MAY
1948

# masses & MAINSTREAM

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# *An Appeal and an Offer to*

# M & M READERS

With this, *Masses & Mainstream's* third issue, the complex technical problems that go into the creation of a new magazine have largely been solved. Two big jobs still remain: (1) consistently to improve our magazine; (2) systematically to enlarge its circulation. These two jobs are interdependent. Ours is the responsibility of ensuring the constant deepening and enrichment of the content of *Masses & Mainstream.* You, our Readers, hold the key to the further expansion of its present circulation of 17,000 and, thereby, the extension of its influence in the cultural life of America.

Our goal is to achieve a circulation of 25,000 before the end of 1948. We are appealing to the readers of *Masses & Mainstream* to help us secure additional subscriptions from friends, neighbors, associates. Building the circulation of *Masses & Mainstream* means to reinforce a new weapon against the thought-controllers and warmongers.

As a special inducement to our Readers for their efforts, we are offering the following free premiums for new subscriptions sent in from now until Labor Day, 1948 (if you already own these titles, you may select their equivalents from the International Publishers list):

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# masses & MAINSTREAM



## *May, 1948*



Drawings by Milton Avery, William Gropper, Joseph Hirsch, Charles Keller, Royden.

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# *AMONG THE CONTRIBUTORS*

GERHART EISLER, fighter against Nazism and American reaction, is co-author of *The Lesson of Germany.*

WILLIAM GROPPER has just illustrated a book of short stories by Ben Gold, president of the C.I.O. furriers' union.

A. M. KRICH has appeared in *Cross Section 1947,* the *New Mexico Quarterly* and *New Masses.*

JOHN HOWARD LAWSON'S essay is based upon material to appear in a new edition of *Theory and Technique of Playwriting,* now in preparation.

ELEANOR MABRY, whose poems have appeared in *New Masses,* lives in the state of Washington.

WALTER S. NEFF, formerly professor of psychology at Brooklyn College, is now director of the Abraham Lincoln School in Chicago.

ANNA LOUISE STRONG, the well-known author and journalist, recently returned after an extended stay in the Far East.

THEODORE WARD, author of *Our Lan',* has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for 1948.

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*COVER*: By the Chilean artist, Jose Venturelli.

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*All manuscripts should be addressed to The Editors of* MASSES & MAINSTREAM, *832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y., and be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelope for return.*

# American Message

## *A REPLY TO AN OPEN LETTER OF SOVIET WRITERS*

SOME time ago you sent an Open Letter to writers and representatives of culture in the United States.* You expressed your concern for the future of mankind, once again threatened by the tide of war which our ruling class has set in motion. You asked why more of our writers and artists, scientists and teachers did not speak out against those who cause rivers of blood to flow in Greece, Indonesia and China. You urged us to defend the peace which the plain people of all countries fought for and yearn to keep.

Your letter tells us that you are not deceived by the shots fired in the air by our press and radio, the furious wailing of paid mourners for the status quo—all the caterwauling that passes for the voice of America. You know that it is not the plain people of our country who see in the toadstool rising above Hiroshima a throne from which to enslave the world; theirs is not the breath of hate from which humanity recoils. They too are targets of the exploiters who hope to convert America into a Fourth Reich. Your appeal to us is an immense hand of hope stretched out to our people as they strain to reach the truth. We will help them to take your hand, speaking,

* Signed by twelve Soviet novelists, playwrights and poets—W. Wasiliewska, B. Gorbatov, A. Korneichuk, N. Pogodin, A. Tvardovsky, K. Fedin, V. Vishnevsky, V. Katayev, L. Leonov, L. Simonov, A. Fadeyev, and M. Sholokhov—this letter was published in *New Masses,* January 13, 1948.

pointing, writing the simple fact, the direction of peace, the honest word that shrivels up the great lies.

WE WISH that we could answer you in behalf of all the intellectuals of our country. But the mind, too, has its traitors and its lost persons. There are some who will crow for a compliment; others have to be stuffed with their soul's food, money. They have only one function: to promote disbelief that their masters can be monsters for the sake of profit. In Germany their kind said, "Perish the thought, it can't happen here." In America they cry peace, perched on the bones of Greeks and Chinese, they boast of equality before the chained Negro people, and they whine friendship for the once again martyred Jewish people. They hope a fine speech will weigh against murder.

Honorable intellectuals will not bleat behind these Judas sheep. The conduct of the Hollywood writers and directors before the Un-American Committee is a rehearsal in courage for them. Scientists resist the degradation of their knowledge from its role as a bearer of happiness to that of an instrument of horror. Educators protest the conversion of their campuses into drill grounds. Thousands of cultural leaders have come to understand that the baiting of Hanns Eisler in the United States and the hunting of Pablo Neruda in Chile are not unrelated, and that the barring from our country of the Ukrainian singers Zoya Haidai and Ivan Patorzhinsky, the Mexican painter, Xavier Guerrero, the Brazilian architect, Oscar Niemeyer, and the detention of the physicist, Irene Joliot-Curie, are portents of their own persecution.

The growing support for Wallace's candidacy among American cultural workers shows that they have a memory for their history. It is a memory shared by millions of Americans who have already turned to a peoples' party movement in defense of their basic rights and their very lives. Did we not call our country the cradle of liberty?

Our greatest writers were mirrors in which every man could test his conscience and know whether he stood with oppressor or oppressed. Our working class has fought over and over again for human progress. We shall never forget this, nor let our nation sink into the swamp of fascism.

Nor have we forgotten the bankers who financed Hitler. Today we see them turn up creatures under stones to rule in Germany, mass torturers and nightmare figures out of the Teutoberg forest. We watch them flatter the feudal fascists of Japan and supervise the prison slaughterhouses of Korea. They want to plant the dragon's teeth of our bayonets in every land and have our young men spring out of that bitter ground. Uranium volcanoes spout in their dreams to enflame the earth. Brains of metal, hearts like dried peas, what honest man among us can vindicate such people?

Our capitalists have become sharply aware of the force of culture. They want to tell us what to say and not to say in defense of their system. Our President becomes an art critic; after a few easy lessons he insults painters with confidence. At a dinner in Washington connoisseurs from Wall Street admire a sculptured pastry called Bombe Atomique. They may even give a Pulitzer prize to the cook who created this masterpiece.

BUT American artists know what these culture-lovers are like. If the book will not bring in six per cent, if the symphony will not attract customers, if the painting will not sell that refreshing drink, then it is not art. The poetry and music our State Department broadcasts to Europe, to impress everybody with the riches of imperialist culture, are the work of men neglected and scorned throughout their lives by the hypocrites who now pretend to honor them. The patrons of De Gaulle and De Gasperi have nothing but contempt for, and fear of, creative labor. We know how differently artists are looked upon in your country, which surrounds them with the

love of millions of people and provides them with the means to carry out their social responsibility.

We want to share that responsibility with you. We will work for friendship between our peoples. Loving our country, we will help show our awakening people the true nature and source of their terrible peril. We hope that your letter and our reply will begin a close and fruitful communication between us, so that we can exchange ideas and speak together against the voices of death. Our enemies will see that our international solidarity for peace and democracy stands firm against their frantic writhing and thrashing. On this May Day we grip your hand, the hand of all mankind.

——*Nelson Algren, James S. Allen, Herbert Aptheker, Thomas Bell, Walter Bernstein, Alvah Bessie, Marc Blitzstein, B. A. Botkin, Richard O. Boyer, Lloyd L. Brown, Arnaud d'Usseau, Philip Evergood, Howard Fast, Ben Field, Sidney Finkelstein, Barbara Giles, Robert Gwathmey, Charles Humboldt, V. J. Jerome, Meridel Le Sueur, Ray Lev, A. B. Magil, Carlton Moss, Joseph North, Isidor Schneider, Howard Selsam, Samuel Sillen, Raphael Soyer, Ira Wallach, Theodore Ward, Max Weber, Doxey Wilkerson.*

PALESTINE

# *Shout Hallelujah!*

*by* THEODORE WARD

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NOTE: The following excerpt is taken from Mr. Ward's new play, *Shout Hallelujah!** which was completed under a 1947 award of the National Theatre Conference and upon the basis of which the author recently received from that body a second award for 1948.

The play is in the genre of slice-of-life drama, and is projected against the historical background of the havoc at Gawley Bridge, West Virginia, where some twenty years ago, because of company greed and their own lack of organization, several thousand Negro and white tunnel construction workers died of silicosis. In the preceding opening scene, the background is sketched and we learn that one of the Negro workers caught in the situation is SAMMY DYER, a talented young pianist, who wants to fight for better working conditions in the tunnel, and who also wants to go to a conservatory. He cannot do either because on the one hand the workers are disunited, while on the other hand he is the sole support of his father, one of the victims of the ravaging industrial disease.

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## ACT I, Scene 2.

SCENE: The tunnel at Gawley Bridge.
TIME: A morning in June, 1925.

*There is the incessant ringing of a dozen pneumatic drills somewhere in the distance. In a thick haze of dust, a crew of Negro workers is clearing away recently blasted rock; some are using sledge-hammers, others picks and shovels, as they load the debris into several dump cars standing on the tracks of a narrow-gauge railway in the rear of the chamber.*

*As the curtain rises, one of the men, a small, rawboned fellow named* Fudge, *is coughing. The others have paused to watch him, sympathetically. In a moment his condition develops into what seems a paroxysm. Silently the men return to their dusty labor. But soon a little fellow called* Skeets *begins an old refrain—*

SKEETS (*Leaning on his pick*): Now when we was borin th Big Bend—

BLUE (*Derisively—A strapping black man of thirty*): Yeah—when you was borin th Big Bend, they had fans n hose-pipes wid runnin water, n you couldn't even smell th dust—so what? (*Angrily*) A hell of a lot of good thas doin us in this Gawd damn hole!

SAMMY: Blue, you can't cool a man for wishing.

MAYBIRD: Now thas right.

BLUE: Yeah. But Gawd damn it, I git sick-a this bellyachin all th Gawd damn time!

SKEETS: Ahm talkin facks. N you'll see hit too when you gits like Fudge there.

MAYBIRD: You right too, Skeets. There ain't no scuse for silica dust to be this thick, chokin you, gittin your eyes—yestiddy even mah bucket was so gritty Ah couldn't hardly eat mah grub.

BLUE: Ah still say it don't do no good to bellyache all th Gawd damn time!

SAMMY: Then why don't we all listen and look up this man Holt?

STANLEY (*A fat brown man of fifty, pausing to wipe his brow—Belligerently*): Holt's full o crap. Ah done tole you all. He's jes trying to git somebody's head busted!

SAMMY: From what I've heard, Holt's a race man!

STANLEY: You young boy. For all your high-school education you got a lot to learn.

SAMMY: I say like Skeets: I'm talking facts.

STANLEY: What facts?

SAMMY: A man works to make a living, not to kill himself.

STANLEY (*Derisively*): Jes listen to th wisdom—he educated, he is!

SAMMY: You haven't heard me say anything about my education. It's common sense.

STANLEY: You had any common sense you wouldn't be in here—(*Laughing derisively*) But Ah always did say education wuzzn't no cure for mother wit! You in here jes like th rest!

SAMMY: Maybe that's a point and you don't see it. I don't want to be here. Nobody wants to be here. So we ought to have sense enough to get together and make the company give us some protection.

STANLEY: You jes keep up tha kind-a talk. They goin find you n Holt bofe on a limb, stretched high-n Haymen, one-a these mawnings —Fact I done heard Cap'n Zack's lookin fer him already. They say him n two or three deputies was round by th Quarters t'other night.

SAMMY: It's all a bluff, that's what I say. They want to scare us so we'll just go on letting them make fools of us, when anybody can see we haven't got a chance to work in here and live.

SKEETS (*After a moment*): Maybe after all, like th engineer say, we'll be out-a dis deposit n another week or so.

MAYBIRD: Like hell! They been perdictin evvysince I been on th job. Fer's we know, dis whole damn mountain might be silica rock!

SAMMY: It is. I heard one of the surveyors tell a couple of white men uptown, the boring tests showed it before they ever sunk the first shaft.

BLUE: You did?

SAMMY: Sure. I was standing close to him as I am to these rocks.

BLUE: Then them bastards jes don't give er damn, hunh?

SAMMY: Why should they, if we haven't got the guts to stand up for our rights?

FUDGE (*Suddenly choking*): Help! . . . I'm cho . . . cho . . . chokin!

BLUE (*Dropping his pick*): Get some water!

SAMMY (*As* BLUE *joins* FUDGE): Pat him on the back!

SKEETS (*At bucket*): It's full o silica.

BLUE: Damn tha!—Bring some!

FUDGE (*Gasping*): I can't . . . I can't . . . breathe—

BLUE: Hurry up, Skeets!

SKEETS: I'm gittin it.

BLUE (SKEETS *runs over with dipper—As he hands it*): Here, drink, Fudge.

SAMMY (*He watches* FUDGE *gulp water and sees it overflow, spilling from his lips*): This makes me sick to the pit of my stomach!

BLUE (*Sympathetically to* FUDGE): How you feel now, boy?

FUDGE: Ahem . . . Ahem . . . Ah guess . . . Ahm . . . all right.

BLUE (*Looking off into distance, as the men silently return to work*): Ah think Ahma make me one more payday. Then Ahma move on down th road.

SAMMY: I wish I could say the same. (*Silence reigns again.*)

BLUE (*Suddenly, irrepressibly*): But what th hell! Skeets, you comin down to th Bucket of Blood tonight?

SKEETS: You damn tootin, man. But Ah tell you dis: Ah ain't goin fer none of them hags Mag had out heah last payday!

BLUE (*Laughing*): Hell, when Ah gits drunk they all look alike to me.

MAYBIRD: Thas all you zigwalks think bout.

BLUE: Hell, what else's a man goin do but git him a lil poontong Saddy night?

MAYBIRD (*Working furiously*): Poontong! Poontong! Thas all you hear!

BLUE (*Chuckling*): Listen who's in th pulpit!—Why, you long-legged crane, th first Saddy night Ah miss you at the Bucket o Blood Ahm gwine straight Sunday mawnin n jine the chu'ch! (*He laughs uproariously, infecting the others. They thus fail to notice the appearance in the rear of a huge black man, who stands surveying them for a moment, prior to roaring down.*)

BIG STICK (*Roaring*): What th hell is dis, a picnic? Gawddamn it, don't you know we's behind schedule—Come on, come on, git to wuk! (*As* MAYBIRD *moves reluctantly*) Tha means you too!

MAYBIRD: How come you got to choose me?

BIG STICK: Don't gimme none o your backtalk—Ah'll kill mah mammy dis mawnin!

MAYBIRD (*Humiliated*): A man's got to stop to git his breath! How you speck somebody to bear down in all dis heat n silica?

LANG (*The Superintendent, entering*): Anything wrong, Harper?

BIG STICK (*Indicating* MAYBIRD): Dis loafer heah, Mister Lang, is squawkin bout th dust—

LANG (*Quietly*): If you don't like it, boy, why don't you go get your time? Ain't nobody got no gun on you.

MAYBIRD (*Indignantly*): You don't need no pistol, Mister Lang, n you know it—long's people got wives n chillun to feed!

LANG (*Paternally*): You ought to learn to sleep by yourself, boy. Then you wouldn't have so many pickaninnies—(*Going*) Come along, Harper.

BIG STICK (*Going*): Don't fergit what Ah said. Ah don't want-a see a stone left in dis room dis mawnin! (*Exits behind* LANG)

BLUE (*Jokingly—sotto voce*): Looks like you ain't gwine be heah long, Maybird.

MAYBIRD (*Bitterly humiliated*): Ahma kill tha black dog yet—Ah declare fore Gawd! Gawd damn ex-convict—Dis ain't no chaingang!

SKEETS: Sho ain't. But Big Stick don't know it.

MAYBIRD (*Angrily*): He goin keep on ridin me till one o dese days he goin catch me wrong, n Ahma drive dis pick clean through his nappy head!

SAMMY: Sh! Sh!

MAYBIRD: Damn tha black scum. Ah prove mahsef—Ahma Maybird —Ef Ah didn't have Rachel n all dem chillun, Ah'd-a done done it!

ED (*A man of forty-five, robust and usually short of words*): All Ah say, you better be sure you don't miss!

SKEETS: Ain't hit de truth! Big Stick was sent up for murder; n while he was trusty on th chaingang, he killed fifteen more!

BLUE: There never was a bull so bad the butcher didn't cut him down!

MAYBIRD: Ah prove mahsef—Tryin to git th best of somebody fer th sake of th boss!

ED: Thas what hurts. A man kin stand anything but tha—Take th white folks. You speck them to be hard on you n try to give you th worse o hit—But your own people—(*He shakes his head*)

BLUE: You ought to be like me, Maybird. Mah home ain't heah; it's fer on down th line—When Ah does mah stuff to a bastard, they sho can't track me down.

SKEETS: Enybody lissen to Blue, think he had a Mojo.

BLUE (*Laughing*): Gooferdust, Skeets. Gooferdust from a Voodoo down in New Orleans!

SKEETS (*Laughing*): Yeah. Long's Big Stick ain't round.

BLUE: You don't never see him messin wid me, do you? He knows who to pick on. He may-a killed fifteen on the chaingang, but he knows Ah'll take a piece o his big black behind—Ah betcha he lay off-a me!

SAMMY: He knows you're free—But Blue, there's one thing I can't understand about you.

BLUE: What's that, Sammy boy.

SAMMY: Why don't you help get the men together so we can force Red Lang to a showdown?

BLUE (*Smiling*): Well, Sammy boy, Ah tell you like Conel Tom I used to work for down in Mississippi. One night a mob came by the place on the way to lynch Big Tucker who lived about a half-a mile down below us. Big Tucker had got into some kind of trouble in town, and the white folks had made up their minds they was goin get rid of him. They figured if they jumped Big Tucker they was goin have hell on their hands. So they stopped by our place and called Conel Tom down to the gate. They told him what they was plannin, and asked him to git his gun and come on. For bout a minute Conel Tom jes stood there and scratched his head thinkin like hell. Then he said: All right, boys. You-all go ahead. I'll ketch up wid you! (*There is a burst of laughter from the men*) Old Conel Tom wasn't nobody's fool.

SAMMY (*As they quiet down*): It's easy to laugh, fellows. But take another look at poor Fudge there—Just like my old man, only worse —hacking up his lungs and all the doctors in the world can't cure him. How many of us do you think are going to leave the job like we came on it? (*Another Negro worker appears*)

HOLT (*An elderly gray-haired man, with a twinkle in his eye*): Hello, men.

MAYBIRD (*Jerking around*): Where'd you pop up from?

HOLT: I just ducked in for a minute—(*To* ED) Keep an eye out there for me, will you? (*As* ED *goes up to mouth of bore*): I know you-all don't know me from Adam's apple. I've had to make myself kind-a scarce round town. But the name is Holt!

OTHERS: Holt! So you's Holt!

HOLT: The same. While I don't mean to set myself up side the Lawd, me and Him's brothers of the same trade. I'm a carpenter, one

of the crew laying timber here in the bore—like most of you-all, I speck, I came to town because I heard they was paying good money. I can't say I been disappointed on that head. But one thing they didn't tell me. And I guess it goes for you all, and that was that while the pay might suit, conditions was burning hell!

MAYBIRD: Man, you said a mouthful!

HOLT: They say, when you in Rome, do like the Romans—Or, I might add, else like Peter; pick up your bed and walk!

BLUE (*Ejaculating*): Heh!

HOLT: I used to believe that. But I'm a man going on fifty-six now. And if there's one thing that's seeped into this gray-haired skull of mine, it's this: A rule ain't much if you draw a line and it comes out crooked everytime! I think you get my drift. As a people we can't get nowhere copying after the Romans nor Peter neither. That's why I want to ask you to meet me at the Bucket of Blood tonight, and let's see if we can't get our heads together.

SAMMY: I was supposed to go to Charleston this afternoon, but here's one you can count on.

STANLEY (*To* HOLT): You know this ain't no steady job. How you speck to get any place?

HOLT: There's always a way when men stick together.

STANLEY: You ain't talking to me. I'se heard that before.

HOLT: How about the rest of you all?

MAYBIRD: You ain't plannin no Sunday school picnic, you know that Ah hope!

HOLT: I ran across a book once which said there ain't but two kinds of men in the world: the low type and the high type, and they both carry a sure sign by which you can always tell em apart; because the low type always thinks of himself first, while the high type always thinks of others first. Now, personally, me, I aim to be one of the latter—

ED (*Hustling down*): Git goin. Here come Red Lang.

HOLT (*Going*): I'll see you-all at the Bucket of Blood tonight—(*To* ED): Can I make it?

ED: Duck round the dump car! (HOLT *dashes up and disappears behind dump car as the men work furiously*)

LANG (*Coming down a moment later*): Any of you boys ever use an air-drill? (*He is greeted with silence—so he turns to* BLUE) How about you?

BLUE: No suh. Not me.

LANG: You've got a good pair of shoulders—How'd you like to learn?

BLUE: Them drills kick up too much dust, Boss.

LANG: There's four dollars more a day in it for you.

BLUE: I know, Boss. N Ah ain't sayin Ah couldn't use em. But there ain't nothin in the drugstore kill a man any quicker n drivin a drill in this rock.

LANG: Shucks, boy, this deposit can't last. We'll be out of it in another week at the most. (BLUE *is silent*) How about some of you other boys? It's big money—? (*They all remain silent—in disgust*) Well, suit yourselves. There's plenty of men in Charleston, by Gawd! (*Whirling, he goes out Up-Left*)

BLUE (*Under his breath*): Damn them four dollars!

STANLEY (*Dropping his shovel*): Hell. Ahm going git me some o tha money—

SAMMY: Hold on, Stanley!

STANLEY: For what?

SAMMY: Don't be a fool!

STANLEY (*Going*): Ah know what Ahm doin—(*Calling as he exits running*) Mr. Lang!

SAMMY: Now there's a chump for you.

ED: You heard how he talked.

BLUE: Let him go—th rat!

SKEETS: You don't reckon he'll tell Red Lang?

ED (*Shaking his head*): Stanley jes skeered.

MAYBIRD: Ah wonder what happened?—They don't gen'ly offer us no drillin job.

ED: Less Ah miss mah guess, the drillers done throwed down their hammers.

SAMMY: Yeah! Listen—You can't hear em!

SKEETS: Lawd, Ah bet this is a walkout!

SAMMY: Then it's a break for us—If the white boys have quit, we'll have Red Lang hogtied.

MAYBIRD: Yeah. Wid them in it, the company won't be so quick to start nothing.

SAMMY: Think I ought to go see?

SKEETS: Big Stick bound to catch you out there.

FUDGE (*Suddenly gasping*): Help! Help! I can't . . . Ah . . . Ah!

SAMMY (*Pushing* SKEETS *aside*): Look out, Skeets. Let's put him on tha ledge.

FUDGE: Ah can't breathe!

MAYBIRD: Give him some more water.

SAMMY (*Carrying dipper*): Here Fudge. Take a sip.

MAYBIRD (*After a moment*): This here's th shame o shames!

SAMMY: I think I'll take him home. (BIG STICK *enters*)

BIG STICK (*Seeing them around* FUDGE): Loafin agin, hunh? Didn't Ah tell you gandydancers Ah wanted dese cars loaded this mawnin?

SAMMY: Ain't nobody loafing, Big Stick. Fudge here's in a pretty bad shape.

BIG STICK: Coughin, you mean?

SAMMY: He just had another spell—He almost died.

BIG STICK: Well, this ain't no Gawd damn hospital. You gittin paid to nurse dese rocks—Come on, scatter out. Get busy.

SAMMY (*As* FUDGE *bursts into another fit*): This man's in no condition to be here.

BIG STICK: Ah said let him lone, didn't Ah?

SAMMY: But can't you see—The dust—it's too thick for him!

BIG STICK: If he ain't fit to wuk, he should-a stayed home.

FUDGE (*Gasping*): Ah . . . Ah!

SAMMY: He's choking to death.

BIG STICK: Ah don't give er good Gawddamn. He been coughin round heah fer months, n Ah ain't goin have Mister Lang raisin hell wid me on account o you lazy mammy-creepers. Ahm heah to see tha you wuk; n damn mah soul, thas what you goin do er git th hell out-er heah n go git your time!

SAMMY (*Going back to* FUDGE): This man needs to go home and—

BIG STICK (*Threatening him with stick*): What'd Ah say?

BLUE (*Plunging across with pick above his head*): Awruph! Don't you hit him! Er Ah'll tear your skull open!

BIG STICK (*Licking his lips*): Er gang, hunh?

BLUE (*Angrily*): Call it what you like, you bad son-of-a-bitch!

SAMMY (*Seeing* BLUE *edging closer to* BIG STICK): Don't kill him, Blue!

BLUE (*Blazing*): Comin in heah runnin over somebody—Ah ought-er drive nine inches o dis pick in your Gawd damn head anyway!

SAMMY: No, Blue—Hold your temper.

BLUE: Go on, Sammy boy. If you want to take Fudge home, go on wid him. Ah dare dis bad bastard to fire you.

BIG STICK: Ah take low. You got th ups on me.

BLUE: Ah wuz born wid th ups on you, Gawd damn hit, n if you don't believe hit, jes say: "Boo."

BIG STICK: You th boss!

BLUE: Jes open your liver lips! (*Turning to* SAMMY): Take him, Sammy—

SAMMY (*Seeing* BIG STICK *pull gun*): Look out, Blue!

BIG STICK (*Triumphantly*): Now Gawd damn you. Drop tha pick!

SAMMY (*As* BLUE *stands his ground*): Drop it, Blue! He'll kill you!

MAYBIRD (*Realizing* BLUE *is debating his chances of striking first*): For th Lawd's sake, Blue!

BIG STICK (*Edging back*): Ah said, drop hit!

SKEETS: Lawd, Lawd!

SAMMY (*Edging between them*): Drop it, Blue—

BLUE (*Coolly*): Git back, Sammy—Tha son-of-a-bitch ain't got guts enuff to shoot!

SAMMY: Don't hurt him, Big Stick—Both of you forget it.

BIG STICK: Git back or Ah'll let you have hit!

BLUE: You got your gun. Why don't you use hit?

BIG STICK: Ah gives you three seconds to drop tha pick!

ED: Do like he say, Blue.

MAYBIRD: Yeah, Blue. Ain't no sense in this.

SAMMY: Please, Blue! (*Slowly* BLUE *lowers pick*)

BIG STICK (*Triumphantly*): Now, Gawd damn hit. Git th hell outer heah—Fore Ah blow your head cff—You fired. You n your punk bofe!

SAMMY: But, Big Stick, I need my job!

BIG STICK: I said you fired.

SAMMY: But I got to keep my job, man.

BLUE: Don't beg tha son-of-a-bitch, Sammy—Come on, this ain't th last o this. (*He laughs*)

BIG STICK (*Goaded*): You black bastard! (*He raises gun*)

MAYBIRD (*Knocks his hand up as he fires*): Lawd, Big Stick—Don't kill th man in cold blood!

SAMMY (*Beside* FUDGE): Help me get him up, Blue.

BLUE (*Sighing as he lifts* FUDGE): Eh, hey! (*Suddenly chuckling*) Ah'll take him, Sammy boy. (*With* FUDGE *on his back* BLUE *leads the way out*) Eh, hey!

BIG STICK: Th rest o you git back to wuk, fore Ah packs you all off th job. (*He turns and goes out Up-Left. The sound of a drill suddenly punctures the quiet.*)

SKEETS: There goes th drills ergin!

ED: Must be Stanley.

MAYBIRD (*Working furiously*): The Gawd damn scab! (*His fury continues, as the curtain falls.*)

## HAYMARKET

"THE HAYMARKET SERIES," a group of twenty-five drawings by Mitchell Siporin, four of which are reproduced here, were made during the years 1934-35 in Chicago. History's repeat performance of hunger and unemployment recalled the earlier movement in Chicago of the Knights of Labor for the eight-hour day and the demonstrations of the unemployed in the 1880's. In 1886, the Haymarket Martyrs (Parsons, Spies, Fischer and Engel) were hanged. Of the other frame-up victims, Lingg died by his own hand, and Fielden, Schwab and Neebe, first sentenced to life imprisonment, were pardoned six years later by Governor John P. Altgeld.

Siporin's drawings reflect the emotions and moods of the historical struggles from which came labor's international holiday—May Day. The drawings themselves are not history in the narrow sense of episode, but they are history in the poetry they evoke and in the dramatic visual impact of their stark black-and-white vision of our world of conflict and the martyrdom of man on the road to freedom.


1. THE REAPER

2. THE STOOLPIGEON

3. THE COLLABORATORS: McCORMICK AND POWDERLY

4. THEN AND NOW

# FARMER LI

*by* ANNA LOUISE STRONG

FARMER LI sat in my cave in Yenan, smiling his modest, ingratiating smile. He was as curious to see his first American as I was to meet a "labor hero" of Yenan. General Chu Teh had sent him to me. I had asked the commander-in-chief for an interview but he had just returned from the great farm at Nanniwan where his army raised most of its food on reclaimed wasteland. He phoned that he was busy with accumulated radiograms but could offer a substitute. "One of our country's labor heroes spent the night at my place. I'll send him down to you."

Li's body moved thin and agile in his homespun whitish trousers, long since discolored to a mottled yellow-brown. Above his high, almost pointed cheek-bones, a fuzzy towel was twisted to a turban that also had taken the color of dust. His bare brown feet were held by canvas slippers, rope-soled and so impregnated with the loose soil of the region that only careful scrutiny showed that they had once been black. Li seemed a bit of restless life not wholly freed from its mother earth.

Li's swarthy skin seemed darker than the usual Chinese color, though Chinese skins may range through many shades. Perhaps it was tanned by long toil in the sun, or tinged by some Central Asian blood. Yenan, in the far northwest of China, was an old outpost against Moslem raids. Li knew of no such blood among his forebears. He was, he said, a "son of Han," that is, Chinese.

He was not shy at being interviewed even by an American who had come so far. That the interviewer was a woman seemed to give him a sense of almost indelicate daring. Li grinned; he was in the modern world. Li was a success!

From time to time Li thrust his hand inside his black cotton jacket,

pulled out a louse, cracked it and threw it on the floor. He was not aware that he was doing this; it was a habit long acquired. "Eighty per cent of the human race is lousy," the famous surgeon Dr. Leo Eloesser once told me. Star Farmer Li was one of the eighty per cent.

"What makes you a labor hero?" I asked him.

"My village chose me. Afterwards the county congress of heroes chose me too."

There was a pause while a boy of our compound brought tea and poured it for my guest. Li sipped the hot liquid with noisy appreciation. Then he went on. "I planted more land than anyone else in the village. There are eighteen in my family and we planted 360 *mou*—60 acres. This is more than ten other families did together. I put on much manure. I cultivated much. I even planted the edges of the land to keep down field mice. Most people do not plant the edges, for the land is in steep terraces more than a man's height and the oxen cannot plow the edge. So mice and pests live there and eat. But I broke the edge with a hoe and planted it."

Li finished his cup of tea and filled it again. He seemed to consider what else to add. "I also dig ditches to irrigate the lower land. I store water when the rains come and later I spill it on the soil." He relaxed in his chair, content.

"So all this makes you a hero, a champion?"

After a moment's thought Li shook his head. "To be a hero it is not enough to get good crops for myself. I organized a labor exchange in the village. We cultivated all our land better and we also planted fifty-one acres of waste land that were not planted before."

When I tried to get the details of this labor exchange, the champion farmer could not give them consecutively. He was not used to consecutive thought. Bits came out such as: "When the meeting was called for taxes they said that Wang must pay two bushels. Wang says he cannot pay two bushels because his crop was bad in the drought. So I paid Wang's two bushels for him. I got 100 sacks of potatoes last harvest. Twenty sacks I gave to refugees for seed. They were refugees who came from Yulin, fleeing from oppressions of the Kuomintang. Mao Chusi—Chairman Mao—says we must help these strangers who come to us, so that they may quickly produce and our Border Region be strong."

Li—so much was clear—had been chosen a village hero because he produced well and helped the neighbors produce. He had increased the village prosperity. Then he had gone to a congress of village heroes and been chosen one of the "county labor heroes." Some day he might aspire to be a "Border Region Labor Hero," the highest honor of all. Li was a good citizen, working for himself, his village, his county and his Border Region.

IN THE days of what Li calls the "old society," Li was a farmhand. He came to Yenan County in "the sixteenth year of the Republic" —1927—a boy of fourteen fleeing from one of China's frequent famines and begging food by the way. The energy that later made him a hero seems to have been in the boy already, for he got a job before his older brothers. He worked in the fields for a landlord and was given the use of a small cave in a cliff. The rest of Li's family followed him: a mother, sister and four brothers. The father was dead and none of the others had a job as steady as that which the boy Li had secured.

Eight years Li worked for the landlord. In the later years, when he was a man grown, he got $10* a year for his labor. He also got his food, millet and a vegetable twice daily, and one towel each year to protect his head from the sun. This wage made him the head of the family, its main support. His older brothers worked for the landlord at harvest for $1.00 a month and their food, but the food was only for the months in which they worked. His younger brother was shepherd for the landlord, getting food all the year but no pay. So Li's wage of $10 a year went for family food in slack seasons. Even though they ate only millet mixed with husks and slept very much in winter to keep from eating, Li's wages could not buy them food enough. At the end of every year Li found himself owing two or three dollars to the landlord, a third of a year's pay.

"Never mind," the landlord would say. "You'll work for me another year." This landlord was not a big landlord. He had sixty acres, of which he kept the most fertile part for himself, working it by the labor of Li and another farmhand, while he gave out the less fertile to two *hodze,* or sharecroppers, who took their chance on the crop.

* Figures reduced to American money.

The *hodze* borrowed seed and food from the landlord and paid this also at harvest. One of the *hodze* raised 100 bushels and was allowed to keep twenty-five, giving seventy-five to the landlord. The other harvested seventy-five and was allowed to keep a little less than twenty.

At first Li got his cave for nothing. But when the second *hodze* came, the landlord found that he could rent the cave and put Li out of it. But Li was too good a worker to lose. The landlord said that if Li would dig another cave, he would pay for the door-frame and windows. The wooden lattice front that molds the door and windows is the only expense to a cave except labor. It distinguishes a home of man from a den of beasts.

"We dug our cave," said Li, "but the landlord gave us no wood for door-frame or windows, so we could not close the front of the cave. Even so we lived there, for the cave kept off the rain and snow. But it was very hard that winter; my mother was always ailing. By the second winter we had a door and a window. All that time I worked for the landlord, beginning at dawn and working late."

Impressed by Li's industry, the landlord decided to bind him by a long agreement. "If you'll work for me ten years," he offered, "I'll buy you a wife." Li was a grown man and he wanted a wife. But ten years' labor seemed too much. "Five years is enough," said Li. They argued and no agreement was reached.

The landlord's next proposition was even less acceptable to young Li. "He said that I should become his son and take his name and then he would get me a wife. I refused. It is an evil thing to be unfilial to ancestors."

"Would he have let you share in his property?" I asked, wondering why Li had rejected comparative wealth. But "property" had for Li a different meaning from that of our capitalist world.

"The landlord had one son already who was an idler and an opium-smoker," Li explained. "If I become son, I must work all my life for that landlord and that opium-smoker without pay. If I have sons they will be that landlord's sons and not my father's. Better that I die together with my mother than sell my father's seed."

Li therefore continued to work for the landlord until "the revolution" came in 1935.

FOR the farmhand Li, the word "revolution" had none of the taint of disorder that it seems to hold for today's Americans. All of Li's life people had made revolutions. The Republic was a revolution. The Kuomintang government called itself a revolution. To Li, the land revolution was the only one that did him any good. It was simple and beneficent.

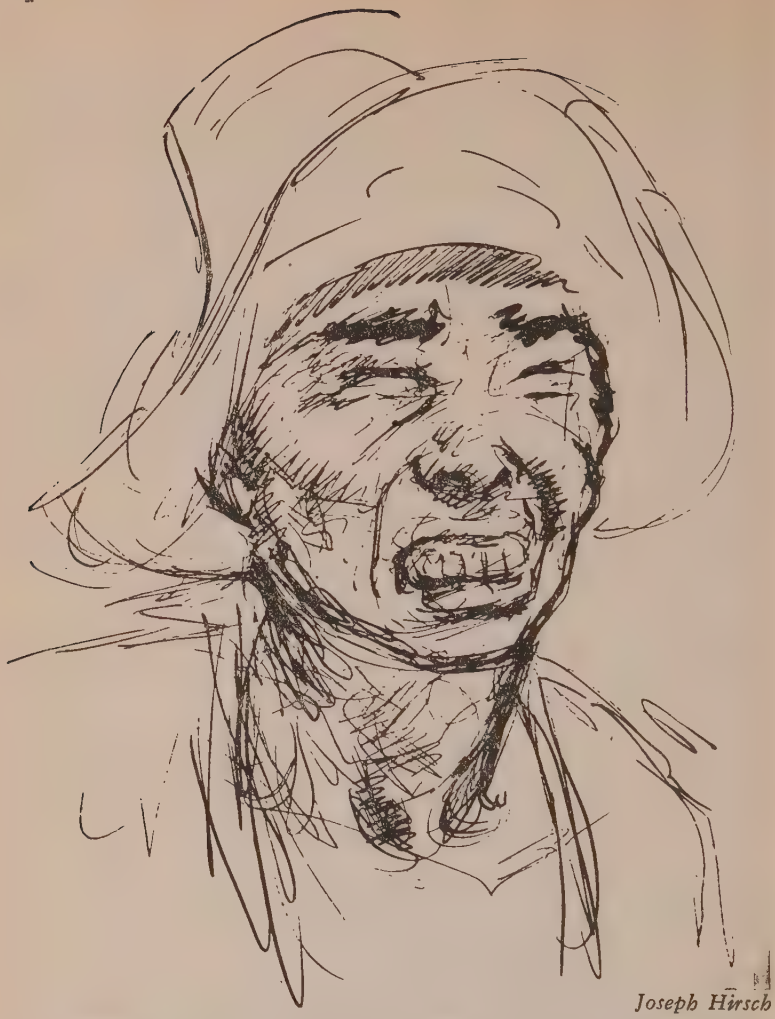
"In January workers came out from the town saying that there was revolution and we should plant as much as we could and nothing would go to the landlord. So I planted as much as I could—twenty-five acres. In October they divided the land and those twenty-five acres were mine!" The various methods of taking land from landlords, which were much discussed by the higher-ups, were hardly considered by farmhand Li. The land had been the landlord's; now it was his. A gift from the revolution, from the government.

Almost as great as the gift of land was the gift of a new family status. "I got my wife from the revolution," Li told me. "She cost me only $20; I could never hope to get a wife before."

How did the revolution make wives cheaper? When I asked this, Li seemed perplexed. "Her father knows that I have land now," was his first answer. Later he added: "If a wife does not like a man now, she can leave him, so people will not pay so much."

Suddenly, to my surprise, Li began to talk of his wedding. The details came with a rush. "We intended to use a sedan chair but then we saw that the revolution was against this, because a bridal chair needs four men to carry it and this is exploitation. So we used a mule instead. Some people have two mules, one in front and one behind, with the bride in a chair between. But I had only one mule and she sat on it, not all covered as in a chair, but with her head and shoulders covered with red cloth."

Li was smiling happily now. When he first began to speak of his wife, he had smirked and laughed expressively as a man does at a tale that is off-color. To talk of his wife and to a foreign woman at that! Li had laughed because it was so daring and improper. Then, as he talked on, and I did not seem to think it improper, Li's laughter changed until it was a breathless laugh of pure pleasure. He was seeing her riding on a mule, veiled in red, the girl whose coming



*Joseph Hirsch*

made a whole man of him, father of a new family. He was seeing her more truly than on the day when she first came. I knew that in Farmer Li's soul one more shackle of the "old society" was breaking. Li was admitting that he loved his wife; he was willing that a foreign friend should know!

"And how did you come to visit General Chu Teh?" I asked him.

Li's dark face glowed as he answered. "It was because Mao Chusi —Chairman Mao—went away to Chungking on that American plane."

I knew, of course, that Mao Tse-tung had gone to Chungking in the fall of 1945 in Ambassador Hurley's plane to discuss an agreement with Chiang Kai-shek. But this was more than a year in the past and what had it to do with my new acquaintance Li?

"We all worry very much when Mao Chusi stays so long in Chungking," Li told me. "Maybe that Chiang will keep him and then everything will get worse. Mao gave us land and taught us how to work and help each other. Without Mao there will be no elections and no farmer heroes. Maybe even landlords will come back. Then my friend Yang walks two days from Yenan to my village to tell me that our Chairman Mao is home. We are all very happy. I say to the *hsien*—county government: 'Let us plant extra land for Mao Chusi and also for General Chu Teh because they are too busy to do their own production work.' The magistrate says this is not my business. All the same I cannot rest. So I plant extra land myself and our labor exchange plants extra land and I bring eleven bushels of wheat, half to Chairman Mao and half to General Chu. Now I am easy at heart for this is food for a year for them both."

Li's eyes gleamed still more brightly as he added: "I stayed one night at the cave of Chairman Mao and one with General Chu. Chairman Mao gave me a present of rice cookies and sugar from the city. General Chu gave me tomatoes that he grew in his garden. He also gave me dinner of rice with six dishes! Never in the old society could a farmer have a banquet of rice with a general! Truly, our society is new!"

EXACTLY how new was this new society? I pried further into Li's life. The twenty-five acres he got from the revolution have grown to sixty, by ten acres reclaimed from wasteland and twenty-five bought from other farmers. Why had the others sold?

"They moved away because they said our valley was unlucky. Their babies died and their crops failed."

"Then you don't think the place unlucky?" I asked.

Li was clearly uneasy. "How do I know?" he asked me. "I think their crops fail because they have no manure. I have many sheep and much manure." But when I asked whether Li had any children he answered, "I have had four. One—my son—is alive."

A stubbornness settled on Li's face as he continued. "I am not sure

that the valley is unlucky. The woman from the hospital said it might be the water. We boil the water now." So Li was defying a curse and was still uncertain. One child was alive, and he had begun to listen to that woman from the hospital.

Large families cluster rapidly around the fortunate. Even with only one child, Farmer Li had a "family" of eighteen. These included his mother, sister, and four brothers with their wives and children. There were also—to my surprise—two hired hands. They got twice the wage that Li formerly received—it was paid in grain, not in money—but still it was not very much. So I posed the real question. "You have as much land as your former landlord had. When will they dispossess you and divide your land among your farmhands?"

Li laughed merrily. This was really a joke. Then as I persisted: "How do you differ from that landlord?" he grew uneasy. "It is not the same," he insisted. "I go to the hill to work." He rocked back and forth on the edge of his chair in the effort of thinking. He began to argue. "That man only exploited. I give the farmhands boiled water when they are thirsty. I give them tobacco leaves." Drops of sweat came to his brow as he finally burst forth: "I am illiterate and cannot explain clearly. But I know it is not the same. I go to the hill to work."

Only when I agreed that it was "not the same" was Li quieted. One thing at least was not the same. Farm champion Li hated the thought of being a landlord. In the "old society" he would have thought it an honor. Now it was utter disgrace. In the "new society" men were honored not for exploitation; they were honored for their work. Later I learned that the employment of farmhands was discouraged in favor of the co-operative labor brigades.

I MET Farmer Li unexpectedly the following morning when I was visiting the magistrate of Yenan County.

Seven miles from town by a rough dirt road the county building overlooked the valley. Magistrate Tsao, an intelligent man in his thirties, in the usual suit of blue cotton, received me in his large, whitewashed office. Under him came all questions of county government, finance, civil affairs, education, courts, police and local self-defense. The county, or *hsien,* was still the basic unit of government.

"But my chief job is the drive to increase farm production," said Tsao. "Chief honors go to our labor heroes." He nodded affably

toward a man in unbleached homespun trousers, whom he introduced as "Labor Hero Yang." The name seemed familiar. Yes, this was the Yang who made the two-day hike to Farmer Li's village, to tell him that Chairman Mao was home. Yang was a member of the county council.

Two other members of the county council bowed more formally as they were introduced. A smiling, round-headed elderly man in a black skullcap was a former landlord named Chang; a stocky man in his forties named Sung had been chief of police in the "old society" but was now organizer of village dramatic groups.

All of them discussed the changes that had taken place in the county in twelve years since the Communists came.

"The biggest difference," said Magistrate Tsao, "is that formerly all officials were appointed from the top down, but now they are all elected from the bottom up."

"The biggest difference," said Yang, "is that in the old society there was no voting, but now everybody votes."

"The biggest difference," grinned Sung, "is that government jobs were formerly bought by people who wanted to make money, but now nobody gets rich by being an official."

"The biggest difference," said ex-landlord Chang, "is that now there is order. Formerly there were so many bandits that nobody dared live on the good valley land. They lived high in the hills and fortified their villages. I myself was a landlord with big wealth. But twice I was kidnapped by bandits and held for ransom. My life was never secure."

Both ex-landlord Chang and ex-policeman Sung had run away in fear of their lives when the Communists first came. Both had come back and made their peace with the new regime. Both wanted me to understand that they were now using their abilities for the new society. Ex-landlord Chang had put his money into the new paper mill which was making a handsome profit. Ex-policeman Sung had cured himself of the opium habit which he indulged in formerly, as an official of the Kuomintang. What they would do if the old society returned was anybody's guess. They had managed, at least, to fit rather well into the new society.

They began putting food on the table, bowls of millet and greens flavored with meat. I stepped out of doors to stretch myself in the sun. Suddenly I saw a figure that seemed familiar, a thin, agile body

in earth-stained trousers and fuzzy turban. Yes, it was Farmer Li!

Farmer Li beamed all over when he saw me. He was on his way home with his donkeys and his purchases from town. When he saw me seven miles out in the country, I was already an old friend. Magistrate Tsao invited Li to share our lunch and Li happily accepted. He went out first to tie and feed his donkeys. Then he returned with a large bundle wrapped in the heavy, brown paper of the Yenan *Emancipation Daily* and opened it with a sweep of his hands.

Big red tomatoes, rice cookies and a small, precious packet of sugar poured out of the bundle. They were the presents from General Chu and Chairman Mao. Li pressed them all upon us, keeping nothing back. It was I who at last reminded him: "You have a family of eighteen people who will want to see those gifts."

"Yes, you must save half of it to show your family," agreed the magistrate.

Farmer Li wrapped up half of the food in the brown paper and continued to ply us with the rest. His dark face was lit with ecstasy. This was a great moment in his life. Once he had been a farmhand who hardly ranked as human. Now, a labor hero, returning from visits to the chiefs of the Border Region, he was acting as host to the chiefs of his county and even to a foreign guest.

I saw him later, plodding down the road in a cloud of dust with his donkeys, flicking them with a long whip. Star Farmer Li, still lousy, illiterate, superstitious, but an honored citizen of the new society through his industry in producing food.

# *TWO FOR FRANCE*

*by* MILTON BLAU

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## DANIEL AND THE LIONS

*For René and Danielle on the death of René-Danièl, their infant son.*

1.

For me the first blow is grief:
The hot dry hands upon my face,
The slow red wake of tears
Eating my stomach and heart.

Outside my window St. Ouen cries
With the heat of Saigon, the shifting
Mourning climates of the world.
On the street a piece of me falls dead.

Our few hours, our few walks
On the boulevard where the bomb marks
Frame our ideas like *Avis* upon the walls,
Burst from my head in the blackest gowns.

*O comrades, in the ocean which touches France,*
*If you can see them, forever run my tears . . .*

2.

The second blow for me is hate.
Daniel, destined to down lions, is dead.
I am sick of the accidental death:
The daily murder in the children's room.

Outside my window I see the piers
Where the slow ships give up our boys.
The big flags dip, the ground opens
To welcome them home. The yellow teeth

Of treason grind our peace. Our blood,
Poured also for the birth of Daniel,
Is clawed from his vein and we pale.
The beasts roar the passing of our heir.

*O comrades, in the ocean which smashes France,*
*On the rock split waves, grinds my wrath . . .*

3.

But in the end for me I love
And here the lions break their teeth
For we have this and they have not
And they have nothing.

Outside my window the mean day closes.
The last clouds blunder across the moon.
The sick lions whimper now and people ask us:
What are you hiding in that angry sky?

René, Danielle, René-Danièl,
That storm of heroes which saved
This dry earth, rains down still.
The wet lions run and roar.

*O comrades, in the ocean which caresses France,*
*My love whispers across the feet of children. . . .*

## THE PAULA MARCH

Each gift I gave was sinister:
The orange for Dudah,
The clothes for Monique,
The shoes for Paula.

*(Beware of the boys with the cigarets,*
*The boys with the chocolate bars.)*

Gaudy was my packaged love
Yet paled so by your return.
I kissed you cheek on cheek with commodity
You burned my lips with your new liberty.

*(Beware of the boys with the shining ships*
*The boys with the Greek guitars.)*

I will never give you such gifts again
For each must take his own.

Dudah take the orange groves:
Monique take the mills:
Paula march all over France.

# CAMERA and MICROPHONE

*by* JOHN HOWARD LAWSON

IT IS NOT surprising that the motion picture relies to a considerable extent on devices borrowed from the theatre. There are many superficial points of resemblance between the two arts. Films are shown in auditoriums which do not differ in any marked degree from other playhouses. Stage actors perform in films. Stage training is still regarded as a fairly satisfactory prerequisite for appearance before the camera. Actors, directors and writers move from stage to screen with comparative ease and with what seem to be minor adjustments of their techniques and methods. It is often customary to draw a stage curtain back and forth to mark the beginning and end of the drama projected on the screen within the proscenium arch.

If we go behind the screen and examine the resources and techniques which enter into the making of a motion picture, it becomes apparent that the similarity in audience presentation conceals essential differences in the creative process. The performance within the proscenium arch is actually the way in which the play is made. The playwright can use only the means of production that are available in the stage-space bounded by the footlights and the walls of the playhouse. The convention of the theatre assumes that the audience observes the events on the stage through a transparent fourth wall. Thus the angle of vision from which the audience views the scene is constant.

The motion picture is not created within the limits of the proscenium arch, and it is not dependent on the technical resources which are there available. The angle of vision from which the audience views the picture is not determined solely by the relationship between the auditorium and the stage. The angle of vision is constantly changing, and it is determined by the camera.

The basic quality of the camera as a story-telling instrument is its mobility, its ability to search out and record the most diverse phenomena. The camera's facility in portraying movement and contrast is augmented by a quality that is not inherent in the camera, but is supplied by the cutting and arrangement of the strips of film. The process of cutting is properly described by the European term montage.*

Mobility and montage as the physical conditions that determine the film structure were discovered at a very early period of motion picture history. As long as they were used chiefly for trickery and illusion, shocks or surprises, they had no specific artistic meaning or emotional validity. Griffith and Chaplin undertook to explore the psychological and social potentialities that were inherent in the camera's movement and the interrelationship of scenes. They found, almost simultaneously, that the camera was especially effective in achieving psychological intimacy and in portraying panoramic movements of people and events, and that the dramatic essence of montage lay in the distinctive interrelationship between the intimate detail and the large movement.

The fact that the motion picture has a far greater sweep and more varied contact with reality than is possible on the stage may lead enthusiasts to conclude somewhat prematurely that the film is, at least potentially, a "greater art" than the theatre. The assumption can only be attributed to a misunderstanding of the relationship between a work of art and the reality that it mirrors. A work of art is an organized and unified interpretation of reality. The physical conditions of performance by living actors on a stage determine the dramatic structure, but the conditions do not place any limitations on the playwright's interpretation of life. The poetic splendor of Shakespeare's plays grew out of the system of production in the Elizabethan theatre, but it was not the open roof that permitted the lines to soar to heaven. The power of the plays lay in the creator's ability to see life in its wholeness and beauty, and his development of an organic structure that was whole and beautiful.

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* The American industry uses the word montage to describe a jumble of shots superimposed or simultaneously shown on the screen to convey a mood or cover a time-lapse. Since almost all serious studies of the motion picture accept the European usage of the term as a description of cutting or editing, it seems wise to follow the general example.

THE extraordinary scope of the action that the camera can portray has both advantages and disadvantages. It makes structural unity difficult, and encourages the irresponsible wandering in search of elusive drama that characterizes so many films. Many motion pictures seem to disintegrate before our eyes. We can say that the story is disorganized, but the weakness of the story is related to ignorance or wilful perversion of the principles that govern the use of the camera and the arrangement of the visual image.

The camera's facility in recording diverse phenomena may seem to be too obvious to require extended comment. It can follow the criminal in his flight. It can pause to show ants making an ant hill or observe the slow setting of the sun, the rising of the evening star.

The camera's movement, however startling or rapid it may be, is not an end in itself. It has no dramatic value unless it reveals drama, a conflict of wills developing to a climax. Thus the chase, the struggle between the pursuer and the pursued, emerged as the first crude form of conflict in motion. The principle that the camera's movement must be related to a conflict in motion governs such diverse events as the men struggling on the train in *The Great Train Robbery,* the armies marching through the Alps in *Suvarov,* the lovers quarreling on the bus in *It Happened One Night,* the dilapidated truck moving along Highway 66 in *The Grapes of Wrath.*

There is nothing in the theatre that has a similar value. An effect of conflict in motion is occasionally achieved through mechanical means—for example, the tableau of Eliza crossing the ice in *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* But it would be difficult to argue that these mechanical effects, which were common in nineteenth century plays, altered basic concepts of dramatic art.

Action taking place within the limits of the proscenium arch has a creative life and vigor that is natural to the stage. These limits are unnatural for the camera, and when they are imposed upon it the action becomes stilted. It seems as if the conscious will and emotional drive of the characters are strait-jacketed by the unnecessarily restricted environment. Directors who present action in purely theatrical terms frequently try to impose cinematic vitality on the scene by moving the camera and by rapid cutting. When the introduction of sound restricted the activity of the characters and temporarily immobilized the camera, muffled in sound-proof booth, directors looked desperately

for some trick to give the illusion of movement. Rouben Mamoulian wrote of the film, *Applause,* which he directed in 1929: "I lifted the sound-proofed camera off its feet and set it in motion on pneumatic tires. Scenes moved out of one room and into others without halt. The camera flew, jerked, floated and rolled, discarding its stubborn tripod-legs for a set of wired wheels that raced over the studio floors."

The camera's feverish activity could not solve Mamoulian's problem. He had not discovered the secret of adapting sound to the principle of conflict in motion. The people talking in theatrical settings could not be brought to life by the camera racing on its wire wheels.

LET us now turn to the use of montage, which is another aspect of the presentation of conflict in motion.

Eisenstein observed that "there was a period in Soviet cinema when montage was proclaimed 'everything.'" The error, according to Eisenstein, arose from a one-sided and exaggerated recognition of the peculiar dramatic value of montage. The value "consisted in the fact *that two film pieces of any kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of that juxtaposition.*"

Montage is an extension of the camera's mobility. The camera can go wherever human beings can carry and operate it. But film that has been taken by any number of cameras in any number of places can be put together so as to establish unpredictable relationships and varieties of experience. Here again we have a principle that is foreign to the stage. A play may have a great many changes of scene, but the driving force of the play is found in the inner content of the scenes and only to a minor degree in the contrast and linkage between them.

In the motion picture, the inner content of the scenes is continually transformed, given new meaning, driven forward by the movement between the scenes. In a sense, the movement is hidden; there is nothing between the scenes that we can actually see or get our hands on. But the transition is dynamic and meaningful because it possesses the quality of action. It conforms to our description of action as a *process of becoming,* a change of equilibrium involving prior and forthcoming changes of equilibrium.

Montage is as much an accepted convention of the film as the imaginary fourth wall in the theatre. The audience is not disturbed by the discontinuity of time and space which is one of the characteristics of montage. In general, time and space function normally within

the limits of a scene. But the scene may be cut at any point, to carry us half way across the world, or back or forward through time. In *Intolerance,* the great city of Babylon falls, the Huguenots are massacred in seventeenth century France—and simultaneously, the boy in the modern story walks to the scaffold and mounts the steps to die.

Throughout this film, one feels that Griffith is searching for unity, for a meaning which he himself understands but which he cannot fully translate into the language of film. He partially succeeds in certain close-ups which bring the action into focus and define the relationship between human beings and the sweep of events. In these close-ups, Griffith intuitively approaches the principle for which he is seeking. The close-up is the key to the film structure. It provides the emotional insight, the pattern of will and purpose that bind the action together in a rational design. There are many flashes of this insight in *Intolerance,* but they are not sufficient to unify the vast historical pageant. Griffith's instinct was correct. Even his rather abstract image of the woman rocking the cradle is an instinctive attempt to use the close-up for emotional and psychological integration. The scene is a close-up of a person performing a humble and familiar act. But we do not actually get close to the woman. We do not see her face or know what she is feeling or suffering. We cannot do so because she is only an artifice, an idea which has no human function in the story.

IN ORDER to understand the use of the close-up in the motion picture, it may be of value to consider the development of a somewhat similar device in the drama. The Elizabethan soliloquy serves an analagous purpose. It defines the conscious will in relation to the whole scope of the action. Many of Shakespeare's soliloquies and long speeches are examples of the remarkable compression and extension that can be achieved through the *close-up* of the individual's mind, the intimate analysis of his conscious will.

The same effect is accomplished, without poetic elaboration and with greater dependence on visual communication, in Ibsen's plays. The second act of *Hedda Gabler* opens with Hedda alone loading a pistol. The scene suggests a close-up of the gun. Then, as Hedda looks off into the garden, we can imagine the camera panning to her face. Certainly a close-up is indicated as she raises the gun, points it off scene and says: "Now I'll shoot you, Judge Brack!"

At the end of *A Doll's House,* when Nora stands at the door ready to leave, we want to see her face, her eyes and the movement of her lips as she speaks of "a real wedlock." Ibsen's stage directions after her departure describe Helmer's reactions with painstaking intimacy. "He sinks down on a chair at the door and buries his face in his hands.... Looks around and rises. . . . A hope flashes across his mind . . . he hears the door slamming below."

The introduction of electric lighting, illuminating the actor's face and enabling the audience to see changes in facial expression or pantomime with physical objects, was responsible in part for Ibsen's method of detailed characterization and his use of things as symbols. The possibility of studying the actor at close range, which inspired Ibsen's technical innovations, was fully realized a half century later, when the camera approached the performer's face to record every nuance of feeling, to move from a man's or woman's eyes to the thing that is being watched, to follow the hands as they reach out to touch or caress or reject.

It may be said that in practice the film uses the close-up in an empty and repetitious manner. The intimate contact with the audience is more likely to be slightly obscene than seriously psychological. Kisses, parted lips and heaving bosoms are more common than the study of less obvious reactions. Nevertheless, the intimacy is there. Its misuse does not detract from its importance. Where it is misused, the structure is weakened, and psychological values are distorted.

While some film-makers, especially in the formative period of the Soviet film, have tended to over-emphasize montage as the sole creative element in the motion picture, others have placed a one-sided emphasis on the close-up. Recognition of the importance of the close-up leads Dudley Nichols to the conclusion that it is a mistake to speak of the motion picture as the medium of "action":

> "The truth is that the stage is the medium of action while the screen is the medium of reaction. It is through identification with the person *acted upon* on the screen, and not with the person acting, that the film builds up its oscillating power with an audience. . . . At any emotional crisis of a film, when a character is saying something which profoundly affects another, it is to this second character that the camera instinctively roves, perhaps in a close-up; and it is then that the hearts of the audience quiver and open in release, or rock with laughter or shrink with pain."

Milton Avery

Nichols is right in suggesting the function of the close-up as the key to the human root and meaning of the action. But he misinterprets the relationship between the close-up and the action that precedes and follows it, and thus adopts an erroneous premise concerning the nature of the film story. The theory has broader philosophic implications that deserve attention. It may seem like a long jump from the cinema close-up to the cult of Nihilism that permeates so much of the intellectual life of our time. Yet if the close-up is used in the manner suggested—and there is a marked tendency to so use it in the contemporary film—the individual is depicted as the passive and tortured observer of a world in which his conscious will is inoperative, and moments of greatest tension arise from suffering or exaltation which lead to no decision and have no effect on the chaotic reality in which the individual moves. Many people take this despairing view of the postwar environment: we can imagine a close-up of the average "man of good will," confused by newspaper hysteria and frightened by war propaganda, hypnotized by chaos, *acted upon* and unable to act.

HOWEVER, if we think a little about this close-up, we must come to the conclusion that its meaning and dramatic impact do not lie in the individual's passivity, but in his failure to act when action is necessary. If we are sure that he will continue to be acted upon and do nothing, the close-up lacks tension; it involves no struggle and no progression. Tension arises only when the individual seen in close-up is a participant in the events which he observes; what he sees is to some extent the result of what he has willed. It may be different from anything that he had intended or hoped, but the unexpected result brings him face to face with new and more portentous decisions. He must go on willing or die.

The law of life demands that man use his conscious will and exacts terrible penalties for his failure to do so. The same law determines the function of the close-up in the structure of the motion picture. It presents an intimate study of decision, of the will in motion, of man's recognition of what he has done and his search for remedies or solutions. Vacillation heightens tension only when it is related, as in Hamlet's soliloquies, to the necessity of action.

The motion picture is unlike the stage, in that it can jump without any break in continuity from the individual debating a course of

action to the whole range of events on which his will is concentrated. It can move from the most intimate detail to the clash of historical forces, from the private decision to the unexpected public result. The close-up fuses the elements that are driving toward the climax. But the action must have the extension and magnitude that are characteristic of the film structure. The camera is not content to dwell upon intimate detail alone, and it is artificially restricted when it is forced to do so. It seeks space and movement, crowds and horizons. The motion picture tends to create a new kind of story, a mass-story, in which the lives of individuals are interwoven with the life of society and the fate of the individual is inextricably bound up in the fate of the crowd.

But the development of the film has shown that mass movement tends to be abstract and fragmentary when it is unrelated to the dramatic purpose of the individuals who compose the mass. Scenes depicting crowds are artistically complete only when we see enough faces to catch the mood of the group and give the flavor of its collective purpose. Similarly the structure is complete only when the pattern of relationships between individuals and the forces that constitute their environment are sufficiently defined to give form and meaning to the whole action.

The most creative artists of the cinema have shown a preference for historical subjects. History is people in motion. It offers material that is more closely related to the requirements of mobility and montage than stories that have been molded by the necessities of another art form in novels or plays. The limitations imposed on the American screen are especially indicated in its failure to grapple with the massive, vivid, dynamic stuff of American history and tradition.

THE screen story is not told solely by the camera. In giving less attention to the microphone, we are merely accepting the realities of the contemporary system of production. The sound-track follows its pedestrian course; the skill of expert technicians is wasted on unimaginative dialogue, "descriptive" and intrusive music, and dutifully "realistic" effects of trains, bells, footsteps, thunderstorms.

The sound-track is strait-jacketed by the tradition of the theatre, where sound comes only from the voices of actors, or the efforts of stagehands manipulating crude machines. There has been so little experimentation with sound as an active dramatic agent that any

assertions regarding its use must be tentative and based more upon speculation than upon experience.

A rare instance of the creative use of music, which suggests the interrelationship of music to dialogue and other sounds that are interwoven on the sound-track may be found in Pare Lorentz' musical instructions for *The Fight for Life,* a documentary film dealing with childbirth in a city hospital. Lorentz is insistent on tempo, and the precise synchronization of sound and action:

> "Every scene was directed to a metronome, and for dramatic effect the music must start exactly with the film—from the moment we see "City Hospital" until the baby is born, the beat of the music must not vary, and there must be no change in instrumentation sufficient enough to be noticeable—the conception in direction was that we would have the mother's heart beat—two beats in one, with the accent on the first one; with the echo exactly 1½ times as fast, and without an accent; factually, a beat of 100 a minute as against the fetal heart beat of 150 a minute."

When the story changes its scene and tempo, Lorentz suggests that "the music must always precede the picture." When the interne is leaving the delivery room, the music begins to suggest the raucous life of streets and saloons: "I feel, then, that we start one piano under the interne; that we start another piano as he walks out of the hospital; that the minute he hits the street, we suddenly hit the audience in the face with gin, women, despair, cruelty and life, as crude as it is."

During this walk through the streets, we hear the interne's voice; he is talking to himself about the woman who has just died: "And now she is dead. . . . Now her striving body, that brought a life into the world, is cold and empty. . . ." He walks past lighted shop windows. He continues to speak, and the two pianos play blues. But "the words themselves carry the meaning and the tempo. . . . If the music attempts to narrate the city, to interpret it, then the music and the picture will overwhelm my dialogue. My man is all-important;—he doesn't know where he is."

The distinctive values provided by the microphone are similar to the values offered by the camera in the visual field. There is a mechanical similarity: the microphone has the mobility of the camera, and the sound-track is like the strips of film—it is the record of segments

of reality that can be arranged in any sequence or juxtaposition, without regard for space or time.

These physical characteristics provide the basis for a sound structure that resembles the visual structure in combining psychological intimacy with sweeping movement. The brief excerpts quoted from Lorentz' plan for *The Fight for Life* illustrate the basic factors in the use of sound. The microphone's mobility is evident; it keeps pace with the interne as he walks along the street. The scene involves a complex montage of sounds: the voice, the blues music, the sounds of the street. Lorentz recognizes that the primary dramatic factor is the close-up, portraying the man's feeling and purpose: "My man is all-important." The sound that corresponds to the visual close-up, the inner voice, must also be primary.

THE history of the motion picture as an art and a business explains the partial neglect of the camera's potentialities and the far more complete neglect of the microphone. Commercial dependence on cheap situations and theatrical effects has led many serious photographic artists to assume that the use of the camera to tell a story is in direct opposition to its esthetic value in creating a visual image. They have disregarded, and often despised, the story-telling function as a degradation of an essentially pictorial art. The development of the cinema as a graphic art had reached a relative maturity, and had begun to exert some influence on commercial production, when the talking picture introduced a new element. Bringing a larger investment and a further concentration of monopoly control, sound tended to impose greater dependence on the theatre and further limitations on visual experimentation. To the artist intent on composition and the movement of light and shadow, sound was merely noise, an unwarranted intrusion on the legitimate art of the camera, justified only by its popularity as a crude story-telling device.

Thus the esthetics of sound received far less attention than the esthetics of the visual image, which had achieved some recognition as a valid, although subordinate, contribution to the story. Photography is treated with some respect in commercial production. But all that is demanded of the sound-man is technical proficiency in making the sound real and reasonably attractive to the ear.

Contemporary studio methods disregard the structural unity of the

film. The story is supposed to have a form. It must have a beginning and an ending. It must hold attention and reach some sort of climax. But there is no fusing of the elements that compose the structure. In most cases the screenwriter has no knowledge of the camera. The cameraman knows nothing about story values, except what he has picked up in the course of his work on the set. The editor is given strips of film without any previous consultation concerning the script or the problems that it involves. The composer is given his assignment belatedly after most of the photographic work has been completed. The director, who in many cases does not participate in the preparation of the script and who may or may not know anything about the camera, is given the impossible task of unifying these separate and discordant elements.

The structural unity of the film must originate in the screenplay. There can be no unity unless the screenplay is actually a screen invention, fully realized in film terms, with genuine understanding of the function of the camera and the microphone and free creative use of these marvelous instruments.

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As we go to press, John Howard Lawson is on trial in Washington, charged with contempt of the Un-American Committee. He is the first of the Hollywood Ten to be prosecuted for their defense of American constitutional rights.

The fight of these men is graphically recorded in *Hollywood on Trial,* by Gordon Kahn, a book just published by Boni & Gaer ($2.75; paper-bound, $1.00). We urge our readers to buy and distribute this book, all royalties of which have been assigned to the legal defense fund of the Ten.

——*The Editors.*

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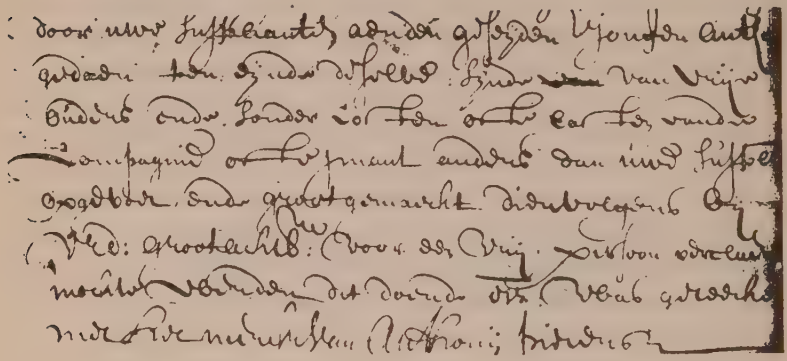
# *Cry Freedom: 1661*

## THE FIRST DOCUMENT FROM AN AMERICAN NEGRO'S PEN



*In the New York State Library at the Capitol in Albany there is a copy, contemporaneously made by the official scribe, of the first piece of writing, so far as I know, from the pen of a Negro on soil later to become part of the United States. The manuscript itself is undated, but the clerk's entry on the official register lists it as having been presented to the provincial government of the colony of New Netherlands on March 21, 1661.*

*The document is a petition from a free Negro man and his wife asking for the issuance of a certificate of freedom to a Negro lad whom they had adopted as an infant in 1643 and had since supported and raised. The request was granted. It is eminently fitting that the earliest extant document from an American Negro's hand should be a plea for freedom since this has formed, from that day to this moment, the dominant motif in the history of the Negro people.*

*Shown above is a photostatic reproduction of a portion of the manuscript, parts of which were rendered illegible by the Capitol building fire of 1910. The translation of the document from the Dutch, presented on the following page, is the work of Professor Margaret Schlauch of New York University.*

HERBERT APTHEKER

## To the Noble Right Honorable General and Lords Council of New Netherlands

...very respectful...Emanuel Pieterson a free Negro and Reytory, otherwise Dorothy Angola, free Negroes together, husband and wife, to your noble honor very humble male petitioner and female petitioner, that she, Reytory, in the year 1643 on the 3rd of August as godparent or witness has stood over the Christian baptism of a little son of the deceased Anthony van Angola conceived by the same [*i.e.,* Anthony's] wife named Louise, the which aforenamed Anthony and Louise were both free Negroes; and about four weeks thereafter the aforenamed Louise has come to depart this world, leaving behind her the aforementioned little son named Anthony; the which child your petitioner, out of Christian feeling to herself have taken and with the fruit of her . . . labor as her own child reared, and has until now sustained, and all motherly attention and care has borne therefor without anyone in the world not even its father himself who about five years thereafter likewise had died, for nourishment to ask for it; and also has your male petitioner, since he was with your female petitioner married, his duty and utmost best done for the rearing... to advance...your male and female petitioners these most respectful turn to your honorable lordships humbly begging that your honors will please to her...stamp in the margin of this document or otherwise a document containing the granting and approbation of the above declared naming and fostering by your female petitioner for the said youth Anthony done to the end that, he being of free parents and without expense or burden of this Company or anyone your petitioner reared and brought to maturity, therefore by your honors as a free person declared should be: this doing the above was signed with the mark of Anthony Pieterson.

THE ABOVE-STANDING REQUEST IS RECEIVED AND BEING READ, IS STAMPED.

THE MATTER BEING AS THE PETITIONER IN THIS [DOCUMENT] ANNOUNCES, THE REQUEST IS CONSENTED TO THE TWO AS ABOVE.

# *WHOSE GERMANY?*

*by* GERHART EISLER

IN THE opinion of the American imperialist war party Germany remains, next to the atom bomb, the most promising weapon for aggression. This is why "Western Germany" plays such an outstanding role in the strategy of the Marshall Planners.

German mercenaries in the French Foreign Legion under the command of French generals are waging war against the Indo-Chinese people. In the streets of Saigon one can hear German soldiers in the service of "Western civilization" singing the old Nazi songs as a recreation from murdering the natives. Why, then, should it not also be possible that such types of German soldiers will fight under the command of U.S. generals in the service of "American democracy" and with all the best wishes of Cardinal Spellman and Monsignor Sheen, who would seem to favor the baptizing of this un-Catholic world with atom bombs?

It's a good guess—and possible later trials against certain American war criminals may offer the judicial proof—that the U.S. general staff, in its war preparation against the new progressive world, counts on the use of large German armies, just as it calculates on French, Italian, Greek and other mercenaries.

Consideration of Germany by the warmongers as one of the greatest war potentials in an aggressive war is not without justification. Germany has between sixty-five and seventy million people in the heart of Europe—more than any other European capitalist nation. Germany has, despite the terrible destruction she suffered, a potentially great war industry concentrated in the West, in the Ruhr, and could soon develop again the second strongest capitalist industry in the world, surpassing the industries of France and England. Germany, moreover, has millions of seasoned troops and officers, and a rich—all too rich—

tradition of waging inhuman warfare. The inventors of gas chambers seem to be the natural allies in spirit and in human kindness of those Americans who dream about what the flying gas chambers, the atom bombs, can do.

Thus, her population, strategic position, industrial potential and the deep marks of the Prussian and Nazi heritage make Germany a plausible keystone in the Marshall Plan for crushing the world of socialism, the new people's democracies and the struggles of colonial and semi-colonial peoples for national independence.

However, American progressives would be grievously mistaken to look upon Germany and the Germans only from the viewpoint of the U.S.warmongers. This would overlook the important fact that the progressive forces in Germany, after terrible defeats, are on the march again; that these forces are showing increasing signs of strength; that a tremendous battle is going on between the German camp of peace and progress and the U.S.-sponsored German camp of war and reaction.

It is high time for American progressives to recognize that there are in Germany itself very important allies in the battle for peace. It is high time to discard all vestiges of the stupid theory that all Germans are hopeless and that there are no differences among them. One should also abandon the fallacious theory that the German problem can be solved according to the recipes of Henry Morgenthau or the advocates of German dismemberment. For all such theories are only water on the mill-wheel of the U.S. war party. Such theories make it impossible for liberal Americans to know what to fight for and what to fight against in regard to Germany.

In brief, *Germany must also be regarded as a great democratic and socialist potential.*

THE outstanding fact in Germany today is the renaissance of the working-class movement. Its strength, its courage will decide what role Germany is going to play. The labor movement's reckoning with the past—with its sectarian and opportunistic mistakes, with its tragic splits, with the shame of capitulation before reaction—is deciding the question: Whither Germany? For there is no other class, after the utter bankruptcy of the German bourgeoisie, that can lead the Germans from the morass of centuries into a new progressive era. The

creation of a new, democratic, progressive and peaceful German national state has again become the historic and practical task of the German workers.

The renaissance of the German labor movement no doubt saddens U.S. reactionaries. In the midst of their campaign against American Marxists and progressives, in the midst of their dreams of how to imprison, deport and maybe torture and kill the American class-conscious workers and workers' leaders, they have to face the fact that there are today more German Marxists than there were before the Nazis "eradicated" Marxism in Germany. And what has J. Edgar Hoover got that Himmler didn't have?

The Marxist party of the German working class is the Socialist Unity Party (S.E.D.), product of the merger of the former German Social Democratic Party with the former German Communist Party in the Soviet zone. The new party would have been organized in the whole of Germany had this not been prohibited by the Western powers. At its second convention, held a few months ago, the S.E.D. numbered 1,800,000 dues-paying members. There were also on hand 300,000 applications of Germans from the Western zones.

Allied with the S.E.D. are three German Communist parties in the Western zones. They exist as independent organizations because of the laws of the occupation armies of the Western powers. Their total membership is around 350,000.

The Socialist Unity Party plus the three Communist parties plus the applicants for membership thus add up to about two and a half millions (the strength of the German Communist Party before Hitler came to power was about 300,000!). This means that two and a half million Germans, the great majority of them workers, adhere to parties guided by the theory and practice of Marxism as taught by Marx and Engels and developed by Lenin and Stalin. Of all those Germans participating in the various elections in the Soviet zone as well as in the Western zones, 23.4 per cent voted for the S.E.D. and for the Communist parties—about seven million votes. (The highest electoral vote of the German Communist Party before Hitler came to power was about six millions.)

The electoral vote of the Social Democratic Party in the whole of Germany is 23.5 per cent. A united Marxist labor party in the country would therefore now be able to claim a total vote of 47 per cent and would be the strongest party of Germany.

The Western powers are doing everything possible to prevent such a historical development in Germany. They fear the end of the split in the German labor movement which occurred in 1914, when the majority of the German labor leaders openly went over into the camp of imperialism, and which ultimately led to the victory of Nazism and the disaster of World War II. The Western occupation powers are seeking to impress upon the German workers that "democracy" means the continuation of this split. Such teaching includes suppressive measures against the Communists and the Socialist Unity Party and against such democratic mass organizations as the League of Culture. It includes provocations of all kinds such as the fabrication of "Protocol M." The policy of perpetuating the split is expressed in active material and moral support for all those Social Democratic leaders and bourgeois politicians who have learned nothing from the past, who have not purged themselves of the old imperialist infections and the marks of their shameful capitulation to reaction.

The German Marxists are not only more numerous in the Germany of today than they were before Hitler—although by no means numerous and strong enough to solve the problems in the whole of Germany —they have also already proved what a united workers' party, guided by Marxism, can achieve. In the territories occupied by the Soviet Union, they have led in laying the basis for a new democracy.

AFTER the destruction of the Hitler state through the heroic deeds of the soldiers of the Soviet Union and her Allies there came into being the rare case in history of a capitalist country without a capitalist state. The state power was represented by the armies and the military governments of the victors. The Yalta decisions and the Potsdam agreement laid down the principles by which the victors should rule over Germany. These decisions, despite the fact that they arose as a compromise between the big powers, were essentially of a democratic, non-imperialist character and remain the basis for a just and peaceful solution of the German problem, a solution in the interests of both the Germans and all other European peoples.

Germany was not to be considered as a conglomerate of territories on which every German and international reactionary interest could lay its hands for its own purposes. The anti-fascist forces of Germany were to be encouraged and helped so that they could become the decisive force in rebuilding a new democratic state. In time this was

to lead to the building of a democratic central government ruling within the borders decided by the Potsdam decisions and able to conclude a peace with the victors. A merciless policy of de-nazification, de-militarization and de-monopolization was to be carried through, and all war criminals, civilian and military, were to be brought to trial. German war industry was to be destroyed and the principle of reparations, especially to the nations most harmed by Hitlerite aggression, was decided upon.

So far as it has been possible in *one* part of Germany, the Potsdam decisions have been carried out in the Soviet zone. The military government of the Red Army from the beginning took a clear course of encouraging the progressive Germans, especially the workers and their organizations, to do a complete job of cleaning out militarism and Nazism from their zone. Never in history has a country, so terribly devastated by a merciless enemy, acted in victory as did the Soviet Union. She helped the German workers, peasants and intelligentsia to get rid of those forces that led the German people into the disaster from which they did not in good time liberate themselves with their own hands.

The occupation army of the Soviet Union did not try to impose the Russian way of life upon the Germans, but helped them to carry through their own German program of democratic revolution, essentially the program of every progressive German party for a hundred years, as enlarged by the lessons of the Weimar Republic and the Nazi dictatorship.

This democratic revolution consisted of the long overdue destruction of the Junkers as a class and the elimination of their influence from all branches of society; the expropriation without compensation of the monopoly holdings of all war criminals; the eradication of the militarist and Nazi-infested bureaucracy; and the creation of a new democratic type of administration. It consisted further of a fundamental democratic reorganization of the educational system and the setting up of a new judicial apparatus—the traditional stronghold of German reaction.

BUT all the good intentions of the military government of the Soviet Union would have come to naught if the reorganized Communist and Social Democratic parties, the surviving progressive cadres of the working-class movement, had not united. These parties

were able to draw lessons from the past. They understood the problem of constructing an anti-fascist order of a new type, a people's democracy. The democratic and socialist advance of a nation, while it can be encouraged or hampered by foreign nations, *can in the end be achieved only by the efforts of the nation itself and its most progressive class, and in its own peculiar national forms.* The German Marxists had to prove in life that they were able to achieve this difficult task.

The German Marxists have proved their ability to learn. In a very important part of Germany, with about twenty million people and the second most important industrial territory, the Socialist Unity Party has led in the creation of a new state power. Democratic institutions have been set up. Larger and larger numbers of people are being involved in the day-to-day democratic process. The Marxist workers have proved, and are continuing to prove, to the Germans that the workers, if they are united and allied with the peasants and intelligentsia, are able to organize a Germany without Junkers, where the power of the great industrialists is broken and destroyed, and a planned economy in the interest of the people is developed.

The former Prussian territories are becoming more and more a bulwark of a new democratic Germany, a beacon to show the whole of Germany which way to go. The new state apparatus, created in the Soviet zone, is not, as in France and Italy, or as increasingly once again in Western Germany, an instrument of the great industrialists and Junkers. It is, rather, an instrument in the hands of the workers and their allies.

The S.E.D. does not consider itself only as a party of the Soviet zone and as representing only the interests of the Germans of that zone. All its plans, activities and principles are guided by the interests of the whole nation. The S.E.D. avoids steps that would make it more difficult to achieve the unity of the German nation and the creation of a parliamentary German Republic. All the chatter that this party has "sovietized" the Eastern zone or introduced socialism into this zone or even is planning to create a socialist "little Germany" is nothing but malicious propaganda.

Nothing is done in the Soviet zone which contradicts the Potsdam agreements and runs counter to the task of building a united Germany. The administration from top to bottom is composed of an alliance or bloc of the Socialist Unity Party with the two existing

bourgeois parties, the Christian Democratic Union and the Liberal Democratic Party, which in September, 1946 received three and a half million votes against five million for the S.E.D. All administrative bodies are governed by a single chamber system of freely elected representatives of the people.

The S.E.D. has declared that it considers a democratic and peaceful way to a socialist Germany possible under certain conditions. These are: The unity of the working class in the whole of Germany; the unity of Germany as an indivisible, democratic Republic; the expropriation and punishment of the active Nazis and war criminals; the expropriation of the big landowners and the distribution of their land among landless and poor peasants and re-settlers in all Germany; the eradication of the power of the financiers through the abolition of monopolies; and finally, the democratic rebuilding of the economy, administration, judiciary, and education. The S.E.D. emphasizes its desire to follow this peaceful and democratic way to a socialist Germany. But if the capitalist class abandons democracy in order to create a reactionary regime, the duty of the working class will be to employ revolutionary means. Warned by the past, the party declares: "We will not hesitate to break the resistance of the capitalist class if it should try forcibly to prevent the democratization of Germany and the development of the power of the toilers."

QUITE a few people have accused the Socialist Unity Party and the Communist parties in the Western zone of being chauvinistic because they strongly favor a united Germany and are hostile to all separatist and federalist plans. This demand for a united Germany and the abolition of all zone barriers has become the slogan of increasing masses of the Germans. This is seen in the successful creation of an all-German people's congress and a German people's council, whose delegates were elected from thousands of factories, schools, churches and villages throughout the country.

The fight for a united, indivisible German Republic in which the Germans and only the Germans themselves decide their constitution and the relations between a centralized government in the different *Laenders,* led by the German Marxists, is a progressive battle. To give up this fight would mean to give up the fight for democracy and for socialism, because both can be accomplished only in national forms and within a united nation. There cannot be a German people's

democracy unless a democratically elected central government has the power to destroy in all of Germany the Junkers and the great monopolists and their increasing influence in the Western zone.

The opponents of a united democratic Republic include the big landowners in the Western zone plus the great German trusts and business barons who helped to bring Hitler to power. For the most part they remain unpunished. One example of how well these reactionary forces have survived in the Western zone: Of 361 top executives in the British zone who were members of the Nazi Party (and the non-member executives of the great financial and industrial combines were no better) only thirty-three were arrested, while all the others have kept their old positions.

Other enemies of a central democratic government are the Vatican-led clerico-fascists, the "Black International," who are trying to use their influence and power in certain parts of Germany, especially in Bavaria and in the Rhineland, to scheme for the creation of reactionary regimes in the Donau Basin and to regain their historical power in Europe. The foes of such a Germany also include the black marketeers, a great power in the decayed economy of the Western zone.

For all these elements the conditions in the Soviet zone are "hell." They are terrified by the idea of a centralized democratic government with the power to clean up every corner of Germany for the first time in history. They have the support of certain German labor leaders who have learned nothing from the past, just as reaction in France and Italy has found valuable allies in the Blums and Saragats.

GERMAN reaction, having failed to rebuild a strong state apparatus, would have little chance in its battle against a united, democratic government if it had to stand alone against the German masses, and especially against the workers. But German reaction has been bolstered by the occupation armies of the Western powers and their military governments, especially the military government of the United States *which has betrayed the agreement, spirit and ideas of Potsdam just as it has betrayed the hopes of the Jewish people for the creation of a Jewish national state in Palestine.*

A dismembered Germany gives the Western powers, under the domination of the U.S., a chance to restore the economic and social basis of German imperialism, especially in the most important center of the Ruhr and Rhine. The Marshall Plan for Germany and the

setting up of a puppet government, a so-called economic council, over the "united" Western zone is an attempt to organize a German India in the interests of the American monopolies and their German imperialist junior partners.

As a result, the battle for a new anti-fascist, united democratic Germany *is becoming a battle, led by the German Marxists, of a suppressed nation against imperialist suppressors.* The German imperialists and their hirelings who yesterday wanted to destroy the national independence of the nations of the world have today become the active helpers of the Western bloc in the effort to prevent the creation of a German democratic national state and a peaceful and anti-imperialist solution of the German question.

THE demand that the German nation, which has so terribly wronged so many other countries, pay reparations, eradicate the institutions and influences of its imperialists, and create a real peaceful democracy, is the rightful demand of the victors. It is in the interest both of the victors and the vanquished. The demand for full guarantees against new aggressions, and the carrying through of agreements for this purpose, cannot be resisted by any far-sighted and progressive German.

But the attempt to force the conquered to retain in power those who led Germany into this terrible national catastrophe, the attempt to prevent a democratic revolution and a united anti-fascist Germany, is the criminal method of imperialism. It is a method of exploiting the victory over Hitler Germany for the aggressive purposes of American imperialism in connivance with German reaction.

It is because the German Marxists are anti-imperialist and anti-fascist, and because they know that only a German people's republic can prevent the revival of German aggression and the use of Germany as a war potential of American imperialism, that they oppose not only German reaction, but its American, British, French and Vatican sponsors.

The progressive German does not want Germany to be a war potential for anybody. He wants peace, a way out of misery, social progress, not only in one part of Germany, but in the whole of Germany. And therefore he carries the banner for a united German Republic, a new and long overdue progressive chapter in the history of his land.

# Antios: Return to Earth

*by* ELEANOR MABRY

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Comes the old woman with the flowered apron
to the forgotten place of murder,
rolls the dry skull of the dead
into the stuff of life, the flowered apron;
and goes mumbling and muttering away,
turning, turning with the day.
The brown woman, the earthen woman,
blesses the defiant dead
and embraces them without dread.

Ancient, ancient, ancient and lovely
the bread that fills the silent mouth
(singing still, as Lorca will
throughout the memory of man)
the dark earth nourishing the flower
where lay the singing tongue.

Plain man Joe Hill of the rowdy hymns,
stretching out his easing limbs
along the earth, one of the brave;
and dandelions wave on wave
cover his unforgotten blood,
an ever-fructifying flood.
The faded apron of the sky
hovers and covers the unshut eye.

# THE SLICKS ARE *slipping*

*by* GODFREY PIKE

THE magazine industry is a hypochondriac business which spends millions of dollars annually to have itself examined for signs of low circulation and falling profits. This year the magazine doctors have found enough signs of ailments to create misgivings about their traditional prescription for success: shock and sex. There appears to be danger that forty million people won't go on reading *Life* and the *Saturday Evening Post* forever.

Because the average publisher is a four-colored barnacle on capitalism's ship of state, he has the twin objective of making money by advertising while he thumps editorially for the system that sustains him. Fulton Oursler, a *Reader's Digest* editor, best described the tender esthetics of the business when Frederick Lewis Allen, the *Harper's* editor, once provoked him by an erudite banquet speech. "I'm not here to pretend that magazines are published primarily to be useful to society," groused Oursler, then publisher of *Liberty*. "Primarily, magazines are commercial products delivered under the rapidly fading but still existing profit motive in the United States."

Measured by its own yardstick of profits, the magazine industry appears on the surface to be in perfect health. In 1947, the great year of the hucksters, a record total of 441 million dollars in advertising revenue was taken in by the periodicals. *Life* led the parade with a net 75 million, an increase of 20 million, followed by the *Post, Ladies Home Journal* and *Time,* the three magazines making gains of twelve, six and five millions respectively. Only *Collier's* of the Big Ten* failed to show a gain.

* *Life, Saturday Evening Post, Ladies Home Journal, Time, Collier's, American Weekly, This Week, Better Homes and Gardens, Good Housekeeping, McCall's.*

All was not so glossy, however, with the smaller magazines of the big syndicates. Among those which lost advertising revenue as compared to 1946 were Hearst's *Cosmopolitan* and *Red Book,* the floundering *Liberty,* swank *Town & Country* and *True Confessions.* The confession magazines, like many periodicals in special circulation fields, lost heavily. So did the movie magazines, and their publishers have organized to petition Hollywood for more advertising or else.

But what is really causing the anguish in the air-conditioned offices of the publishers is you, dear reader. Circulation, tied organically to rates and advertising, nose-dived last summer with the first tremor of the coming depression and never completely recovered. Many magazines are still trying to climb back from a drop that was estimated as averaging twenty per cent throughout the industry. The publishers, who have religiously had their customers surveyed to determine their preferences, can't understand such treachery at the newsstand. In this age of statistical editing via survey polls, every editor was supposed to know what went on inside the head, home and bed of his average reader.

Inflation is the major cause for the slump in circulation. In order to continue the high rate of profit-taking in the face of increased production costs, advertising rates and magazine prices were boosted. The reader, having less money of his own, resisted the squeeze by buying one magazine where he had bought two. Or maybe he went to a bar and looked at a television show. At any rate, the secondary magazines are aching for readers and several big publishers have grown wary enough to veto new projects. Curtis and Marshall Field both junked plans for new magazines last year, and other by-products of the circulation jitters have been widespread firing of editors and reductions in staffs.

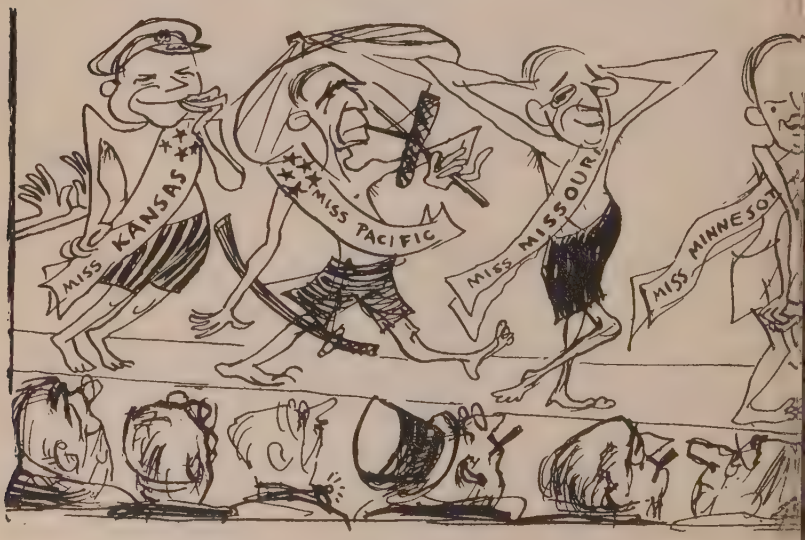
THERE is, however, another factor in the circulation picture that would be understood by the publishers if only they would read some of their old surveys and their old speeches. In the first place, it was proved long ago that more people buy *Life* for its cheesecake than for its editorials, just as more people buy the *Post* for its slick fiction than for its grumpy think pieces. The arsenic of political pieces in defense of the status quo must always be made palatable by the antidote of love and laughs.

One of the best definitions of the slick magazine formula still remains that classic laid down by William L. Chenery, the publisher of

*Collier's.* "One or two so-called *important* articles are sufficient for a single issue," Chenery said. "Other articles dealing with sports, entertainment, the movies, theatre, woman's interests, humor, adventure, and even such subjects as the building of homes and the cooking of meals must be provided."

It is one of the neat little contradictions of capitalism that Chenery, having developed such a skilful way to make digestible the I-rat-on-Roosevelt articles of John Garner and Jim Farley, can't always follow his own formula. Issues of his magazine now contain two, three and four so-called important articles and a recent issue just about knocked out its fun-loving readers with attacks on Roosevelt, Russia and Palestine. The reason for such a lack of balance is the insistence of class-conscious advertisers that the way to sell magazines is to ballyhoo the Taft-Hartley Act, the Marshall Plan and anybody but Henry Wallace. *Collier's,* its circulation slip showing, ran an editorial last year declaring that anyone who said it was a pica to the left of the *Post* or *Life* was a dirty so-and-so. *Liberty, Cosmopolitan* and other magazine laggards are also devoting so much space to appeasing their advertisers that they are boring their readers.

In trying to get out of the crossfire coming from advertiser and reader, the publishers have reached back into the past and come up with the traditional solution—sex. Consequently we have had, and



are going to have, cycles of articles about prostitution, perversion, sterility, frigidity and all known and unknown neuroses complete with a quick cure. And most of the publishers wish Dr. Kinsey would hurry up with that next report. The reasoning behind such excessive sexuality to make bad politics salable is that MacFadden and Luce made it pay the last time things were tough. But thus far the old gimmick has failed to bring back the customers who were lost with the first ill-winds of inflation. Maybe there's something wrong with sex.

The last mass revolt among magazine buyers occurred in the last depression when they got so fed up with obscurantism and escapism that they boycotted a number of magazines into the graveyard. Among them was the *Literary Digest,* the *Time* of its day, which died trying to sell Hooverism and Free Enterprise. The *Post* also lingered on the brink until revived with the serum of pseudo-liberalism. Such history should not, however, stir any hopes that the big slicks can be expected to choke shortly on their own returns. The magazine industry is as powerful and trustified as the next one, and it begins with pulp kings like Street and Smith and ends with the Luce empire. With cannibalism so typical of monopoly, the big syndicates will eat up any weakling off-spring which fails to make money in the coming years. The first effect of this will be the increasing domination of the industry by the big low-priced magazines. This domination, regardless of circula-

tion losses, will continue until the big magazines are challenged by low-priced, progressive magazines that are tailored for mass circulation.

THE trend toward big magazine domination of the industry has been apparent ever since Frank Munsey put magazines within range of the common man by dropping his price to a dime and horrifying the gentle readers of *Harper's* by publishing the exposés of Lincoln Steffens. Cyrus Curtis continued this development by peddling the *Post* cheaply and getting his reward from the big business advertisers. The last dubious boon to the common man was the picture magazines that appeared during the disillusioned Thirties with the formula of seeing-is-believing. Each development in the mass circulation field, including the 20-in-one digests, came about in troubled economic periods when the magazine buyer began to sour on the old forms of selling him the capitalist system. The buyer is souring again, but until he has a choice between *Life* and something better he can't be expected to put Luce out of business.

The growing disillusionment among the readers of the current slicks is expected to create a field for progressive, mass-circulation magazines. The shift in reader opinion needed to establish such a circulation field will undoubtedly be speeded by the third-party movement. Millions of readers will inevitably demand publications that don't ask them to stool with Stolberg and rat with Riesel in order to find out what's happening in Hollywood or in the world of sports or fashions.

Meanwhile, sex having failed to make the public queue up at the newsstand, what are the publishers going to do now? The answer is, scare hell out of you. The shocker story has always been an industry standby, and now the boys have something to work with that makes stories about opium dens and pictures of brain operations seem as sedate as your Aunt Hattie's high school diary. The gimmick is their projected atomic war. The publishers are getting set for a series of articles that are hopefully designed to produce such a state of shock in their readers that they will read anything passively—including their draft notices.

## *DEMOCRACY FOR EXPORT*

"I was disturbed to hear the Senator from Oregon suggest that anyone who raised a question regarding the [Marshall] plan was mercenary. I regretted that, because it seems to me that necessarily we in this body must be mercenary."—*Owen J. Brewster of Maine to the Senate.*

*"I believe, anyway, that the poll tax is more of a stabilizing regulation of the voting franchise than it is a tax. The times are fair warning to me that instead of wanting to repeal all of our regulations of the franchise, we should be wanting to protect it more and more. And as a most reasonable and moderate regulation, I recommend it to all the States in the Union."*—Sen. John C. Stennis, Mississippi.

"I am told that if you will watch the handling of hogs in transit, you will see carloads of Duroc Reds, Chester Whites, black Hampshires, with White Saddlers and Poland China spotted animals unloaded in a large pen for overnight rest. When this is done, the hogs are restless and confused. They squeal and mill around until nightfall. Return the next morning and you will find a peaceful array of sleeping hogs, but the pen now consists of islands of reds, whites, blacks, and spotted hogs, each segregated and sleeping peacefully with their own kind. If an adventuresome hog starts to wander about, he is soon put in his place by the squeal and rancor of the community. It looks like men would have as much sense as a bunch of hogs."—*Rep. Frank W. Boykin of Alabama argues against civil rights legislation in the House.*

*"Mr. Speaker, we all want to get rid of the Communists, in and out of the Government. . . . I have been thinking a good deal about this. . . . The Civil Service Commission . . . should require as the first qualification of an applicant . . . a certificate indicating that they* [sic] *are registered voters, registered with one of the two major parties. . . . Someone might ask: Why registered with one of the two major parties? The answer is simple. It is essential in our system of government that we have two parties, but we do not need more than two parties."*—From a speech by Rep. Chester H. Gross of Pennsylvania to the House.

We invite readers' contributions to this department.
Original clippings are requested with each item.

# The I. Q. Myth

*by* WALTER S. NEFF

THE magic letters "I.Q." have become almost as familiar to the American public as C.O.D. or B.V.D. This doubtful result is in great part due to radio, which somehow discovered that quiz programs were an efficient means of selling soap and laxatives. Public interest in I.Q. has also been stimulated by the fact that in two great wars the government administered to millions in the armed forces a kind of "mental test." By this time, moreover, probably millions of school children have been subjected to one or another variety of "intelligence" test. It would be hard to find another, supposedly scientific, subject in which the mass of the population shows as much interest. Unfortunately, it would also be hard to find a subject which has suffered from such harmful distortions as the apparently innocent matter of intelligence testing.

Particularly sinister has been the attempt to use the alleged results of intelligence testing as props for the idea that social or so-called racial groups differ in native ability. The findings of half a dozen sciences during the past generation had forced this particular fallacy back into the nether-world of avowed bigots. But the movement seems to have been only a strategic retreat and not a rout. Now, with the heightening of reaction's drive, this racist myth is reappearing, with academic sugar-coating, in "learned" journals.

For example, consider a recent article by Professor Garrett, executive head of the department of psychology at Columbia University, "Negro-White Differences in Mental Ability in the United States" (*Scientific Monthly,* October, 1947). The professor begins with a great display of objectivity. "The honest psychologist," he writes, "like any other true scientist, has no racial bias; he does not *care* which race (if any) is more intelligent." But still he concludes that "on tests of mental

ability, American Negroes on the average rank consistently lower than American whites."

As is typical of this school of thought, this particular "honest psychologist" achieves his result by carefully selecting his evidence from a few old studies whose findings have been thoroughly discredited by more recent research. In addition, and this is of even more basic significance, he seems to accept uncritically the idea that standard intelligence tests afford a fair measure of innate endowment. It is with this widespread and dangerous notion that I will deal.

ABOUT forty years ago the Minister of Public Instruction in France assigned two colleagues, Binet and Simon, the task of devising an instrument which would measure the "native ability" of children. The problem at that time was clear-cut. The idea was to find some way of distinguishing between those children who were doing poorly in school because they were really dull-witted, and those who were doing poor work for a variety of reasons extraneous to their "real" ability. In the course of their efforts to solve this problem, which has turned out to be more complex the more it has been investigated, these two French educators hit upon a novel approach which, with refinements, is still the basic methodology of mental testing today.

Being eminently practical men, Binet and Simon started with what they already knew. They shared the general experience of all teachers that, as children grow older, they are able to grasp more and solve more difficult problems than when they are younger. It is upon this very obvious fact that the entire system of graded classes is built in any modern educational system. Thus, Assumption I of the method is that mental ability *develops* as the child grows. Another familiar observation—that children of the same age appear to differ in mental development—leads to Assumption II: that mental ability develops at different *rates* and reaches different levels in different individuals.

It is with these two quite practical ideas that Binet and Simon set to work. Their method was empirical from the beginning. They obtained access to a number of school children of differing ages. They then set up a whole collection of tests of a wide variety of apparently unrelated abilities: ability to repeat numbers, to solve problems, to identify pictures or words, to get the point of stories, and so on. Now here is the chief novelty of their method. Those problems which

appeared to differentiate the entire group of children *according to their age* were considered crucial, and those which did not do so were discarded. In other words, if a given problem was solved by most eight-year-olds, for example, but was too difficult for the six-year-olds and too easy for the ten-year-olds, then Binet and Simon concluded they had a fair measure of average mental ability as displayed by eight-year-old children. From this procedure came their basic notion of *mental age,* which is the building block of all tests of mental ability among children.

And from this procedure also came their "intelligence test," which is nothing more than a battery of such age-placed subtests worked out for different age groups. As the test was later used in practice, a child of a given age who passes test problems characteristic of the *older* children in the original sample was considered "superior" in intelligence; if his performance was about the same as the children of his own age in the original sample, he was considered average; if he could pass only those problems which children *younger* than he in the original sample could solve, he was considered "inferior" or "retarded." Later investigators, particularly an American, Louis M. Terman, devised the numerical concept of the *intelligence quotient* (I.Q.), which is simply the child's mental age score on the test divided by his actual chronological age. Thus, by simple division, a ten-year-old child who gets a mental age of eight years, would have an I.Q. of 0.80 (written usually as 80); if the same child got a mental age score of twelve years, his I.Q. is 120; obviously an exactly average child will have an I.Q. of 100.

AN INTELLIGENCE test score is thus a highly *relative* thing. *Interpretation of a given score on a test made up in this manner can have meaning only with reference to the characteristics of the original group on which the test was standardized.* In other words, if little Willie, to whom we give the test today, gets a mental age score of ten years, this simply says that his performance is about the same as that of the actual ten-year-olds used in the original standardization group. But what factors determined the ability of the original ten-year-olds? Here we reach an impasse! We come out precisely where we entered.

This whole problem of mental testing reminds one of the old riddle of how to lift oneself by one's bootstraps. In constructing the tests

the psychologists wanted to find some way to measure "native ability" unaffected by social and environmental factors. Yet the human material used to standardize the tests was composed of people drawn from society as it exists, whose behavior is, of course, already a product of an unknown combination of biological and social factors. Thus, the entire procedure involves itself in a vicious circle.

If the psychologist could provide himself with a standardization group of children reared in an environment exactly identical for each, the differences which then make their appearance could be attributed to differences in inborn ability. But such has not been, and is hardly likely to be, the case. On the contrary, the crucial group of children —the standardization group with which all other children are to be compared—is already sharply differentiated by whatever social and environmental factors have been brought to bear upon them since birth, so it is impossible to judge whether the final result is due to biological factors, social factors or some combination of both.

The standard intelligence tests have generally attempted to use as the "norm" the child of "average social status." In his 1916 adaptation of the Binet-type test—widely known as the Stanford Binet—Terman apparently made an effort to secure a large number of children of middle status. He tells us that "the schools selected for the tests were such as almost anyone would classify as middle-class." In addition, *no* children in his sample were foreign-born, few were other than western European in descent, and all were white. On the basis of 500 children, whose social status was estimated in each case by their teacher, we find that those of "average" social status obtained an average I.Q. of 99.5, near enough 100 to be considered perfectly at norm.

In his latest revision (1937), Terman made a fairly successful effort to gather a standardization sample which was really representative of all the social levels in our society, but here again the results tell us only of how the children performed at the time of construction of the test and yield no information upon the cases of the relationships found. Kuhlmann's adaptation of the Binet, used in a widely quoted study of the relation between social status and intelligence, was built on subjects from county fairs, orphan homes and public schools, and we cannot even guess at their social background.

Precise knowledge of the individuals making up the standardization sample is decisive for a scientific interpretation of an intelligence test

score. It is all the more serious, therefore, that very broad generalizations have frequently been made in the field of mental testing without taking this basic fact into consideration. Not very long ago, psychologists were using tests standardized on middle-class, native-born, American white children to measure the "native ability" of groups as diverse in culture and background as south European and Mexican immigrants, American Indians and American Negroes. When these groups obtained lower average scores than native-born American whites, investigators jumped to hasty conclusions on the relative superiority and inferiority of different racial and national groups.

In the field of "racial intelligence," Otto Klineberg of Columbia University, among others, has shown why these conclusions were hasty, to say the least; and most psychologists are now agreed that a test standardized on one racial or national group cannot be applied to a group of sharply differing culture and background. Very interesting recent evidence of the fact that, under similar environmental conditions, American Negroes learn just as efficiently as American whites, is afforded by the results of the Army literacy-training program carried on during World War II. Summarizing these results, Herbert Aptheker demonstrated that "the learning accomplishments of scores of thousands of Negroes from all sections of the country . . . compares quite favorably with that attained by scores of thousands of similarly diversified whites." (*Journal of Negro Education,* Fall, 1946.)

THE core of the problem is that most intelligence tests measure education and information to a considerable extent on the implicit assumption that the more intelligent an individual is the more knowledge and skill he will be able to absorb or acquire. This has a certain appearance of truth, but the assumption becomes invalid because social factors enter the picture. If every single individual in our society had precisely equal opportunity, encouragement and stimulation to acquire education and intellectual ability, and if the fund of things to be learned were common to all, then intelligence test performance might be a fairly accurate measure of native ability. But we know that social and economic factors (in a class society such as ours with a complex division of labor) have a great deal to do with opportunity for education, cultural stimulation and intellectual attitude.

It should not surprise anyone, then, that a very large number of

studies of the problem have demonstrated that social status and intelligence test performance are clearly related. Wherever samples have been taken, it is easy to show that the children of unskilled, low-paid workers score, *on the average,* about twenty points lower in I.Q. than do the children of professionals and business executives. Similarly, rural children average lower than city children, and country children from the more backward areas show still lower average scores.

In the early days of intelligence testing, these results led to the comfortable generalizations that, after all, one's economic and social position in a "free" society such as ours is determined by one's native ability. It is instructive to see these supposedly objective scientists parroting the complacent opinions of the well-to-do, that the poor may be honest, but not very bright. It took the economic crash of 1929 and its widespread social effects to launch a sharp controversy among psychologists about these results, which led to an interesting series of studies during the Thirties on the relation between social status and intelligence. One of the best studies of this type showed that children of common laborers, who are adopted at infancy by professional foster parents, demonstrate intelligence levels, when later tested, just about the same as the real children of professional parents. Here is evidence that the twenty-point I.Q. difference mentioned above between children of the lowest and highest economic categories in our society may be attributed entirely to environmental factors.

Similarly, M. E. Shimberg demonstrated that a test standardized on a group of rural children (rather than on city children as is usually the case) resulted in lower scores for *city* children, a result which is the reverse of that obtained with the standard intelligence tests. Finally, Beth Wellman is one of a number of investigators who have shown that special educational techniques can bring about significant increases in I.Q., provided that these techniques are applied to young children who are otherwise normal. It is important now to recognize that the net effect of these studies—of foster children, identical and fraternal twins, and so on—have led most in the field to the conclusion that social and environmental factors play a very considerable role in determining intelligence test performance and that, in fact, differences in average I.Q. related to social status are not a decisive indicator of original differences in native endowment. My own survey of the evidence in this field led me ten years ago to the unrefuted conclusion

that "these tests cannot be used for measuring the capacity of different social levels within our own society."

THUS, the degree to which the best intelligence tests measure innate ability has become an extremely debatable matter and the more cautious investigators have become accustomed to leaving this crucial question entirely open. Actually, this should have been clear from examination of the very structure and make-up of the so-called standard intelligence tests, and we must conclude that it was only class bias (conscious or unconscious) that prevented psychologists from seeing this point earlier. Once we remember how the test is constructed, we see that all that is measured here is the average performance of the "standardization group," which thereafter functions as the level below or above which inferiority or superiority is to be fixed.

Even if one takes pains to bring together a standardization group which really represents a cross-section of society (a feat never really achieved by anyone), it is still not clear what the results will imply. If our earlier statements as to the relation between social status and cultural background are true—and they are supported by facts which cannot be argued away—then the standardization group *itself* will already be affected by social influences as regards its proficiency at various tasks, a result which will be permanently self-perpetuating as soon as the test is applied in practice.

It must be emphasized that we are not saying here that *individuals* do not differ in ability. We are saying that it is impossible to determine the *reasons* for these differences by the use of intelligence tests. Individuals may differ exclusively because of environmental influences; they may differ because of some combination of biological and social factors; few think that the differences can ever be attributed purely to hereditary factors. But the very method of construction of the standard intelligence test, combined with the existing wide variation in social and cultural opportunity, makes it impossible to derive any positive conclusion whatever even as to individuals from intelligence test results.

Like all myths that have a survival value for the ruling class, that of racial, national or social superiority dies hard. Only when the exploitation of man by man becomes a thing of the past will the study of human differences become a truly objective affair.

# *Two Poems*

*by* A. M. KRICH

## THE VOYAGE

*We set out one morning, brain afire*
*Hearts fat with rancor and bitter desires..*
—Baudelaire

Yet to all who death and danger dare
That undiscovered country must be near
Where man and poet both are one:
Themselves the oarsmen and the oars
The sea its storms: The shackle-iron
They now conspire to break and set a course
Beyond need's waiting jaws, the shrouded reef
Of habit's random treachery:
The journey covers years within a selfish space
Horizon changing like an uneasy lie
That suddenly enflames the dreamed-out night
And in the unknown dawn reveals
The infinite labors on the way:
Crossing the swampland of the spirit's deep disgust
The mind deserts its printed paths
Windows bright with mirrored lusts:
The voyagers speak a single tongue
Desire answers desire while on the rotting bank
Like wrecked survivors on a narrow shore
The exquisites make love in frightened code:
Denied they plunge into the sea again
Or fevered they begin
To eat the weakest brother's skin.

## PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A FRIENDLY WITNESS

Poet, he sings the heart of stone,
Painless commerce of the mind.
The pen, once mighty and unkind,
Doodles near the telephone.

Seer, his vision multiplies
The market's wild infinities.
Unseen before his naked eyes,
Gallows on the greenest trees.

Pursuer of the next mirage,
Deceived now by dissemblance.
Or with alcohol's remembrance,
Weeps to find the world still large.

Lost in a forest of tongues,
Bloodhounds bellow in his lungs.
Hunter trapped by himself again,
Locked in the jaws of other men.

# books in review

## *MIKE QUIN*

ON THE DRUMHEAD: A Selection From the Writings of Mike Quin. *Edited by Harry Carlisle. The Pacific Publishing Foundation, San Francisco.* $1.50.

WHEN his doctors told him that he had only two more months to live, Mike Quin sat down and wrote a preface to the autobiography he was working on, and he said that it was his "belief that a man should die pointed in his chosen direction and fighting like hell to get there." He also said that he hoped his book would not lack humility, explaining that "true humility can be attained only by one who, on occasion, falls prey to his own weaknesses. Personally, I have always avoided self-righteous men and have never fully trusted either the friendship or humanity of anyone who did not make a damn fool of himself on occasion. For without this requisite there can be no humility, no sense of humor, and no true brotherly understanding."

Mike never finished his autobiography but he was still fighting like hell in his chosen direction when the end came, and everything he ever wrote was touched with the kind of humility which, to him, was synonymous with humanity. The present volume is made up of a collection of his columns, articles, poems and radio broadcasts covering a period from 1933 through the early part of 1947 (he died in August of that year).

Those familiar with Mike Quin's columns in the *Daily People's World,* or with two previous collections, *Dangerous Thoughts* and *More Dangerous Thoughts,* will not have to be urged to acquire this memorial volume. Those not familiar with his work should remedy that lack now, for there is no one at this moment working in the tradition that Mike carried forward into our own time.

It was Theodore Dreiser who in 1940 called attention not only to the "genuine art value" of Mike's writings, but to their "truly startling and illuminating intellectual force — the type of concentrated essence of social logic and philosophy and irony to be found in Finley Peter Dunne (Philosopher Dooley) and George Ade (Fables in Slang)." Mike even borrowed Dunne's own technique in his Murphy and O'Brien dialogues, but he deep-

ened and sharpened it and with it he slammed a point home with the force of a fist.

But Dunne and Ade were not his only sources—he was in the same vein as the rebel Jack London and the crusading Lincoln Steffens, and he brightened everything he touched with the bold and racy spirit of the old Wobblies, the spirit that gave us the songs of Joe Hill and the jolting parodies that slashed through all bunk to the very bone of truth. He had the rare ability to take the utterly commonplace, the taken-for-granted and the matter-of-fact stuff of our ordinary lives, stuff we forget even to think about, and to treat it in such a manner that it bursts like a new revelation packed with revolutionary truths that all this time had escaped us. He was the supreme agitator in the sense that he had the ability to compel the thoughtless to think and the blind to see.

He was truly and completely American, by which I mean that he worked with American material and slang and he had the American twist of things.

There are many things in this book that deserve to be perpetuated as little classics. There is his unforgettable sketch of Bongo and Wowsey: "'Why,' asked Bongo, 'must we stick bones in our noses and slit our ears? Just give me one good reason . . .'" And there is his poem, "How Much for Spain?"

*". . . In that brief, jostled moment when*
*The battered hat arrives,*
*Try, brother, to remember that*
*Some men put in their lives."*

There is his burning scorn of the Liberals and their battle cry, "Give us something to believe in!" "It's going to be tough on them," Mike says. "Hang on to your seats, folks. There are curves ahead." History took quite a few lurches in Mike's lifetime but he never lost his seat.

The volume includes Mike's tributes to Tom Mooney and to J. B. McNamara—he was born in San Francisco and lived there most of his life and it was impossible for him ever to forget that San Quentin was only a short distance away across the Bay.

Harry Carlisle provides an excellent biographical sketch, and he tells us that Mike had a working slogan he always recited to himself when the going was rough: "To think without confusion, clearly, To love your fellow men sincerely." And always he had one big symbol: The Man in the Rain. The hungry, homeless, workless man whose plight is the doom of all of us unless we learn to "fight and think and work like hell" until "all men shall stand erect and laugh together in the sun."

LAWRENCE EMERY

## Rolland: Music Critic

ROMAIN ROLLAND: Essays on Music. *Allen, Town & Heath.* $5.00.

IT IS as a novelist and political leader rather than as a music critic that we usually think of Romain Rolland. He became a world-famous figure with the publication of his novel, *Jean Christophe,* which also won him the Nobel Prize for literature. In the years between the First and Second World Wars he became a leader of European intellectuals against fascism. In 1927, in Paris, he organized the first anti-fascist congress of intellectuals, and continued organizing until the Nazis, with the complicity of French traitors, overran France.

His writings cover forty crucial years of our century and, put together, make up one of the intellectual epics by which our age will be known to future times. He was one of those who saw with horror the First World War coming, and in *Jean Christophe* castigated French society on every level. He struck a note of romantic individualism in this book, judging socialism from the Millerands, and not seeing any real forces for enlightenment among the masses of people. He never fell prey, however, to pessimism, as did so many other minds of his time. If he could not see a new world when it was still a dream in men's minds, he could

recognize it when it became an actuality.

And so the rise of the Soviet Union marked a turning point in his thinking. Various petty minds during the Twenties, some of them his former friends, would run to him almost daily with new journalistic inventions of "outrages" in the "East" and demand that he "take a stand." Take a stand he always did, and on the side of the new world and man's future, always too keenly aware of the real outrages that were perpetrated daily by capitalist exploitation of human beings and planning of war. Thus, while others dwindled in artistic stature, finding that as they refused to face the full world of reality their art slipped through their fingers, Rolland grew steadily as leader and thinker.

His writings on music date mainly from his earlier years, but they are remarkable pieces, with qualities that could only come from his refusal to permit a division to take place in him between the artist and the social man. He recognized that once the intellectual permits this chasm to grow between his living and his thinking, his thinking itself becomes a matter of narrow formulas and system-mongering. It is because he never allowed himself to become overspecialized that his writings on any topic retain their life.

He wrote about music with a

passionate feeling going beyond the beauties of the art to the struggles of the men who created it. This kind of emotional writing has become suspect these days, and in fact some of Rolland's psychological formulations, about Beethoven for example, are not fully convincing. Yet it is good for us to recover some of this warmth in our writing, to remember that if we love art, it is because we find in it the image of human beings. And one fact must be remembered that puts Rolland on a level far above those who turn out prose poems about their reactions to a work of music. It is that if Rolland disdained to write in technical terms, he nevertheless had a most complete grasp of the art, history and technique of music, and the most detailed knowledge of the works he was describing. If he disdained the scholarly piling up of detail, he still built his thesis upon the most careful study of every available document and source of data. He refused, however, to cut an art down to a technical formula, or to permit the groundbreaking and revolutionary art of one generation to be accepted as an escape for the next.

It is because Rolland is so great a music scholar that I find the present collection of his musical essays to be disappointing. Some of his finest essays are either ignored or badly cut. The editor's purpose obviously is to make this

book seem to be a history of music that Rolland never made any pretense of writing.

In his book, *Musicians of Former Days,* which the present edition draws upon for some material, there was a long essay on the origins of opera in Italy, which was a groundbreaking document in musical history. It showed that opera did not begin when a group of Venetian noblemen thought they were creating a new art form, but had a history as a people's art extending three centuries back in the life of the Italian cities. This essay has been omitted here, and instead we are given a comparatively trivial piece on Mozart. In the same book there was a long essay on Lully which was a model for the evaluation of a great man. It described the man, his friends, the roots of his art, the formal problems he had to face, the relation of his forms to the court and the people of his time, the influence upon his music of the classic poetry to which he set it, the wrong and right manner of interpreting it, the greatness and limitations of the music. Out of this great essay the editors have selected only a few pages of generalities. In Rolland's *Musicians of Today* there were some essays on Richard Strauss, D'Indy, Debussy, Mahler, which were necessarily incomplete, but showed us the special impact made by rising creative minds upon another who was their contemporary. These are also ignored.

Still, there are values here: an essay called "The Place of Music in General History" which should be part of the intellectual equipment of every writer on the arts; splendid studies of Handel, Gluck, Berlioz and Hugo Wolf; an essay on Saint-Saens which is a model study of how one artist gives full justice to another with whom he is not in complete sympathy. All of these are characterized by the approach Rolland himself announces in his study of Beethoven:

"History in the hands of conscientious savants who go to the archives for the life of a man but forget to look for it in the man himself is a form of treason. I do not wish to be unjust. These men with the patience of ants have meticulously amassed a treasure of documents for which we cannot be too grateful to them; and every now and then there comes a glow into the blood of the good musicians that they are that makes them render fine homage to the perfection of the art. But how destitute of life they are, and what a sealed enigma life remains to them!"

It is worth having this book if only that such thoughts might become better known; if only critics learn from it that their job is not only to dissect art, or describe it, or praise it, but to fight for it, and to fight for the living conditions under which art can continue to be created.

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

## No Bird Sings

CROSS SECTION 1948, *edited by Edwin Seaver. Simon & Schuster.* $3.50.

IN HIS foreword to this *Cross Section,* Edwin Seaver paints a gloomy picture of the state of American literature today. He finds little diversity and fire in it. But he hastens to add that his collection does not reflect the low level of the writing and to prove his point he lists some of the contributions which make this a "distinguished" book.

I have gone over three of the four volumes of this annual collection of new American writing. They stand head and shoulders above most anthologies and collections and have some of the excitement and drive of the work which appeared in the little magazines of the 1930's. The present collection shows a certain slackening of vitality, and it is inferior to last year's collection which had several powerful stories and Tom McGrath's poetry. No bird sings in this *Cross Section,* and most of the fiction is not in the milk. The vital things here are said in the foreword by Seaver when he calls for freedom and truth for the writer, and by Robert Adams and Isidor Schneider in their essays.

The mass of reviewers always make a to-do about the grimness and morbidity of our so-called serious fiction. They complain that the hard qualities shown in fiction like that in *Cross Section* are only true of the underside of the leaf,

and assert that there is plenty of sunny-side-up and greenness in our life. The truth is that there is very little. Unlike such reviewers, however, we do not quarrel with these writers about the choice of their themes and we will not limit their run. What we must question is what they wring out of their themes and what they pick up on their run.

For these writers are capable. They have a whip hand over language and form; they can engineer a plot, and they have a feeling for character. Yet they leave us up in the air, dissatisfied, and this, it seems to me, springs not from the frustration and unhappiness of their characters, but from the bewilderment and inadequacy of the writer. It is the writer who is the tragic figure, the figure of despair, wandering around like a homeless creature in the dumps. And this is so because the writer does not see clearly the kind of world he inhabits, and, operating in the dumps, gives us men and women who are odds and ends, shards, empty bottles and pots instead of the living, striving men and women who are our hope, even though many are caught in hysteria and spiritual depression.

Story after story in this collection illustrates the half-baked thinking and the futile passes of the writers. Perhaps J. Edgar Grove's "The Trips You Don't Come Back From" illustrates these lower depths best. This is a skill-


*"HR 0799 is ready now, Congressman."*

ful story about a man who is left alone with his little boy after his wife's death. All through the story there are repeated attempts by the bereft man to quarter the shrinking world left him, to make a sounding and come up with a core of something solid to which he can cling. The result of all his efforts is the conclusion that love was responsible for the unhappiness of his wife and himself. One would think that in his tragedy he would take his child and hug him to himself, for here is his hope, his immortality and answer, but he shrinks from that, crying: "Love always asks too much!" Feelings are perverted and he comes to a conclusion which stands everything on its head and feeds us Dead Sea apples.

We are not Happiness Boys asking for glib and pat answers from writers. Even in defeat men and women can act and talk with dignity and poetry and their lives can have meaning. That is not true of most of the characters in this fiction. In George Elliott's "Jordan" the talk between the shipyard worker and the woman whose sexual feelings he cannot satisfy, their couplings and uncouplings, just bleed monotonous air out of them and not the human, thinking voice. The sensitive soldier in Robert Lowry's "The Wolf That Fed Us" sees the misery that war and fascism have heaped on Italy, but he cannot express himself articulately, and he is shallow and even less convincing than his buddy who limits his feelings to mounting one Italian woman after the other. In Norman Mailer's "The Naked and the Dead" the troops fighting the Japanese pale and sound obscene because the writer is utterly at a loss when it comes to making them think and talk, does not differentiate between them because of that, and vulgarizes their suffering so it appears that the darkness and confusion is in him and not in the night in which the men battle their enemy.

The bulk of the fiction in *Cross Section* is thin because the writers project their own insecurity and muddleheadedness into their characters. For the people, bewildered and crossed as they are, are not hollow dumb figures like the Cartesian devil which can be manipulated and mechanically made to sink by outside pressures. In their daily lives men and women show fire and diversity; they make the world echo and re-echo with their backtalk and go. They seek the freedom and truth which Seaver mentions. It is this hunt for freedom and truth which distinguishes Isidor Schneider's "The Classic or Nothing" and Robert Adam's exposé of Philip Wylie, that peddler of confusion. It is this hunt, coupled with Schneider's and Adam's social consciousness, which can give the story writers glimpses of the true body and spirit of America and thus help them create work which will really give us something to sing about.

BEN FIELD

films

# ITALIAN STORY

*by* JOSEPH FOSTER

IF THERE was any lingering doubt about the stature of Roberto Rossellini after *Open City*, there surely can be none now with the advent of his second film, *Paisan* (made two years ago). On the basis of these two films alone, I would say that he is easily the outstanding film director of today. In both these films he shows a boldness that shatters many a cliché established as final by Hollywood "success" films. While not as revolutionary as Eisenstein, his film forms are sufficiently radical to influence film making in the future.

*Paisan* consists of six separate episodes, each peopled by a different cast. For this reason the total film lacks the cumulative effect of *Open City*. Yet all the episodes are tied together, united by the common humanity arising out of the personal tragedies and heroic deeds of individuals in the wake of a major military campaign. In the opening episode, a young Italian girl serves as a guide to an advance party of Americans. While the others are reconnoitering, one of the G.I.'s, left behind with the girl, is killed by rearguard Germans. The girl finds his carbine, shoots one of the Nazis and is killed for her act.

In the second episode, a tipsy Negro G.I. is picked up by a tough Italian youngster. They have a series of adventures that end on a rubble heap on the outskirts of Naples. The Negro, still high, proclaims to the uncomprehending youngster what a hero's welcome he will get when he returns home. The word home sobers him, and he confesses that he lives in a shack. He shouts that he doesn't want to go home, that a hero's welcome for Negroes is a pipe dream. When he falls asleep, the kid steals his shoes. Later he catches the boy and makes him go home to get them. But when he sees the misery of the people, the caves they live in, the frightened helplessness of the boy behind his braggadocio, the soldier returns the shoes. As an American Negro he understands only too well the plight of the Italians.

The third episode deals with a G.I. and a whore in Rome, the fourth with an American nurse

in search of her boy friend who is a leader of the Partisans. The next episode concerns a Catholic, a Jewish and a Protestant chaplain who take refuge in a monastery, and the final one follows a group of American and British soldiers and Italian Partisans fighting an isolated action behind the German lines.

In all these sequences but one, reminiscent in their understatement of the early Hemingway short stories, the heroism, courage and self-sacrifice of the Italian people clearly emerge. The one exception is the incident involving the three American divines and the monastery monks. The monks, to whom Luther is still the villain of history, argue with the American Catholic about religion and the comparative faiths. Their naive, foolish and medieval postulates are never answered. Instead the American priest hails the monks for their sublime calmness and serenity of spirit: that is to say, for turning their backs on a world mortally involved with fascism. The moral right to such "serenity" is taken for granted in the film.

Yet despite this flaw, *Paisan* is a remarkable film, one of the most eloquent documents of the war in Italy. The film is rich with the understanding and love of people and places. Rossellini poses the modern fighting against the classical landmarks of Florence and Rome, but the people are always the most important element of the stories. Although he respects the grandeur of the past, he shows in the sightseeing of two English officers how foolish it is to venerate the antiquities while more important matters are going on.

This understanding of people, and the concomitant concern for their fate, infuses Rossellini's technique throughout. Although it is impossible in so short a space as this to go fully into his style, several instances of his work can be cited. In the opening episode, the G.I. and the Italian girl are sitting in an open archway and talking. The average director invariably introduces this type of scene with a medium-distance shot of the boy and the girl. He then trucks up close and follows with alternate closeups until the dialogue is covered. The closeups are sometimes varied by shooting from behind the shoulder of one of the characters or past the ear of the other, but the general routine is rarely questioned or altered. Rossellini, however, appears never to have heard of such conventions. Because he is reluctant to break up the mood of the scene—a mood created by the ruins, the threat of a Nazi bullet, the dark night, the conversation and curiosity between them—he presents the couple in a medium shot and then leaves the camera alone. He does not cut from one to the other, or dance around them or pan the surroundings, or engage in any of the established

didoes of artiness that such nocturnal settings almost always call forth.

Further along in the film, two major characters of a scene are discovered by Rossellini's camera in a public square in Naples. All the activities of impoverished people grubbing for pennies animate the square. There are panhandlers, hustlers, pitchmen, peddlers, petty thieves, shoeshine boys—and American soldiers, all surrounded by the bustle and noise you would expect to see and hear. The prescribed method for dealing with characters under such circumstances is first to establish them within the locale for story purposes, then to cut away to a two-shot of the pair to be followed by the individual closeups. While such intercutting proceeds, all street noises disappear, backgrounds vague out, and the principals from that point on might just as well be in a corner of a studio.

In contrast to this formula in which the sense of environment is sacrificed to extra concentration on the actor, or where the pan shot gives you too rapid a look at background for any real savoring of detail, Rossellini preserves the tone of the scene by keeping alive and intact the noises, the inhabitants of the square, their interests and movements while the two main figures are interacting upon each other.

These examples may possibly give the impression that Rossellini uses a static camera. Nothing could be further from the truth. In these scenes, as in all his work, Rossellini's central idea is to treat each scene as though the camera had wandered upon it by accident, to eliminate the feeling that there is a mechanical agent between the audience and its visual experience. In this way he is able to impart a realistic quality to his content. To pursue such a technique successfully demands the utmost respect for documentary veracity, and a profound feeling for character. Such an esthetic attitude also requires a highly skilled dramatization of the invented actions to make them appear as an integrated part of the historic background. In both *Open City* and *Paisan* he succeeds so

well that the films appear as records of spontaneous social action.

Rossellini snubs conventional treatment even in his most self-consciously staged scenes. By so doing he extracts greater meaning from a given relationship. This is beautifully demonstrated in a sequence in which a drunken G.I. is recalling to a tart how beautiful the girls of Rome had been when the troops first arrived, and how full the city was now of girls like herself. The main concern of the director is not the disappointments of the G.I. but the results of the occupation upon the city, of which the girl is one kind of symbol. Thus the soldier is only important as a voice. The director does not bother, consequently, to keep the sequence as a scene of two characters. He constantly focuses on the girl. When she moves, the camera moves with her in continuous action. Sometimes the soldier comes into view but only as an out-of-focus background in the corner of the frame. What is essential here is the girl's sadness as he reminds her of what the war has done to her and her friends.

Rossellini employs the cut and the continuous action in sensitive and skillful combination. But because he treats his characters with honesty and sympathy, and because such treatment endows his people with reality, he finds it unnecessary to use those technical tricks that customarily hide the poverty of cliché and stereotype.

music

# PETER GRIMES: *Dubious Hero*

*by* SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

BEFORE discussing *Peter Grimes,* the much publicized new opera offered by the Metropolitan Opera Company, one must say a word about the company itself. For a "Met" presentation proves the unity of form and content—in reverse. It forces its own forms upon the operas it produces, with the result that whatever social ideas may lie within them are never grasped by the audience. And so, it may be that a better performance of *Peter Grimes* would make me see more in the work than I did on the basis of the Metropolitan showing. Yet I think there is a contradiction at the heart of the work which prevents it from being an artistic success.

The story of the opera was taken from *The Borough,* written in 1810 by the poet, George Crabbe. Crabbe had a realistic eye for small-town people and manners, if no great subtlety in presenting them. In his poem, Grimes is a fisherman who exploits apprentices gotten from foundling homes. He beats and starves them, knowing that if they die he can get others. After a third apprentice dies under mysterious circumstances the indignation of the townspeople is aroused, and while they cannot prove that Grimes has committed actual murder, they

prevent him from getting any more apprentices. He finally goes mad, and in his dying confession speaks his remorse for his brutal treatment and murder of these children.

The story was rewritten for the opera by Montagu Slater, an English poet and novelist who has a reputation for hard-hitting, socially conscious work. What he has tried to do here, however, in obedience to the restrictions of grand opera today, is to inject some valid social ideas in a setting from which they fail to spring naturally. This procedure was possible in comic opera under feudalism, in which the characters were folk symbols and could speak many social innuendoes under their comic masks. Such, indeed, were the operas of Mozart. These double lines of meaning, however, are not possible when the style is a naturalistic one, depending for its impact on the full conviction of the audience that what they see on the stage is a transcript from life.

Slater has not only "humanized" Grimes, but stood the story on its head to make him into a tragic hero. Grimes, as Slater depicts him, really means well by his apprentices, but must drive them because unless he makes money the townspeople will despise him. The deaths of his apprentices are sheer accident, but they occur under such suspicious circumstances that the malicious gossips of the town are able to rouse a lynch spirit against him. The story becomes one of the destructive effect upon the individual of bourgeois money values.

But the real drama of the individual in bourgeois society takes place in a much different setting than an English fishing town, as Balzac for instance showed. For all the talk about bourgeois values, many of the townspeople are still seen to be fisher-folk. The lynching bee that makes up the melodramatic climax of the opera is inconceivable for an English small town of the period. The audience is still painfully aware of the social evil of exploiting foundlings, and it is most confusing for them to accept the man they see beating the children as the "hero" and those who speak with sympathy of the children as the "villains."

The music by Benjamin Britten has too much talent to be called bad, and makes its effects too superficially to be called good. Like many up-and-coming young musicians of these times, Britten knows everything from Debussy to Bartok, but it is difficult to know what he believes in. He is a master of slickness.

This opera follows in a devious way the path that is the main line for the composer of today. The period of the great one-sided musical systems is over. The need today is for the composer to take what is useful from these systems, relate the art of music again to real human images, find dramatic forms through which music can take on vivid meaning for its lis-

teners and go back for human warmth to the wealth of folk music.

Britten makes a stab at all these things, but stops halfway of the honesty needed to realize such a program. By honesty I mean that the music must do more than describe what is going on, or be an adroit solution of the formal problems of the setting. It must speak for the inner life of the characters, for their feelings, and for the composer's feelings about them. What Britten does is best exemplified in a duet, in which, as an admirer enthusiastically points out, Grimes and the widow Orford sing in two different keys to show that they are apart from one another, and then join in the same key to show that they have come together. This makes admirable material for analytic notes, but the ear fails to be convinced. It notices that these characters, who are supposed to be "different," still sing the same sort of melodic line.

*Peter Grimes* has been produced by many opera companies in Europe, and has even been chosen by the Metropolitan to mishandle. It is a success of slickness. It uses all the modern techniques and sounds like very fresh music to an audience insufficiently familiar with the greater men from whom Britten borrowed his styles. I don't think there is any living composer who has more ability and less depth of emotion; who can handle every normal musical problem with such finesse yet never give

the listener an inkling of what he really feels about anything. The opera carries this slickness to its all-over form as well. It pretends to fit the deepest needs of our age in music, but it mocks these needs. It is a make-believe realism when the demands of our time are for genuine realism; a kind of realism never before so wholly possible in the arts as today. Man has no longer any need of myths or subterfuges to express his unfulfilled needs. The artist can no longer say that the world is chaos, that society is an unsolved mystery, and still retain his integrity.

I do not raise this question of realism as a formula, or as a demand applicable to every musical task. It is possible for composers to tackle less ambitious projects than the full portrayal of a variety of human beings, who in their combination, show the inner conflicts and problems of our society, or of our history. Realism, however, once it is attempted, cannot be compromised with. A man cannot take an epic form such as opera, present what is obviously a real setting, real people and real conflict, and then say that his main interest was in fitting musical color to the words, or in creating a tone picture of the sea, or in building up a mood. At least, he cannot do this and call himself an artist. Composers and poets who want to create opera must fight the contamination of a great art form by an upper-class clientele which will not face its own image.

# theatre

## *Responsibility as Theme*

*by* ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

AT A TIME when only infantile, calloused or corrupted minds can be carefree, social responsibility is an inevitable major literary theme. Even Hollywood gives it passing attention; and, in the theatre, virtually every recent play worth a second thought has touched on it.

Most direct was Arthur Miller's *All My Sons* whose message, that a man's family is the entire community, was nailed home in the very title. Similarly, social responsibility, carried out in remarkably effective symbolism, was the core of J. B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls.* There, under cross-examination, a respectable businessman and his entire family, including the prospective son-in-law, stand self-convicted (though capitalist law absolves them) of the death of a working girl who has just committed suicide.

Another aspect of social responsibility, that of the special responsibility of a people's leader, was an important secondary theme of Theodore Ward's *Our Lan'.* Democratic leadership was here purely and beautifully illustrated. Joshua Tain completely served his people and in turn they followed him voluntarily even when, of necessity, he led them into mortal danger.

How leadership can be twisted from social responsibility and corrupted by rank and privilege was the theme of William Wister Haines' *Command Decision.* There an Air Force general, conscious of his social responsibility, violates personal loyalties and risks a court-martial in a conflict with men of coarser conscience. To them insignia, privileges and the career security of playing alone with an inner circle, comes higher than the collective good. That conflict and its positive solution were all that distinguished an otherwise machine-made play. It was not quite enough because, in contriving his glorified ending, the playwright frustrated his own apparent intent; he left the "higher brass" with a higher polish.

A warmer, more sensitive, clearer and more positive handling of the theme distinguishes *Mister Roberts.* This good, though over-rated, play makes its chief appeal by romanticizing human

weaknesses, emphasizing the lovable aspects of drunkenness, brawling, the daydream and the pathological lie. Its composite sailor is a big cut above the lovable moron of the early Hollywood war movies, but he is of the same genre. What gives the play its significance and dramatic tension and enables the audience to relish the goofiness without too unpleasant an after-taste is the illustration of leadership when it is a current of mutual devotion and responsibility between the leader and the led in a democratic struggle. It is dramatized in the conflict of two concepts of

leadership. One is symbolized in the brass hat kept in the skipper's safe in anticipation of the next promotion; the other is Mr. Roberts whose eye fixes not on epaulettes but on the crew, seeing in service to that immediate collective the fulfillment of his responsibility to the larger collective, the whole people.

Social responsibility is a universal issue but it bears with particular poignancy on the intellectual. It is not surprising therefore that so many outstanding recent plays have dealt with his responsibility to society. Part of the intellectual's function as teacher, reporter, administrator, etc., is to survey and understand. Inevitably he acquires some comprehension of social conditions—in our time, of the decline and corruption of capitalist society. What is he to do? Jobs require service to it; understanding spurs him to challenge it. Some intellectuals, as we have seen them in similar dilemmas in other epochs, violate their understanding and their conscience, rationalizing as they go; from them have come some of the villains of history. Others have followed the pointers of their understanding and conscience; from them have come heroes. Most, however, turn on the dilemma like a fowl on a spit; and their agony, open or repressed, contributes much to the so-called "neurosis of our time."

Two plays dealing with this dilemma, Barrie Stavis' *Lamp at Midnight* and Bertold Brecht's *Galileo,* as it affected a scientist in an earlier age, were discussed by Harry Granick in our March issue.

The most imaginative treatment of the theme was that given in Donald Ogden Stewart's *How I*

*Wonder,* where an astronomer turned his telescope from the heavens to the earth and its explosions, and thereby made some startling discoveries about the stars. At least two subsequently produced plays, one by Priestley and the other by Robert Penn Warren, have coped with the problem of the intellectual's social responsibility but have fallen short of the mark set by Stewart in sensitive perception.

Priestley, who had dealt with the general problem so ably in *An Inspector Calls,* tried the special case of the intellectual in the later play, *The Linden Tree.* His intellectual is an aging history professor who tries to show the continuity of social forces in history. He has reached retirement age but intends to stay at his post. As he sees it, retirement would be a privileged evasion of his social responsibility. To continue to discharge that obligation, he has to fight coaxing family pressures and humiliating official pressures from the university administration which takes this opportunity to try to get rid of him.

In *The Linden Tree,* which closed after a few days, Priestley's gift for symbolic personification serves him ill. The personification drains the characters of personality. The aging professor himself, in a personification more significant perhaps than the author intended, comes to symbolize Laborite "socialism." The play rambles away in a garrulity about which the best that can be said is that it is in character.

Much more ambitious and interesting, but a more sinister failure in the handling of the theme, is Robert Penn Warren's dramatization of his novel, *All the King's Men,* in Erwin Piscator's Theatre Workshop's current repertory. In a subsequent article I will discuss certain interesting devices by which the novelist-playwright sought to carry over values of prose fiction to the stage. Here, however, I will confine myself to Warren's treatment of the dilemma of the intellectual. It is a double evasion of the problem.

Part of the dialogue in *All the King's Men* is a debate between a supposed outside observer and the play's intellectual, a newspaperman who works for the "Boss" (Huey Long). The dramatic action serves as text and illustration and the topic of the

debate is whether the "Boss" is a man of evil or of good. The play ends with the debate left unresolved; and Warren implies, though he does not outrightly say so, that the issue is unresolvable. Good grows from evil as the plant from the dirt to which it returns in decay—that is Warren's first evasion. For, in that case, social responsibility is an illusion and it is futile to conceive it and act upon it. Why struggle against evil that will inevitably evolve into good?

The second evasion is not philosophical but psychological. Warren sees the intellectual as the perpetual adolescent as compared to the adult man of action, the "Boss," to whom he turns as a son to the father. The intellectual is in love with a girl who will not return his love until he becomes adult and capable of making his own decisions. He disappoints her and she becomes the mistress of the "Boss." The intellectual is soon reconciled to that; to make decisions is the responsibility of the boss and the desirable woman is his due prerequisite.

But the author himself provides the retort. The adolescent intellectual loses not only the girl but the "Boss"-father as well. Even as Warren arranges the matter, or rather, as he does his best with the way life and history have arranged it, it is clear that the intellectual must face his social responsibilities, that he had better grow up. To take his mature part in life, he must differentiate good from evil and fight for the good. At this historic moment it means to join the forces that are resisting the fascist offensive in America.

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