

THE REAL ISSUE IS THE CLIVEDEN SET

by the Editors

THE Potomac is a beautiful river. But not all the people living on its banks are beautiful either outwardly or inwardly. The exterior doesn't matter, but the interior does. Recently NEW MASSES looked inside certain Washington residents. What it saw was not pleasant, in fact, dangerous to the life of the country. This magazine spoke up in order that the nation might be warned. It was only natural that certain individuals should be all in a dither about NEW MASSES' plain speaking. And to shift the onus from themselves they are now trying the old stop-thief dodge and doing their best to envelop everything in a pea-soup fog of falsehoods, distortions, and irrelevancies.

Three weeks have passed since NEW MASSES published the expose of the Washington Cliveden set by Bruce Minton, its Washington editor. Judging from the shrill comments in certain circles and newspapers, the issue involved is the integrity and patriotism of NEW MASSES and/or Bruce Minton and/or the Communists. These are, however, false issues. Much as it spoils the game of certain folks, *we insist on the real issue: the Washington Cliveden set.* NEW MASSES did not create this



James Cromwell chats with "I-Am-the-Law" Hague of Jersey City who endorsed his candidacy for the US Senate in 1940.

issue. We were not even the first to call attention to it. The President of the United States and an outstanding leader of the Republican Party, Thomas E. Dewey, did that. Our own modest part was simply to supply further information. It may be useful, therefore, to nail down a few of the salient facts.

First, the Washington Cliveden set exists. Appeasement organs like Eleanor Patterson's *Washington Times-Herald* and the *New York Daily News* may ridicule the idea, but the American people will not be so easily persuaded that President Roosevelt and Thomas Dewey are liars. The Cliveden set exists here as it existed in England, France, and every country where a small minority of the very wealthy and effete, who would like to do business with Hitler, gather together for good times, good gossip, dirty intrigue.

Secondly, the Clivedenites are known by their fruits. According to Mr. Dewey, "They are scheming to end the war short of victory. They are waiting for the time to come out in the open with plans for a negotiated peace." (Lincoln Day speech before the National Republican Club.) According to the President, they are people who spread opposition to further aid for Russia (Press conference, February 17). In short, they are the American counterparts of that English group which used to gather at Lady Astor's estate to promote appeasement of Hitler and hostility to the Soviet Union—a policy which brought disaster to their own country.

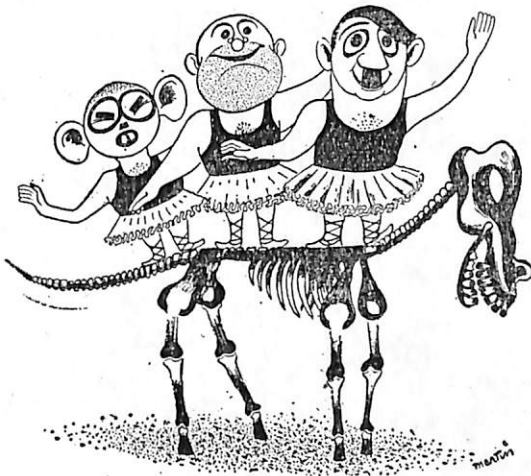
Finally, the Clivedenites have names. *NEW MASSES* does not profess to have said the last word on the subject. But when the President of the United States denounces the Washington Cliveden set, it seems to us the elementary duty of a press that is worth its salt and is devoted to the country's interest to find out who they are and name them. As far as we know, only *NEW MASSES* and the *Daily Worker* made any attempt to perform this duty. When Doris Fleeson in the *New York Daily News* seeks to discredit the NM expose by giving different names—names of persons who actively support the war against the Axis and who are occasionally invited to the home of Mrs. Evalyn Walsh McLean, the motive is clear, considering the source. Minton's article pointed out, of course, that in addition to appeasers and Soviet-haters like Ham Fish, Martin Dies, Senators Wheeler and Nye, John L. Lewis, and the Finnish minister, Hjalmar Procope, who are the "regulars" of Mrs. McLean's set, the elegant lady also uses certain innocents

—as did her prototype, Lady Astor—as window-dressing. In fact, it is part of the Cliveden technique to seek out such innocents in an effort to influence them and pick up bits of information which may be dropped inadvertently. It is also possible that among those who seem to be of Mrs. McLean's inner circle there are some who have unwittingly been duped into this intimacy with appeasers. Such persons can best make their position clear by repudiating the Clivedenites.

MOST unexpected has been the attitude of the newspaper *PM*. This paper has done notable service in exposing fifth columnists and in supporting energetic conduct of the war in closest collaboration with America's allies. It has itself attacked some of those mentioned in Minton's article, such as Fish, Dies, William R. Castle, and the State Department appeasers. Yet surprisingly enough, instead of welcoming our expose of the Clivedenites, *PM* published a story and a Red-baiting editorial by Kenneth G. Crawford attempting to discredit Minton's article. Professing solicitude for the innocent, *PM* actually helped shield the guilty.

Within a few days *PM* received sixty letters protesting the Crawford piece and evidently few, if any, supporting it. The editor replied to these protests in a manner which, to say the least, shows no great respect for his readers' intelligence. "We stand with Crawford because we are against tying tin cans to dogs' tails, whether the victims are lapdogs or underdogs. We are against unfair treatment of dogs—or humans. We are against pushing people around." Did *PM* apply this falsely "humanitarian" doctrine when it recently exposed the fascist, George Deatherage? Did it apply it to Lawrence Dennis, to Coughlin, to Lindbergh, to Ham Fish? On the contrary, *PM* has quite properly demanded strong action against these fifth columnists and has criticized the government for its laxity. Unfortunately, *PM* has tended to nullify this excellent work by itself tying tin cans where they don't belong. Only three days after the editor said he was against pushing people around (this in regard to an underprivileged individual by the name of Mrs. Evalyn Walsh McLean), he published a scandalous smear of the most militant and consistent anti-fascist in Congress, Rep. Vito Marcantonio. Is this not borrowing the tactics of the Dies committee? Is this not helping the appeasers and fifth columnists who would like nothing better than to replace Marcantonio with a Tammany man of their own stripe?

Another kind of attack on us has been made by two of those mentioned in Minton's article. James H. R. Cromwell, estranged husband of Doris Duke and ex-minister to Canada, has announced in the press that he has brought suit against *NEW MASSES* for libel. And it is reported that Mrs. McLean, resplendent in her Hope diamond, appeared before a District of Columbia grand jury demanding a criminal libel indictment against Bruce Minton. Judging from the letter Mr. Cromwell sent to the *Washington Post* and the *New York Herald-Tribune* and from other statements he has made, his is a most peculiar libel suit: the plaintiff is evidently not seeking redress of grievances, but publicly proclaims that his chief object is to suppress *NEW MASSES*! "Closing down the magazine is my real desire," he is quoted as saying by Evalyn Peyton Gordon in the *Scripps-Howard Washington Daily News* of March 4. Offhand, this would seem to be a rather curious way for Mr. Cromwell to demonstrate his devotion to the liberties for which this nation stands. And since *NEW MASSES* actively supports the war against the Axis, it is hardly the most impressive way of proving that he has no connection with the Washington Cliveden set.



Charles Martin in the Anti-Axis Exhibit

"Three men on a horse."



Cromwell and Mrs. McLean, hostess of "Friendship" House

Mr. Cromwell's letter is an illuminating document in more ways than one. Perhaps one can overlook his sneering "our new comrades" in referring to the Russian people. But not so easily dismissed is this: "I respectfully suggest to His Excellency, the Ambassador of the USSR, that all Communist publications be discontinued for the duration of the war." In other words, Mr. Cromwell, apart from libeling NEW MASSES (which, as he knows, is an independent American publication in existence for thirty-one years), is saying that the Soviet Union, in violation of the solemn pledge it gave in November 1933 when it was recognized by the United States, is secretly maintaining political organs in this country. This is not only an impudent libel on America's great ally, but an attack on our own government, which is thereby accused of tolerating and conniving in the violation of its own diplomatic agreements and its own laws. That is hardly the best way to prove that Mr. Cromwell has no connection with the Cliveden set.

Mr. Cromwell makes much of the fact that two years ago, when the character of the war was quite different from what it is today, NEW MASSES published an editorial criticizing a speech he had made. NEW MASSES has no apologies to make for having refused to go along with Mr. Cromwell in supporting the men who later betrayed France, the Chamberlain appeasers of England, and Hitler's Finnish stooges. Nor need we apologize that, unlike Mr. Cromwell, we at that time were advocating what has since become our government's policy: close collaboration with Soviet Russia. We might also point out that this magazine was fighting for collective security to thwart fascist aggression at a time (1937) when James H. R.

Cromwell was writing: "Our formula for maintaining peace, i.e., universal obedience to the laws of scientific money, does not contemplate that the United States should become a party to any League of Nations to prevent war, or enter into any alliances or compacts with any nation or nations under any circumstances. On the contrary, we believe that the United States and other nations should strictly mind their own business. . . ." (*In Defense of Capitalism*, p. 277.) That is the doctrine of the isolationists and appeasers, a doctrine that led this nation and the world to catastrophe.

Since Mr. Cromwell is so interested in the past, perhaps he will recall a conference he attended on or about Nov. 21, 1934. He doesn't recall it? Let us refresh his memory. It was held in Royal Oak, Mich., with Father Coughlin acting as host. This was only a few days after the fascist radio priest had launched his National Union for Social Justice. Mr. Cromwell's role in that conference was evidently quite important, for he served as its spokesman to the press. In those days and for several years after, he was playing around with various schemes for monetary inflation. He was a leading figure in the Committee for the Nation, a big business inflation lobby that was backing Coughlin. Perhaps he remembers another of the leaders of that organization, a man by the name of Gen. Robert E. Wood, who later became head of the America First Committee. And surely he must recall another prominent figure in the Committee for the Nation, Robert M. Harriss of the investment house of Harriss & Vose, New York. Harriss has for years been Father Coughlin's financial adviser. More recently Harriss has contributed financially to Women United, an America First affiliate that sponsored meetings for the convicted Nazi agent, Laura Ingalls. (In John L. Spivak's expose of America First, which NEW MASSES published last year, we presented a photostatic copy of a letter Harriss sent to Women United.)

And no doubt Mr. Cromwell will also recall the secretary of the Committee for the Nation, Dr. Edward A. Rumely. This is the same Dr. Rumely who was a secret German agent in World War I and was later imprisoned for concealing the fact that he had bought the New York *Evening Mail* with German government money. In NEW MASSES of Nov. 13, 1934, John L. Spivak revealed that Rumely had contacts in the highest Nazi circles.

BUT what has all this to do with Mr. Cromwell's present activities and his libel suit? Among Americans a man's associates are generally regarded as an index to his character. Since Mr. Cromwell charges NEW MASSES with libeling him, we think it pertinent to inquire into the kind of company he keeps. And it does seem strange that he should employ his time in attempting to suppress an anti-fascist magazine instead of renouncing and denouncing those old friends of his.

Our quarrel is not with Mr. Cromwell or Mrs. McLean as individuals. The issue, we emphasize again, is the Cliveden set, the appeasers and pro-fascists who seek to undermine our country's fight for survival. And the attack on NEW MASSES, the effort to sue to death a magazine that for years has been in the vanguard of the anti-fascist struggle, is part of the larger assault on the nation's war effort. If they succeed in silencing us, the cause of the American people, of the United Nations will be that much weaker. To all intriguers against our country we say, paraphrasing the words of William Lloyd Garrison in his *Liberator*: "We are in earnest—we will not equivocate—we will not excuse—we will not retreat a single inch—and we will be heard." We are confident that we shall not stand alone.