

# Books of the Times

By ORVILLE PRESCOTT

**J**OHAN ROY CARLSON is a soft-spoken, pleasant, agreeable young American of thirty-three. His parents were Armenians and he spent his first twelve years in Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey. As a child he saw enough persecution, massacre and racial bigotry to last him the rest of his life. He came to this country with his family in 1921. In gratitude for the freedom, tolerance and equality he found here he became a passionate supporter of capitalist democracy and the American way of life. As his modest, personal bit toward defending that way of life he spent four and a half years, from the autumn of 1938 until the spring of 1943, investigating the subversive, fascist organizations of the United States.

He went "under cover," joined scores of seditious groups, became a leader among them and the trusted friend of many of the most powerful and vicious individuals in this country, and collected an enormous pile of documents and data running to millions of words. Out of this experience he has written a book, "Under Cover,"\* which is of sensational importance to every man and woman of good-will who hopes for victory in this war and believes that the barbarians within our borders must be defeated as well as those outside. Carlson, of course, is not the author's real name.

## The Menace to Democracy

"The only thing we can hope for from now on is for America to lose this war—to be smashed completely! That's the only way to get rid of democracy. Yes, sir, the only way to save America is for Hitler and Japan to smash us."—Edward Holton James speaking, cultured Yankee aristocrat, nephew of William and Henry James, leader of his own fascist organization.

"This is another revolution, a revolution for a nationalist America. Don't let anyone tell you anything different. It's a revolution against the Jew first, then against democracy, then against the Republican and Democratic parties. Both are rotten. Both are useless. We are going to drive them both out and we are going to run this country with an iron hand, the way Hitler runs Germany. \* \* \* We want strong men. Men to fight for America's destiny and link it with the destiny of Adolf Hitler, the greatest philosopher since the time of Christ!"—Joe McWilliams speaking, rabble rouser and leader of his own fascist organization. Both men are still at large.

One of the most sinister aspects of American fascism brought out in "Under Cover" is that it seems to breed equally well among gangster, fanatic hoodlums like McWilliams, Fritz Kuhn and James Banahan (the Christian Mobilizer leader who raved: "Not faith, hope and charity, but faith, hope and terror. Remember that, men.

Terror! Terror! Terror!") and educated business and political leaders like Seward Collins, the crafty Lawrence Dennis and the "gentleman fascist," John B. Snow. The FBI has clipped the wings of the Pelleys, Deatherages, Vierecks and Winrods, but there are plenty of men in the United States Senate and House of Representatives who manifest respectful admiration for Lawrence Dennis and express opinions not very different from his. Mr. Carlson found that Senators Nye, Wheeler, Reynolds and Walsh and Representatives Day, Fish and Hoffman are considered heroes by fascist sympathizers throughout the country. He doesn't question their patriotism, but he does question their judgment and the company they keep.

## His Findings Given in Detail

"Under Cover" was made possible only because Mr. Carlson must be a consummate actor. While earning a salary by day, at first by working for Fortune and then for several Democratic organizations, Mr. Carlson spent his evenings as an Italian Fascist, George Pagnanelli. He even published temporarily a scurrilous paper that served as his passport and introduction. He found that the scores of fascist organizations overlap, separate and merge, exchange speakers and subversive literature. He went among them in the Middle and Far West, as well as in New York, and found everywhere the same brutal hatred, the same ignorant fanaticism, the same traitorous scheming. Of the hundreds of persons he exposes, most are still free and carrying on their dirty work.

A book such as "Under Cover" cannot be altogether news to readers of newspapers, magazines and books. Its value lies in its impressive piling up of evidence. Letters, documents, first-hand knowledge and quotations, names and addresses are given in copious detail. These men and women are our foes and the foes of our country as much as those at whom our soldiers are shooting. The more we know about them, how their diseased minds work and their evil organizations function, the better for our national welfare. And the corollary of that fact is that "Under Cover" deserves all the attention it can get.

Unfortunately, it may not get much, for it is not well written or well organized. It is divided into hundreds of small sections that make for difficult and confusing reading. And the same kind of people exposed in the same kind of vicious activities become tiresome and monotonous through more than 500 pages. Some people may say: "Why get so excited? Like the poor, cranks and bigots are always with us." The answer to that is: This is the century when the cranks and bigots have already destroyed much of civilization. Those who neglected to take them seriously enough in Europe are dead, in concentration camps, in hiding, or in exile.

\*UNDER COVER. By John Roy Carlson. 544 pages. Dutton. \$3.50.