fill the hall. Nevertheless, the press gave considerable space to this attempt to divide men along religious lines at a time when justice, reason, and the fundamental laws of self-preservation demand that they unite to defend their common interests.

It would be folly to argue with the Smiths and the Harveys. Men unscrupulous enough to fan religious hatred for political purposes are beyond any appeal to reason. But we call the attention of sincere Catholics to the famous letter which Frank Ryan addressed to His Eminence Cardinal McRory, Catholic Primate of Ireland.

An executive of the Gaelic League, formerly editor of

*An Phoblacht*, member of the Irish Republican Army, Frank Ryan took some five hundred and fifty fighting Irishmen to Spain last December. These came not only from Ireland, but from Belfast, Liverpool, New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. Today Ryan heads the Irish Battalion of the International Brigade.

Irish reactionaries attacked Ryan's activities as part of a campaign to "destroy all belief in God and Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church, as well as every Catholic state in the world." Replying, Ryan wrote to Cardinal McRory:

Because Your Eminence supports those forces in rebellion in Spain, it does not follow that you applaud the massacre of 2000 Catholics at Badajoz; that you believe the Mohammedan Moors are fighting for Christianity; that you approve of the godless scum of the Foreign Legion, nor the outrages committed by irresponsibles against the Catholic churches . . . Your Eminence, when the Catholic clergy identify themselves with the Spanish rebellion, they turn their churches into barracks. . . . As in the Irish civil war of 1922-23, I see no legitimate reason why the Spanish monarchy or the fascists should be supported by the Spanish bishops. So today I voice my strongest objection to the attempts they have made to represent the Almighty as 'God become fascist.' . . . *I maintain that the real enemies of Christianity are those who use its name for political purposes. I maintain that the real enemies of Christianity are those fascist generals who openly proclaim that they will set up a military dictatorship, suppress trade unions, and prohibit the workers' right to strike. . . . I am a Catholic who cherishes the name of Father Garcia Morales and the Basque priests who are opposing the Spanish fascists.*

Ryan's words deserve far more serious attention from sincere Catholics than the muddle-headed fulminations of ex-governor Smith. The splendid republican captain who boasts that he takes his religion from Rome also boasts that he will not take his politics from Maynooth. He knows enough to look upon the Communists beside him in the International Brigade not as enemies, but as comrades-in-arms defending all that is best in contemporary life.

## A Million Students

TWENTY years ago, when the United States entered the world war, only a handful of Americans had the insight and the courage to call for peace. Since then, many more have realized what war means. Nearly a million students are expected to participate this week in strikes and peace actions throughout the country. The sponsorship of this year's movement is broader than ever before. Perhaps the most noteworthy single action so far has been the proclamation of Governor Benson of Minnesota setting April 22 as Peace Day and recommending that the day be celebrated throughout the state with proper exercises and programs. As a result of this proclamation, almost every high school and college student in Minnesota will participate in peace day demonstrations.

"The people as a whole," the governor said, "should join in this enlightened movement of our young people, and direct their thoughts and energies to an analysis of the causes of warfare, its futility, and the means of its prevention."

Governor Benson's wise proclamation is likely to have a profound effect even outside of Minnesota. To many, it will be a dramatic indication of what a national farmer-labor party could mean for the success of a peace movement in America.

# READERS' FORUM

*A letter on Spain from the author of "Stay Out of My Life"—And a message to our readers*

● For a good many years I have gone each year to Spain and spent there the greater part of my too-short holiday. Usually I go in the early fall, when the vintage is on, and the great wheat threshings of Old Castile are almost over, and everywhere in the South bare trees and sides of houses are hung with thick fringes of long yellow ears of corn. Last year I did not make my usual visit because of the revolution, but last year and every year before that I have subscribed to a Spanish magazine to bring me a regular reminder of the country I hold in dear affection. . . .

The *Mundo Grafico* is edited and published in Madrid, it is a much-illustrated news-sheet printed in brown and green rotogravure with large illustrations, mostly from photographs, and it looks rather like one of our Sunday picture supplements with smaller page and more text. It reports sensational crimes, preferring those of a sentimental slant; it has a page or two of bull-fighting, pages of other sports, football, cycling, tennis, swimming, boxing; there is a page of women's fashions; the arts, the theater, the films, society are all represented.

When the revolution began last July, there was a sudden delay in the arrival of my *Mundo Grafico*. But presently it began again, with pictures of young men drilling and pretty girls with collection boxes and Red Cross caps, and volunteers with raised hands of loyalty to the government, and speakers rousing the crowds—all that feverish, uncoordinated enthusiasm which I could recall so well in America in 1917. The fiction dropped out. The advertising lessened. The sports pages grew more and more scant, the theater and the films and women's fashions went too, except when now and then something of the sort was put in palpably to fill a desperate last-minute gap. But the *Mundo Grafico* carried on.

After October there was another long lapse, and when at last the magazine came through again, it was lean indeed. Practically no advertising. Pictures of men on duty, of the child victims of air raids, of weary files of refugees, of death and wanton destruction filled it now, and the printing was often very, very bad. I waited for it each week with fear that I would never see it again. It had become for me a symbol of Spanish courage and proud indifference to death. . . .

All during the siege of Madrid the *Mundo Grafico* has arrived, still edited and printed and mailed from Madrid! It is very lean now, but its spirit is unimpaired. A few weeks ago it carried a symposium on the future of Spain after the war, street interviews with men and women passing the office by chance. Only one old woman was pessimistic; she said, "I have seen civil war before; Spain will be sad and poor for a long time." But the young Spaniards, optimists still, all said: "Spain will be better, there will be more understanding, more kindness, more justice!"

In another, very recent *Mundo Grafico* there is an account of the little street businesses of Madrid, for many shops have closed and peddling has therefore increased. One of the most flourishing businesses is the selling of *bocadillas*, generally speaking, a sandwich, a snack. It seems that the pre-war *bocadillas* made with eggs or anchovies or ham have vanished, but the *Mundo Grafico* gayly reports that the smart, resourceful Madrileños have found a way to make egg sandwiches without eggs, and ham sandwiches without ham, but it cautions that you must not ask what is in your *bocadilla*. As a final gourmet touch it affirms that the *bocadilla* of horse meat is undoubtedly the best!

There is something about these thin little not-to-be-downed *Mundo Graficos* which brings me new hope. It cannot be much fun to get out a magazine in a

city which is daily bombarded by artillery and airplanes, a city with scant light and power, a city rationed on horse meat, an anxious, nervous, battered, depleted city. But the *Mundo Grafico* comes along every week, and so long as it reaches me I know that Franco, the would-be dictator, Franco the butcher,

as his own men call him, has not achieved his bloody and oppressive ends. More, it gives me confidence that he can never achieve them. Viva, Viva, el *Mundo Grafico* de Madrid! More power to your pen and your presses!

SOPHIE KERR.

## An Open Letter to Our Readers

YOU will feel at once that this direct address to you in the columns of the NEW MASSES is a rather unusual procedure. You will be right about that; it is. And the reason we do it is that we have embarked upon a venture which is itself unusual for the NEW MASSES.

Perhaps you have sensed something in the air recently which will be a clue to what it's all about. Changes are taking place. Heywood Broun's column in last week's *Nation* gave food for thought on the question of progressive political journalism. The appearance of Harold J. Laski in our pages for the first time two weeks ago was another straw in the wind. The article by Peter Freuchen, internationally known explorer, which we published last week, was another. The very fact that events forced us to publish an enlarged forty-page issue last week was yet another. Next week we will publish another forty-page issue in order to do justice to the thunderous march of history. In that issue we will publish for the first time an article by Heinrich Mann, internationally known novelist, brother of Thomas Mann. Heinrich Mann, along with Willi Munzenberg, will write on the people's front in Germany (as part of our international symposium on the people's front), and will tell the story behind the recent news of the growing anti-Hitler movement inside and outside of Naziland. We have received from correspondent James Hawthorne an article about the Abraham Lincoln Battalion in Spain which we will publish next week. There will be several other articles on various historical and legal aspects of the sit-down strikes in America—and so another forty-page issue is called for if you are to be kept properly abreast of the times. But eight extra pages costs \$300 more per issue.

And so we of the NEW MASSES have decided to launch a public drive for a fund of \$15,000, which will enable us to finance the publication of a bigger, improved NEW MASSES until the improvement in the magazine raises circulation totals (which is bound to happen) to the point where the extra expense is met by increased circulation and advertising. You have a share in the responsibility for making this venture a success, just as you have a share in the fruits of that success. When the NEW MASSES started as a weekly three years ago, support poured in because it seemed a heroic effort at that time for the revolutionary movement to put a weekly magazine into the field. It was a heroic effort—we have never had big-money "angels" to foot our bills (and, incidentally, to bring pressure to soften our editorial policy). Now that the NEW MASSES has appeared as a weekly for three years, many readers take us for granted. But it has been a heroic task all along. Many are the weeks in which the staff has got only half pay, and sometimes none at all; too many are the times when paper and printing bills seemed to threaten the continuance of publication. Those weeks the staff went hungry. It is still a heroic task to issue this magazine, and with forty pages! . . .

We are not here appealing to you for funds (although we won't refuse any cheques the postman brings); we are asking you to participate in the drive by arranging parties, lectures, etc., for the benefit of the NEW MASSES. We are asking you to publicize among organizations and individuals the fact that we are selling life-time subscriptions for \$100; ten-year subscriptions for \$25. Members of the editorial staff will be glad to appear at parties and meetings to explain the plans for bettering the magazine. Our business department will be glad to help you make arrangements for such affairs. Branch 615 of the International Workers' Order, at Brighton Beach, New York, has already started the ball rolling by having one of the editors speak at a meeting which brought us thirty-two subscriptions and half the box-office receipts. Several individuals have planned parties at their homes in line with the drive. Who's next? Write or phone our business department about it. And watch Between Ourselves each week hereafter for news of the drive. Remember: whatever other magazines may do, the NEW MASSES must grow in size and influence! And you must help!

JOSEPH FREEMAN, Editor.

GEORGE WILLNER, Business Manager.