

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK

A RECENT editorial page of the *Herald Tribune* praises the work of the American Library in Paris, urges the State Department not to weaken the valuable information services which the O.W.I. has established abroad, and congratulates college professors upon their memorable contributions to the war effort. Librarians should be congratulated also for their services, and particularly the heads of the Information Libraries established by the O.W.I. in many important cities abroad. This is a new kind of effort in war time, which is also a most valuable means of useful understanding among countries who must coöperate intelligently if we are to have a good peace.

Take, for example, the so-called United States Information Libraries established by the O.W.I. in Melbourne and Sydney in Australia (both cities of over a million inhabitants), and in Wellington, the capital of New Zealand.

As the *Herald Tribune* says, it is merely naive to suppose that foreigners know what they need to know about the United States, or can readily find out. They know what they are told, and chiefly from magazines, newspaper reporting, or outright propaganda, and the opinions and information gathered by those who wish to know for reasons of business, diplomacy, or education is too often spotty, biased, and inspires little confidence or respect.

The object of these Information Libraries, which Secretary Byrnes has already proposed should be continued and extended so as to correct a situation which every American resident or traveller abroad knows to have been deplorable, is to make the best information easily available. A typical French provincial newspaper would publish, for example, as its weekly news of Amer-

ica, one murder, one automobile accident, one Supreme Court decision of revolutionary importance and completely uninterpreted, all given the same number of lines of print. Austrian, German, Scandinavian, Italian papers and periodicals were full of well-meaning editorial comment, completely misleading because the authors themselves did not understand the implications of the news which they discussed.

It was and is the purpose of the O.W.I. Information Libraries not to force knowledge of our country in a propaganda fashion, but to make it accessible. The Library in Melbourne, for example, is on one of the main streets of the metropolis, with a window display, at the sidewalk level, of American books and pictures relevant to whatever happens to be in the news. Inside is a pleasant well-lighted library, with tables and chairs, the walls lined with a careful classification of important books in all fields published in recent years, with the best reference books of every kind, and some background books of literary or historical importance. Below is a newspaper and periodical room. A trained reference librarian is in charge with five or six assistants, and both searchers and browsers are guided to what they want, then left alone to read or work, or permitted to take books home for study. Seldom less than forty or fifty are reading or studying there at any time. An observer one morning noted a member of the Australian Supreme Court, an ex-Governor-General, an American Colonel, a member of the government at Canberra, a distin-

guished Melbourne surgeon, four Australian airmen on leave, and three sailors, a dozen students from the university, two executives of a labor union, the head of the General Motors Agency, eight or ten curious citizens unidentified, plus a number of youngsters evidently from the schools.

The news of President Roosevelt's death came to Melbourne about eight to nine on a Friday morning. By ten, the shutters were beginning to close on all the chief shops of the thoroughfare, and flags at half mast broke out everywhere. Every newspaper in that part of Australia began to telephone the Information Library. What was the procedure of installing a successor? Who would be his successor in case of Mr. Truman's death? What effect constitutionally might this tragedy have upon American policy? What was the relation of the Chief Executive to Congress? Where had Mr. Truman stood in his political activities? What was he like? The result was the best and most accurate and most thoroughly informed newspaper coverage of a world-important event in another country that Americans then resident in Australia had ever seen.

Nor is this all that must be credited to the services of the librarians in these war years. The admirable technique and practice of librarianship, developed in this country far beyond anywhere else in the world, and put to work in these Information Libraries, have already profoundly stimulated and influenced library work and growth in both Australia and New Zealand which, like all democracies, are dependent upon the education of their communities for governmental progress.

At the moment, Australia and New Zealand are turning with hope and intense interest to the United States as a fellow occupant of the great Pacific Basin whose history in the next fifty years is likely to be of the same outstanding, and perhaps dominant, importance as was the history of the Atlantic Basin in the nineteenth century. They have much to offer us. But that they are turning gladly and with confidence toward us for leadership, where they need leadership, is because of two facts, one major, one minor, but by no means to be discounted. American ships and armies saved both countries from an almost inevitable devastation in the bad years of the war. And the three Information Libraries mentioned above have enabled the right people at the right time to learn for themselves, from books and not from propaganda, what America was, is, had, could offer, what we were thinking, and how we felt. They and all such institutions should be a part of our permanent foreign policy. H. S. C.

Advice for Those Long Overseas

By Sgt. James E. Warren, Jr.

IE dreaming on the Leyte grass
How winds shake white the
Georgia bough.
(Last night our moon was lovely as
The moon on Okinawa now).

Stare at the conquered town. Be lonely
For distant lips and throat. (I swear
Love is not lost in Koblenz only.
Ten thousand lie as lonely here).

And, praising passion, take delight
In both the bloom and storm unfurled.

Pursue down the impartial night
The Grief and Beauty of the world—

Two lovers you may always seek.
Oh, make them yours this darkness through,

The heart to heart, the cheek to cheek
As lovers do, as lovers do.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

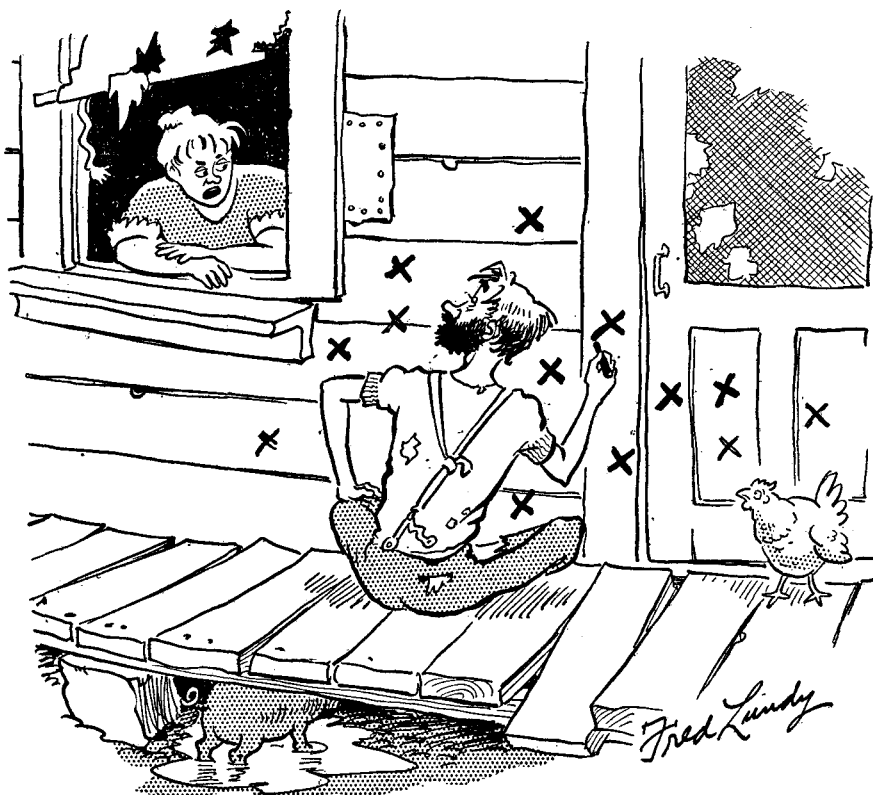
Dissenting with Mr. Gruin

SIR: It seems to me about time that some word of protest, if it can be allowed in print, ought to be expressed over reviews such as that of Frederick Gruin consisting merely of a series of choric insinuations of his dislike of the trenchant realism of William Henry Chamberlin's examination of the recent history and policies of Soviet Russia in his "America: Partner in World Rule." Certainly, your practice of dishing out books to such reviewers whose attitude you know in advance will denigrate any attempt to open the windows on this totalitarian state makes quite futile your high-flown editorials on how "Hence forward, it will be every man's business to inform himself of what can happen" irrespective of his desires and so on.

Surely, a major phenomenon of this era is the infection of so many so-called intellectuals by the very essence of totalitarianism in its efforts to crush all reason, logic, and common sense should they be applied to Stalin exactly as they were to Hitler. Mr. Gruin, while deprecatingly quoting the powerful factual summaries of Mr. Chamberlin, just nowhere proposes any answer to them. What he does is to beg the question. He asks, not whether the greatest mass deportations in history of peoples from their homes and lands without any reimbursement makes a mockery of our professed passion for international justice and establishment of future peace, but whether Mr. Chamberlin is "advocating a war against Russia? Or a stoppage of lend-lease? [President Truman apparently disagreeing with Mr. Gruin]." When Mr. Gruin does add, "Perhaps, these questions are unfair," he might have realized that the isolationists asked similar questions to side-step the unwelcome facts.

The rhetorical trick of such sentences as "No tolerant person can fail to sympathize with his [Mr. Chamberlin's] horror of brutal intolerance" we all learned at school from Marc Antony and know how they will be immediately followed by the real ulterior attitude. And sure enough, Mr. Gruin follows the pattern, for he at once tells us that "Some, like Max Lerner, have audibly wondered over the 'irresponsibility' of the anti-Russian school." Of course, the Lerner's "wonder" and do more than wonder, for with them if you are not for concentration camps in Russia, for all exclusion of any sight of them, or for the Stalin refusal to let in even observers to oversee the United Nations Relief, you are *ipso facto* anti-Russian and irresponsible, and now notoriously with these great minds, if you are not in favor of Stalin totalitarianism, you are indubitably a fascist.

This party line comes to us in news



"Fer the last time, stop writin' yer name all over the place."

dispatches from all over Europe and is merely echoed from the disciples here, but my point is that it is wholly inappropriate in a review of literature, especially if your editorials are to have any functional value and are not to be guilty of the same sophistries from a determination that this ideology must subjectivize even book reviews, the Four Freedoms notwithstanding.

EDWARD KENNEDY.

Toronto, Canada.

Dissenting with Mr. Inman

SIR: As a collaborator in the preparation of the "Handbook of International Organizations in the Americas," recently reviewed in the *SRL* by Samuel Guy Inman, I wish to point out certain matters which he evidently overlooked or misconstrued in writing his account.

In the first place there are not four hundred organizations in the book, but one hundred and nine. This is clearly pointed out in the Prefatory Note. The reviewer evidently counted all the entries in the Index of Organizations which includes, as the note at the head of the Index indicates, "Former names of organizations included in the Handbook, as well as inter-American organizations referred to throughout the text but not appearing as main entries." In counting four hundred organizations he no doubt counted many organizations twice since they appear not only under the first word of the

name but also under their subject classification, e.g., the "Inter-American Bar Association" is also entered as "Bar Association, Inter-American."

Mr. Inman also remarks that many organizations which should be included are missing, mentioning, as an example, the cultural institutes existing in most Latin American countries. The absence of these institutes was not an oversight. The decision to omit such organizations is pointed out on page x of the Prefatory Note. The chief reason for the omission was simply that if the cultural institutes had been included it would also have been appropriate to give space to social and commercial organizations. It was decided that the inclusion of the entire number of this type of institute would have taken up an inordinate amount of space of the book. This deficiency with respect to the cultural institutes will, however, be corrected in the Spanish edition of the Handbook which is in process of being written. In this edition it is planned to include a summary of the work of all the cultural societies.

The omission of the International Labor Office mentioned by Mr. Inman is also explained in the Prefatory Note in the following words: "Organizations originally located in Europe, which have been temporarily moved to American cities during the present war (as for example, the International Labor Office) have not been included in the Handbook in view of the fact that it cannot be predicted whether