

Constance, the daughter in Swiss Kreutzlingen. The daughter is seriously ill but cannot return to Germany because she is an expatriated Jewess who married a Swiss citizen; the mother cannot go to her daughter because she is a Jewess and has no passport.

The point of greatest intensity for Nazi propaganda is the canton of Argovia, particularly the village of Zurzach, which is the bridgehead at the confluence of the rivers Rhine and Aar. The first Nazi paper appeared at Zurzach. The mayor of Zurzach, whose name is Keusch, is a Gestapo agent—and what is worse, a Swiss army officer who knows too much about the defense plans of this district. Zurzach's most prominent architect, von Senger, and a prominent lawyer, Ursprung, were two of the founders of the Schweizerische Heimatwehr, the first Swiss fascist party.

The reason for the importance of Zurzach is purely military: there is no other good bridgehead within fifty miles to east or west; and the valley of the Aar River, draining from southwest to northeast, joins (1) the Saane in the South, leading into the canton of Vaud and Geneva—in other words, it connects the system of the German Rhine with the French Rhone; (2) the lakes of Bienne and Neuchatel, beyond which are the valleys that descend to Lake Lemman above Geneva, the best, least protected gateway into France.

This district has never been extensively fortified. But after the Nazi coup in Germany, the Swiss government realized the new danger in the North and made plans to construct a "little Maginot line" on the French model. These plans were opposed by certain reactionaries in the Swiss General Staff, one of whom, a Colonel Wille, had previously paid an unauthorized visit to Hitler, Goering, and von Blomberg. He has a lot to explain.

By such sabotage the work of defense has been slowed up but not stopped. Schaffhausen, which lies on the north bank of the Rhine, has strong fortifications and new, heavy guns. As for the army itself, long-term universal conscription has given wide field experience to the average citizen: Swiss engineers rank with the German, and Swiss Alpine troops are the best mountain troops in the world. To these people, especially those of the Northern cantons, war does not seem so distant as it once did; they are conscious of it every day they walk the streets of their frontier towns, such as Kreutzlingen, and see the roadways prepared for the insertion of iron posts and grill work—to halt German tanks.

The German army maneuvers are of no less importance. Following its political agents as a wartime battalion follows its scouting patrols, the German Bavarian army headquarters has moved twenty kilometers nearer the border, to Donaueschingen, and is now reinforced by an Alpine brigade. As for the air force, its increased efficiency and strength is common knowledge. But not all of that new strength is concentrated on the French and Czechoslovakian borders. A friend of mine was recently cycling through Southern Bavaria, watching a German plane land on a

nearby field, when suddenly it disappeared from sight! He wondered—not knowing of the new subterranean hangars on the Swiss border.

What has been the effect of this propaganda, espionage, and mobilization on the Swiss people? In a few cases, it has achieved some success. Certain Swiss citizens have become too frightened to oppose the Nazis openly; others have followed old class lines into the Nazi ideology. A German Jew living in Swiss Kreutzlingen told me not long ago that the proprietor of his favorite restaurant had begun to "disapprove" of his Jewish refugee friends sitting together at dinner, although he did not actually "protest." But for the most part, the Swiss are either loudly anti-Nazi or stolidly and silently isolationist. And the isolationists are dwindling in number. Those who were not at first excited by the Austrian *Anschluss* came to a sudden awakening when they saw Austrian troops come up Lake Constance and land at their doorsteps. Add to the dangers on the North and South that of the East, and it is no wonder that Switzerland is losing faith in "absolute neutrality" and now threatens to quit the League of Nations unless guaranteed support in case her borders are invaded. France will probably extend that support—for to do so is to protect her own only unfortified border.

★

PEERLESS

IT was called the Hotel Peerless, but a better mark of identification was its roster of rates, posted in the window on a hand-inscribed placard: Beds, 25 cents, rooms, 35 cents, showers free. Then as an optimistic afterthought, special rates by the week.

Rarely did a guest engage a room for a week, because that meant full payment in advance. It also implied great confidence in the future, and the Peerless dwellers were realists who lived in the present. They knew that a man who can slam down two silver dollars in advance for a week's lodging also has an unpunched meal ticket in his pocket, a folded dollar bill sewed in a frayed coat lining, some jangling coins for spiked beer, a haircut, and, heaven be with us, even a change of linen. Where was this man?

In the past, longshoremen, sailors, and loggers in for a spree, would pay up a week in advance just to be certain of a place to sleep off a drunk. But lately these workers, in addition to lack of money, had more serious things to think about. And exciting, too. Strikes, lockouts, union meetings, speeches by organizers, and picket duty.

In the lobby of the Hotel Peerless were two rows of wooden chairs. Some had one arm rest left and these were occupied first. Between every pair of chairs, there was a space in which bloomed a moldy cuspidor, into which those who chewed tobacco spat regularly and meditatively. Thus, each man had a spittoon to the right or left of him, and conversation would be interrupted by heads turning in opposite directions for a great brown squirt.

In one of these chairs sat a man of about fifty, turning the leaves of an old magazine. He seemed to have been rolled in dirt, poverty, and despair, and these clung to him like flour to a fallen doughnut. He had a dead-gray mustache which drooped down in lines parallel to the furrows on his face, a pock-marked nose, and his eyes stared from behind a film. His hat was on backwards and you could see a piece of the dirt-soaked sweatband protruding from the seam and marking his forehead. His coat, vest, shirt, and trousers seemed all of one color. He had no necktie and the collar band was open at the throat, but curiously enough, like a lone ornament, there was a shining collar-button in the hole.

The man's name was William, and he was thinking. For years now, he had had occasion to use his name only when asking for relief from some charity organization, or when he submitted to voluntary arrest for thirty days of police bed and board.

The man was not a regular guest at the Hotel Peerless, but each morning, after he had had black coffee and a roll at the mission relief window, a fatiguing three-hour breakfast wait, he would come to the hotel, sit down in a chair, and read the magazine which now lay in his hands.

It was an old issue of a scientific monthly devoted to pictures and descriptions of new mechanical marvels and fantastic discoveries to advance the human race. William was thinking about modern science. Sometimes his lips moved with the difficult words, and he tasted the dirty grit in his mustache.

William was thinking. Here was an inventor who had perfected a rocket ship which could safely project a man to the moon. Not only the man, but a case full of instruments to record time and space. That was wonderful.

He turned a page and gazed at another invention. As you are driving at great speed along the highway, and you desire to flick the ash off your cigar, you press a button and the window of your car flies down. Think of it, you no longer have to roll the pane down. William tried to puzzle out the practical advantages of this mechanical step forward, but it was difficult. It had been many years since he had ridden in an automobile. And as he had never owned one the problem of a side window, flying up or gliding down, was purely academic with him. But just the same, the improvement was wonderful.

And here was another brilliant invention. You crossed a light beam and the door flew open by itself. The human hand would never have to touch a doorknob. Push and pull were eliminated from human problems. That, undoubtedly, was very wonderful.

And thinking about all the vast improvements in science and mechanics, flights around the world, rockets to the moon, sawdust into trees, plants into stone, refuse into gold, old age into youth, ugliness into beauty, man into God, William wondered why nobody had invented a process which would prevent him from sitting his life away in that chair, tired, dirty, hungry, and homeless.—ABEN KANDEL.

Readers' Forum

No "Isolationist"

TO NEW MASSES: You print an excerpt from a letter, and make it the occasion for pinning a label on me—"isolationist." Tut, tut—editors, gentlemen, friends!—I can't let you get away with that. Labels are the bastards of theories, and theories are the cretins born of lazy minds. I've been fighting both since 1908, when your predecessors, the Socialists of those days, used them as excuses for declining to join with me, and better men, in opposing the traction trust's larcenies.

For more than thirty years I've fought for the Washington-Jefferson principle of "no entangling alliances" because the only invitation to entanglement came from the English imperialists. I'm still fighting that entanglement now that the Communist Party of the United States is its loudest proponent. But I will do anything possible, work for any possible policy, that might put the might of America on the side of the Soviet Union in its coming fight for life. I join the demand that the embargo against the Spanish people's government be lifted. I have publicly proposed a policy which would probably put us at war with Japan and thereby certainly save the Soviet Union. Do these things make me an "isolationist"?

Like Stalin—in that letter much publicized a few months ago, in which moreover he quoted Lenin—I see the whole European and Asiatic capitalist world ganging up on the Soviets because the masters of capitalism know that capitalism must perish unless they crush Socialism in the Soviet Union. And the headquarters of capitalism are in London. The British imperial government is capitalism's No. 1 gunman. Hitler and Mussolini and Japan are merely its paid thugs. Two years ago when the blow was struck at the people of Spain—not by Franco, but by Sanjurjo, who died as he started from the British satrapy called Portugal—Tony Eden "put it over" on Litvinov, persuaded Moscow that if it would refrain from aggressive aid to Spain, the British government would organize "collective action" by the "democracies." And it organized "collective action," all right—"non-intervention," resulting in the crucifixion of Spain. This affords the opportunity for a fraudulent appearance of belligerency between John Bull on the one hand and Mussolini, Hitler, and the Japs on the other, which stage-play has two objects: to fool Moscow and theorists like you, and to grind into all the peoples, especially the British, that fear out of which war hysteria grows. When the proper pitch is reached, the English rulers will have no trouble turning their people's anger away from the fascists and against the terrible Bolsheviks.

You think that up to some months ago there was a chance that the British government would stand with the Soviets against the fascists. I say that from the beginning the British government has been the chief instrument of international capitalism's plot against the Soviets. You think that if Eden, who gave Litvinov the poisoned cup, or Lloyd George, "the worst scoundrel in Europe," or the insane anti-Communist Churchill, should replace Chamberlain, the Soviets would be saved; I, the inheritor of seven hundred years of Irish experience with the English rulers, say you would simply be worse betrayed. Therefore I oppose handing over control of American policy to the English government precisely because that would be the direct road to our association in the great crusade to "save the world from Bolshevism." In proposing to build a "democratic front" on an English cornerstone, you are actually proposing to find safety in the arms of your chief enemy. And in trying to range America

on the side of the Soviets *via* an English alliance, you are wasting the time and dissipating the energies of your followers; it is the one policy that is anathema to an overwhelming majority of Americans.

Eighteen months ago, while you were promising your readers a Soviet-French-British-American lineup, I began publicly to predict a British-French-Italian-German lineup against the Soviets. Can you deny that every single occurrence since then has tended to verify my prediction?

NEW MASSES is a wonderful paper. Too bad that for a year you have refused me a hearing in your pages, and then play the childish trick of pinning a label on me. "Isolationist" my eye! When the British-led gang attacks the Soviets, I shall be

American volunteer number one

In Soviet defense with a gun—

Red Hook, N. Y.

SHAEMAS O'SHEEL.

The Editors Reply

NEW MASSES had no desire to offend our good friend Shaemas O'Sheel by calling him an isolationist. We thought we were accurately describing his point of view. The letter he refers to was published in the Between Ourselves department of our July 26 issue. In it Mr. O'Sheel, after praising the first two articles of A. B. Magil's series on the New Deal, expressed the hope that the third would not advocate collective security in the realm of foreign policy. It did. We are happy, nevertheless, to learn that so vigorous and intransigent an opponent of collective security as Mr. O'Sheel is not an isolationist. But in that case what is he?

We share with Mr. O'Sheel his fine Irish hatred of British imperialism, but feel that he has permitted his Anglophobia to get the better of him. As a result, he regards any proposal for joint action of the peoples and governments of the democratic countries to curb the fascist aggressors as a Chamberlain plot—though Chamberlain happens to be pursuing a diametrically opposite policy. Mr. O'Sheel is mistaken if he thinks we have any illusions about the tory government; even a casual reading of *NEW MASSES* should have made that clear. Nor have we at any time promised our readers a Soviet-French-British-American lineup. To advocate such a lineup on the basis of a policy of cooperative action for peace is quite different from promising it. What we don't understand is why Mr. O'Sheel should object to the people of England throwing overboard the Chamberlain policy, which he rightly excoriates, and adopting, in concert with the peoples of the United States, France, the Soviet Union, and other democracies, a policy which will check fascist aggression, save world peace, and defend the USSR from capitalist attack. Mr. O'Sheel greatly oversimplifies this proposal when he conceives it as a question of Eden or Lloyd George replacing Chamberlain. We have always made clear that we regard the Labor Party and the trade unions and the masses of the English people as a whole as the driving force in any change of British policy. But this does not mean that they should refuse to utilize in the interests of peace the real conflicts that exist within the British ruling class or reject in advance possible allies, no matter how temporary or unstable. Lenin in *Left-Wing Communism* lashed out at the sectarians who advocated any such "purist" attitude. The present "neutrality" policy of the American government, which is presumably a policy of "no entangling alliances" and isolation from world

affairs, actually results in collaboration with the Chamberlain government. The infamous embargo on Spain is the fruit of that policy. Mr. O'Sheel, while opposing the embargo, objects to collective security which would end the embargo and make the United States a powerful factor for world peace. Just what he does propose in the present situation is a mystery. Incidentally, he has managed to convert R. Palme Dutt, who is one of the leaders of the British Communist Party, and Stalin into supporters of his thesis and hence opponents of collective security!—The Editors.

Against Partition

TO NEW MASSES: Partition is the intensification of the ghetto-izing of Palestine which began in the early twenties. The Zionists have been building their economic and cultural ghettos on the fringe of a densely populated Arabic world. Their nationalism was unwittingly taught to the Arabs, who now like Zionism for themselves. They have come to look upon the Zionist settlements as luxurious cankers on the body of their land. No Mufti or agitator taught them such wisdom. The Zionist higher standard of living taught them. Zionism was doomed when the Jews first began to reconstruct Palestine for themselves. There can be no security for a Jew in Palestine until the Arab has a corresponding economic security. This does mean lowering the standard of living of Jewish workers, but which is better—to be hungry with the Arab cousin for some years so that both may rise together, or to live in a ghetto, behind British bayonets?

The Histadruth neglected to organize Arabs into the same unions with Jews, because it was nationalistically greedy for more immigrants. It further claimed that the Histadruth had to build capitalism first, so that it could be overthrown in favor of Socialism. The central Asiatic republics in the USSR, however, have demonstrated that a feudal economy can be transferred into a Socialist economy—if the workers and farmers so will it. A Zionist who is a nationalist foremost and a Socialist thereafter is no model for any neighbor, except the Nazis who live in Sarona (suburb of Tel-Aviv). There will be no peace in Palestine until Arab and Jewish workers and farmers create a joint economy, and, if need be, a joint nationalism (as in the Crimea with the Tartars). Is it not significant that there have been no Zionist skirmishes against the Tommies, while Arabs constantly battle British imperialism? This fact helps explain the nature of Zionism. The initiative for cooperation and peace must come from the Histadruth. Otherwise the fears Dr. Chaim Weizmann expressed to me in Jerusalem in 1934 will be fulfilled. The Zionists "will be pushed into the Mediterranean."

Escanaba, Mich.

ROBERT GESSNER.

Welsh Writers

TO NEW MASSES: I notice in Joseph Frank's review of Glyn Jones' *The Blue Bed and Other Stories* [*NEW MASSES*, June 7] one or two errors which I think are serious enough to merit your attention. It is true that Glyn Jones and other young Welsh writers like Dylan Thomas and myself are associated with a Swansea Group and with the little magazine *Wales*, but you are quite incorrect in linking our work in imagery, etc., to that of Gavin Ewart, who is English. Again, you are wrong in talking about the "primitiveness" of this particular collection. Hasn't Mr. Frank the textbook ideas about the work of other Welsh writers such as Caradoc Evans and Rhys Davies at the back of his head? Glyn Jones was born in a mining valley; surely it is Caradoc Evans, in his early stories, written around the peasants of Cardiganshire, published in 1915, who tackles the "land proletariat" and the sexual-religious aspect.

KEIDRYCH RHYS.

Llangadock,
Carmarthenshire, Wales.