

Swedish and Norwegian declarations of neutrality are based on very sober reasoning.

In any case it is highly improbable that the Allies could give Mannerheim sufficient aid in men and material to do more than prolong the conflict. Finland was only a stalking horse for British-American diplomacy, foredoomed to failure. As soon as the final Red Army operations begin, the Finnish bourgeoisie will probably bolt as their Polish brethren did. That the initial blow by the British interventionists has failed is important. That they will try again in other sectors should not be doubted.

MAJOR ALLEN JOHNSON.

## Sour Grapes of Wrath

PERHAPS the greatest Soviet victory in Finland has been at the expense of the American press. The typewriter strategists and semicolon generals have all suffered setbacks in the Red Army penetration of the Mannerheim zone. In the first weeks of the war, the American press "destroyed" Soviet military strength; by now, they have succeeded in destroying what confidence remains in American journalism. Two battles were lost: one for the socialist frontier, the other for the American public. One item last week tells the story. According to the New York *Herald Tribune* for March 2, the Helsinki censors have issued direct instructions to correspondents with the following revealing passages:

Exaggerated descriptions of our own achievements must be avoided, especially if the information is vague. . . . All information and all criticism and mockery which might benefit the enemy should be carefully avoided. . . . Any undervaluation of the enemy, of his fighting capacity, his supply of war materials, and of the possibilities open to him in general, should be avoided. Disparagement of the enemy is not founded on reality. On the contrary, several proofs of his capacity have recently been received.

## The Man Who Came Back

HERBERT HOOVER remembers his past. But he is thinking of the future when he suggests that Congress appropriate ten or twenty million dollars for humanitarian relief in Europe. "I have no doubt," he said, "that the whole of Europe will be an area of starvation when the war is over." What Mr. Hoover means, if we understand his own past, is that the whole of Europe may be struggling to maintain revolutionary governments, at the end of, and in that way ending, the war. Mr. Hoover is thinking ahead toward this eventuality. Not that helping the peoples of Europe with food isn't a good thing. Not that there aren't peoples who have been plunged into disaster and starvation by their criminal rulers. But from the way Mr. Hoover employed food supplies as a weapon to smash the Hungarian people's revolution in 1919, from the way he tried to do the very same against the Russian people, we are suspicious. Like any elephant, Mr. Hoover remembers.

# You Paint It Red, It Looks So Grand

A short story by Cora MacAlbert. When the World War entered the classroom.

WHEN the World War came to the classroom, Carol found going to school bearable for the first time. From that morning when Miss Eckstein announced to the class, in what should have been the mental arithmetic period, "We teachers have decided that the nicest thing you children can do to help our boys is to make them comfy kits," the fascinations of war were self-evident to Carol.

The morning passed quickly and happily, while Miss Eckstein expounded the nature of war and of comfy kits. The little girls nudged one another and whispered delightedly:

"Now it's too late for mental arithmetic!"

"We won't have time for spelling!"

"We won't have to do anything this morning!"

It was already lunch time when Miss Eckstein and the class had decided that a proper comfy kit was made of gray cotton cloth, nine inches long by twelve inches wide, and that it contained:

- 2 pairs of woolen socks
- 1 pair of woolen gloves
- 2 khaki colored handkerchiefs
- 1 washcloth
- 1 package of toilet soap
- 1 package of shaving soap
- 3 packages of chewing gum
- 3 bars of chocolate
- 1 nice letter from the little girl who made up the comfy kit.

Miss Eckstein was very particular about the letters. She said that if the little girls wrote really nice letters in good Palmer penmanship, the soldiers would answer them. She wrote the model letter on the blackboard in yellow chalk:

Dear Soldier:

I am the little girl who sent you this comfy kit. My name is Mary Smith. I am seven years old. I am in class 2-A. My teacher is Miss Eckstein.

I hope you will like this comfy kit. Miss Eckstein says that it will help you to be comfortable while you are fighting for us.

I hope that you will write me soon.

Your well wisher,

Mary Smith.

During the four-week period set for the completion of the comfy kits, whole mornings were spent checking up each little girl's progress in collecting her material. Whole afternoons passed in trying to achieve a copy of Miss Eckstein's letter without inkblots. Carol and many of the little girls copied Miss Eckstein's letter too faithfully, including Mary Smith's name, and then had to do the letter over again.

The comfy kits were only a foretaste of the sweet distractions that war was to bring

to the tiresome routine of the classroom. School assemblies, formerly dull once-a-week affairs, at which the little girls had wiggled as restlessly as in the classroom, were now exciting daily events. The slow songs so laggingly droned about, "The shy baby buds, bashfully pe-ee-ping, out of their brown little beds," were replaced by popular war songs which the little girls sang loudly and enthusiastically.

They sang "Over There" with five different fast verses. They sang "Smiles" with a special tributary line to President Wilson, which always made the little girls giggle because the words had to be said so fast to get them into the music:

. . . there are smiles which have a tender meaning which the eyes of love alone can see but the smiles we get from President Wilson are the best smiles of all, you see!

Best loved by Carol and the little girls was the song "Camouflage." Camouflage itself was such a strange big word and the whole song had such fine words:

Camouflage, camouflage, that's the latest dodge,  
Camouflage, camouflage, it's not a cheese or lodge,  
You buy a Ford, it's secondhand,  
You paint it red, it looks so grand,  
And near a Stutz you let it stand—  
That's camouflage!

Even the recitations in assembly were interesting now. Before the war, all the lower grades had recited, "I shot an arrow into the air, it fell to earth I know not where." Now the little girls had new ones—"In Flanders Field the Poppies Grow," and "Only God Can Make a Tree." And the upper grade boys recited "On the Road to Mandalay" with fierce faces and savage gestures which tickled the little girls.

Special entertainments were now a frequent feature of assembly. Carol's class gave "Nanette and Rin-tin-tin" as the story of two brave Belgian children who outwitted the Huns. Carol was picked for the part of Rin-tin-tin, and was excused from class nearly all the time during the two weeks' rehearsal. The little girls adopted Nanette and Rin-tin-tin as their favorite war heroes, and wore tiny woolen Nanette and Rin-tin-tin dolls around their necks and wrists.

Pat Rooney's little boy became very popular at assembly entertainments. Every week he was called on to dance. He was ten or eleven years old and small for his age, and all the teachers said he looked very cute when he imitated his father's imitations of George Primrose and George M. Cohan.

There was another exciting innovation at this time which was eventually incorporated into the regular ordinary of the assembly.

Before the war, assembly had opened with the principal's inaudible mumbling of the Bible. Now, assembly opened with the Grand March of the Color Guard. All the little girls admired the Color Guard, and called it the Colored Guard, and it was many years before Carol learned its proper name.

Six eighth-grade boys and girls wearing khaki Scout uniforms made up the Color Guard. A boy and girl marched first, followed by two boys carrying the American flag and the orange, white, and blue flag of New York City. Another boy and girl followed them. They marched into assembly in a very military way, for they had been coached by the gym teacher. Halfway down the Assembly Hall, they stood at attention. Three chords were struck on the piano, signals to the assembly to get ready, to stand, to face the colors.

Then with outstretched arms, the whole assembly chanted, "I pledge allegiance to my flag, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice, for all."

It was solemn and fascinating to the little girls, and none of them had any idea what it meant. They all said "indivishable" and no amount of correction could change them.

Then there was a lusty singing of "The Star Spangled Banner," everyone cracking terribly on the too-deep notes of "last gleaming" and the too-high notes of "banner yet wave." The children could never get the lines straight. They knew the words by heart, but put them in the wrong places. Every now and again the principal would say in his tired voice, "It has been called to my attention that your rendition of our national anthem is very poor. Consequently, I urge you to give a better performance. At a time like this especially, you should give your best efforts." Then for a time there would be systematic practice of "The Star Spangled Banner," but in the end there was always the same caterwauling effect.

When the Liberty Bond and Thrift Stamp campaigns came to the classroom, the days flew by in delightful frenzy.

Everybody was interested in the Liberty Bonds. Mama took Carol down to the Treasury Building to see Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, and Douglas Fairbanks, when they gave their Minute Men Speeches. One night they heard Mme. Schumann-Heink at Columbus Circle singing "The Star Spangled Banner" to sell Liberty Bonds and Mama said it was very funny to hear her singing it with such a heavy German accent.

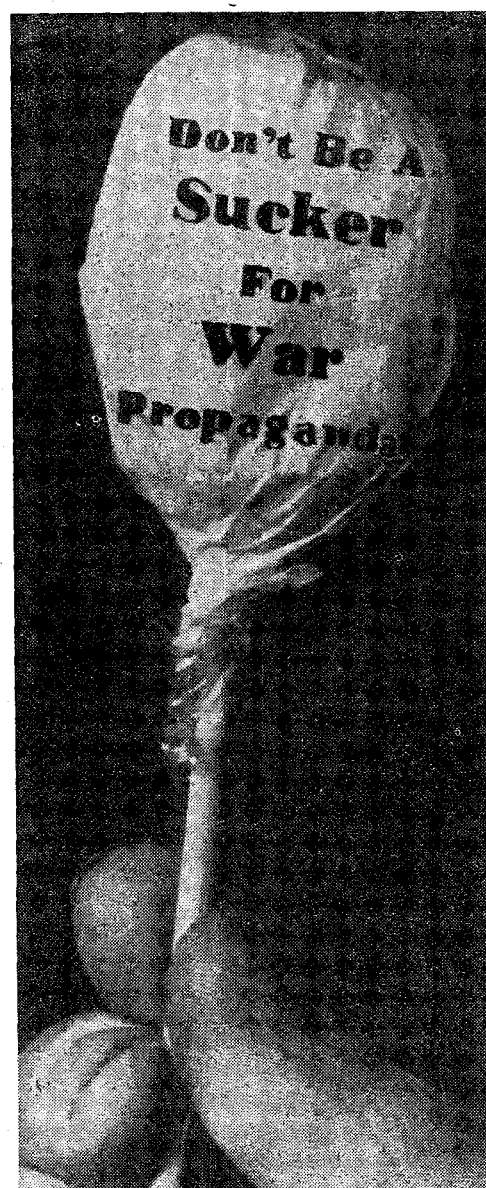
In school, there were daily meetings at which Liberty Bonds and the method of selling them were explained to the little girls. There were Honor Rolls for individuals, classes, grades, and whole schools, and the principal exhorted the assembly to make their school first on the City Honor Roll.

The little girls were told to sell bonds to their parents, relatives, and parents' friends, and when these resources were exhausted, to canvass apartment houses and to try people on the streets. Mama told Carol she wouldn't

have her talking to strangers in the street and going around ringing doorbells. Even though it was wartime and everybody had to be patriotic, little girls had to be careful where they went. After all it was not so long ago since Jack the Ripper. "And, besides, all the bonds you could sell to strangers, you could put in a hen's tooth."

Carol sold only four bonds to Papa, and felt terrible about being so far down on the Honor Roll. She told Mama that Minnie Katz, who was at the top, had sold hundreds. Mama said, "But she's a little Jewish girl and they're always better at selling things, and besides they have lots of relatives."

It was easier with the Thrift Stamps. The little girls were not asked to sell them, but



HELLO, SUCKER. When Lord Duff Cooper, his majesty's ace war propagandist, spoke at the San Francisco Opera House recently, he was met with a picketline which handed out seven hundred lollipops such as the above. Only three were thrown aside. Many laughed and caught the idea that perhaps his lordship was overdoing his efforts on behalf of the British lion. The lollipops were the gift of "The Yanks Are Not Coming Committee," District Council No. 2, Maritime Federation of the Pacific.

to buy them themselves on weekly installments. Mama gave Carol money each week and Carol bought five of them. Mama said it was a good idea because Carol would have \$25 all her own in five years. But Carol wasn't interested in money so far away.

The Liberty Bonds and Thrift Stamps certainly made going to school interesting, but they were never as dear to Carol as the comfy kits. She had had such fun buying the things for the kits and wrapping each article in its own separate package. She had had many rosy, happy thoughts about the pleasant surprise of the soldier who would some day open her comfy kit and find all those nice things and her beautiful ink-written letter.

For a long time Carol and the other little girls looked for answers to their letters, and kept asking the teacher why they didn't come. At first the teacher said that letters took a very long time to come from No Man's Land. Later she said that the soldiers must be excused for not writing. She was sure that they wanted to, but they were so busy fighting the Germans that they just hadn't time.

Carol was never satisfied with this explanation. She felt that the soldier who got her lovely comfy kit and didn't write to thank her, was just plain mean. Mama wasn't comforting about it. "There's one chance in a thousand that your soldier got your comfy kit," she said.

"But Mama, what could have happened to all those lovely things?"

"Maybe a German's using them. After all they need things too, you know."

The comfy kits became a forgotten mystery, and only once, years later, did Carol think of them again, and then indifferently. One day when she was in the seventh grade, the teacher sent her and a classmate down to the basement storeroom for some drawing supplies. They were explicitly warned when sent to the storeroom never to "meddle" but to fetch the supplies and hurry back to the classroom. So, when they noticed, for the first time, a dark alcove lined with closets, they tried the closet doors warily and guiltily.

The first few doors wouldn't open, but then one did, and out came a tumble of dusty gray bundles. They poked at the bundles with their toes, and a Hershey wrapper fell out. Excited by the candy wrapper, they began to examine the bundles. The socks and soap and woolen gloves that they found all seemed distantly familiar to Carol.

"Do you remember our old comfy kits?" she said.

"Oo-oh, they can't be. I remember. But they were sent Over There."

"But they look just like them. I remember."

"Listen, we'd better put this stuff back fast. We'll catch it if anybody sees us meddling."

Only a few days later did Carol remember to tell Mama about the discovered comfy kits. Then she swore Mama to secrecy. For her chief concern was that nobody should find out that she had been meddling in the storeroom.

CORA MACALBERT.



# California Turns Back to 1933

Starvation faces the people in the land of plenty, as a state's welfare is turned over to the Associated Farmers.

**A**LITTLE over a year ago the people of California exultantly looked forward to a day when they would eat, when the abundant wealth of California would spread to the tables of hundreds of thousands of hungry people.

They had ousted a rotten Republican administration that had held power for four decades. They had elected a new administration headed by Culbert L. Olson with an overwhelming mandate to take drastic measures against unemployment, terrorism, boss rule, and starvation. But on February 12 more than six thousand people crowded into the huge Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles to protest bitterly the weakness and capitulation of the men they had elected.

The people accused.

They accused Olson of turning the state back to the Chamber of Commerce and the Associated Farmers through a policy of appeasement.

The deep anger of that meeting was expressed in the words of a leading progressive in the state, Reuben W. Borough, who said:

We must speak bluntly, boldly, and vigorously so that all the state may hear.

We are not consorting with Democratic partisan politicians at this or any later hour. Our contacts are with the people themselves in their need.

We are again declaring our independence of the dominant Democratic Party machine. It is not of our choosing and we will have nothing to do with it. It is packed with flabby opportunists, Red-baiting Tories, and special interests corruptionists. Completely isolated as it is from the mind and the conscience of the people in this hour, there is no popular leadership in it.

If however, the situation becomes hopeless within the Democratic Party, we shall march out of the Democratic Party in orderly, organized fashion and create a new political instrument to serve the people of California.

Those words were not easily or glibly spoken. They were wrung out of long tolerance with a policy of appeasement and backwatering, of deals with reactionaries in hotel rooms, Red-baiting, and shallow political maneuvering. The people gave Olson a mandate. Had he put up a fight, had he taken the offensive, it was pointed out at the Shrine meeting, he would have had a united people behind him. Even if he had been defeated by the reactionaries, the people would have stood back of him. At the next election they would have ousted from office the legislators who were blocking his program.

But here is the situation that faces a weak and bungling administration.

Governor Olson called a special session of the Legislature to make up the deficiency in the relief appropriation; the last Legislature failed to appropriate nearly enough money to carry

on for the biennium. The first thing the Assembly did was to form a coalition of Republicans and renegade Democrats. They defeated the administration's speaker of the House and elected a right-wing Democrat, Gordon Garland. Mr. Garland tore out the telephone that had connected the speaker's table with the governor's office. Then the boys got together and dealt out Republican-stacked committees.

OLSON WOULDN'T FIGHT

The governor submitted sixty-four administration bills and the Legislature went to work like a bunch of wildcats. Of course if the governor had really meant to put up a fight, he would have submitted four or five bills that the people could understand instead of a basketful. He needed an adequate relief bill, a reasonable tax bill to finance relief, an old-age pension bill, and a bill on the Central Valley Project to provide cheap power. The people would have understood that kind of program; they would have fought with the governor.

Then Olson pulled a prize piece of demagoguery. He submitted a relief budget for the biennium of \$95,500,000. That was \$18,000,000 more than Labor's Non-Partisan League had set as a minimum need. However, in his budget message, the governor told the Legislature that his figure could be cut by \$30,000,000—but that "no such reduction is possible without causing untold misery and hardship." He then presented a complete plan for this \$30,000,000 cut, including such provisions as a three-year residence requirement for relief, and a \$60 maximum for any family. The Legislature, of course, took the tip, as did the press. The newspapers headlined: "Governor Olson Demands \$66,000,000 for Relief."

Meantime, the Legislature was busy with the findings of a committee established to "investigate relief." For months this committee, headed by Sen. John Phillips, has been working to browbeat the administration and prepare for the introduction of bills designed to turn state relief back to Republican-controlled counties.

SAM HOUSTON ALLEN

The best job of state relief administration has been done by Sam Houston Allen, administrator for Los Angeles County. Though his case-load doubled because of WPA cuts, Allen slashed administrative costs \$3 per case and increased actual relief to the client by 50 percent. Phillips' committee smeared the Los Angeles administration, calling it incompetent and Red. Suddenly, a few weeks ago, Olson announced he was abolishing the county relief setup. It was plain that

the governor had decided to burn down the house to get rid of one man.

That roused the progressive leaders of the state. They stormed at Olson's door, begged him not to capitulate, asked for a hearing before the closing of the county office, threatened to withdraw liberal and labor support, and even talked of recall. The Committee for Democratic Action was formed and thousands flocked to its protest meeting. Olson promised a hearing and granted a brief reprieve but

## After the Veto

**R**EACTIONARY legislators overrode Governor Olson's sly veto of the Phillips starvation budget bill on February 23 and California stepped backward into 1933 and Hoovervilles. The monthly budget for families of seven is reduced from \$84.68 to \$58; for families of four from \$42.57 to \$25.54; for childless couples from \$31.06 to \$18.64; for single men and women from \$18.52 to \$11.11. Evictions, loss of gas and electricity, starvation and disease face 369,786 men, women, and children now on the state relief rolls. The total appropriation for relief is \$12,200,000—a little more than one-seventh of Governor Olson's original demand. This sum may legally have been expended on June 1. On May 13 appropriations for the fiscal biennium must therefore be taken up when the Legislature convenes. In the meantime a relief probe committee will travel about the state, preparing a program which is avowedly designed to return all relief to the mercies of the monopoly-dominated counties. This committee will receive Red-baiting aid from the Yorty "little Dies committee."

Labor's Non-Partisan League, the Workers Alliance, and other organizations have rallied to demand supplementary aid. Relief clients are buying only food with their scanty funds; there is talk of a rent strike in Los Angeles. The State, County, and Municipal Workers, a CIO union, is up in arms at the disclosure that the new law dismisses fifteen hundred of the state's six thousand relief workers without hearings. On March 4, jobless men and women demonstrated at San Francisco City Hall, demanding that the Board of Supervisors appropriate funds to cover the 40 percent slash. Mass picketlines appeared before Los Angeles relief offices. Californians are defending their right to live.

Developments in the rapidly shifting California political and economic scene, of which the above is a rapid bird's-eye view, will be reported in an early issue of NEW MASSES.