

of Utica and the boarding houses of York can know as much about as many of culture, in the narrower sense, as it did. The very fact that his fellow American proletarian novelists share this naive ignorance to slightly varying degrees is an impartial proof of this; Bukharin has noted lack of knowledge, similar if springing from different roots, on the part of Soviet writers. But Vogel can know as much as anybody about the circumstances and the people of his own life, his own culture and he can make of these his own strong and pictures, without the cork-lined chamber. As it is, his people do not have enough historical and psychological density and this is not merely a matter of length of piling on detail. There is hardly more linotype lead in *Anna Karenina* than there is in *Hyman* but *Bovary's* attitudes toward his mother, his child, his wife and her father and her lover are worked out in relation to another, made to illuminate one another they could never be budged from the setting into which Flaubert has imbedded them. Situations in a novel have to be chosen with different standards and a different discipline than those of a short story. There can be nothing more odious to a popular writer than the commentator who pushes him around the shoulder and says "pretty good, boy, pretty good and you'll get better as you go along, anyhow I hope so; I mean well." Vogel is much more than a well-meaning writer. He knows a lot about the forces operating in his people and he urges to know more. He never fakes. He works in a collective laboratory where reports are constantly being checked, approved or eliminated. He has command over a vigorous and easy flow of words, the protoplasmic writing, words in their right place. These are the prerequisites of growth.

EDWARD NEWHOUSE.

## Sweet Impartiality

*PROPHETS AND POETS*, by André Maurois. Harper & Brothers. \$3.00.

ANDRÉ MAUROIS, the William Lyon Phelps of French criticism, has fussed together another of his inimitable bouquets of enthusiasms and it has been rushed through in a gold wrapper at three bucks a throw just in time for the Christmas trade. Aunt Agatha, please take notice.

This time the industrious popularizer of culture for the ladies' clubs lets his impartial Gallic eyes rove over the frames of Kipling, Wells, Shaw, Chesterton, Conrad, Strachey, Lawrence, Huxley (Aldous) and Katherine Mansfield. Impartiality is, indeed, the hopeful motif of this effort to flutter through the thought that has supposedly best expressed the heart and growth of this century. Maurois himself would probably be horrified if you thought he favored any one writer's values above another's: he simply regards them all unimpassionedly and records their contents evenly.

This, for example, on Kipling's brazen imperialism is, we suppose, an "impartial" comment: "For many years liberal critics were prevented by political passion from recognizing that the genius in Kipling is something

quite independent of political ideas." Wells' pseudo-scientific utopianism and wholesale contempt for the "little man" find Maurois positively dripping with approval. And this near-idiotic comment on Shaw—"though he made short work of Marx's obsolescences in abstract economics, and of his inexperience in practical administration, and laughs at the famous dialectic as a method of thought for British islanders, [Shaw] remains in all essentials a convinced Marxist"—should help finally to dispel any lingering delusions about Maurois' reliability as an "unprejudiced" guide to contemporary literature.

The remaining essays add or subtract absolutely nothing in the existent sum of clichés on the subjects. EMANUEL EISENBERG.

## Brief Review

*WHO ARE THE ARYANS?* by Margaret Schlauch. (*Anti-Fascist Literature Committee*. 10 cents.) Margaret Schlauch's simple analysis of the terms Aryan and race is useful and refreshing. Race in its scientific meaning is a physiological differentiation of people. The word Aryan is scientifically used to describe not a race but a prehistoric language, from which many modern European languages are derived and a civilization about whose existence and origin there is very little evidence available. Schlauch concisely shows that race purity or superiority is a myth. Its prominence in fascist countries can only be accepted as an attempt to distract and divide the dissatisfied masses. This pamphlet will serve a valuable purpose in halting the spread of the race myth in other countries.

*FIG TREE JOHN*, by Edwin Corle. (*Liveright and Company*. \$2.) This smoothly-written, sympathetic story of an old and a young Apache Indian and their different attitudes toward white men, makes interesting reading in spite of its narrow and sectional approach.

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DECEMBER 31, 1935

# Why I Created "Air-City"

ALEXANDER DOVJENKO

Alexander Dovjenko, together with S. M. Eisenstein and V. I. Pudovkin make up the "big three" in the Soviet cinema. His three films, Arsenal, Soil and Ivan (for which he was awarded the Order of Lenin) have all been seen here. His new film Air-City is soon to be released in this country as Frontier.—THE EDITORS.

**M**Y TRIP to the Far East for the purposes of studying this region, its economics, life, people, nature—with a view to creating a scenario for the film—was probably one of the most outstanding events in my life.

Four whole months I traveled with my group all over the country, using all possible means of conveyance. I traveled by railroad; flew over the great Amur in a hydroplane; beyond Nikolaievsk-on-Amur I rode into the Taiga on horseback; from the mouth of the Amur to Vladivostok I took a boat; I visited Sakhalin, went down into the Suchan coal mines, tramped 400 kilometers through the Taiga following partisan tracks, spent New Year's in Komsomolsk.

And it began to seem to me, that my life was spent wrongly, that I should have come here five years ago and never go back to "Russia," as some of the trappers say. And that I am not a director, but a partisan, a trapper, a member of the Tcheka and I should not be making films, but should be rebuilding the country, discovering its riches and guarding our far-away borders against the enemies of the workers.

I found a place for this feeling: "Fifty years of my life were spent in the Taiga—like a day. And every day I look and cannot stop looking, and I ask myself: is there in the world such beauty and such richness? No. There is no such beauty and such richness! And therefore, tell me, young people, who will dare?" (Glushak's speech at the end of the film.)

We met a number of workers of the Far East Commune, beginning with the leaders and ending with inhabitants of the distant settlements—fisheries, forestries, trappers and kolkhozes of the outlying villages. And everywhere I felt one idea—the forceful socialist advance on the natural resources of this young and plentiful region and the assurance of peace on the border.

During the trip it began to be clear to me that here one can make not one film, but a multitude of beautiful films, articles, novels and symphonies. But I had to make one scenario for one film.

So I decided to select from the mass of impressions the most important ones and, having them generalized and united, express them in the form of a work of art.

The scenario of the *Air-City* is the result. The idea of *Air-City* was not born as an artful resignation, not as a withdrawal from the many things seen or from the hardships of subjecting the actuality to the art form.

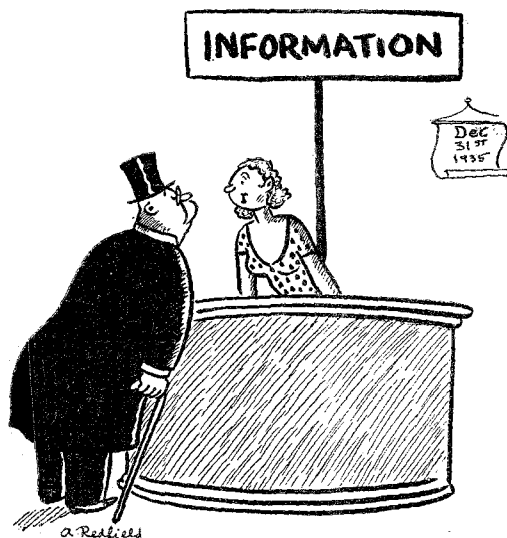
Just the opposite. In my creative and social mind I paid tribute to everything beautiful which I admired in this region of

my great country. But I wanted more than that. Studying the country I came to the conclusion, that our historic future in the Far East Commune must not be dependent upon the existing economic centers. Pass over the Ural and Kuzbas, over the fu Angrastroy and the greatest coal-mining region of Biro-Burey, breaking through the Baikal-Amur Road to a new outlet to the ocean, we must build another great city on the shores of the ocean, a second Vladivostok. I even found a place to build *Air-City* and I decided that this is correct.

And so I think that *Air-City* is not an imaginings of an artist, but a reality of days. And if this city does not exist it does not mean a thing. Occasionally I think, what if, while the film was being made, they built a city in the Soviet harbor. In our country everything is possible. We did build Magadan on the Okhotsk shore with miraculous speed and everybody liked it and everybody is happy about it.

In this film I did not want to be an illustrator of things done by the Party, government and the workers, I wanted to be a pioneer of things to be done.

The poetic underline of the film is a result of the fact, that life is beautiful, the region is beautiful and that our flags will never wave in this region.



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