

One Year of NEW MASSES

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THE SOVIET SPIRIT

By Harry Ward

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seven states. Nature has given the area abundant resources in soil, water and minerals. But greed and improper exploitation had denuded the area and left an "ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed" population.

Under the leadership of President Roosevelt, and the late Senator George W. Norris—"the one man in public life who is most right on the power question"—a measure was put through Congress placing the Tennessee Valley under governmental control. Scientists turned the precipitous river, shallow in many places and deep in others, into a stream navigable from its headwaters down to the Ohio. Because the latter connects with the Mississippi, it had access to the Gulf of Mexico, which meant giving the Valley people commerce and contact with all ports of the world. The engineers built regulating dams to control floodwaters, and hydro-electric engineers converted falling waters into cheap electric power servicing a radius of 250 miles. Phosphate methods of soil rebuilding were taught and the agriculturists introduced crop diversification.

To the white magic of water power, and concrete and steel, the author has added the flesh and bone of the Tennessee Valley people. In 1925 they had believed that John Thomas Scopes was justly convicted for teaching the theories of evolution. TVA turned light on that darkness. It brought schools, decent homes and jobs at living wages. Its policy was to employ local labor whenever possible; it turned raw farm hands into stable, semi-skilled, independent workers. It reduced the migrations from Tennessee from 12,000 to 3,000 per year.

Mr. Duffus of the New York Times hails the achievements of TVA "as the one incontestably solid pre-war accomplishment of the Roosevelt administration." Critics of the program have been forced to acknowledge that only governmental planning and finances were large and bold enough to undertake such a project. Even Wendell Willkie, who had fought TVA through his power company, came to the conclusion that the Authority had done a good job.

The text written by Mr. Duffus is accompanied by many beautiful illustrations, provided by Charles Krutch and the staff of the Graphics Department of TVA.

The book has become a weapon in the fight to establish President Roosevelt's new program for Missouri Valley and Columbia River Authorities.

JAMES KNIGHT.

You've Heard This One

CHEDWORTH, by R. C. Sherriff. Macmillan.
\$2.75.

SOME people just never learn, or if they ever knew, they've forgotten. And high among those people let us list the There'll-Always-Be-A-Colonel-Blimp's-England school of British writers. Witness our exhibit by Mr. Sherriff, who once wrote *Journey's End*, a tense and dramatic play of World War I (but a bit on the Blimpy side, too).

This time there's this gal making her way in show business, see, by the name of Peggy Grey. During an air raid up turns this tall, glamorous RAF character, a wing commander no less, who thinks she's terribly, terribly brave to go on singing and prevent a panic. His name is Derek Chedworth (shades of Ethel M. Dell!) and he's the squire of a but ancient manor in Cornwall. Blinded in a bit of a show, too, but a real glamorous-type character nonetheless—so much so that he sweeps Peggy off her feet overnight (not what you vulgar Americans are thinking, either!), carts her off to Cornwall and sets her up as lady of the manor. There she comes to love all the dear old villagers, with whom Derek settles down to agriculture, and also discovers that, because manor-running isn't the most economical way of farming and also because Derek just won't stop playing squire and giving away large scholarships and things, the estate is absolutely broke and they have to keep peddling off ancestral portraits and the bed Queen Elizabeth slept in. But will Derek let the little woman budget? Oh no; those are not women's problems, my dear.

So everything goes quietly to pot while a large air base for some American bombers is built on part of the land. Peggy almost gets herself involved with one of the brave, brave boys (nobody says anything or does anything, but they think a lot). Finally the field is raided and the manor burns down. Derek, though blind, manages to work the radio and save some of the planes that were in the air, while Peggy, under all this stress, caves in and just tells the villagers that they're broke. So everyone pitches in and builds Derek a new barn. Derek continues to believe that the village is the backbone of old England and he'll stick around Chedworth village and help preserve it (the Americans had shaken it a bit loose, you see).

The final scene is *not* a happy couple drinking tea at a fireside, but heaven knows how Mr. Sherriff missed it.

SALLY ALFORD.

March 6, 1945 NM

What Ernie Pyle did for GIs abroad, Arthur Miller has done for GIs in boot camp.

Miller toured the world of Army camps to trace the beginnings of the American soldier, to discover the moment when he changes from civilian in uniform to honest-to-god GI. He went because Hollywood was filming Ernie Pyle's *Here Is Your War*, and this time it wanted a war film that was real, a war film that wasn't just a "big, bloody western in uniform." To do justice to a great book, Hollywood wanted the whole picture of Army life, starting with the first bewildering day in boot camp. So Miller went on his journey and came back with this unique report—an honest, heart-warming book that is praised all over the nation.

"If this perfectly grand book is added to Ernie Pyle's *Here Is Your War* and *Brave Men*, even the most assiduous reader will have to go no further for a comprehensive picture of the men who make up our fighting forces."—STANLEY ANDERSON, *Cleveland Press*.

"First-rate. Mr. Miller is an excellent reporter: he has an eye for the little things that give meaning to the big ones...It's as good a picture as you are likely to find (short of joining the Army) of what goes on from draft board to port of embarkation."—HERBERT KUPFERBERG, *N.Y. Herald Tribune*.

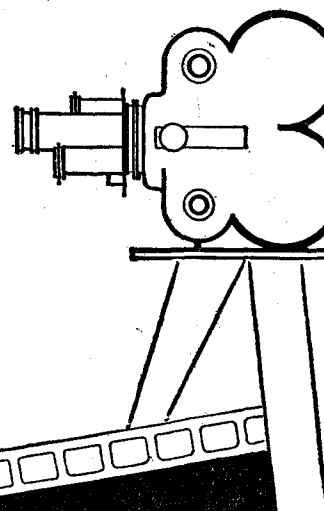
"The most terrific war book yet... I have not been so shaken by anything written of the war as I have been by *Situation Normal*..."—HELEN BOWER, *Detroit Free Press*.

"Mr. Miller is at his best—and that is really good—when he is describing actual happenings... I have never seen the excitements and bewilderments of basic training better re-

corded... He got to understand tanks better than most writers ('You are in a clothes closet with the breech of a cannon swinging past your head.'). His account of a plane full of paratroops going up for their first jump is almost unbearably detailed and tense."—RUSSELL MALONEY, *N. Y. Times*.

"For the friend or relative of a young man enlisted in our Army, *Situation Normal*... supplies the most intimate and thoughtful sort of picture of what happens to such a young man, and of what the young man thinks about it all."—CRAWFORD, *New Masses*

"The most refreshing, convincing and down-to-earth book that has been turned out yet on soldiers and army life."—*St. Louis Star Times*.



by **ARTHUR MILLER**

SITUATION NORMAL...

Reynal and Hitchcock \$2.00



SIGHTS and SOUNDS

OPEN LETTER TO HOLLYWOOD

By JOSEPH FOSTER

IF EVER there was a subject for the Great American Film of this war, it is Captain Herman Bottcher, killed at Leyte on New Year's Eve, 1944. Such a film would not be a war play in the sense of *Objective Burma* or *Bataan*. Here the war would be a climax illustrating the purpose and meaning of a heroic life. As such it would be timely a year or ten years after the ending of military hostilities.

For the film would have to show not *how* he fought but *why*: that the reasons for his fighting are the reasons for his courage, his efficiency and his qualities of leadership. In these reasons would be found the explanation of why his men loved him and would follow him anywhere. Pvt. Harold Endres of Madison, Wis., declared: "If the old man (he was all of thirty-five) wanted us to enter Manila Bay in a rubber boat, we would go." Pvt. Tex Wilcox of Amarillo, Texas, avowed: "There ain't a man in the outfit who wouldn't have followed him through hell carrying a bucket of icewater." He was a soldier's soldier, which means that in peacetime he would have been a man of the people.

If Hollywood is to justify its claim to be a reflector of the ideas and currents of our time, if the movie is to be regarded as the medium from which historians of the future will document the tone and purpose of our generation, then the making of a film on Bottcher is obligatory. To date no motion picture has adequately explained the anti-fascist motives of the war. To do so, a film would have to get inside the individual soldier who understood the nature of the enemy, would have to analyze and examine his love for a democratic America, what it meant in terms of his personal life, his dreams and his plans.

Dozens of sequences, cinematically effective, come readily to mind when you examine the biographical facts of our protagonist. His life was a lightning flash illuminating the soul of what we popularly call our American way of life. As the quintessential American, he was the lowest common denominator of Americanism, for in demonstrating the

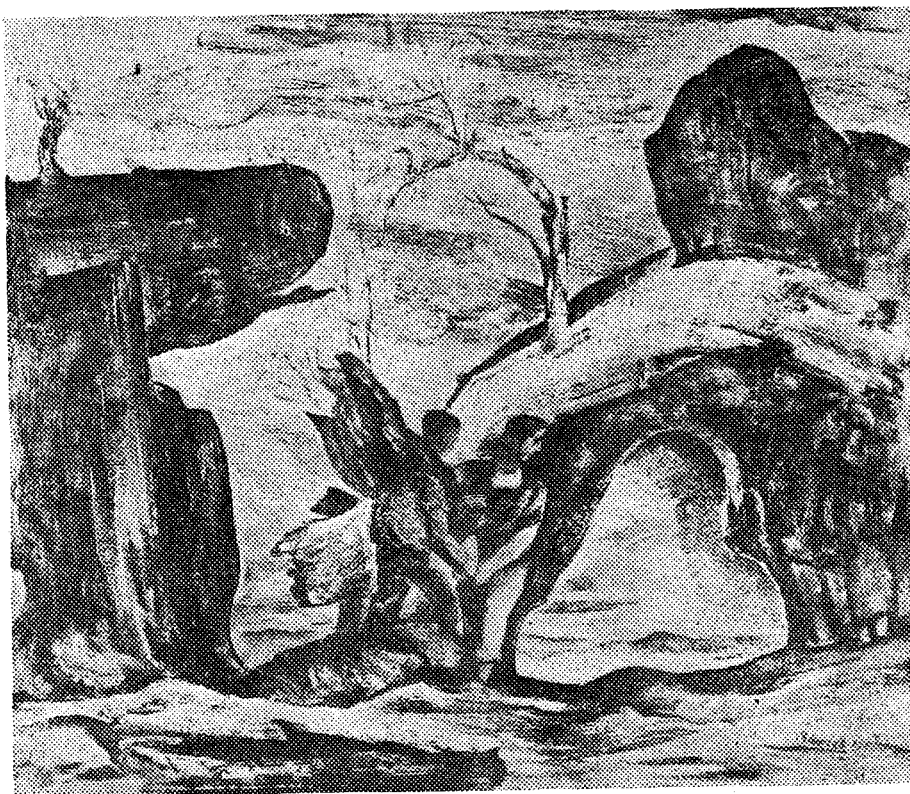
best of our ideals, he was typical of all of us, including the inarticulate and the apolitical.

Five years after the Hitler beer-hall putsch and five years before Hitler came to power, Bottcher departed his native Germany for America. He was only nineteen at the time, but already America for him was a hope and a future. He couldn't have chosen a worse time to test his ideals. In the midst of the depression, America as a symbol must have had some of her brightness dimmed by the misery of the times. But I can imagine him fighting unemployment and hunger as he fought the Japs at Buna Mission. Facing, in the Whitman sense, broad democratic vistas, he must have regarded the setbacks of those days as temporary obstacles and transient aspects of the never-ending struggle for the good life. When Franco and his junta of fascist generals hatched the plot with Hitler and Mussolini to defeat de-

mocracy in Spain, Bottcher joined the Lincoln Brigade, formed in America to aid the Spanish people.

Bottcher said: "I've always hated dictators—that's why I joined the Spanish Loyalists." Here the film makers can find overpowering motivation for the fact that a German, saving his pennies to reach America, would leave these shores only a few years later to fight a war in Spain. This is the act which makes him so much the exemplary man of our time. He left America to protect the ideals for which he stood, the kind of life he was seeking here. The battle for the preservation of a free society happened to begin in Spain and he knew it.

WHEN it was over Bottcher had been wounded three times, decorated twice and raised to the rank of major, and he came back to San Francisco to complete his education. He



"Stormy Landscape," by Maurice Becker. At the Macbeth Gallery until March 10. A real people's artist, Becker has been drawing for the Masses since its founding.