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February

"We hold these Truths"



A COLUMN OF PERSONAL OPINION

Of course I will vote for Henry Wallace in November. I will vote for him. And from now on every day and every hour I can spare from the earning of my livelihood and from sleep I'll work for him.

ALL WORK FOR HIM not as the Democratic Party will work for the election of Truman: by the begging of people to forget his utter and shameless abandonment of the policies and the obligations he fell heir to, and the betrayal of an electorate which that abandonment became; to forgive his leadership in the destruction of our civil liberties; to condone his apathy towards labor's rights; to praise him (they'll even go so far as that, these Democrats!) for the re-invigoration, the broadening, the strengthening of American imperialism toward war and the enslavement of the world. To save the face of demonstrated executive incompetence they'll lift it, paint stripes of red and white upon its cheeks and stars upon its shop-worn brow and, thus refurbished, offer it again—for President! Thanks, Democratic Party: No!

NOR WILL I work for Henry Wallace as the Republicans will work for—Dewey? Stassen? Taft? or Eisenhower? (They've yet to pick their "People's Friend," their "Lover of the Common Man"!) Not by the chromium effrontery of asserting that a pal of Wall Street is the friend of You, and Wall Street's dreams are your sole hope for peace; not by the all-out mobilization of press and radio, of high powered salesmanship to make black look like white and evil shine as good. No. Not by any form of persuasion or cajolery, not through threats or blandishments or soaring promises, not by any

By ROCKWELL KENT

of the time worn means and expedients of political organizations will I, and millions of others in America, work for Henry Wallace. For Henry Wallace, as a man of deep integrity, of unquestioned love and respect for the common man, of noble vision of a world at peace, of proven statesmanship and of absolutely dauntless courage, has already taken his place in our hearts.

IT IS, THEREFORE, to the heart and the conscience of every individual American that we appeal. Let each of us, in this twilight hour, but be true unto himself, and with full faith in the like integrity of his fellow citizens support that leader who above all other living men has shown himself to be the spokesman of the conscience of America. God bless Henry Wallace.

A CERTAIN HORSE TRADER of my acquaintance—or Jockey, as they call them hereabouts—read an ad for a piebald horse wanted by a travelling show. Now he was a smart fellow, my friend the trader; and having on hand an old white horse, painted spots on him, took him to the show and sold him. But one day it rained. The horse got wet, the colors ran. There was the devil to pay over that deal.

WE THE PEOPLE are going to swap horses in November. We want a good horse and one whose colors are good red, white and blue. Look out, people, for these smart traders. They have got their paint pots handy, and with paint you can do a lot with the shabbiest of old nags. But be sure of what you buy, for rainy days are sure to come; and it would be a sad day for all of us if our horse's colors ran. There'd be the devil to pay.



Roosevelt with his vice-president and close associate—Henry Wallace

March

"We hold these Truths"



A COLUMN OF PERSONAL OPINION

A SHORT time ago, the people who rejoice in unrestricted private enterprise were delighted by the news from the Soviet Union that the Communist Party had severely censured their leading composers, calling them to account for alleged decadent tendencies and failure to serve the cultural needs of the people. Here was, to them, an official assault on the most sacred precinct of free man—the freedom of the arts—and final evidence of that enslavement of the human mind which they held to be inherent to Communism.

When we speak of believers in unrestricted free enterprise we don't mean to imply a belief by anyone of intelligence that *all* enterprise should be free of all restriction. We have our Pure Food and Drugs Act, and our agencies for the enforcement of its provisions. We do not allow poisonous and harmful foods or drugs to be produced and offered for sale. We do not allow bridges or buildings—even unsafe private homes—to be erected. We don't allow unsafe and dangerous practices in industry. Nor, in activities that approach or are within the fields of the arts do we permit things that are, by the general consensus of public opinion, grossly and offensively immoral. And of course we have never permitted, and never will permit, words or acts that lead to violence against either the state or individuals in the enjoyment of their legal rights. Somehow, even our most fundamental believers in the inviolability of private enterprise do admit exceptions. But these exceptions are, of course, of an obvious nature. They involve the well-being and the morals and the lives of other people and, in this respect, are felt to be utterly different from the fine arts.

I wonder if in this exception of the fine arts there is not involved the most profound disrespect for them as essentially innocuous in the life of a people. And I wonder if the stern admonition meted out to the composers of the Soviet Union by the Communist Party is not based fundamentally upon the extraordinary recognition of the enormous importance of the arts in the life of a people and, in consequence, of the deep responsibility of the artist to give out spiritual food that is neither poisonous nor narcotic. I, like most of us, am not

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qualified to judge of the values upon which the censure was based.

Nor do I accept the judgment of our own critics and musicians who, being ours, are conditioned to those very values which a socialist state has found to be unacceptable or even pernicious. There has now been a sudden rush by our musical entrepreneurs to clasp Shostakovich and Prokofieff to our bosom. I am neither for this nor against it. I don't know. But I do hold that recognition by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of the vital importance of the arts in the life of the people is the highest tribute to the arts that they have ever received. It is a tribute that our people have been slow in offering and that our artists—all of us—have perhaps been backward in deserving. *Man cannot live by bread alone*: That is a precept which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has recognized by its act of criticism.

We would be blind if we did not see the inherent danger to the arts through such control. We would be blind, and we are blind, in not recognizing the dangers inherent to society in the lack of it. Control of the arts, if it is exercised, means their control by the powers of the State. If these powers are representative of the people, that control would be in the people's interest. If it is representative, directly or indirectly, of a class, it would be in the interests of that class. We had evidence of that in Germany under Hitler, in Italy under Mussolini. And we have it in America today under the NAM. We have concerned ourselves, naturally, first of all with controlling that form of art with the greatest popular appeal, the motion pictures.

We enforce our control not by a public criticism and appeal addressed to the conscience of the American people and its artists but by threatening the security of the huge vested interests involved and by the destruction of the reputation and the means of livelihood of artists. This can at any rate be said for our Administration and Congress and for its instrument, the Thomas-Rankin Committee: They know just what they are doing. And if, in the course of doing it, they eliminate from that field of activity every good artist who is employed, that is inevitable; for



Rockwell Kent, noted American artist, voices his opinions on the Shostakovich (above) controversy.

art will forever be an expression of good hearts and good minds.

It is less with the principle of control than with the abuse of it that we must quarrel. Fortunately, there still remains for us in America the right and the opportunity to alter the abuse. Under a government that is truly of the people, by the people and for the people we shall have nothing but justice to the people. And if we continue to tolerate such censorship of that important people's art, the movies, as is in progress, we shall have no one but ourselves to blame.

May

"We hold these Truths"



A COLUMN OF PERSONAL OPINION

By ROCKWELL KENT

AS I write this column, the press and radio are just subsiding from having broadcast to America the story of the boycott, with the intent of bankrupting, of a small businessman in a little village of up-state New York. His crime was the support of Henry Wallace. And his act, which precipitated the boycott, was the mailing of local boxholders of a reprint of that



small businessman's own article on Henry Wallace which appeared in the February issue of the *Fraternal Outlook*. It was important that the story made the news, and it is well to review

it here as an example that what we believed a few years ago "can't happen here" can happen, is happening, and may be expected to happen increasingly unless the decent, law-abiding people of America wake up and bestir themselves.

IT IS ALWAYS difficult to get at the roots of acts of terrorism that are the expression of any considerable element of public opinion. Masses of people, for example, may have been active in a southern lynching; yet it has proven difficult to get the leaders or participants identified. When, therefore, two or three days after the mailing of the leaflet, the customers of the small business—a dairy that delivered milk—began to inform the drivers that they wanted no more milk from them, it was in most cases a mysterious "They" who were

charged with having forced the customer to quit. "We like the milk, but 'They' won't let us take it." And some would add, "It is because of that paper." Because... "Henry Wallace seems to lean toward Russia and communism." "We don't want Russian milk." It soon became apparent that a house to house campaign was in progress. From one community it spread to another. Two drivers gave notice that they were through. Within ten days the boycott had reached such proportions that only drastic action would save what remained of the business. That drastic action was taken. The business, lock, stock and barrel—costly equipment and two trucks, and, as the transfer read, "all the good will that remains"—was given to the two remaining loyal employees.

Because of a deviation in political belief from the entrenched beliefs of his community, a small businessman—with all in terms of capital and heartache that the rearing of a small, successful enterprise involved—had been wiped out.

The fate that had befallen him would befall any other vulnerable man, business or professional, in the community. And, knowing what may be termed the interlocking directorate of the communities of northern New York, he might have found no welcome anywhere. Main Street had spoken.

MAIN STREET of Ausable Forks—its merchants, insurance men, doctors, lawyers, clergy, its Chamber of Commerce, its Rotary,

its newspaper, the paper mill, the blocks of homes—the lovely little up-state mountain town had spoken. It had spoken through boycott and through threats of violence. And it had spoken even more eloquently by its utter silence in the face of a disgrace that has become nation-wide.

If only the shame of this one village could be a warning to the thousands of villages of America to be alert in their own interest and—in the interest of their country and the world—to honor those civil rights and decencies that are our heritage and boast! And as a warning to the people of America that those who shout the loudest about civil liberties abroad are picking our own pockets of what's left of ours.

LETTERS KEEP POURING in to the small businessman—letters of sympathy, letters of encouragement. Shocking letters: In St. Louis a devoted Wallace worker is called on the phone and told that "They" are going to kill her beloved old cocker spaniel. A professor at Oglethorpe University is fired for sponsoring Henry Wallace.

Henry Wallace has established the Freedom League, to which complaints like these pour in. There appears to be a lot of villainy at large. But the villains, it seems, are not for Wallace.

Oh, but we almost forgot the small businessman! Don't worry about him. They broke his business, but they set him free—free to work with redoubled fervor, born of bitter experience, for the restoration of democracy in America.

June

"We hold these Truths"



A COLUMN OF PERSONAL OPINION

A SHORT TIME AGO a letter of mine in defense of freedom of speech was published in the *New York Herald Tribune*. I received letters from strangers here and there in America praising me for my courage (1) in writing it. Among them—it came in yesterday—is one in pencil and lettered, as though to conceal the writer's identity; and enclosed in a blank sheet, presumably to prevent its being read through the envelope. The writer is envious of my freedom, for he exclaims, "You must be pretty lucky in your living conditions." He continues:

"I am a pioneer and a Christian but I would not dare to go to the church of my choice. When my folks go out, I never expect to see them alive again. (I cannot believe in war.) Have one buried in France."

"This is my witness for today before Almighty God to whom all things are known. I would not dare to sign my name for fear of reprisals on my family. This is U.S.A. today!"

Signed: A PIONEER"

"P.S. St. Matthew 5:10-12."

I looked up St. Mathew 5.10-12. Jesus is speaking on the mountain. He has just blessed the peacemakers for they, he tells the multitude, are the "children of God." And He continues:

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."

"Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

By ROCKWELL KENT

A FEW YEARS AGO, I was invited to address the combined Chambers of Commerce of the Champlain Valley. A very large audience was assembled, for people were curious, then, as to what I might talk about. I began by telling them that I had recently received a letter from an organization formed in defense of our civil liberties, which were being threatened. In the letter I had been asked to send the names of organizations in my region that would cooperate in that good cause. After careful consideration I had replied that, in the region in which I lived, there were no organizations but the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, the Lions Club, the Red Cross, and the Garden Club, and I had regretfully to inform them that not one of these organizations would be in the least degree interested in doing the least little thing in defense of our civil liberties. I paused, and there was a deep, embarrassed silence. Then I added, "It is true, isn't it?" There was not a sound in answer.

Since the writing of the Declaration of Independence one hundred and fifty-two years ago, no threat to the democracy that was then decreed and subsequently established has appeared in any degree comparable to that inherent in the Mundt-Nixon Bill. To be sure, we have not at the moment a government of the people; but we still retain—or do at the moment of writing—the right to establish one whenever the people in their own good time decide to. But the Mundt-Nixon Bill would take away

that right. It was our birthright; and it is the birthright, I would like to believe, of our children. Yet the tenure of it, by us and them, hangs on a thread.

FIVE THOUSAND TELEGRAMS and letters protesting the Bill, we are told, have been received by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Five thousand people converged on Washington to demonstrate against the Bill. Five thousand protests from a voting population of fifty million! In an emergency like this, would five million have been too much to expect? Our Order has a membership of one hundred and eighty thousand. Would five thousand protests from that membership alone have been too much to expect?

We are confronted, this election year, by critical issues. Shall the rights of labor, so fundamental to the very concept of democracy, be destroyed? Shall the final cataclysm of another war, of the great, last and all-destructive war, be permitted?

No. Yet fundamental to all action on these great issues is the preservation of the right to act. It is as essential now to the peace of America as arms might have been to the preservation of Israel.

TERROR IS STALKING in the U.S.A. Yet, of our millions, how few the thousands that have come to realize it. How few they are who can read in what happens to others, what, but by the grace of God, or luck, might happen to themselves; that in the lynching of a Negro, the hounding of a Jew, the persecution of others for re-

ligious or political beliefs, lies the germ of their own destruction. Of a man finally apprehended, tried and sentenced, for a murder for which another man had already served two years in prison, the Court asked, "Didn't your conscience trouble you for letting this innocent man suffer punishment?" "No," he answered, "I didn't know him."

Too many people don't know the Negro who is lynched, the Jew, the agitator who is not a Republican. And not knowing them, don't care.

A man sentenced to death stood

on the scaffold with a noose around his neck. "You are allowed to say something before you die," said the executioner. "Well, I would just like to say," said the man, "that this certainly has taught me a lesson."

With the Mundt-Nixon Bill before Congress, the people of America stand with the hangman's noose about their necks. Their crime has been: They didn't care. If only the feel of that rope may prove a lesson to us and rouse us, as it should, to throw it off while there is still time.

ACT NOW!

August

"We hold these Truths"



A COLUMN OF PERSONAL OPINION

By ROCKWELL KENT

WHEN the government of the greatest industrial power on earth, in the very hour when by virtue of its vast navy, its supreme air force and its atomic bomb that stands prepared to lick the world, arrests twelve leaders of a tiny minority political party on the charge that they have "conspired to overthrow that Government by force and violence" it might well make us laugh. But we don't laugh.

We don't laugh, first of all, because these twelve men are human kindred, with all the love of life and liberty and happiness that is fundamental to all men. We don't laugh at personal tragedy.

And we don't laugh at injustice or at any semblance of it—to man, woman or child here in America, or anywhere. We are aroused to fury by injustice—to fury and to fear. For, in a country like ours, or in a world like ours today, injustice to anyone, however obscure, is a threat to our own liberties.

And we don't laugh because, through what we have experienced in the past decades, through what the peoples of the world have experienced, through what we have read of their experiences, through the conclusions on these experiences that mankind has drawn, through history as we have come to understand it, we comprehend the full significance of these arrests as part of a broad strategy to foment dissension among the American people, to debauch their political ideals, to enslave labor and destroy democracy. We don't laugh for we are terrified.

Yet the terrifying events of the hour have not, and shall not, deter us from action to put an end to these persecutions and restore democracy. The people—millions strong—are organized and on the march. And in the people, imbued with a love of life and liberty, united in understanding and armed with righteousness, rests the power to remake the world.

October

"We hold these Truths"



A COLUMN OF PERSONAL OPINION

AS candidate for Congress, I have received from the New York State Branch of the United World Federalists the following four questions with the request that I answer them:

1. *Do you believe that government, in any community, is essential to the maintenance of peace?*
2. *Do you believe that world government must therefore be established in order to obtain world peace?*
3. *Do you believe that a United Nations Charter Review Conference should be called, under Article 109 of the Charter, to strengthen the United Nations into a federal world government?*
4. *Will you, as a member of Congress, initiate, support, and vote for legislation enabling our government to take whatever action may be necessary to attain these objectives?*

Though the questions are leading ones, they are provocative of answer, for they concern, ostensibly, the establishment of enduring world peace by a plan that has attracted the support of many people of good heart. My reply was as follows:

"Dear Mr.:

It is a little difficult to answer the questions of your letter of September 16th. I want enduring peace above all things in the world, but the idea of One World Government strikes me as a solution conceived of in a vacuum or, at best, out of the conditioning of our own Federation of States. And the conditions which have made that possible do not prevail in the world at large. We started in America with a dominant Anglo-

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Saxon culture. That culture, through its continued domination and extensive absorption of the cultures of our immigrants, remains dominant today. It is to me, however, inconceivable that the democracy which will eventually blossom in China, in India, and which is blossoming in the Soviet Union, that the democracies which will undoubtedly come into being in Indonesia and in Africa, will be—or should be—like American democracy. Nor can I believe that the present pattern of American democracy should be imposed on any other peoples of the world as a restraining factor in their development or as a plan to which they should at last conform.

"I am glad of the variety of cultures on the continents of the world; and I can only see in the program that is obviously behind your questions a threat to the integrity of these cultures. I see in our concept of democracy as a government of, by, and for the people a proper assertion that it be of, by, and for the people of America. And my hope for the peoples of the world is that they may each and severally eventually establish for themselves governments that shall be of, by, and for *their* peoples. I assume that when democracy in America, through widespread education and the full preservation of our civil liberties, becomes at last a complete expression of the will of the American people, in answer to their needs, that it will be the best form of government in the world for the American people. But I do not, and will not, assume that it will be the best form for any other people. I cannot conceive of the American people compromising their

form of government in the interests of world government. Neither can I conceive of any other people freely compromising their form of government in consideration of our demands.

"I believe in the strengthening of the United Nations to become a body to coordinate the interests and activities of separate nations and, through such wise coordination, preserving peace. But beyond this limited "yes" to Question 3 of your letter, I answer "no" to 2, 3, and 4.

But to Question 1 my answer is "yes"—until such time as a people (and I have seen such a people among the Eskimo), through age-long conditioning will have become civilized to the extent of instinctive obedience to the laws of social necessity and constrained in that obedience by public opinion."

Here ended my reply. But the letter bearing the question concluded with a courteous invitation from the Field Director who had written it to discuss the subject in more detail before I answered it, and to that end to stop in and talk with him. Feeling somehow that such a further discussion would profit neither of us, and wanting at the same time to enlarge a bit on what I have written, I carry my discussion to this column.

It is Question 1 that interests me, for it is obviously a question by which the questionee (that funny word means myself) is supposed to be committed by answering a hearty "yes." And by that answer he would be lost.

Frankly, I don't think so little of people as to believe that they must be forever coerced by government and government's police to keep from killing each other. It is an axiom of law that ignorance of law is no excuse

for violation of it. And yet the volume of our laws is so enormous that no trained lawyer would pretend to off-hand comprehensive knowledge of it. Living, as most of us do, in ignorance of most laws, we still live law-abiding lives, conforming, as though instinctively obedient, to that social conditioning of the ages to which each one of us is in large degree the heir and of which that illusive force in the determination of our conduct which we term the "conscience" is the mentor. "Thou shalt not kill." "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." "Thou shalt not steal." These and other laws were proclaimed by Moses long after, as essential rules of social behavior, they had been graven on the conscience of mankind.

No: People, either singly or collectively, just don't kill, for they love peace. Wanting to live their lives in peace, they are respecters of the lives of others.

But governments have sent their peoples into wars. And it is with governments that the question of the World Federalists are concerned.

And suddenly the answer to the whole four questions is as clear as day: Make governments behave like people.

And to this end, and in this hour, let us, the American people, rouse ourselves from the lethargy into which we have fallen and, conscious of our full rights and obligations as citizens, take into our own good peaceful hands the moulding of our destiny.

November



A COLUMN OF PERSONAL OPINION

By Rockwell Kent

YES, I saw the Ukrainian Folk Festival—saw it, heard it, drank of it on my knees as a parched traveler would drink the clear, cool, sweet, refreshing water of a spring. It was just that. And all of us, I guess, are just that thirsty.

This is a wonderful country of ours, this America. Its "rocks and rills," its plains and mountains, its geographic immensity, its farms, its mines, its teeming industrial activity. Its opportunities and freedoms—yes. Its people—yes. Its people!

PEOPLE FROM EVERYWHERE.

From all the big and little countries of the five continents of the world and every region of those continents. People rich in all the manners, customs, folk ways of the lands of their origin, and imbued with that universal will to happiness for whose fulfillment this New World of ours held such abundant promise. "Oh brave new world, that has such people in't."

Yet somehow it has not come off—this happiness. And for the life of me, I can't say why.

Oh, we know all the answers in the books. The cycles of depression, unemployment, war. The all but continuous insecurity and fear in which we live. We know the relentless pressure of an industrial age toward the standardization of all things, and see its hand of death laid on our pleasures. Yet we have believed too deeply in the indestructible need and will of man to live, to love, to sing against adversity, to be persuaded that such factors can explain our cultural apathy.

MAYBE—though I don't believe it—we're all victims of the devastating

holiness of our Puritan New England Fathers, the blight of whose biblical virtues may, like our fathers' sins, have descended upon us "unto the third and fourth generation." Do we all know Nathaniel Hawthorne's story of Merry Mount? Of how that happy New England colony, dedicated to the festivals and pastimes of Old England, was invaded and destroyed by the "Puritan of Puritans," Endicott? With his own sword he felled the Maypole. "It groaned with a dismal sound; it showered leaves and rosebuds upon the remorseless enthusiast; and finally, with all its green boughs, and ribbons, and flowers, symbolic of departed pleasures, down fell the banner staff of Merry Mount. As it sank, tradition says, the evening sky grew darker, and the woods threw forth a more sombre shadow." Does that shadow, after three centuries, still lie across America? No, people, no!

IT WAS MY PRIVILEGE, at the Ukrainian Festivals which I attended, in Newark and at Manhattan Center in New York, to address the great audiences assembled there. Yet until the moment of walking onto the stage, I too had been one of the audience, enthralled as all had been by the beauty of the spectacle, by its spontaneous gaiety and warmth. My heart was full, as were the hearts of all of us. And for us all I spoke our gratitude for what these brothers and sisters of ours had brought to us that day. As an American, I spoke our thanks to the Ukraine. I found it hard to speak, I was too deeply moved. Yes, we'd been thirsty, all of us, until that hour. Now

we had drunk, drunk deep to heart's content.

A certain ultra fastidious and precious composer once said to me, speaking in contempt of folk music: "Folk art can never be better than the folk." Thank God, that's true. What lovely people our Ukrainians, through their art, have shown themselves to be!

• • •

BY INFERENCE, America is rich beyond all other lands in the diversity of its cultural heritage. And beyond belief careless in its neglect of that heritage. At most we tolerate what we should glory in. Yet it may be that the full realization in our national life of the equality, the brotherhood of man to which we are pledged waits for nothing but more such revelations of a people's quality as the Ukrainian Festival has been.

• • •

OUR ORDER is rich in the diversity of its component cultures. And, despite the honor that we pay them, still unbelievably neglectful of their full employment toward the enrichment of our lives and the advancement of democracy. What the Ukrainians have done, all our nationality groups should in their own way do. And I foresee the time when, each having attained its cultural self-expression, all will unite in the presentation of a Pageant of America that, touring our continent, viewed by our millions, will be to all a proud and deeply-moving revelation.

December

"We hold these Truths"



A COLUMN OF PERSONAL OPINION

By Rockwell Kent

CHRISTMAS, as I write this, is less than four weeks away. As you, dear Brothers and Sisters, read what I shall write, Christmas will have come. So, to begin with, I wish you with all my heart a Happy Christmas, a Merry Christmas, and, for the New Year, Peace, Good Will Toward Men. Just *wish* it? No. If we millions of Americans who idly wish for peace would bring ourselves to *will* that peace shall be and dedicate ourselves to work for it, to vote for it, to live for it, then—and only then—shall we have peace. Let the dedication of ourselves to the great cause of peace on earth be our New Year's resolution.

WE HEAR AND READ a lot these days about the "American Way of Life," as though our way of thinking, feeling, doing, living, was of an especially exalted nature evolved by a chosen people out of the special conditions of life in what was once known as the New World. And yet in truth many of our cherished customs are derived from other, older lands. Christmas as we celebrate it in America—the tree, the stockings on the mantelpiece, the lavish gifts for children, the gifts for everyone—is largely of German origin and quite different from the time-honored Anglo-Saxon *men's* festival of the Yule log and was-sail bowl, of roast beef and chine as celebrated in the Christmas songs of old England. The final designation of December 25th as Christmas Day was made as late as the Fifth Century. The Birth was originally feasted together with the Marriage at Cana and the Feeding of the Four Thousand.

But although as it happens, the giving of presents at *Christmas* was of Teutonic origin, the lavish giving of

presents as a part of special celebrations has been a custom among peoples as remote from Europeans as the ancient Eskimo of the American Arctic, to whom the Potlatch and kindred celebrations appear to have served the social purpose of leveling wealth and discouraging the hoarding of unused possessions. That the Potlatch led to a deliberate hoarding in order that a great display of generosity might at last be staged will remind a lot of us of the agony we go through in our competitive Christmas giving. And it reminds many of us of the agony of work of making things, providing things, of the pressing of last year's Christmas paper and ribbons, the unearthing of strings of light bulbs, of twenty-year old tinsel and tree ornaments, of all that dear agony of work that lies before us between now and Christmas Eve.

AND IT REMINDS ME, as a maker of things, of the ferment of work that all of us artists, writers, printers, designers of toys, inventors of gadgets, shop workers—workers at everything remotely connected with Christmas giving—are undergoing so that the kids of America, and the parents and the aunts, and the cousins and the uncles and the friends of America may be happy.

And it reminds me again, as my statement of my New Year's resolution reminded me, that in only two days from this writing there is to be a great meeting of people who design things and invent things, and who in general contribute creatively to the happiness and well-being of people, to discuss what we, as creators, can do for the furtherance of peace; and to discuss what we, as creators, can do for the happiness and spiritual welfare of

people through the fostering of the arts and sciences toward the creation of a true and great American people's culture. In short, since we will have an "American Way of Life," let's make it, say we people of the arts, sciences and professions, a good one, a productive one, a rich one and, above all, a peaceful one.

WHATEVER WE OF THE ARTS, the sciences and the professions may have been in the past, however unrelated we may have felt our activities to have been to the lives of the millions of the American people, to their problems, and to the lives and problems of the people of the world, the light has come to us. And if we come at last to make that light to shine it will be to light the way more clearly toward our common goal.

We shall meet in full realization at last of the fact that our professions involve no renunciation of our rights and obligations as citizens; that, in these months of national and international crisis, with China, Indonesia, Greece and Israel in flames and cold war verging on atomic war, we are no Neros fiddling, painting, writing while the world around us burns.

Late last July "a great historic event took place in Philadelphia, the birth of a new American political party, the Progressive Party; 3,500 men and women from every state of the Union, of every creed and of many races, came from the workshops, the farms, from the laboratories, offices and studios. They came to formulate their needs, their deepest desires, their will for an America of peace, freedom and abundance. This they did in open exchange of ideas, in democratic discussion and amendment on the floor of

Convention Hall." Unanimously the delegates at that Convention read the following plank into the platform of the Progressive Party:

"The Progressive Party recognizes Culture as a potentially powerful force in the moral and spiritual life of a people and, through the people, in the growth of democracy and the preservation of peace; it realizes that the culture of a democracy must, like its government, be of, by, and for the people.

"We pledge ourselves to establish a department of government that shall be known as the Department of Culture, whose function shall be the promotion of all the arts as an expression of the American people and, toward the enrichment of the people's lives, to make the arts available to all."

We beg you who read these words, this plank of the Progressive Party, to accept it as an expression of the heartfelt good will of American artists and as their New Year's resolution for us all.

Testimony, July 22, 1948



From top to bottom:
Rockwell Kent
Mary Wojkowski
Dr. J. Dalven
Walter Garland
Sam Pevzner



TESTIMONY

Of the International Workers Order to the Platform Committee of the Progressive Party at Convention Hall, Philadelphia, July 22, 1948

The Platform Committee of the Progressive Party held three days of open hearings, during which hundreds of representatives of diverse organizations and walks of life presented their views, before it pre-

sented its draft to the convention for adoption. The International Workers Order was happy to accept the invitation of the Platform Committee to present its views. A summary of the IWO's testimony follows:

ROCKWELL KENT, the President of the IWO, opened the IWO's testimony with the following remarks:

"As a fraternal organization with members of diverse political beliefs, we do not endorse political parties or candidates for public office. Our organization, as a truly fraternal society, is open to all, irrespective of race, religion, color, national origin or political belief. As an organization we respect the rights of our members to exercise their civic duties, and their right to vote for candidates of their choice as free Americans.

"Perhaps because we are a people's, interracial fraternal organization, we were not invited to present our views to the platform committees of the Republican and Democratic parties. We are happy, however, to accept the invitation of the New Party to present our views on what a people's platform should contain in these fateful days.

"We are profoundly concerned with the fight for peace; with the defense of civil liberties; the rights of the Negro people; the national groups and labor's rights, which are under such sharp attack today; and the protection and elevation of the imperiled living standards, health, security and welfare of the American people.

"We are fully conscious of the fact that the benefits available through organizations such as ours, necessary as they are, are only a stopgap. We have always maintained that it should be the responsibility of the government to provide for the needs of the people from the cradle to the grave.

"We are not a selfish organization, and have no fears of being put out of business by the assumption of govern-

ment responsibility for the people's needs. Our aim is a social security system which will guarantee the right to a job, the right to education, the right to a decent home, the right to old age security, maternity welfare, child care, and the pursuit of happiness.

"We believe that social security should be extended to cover all who work, to the farmers, and the self-employed, and should provide more protection to every man, woman and child in the United States including increased unemployment benefits, disability and sickness benefits, and adequate protection for the aged."

Brother Kent then went on to outline the IWO's proposals on the question of unemployment insurance: that the Federal unemployment system, now under state operation, be federalized to enable a uniform employment insurance plan, embodying the best features of the respective states, eliminating the unfair waiting periods, conditions of residence and differentials in payment now prevailing. "This would free unemployment funds from the pressures of local and state politics," said Brother Kent, "and above all would put an end to the legalized discrimination against the Negroes and other minority groups prevailing in many states."

Brother Kent continued: "The unemployment benefit fund must . . . be expanded to cover not only the loss of jobs by the able-bodied and healthy, but inability to work due to natural illness. . . ."

Brother Kent also testified on the needs of the aged, giving the IWO proposal that the Social Security Act be changed to provide old age benefits

Photos of IWO delegation by Arnold Cain

TESTIMONY

at the age of 60 and that a \$100 a month minimum be established, with provision for additional payments to cover any rise in the cost of living.

At this point DR. JOSEPH DALVEN, noted physician and a member of the IWO Medical Board presented the IWO's testimony on health. Dr. Dalven spoke on the major health requirements of the American people and made the following proposals to be included in the platform:

1. "The guarantee of hygienic education, medical care and treatment to every person must become the obligation of the Federal government.

2. "... facilities, ... hospitals, clinics, child care centers, to meet the minimum needs for care, treatment and prevention of all illness, must be expanded in most metropolitan communities and especially in the rural areas.

3. "The Federal government must begin now an expanded program of training health workers, in medicine, dentistry, nursing and public health, without discrimination or quota system. . . .

4. "The Federal government must guarantee all necessary funds, facilities and personnel to solve the

mystery of the death-dealing diseases of the heart, arthritis and cancer. . . .

5. "The Federal government must guarantee a minimum of required nutrition to all children by aiding the schools to serve hot lunches. . . .

6. "The health policy of the government must meet the general social security needs of the people, and social security, housing and rehabilitation of disabled civilians must be considered part of a national health program."

ROCKWELL KENT *then spoke on the needs and problems of the national groups.* The national groups, he said, "have always looked to the progressive forces in America as the only hope of obtaining real and full equality, without being subjected to the inquisition of a 'melting pot' which would dissolve them into a pure Anglo-Saxon image. Henry Wallace voiced the natural respect of the real America for the national groups when he declared to a group of American Slav leaders that he envisaged America as a garden in which all of the diverse national groups could bloom and flower in all their richness."

Brother Kent discussed the contempt



Vito Magli

and organized hatred which has met the immigrants and their American born children, who have been placed in the status of second-class citizenship, and the discrimination they have met in employment and housing.

"Out of the conflict between the American racists who built up a system of oppression to rob the national groups of their rights, and the immigrants and their children who fought for their full, equal rights, their right to lead a group life and to preserve their cultural heritage, there emerged a national group community," he said.

Brother Kent spoke of the rising democratic movement during the Roosevelt era which challenged the reactionary concept of a white Anglo-Saxon Americanism and the fact that the national group communities emerged in that period as a pillar of the people's coalition supporting the progressive policies of Roosevelt. He spoke of the role of the national groups today as a leading force in the fight for peace and democracy, and added, "In this period of the concerted assault of American reaction we are witnessing the worst wave of contempt and persecution of the national groups."

Brother Kent made several specific proposals to the platform committee on the question of the national groups of America. He said: "We would like to see a recognition and a welcoming of the diversity of the American people and American culture, a conscious acceptance of this diversity as a source of strength for the democratic development of our country."



The IWO delegation to the Platform Committee of the Progressive Party. l. to r.: Vito Magli, Dave Greene, Max Bloom, Sol Vail, Dr. Joseph Dalven, Walter B. Garland, Rockwell Kent, Morris Shafiritz, Mary Wojkowski, Sol. Rotenberg, Sam Pevzner.

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"We should like to project the idea of the establishment of a special agency of the Federal government to assist, help develop and popularize the cultural contributions of the national groups in the U.S.; subsidize national group cultural institutions; systematize the teaching of the languages of the national groups as elective courses in the American school system; and promote cultural exchange between the national groups in the U.S. and their countries of origin."

A third proposal attacked the Displaced Persons bill as a means of importing fascist and reactionary war propagandists into the United States "to disseminate war propaganda in the national group communities, to foment enmity between one national group and another, and to promote enmity against our wartime allies, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe." He proposed that the platform include an endorsement of the UN resolution against war propaganda, and in this spirit pledge to stop the foreign agents, and in addition endorse the principle of providing a haven for the actual D.P.'s—the victims of fascism.

WALTER B. GARLAND, *national organizer, IWO*, spoke for the 6,000 Negro members of the IWO in endorsing the proposals made by other representatives of the IWO. He discussed the special health problems of the Negro people of America and proposed that special funds be set aside by the Federal government devoted to raising the level of health conditions among the Negro people and that a Federal education fund be established to aid Negro youth to become trained as doctors. In line with the latter principle, he urged that colleges and universities, in order to receive Federal funds, be required to abolish segregation and the practice of quota systems. Brother Garland subscribed to the IWO social security proposals to include agricultural workers, domestic workers, sharecroppers and tenant farmers, and said only in that way can the majority of Negroes be brought under social security. He said that a plank on Federal low-cost housing would be a step to-

ward the elimination of the special housing problem of the Negro people and urged the end of publicly subsidized segregated housing projects. "Perhaps we need a Fair Housing Practices Act alongside of FEPC," he said. He closed his testimony with the following remarks: "I am sure that with the platform being formulated here today, which includes anti-lynching bills, etc., the Negro people will see the determination to make it more than a paper program."

SAM PEVZNER, *National Activities Director of the Jewish Peoples Fraternal Order* made specific proposals for a forthright and effective plank on fighting anti-Semitism, including the abolition of the un-American Activities Committee "which is helping to spread racial prejudice, hatred of minorities and is contributing to the dangerous spread of anti-Semitism." He called for a democratic American policy towards Israel including *de jure* recognition of the new state with boundaries as proposed in the UN partition plan; immediate lifting of the embargo on arms to Israel, full aid to the people of Israel, without political strings or commitments; and enforcement of the UN decision. Brother Pevzner attacked the D.P. Bill as an anti-Semitic and reactionary measure and among his specific proposals called for the "liberalization of our immigration laws to permit the speedy entry of Jewish and other DP's who have suffered most at the hands of Nazism."



VITO MAGLI, *National Secretary, Garibaldi Society, IWO*, said, "I want to underscore the fact that the extension of social security and the enactment of national health insurance are of particular urgency to the Italian Americans who, in the main, are wage earners, unable to afford adequate medical care, who need protection from the ravages of unemployment, sickness and disability." He spoke of the serious effects of social, economic, political and cultural discrimination on the Italian American community. He called for a plank in the platform demanding the removal of all obstacles to naturalization and citizenship for 400,000 Italians living in the United States who are denied citizenship on technical grounds. He restated the policy of the Garibaldi Society to promote friendship between the United States and Italy and in line with this called for the opposition of all intervention, economic or political, in the internal affairs of Italy and all other countries, and the support of a genuine program of relief and rehabilitation, with no political strings attached, through the medium of a UN agency.

MARY WOJKOWSKI of the *Polonia Society, IWO*, spoke on the problems of the Polish Americans who are treated in American political life as second rate citizens and expressed the hope that the New Party would stress in its platform and practical activities its appreciation of the role of the national groups on the basis of full equality. She said that Polish Americans are vitally interested in the future of Poland and in peaceful and friendly relations between the United States and the new Poland.

She said, "We request that the New Party declare its unequivocal support of the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements; firmly and clearly oppose the rebuilding of a reactionary, aggressive Germany and support the denazification and demilitarization of a united democratic Germany. We also request that the New Party platform support the western borders of Poland, recognizing them as frontiers of peace in Europe and pledge to help the new Poland economically in the spirit of traditional American-Polish friendship."