

agrarian countries. The United States has tremendous prestige in the Middle East and its influence can be a highly positive one in building a stability and prosperity which will keep these countries from falling prey to aggressors.

In Peace or War

“THE creation of such an army in the very jaws of the appalling initial defeats will always remain one of the most amazing achievements in history . . . the [Soviet] system itself showed startling powers of evoking, mobilizing and directing the human and material reserves available.” The recent New York *Herald Tribune* editorial from which these quotations are drawn also spoke of “the most up-to-date equipment” and “the invincible morale of the Red Army” and remarked that “the Communist system . . . probably is better for waging war [than our own].”

These praises were elicited by the celebration of Red Army Day and the remarkable series of articles of the *Herald Tribune's* correspondent, Maurice Hindus, who has just returned from the Soviet Union. But this tribute to our Soviet ally ends on a note of doubt—the question: Will the Soviet Union meet the test of peace as successfully as it has met the test of war?

Do the *Tribune* editors recall that on the eve of the war commentators were claiming that the Soviet economic successes of the brief and precarious interval of peace would not survive the first blows of war? It was these very achievements in the all-too-short and difficult period of peace that made possible the Soviet war achievements. It is a safe prediction that the other democratic peoples of the world will find the powerful peacetime economy of the Soviet democracy as necessary and decisive a bulwark as its Red Army and its efficient organization for war has proved to be.

Water for Two Lands

THE Senate Foreign Relations Committee has for some weeks been conducting hearings on a treaty with Mexico, signed over a year ago, concerning the waters of the Rio Grande, the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers. After long and harassing delay, the hearings have at last been ended. The treaty itself is highly technical, having been drawn up by engineers to provide for the damming, storing and equitable allocation of the vast waters of these three rivers between the United States and Mexico. And because of the agreement's technicalities the country is not sufficiently aware of the great political

importance of immediate ratification by the Senate.

Senate consideration of this treaty coincides with the Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace, where the firmness of our intentions to extend the Good Neighbor policy into the postwar period is being put to the test.

It is obvious that a defeat of the treaty would deal a serious blow to hemisphere relations. Opposition to it comes from two quarters. California opinion seems to take the view that no water which might in some conceivable manner eventually find its way to that state's valleys should be retained or allocated to any one else, even to Mexico, through which sections of all three of these rivers run. Fortunately opinion in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Utah and Wyoming in general favors ratification. There would be no danger of defeat if California were the only source of opposition. But as usual we have to deal with a second source, those Republicans who snipe at any and all measures which have administration sponsorship. There is a possibility that their votes, combined with those from California, can obstruct its ratification. For this reason national opinion must speak out promptly to avoid serious damage to the policy of good neighborliness.



FRONT LINES

by COLONEL T.

ASSAULT ON THE RHINE

FEBRUARY 22 and 23, 1945, will go down in history as perhaps the most significant and decisive double date of this war. For the time between the birthday of the leader of America's Army and the birthday of the USSR's Army was precisely the fateful night when American regiments were moving up to the front line facing the Cologne Plain and American artillery was making the last preparations for laying down the mighty barrage which ushered in the big push.

Four hundred miles to the east Soviet regiments were completing the liquidation of the German garrison of 50,000 men in the great Polish fortress of Posnan, thus opening the way for a renewed assault on the Berlin fortified area.

And so it came to pass that Feb. 23,

1945, became a date of which it will be said: “that was *before* Feb. 23, 1945” or “that was *after* Feb. 23, 1945”—the date when the first truly coordinated assault on Germany by the Eastern and Western Allies began.

As THIS is written (February 26) the fortresses of Juelich and Dueren have fallen to the Ninth and First American Armies who are now advancing on Cologne. To the north the Canadians and British are near Calcar, compressing the right flank of the enemy fighting space west of the Rhine. To the south the American Third Army is drilling down the valley of the Moselle and is near the fortress of Trier, compressing the left flank of the enemy fighting space and possibly aiming at

cutting off the Emmerich-Coblenz-Trier triangle of that space from the fortified area between the Saar and the Rhine—the incision to be made along the Trier-Coblenz line. Meanwhile the American Seventh Army is exerting what looks like holding pressure precisely on that fortified area, preventing the enemy from shifting troops from here to the north.

All this is the push to the Rhine which will be the first really big water barrier yet encountered by American troops. The Seine, Somme, Marne, Moselle, and of course the Pruem, Roer, Our, Saar, etc., are not much as rivers go. The Loire and Rhone were not really defended by the enemy. Thus the only real water barriers forced by Allied troops were the Maas and Waal in Holland which the

British-Canadians crossed in September.

An important tactical-operational test will thus come at the Rhine. Radio-correspondents and news analysts have been stressing the point that General Eisenhower intends to destroy "all German forces west of the Rhine," the word "west" being emphasized by repetition and vocal accent. This is no doubt the intention. However, the question is: how many German troops will there be to destroy west of the Rhine? The pattern of the operation so far suggests a "squeeze" from all sides (Goch, Juelich, Dueren, Pruem, Trier) without any breakthrough leading to eventual encirclement taking shape yet. Furthermore, the fighting space west of the Rhine is so shallow that a deep maneuver appears to be hardly possible. In other words it seems hardly advisable to count on a battle for a decision to take place west of the Rhine. To put it in a different way: we will have to fight very hard for the Rhine, just as the Red Army had to fight and has to fight very hard for the Oder. Leaving aside the fact that Frankfurt is thirty-five miles from Berlin while Cologne is about 300 miles from the capital, the two key points are now precisely Cologne and Frankfurt. However, the difference between them is this: Frankfurt can be much more easily by-passed than Cologne because the Red Army has already crossed the Oder and the Bober and the Neisse, while we still have the Rhine ahead of us on all sectors of the front, from the Swiss border to the North Sea.

Thus it is rather clear that barring a sudden and unlikely German collapse from the *inside*, the Allied operation west of the Rhine is only a preliminary, and *the big show will come on the Rhine*. The best thing would be to have the storming of the Rhine by the Anglo-Americans coincide with the storming of the Berlin Fortified Area by the Red Army, with a simultaneous irruption into the common rear of both German fronts, between the Weser and the Elbe. This would signal the inevitable military (i.e., independent of an internal upheaval) collapse of both fronts.

Such a collapse, however, would not necessarily mean that we could enjoy peace in Europe and start its reconstruction immediately. It is entirely possible and even probable, as I pointed out here many months ago that picked Wehrmacht units, officer-regiments and Nazi Party formations (SS and others) would flow from the disintegrating fronts precisely through the Weser-Elbe corridor southward to seek refuge in the Alpine

Tess Slesinger

Death at the age of thirty-nine has cut short a brilliant literary career. Tess Slesinger, whose co-adaptation with her husband, Frank Davis, of "A Tree Grows In Brooklyn" opens this week, won note as a short story and film writer. The collection of her stories in "The Unpossessed" was the sensation of its season, but in that same season she was one of a group of writers arrested for picketing with the striking workers of a publishing house. Never since then had her name been disassociated from progressive and anti-fascist causes. And this doubles the weight of her loss. The world cannot afford the cutting short of such a life.

areas of Bavaria, the Tyrol, Austria and Bohemia. Such a movement would take place by infiltration (or should we say exfiltration?), in small groups, off the great highways, via Nuremberg and Munich southward.

It is entirely probable that great stores of arms and ammunition, and food have already been assembled in the Alpine area. In this connection it is interesting to note that prisoner-of-war camps have been moved from Eastern Germany southwestward, in the direction of Nuremberg and Munich. Thus the Nazis are assuring their possession of Allied hostages for bargaining at the last minute. Many government institutions are reported to have been moved from Berlin to Nuremberg.

Look at the military symptoms. The Germans have lost Budapest and with it 175,000 men. They have lost valuable first-class reserves to save the city. Now, having lost it, they continue to lose men by the thousands and tanks by the score in daily counterattacks on the Danube, east of Komarno. Why are they doing this? Obviously because they are trying to protect the gateway to the mountain region from the east. They held on to Budapest for fifty days. They are holding on to Breslau. They will hold on to Dresden and Bratislava, and then Nuremberg and Vienna for exactly the same purpose: so that Allied armies may not enter either the Fastness from any side or cut it off from the north German plain before the process of ex-

filtration from the two main fronts has been at least partly completed—and that means before the two main fronts have been irrevocably shattered. Basically, the Rhine front must fold up clockwise pivoting around, say, Karlsruhe, and the Oder-Neisse front must fold up counterclockwise, pivoting around, say, Dresden.

The stubborn German defense in Italy is most probably a part of the same plan and is designed to protect the Fastness from the south. In the west the Germans count on the Rhine, the Black Forest and the weakness of our right wing.

Thus after the decisive battles on the Rhine and the Spree where the "regular" phase of the war must end, the "irregular" war against Nazi last-stand hideouts will probably start. Such hideouts are possible not only in the Alpine fastness, but also in Norway, Moravia and Croatia. How long such a war will last is impossible to foretell, for the Nazis will be driven on by the maxim that "there is always time to hang."

MANILA, with Cavite and the strongholds of Corregidor and Bataan are ours and our naval power is thus only 750 miles from Hong Kong. The route from San Francisco to Manila through San Bernadino Strait is clear. Iwo Island is well on the way to becoming ours completely. This island which looks like a Blue-Point oyster three miles wide and five miles long is in relation to Tokyo what Bermuda is to New York—an outpost 750 miles away. However, there is no land between Bermuda and Sandy Hook, but there are other islands between Iwo and Tokyo—the Bonins and the Nanpo and Izu-Shichito chains.

Iwo has two airfields and from here our bombers (other than B-29's) and even some fighters will be able to operate over Japan, just as bombers and fighters will be able to operate over Hong Kong, Swatow, Amoy, Hainan and Formosa from Luzon. This is why the Japanese fight so desperately for Iwo where three of our magnificent Marine divisions are deployed on a very narrow front. The island is volcanic and those who have to dig in as they go are at a great disadvantage in comparison with those who have been "dug in" for years. However, an aerial base within two-and-one-half-hours' flight from Tokyo is such an important objective that it is well worth the comparatively high losses which we have incurred so far. However costly, the thing had to be done. On Iwo our fighting men are less than half the distance from Tokyo than ever at any time before—on *terra firma*, of course.

March 6, 1945 NM



REVIEW and COMMENT

ESCAPE TO LIFE

Egon Hostovsky's "The Hideout," reviewed by Isidor Schneider

SOVIET history, and our own, if you read it well, has shown that hope as well as tragic emergency can act as releases for men; but in this grim time, it is the triggers of war that unloose heroism and genius. This the Czech writer, Egon Hostovsky, illuminates for us in a remarkable novel of a man who could not emerge from a spiritual den until, reduced to living like an animal, he broke from a physical den and soared into heroism.*

An engineer and inventor, he had sunk into the featherbed isolation of bourgeois success and felt half stifled in it. The story is his road from isolation to reunion with humanity. It is told in a long letter to his wife, a letter throbbing with exultation and penitence, in which he tries to explain events whose meanings have become clear to him at last.

The memories gone over in the letter begin in the confused days of the Munich betrayal. After destroying the blueprints of a gunsight he has invented he discovers that the director of his factory is a quisling and has negotiated the sale of the gunsight to the Germans. At the dinner where he learns it, an attractive Jewish woman with whom he has had a unfulfilled relationship comes to say goodby; she is on her way to refuge in Paris. All through the evening his secretary, who has arrived with the director, cannot conceal her agitation. And these harassing impressions merge with the realization that his daughters, whom he has caught smoking, have suddenly become estranged from him in new found maturity.

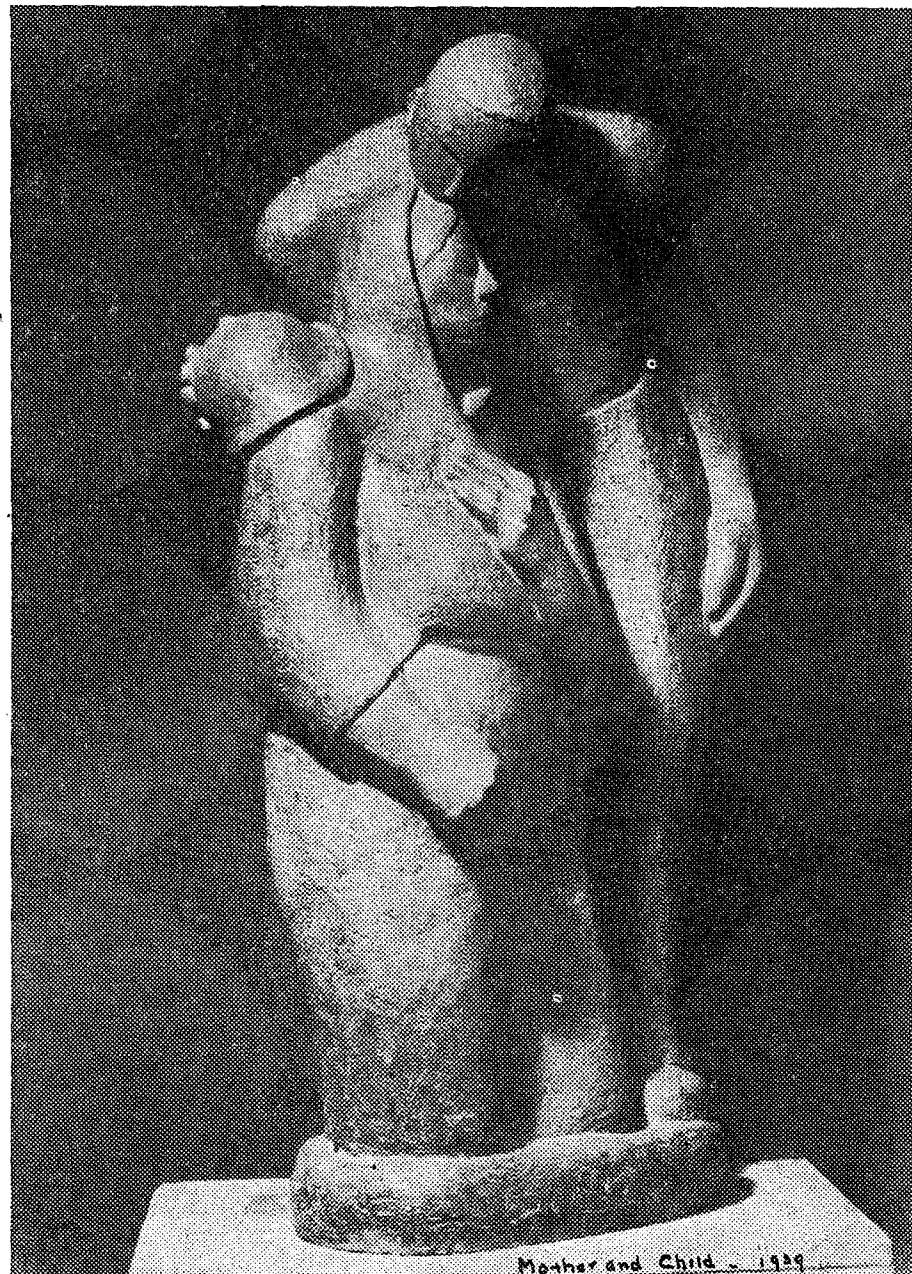
An impulse to settle something, at least, in this chaos, takes him on a secret pursuit of the fleeing woman. In a Paris cafe, in a meeting which, by the usual standards, is a success—for she accepts him as a lover—he feels disillusioned, not by the woman, in whom he senses the same disillusionment, but by life. Something is touching it that disarranges the affair that has just been arranged. He prepares to return to his family when

he receives a letter from his secretary confessing her love for him and warning him that the Germans, furious over losing his gunsight, are hunting him, and that he must stay away.

The forced separation from his country and his family becomes the first stage in the physical isolation that ends in a cellar-life as subterranean as a mole's. There he comes to understand the joy of human fellowship and the freedom

possible only within it. His yearning for it grows so strong that he accepts it even when its price is death. The long letter is cut short by the summons to the exhilarating hours of life in, and for, a chosen human fellowship and for the first use of his skill that will be joyously voluntary though it will bring his death.

It is not easy to communicate the remarkable tension maintained in this story. As absorbing reading it matches



"Mother and Child," by Dorothy Offner. Currently on exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum.

* THE HIDEOUT, by Egon Hostovsky. Translated from the Czech by Fern Long. Random House. \$1.75.