

# BOOKS ABROAD

*Nouvelle Age Litteraire* by Henry Poulaille. Librarie Valois, Paris.

Henry Poulaille believes that literature—all literature—is breathing its last. The reason? The advent of the radio, the cinema, television. Nevertheless, he has gone to the trouble of writing a 438-page volume about what he calls *The New Literary Age*.

Thruout the book, however, its author never fails to sound the clarion again and again for this “new” literature which he says must come and of which there are already precursory indications. The major portion of his work is devoted to these “pre-curseurs de cette litterature neuve.” Not a stone is left unturned in a procrustean effort to show the new within the womb of the old. A French “Newer Spirit.” Poulaille, too, by the way, thinks that Sherwood Anderson is a proletarian writer. He has even managed to make room for Eugene O’Neil and Eugene Jolas in this exclusive domain. And whom have you? The names of a thousand and one scribblers of petty-bourgeois pedigree are offered as “pre-curseurs” of something or other that the author never quite clearly formulates. Evasion, eclecticism and general confusion characterize the whole book.

Speaking of Barbusse: “What can be more remarkable than to write in the service of an idea. And in this light, the works of religious inspiration—I mean the true ones—will long remain the most beautiful. . . . Looked upon from this viewpoint, the works of Barbusse appear of a formidable solidity.” But aside from this “formidable solidity,” the work of Barbusse, like that of Upton Sinclair (!), has but transitional value, Poulaille thinks. Michelet and George Sorel are cited as high authorities on the question of the social significance of art and the ultra-reactionary Claudel is ranked with Ramuz, Bloy and Hardy as “one of the crowd” that is ushering in—well, something or other that’s different, anyway.

“In the United States there exists a proletarian magazine of violent radicalism, the *New Masses*. Radicalism there has nothing in common with ours. So they designate everything of a libertarian tendency. Some contributors to this magazine are Upton Sinclair, John Dos Passos, Floyd Dell, as well as some authentic workers (Italics mine—S.B.). It is one of the most curious magazines. . . . I do not say that there are not some mighty strange viewpoints among its editors. There is the tendency to emphasize titles like thief or murderer just as in France one might sign Mr. X of the French Academy. . . . But apart from that the magazine has a proud bearing.”

No more appropriate conclusion than Lenin’s oft-quoted remark could be cited here to characterize this hopeless mass of petty-bourgeois intellectual gallimaufry: “People bend every effort to conceive something extraordinary, and in their zeal to intellectualize, they become ridiculous.”

—SAMUEL BRODY

Erich Weinert Spricht. International Arbeiter Verlag, Berlin.

Erich Weinert is Germany’s best known agitator-poet. Ginkel, with his bore-hammer rhythms, and Becher’s verbal thunders have stirred broad attention. But Weinert with his solid ringing voice, is greeted with applause wherever he personally appears to read his poems. And he appears night after night. The workers anticipate something sharp and sarcastic, pregnant with grim humor. They are seldom disappointed. For Weinert, catching the mood of the minute into ready verse, challenges with healthy satire.

His first volume contains some of his best poetical agitations. Sacco and Vanzetti, Unemployment, Censorship, the “Bonzen”, as the social-democratic politicians are termed, come in for consideration. Roll of drums, shrill of factory whistles, voices of hunger and rebellion give swing to the poems which are known everywhere in the Germany of today.

Although a sensitive reader of poetry might protest against the amount of soapboxery in them, one cannot deny their effectiveness. Weinert is most happy to have voiced the passionate protest and aspirations of the working class.

Berlin, Germany.

—ED FALKOWSKI.

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*Es gibt ein anderes Amerika!* by Israel Kassvan. Der Strom Verlag, Berlin.

This book though written in German, is as American as Broadway or Gastonia or Imperial Valley. The titles of the poems speak for themselves—“The Day After the Elections”, “The Building Trades Worker”, “American Justice”, “Coal Strike in Colorado”.

The author of *Es gibt ein anderes Amerika!* is a German worker now living in New York. His book doesn’t contain a single poem which is not directly concerned with the class war in the United States. The poems have their shortcomings; they suffer from didacticism and lack technical resourcefulness. But they have social passion and revolutionary understanding, and these are still rare enough in the literature produced in this country to be important for their own sake.

The book is illustrated with drawings from the *New Masses* and has an unusually striking cover. It contains an introduction by Dr. Alfons Goldschmidt, well-known in Germany as a leftwing publicist and an active figure in the German Workers International Relief.

—A. B. MAGIL.