

READERS' FORUM

More on Hate

TO THE NEW MASSES:

STUYVESANT VAN VEEN's question about wherein lies the difference between the hate he felt in drawing a Japanese marauder and Bellows's hate in his Hun drawings invites a very simple answer. A person conditioned by capitalism may feel, and therefore hate, in nationalistic terms. Or he may, by a conscientious identification with the working class, transcend his conditioning and hate in class terms. In the latter case, one hates then, not "Huns" or "Japs," but loves the working people of any nationality, and in equal degree hates their exploiters.

In the instance in question, one hates the Japanese fascist imperialists, who are the big bourgeoisie of Japan, and naturally, out of the instinct of self-preservation, profoundly hates whatever human being girds himself up with the arms of the fascists, whoever fires its guns and drops its bombs. But in wars of this era, soldiers who are forced to fight for masters they also hate, often lay down their arms and advance with upraised fists in people's-front salute, and are welcomed by the soldiers on democracy's side with, I imagine, quite wonderful feelings of love.

New York City.

EMMETT GOWEN.

A Victory for Progressive Unionism

TO THE NEW MASSES:

A SIGNIFICANT victory for progressive unionism marked the last days of the old year in Los Angeles, where Local 47 of the American Federation of Musicians dislodged from office a do-nothing administration which had been entrenched for fifteen years. The progressives won eight out of twelve seats on the board, and elected as president forward-looking Jack B. Tenney, who, as a first-term member of the California state legislature, has already distinguished himself there for his forthright campaigning for progressive principles. An important aspect of the progressives' victory in this second-largest local of the A.F.M. was that a thousand more members participated in the recent election than did so the year before, which indicates a striking elevation in the trade-union consciousness of the membership as a result of a determined educational campaign among the rank and file.

The members of the new administration are expected, when they assume office this month, to take immediate steps to wipe out any division of the local into progressive and conservative blocs, and to create a solid, unified structure which will enable them to counter successfully the wage-cutting in many local dance-halls, which the outgoing administration countenanced. The constant growth of Hollywood into the nation's radio capital and the threat of general retrenchment in the movie studios also present problems with which only a fighting, progressive union can cope.

This progressive victory assumes special importance for labor as a whole because of the increasing virulence of the open-shop drive in southern California. The police frame-up of a local C.I.O. official which I described in these pages two weeks ago was part of the open-shop drive. Another was the declaration last week by Burton Fitts, District Attorney of Los Angeles County, that he sees it as part of his job to maintain the open shop. (The regional office of the C.I.O. exposed him prettily on this by dumping in his lap the case of a firm which was refusing

to hire workers unless they joined its company union; Fitts lamely referred the case to a subordinate.)

Still another phase of the drive is the organization of Southern Californians, Inc., which has come out for the right of the worker to work when he pleases, to join unions, to bargain collectively, but under no circumstances to seek the closed shop.

And then there is the Neutral Thousands, ostensibly comprising the "public" who are presumed to be victimized in the crossfire of disputes between capital and labor. Of course, this is another open-shop outfit, specially designed to drive a wedge between the middle class and the labor movement.

To round out the ugly picture, the Los Angeles City Council last week passed a vicious anti-picketing ordinance which forbade any but the employees of a firm against which a "bona-fide" strike is in progress from picketing that firm—and then only to the extent of one picket to every fifty feet.

This measure was vetoed by Mayor Shaw, as a result of joint action by the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. But the mayor followed that up by demanding an "enforceable" ordinance against mass picketing—so the danger remains. In the face of such a full-blown fascist trend, such developments as that in the musicians' unions are a burning immediate need for the Los Angeles labor movement.

Los Angeles.

ALFRED O'MALLEY.

Is Poetry Dead?

TO THE NEW MASSES:

WE, of the Poetry Group, welcome your editorial, "Is Poetry Dead?" The Poetry Group is founded on the definite belief that poetry is as alive as anything in the world, and that persons not seeing life in poetry, have no right to see it fully in themselves.

The purpose of the Poetry Group is "to make poetry mean more to more Americans." One of the corollary beliefs of the Poetry Group is that poetry should, even when representative of the Left, not be confusedly ornate, pretentiously intellectual, and "cerebrally" dull.

We have felt that a good work-song or a spiritual was, strictly speaking, more intellectual than something which is an imitative compound of MacLeish, Eliot, Hopkins, with an elusive dash of Marx. We think, moreover, that the New MASSES has fallen too readily and too often for some mixture of colons, hard-working imagery, and chewing-gum lifelessness that is impressive all over the place, but can affect the general American less than a Sears-Roebuck catalogue.

We entirely agree with Mr. Albert Shepard of the C.I.O. that poetry has as much of a future to it, as the movies.

We think that even intellectual poetry can have a direct earthiness and a warm forthrightness that somehow will hit people of the kind that comprise the United States census.

We think that it's as new as television.

Further, we think that real poetry is an opponent of that bad formal prose at its worst, which in politics, is fascism. Fascism is against the life of man. Poetry has always been for it. And it can be today, more than ever.

Poetry is rhythm, and rhythm is at the basis of the lives of all men and women. To say that poetry cannot meet some need in the lives of humans is equivalent to saying that rhythm is useless. And we know that rhythm can be used on the picket-line, in a marching song, in a leaflet, in a novel, and in a poem, in such a way, that an idea, otherwise unattractive, permeates the reader and becomes a part of himself and his actions.

Cannot rhythm be used in the anti-fascist cause? And if it can, is that not to admit that poetry can be used to combat Franco, and Girdler, and Weir?

It seems to us that a political idea presented rhythmically, gains in force. In other words—*rhythm is an aspect of power*, including political power. One of the things making the phrase,

"Workers of the world, unite" so effective, is its essential rhythm.

Thousands of New Yorkers were thrilled by the refrain of last year's May Day parade—the refrain:

"Wages up and hours down,
Make New York a union town."

One of the important reasons that these eleven words, as we ourselves observed, hit joyfully and strongly the ears and minds of some hundreds of thousands of persons on the streets of Manhattan, was the rhythm, or, put otherwise, its poetry.

The popular front needs rhythm in all its implications, in order to combat the profit system in its latest manifestation, the totalitarian state.

The popular front has to become popular. Since the popular front needs poetry, poetry too has to become popular. And it can become popular only when it attains a rich and accurate simplicity and directness.

We are for the highest standards in poetry. Yet we feel that these highest standards are in no way in conflict with a straightforward approach in verse. As we have mentioned, we think that the New MASSES has unfortunately sinned in this respect.

We know that there is a possibility of being as delicate as Pater, and, simultaneously, as appealing as "Casey Jones."

MARTHA MILLET,

Secretary, Poetry Group

(For the Executive Committee.)

New York City.

Arrests in Haiti

TO THE NEW MASSES:

NEWs has reached us that the Haitian government has taken advantage of the present situation on the island and ordered the wholesale arrest of prominent Haitians suspected of being in opposition to the regime. Thirty-seven have been arrested already, including Seymour Pradel, former candidate for President of Haiti; P. Thoby, a prominent attorney; Dr. Ricot; Paulius Sanon, former minister of Haiti at Washington; Dr. J. Adam; Alphonse Henriquez, the nationalist leader active in opposing American occupation; Max Hudicour, journalist; the writer, Constant Vieux; Salabat; former Senator Placide David; Justin Sam, the young Haitian author; the attorney, Marc Bauduy; Victor Cauvin, president of the Law School in Haiti; and Louis Mevs, the president of the Taxi Workers' Union. Pierre Paul, representative of Haiti at the Montevideo conference in 1933, former General E. Thezan, and others had been arrested previously.

The lives of these men, including former senators and men prominent in the recent history of Haiti, are in the greatest danger. In 1934 President Vincent, through his chief of protocol, Raoul Rousier, ordered the assassination of these men. This was established at the subsequent trial of Rousier who was arrested after the incident was exposed. He testified, under examination by the attorney-general, that, with Elic Lescot and Frederic Duvigeneaud as accomplices, he had acted according to the instruction of Vincent in his capacity as a confidential official to the President.

Neither must be forgotten the murder of Jolibois in prison two years ago. After Jolibois was stabbed, President Vincent refused to turn the body over to his family. Instead, he brought Jolibois's two young sons from school and forced them, although still minors, to sign a statement relinquishing all claim to the body. These facts should serve to remind Americans of the danger threatening the lives of the men under arrest.

Americans who love freedom and democracy should send protests against the arrest of these innocent men to Elic Lescot, now minister of Haiti at Washington, D. C., to Charles Vincent, consul of Haiti in New York City, and to President Stenio Vincent in Haiti.

New York City.

S. JUSTE ZAMOR.

A Report on

LISLE STOCKINGS

with ratings of 14 brands



*What are the "Best Buys" in non-silk hose?
Which brands compare most favorably with silk stockings in appearance and in wearing quality?
How do lisle and rayon hose compare in wearing quality?*

These questions are answered in a report in the current (January) issue of *Consumers Union Reports* giving test results on lisle and other non-silk hosiery. More than 14 brands are rated by name as "Best Buys," "Also Acceptable," and "Not Acceptable" on the basis of wear and laboratory tests. There is also a supplementary note on the labor conditions under which these brands are made.

Other reports in this issue cover:

HOME BUILDING and BUILDING MATERIALS. The first of a series of reports intended to supply a "layman's technique" for buying or building a home. If you want the cold facts about home ownership read this report.

STORAGE BATTERIES. This report rates 13 makes of storage batteries for comparative quality, naming those which will get a car going most readily in cold weather.

MEN'S SHIRTS and SHORTS. Of the 14 kinds of broadcloth and madras shorts tested and reported upon in this report only two are rated "Best Buys." Undershirts are also rated.

VITAMINS and COD-LIVER OIL. This report, also the first of a series—deals with vitamins and in particular with Vitamin D and cod-liver oil. The series will attempt to give a summary of what is actually known about vitamins, and to estimate the value of vitamin products.

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To secure a copy of this issue fill out and mail the coupon below. The membership fee of \$3 will bring you 12 issues of the *Reports* and, without extra charge, the 1938 250-page Consumers Union Annual Buying Guide which will appear early in 1938 and which will contain ratings of over 1500 products. Membership can be started with the current issue or with any of the following previous issues: JULY — Miniature Cameras, Gasolines, Motor Oils; AUG.-SEPT.—Refrigerators, Films, Ice Cream, Inner Tubes; OCT.—Oil Burners and Coal Stokers, Breakfast Cereals, Auto Radios; NOV.—Life Insurance, Portable Typewriters, Men's Hats; DEC.—1938 Radios, Cigars, Lipsticks, Electric Shavers.

WHAT CONSUMERS UNION IS: Consumers Union of United States is a non-profit, membership organization established to provide ultimate consumers with accurate and disinterested information on the products they use, based on laboratory and use tests by competent technicians. The results of these tests are reported monthly in *Consumers Union Reports*, in most cases with ratings of the products tested by brand name as "Best Buys," "Also Acceptable," and "Not Acceptable." Information is also given on the labor conditions under which products are made. If you cannot afford to spend money unwisely read *Consumers Union Reports*.

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BOOK REVIEWS

From Addis Ababa to Madrid

TWO WARS AND MORE TO COME, by Herbert L. Matthews. Carrick & Evans, Inc. \$2.50.

THIS is a very personal narrative of two Italian wars of invasion. Mr. Matthews frankly treats Mussolini's ambitions of empire as the link between his experiences in Ethiopia and his adventures in Spain. It is as a newspaperman (much more youthful than his thirty-seven years) who loves to get away from the desk into the wilds, that the New York Times correspondent writes. As adventure, his trip across Dankalia with the Mariotti column, the battle of Ende Gorge, and his dash across the Arganda Bridge in February are bright reading. As journalism, the Italian route at Guadalajara is a high spot. Except for a sketch of the battle of Brihuega and another showing the Italian march through Ethiopia there are no maps, and this is a distinct annoyance in a book of this type.

Matthews is a good newspaperman and an ethical one. His innate sincerity, moreover, often leads him to take up the cudgels for the factual truth. On April 10, 1936, for example, he earnestly cabled from Asmara that Addis Ababa would fall within a month. He was deliberately contradicting a hasty and ill-informed world opinion. Time has proved him correct. From Madrid he has repeatedly cabled information consciously designed to combat the thinly disguised propaganda released by dishonest journalists in rebel territory. Whenever Matthews appears to be pleading a cause, he is merely defending the facts as against misinformation. With Rome and Berlin grinding the rebel propaganda mill, Matthews's one-man struggle for truth has given his work an enormous political importance. His book, notably the chapters dealing with the nature of the Negrin government, the Italian intervention, the role of the Communist Party, the necessity for the elimination of Largo Caballero, and the Trotskyist disruption of the Aragon front, should carry on the work of his Times dispatches despite certain glaring faults. The essential facts are there.

NEW MASSES readers who may have speculated on Mr. Matthews's own political opinions will find part of the answer in this book. It is a record of experiences which have left their mark on the correspondent in terms of intellectual growth, not yet ended by any means. In the Ethiopian war he sympathized with the Italians, justifying himself by the argument that he is a "nationalist," who has "no objection to seeing any country better its position in the world." Today his affections

are with the Spanish people. Something has happened to him in the interim—and he frankly admits it. "I, like so many other people, am going through an evolution about fascism that must be obtruding through my daily work, as it will into this book." When he writes of the American battalions, he reveals to the reader something he himself may not fully realize: those incomparable anti-fascists have been a major factor in changing his outlook. "They are fighting," he writes, "because they would rather die than see a fascist regime under any shape or auspices installed in the United States." He observed that the American volunteers in Spain were all on one side. This fact no doubt weighed heavily among the new experiences which were altering his estimate of fascism. He sums up his position (in October 1937) as follows:

There was a time when I was all for it, and I am not convinced yet that it has been a bad thing for Italy. But the export brand of fascism with its link now with Nazism in Germany, however logical, is an ugly thing to behold. Moreover, I should hate to see it exported as far as the United States.

This is a half-way position and it makes for some lack of clarity in his story. He still finds war a great adventure—if only there were no slaughter of non-combatants. If only! And fascism is great stuff in Italy, but the export product fills him with doubts. Murder and aggression are not simply inevitable consequences of war and fascism to him. That view is simply one of the annoying dogmas of leftists and rightists "who had the doubtful advantage of being sure of their convictions."

Matthews is still, as he himself says, something less than an utterly convinced anti-

fascist. Yet his work often has a quality that suggests conviction, indignation, purpose. His recent dispatches—perhaps the most brilliant work he has ever done—deliberately and carefully destroyed two weeks of rebel lies about the status of Teruel. In the present state of his opinions, Matthews's fervor is due mainly to sheer journalistic honesty. He is still at his best when making "on the spot" contradictions of phony stories.

JAMES HAWTHORNE.

Reporters at Capitol Hill

THE WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENTS, by Leo C. Rosten. Harcourt Brace & Co. \$3.

WHILE *The Washington Correspondents* was written, the same author, under the name of Leonard Q. Ross, was writing *The Education of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N*. The joint effort was perhaps too much, for a good deal of the ineffable Hyman Kaplan has crept into the account of the men and women who interpret the doings of government to their constituents.

With Mr. Kaplan, student of the English language in an Americanization school, the touchstone was his lack of command of the language he was studying, plus an incomparable amount of confidence in his ability to know and understand. With Mr. Rosten the touchstone is a pseudo-psychoanalytic method of social analysis after the manner of Prof. Harold Lasswell of the University of Chicago.

To start at the end, Mr. Rosten finds it deplorable that publishers are uncontrolled, that "the ills with which contemporary journalism is afflicted are an integral aspect of our society rather than a disease with an etiology of its own," that American journalism does not have an American Bar Association or an American Medical Association to primp its ethics, and that the news is not free.

With these conclusions few will disagree. But when Mr. Rosten winds up with the suggestion that perhaps the solution lies in the licensing of newspaper owners in the same manner that doctors, pharmacists, and veterinarians are licensed, there are many who will be quick to wonder if Mr. Rosten failed completely to learn the nature of government in the time he spent in Washington gathering material for his book.

In a left-handed manner Mr. Rosten recognizes that newspapers are a part of big business. "Publishing," he says, "has become an enterprise which is no longer accessible except to the wealthy." (The italics are his.) Yet a corollary recognition, that newspapers naturally fulfill certain functions as a part of big business, is lacking. That the function of

Recently Recommended Books

- Letters from Iceland*, by W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice. Random. \$3.
- Old Hell*, by Emmett Gowen. Modern Age. Cloth, 85c. Paper, 25c.
- Madame Curie*, by Eve Curie. Translated by Vincent Sheean. Doubleday, Doran. \$3.50.
- Six Centuries of Fine Prints*, by Carl Zigrosser. Covici-Friede. \$5.
- Young Henry of Navarre*, by Heinrich Mann. Knopf. \$3.
- The Pretender*, by Lion Feuchtwanger. Viking. \$2.50.
- The Flivver King*, by Upton Sinclair. United Automobile Workers of America. Also by the author, Pasadena, Cal. 25c.
- Ralph Fox: A Writer in Arms*, edited by John Lehmann, T. A. Jackson, and C. Day Lewis. International. \$1.75.
- Labor Agitator, The Story of Albert Parsons*, by Alan Calmer. International. 35c.
- The Civil War in the United States*, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. International. \$2.50.
- C.I.O.*, by J. Raymond Walsh. Norton. \$2.50.
- Engels on Capital*, translated and edited by Leonard E. Mins. International. \$1.25.