SEPTEMBER
1948

# masses & MAINSTREAM

*this Issue:*

**OMMUNISM
ND CHAOS**
*by*
RBERT APTHEKER

**t About Bebop?**
*by*
NEY FINKELSTEIN

**DED WOMAN**
*by*
ERIDEL LE SUEUR

**'48 Maneuvers**
*by*
ROB F. HALL


*arkling Plain—a story by* GWYN THOMAS

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 7

# masses & MAINSTREAM



## *September, 1948*


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## *AMONG THE CONTRIBUTORS*

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RUTH GIKOW has appeared in *New Masses*. She is now preparing an exhibition of paintings which include canvases based upon her recent trip through Italy.

ROB F. HALL is Washington editor of the *Daily Worker*.

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GWYN THOMAS is a Welsh writer. Two of his novels, *Dark Philosophers* and *Venus and the Voters*, were published in this country.

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*COVER:* by William Gropper

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# Twelve Men and America

"THESE defendants face trial not because they are Communists or because of any political views they hold, but because, according to the indictment, they have conspired to overthrow the government by force."

So said the New York *Herald Tribune* in reply to a letter by Richard O. Boyer published August 1 in that paper, which protested the indictment of the twelve members of the National Board of the Communist Party, U.S.A., as a negation of the basic principles of American democracy.

The statement of the *Tribune* editors is a lie, a compound lie in fact. The text of the indictment, which was published in the press—including the *Tribune*—declares that the Communists are indicted for being Communists and because of their political views; they are *not* charged with conspiring to overthrow the government by force.

The indictment charges that the defendants conspired to "organize as the Communist Party of the United States a society, group, and assembly of persons who *teach and advocate* the overthrow and destruction of the Government of the United States by force and violence. . . ." It is further charged that they published and circulated "articles, magazines, and newspapers advocating the principles of Marxism-Leninism"; that they "conducted schools and classes for the study of the principles of Marxism-Leninism. . . ."; that they caused a convention of the Communist Party to "adopt a constitution basing said party upon the principles of Marxism-Leninism"; that they formed committees, state units and clubs, recruited members into the party, etc.

It is inevitable that the press will continue to publish one lie after another in the case. Inevitable, because the indictment upon which the

Communist leaders were arrested and will be tried is based upon falsehood so thin and untenable that its supporters are compelled to bolster it with additional falsehood. After all, a Reichstag Fire Trial without a fire—that's not so easy.

Wilhelm Stieber was the first to find that out. The Tom Clark for the King of Prussia, Herr Stieber was given the job of prosecuting the eleven members of the Communist League arrested in May, 1851, at Cologne. One difficulty, he admitted, was that there was no "objective basis for an indictment." Three years after the *Communist Manifesto* was published in order "that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies . . ." the Marxists had been arrested and charged with treasonable conspiracy. The trial was postponed until October, 1852—it takes a long time to prepare a case when the prosecution has no evidence. (Even now, nearly 100 years later, with all the improvements of modern technique, it took the New York blue-ribbon grand jury over a year to ready its charges.)

But if evidence cannot be found, it can be made; a Budenz and a Bentley can always be had. With the aid of a couple of agents-provocateurs, Charles Fleury and Wilhelm Hirsch, the hard-working Stieber forged *The Original Minute Book of the Marx Party,* "recording" the secret meetings at which Marx and his comrades made their "nefarious plans for world revolution." Marx from his exile in London succeeded in exposing the forgery despite the efforts of the German police to intercept and confiscate his letters. The historian Franz Mehring writes:

> "Marx won the victory and Stieber's forgery was exposed even before the trial so that the Public Prosecutor was compelled to abandon 'the wretched book.' However, the public victory sealed the fate of the accused. The five weeks' proceedings revealed such a mass of infamies committed in part by the highest authorities in the Prussian State that the acquittal of the accused would have meant the conviction of the State in the eyes of the whole world. To spare the State this humiliation the carefully sifted bourgeois jurymen were prepared to besmirch their honor and violate their consciences, and they therefore found seven of the eleven guilty of high treason."

If in the century since then the bourgeois forces of "law and order" —the Okhrana, O.V.R.A., Gestapo, Scotland Yard and F.B.I., have

learned and applied the methods of Herr Stieber, it is also true that millions throughout the world have learned that Marxism-Leninism is no "plot," no "conspiracy," but rather the science through which mankind can raise itself above the repressive minority rule of capitalism. The victorious socialist state, the Soviet Union, has proved that. Every day, in every land, new thousands join the Marxists.

THE forthcoming trial may well be the most important case to come before a court in our nation's history. Along with the Twelve, two basic principles will stand in the dock. One principle, the ideas of socialism embodied in the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, pertains to America's future. But all the courts, blue-ribbon juries, Congressional committees and Chambers of Commerce are as impotent against this scientific analysis of social dynamics as was the "holy alliance" of 100 years ago—the Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.

The second principle pertains to America today, the America whose people claim the democratic liberties embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. This principle—this America—can be destroyed and fascism established. As Henry Wallace said, in speaking of this case:

> "Defense of the civil rights of Communists is the first line in the defense of the liberties of a democratic people. The history of Germany, Italy, Japan and Franco Spain should teach us that the suppression of the Communists is but the first step in an assault on the democratic rights of labor, national and racial and political minorities, and all those who oppose the government in power."

The Communists are readily prepared to refute—again—the lie that their ideology advocates "force and violence." This refutation has been made on innumerable occasions, yes, in thousands of "articles, magazines and newspapers"—and pamphlets, books and classes, not only here in America but in all countries, in all languages. Elsewhere in this issue Herbert Aptheker deals with this question in relation to the contemporary political scene.

But what the Communists are not able to do—by themselves—is to defeat the monstrous attempt, so baldly and directly made in this indictment, to overthrow and destroy American civil liberties. Even those

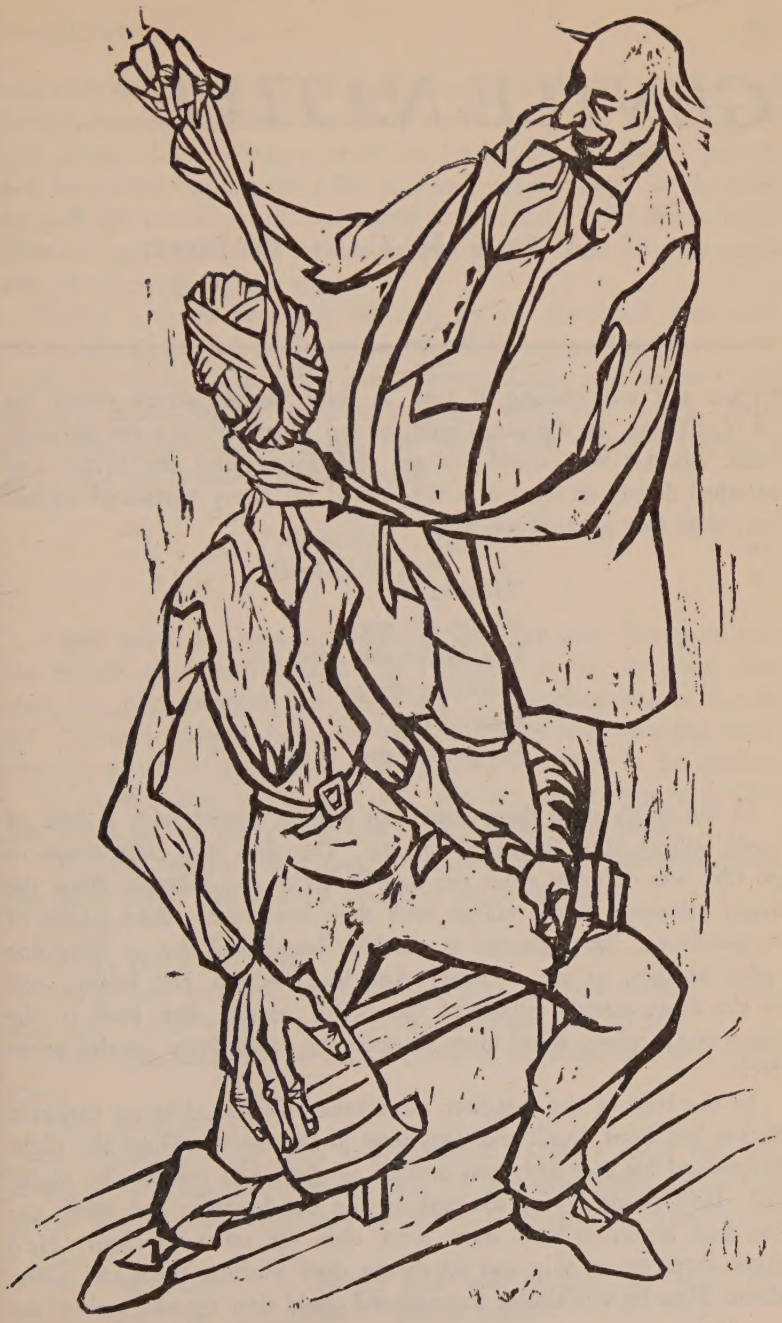
who now believe that the outlawing of the Communist Party is of little or no importance, even those who would ignore the lessons of Germany, Italy, Japan and Franco Spain, must see that the teaching and advocacy of *ideas,* free speech and free press, free schools and free libraries, are to be outlawed along with the "Reds." If Foster and his colleagues can be jailed on this indictment, any teacher, student, writer, worker, scientist or editor can be jailed who publishes, teaches or advocates ideas that are displeasing to a Truman, a Dewey, a Rankin. That is plain—as plain as the words of the First Amendment: *"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."*

CERTAINLY the perpetrators of this new and greater frame-up, the agents of our ruling minority class which wants to rule the world, know what they are doing. They are ruthless and bold—but their boldness hides a fear. They trumpeted and brayed at Philadelphia—but something else happened in Philadelphia after they were gone. The people came. The high-jacked, the Jim-Crowed, the swindled, the Taft-Hartleyed, the doubled-up and rent-gouged—the rank and file America. They cried out for peace and formed a new party.

They denounced Red-baiting and warned of its dangers. And now it devolves upon all of us—Communists and non-Communists—to meet the challenge of this trial, to free the defendants and pillory the real conspirators, their accusers. With protests. With organization. With money. With speaking, writing, doorbell ringing, vote-getting.

MASSES & MAINSTREAM has a direct and immediate stake in this fight. In our first issue we announced that "our editorial viewpoint—though not necessarily the viewpoint of every contributor—is Marxist. For we believe that only in a socialist society can the creative energies of man be truly liberated." We reaffirm our position and with it, as an inseparable component, the defense of democracy in our country and throughout the world.

THE EDITORS.



*Louise Krueger*

# *GENTLE NATIVE*

*A Story by* CARL OFFORD

THE sun was cooling at last. A faint breeze stirred across the Caribbean. In the cargo holds of the American ship the sweating black laborers who could not see the sky smelled the breeze and breathed deeply on it, and as they rolled the heavy barrels of asphalt into place they grunted and sang:

*"Heave ho!*
*She go, she go!*
*The harder she stand up*
*More easy she go!*
*Heave ho!*
*She go, she go!"*

In the ship's stern three American soldiers fooled with a deck of cards, killing time, arguing, cursing. The ship was somewhere to go that was different from the bare barracks and different from the dingy barrooms of the village with their hot, sweet sticky smells of rum-and-cola. They glanced at the blue heat-baked sky, at their fine wrist watches, at the secluded American Section just inland, and at the more distant village of the native people, then back to the game and, arguing some more, slapped the cards down on the warm deck.

In the bow of the freighter sat another soldier, cleaning carbines. Sacker had been drunk and disorderly in the native village the night before and for that had been ordered to clean fifty carbines by nightfall. He'd sweated over the task in the hot barracks and when the sun had begun to cool there were only six more to clean. He'd taken them out to ship and sat on the deck washing them and oiling them. Now he was almost through and could slow up and look at the

native swimmer who had just climbed over the side of the ship and landed dripping wet upon the warm deck.

A group of seamen surrounded the black man and Sacker got up and went over, leaving the rifles in a heap on the deck. In his hand he held the cleaning rod, and stared at the native who stood firmly with his legs spread wide and smiled and pitched back talk in a queer sort of sing-song British accent.

"Throw a florin over and I'll dive for it," the black man said. "But nothing under a florin, mind you. What do you say?"

In the holds of the ship the sweating black men labored and grunted, arms flexing, muscles bulging, their wet, naked chests glistening. Knotty hands clasped the barrels like wrestlers making a grip, then the sweating bodies swung.

*"Heave ho!*
*She go, she go!"*

Across miles of Company land and over the long Company pier the barrels of asphalt rode on an overhead trestle. In giant steel trays they came swinging out to the ship. A snapping crew uncoupled the trays and dumped them, and sent the empty trays winding round the nose of the ship and back to the loading platforms in the interior.

"A florin's forty cents, ain't it?" one of the seamen said. "For that I can get me one of the best diving shows back home."

"Oh, yes?" said the black man. "I'd like them to tackle some of the fish down there." He jerked a thumb at the sea below.

"Sharks?"

"Sharks and a lot more."

"There can't be a hell of a lot of sharks in these waters," a seaman said. "I ain't spotted but one since we been tied up here."

"No?" The black man smiled. "You'd be surprised at what's down there."

"Dive for a quarter?"

The man shook his head and shrugged. "I don't really feel like diving. That's the truth." He smiled. "I was only going to dive to please you. I want something to eat, if I can get it. That's what I want."

"Your department," a seaman said, and nudged the huge, fat-necked cook. The cook grinned. Sacker spoke.

"Y'all always looking for sump'n to eat. How come you always hongry?"

The seamen peeled off small, uncertain smiles.

"And you-all always looking for rum and woman," the black man replied in his sing-song accent. "How is it you-all so hot in the pants and itching in the throat?"

"Hey!" Sacker said, and started to push through the ring of seamen. "That ain't no way to talk to me."

But the seamen shuffled in and blocked him off from the black man. "Take it easy, soldier," one of them said. "If you can't take it, don't dish it out."

Sacker stared at the seamen. He was shaggy-blond, and skinny and fairly tall. A tangle of corn hair straggled down over his eyes and his jaws were outlined sharp and hard as those of a lean field horse. "What—" he said, and paused, the words breaking off in his mouth. His eyes narrowed. "You fellers going against me for that black bastard?"

"We ain't against nobody for nobody," said one of the seamen. "But don't dish it out if you can't take it, that's all."

Sacker stepped back. "Well, I'll be goddammed." He breathed heavily, and slowly balled his tongue in his mouth and spat.

"Spit over the side, bastard!" yelled a slight, flat-nosed seaman. "Don't you spit on the goddam deck!"

"Take it easy, Mack," the big cook said. "Leave him be."

SACKER turned off and returned to the carbines that lay on the deck. He stood over the guns, his long legs making a pointed arch over them, and he stared at the seamen who surrounded the black man.

"What he want to insult me for?" the black man complained. "I didn't interfere with him. I didn't say a thing to him."

"Forget about that baby," said the cook. "I'll get you sump'n to eat." He turned away for the galley and the other seamen edged in, closing the gap in the ring about the black man.

"This how you make a living?" Mack asked. "Diving?"

The man shrugged. Sacker came back, a carbine in his hand.

"What's your name, anyway?" Mack said.

"Harry," the black man said. "Harry O'Garra."

"You're kidding. Did you say, O'Garra?"

The black man nodded seriously. The seamen laughed.

"What you laughing at?" O'Garra shook his bare, wet shoulders. He was not a tall man, but he was built heavy, and his teeth were small and very white. The deck was wet now where he stood, the water still dripping from him.

"That's Irish," Mack said, grinning. "O'Garra's an Irish name."

"And what's in that to laugh about? What's wrong with an Irish name?"

"Wrong?" Mack stopped grinning. "Hell! I'm Irish myself!"

"So what are you laughing at?" demanded O'Garra.

The cook returned with a plate of salad and O'Garra thanked him for the food and said he would dive after eating. Then he asked, "Where's the knife?"

"What knife?" the cook said.

"You give me a fork but where's the knife?"

"Knife for what? A salad? You don't need no knife for that. That's a crabmeat salad. Ain't nothing to cut." The cook and the seamen laughed.

"Why you-all laughing? Knife-and-fork is knife-and-fork. If you-all Americans don't know about knife-and-fork give me a spoon then, if you please."

"You don't need no goddam knife for that stuff," Mack said. "Go ahead and eat it with the fork. That's all you need to have."

Sacker snorted and the seamen stopped grinning and looked at him. "Why don't y'all give him a napkin?" he drawled. "Y'all might think of giving him a napkin and finger bowl."

"Over here we eat with a knife-and-fork or we eat with a spoon," O'Garra said. "That's the way we eat."

"I'll get you a goddam spoon," the cook said. He slapped O'Garra's shoulder and ambled off to the galley.

O'GARRA backed up and sat on the rail, his stocky legs hooked between the bars, and the men surged in close around him. Only Sacker stood motionless.

"This all right?" said the cook, coming back with a spoon.

O'Garra nodded. "Thank you, sir, thank you."

He dug the spoon into the salad and the men watched. As he raised the spoon he became aware of the intent gaze of the men and

stopped and stared back at them. The men hastily shifted their eyes and he put the spoon to his mouth and chewed slowly, tentatively, tasting the food critically.

"Tell me about this place," Mack said. "What kind of people live here?"

"Peoples," he answered simply. "What do you mean?"

"What kind of people? Many white people?"

O'Garra lifted gobs of mayonnaise with the spoon and spattered it to one side of the plate. "They're mainly the Americans in this part. The soldiers and the others who run the Company. But in the city we have the Englishman and plenty of everybody else. East Indians and Chinese." He chewed the small bits of potato slowly, without enthusiasm. "And Syrians. And Portuguese. And Japanese. And regular Trinidadians like me."

"What about the Africans?"

"What Africans?"

"The drums were beating all night long."

"Oh. Those are the Shango people. They beat the drums every once in a while, in celebration. I think it's the Feast for the Dead."

"What kind of people are they?"

O'Garra shrugged. The water was dried from his body now and the salt of it stuck to his skin in a gray film. "They're Trinidadians."

"But they came from Africa, didn't they? They must of come from Africa in the beginning, didn't they?"

O'Garra shrugged again. What had happened such a long time ago he'd never quite known and had never found very important. He was hardly conscious of a history of slavery and he was not interested.

"Do they work for The Company?"

"Shango people don't work for anybody. They live in the hills."

"You don't work either. How come? Can't you get a job with The Company?"

Harry O'Garra eyed them sharply, his glance roving from one to the other of them. Each one was different from the other. They were brown-haired and red-haired, black-haired, sandy-haired and blond-haired, and they ranged from the tall-thin to the short-stocky. Their sweating necks were red from the tropical suns and their coarse, calloused hands were burnt almost black. "What for?" O'Garra asked.

"What you mean, 'what for'? What do people work for—dough, moolah, money."

"I don't intend to work for Americans," O'Garra said. "No time. If I need to work, my brother's got a windjammer." He passed the plate to the cook. "Thanks a lot for the food, sir. Thank you very much."

"Why the poke at Americans?" Mack said. "Work for Americans or Chinese—what the hell's the difference?"

"I notice you're not working for Chinese," the black man said. "Try working for Chinese sometimes." He turned and gazed at the sea below. A school of sardines darted by like a thousand arrows. They shot across the bow of the ship in a frenzy and the black man said, "When you see that, look out for sharks. Sharks are after them."

"Good thing you ain't down there," Mack said.

O'Garra laughed, his shoulders shaking slightly. "Sharks don't bother me. I play with them."

"Yeah? I'd like to see that one."

"I'm not joking. I play with them."

SACKER walked over to the rail and looked down at the sardines. He aimed his carbine and fired rapidly at the fish, the carbine singing a high whine; with each shot there was a small spurt of white water below, like bits of torn paper. The cook stood behind him and watched. Nobody spoke. When there were no more fish Sacker straightened up, his face flushed. He shook his head to clear the tassel of corn hair from his eyes, and he grinned and said, "Bet I killed a gang of them sonsofbitches."

Still nobody spoke. Sacker slapped a fresh clip of bullets into the carbine and looked down at the greenish waters.

"Well, where's the sharks now?" a seaman demanded. "I don't see no sharks."

O'Garra smiled but said nothing.

"So you play games with sharks," Mack said, and he laughed. "Tell me another."

"It's true, what I say to you," O'Garra said. He stole a glance at Sacker, then he went on. "The shark is nothing. The real man-eater is the barracuda. He's twice as fast as the shark and he's always hungry."

"Don't the American company pay good money?" Mack asked. "Don't they pay more than the British?"

"Certainly," O'Garra said.

"Then how come the poke at them. How come you wouldn't want to work for them?"

O'Garra glanced from Mack to the others. "I'd rather not answer that," he said with a shake of his head. "I don't intend to talk politics."

The seamen laughed and just then The Company's five o'clock whistle screamed across the still blue sky. At the sound of the whistle the overhead trestle came to a stop, then it started again, the men picking up the interrupted rhythm, the empty steel trays snaking their way round the nose of the ship and heading for the interior.

"They're working overtime," O'Garra said, indicating the laborers. "You-all must be leaving tonight."

"Yeah," the cook answered. "Soon as we load up."

O'Garra dug into the fob pocket of his swimming trunks and brought out a shining florin, about the size of an American half dollar, and tossed it to the cook. "Throw it over when I say the word."

"Hey—" Mack protested. "No point in taking a chance with them sharks. We don't give a damn if you dive or not."

"Don't worry about the sharks," O'Garra said, and grasped the iron railing and climbed. Pressing his knees against the third rung he balanced himself for the dive.

Sacker said: "I'm watching you. Don't you jump till that goddam money hits the water."

O'Garra turned to look at him and his knees came away from the rail, upsetting his balance. He swayed and Mack grabbed and steadied him.

"Take it easy," Mack said. "Don't let that bastard get under your skin."

O'Garra hesitated and put a hand on Mack's shoulder to balance himself. "Throw her over. Go ahead. Throw," he said abruptly to the cook.

"Okay," the cook said. "Watch it." The coin flew out. O'Garra waited till it struck the water, then he dived. He shot downward, his body curved like a cocoanut branch. A plume of foamy water rose upwards, then settled back quickly to a circle of tiny bubbles, and then there was nothing but the heavy, greenish waters lapping at the side

of the ship. Time dragged. There was only the ship, the sky, and the greenish waters. Up on deck the men watched, clutching the rail.

AT LAST O'Garra appeared. He rose some fifteen yards off the side of the ship, the coin held high in his hand.

"Here she is!" he called, and waved his arm. "Here she is!"

Suddenly he thrashed forward, and they heard him cry: *"Barracuda!"*

As he made for the rope ladder on the side of the ship, the men saw a long, silvery shaft streaking after him. The fish darted to a position between O'Garra and the ship, heading him off; and then it charged. O'Garra catapulted into the air, his body spinning, and the barracuda followed, its six-foot, silver-scaled length rising out of the water.

Sacker aimed his carbine at the leaping fish and fired, and O'Garra shouted at him wildly. The barracuda streaked for him again and it seemed that this time O'Garra could not escape it. From the rails of the ship the men saw the long, tapered head shoot at him. But again O'Garra leaped clear of the snapping jaws. He lunged toward the rope ladder in a whirl of flying foam.

O'Garra grabbed the ropes and pulled himself up. Below him the fish circled frenziedly as if searching for a precious thing lost, then it shot downward and was gone.

The seamen at the rail grabbed O'Garra's arms to help him over but he waved them off angrily. He sat on the warm deck, the water dripping off him. The fangs of the barracuda had ripped his khaki trunks and the frayed threads stuck like cobwebs to his wet thigh. He gasped for breath, then he lifted his head and searched for Sacker, spotting him in the group of seamen. He rose suddenly and charged at the soldier but the men grabbed him.

"What the hell are you up to?" he demanded. "Suppose you'd shot me down there?"

"Suppose I'd shot you?" Sacker was perplexed. The carbine was still in his hands. His face flushed. "You'd be dead, I guess," he drawled slowly. "You'd be a smart nigger right on, but a dead one."

O'Garra jerked forward but the men held on to him.

"Goddam!" Mack exploded. "He was shooting at the fish, not at you."

"He's a jackass to shoot like that. He could have shot me."

"We know that. That's why he didn't get to shoot but once."

"I believe he wanted to shoot me."

"That's what I should of done," Sacker drawled. "I should of let you have it."

"You're a bloody coward," O'Garra shouted. "Fight me like a man if it's a fight you want. I challenge you."

"Not here," the cook said, and pushed the black man back toward the rail of the ship. "No challenging and no fighting here."

"Don't hold him," Sacker said. "Don't hold him, y'all." He stood poised, the carbine held in his grasp as if for a swinging blow. "Let him come on, y'all. Don't hold him."

The seamen pushed O'Garra back, all the way to the rail.

The laborers of the snapping crew looked toward the men, but they kept to their jobs, uncoupling and coupling the great steel trays, dumping the barrels of asphalt, stacking them in the holds.

"I'm getting off your ship," O'Garra said. "Thanks for your food." He turned and climbed the rails.

"Why take chances on the fish down there?" Mack said. "Use the pier."

"Fish don't stay one place," O'Garra said, "and I don't care to use your American pier." He dove and disappeared beneath the water. Sacker moved over to the railing and watched the black figure rise to the surface and strike out for the shore. He spat over the side.

"Now, get to hell off this ship," Mack shouted.

"Sure," Sacker said. "I'll get off your ship. Right now I'm just about raring to get the hell off it." He strode very casually to the heap of carbines on the deck, bent over, cradled them in his arms and started off the ship.

THE FIRE-EATER, *by Alberto Beltran*

# COMMUNISM and CHAOS

*by* HERBERT APTHEKER

THE Columbia Dean buddied up to me—some dozen years ago when I was one of the "boys with the sullen eyes and the dropped chins" (to quote Rebecca West's description of pro-Wallace youth)—and placed his hand, gently, on my knee. "I don't understand you people," he began, confidentially. "If it's revolution you want, why agitate against war? War will mean revolution. You ought to be conspiring for war, not striking for peace."

In my youthful ignorance of *hochpolitik,* the Dean's reasoning appeared unconvincing and I joined some quarter of a million American students in a demonstration against imperialist war. It is only now that I comprehend that the 250,000 of us were dupes of the Reds who, really wanting war, had instigated this vulgar mob display for peace in order to alienate and confuse all honest opponents of imperialism, thus helping to provoke conflict. As the clever Miss West has put it: "Communists do not want peace. They want war with Russia in which they can count on a nice crop of smug and self-satisfied traitors who would sabotage American efforts at self-defense" (New York *Herald Tribune,* July 28, 1948). For the benefit of my simple-minded readers let it be repeated that this explains why Reds propagandize for peace —the dialectics of the West, as it were!

How is one to explain this deliberately assumed insanity of the Little Foxes? It is the madness of desperation. It is the intellectual smoke-screen covering the assault of the fascist phalanx. It is the result, as it is the proof, of utter corruption and total bankruptcy.

Listen to them:

"The Communists," says the intellectual titan currently inhabiting the White House in addressing his peers assembled in special session, "are counting on economic collapse in this country." "The Communists," says the "Socialist" Prime Minister of His Majesty's Govern-

ment, "want Europe to be weak and disturbed because they think the more wretched the people are the greater the chance for Communism" (A.P. dispatch, June 27, 1948). "Communism," says Governor Green of Illinois in keynoting the Republican Convention, "grows upon darkness and poverty and hunger." "Communism," announces Heber H. Rice, past president of the Federal Bar Association, "thrives best where there is chaos and turmoil" (*Journal of Bar Association of District of Columbia,* June, 1948).

So widespread is this insidious idea of "the worse it is, the better it is" that one finds its effects permeating progressive circles. Here it appears in a reverse guise but its essence remains identical. Thus, Henry Wallace frequently couples his demands for needed reforms with the announcement that their accomplishment represents the only effective antiseptic against Communism, which, as he wrote in *Toward Total Peace,* "grows wherever there is scarcity, racial discrimination, and exploitation." And even among certain misinformed Communists, as has been pointed out by Gus Hall, state chairman of the Party in Ohio, there occasionally appears the slogan of "fight Communism by making democracy work" (*The Worker,* June 20, 1948).

GIVEN this conception of Communism as analogous to a disease thriving only in the midst of decay, it takes little ingenuity to move to the next proposition: Communists actively seek to bring on misery and chaos.

This idea has the imprimatur of the Un-American Committee itself. "The immediate objective of the Communist Party is to confuse and divide the majority so that in time of chaos they can seize control" (*One Hundred Things You Should Know About Communism in the United States*). The Department of State expresses its agreement through the person of Mr. Benninghoff, Deputy Director of its Office of Far Eastern Affairs, who finds that Communists are "people whose policies require the preservation and the intensification of chaos and hatred everywhere in the world" (Department of State, press release No. 514, June 26, 1948).

We are ready now for the third step: A delineation of Mr. Benninghoff's "people." Here, as up to now, the blueprint of Goebbels serves. To the Herr Doktor Communists were, as he told his diary, "uncivilized and barbaric."

Here anything goes. *Look Magazine* (August 3, 1948) devotes

seven pages replete with photographs posed by professional models and ambitious amateurs—such as the Mayor and Police Chief of Detroit—to show its eighteen million readers exactly how Communists "might" capture one city. The monsters accomplish the task by shooting, stabbing, choking and clubbing various and sundry innocents, arming lesser criminals, like run-of-the-mill murderers and rapists, blowing up bridges, destroying subways and in general creating such a mess that one wonders why even Communists should want it once they've got it!

With the piousness of which only a one-time employee of the Japanese Sun God and the National Association of Manufacturers is capable, George Sokolsky intones: "To understand Communism and its forces, it is wise to understand the struggle between God and the devil" (New York *Sun,* May 25, 1948). A former National Commander of the American Legion, Paul H. Griffith, rewrites American history to announce that Communism was tried in colonial Virginia and the experiment "ended with the men eating the women" (*New Republic,* July 19, 1948).

SEEING all this, how salutary and how prophetic appear the words of that great rugged individualist, Al Capone, then of Alcatraz, published in *Liberty* magazine a decade ago.

> "Bolshevism is knocking at our gates. We cannot afford to let it in. We've got to organize ourselves against it and put our shoulders together and hold fast. We must keep America whole, safe and unspoiled. We must keep the worker away from Red literature and Red ruses; we must see that his mind remains healthy."

Being an eminently successful businessman, Mr. Capone spoke of Communism with authority just as, being afflicted with paresis, he knew a "healthy mind" when he saw one.

How shall one explain the appearance of Red monsters in our fair land? Representative of the profound analysis to which this question has been submitted is that offered by the Honorable Donald L. Jackson of California, speaking in Congress, April 20, 1948:

> "The Communist is an agent of a police state such as the world has never seen, and his hatred of property and those who hold it is second only to his desire to personally acquire something for nothing. Lacking shoes, he detests those who wear them, and his ideology

leads him to set the torch to the shoe factory in order that his innate inferiority complex may better be disguised in a shoeless world. The cold fact that he has never tried to earn a pair of shoes, a suit of clothes, an automobile, or a home never infringes upon a mentality better suited to looting, rapacity and murder."

This strange ideology is nevertheless highly contagious particularly among workers, Negroes, Jews and others prone to innate inferiority complexes. As a result, writes Norbert F. Dougherty, president of the Modern Housing Corporation and Director of Industrial Relations, General Motors Corporation, this "kind of thinking which is absolutely determined on world collapse, world revolution and consequent chaos, starvation and murder" has infiltrated even American labor unions which "are following a dangerous course very closely allied to this Russian ideology" (*Savagery to Civilization*).

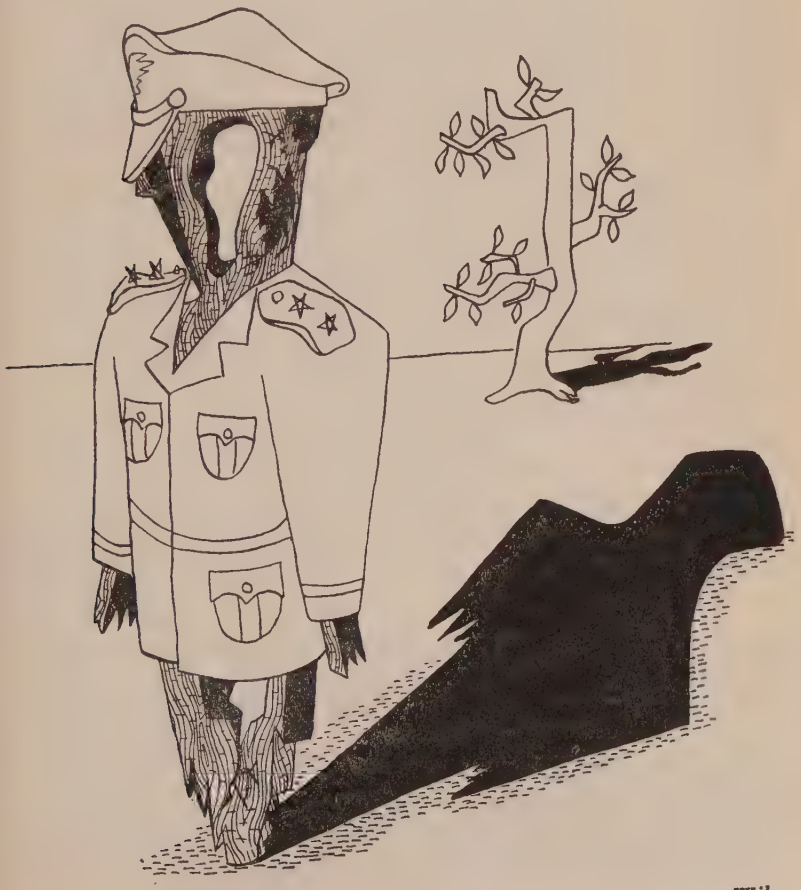
It should be clear by now why Communists at times take up the cudgels for things like peace, civil liberties, higher wages, lower prices, better housing, Negro equality. It is because they know they have been exposed in all their putrefaction and because they know that if they can attach their stench to some worthwhile aims, such as those enumerated, this will help prevent their attainment, thus hastening disaster and accentuating human misery. Thus, as Miss West suggested, Communists "want war with Russia" and therefore advocate peace; thus, as the majority of the National Board of the C.I.O. stated, last January, Communists support the new party in order "to give the public a taste of real reaction"; thus, as the idol of the Americans for Democratic Action, Paul Douglas, Democratic Senatorial candidate of Illinois, put it (*New Republic,* June 28, 1948), Communists support Wallace because they seek Dewey's election, in order "to destroy the progressive Center." Once again, so all pervasive is this propaganda that it even infects a man like Senator Glen Taylor who permitted himself to tell reporters that "The 'Red' Communists, those who work for revolution, will back Dewey, for that would be the best way to bring a revolution about."

BUT the classic example of the Machiavellian touch came in the hundreds of thousands of dollars the Communists spent in their pretended efforts to defeat the Mundt Bill. Here, by their open denunciation, their vulgar demonstrations, their impassioned testimony, their numerous advertisements they really went all-out to force the

adoption of the Mundt Bill in order to weaken civil liberties, in order to pose as martyrs, in order to divide progressives and in order, generally, to simply foul up the American scene.

The practical unanimity with which this interpretation was insisted upon is impressive. On June 2 the Washington correspondent of the London *Times* began his dispatch: "The Communists are making a determined attempt to persuade the Senate to pass the Mundt-Nixon Bill and give them a martyr's crown." This cue came from the testimony given that day by Leon Henderson, representing the A.D.A.: "The Communists are banking on the hope that the Senate can be

stampeded into passing the bill." Mr. Mazey, the Dubinsky-like official of the United Automobile Workers, broadened this a bit by urging the Senators not to "be suckers for the left-hook of Henry Wallace and his Communist collaborators who seem to be trying to provoke you into passing the Mundt-Nixon Bill" (*CIO News,* June 7, 1948). George Schuyler, the Negro Westbrook Pegler, saw this as "clever Red strategy to further reaction in America" (*Pittsburgh Courier,* June 12, 1948). The *New Leader* asserted editorially (June 12) that "all of the Communist picketing and sloganeering was undertaken, not to defeat the bill, but to get it passed." Henry Luce's *Time* said the same



*Forrest Wilson*

thing (June 14), and his right-hand man, Norman Thomas, agreed that "the Communist leaders desire the bill's passage" (A.P. dispatch, June 25).

A discordant note was sounded in the *Commonweal* (July 9), where two grown-up men actually debated this question: Did the Communists fight against the Mundt-Nixon Bill because they wanted it enacted? While Clifford Forster, Staff Counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union, replied affirmatively, Christopher Emmet, a theoretician of the Catholic hierarchy, took the negative side. His trump card in this debate was to point out that the Mundt-Nixon Bill *protected* civil rights and therefore the Communists *really* opposed it even though they said so. Similarly the Marshall Plan *really* was humanitarian which is why Communists *really* opposed it even though they said so. Or, and with this his opponent must have felt himself bested, did anyone believe, demanded Mr. Emmet, that Communists oppose the Marshall Plan in order to assure its success—the success of so fine, so democratic, so idealistic a program?

Clearly, then, one of the strongest pieces of evidence that the Communist Party is a conspiratorial group devoted to propagating the idea of the forcible overthrow of the U.S. government, as charged by that government in its indictment of the Party's National Board, is the fact that its Constitution provides for the expulsion of any one who "conspires or acts to subvert, undermine, weaken or overthrow any or all institutions of American democracy."

"Oh," cried Alice, peering into the looking glass, "things are so strange here!"

WE ARE almost ready now for the crematoria. Depriving Communists of their children (as Judge Newman of Elmira, N. Y., recently suggested) is but a first step. Next comes sterilization and then annihilation for them and for all infected by or most likely to become infected by their virus. When dealing with monsters whose aim is chaos and whose methods correspond with this aim the ovens become huge sewerage projects—necessary agents of social cleanliness.

Some Americans in Nazidom were shocked by the callousness common among Germans who were forced to examine Dachau and Maidenek. Some of us became so incensed that we forced these immune ones to remain behind and to look again and again. But still many were emotionally unperturbed even while physically gagging at death's

odor. Why? Because these people were not looking upon the remains of human beings; they were looking at Communists, Jews, Slavs and other types of sub-human species. The Georgia mother who, at the fringes of a lynch mob, lifts up her child to give the little one a better view of the festivities is showing her offspring not a human being but a Negro, that is, an object of pathological hatred.

The result of all the preceding elaborate rationalization of the irrational is spelled out for us by Dorothy Thompson. She writes that the suppression of the Communist Party "has nothing to do with peace, war, or Constitutional liberties. If American democracy is unable to suppress fifth columns, this nation will perish, or," she concludes, "*the people will move toward fascism by taking the law into their own hands*" (Washington *Star,* June 4, 1948; my italics—H.A.). Fascism now becomes a people's movement, a democratic upsurge!

The tie-up then is complete. One begins with a devotion to the obsolete and festering status quo. He moves from this to a denunciation of all who challenge this status quo and thence to the development of a pathological hatred for those who discern the character of the disease, inform others of the diagnosis and advocate a cure.

Such social physicians become transformed by these deliberate deceivers into horrendous creatures responsible for and delighting in all the ills of mankind. They become devotees of chaos and misery, and therefore practitioners of murder, engineers of disorder. They become Hollywood revolutionists, propelled by lust and greed, who have at their command hordes of hired extras, and who, if spurned by Ginger Rogers, cry out: "Let the revolution proceed!"

This may do for a Goldwyn script, but bear in mind that to this script is normally and properly appended the disclaimer: "Any similarity between this production and actual events or persons is purely coincidental."

THIS contempt for the masses—remember Alexander Hamilton's toast: "The people is a great beast"—is indigenous to the members of the ruling class, and forms, indeed, that class's Achilles heel. History is replete with demonstrations of this truth.

In November, 1860, for example, one A. P. Aldrich, a former Congressman and a wealthy slaveholder of South Carolina, wrote to a class brother concerning the movement to be launched the following month

with the secession of his own state: "I do not believe the common people understand it; but whoever waited for the common people when a great movement was to be made? We must make the move and force them to follow. That is the way of all great revolutions and all great achievements."

No, that is the way of all great *counter*-revolutions, not revolutions, as Aldrich and his class were to discover when they saw the Southern common people's failure to "understand" serve as one of the decisive causes of the Confederacy's collapse.

Revolutions, in the first place, result from a ruling class's inability to maintain tolerable minima of human existence, both in mental and in physical terms. The origins of social revolution are to be found in the contradiction between the developing material forces of production and the existing relations of production. In our era, the key to an understanding of the roots of revolution lies in these words of Marx: "Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder" (*Capital,* Vol. I).

The historical process of satiation not only produces a frustrating constriction upon the ruling classes; the same process serves to develop the numbers, experience, maturity and organizational apparatus of the oppressed. And this latter development in turn heightens the former. One doesn't have simple or formal cause and effect, one has complex or dialectic cause and effect; that is, each reacts upon the other and acts upon itself, simultaneously. The growing maturity of the oppressed derived in the course of their struggles waged in time of boom as well as in time of bust, in turn intensifies the desperation of the exploiters. They writhe and thrash about. There follow forced liquidation and unemployment during depressions; the rape and unbridled exploitation of colonial peoples; the increased oppression of the home population; the fostering of scape-goat hatreds; the launching of slaughters on a world scale with the annihilation of scores of millions of human beings and the destruction of hundreds of billions of dollars worth of property.

As the crisis deepens, the resistance grows. As the resistance grows, the crisis deepens.

The cherished gains of the masses won by rivers of blood and centuries of effort are attacked ever more fiercely. Even liberties or rights gained in earlier epochs of social revolution—as the limited freedoms won by and useful to the bourgeoisie in the course of its struggles

against king, pope and knight—turn from constructive levers into intolerable brakes.

The ruling class, mad with desperation, aware of its impending doom, resorts to a merciless policy of Blood and Iron. It launches the violence, it turns to force, it seeks to cut its way out of the inexorable impasse—while charging the working people with using force and violence. And the people rise in defense of their liberties, their nations and their lives. In so rising, the people forge new freedoms. So it was in the American Revolution, in the French Revolution, in the American Civil War, in the Paris Commune, in the Russian Revolution of 1905 and in the epoch-making Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

The dynamic comes from the masses. Always and everywhere they, the exploited and the oppressed, have been the instruments of change, challenge and advance. Those, therefore, who speak of the masses as pawns, and profess to see the Communists as *using* the workers, reveal their ignorance of the dynamics of history and their contempt for these masses.

THE Communists, themselves of and from the people, fight for their immediate demands. While the Communists are convinced that the grievances producing these demands rise from basic socio-economic forces and relationships and interests, and that only a fundamental change in these will *eliminate* the roots of the grievances, this knowledge does not produce inactivity induced by defeatism or, what amounts to the same thing, infantile leftism. On the contrary the Communists know that only by this activity, guided by Marxist theory, only by the day-to-day struggles of the masses themselves for immediate demands, and through the unity, clarity and experience thereby obtained are the people brought, by themselves and through themselves, not only to understand the world but also to remake it. And it is only by leadership in such struggles that a Communist Party earns the devotion of the masses, that it becomes a vanguard.

One doesn't fight Communism by attacking poverty, war and oppression; in attacking poverty, war and oppression one fights for Communism.

For one hundred years Communists have been leading in the struggle to better social conditions. This has been true of every major demand that has sprung out of the people's necessities and aspirations—from universal suffrage to progressive taxation, from unemployment insurance

to free education, from labor organization to women's rights, from the battle against Jim Crow to that against anti-Semitism.

Thus it is that one finds Lenin repeatedly insisting: "We are obliged . . . to expound and emphasize *general democratic tasks before the whole people,* without for a moment concealing our socialistic convictions" (*What Is To Be Done?*). Or again: "In order to obtain the power of state the class conscious workers must win the majority to their side. *As long as* no violence is used against the masses, there is no other road to power. We are not Blanquists, we are not in favor of the seizure of power by a minority" (*A Dual Power*).

"The proletarian movement," declared Marx and Engels in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party,* "is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority."

Always and everywhere the reactionaries who despise life and have played the role of leeches turn to violence; it is never the revolutionists who first resort to violence for they cherish life and exist to ennoble it.

The surgeon removes the burst appendix; could the appendix talk it would shout at the physician: "Bloodthirsty monster, put down your knife!"

A century ago in this country the slaveholders, whip in hand and beset by insurrections, accused the Abolitionists of advocating violence and stirring up their normally happy Negroes who, all were assured, delighted in their chains. "Not so," replied the Abolitionists, "if you seek the cause of slave insurrections, look into slavery and if you would end the insurrections, end the slavery!"

That ruling class, those slaveholders, bankrupt and distraught, made truth falsehood and falsehood truth. They made of Christ a preacher of slavery; they pronounced a Frederick Douglass a beast.

TODAY the bourgeoisie, sitting upon its atomic bomb piles, turns day into night and night into day. Today Project X gangsters accuse a Gerhart Eisler of being an international spy. Today a John Rankin sits in judgment upon a Paul Robeson. Today a Parnell Thomas is an Honorable Sir and a Howard Fast is a criminal. Today a Robert Thompson, wearer of the Distinguished Service Cross, is branded a traitor and a DuPont is the patriot—a DuPont, co-owner of the Nazi Opel Motor Works and a co-operator with I. G. Farben, who defended himself by

remarking: "We cannot assent to allowing our own patriotism to interfere with our duties as trustees for our stock holders"!

The Luces of the world may own *Fortune,* but they possess *Time* and *Life* in name only. This explains their haste and their desperation. This explains their apparent insanity.

We who understand the indivisibility of true freedom, the essential identity of interest of all the common peoples of the world and the immortality of these people—we possess an unquenchable confidence. We know that neither slander nor illegality nor torture nor crematoria —should they build ovens enough for ten times the millions already burned—will keep the working men and women of this earth from their inheritance of peace and dignity.

How frequently has the ruling class hailed the destruction of its nemesis! In 1814 when Pittsburgh workers were convicted of conspiracy because they had formed a union the press rejoiced: "The verdict is most important to the manufacturing interest of the community; it puts an end to those associations which have been so prejudicial to the successful enterprise of the capitalist." Thiers, after drowning the Commune in the blood of 25,000 Parisians, gloated: "Now we have finished with socialism for a long time." And none can forget Hitler's boast against the backdrop of the burning Reichstag: "We shall rule for a thousand years!"

We know that for the bourgeoisie to rid itself of Communism it must first extirpate the working class; but this cannot be done for the working class is the one and only class indispensable to humanity's survival.

Militant, organized mass struggle to be waged by a united and aroused people against the onslaught of reaction, for the winning of immediate demands, for democracy, for the realization of socialism, of the human epoch of history—this is the road to world emancipation. It is because the Communists know this road that they have earned the hatred of Thiers and Bismarck, of Hitler and Hirohito, of Mussolini and Franco, of Churchill and Dulles. This hatred is a crown of glory. Its existence certifies the veracity of Marxism-Leninism.

# *AUTOCRACY: Many-Faced Demon*

*by* ELEANOR MABRY

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There are two choices in our times,
Apollyon confronted as we are:
to stand our ground, the common ground, and fight;
or to yield brain, viscera and marrow
to be devoured by the dogs
that scavenge beneath the banker's bloody table,
to become dog.

If we fight and win, we are scarred;
clawmarked and batwing beaten and torn
and buffeted, breathed on and worn.
Mutilated, perhaps, but in the essential, whole;
that is, we gain that goal,
as well as the battle,
that no one can win for another:
bright honor, bright brotherhood.

Fight, lose, and perhaps one fights again;
our companions will, our soldierly company;
the Battle of Spain is not lost forever, friends:
except to traitors.

Unlike Evelyn and Aldous, retreating to a mystic womb
each in his way; and doubting Thomas, too,
reducing his mother earth to an iterant tomb;
walking all three among mankind but not of it:
before you lie down, make peace with your mortal flesh
and with livingkind.

The battle is engaged; how long must we wait,
crying A ROLAND from the place of terrible blows,
of gnashings and clashings
while the Prince of Tempters draws you back and away?
That prince is one part of the many-seeming monster, the beast
Apollyon: there is Mammon Profit, there's Moloch Fascism,
and there's the authoritarian church; enslaving conscience,
enslaving moral judgment and wooing minds to death,
those isolated minds that profit makes.
The Prince of Tempters, in sheep's clothing, eyes cast down
or sidelong, lures the dreamer to the retreat;
Cardinal this and that searching out the frightened lambs
for the treacherous slaughter, or for decoys to the hunter.
Those wooden ducks on the darkening pools of blood,
what a refuge they cry us to. Those sitting birds.

From your grave jeopardy, while you still breathe
we cry you to us; come while there is time
to choose even mortal death, yet save your lives;
oh walking dead men, utter the word *friend*
and even trailing the mould of past surrenders, come
and stand or fall among us. If you fall
among us, you will live forever; the very earth
will love your dispersing dust. But Yeats is gone,
become a case history; a scarecrow for our children
to show them where evil is, and to beware;
beware the dead end.

# ERODED WOMAN

*by* MERIDEL LE SUEUR

THE sight of the shanty in the lead mine district brought back many strains of melancholy from my childhood in Oklahoma, and it was as if I had always remembered the bare duned countryside and the tough, thin herb strains of men and women from the Indians of the Five Tribes to the lean migrants from Valley Forge. Standing before the shack, an old lean-to, pine bent and tense from the metal onslaught of sun, I was afraid to see the woman I knew would open the door.

The abandoned lead and zinc mines stand in a wasteland of ruined earth and human refuse. Ruin shows in the form of the shanty roof, in the shape of the awful knothole eye which admits chat-laden wind and light, in the loose swinging door. The insecurities of my childhood are awakened. The mine shaft openings glitter in the sunlight and the unreal day seems to shift and shatter and the old fear emanating from the land gnaws at me, fear of space, of moving, of the town, of what?

A union man in Joplin had told me to knock at this door. "The old lady is a fighter, her son is a fighter from way back! We had the blue-card company union here first. They played all the tricks, control of relief, goons, they even had armed Indians against strikers, called everybody furriner and Communist, but we got railroaders blacklisted far back as the '94 strike, and old miners from Little Egypt who knew the score. We held out. Now we got a union. You go see the old lady."

She answered my knock. She was spare, clad in a kind of flour sack with a hole cut in the middle, showing the hulk of her bones and also the peculiar shyness, tenderness and dignity of a woman who has borne children, been much alone, and is still strong set against rebuff.

She was shy and I was shy. When I told her who sent me she let

me into the rickety house which seemed only an extension of her gothic body. She wiped a chair with her skirt. "Set," she said. "It's the chat, overn everything."

"You lived here long?"

She looked at me. Her eyes seemed dusted with chat, their blueness dimmed and yet wide open and upon me, magnets of another human being. "A sight of time," she said, "too long. When we come we were always going back to the Ozarks to a farm." We both looked out of the crooked frame of the window. A chat pile rose up, there was not a tree, flower or bush. "Nothing will ever grow," she said, fixing her gnarled, knuckled hand in the flour sack of her lap. "Seems like you're getting sludge in yore blood."

We both looked out of the crooked window. More is said in silence than in words. It is in silence that she trusts me. "The Quapaws owned this land but the big oil scared them and they signed it over for ninety-nine years. I guess that's forever as us'n goes. I wouldn't sign over green land like that to some critters I never see.

"My son will be here. He will tell you. He's thinking all the time. Sometimes when he ain't working he makes me nervous setting thar but I know now he's thinking it out. Since the C.I.O. come here he's been thinking. Since they had that row and we was all out of work for so long and they broke up our meetings and they beat up my son. They beat him bad and my husband didn't say anything agin't. 'Ellie,' he said, 'he's fighting for his kin. He's fighting good.' And I tended him for two weeks bandaging his raw skin. His skin was peeled off'n him. Not an inch but what was pounded like a steak and I never said nothing to him. It looked like he was hurt for some reason that was not just hurt like in the mines, not just death. It makes you sore after awhile, no use seem to comin' of it. Like all the babies born so hard and dying so early."

A YOUNG man came up the walk. "It's my son that was in the strike," she said. "I been widowed twice. It's the chat hemorrhage both times. You drown in your own blood, you do. Hello, son," she said.

The boy was silent and shaggy, with the same blue eyes and a tense grievance in him. He sat on the edge of the bed, his cap in his hand. "Yes, we've got a union now, right of our blood we have. They done everything to us."

"They beat him," she said softly looking at him, and he looked fiercely and briefly at her.

"Yes, the Klan, the bosses, pickhandlers beat up every man with a C.I.O. button. The merchants give dances and prizes if you belonged to the Blue Card."

"They tried to run him out, beat him up twice," she said.

"Don't lower your voice. The Klan don't rule here now, mamma," he said.

"I don't know. The Republicans are coming back. The Republicans sent the army. The army!" she said.

"Talk right up," he said.

"We would not give up fighting for the people and the land. I'm mighty proud of him not to lick the boots of the company. Now I'll be fixing the supper if you'll all excuse me."

When he got into it he was like a man in love. "Why," he said, "I'd kill a child of mine before he'd work in the mines. Children of lead, that's all we call them. I saw my father die, his lungs turned to stone, setting in that chair there till he held his breath and let his blood choke him and then he could lie down forever." Now the union was going to send him North to a school and he was going to learn. He didn't know anything. His mother would go with him and they would go North.

"Another migration," I said.

He looked at me. "You think we should stay? Stay put, eh?" He began to walk around the room, his hands in his pockets. The Mrs. came in. "Well," he said, "I got the seeds of unionism in me. My dad carried his union card in his heart for a long time, couldn't carry it nowheres else. He was always telling us a better life was coming through the union no matter how long we had to fight, he used to tell us. You can always do whatever you have to do to win."

The mother came to the door and said, "If you can eat what we eat, I guess like we used to say if we can stand it all year you can stand it for one meal."

We went into the lean-to kitchen. You could see the earth through the cracks but the boards were scrubbed clean as a butcher's table.

"I was a weaver back in Virginia," the mother said. "Why, if Mr. Baxter, the owner of the mill, was here this minute he could tell you, I could shore weave!"

The meal was a big plate of beans the color of dry locusts and some cornmeal bread. "If'n we had ketchup it would be tasty," he said. "Set!"

We bowed our heads. "Dear Lord, maké us thankful fer what we are about to receive and fer all the blessing we receive at Thy hands. In Jesus name we ask it, amen."

The son wanted to tell what he knew. He believed at first that the blue-card union was the best because it "ain't furrin and it ain't Red" and you kept your job. Then the Blue Card had deliberately affiliated with the "furrin" union, the A. F. of L.

"A man don't know which way to turn. There was riot and killing in Galena. Lots of folks showed up here from all over. The Communists they help you and they ain't afeared. They call them furriners too."

"Henry," she laughed, "he says the whole darn district is getting furrin, he says he's gonna go on further West. Further West." They laughed.

She sang in a crooked voice, "*Ladies to the center, form a star, kill all furriners near and far.* We used to sing that. Don't never see how a union against the boss is always furrin. My man always was a union man and I don't always rightly understand but I am with him till the day I die and his thinking is my thinking and his way is mine. *Heigh ho, heigh ho, I joined the C.I.O., I give my dues to the goddamned Jews, heigh ho, heigh ho.* Not even a song like that got our boys to testify agin the C.I.O. They had to bring in a lot of wild boys and pay some drunk Indians to look like they was a big army agin the C.I.O. The pickhandle boys went around and the Klan come in."

"I got to be goin," the boy said.

"He's always off to a meeting," she said proudly.

He stopped at the door. "It's mighty fine, writing something. I hope you do it." He stood a moment. I held out my hand and he hesitated a moment in the dusky door, then in a rush he took it.

WHEN he had gone it was dusk and the wood darkened. I said, "Don't light a lamp. It's nice to sit in the dusk."

"It's nice," she said sitting closer to me. "I should wash the dishes."

"I'll help you after a while. Let's just sit together." She was pleased.

I could feel the clearness of the woman, the edge, the honor, the gothic simplicity of the lean struggle and the clarity and honor with which she lived. She was close to the bone, her face honest as her house with the terrible nakedness of a tool, used as a tool is used, discarded as a tool, worked as a tool, uncared for as a human. And underneath there stirred the almost virginal delicate life of the woman, her modest delicate withdrawals, the bare and meager boundaries of her person kept intact, unviolated, with human tenderness emanating from her, like live energy. We sat close together.

"The long trek we been doin'. My children always thinkin' we are crossing a river or that the wind is on the wagon shaking and moving. We was movin' a lot. Why, we picked up everything when the mines open at Picher. Everyone was talking about a big lead and zinc vein over here, everybody was tearing out fer the new diggings jest across the line into Oklahoma, jest a hole in the road. It was a time I tell you when everybody was on the road. You see yore neighbor sticking his head outen his shack which was movin' comical right down the road and the living going on as usual, the kids hoppin' in and out shouting more'n usual. Farmers were a coming from Arkansas and Alabama even and Tennessee scurrying like ants to a new corpse. Ozark hillbillies was comin' in on the freights, knocking on the door at night fer victuals, women even rode the blinds in with their children. Houses from Joplin carted, villages lifted right up and took on wheels, timber pulled by mules right onto the new diggins in Oklahoma.

"First we left the cotton hills, we come trying to git us'n a piece of land in Arkansas sharecropping, but we come on here in the night then when a friend comin' through in a covered wagon with his family and said he is going to Galena for to work in the zinc thar. I didn't want my man to work ever again under the earth but he telling me then he says, No, Elly, you kin make a stake thar, we ain't aimin' to stay thar at all. We aimin' to make a little stake and then we goin' into that new territory of Oklahoma we stayin' thar, he says.

"We got us some of that land, that new good land and raisin' a crop of kids and whatever they are raisin' in them parts, but it's good land. That thar was years ago afore the twins died and layin' out thar in no proper earth I think sometimes I hear them playing in the woodshed. Now back in Kentucky, I recollect thar was good sweet

*Illustration by Ruth Gikow.*

earth with the sweet rot of leaves and it's just I think I hear them. I know I don't really hear them."

All of her teeth had gone, she said, by her fourth baby and her chin grew upward around as if to protect the sunken mouth and cheeks. "My man got as clever a turn as you want to see with everything. I got no education at all. We got one book, a hymn book. I know the words and I point them out to my sons a long time afore he knew I couldn't read a scratch. I was ashamed. I never felt much like larnin' when I come from the mill. My pa was for larnin'. He

said, you don't know, you air shut up. My ma couldn't read but she knew more'n any living woman I ever heard tell of. And when pa was kilt in the mill she worked as hard fer her family as cunning and strong you had to be. Born in Catawba County, her pa owned a farm there afore the rebel war. He never owned a slave and was bitter agin it saying the white man and the black man had to stand together, but all his sons was killed in it one way or another and it don't seem fair.

"Funny thing, the men always dyin' early. Hard life and dangerous, in my family the women is left with all the chilluns to raise and by that time you sure ain't in no shape to get another man.

"I remember we had beds of white maple pa made. Then he was one with his hands but hard times done us out of them, we sold them for quite a fancy price I remember. Pa worked in the field and raised a good part of what we et. We drawed ten cents a day in the mill. Ma drawed twenty-five. It were winter time when I begun to work. I recollect we went to work by lantern light and the kerosene lamps swinging away in the ceiling I thought they was some kind of bugs swinging away there. Then my brother went to the mill, four of us drawing money. Hard times fer us, hard fer me. I got a fever I recollect, takes grit to get a body along. I just got over the typhoid and I went to the boss and I says I'm wuth more'n ten cents a day. I was a shy body I just didn't think I had nothin to lose we couldn't eat with four of us working and he raised me to twenty cents and told me not to tell nobody.

"Do you think I'll meet them all in heaven? Do you believe they will be there now? I remember them all. Sadie, Goldie, Elijah, all of them and some of the dead ones more than the living. Oh, how it goes on and how you live through it! Claire, Kate and the dogs and cats and mules and cows and calves I have fed, always feeding something, day and midnight trying to get something to eat.

"I mourned and always mourn. Here was the pasture land and cows grazing and the green land I remember and crickets and in no time quicker than scat the green pasture was turned over like the palm of my hand and the mills was belching at the tailings and the gray chat begin to drift in all the cracks and the green land was agone forever agone and never coming back in our time."

SHE arose shyly. White in the gloom, the match struck sharp in her knuckled tree-bark weaver's hands. She held it, shaking a little, to the lamp wick. The light shook, distended like an eye, and the house sprang in the night in the ruined land. I saw the awkward, hunted, lost and wild endurance of her strong odored herb body which I could smell like night herb and I wanted to reach out and touch her but knew her flight. The door hung crooked outward and she went to close it. I saw the darkness, like an eye, through a knot hole of the bleached skeletal sun-wracked pine—a thin boat in the night on a vacant sea. I saw the frail, sagging iron bed. The broken mirror held the light in a sharp rectangle. She was looking steadily at me holding me in her silence. I saw a picture of a dead child. A picture of a bride and groom in a round frame, a garland of paper, faded roses about it.

I felt her deep exhaustion and her sorrow, wakened and warmed by unaccustomed talking, like soil stirred, the sorrow of its ruin reflected in her, the human and the land interlocked like doomed lovers.

I felt a kind of anguish as if we rode a Moby Dick of terror—as if a great beast rode under us not of earth but of a ruthless power that we could neither see nor call by name.

Her eyes in ambush look out at me for what I am thinking, gravely watchful. "My son will stay with a friend, if you would not mind to sleep with me."

I lay awake thinking of human waste, of injuries which reflect on the indifference and callousness of us all, of the unrecorded lives of dead children, the million-faceted darkness of their fear and sorrow like my own of being trapped far below ground in American life.

All over mid-America now lamplight reveals the old earth, reveals the story of water, and the sound of water in the darkness repeats the myth and legends of old struggles. The fields lie there, the plow handles wet, standing useless in the mud, the countless seeds, the little houses, the big houses, the vast spider network of us all in the womb of history, looking fearful, not knowing at this moment the strength, doubting the strength, often fearful of giant menace, fearful of peculiar strains and wild boar power and small eyes of the fox.

The lower continent underlying all, speaks below us, the gulf, the black old land.

# *The '48 Maneuvers*

*by* Rob F. Hall

"The President," Emerson wrote in 1841, "has paid dear for his White House. . . . To preserve for a short time so conspicuous an appearance before the world, he is content to eat dust before the real masters who stand erect behind the throne."

There is no evidence that the Republican and Democratic candidates of 1948 have found the dust unpalatable. Although they may deplore this or that tactical requirement of the moment, their basic outlook and fundamental objectives are so consistent with those of the "real masters" that dust eating is no inconvenience.

The real masters insured that the nominees of both old parties would be men completely committed to their own basic objectives, their world strategy, and their chosen methods. Although they obviously decided months ago that the next President of the United States should be a Republican, they were not indifferent to the Democratic nomination. It was important that between the two parties there should be no cleavage on crucial issues, especially foreign policy. Such a division would weaken American prestige abroad. More importantly, perhaps, it would provide a channel for the expression of dissent which might become formidable opposition to their policies. It was therefore necessary for them to maintain a strong control over both parties and both conventions, and to dictate, in the final analysis, the selection of the standard-bearers.

The emergence of the Wallace movement, which in its own convention at Philadelphia showed such vigor and such a broad appeal, compelled the real masters to modify their strategy. They were forced to allow, even to dictate, a more "liberal" appeal by the Democratic party, or else see that party go the way of the Whigs and be superseded by the Progressives. If the Democratic standard-bearer should make larger concessions to popular opinion than the masters desire, that is because

the political struggle has a logic of its own. To recognize that is not to deny the power of the socio-economic realities which fix the broad limits within which the political logic of the two parties unrolls.

The "real masters" of today are obviously far more mighty than they were when Emerson wrote the words which open this article. They are the finance capitalists, the most powerful in the world, led by the great aggregations labeled, for convenience, Morgan, Rockefeller, Mellon and DuPont, or, for brevity, big business.

How close to fascism has their program for world domination brought us? O. John Rogge, former special assistant to the attorney general who investigated German fascism, has attached significance to March 22, 1947, when Truman issued his order for the "loyalty" purge. "That day, for the first time," Rogge declared recently, "I told an audience that we were moving in the direction of a fascist police state unless the people did something about it." Philip Murray saw in the Taft-Hartley Act "the first big step toward fascism."

George Dimitrov in 1935 warned against ignoring the distinction between fascism and bourgeois democracy. "The accession to power of fascism is not an ordinary succession of one bourgeois government by another, but a substitution for one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie—bourgeois democracy—of another form—open terrorist dictatorship." He asserted, with equal force, that it would be a serious mistake to "underrate the importance, in establishing the fascist dictatorship, of the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie which are at present being increasingly initiated in bourgeois-democratic countries—measures which destroy the democratic liberties of the toilers, falsify and curtail the rights of parliament and intensify the repression of the revolutionary movement." Before the establishment of a fascist dictatorship, Dimitrov said, "bourgeois governments usually pass through a number of preliminary stages and institute a number of reactionary measures which directly facilitate the accession to power of fascism."

Clearly by the summer of 1948, the U.S. government, with the full support of the leadership of the Republican and Democratic parties, had proceeded apace through the "preliminary stages" and had created many of the most important prerequisites of fascism. One reason they did not proceed faster may lie in the timetable which most sections of big business seem to have agreed upon. A majority of their economic advisers apparently believe that economic collapse is not imminent and

that it can be forestalled for several years with a war economy based on Marshall Plan expenditures and tremendous armaments, accompanied by the gradual deterioration of the living standards of the people. The thinking of the more substantial military men, as the testimony of General Eisenhower before a Congressional committee indicated, is that war is four or five years off.

So there was time for at least one more national election in the traditional sense. The only notable dissent, strangely enough, came from Senator Claude Pepper, who proposed the negation of democratic elections by the bipartisan nomination of Eisenhower on a platform to be dictated by the general. But the decision of the really potent ones was to secure the election of a Republican.

It is not hard to see why big business chose to concentrate on the G.O.P. Throughout the Roosevelt administration, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers had established overwhelming influence in that party. Its leaders were fully committed to the removal of all restrictions on "free enterprise," and it was less subject to the influence of the trade unions than the Democratic party.

WITH the Republican party carrying Wall Street's banner into the race, it was necessary to have a candidate wholly committed to big business's foreign policy, including the Marshall Plan and large armaments. Taft and Bricker had reservations on the establishment of a large standing army, due in part to the strong isolationist sentiment of mid-western farmers. But there was also the fact that these men were closely allied with the Cleveland and Chicago financial groups, rivals, though not yet too serious, of the Wall Street groups.

DuPont and important sections of the Morgan interests liked Senator Arthur Vandenberg. General Motors had always found him tractable and his record on foreign policy was eminently satisfactory. Other Morgan men preferred Harold Stassen, whom they had financed and groomed. But the Rockefeller interests, especially Standard Oil, insisted on Dewey, who over the years had become the outright agent of their Chase National Bank. The differences here were obviously not on principle but merely reflected the jockeying between these powerful groups to determine whose immediate representative would represent all. Since they could not be resolved behind the scenes, they were in-

jected into the Republican national convention and provided the convention's one note of struggle.

The crucial deal for Dewey was that with Pew of Pennsylvania, whose family fortune is estimated at $70,000,000. Pew controls former Senator Grundy and Grundy controls two-thirds of the Republican state machine. As a result of the Pennsylvania deal, Senator Edward Martin is reportedly set to be Secretary of Defense. But the real reward for the Pew-Grundy assist was the naming of Representative Hugh Scott, Jr., of Pennsylvania, a protege of Grundy, as chairman of the Republican national committee. This is the bounteous Pandora's Box through which federal patronage is distributed by a triumphant party. The Pew-Grundy machine, in the event of a Republican victory, thus becomes a political camarilla with vast national power.

The press in general hailed the Dewey-Warren ticket as very strong and predictions of a Republican landslide were unanimous. At this point, a new concern infected the thinking of the financial overlords. It appeared that the Democratic party, facing the elections with a weak candidate, little financial backing and virtually no press support, would make such a poor showing as to encourage the growth of the Wallace movement. Political parties have under similar circumstances passed into oblivion, as did the Whigs a century ago. The two-party system, as the American vested interests saw it, required that the Democratic party offer some substantial opposition to the Republicans.

The internal weakness of the Democratic party was erupting in violent controversy during the two weeks immediately prior to the scheduled convention date. The fight involved both persons and issues. The reactionary wing of Southern Democracy had become emboldened by its successes in recapturing control of state machines following the death of Roosevelt. This group utilized the issue of civil rights which Truman endorsed in words because even lip service to the rights of the Negro people was, in its mind, a heinous crime; and because it provided a convenient cry around which to mobilize its backward supporters in the South.

In the election of 1860, the entire Southern wing withdrew from the Democratic party, despite concessions offered by Stephen Douglas. For a while it appeared that this might happen at Philadelphia in 1948, although here, too, the compromises offered by the Democratic chairman, Senator J. Howard McGrath, were generous.

With the Wallace movement presenting such a clearcut and preferable alternative for the Negro people, labor and liberals, the Democratic leaders who were one iota to the left of center decided that Harry Truman with his record of appeasing the G.O.P. was unacceptable. The most articulate and best organized of these were the Americans for Democratic Action, a social-democratic outfit which had become a respository for some of the New Dealers dropped from the government by Truman. This faction and the Southern reactionaries united in a movement to draft Eisenhower. The general's final refusal came only after his own financial backers, who had placed him in the Columbia University presidency, insisted that he hold himself in reserve until 1952, against the threat of an even more powerful Wallace movement.

Justice Douglas' refusal to run left only Senator Pepper as a possible contender for Northern and Western liberal support, to which his progressive record in the Senate entitled him. And although he humbled himself and compromised his known principles in an effort to secure that support, his was a lost cause from the beginning. He was unacceptable to the South because he fought for poll-tax repeal. He was unacceptable to the A.D.A. because he had championed closer relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. When his pledged strength had fallen from 100 to fewer than 50 delegates, the senator sadly withdrew.

The Pepper incident is significant mainly as an answer to those liberals who were recently contending that Henry Wallace erred in leaving the Democratic party. They asserted that had he remained within the fold, he could have dominated the convention. But the Florida senator, who started with the same progressive principles as Wallace, ended a beaten, powerless man, hopelessly compromised.

UNTIL the Truman nomination was definitely assured, the President's forces worked in a vacillating and indecisive manner on other matters. Anti-Truman white supremacy delegations from the South were seated by the credentials committee and upheld by the floor, despite the excellent case made by the contesting delegations. The platform as drafted by a sub-committee was weak on civil rights and in its earlier stages even avoided advocating repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act.

But with the nomination in the bag, the very temper of the convention began to change. James Roosevelt was given the floor for a mili-

tant speech to assert that the "Taft-Hartley Act must go." A. F. Whitney, the railroad brotherhood leader, made a withering attack on the labor record of Congress. The platform plank on civil rights was strengthened on the floor, and although McGrath sought to dissuade delegation leaders, it was obvious that the Truman forces (and subsequently, Truman himself) were not unhappy about it. The Southern revolt had obviously reached its zenith when only Mississippi and half of Alabama—35 delegates in all—bolted.

The President intervened on the final day in an effort to secure the most liberal running mate possible and made personal appeals to Douglas. But the final proof of the new temper came when Truman appeared at the end of the final session to make his acceptance speech. It was perhaps the most effective address of his career, delivered from notes in a free and easy style and sounding the note of liberal, progressive struggle against the reactionary Republican Congress. It denoted that the Truman forces had decided to conduct an election campaign which would seek to make people forget the reactionary character of the administration and attempt to hark back to Roosevelt traditions.

It was to be a campaign in which the Democrats of today would take a leaf from the tattered book of William Jennings Bryan and by stealing the platform of the progressive opposition, devour the new party. It should be pointed out that the Democratic party of Truman found the platform of the emerging Progressive party more indigestible than the Bryan Democrats found the Populists, and any further efforts to consume the party will undoubtedly evoke the most serious gastric disturbances.

THE new tactic of the Democratic party, however, was too complete a reversal to have been decided upon without the most thoroughgoing discussions and consultations. Obviously the decision was made by the real rulers of the party, the same financial interests which three weeks earlier had selected Dewey and Warren to head the Republican ticket.

Involved in this decision was a recognition of the role social-democracy can play in saving monopoly capitalism. It was clearly based on the conclusion that without a militant campaign, which appeared to fight the reaction of big business, the Democratic party would be compelled to relinquish its part in bulwarking the two-party system.

The question still unanswered was how far the Truman administra-

tion could move in this direction. It was clear from the first that within the Democratic party leadership there were powerful interests prepared to draw a line and say "this far and no farther." This was revealed without much delay on the civil rights issue. In his message to the special session, Truman gave priority to a dozen matters ahead of civil rights. On the issue of segregation in the armed forces and discrimination within government departments, which the President is empowered to handle without the aid of Congress, Truman issued two executive orders which wrought no changes in the set-up.

The Administration's price control proposals were fraudulent, despite their superficial appeal. Inflation could be dealt with adequately only by attacking monopoly profits and reducing expenditures for the cold war. The real masters of the party, however much they might want to see the Democrats run a good second in the elections, could not condone such a radical approach to the problem.

But within these limits there remained considerable latitude for the Democrats; they could still put on quite a show. One waited for an indication of their intentions in the appointments to leading positions within the government and the campaign machinery. At this writing, the only significant development is the return of Paul Porter of the A.D.A. as a White House adviser on price controls. If the Truman forces intend to intensify their appeal to labor and the minority groups, they will undoubtedly express this through the incorporation of certain trade union officials, Negro leaders and A.D.A.'ers into the party machine.

It is already axiomatic to attribute these leftish gestures of the Democratic party to the existence of the Wallace movement. But the full results of having a pro-labor, anti-monopoly party in the field in 1948 have not yet been fully explored, and they cannot be in this piece. It can be said, however, that the existence of the Progressive party, even as a fledgling which hasn't had a chance to try its wings, has affected both the old parties. We have as a result what some have been pleased to call a new political climate.

WHEN one compares 1946 with 1948 the difference is striking. In the former year, the Republicans opened their campaign with a torrid burst of Red-baiting and labor-baiting which continued until election day and beyond. The Democratic campaigners followed the

same pattern and tried only to surpass them in the baiting. In 1948, the two parties vie with each other in claiming to be the real and trusted friends of the Negro people and other minorities. The Democrats now demand the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act for which a year ago a majority of its House delegation voted. The Republicans, while defending the act, are noticeably restrained in discussing labor-management relations. Both parties insist on their determination to curb monopolies and protect small business.

In these matters, the general political atmosphere is so altered that it is possible to discuss actual concessions, especially in the field of Negro rights, which may be wrung from the Administration. The immediate reason is that the Progressive party's clearcut program and militant crusade for the extension of civil rights and for the defense of the people's living standards have forced the Democrats to move verbally to the left. This has created a situation in which the G.O.P. must also flirt with progressive phrases or face the possibility of losing, if not the Presidential election, a substantial number of Congressional seats.

The international scene, at this writing, has lost a certain degree of its former bellicosity. The synthetic crises occur less frequently, and when they do, they receive somewhat more moderate treatment in the press and by the Administration. Undoubtedly this is due in great part to the peace diplomacy of the U.S.S.R. But it is also due to the fact that the Progressive party has pointed to an alternative of negotiation with the Soviet Union as a substitute for a cold war which threatens to become hot. Both the Democrats and the Republicans apparently recognize that saber-rattling now would mean more votes for the Progressive party.

There is a disposition in some progressive quarters to dismiss political commitments by the Republican and Democratic leadership as meaningless. Of course these commitments are hypocritical and are advanced opportunistically to win votes. But they are also political facts which must receive consideration in estimating the total situation. In the first place, they reflect the temper of public sentiment; and secondly, political pledges are instruments which the people, if organized, can utilize to force concessions.

No progressive would trust either Dewey or Truman to save the peace. But if either one, or both, or their representatives, should sit down with Stalin and agree even tentatively upon a settlement of the

German or the European question, the peace forces in our country would have a powerful weapon for many months to come.

THE positive aspects of the present situation pointed out above are of course not the whole picture. The Republican party would like nothing better than to make Communism the issue for 1948 as it was in 1946, and thus avoid the necessity of discussing high prices, housing and civil rights. The Democratic platform follows the Republican in denouncing Communism but there have been some signs that Democratic speakers have decided not to be drawn into the G.O.P. trap of debating the so-called Red menace during this campaign. It is rather hard to preserve a façade of liberalism if you are spending your radio money for blasts against Communists instead of against the monopolies and the economic royalists.

The Truman Administration on the other hand has not ignored anti-Communism as an issue, as is shown in the indictment of the twelve Communist leaders. There is certainly no guarantee that the Democratic campaigners will not be distracted from their earlier strategy of making prices and housing the issue.

The anti-Communist campaign, like the war preparations, falls within the reactionary measures which, as Dimitrov said, directly facilitate the accession to power of fascism. This description could also cover some of the Truman proposals to curb inflation, especially the wage-freezing provision.

Perhaps the present political situation can be summarized by saying that the drive toward war and fascism has been slowed down but not stopped, and that this has been the major political dividend the American people have received so far from the establishment of the Progressive party.

The government, following the dictates of both old parties, is still moving through the preliminary stages toward fascism. But in the Progressive party, the people have the means by which they may bring that motion to a halt in 1948 and reverse the trend, even if the Progressive party itself does not gain power in its first attempt. That is why every additional vote for Wallace is of such vital importance.

# *LITERARY RENAISSANCE: 1948*

## Our Leading Publishers Promote Belles Lettres

"FIND ME IN FIRE, by Robert Lowry. *Doubleday. $3.00.*

Jim Miller, minus one leg and most of his illusions, returned from war to his Ohio small-town home to regain his joy in life. He was to be the catalytic agent that made a Negro boy set fire to an old man's home; he raped or seduced teen-age Petey; he gave a frustrated librarian one night of lust and the courage to stick to her job. *For shockproof readers to whom it should rent fairly well and sell a little.*

"THE UGLY WOMAN, by William O'Farrell. *Duell, Sloan and Pearce. $2.50.*

Madness and murder on a pleasant summer day, involving a strange coterie of characters: a divorced movie critic; his money-mad ex-wife; a dictatorial publisher; a mentally disturbed man of property—all of them dominated by the ugly woman, Alice Abbott, whose influence is both strange and sinister.

"THE BODY IN THE BED, by Bill S. Ballinger. *Harper. $2.50.*

Tough, sexy mystery involving Barr Breed, private detective, with a businessman whose mistress has been strangled, a blonde named Thais, a party girl named Caroline, and a 'lucky' wooden angel coveted by Chicago's gangsters and others. It proceeds at a dizzying pace. *A first for good rentals.*

"THE SECRET THREAD, by Ethel Vance. *Harper. $2.75.*

Cassius Terhune, an important State Department representative, merely wanted to see his boyhood home down near New York's waterfront. Just as he discovered that the attic of the empty house was a storeroom for gangsters' loot, he broke his ankle. Edna, the bigshot's girl friend, found him and hid him from weak-witted Gus. Then Mort, the boss and a killer, arrived. There followed a dramatic conflict of will and intelligence. A suspenseful interlude given intellectual connotations. *A best seller and best renter.*

"THE ENCHANTED LIFE, by Mary Main. *Harcourt, Brace. $3.00.*

Caroline Munroe, plain, unpromising daughter of a prominent British family in the Argentine, is the central character of this novel of childhood repression, marriage without understanding, frustrated love affairs, and submission to family tradition. *For the women."*

—From the book announcements for August in *The Retail Bookseller.*

# As On a Darkling Plain

*A Story by* GWYN THOMAS

IN THE house of Verdun Pugh, in Khartoum Row, there was a sense of excitement, restrained but still enough to astonish after so long a period of flat calm. During the six weeks that had passed since Verdun had got his first regular job with the local contractor, Hicks the Bricks, he and his Uncle Gomer who also lived with them had been waging a hard war with Grandfather Harris in an effort to persuade the old man that he would be doing himself and them no harm if he vacated the kitchen three or four evenings a week and sat long over a gill at The Plough, the tavern just around the corner from Khartoum Row.

The old man had been obstinate. For years he had sat, so often Verdun had several times to hurry Gomer out of the house lest he use his great strength to lift Mr. Harris clean through the fanlight; for years he had sat each evening in that kitchen chair, clad in little more than a collarless flannel shirt and patched trousers, drinking in all the peculiar draughts of evil that life had chosen to send him, draughts, sometimes, of queer, thrilling flavors. He had sat there counting his troubles like beads on a rosary, as black and nearly as tangible. He had also striven to beguile his wretchedness by occasionally detaching his spirit from his body, in accordance with instructions he had once read in a book about Tibet, and sending the thing around the world dropping in on high-class voters and surprising them by lodging formal protests against the condition of sepsis in which his own life and that of his neighbors had entered since the failure of the great strike movements of the Twenties and the onset of mass unemployment.

In that book too he had read of another antic which had added a fine shuddering tassel to the palsy of morbid eccentricities he had worn as a mourning garb since the days of decline had come upon him. It was a specially modulated cry perfected by some sullen votaries in Asia's

frozen hills which, repeated often enough on precisely the right key, would open up a distinct hole in the skull of the shrieker. Mr. Harris was a tenor of more than fair ability and he had practiced hard to get the exact degree of magic potency that would do the job and let the air in, but he had failed so far. However, he kept trying and one of the few smiles he could still manage was brought by the thought of the look that would be worn by the various agencies that had depressed his life to its present plane of quaint ugliness when he handed them his suffering pate, perforated like a colander, for use as a penholder and a memento of the murderous tomfooleries of waste and inequality to which the substance of Mr. Harris had been sacrificially delivered up. He had devoted himself to elaborating a curriculum in misery which would show the world how well it could do along this line when one of its creatures really set out to give it all the help it needed.

To this end, he had eliminated from his life all such light articles as drink, dirty jokes, faith in God, love of women, lounging in the sun on the hillsides, singing in harmony with the boys up by the old grass patch, or anything else that might cause the froth of a forgetful laughter to form upon his heart. This was to be no botched or sloppy job. The coal-owners, the Public Assistance Committee, a whole procession of evictive landlords and a severe hernia having given him an incomparably good start, he was going to go the limit. He would strip his life to one bare board of rigid wretchedness and, that done, he would proceed to ram said board up the rear of the elements who had conspired against his dignity and joy. And maybe one day, when the process would reach its peak, some new creature, like himself in what was good, unlike himself in lacking all weakness and stupidity, would arise from the stirring of a counter-life within the death of his total, organic defeat. To that end, he would sit upon his corner-chair until the seat of his pants, or his very own seat itself, gave up the ghost and became unstuck through so much steady sitting.

THIS program horrified Gomer, especially since Gomer had got his job driving out for the Co-operative store and had taken on an altogether blander view of the social question. Gomer was also courting one of the most vigorous girls in Meadow Prospect, Emma Hall, who was one of the cleaners down at the Coliseum, a picture palace, and who appeared to be kept passionate by having so much to do with warm water, soap and suds. Emma and Gomer were short of a place

for their indoor work. Emma had a fleet of older brothers and sisters who used up every inch of floor space with their own activites, and the kitchen in which Mr. Harris did his sitting was the only room in Verdun's house which did not have a bare stone floor and Emma had often told Gomer that not even for him would she run the risk of those many complaints that come to those who fool about on the floor with nothing between them and the naked flags. So she threatened him with a jilt unless he could persuade the old man either to clear out or go properly to sleep during their sessions in the kitchen.

Gomer chafed, convinced that Emma, mounting in seed and ungentle at the best of times, would approach the problem from another angle and beat the Yoga to it by treating Mr. Harris' skull to a few small holes to be getting on with if he continued to brood over their presence. Gomer told Verdun that no one had the right to be burdening the world with such a long course of meditation and suffering as the old man had sketched out for himself. He had surveyed the old man's seat in the course of several walks around the house immediately in the rear of Mr. Harris and he had concluded that it looked a very firm and lasting article, not likely to come unstuck simply by sitting on it. He questioned Verdun as to what methods existed of hurrying this unsticking other than waiting for the element in the case to sit it off.

Verdun admitted to having read of one man who unscrewed his seat by rubbing his hand vigorously around his navel for thirty days and nights in reaction to some long idleness caused by a spasm on the world market, but he doubted if such a ticklish and querulous voter as Mr. Harris would consent to sit down and be rubbed for so great a length in so systematic a way. Gomer had also found an item in the paper which told of how some voter in one of the Northern valleys had not just one uncle, like Gomer, living with him, but two. These uncles, being aged and cantankerous, had set about balking and hindering the urges of the young voter in any number of cunning ways such as lying to women about his real nature and even grating some cheap soap into his roasted cheese. These maneuvers had exhausted the voter who had not minded about the lying because he did a bit in that line himself but he hated cheap soap outright. He had persuaded the uncles to buy an axe. They, though mean, had clubbed together to this end, moved by the cruel notion that the nephew, given an axe, might delight them by chopping a leg off. But the young voter had a subtle plan. This plan was no other than to set about the uncles with the axe

and, encouraged by the very good marksmanship he showed from the beginning, he changed the look of the uncles so much they did not now recognize each other.

This was the kind of simple tale that Gómer liked, full of vigor and climax and moral and he read it out five nights running to the old man, letting his voice rise to a bawl that nearly deafened Verdun when he came to the phase of butchery and revenge; and he openly stated when the reading was done, tapping Mr. Harris on the knee to make sure that he had his full attention, that if the element in the Northern valley had had four uncles, all of the same bleak quality as the first two, he still would not have had one tithe of the reason that Gomer had for making towards the axe and getting Mr. Harris in the sights.

But not even this recital had shifted any part of the expression of scorn that had settled like a snow-cap on the grandfather's face ever since they had started upon him with their request that he vary his life a little.

"To the end. To the end," he said, causing Gomer to turn to Verdun and say that jail was so little worse than this he was wondering whether he would take a swing at Mr. Harris there and then with whatever weapon came to hand.

BUT it was Verdun, addressing a quiet, sincere appeal to the old man and pointing out to him how well the ruling groups were doing already in spreading gloom without any suggestions from Khartoum Row to thicken the mixture that persuaded Mr. Harris to break his syllabus of vindicative brooding. He accepted the offer that Verdun and Gomer should club in enough to send him to The Plough three times weekly, twice for a pint, once for a gill. Wednesday was fixed as the opening date of the new era, giving Mr. Harris a whole day in which to prepare his spirit for the strangeness of entering a place of public entertainment for the first time in eleven years. Gomer was overjoyed, and angered Mr. Harris by standing in front of him and engaging in a lot of gross mimicry of drunken men. This was to show how happy Gomer was at the prospect of Mr. Harris taking to drink and a less thoughtful, more chuckling viewpoint, leaving Gomer free to spread out over the whole kitchen with Emma.

"You knock them back, boy," said Gomer. "Don't think of the expense. Life's short. Knock them back and have a good time."

"Oh go to hell," said Mr. Harris, half sorry that he had let Verdun

talk him out of his ancient austerity. "I pity that Emma, Gomer. Honest to God, I pity her."

"Why?" asked Gomer, not depressed by the old man's judgment.

"Because you're like a bull. You're not like a man, you're like a bull."

"Course I am," said Gomer, smiling and pleased. "Least I will be when you go along to The Plough and stop interrupting me when the tide is running at the full with your mumbles and shrieks and spirit-stuff and groaning with the strain of sitting cross-legged."

"I was talking of the brains of a bull," said Mr. Harris, speaking very slowly so that Gomer could take it all in without having to sit down and take it in portions.

"What do I want with brains? I spend all my time with horses and Emma, and I haven't heard any of those parties asking for brains yet."

"You'll get wiser, Gomer. One day Emma may weaken. You can't be strong all the time. If you could there wouldn't be any thinking at all going on on this earth. And when she gets weaker she'll get tired of having so much of you hanging about above her and she'll want something with a bit of spirit attached to it. Where will you be then?"

"With the horses, all the time," said Gomer sincerely.

Verdun hurried home from work on the Wednesday evening in time to counteract any unwillingness his grandfather might still feel about breaking the walls of his old isolation. As soon as the meal was over, Verdun smiled broadly and encouragingly across the table.

"Now, what about changing, Granch?"

"Changing what?"

"Your clothes. You look a bit rough as you are."

"I've looked like this for fifteen years. Get used to it, boy, and stop being fussy."

"But you're going to The Plough tonight. Fresh start, remember? You're going to have a drink and be happy."

"Oh aye, that. I'm sorry I ever said I'd go."

"Don't say that, Granch. You said you'd go. You've still got your best clothes in the upstairs drawer. You'll look a treat. You'll surprise everybody."

"No doubt about that. They're funeral clothes upstairs."

"They look fine. That night you tried them on for me they looked fine."

"All right then," said Mr. Harris, averting his eyes shyly from Ver-

dun's. "Let's get them on before that Gomer comes in. He's the most barbaric voter I'll ever meet. I can't bear the noise he makes. If ever he starts to stoop it won't be because of age like it is with me. It'll be because his traffic with the Co-op and Emma will be turning him into a horse full time."

"There's no harm in Gomer, Granch. Wallace the Chips for whom I do odd jobs at night and who is as pensive as you are, says Gomer is the only element he knows who came out of the long slump with more gonads than he went in."

THEY made their way upstairs. In the bottom drawer of the chest in Mr. Harris' room were the suit, bowler hat and starched shirt-front. The suit was black and of a material thicker than any Verdun had seen in use among his own contemporaries. Verdun had never seen very much in the way of elaborate garments and this suit of his grandfather, for all its creeping suffusion of rusty green around the shoulders, struck him as being admirable.

"You'll look a treat in this," he said again and his grandfather grunted.

Verdun put aside the sheet of thin wrinkled white paper that had been covering the clothes. He placed it on the floor with a slow reverence, as if everything connected with this funeral splendor merited its dose of considerate care.

"Ginger it up a bit there, Verdun," said Mr. Harris. "You're treating that suit as if it were a mummy."

Verdun laid the trousers on the bed. He surveyed the extreme narrowness of the leg.

"Anything missing from these, Granch?"

"How can anything be missing from trousers? Either they are there or not there. These are on the bed."

"They look very thin."

"That was the style when I was younger."

"Were the people thinner?"

"No, just the trousers. We fancied them that style. You had to be very nimble to get into them."

"Think you can manage it now?"

"With a bit of help from you."

"All right then. Here they are."

Mr. Harris slipped off his old trousers. They were an old pair of Gomer's and slipped away from the old man's legs as soon as he touched

the buttons, as if glad to be on the move. He kicked them away from him and thrust one leg masterfully into the black ones. His foot got stuck half-way down the pipe of cloth and he plunged forward dangerously. Verdun caught him as he was falling, propped him against the bed and told him not to be so daring until he got into the full rhythm of it.

"Have another try, Granch," he said tolerantly. "And it would be a big help if you took off your boots first." Verdun gave him a hand with the boots and after three or four false starts, with Mr. Harris falling on him suddenly from different directions, he saw the old man's feet appear through the bottoms.

"They're terrible things to get into, Granch. What was the point of making them so narrow?"

"So that people could really look as thin as they were. That way, such voters as the Relieving Officers who give food grants on behalf of the Council when cannibalism is in sight could see without poking at you that you were as lean as you said you were on the official form."

"Must have given the boys a lot of trouble getting into them."

"A lot. It was nothing to see some voter with big feet stumbling all the way down the street with his trousers only half on and boys from the chapels running behind asking him what the hell he was up to. Sometimes if there was a big funeral and we were all getting dressed up we took turns at holding the trousers still while the rest pushed. Even without the interesting flavor of death, the good harmonies around the grave and the slices of ham at the funeral tea, it was a good way of passing a day on, with not too great a rub of grief across the heart."

"They must have taken a lot of time burying people, with the mourning voters having to go to all this fuss and bother getting their legs covered."

"There wasn't so much speed or crowding in those days. The voters could breathe without having to tell anybody or wonder if it was their turn." He looked down. "I feel queer in these trousers, Verdun."

VERDUN stepped back to take a good look. He agreed with the way his grandfather felt. Standing there, with his baggy flannel shirt surmounting the two black columns of mourning cloth, he looked as if he were waiting for a fresher, whiter pair of legs.

"They look fine, Granch. Thin, but fine. Now, what about this contraption?" He held up the starched front. It looked to Verdun like a

pair of hand shears. "They look tricky and no mistake. On what part of you do you wear these?"

"Around my neck and over my chest."

"For colds?"

"No. To make me look as if I have a white shirt."

Verdun looked astonished at this. He had never before come into contact with this particular form of fooling the public. In his day it had become enough not actively to show the pelt.

"Let's try the bowler first," said Mr. Harris. "We'll leave the front till last. They're terrible things to put on. If they come loose the sharp points can stab you to death. In the funerals in the old days when sorrow among the voters was a lusher article altogether, there were always two first-aid men standing by to heal blokes hurt by fronts that broke loose during the swelling of the hymns. If I can't manage to fix this one on, you can take it along to The Plough and leave me looking stiff in the drawer."

"Oh we'll manage, Granch. I'm looking forward to seeing you in this front. Here's the bowler."

Mr. Harris took the hat, a sinister and tall-crowned item. "Top price," he said in a softer voice. "I made a splash on this. I had worked four shifts in a row and this is what I spent most of the money on."

"It's a beauty, Granch. I can see that."

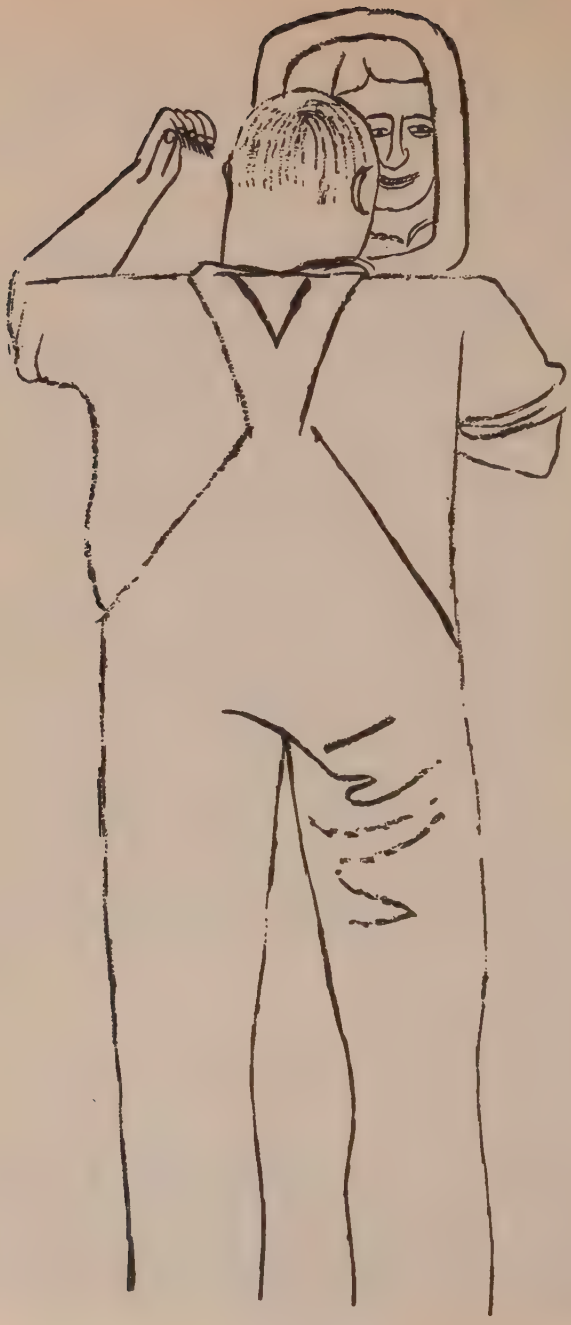
"When I wore this they always put me among the official mourners behind the hearse. That was to give the turn-out a better look. So most times I wore my cheap bowler to be with the rest of the boys. With the mourners I had to look sad all the time and say, 'It was a blessing.' That didn't suit me because I only went for the hymns and sometimes for the ham." He gave the bowler a sharp, sudden rap against the bed rail that made Verdun jump.

"What's that for, Granch?"

"Get the dust out."

"Thought you were trying to get the crown off," said Verdun relieved.

Mr. Harris put on the bowler cautiously. It slipped with a kind of audible satisfaction to within a fraction of an inch of his eyebrows. His face became impassively suspicious. He held his head quite still. Verdun looked at him inquiringly. There seemed to be only a tiny zone of light left between the descending shadow of the bowler and the mounting threat of the razor-thin trousers.



*Ben Shahn*

"Stop lifting your eyebrows, Granch. They're up too near the bowler."

"I'm not lifting them. It's this bloody hat has swollen. This is one of that Gomer's tricks. He's been wearing it to show off to that Emma and now he's made it too big for me."

"No, honest, Granch. Nobody's touched it."

"Then what the hell is it doing covering my face like a mask? I'll have to bend down to see under the damned thing."

"Perhaps your skull has shrunk."

"Why in the Almighty's name should it do that? A skull doesn't go in and out. It stays."

Mr. Harris picked up the tissue paper from the floor, rolled it and fitted it inside the hat. As he was doing so the heavy tread of Gomer was heard downstairs. He was obviously in a state of high tide with regard to noise and merriment. He kept bawling Verdun's name. Verdun went to the bedroom door and shouted down that they were upstairs. Gomer bounded up the stairs promptly and advanced on the grandfather, who had just put the bowler back on, with a look of gleaming wonder in his eye. It was the mourning trousers that had Gomer's attention riveted.

"Oh you'll surprise them, boy," he started to shout. "You're fit for courting, honest to God. If you didn't look so much like a duck with being so sad and bandy, me and Verdun would have to come with you to drive the women off. Put the coat on now, Uncle Edgar. It's too black for my fancy but, honest to God, it makes me respect you."

"Gomer," said Mr. Harris—looking and sounding for all the world like one of his revered Lamas hurled after a lifetime's single-minded concentration on the curved flights of the self-immolating spirit into renewed contact with the rougher forms of man's buffoonery—"Gomer, for Christ's sake, get hold of that counterpane, stuff about a yard of it into that big mouth and chew hard until you come to the dye. Now stand back and give my grandson Verdun a bit of room to help me on with the front."

GOMER, chastened by a fear of offending the old man and postponing the delight of a free and empty kitchen, sat on the bed and stared at Mr. Harris' trousers, thinking that the reference to the front had something to do with the buttoning up of that garment.

"It's always the same with those old trousers," he said. "Holes too small and buttons too big. But don't worry. Those boys at The Plough don't care a damn. Very easy going about the fly if you see what I mean."

Mr. Harris saw no irrelevance in this, only another clear sample of Gomer's lack of reason.

Verdun advanced on his grandfather from the back, bearing the starched front in his hand. The front was a novelty to Gomer and he bent forward to watch this maneuver more closely.

"What the hell are you playing at there, Verdun?" he asked. "You giving the old man a trim or what?"

The collar fitted around the neck.

"It's to look like a white shirt," said Verdun.

"Oh, instead of a waistcoat," said Gomer and winked seriously at the old man as if complimenting him on this resourcefulness.

"Who in God's name would wear this contraption instead of a waistcoat?" asked Mr. Harris. "This goes under the waistcoat, you mule."

"I had that at the back of my mind," said Gomer amenably.

"Granch," said Verdun, "how are we going to get these long wings or fins or whatever you call them to stay down?"

"Studs, Verdun. You're supposed to have studs. A lot of ignorance has come upon this house since life started to smell and I lost the way of laughing."

"Where are they?"

"In the drawer."

"Not there now."

"Do without them."

"How?"

"The waistcoat'll hold them down."

"Aye, aye, of course," said Gomer. "Get the waistcoat, Verdun. Don't see why you want all this fuss with studs." He stood up busily. "Such things are fancy beyond."

Mr. Harris drew on his waistcoat. He buttoned it up. It touched his chest at no point. The upper part of his body must have shrunk by a half. Behind the slack the wings of the front jutted sharply, aggressively.

"Fasten the waistcoat up in the back," said Gomer. "There's room for two more blokes in the front here."

"There's nothing in the back to fasten," said Mr. Harris in a flat bitter voice. "This is nature herself on the job, in brilliant bloody form too. I've shrunk. It's hanging on me like a shroud."

"Never mind about that," said Gomer. "It looks pretty with that contraption sticking out underneath. It'll bring the house down when you get to The Plough. I know the boys who go there. They're sods for a good laugh and you in this starched article are just the voter to give it to them. When you go in the boys will look at you and they'll be puzzled and they'll say, 'What the hell have you got sticking out there, Harris?' Then you can open your waistcoat in a flash, it'll have to be sudden, of course, and they'll be in fits. It'll be better than a turn on the stage." Gomer started to roll about on the bed in anticipation of the fun that the boys at The Plough were going to have at the spectacle of Mr. Harris in semi-flight with his unmoored shirt-front. Mr. Harris watched his nephew with a mounting disgust and a great Celtic wrath coming to full glory around the tip of his tongue.

"Aye, I bet even now they're laughing to get their jaws in working order for the big moment when I start unbuttoning from head to foot for their delight. Go on, give them a real treat. Get a couple of door knobs, the biggest you can find. Go on, get them. Tie them to the middle of my spine so that I can have a couple of interesting lumps in the back as well and I can turn around and give them a couple of fresh surprises when they get tired of examining the front part of my underwear. It's no wonder, Gomer, that there are a lot of dark pranks going on in this world, with voters like you in it with brains no better than sheepsheads."

"Eightpence in Turnbulls, sevenpence at the Co-op," said Gomer.

"What?"

"Sheepsheads," said Gomer, who had not interpreted the old man's oratory as in any way a rebuke to himself. "I'll fix those wings for you."

"How?" asked Mr. Harris, stepping back and keeping Gomer under strict watch. "I wouldn't put it beyond you to push them in or push them up somewhere, anywhere so they'd be out of sight. You belong in a cave, Gomer."

"No, not that. No pushing them up. It's easy. You watch." Gomer went off into the second bedroom on the tiny landing which contained nothing but a few cardboard boxes full of assorted discards. He returned with a length of stout twine in his right hand.

MR. HARRIS and Verdun stood silent. Neither attempted to question or to expostulate with Gomer as to the nature of this new development. Both, the old man and the young, had this habit of doffing their hats respectfully to the Life Force when it seemed to them to be reaching up to a phase of roaring and inexplicable daftness. They regarded Gomer at that moment as the agent of some new revelation in the crass, some new strand in the great rich tapestry of the sardonic and both would have been conscious of a sense of undignified betrayal if they resisted even an attempt by Gomer to solve the question of the protruding wings by stringing the grandfather up on the lintel.

"Undo that waistcoat." Mr. Harris did so. Gomer bent forward efficiently and threw the cord's loose end around Mr. Harris' torso, drew the cord tightly around the front's bottom half and made a secure knot in the back. Mr. Harris stood passive and suffering, his torso inclined slightly forward and expressing reaction to the unaccustomed pressure on his chest by sticking his tongue out as if he were beginning to choke.

"All right, Granch?" asked Verdun, watching the tongue.

"All right. Thank you, Gomer, my boy. I'd never have thought of that, honest. Maybe due to my not having any horses to play about with as you have, but I don't think along simple lines any more. This is fine. You've got me properly trussed, waiting to be plucked. I bequeath my feathers to the broad anus of the last reactionary so he can fly down to hell in comfort. Only one thing you did wrong, Gomer. You should have gone the whole hog and strapped me to the bed post for good so that I and you and Emma would have even less to worry about than we have now."

"Get his coat on, Verdun. That's a pretty big knot I made in the middle of his back and it'll make him feel strange and bitter for a while."

Verdun helped Mr. Harris into his coat. He marvelled at the stiff stillness of the old man's frame as this was done. He glanced behind to make sure that Gomer, as Mr. Harris had jestingly suggested, had not lashed him to the bed frame.

"A toffee apple," said Gomer, impressed, walking slowly around his fully dressed uncle. "Oh, Jesus, though, this is something to watch. This beats the switchback at Barry. This beats that Royston Richards

and his Romanies who play gypsy music down at the Palaceum dressed in yellow shirts. All right, Granch. You're ready. Walk."

Mr. Harris did not move. A twitching around his neck muscles seemed to show that he had the will to walk but he did not budge an inch.

"He's got the cramps," said Gomer. "That contraption with wings is cold on his belly, no doubt, and it's given him the cramps."

"What have you done to me, Gomer, you stupid sod?" wailed the old man. "I can't move. I seem to be up against a wall. This front and that rope you used are against me like a wall. I'm on to you, Gomer. That talk about The Plough was just camouflage. You've got no intention of letting me out of this bedroom. You've paralyzed me. It's that knot in the back. Get me out of this, you donkey."

"It's all right, Uncle Edgar. It's nerves, that's all. That's what's the matter. You've got out of the way of being dressed-up and blithe after all those years of brooding on the revolution and seeking solace in those antics from India and Tibet. Those habits are enough to give any voter a chill on the guts, even without that front. Take his other arm, Verd."

And between Gomer and Verdun the unresisting grandfather was more or less air-borne down the stairs.

IN THE kitchen, Verdun's friends, Sylvanus, Merlin and Elwyn were waiting for him. The sight of Mr. Harris dressed up in a black suit and a bowler would have caused a stir among the boys at any time but the old man's dramatic entrance between Gomer and Verdun, his feet about three inches off the ground, caused them all to crowd around to take a look at the details. Mr. Harris shook himself loose and went to stand in one of the kitchen's further corners, a look of defiance on his face and the same paralytic crouch in the slope of his torso. He was still feeling a captive between the pressure of the shirt front on his chest and Gomer's double knot at the back.

Elwyn, who had been studying an illustrated weekly in the armchair, started edging towards the old man. It was the bowler that interested him. He had been thinking of buying one. He knew it would be idle making a formal request to Mr. Harris that he be allowed to handle and examine the article. He knew how touchy Mr. Harris was about such things. His idea was to get his hand in quickly and examine

the hat swiftly in the few seconds taken by Mr. Harris to raise his own hand for a retaliatory smack. He shot his arm out and Mr. Harris bounded back out of range. He had evidently, for all the concentrated stiffness of his posture, been keeping an eye on Elwyn.

"None of that," he shouted snappishly. "No respect for the dead, that's what's wrong with all you silly young sods."

"Who's dead, Mr. Harris?"

"Somebody, or I wouldn't be wearing this turn-out."

"Stop badgering him, Elwyn," said Verdun.

"I wanted a quick feel at his bowler. Wanted to test it for weight, honest. I'm thinking of buying one to go with the striped suit my mother's getting for me through the Clothing Club, shilling a week."

"Why is he bent like that?" asked Merlin. "What's he crouching for, Verd?"

Merlin began to walk around the old man who pursed his lips hostilely and kept his hand tight on his hat.

"Don't any of you go touching this bowler," said Mr. Harris. "It's stuffed with paper to make up for all the wear and tear on my poor bloody skull through the years of stoppage and disaster. One touch and the whole lot comes down like a curtain, blinding me. Leave it alone."

"Come away from there, Merlin," said Verdun, appealingly.

"But why's he crouched like that?"

"It's that white contraption he's got on. It's stiff and fancy and he's not used to it."

"What's it supposed to be?"

"It's a false shirt."

"What's false about it?"

"It's not all there."

"Where's the rest of it?" Merlin looked interestedly at the old man as if he expected him to go producing the rest of this shirt in bits from his pockets.

"It's false," said Verdun. "There isn't any more of it."

"Cheap shirt. Cold, though."

"He's got another shirt under it."

"Oh, and it crouches him up?"

"That's it. You're very slow at seeing things tonight, Merlin."

"You can't tell about these things, Verdun."

"What you mean, you can't tell. I saw Granch put the front on. I

saw Gomer strapping it down with cord and that's why he's a bit bent. When he gets used to it or Gomer loosens the knot, he'll straighten up and he'll be one of the smartest sights in Khartoum Row."

"I don't know. My old man took to crouching after that big cut in the dole in 1931. And he landed up with what is called a sleeping nerve which makes him wink all the time and look wise as hell. Perhaps your grandfather has got the same kind of trouble coming his way." Merlin bent down and began to study Mr. Harris' right eye for any sign of this new disturbance.

"For Christ's sake, stop staring at me, boy," shouted Mr. Harris, "or you'll be sleeping. Not just your nerve. All of you."

"Stop aggravating him, Merlin. Come on, Granch. Time to go."

"Where's he going?" asked Sylvanus who was sitting on the table looking at some photographs of a drinking party in Mayfair and feeling rather pleased that Mr. Harris, in however rough a fashion, was trying to jerk the standard of dress in Khartoum Row a little nearer the level of the male drinkers in the photographs who had clearly heard little of the Social Insurance which so many of the voters in Khartoum Row used to keep body and soul in a shifting, grimacing truce.

GOMER came in from the backyard with a cane brush and started sweeping hard at the fireside mats. He did the job too vigorously, shifting the main mat a foot every time he made a stroke.

"What's he up to?" asked Elwyn, dodging quickly out of the way to prevent his legs being knocked from under him by the advancing brush-head.

"He's preparing the mat for Emma," said Verdun.

"Is he going to give her the mat?"

"No. She's going to lie on it, so Gomer hopes."

The boys all looked at Gomer with a new wonder. Until then they had thought of mats only in relation to the feet. They were grateful to anyone who provided them with a new dimension of utility, even Gomer.

"We're going as far as The Plough, with Granch," said Verdun. He turned and added a word of explanation for his friends. "Granch hasn't been out for a long time. We've been telling him he only lives once and he ought to lead a brighter life. So he's going to The Plough in his funeral suit."

"Good idea, that," said Elwyn. "There are a lot of stern elements in

Meadow Prospect who could do with such a new outlook. There's that Octavious Pugh, father of Elvira Pugh, my girl. He's gone jingles with being so pure of mind and he comes at me like a tiger every time I go around courting."

"Coming, Gomer?" called Verdun.

"Course I'm coming. This is the happiest moment I've had for a long time. We'll make a real procession out of it and give Khartoum Row something to remember." He threw his brush down and took hold of his coat. "Something to remember. Won't we, Uncle Edgar?" He slapped Mr. Harris hard on the back, at the very spot where he had tied the knot.

"Oh God in Heaven," said Mr. Harris in a soft voice on which was falling a thickening shadow of anguish. "Do that again, Gomer, my boy. You didn't quite drive it in. You boys do me a favor, will you? Stand around me as I walk down the street. This is a peculiar thing I'm doing, sort of rising from the dead. It feels hardly decent somehow. Stand around me, hide me a bit until we get to The Plough. If the people see me dressed like this they won't know what the hell is coming off." His voice dropped and it was only Verdun who heard him. "I'm full to the scalp of laughing bloody ghosts. Can you hear them, boy?"

"No, Granch, I can't. It's the creaking of the suit. It's stiff. Get around him, boys. You get in front, Gomer."

THE little band set forth down the gully, Mr. Harris in the middle shrinking down to a point where only the top of his bowler was visible. Gomer in front was grinning to the widest possible degree and bearing himself with a bursting pride similar to that of a homecoming animal-catcher bringing something back alive. Verdun observed that a strand of the white tissue paper inside his grandfather's bowler was beginning to slip out at the back. In the half-light of the evening it had a curious effect, giving Mr. Harris' appearance at the top a quaint compromise between saint and Foreign Legionnaire.

Through the veins of Mr. Harris, made narrow and cold by a too long acceptance and inertia, crept the intimations of a renascence which could have no meaning, for which he could feel no love, plucking stealthily and with tremendous pain. They reached The Plough, a squat, detached building at the end of the street, large but invested now with a quiet frowsiness. The contingent stopped outside the main door. They had all fallen silent during the last half of the walk, con-

scious that what they were doing had something of a ceremonial character. They all looked and felt deeply solemn, like the inhabitants of an extremely Northern bay seeing a boat steam into their harborage after months of half-starving sequestration. The symbolism of the moment was vivid to every mind present. An expression of climactic and passionately reminiscent melancholy was contracting the features of the old man. Even the animal grossness of Gomer became sensitive for a few strange quivering instants. He walked up to Mr. Harris and shook him by the hand. The boys did the same and then turned away. Quickly and silently the old man was left alone.

THE POLK CASE, *by Helen West Heller*

# *What about* BEBOP?

*by* SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

TO DEFINE bebop is a difficult task, as it is to define jazz itself. Jazz is a people's music, and at the same time it is a music produced as a controlled commodity by a large-scale capitalist industry. Most commentators have used the terms "hot" jazz and "commercial" jazz to describe these contradictory elements. Yet the two are not sharply distinct from one another. Their dual presence causes the history of popular song and dance to alternate between periods of standardization and sudden eruptions of a strange and beautiful music. And if the latter speaks for the presence within jazz of independent, thinking and feeling creative musicians, this music is at the same time scarred and distorted by the conditions under which it has to arise.

Bebop is the latest of these surprises which jazz has put forth, like a magician taking a rabbit out of his hat—or like a worker thumbing his nose at the boss. Many lovers of the older jazz, recoiling from bebop's strange sounds, refuse to call it jazz at all; they describe it as an attempted infiltration of modern European composition into jazz. Yet the very newness of sound in bebop is at least part proof that it is in the main line of jazz, for the very essence of jazz development has been its constant experiment and change.

One can define bebop in terms of the origin of the word itself, which

was coined by the trumpet player John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie to describe a tricky new rhythmic pattern to the members of his band. Or one can define it in terms of the new harmonic patterns which are generally found in bebop improvisation. Or one can talk about the cultishness which has collected about the music: the flirtings with existentialism and Mohammedanism, the special lingo, the style of dress, the imitation of Gillespie's goatee. But these aspects of the movement do not adequately explain it.

It has produced personalities who are as different in their music from Gillespie as they are from one another. They include the alto sax player, Charlie Parker; the drummer, Max Roach; the pianists, Errol Garner and Theolonious Monk; the arranger, Tad Dameron; the trombone player, J. J. Johnson; the tenor sax men, Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray. It has attracted the interest of many older luminaries of jazz, such as Teddy Wilson, Duke Ellington, Mary Lou Williams, Coleman Hawkins.

Bebop can be traced back to many aspects of jazz in the Thirties: the lusty Kansas City "jump" music of Count Basie; the tenor sax improvisations of Lester Young, combining popular tunes with haunting blues phrases; the sensitive refinements of harmony and instrumental timbre of Duke Ellington; the exuberant song-kidding trumpet solos of Louis Armstrong; the small-band experimental music of Teddy Wilson, Benny Goodman and Charlie Christian. But it is at the same time a new development. It has attracted a great mass of the young players now entering the jazz field. It has won a devoted audience of youth, especially the Negro youth. It is the jazz of the post-World War II generation.

BEBOP may be analyzed, musically, in terms of four characteristics: its use of the popular tin-pan-alley tune, its harmonies, its rhythmic patterns, its instrumentation.

While bebop consistently uses the popular ballad, the listener rarely hears it. The tune exists only in the performers' minds, while they actually play countermelodies against it. The background for this music lies in the transformations of popular songs by men like Louis Armstrong, Thomas "Fats" Waller and Lester Young. In bebop, however, the disguise is more complete. Many bebop performances with fanciful names are countermelodies to popular tunes. For example, the ghost of Gillespie's "Dizzy Atmosphere" (Musicraft) is "I've Got Rhythm,"

and that of Parker's "Ornithology" is "How High the Moon." This process is not plagiarism, but the development of the wit and kidding, the subtle and lyrical recasting of the tin-pan-alley song that have always been part of jazz.

Harmonically, bebop is based on the diatonic key system of concert music, which it carries to an extreme use of unresolved dissonances, chromatic notes, common chords with raised or lowered notes. This kind of improvisation, almost like a musical tight-rope walking, requires the most knowing musicianship. It sometimes produces a deeply moving lyrical line, as in Gillespie's "I Can't Get Started" (Manor), and "Round About Midnight" (Dial)—the latter a continuation of the former—but frequently a deliberate hitting of unexpected notes simply for novelty's sake, and a mechanical noodling of dissonant chords.

The rhythmic patterns of bebop, as in all jazz, are based on melodic lines that move in counter rhythm to the basic four-to-the-bar beat. The emphasis, however, is on blindingly fast melodic phrases built of sixteenth notes and of erratic length, beginning and ending anywhere within the bar. The drummer will often leave the basic beat unheard, keep up a sixteenth-note beat on the cymbals, and add unexpected accents and splurges of rhythmic pattern.

Bebop instrumentation uses any and every instrument in any combination. It employs concert tones more than rough tones and probes the most extreme ranges of the instrument, sometimes for exhibitionist purposes, sometimes for comic purposes, and sometimes for a fine use and blending of instrumental timbres.

A most important aspect of bebop, further establishing it in the main line of jazz development, is its prolific use of the blues. The blues both permeate jazz and long antedate it. Like flamenco and ancient Hebrew Cantorial chants, the blues are human speech turned into song, based on essentially simple melodic phrases but capable of innumerable variations, moving freely through an implied scale of their own with no relation to diatonic music. Like every other element of jazz that enters bebop, the blues are transformed. Their basic twelve-bar pattern is heard only in variation; their simple, descending phrases and breaks adorned with strange broken chords. But they carry the same human burden. While bebop is frequently a witty and happy music, it expresses in its use of the blues a note of bitterness that strikes home with its younger listeners. It speaks of the resentment against the Jim Crow that pervaded the Army, the postwar conviction of having been

let down by hypocritical phrasemongering. Charlie Parker especially plays a most haunting blues, as in his "Billie's Bounce" (Savoy). Other fine examples of the treatment of blues in bebop are Red Norvo's "Congo Blues" and "Slam Slam Blues," with Gillespie, Parker and Teddy Wilson (Comet); "The Chase" with Wardell Gray and Dexter Gordon (Dial); Theolonius Monk's "Round About Midnight" (Blue Note); Lucky Thompson's "Boppin' the Blues" (Victor).

A most important progressive aspect of bebop is that Negro and white musicians perform with a closer collaboration and exchange of ideas than in any previous form of jazz. White bebop musicians will fight for the right to have Negro musicians perform with them, and will give up jobs rather than submit to Jim Crow. Boyd Raeburn, the leader of a large band which used many bebop musical ideas, included several Negro musicians as part of his permanent group, although this practice and the music he played were both protested by managers and booking agents.

AN ADEQUATE understanding of bebop is inseparable from an understanding of the inner conflicts which have always led creative jazz to break with set rules and periodically to stand the world of popular music on its head. During the Thirties many commentators on jazz, including some Marxists, tried to explain jazz by drawing a sharp distinction between the old and new. The old music was the "folk" music, the small-band communal music of New Orleans style, drawing its idiom from marches, spirituals, blues and folk song, employing a single trumpet, clarinet and trombone to carry the melodic lines into free, many-voiced improvisations. The "commercial" jazz was the large-band music based on the tin-pan-alley ballad, with a saccharine, imitation-classical instrumentation and harmonization. We looked upon the "swing" music of the Thirties as a well-meant but fruitless attempt to compromise with the commercial, its harmonic music weak compared to the older polyphony, and its "hot" solos seemingly exhibitionist.

This, however, was a most superficial characterization of what was really going on, and we must now see that the movement into the popular song, the large band, the study of new musical problems was a necessary step forward for the Negro musician and for jazz. The communally created music of New Orleans, a truly wonderful music, was also a product of ghetto life. The city had a musical tradition dating back to French days, and was a meeting place of many peoples, Creole,

Caribbean and Gulf Coast. Yet in the early decades of this century, when jazz arose, New Orleans was a city of discrimination and Jim Crow. The folk qualities of the music were themselves a product of the semi-feudal conditions of life among the Negro people of the South.

And so, although New Orleans was the home of a flowering of music, it produced forces within the music itself which beat at the restrictions of Southern city life. The New Orleans musician, learning his music frequently by ear, poured forth a powerful music; but, relegated to an amateur or semi-amateur status, he felt a need to find ways to master his instrument and the full art of music, to work as a full-time musician. There were also educated musicians in New Orleans, most of them pianists. But these men—some of them like Scott Joplin and Ferdinand Morton potentially great American composers—were relegated to the position of pianists in "sporting houses," a "job-opportunity" typical of the depravities of Jim Crow.

The Southern social structure was semi-feudal, but within a capitalist framework. New Orleans music provided the material for the mushrooming sheet-music industry, with its ragtime, one-step, blues and semi-blues songs. And where the music went, the musician followed. The Negro musician, moving to Northern cities such as Chicago and New York, had to accept the conditions of labor that capitalism offered him.

In form and content the popular music of the 1920's and 1930's was dictated by the conditions of commodity production. The forms were standardized to fit mass production. Whatever borrowings had been made from folk and New Orleans jazz were diluted by innumerable repetitions and weakened by childish, textbook harmony. Similarly, the entire opera and concert music of the nineteenth century became an open mine for plagiarism and dilution. The large band, sponsored by radio, Hollywood, movie palaces and record companies, became with its fake impressiveness the dominant means of performance. The musician was asked, not for his creativity, but only for his labor power. The paymaster told him what he was to do.

Had the Negro musician accepted these conditions without protest, the story of creative jazz would have been ended. But he did not accept them. He welcomed the new materials he found: the opportunity to explore the full tonal and technical resources of his instrument, the opportunity to enter into and handle the large band, which was also an instrument of potentially great expressive power. The harmonic sys-

tem, implied in tin-pan-alley music, of chords, key and key change, also offered possibilities of new emotional expression. And welcoming these new conditions, the Negro musician set about transforming them. The story of jazz in the Thirties is one of struggle with the popular tune and the large band; a struggle to liberate music from the conditions imposed upon it by a monopolized commodity production system, to make it again the free portrayal of human feelings.

And this struggle, led by the Negro musician, likewise showed the way of liberation for the white musician. For the white musician, although favored far above the Negro in pay, consistent employment and conditions of work, also suffered from the mechanization of popular music production. In increasing numbers white musicians turned to methods of performance in which the music carried something of the creative stamp of the musician himself. This influence also had its ironic aspect. The new as well as old jazz, pioneered by the Negro musician, was frequently vulgarized and commercialized to make fortunes for everyone concerned but the Negro musician. At the same time, however, the movement to the North brought a new level of open collaboration, an exchange of musical ideas, between Negro and white musicians, and the beginnings of a forthright struggle against Jim Crow in popular music. There is no better proof of the fact that jazz, in spite of its factory production, has elements of a people's music than the breakdown of segregation within it. This breakdown is far from complete but it has nevertheless gone much further in popular than in concert music.

IT MAY seem that I have strayed far from the subject of bebop. What I have been describing, however, are the inner contradictions of jazz out of which the music loosely termed bebop had to come.

One more point is essential for an understanding of the rise of bebop. It is the pre-eminence of the Negro musician in every new development of jazz. The reasons for this pre-eminence are many and cannot be gone into here in detail. They revolve about the historic place of music in the collective struggle of the Negro people against slavery and the oppression that followed slavery; about the need of the impoverished Negro people to make their own entertainment out of whatever materials lay at hand, instead of buying a packaged commodity.

The one reason I want to stress here has particular application to modern jazz and bebop. It is the somewhat more subtle form of discrimina-

tion which relegates the Negro musician to the field of mis-called popular music. Having battled for and won a foothold in this field, the Negro musician is told by implication that it is the only musical field he is fit to enter, and the pressure is unrelenting to surround his work with clownishness. The history of jazz is also a record of the battle of the Negro musician to give his standing the dignity the music deserves. The story of Duke Ellington's break with a major record company, which occurred when he was recording one of his more ambitious compositions, is insufficiently known: he was told by a company official that he was hired not to record this high-brow music, but only "nigger" music.

The fields of concert, opera and serious musical education are closed to the Negro by unwritten law, and only a few people, by a combination of luck and herculean effort, have broken through. The Negro has the theoretical right to compose music; but the conditions under which the American composer works, bad as they are for the white, are ten times worse, and well-nigh prohibitive, for the Negro. The result is that the musical genius of the Negro people has been poured almost wholly into the forms of song, dance and improvisation. The inventiveness shown in these forms has benefited jazz greatly. Yet the frame of jazz has become too restricted to hold the ideas poured into it, and to allow them development. What we find, furthermore, is that musical ideas of the greatest subtlety have to be worked out under the forbidding conditions of the smoke and liquor-laden atmosphere of night clubs, constant travel, low pay and insufficient relaxation, unemployment, record making constantly interfered with by the idiocies of the sponsors. In bebop especially we have musical ideas of finesse and the most ambitious scope, but worked out in fragmentary and incomplete form.

Thus in bebop we have the contradictions of jazz heightened and developed to their breaking point. We have a music both joyous, witty and deeply poignant, and at the same time intensely private, personal and secretive, almost a "musicians' music"; we have rich imaginative and inventive harmonic and instrumental qualities on the one hand, and on the other, barren, formalistic experiment, the different used only because it is different. We have the adherence of some of the finest, most thoughtful minds in jazz, and alongside of them the cultism mentioned above, with even some cases of personal degeneracy. These conditions remain unresolved because their resolution demands more than a new musical theory or style of jazz. It demands a radical change of the

place of popular music in American musical culture, and of the place of the Negro people in American life.

As in all of jazz, the musical failures of bebop are more numerous than the successes. Bebop musicians are playing with musical ideas that challenge the foundation of our prevalent "classical-popular" division in music, for the bebop listeners enjoy instrumental, rhythmic and harmonic subtleties that would baffle many members of a Carnegie Hall audience. But these are only advances in style, in language, rather than in what is said in this language. Bebop at its best is a music of wit, of outbursts of anger, of feelings left undeveloped and suspended. For "permission" to work out its advances in style, bebop has had to pay the price of isolating itself from any functioning place in American social life, except to the extent that the commercial music industry may decide that it can cash in on this "novelty" by accenting and publicizing its most freakish qualities. The "classical-popular" division, meaningless as a theory, exists as a fact, because both "classical" and "popular" music are controlled by a business and investment set-up that abhors any true expression of the present, and likes to classify its products as regimented mass-consumption goods and luxury "old-master" goods.

Thus modern jazz, with many ambitious ideas, has no real outlet for these ideas and turns in on itself. It becomes a prey to cultist practices and escapist ideologies, victimized by publicity men exploiting its most sensationalist characteristics and commercial musicians vulgarizing its innovations. Bebop makes it clear that to produce creative music is both easy in one way, difficult in another; easy, because what it requires is not so much knowledge and complicated technique, as the ability to express oneself as a human being; difficult, because the conditions of modern life under capitalism make it impossible for people to behave like human beings unless they carry on a resolute struggle against these conditions.

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NOTE: Some first-rate records which exhibit the rise of bebop out of the "experimental laboratory" of jazz in the Thirties are Duke Ellington's "Cotton Tail" (Victor); Red Norvo's "Congo Blues," "Get Happy," "Slam Slam Blues" and "Hallelujah" (Comet); Lester Young's "Tea for Two" (Philo); Dizzy Gillespie's "I Can't Get Started" and "Good Bait" (Manor). "Cotton Tail" is an amazing fast stomp treatment of a blues theme in two clashing keys and a complicated rhythmic pattern. "Congo Blues" is a masterly example of the modern, clipped and economical use of the riff. It also has one of Parker's most beautiful blues breaks, as well as a brilliant piano solo by Teddy Wilson. "Slam Slam Blues"

exhibits Gillespie's slow blues style, more thoughtful, less searing than Parker's. "Hallelujah" opens with the melody wholly recognizable, and then dissolves it into the bebop harmonic and rhythmic texture. "Tea for Two" is a haunting transformation of the well-known song, indicating why Young has been so powerful an influence upon the bebop sax player. "I Can't Get Started" is in two keys throughout. "Good Bait" opens with a familiar sweet Kansas City riff, then offers Gillespie exploring strange chords, and ends with Gillespie playing polytonally against the opening riff. (Riff, for the uninitiated, is a melodic phrase, generally a blues, repeated over and over, either as a climax or as a base for solo elaboration.)

For bebop proper, Gillespie's "Hothouse" and "Shaw Nuff" are classics, bringing Dizzy and Parker together in a matching of talents. Gillespie's own wit is heard to good advantage in "Dizzy Atmosphere" and "One Bass Hit" while his "Things To Come" (All Musicraft) is a masterly example of bebop idiom reproduced in a large band. Parker's "Billie's Bounce" is one of his most poignant blues performances (Savoy). "Ko Ko" and "Buzzy" (Savoy), "Ornithology" and "Carving the Bird" (Dial) are good examples of his fantastic melodic line made up of seemingly disjointed phrases. "Lover Man" (Dial) is one of the strangest records in all bebop literature. Made when Parker was seriously ill, it is fragmentary music, and yet some of its phrases are unforgettable.

Theolonius Monk's piano solos tend to be interesting in single phrases, but unorganized as all-over pieces of music. "Well You Needn't" is one of his best, with fine rhythm from Art Blakey and Eugene Ramey, and the reverse side, "Round About Midnight" (Blue Note), is one of his most sensitive small-band compositions. "The Chase" (Dial) with Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray, is based in part on the old New Orleans march, "High Society," and is full of sad phrases. It is also a fine example of the "chase" form itself, in which a phrase is tossed back and forth from one instrument to another, a challenge to the players' wit and invention. Chubby Jackson's "The Happy Monster" (MGM), displays the feeding upon itself that often takes place in bebop, one performance being a variation upon another. Here we have a kidding commentary on Parker's "Ornithology" and Gillespie's typical trumpet phrases. Lucky Thompson's "Boppin' the Blues" (Victor) displays his own sax talents, the sensitive piano of Dodo Mamorosa, the witty trumpet of Neil Hefti and the ability of the veteran, Benny Carter, to fit into a "bop" texture.

S. F.

# The Cemetery Keeper

*A Story by* ZOFIA NALKOWSKA

THE carline to the cemetery skirted the entire length of the ghetto wall. All along the way there were the gaping empty windows, the balconies which until not very long ago had always been crowded, as if the people imprisoned inside were hungry for whatever glimpses they could still have of the outside world. But your attention would be caught by one casement window which swung wide open on the second floor of a not-too-badly damaged house. Inside, a blackened curtain still hung from a twisted curtain rod. There was a flower pot with withered flowers on the sill, and deeper inside the room you could see a cheap sideboard whose doors always swung wide open, too.

The months passed, and no one ever came to straighten the curtain rod, no one shut the doors of the sideboard or threw out the withered plant. . . .

The road to the cemetery changed gradually. Less and less a part of the living world, it became altogether a road of death. Yet, though the cemetery itself was framed in emptiness, it wasn't altogether removed from the orbit of life. For while there, you could still hear and still see.

Above the tender early-spring greenness of the place there rose heavy clouds of black smoke. Now and then a long tongue of flame darted through them like a narrow red scarf flicking in the wind. The sky overhead was filled with the incessant, if distant, hum of planes.

The months passed, but the smoke and the hum of the planes went on and on.

In the meantime, news of fresh deaths reached the city from everywhere. So-and-so had been murdered in a concentration camp, so-and-so at a nameless railroad station. *They* had caught her in the street and sealed her into one of those cattle trains. . . . People were dying in a hundred different ways, for a hundred reasons and for no reason. Sometimes it even seemed as if those of us who remained alive were already dead too, for there was nothing real, nothing solid left for us to hold on to, and it had become impossible to fight back.

So much death everywhere! In the cellars of the cemetery chapels the coffins stood in rows, as if waiting in queues for the proper time of burial. And in the face of this collective monstrous death, simple personal death began to seem hardly proper. But it was still more embarrassing to be alive.

Nothing of the old world seemed real, nothing remained of it. For it was now given to human beings to suffer the inhuman. Terror came to dwell among them, dividing them from each other. At any moment any one of them might become the source of death to another.

Reality could still be borne, for not all of it had become part of one's own experience. Or rather, not all of it was part of anyone's experience at any given time. It reached us in fragments—the experience and the suffering of others, sketchily told. It reached us as the echo of shots, the distant smoke dissolving in the sky, the fires of which history would say later that "they turned everything to ashes."

But most of it we still heard only as meaningless words. All this reality, whether distant, or close at hand but hidden from us by the blind wall, held no truth for us yet. The best the brain could do was to attempt to grapple with it, to try to comprehend.

WE MADE the last lap of the journey to the cemetery on foot, walking along neat gravel pathways. It was Easter Week, the time of solemn spring visits to the dead—the dead of another era, those who had died a natural death.

The graves all had headstones with names and dates, sometimes even a word of praise for old achievement or a reminder of social position. Here and there was a request for a sigh and a prayer. Surely not much to ask! The graves were eternally the same, always repeating the same legend, repeating it shyly, as if uneasy now at such a display of conventionality. It was as if they would be grateful for the merest thought. . . .

Here and there a member of the family had given encouragement to whoever lay beneath the gravestone—some wife or children testifying in carved-stone whispers that "he" had been the best. Here a daughter, herself long dead, promised in letters grown green with moss to love her mother forever.

One grave stood without a cross. On a brownstone tablet, words which once must have had meaning proclaimed extravagantly, "Looking from the lofty vantage-point of evolution into the infinite abyss of the

*Ben-Zion*

future, what we see is not the despairing darkness of eternal death, but the glad light of eternal and ever greater life."

Down death row a woman came toward us—the cemetery keeper who cared for the lawns and the flowers on the graves. She carried the emblems of her profession—a broom and a large watering can. She placed the can on the flat stone under an iron pump and began to fill it.

This part of the cemetery, close under the wall, was luxuriantly green, the graves like small fields of blue and yellow pansies. We breathed

in the sweet smell of lilies-of-the-valley, and the green smell of lilacs about to bloom. The air spoke of moist growth, as it had every spring long ago, at home, in childhood. A field mouse minced daintily among the flowers, stopped, sat up on its haunches, nibbled a little.

Into the sunny silence of the placid cemetery, airplanes floated slowly from the direction of the flying field beyond. They came regularly, one every quarter-hour. After completing a perfect semicircle, they flew beyond the walls of the ghetto. We could not see the bombs which dropped quietly, but where each plane had circled, there rose after a while a long, thin curl of smoke. And presently the flames could be seen too.

The cemetery keeper finished filling her watering can and started to water the flowers. We watched her. She was a familiar figure by now; we sometimes came to talk with her about death and about dying. In times of complete horror, we sought the cemetery as the single spot where a little peace and safety could still be found—we came here as once we used to go to the old family home in search of peace. At such times, the cemetery became our only safe, certain address.

THERE had come a time, however, when the cemetery keeper managed to destroy this last illusion for me.

"Here the graves are best," she happened to say that day. "They're best here because the ground is dry. The body can just lie quietly without rotting, it only dries out. Down at the bottom of the slope where it's damp, the plots are cheaper. Can't put more than two coffins one on top of the other there."

She was a gentle, tender-hearted woman, but she was also competent, always ready with good advice and even with comfort. She was plump and fair-skinned, and she had a deep kind of tolerance. Nothing ever upset her.

"Where the ground is high," she went on, "they had to open a grave once. And they dug up this woman, and she hadn't changed at all. Her husband had them do it. She was young, hardly more than a girl, and they'd buried her all in white. And would you believe it, the dress had stayed white—just like she'd been laid to rest yesterday."

She had forgotten to mention why all this had been necessary. Now she explained. "He had it done for the law. He was suing the hospital, claimed the doctors hadn't taken good enough care of her. You see, after her baby was born she'd killed herself—jumped out of a window. They hadn't watched her carefully. . . . So then they dug her up, took

her to the city hospital for an autopsy. Then they brought her back and buried her a second time, only she wasn't wearing her white dress any more, she was wearing a blue one."

They buried her again, but still not for good. Less than three months later the coffin was disturbed once more. "That husband of hers killed himself, and they had to bury him too. So they made the grave deeper, lined it with brick. Now they both lie here together."

No, she didn't know how the case against the hospital had turned out. But apparently the verdict hadn't satisfied the young husband, since he'd had to find escape from his suffering in death.

There had also come a time when bombs fell on the cemetery. Broken statues and headstones lay in the roadway, disturbing the neatness of the gravel paths. Cracked coffins, gaping open in open graves, showed their dead.

The cemetery keeper kept her equanimity even in the face of this disaster. "It won't hurt them," she decided. "They can't die a second time."

Now, however, as she came back to the pump for more water, I could see she had changed.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "Have you been ill?"

Her round white face, I noticed, was thinner, darker; her forehead wrinkled as if with constant effort, and her eyes had taken on the brilliance of fever.

"Nothing, there's nothing wrong with me," she answered moodily. "It's just that one can't live here peacefully any longer. . . ."

Even her voice had lost its assurance and trembled uncertainly.

"You see, we live right next to the wall, and we can hear everything that goes on on the other side. By now we all know what's what. They shoot them in the streets 'over there.' They burn them alive in their houses. All night long it's nothing but weeping and moaning. Nobody at home can sleep any more, nobody can stand it. Believe me," she finished, "it's no pleasure."

She looked around, as if afraid the graves in the deserted cemetery were eavesdropping. "After all, they're people too, one can't help being sorry for them. But still and all, maybe for us it's best the Germans will do away with them. They hate us worse than the Germans."

She seemed offended when, naively, I tried to argue with her.

"What do you mean: who told me that? Nobody has to tell me anything! Everybody who knows them says the same thing. That if the

Germans ever lost the war, the Jews would take and murder the lot of us. You don't believe me? Even the Germans themselves say it. The radio too."

She knew it for a fact, and this knowledge, this queer faith was something she seemed to need.

She pushed the watering can so it stood directly under the spout and began to work the pump handle. When she was done she raised her head, but her expression was still gloomy. She wrinkled her forehead more deeply, her eyelids fluttered. "It's more than one can bear, however, it's more than one can bear," she muttered.

Her hands shook as she tried to wipe away the easy tears running down her face. "The worst of it is, there's no help for them." She spoke barely above a whisper, as if still afraid of being overheard. "Those who fight back they murder on the spot. And those who don't fight back they take away in trucks—and murder later. So what are the Jews supposed to do?

"They set fire to the houses and won't let the people come out. So mothers wrap their children in whatever they have that's soft, so's not to hurt them more than they have to, and drop them out the windows, to the sidewalk. Then they jump too. Some of them jump holding their babies in their arms. . . ."

She came up close. "From one of our windows the other night we saw a father jump like that with his little boy. First he tried to get the kid to jump on his own. But the little one was afraid. He stood there on the windowsill, and he kept grabbing hold of the frame. And—well, we couldn't see if the father pushed him or what, but they both went down, one after the other."

And she began to cry again, rubbing her tear-stained face.

"Even when you can't see it, you can't help hearing. It's like something soft falling—plunk, plunk. . . . They jump all the time. They'd rather do it that way than burn to death."

She grew silent, listening. It was as if in the soft call of birds in the cemetery trees she heard the distant echo of bodies falling on stone. After a while she picked up her watering can and walked off in the direction of the blue and yellow pansies on the "best" graves. Overhead another plane had risen and in a wide semicircle headed toward the ghetto walls.

*( Translated from the Polish by Jean Karsavina.)*

# BIZONIA
# *BECKONS*

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Kulmbach, Bavaria
16 June 1948
SB/205

Dear Sir—

being convinced to win competent business-men for my ideas, I apply to prominent Americans of exquisite circles with conceptions which presuppose a wide horizon and inclination for reasonable co-operation. I invite you, to boldly accept my proposals. This risk is low, the chance for profit high. Please, talk it over with resolute friends, when you think it too much for you.

The experiment will pay. I show you examples of trustworthy co-operation. Every thought is a small grain developing into a tree, the fruits of which will be yours.

If other businesses are more appealing to you, I arrange for you, whatever is possible in Germany now or later, engage assistants and control them. Interpreters, trades-men, advocates, political economists, chemists, scientists, artists, authors, technicians, handicraft-men, foremen, bookkeepers, typists, stenographers, etc., from apprentices to directors, all of them are available, if their utmost needs are satisfied: with food, clothing, underwear, anyway better than with bad money. Most of them are slender, 6 ft, collar 16, head 22 inches. There is nothing else existing for Germans anymore but difficulties. Therefore, will you please excuse this informal letter, as far as bookprint is concerned and the lack of envelopes.

For Dollars you can get everything here, even steel-houses for offices, storerooms and work-halls, books, machines, furniture, material, cars, etc. Recommendations of authoritative officers of OMGUS through interested Americans back me up against German offices.

*Tempora mutantur.* . . . Germany is now the country of unlimited opportunities. Everybody sees that. High cultured powers are lying idle. Europe is full of values. Let us save them.

I hold out my hand to you. Here is fertile land, but here is no scheme. You need a point of support and someone to be acquainted with the

country. I know open and secret ways, to dig up a "gold-mine" for you in Germany with active initiative.

I show you a few possibilities and examples. Will you please tell me, *what direction* does your interest follow, *how much money* you want to invest, what you *specially like* in my proposals, what *questions or doubts* you would like to have cleared, whether you are going to make a *solid contract* with me, in order to build up an enterprise according to *your orders,* whether you want *participation* in existing plants or *sponsorships* for German firms, whether you rather recommend the foundation of an *American-German Co-operative Association* with small individual shares or at first but *a detailed plan,* worked out by me and *which one.*

Once you have made up your mind, I form, arrange and carry out everything, until you later on can take over yourself and occupy the seat at your desk, may be in a temporary house at first, but with all the necessary equipment and personnel.

What do you wish?

1. A Sanatorium supervised by a doctor with a herb-laboratory, gymnastics, physical culture, and therapeutics for mental disposition, conditions and labor?

2. An institute for advice in good conduct in life, cosmetics, for upkeep of physical expression and attitude? (already existing).

3. An institute for science of business economy connected with a modern Advertising Agency and Propaganda-edition? (my own business).

4. A World-edition for picture-collections, which spreads art and science all over the world? (I am an expert in this matter).

5. A European travelling Mess "Euwa" with the purpose of market regulation and renewal of continental economic relations?

6. A training-school for occupational training of the youth and homecomers with the guaranteed obligation to pay off the training fees by labor?

7. A net of small inexpensive hour-movie-theatres for advertising, training and culture films with trick- and funny-films in between?

8. Sleeping or active partnership in small, medium or important German trade- and industry firms, as printing-works, textile plants, shoe-, leather-, pottery-, porcelain-, and machine-plants, soap-works, shipping-trade, traffic-, construction-, gymnastic-, entertainment-, hotel-enterprises or whatever you want?

9. European businesses of your own interest, checking of the opportunities, market-analysis, carefully planned extension according to your wishes?

10. Opportune enterprises according to American style, as laundry- and linen-service, etc., on a guarantee-basis, construction, steel-house and living-car agents-offices and many others?

Take whatever you like. Let me make the plans. That will cost you not more than 75 Dollars or for a detailed arrangement on more important subjects 350 Dollars, cash disbursements extra. I will make it easy for you. You will not have much trouble with it. Will you please pay half of the fees in advance. The rest I would prefer to get in material: paper for writing and printing purposes, bulbs, suits, even worn ones, worn shirts, hats, blankets, soap, food, etc.

In the long run even a supposed taxation of the American taxpayer for pretended——"Alms" is painful to each intellectual healthy person. Why should one not prefer to give us tasks against corresponding payment? I am well versed with the tasks to be seen from my letter head and may do something for you too if you do not have any European interests yet. Why not criticize once completely impartially or change American plans, texts and ads? This would be a job for me. My greatest joy is if you would give me the chance to make a considerable profit for you. I wish to be paid only for that.

Let us start! Unprejudiced eyes are more sharp-sighted. I will become your friend, whom you can trust, your loyal comrade and your agent. I repay it with the power of my knowledge and my experiences working for your interests. Give me a chance.

Yours truly,
M. W. Schneider

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*We are not quite certain how* M&M *came to be included among the prominent Americans of exquisite circles to whom Herr Schneider sent the above circular. But that he is, in fact, a man of enterprise is shown on the letterhead to which he refers. He is listed as a member of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce for Oberfranken, and a commercial author, publicity specialist and business adviser of thirty years' experience—including 1933 to 1945.*—The Editors.

*Al Blaustein*

# books in review

## Maccabees to Haganah

A TREASURY OF JEWISH FOLKLORE, edited by Nathan Ausubel. *Crown. $4.00.*

IN THIS volume, the most comprehensive collection of its kind, Nathan Ausubel gives us a kaleidoscopic view of Jewish folklore over a period of more than 2,000 years—from ancient times through the Middle Ages, into modern and contemporary periods and up to the present day. *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore* contains a rich selection of tales, legends, parables, proverbs, anecdotes, descriptions, accounts, songs and dances, jokes and quips out of the oral and the written lore of the people. Ausubel's compilation is permeated with warmth, deep understanding and keen evaluation of his people.

A composite picture of the Jew unfolds—a figure that has valued knowledge, guarded justice, cherished beauty. Uprooted many times in their long history, the Jewish people created more than one culture, in more than one tongue, and in different lands. They have fashioned their cultural values in ancient Hebrew, in Aramaic, in Yiddish and in a number of tongues current along the Mediterranean, the Near East and the Orient.

This complex panorama, and the obvious impossibility of embracing all of it in one volume, undoubtedly accounts for the omission in this compilation of material stemming from certain Jewish communities of the world, such as the Spaniolic Jews. Yet, through his division on "The Ten Lost Tribes," Ausubel does acquaint us with some aspects of the life of such Jewish communities as those of Yemen, China, India, Cochin, Ethiopia and the Caucasus.

Though many and varied, these cultures are nevertheless bound together by one "golden thread" of continuity. This continuity, stemming from a community of religious belief, colored the content of the word-and-tone lore created by the people over many centuries. Piety, justice, dignity, simplicity, were the main themes for many generations, fashioned by the talent for story-telling. The worth of man is raised to lofty heights in valorous deeds, as chronicled in ancient times by the exploits of the Maccabees, the heroic revolt of Bar Kochba. In the dark Middle Ages martyrdom for one's religion

takes the place of these direct struggles; they are revived in the Jewish participation in the war for American independence in the New World and the struggle for Polish freedom from czarism in the Old World. An account of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of our own day brings the "golden thread" up to date with one of the outstanding examples of mass heroism in world history. Such is the historical pattern of this compilation.

The bulk of the material is drawn from published and adapted translations of the Midrash and the Agada. Although this presents a number of varied literary styles, the able editorial hand of the author-compiler is felt throughout, especially in those selections that he himself has gathered directly from the "mouth of the people." The close to 700 items treat the "mindskills" of the wise, holy, pious, righteous and charitable men of many generations. The power of prayer, the miracles, the resisting of temptation are illustrated. The mystic legends of the Cabbalists and the fanciful tales of the Hassidic Rabbis are vividly represented.

With the aid of the sharp barbs of folk wit, satire and humor, the skeptics and scoffers, liars and braggarts, misers and stingy men, are exposed. The traditional types of modern Eastern Europe emerge: the scholars and scripture teachers, the cantors, preachers and rabbis, the storekeepers and peddlers, the tailors and cobblers, the rich men and the "schnorrers." The rogues, sinners, tricksters—all pass before us, not as shadows, but animated and alive. Thus the folk has characterized itself unto-itself. The folk has not hesitated to poke fun at itself, to lay bare its weaknesses, its human shortcomings. Thus the lore of the people becomes the unchronicled history book, the unwritten law, transcribed not by the professional historians, but by the people themselves. So vivid are the translations of almost all of the material presented, that one can almost hear the sighs and groans side by side with the chuckles and belly-laughs.

The thirty-odd divisions and sub-divisions of the book are introduced with deep insight by the editor, who traces for the reader the historic background out of which these gems of the people have evolved.

It did appear to me, however, that the section on Proverbs and Riddles was rather slender and not quite representative in view of the material already gathered both here and abroad. I also found the English transcriptions of the Hebrew and Yiddish texts somewhat inconsistent, both as to phonetic application and dialects employed. In this connection, it would be a fine thing if some way were found to evolve a uniform pattern of transcription of Yiddish and

Hebrew texts for scholars active in this field.

"Folklore is a continuous and unending process and flows along with the stream of life," says Nathan Ausubel in his main introduction. Indeed, the *Treasury* is not only a great step forward toward bringing the beauty of Jewish literature and lore to English readers, but the assimilation of this material will undoubtedly stimulate in time some forms of further development and add to the folklore stream of life in our land.

Nathan Ausubel has unveiled with skill and tenderness the human warmth, the joy of learning, the love of the simple life, the dignity, the rich creativeness, the valor of an ancient yet modern people still treading the path of struggle in many parts of the world for equality, security and freedom.

RUTH RUBIN

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## Hollow Hero

THE WELL OF COMPASSION, by David Alman. *Simon & Schuster. $3.00.*

DAVID ALMAN is a novelist who in his first two books has taken as his subject the relations between Negroes and whites. In *The Hourglass* he dealt with the rape of a Negro woman by three white men and the effect

that had on the lives of two of them, and this was handled with directness and vigor. He changes his setting to the North and works with totally different types in his second novel, *The Well of Compassion.* Unfortunately, he merely nicks the corner and raises a little dust.

Lock Sharon, the Negro hero of *The Well of Compassion,* is caught in triple cords—the death of his sweetheart, the conflict between his loyalty to his family and his personal convictions, and the struggle to find himself as a painter. He meets Jo, a white woman, with a studio in downtown Manhattan, and marries her in the belief that this will help break his cords. The neurotic Jo sees in Lock a chance to free herself from her own lack of feeling. The marriage blows up. Jo goes off to Reno for a divorce, and Lock returns to his family, ostensibly with a deeper understanding of them and a compassion for whites, a result of his unhappy experiences with his wife and his growing friendship with the young Jewish woman, Melia, who is also a painter.

Alman's new novel does not carry the suspense and drive of *The Hourglass.* Its structure is weaker. The dialogue and much of the interior monologue is a barren patter which locks the gears of the story. The characters are in the main unreal.

Alman is a social novelist, and

the agents of his vision are his characters. They break down, however, under the load. In *The Hourglass,* Brian Keller is a shiftless, mean, egotistical little lawyer, propelled by his reflexes; he rapes a Negro, beats up a white woman, is constantly being torn and quartered by his frustrations and moods, and never shows contrition or any real human sympathies. Despite this, the author would have us believe that overnight this creature miraculously acquires the soul and courage to stand up and confess in court to the rape, thereby kicking in the teeth everything which as a Southern white he has held dear and defended brutally.

Lock Sharon of *The Well of Compassion* is even less of a man than Keller. He allows his mother to beat him, is led by the nose into marriage, and is so hypnotized by longing for his dead sweetheart that he goes off into mystical trances over his painting of the girl which he calls "She-Jesus." The Lock Sharon whom Alman believes to be a heroic figure is actually incapable of growth, action, or thought. Alman's misconception of Sharon distorts his social vision into its opposite and plays into the hands of those who believe it is impossible to solve Negro and white relations because human nature is weak and is caught in iron molds.

David Alman conceives Lock Sharon as a symbol of the Negro's suffering, struggles and hopes. There is nothing in Lock Sharon which makes him a son of his people; his heart is not touched by them and his hand is not lifted to support them. He is merely a neurotic little man who takes to painting as a release. He would have behaved the same way had he been born a white man. Therefore his story can have no significance to us as a commentary on Negro life.

There is a story in Glenway Wescott's *Goodbye, Wisconsin,* where he uses an image almost as banal as Alman's "She-Jesus" though it does not carry with it any religious mumbo-jumbo. The dying swan, wounded accidentally by the musician who is the hero of the story, is used to symbolize not only his defeat but the defeat of all artists in America. Wescott is able to get into the soul of the artist; the sounds of the forest into which he flees are described graphically as a musician would hear them; the dying swan lives for us magnificently in its last agonies; and thus Wescott is completely successful in conveying to the reader his views and reasons for the artist's tragedy. For Wescott with all his shortcomings had psychological penetration; he never took on in his fiction more than he could handle, and was one of the most conscientious of craftsmen.

So long as Alman fails to solve the question of character, his novels will not stand up. It is un-

fortunate that in this respect his second novel is inferior to the first. There the daughter of the storekeeper who participates in the rape lives vividly for us in one cloudburst of a scene; in general, Alman does better with his minor characters. Otherwise, he is at sea. This prevents his breadth of vision, his personal warmth and courage from getting into his work and being communicated to his readers.

In the novel we have one of the most independent, elastic and prodigious of literary forms, presenting the serious novelist with such opportunities that for him to be aware of them is to have the battle partly won. The function of the novelist is to seize on reality, drag it into the corner of his heart, and there, mixing its life freely with his own, recreate the materials which go into his work. But Alman's perceptions have not been sharp enough, and he has spared his heart and hands. It is this which explains the failure of *The Well of Compassion.* It is this which presents a challenge he will have to meet. BEN FIELD

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## OM!

APE AND ESSENCE, by Aldous Huxley. *Harper. $2.50.*

IN HIS current satire, *Ape and Essence,* Aldous Huxley has raised his pillow to strike a soft blow against society. It is a curi-

ously vacant book in which the reader searches, first eagerly, then hopelessly, for the old Huxley wit.

Huxley casts his story in the form of a movie scenario. The time is the year 2108; the place, our world after atomic wars have ravaged it. Only New Zealand remains miraculously untouched by the catastrophic wars and the reign of evil which follow. Many infants born in this new world are horribly deformed as a result of exposure to gamma rays. Every year a festival is held at which infants who do not meet new and relaxed standards of physical normalcy are murdered. A cynical priesthood of evil, intended to satirize all political movements of today, manages this chamber of horrors. To this world comes the New Zealander, Dr. Poole, who meets and loves Loola. Dr. Poole leads Loola to salvation, to "the supernatural reality that underlies all appearances."

Why is it, then, that Dr. Poole has no more impact on the reader than a bubble bath? And why do we remember of Loola only that she had four nipples on her breasts, more than enough for one woman, but too few to nourish 205 pages of satire?

Huxley is interested only in individual retreat. He makes no attempt to prove his moral that only the use of the navel as Open Sesame to the Absolute will save the world. He simply states this moral and lets it fall by itself. He does

not inform us what "supernatural reality" underlies the appearance of the landlord who wants last month's rent. The Narrator, who is the voice of Huxley, may talk of "the fruits of the spirit that is your essence and the essence of the world," but he never offers an answer to the cosmic and very relevant question, "What's that got to do with the price of meat?"

Would Huxley have us apes achieve manhood by shouting "OM"? According to the Swami Prabhavananda, this word "OM" vibrates through the universe, and "the worship of God and meditation upon Him can be effected by repeating OM and meditating upon its meaning" (*Vedanta for the Western World*).

Huxley underwrote this arrant nonsense in his contributions to *Vedanta for the Western World*, a book, incidentally, which critics received with such a straight face that one wonders what has happened to the America which produced a Mark Twain. This book contains a more complete exposition of the message Huxley attempts to convey in *Ape and Essence*. As a Vedantist, he urges us to answer the evils of society, the threat of atomic war, of unemployment and disease, of vested interests, of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the farmer and the middle class, the Communist and the capitalist (*everybody's* in the act!) by pursing our lips into an

oval shape and intonating a strong, but meditative OM.

While the OM's resound, the stockpiling of atom bombs continues.

For those who do their thinking with their heads, and consider that the navel, having once fulfilled its umbilical function, is no more than a repository for lint, *Ape and Essence* is a peculiarly forgettable book.

IRA WALLACH

## In Brief

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, by Benjamin Quarles. *Associated Publishers. $4.00.*

AFTER years of research, Dr. Quarles, professor of history at Dillard University, has produced the only authoritative life of Frederick Douglass thus far published. This biography has the all-around quality of competent scholarship combined with lively interest and sustained readability. It also has grave faults. It contains cynical observations concerning the Abolitionists and the Radical Republicans which probably stem from the influence of the author's "great teacher," Dr. William B. Hesseltine of the University of Wisconsin. More serious is the fact that Douglass' militancy, his unceasing battle for the full and complete equality of his people, his powerful indictments of the oppression of all people do not appear in their proper focus. Un-

less these things are central only the skeleton of the man emerges.

A definitive biography of Douglass need not be a volume of eulogy and panegyric alone. But it must make crystal clear for us the heritage of this great champion of freedom. This Dr. Quarles has not done.

SEEDS OF LIBERTY, by Max Savelle. *Knopf. $6.50.*

THIS is a solid and first-rate job of historical writing. It is the best single-volume survey of the intellectual history of the American colonies (the book covers only the period up to the Revolution) in existence. It proceeds, with only occasional lapses, from the author's belief that "it is experience that generates ideas." Given this sound starting-point, Max Savelle has produced a sorely-needed analysis of the religious, scientific, political and social thinking of the articulate classes of colonial society as well as of their literature, art, architecture and music.



WHEN THIS YOU SEE REMEMBER ME: GERTRUDE STEIN IN PERSON, by W. G. Rogers. *Rinehart. $3.00.*

A SERIES of intimate personal impressions rather than an attempt to estimate Miss Stein's literary achievement, this book reveals some of the shrewd, stubborn, practical qualities that underlay the more eccentric features of the Stein legend.

Distinctively new is the material on Gertrude Stein's politics. She opposed the Spanish Loyalists, supported Petain, found Mussolini's Italy congenial. A lifelong Republican, she disliked Roosevelt and was drawn to Croix de Feu circles, finding that "white is bad but not so bad as red."

"She was a rentier," writes Mr. Rogers, "and possessed a rentier's mentality in matters of taxes, jobs and government."

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