

# Scratched

By HEYWOOD BROWN

I THINK that one of the most useful kinds of protest that can be made against the fascist regime of Hitler lies in our staying away from the Olympic games in Berlin next year. Boycotts of one sort or another have certain dangers. I will admit that I have changed my mind in regard to organizations of Americans pledged not to buy German goods. In the beginning I opposed it. I still feel that it is a blunderbuss kind of targetry. Some will be hit against whom the charge of anti-Semitism doesn't lie.

But in the case of the Olympic games a decision can be made by the American people themselves. It really is a gesture from the masses of one country to the masses of another. It isn't feasible, of course, to hold a national referendum on the question in an official way, but I am very strongly for straw votes in various sections of the country in order to demonstrate that the withdrawal of our team is an act based upon the approval of citizens in general. I think that magazines, newspapers, and radio stations might well notify their clients to vote on the issue.

As a matter of fact, I made a short test myself over Station WOR. I took a few minutes one night to explain the reasons which seem to me sufficient to justify our keeping an American team away, and then I asked for a postcard poll of simple "Yes" and "No." A great deal of mail came in. In fact, there were more than a thousand letters within the first few days. When the limit of time was up I tabulated the returns and, as I remember, they ran, roughly, something like 1,900 against sending our athletes to Berlin to 100 in favor of it.

Unfortunately I wasn't able to shut off the votes after the date set for the closing of the poll; they are still coming in and running 99 per cent or more in the negative. It has been a little disturbing to me because, like every other radio performer, I like to hear from my public, if any, and I have gone down on certain evenings to the station to find quite a sizable stack of mail waiting for me. And on such occasions I have thought to myself, "Ah, there are people somewhere who liked the little chatty discourse I gave last night on 'Old Days in American Vaudeville.'" Then I started to open the envelopes and found nothing at all except "In my opinion we should not send a team to the Olympics in Germany this year." Apparently I have never said anything on the air in any other discourse which caught and held a single ear.

Indeed, the issue seems to grow slightly confused in some quarters. I've had four or five indignant letters from radio fans saying, "I understand you are conducting a vote as to whether or not we should be represented in the next Olympics. Haven't you got sufficient strength of character to make up your own mind on this point without waiting to use a vote?"

Of course the answer is the simple one that nobody has left it to me, personally, to make the decision. I made up my mind quite a while ago and said so. But if this protest is to be made, it ought of course to be a mass protest. Moreover, I quite agree with the suggestion that in addition to

keeping our Olympic team from Berlin we should undertake to find some other place where the games could be held. Some place where there was no trace of anti-Semitism whatsoever.

I wish it were possible that America might assume the role of host and say to the athletes of the world, "Come here for your competition, to America, the land of liberty, the melting pot, the place of refuge for all people. Here the youth of the world can compete in sportsmanship and amity. With us the best mile runner is the best mile runner regardless of any question of race or religion or political point of view."

I wish we could say that. Now it is true that anti-Semitism in America has no such official indorsement as it receives in Germany. Race and religious prejudice here is on an economic foundation. Anti-Semitism here manifests itself in many subtle ways, and in some which are perfectly palpable. Nobody can deny the use of a quota system in very many of our schools and colleges. By now the so-called psychological test is recognized as a pure fraud to limit Jewish enrolment.

Certainly no doctor can deny that our largest medical schools quite obviously get away from any competitive test in scholastic ranking and choose to take poorer students in many cases if they happen to be Gentiles. And after graduation there are a great many hospitals to which a Jewish interne is never admitted. Those which let down the bars at least make entrance difficult. The Jewish applicant for an internship has to be at least 50 per cent better than his nearest Gentile competitor.

A surgeon said to me once, "But if we made no attempt at curtailment, if we based admission wholly on scholarship, then all our students would be Jewish." If Aryan superiority rests upon nothing more than fraudulent psychological tests, it seems to me that the anti-Semites have no leg on which to stand.

I may say frankly for myself, as an old hypochondriac who is a perfect sucker for doctors, that the physician's race or religion is no concern of mine.

When I get sick I want somebody who's smart enough to cure me.

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[The Labor and Industry Section of *The Nation* is omitted from this issue because of the pressure of space. It will appear as usual next week. The following articles, among others, are scheduled for early issues:

A. J. MUSTE will discuss the proceedings and significance of the recent convention of the American Federation of Labor.

MIRIAM ALLEN DE FORD, who is attending the Mooney hearings now in progress in California, will present a full report of one political prisoner's latest fight for justice.

KATHERINE GAY will contribute a first-hand report of the dramatic trial now going on in Aztec, New Mexico, where ten workers are on trial for their lives.]

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