

NEW MASSES

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The USSR and Germany

MOLOTOV's visit to Berlin is above all symbolic of the new and undeniable power of the first workers' republic in world affairs. In a speech to the Eighth Congress of Soviets just four years ago, Maxim Litvinov spoke of himself as sitting at a "window looking out upon the world." His audience laughed, but there was a bitter overtone in its laughter. For it was the feverish dream of the pigmy statesmen from Clemenceau to Chamberlain that the USSR, one whole sixth of the earth, be somehow isolated from the rest of the world. For this they carved up states, and for this they excluded the USSR from their League of Nations sixteen years. Their attitude toward the USSR merely epitomized their attitude toward the so-called "backward" and semi-colonial peoples. It was this arrogance, mingled with fear, which impelled Sir Neville Henderson to remark in August 1939 that if a pact had to be signed with Moscow he preferred that the Germans sign it. And last week, as Molotov left Berlin, the British Foreign Office let it be known that the USSR had been offered a seat at the peace conference. How characteristic it is of the British Tories that even while they hang on a ledge off Europe, they assume, with fatuous condescension that only his majesty King George can determine the place and conditions of peace!

In a recent editorial, the *New York Times* reproaches Hitler for having "drawn Russia out of her isolation and into the complex of Europe" and even speculates on the effect of this fact on "Germany itself and the Slav nations the Nazis aim to control?" Yes, indeed, this is what causes them dismay. For us therefore, it ought to be a source of satisfaction that even the dominant power in capitalist Europe, the brutal enemy of the working class, cannot reckon its future course without consulting the world representative of working class power.

MOLOTOV'S TRIP APPEARS mysterious only if we persist in mental telepathy: a foolish and sometimes sinister sport. For what is background to the discussions in Berlin? This war, which expresses the deepest crisis as well as the criminal character of world imperialism bids to become a long torture for all of humanity. Germany has achieved the virtual dominion of most of the continent, but in the second winter of its struggle it is already confronted with an Anglo-American

alliance, which has been maturing for six months and became a certainty with Mr. Roosevelt's re-election. Only the other day, William Allen White suggested that the slogan "aid to Britain short of war" be changed to "short of declaring war." Britain continues to resist only by the desperate mobilization of her vast empire, only because American imperialism has become her arsenal and chief moral reserve.

But Germany is blockaded on the continent, and will begin to lose her grip unless she can break out to the great oceans, and reach the oil and cotton of Africa and the Near East. Britain could be broken on the island only at great cost and the conquest might prove pyrrhic; but the island might very well be gained if its jugular veins in the Mediterranean were severed. Thus two new fronts are created: at home and in the Mediterranean. Germany's famous slogan has been "cannon rather than butter" but a time may come, say by next winter, when butter might be a more powerful armament than cannon.

Thus Germany has every interest in expanding fruitful economic relations with the USSR even at the cost of diverting railway and machine tool production from her own needs. On the other hand, in view of the vast intercontinental struggle that now looms up, the USSR proceeds from the principle of business relations with all powers, to develop mutually profitable economic relations with Germany, especially since through no fault of her own, Britain and the United States are practically boycotting the USSR.

AS FOR STRATEGIC QUESTIONS: the old Versailles edifice has collapsed along the Soviet-German frontier. It was the brilliance of Soviet diplomacy that when this collapse became self evident, her leaders did not let the rotten rafters of the Versailles structure fall on their heads. Ignoring Finland for the moment, it would seem that the problems on the Danube river do not differ essentially from the problems all along the thousand miles of Soviet-German frontier. Rumania has been occupied, Yugoslavia is isolated, and Greece is under assault. Since the USSR desires peace in the Balkans, only Bulgaria and Turkey remain strategic centers, and more especially what lies between them, the Dardanelles.

There are roughly two routes to the Near East: one by land across the straits and through Turkey, the other by sea via the Greek harbors and air bases to Syria. Italy and Germany must choose one or another of these routes. Both of them present problems of terrain and politics. While Britain's position in the eastern Mediterranean is difficult it has been improved in the Greek campaign. Germany and Italy on the other hand, if they could overcome Greece, squeeze the British Navy out, and secure the cooperation of France, could avoid the Dardanelles. Since the Soviet Union cannot be indifferent to an attack on Turkey, it is possible that the Germans, recognizing the strength of the Soviet position, will come to the assistance of their ally in the war against Greece. What happens

in the Mediterranean is full of "ifs and buts." They fall wholly within the province of the contending parties, and need not at this time menace nor involve the USSR.

THERE IS MUCH chatter in the press about German intercession with the USSR for a non-aggression pact with Japan. Of course an improvement in Soviet-Japanese relations is always possible, indeed the hopes have always come from Japan's side. But to see it, British and American business must get the consent of their governments are already doing as much for Japan as she could ever expect from Germany. On November 15 *Tass*, the official Soviet news agency specifically discounts a Soviet Japanese agreement in which the USSR would "cease backing the resistance of Chungking." From her two summers' experience with the Soviet Far Eastern army, Japan knows the actual relation of forces in the Pacific, as her past year's southward movement virtually admits. Apart from everything else, it is a flagrant hypocrisy for American liberals to question Soviet assistance to China when their own government has given perhaps one-eighteenth of the help to China that the Soviet people have. Britain and the United States did not begin to worry about Japan until she moved southward. For three years, they have supplied her with more than a billion dollars worth of goods while Soviet-Japanese trade dwindled to a few millions per year.

Even more — those circles in the United States who grind their own anti-Soviet axes by headlining tall tales of a Soviet-German division of the world are only playing the German game. Mr. Goebbels must simply be delighted when American newspapers give the impression that Herr Hitler is capable of slicing up the pie and Mr. Stalin humbly waits for a share of the German world order. The truth is otherwise. Without in any way underestimating the present strength of the contending imperialist forces, and without understating the long struggle which confronts humanity before the old order is swept away, one fact stands out: *that in a world where nations are tearing at each other's throats, the USSR keeps two hundred million people at peace; that in a world where whole peoples have become pawns, the Soviet Union constructs a federation of free peoples; that out of the shambles which imperialism is making of this earth the USSR emerges as the one force prepared to help the working class of Europe and the people of Asia in the reconstruction of world order and world peace.*

Coventry and Taranto

NO one can read about the devastation of the British factory town of Coventry without a sense of deep indignation. It is a horrible business of murder, a terrible revelation of what an "all-out" blitzkrieg can do. While the vast armies of the contending belligerents are immobilized, the civilian population evidently on both sides is suffering beyond words. From American newspaper reactions it is

clearer every day that British production is being undermined by German air attacks, that Churchill is bringing ever more pressure for the fulfillment of Roosevelt's pledges.

On the other hand, we are somewhat skeptical about the sensational report that "half the Italian navy" was sunk off Taranto. With Molotov in Berlin, a convoy badly cut up off Canada, and with the general intensification of the aerial warfare, a Mediterranean victory was sorely needed in London. To any neutral observer a careful reading of Churchill's statement in the House shows that no Italian vessels were actually sunk. One heavy capital ship had "her fore-castle under water . . . and a heavy list to the starboard"; one lighter capital ship was "beached . . . with her stern under water." "It appears probable" that another ship of the same class was "beached and severely damaged," while two cruisers were "listed to the starboard" and two auxiliary vessels were "lying with their sterns under water." Reference to any standard handbook shows that the Italian Navy has four capital ships plus eight cruisers, apart from fifteen light cruisers and about 130 destroyers. Moreover, the damage was done by naval airplanes operating from an aircraft carrier. This is interesting if true, but only once before in this war, in the attack on the French fleet off Oran, have airplane torpedoes sunk battle-ships. But it is true that even a modest damage to the Italian fleet strengthens British naval supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean.

We are also skeptical about Greek "offensives" all along the Albanian front. If the terrain is difficult for the Italians, it must be equally difficult for the Greeks, all the more so outside their own borders. That Italy has bogged down in Macedonia, undoubtedly with great losses, is quite clear. As our article on page six observes, the Greeks have the defensive advantages, but Italy controls the air, as her intensive bombardments of Greek ports indicate, and this will register in the long run. Relatively reliable observers, such as Ralph Barnes of the *New York Herald Tribune*, report conversations with Italian prisoners; it is plain that they did not want this war—which is a factor to be reckoned with, to be sure. But without internal political changes in Greece, plus long-term aid in equipment, we would not place any bets. And we would keep an eye on German troops on the Yugoslav border.

Heat on Mexico

SEVERAL weeks ago President-elect Avila Camacho, of Mexico, canceled his plans to come to Washington. His people vigorously resented the idea of their chief executive doing obeisance to *imperialismo yanqui*. Our State Department, little daunted, worked out an alternative scheme: if the mountain wouldn't come to Mahomet . . . So Vice President-elect Wallace is poring over a Spanish grammar today and on December 1 he will climb over the mountains to Mexico and attend Camacho's induction ceremonies. But the old adage about Greeks bearing gifts is known in the Spanish, too.

For, according to *Hemisphere* this week, our State Department is trying to drive a hard bargain. Washington, we are told, seeks: (1) to merge all Mexican indebtedness to United States into one single, interest-paying debt; (2) a Mexican pledge not to expropriate without advance payment of "adequate compensation"; and (3) permission for the USA to build and control naval and air bases for United States use. According to our informants, the Mexican Cabinet split violently over these issues. Interior Minister Ignacio Garcia Tellez is quoted as having declared: "It is better to die wrapped in the fatherland's flag rather than accept such conditions." Other ministers indicated varying degrees of opposition. The Mexican people are bitter against the squeeze play the Northern Colossus is working and they are balking. The big question is whether Camacho will reflect the will of his people or whether he will crumble under the combined pressures of such indigenous reactionaries as Abelardo Rodriguez and Wall Street's agents in our own State Department.

Far East Typhoon Signals

THERE can be little doubt that Japan is planning new steps for the complete occupation of Indo-China. The continued withdrawal of troops from their precarious hold on the coastal towns of Kwangsi and Kwangtung provinces, while representing victories for China, means that Japan is regrouping her forces for another advance to the south. The new objective is control of Saigon, the strategic port in the southern provinces of Indo-China; demands are being made on the French authorities similar to those which preceded the Japanese occupation of Haiphong. All this has more significance than meets the eye. Apparently continuing their occupation of a French colony, about which very little can be done by other powers, the Japanese are actually approaching within striking distance of the Dutch East Indies and Singapore. They may not take the latter step until the occupation of Saigon is consolidated, but they will be in a much better position to do so.

Evidently Japan is timing her advance with the Anglo-American-Australian discussions. At the moment when Japan feels that the United States is committing itself fully to the assumption of Britain's position in the south Pacific, her ships and troops will move. If we remember that Washington has been sending squadrons and ships westward to Manila, it is clear that an acute diplomatic conflict looms, with Japanese and American forces facing each other. And what is Mr. Roosevelt doing except to mount his guns? Trade with Japan continues on a large scale; little has been done for China, especially by way of loans for munitions; nothing is being done to maintain peace by a working agreement with the USSR. In fact, Washington brazenly permits American (and British) oil companies to enter new contracts with Japan for the sale of oil from the Dutch East Indies. One million eight hundred thousand tons will be sold to Japan in the next year in order—as the

New York Herald Tribune of November 15 writes—"to offset the severance of much of the supplies to Japan from the United States." This is a fourfold increase in oil from the East Indies, and this is being done by British and American businessmen with the express permission of the British Foreign Office and the State Department.

Where will such tactics lead us? We shall either be at war very shortly, or else Japan will be appeased along the lines that Ambassador Joseph Grew has been working on since last winter. But such appeasement will only lead to warfare later on. Instead of defending peace by collective security with China and the Soviet Union, Mr. Roosevelt is pursuing essentially the same course as did Mr. Chamberlain after Hitler marched on Prague. It will have the same criminal results.

Jim Crow in Middy Blouse

THE highest rank to which a Negro may aspire in the US Navy is officers' messman. Two Negro messmen are in prison facing courtmartial; sixteen others are confined to shipboard. The charge? Against the two in prison the navy levels the accusation of insubordination—they protested unbearable treatment. The sixteen protested against the imprisonment of their mates. A letter from three of the confined men is published in the *Pittsburgh Courier* of November 9. Among other things, it says:

We are subjected to being roughly spoken to three-fourths of the time, cursed at sometimes, without a murmur of resentment coming from us. In case of resentment, we are put on report, restricted, fined, or sent to the brig for being insubordinate. . . . The majority of officers seem to think that we Negroes are a race of illiterates who have to have someone standing over them with a whip all the time to tell them what to do. They are the kings, we are the flunkies. . . . We have no side to our story, and if we have, it doesn't do any good anyway. . . .

This is but one sample of the bitter fruit of President Roosevelt's recent order continuing the Jim Crow tradition in the armed forces. Secretary Stimson declares that the policy is "satisfactory" and says he will not change it, in answer to a protest of Federated Hotel Workers Union, Local 356, AFL. Other organizations are rising to defend Negroes against maltreatment and discrimination. A nationwide parley held in Washington last Sunday points out that Negroes are being denied work in war industries. Local committees of the National Negro Congress are active. The American Peace Mobilization is also taking part in this campaign, the object of which is to end the shameful mistreatment of Negroes in the armed forces.

Sloan's Liniment

WHAT Wall Street thinks today may be Washington policy tomorrow. Alfred P. Sloan Jr., chairman of General Motors, spoke Wall Street's mind the other day. He wasn't entirely frank; he cushioned his words, he

appeared to put off the day of evil, he even omitted from his spoken speech something that appeared in the prepared manuscript; yet he could not hide the naked meaning underneath. Speaking of the menace of inflation, he said: "Probably the wage rate presents the greatest danger and the one hardest to control. The principle is sound that the defense program should not be made the occasion for increases in wage rates that cannot, generally speaking, be justified." And the six-day week must come as soon as "the slack of unemployment has been taken up." Also, "the penalty for overtime should be canceled during the emergency to encourage a longer work week"—but this patriotic proposal, Sloan decided, had better not be made out loud.

Alfred P. Sloan is head of a du Pont-Morgan trust. His corporation made profits of \$129,172,490 during the first nine months of this year. This compares with \$109,619,799 in the same period of 1939. Nor have his fellow-tycoons done badly. For instance, twenty-eight steel companies boosted their profits by 211 percent in the first nine months of 1940. The National City Bank reports that for the same period, 350 leading industrial corporations netted \$869,000,000 in 1940 as against \$611,000,000 in 1939, a rise of 42 percent. It is clear that wage increases represent a real danger—to these huge profits.

Just when Sloan and his friends will decide that the slack of unemployment has been taken up and the six-day week is in order, one can only guess. The star-gazers of the Roosevelt administration have been obligingly predicting the disappearance of unemployment within a few months, though the unemployed themselves stubbornly refuse to disappear. And government arsenals and shipyards are already working a forty-eight-hour week despite President Roosevelt's earlier guarantees. When Sloan says that "America today is working a shorter number of hours per week than any other nation," he needs to be reminded that the American worker is producing far more in these shorter hours than the worker of any other nation. Labor Research Association calls attention to a recent study of the Bureau of Labor Statistics which shows that from 1909 to 1939 the productivity of American labor increased 163.6 percent, but the average real hourly earnings rose by only 110.5 percent. Those figures contain an argument of a different kind, which the American workers will have to back up with their organized strength.

Oklahoma Justice

CIVIL LIBERTIES in Oklahoma received a staggering blow on the night of August 17 when Robert Wood, state secretary of the Communist Party, and seventeen others were arrested on charges of criminal syndicalism. Wood was accused of possessing the *Communist Manifesto* and other pamphlets. Bail was fixed at \$100,000 for each prisoner. Twelve were finally indicted; when Wood was tried he was convicted and given the maximum sentence of ten years in jail and \$5,000 fine. He and the others still face the

charge of membership in the Communist Party.

The progressive forces of Oklahoma, rallied by the International Labor Defense and aided by liberals throughout the country, are beginning to fight back. Under their pressure, the exorbitant bail was reduced. Pending appeal, Wood has been freed on \$15,000 bond, supplied by many individuals. A total of \$47,000 has been raised and all but two of the prisoners are temporarily at liberty.

A conference to defend constitutional liberties met in Oklahoma City last week. It included representatives of the YWCA, the Presbyterian and other churches, heads of all departments in the state university, including the dean of religion, representatives of trade unions and farmers' organizations, editors of two liberal newspapers. Against these liberals, chief prosecutor Lewis R. Morris roared: "Who's squawking about these bums in the jail house? A few hopped-up preachers and college professors?"

Despite these rifts in the clouds, much remains to be done if these men and women, trade unionists, relief workers, old-time Americans are not to be railroaded. Victory in the Oklahoma cases is dimly in sight, but trials are still to be held, appeals taken. The ILD's good fight deserves—and needs—support.

The Ineffable Mr. Kennedy

MR. JOSEPH KENNEDY, the first Irish ambassador to Great Britain, and one of the many envoys floating around the country thousands of miles from their posts, has created another sensation. He is causing no end of embarrassment to those circles who would like to get us into the war tomorrow. He has cast a great deal of light on the state of mind of those sections of the American ruling class who are ready to support Britain just so far, and no further, who join with Roosevelt in fascism at home, who reckon on meeting Mr. Hitler halfway but not in war. On November 9 Mr. Kennedy gave an interview to a friendly reporter, Louis M. Lyons of the *Boston Globe*. There is little question of the authenticity of the interview, for Ralph Cogan, editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, was present along with a subordinate. Kennedy subsequently insisted that his remarks were "off the record," but it takes little sophistica-

tion to realize that his interview was deliberately intended to get his ideas across while his disavowal merely keeps the record straight and saves his irate confreres in Washington.

"Democracy is finished in England," the ambassador said, and the labor men at the center of government merely meant that "national socialism is coming out of it." "The whole reason for aiding England," Kennedy is quoted, "is to give us time . . . as long as she is in there, we have time to prepare. It isn't that she's fighting for democracy, that's the bunk . . . But we don't have to be drawn into the war." Not if we are coldly realistic. "The two greatest bankers in the world are Montagu Norman and Hjalmar Schacht," thought Kennedy, and in another breath "Lindbergh isn't crazy either, you know."

But perhaps the most interesting remark was Kennedy's reason for supporting Roosevelt: "I supported Roosevelt because I feel he's the only man who can control the groups who have got to be brought along in what's ahead of us." "Do you mean the men who control industry?" he was asked. "No," Kennedy replied, "They have a stake that they've got to defend. I mean the have-nots. They haven't any stake of ownership. They've got to take it whatever faces us."

Kennedy's *faux pas* illumines the program of the appeasers, who are equally reactionary with the men that want to rush us into the war. Kennedy and his crowd don't want to bail out the British empire; they want to take it over even more quickly than Mr. Roosevelt has. And they will be "realistic" about which-ever power controls the continent of Europe. There is an alternative which is just as disastrous for democracy as Mr. Roosevelt's.

The Teachers Fight Back

THE Rapp-Coudert committee's attack on the teachers of New York (discussed by Bruce Minton in *NEW MASSES* of November 12) is meeting with strong resistance. The New York Conference for Inalienable Rights, supported by outstanding civic leaders, clergymen, educators, and trade unionists, has issued a protest against the attempt to curb educational facilities and limit the civil rights of teachers in New York state. A large mass meeting called by the Teachers Union demonstrated the desire of the membership to fight the case to a finish. A number of CIO and AFL unions have condemned the highhanded procedures of Mr. Coudert's one-man committee.

Having failed to intimidate the union into handing over its membership lists, Mr. Coudert is now attempting to harass individual union members. He insists that persons appearing before him sign a waiver of immunity; he refuses to let counsel appear with them. Significantly, he has subpoenaed individuals who have been outstanding in the struggle for academic freedom and teaching tenure. These individuals are standing on their legal rights and are refusing to testify under the arbitrary circumstances of the committee's operation. The resolute stand of Locals 5 and 537 of the



American Federation of Teachers has earned the sympathy and support of the public, which recognizes that this fight is also its own.

Church and State

IT is interesting to note that Senator Coudert also sponsored a bill in the New York state legislature last year which menaces the traditional separation of secular and religious education in America. The Coudert-McLaughlin bill enabled local school boards to "release" pupils one hour each week for religious instruction. Last week, the New York City Board of Education, by a vote of five to one, decided to apply this law to the city schools, despite the protest of alarmed parents, educators, and religious leaders.

The inevitable result of the practice instituted by the Board will be to emphasize racial and religious differences and to create a spirit of intolerance. It introduces into the classroom matters of private conscience, and it requires teachers to act as monitors of religious feeling. It thereby violates the whole intention and spirit of a democratic school system. The issue is not the desirability of religious instruction as such. The issue is whether such instruction is to be confused with the non-sectarian training which is the foundation of America's free schools.

The truth is that the public was not consulted about this shameful departure from the principle of separation of church and state. As the meaning of the situation sinks in, the public will insist that the Board of Education revoke its action. Our schools will not be free from divisive quarrels, suspicion, bigotry, and snooping until this ruling is reversed.

Noxious Col. Knox

THE tongue in President Roosevelt's cheek is back in place again. The election being safely past, the peace talk has been poured down the rathole, and once more the incendiary spirit of the President's Charlottesville speech is given free rein. Down in Havana US Ambassador George S. Messersmith—undoubtedly with the approval of the State Department—last week sounded off as follows:

For us, therefore, there is equally no choice and it is only a question as to whether we shall leave the choice of the moment to them [the totalitarian states] or whether we shall determine for ourselves when aggression, which so definitely threatens us, shall be stopped. . . .

Most bellicose of the administration spokesmen is the Republican Secretary of the Navy, Frank A. Knox. Roaring like the bull of Basham, Knox in speech after speech verbally puts a chip on his shoulder and dares Hitler to knock it off. At Boston, in an extemporaneous address broadcast nationally and internationally, Knox manhandled the election results by saying they showed "the American people cannot be scared into an attempt to preserve peace in an unworthy way." Later he shouted: "What we will not do is appease anybody on earth"—just one day after Ameri-

can and British concerns had, with the sanction of their governments, agreed to appease Japan by supplying her with Netherland Indies oil. And Knox hypocritically blamed public opinion for the administration's failure to aid China, though it is well known that public opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of a complete embargo on Japan and substantial assistance to China long before the outbreak of the European war. At the same time this high official of the Roosevelt administration slandered a friendly power, the Soviet Union.

The administration, of course, is not contenting itself with talk. Since the election, it has turned over to Britain the No. 2 American plane bombsight which embodies some of the provisions of the secret bombsight that is still presumably being held back; it has agreed to send a number of flying fortresses; it is putting the finishing touches on an agreement for the use of British bases at Singapore and in the Pacific; it is making passes at French-owned Martinique; it has begun through William Allen White's Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies to prepare the ground for repealing the ban on credits and loans in the Neutrality and Johnson acts. And all this has the advance blessing of Wendell Willkie and the Republican Party. Clearly, the people themselves will have to enforce the mandate for peace which they gave in the elections.

Appeasement in the NLRB

THE appointment of Dr. Harry A. Millis to succeed J. Warren Madden on the National Labor Relations Board continues the Roosevelt administration's trend toward appeasement of big business. It overthrows the progressive majority that has existed on the Board since its establishment five years ago and creates a new majority which the enemies of labor will find far more amenable. President Roosevelt's fifth columnist, William Leiserson, who was appointed last year, now has a political twin, and between the two they are expected to keep the ball away from Edwin S. Smith, the lone progressive holdover.

Millis in his philosophy of labor relations is of the same "mediator" school as Leiserson; this school holds that labor laws can best be enforced through constant compromise by which the workers are persuaded to accept a steadily dwindling half a loaf. Just how far Millis and Leiserson will go in perverting the intent of the National Labor Relations Act remains to be seen. Interpretation is nine-tenths of any law. There was nothing wrong with Section 7-A of the NIRA except that the Roosevelt administration, at that time still honeymooning with big business, interpreted it to suit the needs of the industrialists. And there is nothing in the letter of the present Labor Relations Act to prevent it from being similarly interpreted. A war-bent administration, which is handing out fat contracts to the Fords and Girdlers, is evidently determined to end this nonsense about making them bargain collectively with their workers. But the labor movement will have something to say on that matter too.

Election Postscript

TAKING stock again of the election results, there were encouraging trends to be noted in various localities. For one thing, the breakdown of old-party loyalties manifested itself in an increased tendency to split the vote. Republican governors and senators were elected in some states which were won by President Roosevelt, and Democratic governors and senators were chosen in states which gave pluralities to Willkie. Had there been a Farmer-Labor Party in the field, it could have directed this sentiment for political independence into progressive channels.

Secondly, though for the most part the basic issue of war or peace was blurred, wherever the people were faced with what appeared to be a clearcut choice, they demonstrated their desire for peace. Thus, in Montana Jeannette Rankin, former congresswoman who voted against American participation in the last war, was elected to the House over Jerry O'Connell, who backed the President's foreign policy. In Illinois, which was carried by Roosevelt, C. Wayland Brooks, Republican isolationist, was elected over Democratic Sen. James M. Slattery. In New Jersey James R. W. Cromwell, one of the most blatant administration warmongers, was snowed under by Republican Sen. Warren Barbour, though the state was carried by Roosevelt and also elected a Democratic governor. It is significant, too, that every opponent of the President's foreign policy in the Senate was returned to office; among them were Republicans who ran in states that gave pluralities to Roosevelt. True, most of the Roosevelt supporters were also returned, but the administration lost—besides Slattery in Illinois—its assistant leader, Sen. Sherman Minton of Indiana. Of course, most of these isolationists can hardly be considered genuine defenders of the people's interests, but their election does indicate a significant trend.

Among the bright spots were California and Washington. The four California members of the House who voted against conscription were returned with comfortable majorities. But the only Democrat who voted for conscription, Rep. Frank Havenner, was defeated. An outstanding local victory was won in Los Angeles County where the voters ended the corrupt twelve-year rule of District Attorney Buron Fitts, notorious labor-baiter, by electing in his place former Rep. John F. Dockweiler, who had AFL and CIO support. In Washington the entire progressive slate of six United States representatives and one senator, who had been endorsed by the Washington Commonwealth Federation, was elected. The proposal for a state old age pension of \$40 monthly was also passed with votes to spare.

Isolated reports of the Communist vote confirm our statement of last week that it registered substantial increases. In California final figures on the vote for Anita Whitney, candidate for United States Senator, are expected to top the 98,791 which she polled as candidate for state controller in 1938.

Readers' Forum

Save Luiz Carlos Prestes

NEW MASSES is happy to publish the following letter signed by prominent Americans asking President Vargas to release Luiz Carlos Prestes from a Brazilian prison. Last week in her column Ruth McKenney spoke for all the editors when she said, "A man waits in a faraway prison cell, waits for you to summon up out of your strength the word that will save him. I think you cannot refuse him." —The Editors

MR. PRESIDENT: As Americans, we are deeply concerned with the welfare and progress of our own country as well as of those of all the Americas. We believe that in freedom of thought and opinion lies the basis toward this end, that the infringement upon democratic rights in one country cannot but imperil democracy elsewhere. It is in this spirit that we respectfully appeal to you for the release of Luiz Carlos Prestes, honorary chairman of the National Liberation Alliance of Brazil and outstanding leader of the Latin American people.

The contribution of Prestes to justice and liberty in Latin America is recognized and recorded in the history of text books of many countries. He has won the respect and admiration of all the forward looking people of this hemisphere.

In the tradition of Bolivar, Toussaint l'Ouverture, Marti, San Martin, O'Higgins, Juarez, and Tiradentes, he believed in and worked for the development of democratic institutions and processes in Brazil.

Yet, Luiz Carlos Prestes has languished in a Brazilian prison for the past five years. To add to his torture, Prestes' wife has been deported to Germany where in a concentration camp she gave birth to their daughter, whom Prestes has never seen. His crime was opposition to reaction and to the fascist movement led by Plinio Salgado. Be it noted that Salgado, who organized an abortive *coup d'etat* against your government in 1937, is enjoying the freedom denied to Prestes.

History has demonstrated that the democratic existence and national sovereignty of a people are essentially dependent on the democratic liberties of all; that the security of a nation is seriously endangered when the democratic unity of its citizens is undermined. We earnestly appeal to you, Mr. President, to grant general amnesty and to restore his freedom to Luiz Carlos Prestes as a symbol of the democratic unity of the Brazilian people and of the peoples of all the Americas against any type of foreign domination. We do so in the firm conviction that his release will serve the cause of democracy and liberty in the western hemisphere.

(Signed): Prof. Clifford McAvoy, deputy commissioner of welfare, New York City; Bishop Francis J. McConnell, the Methodist Church; Dr. Peter F. Amoroso, commissioner, Department of Correction, New York City; Justice Otto Bock, Supreme Court, Denver, Colo.; Prof. Franz Boas, Columbia University; Judge M. A. Bratland, district judge, Minnesota; Prof. Confort Adams, Harvard University; Dr. T. Addis, Stanford Medical School, San Francisco; Rabbi Michael Alper; Prof. Frank E. Baker, president, Milwaukee State Teachers College; Prof. Joseph Warren Beach, University of Minnesota; Dr. Ernest P. Boas, New

York City; Rev. Clarence E. Boyer, Madison Square Church House, New York City; William Blake, writer, New York City; Esther Lucile Brown, Russell Sage Foundation, New York City.

Van Wyck Brooks, writer, New York City; Prof. Morris L. Cohen, College of the City of New York; Prof. Albert Sprague Coolidge, Harvard University; Dean William Grant Chambers, Pennsylvania State College; Prof. Jerome Davis, New School for Social Research; Miss Frances R. Grant, president, Pan American Women's Association; Robinson Jeffers, poet, Carmel, Calif.; Robert F. Galbreath, president, Westminster College, Pa.; Dashiell Hammet, writer, New York City; Rockwell Kent, artist, New York City; Dr. John A. Kingsbury, New York City; Joseph Lhevinne, musician, New York City; Rev. Donald G. Lothrop, Community Church, Boston; Mrs. William S. Ladd; Prof. Robert S. Lynd, Columbia University.

Dr. Carl Menninger, Topeka, Kan.; Wallingford Riegger, musician, New York City; Prof. Walter Rautenstrauch, Columbia University; Muriel Rukeyser, poet and writer; Dr. Harlow Shapley, director, Harvard Observatory, Harvard University; Maxwell Stewart, editor, the *Nation*; George Soule, editor, the *New Republic*; Oswald Garrison Villard, editor, writer; Justice James A. Wolfe, Supreme Court, Utah; Isobel Walker Soule, writer; Prof. Raymond Walsh, Hobart College; James Waterman Wise, writer; Thornton Wilder, Connecticut; Benjamin Alper, writer, New York City; Prof. Luton Ackerson, New York University.

Prof. Francis Birch, Harvard University; Rev. Ralph E. Blount, Oak Park, Ill.; Prof. Ruth Benedict, Columbia University; Prof. E. A. Burtt, Cornell University; Prof. Edwin Berry Burgum, New York University; Dr. M. Curti, Columbia University; Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, president, New History Society; Prof. Ephraim Cross, City College, New York City; George Dillon, poet, Chicago; Prof. Cora DuBois, Sarah Lawrence College; Prof. Horace B. Davis, Simmons College, Massachusetts; Prof. Horace A. Eaton, Syracuse University; Prof. Edward Fulbruegger, University of Newark; Prof. John P. Foley, Jr., George Washington University; Prof. Royal Wilbur France, Rollins College, Florida.

Rev. Ralph Grieser, Epworth Methodist Church, Whitestone, New York; Dr. Ernest Graham Guthrie, Chicago Congregational Union; Prof. Horace Grenell, Sarah Lawrence College; Prof. James J. Gibson, Smith College, Northampton, Mass.; Dr. Sheldon Glueck, sociologist; Prof. Selig Hecht, Columbia University; Rolfe Humphries, writer; Prof. Chester Lloyd Jones, University of Wisconsin; John Paul Jones, Union Church of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn; Prof. Otto Klineberg, Columbia University; Dr. R. L. Kahn, University of Wisconsin; Leo Loeb, Washington New Medical School; George Marshall, economist, New York City; Caroline B. Manns, Washington, D. C.

Anita Marburg, Sarah Lawrence College; Prof. M. F. Montagu, University of Pennsylvania; Prof. Norman Maier, University of Michigan; Kenneth W. Porter, Vassar College; Prof. Louis Weisner, Hunter College, New York City; Prof. Eda Lou Walton, New York University; Theodore Ward, playwright; Prof. Carl Wittke, Oberlin College; Prof. Paul E. Gemmill, University of Pennsylvania; Dean M. McConn, New York University; Reid Robinson, president, International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers; Abraham Isserman, lawyer; Rev. Elthered Brown, Jamaica Progressive League; Prof. Lyman R. Bradley, New York University; Fielding Burke, writer; Thomas E. Casey, secretary, Wisconsin State Conference on Social Legislation.

Edward T. Cheyfitz, national secretary, National Association of Die Casting Workers; Martha Dodd, writer; Daniel Driessen, American Communication Association; W. A. Domingo, president, West Indian National Council; Franklin Folsom, executive secretary, League of American Writers; Paul Green, Furniture Workers of America; Dr. Al Goldwater, New York City; Donald Henderson, general president, United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America; Charles Hendley, president, Local 5 American Federation of Teachers, New York City; Mercedes Spier, New York City; Bruno Lasker, Council for Pacific Relations; Dr. W. L. Mahaney, Jr., Philadelphia; H. P. Osborne, secretary, West Indian National Council; Harvey O'Connor, writer, Chicago; Geraldine O'Connell, president, Domestic Workers Union, New York City.

William Pickens, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Rev. Paul H. Streich, New York City; Prof. Margaret Schlauch, New York City; Prof. Howard Selsam, Brooklyn College; Prof. Bernhard J. Stern, Columbia University; Dr. Hope R. Stevens, president, Manhattan Council, National Negro Congress; George Seldes, writer, editor *In Fact*; Dr. Charles Petione, Caribbean Union; John Hyde Preston, writer, Connecticut; Dr. Dwight Bradley, Jr., Council for Social Action; Judge Robert W. Kenny, Los Angeles; Prof. M. Choukas, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. H.; Prof. Ernest R. Hilgard, Stanford University; Prof. Hans Otto Storm, Stanford University; Prof. Ellsworth Huntington, Yale University; Rev. Fred E. Maxey, Leeds, Ala.; Prof. Colston E. Warne, Amherst, Mass.; Benjamin C. Marsh, Peoples Lobby, Washington, D. C.; Dr. Harry F. Ward, Union Theological Seminary; Donah Litt-hauer, psychologist, Hebrew Orphan Asylum.

A Bit of History

TO NEW MASSES: The speech which President Roosevelt made on Armistice Day from Arlington Cemetery is one of the most remarkable documents in American history. On this particular occasion, if on no other, I believe that the people of America had the right to demand of their President a wisdom, an honesty, a courage, and an understanding which would justify his breaking a great American tradition. Instead, he displayed so palpable an inability to grasp the fundamentals of the major problem now facing this country that I tremble to think of the new bloody holocaust into which he may take us.

By what right did he tell us—in the face of historical truth—that England, in its mission of democracy-spreading, discarded conquest? It will be news to the people of South Africa, who were first introduced to the technics of the concentration camp by British militarism. It will be news to the hundreds of thousands of India, victims of imperialistic conquest. And it will be news to the Chinese coolies and peasants who were pounded to bits by the practiced and gentlemanly gunnery of his majesty's sailors. And by what right does he brand "unpatriotic" those men who have unflinchingly told us what all the world some day will know—that the World War was never a fight for democracy?

Is it possible that President Roosevelt is ignorant of the fact that many of the major newspapers of America—these same newspapers which are so loudly hawking their wares again—have publicly declared that American participation in that war was a tragic error? Even our high school boys and girls are beginning to know the truth; and lest the President lay this to "Communists," I