

“The Jig Is Up”

FACTORIES IN THE FIELDS. *The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California.* By Carey McWilliams. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1939. 325 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by LOUIS ADAMIC

STEINBECK'S "Grapes of Wrath" seems to be well on the way to becoming the "Anthony Adverse" and "Gone with the Wind" of 1939. Everybody seems to be reading it, including, I am told, "everybody in Washington." The capitol dome in Sacramento rings with its "wrath." The story has been bought by a leading Hollywood producer, who is said to be under pressure in California either to suppress it so far as the movies are concerned or ruin it in production. Several California newspapers published personal attacks on Steinbeck, while other commentators in the Golden State and elsewhere in the country already have tacked onto the fine, amazingly popular novel such labels as "The 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' of the landless farmers."

Most of Steinbeck's readers will agree, or will be even inclined to urge, that something be done for the homeless people in California and about the entire sordid but colorful mess that he presents so well. They will be emotionally for action; just what kind of action, however, they will be at a loss to say—unless they read Carey McWilliams's extremely competent, high-minded, and purposeful non-fiction book on the same subject.

The two books complement one another. Steinbeck's success gives McWilliams's study nationwide timeliness. "Factories in the Field," in turn, does what Steinbeck did not—could not—do in a novel. It draws an analytical, factual picture of the migratory farm labor situation in California, which involves hundreds of thousands of people, and gives the Steinbeck-stirred indignation intellectual direction toward intelligent action. This direction gains significance when we know that Carey McWilliams—a gentle-mannered, tough-minded young idealist from Colorado who has been a lawyer in Los Angeles for the past fifteen years—is a personal and political friend and social-economic adviser of Governor Olson, who a few months ago appointed him head of the State Division of Immigration and Housing, which has jurisdiction over the colossal migratory labor problem.

"Factories in the Field" is an accurate title, under which McWilliams traces in sixteen concise chapters the entire development of the situation through more than fifty years of California's agricultural, financial, and social history to the painful point where Steinbeck picks it up. The situation, in other words, is nothing new; only formerly it involved mostly Chinese, Mexicans, Filipinos, Italians, Armenians, and single Americans of the type of the restless, irresponsible hero in the play "They Knew What They Wanted." Now it includes also tens of thousands of draught-and-depression-hit "Okie" and

"Texican" families, who are old-stock Anglo-Saxon Americans, not members of the numerically least important racial minorities. And now, this being so, says Carey McWilliams, "the jig is up." Now the out-and-out exploitation of poverty, ill-luck, and homelessness must cease.

McWilliams suggests the direction in which a program for action must be sought. I shall not try to summarize here what his suggestions are, for any brief statement of them is apt to do them injustice. They should be read in the light of the entire book.

"Factories in the Field" took three years to prepare. It was finished several months before "The Grapes of Wrath." Neither of the authors was aware of what the other was doing. Steinbeck created in the country the mood which, I think, will recognize the importance of McWilliams's study. McWilliams gives point to Steinbeck's novel, which ends rather suddenly and weakly in symbolism—in part, no doubt, because it is a novel.

Voice of a People

MR. EMMANUEL. By Louis Golding. New York: The Viking Press. 1939. 444 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

FOR the sake of a refugee German-Jewish lad, who was eating his heart out in England because he did not know whether his mother was alive or dead, Mr. Isaac Emmanuel, of Magnolia Street, Doomington, undertook a mission to Herr Hitler's Germany. Frau Rosenheim had written regularly to her son Bruno, so when her letters ceased to arrive the boy's friends began to make inquiries. But the Refugee Committee in London could tell them nothing, and the Jewish Community in Berlin curtly replied that the matter was without interest for them. It was as though Frau Rosenheim had vanished from the earth, and perhaps she had, but there was no certainty. When Bruno attempted suicide, it was obvious that something must be done. Old Mr. Emmanuel, frail, gentle, and sixty-odd, determined to do it. People did not simply disappear. It was ridiculous! He would soon find out what was what.

So, armed with his British passport, he sallied forth. This passport was his staff and his shield. True, he was a little old Jew who had been born in Russia, but he was also now an Englishman, and if there were any difficulties he would show them what being an Englishman meant. But it was Herr Hitler's Germany that showed Mr. Emmanuel what Nazism means, and the demonstration is the subject



Migratory workers in Sacramento Valley. From "California: a Guide to the Golden State (Hastings House).

and substance of Louis Golding's book. It is a horrifying demonstration, as are all exhibitions of Nazism for those who have grown up with even a fractional faith in the rights of the individual under a system of protective law and attempted justice. It tells us nothing new about Hitlerism, but Mr. Golding has given new force to the familiar truth by incorporating it in one more personal, intensely affecting history. The function that this novel performs aside from its literary values is definite, for it is characteristic of us human beings that we are more profoundly moved by a single human story than by massed statistics that multiply such stories to an anonymous sum that is beyond our powers of realization or response. And the tale of Isaac Emmanuel is moving, indeed.

Avoiding synopsis, it is enough to say here that Mr. Emmanuel encountered a way of life that was at first baffling to him, then frightening, and finally nightmarish in its calculated injustice and brutality. The pattern of this brutality has become familiar to us through stories, plays, and factual reports, but it can never cease to shock, and the shock is greatest when, as in this instance, the victim of the pattern is feeble, innocent, and lovable. One may suspect that a real counterpart of the fictitious Mr. Emmanuel would be too feeble to survive the trials endured by Magnolia Street's knight-errant, but the fictitious Mr. Emmanuel is entirely credible, and he is a symbol as well as a man,—the symbol of a race whose powers of survival are unique, that will look back upon Hitler as it now looks back upon Egypt and Rome.

Mr. Golding has shaped his novel well. It gathers pace and increases its claims upon our interest as it proceeds; the curve of excitement mounts to a climax and a denouement that are entirely satisfying. It leaves us, too, desiring in full another story that is told here only in part; the story of Jewish Elsie Silver, who became the mistress of a powerful Nazi leader, and who was able to save her father's friend when a government had failed.

"Mr. Emmanuel" is a tract for the times, and the voice of a people speaks through it, but it is also an absorbing, stirring, first-rate work of fiction.

Book Note

THE new work
Of John Dos Passos
Is a pain and an irk
To the *New Masses*.
For John has fallen
Away from Stalin,—
A sin that's cardinal
And unpardonal.

M. C.

Underground in Germany

MEN AGAINST HITLER. By Fritz Max Cahen. Adapted, with an introduction by Wythe Williams. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1939. 258 pp. \$2.

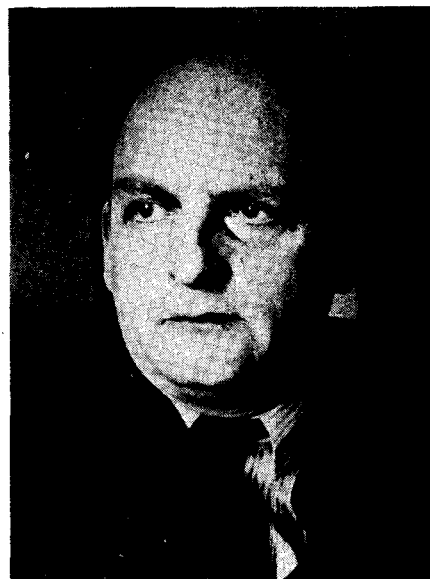
Reviewed by JOSEPH HILTON SMYTH

THE flood of anti-Nazi books during the past six years has consisted of two easy discernible streams. The greater volume has come from the pen of exiled German politicians, writers, and journalists of more or less left complexion. At the same time, however, there has been a steadily growing number of books by dissident German conservatives such as Kurt Ludecke, Otto Strasser, and lately Hermann Rauschning, former President of the Danzig Senate.

"Men against Hitler," by Fritz Max Cahen, definitely belongs in the second category. Written by a former member of the German Foreign Office and an associate of Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, the head of the German peace delegation at Versailles, it deserves close scrutiny by all those concerned with the ubiquitous questions: Is there as yet any concerted opposition to Hitler within Germany? And if so, how does it operate? The author's answer to the first question is strongly in the affirmative. He claims that at least fifty per cent of the German people are in disagreement with Hitler, and that the forces which some day may overthrow the Hitler regime have already taken definite shape. "Some day, when there are barricades in Germany, the unknown bourgeois youth will be there," he writes.

The second question, as to how the opposition functions, is answered by the author in great detail. Those chapters dealing with the undercover operations, the courier service, the clandestine newspapers and broadcasting stations, the daily ferocious and bitter fight against the sinister secret police, are perhaps the best.

Even before Hitler's meteoric rise to power, Cahen, with rare foresight, had organized, as a bulwark against National Socialism, the "German Vanguard." Later, an exile himself, he started to organize and coordinate various other groups of exiles—exclusive of the Communists, whose participation in his various "Popular Front" schemes he regarded as detrimental to the cause. On the other hand, Cahen seems to have found it quite possible to work hand in hand with a right-wing extremist such as Dr. Otto Strasser, renegade from the Nazi Party and leader of the Nazi splinter



Fritz Max Cahen

group, called the "Black Front." Cahen does seem to have originally distrusted Strasser, and he does not advance sufficient reasons for their eventual collaboration.

Cahen asserts that a slow but distinct process of disintegration is taking place inside the Nazi ranks. The future leaders of the anti-Nazi rebellion are already in training. It is his thesis that the army may be counted upon to join a people's movement against Hitler, once the mass of the people has come to realize that Hitler means war and the destruction of Germany. Cahen is a firm believer in a truly progressive European Federation.

Despite the elaborate story of underground opposition carried on by the author and his associates, the reader, unfortunately, fails to become convinced that the opposition is making much headway. The account of the various groups and their failure—at least for the time being—is too strongly reminiscent of the parliamentary system with its all-too-many parties that preceded Hitler. Nor is the reader left convinced that "millions are ready to set forth in the streets, prepared to demonstrate when the moment arrives."

The book is excellently edited by Wythe Williams, ace prophet of late—whose informant Cahen is said to have been for many years. It suffers to a certain extent from the author's inflated opinion of himself. It would seem that constructive work of the kind he describes can flourish only if those who carry it out recede behind the task, and not vice versa. However, this slightly irritating factor does not impair the value of the book.