

in the same report approves a quick revival of German industry. Nor can the Soviet citizen understand the tender care shown his bitter enemies in General Anders' Polish army in Italy. How is it possible, they wonder, that Anton Denikin, the White Russian military leader who organized uprisings against the Soviets, finds asylum in the United States, and is permitted to make such anti-Soviet speeches as he did on February 5? And above all the Soviet citizen does not understand the flaunting of the atom bomb in his face. Alexander Werth, a correspondent who lived in the USSR during the war, reports (*International Affairs*, January 1946) that against the "idea that Russia can some day be threatened and bullied by the

atomic bomb, there is a wave of popular, one might say national, resentment in Russia. As one Russian put it, with a touch of bitterness: 'I suppose one day they will want to atomize the heroes of Stalingrad.' No, the Russians do not understand atomic-bomb morality no more than we would if the Russians should use it on us or other peoples.

The Soviet citizen reacts and reacts quickly. Carl, as a doctor, would begin to worry about the sensibilities of his patients if they showed no response to anything from pinpricks to heavy blows. The Russians, furthermore, do not react with finesse and delicacy. For them the fight for peace is no teaparty. They have twenty million casualties to remind them what it cost to win peace.

The Russians have their faults as they will be first to admit. Stalin recently told a group of Finnish visitors not to idealize the Russians. They too, he noted, have their faults like all individuals and all nations. And he told Senator Pepper in an interview: "Do not either praise us or scold us. Just know us and judge us as we are and base your estimate of us upon facts and not rumors."

That, Carl, is good advice for all of us. Let us not add and subtract faults as though that were the yardstick of any man's or country's worth. Let us rather use the yardstick of peace, of genuine democracy, of jobs and plenty. Whoever contributes most to their attainment shall win the future—and should win our support.

# NM SPOTLIGHT

## The Lineup Against Franco

THE people of the world are rising in revulsion against the Franco regime in Spain. Throughout Europe and in many quarters of our hemisphere the voice of the masses demands the immediate overthrow of the fascist butcher.

Franco remains in power today because his regime has been deliberately bolstered and the democratic opposition obstructed by the American and British governments and by the utterly reactionary policies of the Vatican. The latter, which leans far toward fascism, finds powerful allies in the British Foreign Office and in the American State Department. The fascist Franco, as one of the few remaining outposts of reaction in a rapidly changing Europe, must be fortified lest democracy sweep the entire continent. That until recently has been the motive guiding the policies of the leading imperialists.

Today the situation has changed—not because the notions of London, Washington or the Vatican have been reformed, but because Franco can no longer be held in power. The people of the United Nations, having bled to destroy fascism, will no longer tolerate the existence of an outright fascist dictator in their midst. They can no longer stand the sight of so obvious a source of new wars.

This has placed the imperialist statesmen in a very difficult position. For unless the removal of Franco can be very

carefully controlled by them the Spanish people and their genuinely democratic parties may quickly fill the void. That would be a severe blow to the Byrnes' and the Bevins because democracy, whether in Spain or in China, is the implacable foe of imperialism. What is now going on is therefore a struggle between, on the one hand, the democratic forces of Spain, Europe and the whole world which want to see Spanish fascism thoroughly smashed and replaced by a real people's government, and, on the other, those who, realizing that Franco must be sacrificed, wish his elimination to result in the minimum possible gains for democracy.

The line-up is plain enough. The French and Soviet governments, supported by other democratic countries, want the machinery of the UNO to be brought into operation to strangle the Franco regime out of existence. The American and British governments are looking for a scheme whereby Franco can be eased out with the least possible political consequences. That's why they've been nursing the idea of a monarchy. That's why they are trying to blackmail France into a compromising "go easy" policy. That's why they don't care for the French plan to bring this matter before the Security Council in April. According to Washington and London this is not the kind of situation in which you want those who believe in

real democracy, like the Russians and the Yugoslavs, messing around. Things might get out of imperialist hands and into those of the Spanish anti-fascists! The Vatican is of course horrified by the whole thing. For is not Franco one of the world's greatest instruments of its reactionary politics? Maybe Cardinal Spellman can save the day for fascism even at this late date.

The American public is far behind the people of Europe in giving militant expression to the hatred of Franco and in demanding his immediate destruction. Let no one be lulled into complacency simply because at long last the State Department has done something about fascist Spain. What it has done is scandalously little. In the spirit of our own heroic veterans of the war in Spain we must insist that the Truman government support the demands of the Spanish, French and Russian people and break relations with Franco.

## Lessons in Lynching

MAY QUINN, the anti-Semitic, anti-Negro and anti-democratic public school teacher has been acquitted of all serious anti-democratic charges by New York's Board of Education.

On the same day the adult graduates of the May Quinn ideology in Columbia, Tenn. shocked the nation with an exhibition of the fruits of fascist teachings permeating our school system. May Quinn under a thousand

different names teaches America's children subtle race prejudice, religious intolerance and contempt for the common people of other nationalities so that May Quinn's big business supporters, who invariably control our school boards, may fan these latent sparks of hatred into flames of lynch-terror, anti-Semitic outbreaks and strike violence. Our generation learned the connection between open fascist ideology and the fearful consequences of this ideology at the price of catastrophic horrors of fascist war. Now we must uproot the more subtle native forms of this same ideology.

One member of the New York Board of Education considered the Quinn case a "casual thing." This undemocratic mentality will also skip over the lynchings in Columbia as casual normal routine of the American way of life.

The acquittal of May Quinn, however, has aroused a mighty people's movement in the City of New York that holds a promise of a house cleaning in the New York schools. There is a mounting demand for the removal of all Board members who voted for the Quinn acquittal. There is a demand that a Negro be appointed to the Board and a growing movement for the passage of the Hulan E. Jack bill (# 404) in the State Legislature authorizing the election of all Boards of Education in the future.

The last of these is the most significant inasmuch as it brings the public school education within the sphere of control by the people through elections. School Boards generally are the traditional strongholds of reaction where the moulding of the new generation's ideology is patterned to conform with the stagnant world outlook of the upper classes. The movement in New York to introduce the living breath of democracy into the school system may well be emulated in all parts of the country as a part of the struggle against reaction.

## An American in India

(Continued from page 7)

up rival peasant, worker and student bodies. It was as a result of these developments that the Communist Party resigned from the Congress.

"Through independent education we are carrying our program to the Indian people and those honest but misguided Congressmen and Leaguers who have not yet spoken up. Unless they are halted from the disastrous path of internal struggle they are following, British

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An Apple for Teacher.

ish imperialist tentacles will remain gripping the bodies of the Indian people that much longer. We Communists are doing everything possible to eliminate differences among freedom-loving Indians and build a United Freedom Front. We consider it wasteful to engage in internal factional warfare when all fire must be concentrated on the imperialist rulers."

Then Mohan paused: "But you have a job also. Your country is the strongest imperialist power today. Your people must learn what is happening in the leading colonial country and they must act. India's freedom is the keystone to democracy and freedom throughout the Near and Far East."

Today I am back in America, but what I learned and saw in India can never be forgotten. We in America have a great role to play and a great stake in the struggle of the Indian people for freedom. The Indian freedom movement has grown tremendously in numbers, understanding and militancy

during the war years and any attempt at autocratically imposing another Wavell plan will have disastrous consequences. The Indian people are not and will not be silent. They demand their independence.

## On the Literary Left

(Continued from page 11)

abstract morality that has always conflicted with the generally sound description of class forces and class relations. If Maltz's article means that he is finding it more and more difficult to harmonize this conflict, he should consider whether, in repudiating and abandoning the Marxist analysis of society and the role of the writer, he is not throwing away all that is strong and healthy in his work.

The urge to expression of writers like Steinbeck, Wright and Odets flowed from their indignation with bourgeois morality. Their greatest achievements were made under the direct inspiration of working class struggle. What holds them back are the elements of weakness which result inevitably from the capitalist society which educates and envelops the writer, the thousand corrupting

## DEAR READER:

Two weeks ago we appealed to you for \$50,000. This is the minimum needed to guarantee the existence of NEW MASSES for 1946 and to make possible important changes that will more fully express the cultural interests of our readers. Some of our readers have responded. Most, however, have not yet been heard from. During the past week we received in contributions \$410. This makes a total of \$7,436 received since the beginning of the year.

Unfortunately our creditors won't wait till this financial drive gathers steam. They want their money now. Here are our needs for the coming week:

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| One carload of paper without which we cannot go to press                                | \$2,453 |
| Return of loans made to meet our printer's needs last week                              | 1,500   |
| Required to meet our regular weekly expenses in addition to income from subs, ads, etc. | 1,000   |
| Total   | \$4,953 |

The changes we are planning will make NM a richer, more exciting, more useful magazine, a more effective educator and fighter. Writers and artists like Howard Fast, Richard O. Boyer, Millen Brand, Ben Field, Lawrence Emery, Bill Gropper, Philip Evergood, Frank Kleinholz, Joseph Hirsch and others will give you a sense of the dynamic times in which we live, of the marching picket lines, of the growing unity of labor and middle class people in the battle against the trusts, of the socialist goal toward which we move.

But without your help none of this will be possible. We are proud of the loyalty of NM's readers—precious capital which no other magazine possesses. Last year you helped us raise \$44,000. This year we know we can count on you again. But we need action NOW.

Talk the matter over with your friends—organize a house party to raise funds for NEW MASSES. Write us about it; perhaps we can help you with entertainment, speakers, etc.

And please mail your contribution at once.

—THE EDITORS.

demands that capitalist society places on them, and their inability to find a middle road between the bourgeoisie and the working class. Not until they identify themselves, consistently, wholeheartedly, with the day-to-day struggles of the working class, not until they yearn passionately to stand side by side with the worker, sharing his strength and giving him strength, will they learn and absorb the true values of the working class, which have nothing in common with cynicism, irony, or abstract humanism—not until then will we have grounds to hope that their talents will really mature.

BERNARD HANKIN.

New York.

## Marxism and Colonies

TO NEW MASSES: Neophyte's letter in last week's issue [NM, March 5] raises interesting questions about the British Labor Party's colonial policy of preserving the colonial structure of the Empire as the only means of maintaining the British economy and with it the livelihood of the English people. The letter presents the Labor Party argument for its colonial policy and leaves the Marxist position in the air in the form of a question that would at least imply that the Communist Party would seek to preserve the colonial market as the only form of self-preservation of the English people. It seems to me that NM should strive to answer such questions as a contribution to the Marxist understanding of basic problems of colonial policy.

L. B.

*The editors have cabled R. Palme Dutt, taking Neophyte's suggestion, for an analysis of the problem. In the meantime it is clear that if socialism were really established in England many of the questions Neophyte raises would disappear. For one thing England's agricultural production would be improved technically to produce much more than it does in peacetime. It can also be expanded as it was during wartime. That would not eliminate the need to import food. But these importations would not be based on the exploitation of colonial peoples. It would be on the basis of an exchange of commodities between free peoples. Furthermore, the relation of political forces in Europe and what is now the Empire would be so changed if England went socialist that other countries would aid her without fear of being asked to pay a pound of flesh in return for British exports. Moreover, under socialism British economy would be a planned economy without millionaires hoarding the wealth produced by workers. British industry's technological backwardness would be changed. England could then produce in much greater quantities than she does now, thereby increasing the wealth of the country.*

*The Labor Party's policy towards the colonies merely makes for war, holds back the productive development of their wealth and keeps both Britain and the world that much poorer.—THE EDITORS.*

March 12, 1946 NM



# PERVERSION OF A CLASSIC

By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

"**A**NTIGONE," a French collaborationist version of the classic by Sophocles, is, in its way, the most offensive play on Broadway. Slightly deodorized in the English adaptation by Lewis Galantiere, it is a shrewdly calculated attack on democratic values. It may survive the deadening effect of its verbose subtleties through the excellent acting of the principals, Cecil Hardwicke and Katherine Cornell. In that case one may charitably hope that these artists know not, altogether, what they do.

It is impossible to assume as much for Mr. Galantiere, whose elaborate explanation, printed in the program, gives ample evidence that he is fully aware of what the French author, Anouilh, was up to. He tries to justify Anouilh's liberties with the Sophocles original by assuming that Sophocles himself had tampered with an earlier Theban version of the Antigone story. And he admits that, to make it palatable to an American audience, he himself doctored the Anouilh text, putting a little more weight on what may pass for the democratic side in the play's argument.

The impression was spread by the advance publicity that the play, though produced in German-occupied France, had been a piece of successful double-talk, saying lulling things to the German censors and inspiring things to attuned democratic ears in the audience. I sat through the thing trying to puzzle out the message. Somewhat nauseated at the end, but still puzzled, I talked it over with other spectators at the play and found them in greater or lesser stages of a similar nausea.

The key to the puzzle, of course, is that the Germans knew what they were doing. They perceived "values" in it for them that shine out even through Mr. Galantiere's attempt to dim them.

Sophocles' *Antigone* is broadly based on two elements—the democratic Athenian hatred toward tyrants, and inexorable Destiny, the classic residue of a primitive Greek fatalism. Anouilh decomposes the first while he dresses up the second in all sorts of modern sophistications.

The plot hinges on the order of the Theban tyrant, Creon, to leave unburied the body of a rebel prince, slain in battle. In Greek religious tradition this was especially heinous. The order is intended as a warning to the people; but it outrages them and the murmurs reach into the tyrant's own household. The victim's sister, Antigone, defies the order, buries her brother and is executed. The tyrant has his way, however, only at the cost of the lives of his own wife and son.

How does Anouilh work on this simple story to pervert its democratic message?

In the first place by dressing the characters in modern clothes and putting modern allusions into their mouths, Antigone's act is dragged into an incongruous historical context and made to appear ludicrous. Other devices discredit Antigone's motives. A persistent play upon Antigone's sense of inferiority to her prettier sister—a theme entirely absent in Sophocles—is used to induce those in the audience, familiar with psychoanalytic concepts, to dismiss Antigone's act as a "compensation."

The tyrant Creon is presented as a duty-obsessed administrator shouldering the disagreeable cares of state out of a conscientious concern for public order. Here Anouilh again takes liberties with Sophocles, whose Creon is a simpler and psychologically far more credible tyrant. Through Anouilh's Creon, Hitler, by the implications of the time context, also figures as a man risking mob anger for the sake of "order."

**H**AVING, in these and other ways, made the rebellious act appear absurd and tainted with female pathology, Anouilh then proceeds to build up the fatalism in the play. The subtlest dose of poison is his perversion of the eternal fates into his immortal gangster "guards."

These, he tells us, constitute the only enduring element in politics. Rebels raise their futile tumults, tyrants come and go; but the "guards" remain. Several times in the play the guards

are in peril of their lives, but Anouilh contrives escapes for them to emphasize their immortality. In them Anouilh's perversion of Sophocles reaches its extreme.

Moreover, the guards, says Anouilh, are the real thing: thus debasing political power to its lowest terms. The apparent masters are transitory; the guards eternal. Unconcerned over causes or ideals, their tireless and unchanging goal is pay, promotion and bonuses. It is their very debasement that makes them immortal.

In this, in his own way, Anouilh has literary kinship with the cynical Trotskyists like Celine, those anti-human writers who reduce life to metabolism, to a senseless ingestion and excretion of matter. Anouilh reduces the social structure itself to the reflex gut-functions of the guards.

The play contains other disillusionments in action, other insidious disparagements of human dignity and freedom.

No wonder the Germans smugly sat by and waited for the Anouilh opium to take effect. But they and Anouilh had made one grave error. The extreme idealist is mistaken to omit self-interest and other undeniable realities from his speculations, but the cynic makes an equivalent mistake in omitting from his calculations idealism, conscience and the human will to dignity and freedom.

Leaving them out of account was the flaw in the Nazi plan of world conquest. Suppressing them in *Antigone* made it inevitable that history would turn Anouilh's "tragedy" into tasteless farce.

The day of the decent people of Paris came at last. The undefeated Parisians who had made the French Revolution and the Commune rose to drive out the Germans, rose to prove to the Anouilhs that the spirit remains the immortal part of man.

It seems unforgivable that, with so much noble drama lying unproduced, good American talent should have been wasted on this elaborate and devious apologia for collaborationists.