MAIN-STREAM

A Literary Quarterly

Spring, 1947

THE DEATH MASK OF ANDRE MALRAUX — *Roger Garaudy*

THE GREAT MIDLAND — *Alexander Saxton*

CENTRALIA: A Poem — *Millard Lampell*

THE SUBJECTIVE WAR — *Walter Bernstein*

THE IRON HEEL: Editorial — *Samuel Sillen*

EUGENE ALMAZOV • JOSE L. GONZALEZ • STEFAN HEYM
MARTHA MILLET • STEVE NELSON • ISIDOR SCHNEIDER
IRV SEGALL • WILMA SHORE • OLIVE SUTTON • H. TAYLOR

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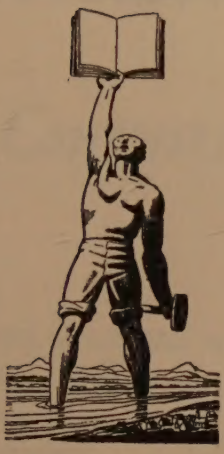

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The Iron Heel

AN EDITORIAL

. .

WITH HIS LOYALTY ORDER of last March, President Truman launched a police inspection of the mind and conscience of America. The decree, though technically limited to government employees, sets a precedent whose sweeping implications can be misjudged only by blind or deceitful men. Coupled with the efforts of the House Un-American Committee to ban the Communist Party and outlaw anti-fascist ideas, the President's Order threatens a Gestapo rule over the American intelligence. In the name of protecting the Republic, our government is sacking the principles on which the Republic was founded. And no writer who has properly read the grim lesson of Germany and Japan will need to be convinced that this is imperatively the time when, in Jefferson's words, we dare not "silence our fears for the safety of our rights."

It was Jefferson, himself denounced as a "French system-monger," who led the fight against the infamous Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 which the latter-day monocrats seek to revive. In the Kentucky Resolutions he warned that "the friendless alien has indeed been selected as the safest subject of a first experiment; but the citizen will soon follow, or rather has already followed, for already has a sedition act marked him as its prey. . . ." And in our own day, those who naively assumed that it was only the alien anti-fascist Gerhart Eisler who was selected for persecution, quickly learned that behind him were over two million government employees marked as the prey of the F.B.I., and behind those two million are the masses of the American people, who are to be mind-printed in Washington. Similarly, the attempt to strangle the Communist Party of the United States is scheduled as a brief prelude, a "first experiment," to be followed by an attempt on every trade union and progressive organization. Jefferson saw through this ruse in 1798; and we who have seen the Nazis use Communists and Jews as the

initial pretext for an assault on every human and democratic value, cannot betray ourselves into this murderous trap.

The trap is sprung for every writer, for every intellectual. One by one the so-called "left" commentators were thrown off the corporation-owned air, until, unappeased, the broadcasting and advertising companies reached William L. Shirer. A writer for the conservative New York *Herald-Tribune,* Mr. Shirer is clearly neither a Communist nor a "fellow-traveller." But as a Berlin correspondent he had personally witnessed the rise of Hitlerism; he was determined to guard jealously his independence as as anti-fascist writer; he was disturbed by the "Truman Doctrine"; and this was of course subversive. Who will be next? How far to the right must one be to earn the privilege of speech?

In the book field, we have witnessed the humiliating spectacle of a New York Board of Education banning Howard Fast's *Citizen Tom Paine.* During the war, it appeared that Paine had at last become an acceptable figure in our schools, which had treated the revolutionary patriot as Theodore Roosevelt's "filthy little atheist"; indeed the repentant city of New Rochelle restored to Paine the citizenship of which he had been unceremoniously deprived in the last years of his life. But the spirit of the times has changed, and Fast's novel, widely acclaimed for its patriotism, has been banned by school officials who concede, without evident embarrassment, that they have not even read the book. And the keepers of the flame in Detroit rushed to imitate this action in New York.

In Georgia the lynching bee against dangerous thoughts takes the form of a malicious assault on Don West's volume of verse, *Clods of Southern Earth.* Mr. West, a minister of the gospel and a professor at Oglethorpe University, has for years courageously opposed the Ku Klux Klan in his native Georgia. His poetry speaks for the common man of the South; it pleads for the unity of Negro and white workers; it lashes the white supremacists who in the persons of Rankin and Bilbo presume to define Americanism for the country. To silence Don West, the Ku Klux Klan elements in Georgia have manufactured a "libel suit." A Georgian named Lewallen—a common name in the South—contends that he was libelled because one of Don West's poems alludes to a man with the same name in Harlan County, Kentucky. The insolence of this charge does not lessen, but rather emphasizes the danger in which the poet is placed by the Ku Klux conspiracy.

Does anybody suppose that the experiences of Shirer, Fast and West—to list just these examples—are coincidental, or that they are unrelated to the

atmosphere of President Truman's Loyalty Order and the machinations of J. Edgar Hoover and the Un-American Committee? The relation is as intimate and inevitable as the link between the burning of the Reichstag and the burning of the books. For it is natural that the writer should be the first to suffer when the blackjack is used to control public opinion. The writer, if he writes truly, is the conscience of the people. He is a danger indeed.

John Rankin and J. Parnell Thomas have therefore announced their intention to "clean up" Hollywood, "clean up" books and magazines, "clean up" theater and radio. And by clean up, they mean, in fact, to scour away the moral sense of the country. They have powerful allies in Hearst, in the Catholic Legion of Decency and in the propaganda chief of the Republican National Committee, Clarence Budington Kelland. The latter speaks for them all when he identifies "bad morals" in writing with "cockeyed politics." Kelland claims that the best products of American culture are "all part of the pattern so strongly influenced by the Communists"—what Hitler, in *Mein Kampf,* called "bolshevism of art." By his standard, writers like Upton Sinclair, Carl Van Doren, Sinclair Lewis, Howard Fast should be suppressed on the ground that their "cockeyed politics" are conducive to "bad morals." And the Goebbels of the G.O.P. is joined by such members of the American Writers Association as George Sokolsky, Eugene Lyons, and the editors of the *New Leader,* all of whom applauded the suppression of *Citizen Tom Paine.*

These G.O.P.-Social Democratic reactionaries are no more content than the Nazis with the blacking-out of the country's cultural heritage. They would like to replace this heritage with monstrous myths and fantasies. They would replace genuine intellectuals with ersatz intellectuals, properly drilled, to produce the counter-novels and the counter-plays which they consider necessary weapons in their counter-democratic orgy. When Eric Johnston appears before the Un-American Committee he readily agrees not only to order anti-Soviet films (of which "The Red Danube" is to be only one sample) but to see to it that films are turned out advising the American workers to abandon strikes and to "increase productivity." The weapon of culture is to be turned against the American people.

"Let us create a new art, an art of our own, a fascist art," Mussolini urged his cultured blackshirts, but the Duce's spiritual henchmen, as an American reporter observed, could only whip a dead horse and call him Pegasus. When D'Annunzio was invited to join Mussolini's Fascist Academy, even this fascist sympathizer was insulted, and he answered in disgust: "A

thoroughbred horse should not mix with jackasses. This is not an insult, but an eugenic-artistic fact."

The attempt to turn American writers into shirted jackasses will fail. The main body of American writers of stature and seriousness is anti-fascist. These writers will not take their orders from Rankin, and some of them who still take their orders from Luce will draw the line at whipping a dead horse and calling him Pegasus.

Indeed, we should have to renounce our entire literary inheritance were we to succumb to the mentality of J. Edgar Hoover and J. Parnell Thomas. What great American writer was willing to yield to the tyranny of big corporations and little minds? What great American writer would be exempt from the terms of Truman's Loyalty Order? Certainly not the Thoreau who stood up in Concord Town Hall and defied the executioners of John Brown: "Treason! Where does such treason take its rise? I cannot help thinking of you as you deserve, ye governments. Can you dry up the fountains of thought?" Certainly not the William Dean Howells who boldly took his stand in defense of Albert Parsons and the other "anarchists" framed at Haymarket. Certainly not the Theodore Dreiser who on joining the Communist Party declared that he was fulfilling the logic of his life.

What American book would pass these new test acts? Lowell's *Bigelow Papers,* which bitterly attacked our aggressive war against Mexico, satirizing the slogan of "increasing the area of freedom" as in fact a cover for extending the area of slavery? Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas,* which warned that our democracy was imperiled by the cannibal ambitions of the business interests? Mark Twain's essays lampooning our pretense that we were moving into the Philippines and China for "benevolent" purposes? Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward,* with its glowing dream of a socialist America? Jack London's *The Iron Heel,* alerting American readers to the possibility of just such men as the Un-Americans taking power in a fascist putsch?

Was Emerson "subversive" when he joined a committee to oppose the war against Mexico? Then so were Whittier, Bryant, Julia Ward Howe, Frederick Douglass, Wendell Phillips. Was William James "subversive" when he opposed the Spanish War and joined the Anti-Imperialist League? Then so were Howells, Mark Twain, Charles Eliot Norton, and Hamlin Garland.

The creed of the democratic writer in America was stated by Emerson in terms which are precious for us today:

"The scholar or critic defending the cause of slavery, of arbitrary govern-

ment, of monopoly, of the oppressor is a traitor to his profession. He is not company for clean people. It is not enough that the work should show a skillful hand, ingenious contrivance and admirable polish and finish; it should have a commanding motive in the time and condition in which it was made. There is always the previous question: 'How came you on that side? You are a very elegant writer, but you can't write up what gravitates down.' "

How came you on that side? This is the question every honest writer urgently asks himself today. For there are only two sides, and for writers the difference between them is the difference between life and death. One is the side of the people; it is the side of labor and liberty, the United Nations and peace. The other is the side of the giant corporations and their imperialist drive toward world domination as expressed through the "Truman Doctrine," which is the antithesis of the Monroe Doctrine; it is the side which, as Henry Wallace has pointed out, sets America against the world and turns a minority of the country against the majority; it is the side that seeks to outlaw ideas and to rule by force.

In the face of those who would convert our country into a jailer among nations, the American writer today may well echo the challenge of William Vaughn Moody to the imperialists at the dawn of our century:

"O ye who lead,
Take heed!
Blindness we may forgive, but baseness we will smite."

SAMUEL SILLEN

Centralia

By MILLARD LAMPELL

. .

"THIS IS A PLEA TO YOU TO PLEASE SAVE OUR LIVES. PLEASE MAKE THE DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND MINERALS ENFORCE THE LAWS AT NUMBER 5 MINE AT WHICH WE ARE EMPLOYED BEFORE WE HAVE A DUST EXPLOSION LIKE JUST HAPPENED IN KENTUCKY AND WEST VIRGINIA.

"IN 1945 WE PREFERRED CHARGES AGAINST THE MINE MANAGER AND SUPERINTENDENT OF OUR MINE FOR IGNORING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE MINE INSPECTOR. AN INVESTIGATING COMMISSION WAS APPOINTED, WHICH INCLUDED ROBERT WEIR, A BOSS FOR THE COAL COMPANY . . ."

—Letter from officials of Local 52, Mine Workers Union, to Governor Green.

I

In the morning,
Spring morning with its child's face,
Wind quiet on the hills,
Sun warm on the mineshafts,
Sun without sound on the company houses,
In the morning, the green morning.

It could have been gentle thunder
(But there were no clouds in the porcelain sky),
It could have been a fast freight rolling west

(But then they would not have blown the sirens),
In the morning, the bright morning.

The women waited, wearing their fear like shawls.
All the clocks of the earth ticked slowly,
Life moved with the swing of the pendulum,
Death was a delicate chime waiting to strike the hour,
In the morning, the silent morning.

No one wept but Joe Kubik
Who did not go down that day;
He stood among the women like an island in a sea of loneliness,
Crying with a high and terrible sound.
A child's shout died in the air,
A dog's bark faded,
A grandmother murmured *Hail Mary Full of Grace . . .*
As they brought up the bodies
In the morning, the murderous morning.

II

In the afternoon,
Rescue men told of the stink,
Like all the corpses of the world,
And a note found on a body:
"Mike is in bad shape. Moaning and going on.
It is seeping in on us—6:30 a.m.
God bless you all. Tell Dad to quit the mines.
Take care of Mom, not like this."
They told of the faces,
Stretched flat, pleading a last breath of air,
And a head burrowed into the tunnel floor
(No hiding place down here),
In the afternoon, the calm afternoon.
They laid the dead at the drift mouth,
Bodies naked from the blast,
Eyes bulging—they could not close the eyes.

The dead lay remarking the innocent sky,
In the afternoon, the long afternoon.

They lay under blankets.
Thomas Bush, Elmer Moss,
"Chub" Buehne of the blues guitar and the young laughter,
Jake Schmidt, president of the union,
In the afternoon, the fading afternoon.

III

In the evening,
Mineshaft against the dark sky like a gravestone,
And the lights, broken chips of the moon along the hill,
And the night wind cold,
The stars cold,
In the evening, the muffled evening.

After the children were in bed,
Unsleeping, staring at the dark walls,
The women sat with their grief,
Hands cupped over the small flame of remembrance,
Grief and hate like great bells
Tolling up the hill to the operators' houses,
Tolling across the state to the Capitol,
To the high court, the White House,
Tolling one, two . . .
In the evening, in the evening,
The bitter evening.

The Death Mask of Andre Malraux

By ROGER GARAUDY

. .

ANDRE MALRAUX is the central character and indeed the sole character of his books. In his novels it is his own face he contemplates as if in a multiple mirror. Everything else—other human beings, nations, classes with their torments and hopes, their defeats or their revolutions—only serves as a background to set in relief a profile designed to be triumphant or tragic.

Here I am not criticizing the writer's talent, which is undeniably great, but the man who expresses himself in his art. This man interests me because he bears witness to an era, to a class, and to its decadence of which he is the fine flower.

It is no accident, as we shall see, that the Catholic newspaper, *La Croix,* greets this "tragic atheist" with deep sympathy; that now, at the beginning of 1947, Malraux is replacing Jean-Paul Sartre in circles that are looking for a revolutionary ideology which does not lead to revolution; and that, in short, this "Red" is the favorite son of the reactionaries. The world of the bored and especially the world of the frightened—the world of decadence—needs an ersatz-type of spiritual adventure for the titillation of its inner life; and even more than that, it needs "spiritual revolutions" in order to avoid real ones and to sidetrack demands for social change.

PORTRAIT OF THE DEAD MAN

A decadent class that still persists in calling itself the "élite" has found in Malraux its most brilliant "medium." In a lecture given November 4, 1946, at the Sorbonne, Malraux posed this problem: "On this soil of Europe, yes or no, is man dead?" And he added this comment: "At the end of the 19th century the voice of Nietzsche again uttered the ancient cry heard on the Archipelago: God Is Dead! . . . and he restored to that phrase all its tragic meaning. What that meant was very well known: it meant that the world was waiting for the reign of man. . . . Above all that we see, above these ghost towns and these cities in ruins, a still more terrible presence is hovering over Europe. For ravaged and bleeding Europe is not more ravaged and bleeding than the face of the man it had hoped to bring forth."

Thus Malraux the "European" is the receiver in bankruptcy of the "new order" in Europe, which others before him evoked in the same desperate tone and which they would again like to foist on us with a few variations and a different name: "Western civilization." This "Western civilization" (in the Anglo-Saxon version) would drive us into the same bankruptcy as its European predecessor (in the German version). Malraux knows it, for he concludes: "Whatever humanism we seek, it is doubtful whether it will save us from war."

Who is bankrupt in all this? And what man is about to die? The bankruptcy is that of a decaying system whose reprieved corpse is still poisoning the "European world" (German version) or the "Western world" (Anglo-Saxon version). The man about to enter his death-throes is the representative of a dying class: when this man, bound to a class, has that "conscious will" which Malraux glorifies, he can only grow conscious of these contradictions, these dead-ends, this death. And he becomes a prophet of disgust and despair, with their evasions and opiates, a prophet of eroticism, opium, sexual perversion, terrorism, etc. . . . "All suffer," says the opium-smoking philosopher Gisors in *Man's Fate,* "and each one suffers because he thinks. . . . The consciousness of life can be nothing but anguish." There is no perspective or way out for this dying class, in which, in the words of a critic who admires Malraux, "each character grows conscious of himself in an experience that reveals to him the absurdity of the world and the abjectness of destiny."

To find the sources of these "idealisms" with their existentialist, "humanist," surrealist variations, it is less important to go back to Heidegger or Kierkegaard than to see in them the literature and metaphysics of a world at a dead end.

Malraux's work gives us a striking portrait of the dead man, whose spokesman he is. His testimony is much more powerful than that of Sartre and complements that of François Mauriac in this literature of gravediggers.

What, in Malraux, are the attributes of the dead man? First of all, he is solitary and he is eternal. Malraux gives us the most perfect formula for this in his *Days of Wrath.* Here is proof, if proof were needed, that it is not enough to choose a revolutionary theme to create a revolutionary work of art. Depicting the Communist Kassner, Malraux gives us the most *reactionary* allegory of man, in the deepest sense of the term. "The world of a work like this," he writes in his preface, "the world of tragedy, is the ancient world still—man, the crowd, the elements, woman, destiny. It reduces itself

to two characters, the hero and his sense of life." There we have Narcissus comfortably facing his mirror.

In love as in war or revolution, Malraux's man knows only himself. In *Man's Fate* Ferral "never went to bed with anyone but himself, but he could do this only if he were not alone. . . . He would possess through this Chinese woman who was awaiting him, the only thing he was eager for: himself. He needed the eyes of others to see himself, the senses of another to feed himself." And in all of Malraux's work "the others" serve no other purpose but that of giving the hero an opportunity to reveal himself. They fulfill their function perfectly when they are tortured or in agony: Malraux needs the suffering of all in order to live violently. Almost all his characters illustrate what might be called the "Nero complex": they enjoy themselves only in slaughter.

Nowhere does the hero's power unfold in generosity: Katov in *Man's Fate* gives his poison to his prison-comrades in the same spirit as that which drives Perken (in *The Royal Way*) to the Mois and their torture. It is always self-glorification. Garine confesses in *The Conquerors:* "I do not love men, I do not even love the poor." And another character speaks in the same vein: "Never have I felt as strongly as today the isolation of which Garine spoke to me, the solitude in which we are, the distance separating what is profound in us from the movements of this crowd, and even from its enthusiasm." The blows struck on the walls of Kassner's prison cell only furnish an orchestration to his personal anguish. The presence of others only serves as a catalyst for his self-revelation.

In Kassner the Communist, it is not two classes, two forces of history confronting one another, with all the originality and marvelous newness that this historic drama can produce within man in a given year and under given circumstances. No, it is eternal man, exposed to obstacles as eternal as himself. These obstacles may be the virgin forest, as in *The Royal Way,* or fascism as in *Man's Hope:* they do not in the least change "man's" relations with his "fate."

Action in Malraux is never rooted in real, historic oppression; nor does it ever attain a triumphant climax. Gisors "felt the *basic suffering* trembling within him, not that which comes from creatures or from things, but that which gushes forth from man himself and from which life attempts to tear us away." There lies the source, I would almost call it the abstract, mythological source of the initial suffering; and here, in *The Royal Way,* is the end-point, which is not a solution but a kind of slaking: "Could he but break

away from the drab and dusty life of those around him, and at last attain something beyond, something outside himself . . .!" Between the two, suspended in the void, reigns man and his acts. Here is Perken in "action": "the infinite humiliation of a man caught in the snare of his appointed fate. Grappling with the prescience of his degradation, he felt a rush of sensual rage sweep over him, like an orgasm. . . . A grotesque notion flashed across his mind—of the punishments assigned to Pride. . . . He felt an insensate longing that such torments should exist, so that, in their extremity, a man might be enabled to spit in the face of torture, and defy it with full consciousness, with all his will, though it should make him shriek with agony. And such was his wild elation at the thought that he was risking more than death, so vividly did he see it as his revenge upon the universe, his warrant of release from man's estate, that he was conscious of an inward struggle, an effort to fight down an overpowering hallucination, a kind of ecstasy." There in résumé is the complete and "tragic" curve of André Malraux: from humiliation to frenzy.

In each of his works he begins all over again with the same indifference toward the ideals and social interests of his fighters, with the same skepticism as to the usefulness of their collective efforts.

MYTH OF THE ETERNAL MAN

But why, one may ask, after *The Royal Way* did he choose only revolutions as the backdrop for his personal dramas? The Napoleonic formula of his essay on Laclos* gives us the answer: "Tragedy, in our times, is politics."

Man, eternal man, that is to say, the *myth* of man is here torn out of its social and historic context. Politics is only a stage-decoration: what *Man's Hope* tells us of the anarchist printer, Puig, expresses the essence of Malraux's thought: "He had always looked on the Spanish revolution as another Jacquerie. Since he saw no hope for the world, exemplary revolts were the utmost he could hope from anarchism. And so for him every political crisis resolved itself into a test of character and courage."

This theme is fundamental in all Malraux's work. Later in *Man's Hope* he again expresses it, this time in his own name: "The business of the revolution is to solve its own problems, not ours. Ours depend on ourselves alone.

* Choderlos de Laclos, author of the late 18th century novel, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, a penetrating psychological study of love and manners in the *ancien régime*.

. . . No state, no social structure can create nobility of character, nor intellectual qualities; the most we can expect of it is favorable conditions."

Malraux has forsaken the revolutionary teachings of our 18th century materialist philosophers, Helvetius and Diderot, who showed how our personal greatness depends on "social structures." At the same time, Malraux has broken with the great tradition of the French novel—the tradition of Balzac and Stendhal, of Maupassant and Zola, of Barbusse and Aragon. Man, in this tradition, cannot be understood apart from his environment, of which he is the highest and most subtle expression. The French classical novel was based on the physical man; Malraux's novels are based on the metaphysical man. That is why they lose all revolutionary content.

"Does there exist any data on which the notion of man can be based?" the Altenburg intellectuals ask in Malraux's latest novel.*

This metaphysical approach to man leads quite naturally to an aristocratic and reactionary conception of social life. Instead of humbly learning from the people, instead of watching man in the process of being born as did Louis Aragon when he wrote of the men of the Resistance as "a witness of the martyrs,"** Malraux muses on the tomb of "the dead man" and continues the prejudices that have brought this man to decadence and doom. He continues to believe that it behooves a so-called "élite" of intellectuals detached from life, the philosophizing adventurers of his novels, "to create man" or "re-create reason."

Expect nothing of the people and their struggles; expect everything of the metaphysical onanism of this "intellectual élite," that is, of the tiny group of questioners and answerers he has set up in his books by multiplying portraits of himself. Such is the new edition of "the enlightened despotism" which Malraux offers as the last word of his political wisdom.

Man's Hope is dominated by this preoccupation: "Reason has to be rebuilt on a new basis. . . . The only hope that the New Spain has of keeping that for which you and Jaime and so many others are fighting, is that somehow the thing which we've been trying our best to inculcate year after year may be preserved . . . the quality of man." After which this teacher of humanity pours himself out another glass of brandy (like Gisors smoking a new pipe of opium), and still fails to see in his alcoholic and metaphysical fog that a *new* man is being forged in the struggle.

Several pages further, in the midst of a people offering thousands of

* *Les Noyers d'Altenbourg*, Malraux's most recent novel, as yet untranslated.
** One of the pen-names of Louis Aragon during the French Resistance movement.

martyrs to win their right to live, another decadent esthete, Scali, asserts: "All the same, some men will have to be taught again the art of living. . . ." As if that were an intellectual's privilege, instead of his learning life from those who win life, create it, and who are ready to sacrifice it.

Four pages later this "man of quality" preens himself and defines the role of the "élite": "The only guarantee that an enlightened policy will be followed by a popular government isn't our theories but our presence, now and here. The moral standard of our government depends on our efforts and on our steadfastness."

We are reminded of Carlyle, of the hero and hero-worship. That is where this line of thought in Malraux leads. In his November, 1946, lecture, he declared: "The Church is of no importance here, because in this domain the Saints are all-important; the army is of no importance because the heroes are all-important; and at bottom, students, it does not matter in the least for any one of you, whether you are Communist, anti-Communist, liberal, or no matter what, for the only real problem is to know how—above these structures—and in what form we can re-create man." As if the whole of intellect, with our reasons for living and the creation of man, were not being staked each day in our struggles for bread and freedom!

DESPAIR AS A REASON FOR BEING

This man, dead because he has divorced himself from the people, from their sorrows, their hopes, and their angers, this solitary and eternal man is a desperate man.

Malraux's world, the only one that exists for one who refuses to fight the existing order head-on, is that of despair. Malraux himself defines it in his preface to Faulkner's *Sanctuary:* "A world of only the crushed."

Everything in his books assumes the somber hue of fate, sorrow, or death. In his prison, the Communist hero of *Days of Wrath,* Kassner, is not sustained by the certainty of any ideals or by the presence of any "brotherhood of man" in the struggle. What Malraux wrongly calls "brotherhood" is only the echo of other despairs. In this desperate solitude, "his courage had assumed the form of death"; "hope itself was a form of suffering"; "what was man's freedom but the knowledge and manipulation of his fate?" For the trapped man of Malraux as for the beaten man of Sartre, hope and despair, clarity and absurdity become equivalent and identical.

Malraux, the motionless and solitary Malraux, who has not undergone

any evolution in a quarter of a century of adventures, wars and revolutions because he has travelled over the world wrapped in himself, has not changed his vision of the world from his early *Temptation of the West* to his recent *Wrestling With the Angel:* "At the heart of European man, dominating the great movements of his life, there is a basic absurdity," asserted the Chinese Ling in Malraux's first published essays. And he analyzed this absurdity, breeder of despair: "Despite its accurate power, the European evening is wretched and empty, empty as a conqueror's soul." No better definition of the moral decay of imperialist capitalism could be found. And the man who does not see any forces of the future rising up against it must come to the conclusion: "There is no ideal to which we can sacrifice ourselves, for we know the lies in all of them, we who do not know what Truth is." This world is aimless. And the life of a man, who does not struggle to destroy it with the clear-sighted vision of another social order, is a desperate life, a life which, rebellious and embittered, merely waits for death.

This grimace of life creates all the tragedy in Malraux's works. What pleases him in an insurrection is not its positive surge toward life, not its enthusiasm, but the intensity of lyric disorder which it substitutes for the routine disorder of the old régime. The intensity of this temporary disorder allows the individual to furnish variants of himself, to experience his potential personalities.

Disorder is indispensable to Malraux the negator. He does not exist and does not fight save against something—not for something. "I think," says Kyo in *Man's Fate,* "that Communism will make dignity possible for those with whom I am fighting. . . ."

"What do you call dignity? . . ."

"The opposite of humiliation."

Then what becomes of dignity in a social order that is no longer humiliating to the mass of men? What would become of Malraux's heroes if there was nothing left to destroy? To them the triumph of a revolution would be a disappointment and a defeat: man loses consciousness of himself as soon as the apocalyptic frenzy of the battle ceases.

There is nothing else in man's fate but enslavements and their negation. And man, were he to get out of this desperate situation, would lose his reason for being and his dignity.

For of what use can action be if it is without content? Freedom, if it is without content? Existence without content? Consciousness, if it has no other content save itself? In a famous chapter in *Man's Hope* Malraux

counterposes "being" and "doing." But the fundamental question remains unanswered: being whom, and doing what?

In Malraux action does not get its value or significance from the reality it transforms in society or in man. "It seems to me," Ling the Chinese asserts, "that you attach too much importance to what is called by almost universal consent reality." Action has no other end but itself: it is the art for art's sake of a human existence. Sacrifice has no justification outside itself: "He who sacrifices himself participates in the greatness of the cause to which he has sacrificed himself. But I see no other greatness in this cause except in that which it owes to sacrifice. It is without intelligence."

What counts in action is only the intoxication it gives. It expresses nothing else but what Perken in *The Royal Way,* speaking of a sexual experience, calls "flaying the senses to satiety."

With this nihilist perspective, attributing a goal to action means debasing it for it means limiting it.

The glamor of this adventurous activity is freedom. Malraux's freedom is twin to Sartre's. Liberty is attained in this delirium caused by the nearness of blood, torture, and death. Freedom, which in Sartre confronts nothingness, is the corridor to death in Malraux. Being and one's consciousness of being have no savor except in the hunger for death.

Death is the measure and salt of life. It is the end-point and apotheosis of action, which is only a delayed suicide. This profound defeatism runs through all of Malraux's writings and gives them their reactionary stamp. To a revolutionary, it is not death but creation that is the measure of life. In Malraux action is merely a Pascalian amusement, or better still, an intoxication. It means forgetting an intolerable consciousness. But what is intolerable in our consciousness is the presence of an intolerable society—and the revolutionary role of action is to change this world, not to escape from the consciousness we have of it.

ERSATZES FOR DEATH

The annoying thing about death is that it happens only once: to weave it into the fabric of life, one must find ersatzes for it. This "ecstasy toward the depths" which death produces can be created artificially by opium, alcohol, drugs, terrorism, or adventure. All these flights are escapes which, for a time, tear us away from the grip of fate. The all-important thing in this kind of living is for each individual to find the proper drug.

Gisors embodies this wisdom: "There is always a need for intoxication: this country has opium, Islam has hashish, the West has woman. . . . Ch'en and murder, Clappique and his madness, Katov and the revolution, May and love, himself and opium."

This ethic of decadence rules over Malraux's world as it ruled over the *Satyricon* of Petronius. Voluptuousness has the smell of death. When Perken made love, "he too closed his eyes, thrown back upon himself as on a noxious drug, drunk with a wild desire violently to crush out of existence this stranger's face that urged him on to death."

Let us not linger over this company of monsters; let us consider only Malraux's favorites: the terrorists. He prefers them because the raw material they work in is death. If one can die but once, one can kill several times and thus enjoy the orgasm of death. Ch'en enters into a trance as he is about to commit murder:

"You want to make a kind of religion of terrorism?"—Ch'en's exaltation was growing. All words were hollow, absurd, too feeble to express what he wanted of them.

"Not a religion. The meaning of life. The . . . the complete possession of oneself. Total. Absolute. To know. Not to be looking, looking, always, for ideas, for duties. In the last hour I have felt nothing of what used to weigh on me. Do you hear? Nothing."

This adventurous vision of men shapes Malraux's opinions concerning revolutionaries: according to him, the International Brigades in Spain were made up as follows: "The sort of volunteer we got at first was usually a bit of a lunatic or a bit of a hero. Sometimes both at once." Elsewhere in *Man's Hope:* "The war assimilated mercenaries and volunteers alike in a romantic venture."

And it is in this sense that Malraux makes revolution mysterious. Action is not interesting except when it is studied as if at arm's length. Man faces his activity as an artist his creation: he is external and superior to it: "A man devotes to any line of action only a limited part of himself; and the more that line of action sets up to be 'totalitarian,' the smaller is the part of him involved."

So this master craftsman is as reassuring as he is attractive to the decadent upper class: he knows how to produce apocalyptic thrills, but with respect to action he is well-bred enough to hold it comfortably at arm's length. Only thus can the "élite" continue to claim their monopoly of things of the "spirit."

This Don Juan of revolution brings back a reportage from hell. But when you look at it closely, this hell is not dangerous. It is not the hell of the "wretched of the earth"; it is the hell which the writer bears in himself, his spiritual anguish.

CAREER OF A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

But of course you must persuade everyone around you that this spiritual revolution is a "real" revolution. To accomplish that, you have to have an authentic witness. So Malraux becomes the "revolutionary type"—even if history does not confirm it, legend will. And Arthur Koestler, in his *Yogi and the Commissar,* supplies Malraux with the revolutionary halo.

This new transformation is as subtle as the first one. How is one to fit into the dazzling legend of revolution the real history of this desperate soldier of fortune?

His career and wealth began right after World War I, with a journey to the Far East in which a passion for archaeology, a spirit of adventure, and financial speculations were inextricably combined. Purified and appropriately presented, that exploit resulted in *The Royal Way* and *Temptation of the West.* His search for Oriental bas-reliefs brought him close to the upheavals of the Chinese Revolution. From 1925-1927 he was with the Chinese Kuomintang: his personal part in the movement consisted of organizing, with the Committee of Twelve, the adventurist Canton Commune, which ended in the slaughter of masses of workers and democrats. Fortified by this experience, which furnished him with the theme for *The Conquerors* and *Man's Fate,* he returned to France just in time to enter into relations with Trotsky, thenceforth his spiritual father.

In August, 1936, he arrived in Spain as head of the *España* air squadron, with a duly signed contract by which he got a double salary paid out in dollars in Paris and in *pesetas* in Madrid. This mixture of love of risk and mercenary preoccupations resulted in disorder and a breakdown of discipline in the squadron, which nevertheless did contain some truly heroic fighters for freedom. In October of that year, Malraux, refusing to bow to military discipline, left the squadron and the country. He returned to Spain as a movie-producer. This was the period of *Man's Hope.*

By 1939, Malraux's anti-Communism, already shown in Spain, was violent. This anti-Communism, closely bound up in him with contempt for the common people, led him in the French Resistance movement to work with the British Intelligence Service instead of the masses.

After liberation he became a cabinet minister under General Charles de Gaulle. He was still collaborating, not with the people, but with those who despised the people.

His life attests to the decadence of a social system and a class. His work is a testimonial to our times; but it expresses everything that is at present dying and in decomposition, not that which is coming to birth and growing. Malraux's "conscious will" gives us the consciousness of a civilization that realizes it is dying. His is a desperate conscience. An uneasy conscience, Hegel called it. "I do not consider society evil, capable of being improved; I consider it absurd" (*Man's Fate*). Albert Camus speaks in the same vein. Sartre is filled with nausea by this world. In François Mauriac it inspires daily laments and novels whose realism throws a pitiless light on the baseness of a class. All of these writers give a metaphysical twist to the contradictions of a social system. Each one of them attributes to an eternal man the contradictions they find in themselves, which are those of a class and a social system. That is the basis of the mythology which Marx called "alienation." It is a profoundly reactionary attitude because by projecting into eternity these contradictions of a specific period, it turns away from destroying their historic roots. The revolutionary attitude is just the reverse: if I realize that my problems and contradictions are the problems and contradictions of a social system, I shall only look for the solution of these problems and contradictions in the transformation of that social system. That is why dialectical materialism is the only basis for revolutionary thinking: it sees consciousness and its dramas only as the consciousness of a reality that is not altogether contained in myself. The world is not in me; I am in the world.

That is the first link in the great chain: if the reply to my anguish demands a transformation of the world, that transformation requires the participation of the masses of mankind. Only a real revolution will put an end to the unhappy consciousness by bringing about an objective solution of the contradictions that the consciousness reflects and transposes. Only then is revolution affirmation and creation, not negation and revolt; only then is it joy, not despair.

To Malraux, revolution is not the solution of a problem, it is the opportunity for lyrical gestures. At bottom there is an unleashing of elemental forces with blind devotion and bloody sacrifices. In this somber apocalyptic-like setting flashes the lightning of "great personalities—with the masses as their step ladder," in the words of Blanqui.

Conjuring up this disorder from the nameless masses, Malraux, god of

chaos, draws from it the anguish of the "élite," the escapism of the privileged, the metaphysical alibi of a class at bay. This is precious alchemy for the ruling classes: they are ready to applaud all these transmutations, all these sleight-of-hand tricks: those of Sartre, those of Koestler, and those of Malraux. The main thing is to make a spiritual phenomenon of the revolution, a biblical parable—"wrestling with the Angel." At this level it no longer threatens the security or privileges of the few. Moreover, this "revolutionary spirituality" supplies a solid foundation to anti-Communism. It is awkward and sometimes difficult to attack the Communists' national policies or some concrete phase of their activity: so blessed be the Koestlers, Sartres, or Malraux's who are each at hand to offer noble, metaphysical, spiritual reasons for despising and hating the Communists in order to justify the struggle against them.

THE MAN WITH THE KNIFE BETWEEN HIS TEETH—1947 VERSION

All of Koestler's *Darkness at Noon,* the French publication of which was financed by Ernest Bevin, is contained in miniature in a few lines of *Man's Hope.* An anarchist leads the attack: "I say that Communists are turning priests. For you, being a revolutionary means just being cleverer than the next fellow. . . . You're soaked in the Party, in discipline, in plotting and scheming. If a man doesn't belong, you don't give him a square deal; you've not a scrap of decency towards him."

This concoction, this caricature has in present-day anti-Communist literature replaced the gruesome image of the "man with the knife between his teeth" so prevalent in anti-Bolshevik propaganda after 1917. Our esthetes and sophisticates must be pretty frightened indeed if they are satisfied with that!

The Communist and his party in Malraux's books—except when Malraux blows him up with his personal philosophy as in the case of Kassner in *Days of Wrath*—is a wonderfully simple character, easy to hate. This mythological puppet obeys a single iron law: discipline, obedience. As someone in *Man's Hope* says: "Formerly, our people were disciplined because they were Communists; now plenty of people become Communists because the Party stands for discipline." One thing is conceded to these robots: "They have all the virtues of action and only those."

That is what the psychology of the "pure" Communist amounts to in

André Malraux's works. But at bottom is there anything else in Koestler's Gletkin or his Bolsheviks? In reality, one doesn't have to bother about psychology with the Communists: it's enough to present a puppet, to set up a scarecrow and to instill fear. When it is a question of fighting the Communists, the refined esthetes are no longer so choosy. What matters the method chosen? What of it if it is vulgar? The main thing is for the Communist to lose all semblance of humanity! Once he is dehumanized, we are freed of all human obligations toward him: he is outside humanity's law.

And when one has manufactured such a mechanical, soulless Communist Party, one can only hate it: "You know," says Negus the anarchist, "the Communists are good workers. I can work with them. But as to liking—no! I've done my damnedest, but I can't get to like 'em!" So the next step is to refuse to "work" with those unpleasant robots—and that was exactly what Malraux did when he airily refused to have anything to do with the Military Committee of the Spanish Communist Party in 1936, or when he would not allow members of the F.T.P. Resistance movement (*Francs-Tireurs et Partisans*) to participate in parachute-jumps with the British in 1944. These caricatures have a meaning: they furnish justifications for the most rabid kind of anti-Communism.

What is much more serious is that when he assails the Communists, Malraux is really attacking the whole French tradition of reason and progress, the entire revolutionary 19th century born of the 18th century philosophy of enlightenment and of the high hopes of 1789 and 1793. Is it not curious how it is always the same men who, seeking "to erase '89 from history," always attack the Communists! Malraux the European, the Westerner, having dangled before our eyes his mechanical Bolshevik, then blithely condemns Communism for the spiritual hold it has gained. He turns on reason, on progress, on the 19th century. In his lecture of November 4, 1946, at the Sorbonne, which has become a kind of manifesto for the followers of the pro-fascist Charles Maurras, he asserted: "I believe that European values have nothing in common with those of the 19th century. . . . At the present time, what are the values of the West? We have seen enough to realize that they are certainly not rationalism or progress. . . .The strength of the West is the acceptance of the unknown."

Malraux is haunted by the shadow of Nietzsche as Sartre is by the shadow of Heidegger: they are two variants of what was generally called several months ago "existentialism," which was only a new and barbarous name for

the latest version of this three-fold contempt for reason, reality, and man, characteristic of all decadent modes of thinking.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

And when this contempt has destroyed, within man and around him, all hope of the future and every chance of progress, the way is open to religion.

Fifteen years ago, in a lecture called "European Youth," Malraux asserted: "Our civilization, since it has lost hope of finding the meaning of the spiritual world in the sciences, is devoid of any spiritual aims." From that time on the Church was on the look-out for him. Mauriac was not wrong when, more than ten years ago, he made this analysis in his *Diary:* "Man, according to Malraux, prisoner of his materialist jail, shut up in a mechanized world, without any avenue of escape to eternity, finds his greatness only in despair; and with despair he loses his whole reason for being."

The Catholic Church knows how much it can get from these alchemists of despair who make of revolution a spiritual phenomenon, of freedom the tearing down not the building up of something that exists, and of disorder an apocalypse in which the human being asserts himself; it is well aware of the value of these magicians who exorcise everything it combats: science and joy. The Church does not burn these individuals at the stake as it once burned reputed witches. It utilizes them and guides them: they may smooth the path for a future believer. They are adept in steering an enthusiastic middle-class youth away from political activity and in leading him into such a blind alley of despair that the only thing left for him to do is to "stretch out his arms to the Liberator." O excellent propagators of the faith!

An editorial in the Catholic newspaper, *La Croix,* on December 20, 1946, entitled "To Save Man," is devoted to Malraux. Listen to this outburst of jubilation: "André Malraux's lecture . . . marks an important stage in contemporary thought . . . by sincerely posing the problem of man. . . . It has been clearly demonstrated that science has not served mankind. 'Bikini replies,' says Malraux. . . . The atom bomb proves to us the bankruptcy of science. Drunk with its discoveries, the 19th century substituted science, which it considered all-powerful, for metaphysics. . . . Malraux is right to mistrust optimism concerning progress. . . . We share his point of view concerning the agony of thought in the past century. . . ." And the author replies to Malraux's "anguished question" in the only way a question thus posed can be answered: "It is a question of restoring God to the uprooted helpless man of our time."

And that is the old familiar rut to which Malraux leads us! No wonder the fascist intellectual, Drieu la Rochelle, greeted him as "the new man."

Malraux's success arises from the same causes as the return to religion of the present day bourgeoisie: Voltairean in the period of its greatness and church-going in the period of its decline. Malraux is a medium for a dying class and a dying social system because he furnishes a psychological transposition and a metaphysical justification of their disorder and agony.

The teachings of Malraux and those of the Church have this in common: there is no human solution, here on this earth, to our problems. The Catholic Church, as well as the ruling class in general, asks no more than this of its thinkers: not to draw conclusions.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Our philosophers of the Intelligence Service are hard at work. In all of them we find the same false antitheses: in Koestler, darkness at noon, the Yogi and the Commissar; in Malraux, being and doing, morality and politics. Furthermore, all the antitheses of our philosophers are found on the path of thought to action. "Always there is a conflict between the man who acts and the conditions of his action," Malraux writes in *Man's Hope;* and elsewhere, "Action . . . always involves injustice." Already our hero is perplexed and paralyzed. In this uneasy equilibrium of a social system on the brink of collapse, in which every real movement compromises its entire economy based on injustices and privileges, on enslavement and slaughter, is there any doctrine more reassuring to the possessing class than this doctrine which teaches that the effective human being is a soulless brute (Koestler's Commissar) and that purity demands the renunciation of action (Koestler's Yogi)? Malraux, in a key chapter in *Man's Hope* had already written that whoever wants "to do" ceases "to be" and whoever wants "to be" ceases "to do": "The Communists, you see, *want to get things done.* Whereas you (the Christians) and the anarchists, for different reasons, want to *be* something. . . . That's the tragedy of a revolution like this one. Our respective ideals are so different: pacifism and the need to fight in self-defense; organization and Christian sentiment; efficiency and justice—nothing but contradictions."

It is characteristic of the ideology of a decaying class not to be able to conceive of agreement between man and the universe. The contradictions of the system are opposed to the conscious mastery of the forces of nature. The world appears hostile to a society paralyzed by its inner disorder.

In this society the masters of chaos fear above all lest the contradictions be sharpened and then overcome. Unable or unwilling to conceive of a logical action being built on the ruins of its disorder, they retain only the negative side of this action, since to them it is only destruction. Then the antitheses between means and ends multiply, and all the elegies on how action destroys the delicacies of "the inner life." Action becomes the badge of louts if not of savage brutes. Once again aristocracy and distinction consist of not drawing conclusions, of not acting, of swaying endlessly between "yes" and "no," between purity and efficiency, charity and justice, victory and pity, the Yogi and the Commissar, morals and politics. This oscillation gives one an illusion of the infinite since it keeps on going all the time. And that is what our elegant decadents, "the most human men," in Malraux's phrase, call profundity.

THE SONG OF THOSE WHO LOVE THE FUTURE

As against the masters of chaos, there are those who love the future. To them, greatness is not in the consciousness of disorder and despair, but in the indomitable will to overcome them. "To make exploitation more intolerable by becoming conscious of the exploitation," Marx said; but our consciousness of the baseness of our present status is but the first moment in our action that fights against it.

It is in the name of this greatness that we fight against the reactionary defeatism in Malraux. The first chapter of his *Psychology of Art* sounds like a death knell: "The hope of a new art opening upon an open world has ceased together with the hope of a new science that was going to conquer that world. The European spirit, its vitality threatened, is undergoing a transformation—as the Medieval spirit, plagued by endless wars, went through its Inferno in the 15th century with the great lost hope of the cathedrals. Dying or not, certainly menaced, Europe—weighed down with rebirths it still embraces—no longer thinks in words of freedom but in terms of fate." Between the masters of chaos who like to think of the world "in terms of fate" in order to perpetuate its disorder, and those who love the future and think of the common people "in words of freedom," Malraux's choice is made. Ours is also made, irrevocably: against this aristocratic philosophy of dilemmas, against the tragic enticements of the dead man and Malraux, his embalmer, we choose a more down-to-earth philosophy, a philosophy that draws conclusions, a joyful and fearless ally of the forces of life.

(Translated by Joseph Bernstein.)

Come Gently, Spring

By OLIVE SUTTON

. .

Come gently, spring;
There will be wonder in so many hearts
At your intrusion
On an earth
Where even winter's freshly fallen snow
Is stained within the hour
And most persistent storm
Cannot disguise the scars of shells
Nor smooth the crooked backs of mounds.

Come gently to the hills of Greece:
A spike of green beside the path
Pierces the heart of one
Grown more familiar
With the bones of war
Than with the ways of snowdrops.
Visit first with coaxing wind
That she may go forewarned
And poke about the rubble
Till the green shoot lifts,
Beneath her touch,
A new and burning thing.

In China, gently, spring
But firmly come.
Remind insistently
—Another season turns
The year, the century, near halfway done—

That men will forge new action
From your promise kept:
And grain, now sown
Below the troubled slopes
Need not be burned when winter comes.
This planting, spring, coax
With your telling ways into abundance.

Come gently, too,
Across the Polish plains;
Soothe the lean faces
Early turned to work
Building again the cities
Other springs have seen
Uprooted from the earth.
Twine deftly new vines up
From soil the patient feet have worn
To make these stronger walls,
That men will feel new life
Springs from a kindly earth.

Across the Yugoslav hills
Peep first from scattered rocks
With pastel-tinted rosemary leaves
And tease a gaiety into their hearts.
And then, more gloriously
Than any spring before,
Burst beauty from their wounded woodland,
In their village square
Where gallows stood,
And yield a special garland
For a Partisan boy
To fasten in his sweetheart's shining hair.

"El Fantastico"

By STEVE NELSON

. .

EL FANTASTICO, so named by his American comrades in the Perpignan prison, joined the Spanish company of the Lincoln Battalion at Jarama, and at once he was their hero, and they hung on his words. He told great tales of the 1934 revolt in his native Asturias.

"This is no fight here," he would say. "Ah, when you have to crawl on your belly all day, like a snake, so they see nothing—and when night comes you are above them, the lovely Spanish officers smoking their cigars—you toss in one grenade—*'Arriba mandos!'* you shout—and they walk out, those still alive, their faces white, their bodies shaking with terror, their snaky hips moving, so—educated gentlemen, white-livered dogs! Pah! I spit on them!"

He could throw a Russian bayonet to split a slender pole at fifteen paces. "I like these Russos, they are long and heavy, they balance well." He showed the boys how to make an Asturian grenade, of dynamite and bits of old wire cable, pieces of horse shoe, a few spikes. "And then, look out, fascist! You'd much better be home with your missus, or you're likely to leave a good-looking widow for El Fantastico!" He played the concertina well; he loved to sing the folk songs of Asturias. He loved living.

He was a fighting cock—vain, gaudy, flamboyant, with a heart of steel courage. For all his happy-go-lucky manner, he was deeply class conscious, and he hated the fascists with a deep, blazing fury.

While the battalion was resting at Albarez, a call came from the government for each outfit long at the front to nominate men for the *guerrilleros,* the partisan fighters behind the fascist lines. El Fantastico—his real name was Jose—was an inevitable choice from the Lincolns.

When Steve told him of the new assignment, he thought the man was going to cry, so deeply moved was he by the honor that had come upon him; for every man knew that the guerrilla fighters were strictly chosen, from the

fittest, ablest, most alert and most trustworthy of the Loyalist forces. "Comrade," he said, "this is no joke you are playing? You are not making fun?"

"No. This is no fun. This is the most serious work we have, and the most dangerous. Are you ready to undertake it?"

Jose smote his great chest. "You ask El Fantastico if he is ready? What must be done? Just tell me—what is necessary to be done?"

"You'll be told in Madrid. This American comrade is also assigned to the work; he will accompany you. You are not to say a word to anyone, your lips are sealed. . . . Goodbye, Jose. Good luck."

Jose departed, wrapped in deepest mystery, and glorying in it. With him went the American, his "Comrade Yank," a boy from Brooklyn of Spanish descent, who spoke Spanish fluently, who had been an acrobat and was capable of amazing feats of physical prowess.

In Madrid, a commission examined the men nominated by the various battalions. Of them all, twenty-two were selected. The twenty-two were told they might leave, to report back in an hour; Jose alone was told to remain at the office. He paced the corridor nervously, lighting cigarettes and grinding them out, sweating with fear that he was to be rejected.

He was called in. "Comrade Jose," the commissar said, "we think you are best qualified to be entrusted with the lives of these fighters, and as their leader to hold the confidence of the Republic."

"Yo—commandante! Pero—pero—." He was overwhelmed and stammering. "I don't know why you comrades really think that I—but so be it. What do you want done?"

"First, see that your men fill in these forms. There is one for you, also. Then outfit your men with the type of clothing worn by peasants in Cordoba province. Get automatic pistols and underarm holsters. Here is a *bon* which will entitle you to draw things you need from armories or quartermaster's depots. Tonight you will be given a sum of fascist money, and a truck will take you to a post near Pozo Blanco. The commander in that sector will give you detailed orders and supply horses and further equipment. . . . Now, can you repeat the order?"

Jose could and did. As a phonograph repeats, correct to the last inflection. "Jose never writes anything down," he explained, seeing the surprised stares of the officers. "He keeps everything here."

Outside, the men had gathered. The commissar went with Jose to meet them, announced that Jose had been chosen to lead them. "As a son of Asturias, a veteran fighter for liberty, experienced in guerrilla warfare, we

know he will live up to our expectations and the glorious traditions of the people of Asturias."

The boys cheered. Jose, his face fiery red, wiggled uncomfortably, and repressed an impulse to strut. "There is work to be done, comrades. . . . First of all, I must have an assistant, to take care of the records and all details. Whom do you nominate, *chicos?*"

Comrade Yank was elected. "Here, *chico;* first of all have these questionnaires filled out. Check every sheet. All must be perfect. Then to the armory, quickly. I will meet you there."

"Hey, Jose, wait! You didn't fill out yours."

Jose was furious. "*Madre de dios,* are you not my adjutant? Jose has no time! Fill it out for me. . . . And bring my concertina with you to the armory."

At the sidewalk, he paused, considering the motorcycles parked at the curb. He strode up to the largest and shiniest. "*Chico,*" he said to the driver, "to the armory, quickly."

"I'm sorry, comrade. This service is for officers only."

Jose smiled. He patted the man on the back. Slowly, and with dignity, he produced his *bon,* passed it before the man's nose. Slowly, he straddled the motorcycle. "*Chico,*" he said, "I am an officer. I, El Fantastico. To the armory!"

"When you get near the bridge," said the commander of the Pazo Blanco sector, "you will see a switchman's booth, No. 8. Our comrade works the shift from noon to midnight. The comrade has a big gray mustache; he is short and fat, about fifty years old.

"You will say, 'It's a wonderful day.' Two times you say that. Then ask for a match. He will say, 'Certainly,' and pull out two cigarettes, handing you one. He will not light his. You will say, 'Thank you, I have cigars, would you like one?' He'll say yes, put the cigarette in his side pocket, and take your cigar. Then he'll tell you his name, Montez, and you give him yours, with my name in the middle. After that, all will be clear. . . . Repeat the orders!"

The command waited two days, spending the time in equipping, in trying out the horses, in target practice with the automatics and the two light machine guns, in learning to throw dynamite bombs in the Asturian fashion. In everything, Jose was the leader, the teacher. His manner was less swashbuckling, more subdued under the weight of responsibility upon him; he was patient and painstaking, with a wonderful eye for detail, and was satisfied with nothing short of perfection. They built a small rough model of the

bridge they were to destroy, and rehearsed placing the dynamite charges. Each man was drilled in preparing charges, cutting the time fuse, and so on. Each was assigned his special task and drilled in it.

The nights, Jose spent with Comrade Yank in the town's best cafe, singing, drinking, making love to the girls, making friends with everyone present. He came away from the cafe with a detailed knowledge of the countryside, of the mountain passes, of alternative routes to and from the railroad bridge he was to destroy.

On the third day, the order came. Jose tossed the paper onto the table, and bellowed for Comrade Yank. "The order. There on the table. Read it."

Comrade Yank read, and whistled.

"Will you remember everything? The paper must be burned, you know."

"I think I'll remember it."

"Thinking! That is no good. . . . Read it aloud! . . . Now again! . . . Now repeat it." Comrade Yank did his best, and Jose corrected his slips. "Now bring along these peasant clothes, and we will inform the *chicos.*"

Jose went out, carrying the order. Comrade Yank heard him summon the men. "*Chicos,* we have received orders which I will now read to you. As follows. . . ."

But the order still lay on the table. Jose had picked up the wrong piece of paper. Comrade Yank snatched it up, and ran to the door, his mouth open to shout at El Fantastico.

". . . proceed to the railroad bridge twelve kilometers west of that town. The train to be destroyed will approach the bridge shortly before eleven o'clock on the night of—"

Comrade Yank stared dazedly at the paper in his hand. Word for word, he was repeating the order. The paper he held sternly before his eyes was a report Comrade Yank had been preparing.

Comrade Yank closed his mouth slowly. So El Fantastico could not read. But what need has a commander to read when he has a memory like a camera, and an able adjutant at his side?

Far away down the canyon, the train whistle sounded. Jose thrust the last stick of dynamite into place. "Now, the shovels. Cinders first, to keep it dry. . . . Now dirt. Plenty of dirt. Pour it on, *chicos*—the more weight on top, the higher she blows!"

The steel trestle was vibrating as the train came nearer, the supply train from Seville to the Madrid front. Jose picked up the fuse, followed it hand

over hand to a clump of bushes. Forty yards, forty seconds. The end of his cigar glowed red. "Run! Run, Pedro!" The sharp hiss of the fuse sounded.

They all ran.

The engine and four cars were on the bridge when the charge let go, and the rest of the cars plummeted into the river. There were gasoline cars in the train. In a moment, the whole countryside was lit up as by a gigantic searchlight. It was necessary to crawl flat on your belly, like a snake. It was necessary to abandon the horses, to move by a long and circuitous route back to the Loyalist lines. A route of which Jose had learned while gossiping idly in the cafe.

He had lost his horses, his equipment. Above all, he had lost a man, a fine comrade. El Fantastico mourned his failure, and would not be consoled. The duty of a commander was to take care of his men, and he had neglected to warn Pedro to be on the east side of the bridge when the train approached. Ah, that was bad, that was criminal, how could he have been so careless?

Even the praises heaped upon him by the command did not altogether console him.

"You have done the Republic a great service," said the commander.

"But we lost our horses," said Jose.

"We must expect these things."

"But we lost Pedro, and had I given Pedro the proper instructions, he would now be alive. "

"We don't look at things that way, comrade," the commander said earnestly. "We expect you to take every precaution, to train yourself and your men; we treasure every man, and do not take lightly the loss of a good comrade. But you did a fine piece of work, requiring courage, daring, and initiative. We could not hope that we would have no losses. Keep up the good work, Jose, but profit from your experience."

That was the first exploit of El Fantastico's command. It was not the last.

Now, part of what follows was told by Comrade Yank, and part was told, much later, by a Spanish comrade who, for a time and for a purpose, served in a fascist uniform, as orderly for a certain fascist colonel.

The tale begins with an order to Jose, along these lines:

A number of very important leaders of the Republic were among those captured in Malaga when the city fell to the Italian invaders. By disguising themselves as common soldiers, they escaped the fate of the hundreds of captives who were executed.

Information came through that these men were held in prison near Cordoba, and that their lives were in danger.

"You are ordered, therefore, to organize a small band, who will be dressed as fascist officers and men. You will approach the jail as though bringing prisoners to it. You will hold up the guard, and release all prisoners, instructing them as to how they may reach our lines. You must see that horses are ready for the comrades whose names and pictures are sent you herewith and you must see to it that they get through safely at all costs. You are to make all plans and arrangements necessary to accomplish this."

Jose and six other men drew fascist uniforms and fascist money, rehearsed the fascist salute, practiced a fascist arrogance, learned a few fascist songs. They had all necessary information to pass themselves off as a fascist cavalry patrol.

Their swanky uniforms concealed canvas vests carrying fifteen clips each for the Mausers they wore. The Mausers swung in wooden holsters, and these holsters could be clipped to the butt of the gun, whereupon the pistol became a sub-machine gun. But the canvas vests were very hot. The men sweated, riding into Cordoba.

They lounged in front of a sidewalk cafe, ogling the women who passed. Late in the afternoon, Jose went to a place appointed, and said and did certain things, and from one there, he learned that at about six-thirty, a few prisoners would be brought to the jail. He was also informed as to the number of guards on duty.

Toward sundown, Jose and his men strolled out of town along the road leading to the prison, and waited on top of a hill.

A Fiat truck came crawling in low gear. Jose shouted, "Hey, *chico!* Stop!"

The chauffeur stopped and saluted. A sergeant rode in the seat beside him. "Yes, sir?"

"Our car has broken down. Give us a lift."

Two prisoners rode in the back of the truck. Jose growled at them: "Red dogs!" He offered the sergeant a cigarette. "What's the password for tonight, *chicos?*" Jose asked of no one in particular. "I forgot to ask."

"Fusil," said the sergeant respectfully. "Rifle."

When the bodies of the sergeant and the chauffeur had been hidden at the roadside, Comrade Yank took the wheel, while Jose himself instructed the prisoners as to what would happen at the jail. Just short of the prison, Jose dropped three of his boys, to act as a sort of rear guard.

At the jail, Jose and the rest leaped out with drawn Mausers, cursing the *ojos,* the Reds. Jose backed up the steps to the gate, his pistol threatening ıe two. The gate opened. A lieutenant stepped out.

"Desperate criminals, these," Jose told him. "Call the rest of the guard. hey made a break, up the road. I had to shoot one of them."

The lieutenant blew his whistle. "This way, captain."

The prison had been an olive-oil refining plant. They entered the office. ı the wall opposite the entrance was a steel door, newly hung; in one ɔrner stood a desk and phone. The steel door opened, and ten men, armed ith rifles, entered. They lined up facing the prisoners. Jose moved to a posi-ɔn behind the desk.

"I want every man to get a good look at these dogs. Have you any more ɛn in the place? All must be able to recognize them."

"No more men, sir."

"Put up your hands!"

Paralyzed, the fascist gaped at the guns held by El Fantastico's men, by ɛ prisoners. They were quickly disarmed. Jose ripped out the telephone. There are handcuffs!" he shouted. "Chain them to the steel door. All of ɛm!"

He ran down the corridor leading to the cells. "Comrades! El Fantastico ɛets you in the name of the Republic! Come out! You are free! *Viva la ɛpublica!* Down with Franco!"

There were some thirty men in the prison. Jose called out the names the four men whose release was especially desired by the Republic. But ly three responded. One explained: "Ricardo is dead. Ricardo died of ɛ beating given him yesterday by the lieutenant you have chained up."

In the yard, Comrade Yank had smashed the distributor of the truck, and ıshed the tires. They were ready to leave. But Jose lingered. He addressed ɛ soldiers: "You men, for you the Republic has sympathy. You are dupes Franco, victims of these murderers. . . . But you, my brave lieutenant, who at honest comrades to death—El Fantastico will decorate you for your lor!"

He raised his Mauser. But he was merciful to the lieutenant; he did not ɔot him in the stomach. He shot him through the head.

If only they could get to the little mountain ravine where their horses ɛre hidden, the rest would be easy. But getting to that ravine was not ɜy. The prisoners were weak; they stumbled and fell continually, and had be helped, half carried along the steep, rocky trail. The night wore away.

Gray streaks of dawn were appearing in the sky. In the ragged, black line of the mountain crests against the gray sky, Jose recognized a landmark. It was not much further. Another half hour.

The hoofbeats were very faint, far down the path behind them. But Jose heard. He called to Comrade Yank: "Cavalry coming! Quick, pull off your vest."

Yank said, "Wait. Let me help this comrade over to that bunch of trees." He thought the leader meant they would both stay to hold off the patrol. But Jose did not mean that. Jose cursed him angrily, calling him a woman. "You think El Fantastico needs help when there is but one patrol? Go! Get these comrades to the horses, and go on with them through our lines! That is an order. Obey it!"

When Comrade Yank had gone, Jose wiped tears from his eyes, and snuggled down behind a big rock above the trail. He peered narrowly past the rock, watching for the first horseman to appear. He started to loosen the hand grenade strapped under his belt, against his stomach, but then he changed his mind, and left the hand grenade in place. He laid out the clips of bullets neatly, his own and Comrade Yank's, and made sure the Mauser holster held the gun firmly, and that the pistol was set for automatic fire.

There were ten men in the patrol. Two of them went down in Jose's first burst of fire, and he was quite sure he had winged another. The others took cover among the rocks. Chips began flying from the big boulder sheltering him.

For a long time, for an hour perhaps, nothing happened. There was only the intermittent stutter of gunfire, echoing through the canyon. There was only the wild whine of bullets glancing from the rocks around him, and the feel of the Mauser growing hot in his hands. There was only the dwindling pile of magazine clips beside him, the growing litter of empty shell cases under his elbows.

Two bullets hit the back of his shoulder, and his right hand fell from the Mauser. A voice behind him yelled harshly, *"Mandos arribos!"*

He staggered to his feet, one hand in the air, the other clasping his middle. The fascist officer came leaping over the rocks toward him. His fist smashed into Jose's face.

"Get up, dog of a Red! Where's your detachment?"

"El Fantastico ordered me to stay here."

"Where is he?"

"By now, he's over the ridge—the bastard. He left me here all alone—to die——"

"How long have you been with him?"

"This is my first trip."

"Who gives him information? How does he get through?"

Jose grinned, the grin of a sly, stupid peasant. "Ha! If I tell you these things, then you will kill me."

Again the fist, and boots crashing against his side, his injured shoulder. He doubled up, and groaned and yelled. The lieutenant said loudly, "Enough! Stop! Our orders are to bring in all *guerrilleros* alive."

Jose was yanked to his feet. The lieutenant smiled at him fatuously. "Never mind, old fellow. We'll take you to headquarters. You be good to the colonel, and he'll be good to you, eh?"

The bullets had gone clear through his shoulder; he was weak from bleeding, his shirt and trousers were soaked with blood. "Bandage!" he gasped. "I bleed to death!" Grumbling, they produced a bandage, and Jose snatched it, and stuffed it under his shirt, into the wounds, and with his left hand, he lifted his right arm, and thrust it into the opening of his shirt, so his belt would act as a sling. "Can't move it—my arm," he explained. "It is dead."

He was too weak to walk. They loaded him onto the horse of one of the dead cavalrymen. With his good hand, he clung to the saddle, reeling.

The colonel's headquarters was in a beautiful country house, on a tree-shaded hill.

The lieutenant was proud of his capture. "Sir, we have one of El Fantastico's men here."

"Ah! At last! About time, you blockheads." The colonel leaned forward across the carved oak table that served as his desk, staring at Jose. "What have you learned from him?"

"Very little, sir. He drives a hard bargain with us." He winked broadly at the colonel. "He insisted that he be brought to you, sir. He will be nice to you if you are nice to him. That is the arrangement."

Jose grinned dizzily at the colonel, and let his knees buckle. That was easily done; they were made of jelly, his knees, and the room was full of colonels and aides and guards, madly spinning. A few minutes more, Jose. A very few minutes. "Water, excellency. God's mercy—water!"

The guard looked to the colonel, and the colonel nodded. Jose drank eagerly. "So," the colonel said slowly, "after all your crimes, you still wish

to live. You ignorant, atheist dog! Talk, then. Your information had better be true and plentiful!"

"If I talk," said Jose, "how do I know you won't kill me then?"

"You question the word of a Spanish officer?" The colonel was on his feet; he strode forward, struck Jose across the face with his own hand. "Speak, damn you!"

The blow sent Jose reeling forward. His left arm clutched at the colonel, seeking support. His left arm was around the colonel's neck, clutching him tightly, straining his body against Jose's body; and Jose's right hand held the ring on the firing pin of the hand grenade strapped to his waist.

He tugged at the firing pin, felt it come away.

"I talk!" he cried. "I give you a message from El Fantastico! Listen!"

The grenade made very little noise, exploding. It was so tightly pressed between the bodies of the fascist colonel and El Fantastico.

To the Esthetes

WHO HAVE DECRIED THE "MATERIALISM" OF OTHERS

By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

. .

Dust from your eyes
makes barren the landscapes on your walls
all done by famous hands
and bought at a notorious cost
for your private desecration.
Never, you shall never
be as common with creation
as the peasant you shudder from.
Cezanne in him
found fellow feeling;
not in you.

Your nudes,
in crucifixion on your walls
arraign your special impotence.
Speak whatever is the fashionable word
'Color' or 'image' or 'plasticity,'
they shall not answer.
The awaited word fell silent
long ago, in you, the time you found,
were taught or bought
frontiers against humanity.

Thus with your music, too,
that with you left the social unison
and now is up-to-date
as your latest headache.

Jangling like your nerves
and isolate like your ego
it strains, it throbs, it dies
into the scream of loneliness.

Therefore, do not cry materialism
do not defame in the spirit's name
man's love of what he lives upon!
Where lives spirit but in life?

The Subjective War

By WALTER BERNSTEIN

. .

IT IS NOW ALMOST TWO YEARS since the end of the war, but the war writing still continues to flow. The writers seem not to understand either the critics, who tell them it is too soon to write about the war, or the editors, who say that people don't want to read about it. The writers just keep writing. The only change is that now the so-called creative work has superseded the factual accounts that appeared during the war. At the moment this is not necessarily a change for the better. American fiction, whether about war or peace, is still not up to American reporting. There has been no novel as true to the war as Bill Mauldin's *Up Front* and few short stories equal to a good deal of the war correspondence. In the fiction that has appeared, however, it is possible to identify a trend: a subjective, negative, cynical and generally bitter attitude toward the war. It is expressed in a kind of writing, for the most part by young men, that sounds curiously dated. Most of it could just as well be about the first World War. There is a certain influence of movie technique, a slickness about some of the writing, but the ideas are old and tired. It is wrong to say the writers are without ideas. The ideas are there; it is their content that gives the impression of vacuity. Whether these ideas will continue to dominate our war writing cannot yet be determined. The writer's attitude toward the war will be affected by the state of society in the period of his writing and the conscious position he assumes in the struggle to improve that society.

The war fiction covered in this review has appeared since the war. No attempt has been made to cover poetry. The theater has done little, producing only two Broadway plays, Arthur Laurents' *Home of the Brave* and Harry Brown's *Sound of Hunting,* which deserve mention, the first because it did make an attempt, however shallow, to handle a social theme in a war

setting, and the second because it again demonstrated the specific talent of Harry Brown to simulate reality so expertly that the emptiness of his writing is effectively concealed. Brown did it first in *A Walk in the Sun,* a neatly contrived account of an operation on the Salerno beachhead, later made into an equally neat, contrived and essentially false movie. The fact that *A Walk in the Sun* bore little resemblance to the way war is conducted, that the action was phony and the soldier talk and behavior frequently just silly did not seem to matter to the critics, who hailed the book as possessing the true flavor of combat. But the flavor is synthetic; it is Hollywood flavor, the conversation tough without ever being real, the action fast without ever being meaningful and the whole thing dusted with the ersatz scent of reality, distilled from the genuine imitation of an imitation.

Brown is talented; so is Alfred Hayes. In both cases their talent has been used to project either complete falsity, in the case of Brown, or half-truths, in the case of Hayes. *All Thy Conquests,** Hayes' novel of Rome after its capture, is perhaps the most talented novel to come out of the war.

Hayes is a poet, and he writes with a fine, accurate ear and an acute sense of bitterness. He is also a cynic and therefore, lacking the basic affirmation that pitted against necessity can produce tragedy, he lacks stature. The people in his book are sad, but never tragic. They are lost, corrupt or corrupted; even when performing an act that might be a precondition for something positive (such as killing a fascist) they do it bestially and arbitrarily. Hayes is good enough so that his people at first seem exactly caught. The soldier talk, for example, is wonderfully exact and the Italians give the impression of being very real and as large as life; but actually they are all smaller than life. They are presented in Hayes' own image; he seeks destruction, trying perhaps to find salvation for his own damaged ego with assurances that we are all in the same condition. But it is not true, even in Rome after its capture, and so his people, incapable of growth, shrink throughout the book and seem less and less like people, and even his choice of character and situation begins to seem capricious and even commercial. And the writing, sometimes extremely good, too often sounds derivative, stemming along with the content from Hemingway, the man who did this kind of thing definitively.

Hayes has, however, managed to avoid the particular clichés of the two most prominent World War I heroes: the tight-lipped man of action and the self-pitying intellectual. This is more than can be said of Basil Heatter,

* Alfred Hayes, *All Thy Conquests,* Howell, Soskin, Publishers, Inc., New York, 1946.

who deals with the first type in *The Dim View,** or Robert Lowry, who embraces the other in *Casualty.*** Lowry swoons over the story of Pfc. Joe Hammond, eating his heart out at a rear Air Force base in Italy, writing promotion notices for the public relations officer. The point he tries to make is fair enough. He is interested in the Army's destruction of personality under inactive war conditions, as important a subject as any combat story, since most soldiers were non-combatants and spent their years in what usually seemed a thoroughly pointless existence. But Lowry, beating his chest over this, is thoroughly subjective in his approach and thoroughly undistinguished in his writing. His Pfc. Hammond is insufferable; he is a complete prig, the only man at the base who thinks he has both intelligence and feeling. Even when he tries to help another soldier (whom he doesn't really care for) and is caught and punished, it is difficult to feel sorry for him. When he is finally run over by a truck, dying as foolishly as he was living, the effect on the reader is one of relief.

There is nothing in Lowry's book that even implies what the war was about, and here again, as in Hayes' book, the complete negation of life falsifies what seems otherwise a reasonably documented presentation. Lowry's soldiers live in a vacuum. This may have been true of many soldiers, but it is not necessary for Lowry also to live in one. He presents Hammond as a symbol of our time, but he is only symbolic of a tiny group of intellectuals who cannot see beyond their own outraged sensibilities. They are not only out of joint with their immediate environment, but they are detached from the real world as a whole. In order for Lowry's book to have real meaning, Hammond must represent something positive. All he represents in *Casualty* is himself. He has no feeling for the people around him and no understanding of the world he inhabits.

But if Pfc. Hammond derives from *Three Soldiers,* Lt. Jim Masters, the hero of *The Dim View,* is right out of *A Farewell To Arms.* He is a Navy P.T. boat officer, convalescing in an Australian hospital after being wounded. He has a brief idyll with an Australian girl, returns to the war and is nearly killed, and at the end comes back to Australia and the girl. The story is cleanly told and so simple that it is easy to feel that it is deceptively simple; but this is merely because the author hasn't much of anything to say. His book divides into combat and non-combat levels. The combat writing is quite good, in the style of the good American war reporting, terse and informative

* Basil Heatter, *The Dim View,* Farrar, Straus & Co., Inc., New York, 1946.
** Robert Lowry, *Casualty,* New Directions, Norfolk, 1946.

and exciting. The non-combat parts are written with the carefully unsentimental manner that really conceals a great sentimentality. Heatter, like Hayes, is not quite Hemingway, although it often seems that he would like to be. Once in a while the imitation is effective enough to make it seem as though there really must be something going on underneath. Unfortunately, there isn't. Heatter might be writing about the last war, trying to deal with P.T. boats as William Faulkner did in his wonderful story, *Turnabout,* except that Faulkner did make a strong statement at the end of his story about the men who start such wars as his. In *The Dim View* the enemy is not primarily fascism or even the Japanese army, but stupid and cowardly officers, bureaucrats and braggarts. As in *Casualty* it sometimes seems as though the war should have been fought against them.

There have been books, though, that have tried to say something about the war. The least pretentious, and probably the most successful, is *Mister Roberts** by Thomas Heggen. This also deals with military life in an inactive area, treating life aboard a Navy supply ship in the Pacific. But Heggen, while sparing none of the hopelessness and monotony of that life, understands and feels for his people. His book is touching and very funny. At times it gets a trifle cute, but Heggen usually manages to pull it out. And in the figure of Mr. Roberts he has caught a rare and wonderful type of American idealist. Roberts believes in the war, refers to himself as a frustrated anti-fascist because he has never been allowed to come to grips with the enemy, and finally dies below decks after he gets his chance at combat. He is not a consciously political person in any developed sense, but he is very honest and very brave, and because of this Heggen's book is one of the few American war books that leave any warm or good feeling at all.

Another book with something to say is Robert McLaughlin's *The Side of the Angels,*** a long and earnest novel about two brothers, one pure and the other corrupt. The pure one lands in a chemical mortar battalion and the other, by no coincidence, winds up in the O.S.S. McLaughlin is serious and well-meaning; a good deal of his polemic, for instance, is directed against discrimination. But his book is bald and talky and generally fuzzy, an excellent example of the axiom that good intentions are not enough. On the other hand, it would be over-simple to dismiss such a book. It does attempt to view the war objectively and the attempt, even if it does not come off, is more than just commendable; it is necessary if we are to have good litera-

* Thomas Heggen, *Mister Roberts,* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1946.
** Robert McLaughlin, *The Side of the Angels,* Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1947.

ture about the war. Simply compare McLaughlin's book to *Beach Red,** the story of a Pacific amphibious operation, written in a kind of free verse, by Peter Bowman. Bowman also tries saying something about the war, and he received good notices for his effort, but all he had to say boiled down to another kind of hopelessness: "Americans and Japs fighting for the things they had before they started to fight and giving them up in order to fight for them . . . it doesn't make sense." Presented that way, it certainly doesn't.

Probably the two most professional war books are collections of short stories, Irwin Shaw's *Act of Faith*** and Edward Newhouse's *The Iron Chain.**** Shaw's book contains probably the single finest story to come out of the war: "Gunner's Passage." The rest of the stories do not measure up to that one, but they are all extremely well-written and frequently exciting. Shaw is a positive writer; he knows what the problems are and he faces them. The fact that he faces them in an individualistic, middle class way is what prevents much of his work from being really great. An example is his handling of anti-Semitism in the title story. He presents the problem there in terms of intellectuals and indicates a solution in an arbitrary and romantic way. The story is effective, but limited; the problem is not faced in its totality.

Newhouse is concerned with officers, particularly those officers chained to desk jobs. The subject is meaty, since officer relationships were good reflections of a certain aspect of our society, and Newhouse is smart and aware. Some of his pieces are penetrating and all of them show thought and intelligence. Compared to most of the other war writers, he seems much more knowing and adult. Sometimes he seems to know more than he's willing to admit, and the question becomes why the stories don't go deeper and hit harder. Often, Newhouse gives the impression of being a snob, of satisfaction at being one of this privileged group he is presumably dissecting, and this dualism may be the reason why many of the stories seem dry and almost bloodless. Satire requires more commitment than Newhouse is apparently willing to give. After a while, mere urbanity becomes a little wearing.

So there has not yet been a really positive major creative work about Americans in World War II. The odds against one are steep. The relationship between Americans and the war was not the same as that of the other Allies, to whom the war was factually and vividly a war of national lib-

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* Peter Bowman, *Beach Red,* Random House, New York, 1945.
** Irwin Shaw, *Act of Faith,* Random House, New York, 1946.
*** Edward Newhouse, *The Iron Chain,* Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1946.

eration. For many American soldiers the war was only a war against the tyranny of the Army. For the combat men it was a war to stay alive, without any particular ideology, with its values the personal ones of friendship and dignity and courage. Yet the attitude of most American soldiers toward the war *was* conditioned by its anti-fascist character.

The war was rarely embraced as a great and necessary crusade, but it was rarely condemned, as was the last war, as a fraud and a delusion. Most soldiers accepted its necessity without particularly understanding its complete nature. It is interesting, however, that where Americans were permitted to know and work with resistance forces in other countries, they did develop an understanding of their own. This was not always true; there was a team of G.I. weather observers, for example, who sat for almost a year at Marshal Tito's headquarters in German-occupied territory, surrounded by history-making events, who never learned a word of the language, were never interested in who the Partisans were or what they were doing, and whose first questions of any American visitor were what had happened to their P.X. rations of candy and chewing gum, which were supposed to be dropped to them by parachute. On the other hand, many of the O.S.S. operational men and later the infantrymen who fought and worked with the Partisans learned the nature of the enemy and the war as they had never learned among themselves.

In this respect, the war writers have not yet caught up with the people they are writing about. For the most part, soldiers analyzed the war pragmatically in terms of the present. The pacifist heritage of our country, that has been declared so important, was not actually basic as a conditioner of, say, the fighter pilot's attitude toward the war. This is not true of many writers, who have not been able to shake the literary heritage of the last war. They have been weaned on it, their teachers Hemingway, Cummings, March, Faulkner & Co., the teaching, subjective and negative, congenial to a post-war society dissolving of its own corruption. It is an attitude also congenial to a writer who deplores the corruption of our society, with its demeaning of the artist, but who is not prepared to question the basis of that society. The revolt led by the post-World War I writers was a revolt in bourgeois terms; that is why it had to be negative. So long as the artist accepted bourgeois society—and that is what these writers did, for all their protestations at its results—he had nowhere to go but into himself. He could examine what the society did to people, and that examination could be valuable, but if this did not lead him to the necessity for changing the society, he was

trapped. If what he saw could not be changed, then it had to be rationalized out of existence; it was too much to tolerate. So the objective world disappeared and in its place was created the world in the image of the artist. In the case of war writing, it was the war in that image, a war in which there were no objective forces and nothing positive other than the ego. The outraged world was replaced by the outraged artist.

When applied to writing about an imperialist war, whose total effect is the destruction of personality, that attitude can have bite and a certain vigor. It can have value as a demonstration of what such a war can do to human beings. It is different when applied to an anti-fascist war. Then it becomes not simply bourgeois in content, but actively reactionary. A book devoted only to the negative aspects of World War II, even though its subject matter seems superficially true, can have only one effect. By putting its emphasis, even implicitly, on the futility of the endeavor it can only paralyze the present struggle to preserve the gains made in the war. What are we fighting for today if our people died two years ago for nothing?

We cannot take the nature of the war for granted. Yet, although it is a prerequisite to any honest war writing, recognizing the nature of the war is not enough. Many writers recognized the nature of capitalism in the thirties, but still wrote badly about it. It is easy to write glowingly of the people's war in Spain, but there still has been no literature out of that war commensurate with its greatness. We must translate the nature of the war in terms of our own country, steering clear of despair and cynicism on one hand and wishful thinking on the other. Bearing in mind that the war was, on the grand scale, a heroic one, and that its heroes were the people of all the resistant countries, we must bring that concept down to scale in terms of our own heroes. We must revive the heroic concept, as Ralph Fox has said; we have need of heroes these days. We must rescue our heroes from the pulp magazines, the radio serials and the Hollywood studios, because they have been perverted there into adventurers, and we must also rescue them from the *avant-garde* magazines and the so-called serious writers, who have debased them into psychoneurotics. This must be done without philistinism, recognizing the pervasive and corrupting effect of our society even on our heroes. We must write about human beings, not symbols.

The atmosphere today is, in one sense, not conducive to positive writing, certainly not positive writing about the war. It is depressingly easy to view the momentary triumph of reaction and decide that the war was futile and the peace hopeless. This attitude would not only be inaccurate, but sui-

cidal. It would be inaccurate because the war, by the simple fact that the world today is not living under fascism, was not futile, regardless of what is happening in America today. And because it was not futile, the peace is not hopeless. In crushing the military expression of fascism, we saw liberated the tremendous force of millions of people all over the world. Before the war many of these people were oppressed and used by reaction. Today they make impossible the resurgence of fascism on the scale that we have previously seen it.

An affirmative attitude toward the war goes hand in hand with a similar attitude toward the peace. The writer who hopes to deal truthfully, and therefore positively, about the war cannot divorce himself from the problems of the peace. He will more than likely be one who is intimately tied up with those problems, with the continuing fight to defend and advance the gains of the war. It is possible today to do both. It is necessary, if we do not want the lessons of the war corrupted and used against us. It is also necessary, if we are going to have a war literature equal to the magnitude of the war effort.

After the Holiday

By MARTHA MILLET

. .

Smoke bubbles up through the manhole covers,
Damp clings to the pavement like a skin,
Eyes open and close in the houses.
People are straining out of chairs, shuffling to bed.
The cracked dish holds a few coins;
The cost of holiday joy came high,
But the children were happy, anyway.
Next week's frugal fare will find them
Still in the afterglow of drums to pound.

The damp seeps in through pores of tenements,
Glistening thickly on walls marred and wrinkled.

Leafing through the ledgers of the mind
For chance coin, hidden away and then forgotten,
The dwellers come back to the main reality,
The iron bed, the worn-thin pillow with its gaps,
The frame that barely holds a man's tired weight.

The window's wreath has lost its pride and gloss.
Another day, then to the heap
With refuse of the ordinary day.
A man turns to his woman in a sleep
Troubled with pondering exits, finding none.
At least, the children, legs tossed over legs,
Hold brightness in their dreams, hold sound of chimes
Still sweetly echoing a golden time,
And wonder folds them grandly in her arms
Against the night.

All the Christmas trees are burnt.
The boys had a lovely time.

The Great Midland

By ALEXANDER SAXTON

• •

AS THE TRAIN ROLLED out of the yard, Dave and the red-headed carknocker swung aboard the last car. This was a lounge car with the name *Saphira City* in gold letters across the vestibule door. When the door closed behind them, the clanking of wheels faded to a velvet tick; the darkness inside the car smelled of soap, brass-polish, lemon-peel and whiskey. Watery patterns floated across the ceiling as the lights of the coach yard slid past outside the windows.

"Sit down, gents," a voice told them. "But don't dirty up my arm chairs or they'll hang me sure." Dave and the carknocker, groping their way down the aisle, found the white jacket of the Pullman steward and dropped into the chairs on each side of him. The end of the Pullman car was a curved sheet of glass, through which they looked out at the red and green lights, the interwebbed gleaming rails of the yard behind them.

"We'll have frogs' legs on toast," Dave said, "with brandy and soda."

"They keep a padlock on the groceries, gents; but I can get you some music. That's one thing that's free." The white jacket drifted away; a light in an alcove at the far end glowed against blue mirrors behind a bar. There was a rustle of dance music and the steward returned, two-stepping down the aisle. Red, pulling a handful of cigars from his overalls' pocket, passed them around and they lighted up.

The train rolled out to the embankment and stopped. An old brakeman with a lantern in his hand stamped into the car, glared at them without speaking, then yanked up a panel in the sill of the observation window and began testing the signal and air brake valves.

"What you waiting on?" Red asked. "The Fourth of July?"

The brakeman let go a couple of shrill whistles on the signal hose, there came two answering hoots from the engine; the train lurched forward, stopped, and then rolled backwards toward the depot. The brakeman sat down beside the brake valve. "Mind your own business, you crabby redhead," he said over his shoulder. "And let me have one of those cigars."

etting his lantern between his boots, he turned and stared at Dave. "I ain't een you around before. Who the hell might you be?"

"You've seen me before, Paddy. You just forgot, that's all."

"Where do you get that Paddy stuff. I don't know you."

"Why you got Paddy written all over your mug in big green letters," Dave said. "A man's only got to look at you to know your name must be Paddy or Moikel."

"Watch your talk, lad. You're talking too goddamn smart." Red began o laugh and the brakeman shouted, "The quickest way to get in trouble n this railroad is to talk smart. You'll learn that mighty soon. How long ou been working?"

"Two weeks."

"Two weeks! And they made you a carknocker already? Mother of God, ut they must be hard up for men."

"They're not hard up. I hired out as a carknocker. I knew more about ailroad cars when I was ten years old than you'd know if you lived to a undred and fifty."

"You knew what?" Dave could see Paddy Gallagher fumbling at his eet trying to get hold of his lantern. "I've seen you dynamite the brakes on a reight train," Dave told him, "so you flattened every wheel on the train. And then you tried to blame it on the engineer."

The lantern flashed on, shone in his face and went out. In a grieved oice, Paddy Gallagher said, "I know who you are. You're Eddie Spaas' oung nephew." He patted Dave on the knee. "Glad to see you back, boy. should have known you were Eddie's nephew from the smart-aleck way ou were talking. Eddie told me you was over here, too."

"When did you quit the animal trail, Paddy?"

"A year ago now, lad. Not so much leg work for an old man on these assenger back-ups."

"You must be getting on towards ninety, aren't you?"

"You son of a bitch. I'm fifty-five."

"How do you make out for bull-rings on this run?"

"God's truth, I don't find any bull-rings. But I pick up a little overtime ow and then. And I hear you're going to be getting a wage raise for us?" ave glanced up at the angry shower of sparks from the end of Red's cigar; e rumor mill was running already, he thought. "Yes sir," Paddy Gallagher nnounced. "They're saying Joe Spaas' boy hired out only two weeks back nd here he's talking about a wage raise already. Why look at that, the

bastard's set me a stop board." Down the main line, a block of signal lights turned red. Paddy Gallagher opened the brake valve, the air escaping with a thin hiss; the train slowed to a halt. In front of them, the embankment narrowed and the framework of a bridge thrust up over the roofs of the factories on each side. An engine puffed toward them across the bridge; the smoke from its stack tangled and shredded through the girders, then burst up into a great white cauliflower as the engine emerged from the framework. The engine rattled past them, drawing a couple of boxcars and a caboose. The signal board turned green. Paddy blew his whistle and their own train rolled across the bridge.

"But hell no, we won't be getting no raise," Paddy said as he dropped back into his chair. "The most of these fellows nowadays sit around squawking like a row of hens on a fence, but they never do nothing. It was different when Eddie and I was young, lad."

"Back when you had the Wobblies?" Dave asked, smiling.

"I was never no Wobbly."

Dave saw Paddy Gallagher watching him suspiciously. They were coming into the depot now; the buildings of the Loop rose up in a solid dark wall in front of them. "You're just like your crazy uncle," Paddy said. "First thing you know, you'll be trying to get the C.I.O. in here. And if that's not what they're saying, too. They're saying that no-good Carmen's Lodge of yours next to voted itself into the C.I.O."

"Nobody asked you to stick your nose into our lodge business," Red said.

"What's that lodge of yours fooling around with the C.I.O. for?"

Red, pulling his cigar from his mouth, ground it out against his boot. "All you lousy brakemen are the same way. Just because you get paid a little more than somebody else, you act like you was half owners in the company."

Paddy drew himself up with dignity. "I'll not be listening to that kind of talk."

For a moment he eyed Red coldly; then he turned back to his brake valve. They were under the trainshed, coasting down between the platforms of the station; he eased the train to a halt just short of the bumping post, they took their lanterns and tools and dropped down from the car. Without waiting for them, Red strode off by himself, while Dave walked along for a moment beside Paddy.

"Can't walk so good now, I got a bum leg," Paddy said. "If I was younger, I'd have punched that red-head's teeth out through the back of his head."

"It was your own fault, Paddy."

"It was my own fault? What are you trying to tell me?"

"You haven't got your head cut in, that's all. You let the bunk-shooters fill you so full of crap, it's running out your ears."

"You watch what you're saying."

"It's true, Paddy. Look, you haven't had a raise in years, you don't work a forty-hour week, you don't get vacations. But as soon as somebody tries to tell you anything, you let that bunch of old women throw a scare into you about the C.I.O. Who were you talking to from our lodge, anyway?"

"Never mind that, lad."

Dave peered at him in the dim light of the train shed. "It wasn't Jennison, was it?"

"I don't want to hear any talk against Uncle Jennison, lad. I've known him since I started to work on this railroad."

So that was what Jennison was doing, Dave thought, talking up the C.I.O. scare. He took Paddy by the elbow. "I've known Jennison a long time too—since I was a kid," he said. "And I always liked him. But I begin to think he's taken root in the ground from sitting on his ass too long. Sure, he knows the contract by heart, he's a good griever, he fought all his life for seniority and overtime. But you ask him to fight for something a little bit different and he begins to scream about the C.I.O. Don't rock the boat, he says, don't shake me up——."

Paddy Gallagher was still scowling.

"It's not only Jennison," Dave told him. "It's all over the railroad. It's a disease like measles. My old man was the same way when he was your chairman."

"Don't speak no evil of your poor father. I don't want to hear it."

They reached the head end of the train. Dave dropped down between the engine and the cars to unfasten the steamline and close the air valves. When he crawled back on the platform, Paddy Gallagher asked, "Is it true what Jennison said, that you're going to help the C.I.O. in that can factory?"

"Sure it's the truth. The guys walk past that factory every day of the year. They got friends in there. Why shouldn't we help them? You want to come?"

"No sir, I don't."

Dave yanked the lever uncoupling the engine and waved to the engineer to move ahead. But the engineer, leaning on the sill of his cab window, had dropped asleep. "Wake up, you wart-faced old son of a bitch," Paddy

bellowed suddenly. "It's a wonder they don't give you hog-heads sleeping compartments." The engineer snapped awake, clawing wildly in front of him, then glared back at Paddy. "What are you waiting for?" Paddy asked. "The lad's got you unhooked and he wants you to get this teakettle out of here. You figure to spend the night in the depot?" The engineer pushed in his throttle, the drive wheels eased forward a half turn; the coupling knuckles parted and the air hose disconnected with a pop like a cork coming out of a bottle.

"Listen to me, lad," Paddy told Dave. "Don't you go fooling around with the C.I.O. Maybe it's all right for spicks and niggers, but we don't want none of it——."

"Say, Paddy," the engineer called. "You coming back to the yard with us?"

"Sure I'm coming back. Did you think I'd be taking the street car?"

"Then run for it," the engineer yelled in a shrill voice. "Run for it, you gandy-dancer." He slammed in his throttle and the engine leaped up the track. Paddy let out a yell and raced after it on his game leg, swinging his lantern over his head. Dave, shaking with laughter, saw him catch the engine up at the far end of the platform.

The depot was quiet after the engine had gone. A blue film of smoke floated up across the lights that hung swaying from the arch of the trainshed. Except for the cars the engine had just left, all the tracks were empty. The rails gleamed dully and here and there pools of ice glinted between the ties. On the wall of the station, above the gate to the waiting room, the red neon sign flashed on and off: *GREAT MIDLAND RAILROAD . . . SOUTH SOUTHWEST . . . FAST, FRIENDLY SERVICE . . . GREAT MIDLAND RAILROAD. . . .*

Dave, picking up his tools, walked out the open end of the trainshed. The stars sparkled in the black sky and the wind whistled shrilly across the unsheltered tracks. At the express platform, he found Red working on the baggage cars, which were glazed an inch thick with ice they had to crack off with their hammers before they could check the coupling irons and air lines. They worked steadily, marking the hours which circled the clock on the station tower. The dividing points of the night came and passed. At two o'clock, an engine from the Milwaukee Road delivered the freezer loads of cream. At three, a coach-yard engine hauled in the string of empty baggage cars to replace the loaded cars Dave and Red were working on. The engine parked on the next track, wheezing and puffing, while the brake-

men crowded up into the cab to keep warm. And finally sometime after three o'clock, Dave fixed the last broken air hose, Red chalked okay on the cars; the engine chugged into the express track, pulled the loads out and put the empties in their place. Then it pushed the loaded baggage cars over against the line of Pullmans and coaches under the trainshed, and set the freezers on top. The brakemen stretched out the train to make sure the couplings had locked. Red and Dave tied in the air and steam lines, and the Daylight was ready to travel. Cutting loose from the cars, the switch engine rattled off to the coachyard; it was four in the morning. Dave and Red walked back through the trainshed to the buffet in the empty waiting room, slapping their hands and stamping to thaw the cold out.

A sleepy-eyed woman behind the lunch counter brought them coffee and doughnuts and leaned on the counter waiting for them to start talking. Red was still growling about the brakemen and how they thought they owned the turnpike. Emptying his cup, he shouted at the woman who was only two feet away from him. "Fill her up, sister." Then he handed Dave a cigar and lighted it for him. "I tell you, Dave, they're all the same, these brakemen. Remember one time I was lying on my back under a car working on the air line. First thing I know one of those sons of bitches is trying to couple an engine on to me. I see the engine coming from under the car. Well, I kick out of there like I'd straddled a rattlesnake and you know what that brakeman says? He says, what's the idea crawling around under cars like that? That's how guys get hurt. Listen, Buddy, I tell him. You see that blue lantern? You know what a blue lantern means? Where's any blue lantern? he says. So I pick it up and clout him over the head with it. Broke the lantern all to hell and they give me ninety days suspension. That was back in the depression; I was lucky they didn't fire me."

"Don't go getting in a bind about the brakemen," Dave said. "They aren't any worse than anybody else around here."

"Aw, don't hand me that stuff. I've known too many of the bastards. It must be something in the blood. They act like we're a bunch of scum because we got to lie in the mud and fix the cars."

Dave grinned at the woman behind the counter. "What do you think when you hear guys talk like that?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "I don't pay any attention. I got to listen to all kinds of talk."

They finished their coffee and went back to the trainshed. At six o'clock, the two sections of the Kansas City Express rolled in, spattered with mud and ice; passengers surged down the platforms to the waiting room. A pair of

switch engines, following the trains into the depot, began yanking them apart; set the Pullmans on the far track so the first class passengers could finish their sleep, lined up the mail cars for the mail gang who went to work heaving canvas sacks out into the hand trucks; banged all the empty coaches together for the drag back to the coach yard. After that, one on top of another, commuters' specials whistled into the depot. The platforms swarmed with office workers, and Dave as he moved along tapping his hammer against the wheels of the cars, had to shoulder his way through the crowd.

At seven o'clock, the night shift went off duty. Dave caught a ride to the coach yard on one of the switch engines, changed his clothes in the locker room and walked home for breakfast. He had been sleepy before, but the first glow of daylight brought him wide awake, and he swung along, whistling and clapping his hands together. At home, his mother, Ann Spaas, was getting the litle girl Sally off to school. Then she set his breakfast on the table, and while he was eating, told him:

"Jennison called you last night."

"What did he want?"

"I don't know. He sounded mad."

Dave nodded. "I'm going down to see him today." Then he asked, "Did Eddie pay you a visit, Mom?"

"Oh, yes, Eddie stopped by. But he left right away. I guess he was afraid you'd catch him here." She fell into a fit of laughter, and Dave watched her while she wiped her eyes on a dish towel; then abruptly she turned serious and stared at him across the kitchen table.

"You better go to bed," she told him. "You ought to get your sleep before Sally comes home from school. She'll wake you sure."

Dave finished his breakfast and went upstairs to the bedroom. During the eight-hour shift at the depot, he had grown tired and his shoulder ached sometimes. But that would only help make the bed feel softer, he thought. Sleeping, eating, working, these still seemed to him a novelty and wonderful pleasure. He stretched and yawned, rolling luxuriously under the covers. On the verge of sleep, he thought for a moment about the railroad, his old friend the Great Midland, which he had always aimed to come back to. Years before, he remembered promising Pledger McAdams that when the chance came he would hire out on the Great Midland, and together they would take on the company. Together they would even things up a little bit with the Great Midland.

He rolled over, stretched once again and fell asleep.

• •

ROMAN KOVIAK parked his Chevrolet several blocks from the hall. Stiff-legged, the five men scrambled out to the sidewalk. The night was bitter cold with no sign yet of daybreak. Overhead were the clear countless stars, and into the sky fingers of silver light pulsed up out of the north. Dave and Pledger dragged the signs from the back seat, and the five men set off with their heels clacking on the sidewalk like a small parade down the empty street. The rows of workers' houses stretched ahead of them, fragile and tiny under the glow of the stars.

On the corner, two cops who had been dancing and clapping their hands against the cold, now waited hostilely with arms folded. The five turned the corner laughing, and headed north. Before them, over the roofs of the houses, Dave saw the factory with its smokeless stacks thrusting up against the luminous sky. Police were at all the corners and there were squad cars parked in the alleys.

But at the triangular intersection where Cleveland Avenue crossed Thirty-First Street, no police were in sight. Trolley cars banged through the intersection every two or three minutes and each car let down a group of men who moved toward the hall. Stewards with C.I.O. buttons hurried the groups along, calling, "Let's get inside, Brothers. Let's get inside out of the cold."

The hall was an old building with a curved roof like a car barn, and the name "Zeiger Auditorium" painted across the front. Beside the doorway, Dave and Pledger McAdams and the other three waited, waving their placards to collect the rest of their people.

By half past five, some fifteen had come. The white carmen looked surprised at seeing Pledger McAdams and the other Negroes and stuck close together, glancing back and forth between themselves. Dave, taking Pledger McAdams by the arm, stepped into the center of the group. "We all know McAdams," he said, "chairman of the coach cleaners. Well, he's got a new job now. He's chairman of a new lodge in our own Association." Dave could see the men watching Pledger, waiting for him to say something. Pledger's voiced boomed out.

"Right soon we'll be fighting for better conditions for ourselves just like these boys in the can company are doing. All I got to say is this: When that time comes, our lodge will be in there and all the way." The men nodded. Roman Koviak, blushing down to his collar, shook hands with Dave and Pledger, while Red passed out his nickel cigars. The little newspaper seller, Zambolli, was working the sidewalk in front of the auditorium. Dave watched him as he stalked his customers from the rear, tugged at their

elbows until they turned, then shoved his newspapers into their hands. When he came to the group of railroad workers, he glanced for a moment at Dave, but made no sign of recognition.

"Copy of the *Daily Worker,* Brothers? The only paper that gives you the real facts about workers. . . ."

"Hello, Zambolli," Dave said. "How's business?"

Zambolli's face blossomed immediately with smiles. He held out his hand and said, "Hello, Brother Spaas. You can spare a nickel for the *Daily Worker?*" Dave gave him the nickel and took the paper.

The men were lighting up the cigars Red had handed out and they elbowed into the crowd around the doorway of the hall. After they had gone in, Dave waited outside a few minutes longer to pick up any stragglers. Across from him, the intersection was still almost deserted and the streets were empty in both directions. A few squad cars cruised down Cleveland Avenue, and sometimes cops would step out of the alleys and disappear again. Street cars were stopping one after another in front of the hall and bunches of men streamed up the stairway. Dave, leaning on the staff of his sign, looked up at the stars; he thought of how many times he had watched them, waiting for daybreak. The stars would pale as if mist were blowing across them, the sky lighten behind the buildings in the east——.

Someone tapped him on the shoulder and one of the C.I.O. stewards said into his ear, "Can you come upstairs, Brother? We need you on the platform."

It was cold inside and the men had their hats and coats on. Cigarette smoke hung in blue clouds under the ceiling. The hall was packed and quiet; from the platform one of the union officials was speaking. Dave, making his way around the hall, found Hanson by the corner of the platform.

"How's it going, Butch?"

"Look at the crowd, will you." Hanson shoved his hat to the back of his head and wiped his sweat-streaked face on his sleeve. "What a workout, I haven't slept in two nights. But look at it, Dave, it's wonderful." He flung out his arms including all the people in the hall; then leaning close to Dave's ear, he said quickly, "They're going to try to open the plant at seven o'clock. We can't move for another half hour yet. No use telling the cops where we're going ahead of time, is there? They'll find out quick enough anyhow."

"Stool pigeons?"

Hanson shrugged his shoulders. "How can you keep 'em out, Dave? Not even the shop stewards know all their guys by sight. Couple of minutes

ago I saw a guy I recognized for a company fink. I was just getting ready to bust him in the nose, when I thought, take it easy, Hanson; we'll catch up with those guys later on."

"It's a good crowd," Dave said.

"Good! For five-thirty in the morning, it's wonderful. I'm excited as a kid at my first strike. Look at those delegations, will you, Dave. And railroad workers! Whoever heard of railroad workers sending a delegation? You should have heard the boys yell when those railroad workers rolled in——." Hanson quieted suddenly and glanced at his watch. "Fifteen minutes to go. I want you up on the platform, Dave, after McAdams gets through. How did those cops look out there?"

"Cold."

"Cold, were they? I hope the bastards freeze. Plenty of them, aren't there?"

"Hundreds. Look like they expected an invasion." Hanson smiled slowly and as the two looked at each other, they both nodded. Dave suddenly felt his heart pounding, and the blood drummed through the veins of his arms. Over the noise of the crowd, he said into Hanson's ear, "It's good. You can feel it. You can always tell." The light in Hanson's eyes met his, and he knew Hanson felt the same flood of love and hate, the same upsurging of the crowd. On the platform, Pledger McAdams was speaking, his voice rolled out, filling the hall.

"Who gains by it, Brothers, who gains by it? You and me don't gain by it, nor our wives and kids don't either. But the big shots, the big mouths, the labor-baiters and union busters, they keep coming back to race hatred like a dog comes back to a rotten carcass——."

Dave climbed up on the platform. The crowd was shouting and clapping for Pledger McAdams, and Dave leaned on the speaker's table, looking out over the sea of faces. All across the hall were the signs and banners of the delegations: Steel Workers, Farm Equipment Workers, American Student Union, auto workers, railroad workers, United Office and Professional. They quieted and he felt their attention gather on him. He began to talk while his eyes moved from one face to another—an old man at the back, a woman close to him, a bunch of boys perched on a window sill—and he watched their expressions to make sure they followed him. ". . . more than wages and working conditions, we're fighting for the recognition of our unions. We're fighting for the right to organize for our own protection." As he talked he tried to hold his voice quiet. "We got a job to do today. We've got to be orderly and disciplined when we do it. The cops are out

there waiting for us. They want trouble, but don't give it to them——."

Somebody yelled up from the crowd, "How about Memorial Day?"

"Those are the same cops, Brother." Dave's voice rose now in spite of himself. He stepped around the speaker's table. "I know they murdered the steel workers in South Chicago and they got medals for it. Now they're out there waiting for us. We'll catch up with them someday. But right now, we only want one thing and that's to win this strike. Don't let those cops provoke you."

Hanson jumped up to the platform with a sheet of paper in his hand, and Dave spread his arms for quiet.

"We're ready to go now, boys," Hanson said. "The executive committee's been in session all night and we doped out our moves. They'll work right if we do 'em right.

"Now listen. The company's going to open the plant at seven o'clock. The scabs are supposed to collect at the company union office on Thirty-Second Street and then the cops are going to take them into the plant. Now our job is to keep the scabs away from the company union office in the first place. You understand?"

The men shouted, and Hanson, holding up his hand, went on. "I'm going to divide you guys into three groups. One group goes to the company union office. Get as close as you can and make it tough for any scabs to get in. There'll be plenty cops there, but like the railroad brother just told you, don't get in trouble with those cops. That goes for all of us, all the time."

He pointed suddenly to the door at the rear of the hall. "Watch that door, you stewards back there. Don't let anybody go out till I finish talking." Two men moved in front of the door, and Hanson shouted, "Now listen, Brothers, all you men from the platform to the first windows are in group one. First window to the third window, group two. Third window to the back, group three. You get it? Group three raise your hands." The hands went up solid across the end of the hall. "Group three moves out first. Scatter as soon as you get outside, like you'd got tired and was going home. Then get together again three blocks west of Cleveland Avenue. Lie down on the tracks if you have to, *but stop those cars.* We don't want one single car through here until seven-thirty. After seven-thirty, come back and join the picket line. All right, Brothers, get going."

The men at the back of the hall poured down the stairs and Hanson said over his shoulder, "Go with them, will you, Dave?"

It was a few minutes after six. The chimneys and water tanks to the

east sharpened into silhouette. The stars faded quickly and the windows of the old buildings along Cleveland Avenue reflected the first pale light from the sky. To the east where the Great Midland crossed Cleveland Avenue, Dave saw an engine puff over the viaduct, and when the engine disappeared, the boxcars rolled after it endlessly. He could hear through the silence the rumble and squall of the wheels.

From different directions the men gathered at the street car stop. The round yellow eye of the next approaching car looked watery in the growing daylight. As the men spread across the tracks, the motorman clanged his bell, then pulled to a stop.

Frightened, he stuck his head out the door. "What might be the trouble, lads?"

"This is the end of the line, Paddy."

"You got any scabs aboard?"

Inside the car, they could see the people getting up from their seats; a man stepped into the doorway and peered down at them. No one stirred. Then the man grinned suddenly and called back into the car, "Let's go in there. These are our boys." He jumped down and a dozen men came out after him; they were wearing C.I.O. buttons and one of them carried a placard, "Cicero Auto Local Supports the Can Workers." The men in the street let out howls and cheers.

"Lucky you had that sign."

"You guys are late. You almost got your ass in a sling."

The one who had jumped down first said to Dave, "Cripes, fellow, we didn't know who you were."

"Is there anybody else in that car?"

"No, but listen, Brother. There's two carloads of scabs behind us. We saw them get on at Western."

"How far behind?"

"Right behind."

Somebody sang out, "How we going to hold these cars after the cops get here?"

The cops must be on their way by now, Dave thought; they'd be coming as soon as they saw the crowd gather. Stepping back, he stared up at the car roof for a moment. Then he borrowed a pocketknife from one of the men and called for a boost. Setting his foot in a pair of cupped hands and stepping on someone's shoulder, he scrambled to the roof of the street car. Now, as he stood up, his head was higher than the trolley wire. Over the buildings on each side of the avenue, he could see the city stretching out,

smoky and indistinct, and the faraway towers of the Loop thrusting through the shadows into the glow of sunlight. Wind whistled past his ears. He hurried along the roof to the other end of the car where the trolley rod reached up at an angle, pressing its wheel against the overhead wire.

Below him, the crowd was packed solidly around the street car. A second car drew to a stop at the fringe of the crowd and there was a third right behind it. Out of the side street from the direction of the factory a couple of squad cars wheeled into Cleveland Avenue. Dave opened his pocket knife, knelt down and cut the control rope from the trolley rod to the rear window of the street car. Half a dozen men had followed him onto the roof. They kicked the trolley rod away from the wire, then forced it over backwards until the spring swivel it was mounted on gave way and the rod flopped down over the side of the car like a broken wing. They stood grinning at each other, while Dave carefully closed the knife and put it in his pocket. One of the men said, "This baby won't go anywhere for awhile."

They heard shouts from below. The cops were breaking through to the stalled car. The men on the roof ran to the opposite end and slid off, but suddenly cops were all around them. Dave saw one of the men climbing down snag his coat on a window ledge, and as he hung suspended the cops reached out for him, the clubs smashed down on his head and shoulders. Across the street the crowd scattered and people were running in all directions. Dave picked a clear spot and jumped. Falling as he landed, he rolled up to his feet, and a blow in the back sent him down again. Above him was a pair of blue uniformed legs. He dove for them, heard the club whistle over his head. and he struggled to his feet with his arms around the cop's middle. For a moment he and the cop strained against each other; the square red face, smelling of whiskey and tobacco, was three inches in front of his own. Then Dave pulled one arm free, rolled his shoulder back and struck. As the cop stumbled sideways, Dave broke and ran.

He ducked into the crowd that was forming again around the two street cars behind the first, where the strikebreakers were now under siege. Rocks crashed through the windows, the men inside were trying to hold the front door closed against the crowd. As Dave elbowed his way toward the car, he saw the door cave in; there was a fight on the steps and then a man with a C.I.O. steward's button was standing in the doorway shouting down at the men on the street, "Give way, Brothers, give way. These guys are going home. Keep your mitts in your pockets."

The strikebreakers came down from the car in bunches of four and

five, and followed the stewards who shepherded them through the crowd. At first the men watched them in silence. Then someone began to hiss and the whole mass of voices took up the chant, "Shame, shame, shame——." At the fringes there were a few fist fights, and a bunch of men trailed the strikebreakers up Cleveland Avenue to make sure they did not return.

Behind the three street cars, other cars were lining up one after another west on Cleveland Avenue. People got down to find what the trouble was and the crowd grew steadily at the corner. The cops moved in with their clubs to break up one group; another group gathered a few yards away.

Dave found one of the C.I.O. stewards beside him. "We got 'em buffaloed," the steward said, "Look at 'em, they don't know which end's up." Then leaning close, he asked, "You're the guy that pulled the trolley down, aren't you? I wouldn't hang around here if I was you. Those bastards are plenty mad about that trolley."

"They'd have some going to pick me out in a crowd like this."

"Why take a chance, Brother? Drop over to the main picket line for a spell and give these coppers a chance to cool down." The steward looked at his watch. "It's a quarter after seven now. We done our job here." He laughed suddenly and slapped Dave on the shoulder. "We put the blocks to 'em all right. I hope they done as good at the other end."

Dave slipped out of the crowd. He heard the police sirens and saw squad cars full of reinforcements racing up Cleveland Avenue. But he noticed that no street cars were moving from below; the boys must have done all right down there too. Through a side street, he cut east toward the factory and the embankment of the Great Midland, whistling because they had done the job well.

By eight o'clock the gate of the factory had not yet opened. The picket line was a solid mass three blocks long, spilling into the streets and alleys as far as Cleveland Avenue. Across from the plant, the line moved like an endless chain, up the inside of the sidewalk and back on the outside, while the marchers waved and shouted passing each other in opposite directions. Four girls with Student Union placards marched link-armed, singing. Behind them feet began to stamp in rhythm and other voices took up the chant:

"We shall not be moved,
Just like a tree that's standing by the water,
We shall not be moved."

Dave, stepping into a doorway, waited until the railroad delegation passed. The men were swinging along arm in arm, all of them puffing cigars; Red, who still had a pocketful, slipped Dave a couple, and Pledger

McAdams struck a light for him, shielding it in the palms of his big hands against the wind.

Along the street, between the factory and the picket line, squad cars cruised back and forth to keep the pickets away from the gates. But it was almost half-past eight before the factory whistle blew. The cops elbowed into the crowd, breaking a passage way from the company union office, and some fifty strikebreakers hurried through. A few walked with their heads up, but most of them covered their faces with their hands while the pickets driven back on both sides by lines of police, shouted, "Scab, scab, scab!" The gates swung shut behind the strikebreakers and the picket line resumed its march. All down the line now, people laughed. Voices called out to the cops who were swinging their arms against the cold.

"How many cans they going to turn out today, copper?"

"When you're out of a job, brother, come to us."

A *Chicago Tribune* press car nosed its way around the corner into the crowd, and someone sang out, "Get your facts straight, boys. Five thousand loyal workers went into the plant." Some of the pickets, producing doughnuts and bottles of coffee, ate breakfast as they marched. The coffee steamed in the cold air, and the scent of it drifted back over the heads of those behind. The railroad workers began telling each other how hungry they were, and when they reached the top of the picket line, they broke up, half of them heading over to Cleveland Avenue for breakfast while the others went on marching.

Dave stepped out of the crowd for a moment to point Roman Koviak to the nearest restaurant. As he turned back he raised his eyes suddenly; directly in front of him was the red-faced policeman he had fought at the street car stop. They stared at each other, then Dave moved into place in the picket line. From behind the policeman caught him by the collar and dragged him into the street.

Dave wrenched loose, turned, trying to duck into the crowd again. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the other cop behind him and swung his arm up to shield himself. Light burst across his eyes. For an instant, he felt as if blood were raining over his forehead while his knees buckled slowly beneath him. The pavement rolled up to meet him.

When he came to, he was sitting against a wall with two cops standing over him. He raised his hand and moved his fingertips cautiously over his head; he could feel the goose-egg, and the hair around it sticky with blood.

One of the cops asked in a friendly voice, "How do you feel, Bud? Can you stand up?"

Dave pushed himself awkwardly to his feet. In front of him was the red-faced policeman. A fist banged into his mouth and he slumped down against the wall again. The sunlit pavement rocked endlessly and he thought he was lying in his bunk feeling the rise and fall of the ground swell; but his hands pressed against an icy pavement. Between the legs of the cops, he saw figures moving out in the street, and he tried to understand what they were doing. People were running, and he saw the blue backs of the police and the clubs swinging up and down. The placards of the picket line swayed like corn in a summer wind. The crowd broke and scattered, leaving a few knots of struggling figures. Dave's head cleared with the anger that surged into his throat. He saw the pickets who had been clubbed sprawled across the curbs, and the winter sunlight flickering over the long empty pavements. The cops, returning from the side streets, grinned at each other and hefted their clubs. Over Dave, the policeman with the friendly voice asked again:

"How do you feel, Bud? Can you stand up?"

Dave did not move, and the one with the red face said, "The bastard's faking. Stand up, will you?" Taking him under the armpits, they pulled him to his feet; Dave hung limply between them.

"Where the hell's the wagon?"

"Must be busy," the first cop said and laughed.

But now from the side streets, Dave saw the pickets coming back. Hanson was with them. One of the shop stewards carried an American flag, and the men fell in behind him two by two as if they were marching at a firemen's parade. Dave felt his heart beat solidly in his throat. He wanted to hear them singing and to call out to them but he only groaned and shook his head drunkenly.

"Look at the bastards," the red-faced cop said. "They got an American flag."

Dave, moving his feet carefully, braced them on the pavement. He flung his arms out and spun sideways. The cops lost their hold. Dave jumped free and raced down the sidewalk under the wall of the factory. The policemen in the center of the street were all looking in the other direction, watching the pickets with the American flag. Dave saw them turning one after another at the sound of his feet and the shouts behind him. But he reached the corner of the factory. Ahead of him, a squad car swerved across the

avenue and bumped up over the sidewalk. Doubling back, he plunged into the alley that ran under the end of the factory. The shouts of the crowd faded and his footsteps rang out sharply on the concrete pavement. Blocking the end of the alley, the retaining wall and steep cinder embankment of the Great Midland reared in front of him. He went at it on the dead run, jumped, reached the ledge at the top with his fingertips, lost his hold and fell. He crouched again and jumped. As he hung struggling for a foothold, the loose sand over the ledge slipped under his fingers and again he dropped back. His hands were bleeding; he leaned against the base of the wall gasping for breath. Behind him, he saw the cops pour into the mouth of the alley. There was a puff of smoke, a thud and ping over his head, and an instant later he heard the crack of the gun. He flattened into the corner where the wall of the factory joined the retaining wall. Between the two walls he found a crack wide enough for his fingers; braced his feet sideways against the walls, and using the crack for a hand-hold, inched his way up. A bullet ricocheted close to his head. Then he got his elbows on the ledge of the retaining wall and rolled his body over.

The corner of the factory sheltered him from the men below and he lay still for a moment to catch his breath. Then, wondering whether the cops would have reached the embankment yet, and whether the railroad dicks had heard the shots, he crawled up the cinder slope. Cautiously he lifted his head over the crest. The tracks stretched out wide and empty in the winter sunshine. He rose to his feet and started across at an angle toward the Great Midland coach yard. One of the commuters' specials roared down the main line in front of him, and after it passed, he saw three railroad detectives moving toward him along the siding that swung around the far corner of the can factory. Dave walked as if to meet them. He recognized one of the three—the thin black-coated figure of the detective Morgan. While they were still too far away to hear, Dave began shouting questions and pointing toward the factory building; to himself he kept saying half out loud, "Keep together, you damn scum. Just don't spread out——." He clenched his fists against his sides to keep from running.

The wind flicked tears out of his eyes and froze them on his cheeks. Up here, the wind swept unbroken out of the sky, rushed like a gigantic stream over the roofs of the low houses in the west. In the distance now, beyond the houses, he saw a column of smoke whipped back low by the wind; another commuters' special swung around the curve of the embankment.

He heard shouts behind him; the cops were coming up over the wall

from the alley. The railroad detectives caught on at last and broke into a run, Morgan struggling in the pocket of his black overcoat to unlimber his gun. Dave swerved sideways toward the factory, and the three detectives turned with him to trap him against the wall of the building. The commuters' special was close now; its whistle wailed shrilly, the steam and smoke streaked back over the coaches. This is it—turn now, turn! The engine thundered over the nearest viaduct. Dave pivoted and raced back across the embankment. Morgan turned also, and for a moment they ran parallel to each other; then Dave plunged across the main line so close under the wheels of the locomotive, he smelled the hot oily wind and the gas from the firebox.

He did not look back. As he reached the edge of the embankment where it dropped into the coach yard, he lost his footing and shot down the slope in an avalanche of gravel and cinders. In front of him stretched a line of Pullmans and he rolled beneath them. The coach yard was crowded with the day's trains ready to go out. He counted four tracks as he crawled across them, then got to his feet, opened the door of a car, climbed inside and ran down the aisles of the empty coaches. When he stepped out at the far end, he was directly across from the carknockers' locker room.

There was no one in the locker room. He hung his street clothes in the locker, pulled on his overalls, his grease-smeared canvas jacket, and put on his cap covering the scar from the policeman's club. After setting out his lantern and carman's hammer on the bench, he went into the washroom to see how his face looked in the mirror. Dark purple bruises showed across his lips and cheekbones. Wiping his face on the sleeve of his jacket, he left a smear of grease across the marks.

When the railroad detective Morgan came into the locker room, Dave was sitting on the bench putting his lantern together.

"What are you doing?" Morgan asked.

"Fixing my lantern."

"What shift do you work on?"

Dave looked up. "You the yardmaster now?" he asked. "Or still a gumshoe like you used to be?"

Morgan watched him for a moment in silence. When he spoke again, the tone of his voice had changed. "I asked you a civil question. What shift you work on?"

"I work on the twelve to eight. I just finished breakfast and now I'm here fixing my lantern. All right?"

"How long you been here?"

"Half an hour."

"I was in here twenty minutes ago and you weren't here." Morgan's hand moved down toward the pocket of his overcoat. "You come in just now. You come in across the tracks."

"I been here half an hour," Dave said. "And I came on the street car." He got up from the bench, swinging the carman's hammer lightly against his thigh. "What are you trying to do, kid me?" The two stood facing each other in the empty locker room. "You trying to throw a scare into me?" Dave asked. "I work on this railroad just like you do, Morgan. This is my locker room—I belong here. There's a sign on the door says 'Carknockers' Locker Room'; it don't say 'Gumshoes' either." The shaft of the hammer was smooth and supple under his fingers. He wondered whether Morgan would reach his hand into the coat pocket. Their eyes met and he stared into the protruding blue eyes of Morgan's face. Dave dropped his eyes first. He looked down at Morgan's hands again, and Morgan, turning abruptly, walked out of the room.

After he had gone, Dave began to sweat under his armpits and across the back. He sat down on the bench for a moment and lighted a cigarette. Then he put his hammer and lantern away, locked the locker and went outside. As he reached the bottom of the steps that led down the embankment to Thirty-Fifth Street, he turned back suddenly and saw Morgan above him, standing by the rail at the top of the wall. His thin figure silhouetted against the pale sky looked unbelievably thin and tall.

"Get a good look at my back," Dave called.

He walked along Thirty-Fifth Street to the Halsted car line. At the corner, he passed a couple of policemen, but they did not even glance at him.

On the "Tendentious" In Literature

By EUGENE ALMAZOV

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THERE ARE WRITERS and critics who hold that art must be "free" and "pure" in the sense that it must serve to express the feelings of the author and be a conglomerate of esthetically beautiful forms. There is another view which insists that while art must strive to mirror beauty in art forms, it cannot hold itself aloof from life; that its subject must be the thoughts and feelings that actuate the millions. This latter view is very often labeled "tendentious," for it leads to the expression of a definite tendency in art, to the assertion of ethical and moral ideas or the advocacy of definite social principles.

Writers who adhere to this view are subjected to heavy fire from the champions of "pure" art. And Soviet literature, in particular, is often accused of social tendentiousness—in the eyes of some critics abroad this tendency is regarded as a cardinal defect in Soviet literature. This is the opinion expressed by the Russian emigré, Gleb Struve, in his book, *25 Years of Soviet Literature,* and by Yanko Lavrin in his *Introduction to the Russian Novel.* The *Times Literary Supplement* joins the chorus in numerous book reviews. The attack is based on a definite criterion, stemming from the esthetics of philosophical idealism. This makes it impossible to discuss the question without examining the general principles of literature.

One of the current beliefs is that art has no aim other than beauty of form. This opinion was held by Théophile Gautier, who lauded Baudelaire for upholding the "absolute autonomy of art" and for denying that poetry can have any aim outside itself or any mission save to engender in the soul of the reader "a perception of the beautiful in the absolute sense of the word." The source of this viewpoint is philosophical idealism, particularly the esthetics of Kant, who asserted that the basis of esthetic feeling is an unbiased delight in pure form.

Gautier held that true poetry not only proves nothing, but that it has not even a story to relate; that the beauty of a poem lies in its music and rhythm, rather than in its content. This view means that any work of art expressing

an idea is tendentious. Gautier advocated "pure" art, and the opponents of tendentiousness today are still the adherents of "art for art's sake."

Now, I am one of those who emphatically deny the existence of "pure" art; pure art has never actually existed. Any work of art always tells a story or describes something. Its materials are either the external world of the artist or his inner experience; whatever the artist's subject, he must reflect things as they appear to him. Further, if the prose-writer's or poet's description coincides with our own conceptions of things, we call him an objective writer. If his description differs from our conceptions, we call him subjective. In either case, we are dealing with an artist who has his own views on world phenomena, nor can this be otherwise. The writer must have his own measure by which he appraises the world about him.

Balzac writes in the preface to the *Human Comedy* as follows: "The writer's law is that which makes him what he is, what makes him—I make bold to say—equal to the statesman and perhaps above him. The law is his judgment in problems of human life and his steadfast adherence to principle." Balzac quotes Bonald, who wrote: "The writer must have definite views on morals and on politics; he must look upon himself as an educator." The author of the *Human Comedy* goes on to say of himself: "I early took these words, which constitute a law for the monarchistic as well as the democratic writer, as my rule."

Leo Tolstoy held, in the main, the same view. In 1908 Tolstoy wrote to Leonid Andreyev: "I believe that one should write only when the thought that one wishes to express becomes so persistent that it refuses to leave the mind until it is put down as best the writer can." Tolstoy, like Balzac, felt that literary creation is connected with the expression of definite ideas.

The standpoint of these two writers is of the highest value, for it expresses the views on the nature of art of two of the greatest literary masters of modern times. If any adherent of pure art should declare that it is the Marxists alone who demand tendentiousness in art, they must first consider the opinion of these writers, who cannot be accused of being Marxists, and whose right to express views on the nature of art cannot be questioned.

It may be argued that Balzac's and Tolstoy's views hold good only for their own compositions and for those of their followers. But what about those writers who consciously deny not only tendentiousness, but content?

Théophile Gautier once said: "I should be happy to forswear my rights as a Frenchman and a citizen, could I but look at a painting by Raphael or at a nude beauty." Gautier is not without disciples among modern poets and

critics. The political indifference of these people also constitutes a definite tendency, even though they may be bitterly opposed to tendentiousness.

This tendency may be defined more precisely. The Russian critic Plekhanov pointed out that the art for art's sake argument appears whenever there arises an inability on the part of the artist to approve of the social milieu in which he finds himself. In an essay entitled *Art and Social Life,* Plekhanov described the romanticism of the first half of the 19th century as an esthetic protest against bourgeois society.

The modern esthetes are likewise dissatisfied with their milieu. But their dissatisfaction with the modern way of life, like that of the majority of the romantics, is accompanied by a negative attitude towards the socialist thesis concerning the necessity of changing the social system. Like the romantics, the modern esthetes would like to change the social conditions in which they find themselves without changing the social system. Hence the denial on the part of such poets and writers of social subjects in art and their preoccupation with psychological problems and questions of art forms. The denial of social subjects forms a clearly defined tendency followed by this school. In the final analysis writers and critics who take up the cudgels against tendentiousness are themselves caught fast in the toils of a definite tendency.

II

It is Soviet literature in particular that is accused of tendentiousness. There are critics who go farther and declare that tendentiousness is a quality inherent in Russian literature. In my opinion, if we were to think of tendentiousness as it has been defined above, we would have little difficulty in proving that all English literature, both classical and modern, is definitely tendentious. There is no need to dig up the ancient past to prove this. We can take Shakespeare himself. To say nothing of the fact that Shakespeare's art as a whole is the expression of the current which has come to be called Renaissance humanism, it should be clear to anyone that the chronicles are not only tendentious, but that they are direct political propaganda. Think how many times during the war the lines of Falconbridge were quoted:

> *This England never did, nor never shall,*
> *Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror. . . .*
> *Come the three corners of the world in arms,*
> *And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,*
> *If England to itself do rest but true.*

Recall, too, Wilson Knight's *The Olive and the Sword,* published in 1944 and proving the patriotic propagandist nature of a number of Shakespeare's works.

Ben Jonson may justly be called one of Europe's first theoreticians of the tendentious in literature. In the prologue to *Every Man in His Humor,* he defines his aims as to "show an image of the times, and sport with human follies." In the preface to *Volpone* he declares: "I have labored for their instruction and amendment, to reduce not only the ancient forms, but manners of the scene, the easiness, the propriety, the innocence and last, the doctrine, which is the principal end of poesie, to inform men in the best reason of living."

The entire English novel of the 18th century is permeated with moralistic tendentiousness. Defoe, Swift, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Goldsmith were all tendentious, each in his own way. Moral views were considered a necessary factor in the work of any writer.

The romantics instituted a revolt against the ideas of the 18th century, but in the principles which they substituted for those of the preceding age, there is just as much tendentiousness. This we can see immediately we glance into the preface to Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads:* "Habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings will be found to carry along with them a *purpose.* If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. . . . The understanding of the reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified."

We shall not discuss Byron and Shelley, for, since the time of Southey and Jeffrey, they have too often been accused of tendentiousness to make it necessary to point out this quality in their writings.

The Victorian novel and Victorian poetry continue the tendentiousness of their predecessors, as may be seen in the works of Dickens, Thackeray and their followers, who created the modern social novel. In Cazamian's *Roman et Idées en Angleterre* the reader will find a most interesting exposition of the social ideas and tendencies in the Victorian novelists.

World literature knows no poetry to compare in moralizing tendency with that of Tennyson and the Brownings, as was proved most conclusively by the Pre-Raphaelites and the esthetic critics of the end of the century, who took the Victorian poets to task for this tendency. Meredith and Butler

launched the reaction against Victorianism, but who will deny the tendentiousness in *The Way of All Flesh or Erewhon?*

The writings of Kipling, Shaw and Wells, which have won universal fame, are all direct propaganda for definite principles.

An objective and unbiased approach to the subject must convince anyone that tendentiousness is far from being the exclusive property of Russian literature. It is as typical of English literature or of American or French or any other literature. And the apostle of "pure art" who maintains that this is a defect, must deny Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Byron, Tennyson, Dickens, Kipling, Wells and Shaw.

Actually, the esthetes counterpose to the classical line of development in English literature, those writers of the past who are closest to their standpoint. For them Donne and the metaphysical poets are of primary importance; we find the estheticism of Keats emphasized, and an exalted view taken of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Christina Rossetti, Thomson and the poets of English decadence. Although we have no desire to detract from the excellence of these poets, we must agree with the majority that they constitute the second, rather than the first rank of English writers.

Esthetes of various shades are eager to discuss what they allege to be an anti-art tendency in Soviet literature, their objections being leveled not only against the principle of tendentiousness generally, but the socialist and democratic ideas that form the content of Soviet literature. As a rule, the adherents of "pure art" are found among the antagonists of socialist ideas. The unprejudiced reader who examines the theories of these poets and critics will discover that they deny not only the artistic merits of Russian literature, but also the value of everything that is most significant in English literature. Consider, for example, T. S. Eliot's essay, arguing that *Hamlet* is a bad play. (See "Hamlet and His Problems" in the collection *The Sacred Wood.*) We cannot but view with grave doubts the value of discussions on the artistic merits of Soviet literature, coming from people who also deny the literary merits of *Hamlet.* In my opinion, such people display a tendency inimical to art, no matter how deeply it may be obscured by verbiage about the beautiful, and the necessity of restoring a sense of the beautiful.

III

An erroneous conception of the nature of tendentiousness frequently leads to an incorrect assessment of the most important literary phenomena.

Take, for example, the following conclusion quoted from Professor Simmons' *Outline of Modern Russian Literature:*

"Not infrequently an exaggerated emphasis has been placed upon the so-called 'tendentious' nature of Russian literature. Its tendentiousness existed more in the minds and demands of professional native critics than in the actual performance of great imaginative writers. . . . It is a striking fact that the famous novelists in the most fruitful period of Russian fiction kept singularly aloof from tendentious themes. Goncharov, Dostoyevsky, Turgenev, Tolstoy and Leskov for the most part ploughed their own furrows of art without turning to the left or to the right in order to satisfy the social demands of the critics. Such distinguished novels as *Oblomov, A Nest of Gentlefolk, War and Peace, Anna Karenina* and *The Brothers Karamazov* are unusually free from tendentiousness."

In actual fact the books mentioned by Professor Simmons are among the most openly tendentious literary compositions: I go so far as to say they are the most tendentious in all of Russian classical literature!

Oblomov is a novel criticizing aristocratic parasitism and exalting the active attitude towards life. *A Nest of Gentlefolk* is a somber elegy of the irreparable ruin of aristocratic culture. *War and Peace* is a mighty patriotic panorama glorifying the Russian people and describing the search by the cream of the Russian aristocratic intellectuals for the meaning of life. *Anna Karenina* is a vivid portrayal of the dissolution of a family in aristocratic and bourgeois society. *The Brothers Karamazov* is full of Christian moralizing. The authors of these works never concealed their tendencies, and Professor Simmons' attempts to liberate them from such intentions are vain and entirely fruitless.

The task of every objective investigator is not to defend literature from accusations of tendentiousness, but to examine the nature of tendentiousness, understand and explain the relationship between tendentiousness and objectivity in artistic creation, the relation and interdependence of the author's ideas and the clash between them, and the objectivity of the description of life in the literary composition. Finally, we must estimate the influence of various tendencies on the vitality and the artistic strength of the composition.

Maxim Gorky considered literature the most common means of spreading ideas. "Investing ideas with flesh and blood gives them greater universal appeal and conviction than philosophy or science." At the same time Gorky points out that "bare thoughts, grammatically correct phrases logically connected are insufficient for a novel, which requires human beings with all

their psychological complexity, confused and contradictory as its elements are in the society of our day." Gorky also pointed out that "the novelist is broader than his tendencies in that the idea he defends must, to carry greater conviction, be juxtaposed to hostile ideas. The novelist thus informs us, although in distorted form, of what may be inimical to him."

Not without interest is the opinion of Engels on tendentiousness, expressed in a letter to Minna Kautsky. In speaking of her novel *Die Alten und die Neuen,* Engels says that he is by no means opposed to tendentious poetry. He points out that Aeschylus, the father of tragedy, and Aristophanes, the father of comedy, like Dante and Cervantes, were definitely tendentious poets. Engels writes that the Russian and the Norwegian writers of the second half of the 19th century "have produced splendid novels, all tendentious."

Engels was, however, opposed to stark tendentiousness. The tendency, he considered, must not be forced on the reader, but must arise naturally out of the setting and the action of the composition. He speaks of tendentiousness again in a letter to the English novelist, Margaret Harkness. In it he says:

"I am far from finding fault with your not having written a pinchbeck Socialist novel, a 'tendenz Roman,' as we Germans call it, to glorify the social and political views of the author. That is not at all what I mean. The more the opinions of the author remain hidden, the better for the work of art."

Engels held that there were works in which the realism made itself felt, despite the views of the author. He took Balzac's *Human Comedy* as an illustration.

"Well, Balzac was politically a legitimist; his great work is a constant elegy unto the irreparable decay of good society; his sympathy is with the class that is doomed to extinction. But for all that his satire is never more cutting, his irony more biting than when he sets in motion the very men and women with whom he sympathizes most deeply—the nobles. And the only men of whom he speaks with undisguised admiration are his bitterest political antagonists, the Republican heroes of the Cloitre-Saint-Méry, the men who at that time (1830-36) were indeed the representatives of the popular masses. That Balzac was thus compelled to go against his own class sympathies and political prejudices, that he *saw* the necessity of the downfall of his favorite nobles and described them as people deserving no better fate; that he *saw* the real men of the future where, for the time being, they alone

could be found—that I consider one of the greatest triumphs of Realism, one of the greatest features in old Balzac."

We may therefore speak of two types of tendencies: the tendency of the author and the tendency of the development of life itself. Actually the question boils down to the relationship of these two tendencies. If the author's tendency coincides with life itself, his composition will doubtless be realistic. Should the author champion things that are out of harmony with the actuality surrounding him, his work becomes unrealistic. However, there is a third category, and Balzac falls into this category. The author's sympathies lay with a class doomed historically; but due to his realistic method of composition, he depicted that class with all the sternness of impartial justice. Balzac's political opponents, the left republicans, received a like justice. He saw that it was to these people that the future belonged. The resultant picture of society in the *Human Comedy* is a truthful one. Balzac maps the social tendencies of his time correctly.

Applying the same criteria to compositions of the great Russian novelists of the time helps us to a better understanding of them. Goncharov, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and others were definitely tendentious. But the content of their works is not exhausted by those ideas which they sought to embody in their writings. They produced works which mirrored the tendencies in the development of Russian society; they described the decay of the old aristocracy, the rise of democratic forces and the spread of discontent with all forms of exploitation of man by man. The majority of the Russian classics were, beyond question, on the side of the democratic movements of their time.

This impulse can be seen in the great writers of Russia, England, the United States and other countries. The writer's profound concern with the life of his people, his effort to shape the destiny of his people and to help his people is a noble motive crowning his art and stimulating him to produce true masterpieces. Such tendentiousness exalts not only the social significance, but also the artistic strength of literature.

There are some who fall into the error of thinking that success in literature may be achieved by perfection of form alone. The writer who is not a master of his craft is, of course, engaged in a futile pursuit. However, given an equal mastery of the technique of writing, that author will achieve the greatest success who depicts life, who is actuated by a desire to find a solution to the problems that concern the life of the people.

The great merit of the Russian classics lies in the fact that they under-

stood this axiom. Maxim Gorky wrote: "Russian literature carries a particularly great message and is of particular value in view of its breadth. There is no question which Russian literature does not take up and strive to find an answer to. Its constant preoccupation is with such questions as 'What is to be done?' 'What is best for us?' 'Who is at fault?' "

These were questions that occupied the minds of the Russian people, crushed beneath the despotism of the autocracy, the landlords and the capitalists.

The Russian people's answer to the question "What is to be done?" was to throw off the triple yoke of that despotism, and literature helped to instill the desire for liberation in the people. In vivid lines, literature went on to show the people "Who is at fault," delineating types among the tsarist bureaucracy, the landlords and the bourgeoisie, who were guilty of the people's sufferings. Finally, literature searched unremittingly for "What is best for us," the social system that would bring the people complete freedom.

Let us return to another statement concerning Russian criticism in Professor Simmons' book:

"From the time of V. G. Belinsky (1811-1848), the father of Russian literary criticism, critics among the radical intelligentsia, usually the most able and popular, tended to approve all literary productions on the basis of their political and social significance. Esthetic matters of form and expression were accorded a secondary place, or no place at all in the prevailing criticism."

Without going into the value of Professor Simmons' books, as a whole, I feel I must take exception to this statement. True, Russian critics, Belinsky in particular, demanded that the writer's work have a social content. This does not mean, however, that esthetic questions were relegated to a minor place.

"That beauty is a necessary condition of art, that without beauty there is not and cannot be any art, is an axiom," Belinsky wrote. The Russian critic acknowledged that "we ourselves were at one time ardent champions of beauty, as not only the sole element, but as the sole aim of art. This is always the starting point towards an understanding of art; art for art's sake, the conception of art as an end in itself is ever the first step in the process. Omitting this factor means never to achieve an understanding of art. Failure to progress beyond this point means a one-sided understanding of art."

"Art without a logical content of historical significance can satisfy only the literary 'has been,' " Belinsky goes on to say. He considers that "in our time, the greatest creative skill will provide but ephemeral delight, should

it be restricted to the production of 'bird songs,' to the setting up of a world divorced from historical and philosophical reality. It will not endure if it imagines that its home is in the clouds and if it disdains mother earth, if the tribulations and the aspirations of mankind are not allowed to disturb its mysterious dreams and poetic meditations. But the bird sings because it is made to sing, it reacts neither to the sorrows nor to the joys of its feathered tribe. And how bitter it is to think that among the elect there are humans whose inspiration is like that of 'birds': they are happy that they can sing. They are above humanity, above the sufferings of their kind, whose eyes, filled with prayer and hope, are turned to them in vain; their home is in the sky, they can find joy and consolation in their own souls. And this poetized egoism they call life, unchanging and eternal, aloof from the petty cares of the day."

Here is another quotation illustrative of the views of Belinsky: "Beyond a doubt, art must first of all be art. Only then can it begin to be the expression of the soul and the guiding star of society in any epoch. No matter how beautiful the thoughts with which a poem is filled, whatever the power with which the composition presents modern problems, if there is no poetry in it, there can be neither beautiful thoughts nor problems; the only thing we can say of the composition is that it contains good intentions poorly executed."

The reader will see that these views are not at all those which Simmons attributes to Belinsky. Belinsky's struggle for the development of a socially significant and democratic art was combined with his support of esthetic principles, and he did not separate one from the other.

Russian literature has pursued the path laid down by its great critics. Its objective has always been the unity of profound content and beauty of form.

I must make an excursion here into a question of esthetics. Chernyshevsky, the Russian philosopher and critic, counterposed the principles of materialistic esthetics to Hegel's idealistic esthetics. Chernyshevsky maintains that "the beautiful is life," not, as the idealists from the time of Plato to our own day hold, that "the beautiful is idea." This, however, does not mean that any reality is beautiful in itself. Russian philosophy has labored in esthetics to discover those conditions which are most favorable to the development of the beautiful. Gorky maintains that we must first make life beautiful, must drive out of it everything that deforms and cripples man and his life. Russian and Soviet literature, therefore, combines the effort to create the beauti-

ful with the struggle for a life that will make the beautiful living reality, and not merely an ideal.

IV

The question, then, is not whether a writer is, or is not, tendentious; but rather what are the tendencies he follows. The antagonists of tendentious art in modern literature are people who remain aloof from the questions occupying the mind of our disturbed world. They are indifferent to the fate of the millions who want bread, work and conditions which will enable them to find delight in the beautiful.

The Soviet writer lives in the midst of his people. Together with them he strives for happiness and freedom. He wants no illusory independence in some ivory tower, but true freedom in a free world.

This explains why John Lehmann's recent article *State Art and Scepticism* met with such disapproval among Soviet writers. Lehmann writes that during the war, he and his companions ". . . have held passionately to our right to be critical, to be antinomian, to be gloomy when we should have been enthusiastic, to write about the rambler rose against the garden wall and the kingfisher on the willow branch, the sensual charms of our mistress, the monster-minute dramas of our childhood and school days, and everything else that has no immediate connection with the war. . . ."

No one to whom the fate of culture is dear could take such a stand when the people are engaged in a life and death struggle against such a foe as fascism. The love that Soviet writers bear for art and culture is not platonic; they went to war both as patriots defending their own country and as artists defending art from the barbarians. There was never a thought of giving up the honor of fighting for these riches to others: they took their places in the ranks, and fought with sword and with pen.

Replying to Lehmann in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* Alexei Surkov wrote: "During the war we did not indulge in paradoxes for the sake of paradox, nor did we defend our right to be gloomy, when we should have been enthusiastic. If we wrote of the rose, it was of a rose sprinkled with warm human blood instead of the dew, and if it was of the kingfisher or the starling, it was of birds deprived of their nests by the war. The lover to us was the soldier, caught in the deadly blast of the war, whose heart was warmed by recollections of his beloved. We should have considered ourselves deserters had we done otherwise at a time when millions of our countrymen were suffering. In those great and tragic years, we participated in great and tragic events.

True to the heroic traditions of our classical literature and following the natural inclination of our hearts, we never thought of secluding ourselves in skeptical snobbery, but strove to exalt our art to the grim and heroic prose of a war waged in the name of the noblest and most poetic of ideals."

The writer cannot stand aloof from life now that the war is a thing of the past. The question is, what stand will he take—and he must choose one of two paths. One leads him, together with all the progressive forces of society, into the struggle for the consolidation of peace, and the complete eradication of the fascist plague, for the attainment of the best possible conditions for the free development of all peoples, on democratic foundations. The other leads to seclusion from this struggle, to becoming the accomplices, willing or unwilling, of those who desire a repetition of the horrors of fascism and World War II. Reactionary forces are still extant and will strive to obtain their revenge. We may, of course, close our eyes to all this and sing of the rose and the rose alone but this will not absolve such writers from tendentiousness. It will be an anti-people and anti-democratic tendency, one that plays into the hand of the reactionary servants of darkness and destruction who conceal their black thoughts, who fear the free word of the poet and who hate true beauty.

V

I have spoken of tendentiousness as the thought-content of the writer's art. However, tendentiousness may be understood differently, and is sometimes thought of as the artist's fabrication of characters to prove his own preconceptions. In other words, it may be understood as a writer's distortion of reality in favor of a prejudged idea. Let's look into this type of tendentiousness, as it often forms an accusation leveled against Soviet writers.

Soviet writers, as is well known, write chiefly of the country in which they were born and reared, and whose life they know from personal experience. This can be seen in such well-known Soviet books as *And Quiet Flows the Don* and *Virgin Soil Upturned* by Sholokhov; *The Road to Calvary* by Alexei Tolstoy; *The Nineteen* and *The Last of the Udegei* by Fadeyev, the novels and plays of Leonid Leonov; *Out of Chaos* and *Without a Pause for Breath,* by Ilya Ehrenburg.

It is the contention of some critics that these books distort reality in favor of a socialist conception.

The question that arises in my mind when I read such accusations, is, how can a critic or writer living in London or New York know Soviet reality

so well that he can judge of tendentiousness in the works of Sholokhov or Leonov? Would it not be natural to assume that Sholokhov and Leonov know Russian life better than any foreign critic?

True, the foreign reader will find much that seems strange and unlike the life he knows in Russian novels and plays. But Sholokhov or Leonov must not be judged on the basis of preconceived opinions, but after a more thorough acquaintance with Soviet life. Millions of Soviet readers know these books by Russian writers, and they are the best judges of how truthfully these authors portray their life. And these readers have placed their trust in their writers, for they see that Soviet literature truthfully mirrors the life of the country, the people as a whole and the fate of individuals among them.

I do not deny that there are writers in Soviet literature who fabricate characters to suit their ideas. There are such writers. But their "bare tendentiousness" arises and exists not because they are Soviet writers but simply because they are bad writers, of whom there are many in any country and any literature. However, such writers do not define the character of a literature and we are not speaking of them. We are speaking of Soviet writers who are recognized by the whole people, whose books leave an imprint on the life and consciousness of the nation.

A number of foreign critics express displeasure over the fact that in the books of Soviet writers, the idea of socalism and collectivism is always victorious. But this is a fact drawn from Soviet life. This is not a tendency merely of the writer, but a tendency of life itself, and the finest proof is the conduct of the Soviet people in the war. The source of the heroism of Soviet soldiers and officers in the war was love for their country. They knew that fascism wanted to deprive them of the freedom and happiness they had won by strenuous toil and struggle over a period of two decades. No form of compulsion could have produced the heroism of the men of Stalingrad, the heroism of the partisans and the millions of fighting men who threw themselves heart and soul into the struggle against the invader.

The Soviet people are, indeed, very "tendentious." They love their country, have the deepest faith in its social system, and desire the preservation and development of that system. A writer who wrote anything differing from this might win the approval of certain critics, but he would be writing a tendentious falsehood. Soviet writers are tendentious in the sense that they express the tendencies that exist and have emerged victorious in Soviet life. To the Soviet reader, this constitutes a merit, no matter how it may be frowned upon by certain critics.

John Brown

By IRVING SEGALL

. .

In the belly of the land
Since '59
On a patch ten feet
Where the sun don't shine
They shovel the dirt
Come night, come day,
They shovel the dirt
But the dirt don't stay.

In the soft brown belly
Where the white moon fades—
With their hands closed tight
And their eyes afraid
They dig their heels,
They rule the ground,
They dig their spades
And the curse goes 'round.

They don't forget
How a train ran free
On a railroad track
They couldn't see.
They don't forget
How the raid was done:
The sermon preached
By the preacher's gun.

They don't forget,
They spade the ground,
They heave the dirt
And the dirt shakes down.
Come spring, come fall
The dirt shakes down
Where John Brown's angry
In the ground.

FROM THE SKETCHBOOK

OF

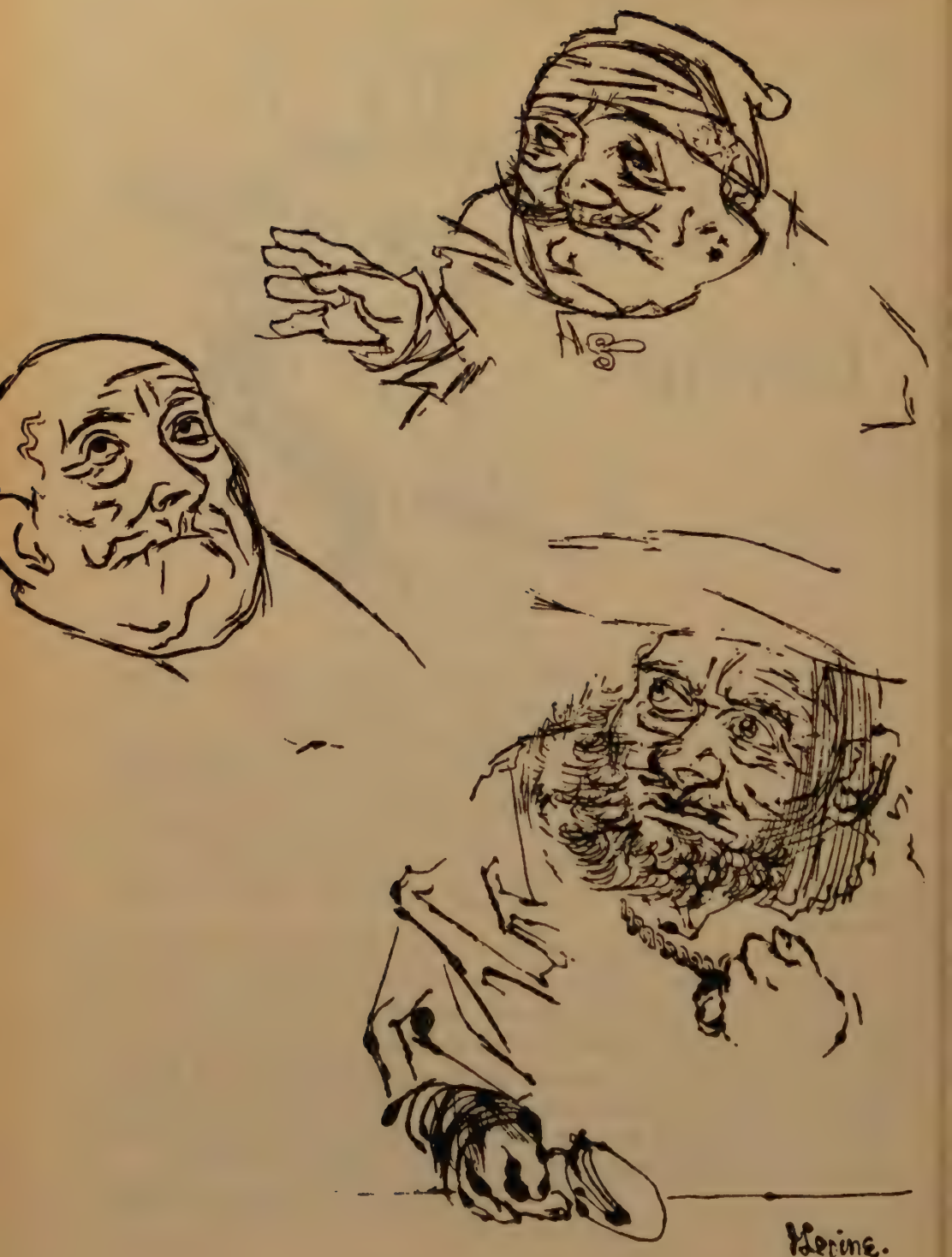
Jack Levine

AN ARTIST'S SKETCHES are like unguarded thoughts, fragmentary, spontaneous and uninhibited by the strict logic of the finished work.

In these few pages from the sketchbook of Jack Levine an artistic personality comes through with clarity and force. These very qualities which make him one of America's leading painters are evident in his slightest sketches. Levine is an artist steeped in the tradition of craftsmanship. He learned to draw before he discarded short pants, and his line has an ease and a fluency which comes only when the hand is the complete servant of the mind.

But what distinguishes Levine as an artist is his sympathy for people and his sense of the dramatic. He grows directly out of the tradition of Rembrandt, Goya and Daumier. Life is to him rich in human interest, full of emotion and incident. He can be warmly sentimental as well as bitingly satiric. He can castigate with a searching precision of line the bloated arrogance of wealth and render with poetic feeling the pathos of an old nag. Light and fragmentary as these sketches are they give one an insight into the sensitivity, richness and humanity of Jack Levine's art.

MARION SUMMERS


Herine.

Souvenir for Chen Wang

By STEFAN HEYM

. .

THE STORY OF CHEN WANG is a simple one. He was a simple man bent to the struggle to preserve as much as possible of the fruits of his labor for himself, his wife who was prematurely broken and old, and his eight children.

This struggle was forced upon Chen Wang. He hadn't sought it. Plowing, fertilizing, watering, watching the soil, sowing and reaping clearly delineated the circle in which he found himself—a circle as inescapable as one drawn by evil spirits. These things he had to do, from sunrise to sundown, in order to live, to feed himself and his large family. But he could not live and continue to work and feed his sons so they might grow and help him and take his place after him, unless he found ways of keeping for himself more of what he grew in his fields than was permitted him.

So it came about that Chen Wang judged everything—men, events, and ideas—by their effect on the amount of his produce he was allowed to consume. His emotions were seated in his stomach, a thin, wiry, muscular stomach never quite filled. He had no philosophy, no ideology, no fine and great thoughts about his country—such considerations did not enter his life because his life was constantly being entered by matters directly affecting his stomach.

This preoccupation prevented him from leading his thoughts outside the immediate circle of working and trying to get enough to eat. Thus, Chen Wang did not hate the Landlord, though in the end it was the Landlord who took the major part of his produce. He couldn't hate him because he had never seen the Landlord—the distant Master could have been a myth or a God. The persons for whom Chen Wang reserved the varying degrees of his hate were the overseers who came around to cart off what they decided belonged to the Landlord. The degree of hate in Chen Wang's heart—or, rather, his stomach—depended on the size of the bribe necessary to make the individual overseer temper his decision. The overseer Tien Chung, an elderly lecher who required only the services of one of Chen Wang's daughters, was

a good man and was greeted by Chen Wang almost with affection. Teh Koong, the junior overseer, whose bribe almost equalled the share of what they ultimately agreed to deliver to the Landlord, aroused in Chen Wang serious thoughts of murder. Teh Koong escaped his fate because Chen Wang was afraid that the spirit of the murdered man would haunt his hut and cause much mischief; a man as vicious as Teh Koong might be worse dead than alive.

Then the war came into the valley in which lay the fields of Chen Wang. It came there because of the big road that ran on the other side of the hill. The Japanese needed this road for their communications and had to occupy the surrounding countryside, including the valley where Chen Wang's hut and village stood.

The Japanese came in the Spring. The fields were still barren, and Chen Wang had hidden his few provisions in holes in the earth so dug that only he could find them. The arrival of the Japanese affected Chen Wang's life in two ways: one good, one bad. It was bad that they took his daughter—the one whose services the overseer Tien Chung had required; and it was bad that his eldest son who was old enough to help in the fields, went off one morning to join an Army which, he said, was going to free the country. It was good, however, that the Japanese caused the two overseers, Tien Chung and Teh Koong, and the Landlord to leave hurriedly; for the first time in his life, Chen Wang expected to keep the entire harvest for himself and to fill his stomach and the stomachs of his large family throughout the next Winter. The Japanese, he thought, could have been much worse.

But just before harvest time, the Landlord and the overseers returned; and as soon as Chen Wang had finished reaping, both Tien Chung and Teh Koong, the junior overseer, came to his hut. A Japanese sergeant was with them.

Tien Chung appeared more elderly and seedy than ever; one could see that he missed the solace of Chen Wang's daughter and of the other girls who had been taken by the Japanese Army. Teh Koong, on the other hand, displayed an almost military bearing and endeavored to compete with the Japanese sergeant who moved about, scowling, and trying to keep his boots clean of the mud in front of Chen Wang's hut.

Tien Chung explained the situation in a friendly manner to Chen Wang. Whenever Chen Wang showed signs of lack of understanding, Teh Koong, the junior overseer, would briskly intersperse remarks that clarified what Tien

Chung had been too old, or too kind, or too sentimental, to put into the right words.

The Japanese Army, said Tien Chung, was requisitioning part of the produce of the countryside to feed its soldiers. As if to illustrate, he pointed surreptitiously to the round, disinterested face of the sergeant. On the other hand, the Landlord had to live, too, as Chen Wang could readily see, and so required his usual tithe.

Chen Wang stood, slightly bent, as a man should before his superiors. Now he looked up. He asked Tien Chung to repeat the figures, and, having heard them repeated, remarked that if one added the share requisitioned by the Japanese to the tithe for the Landlord, nothing was left for him, Chen Wang, and his family.

The junior overseer, Teh Koong, answered quickly that this unfortunately was the case, but that nothing could be done about it. Chen Wang would have to look to himself; he should have worked harder during the Spring and the Summer; and since when was the Landlord responsible for how Chen Wang filled the stomachs of himself and his family?

For one moment, Chen Wang hoped that a way might be found to leave him at least a small part of what he had worked for and what he needed. He looked for the demanding hands of Tien Chung and of Teh Koong, the junior overseer; but Teh Koong drew himself up so that he appeared dignified and almost like a soldier and above that kind of thing; and Tien Chung's small eyes went quickly from corner to corner; and the Japanese sergeant stepped forward, significantly.

Chen Wang felt his stomach constrict; his tortured brain thought of edible roots and grasses, and of the Winter that was close at hand.

That night, Chen Wang listened to angry voices in the sky. The darkness was torn by great flashes and fiery arcs. He heard the roaring of tremendous, fast-flying birds; he saw them fight, and saw the wounded ones plummet down in sheets of flame to crash like burning rocks.

At first, Chen Wang gathered his wife and his children around him and they huddled close, all of them fearing something terrible they could not define. Then Chen Wang remembered the stories he had heard of machines flown by men up in the skies—the Japanese had such machines; if they had them, perhaps there were others who had them, too. At dawn, Chen Wang found the courage to go out and investigate. He saw the still smoking parts

of one such machine; he went close but did not dare touch anything. Then he heard a faint moaning from nearby.

The moaning came from a man covered with blood, who wore a brown leather jacket with Chinese symbols attached to its back. Chen Wang inspected him and tried to make sense of the symbols, but he never had been taught to read. He saw that the man was not like the Japanese sergeant who had visited his hut yesterday. Chen Wang thought the man might belong to those others who also had machines flying through the skies and who were fighting the Japanese.

The man looked pleadingly at Chen Wang. Chen Wang picked him up and dragged him to his hut. He had his children bring fresh water to wash the wounds. Then he fed the man and watched him eat, his own eyes hungry.

In the afternoon, from one of his younger sons who had gone to the village, Chen Wang learned that the Japanese were searching for American fliers.

"Are you an American flier?" asked Chen Wang.

But the wounded man did not understand. His brown leather jacket was open, and he pointed at a shiny button on the collar of his blouse. On the button was a strange symbol. To Chen Wang, it looked like this:

U. S.

"Yuh Ess," the wounded man said and tried to smile. "United States. America."

"America?" repeated Chen Wang.

The wounded man nodded.

Chen Wang went out to the big, dense hedge at the far end of his fields. He cut a hole into the hedge and crept inside and built a kind of dug-out and made the earth smooth and firm and put straw on the ground to serve as a bed for the wounded man. In the evening, he took his guest to the hedge. There he hid him and fed him for seven days.

After seven days, a message came from Chen Wang's eldest son who had joined the Army to free his country. Chen Wang was to bring his guest to a place where the river forked and a copse of birch trees stood to the North, three days' journey from Chen Wang's hut.

Chen Wang wondered where his son had learned that he had a guest; but he questioned the message no more than he had questioned the demands of the overseers Tien Chung and Teh Koong, or of the Japanese sergeant.

Chen Wang fashioned a stretcher out of bamboo sticks and bast rope; and he and his wife and their two next eldest sons carried their guest to where the river forked and a copse of birch trees stood to the North. They traveled by night and hid by day. They lived on roots and berries, but the wounded man ate their rice. When the sun rose after the third night, they found the copse of birch trees, and Chen Wang embraced his eldest son and entrusted to him the wounded guest.

The American, from his stretcher, looked up at Chen Wang and said: "Gee, Old Man, I sure wish I could give you something. But I haven't a damn thing."

Chen Wang smiled. His eyes fell on the shiny button with the strange symbol.

"Want it?" said the American, and as Chen Wang did not answer, he took the U.S. insignia from his blouse and pressed it into Chen Wang's thin hand. The hand closed around the token. Chen Wang smiled again, and the American said, "Okay, okay. It's nothing. If I get back to Base, I can get more where that comes from—plenty." Then he was carried off by the men who had come with Chen Wang's eldest son, and Chen Wang walked back with his wife and his two other sons, for three days, to his hut.

The following Winter, Chen Wang's wife and his two youngest children, both girls, died. They died of bloated stomachs, slowly and with much whimpering. For days on end, Chen Wang sat at their side, pressing his hands to his ears, trying to shut out the sound of their gradually ebbing wailing. Then the wailing ceased, and soon after they were dead.

Chen Wang tried to dig graves for them. But he was too weak, and the ground was hard and frozen. The graves were no more than shallow ruts, and he piled stones on the small mounds and promised himself he would dig better graves if he lived to see the Spring.

Spring came. It opened with the thunder of the ice on the river and with the crackle of rifles. Chen Wang got unexpected aid for the graves he had to dig. His eldest son returned, with many soldiers. They drove out the Japanese, and with the Japanese went the Landlord and Tien Chung and Teh Koong, the junior overseer. The soldiers told Chen Wang to come to the village and take his place in the Village Council. In the Council, Chen Wang learned that his land was now his own and that this year's harvest would be his.

Chen Wang smiled and acknowledged that this was good news, but he

said there would be no harvest because he had nothing to sow. His eldest son got up in the Council and said, "Respect for my elders makes me hesitate to contradict my father. But facts are facts. We have taken the store houses of the Landlord; and part of what is in the store houses will be given to the families for bread, to each according to the number of mouths; and part of it will be given out for seed, to each man according to the fields he can work. This is how the Army of Liberation has ordered, and this is how it will be done."

Chen Wang saw his eldest son sit down. The boy was now a man. He did not look much like a soldier, certainly not like the Japanese sergeant. He was barefoot, and his blouse was torn and shoddy. But his gun shone as much as, perhaps more than, the button with the strange symbol which was the gift the wounded man had given to Chen Wang.

Expecting the first harvest of his life that would be truly his own, Chen Wang began to breathe easier. It would be simple to feed his three younger sons and his remaining small daughter. Chen Wang's shoulders lost some of their stoop. He was counted among the elders of the village and was talked to about politics and government. But he declined courteously to commit himself, saying he was not sufficiently educated to have opinions, and adding, proud and at the same time envious of his eldest son, that these were matters for the younger ones, who were perhaps a different kind of man. Chen Wang knew that he was the same as he had been, his views, his actions, his emotions determined by his stomach. He was in favor of those who allowed him to fill his stomach, and that was as far as he went.

After the harvest was brought in, there was talk of peace. The Japanese had been defeated, and everybody celebrated and felt happy. Chen Wang thought of the Japanese sergeant and said it was a good thing that the enemy had been defeated and was driven out, and everybody agreed. But everybody did not agree that the Landlord and his two overseers, Tien Chung and Teh Koong, had been defeated and driven out along with the Japanese. There were some who insisted they had not.

These apparently were right. Tien Chung and Teh Koong returned the following Spring, and the Landlord himself, portly and white-haired, came down to the village to talk to Chen Wang and the men of the Council. He was more than gracious, for so exalted a personage. But when he was told that the Army of Liberation had given the land to those who worked on it, his face grew fiery and his eyes flashed. Chen Wang began to tremble at the anger of a man of such position and wealth, the superior, furthermore, of

Teh Koong, the junior overseer, and Tien Chung. His eldest son, still barefoot and in his ragged blouse, rose and said to the Landlord:

"Go away. You have no rights here. Once you took this land, now it is taken from you. You never plowed so much as one field in this valley. How can you say that it belongs to you? We, the Army of Liberation, tell you so, and this is how it will be done."

The Landlord and his two overseers left, and everybody could see that they were bitter and would be enemies for all time to come. But since they had entered the village peacefully for the purpose of discussing matters of property with the people, they were allowed to go in peace.

Chen Wang felt that this would not be the end of it, but he preferred to keep his own counsel. The Landlord and his two overseers, too, had stomachs—big stomachs, fat stomachs, but withal the same kind of stomach as Chen Wang. And what had filled their stomachs was taken away from them; and they were proud men and men of position who would not bow or bribe or permit themselves to be robbed, as Chen Wang had been forced to do in previous years.

Chen Wang was not astonished when his eldest son told him that another Army was marching up the big road that ran on the other side of the hill, an Army of the Landlords, fighting for them and the rule of the overseers. The son said that this new Army might cross the hill and come into the village, and that bad times would return. He advised Chen Wang to leave with his remaining children.

But Chen Wang looked over the sprouting green fields which were his fields because he had worked them, and he looked up at the sky from where his strange guest had once come, and said slowly that he would stay. This was his hut and his life, and Armies came and went, and he would have to stay.

So his eldest son said that the detachment of the Liberation Army would move out at noon the next day, to retreat into the mountains and to fight the Army of the Landlords. "It seems," he said, "that when we defeated the Japanese, we performed only half of what we set out to do."

"This is your work," said Chen Wang, "not mine."

That night, again, there were angry voices in the sky, but this time, Chen Wang was no longer afraid because he knew that they were only the voices of flying machines, directed by men. He left his little ones bedded in his hut, and ran out to see.

The sky was filled with great yellow flares that made the night almost as

bright as day, and the birds flew low to observe what was on the ground. Chen Wang counted six of them. He was not afraid. He was not even afraid when he heard the sharp whistling and shrill whining rush toward him, nor when he felt the earth shake like a woman in labor.

Only when he saw flames shoot out of where he knew his hut stood, when he saw the thatched barn with his own harvest burn fiercely, did he sense that he had been destroyed. He managed to run to the place where his hut had been with his remaining children inside. Then he fell on the ground and bit the earth which he had tended always and which had fed him.

In the morning, his eldest son came from the village and found Chen Wang still prostrate. He lifted his father, and washed the old man's face. Supported by his eldest and only son, Chen Wang walked to the pile of ashes and dirt that had been his hut and his children.

There they found the black object. It was half the size of Chen Wang, very round, very satisfied, very quiet, with a pointed yellow nose.

"A dud," said the son. And as he saw that his father did not understand, he explained. "They drop it, it explodes. Something went wrong with this one. Don't touch it."

With dull eyes Chen Wang looked at the thing. Then he knelt down to peer more closely. Out of a pocket, he took the shiny button, the gift the wounded American had given him as a token of thanks. Chen Wang compared the symbol on the button with some of the markings on the bomb. They were the same.

It was to Chen Wang as if the numb pain that had been all over him took shape and form, became sharp and lodged itself, like an ulcer, in his stomach. It was the pain of hunger he had felt when he gave his own slim portion of rice to the guest who had come to him, wounded, from the skies; it was the hunger he had felt when he fed his children, now dead, while going hungry himself.

His pain left no room for anger. It dried his tears before they rose to his eyes. But it gave his mind a frightening clarity. His whole life and everything in it fell into place—the Landlord and the two overseers, the Japanese sergeant, the American who had given him the button, and the bomb.

Chen Wang got up, his shoulders straight. He walked over to his eldest and only son who was standing apart to avoid prying upon his father's grief.

"I will join you," Chen Wang said. "Do you have a rifle for me?"

"No," said the son, "but we will go out and take the rifles from the enemy."

"The Logic of My Life . . ."

By THEODORE DREISER

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The following letter was written by Theodore Dreiser shortly before his death. At the time the letter was made public it was virtually ignored by the press. We are reprinting the letter because we believe it is of vital interest and significance to American writers and intellectuals today.—THE EDITORS.

Hollywood, Calif.
July 20, 1945

William Z. Foster
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Foster:

I am writing this letter to tell you of my desire to become a member of the American Communist organization.

This request is rooted in convictions that I have long held and that have been strengthened and deepened by the years. I have believed intensely that the common people, and first of all the workers—of the United States and of the world—are the guardians of their own destiny and the creators of their own future. I have endeavored to live by this faith, to clothe it in words and symbols, to explore its full meaning in the lives of men and women.

It seems to me that faith in the people is the simple and profound reality that has been tested and proved in the present world crisis. Fascism derided that faith, proclaiming the end of human rights and human dignity, seeking to rob the people of faith in themselves, so that they could be used for their own enslavement and degradation.

But the democratic peoples of the world demonstrated the power that lay in their unity, and a tremendous role was played in this victory by the country that through its attainment of socialism has given the greatest example in history of the heights of achievement that can be reached by a free people with faith in itself and in all the progressive forces of humanity—the Soviet Union. The unity of our country with the great Soviet Union is

one of the most valuable fruits of our united struggle, and dare not be weakened without grave danger to America itself.

Communists all over the world have played a vital part in welding the unity of the peoples that insures the defeat of fascism. Theirs were the first and clearest voices raised against the march of aggression in China, Ethiopia and Spain.

Dr. Norman Bethune, the great pioneer in saving war wounded through the use of the blood bank, died in China helping the free peoples of that country withstand the Japanese hordes years before the democratic countries came to their aid. His dying request was that it be made known that since many years he had been a Communist.

Out of the underground movements of tortured Europe, Communists have risen to give leadership in the face of terror and all-pervading military suppression. Tito of Yugoslavia won the admiration of the world for his leadership of his people to victory. The name of Stalin is one beloved by the free peoples of the earth. Mao Tse-Tung and Chou En-Lai have kept the spirit of democracy and unity alive in China throughout the years that divisive forces have split that country asunder.

In the United States, I feel that the Communists have helped to deepen our understanding of the heritage of American freedom as a guide to action in the present. During the years when fascism was preparing for its projected conquest of the world, American Communists fought to rally the American people against fascism. They saw the danger and they proposed the remedy. Marxist theory enabled them to cast a steady light on the true economic and social origins of fascism; Marxism gave them also a scientific understanding of the power of the working people as a force in history which could mobilize the necessary intelligence, strength and heroism to destroy fascism, save humanity and carry on the fight for further progress.

More than 11,000 Communists are taking part in that struggle as members of the armed forces of our country. That they have served with honor and patriotism is attested to even by the highest authorities of the Army itself.

More and more it is becoming recognized in our country that the Communists are a vital and constructive part of our nation, and that a nation's unity and a nation's democracy is dangerously weakened if it excludes the Communists. Symbolic of this recognition was the action of the War Department in renouncing discrimination against Communists in granting commissions. A statement signed by a number of distinguished Americans

points out that "the Army has apparently taken its position as a result of the excellent record of Communists and so-called Communists, including a number who have been cited for gallantry and a number who have died in action."

It seems to me that this ought to discredit completely one of the ideological weapons from the arsenal of fascism that disorients the country's political life and disgraces its intellectual life—Red-baiting. Irrational prejudice against anything that is truly or falsely labeled "Communism" is absurd and dangerous in politics. Concessions to Red-baiting are even more demoralizing in the field of science, art and culture. If our thinkers and creators are to fulfill their responsibilities to a democratic culture, they must free themselves from the petty fears and illusions that prevent the open discussion of ideas on an adult level. The necessities of our time demand that we explore and use the whole realm of human knowledge.

I therefore greet with particular satisfaction the information that such leading scientists as the French physicist, Joliot-Curie, and the French mathematician, Langevin, have found in the Communist movement, as did the British scientist, Haldane, some years ago, not only the unselfishness and devotion characteristic of the pursuit of science, but also the integration of the scientific approach to their own field of work with the scientific approach to the problems of society.

I am also deeply stirred to hear that such artists and writers, devoted to the cause of the people, as Pablo Picasso of Spain and Louis Aragon of France, have joined the Communist movement which also counts among its leading cultural figures the great Danish novelist, Martin Anderson Nexo, and the Irish playwright, Sean O'Casey.

These historic years have deepened my conviction that widespread membership in the Communist movement will greatly strengthen the American people, together with the anti-fascist forces throughout the world, in completely stamping out fascism and achieving new heights of world democracy, economic progress and free culture. Belief in the greatness and dignity of Man has been the guiding principle of my life and work. The logic of my life and work leads me therefore to apply for membership in the Communist Party.

Sincerely,

(*Signed*) THEODORE DREISER.

The Tailor's House

By WILMA SHORE

WHEN THE FOULGERS learned that Doris Blake's plans were changed and that she would be back in Los Angeles and needing her apartment in a month, all they could do at first was sit and stare at each other. Then Norrie started wandering aimlessly around, looking out of the windows, and Nell went into the bathroom and combed her hair, over and over. It was dark red hair, and very heavy.

By that night, however, they had begun to face their problem. They got on the phone and went right through their address book, calling even their slightest acquaintances and asking them if they knew of anything. The next day Nell spoke to the butcher, the grocery clerk and the milkman. She told them what she could pay and how much she needed a place. Norrie asked around downtown. He also put an ad in the *Times:*

> EX-SERVICEMAN, WIFE, ONE CHILD, NEED SMALL APT. OR HOUSE, FURN., BONUS.

Nell composed one for the little neighborhood paper:

> MY HUSBAND SPENT THREE YEARS IN ARMY BARRACKS. NOW HE NEEDS A PLACE TO LIVE WITH ME AND OUR GOOD LITTLE BOY. WE ARE QUIET AND NEAT AND REALLY VERY DESIRABLE. BONUS AND GRATITUDE.

"It's coy," she said. "But it'll get results."

"You hope," said Norrie.

"If it doesn't," said Nell, "we'll just see whether we can't get along in a small pepper tree. Jimmy'd like that, wouldn't you, baby? Wouldn't you like to live in a tree?"

Jimmy was hopping on one leg, watching their faces. "No," he said. "Birds live in trees."

"Then we'll be birds," said Nell.

"It's all right for Jimmy," said Norrie, "but I think we're a little old for that kind of thing."

"It wouldn't be much of a change," said Nell. "We're always up in the air about something anyhow."

"Yak, yak," said Norrie coldly. "Girls have been pushed out of trees for less than that."

"We're going to get a nice house from my ad," said Nell. "From my revolting ad. Then you can do your pushing indoors."

The first week they got four calls. Two were for houses to buy, one at nineteen thousand and one at twenty-two thousand. One was for a three-room apartment at exactly twice what they were paying, if they could put their little boy in boarding school. The last was a woman who described a really possible place. "I'd like to have a serviceman," she said. "Our boys did their share and I think we ought to help them now."

Nell could barely speak. "Thank you," she said. "Thanks."

"What branch of the service was your husband in?" said the woman.

"The Army," said Nell. "Adjutant General's office. He's a lawyer."

"Lawyer?" said the woman. "Honey, you folks aren't Jewish, are you?"

This was where the split between Nell and Norrie first occurred. "What do you care what kind of person she is?" he said that night. "This is no time to be idealistic. You should have told her the truth, no, we're not."

"Norrie!" said Nell.

He finished drying his hands and folded the towel neatly. "Your diatribe on native fascism isn't going to have the slightest effect on her and you know it. You just gave up a possible house for the pleasures of self-expression."

"Oh, Norrie!" she said. "It wasn't idealism, it was common sense. A woman like that, we wouldn't have been there three weeks without fighting about something. And then she'd put us out and we'd have to start all over again anyhow."

Jimmy was in the bathtub, absently squeezing his sponge. "Your mother is a dreamer," said Norrie. "Great charm but no sense. I hope you take after my side of the family."

Nell walked out of the bathroom. Norrie called after her: "Nell!" She didn't answer. He followed her into the kitchen and put his arms around her. "You're right," he said. "It's just that I'm so anxious for us to find something. We wouldn't want to live in her house under any conditions."

Nell rubbed her face against his shoulder. "I'm glad if you think so," she said. "I got so scared, after, I thought maybe I was being foolish. . . ."

It was all right as long as they were doing something. As long as there was another paper to advertise in, another real estate agent to call. But after a while there were no more papers. And even Nell got tired of hearing the

same thing from the agents. They stopped making jokes about living in trees. "We still have two weeks," said Nell. "Something'll come through. Mrs. Olcott in the Standish office may call me, she said she might be getting something."

Mrs. Olcott didn't call. When Nell called her she said, "Why, I *told* you I didn't have a *thing!*"

Finally Norrie said, "We just have to buy. We have to get a loan some place and buy, that's all."

Sunday they went out with Mrs. Olcott and looked at houses for sale. They drove around all day. At five o'clock they faced the fact that there just were no decent low-cost houses for sale, that they couldn't raise the down payment on any house that they would be willing to have Jimmy live in. Even for a few years.

Then there was nothing left to do at all. They kept their ad in the paper but nobody called them. "Well," said Norrie, "I guess it's back to Chicago for the Foulgers."

"But Norrie!" said Nell. "You can't leave the office! You might never get that kind of break again!"

"I can't stay in the office if I have no place to live," said Norrie.

"Well, we may just have to stay with someone for a while. One of our friends could put us up for a while, till we get a place."

"Yeah?" said Norrie. "Who? Who do we know with an extra bed? Much less an extra room."

Nell looked away and thought. "Something'll come through," she said. "Tomorrow. I just feel it. You wait and see."

Then there was just a week and a half more. Then a week. At night before she fell asleep Nell tried to act out the scene in her mind; they sit in their car and they have no place to go. It seemed important to have once vividly imagined this experience. But she simply could not do it. She would see them in their car, and then they would drive to their present house and go upstairs and the apartment would be waiting for them.

Tuesday a wire came from Doris Blake: ARRIVE SATURDAY MORNING HOPE YOU HAVE FOUND SOMETHING DECENT LOVE.

Wednesday they went to the Johnsons' for dinner. After he had two Manhattans Norrie told them about his crazy wife who insulted prospective landladies. "When we're sleeping in Pershing Square," he said, "we'll draw Nell's ideals up around our shoulders to keep us warm."

Nell looked at him. I was right, she told herself again. I was. I *was* . . .

"Can't you find that woman again and make believe you're someone else?" said Ed Johnson.

"I don't know her name," said Nell. "But something'll turn up. We're keeping the ad in the *Times*."

"Sure" said Norrie. "We haven't had a call for two weeks but something'll surely turn up before next Saturday. Nell has it arranged with God. That's why she can be so particular."

"I don't need a house that bad," said Nell sharply. "If you just forget everything you believe the minute the shoe pinches, I don't think you ever believed it very much."

"This isn't very interesting for the Johnsons," said Norrie. "Shall we change the subject?"

"By all means," said Nell, and that was the last thing she said to him all evening. They gave separate thanks to the Johnsons and walked down to their car in silence, bound closely together by their anger. They went silently to bed and after a while Nell got up and went into the bathroom where she sat crying tears of fright while Norrie lay and watched the line of light on the window sill. When she came back to bed he began to breathe deeply, as though he were asleep, and turned heavily over, his arm groping toward her shoulder. She pulled away and his hand fell to the bed between them. It lay there till he went to sleep.

Thursday Norrie came home early. Jimmy ran over and took him by the knees, pressing his face against his father's leg. "Did you find a house, Daddy?" he said. "Daddy, did you find a house for us to live?"

Norrie removed his arms, gently. "No," he said. "Not yet."

"Where could we live, Daddy?" said Jimmy.

"It's bath time," said Nell. "Come on, Jimmy."

Norrie laid his briefcase on the table. "I didn't have anything to do," he said. "I thought I might as well come home."

She took Jimmy inside without answering. Usually Norrie wandered into the bathroom to watch Jimmy bathe, but tonight he sat in the living room reading his paper and listening to Jimmy's high chatter and trying to catch the inflection of Nell's voice, muffled through the bathroom door.

After Jimmy had supper Norrie read him a book and put him to bed. "Are we going to live in a tree, Daddy?" said Jimmy. "Like the birds?"

"I don't know, Jim," said Norrie. He thought there was a note of real fear in Jimmy's voice but he didn't know what to do about it. He pulled up the cover. "I'll tell you tomorrow. Now go to sleep."

Jimmy laid down his head. "Don't forget," he said.

"All right," said Norrie. He went out and closed the door. Nell had opened up the gate-leg table. He set the table and then read his paper some more. It was not very interesting. After a while she said, "All right, Norrie," and he sat down at the table. She brought in the dinner plates. "I thought you wouldn't mind having the meat loaf again. There was quite a bit left."

"Not at all," he said. He put down his napkin and stood up.

"What's the matter?" said Nell.

"Nothing."

"What are you getting up for?"

He went into the kitchen. "You forgot the salt."

She watched him bring in the salt and pepper. "I didn't set the table."

He sat down and salted his meat loaf. Then he aligned the salt and pepper shakers neatly in front of his plate. "The only thing," he said, speaking to the salt and pepper shakers, "is for you to go back to Chicago with Jimmy. I can sleep on someone's couch for a while. Joe's, maybe."

There was a little silence and then she said, "Well, that would make a nice change after three years without a husband." She took a drink of water to get the meat loaf down past her throat. "My folks don't have room for the two of us."

"You and Jimmy could sleep in the living room," he said. "We could get you one of those davenports that open up. And don't forget it was three years for me too."

She pushed her meat loaf with her fork and then laid the fork on the edge of her plate. "You have it all figured out," she said.

He looked at her and then down at his plate. After a while he said, "Do you have any alternative?"

"No," she said. "Not at the moment. No."

"It would just be for a while," he said. "When things eased up you could come back."

"That would be nice," she said.

He looked away. Nell took her fork and divided her meat loaf into six pieces. From the boulevard came the sudden thin wail of a siren and they both turned toward the window. Then it stopped and they both looked back at their food.

After a while Norrie said, "Did you get my gray suit?"

"I couldn't," said Nell. "The tailor was closed."

"Oh, yes," said Norrie. "The man in the drugstore told me. Mr. Palek

died this morning. The tailor."

"Oh, no!" said Nell. "What a shame! That nice man. What did he die of?" Mr. Palek had been a bright little man, almost bald, with a curved little nose like a bird. He was very anxious to do a good job and proud of his work; he would always run his fingers up and down the trousers to feel the sharp creases before he handed them to her.

"The drugstore man didn't say," said Norrie. His voice was tentative and formal, as though he were trying to make a good impression on someone he hardly knew. "Just that he died this morning. He got some kind of stroke or something during the night."

"That's awful," said Nell. She got up and began to clear the table. "Poor Mrs. Palek. What happens to her?"

"I don't know," said Norrie. "Maybe she goes and lives with one of her children. Does she have any children?"

"I don't know," said Nell. She brought in two cupcakes on a plate. "Norrie!" she said. "Maybe—" She slipped into her chair and leaned across the table. "If she goes and lives with her children, then what about her house?" She sat back. "You see! I told you something could happen!"

"Now, Nell," said Norrie. "In the first place, maybe she'll stay right there. And if she does move, she probably has a hundred friends and relatives to give the place to."

"Oh, Norrie!" said Nell. "Don't be so . . ." She brought over the phone book and began to leaf through it. "The thing is to get there first. Before anyone else."

"Your coffee's getting cold," said Norrie.

"Coffee can wait," said Nell. "Pabst, Pachman, Palek. North Kerningham. That's just past Dunkirk. Thirteen twenty would be about six blocks down." She slammed the book shut. "Drink your coffee," she said. "I'll run downstairs and see if Mrs. Rockford can keep an ear open for Jimmy while we're gone."

"Nell!" said Norrie. "You're kidding."

"Kidding?" said Nell. She untied her apron and hung it over the back of her chair. "Certainly not."

"Well, just drop the whole idea," said Norrie. "I really never heard you come up with such a screwy idea in all the years I've known you."

"Screwy?" said Nell. "How do you figure that?"

Norrie stood up. "You seem to forget," he said, "That a man died in that house this afternoon."

"Morning," said Nell.

"Morning. It doesn't matter. You certainly aren't going to go running over there now. My God, Nell, don't you have any sense? The man just died!"

"That's why we have to go!" said Nell. "Right away! Tomorrow the notices get in the papers and then we won't have a chance. Tonight or not at all."

Norrie threw down his napkin. "Then not at all," he said.

Nell stood and stared at him and he stared back at her. "But I'm the idealist," she said at last. She spoke with difficulty, as though she had been walking uphill. "Two days from now Jimmy and I can go down to the station and take a train East. We can go and live in someone else's living room like a couple of refugees. We can break up the family. That's better than offending anyone's sense of the proprieties. Let's wait a decent interval until the house gets taken by someone else. Let's. Let's—"

"All right, Nell," said Norrie. He pushed his chair in and walked away.

Nell went downstairs and came back up. "I'm ready," she said. Norrie felt in his pocket for his keys. "I told Mrs. Rockford we'd leave this door open so she can hear him if he wakes up." She started down the stairs and Norrie followed.

The car stalled twice backing out of the garage. "Where did you say this place was?" said Norrie in a flat angry voice.

"Keep going," she said. "I'll tell you."

It was a black night and very cold. They sat far apart and looked at the road ahead.

The tailor's house was a small white Spanish house, overgrown with shrubbery. Two large, ugly cacti grew at the curb. Above the door a tattered awning hung from two metal bars. All the windows were brightly lit.

They walked up to the door. "You still want to go through with this?" said Norrie.

"Ring the bell," said Nell. She took a very deep breath.

He pushed the button and they heard a loud, bitter buzzing. Inside there were heavy footsteps and a stocky middle-aged woman opened the door. "Yes?" she said.

Nell moved forward quickly, leaving Norrie behind her on the doorstep. "I'm sorry to intrude," she said. The woman stepped back. "We were so sorry to hear about Mr. Palek—"

The woman put her hand against Nell's shoulder. "Mrs. Palek don't

want to see no one right now," she said.

Nell moved to the side, away from the woman's hand. "—and we just wanted to find out—"

"I'm her sister," said the woman. "She don't want to see no one."

Mrs. Palek was sitting in an armchair beside the empty fireplace, holding a handkerchief. She was dressed in black and her gray hair fell loosely over one ear. In the store she always wore a starched housedress, and her hair was pulled tightly into a bun in back. She was a very soft-spoken woman, who never quoted a price for anything, except perhaps pressing a suit. "I'll ask the tailor," she always said. "I'll go ask the tailor." Then she would go into the back of the shop. When she came out she would be smiling. "The tailor says—"

Nell could feel Norrie standing silent behind her. She took a step forward. "Hello, Mrs. Palek," she said.

Mrs. Palek looked at her. "It's Mrs. Foulger," she said at last. Then she continued to look at Nell without seeing her.

Mrs. Palek's sister took Nell's arm. "It's nice of you to come," she said softly, watching Mrs. Palek, "But she don't want to see no one." She began to urge Nell back toward the door. "Funeral's Saturday," she said.

Nell placed her weight firmly on both heels. "I just want to speak to her a minute. What are her plans? Is she going to stay here?"

The woman was stronger than Nell; they moved slowly back toward the door. "She's coming to live with me," said the sister. "In Eagle Rock. Now you come back next week and she'll be delighted to see you."

Nell and the sister stood together quietly in the doorway; unnoticeably, the pull and push continued. Norrie reached out and took Nell's arm away from the sister. "Nell," he said. "Come on home."

It was easier for Nell to get away from him than from the sister. She pulled sharply and he let her go. "We just want to see her for a minute," she said. "About renting the house."

"Sure," said the sister. "Well, next week."

Suddenly Mrs. Palek raised the handkerchief to her mouth and closed her eyes.

"Nell!" said Norrie. He followed her into the room.

"We'd pay a good rental," said Nell to Mrs. Palek. "You see," she told the sister, "we have a little boy, Mrs. Palek knows him, and we have no place to live, we need a place *desperately.* We'd pay a big bonus——"

"Next week," said Mrs. Palek. She was not speaking to Nell, she was

appealing over her head to her sister, but now the sister stood indecisively and watched Nell.

"Maybe—two hundred dollars?" said Nell. "Two hundred dollars bonus and a hundred a month rent."

Mrs. Palek made a strange sound, somewhere between a sob and a hiccough. "Twenty-four years," she said. "We lived here twenty-four years. . . ."

"Nell!" said Norrie. "For God's sake!"

The sister was watching Nell. "That's a nice offer," she said. "It would be a big help to us. She don't have much to fall back on. The shop isn't very . . ."

"It would be a nice steady income for her," said Nell.

"Of course, she could sell," said the sister. "The prices nowadays . . ."

"Twenty-four years," said Mrs. Palek. Tears began to slide down her cheeks.

The sister turned to her. "You might as well, Rose," she said, leaning over Mrs. Palek and speaking into her ear. "Then it's all taken care of. You get a nice income every month. You live with us and on top of that you have a nice income. And the house still belongs to you."

Mrs. Palek turned away her head. "Nineteen-twenty-three we came here," she said.

"It would mean so much to us, Mrs. Palek," said Nell. "Otherwise we have to break up the family."

"That's all right then, isn't it, Rose?" said the sister, quite gently.

Mrs. Palek sat very still but her head bent slowly forward. Behind her Nell could hear Norrie moving slightly. The sister straightened. "That's all right then, Mrs.——"

"Foulger," said Nell. "When——?"

"Some time next week," said the sister. "I'm taking her back with me to Eagle Rock. She can have my daughter's room all to herself, my daughter's up in Seattle, Washington. She's a nurse. Leave your phone number, I'll let you know."

Nell opened her bag. "Maybe I could leave you a deposit? I have my checkbook right here. The money might come in handy——"

"We can lend her whatever she needs," said the sister, stiffly. "But if you want to leave a check. . . ." She moved a bottle of aspirin and an ice bag across the coffee table to make room for Nell to write.

Nell made out a check and waved it in the air to dry. Norrie came up

behind her and reached for it, and she pulled it away. Then he said, "No, give it to me," and she knew from his voice that it was all right. She gave it to him.

He took it without looking at her and in the lower left hand corner he wrote, *In full payment of first month's rent.* "What's the address?" he asked.

"Thirteen-twenty Kerringham," said Nell, and he wrote that down too. Then he gave it to the sister and went over to the door. The sister glanced at it and placed it under the aspirin bottle.

Nell turned to Mrs. Palek. "I would have had to take Jimmy back to Chicago," she said, speaking quickly in a low voice. "You know Jimmy, our little boy. . . ." Mrs. Palek continued to look blindly away. "We had no place to live. I would have had to take him back to Chicago. You know Jimmy. . . ."

"Did you put your phone number on the check?" said the sister.

"We were apart three years already, during the war," said Nell. "It's hard for a child, not having a father. I would have had to take him back to Chicago. . . ."

Mrs. Palek did not seem to be listening. "Maybe you'd care to look around?" said the sister.

"No," said Norrie.

Nell sighed and turned to the door. The sister followed her. "I don't suppose you'd be interested in any of the furniture? I'd as soon let you have it as those dealers."

"Furniture!" said Nell. "But that hundred dollars is for a furnished house!"

"Oh, no," said the sister. "Oh, no. You didn't say nothing about furniture."

Nell looked at her without speaking. "What would you want for the furniture?" said Norrie.

The sister glanced around at the tan mohair living room suite. "She's got some lovely things. She'd have to have five hundred dollars. With the stove and all."

"But——," began Nell.

"All right," said Norrie. He held out his hand and the sister took it. "Thank you, Mrs.——"

"Robbins," said the sister.

They went down to the curb, watching the shadow move across the walk

as the door closed behind them, and got into the car. "Is that binding?" said Nell. "What you wrote about the first month's rent on the check?"

"Not if they don't cash it," said Norrie. "It just looks more business-like, they won't be so likely to get ideas about a higher rental." He drove around the block and turned home.

Nell sat looking straight ahead. When they had gone another two blocks she said, "Or do you still think it would be better to go back to Chicago?"

Norrie pulled over to the curb and put his arms around her. "Nell," he said. "Nellie." He kissed her on the mouth, hard. They held each other.

After a little while she moved away. "I told Mrs. Rockford we'd be right back. She's going to the movies."

Norrie started the car. "O.K., Mrs. Rockford," he sang out. "We're coming! Foulger to Rockford, hold everything! Foulger to Rockford, hold everything!"

Nell began to laugh, hard. "We're circling the field," he cried. "Coming in, Rockford. Coming in, Rockford. Over!"

Nell took out her handkerchief and wiped her eyes. "It isn't funny!" she said. She could barely speak, she was laughing so hard.

"Roger!" said Norrie. "Mission successful! All targets reached! Saw house, sank same!"

Nell straightened and stopped laughing. "Norrie!" she said. "You mustn't! Poor Mrs. Palek! She was so dependent on him. You should have seen them, they were so sweet together. Like two little birds. . . ."

"You were laughing," said Norrie.

"I know," said Nell. "But you really mustn't. It's not right to kid about it. . . . Her hair was so lopsided. . . ."

"Who's kidding about it?" said Norrie. He moved a little away. "My God, you'd think I was dancing on his grave."

"I didn't mean that," said Nell. "I just meant——"

"You think he's worrying about whether you're laughing or not?" said Norrie. "He's not giving it a thought." He pulled into their driveway. "Don't worry, Mr. Palek! We won't say anything disrespectful. Foulger to Palek! Are you there, Palek? It's all right, Palek, don't worry! Wilco!"

Nell was laughing so hard she could barely manage to climb out of the car. Norrie took her arm. "Foulger to Palek!" he said softly. "Do you hear me, Palek? Come in, Palek! Over——." He half supported her up the stairs. She couldn't seem to stop laughing.

Toward a People's Theater

By HARRY TAYLOR

THE TIME HAS COME to deal seriously with the problem of building a people's theater suitable to the size, the needs and the means of the nation. In the days of the Federal Arts Projects, millions of Americans voted for such a theater at a thousand box offices across the land. Today this question is urgent because we must expand the ways whereby the people can speak up in their own defense against the threatened destruction of their liberties.

This concerns us all; but because a people's theater waits first of all upon the initiative of theater workers, this discussion is especially directed to them.

Theater workers, with steadily dwindling commercial opportunities, are compelled to look to a people's theater movement. In 1890, with a population of 63 million, we had some 5,000 legitimate theaters. Today, there are fewer than 180 legitimate theaters for a population twice as big. In 1929, Broadway had some 70 theaters and 208 openings of new plays. In 1945, it had some 33 theaters and room only for 83 new plays. Today there are 31 houses left; of these, nine are slated be torn down or converted into movie houses within the next few years; and there are no new building plans so much as rumored. Actors' Equity has a membership of 6,000 trained professionals looking for a home in a theater season that cannot accommodate more than 400 actors at a time. There are some 140 scenic designers and no work for a hundred of them. An untold number of able directors and playwrights look in vain for opportunities of production.

This is the picture of destruction and decay wrought by forces which can use the theater only as another way of making money. The social marrow of that theater is thin indeed. True that every season has its *Decision* or its *Deep Are the Roots* or an *On Whitman Avenue* or an *All My Sons;* but we know what prodigious, exhausting labor goes into raising the money for such plays. The potentially vast audience interested in such live social theater is priced out of it and can neither come to its support nor be supported by it.

Does this mean that we can no longer be seriously interested in the commercial theater? On the contrary. We wish to see the commercial theater enlarged so we may have larger opportunities in it. We know it can grow in social stature—look at the room it has!—and we shall continue to work to

help it grow up. But it is best to know what our chances in it are, objectively and statistically, both for making a living and as an art. And perhaps, in striving for a people's theater, in reaching out for the 120 millions of the forgotten audience on the plane of their own neglected interests and aspirations, we shall also stimulate the commercial theater economically, artistically and in a measure as a progressive social force.

This has happened before. In fact, the history of the commercial theater everywhere shows that its low points economically and artistically coincide with the dearth of non-commercial activity and that its high points are a result of goading, stimulation and experimentation from the outside.

Many of the most creative actors, designers, directors and writers came out of the hole-in-the-wall amateur theater. In 1887, a bank clerk, Antoine, founded the *Theatre Libre,* a tiny theater, but a theater so daring and imaginative that it could create a new style of production and acting and force a new concept of truth and writing-content not only upon the smug and artificial theater of Paris, but beyond it, throughout the world. In Germany, the *Freie Buehne* gave Hauptmann and Ibsen to the world. In Russia, Stanislavsky emerged from an amateur group to found a little basement theater from which both his theory and method, and Chekhov and Gorky, reached out to the theaters of the world. The Independent Theater of London and later the London Stage Society blew down the musty Victorian velvets with the loud laughter of Bernard Shaw and the realistic thunders of Granville Barker and Arnold Bennett. The Abbey Theater drew Synge back from a disillusioned exile to join Yeats and Lady Gregory and Sean O'Casey.

It is good to remember this. Still more stimulating and potentially useful, because it is natively ours, is the memory of our own Little Theater movement beginning soon after the First World War. The best European experiments inspired amateur groups made up of young people in revolt against the barriers and the technical and intellectual rot of the professional theater. They made the Neighborhood Playhouse, out of which came a new respect for imagination and craftsmanship; they made the Provincetown, from which came O'Neill and Robert Edmond Jones; they made the Washington Square Players with their emphasis on experimentation and on socially realistic literature in the theater, giving us Tolstoy and Gorky and Rice and Toller and half a dozen American playwrights who have since grown to stature. Their example spread across the country.

Some of the Little Theaters died in the crash, some went on into commercial metamorphosis, some just disappeared after emptying their hard-won

experience and personnel into the greedy commercial streams of Broadway and Hollywood. But they gave a motion and a standard to the theater of their day that at least in the excellence and technical variety of production has become a minimum requirement of the commercial theater.

But have we any tradition or experience of a people's theater movement? We have. And an immensely exciting tradition. We ought to know it, to examine its errors and to recall its victories that we may be encouraged to begin working in it again and at a higher level of theory and organization than any we previously attained. Let us consider it here as briefly as we can. You can find the full story in Ben Blake's *The Awakening of the American Theatre,* in the wonderfully alive pages of *New Theater* magazine, in *Theatre Arts,* in Norris Houghton's *Advance From Broadway,* in Hallie Flannigan's book on the Federal Theater, *Arena.*

The first faltering steps toward a workers' theater were taken at the very height of the New Era that was to have no ending. For all America's apparent prosperity, Europe was a portent of disaster. Some here in America, recognizing that art must no longer consciously or naively serve as a weapon against the welfare of the people but must become a weapon for the larger good, looked with interest at the spread of people's theater in the Soviet Union and at Piscator and Brecht's development of the agit-prop and the mass-spectacle and epic theater. In 1926, they organized the Workers' Drama League and dedicated it to the lives and problems of workers. A year or so later, Mike Gold, Em Jo Basshe, John Howard Lawson, Francis Farragoh and John Dos Passos formed the New Playwrights, took over the Provincetown, and set out, with a grant from Otto Kahn, to present plays of social reality free of commercial conventions. They produced some powerful plays, among them *The Belt,* a play on the Ford speed-up, by the Siftons; Upton Sinclair's stirring strike play, *Singing Jailbirds;* Lawson's *The International,* depicting American suppression of a colonial people's striving for freedom. But still this was not workers' theater; it was pessimistic and descriptive, its support was wholly middle class and intellectual. It ran out with Otto Kahn's money.

The real beginning of workers' theater had to come from the workers themselves. It came with mass unemployment and distress. In 1930, a group of Yorkville German-American workers, calling themselves the Prolet-Buehne, startled New York with their mobile performances in trade union halls of the mass chants, *Scottsboro* and *Tempo, Tempo!* which dramatized the contrast between socialist labor in the Soviet Union and the enforced speed-up of workers in the United States. Almost at the same time, the Work-

ers' Laboratory Theater organized an agit-prop theater with a policy to aid the organization of similar groups among workers. Though often crudely written, its presentations under Al Saxe were powerful and effective, as those of us who remember *Unemployed* can testify. One of its most creative acts was the establishment of *Workers' Theater* magazine, providing guidance and publishing the new one-acters on which agit-prop theater began its growth. By the end of 1932, it was able to call the First National Workers' Theater Festival to which came representatives from 53 workers' theaters from all parts of the country. The conference resulted in the establishment of the League of Workers' Theaters with emphasis, this time, not only on ideological content but even more sharply on technical excellence.

In late 1933, the *Workers' Theater* magazine became the organ of the broader progressive theater movement, with the name of *New Theater Magazine.* Aiming to unite all theaters and theatrical workers against the rising wash of war, fascism and censorship, it sought to base this new theater on the growing understanding of national and world conditions on the part of workers, farmers and urban middle classes. Soon it became the most important and creative voice in the American theater. Among its contributors were its editor Herbert Kline, Lawson, Lee Strassberg, John Gassner, King Vidor, Tamiris, Lincoln Kirstein, Friedrich Wolf, Ilya Ehrenburg, Eisenstein. It championed social theater and gave prizes for such one-act scripts as *Waiting for Lefty, Bury the Dead* and *Newsboy.*

In 1935, the League of Workers' Theaters reorganized as the New Theater League, solidifying the coalition program of *New Theater* magazine, in preparation for the heightening conflicts of the coming period. The Workers' Lab, having lived through a collective stage of two years on beans and hard work and overriding purpose, now became the Theater of Action, a professional theater putting on its first full-length play, *The Young Go First.* New Theater League organized a Social Drama Book Service and a library of new plays which it circulated at low cost, helped to begin theatrical training schools in many cities, supplied direction and advice, cooperated with New Dance League and New Film Alliance and strove mightily to develop and service trade union theater groups.

There were some labor-progressive theaters that were not in the League, notably that extraordinary little jewel of a workers' theater, the Artef. Important contributions were also made by the Harlem Suitcase Theater and the various national group theaters.

The most trenchant *single* theater that arose out of this enormous nation-

wide activity was the Theater Union, the first professional company to declare itself a workers' theater. Theater Union operated as a cooperative, leased a large theater and scaled its prices for the average worker. From the very first, it sought to organize its audience, to base it on support from trade unions and progressive bodies in the community.

Many of us remember its great days: *Peace on Earth, Stevedore, The Black Pit, Sailors of Cattaro, Mother.* We remember the excitement and participation of its audiences, many of whom were seeing theater for the first time in their lives, and all of whom were seeing theater that was of their lives, of war and work and rebellion against intolerable conditions. Theater Union had faults: its coalition was disrupted by the concealed work of the Trotskyites; it was too much an exclusive group of playwrights, making it almost impossible for such a play as *Let Freedom Ring* to borrow its house and its audience; its schedules needed to be lighted by satire and gayety and song. But its development and demise must be carefully studied, for it came closer to being a people's theater than any we had ever had up to the time of Federal Theater or have had since. It set an example of content and production excellence for all workers' stages and little theaters throughout the country. Its work made all sections of the people aware that new theater, speaking for the masses of the people, had come of age and could in fact be more stimulating and enjoyable than Broadway. Similar theaters sprang up in Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco. It was a time of stirring vitality and creativeness in the theater throughout the land.

And now, a studio circle, trained at the Theater Guild, organized as the Group Theater and began operations on Broadway under Broadway conditions. Its ideological orientation was middle class, but it, too, set out to find a stable base for itself in people's organizations on the strength of its progressive social views. For the first time in our theatrical history, we had a theatrical company that operated on a theory of acting and production. This was its greatest lesson and contribution—exceeding even its development of Odets with his depiction of the agony of a middle class torn between the two irreconcilable forces of our society. Hollywood's golden reach drew off its talents and all too easily destroyed the Group.

The most vital and significant national cultural experiment in our history was the Federal Theater. It was the most creative and controversial, the most widely supported and the most mourned of the four art projects administered by W.P.A. It employed 12,000 theater workers in 31 states and gave 63,000 performances before some 30 million people at a 55-cent top. Most

of its plays were on the people's side, ranging from Ward's *Big White Fog* and a marvelously exciting Negro *Macbeth* to the first socially aware children's theater in our history and the kind of musical that could lift into *Ballad for Americans.* Its living newspapers were truly people's theater in Romain Rolland's and Bertholt Brecht's conception—both entertaining and instructive. What we need to remember is the hungry response of the new audiences, their expressed desire for more such theater, the flaming creativity across the nation among long famished theater workers, and—the pitiable, the trifling sum at which it was bought, four years at $46,000,000, less than the yearly budget of the New York State penitentiary system!

Federal Theater, with a program so close to the hearts of New Theater League members, absorbed most of the League's forces. It offered them a way to subsist within their beloved work. When Federal Theater was killed by people-hating congressmen, New Theater League did not come back. The professional theater group, TAC, after having made an admirable fight for democratic Spain and against the coming war, bowed out in 1940. In the same year, the League decentralized into five regional offices. Each of these was to organize as a training school and center for its region and to provide its little theaters with indigenous play scripts and with advice and technical aid.

Philadelphia came through nobly with the living newspaper, *Medicine,* with Paul Horgan's *To Every Goliath,* and with an original review, *We Beg to Differ.* It also sent out agit-prop companies. Chicago, too, wrote and produced its own lively musical and kept its agit-prop players busy. The Red Dust Players of Oklahoma traveled their agit-prop shows around the share-cropper country making their audiences of black and white yell and cry and laugh with the truth of what they saw . . . till Oklahoma suppressed the Players as criminal syndicalists. The Hollywood Theater Alliance, a professional collective, wrote and produced that gay, clever, hard-hitting review, *Meet the People.* The most widely known of all agit-props of that period was a tiny band of folk singers creating their own songs to suit the occasion and the time, the fighting Almanac Singers.

Then the war inundated us as well as the rest of the world . . . and new theater was finished for the duration.

What were the factors that gave rise to and nourished the idea of new theater speaking the people's language at a price the people could afford? We might list them in the category of revolt against the smugness, escapism and exclusiveness of the commercial theater. But more impelling by far was

the logic of the depression and the impulse to combat the forces responsible for its wide misery with every weapon which the people could create, the new awareness of social and economic forces operative in our system, the encouragement given by the development of the New Deal philosophy, the birth of the militant C.I.O. and, in consequence, the astonishing growth of trade union membership, and the spreading fear of fascism and of the power and determination of the Axis to make war. The need for this synthesis of progressive and anti-fascist forces was first recognized by the American Communist Party; and the expanded means of cultural-political expression which the people had to find for an expanding fight against reaction were, in the main, created by Communist example and selfless work.

Well, that entire period is history and the war is many months behind us. There has been a peacetime reconversion all along the line, in industry, in politics, in the world scene. *Only we in the theater have not reconverted.* But we had better begin at once before a new depression and the aggressive reaction, now driving toward the suppression of our liberties, reconvert us.

We have to ask ourselves, first, how can we use the lessons and the inspiring traditions of our earlier strivings toward a people's theater? Second, how shall we evaluate our present strength in the national body? Third, what are the available theatrical forces which, working alone today, may be persuaded to join a people's theater movement? Fourth, how can worker and community theaters stabilize themselves so that they do not vanish every few years but can become rooted in their local soil?

There are no easy answers.

First, an evaluation of our time. We need scarcely review our economic and political climate. In some ways, it resembles the early '30's; its destructive potential, however, is more explosive, more deadly. For one thing, reaction has mastered the use of Red-baiting as a weapon against every defense of the people's rights. Its reading of Hitlerite history has also taught it that the destruction of the people's rights and of their organizations must be preceded by the illegalization of the Communist Party. And this is precisely its strategy today.

But in 1930, when the Prolet-Buehne and the Workers' Lab started us on the way to new theater, the Communist Party had a membership of only 10,000, the trade union membership under the moribund leadership of the A. F. of L. counted 3,000,000 only, the people had no important mass organizations to champion their cause, the middle class had not yet rubbed the American Dream from its eyes. Today, the Communist Party is 75,000 strong,

its experience is incalculably richer. The trade union membership is at 14 millions and in many of the unions there is a strong impulse toward increased political and economic education. In a time of suppression such as we are facing, the trade unions tend to find new ways of hitting back, of reaching the public with their story. There is the Progressive Citizens of America, there is the American Labor Party. The South is waking from its political and economic sloth: new forces are stirring mightily in it. Teachers and scientists are learning that only the common people are their friends. Most pertinently, theatrical trade unions are stronger and their anti-fascist nuclei are bigger than ever and are armed with a great fighting experience. We are once more in an era when a powerful anti-monopoly and anti-fascist coalition is possible.

What is the state of the theater units now working independently to give our theater new meaning and new forces? On the whole, off-Broadway activities in what little theaters remain, in the summer theaters, in the campus theaters and in the few community theaters of the country, are merely a poor aping of Broadway hits with few notable exceptions.

Out at Dillard University, a Negro institution, is Randolph Edmonds who, some fifteen years ago, founded the Negro Intercollegiate Dramatic Association. As a result of its system of exchange and drama-meets and prizes and tours, there are now over fifty dramatic staffs in the 120 Negro colleges where there were none before Edmonds began his work. Himself a playwright, he has presented the work of many other Negro writers dramatizing the harsh condition of their people. He has understood the importance of rooting his project in the local community.

In New York, the six-year-old American Negro Theater looks forward to establishing itself as a permanent company, indeed as a people's theater based on the support of the community. However, in visiting the American Negro Theater for the purposes of this paper, I found a general expression of pessimism and bewilderment. The A.N.T. is scarcely further ahead than it was three years ago. Its theater of 400 seats in a community of 300,000 attracts an audience average of 40 per cent Negroes—and then, is not always full. The self-directed criticism indicated that A.N.T. has yet to involve mass people's organizations, to discover what the community might like or what are its needs, to develop or encourage new Negro playwrights and directors. Operating in a heavily proletarian section, A.N.T. seems to have a rather middle-class, liberal, social-democratic conception of its function.

The one organization palely resembling the New Theater League is Stage for Action. It has had a struggling, gasping existence these last three

years trying to establish its mobile units on an expense-paying basis. When I was with it in 1944, a period of encouraging activity, we figured that we could cover expenses with fifty performances a month. My recollection is that we often averaged twenty. In 1946, performances averaged ten to fifteen a month. S.F.A. realizes that it must base itself on the trade unions and progressive mass organizations in order to be self-sustaining. It also realizes that its actors and technical personnel must be included in the budget or the theater can establish no stability or permanence or loyalty. Therefore, in this period, it has evolved the week-end show-case employing some forty-five members of its mobile cast. This is one means by which it hopes to ensure its existence. However, the trade unions are still its best basis for support, and it is fighting hard to learn how it can serve them. It has eight affiliates which it serves with scripts and advice in Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Denver and Los Angeles. Its present director, Gene Frankel, considers S.F.A. a spearhead rather than a producing organization: its object being to stimulate trade unions and progressive groups to establish their own theater units. Its most challenging opportunity to do this will arise from a national tour of United Electrical Workers' locals managed by the national office of the union.

U.E. is not the only union whose educational department is awake to the power of the theater. Local 65, the Furriers' Union, the Transport Workers' Union, the N.M.U., the Department Store Workers are among those making a beginning toward developing their own units. Such organizations as the American Theater Wing, Jefferson School, the George Washington Carver School, People's Songs, New Dance League, People's Radio Foundation must also be counted as potential forces. The Hollywood Laboratory Theater, inheritor of the Hollywood Theater Alliance, has plans for social theater. Here in New York, Associated Playwrights, presently engaged in presenting three socially important plays at the Henry Street Playhouse, bears watching not only for itself but as an example for other playwrights now wandering in the homeless night.

I have left consideration of the American National Theater and Academy for the end, because in many ways it may be the most important present organization. It was granted a Congressional charter in 1934 to raise private moneys for the establishment of a national theater. The advent of Federal Theater and the war suspended its activity. It resumed work about seventeen months ago with a drive for an operating fund of $5,000,000. It intends using this modest fund to help subsidize regional theaters which can secure

community support, and to pay the rehearsal-period expenses of playwrights whose new plays it will have persuaded little and campus theaters to perform. It is presently doing its best to help the Pasadena Playhouse and the North Star Guild of Minnesota obtain state aid. It is the organization most responsible for the Experimental Theater. Its hope is to be the recipient, at long last, of federal funds to which its charter gives it access for the purpose of creating across the land a real people's theater, a theater growing out of the needs and the genius of the people, large enough to accommodate it and at prices which will exclude no one. Robert Breen, its most energetic worker, informed me that A.N.T.A. has already set precedents for community and state theater subsidy, that it hopes to get administration of the work which U.S.O. is presently doing in military camps and hospitals, and that this will be another wedge driven into the tough resistance to applying some of the people's money to a people's culture. He hopes that the private fund when collected will help build not only the prestige of A.N.T.A. as a logical choice for the administration of a national theater, but that its wide use will excite in every part of the country an overwhelming cry for more theater and, therefore, for federal subsidy.

But whether or not it is A.N.T.A. which is finally entrusted with the administration of a publicly-supported national theater, it is plain that this must come about some day. It has capitalist precedence not only in our country, but in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Czchoslovakia, France and, of closest interest to us, in Great Britain. For many years before the government subsidy administered by the British Arts Council, Britain has had a lively organization of some twenty workers' theaters, the Unity theaters, some of them, like London Unity and Glasgow Unity, now over twenty years old. Subscription theaters and wholly self-supporting, with a paid professional nucleus, they have not only played the best of the social drama of our time, but have developed their own writers and produced their work. Today, with the aid of the Arts Council, Britain has scores of semi-professional community theaters and twenty-two repertory companies for a population of forty-five million where we have barely two or three times that number of people. In the U. S. S. R. the status of theater is far in advance of the capitalist countries.

These community theaters are proving every day what we learned in Federal Theater days, that accustomed though people are to the rich technical excellence of the movies, they can be won for the theater in increasing numbers by the richer excellence of its content. Furthermore, and of utmost significance to us in contemplating a national theater which will include

mobile agit-prop units, the British community theaters are reasserting the validity as an art-form of the one-act play. We need to drop the idea that a one-act play which is socially or politically adult must necessarily be crude. Its writing constitutes a challenge to creative craft and imagination as is proven by Odets and Irwin Shaw and O'Casey and Arthur Miller and, in Stage for Action's current presentations, by Ben Bengal's *All Aboard.* Indeed, more of our playwrights should remember that their great predecessors, almost without exception, learned their business within the limitations of the shorter form and created notable art works.

But one of the profoundest lessons coming from the British little theaters is the immense accrual of theatrical values in decor, direction, acting and repertory which can come only from the secure fact of a permanent company. In commenting on our commercial theater, the Soviet writer, Konstantin Simonov, described it as a hotel for transients in contrast to many theaters in Europe in which the individual may become one of a lifetime family, enriching and enriched by the common experience. Our theater will become a home only when it moves out of the closed orbit of its present commercialism into the wide area of a national and people's theater concept. We are a big country. We must have a theater with room in it for many and diverse families: national groups' theaters, children's theater companies, dance companies, repertory companies, workers' theaters which can develop new and artistic forms of people's theater.

If we were able to demonstrate the power of the idea in the '30's, we are infinitely better equipped to achieve its substance today. Our theatrical ranks are stronger, better trained, more politicalized; consequently we should be able to begin working in a people's theater at a higher level than any we had known before.

The time to begin our march toward a people's theater—*again*—is now. The dwindling commercial theater says this is the time. The analysis, on the one hand, of the rapidly developing political and economic crisis at home and abroad, and, on the other hand, of the present power of the democratic coalition and the even greater need for a more rapid development, says this is the time.

But above all logic is the memory of the fiercely eloquent hunger for theater of the millions of our land in the days of Federal Theater, and especially for theater on their side. It is, above all other pressures, particularly in this period of growing suppression of the people's rights, they who say to us: ***The time for a people's theater is now.***

Communications

Poetry of the Japanese Underground

A LETTER FROM TOKIO

By DAVID RYDER

HERE ARE SOME POEMS translated from Japanese. George and Martha (Japanese friends) and I stayed up past midnight doing them. It was cold enough so that our breath made steam every time we talked. We sat around the charcoal brazier with a quilt covering it, and our feet under the quilt. Supper things had been put away and the satisfaction of living in their own home was manifest. The house, crude and primitive, was warm and cordial with comradeship that made the cold of the air seem very unimportant. George had picked up *Akahanta,* the Communist Party paper, and was reading. The first two poems are translations from it.

Japanese poetry is highly formalized and within the narrow strictures of form, a technique very different from our poetry must be used. Instead of the rich symbolism and color we think of when thinking of the art, their poetry is stingy in description, oblique in approach, utilizing the fact that one word may have many meanings to achieve the effect. It calls much more from the reader and succeeds rather by utilizing the reader's associations than the power of the words themselves. First George would give the literal translations. Then on the basis of their personal experiences I would try to achieve the mood. Nowhere has any meaning been changed though the tense might be, here and there. I don't think I shall forget the evening for a long time.

From *Akahanta,* Communist Party paper, here are two poems by Hiroshi Neyama, written at the Torytama Jail.

TO A KOREAN REVOLUTIONARY

Hungering
Hungering, dear Po Un Tets.

On the day of celebrating Korea's Independence,
Nothing but first grade rice.
First grade rice with red beans.
The day is approaching
The day is approaching. If not tomorrow,
then the day after
Hungering, hungering.

SONG OF THE GALE

Blow up the gale
Wash against my face
My joy is in the gale.
Blow up the gale
Wash against my face
My sorrow, too, lies in the gale.

In America, theoretically, a man is not guilty until so proven. Japanese fascists had their own, dainty, polite travesty of this principle. When a suspect was arrested, trial was not set until a long session at the police jail, sometimes lasting a year or two. The daily beatings, the harassing of family and friends, the mental and physical torture followed the lines made familiar by Hitler with perhaps a few refinements. But the forms must be kept up. Since he had not been formally found guilty, the prisoner wore a blue dress. Only after being tried was the dress changed to red, the sentenced convict's color. Worst hated of all was the straw hat, a shapeless thing worn by prisoners on trial or when being taken for interrogation. Somehow in their misbegotten way they failed to appreciate that this was made standard issue so that in the event they were acquitted their faces would not have become public property and associated with the crime for which they were accused. Such ingratitude!

STRAW HAT

Even when going to bathe—the straw hat.
And to exercise—the straw hat.
In the autumn, straw hat.
In the spring, straw hat.
Always the straw hat.

I passed a comrade in the corridor
But the straw hat kept us apart.
Hateful straw hat.

In the exercise yard
I hang the straw hat on the wall
Look up at the sky
Autumnal with fleecy clouds.
Dear comrade jailed in isolation for six years.

Resound my steps
Roar high.
The wind rattles the lattice
Roar high my steps
Resound in the wind.

Like a solitary pine straw-thatched against the frost
So seems my straw hatted figure.
Like seared, yellowing leaves against a blue icy sky
Let my straw colored hat soar away.

Hateful straw hat.

These last were written by Martha in jail.

THE DAY OF TRIAL EXAMINATION

Forbidden from seeing
Prevented from meeting.
You went
I went, too
But the day was different
So arranged to keep us apart.

Autumn deepens
Susuki blooms are withering
Autumn passes
Persimmons ripening

Looking at Hodogaya valley—
Where a handcuffed man passed
He, too, looked here.

Now we are homeless
Isolated from the masses
Seated in jail vans
Separated from the people.

The lights flash by.
You saw them
And I saw them.
The warmth of lighted houses
Which he saw
I see through the deep straw hat.

The jail van must have returned
The gate creaks open
Then closes
In the gloom.

AT THE POLICE STATION

Because all must be surrendered,
The prisoner handed me his fountain pen. . . .
The spring passed, locked by an iron door
Green leaves are growing, but I am left—alone.

So you see, when the papers at home talk of war criminals and try to lump a nation in the same mould, there is the tendency to lump together the people who are guilty with the ones who sat in concentration camps listening to our bombers, hoping for a direct hit, hoping either to be thus liberated or to die and end the agony. These are the people who today are beginning a new job—a hard one—and who are going places in the reorganization of the nation in a more democratic way. They need a lot of help, the experience of a trade union movement, the support of many against the danger of repression.

Some Notes on Contemporary Latin-American Literature

By JOSE LUIS GONZALEZ

ANYONE MODERATELY ACQUAINTED with contemporary Latin-American literature knows that the best of it is to be found in the work of writers on the Left. This phenomenon, illustrated in the novel by such authors as Jorge Amado, Enrique Gil-Gilbert, José de la Cuadra, Jorge Icaza, and others, and in poetry by Pablo Neruda, Raul González-Tuñon, and Nicolás Guillen, certainly has a historic explanation. The fact that Amado is a Communist deputy in the Brazilian Parliament, that Neruda sits in the Chilean Senate as a member of the Communist Party of Chile, that Enrique Gil-Gilbert is the leading intellectual in the Communist movement in Ecuador, and that González-Tuñon is a prominent member of the Argentine Communist Party is neither accidental nor purely coincidental. Moreover, it is highly significant that of the "three great novels" of Latin America—*Doña Barbara* of Romulo Gallegos, *La Vorágine* of José Eustasio Rivero, and *Don Segundo Sombra* of Ricardo Guiraldes—the first two are both magnificent works of art and moving documents of protest against imperialism and the landlord system.

All this, as we have said, has a historic, scientific explanation. Latin America has been, in general, victim of the two most powerful economic empires of our times: the United States and Great Britain. Many concrete examples could be cited: it is enough to mention Mexican and Venezuelan oil, the copper of Chile, the sugar of Cuba and Puerto Rico, and bananas in the Central American republics. But exploitation in these countries has not been merely economic. Every time armed intervention has been necessary to protect the dollars of Wall Street, Washington has had no scruples. Mexico, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Puerto Rico (the last-named being the most tragic case of all) make up the list of victims of the armed forces of North American imperialism. This, plus the fact that Latin America has suffered internally from the tragedy of big landlordism and pure and simple militarism, has resulted in the fact that

every young writer develops a profound sense of social and political responsibility in addition to his esthetic consciousness. So the sensitivity of every young Latin American who wants to be a writer finds a double field for expression: the inner, subjective emotions of every artist wherever he may be, and the external environment in which he must live and develop as a man and an artist. Hence the two outstanding characteristics of our present literature are social realism and a sturdy romanticism, much more vigorous than European romanticism because it is younger. Decadent tendencies like escapist surrealism or a morbid psychological approach have not yet succeeded in achieving first-rate importance in the literary production of Latin America.

There are many examples of writers who, like Neruda, have begun with a fresh and ardent romanticism and then consciously evolved toward a social art, without the latter at any moment harming the esthetic quality of their work. On the contrary, this evolution, as for example in the case of the Peruvian César Vallejo, has been the road toward maturity and perfection.

But why in Latin America has this movement for a people's art been able to identify itself in such a direct and spontaneous way with the Communist political movement, only occasionally degenerating into Trotskyism, anarchism, or weak-kneed "liberalism"? Because in Latin America Communism has been the radical and anti-imperialist movement *par excellence:* hence it has attracted almost entirely the revolutionary spirit of the masses. That does not mean, of course, that there have been or are no other "leftist" tendencies in Latin America. In Brazil, for example, there is a strong Social-Democratic movement; in Chile there have been anarchist groups; and in Mexico, Trotskyism won over some intellectuals. No doubt the most important of these "radical" anti-Communist movements is *Aprismo* (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance), a demagogically anti-imperialist movement that developed in Peruvian student circles under the leadership of Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, and which managed at first to attract the working-class and peasant masses. Several important writers were influenced by the Apristas, notably Ciro Alegria, author of the novel *Broad and Alien Is the World.* But *Aprismo* lacked a theoretical base capable of checking its ideological degeneration. Never really accepting the theories of Marxism, *Aprismo* created instead a pseudo-theory claiming that Latin America was a special and unique political-economic entity, to which none of the social doctrines hitherto developed could be applied. As a result,

disintegration and corruption rapidly set in, culminating in a shameful surrender to imperialism and the national ruling classes when the latter took the *Apristas* into the Peruvian government a short time ago. The fact is, moreover, that *Aprismo,* despite vague aspirations of becoming a movement on a continental scale, never really made any serious headway outside Peru. Hence, with the exception of Alegria, Sanchez, and a few other lesser writers, *Aprista* writing seems to be a closed chapter in the history of Latin-American literature.

The North American phenomenon of a considerable number of anti-Communist "leftist" writers such as John Dos Passos, James T. Farrell, Richard Wright, and—from England—Arthur Koestler, is rarer in our countries, where most writers are either genuinely radical or bourgeois reactionary. The reactionary writers, of course, offer a frankly deplorable spectacle. Isolated from the masses, protected by the priests, or toadying to their own national or to foreign capitalists, their literary production is daily on the downgrade . . . if at one time it was any good. The despicable example of the Argentine anti-Semite, Hugo Wast, is an example of this degeneration.

The revolutionary Marxist writers, on the other hand, form a numerous group in full creative activity. Among the novelists the most notable names are the Brazilian Jorge Amado, the Ecuadorians Enrique Gil-Gilbert and Humberto Salvador, and two who died in recent years: the Ecuadorian José de la Cuadra and the Haitian Jacques Roumain. In poetry there are Pablo Neruda, Raul González-Tuñon, the Cuban Nicolás Guillen, and many others.

As for the future of the literary movement in Latin America based on Marxist theory and practice, one can only look forward to continuous progress in quality and quantity, paralleling the growth and development of the Communist Parties in all our countries. In Latin America the seed of Communism has been sown once and for all. Nothing—no one—can prevent its growth. Nor can its results in the field of culture be checked, for these are intimately bound up with the aspirations of the great mass of the working people in the twenty-two Latin-American nations.

(*Translated from the Spanish by Joseph Bernstein.*)