

"There are a thousand hacking at the branches to one who
is hacking at the root."—Thoreau

World Events

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GREAT OAKS from little acorns grow. In February 1944 a small group who had been attending Scott Nearing's annual lectures in Washington persuaded him to send them an occasional letter giving his interpretation of the rapidly crystallizing international situation. Their idea was to circulate copies of the letter locally.

When word of this plan got around, however, people in other SN lecture centers asked to be included in the distribution and, before SN had put pen to paper, there were a thousand such requests in hand, with \$2,000 in advance payments. The acorn had begun to sprout.

In the intervening 6½ years quite an oakling has grown up. It may in time become as sturdy and as important a landmark in U. S. history as the Charter Oak.* Our printing records show that, since we started, we have distributed free—not broadcast, but selectively—*over half a million* SN leaflets and sold 50,000 pamphlets and many thousands of his books. Add to this nearly 350,000 copies of *World Events* and you have an impressive total of work accomplished.

We hasten to add that this showing would never have been possible without the active cooperation of hundreds of friends throughout the US and Canada. Let us cite a few examples of the ways in which *WE* supporters have helped disseminate SN's writings:

- The professor of history in an eastern university ordered 50 copies of *WE 66* as required reading for his students.

* We are gambling that nobody will take that seriously.

• Another, in Minnesota, requested 65 leaflets for one class and 40 for another. • A clergyman in Illinois writes: "All the literature that comes from you is of intense significance and invaluable aid to me. I enclose \$4.75 for items as listed." • A. E. Wulff, of Monterey, Calif.: "Send me ten copies of *World Events*. I'm past 87 but I'd like to get in a few licks before I kick off." • The manager of a hotel in British Columbia places our literature in the public lounge of her hotel. • Friend E. E. Garlits, of Seffner, Fla., is always ready to put SN leaflets in the baskets of fruit he ships. • The president of the Farmers' Union in a midwestern state orders SN books, pamphlets and leaflets liberally for the members of his organization. • A fishermen's union in Canada has purchased a set of SN's books and subscribed to *WE*. We sent also a supply of leaflets, of course.

IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES, when liberal publications are finding it difficult to keep going, *WE* circulation is holding its own, notwithstanding the loss each month of about 100 subscribers (mostly procrastinators or "weak sisters" for whom *WE* is "too strong medicine"). The subscription mortality rate for commercial magazines, we are told, is 60-70%. Ours is only half that but we believe it could be lowered considerably if a group in each of the larger centers would undertake to jog the elbow of the many who drop out because they "meant to renew but just never got around to it."

Here again we gladly recognize our indebtedness to the missionary work of the many subscribers who have enlisted their friends as readers of *WE*. This has, in fact, been our chief source of growth in circulation. We have repeatedly tried the usual promotional methods of advertising and circularizing but with little success. *WE* appeals only to a certain type of mind; it is "caviar to the general"— and Russian caviar at that.

So we are going to rely principally on our subscribers to keep up *WE* circulation. *WE* has been from the start a cooperative undertaking, author, distributing office and readers working together to develop its possibilities. There are several ways in which you can cooperate:

1. The most immediately helpful, of course, is by means of

gift subscriptions, and Christmas is a peculiarly appropriate time for this. We enclose some blanks and shall be glad to send more if desired. We have, however, two requests to make in this connection—*first*, that you fill out the greeting slip for the reason stated thereon and, *second*, that you select, to receive these gift subscriptions, intelligent, openminded persons likely to subscribe on their own account when the time comes to renew. We are not anxious to build up circulation for its own sake—the dollar a year barely covers basic costs. What we want is to get *WE* into the hands of people who will be interested to read it.

2. Another good way to help is to order eight copies of *WE* for \$1.00 and send them to likely prospects *with a word of personal recommendation*.

3. We can supply you with printed cards to send to the more intelligent among your friends, suggesting that they give *WE* a trial “on a money-back guarantee.”

4. Or we can send you recommendation slips to fill out with name and address of persons to whom you suggest we send sample copies. (We must here mention Ernest Sadler, who sent in 100 of these slips, with \$5.00 to cover the expense, adding, “I will call personally on each of these persons about subscribing.” That’s cooperation 100% plus!)

5. If you prefer just to send us a list of persons to whom you recommend that we send sample copies, *please give us permission to use your name*. We have sent out many hundreds of sample copies without such personal introduction and cannot recall a single instance where a subscription resulted. People are suspicious of literature that arrives anonymously; they dismiss it as “propaganda.”

This is a good point at which to mention that, in our experience, it is a waste of time and money to send *WE* to Big Shots and others who have a large stake in the maintenance of the present economic system. Every now and then some devoted *WE* supporter offers to pay for sending *WE* to all the members of Congress or to other officials, radio commentators, editors, etc. We decline such offers with thanks, as we see no sense in spending our own time and our friends’ money filling waste baskets. To test our opinion on this, we wrote recently

to a friendly liberal Senator, offering to send him *WE* free if he would have time to read it. He replied with Form Letter 29 as follows: "It was good of you to give me your views and I want you to know they will receive my careful attention and consideration."

And speaking of Christmas gifts—as we were a moment ago—let us remind you of the six books by SN which are still available. For studious-minded folk, interested in understanding the world we live in and the one toward which we' are headed, they make acceptable presents. As especially timely we suggest *The Revolution of Our Time*, *The Tragedy of Empire* and *The Soviet Union as a World Power* (from a defeated outcast to a top-ranking nation in less than a generation—why and how). The money you spend to give SN books or *WE* subscriptions as Christmas presents, instead of enriching some merchant, will disseminate ideas that will help to bring enduring "peace on earth" and genuine "goodwill toward men."

AND NOW for some minor items of special interest:

- We still have some clothbound, autographed copies of the first edition of SN's *United World*, which we offer for \$2.00 postpaid. We think it the best book on world government yet written—but we recognize that we may be a bit prejudiced.
- SN has nearly completed the manuscript of his *Principles of Economics*, a book we have long been urging him to write. *WE* readers will be informed when it is ready.
- A friend who writes that he is out of work and can't renew his subscription gives his new address as Prosperity Place, Cincinnati. Hoover prosperity, apparently.
- Following our practice, *WE* financial accounts for 1950 will be professionally audited as promptly as possible after the close of the year. Copies of the auditor's report will be available to anyone interested.
- If sometimes you do not hear from us promptly, please bear in mind that our mail is averaging 200 letters a week and each of them requires some action on the part of our limited and not too experienced staff.

• *Calling Boston and New York.* The dates for SN's lectures next month are: *Boston*, Sun. a.m., Jan. 7; Mon. p.m., Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29—565 Boylston. *New York*, Sun., Jan. 7, (8 p.m.); Tues. (8:15 p.m.) Jan. 9, 16, 23, 30—40 E. 35th.

• The *Monthly Review* editorial of which SN spoke so highly in *WE* 68 (p. 23: "Nowhere have I read a clearer, more convincing answer to the *hate Russia* aspect of the Truman-Acheson policy") has been reprinted in handy leaflet form. We have been given copies for all *WE* readers. We hope you will take an active interest in distributing this timely article. Please note that orders should be sent to New York, *not to us*.

• An anonymous friend in Philadelphia sent us several times last summer a ten-dollar bill with a typed list of persons to whom he (or she) wished us to send SN literature. This is the only way we have of expressing our thanks and reporting that the instructions were carried out. We wish also there were some way of reporting the surprising reactions of Antonio Granados and Paul Spivak.

• The beloved Vermont poet, Sarah Cleghorn, now living in Philadelphia, was given \$20 by a friend to spend as she saw fit. She used the greater part of the money to give *WE* subscriptions to public libraries and Friends' schools, first making sure, however, that *WE* would be welcome.

• J.J.R. sent two subscriptions with this explanation: "One is for a friend whose wife will not tolerate political stuff and would destroy it if it came by mail, but *he wants WE*. The other is for a friend who has been in the habit of borrowing my copy and passing it on to other people while I have other friends waiting for a turn to read it."

• We have some good friends in foreign countries who would like to subscribe to *WE* and also order SN literature but who cannot get foreign exchange for this purpose. They could, however, send us postage stamps, new and used. Have we some philatelist subscribers who would be interested to help us convert the stamps into U.S. currency?

• A. James McDonald writes: "*World Events* and *Monthly Review* are as truly indispensable as any publications I know of. Here is my pledge to send you \$1.00 a month, in addition to

my subscription, and to increase this amount if, as and when my finances improve." A few months ago he favored us with a copy of his book, *The Llano Cooperative Colony and What It Taught* (\$1.00, Box 271, Leesville, La.) an interesting, documented account of that historic undertaking, in which he played an active part.

- Wing Anderson, author, publisher and leader of the Essenes of Kosmon, is including in his outgoing mail cards recommending *WE*, printed at his own expense. He has been an enthusiastic supporter of *WE* from the start and has sent us more subscribers than any other person.

- We have been given—to be sold for the benefit of *WE*—a number of copies of *A Faith to Free the People* (302 pages) by Cedric Belfrage, editor of *National Guardian*. It is the dramatic story of Claude Williams, a preacher born into a poor white family in the South and raised in its most backward traditions but gradually transformed by bitter experience and earnest study into a dynamic leader of the poor of both races in their common struggle. We will send a copy, together with Claude Williams's 64-page booklet, *Religion, Barrier or Bridge to a Better World?* to the early birds who send \$1.00 (and 12 cents in stamps) before the limited supply is gone.

The steadiness and sturdiness of *WE*, despite the current wave of reaction and the general feeling of insecurity, is all the more noteworthy and significant when one bears in mind that *WE* has never had a well-to-do financial backer to put up large sums of money. It has been distinctly a "grass roots" undertaking and in that lies its strength and its promise. As the years have gone by and the weak-kneed have dropped out, *WE* has acquired a corps of stout-hearted, dependable supporters, sincerely anxious to do what they can to help steer our bewildered planet through the dizzy maze of the present world crisis. We know we can count on their continued cooperation.

December 1950

F.A.B.

*Scott Nearing has had no connection with the writing
or publishing of this bulletin.*

