

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE . . .

An Editorial

IN PRESENTING the opening article in this series by John L. Spivak, *NEW MASSES* is happy to be the first magazine in the country to turn the spotlight on the inner machinations of the misnamed America First Committee. A vast conspiracy against our country is now under way. The Nazi spies on trial in New York are only the most obvious and perhaps not the most dangerous manifestation of this conspiracy. More insidious, because they operate under respectable auspices and seek to inject their poison into millions, are the American Quislings and Vichymen at the head of the America First Committee and their appeaser allies like Herbert Hoover, William Randolph Hearst, Father Coughlin, and such newspapers as the Scripps-Howard press, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *New York Daily News*.

Mr. Spivak's investigation of the America First Committee was begun long before Charles A. Lindbergh took his flight into anti-Semitism. Lindbergh's was not a solo flight, for he has been joined by Sen. Gerald P. Nye, star of the anti-Semitic senatorial vendetta against the movie industry. This desperate resort to the Nazi tactic of Jew-baiting has revealed the appeasers in their true colors and served to arouse the public to the menace of the America First Committee. But it would be a mistake to conceive the issue solely in terms of anti-Semitism. That would play into the hands of the home-grown fascists and appeasers, many of whom would be able to clear their skirts by dissociating themselves from Lindbergh's speech while continuing to support his larger pro-Hitler objectives. Let us not be deceived by the particular garb which appeasement may wear. Whether they openly back the Nazis, as does Coughlin, or counsel, as does Hoover, that America need not help stop Hitler because Hitler will collapse of his own accord; whether they incite against the Jews in the manner of Lindbergh, or pretend, a la Hearst, to be against anti-Semitism, these men are today advocating for America the same policy which Petain and Darlan pursue in France. That policy would convert this country into a colony of Hitler and leave him master of the world.

NEW MASSES has consistently fought against fascism and all forms of pro-fascist appeasement. In 1934, in a series by John L. Spivak, we exposed the Nazi spy ring and the native anti-Semites and fascists operating in this country. The following year we revealed the details of the plot to bribe the late Gen. Smedley Butler to head a fascist coup against the government. This magazine was also the first to raise the alarm about Father Coughlin. And we denounced Lindbergh as a racist and fascist as far back as our Nov. 14, 1939, issue. From the inception of the America First Committee, at a time when friends of the Soviet Union were themselves falsely accused in certain quarters of being appeasers, *NEW MASSES* fought this organization and exposed the pro-fascist and imperialist objectives of its leaders. (See particularly our Jan. 7, 1941, issue.) Our present series on America First is thus part of a struggle which we have waged uncompromisingly over the course of years.

Today the issue of fascism confronts the American people with a new and compelling urgency. The power of Hitlerism, built up by the appeasers in the British, French, and American ruling classes, rages against the peoples of the world. Thanks to the influence of their own Lindberghs and General Woods, nation after nation has fallen. Gorged with the loot of Europe, Hitler

and his jackal "allies" have attacked the one country that prepared to resist them, the Soviet Union. Victory will make him master of Europe and Asia. Victory will enable him to encircle, besiege and overwhelm the Americas. We do not speak merely of physical conquest, which may not be at all necessary. We speak rather of the conquest of the political and social life of our country, of its existence as an independent nation. Petain's France is only a small scale model of what America would become if the Nazis vanquish the USSR.

Yet in this situation the Lindberghs, Hoovers, and Hearsts demand that the American people do nothing to halt the Nazi juggernaut, but await with folded arms their own destruction. Perhaps the cleverest of these devil's advocates is Herbert Hoover. It is quite natural that the man who was deaf to the cries of the hungry when he was President, the man who sent the troops against the bonus marchers should feel a common bond with the Nazi perpetrators of violence and mass hunger. Out of fear and hatred of democracy, men like Hoover, Lindbergh, and General Wood are ready to barter away even the interests of their own class and convert the American capitalists into the subalterns of the German financial and industrial tycoons. And trotting at the heels of these Hitler First gentlemen is a labor leader, John L. Lewis, a one-time liberal, John T. Flynn, and a "Socialist," Norman Thomas. Hoover, however, is too wily to bring his true objectives into the open. He does not even flatly oppose the Roosevelt foreign policy; his is a more subtle dagger. In his radio speech on September 16 he professed to favor aid to Britain and to oppose isolationism. Yet his practical proposals—that the United States refuse assistance to the Soviet Union and remain aloof from the war, trusting that "Hitler collapses of his own overreaching"—would inevitably doom Britain and the United States. What more could Hitler ask?

The leaders of the America First Committee and their fellow-appeasers have the effrontery to spread their pernicious propaganda in the name of peace. The American people, in common with the peoples of other countries, deeply desire peace. But it is the vilest hypocrisy when these appeasers, who helped Hitler unloose this terrible war, seek to exploit the people's yearning for peace in order to further the Nazi dream of world conquest. But though they have succeeded in snaring some honest people with their "peace" propoganda and in confusing others, the overwhelming majority of Americans know that it is easier to make peace with a jungle tiger than with Hitler. Increasingly they are realizing that genuine peace can come only through the military defeat and annihilation of Hitlerism. Today, with the United States for all practical purposes involved in the war against Hitlerism, with all our energies needed to wage this war to a successful conclusion, the activities of these appeasers are nothing less than treason to America. That is an ugly word. But it is no more ugly than the deeds which it describes.

NEW MASSES believes that the facts presented in this series of articles warrant a congressional investigation of the America First Committee and the whole appeasement group. A copy of this issue of *NEW MASSES* is being sent to every member of Congress and to a number of prominent individuals. Let us learn the lesson of France. Let us act before it is too late.