

PM 3/27/42

Un-Americanism in 'Post' Traced to Isolationism

Milton Mayer Followed Defeatist Line in Opposing U. S. Stand Against Fascism

Milton Mayer, who wrote the *Saturday Evening Post's* insult to Americanism in the current issue, entitled *The Case Against the Jews*, is an isolationist and escapist of long-standing.

He is officially an assistant in the office of Robert Maynard Hutchins, the University of Chicago's isolationist president, and was associated with a group of midwestern "brain trusters" for the American First Committee.

Mayer is an intimate of the isolationist educator and has been known to newspapermen as a ghost-writer for Hutchins.

He also is understood to have done ghost writing for William Benton, vice president of the University. Benton, another ardent isolationist, forced the resignation of Richard M. Scammon, research secretary of the University's radio department, after Scammon challenged Gen. Robert E. Wood, American First chairman, to debate the U. S. occupation of Iceland.

Influenced by Adler

Mayer has worked closely with Benton and the University's radio department, and has served as the Roving Reporter of the University of Chicago Round Table.

The author of the *Post* article—which denies essential American democracy—has drawn heavily, like Hutchins, on Mortimer J. Adler, the white-haired champion of reactionary medievalism and escape from reality into mysticism at the University of Chicago.

In October, 1939, Mayer got in his first widely circulated sneer at democracy's stake in defeating Hitler. As the world was thrown into the chaos of a second World War, Mayer wrote a *Saturday Evening Post* article entitled: *I Think I'll Sit This One Out*.

It said:

"I think it [the war] will destroy democracy. I think it will bring no peace.

"The trouble is that if we win it, he [Hitler] will rule the world anyway."

Dubious About Democracy

In his 1939 article, he said he was "not so sure about the democratic tradition in this country," and added:

"My horror at the persecution of the Jews in Germany is tempered by my knowledge of the persecution of Catholics in ancient Rome, Protestants in medieval France . . ."

Mayer's helpless attitude before the onslaught of Fascism strongly resembles that of Hutchins. In July, 1941, Hutchins stepped forward as a spokesman for the America First Committee.

A poll was arranged by Hutchins and six other isolationist intellectual leaders at the expense and under the auspices of America First. As a result of the poll, Hutchins said he thought the Administration ought to "go in for more mediation" between the warring totalitarian and democratic powers.

When asked why the names of no interventionists appeared in the group which

Is Our Face Red!

In PM's hectic early days, Milton Mayer was this newspaper's correspondent in Chicago. He quit us after a disagreement about how much he should be paid.

arranged the poll—if it was an impartial one—Hutchins said:

"I haven't any friends on that side."

And a year before that, Hutchins said in a Convocation Address:

"Is democracy a good form of government? It is worth dying for? Is the United States a democracy? . . . Our ability to answer them [these questions] is more important than the quantity or quality of airplanes, bombs, tanks, flame-throwers and miscellaneous munitions that we can hurl at the enemy."

Milton Mayer's answer to Hutchins's question in the current issue of the *Post* is:

"They (the Jews) know that there is something tentative and temporary in the notion that 'we are all Americans now.'"

PM's answer to Mayer was given in an editorial by Ralph Ingersoll yesterday, which said:

"The article . . . was a glove slapped across the American mouth. Its challenge was not alone to Jew or Gentile—its challenge was to this country as a whole, to America and all Americans."

(For the reaction to Ingersoll's editorial, see Page 21. For more about Milton Mayer's thinking, see the "Bunk" column on this page.)

Bunk . . .

Milton Mayer, in a biographical memorandum on Page 4 which accompanies *Saturday Evening Post's* anti-Semitic article, *The Case Against the Jew*, states: "Nothing anybody ever said ever created any anti-Semitism, and nothing anybody ever will say will ever do away with any."

. . . Because

Adolf Hitler told in *Mein Kampf* how anti-Semitism could be created: "In the year 1918 there was absolutely no systematic anti-Semitism. I still recall the difficulties which one ran into the minute one used the word *Jew*. . . Only very slowly did things begin to turn for the better. As unsuccessful as the 'Guard and Ward League' was, its service in having again broached the Jewish question as such was, nevertheless, great. Later the National Socialist movement transformed it into the compelling motive of a great Nationalist movement."