

# The Dividends of Red-baiting

A review of George Seldes' important book on the leading figures and organizations behind the Red-baiting racket. . . . John Stuart discusses Leo Huberman's "America, Incorporated."

WITCH HUNT: THE TECHNIQUE AND PROFITS OF RED-BAITING, by George Seldes. Modern Age Books. \$2.75.

"AS A WAR correspondent and one who covered Versailles," writes George Seldes, "I saw the beginnings of what is today the great game of Red-baiting. . . ." He refers, of course, to the international campaign that began in 1917 for the purpose of crushing the young Soviet Republic. His experiences and observations in both Europe and America eminently qualify him as an expert on the witch hunt.

The Red-baiting drive in this country, especially in the recent period, does not consist of isolated cases. It has followed a pattern, culminating in the most concentrated campaign ever conducted. The facts behind this drive and their meaning concern Seldes in this book. He is a hard hitter, naming names and calling a spade just that. In the pages of *Witch Hunt* are paraded the leading figures—Dies, Matthews, Father Coughlin, Woll, and lesser lights; also the chambers of commerce, manufacturers, rich farmers' associations, and similar groups. Seldes calls the turn on the corporate and financial interests who profit most by Red-baiting.

Also recorded are the doings of George Sokolsky, Ralph Easley, Mayor Hague, and the congressional and professional witch hunters. The record of the anti-labor tear gas firms and labor spies is laid bare. As the La Follette committee hearings clearly disclosed, the espionage and munition firms advertise themselves as "patriots," interested only in "stamping out Communism." But La Follette's prodding forced their agents to admit that they engaged in and provoked violence and strife for the purpose of crushing unions, be they AFL or CIO. This point is one of the most important brought out by Seldes, because it shows so clearly how Red-baiting is a mask for smashing the labor movement as a whole. We learn also that the recent murder of Laura Law, wife of a militant lumber union official in Oregon, had its origin in the "anti-Red" campaign of local newspapers and business men.

"Red-baiting," Seldes writes . . . "pays in dollars and cents." The biggest witch hunters in this country are the "purely commercial organizations, who Red-bait to preserve their wealth, the system which makes their holdings secure, the status quo of Big Money." Red-baiting is thus not only a powerful weapon of big business, but has itself become a profitable business racket.

It is ironical that the President, in his New Deal hey-day a target of Red-baiters, has now gone over to the enemy. "Gone over" is per-

haps too mild, since Roosevelt himself is now a spearhead of Red-baiting, a weapon which, Seldes recalls, "helped Hitler take power." Seldes cites authoritative sources to show that the current drive of G-men against "Reds" does not originate with J. Edgar Hoover, as some have thought, but with the President himself. He also reveals how the onetime liberal Attorney General Frank Murphy, with an eye to the Supreme Court, entered on a witch hunt against Detroit citizens who sympathized with the Spanish loyalist government. The chapter on "Who Are the Real Fifth Column?" is a notable one. The author qualifies as a real expert on this subject. For, if I recall rightly, Seldes was the first one to popularize the term fifth column in this country in a memorable article in the old *Fight* magazine.

"Most Red-baiting," the author tells us, "does not consist of the baiting of Reds." It may begin, or appear to be directed, against Communists. Actually, it is aimed at the labor movement, liberals, progressive organizations of all kinds, including Negro and youth groups. Nor are advocates of such non-fundamental programs as municipal ownership, "good government," or cooperatives immune. Red-baiting, in short, is used against all who organize in order to curb the profits of the Red-baiters and their backers. It is the tactic of those forces that are working toward fascism.

This book has important lessons for America in these critical days. Mr. Seldes is among those who today see clearly how Red-baiting

leads to fascism. The people are in his debt for giving them such excellent ammunition with which to combat their Red-baiting enemies.

HY KRAVIF.

## Monopoly and Politics

AMERICA, INCORPORATED, by Leo Huberman. Viking Press. \$2.75.

THERE has always been an engaging simplicity in Mr. Huberman's work. He brings a fresh technique of presenting concepts worked out by others; and in that sense his writing is mainly derivative. His *Man's Worldly Goods* is among the best popular studies of the development of capitalism and the corollary economic ideas which were born in the course of the system's ascent and decline. His excessive caution makes it difficult to identify him with any special school of economic thought but undoubtedly he has borrowed most heavily from the Marxists.

This new book is an overall view of the growth of American monopoly after the Civil War. It is decidedly elementary in its approach, using data that have been explored many times before. Its chief quality is that it defies the academicians by talking plainly and directly, by citing statistical material where words would obscure the trend of capital accumulation. By humanizing the facts in terms of what the politicians were saying and thinking, Huberman is able to find the appropriate quotation to illuminate a point. For example, in the McKinley era, monopoly's rapid conquest of the domestic market required new outlets for the consumption of factory production. Imperialist politics began to dominate the scene and to show how Congress was echoing the needs of the industrialists Huberman quotes Sen. Albert Beveridge, who rarely enunciated the scripture of aggrandizement without heavenly sanction. It is worth repeating here, particularly because it is a significant motif in White House speeches and in the literary lamentations of Archibald MacLeish.

God . . . has made us the master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns. . . . He has made us adepts in government that we may administer government among savages and senile peoples. Pray God that the time may never come when Mammon and the love of ease shall so debase our blood that we will fear to shed it for the flag and its imperial destiny. . . . Our institutions will follow our flag on the wings of our commerce. And American law, American order, American civilization, and the American flag will plant themselves on shores hitherto bloody and benighted, but by those agencies of God henceforth to be made beautiful and bright.



George Seldes

The first half of the book can be summed up as the saga of the country's climb "from rags to riches," as Huberman puts it; tremendous industrial and financial expansion under the aegis of the all-embracing corporation. With the flowering of imperialism, national interests in terms of developing the country no longer ran parallel to those of the industrial capitalists whose rate of profit could be maintained and enlarged only by colonial adventure. Concentration of capital expressing itself in unprecedented trustification was a sign along the road leading to Mr. Wilson's war. This is among the major points Huberman elaborates as the story unfolds. There are also good critical summaries of the labor movement, its origins, and the special forms it took as defensive tactics against the monopolies. The farmers' plight is well sketched against the background of struggle with the railroads, the Eastern bankers, the hopeless money panaceas held up to them by the mercurial Bryan.

This first half, it seems to me, is more satisfactory as economic history than that which follows—the tale of the New Deal. What Huberman has to say about Mr. Roosevelt's administration is sprightly as well as useful. But it is for the most part a cataloging of New Deal legislation that rolled out of the congressional sessions. I felt keenly the absence of an analytical summary of Mr. Roosevelt's eclectic economic philosophy, the relation of his ideas to that of his antecedents in office. In the matter of foreign policy Mr. Roosevelt hardly differs from Mr. Hoover. True there are some minor exceptions. There was the all too brief moment of "good neighbor" intentions toward Latin America. But here, as late as last winter, when Huberman was completing his book, it was more than apparent that in the good neighbor days Mr. Roosevelt was covering the old imperialist fist with a velvet glove. It is also a little silly to say, as Huberman does, that while the New Deal was not a revolution in economics it was a "revolution in ideas." The credit system was kept from collapsing by the administration's assistance to the largest financial institutions. Devaluation of the dollar in the first phases of the New Deal made only small inroads in the debt burden of farmers and middle classes. The crop reduction program was hardly a revolutionary idea; it was picked directly from Herbert Hoover's pocket. The only people who really thought that Mr. Roosevelt held revolutionary ideas during the progressive stage of his administration were members of the Liberty League. Whatever major shifts took place in political outlook from 1934-38 can only be attributed to an aroused labor movement, to a political regeneration among the masses of people such as this country had never experienced before. The best of the New Deal ideas were, in the last analysis, based on tactical compromises with the biggest agricultural and financial groupings.

I could wish also that Huberman's last chapter peroration were more definitive. A whole bill of particulars should have been included to substantiate, certainly for the many who still doubt it, his conclusion that the

Democrats are as different from the Republicans as two peas in a pod. It would have given more substance and strength to his sound contention that each of the parties "believes in the protection and advancement of American imperialist interests abroad," and that "neither the Democrats nor the Republicans can give anything but the prologue to war." And while Huberman unfortunately avoids linking himself to a programmatic solution against the fast descending darkness, his book is finely wrought evidence that "America is suffering from only one disease—capitalism."

JOHN STUART.

## Discrimination

A COLORED WOMAN IN A WHITE WORLD, by Mary Church Terrell. Randsell, Inc., Washington, D. C. \$2.50.


**T**HIS book should be required reading for all those who still stubbornly maintain that "there is no special Negro question in the United States; there is only a class question; the problems of the Negro people are simply the problems of all who work."

Take the case of Mrs. Terrell. Her autobiography is 427 pages of evidence of the national oppression of the American Negro people. For Mrs. Terrell has enjoyed a degree of financial ease and security which very few white people ever attain. There was no difficulty about a college education; nor about post-graduate study in Switzerland, Germany, France, and Italy; nor about frequent trips to England and the continent in later years. Mrs. Terrell has lived a life singularly removed from the masses of working people, black and white; her story is filled with references to her friends among senators and congressmen, lords and ladies, princes, countesses, kings.

And yet—this well-to-do, well-educated, and somewhat aristocratic woman has been dragged from her seat in trains, buses, street cars; has been insulted and manhandled by conductors; has been barred from theaters, concerts, restaurants, hotels. She has been "ghettoed" in Washington, denied the chance to buy a desirable home because it was in a "white" neighborhood. She has been unable to get employment as a clerical worker in department stores, offices, government bureaus—despite her college degree, her wide experience, her knowledge of many languages—simply because she is a Negro. And when she happened to get a job because of her light complexion she was dismissed as soon as the "error" was discovered.

She has suffered also for discrimination visited upon family and friends. One close friend was lynched because he was "too successful." Her husband, a judge of the municipal court in Washington, was subjected every four years to ferocious attacks by those who wanted to remove a colored official. (One newspaper cartooned him as an ape.) A young girl, a friend of the family, was shut out from half a dozen Northern academies, and the registrars were astonishingly frank about the reason. Jim

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