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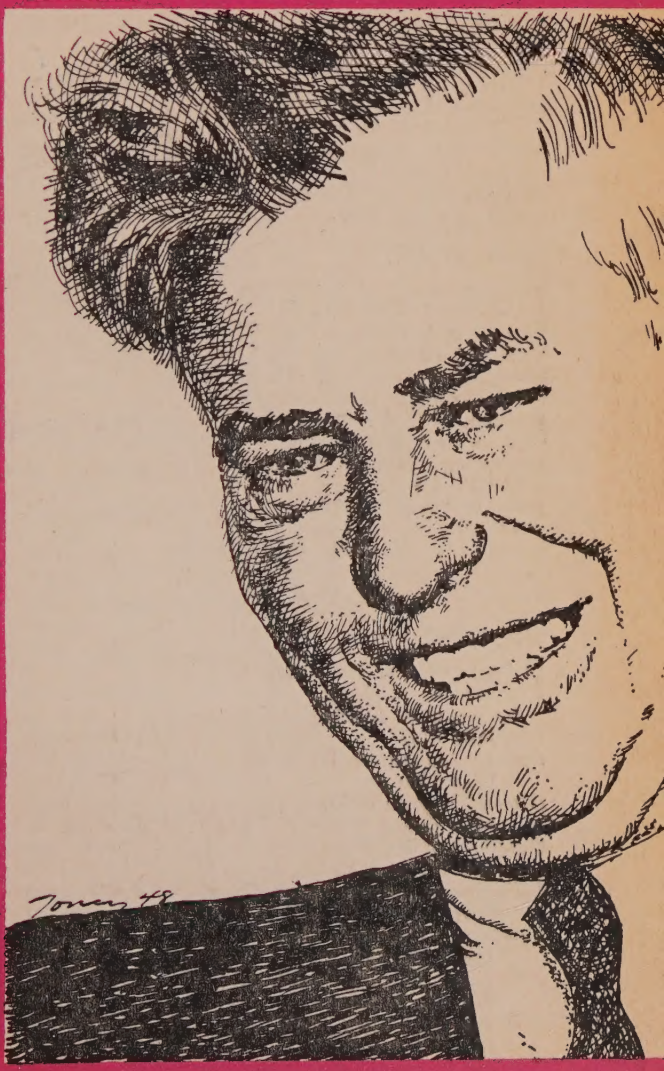

ge of the New Party — ADAM LAPIN

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Art by Bard, Halpert, Kruckman, Lawrence, Marin.

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JACOB LAWRENCE, whose series of paintings on John Brown appeared in part in the Winter, 1947, issue of *Mainstream,* is the first Negro artist to have had a one-man show at the Museum of Modern Art.

ANTON REFREGIER is back in New York after an extended stay on the West Coast.

WALDEEN is an American dancer who, at the invitation of the Mexican government, founded the Mexican National Ballet and Academy several years ago.

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COVER: by Anthony Toney

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

THE HUNTED POET *speaks*

MASSES & MAINSTREAM considers it an extraordinary privilege to publish Pablo Neruda's "Let the Rail Splitter Awake." In this stirring work the foremost poet of our hemisphere speaks directly to the people of the United States. His message has a life or death urgency for the land of Lincoln and Whitman which under Wall Street rule is traveling toward disaster. It is more than a plea for peace, more than an appeal to the memory and conscience of Americans. It is a stern warning that our country will suffer the fate of Germany if the warmakers are permitted to triumph here. And this cry, born of love for all that is good on this continent and matured by kinship with the advancing peoples of the entire world, must arouse new energies in our struggle against fascism.

Neruda is himself a man hunted by those betrayers of his Chile who are serving United States imperialism. Driven from his office as Senator, victim of that anti-Communist inquisition which is the hallmark of fascism everywhere, the poet was not to be silenced—no more than Julius Fuchik in a Nazi prison in Prague, no more than Gabriel Peri at the very moment before his execution.

Neruda is in his own person a symbol of the anti-fascist intellectual of our time who cannot be swerved from the defense of democracy whatever the threat of pain or prison, a symbol of the fight that has its unyielding leaders here in artists like Howard Fast, Paul Robeson, John Howard Lawson and Albert Maltz.

Fittingly, a resolution on behalf of the Chilean poet was presented by Pablo Picasso at the World Congress of Intellec-

tuals for Peace held recently at Wroclaw, Poland. This highly significant gathering of 500 writers, artists, scientists from forty-five countries issued a manifesto against the "handful of self-interested men in America and Europe" who use culture not to enlighten and unite the people, but to preach hatred and prepare for war. The appeal of the Congress that anti-fascist intellectuals in every country gather in national cultural congresses for peace is one to which all progressives in the United States will eagerly respond.

Neruda, the poet-in-arms, exemplifies the truth that intellectuals cannot separate their fight from that of labor and the Communist Party for civil liberties, security and peace. A crucial battle-line today is the defense of the twelve Communist leaders indicted on a frame-up charge. For if the government can make this indictment stick, the freedom to read and write, to exchange ideas, will suffer the most catastrophic setback in our history—a complete blackout of intellectual liberty in America. If we permit this to happen without a fight in which every one of us participates—to the hilt of his powers—we shall indeed have been deaf to the impassioned message of Pablo Neruda's poem.

THE EDITORS

LET THE RAIL SPLITTER AWAKE

by PABLO NERUDA

"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell. . . ."
MATTHEW 11:23.

I

WEST of the Colorado river is a place I love.
I turn toward it, with everything that lives in me,
with all that I was, and am, and believe.
There are tall red rocks, made structures
by the savage air with its thousand hands,
and the scarlet sky arose from the abyss
into them, becoming copper, fire and strength.
America, stretched like a buffalo hide,
aerial, clear night of gallop,
there, toward the starred summits
I drink your cup of green dew.

Yes, through acrid Arizona and knotty Wisconsin,
to Milwaukee upraised against wind and snow,
in the hot swamps of West Palm,
near the pine groves of Tacoma, in the dense
steel aroma of your woods,
I walked upon mother earth,
blue leaves, stones beneath waterfalls,
hurricanes trembling like music,

rivers in prayer like monasteries,
wild geese and apples, land and water,
infinite stillness wherein the wheat is born.

There, from within my central rock of being
I could extend my eyes, ears, hands on the air
until I heard books, engines, snow, struggles,
factories, graves, plants, footsteps,
and from Manhattan the moon on a ship,
the song of the weaving machine,
the iron spoon that devours earth,
the drill that strikes like a condor
and all that oppresses, cuts, sews, runs:
people and wheels in continuous motion and birth.

I love the farmer's small home. New mothers
asleep, fragrant as tamarind syrup: freshly ironed cloth:
fires burning in a thousand homes
surrounded by onion fields.
(The men when they sing down near the river
have voices rough as the stones on its bottom:
tobacco arose from its wide leaves
and like a fiery goblin entered these homes.)
Come into Missouri, look at its cheese and grain,
at the fragrant boards red as violins,
the man navigating a barley-field,
the newly-broken, blue-black colt
that scents bread and alfalfa:
bells, poppies, blacksmiths' forges,
and in the jumble of sylvan cinemas
love bares its teeth
in a dream born of earth.

It is your peace that we love, not your mask.
Your warrior's face is not handsome.
You are vast and beautiful, North America.
Your origin is humble like a washerwoman's,
white, beside your rivers.

Shaped in the unknown,
it is your peace of honeycomb that is most sweet.
We love your man whose hands are red
from the clay of Oregon, your Negro son
who brought you his music born
in the ivory zones, we love
your city, your substance,
your light, your machinery, the energy
of the West, the tranquil honey
of apiary and small town,
the husky boy riding a tractor,
the oat-fields you inherited
from Jefferson, the roaring wheel
that measures out your oceanic territory,
factory smoke and the kiss number a thousand
of a new settlement:
your industrious blood is what we love:
your worker's hand grimed with oil.

Under the prairie night, since long ago,
resting on a buffalo hide in grave silence
are the syllables, the song
of what I was before being, of what we were.
Melville is a marine yew-tree, from his branches
springs a curve of prow, an arm
of wood and ship. Whitman endless
as the fields of grain, Poe in his mathematical
twilight, Dreiser, Wolfe,
fresh wounds in our own absence,
Lockridge, recently dead, bound to the depths,
how many others, bound to the shadows,
while above them burns the same hemispheric dawn
and of them is made what we are.
Powerful infants, blind captains,
and actions and foliage at times terrifying,
interrupted by joy and pain,
beneath prairies traversed by traffic,
how many dead on plains never before visited:

tormented innocents, prophets newly published,
upon the buffalo skins of the prairies.

From France, from Okinawa, from the atolls
of Leyte (Norman Mailer has recorded it),
from the furious air and waves, almost all
the young soldiers have returned.
Almost all. . . . Green and bitter was their story
of mud and sweat: too rarely did they hear
the song of coral reefs, perhaps they never touched
except to die in the islands, the brilliant fragrant
flowers:
blood and dung
pursued them, filth and rats,
and a weary, desolate, fighting heart.
But now they have come back, you have received them
in your open, far-reaching land
and they have closed up (those who returned)
like a corolla of innumerable, anonymous petals,
to be reborn, and to forget.

II

But they found a guest in the house,
or they brought new eyes (or were blind before)
or rasping branches tore their eyelids
or there are new things in the American land.
Those Negroes who fought with you, hard and smiling,
look:
men have placed a flaming cross
in their part of town,
they have hanged and burned your brother in blood:
they made him a man of combat, today they deny him
voice and decision; at night the hooded
executioners gather, with whip and cross.
(It was another story
overseas, in battle.)

An unexpected guest
like an old gnawed octopus, immense and encircling,
has installed himself in your house, my soldier friend.
The press exudes the ancient venom, distilled in Berlin:
magazines (*Time, Newsweek,* etc.) are raucous
yellow sheets of defamation; Hearst,
who sang a love song to the Nazis, smiles
and sharpens his claws so that you may go out again
toward the reefs or the steppes
to fight for that guest within your house.
They give you no respite: they want to keep on selling
steel and bullets, they prepare more gunpowder
which must be sold quickly, before fresh weapons
advance grasped by new hands.

Everywhere the bosses now settled
in your mansion enlarge their falanges,
they love Franco Spain and offer you a cup of blood:
(one executed, one hundred): the Marshall cocktail.
Choose young blood: farmers
in China, prisoners
in Spain,
blood and sweat in the sugar-fields of Cuba,
tears of the women
in the coal and copper mines of Chile;
next, beat it with energy,
like blows with a truncheon,
and don't forget the ice cubes and some drops
from the song "Let us defend Christian culture."
Is this a bitter mixture?
You will grow used to it, soldier friend, and drink it.
At whatever place in the world, in moonlight
or in the morning, in the luxury hotel,
ask for this drink that strengthens and refreshes
and pay for it with a good bill bearing the image of Washington.

You have also discovered that Charles Chaplin,
last father of tenderness in the world,

is defamed, and that the writers (Howard Fast and others)
the scientists and the artists
of your country
must submit to being judged for "Un-American" thoughts
before a tribunal of merchants enriched by the war.
To the remotest corner of the world fear has come.
My aunt reads this news and is frightened,
all the eyes on earth watch
these courts of shame and vengeance.
This is the justice of blood-stained Babbitts,
of the slaveholders, the assassins of Lincoln,
it is the new Inquisition which now arises
not for the cross (even that was horrible, inexplicable),
but for the round gold which rings
on the tables of whorehouses and banks
and which has no right to judge.

Morínigo, Trujillo, González Videla,
Somoza, Dutra, joined forces in Bogotá, and applauded.
You, young American, do not know them, they are
the somber vampires of *our* skies, bitter
is the shadow of their wings:
prisons,
martyrdom, death, hatred: the southern countries
with their petroleum and nitrate
have conceived monsters.
In Chile, in the night,
the hangman's order arrives at the humble, damp
house of the miner. The children
awake crying.
Thousands are in jail,
are thinking.
In Paraguay
the deep forest shade hides
the bones of a murdered patriot, a shot
sounds
in the phosphorescence of summer.
Truth
died there.

In Santo Domingo why didn't
Mr. Vandenberg, Mr. Armour, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Hearst
intervene to defend the West?
Tormented, aroused in the night, why was
the President of Nicaragua driven to flight,
to death in exile?
(Bananas must be defended there, not liberties,
and Somoza will suffice for this.)
These great
victorious ideas penetrate Greece and China
to aid governments stained like dirty carpets.
Ah, Soldier!

III

I ALSO go beyond your lands, America,
there I make my wandering home, flying, traveling, singing
and conversing throughout the days.
And in Asia, in the U.S.S.R., in the Urals I pause
and expand my soul permeated with solitude and resin.
I love whatever man has created in space
by blow of struggle and love.
My house in the Urals is still surrounded
by the ancient night of pines
and silence like a tall beehive.
Here, wheat and steel
were born from the hand of man, from his breast.
And singing of hammers enlivens the aged woods
like a blue phenomenon.
From here I look across wide regions of man,
a geography of children and women, of factories,
love and songs, of schools
which gleam like violets in the forest
where the wild fox lived until yesterday.
From this point my hand, as if across a map,
traces the green of meadows, the smoke
of a thousand workshops, the smell
of textiles, the marvel
of harnessed energy.

In the afternoons I return
along new, freshly-laid roads
and enter kitchens
where cabbage is boiling, and from where
a new spring will flow for the world.

Here too the young men returned
but many millions were left behind,
swollen, hanging from gallows,
burned in special ovens,
destroyed so that nothing remains
but their names in the memory.
Their villages too were murdered:
the Soviet earth was murdered:
millions of glass bits and bones were mingled,
cattle and factories, even Spring disappeared
swallowed up by the war.
Even so, the young men returned.
And love for the country they had built
was merged in them with so much blood
that they speak *My Land* with their veins,
Soviet Union they sing with their blood.
The voice of the invaders from Berlin
still echoed loudly when they returned
to help the cities, animals and Spring
in their rebirth.

Walt Whitman, lift up your grassy beard,
look with me from this wood,
from these fragrant heights,
what do you see, Walt Whitman?
I see, my wise brother tells me,
how factories are working in that city
remembered by the dead,
in pure resplendent Stalingrad.
I see how from the embattled plains,
from the suffering and the flames,
in the humid morning there is born
a tractor which clanks toward the fields.

Give me your voice and the strength of your buried breast,
Walt Whitman, and the solemn roots that are your face
so as to sing of these reconstructions!
Together we will pay homage to what arises
from all the grief, to what surges up
from the deep silence, from the somber
victory.
Stalingrad, your steel voice emerges,
floor by floor hope is rebuilt
like a collective house
and again a deep vibration is on the march
teaching
singing
building.
Stalingrad emerges from blood
like an orchestra of water, stone and iron,
and bread is reborn in the bakeries,
Spring in the schools, the wind climbs
new scaffoldings, new trees,
while the stern old Volga throbs quietly.
These books
in fresh shelves of pine and cedar
reunite above the graves
of dead hangmen,
these theatres built among ruins
cover martyrdom and resistance:
books clear as monuments:
one book over every hero
over every millimeter of death
over every petal of this immutable glory.

Soviet Union, if we could gather up
all the blood spilled in your struggles,
all you gave as a mother to the world
so that freedom, dying, might live,
we would have a new ocean
larger than any other
deeper than any other

vibrant as all rivers
active as the fire of Araucanian volcanoes.
Sink your hand into this sea,
man of every nation,
then withdraw and drown in it
all that has forgotten, outraged,
lied and stained,
all that joined the hundred small curs
of the Western dung-heap
and insulted your blood,
Mother of free men!

From the fragrant Ural pines
I watch the library which is being born
in the heart of Russia,
the laboratory in which silence itself works,
I watch trains carrying lumber and songs
to new cities,
and in this balsamic peace a beat starts
as if in a new breast,
girls and doves return to the steppe
disturbing its whiteness,
orange trees become peopled with gold,
now, at each dawn
the market-place has a new aroma,
a new aroma which arrives from the high lands
where martyrdom was greater,
the map of plains trembles
with engineers writing their numbers,
and aqueducts twist like long serpents
across the earth of a new misty winter.

In three rooms of the ancient Kremlin
lives a man named Joseph Stalin.
The light goes out late in his room.
The world and his country give him no rest.
Other heroes have brought a country into being;
beyond this, he helped to conceive his

and construct it
and defend it.
His immense land, therefore, is part of himself
and he cannot rest because she does not.
In other times snow and gunpowder
found him facing the old bandits
who wished (as again now) to revive
the knout and misery, the anguish of serfs,
the dormant pain of millions of poor.
He was against the Wrangels and Denikins
sent by the West to "defend culture."
They were stripped of their hides there, those
defenders of the hangmen, and throughout the wide
lands of the U.S.S.R. Stalin worked day and night.
But later in a leaden wave came
the Germans fattened up by Chamberlain.
Stalin confronted them at all the vast frontiers,
in all their retreats, in all their advances,
and as far as Berlin, like a hurricane of people
his sons arrived, bringing the broad peace of Russia.

Molotov and Voroshilov are there,
I see them with the others, the high generals,
the indomitable ones.
Firm as snow-covered oak-groves.
None of them has palaces.
None of them has regiments of slaves.
None of them was made wealthy by the war,
by selling blood.
None of them like a peacock
travels to Rio de Janeiro or Bogotá
to command petty satraps, blood-stained torturers.
None of them has two hundred suits,
none of them owns shares in armament factories,
and all of them own shares
in the joy and construction
of that immense country where dawn resounds
arising from the night of death.

They said "comrade" to the world.
They made the carpenter king.
No camel shall pass through this needle's eye.
They cleansed the villages.
Divided the land.
Elevated the serf.
Eliminated the beggar.
Annihilated the cruel.
Brought light into the deep night.

Because of this, Arkansas boy, or rather
you, gilded youth of West Point, or better
you, Detroit mechanic, or instead
you, stevedore of old New Orleans, to all of you
I speak and say this: walk firmly,
open your ear to the vast human world,
it is not the elegant gentlemen of the State Department
nor the ferocious steel barons who are
speaking to you
but a poet from the extreme south of America
son of a railroad worker from Patagonia,
American as the Andean air,
today a fugitive from a country wherein
prison, torture and anguish rule,
while copper and oil gradually transform
into gold for the foreign lords.
You are not the idol
who carries gold in one hand
and in his other the Bomb.
You are
what I am, what I was, what we must
protect, the fraternal sub-soil
of pure America, the simple
men of streets and roadways.
My brother Juan sells shoes
just like your brother John,
my sister Juana peels potatoes
just like your cousin Jane,

and my blood is of miners and sailors
like your blood, Peter.
You and I will open doors
so that the Ural air will blow
through the curtains of ink,
you and I will tell the infuriated:
"My dear fellow, just this far and no further,"
for beyond, the land belongs to us
and no whistle of machine-gun will be heard there,
but a song, another song, and another.

IV

But if you arm your hosts, North America,
to destroy this pure border
and send the Chicago slaughterer
to govern the music and order
which we love,
we will emerge from stones and air
to bite you,
we will emerge from the last window
to fire upon you,
we will emerge from the deepest waves
to stab you with thorns,
we will emerge from the furrows so that the seed
can smash like a Colombian fist,
we will emerge to deny you bread and water,
we will emerge to burn you in hell.

Don't set foot in gentle France then, soldier,
for we will be there to see that the green vines
shall give vinegar and the poor girls
shall point out to you the spot
where German blood is still fresh.
Don't climb the dry mountain ranges of Spain
for every rock will turn into flame,
and there the valiant fight for a thousand years:
don't get lost among the olive trees

for you will never return to Oklahoma, and don't enter
Greece, because even the blood you are shedding there today
will rise up and stop you.
Don't come fishing in Tocopilla
because the sword-fish will know of your plunder
and the obscure miner from Araucania
will seek out the ancient cruel arrows
buried and awaiting new conquistadors.
Don't trust the gaucho singing his *vidalita*
nor the packinghouse workers, they
will be everywhere with eyes and fists,
like the Venezuelans who will wait for you
a bottle of petroleum in one hand, in the other a guitar.
Sandino sleeps in the forest until your coming,
his rifle covered with lianas and rain,
his face without eyelids,
but the wounds where you killed him are alive
like the hands of Puerto Rico which wait
for the light of knives.
The world will be implacable toward you.
Not only will the islands be deserted but also the air
which now hears words that it loves.

Don't dare demand manflesh
from lofty Peru: in the ragged mist of ruins
our blood's gentle ancestors sharpen their
amethyst swords against you, and in the valleys
sound the hoarse conch-shells of battle, calling
together warriors with their slings, the sons
of Amarú. Nor along the Mexican sierras
need you search for men, to bring them into combat
against the dawn. For the rifles of Zapata are not sleeping,
they are oiled and aimed at the Texas plains.
Do not enter Cuba, where in the ocean glare,
in the sweaty sugar-cane fields,
one single dark glance awaits you
and a single cry, until it dies or kills.

Do not advance
to the Partisan lands in murmurous Italy:
don't pass beyond the rows of soldiers in slick uniforms
that you maintain in Rome, don't go past Saint Peter's:
beyond that the rustic village saints,
the marine and fishing saints,
love the great country of steppes
where the world flowered anew.
Do not approach
the bridges of Bulgaria, they won't let you pass;
in the rivers of Rumania we will throw boiling blood
to scald the invaders;
do not hail the farmer who now knows the tomb
of his feudal lords, who with his plow
and rifle stands guard, do not look at him
for he will burn you like a star.
Do not disembark
in China: Chiang the mercenary will not be there:
but awaiting you will be a forest of farmers'
sickles and a volcano of gunpowder.

In other wars there were ditches filled with water,
then endless barbed wire with prongs and claws,
but this ditch is wider, these waters deeper,
these wires more invincible than any metal.
They are one and another atom of human metal,
they are one and a million knots of lives and lives,
they are the old griefs of the peoples
of all remote valleys and lands
of all flags and ships
of all caves wherein they were piled up
of all fish-nets with which they strode against tempests
of all the jagged furrows of the earth
of all the hells with their fiery cauldrons
of all looms and foundries
of all locomotives lost or assembled.
This wire encircles the world a thousand times:
it seems divided, uprooted,

then suddenly it joins magnets
until it fills the earth.

But even farther on,
radiant and resolute
steely, smiling
ready for song or combat
there await you
men and women of the tundra and taiga,
warriors of the Volga who vanquished death,
children of Stalingrad, giant of the Ukraine,
all one vast high wall of stone and blood,
iron and song, courage and hope.
If you touch this battlement you will fall
consumed like coal in the factories,
and the smiles from Rochester will turn into shadows
that will scatter over the air of the steppes
to be buried forever in snow.
There will come the fighters who from Great Peter to new heroes
have astonished the earth,
and they will make of your medals small cold bullets
to whistle ceaselessly across the entire
tremendous land that today is joyous.
And the vine-covered laboratory
will also release the unchained atom
toward your proud cities.

V

Let none of this happen.
Let the Rail Splitter awake.
Let Abe come with his axe
and his wooden plate
to eat with the farmers.
Let his head like tree-bark,
his eyes like those in wooden-planks
and oak-tree boles,
turn to look on the world

rising above the foliage
higher than the sequoias.
Let him buy something in a drugstore
let him take a bus to Tampa
let him bite into a yellow apple
and enter a moviehouse to talk
with all the simple people.

Let the Rail Splitter awake.

Let Abe come, let his aged yeast raise
the green and gold earth of Illinois,
let him lift up his axe in his own town
against the new slaveholders
against the slave-lash
against the poisoned printing-press
against the bloodied merchandise
they want to sell.
Let them march singing and smiling,
the young white, the young Negro,
against the walls of gold
against the manufacturer of hate
against the merchant of their blood,
let them sing, laugh and conquer.

Let the Rail Splitter awake.

Peace for the twilights to come,
peace for the bridge, peace for the wine,
peace for the stanzas which pursue me
and in my blood uprise entangling
my earlier songs with earth and loves,
peace for the city in the morning
when bread wakes up, peace for the Mississippi,
source of rivers,
peace for my brother's shirt,
peace for books like a seal of air,
peace for the great kolkhoz of Kiev,

peace for the ashes of those dead
and of these other dead, peace for the grimy
iron of Brooklyn, peace for the letter-carrier
who from house to house goes like the day,
peace for the choreographer who shouts
through a funnel to the honeysuckle vine,
peace for my own right hand
that wants to write only Rosario,
peace for the Bolivian, secretive
as a lump of tin, peace
so that you may marry, peace for all
the saw-mills of Bió-Bió,
peace for the torn heart
of guerrilla Spain,
peace for the little museum in Wyoming
where the most lovely thing
is a pillow embroidered with a heart,
peace for the baker and his loaves,
and peace for the flour, peace
for all the wheat to be born,
for all the love which will seek its tasselled shelter,
peace for all those alive: peace
for all lands and all waters.

Here I say farewell, I return
to my house, in my dreams
I return to Patagonia where
the wind rattles the barns
and the ocean spatters ice.
I am nothing more than a poet: I love all of you,
I wander about the world I love;
in my country they jail miners
and soldiers give orders to judges.
But I love even the roots
in my small cold country,
if I had to die a thousand times over
it is there I would die,

if I had to be born a thousand times over
it is there I would be born
near the tall wild pines
the tempestuous south wind
the newly-purchased bells.
Let none think of me.
Let us think of the entire earth
and pound the table with love.
I don't want blood again
to saturate bread, beans, music:
I wish they would come with me:
the miner, the little girl,
the lawyer, the seaman,
the doll-maker,
to go into a movie and come out
to drink the reddest wine.
I did not come to solve anything.
I came here to sing
and for you to sing with me.

From somewhere in the Americas, May, 1948.
(*Translated from the Spanish by Waldeen.*)

The Challenge of the NEW PARTY

by ADAM LAPIN

EARLY in 1887 Frederick Engels wrote from London to an American friend: "The movement in America, just at this moment, is I believe best seen from across the ocean. On the spot personal bickerings and local disputes must obscure most of the grandeur of it." With eager interest the great German socialist was watching the young American giant of labor flex his muscles and move into the political arena.

The labor movement was growing by leaps and bounds, labor parties were being formed, and demonstrating remarkable strength. Even the terror of the Haymarket frame-up did not prevent a Cook County labor party in Chicago from polling twenty-seven per cent of the total vote in 1886. A newly formed labor party in Milwaukee elected a Congressman that year. And in New York, leaders of the A. F. of L. and Knights of Labor broke with Tammany to support Henry George, the single-taxer, on a labor party ticket.

Engels described Henry George's single-tax program as "a colossal mass of fraud." But he was more interested in the almost 70,000 votes polled, despite trickery and intimidation, by a labor ticket in New York, and the strength displayed by a new labor movement spilling over into politics. "A million or two of workingmen's votes next November for a bona fide workingmen's party is worth infinitely more at present than a hundred thousand votes for a doctrinally perfect platform," he wrote. He expected that there might soon be an attempt "to consolidate the moving masses on a national basis." He hoped he was witnessing an historic breakaway from the two old capitalist parties, that a new working-class party was in the making.

But the consolidation of the scattered local labor parties of 1886 never took place. The Knights of Labor, already disintegrating, never entered politics in a systematic or consistent fashion. Samuel Gompers, the new up-and-coming leader of the A. F. of L., was developing a

theory of pure and simple trade unionism that shunned political action. Although he participated in the Henry George campaign, Gompers explained years later that he viewed it merely as "a demonstration of protest" and said that "political action had no appeal for me."

Large-scale industry produced a working class strong enough to jeopardize capitalist control. At the same time, the industrialists systematically cultivated the techniques for perpetuating their power. These men produced the incredible corruption of the post-Civil War era, the purchase of politicians and parties, of favors and policies. They took over both the Democratic and Republican parties and devised what has been called the planned rotation in office between the two. Thus Andrew Carnegie, the great steel tycoon, deliberately divided his contributions in 1892 between the Republican Benjamin Harrison and the Democratic Grover Cleveland, but thought it might be better if a Democrat would win that time. And when the election was over, he wrote from Europe to his partner, Henry Frick: "Cleveland! Landslide! Well, we have nothing to fear and perhaps it is best. People will think the Protected Manfrs. are attended to and quit agitating. Cleveland is a pretty good fellow." The capitalists perfected methods for the seduction of the labor movement, cultivating the illusion that labor could play it smart by keeping in the good graces of both old parties.

AGAIN and again new parties of revolt and protest battered against the two-party system of monopoly. They disintegrated not because the two-party system was impregnable but because they were undermined by internal weakness. They lacked above all the labor backing necessary to give direction, leadership and permanence to any new anti-monopoly party.

Labor played only a subsidiary role in the Populist movement, which remained until the end essentially agrarian, deluded by the Free Silver issue and finally sucked into the dead-end of Democratic politics. A primary reason for the petering out of the socialist upsurge at the turn of the century was the growing supremacy of middle-class ideas and leadership in its ranks. Theodore Roosevelt's Square Deal and Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom were reform movements from the top, influenced by labor only to the degree that they were designed to head off working-class revolt and socialist influence.

It was not until the La Follette effort of 1924 that the labo movement briefly entered the national political arena. But if labo supplied the strength of La Follette's short-lived Progressive party, did not supply the program or the direction. This the leaders of th A. F. of L. and the Railroad Brotherhoods took ready-made, and with out question. Indeed, they participated in the La Follette movemen only because they were compelled to do so by the enormous rank-and file demand for a new party which piled up after World War I. An the premise of their participation was that they could better destro the La Follette movement from within. They succeeded in doing th early in 1925 when they disbanded the new party before it was full born.

The New Deal, like the Square Deal and the New Freedom befor it, was initially a product of upper-class reform. Unlike its predecessor however, it gave impetus to a great upsurge of labor, to a mass awaken ing of the people, to a powerful coalition of workers, farmers, middle class groups and the Negro people. And this movement in turn im parted strength and vitality to the New Deal. But the labor leade who supported Roosevelt (there were some in the upper echelons o the A. F. of L. who never did, who considered even the moderate Ne Deal reforms radical and socialistic) played the old game of follo the leader. They had no independent program. And except on a stat or local basis, there was no independent political organization of th progressive forces in the New Deal coalition.

This helps explain the shattering break-up of the New Deal imme diately after the death of Roosevelt. It was inevitable that the end o the war should witness a massive political offensive by the same pow erful groups which had challenged without cease the New Deal. Th would have come whether Roosevelt had lived or died. The threat o reaction was inherent in an economic situation immensely favorab to the monopoly interests which had thrived on the war. What wa not inevitable, however, was the ease and speed with which big bus ness won its victory, scrapped the Roosevelt foreign policy, imposed reconversion program which eliminated all obstacles in the path o monopoly prices, profits and policies. Not inevitable was the absenc of any serious opposition in Congress, the failure of any people movement to challenge the reactionary tide, the confusion, the lack o direction and even the treachery in the labor movement and amon liberals generally.


Phil Bond

This was the pay-off for the crimes of omission and commission during the New Deal era, no less than the Republican reaction of the Twenties was the pay-off for the failure of the labor movement and its allies to form a permanent party out of the La Follette movement. The impotence of the progressive forces, apparently unable to fight back against the bipartisan coalition which developed during the Truman Administration, was the price they paid for not having attained independent organization and policies during the New Deal era. More than that, it represented the accumulated heritage in the labor movement of a half century of the Gompers policy of non-partisanship and virtual non-participation in politics.

THE new Progressive party began to take shape at the low ebb of what had once been the mighty New Deal coalition. The critics of the Wallace movement in the trade unions and among the self-styled liberals of Americans for Democratic Action said that the move was premature. They insisted that the situation was not ripe, that a new party would need greater organized support from labor and liberal leaders, that organization of such a party should be postponed until after the 1948 elections.

But one of the most striking things about the new Progressive party is that it arrives on the scene so late. This is true in an historic sense. For more than fifty years the two-party system has been the pliant instrument of monopoly interests. For decades large sections of the population have been ready for a permanent anti-monopoly party. It is even more true in an immediate sense. With the death of Roosevelt there disappeared the last feeble argument that progressive political policies could be advanced without a new party to give organization and focus to the scattered forces of the New Deal coalition. Every new headline from Washington, whether proclaiming the passage of the Taft-Hartley Law or the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine, screamed the urgency of a new party. Delay in organization might have been fatal. Retreat might have turned into rout, war fever into war, anti-Red hysteria into concentration camps. Wartime dictatorship or fascism might have made a new party impossible.

The Progressive party is very late in appearing on the scene, but not too late. It has emerged at the eleventh hour to give a new focus to the millions of Americans who had stood behind the New Deal, to give them a program, an organization and a fighting spirit.

Like most progressive political movements in the past, and like the New Deal upsurge which directly preceded it, the Progressive party is a coalition. It encompasses substantial sections of the labor movement and has significant backing among the Negro people, white collar, professional and middle-class groups, farmers, the Jewish people and other minorities. Indeed, its full potential is yet to be realized. Ultimately, the new party will probably include most of the popular support embodied in the New Deal coalition.

But it represents a coalition of a far greater maturity than the New Deal, not to speak of earlier progressive movements. This is true of its program, which is stronger, freer of compromise and confusion. It is even more true in the sense that this is a coalition finding expression in a new and independent political party and hence on a much higher organizational level. It is a coalition that finds its greatest strength not in the formal endorsements of particular labor or liberal leaders but in a genuine mass upsurge against the cold war and its by-products, against high prices and Jim Crow and repressive legislation. Its full growth has been retarded by the bitter-end opposition of many important trade union leaders who divide among themselves the luckless labor of clinging to the Democratic party and fearfully, reluctantly endorsing Truman or dickering with the reactionary Republican ticket of Dewey and Warren.

BUT the new party has succeeded in breaking through this upper crust of opposition to sink its roots into the rank and file of American trade unionists and progressives. And in this sense its lack of official support, often cited as a weakness, has actually been a source of strength. The new party is not dependent on old-line leaders but produces its own leaders. In the grass-roots coalition which gives it vitality and fighting spirit, labor plays a decisive role. There are thousands of C.I.O. steel workers who wear Wallace buttons in the mills, thousands of auto workers who campaign for Wallace in the auto plants of Detroit. The Gompers policy of foreswearing independent political action has never been more bankrupt than in 1948. A. F. of L. and C.I.O. leaders played no role at either the Democratic or Republican conventions. Their political influence is at an all-time low. And the confusion and division in their midst has given the Wallace movement an opportunity to win a majority of the labor vote in 1948.

If the new party is not precisely the labor party of which Engels

dreamed fifty years ago, it is a party in which labor exercises important leadership, in which it sloughs off once and for all its subservience to the parties of monopoly and asserts its independence. It comes to the new party not as a beggar, in the Gompers tradition, but as a major part of the new coalition. In this lies the party's greatest promise.

The Progressive party is marked by another distinctive feature. It has not only opposed all attacks on the civil liberties of Communists and rejected Red-baiting in its ranks, it has also openly and publicly accepted the support of Communists for its program and its candidates. Communist support had been privately accepted, indeed eagerly sought, by various political leaders in the past. They asked only that it be kept secret. But now something new has been added to the political scene. The Communists, who for all the vilification directed against them carry forward the long and honorable socialist tradition in American life, are part and parcel of the broad movement which is building the new party. This development, while accompanied by a certain amount of hesitation, has nonetheless been significant and unprecedented.

More consistently than the New Deal, the Wallace party has challenged monopoly, fought both its foreign policy of imperialist expansion and warmongering and its blue-print for a war economy at home. Just as the fight against the expansion of slavery was the overriding issue that united masses of Americans into the Republican party ninety years ago, so has the fight for peace been the dominant issue that has welded the Wallace party together, given its program focus, unity and a great popular cause.

And because it has opposed the foreign policy which is the keystone of bipartisan reaction, it has been able without contradictions or vacillations to oppose its domestic policy, to counterpose to the master plan of a war economy its own proposals for schools, public power, flood control, social security, housing and health insurance. It has supported the demands of labor and Wallace has personally marched the picket lines of auto workers and packinghouse workers in the mid-West. It has insisted that the Negro people be given full equality, while putting forward Negro candidates throughout the country.

The Progressive party is free of ties with big-business elements which would dilute its program and sap its strength as in the case

of Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive party. It is not diverting its energies into chasing political will-o'-the-wisps like Free Silver, and it boldly champions public ownership of utilities, railroads and banks.

It is not, however, free of the illusion that capitalism can somehow be made "progressive" and subordinated to the interests of the people. In short, the Wallace movement is an anti-monopoly party, but it is not an anti-capitalist party. It is certainly not a socialist or a Marxist party.

Here is the measure of the difference between the Progressive party and the Communists. It is a difference which extends to some tactical questions, but even more to fundamental objectives. The Communists reject utterly the theory of a "progressive capitalism." They take the view that capitalism in its present monopoly, imperialist phase retards social progress and dams up the rich potential of American life. They insist that the ultimate logic of curbing monopoly is eliminating it altogether, that this can be accomplished only through a fundamental reorganization of society, that only in socialism will be found the answer to the problems of depression and unemployment and war which plague an America amply supplied with the productive capacity, raw materials and know-how to provide an abundant life for all.

Communists support the Wallace movement for the same reason that American Marxists supported Lincoln and the Civil War, helped build trade unions and have died on a hundred battle fields from the Ebro to Leyte. They support it because it is a progressive movement which will advance the immediate interests of the American people and which can help stave off war and fascism. And they support it for the same reason that Engels watched with such eager and sympathetic interest the growth of labor parties in 1886 whose program he considered inadequate and in some cases fantastic. They support it because here at last is the historic, long overdue breakaway from the capitalist parties which will give the American working class and its allies greater knowledge and organization in grappling with the foe.

Every response to the new party since its formation reveals how ready was the political soil in America for its arrival. All the historic circumstances that make new parties possible and give them the opportunity for victory are present now. The first and most obvious of these is the disappearance of significant differences between the two old parties. The second is the utter chaos within the Democratic party.

The contradictions producing this chaos were sharpened by the appearance of the new party which made it more difficult for the Democratic politicians to gloss over the differences between its labor and liberal supporters and its poll-tax wing. But these contradictions were there to begin with. Defeat for Truman was in any event a foregone conclusion. Without a progressive program, the Democratic party could not hold the progressive vote and therefore could not win the 1948 elections—whether or not Wallace was in the running.

The argument that the new party would lead to Republican victory by causing the defeat of Truman turned out to be one of those preposterous fallacies which its authors would love to forget. The A.D.A. and the C.I.O. were the first to put this garb on the hoary lesser-evil theory. But it turned out that they themselves found it most difficult to support their own lesser evil and did so only after vainly attempting, together with the Claghorns, to back a conservative general who at one time was a serious Republican prospect. In this political comedy was revealed all the dry rot which is destroying the anti-Wallace liberals and labor leaders.

If the progressive forces had followed the advice of the A.D.A. and the C.I.O. top command, all the groups now supporting Wallace would have suffered that most demoralizing of all defeats which comes from a betrayal of principle and political honesty. This path the Wallace movement rejected. Instead of being helplessly enmeshed in the historic break-up of the Democratic party, the Progressive party has given the labor movement and all forward-looking Americans an opportunity to harness the tides of history, to take advantage of the mass disillusionment with both old parties.

THE Wallace movement is already a force to be reckoned with. It has scored heavily in local elections. It showed remarkable vitality in overcoming many obstacles which stood between it and the ballot. It has demonstrated anew that great social and political movements can break through all barriers. This has been the case with every democratic movement in the past. Jefferson's Democratic-Republican party survived the alien and sedition laws. The abolitionists were mobbed in the streets of Boston and hunted like beasts in the South, but they lived to give the Republican party its inspiration and its fighting quality. The new Progressive party also can survive spy-hunts

and persecution because, no less than its democratic predecessors, it is an historic necessity.

Jefferson's new party was necessary to give expression to the democratic forces of a country entering the springtime of capitalist development. Out of the one-party system of the 1820's, the Jackson coalition forged what was in reality a new party, and reflected the aspirations of a rising working class and the Western agrarians. The Republican party was the answer to the Tweedledum and Tweedledee act of the Whigs and Democrats on the great issue of slavery; and a coalition of workers, farmers, the Negro people and industrialists swept away the semi-feudal obstacles to the development of capitalism.

These movements were largely concerned with removing the roadblocks in the path of an expanding capitalism. After the Civil War, the democratic forces were confronted with a new situation, with far more difficult problems. Now it was capitalism itself, in its ultimate form of monopoly, which had become the principal roadblock to democratic development and social progress, which was able, in fact, to frustrate the democratic process by winning control of both major parties.

IT IS not given to any people or to any class to miss its chances without paying for its mistakes. Mankind paid a terrible price for the failure of the German people and the German labor movement to grasp its chance, to defeat fascism in time. At stake now in our country is the democratic heritage for which all the people's movements of the past have fought—and democracy itself.

If we fail now to realize the promise of the Progressive party, it is not only the rest of the world which would be brought closer to the horrors of an atomic war. America itself might face for many years to come the dark night of oppression which was the fate of Italy and Germany, might become an island of fascism in a world moving inexorably toward greater democracy and socialism. If we succeed, America will again take the high road to progress, and link its destiny with the advancing peoples of all the world. This is the challenge of the new party to all Americans.

The Un-American Murals

by GEORGE HITCHCOCK

TO TRUMAN'S lieutenants in the Public Works Administration, Anton Refregier's twenty-nine mural panels in the Rincon Annex Post Office in San Francisco have been as unwelcome as the appearance of Banquo's ghost to Macbeth. Federal sponsorship of art was one aspect of the New Deal they were sure was neatly murdered and interred. The Rincon project had been commissioned in 1941 and the majority of the designs were approved under the Roosevelt Administration. But for the intervention of the war, the project would have been completed five years ago. Instead, it became the object of unequalled philistine sniping on the part of bureaucrats faithful to the new line under the Truman Administration.

Their initial salvo was an order to delete all reference in the murals to the struggle for the eight-hour day led by the Ship Caulkers Union in 1865. The reason? Reference to the eight-hour day was "controversial" and hence banned from public walls. This demand was followed by the now celebrated order to remove a portrait of Franklin Roosevelt from the panel on the United Nations conference. "The building," declared G. S. Underwood, acting deputy commissioner for the Public Works Administration, "does not have enough importance to be graced by a portrait of a President."

In rapid succession the Administration now opened up all of its batteries. The name of "Tom Pain" (sic!) must be deleted from the section on freedom of religion; Charles Erskine Scott Wood and Mike Quin were to be stricken from the cultural panel; and, finally, the entire panel on the 1934 maritime strike was to be covered pending an investigation. This latter ukase was provoked by the onslaught of the local Hearst papers and an obscure official of the Veterans of Foreign Wars who stated his own philosophy of history in unambiguous terms: "We object to the type of all the murals, if you must know. They're sup-

posed to show the history of California, not labor troubles and men dragging Chinamen around by the hair."

The attack on the maritime strike panel, however, was met and defeated. The San Francisco C.I.O. Council, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and a committee of California artists joined hands to save the mural. Picket lines were thrown before the post office and a nationwide campaign of support organized. As a result the "muslin curtain" was removed from the panel and the Public Buildings Administration had to content itself with a few relatively unessential alterations.

THE Rincon project is completed. The largest mural series ever commissioned by the federal government, probably the longest in completion from the date of award and certainly the most bitterly contested, it stands as a living record of the struggles of California's pioneers of yesterday and today.* The frontier is the leitmotiv of the paintings; a frontier which shifts almost imperceptibly from man's struggles with a vast and encompassing nature to his pioneering battles within a social order which thwarts him more seriously than any natural limits. It is perhaps unfortunate that the visitor to Rincon Annex comes upon the paintings almost at random, for there is a definite progression—not alone in the stream of time, but in tonality and composition as well—throughout the series.

The first panels, which deal with primitive Indian life and the subjection of the West successively by conquistador and missionary, are "under-organized" and painted with a limited palette inclined toward oranges, ochres and grays. There is an inherent danger in subject matter of this type—the danger of falling into the banal and picturesque. Refregier escapes this admirably by the use of a tonal understatement which projects his figures into a stark and dramatic contrast with surrounding nature. The light is that of early morning and the human actors, gaunt, expectant and aggressive, still share the stage with the forms of nature. The high point in this development is reached with the sudden introduction of the somber blues and blacks of the central painting on the south wall—that of the overland emigrants trapped by Indians in the winter.

* Silk screen prints from many of the panels, including the 1934 maritime strike mural, were printed during the controversy and may be obtained from the California Labor School in San Francisco and the A.C.A. Gallery in New York.

From this point on the most vigorous colors emerge and the com position becomes increasingly daring and complex until it reaches a almost unbearably high pitch in the two magnificent panels on th San Francisco earthquake and fire. Interspersed with the tense an highly organized paintings are a number of panels of less dynami composition which revert to the earlier mood and provide emphasi and punctuation to the others ("Raising the Bear Flag," the "Civi War Issue," and the "Eight-Hour Day" panels).

The dominant motif in the middle panels is that of the contributio of all races and nationalities to the building of the West, best exem plified in the large panel on the "Building of the Union Pacific" wher white, Negro, Oriental and Mexican Indian join in clearing the wilder ness. The colors in this section are hot and the light high. A vivid us is made of yellows and reds.

THE north wall contains some of the finest painting in America Almost obscured as one rounds the corner is one of the most power ful and compactly composed panels in the series, "The Persecution o the Chinese." Following it is the lyric panel on California's cultura heritage and the two earthquake murals noted above. In these painting the artist makes masterful use of abstract elements to convey the chao and destruction of public disaster. While this havoc was the product o nature rather than man, one cannot look at these two panels withou being aware that here is the face of any city—Rotterdam, Kiev o Coventry—blasted by our century's man-made destruction.

The last panels deal dramatically with the Tom Mooney case, th maritime strike, the building of the Golden Gate bridge and the war time ship construction program. The final mural, symbolizing th defeat of the Axis and the convocation of the United Nations, whil it contains many fine sections, is less successful in its entirety since th censors forced the artist to abandon the human symbolism which woul tie the various concepts together and give them a complete meanin

Refregier's treatment of the human figure constitutes one of hi greatest triumphs in this complex and difficult project. The locatio of the murals (they commence some eight feet above the floor unquestionably created real dangers of foreshortening, dangers whic he has overcome by a use of distortion which gives his central figure a monumental character. Many visitors to Rincon Annex have remarke that he paints "nothing but tall, thin people." Actually, the distortio

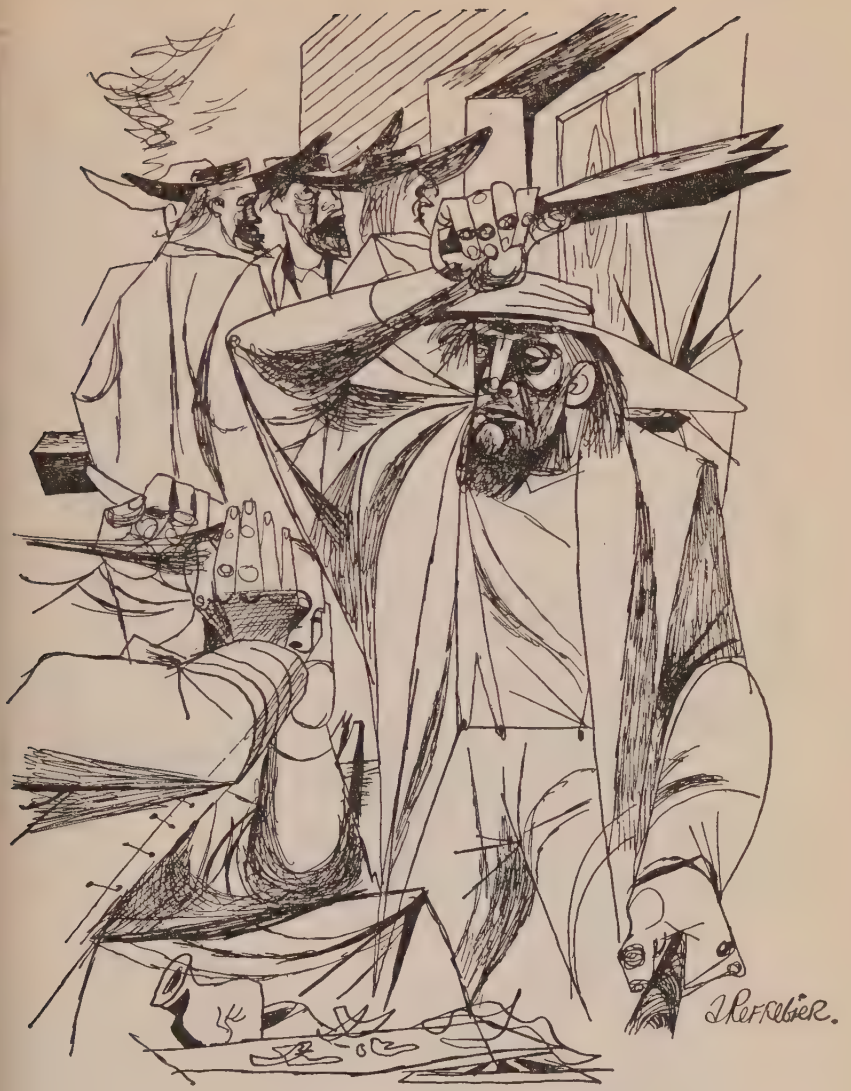
was necessary not only because of the position of the murals, but for reasons inherent in the artist's attitude toward his content as well. The America he has painted is peopled with creators and builders, men to whom the test of their various philosophies lay in action. The result is that the paintings are permeated with the feeling of struggle expressed in the artist's tense calligraphy as powerfully as in the composition and content.

FROM THE RINCON MURALS

Four drawings by

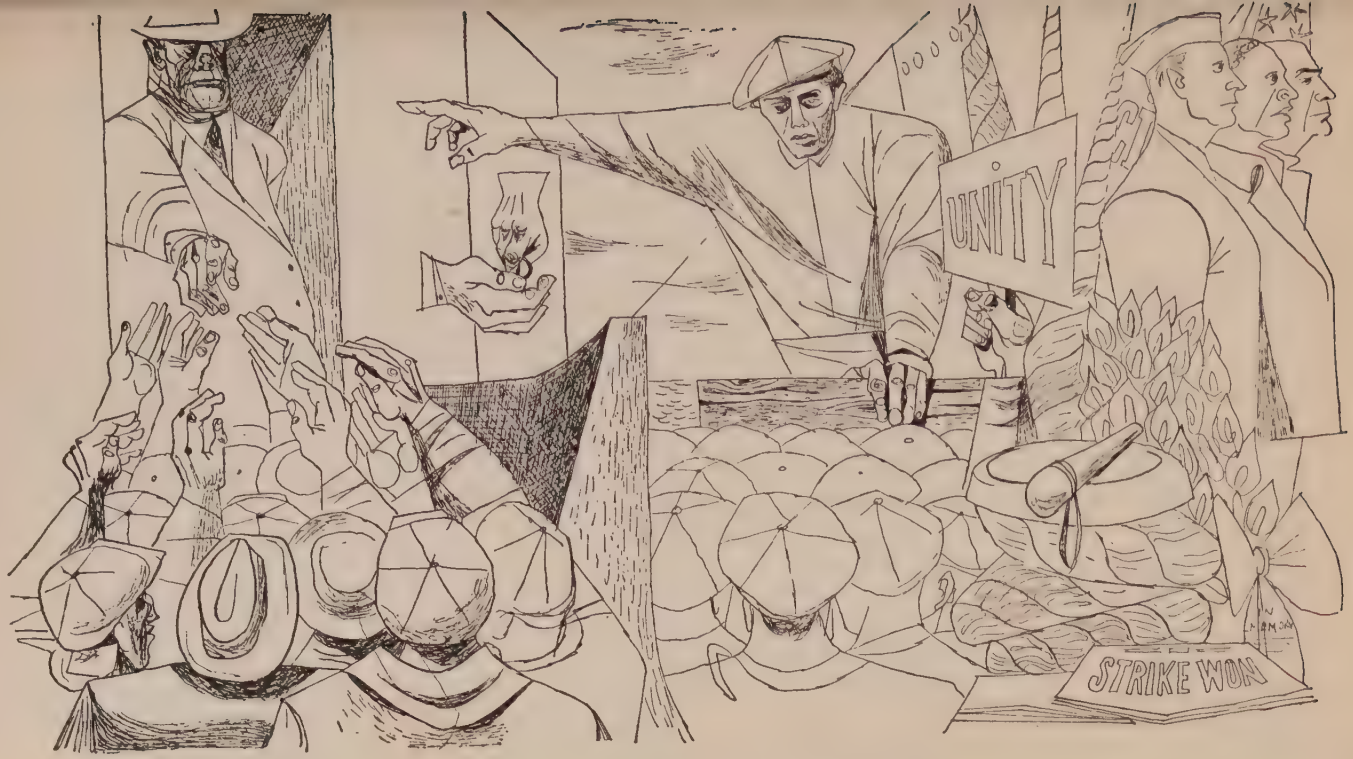
ANTON REFREGIER

DISCOVERY OF GOLD



PERSECUTION OF THE CHINESE IN EARLY SAN FRANCISCO

STREET FIGHTS OVER THE SLAVERY ISSUE



SAN FRANCISCO WATERFRONT STRIKE, 1934

MUSIC:
From Cult to Culture

by HANNS EISLER

AN AMERICAN music student said to me: "I don't care if my music is played or not. It's enough for me to put the notes down on paper. True interpretation, capable of really capturing the composer's spirit, no longer exists in our day. Interpretation and rendition degenerate when there are no longer experienced, perceptive listeners. So true music is alive only as an idea and can no longer be transmitted or communicated."

It is no accident that in Hollywood I heard so much tragically ambitious as well as bombastically empty music. It is evidence not only of wasted effort, disgust, discontent, concern about oneself and one's place in society; it is also evidence of the extreme contradictions in American social life. The capitalist monopolies in control of the culture industry are flooding the market with their synthetic musical goods. (Above all, musical scores for a certain type of movie and play.)

To be sure, the culture industry feels no disgust, no spiritual qualms. It is thoroughly optimistic. It has the optimism of a traveling salesman, of a merchant in a seller's market confident of getting customers for his shoddy merchandise. It loves the people in its way: as consumers, or as the butcher loves the calf. In addition to turning out its own so-called light music, it has put on the market cheap, amateurish arrangements of the great musical classics. It has not only satisfied demands, it has created new ones. It has levelled, standardized, organized. It has infiltrated every position in art, making its influence felt there and pressing the still free artists to the wall. It has put its stamp on every phase of musical life: in concert halls the symphonies already sound like music for the films, and composers are either bought by Hollywood or write musicals. The artist himself is a valet, an employee who is easily disposed of.

The culture industry has brought about a dreary levelling in the private enterprise system. It not only controls the mechanical means of production: movies, radio, television, phonograph. Through concert bureaus it dominates concert activity; through book clubs it commands the book market; and through the entertainment features in the newspapers, especially the comic strips, it has become a partner in the press monopolies and advertising agencies. Its profits, like its power, are enormous. It has turned genuine art into the art of merchandising.

Of course, the culture industry, like any other industry, satisfies demands. These arise out of the need of the people to reproduce their labor-power expended in the dehumanizing process of daily work. They must therefore rest. They desperately need recreation and relaxation—and at a cheap price. Of all the arts music is the furthest from the world of practical things. Hence it lends itself most easily to mystification and titillation. It is said of music that it releases emotions. How that occurs has never been quite clear to me. At any rate, music appears in abstract opposition to the emptiness and monotony of everyday life. The greater the emptiness and the harsher the monotony, the sweeter the melodies become.

THE production and distribution of trash by the trustified culture industry of capitalism is further abetted by a kind of lag in human hearing. One may even venture to say that hearing itself has not kept pace with the swift technical and industrial advances of the past 150 years. If seeing demands effort and exertion, hearing still remains somewhat passive, limited, archaic. In a sense, it has not yet been able to get used to the capitalist world as a world of commodities. In contrast to eyesight, the attempt to grasp something exclusively through the ear still has something of the pre-individualist, pre-capitalist community. The polyphonic style especially points in that direction: to the traditional religious community of the past, the church congregation.

The absorption of the individual, his inclusion in a community, his sense of belonging together and listening together—all music gives this and it may be considered music's most natural function. But it is also most natural for music to be subject to the process of general social evolution.

There have been frequent attempts to date the development of bourgeois music from a definite political and historical period. But

that is a difficult undertaking, since the evolution of music has not proceeded simultaneously with economic and social developments. Thus, for example, it would be hard to trace a direct relationship between the evolution of musical forms and economic institutions. Even where such parallels seem to exist, they represent a complex indirect rather than a mechanically direct relationship. Perhaps the best way of understanding the evolution of bourgeois music is to see it as an emancipation from the formal-religious to the cultural-civilizing.

Musically, this is seen in the development of the homophonic style. In its subjectivity, music now addresses itself to every cultured listener rather than to the confined church congregation. This has been the really bourgeois element in music: its emancipation into a cultural and civilizing force.

But not with impunity did the individual break away from the collective. True, this separation was a historic necessity. But from its very inception, bourgeois music bore within itself a germ which has today led to the disease of the modern style—the extreme last phase of bourgeois music.

In homophonic music there was and is something like a bad conscience. In technical musical terms, this is seen in the simplicity, the naiveté of even a highly developed homophonic style as contrasted with the polyphonic-contrapuntal style. In subjective terms of the artist this appears as a vague sentiment of separation, a feeling of unsureness, of being cut off. Perhaps this sheds light on the late period of Mozart and Beethoven, when both strove for polyphonic, contrapuntal elements in their music. It is as if the bourgeois artist set free, uncertain not only of his material living conditions but also uncertain of his relations as an artist to his listeners, looks back to a period of simpler, surer ties. But in the history of art, too, there is no going back.

For if bourgeois society freed the musician from the servant's hall of feudalism, where Haydn still had to sit and eat his meals, it has really given him an outlaw's freedom. It has shoved the musician into the market-place, made him a victim of free competition, dependent on the whims of patrons, music publishers and concert bureaus. It has turned the artist with weak nerves into a Bohemian. Such figures as Schubert, Baudelaire and Hugo Wolf, hounded by poverty, broke under the strain. It has made the life of great masters a hell on earth, and we should not be surprised if this hell is perceptible in the musical

compositions of the present late-capitalist period. You can even hear some of this hell in Beethoven, a most violent but also a most subtle expression of it. Beethoven expressed not only rebellion, the heroism of revolutionary bourgeois individualism, but also its despair, its isolation, its depression. After the intoxication of freedom came the hangover of the morning after; after the great bourgeois ideas came the great business combines.

If I turn now from the general social basis of bourgeois music to the special background of the modern style, I must limit my frame of reference. I should like to deal with only two schools, represented by Arnold Schoenberg and Igor Stravinsky. This does not mean that I underestimate other masters such as Janacek, Bartok, Szymanowski and Prokofiev. Far from it. But Schoenberg and Stravinsky have exerted the greatest influence on the music of our time.

SCHOENBERG in his book on harmony makes the assertion: Art must express the truth. One must ask: which truth? Does he mean an insight into the social role of music, or merely the evolution of musical material in the abstract? When Schoenberg speaks of the beautiful in art, he means a new beauty in art for which the artist must sincerely and genuinely strive. But in his work this new beauty appears in the abstract, as a striving after new nuances, new delights and sensations. It reminds one very much of pre-World War I Expressionism, the "Blue Rider" circle, Kandinsky, Kokoschka and Franz Marc.

But Schoenberg has created such extraordinary works that we certainly cannot demand or expect of him any musical esthetic. In his opera *Von Heute auf Morgen* (From Today Until Tomorrow), with a libretto by Max Blonda whom I do not know, the story revolves around the marital conflicts of well-bred people. At the end a child, likewise well-bred, says: "Mummy, what's that—modern people?" The librettist, Max Blonda, means of course that there is no such thing: human beings are always human beings. Well, without analyzing this philistine idea, one may nevertheless say after hearing the music: but music is not music. For Schoenberg has composed a brilliant score to this painfully unpleasant book, a score of the highest artistic skill. It sees and deals with these well-bred modern people more as future D.P.'s, future occupants of air-raid shelters, than as night-club visitors. It is uncanny how this music shines through the absurd libretto, contrasting with the dialogue, underscoring the banality of the conflict.

This haunting work, extremely difficult and complicated, is one of the most amazing documents of modern music.

Here Schoenberg's style is an expression of acute nervousness, hysteria, panic, despair, loneliness and terror. I believe it is not too much to say that the basic characteristic of Schoenberg's music is anxiety. Long before the invention of the airplane he anticipated the terror of human beings under bombardment huddling in air-raid shelters. He is the poet of the gas chambers of Auschwitz, the concentration camp of Dachau, the helpless despair of the little man under the jackboot of fascism. That is his humanity. It is a mark of Schoenberg's genius and sure instinct that he expressed it at a time when the world still seemed snug and safe to the little man. Whatever charges may be levelled at him, he has never lied.

But what of Schoenberg's historic attainments, the bold and new elements in his music? Today, any halfway-decent conservatory student can imitate them. Nevertheless, one cannot borrow the mantle of Schoenberg's loneliness. Our time requires and calls for other music, new music. The Schoenberg school is finished; the recent graduates of that school have failed.

THE second leading modern school is that of Stravinsky. Here I should like to limit myself exclusively to his neo-classical period, which wields the greatest influence. Stravinsky's esthetic theories too—they may be found in his autobiography—are fragmentary and derivative. They stem from Jean Cocteau. Glance, for example, at the latter's book *Le Coq et l'Arlequin.* If Schoenberg is the isolated intellectual, Stravinsky is the gentleman who feels quite at home in the modern world. Stravinsky's neo-classical style is careful, smart, cold, open, fabricated and imitative. His *impassibilité,* the impassiveness of the artist before the object he seeks to represent, was already present in a Flaubert. The main features of neo-classicism are coldness, astringent ornamentation, mechanical figuration, echoes of the pre-Beethoven melodic line; it favors the unthematic, the static, the unsymphonic and short forms. In his early works Stravinsky brushed aside nineteenth-century music as outmoded. Around 1923 it was fashionable in drawing-room chatter to dismiss Beethoven as turgid and *passé.*

Neo-classicism is a phenomenon of the big bourgeoisie. It no longer has any connections, intellectually or musically, with the great heritage of the revolutionary bourgeoisie. It displays coldness and arrogance

toward the little man. It is the musical style of the "best" society. At the same time, it would be wrong not to recognize that many of Stravinsky's features and methods are progressive, particularly his theatre and ballet music. He is an unusual composer whom I admire. Unfortunately, certain of his weaknesses and vices rather than his virtues are usually imitated.

The weaknesses of neo-classicism are not solely of a technical musical nature, they are also frankly ideological. The neo-Catholicism of Cocteau and Stravinsky has won over a group of outstanding talents in Paris. But neo-Catholicism cannot be equated with naive religious needs, with faith in the moral heritage of Christianity. Neo-Catholicism prefers to flirt with the formal, ceremonial and cultist aspects of religion. It is more religious formalism than faith. Neo-Catholicism has something mundane, elegant, falsely modern about it. So it happens that Stravinsky's *Psalms Symphony* and his *Oedipus Rex,* the most significant neo-classical compositions of our time, not only sound formal and ceremonial; they also bear an insidious resemblance to the neo-classical bank buildings on Wall Street, which have no religious significance whatever.

Generally speaking, neo-classicism behaves in its modes of expression like a man in good society: one does not raise one's voice in conversation or speak too softly; one makes no binding commitments; one tries to imitate the inscrutable face of the big banker, who in turn is imitating an actor cast as a big banker. The German version of neo-classicism is *Spielfreudigkeit* (delight in technique).

I have never been quite clear as to what *Spielfreudigkeit* really means. Should an audience enjoy the fact that cellist X plays, or should cellist X enjoy the fact that he is allowed to play? In any case, it is clear that *Spielfreudigkeit* means a type of composing that avoids meaningful expression. It prefers fluent figuration and tries to substitute a kind of dissonant conservatory counterpoint for the best in music. The only thing that quivers with joy at this *Spielfreudigkeit* is the long hair of the composer.

It is obvious that the No-Self-Expression of neo-classicism is but a special form of self-expression. For even in the coldest music the coldness appears as an expression. Both schools, Schoenberg's expressive music and Stravinsky's neo-classicism, hunt vainly for solid ties. With Schoenberg it is the twelve-tone system; with Stravinsky, the imitative

style. Both composers manage somehow to hold together their disintegrating material only by dint of cleverness, tricks, artistic sleight-of-hand.

I SAID above that the contradictions and difficulties of late-capitalist music are merely the outward manifestation of a process that extends far back in the history of the bourgeoisie. Here let me quote from the philosopher Hegel. In his lectures on esthetics he declares: "Particularly in the more recent period music, breaking away from its clearly defined values, has retrogressed in its own sphere. In so doing, it has lost all the more power over the whole of inner life, since the enjoyment it offers can now be applied only to one side of art, namely, the purely technical side of composition and cleverness in achieving effects. This is a side that interests only connoisseurs and is of less concern to the universally human interest in art."

The emancipation of music from the formal-religious to the cultural-civilizing has reached its end-stage. After all the excesses and experiments around us, the task of the musician of our time may well be to lead music back—at first, perhaps, in a more modest way—from the private to the universal. In a society of free men in which exploitation of man by man has been abolished, music may perhaps again assume a warmer and more joyful character after this period of dreariness, trouble and self-torment. In his interesting book, *The Condemnation of Music,* the Chinese philosopher Me-Ti, a contemporary of Confucius, writes: "There are four disadvantages in following the calling of music: the hungry are not fed, the freezing are not warmed, the homeless remain homeless, the despairing are not consoled." May the words of Me-Ti remind us modern composers, who are so fond of speculating, constructing and experimenting, that music is made by human beings for human beings.

(*Translated from the German by Joseph M. Bernstein.*)

MYTHS ABOUT ANTI-SEMITISM

by MORRIS U. SCHAPPES

WITHIN a few days after the landing of the first boatload of Jews to settle on the North American continent, a theory of anti-Semitism was set forth in an attempt to prevent them from remaining in New Amsterdam. Thus Governor Peter Stuyvesant, on September 22, 1654, wrote to the directors of the Dutch West India Company asking for support of his intention to compel the twenty-three refugees from the Inquisition in Portuguese Brazil to move elsewhere. He declared the Jews were "very repugnant" to the local officials because of (a) "their customary usury and deceitful trading with the Christians"; (b) the possibility "that owing to their present indigence they might become a charge in the coming winter"; and (c) the view that the Jews were "such hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ."

The combination of forces and theories that prevented Stuyvesant from gaining his end is interesting but not relevant here. Important, however, is the fact that since then the American record is deplorably rich in the expression of anti-Semitism in attitude, word and deed. To cull but a few samples: The public charge of "Christ-killer" was made in 1747 in a close election to the New York colonial legislature. A Federalist journalist in 1795 denounced a prominent Jewish Jeffersonian as a "Shylock." In Maryland from 1818 to 1826 a series of bitter election and parliamentary struggles was fought throughout the state on the issue of the "Jew Bill," which provided for the wiping out of a constitutional clause that disfranchised the Jews. In Brooklyn a mob of German immigrants in 1849 broke up a Jewish funeral procession as it was nearing the cemetery and forced the mourners to take the body elsewhere for burial.

Even children were affected. A Christian missionary interested in converting the Jews of New York described with disgust a scene he

witnessed on East Thirteenth Street, where Irish and Jewish children were playing in front of their homes:

"The Irish, in a chorus, chanted:

'I had a piece of pork, I put it on a fork,
And gave it to the curly-headed Jew,
Pork, Pork, Pork, Jew, Jew, Jew.'

"To this the Jewish boys replied:

'I had a piece of beef, I put it on a leaf,
And gave it to the Irish Christian thief.
Beef, Beef, Beef, Thief, Thief, Thief.'

Thus far have we advanced in civilization in East Thirteenth Street, New York City" (*The Jewish Record,* July 15, 1864).

Whether on the level of folk-lore, sophisticated theory or mob action, anti-Semitism has since then been used more and more often and has become a potent instrument of American reaction. Yet the scientific study and the elaboration of a correct theory of the roots of anti-Semitism that would lead to effective practice in combating the evil—these have lagged far behind the need. Thus Carey McWilliams, after studying the literature in the field, concluded that "the inadequacy of social theory in relation to this crucial problem is a scandal for which every social scientist in the United States should feel ashamed."

Bourgeois sociology, however, will never solve what it persists in calling minority problems (Negro, Jewish, Mexican-American, etc.) so long as it avoids the central minority problem of all: how small but powerful groups controlling our American economy can rule 140,000,000 Americans and now set out to dominate ten times that number of human beings throughout the world.

THE inadequacy lamented is qualitative and not quantitative. There is no dearth of printed matter explaining the causes, with a righteous insistence on the plural, of anti-Semitism. The most popular of recent theories, and the one that has behind it the heaviest backing of reactionary groups like the American Jewish Committee, is the psychoanalytical one. This looks for the cause of anti-Semitism in "the" nature of "Man," who is conceived of in Freudian terms as essentially unchanging. Freud, in full sobriety, interpreted anti-Semitism as due to the "fact" that Christians, feeling guilty over their desire to kill God their Father, purge themselves of this emotion by accusing their

Jewish brethren of having actually murdered their God (*Moses and Monotheism*).

The prominent child-psychologist, Dr. Dorothy W. Baruch, applies this interpretation to contemporary practice in her book, *Glass House of Prejudice*. Her key word is "displacement." First Dr. Baruch invents an abstraction called "the" family, without regard to whether this family is living under conditions of slavery, feudalism, capitalism or socialism. In this static and eternal family, which never dwelt on land or sea, a person will hate a parent or a brother or sister. But he knows he should not hate his parent or brother or sister. So he "displaces" the hatred onto someone it is permissible or fashionable to hate, let us say the Jew. To Dr. Baruch the cure is as simple as the theory: every prejudiced individual should consult a trained psychologist who would help him realize that it is not the Jew or the Negro that he really hates but his parent or brother or sister, and who would help him overcome this hostility to the members of his family—and thus to the Jew or Negroes or any other group.

Dr. Baruch, however, dodges the main issue. Why, for instance, is this "hatred" not "displaced" onto the ruling class instead of onto Jews or similar groups? Is it not because the ruling class sees to it that antipathy is diverted from itself onto others? In a class society in which a small class has to dominate the masses of the people, there is a vested interest in creating scapegoats that will protect the real oppressors from the wrath the people may be expected to visit upon them once they understand who their oppressors are.

A similar evasion characterizes another aspect of the psychological approach. For the theory of displacement is only the half of it. The other half is "projection." That is a "twist" by which "we evade feelings of personal guilt by accusing others of the evils we ourselves practice." You blame the Jews for being greedy because you are greedy yourself, and so on with other accusations against the Jews. Dr. Gordon W. Allport, discussing this theory, concludes that "a BIGOT is a person who, under the tyranny of his own frustrations, tabloid thinking and projection, blames a whole group of people for faults of which they are partially or wholly innocent" (*The Commonweal,* October 6, 1944). Again we are not informed why the projection is onto the innocent and not onto those really responsible for our social disorders, the class of monopoly capitalists. Failure to consider this question

actually serves to protect that dominant class from the scrutiny that would uncover its anti-social role and lead to its downfall.

Study of the situation in the Soviet Union would reveal the futility of such theories as those of displacement and projection. For in the U.S.S.R. too there are families and there too individuals may hesitate to face feelings of personal guilt, and yet there is no problem now of displacement and projection of hostilities onto national or racial groups because society is so reorganized that a premium is placed on co-operation as the basis for individual security instead of on competition. It is only in a dog-eat-dog society that the top dogs organize displacement and projection of hatred and guilt onto innocent victims.

In a brilliant analysis of several major exponents of the psychoanalytic theory, Dr. Walter S. Neff declares that "the psychoanalyst considers anti-Semitism as related to certain universal and biological attributes of mankind and *fundamentally* not as a product of certain historical and social conditions. All these writers admit the importance of economic, social and political factors in *stimulating* or *controlling* anti-Semitic attitudes, but they really see their origin in certain hypothecated instincts of aggression, destruction and hate which organized society must combat. . . . Thus the psychoanalyst, however well-intentioned, turns our attention away from the *real* enemy, and by finding the origins of anti-Semitism within the breasts of all of us, keeps us from seeing the actual inspirers and organizers of this dread danger . . ." (*Jewish Life,* June, 1948).

IN ADDITION to those who look for the cause of anti-Semitism in the nature of Man, there are those who would find it in the nature of the Jew. Sometimes it is a national-religious pride that includes an element of chauvinistic superiority. Characteristic of this trend is the view of Rabbi Edward T. Sandrow that "the 'great hatred' is directed by anti-Semites against us for having given the world the moral law which we envisioned at Sinai" (*The New Palestine,* official organ of the Zionist Organization of America, June 11, 1948). An extreme form of such nationalism is bombastically exhibited in the "desperate Ambrose" posturing of a Ben Hecht and the organization he represents, The American League for a Free Palestine, Inc. In his pageant, *A Flag is Born,* Hecht showed the Jew in histrionic conflict with "the whole world," at the same time that he was using these blatant heroics—utterly different in character from the real heroism of the anti-im-

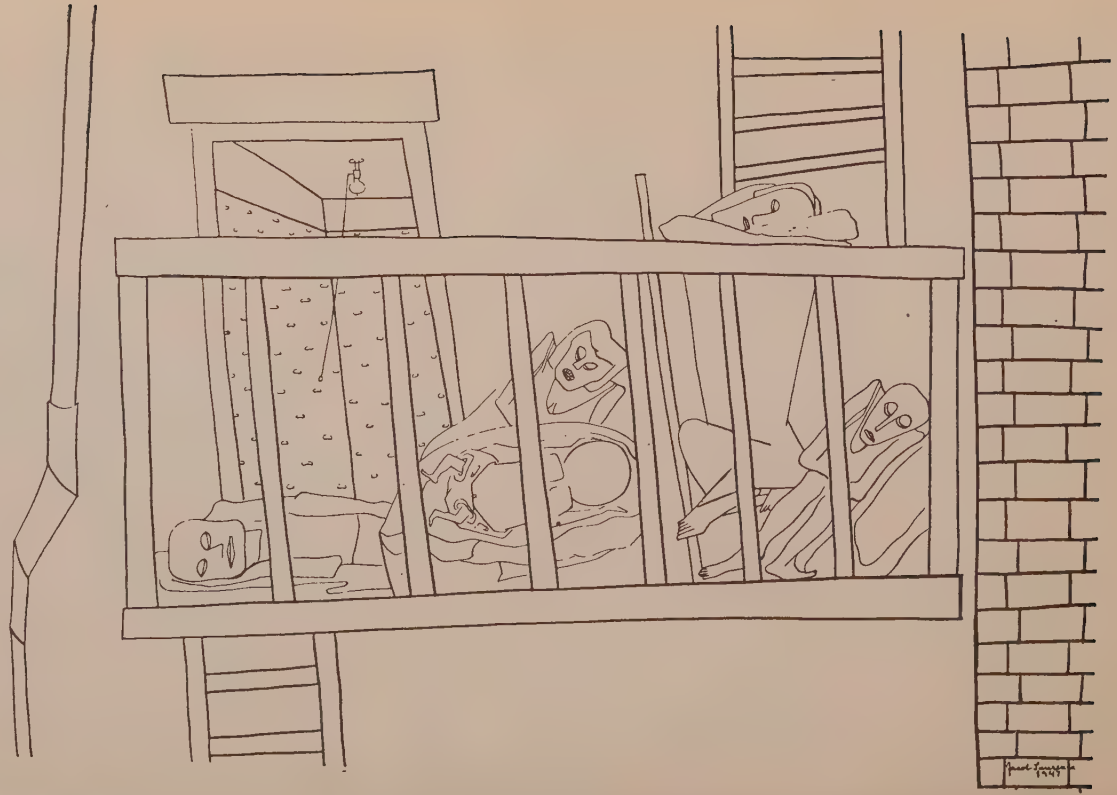
perialist fighters in Israel—to cover up attempts to curry favor with American imperialism.

Usually, however, those who consider the nature of the Jew as the cause of anti-Semitism recommend the liquidation of the Jewish people in one way or another. Immediate assimilation is often urged upon the Jews. Arthur Koestler, whose anti-Semitic attitudes were unsubtly revealed in *Thieves in the Night,* his novel about Palestine, has been explicit in this arrogant advocacy of suicide for the Jewish people:

> "I am in favor of Jews becoming assimilated with and absorbed by the countries in which they live. I think it is high time to liquidate this anachronism of a separate community all over the world, which cannot be defined as a separate race or nation or religious sect, and whose insistence on remaining in one way apart has led to an unparalleled chain of massacres, persecution and expulsions for fifteen hundred years," (*New York Times Magazine,* September 1, 1948).

Thus this renegade from communism, world progress *and* the Jewish people neatly and sweetly blames the Jews directly for having persistently provoked persecution with no regard for the logic of definitions and the feelings of those whom they stubbornly incited to the pogrom.

An exceedingly well-publicized organization dedicated to the same program is the American Council for Judaism, the inspiration and main spokesman for which is Lessing J. Rosenwald, the multi-millionaire America-Firster and Sears, Roebuck magnate. Representing a small number of similarly cushioned Jewish magnates who fear that their fortunes are endangered by the mere existence of a Jewish people, this Council works with might and money to deny and uproot any kind of non-religious Jewish consciousness. Rabbi Elmer Berger, Executive Director of the Council, sets forth the theory of the Council at length in his book, *The Jewish Dilemma.* "It is the major pretension of anti-Semites," he contends, "that Jews are a 'people' apart, upon one basis or another. Once that premise is granted, the fight against anti-Semitism is lost before it is begun." Therefore Rabbi Berger insists that Jews must stop thinking, believing, and acting as if there is any tie that connects them, no matter how loosely, other than the religious bond. Those Jews who do otherwise are responsible for anti-Semitism. Since the masses of Jews are paying no heed to the advice of this



Downtown Gallery

A HOT SUMMER'S NIGHT, *by Jacob Lawrence*

Council, the chief effect of its activity and writings is actually to promote anti-Semitic propaganda. Among the things that the class interests of these rich Jews prevents them from understanding or admitting is that the religion of Judaism and its institutions are by no means immune to the verbal and physical attacks of anti-Semitism.

MORE startling only because of its unexpected source is the theory of Henry Pratt Fairchild, elaborated with defensive truculence in *Race and Nationality as Factors in American Life.* Professor Emeritus of New York University and a fertile author of sociological works, Professor Fairchild has been known for more than a decade for his progressive stand in defense of civil liberties, peace with the Soviet Union and independent political action. Because of this reputation the reading of his book was a physically painful as well as an intellectually shocking experience. Setting out to correct the mistakes of "liberal" and "humanitarian" sociologists, Professor Fairchild moves not to a progressive but to the consistently reactionary position of a partisan of Anglo-Saxon domination. Of immigration, he concludes that "there are good grounds for believing that the numerical restriction of immigration came just about in the nick of time, and that if the current had been allowed to continue and to increase in the former proportions for another two or three decades, irreparable injury to the national integrity of the United States might have ensued." He is frightened by the continued existence of national groups and wants them dissolved because "the United States has gone just about as far as it can safely go in permitting, in the name of humanitarianism and liberalism, the dilution of its own nationality," which is Anglo-Saxon. Misunderstanding and misrepresenting the Negro question, he calls it "near to an insoluble problem."

His chapter which deals with the Jews was disgusting in its repetition of outworn slanders and stupidities. The Jewish people "bring[s] down dislike, if not actual penalties of some sort, upon itself" because it refuses to assimilate. A large part of anti-Semitism in our country is not really *prejudice* based upon ignorance but is hostility based upon contact with Jews themselves. Professor Fairchild gives more than two pages out of twenty on the Jews to reproducing and discussing a mailing circular of a Jewish matrimonial agency, which he denounces as a characteristically Jewish flouting of "certain conventional and accepted hypocrisies" of the American nation. The vulgarity of this professorial disquisition is in no way tempered by

reflection on the fact that we live in a culture in which flexees and falsies are the touted foundations of beautiful women, and the advertising of ladies' underwear extorts the lyricism of our best-paid copywriters and the ecstatic accents and dulcet tones of our best male voices, which convince us every hour on the hour that the destinies of women, at least, are shaped not by social forces but by the BRAAAA!

For the "complete eradication" of anti-Semitism, Professor Fairchild of course proposes a total assimilation that would not even leave the religion of Judaism alone. It seems that Professor Fairchild's long academic career has been plagued by the absence of Jewish students on certain religious holidays, and he envisages no permanent solution that does not do away with the holiday problem. Even the minority of Jews who observe the Sabbath are a menace and he asserts devastatingly that "the purely rationalistic approach would probably raise the question whether a way could not be found to juggle the calendar a little so that the Sabbath could be made to fall on the first day of the week instead of the last." Anti-Semitism is the word for such views.

"A colorless assimilation" is not what Professor Robert M. MacIver of Columbia University recommends in *The More Perfect Union.* But he too looks to the Jews themselves for the cause of anti-Semitism, which he is careful to indicate is more prevalent than such investigators as *Fortune* magazine believe. From on high he surmises that "*both sides* have to learn" because, he concludes with sagacity, "we should not forget that the discriminators have no monopoly of prejudice; that malady may be just as rife among those who suffer from the prejudice of others." He is indifferent to the prime distinction between anti-Semitic aggression and Jewish defense, even an aggressive defense. Therefore he advises that the Jews have to do something about themselves because their "detachment within a community is a strong stimulus to discrimination." Not colorless assimilation but protective coloration is Dr. MacIver's prescription: "They must avoid any imputation that they detach their interests from those of the community. They must particularly restrain the revulsion that expresses itself in doctrines that advocate the overthrow of the whole institutional scheme of things. They must somehow place the symbols of their own group under the sign of the great community." Hard indeed would be the lot of the Jew if he heeded this cadenced caution not to presume to revolt against his lot!

The Jewish or non-Jewish proponents of assimilation place the issue quite falsely. They assume that mere difference on the part of the Jew causes inequality, whereas difference is just as compatible with co-operation as with strife, as has been demonstrated in the Soviet Union. They skirt the cause of anti-Semitism, which is not difference but the exploitation of difference by a small ruling class. They deny and would effectively obliterate the positive values of Jewish culture. They intimidate the individual Jew, weaken his proper pride in his own people and stimulate his desertion from his people. They weaken the front of struggle against reaction by pressing Jews into a form of assent to, and therefore collaboration with, their own destruction.

One thinks again of the Jews of the Soviet Union, who are spared the tribulation of being told they are the cause of anti-Semitism and had better assimilate and vanish as a people. There, where anti-Semitism was declared to be a crime directly after the October revolution, the Jews have undergone many changes and are a stronger, safer, healthier and prouder people. There no one would dare order the Jews: assimilate or else—. Under socialism the definition of anti-Semitism is broad enough to include those who blame the Jews for anti-Semitism or advocate assimilation as the solution to the Jewish problem.

A THIRD set of theories is characterized by a rambling eclecticism which may be well-intended but is nevertheless ineffectual. Sure that the problem is complex (what *simple* social problems there are, they never say), these theoreticians make random listings of causes, with no attempt to find the key link, main emphasis on which could move the entire chain and basically solve the problem. Bruce Bliven, for example, in his *New Republic* series on anti-Semitism, analyzes the situation thus:

> "One of the first and simplest causes is fear of the strange, and of strangers . . . [anti-Semites] bolster their own sense of security and importance by finding someone whom they regard as inferior and on whom they can project their individual inadequacy or failure. . . . A very powerful factor closely allied with this is actual economic competition. . . . Manners also play a great part in group hostility. . . . In the creation of anti-Semitism, the most important single element is plain indoctrination. . . ."

Mr. Bliven omits little, but explains nothing. The only thing clear is that there are "factors," some of which are "first and simplest," others

are "most important," one is "very powerful" and an "ally" of another, while still another is "also" there. Programs of action based upon such eclectic evasion of the necessity to evaluate causes naturally lack integration.

A similar indecision pervades the often brilliantly written book of Rabbi Milton Steinberg, *A Partisan Guide to the Jewish Problem.* To him "anti-Semitism is first of all a product of indoctrination"; secondly, "a consequence of economics"; then "among other things" anti-Semitism is "the expression of psychological factors" which include the "dislike of the unlike" and also "man's resentment against that which is extraordinary"; but "still another wellspring" is the "process of transference and projection, the 'scapegoat' mechanism"; and finally, anti-Semitism "is a product of manipulation and design" on the part of men like Hitler. Rabbi Steinberg's wittiest contribution is his characterization of anti-Semitism as "a prejudice in search of a pretext," and his account of how the pretexts changed successively from the religious to the nationalistic to the racial. It is not because of but despite his eclectic interpretation that Rabbi Steinberg at least realizes that it is "no accident that social reaction is so closely associated with anti-Semitism," and that when "the hungry and naked" have been incited to "breaking Jewish heads, they are not expropriating feudal barons or capitalists." Had Rabbi Steinberg taken this latter insight as the key to the problem, he might then have seen that "indoctrination" and "manipulation and design" were instruments of feudal barons or capitalists, and that the use of these tools had a psychological *effect* on the users. But such an integrated theory, with its implications of a revolutionary program of action, is eschewed by Rabbi Steinberg.

PROFOUNDER, bolder and simpler is the thinking of those who look more or less thoroughly to the material relations of economic production for the cause of anti-Semitic as well as all other ideologies. It is interesting that in 1937 three of six prize-winning essays in a contest conducted by *Opinion,* edited by Dr. Stephen S. Wise, tended in this direction (*How to Combat Anti-Semitism in America*). Thus Rabbi Joshua Trachtenberg of Easton, Pa., wrote:

> "Even outside Marxist circles it is a commonplace that anti-Semitism, in its modern recension, is a disease indigenous to our economic system, which goads the underprivileged, in their ignorance

of the operation of social forces, to exact payment of the eternal scapegoat, the Jew, for the iniquities of the system itself."

Calling for a mass struggle to "stop fascism: preserve democracy," Rabbi Trachtenberg, however, notes that "no realistic fight against anti-Semitism can possibly be unmindful of this final goal" of replacing our economic system with one that will make "anti-Semitism the anachronism it should long since have become." Likewise Rabbi Victor Eppstein and Harry Essrig saw capitalism as the cause of anti-Semitism and tended to look to socialism for a permanent solution.

Without reaching socialist conclusions or even implications, James Parkes, an Englishman, has in a series of volumes explored the history and methods of anti-Semitism. Although historically he sees the "basic cause" in "an intolerant minority" (the Jewish) "under an intolerant majority" (the Christian), Parkes has extensively documented his major finding, that in modern times "the problem resides . . . in a carefully organized conspiracy of privilege against 'the common man,' and of fascism in many forms against democracy." (*The Jewish Problem in the Modern World*).

For anti-Semitism in the United States, this conspiracy of privilege has been extensively exposed in an illuminating and often fundamental analysis by Carey McWilliams in *A Mask for Privilege.* Tending toward economic determinism rather than Marxism, McWilliams has nevertheless given us a very useful work, the first attempt of its kind to demonstrate at length the function of anti-Semitism in our country for three-quarters of a century as a mask for big business and its instrument to divert the attention of the people from seeking the cause of their afflictions in capitalism. His sections on the *system* of anti-Semitic discrimination, on the marginal position of the economic life of most American Jews, on the function of the crackpot agitator in paving the way for big business openly to direct the anti-Semitic campaigns, and on the *irrelevancy* of middle-class goodwill educational programs are fine additions to our arsenal. McWilliams, however, frequently oscillates between an analysis of those by whom anti-Semitism is used and those to whom it appeals.

The only Marxist to have written even a small book on the subject in recent years is I. Rennap, whose *Anti-Semitism and the Jewish Question* first appeared in London in 1942. Its 116 pages are virtually only an outline for a major study, and they are not without flaw. But

even now this work shows that the Marxist method provides answers that elude non-Marxists. In a suggestive historical sketch from antiquity to modern times, Rennap points out that the Jews have suffered because geographically or economically they were often a buffer between contending empires or classes. It is in class relations, class struggles and the uneven development of social systems and then of capitalism that he finds the cause of anti-Semitism. The survival of the Jews he discovers to be based not on religious cohesion, group determination, personal heroism or the interference of God, but rather on the more decisive fact that the Jews were able to serve a socially necessary function in various social systems down the centuries and to different ruling classes at different times. "Class society has made a scapegoat of the Jew" when the ruling class no longer needed him. In the end of class society, Rennap properly sees the only permanent solution of the problem of anti-Semitism.

Less original but very important also is Rennap's section on the socialist solution of the Jewish problem in the Soviet Union. Czarist conditions, he shows, had forced the mass of Jews into a predominantly petty-bourgeois pattern of small traders and middle-class pursuits. Against this dangerously exposed Jewish mass, the big landowners, capitalists and the Church could easily divert the discontent of workers and peasants. After the October revolution, however, the equality of opportunity guaranteed the Jews, and the active aid rendered by the government, made it possible for the Jews to develop a working class and a collective farm peasantry. This reconstruction of Jewish occupational distribution eliminated any special function the Jews may have served in the czarist economy, but it also eliminated the special dangers they had faced. Those Jews who developed a desire to live a full and distinct national Jewish life were then aided to build up Birobidjan as a socialist Jewish state. The end of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, far from meaning the end of the Jews, has meant a rebirth on a higher plane that includes the emergence of a Jewish nation.

In the introduction to Rennap's book, Communist M.P. William Gallacher makes some gratifyingly sharp comments. To the Jew who says, "I am not a Jew. I am a socialist," Gallacher retorts: "He who is opportunist enough to deny his own people will not make a very good or a very loyal socialist."

THAT there is an alarming increase of anti-Semitism in our country has been widely noted. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, which knows more about the instances of anti-Semitism and does less about them than any other agency in the United States, reported this increase in its Annual Report, released this Spring. The Communist Party took stock of the problem in its regional and national conventions this summer. The Progressive party is alive to the issue.

The development of Marxian analysis of the problem in extended forms is sorely needed to bring clarity and vigor into an area that requires more of both. The fascists mean to exterminate the Jews. Fascism does not want only to "keep the Jews in their place." The fascist slogan is "Kill the Jews!" Too few understand that vital fact and act upon that understanding.

Marxists at least know this: to be permanently effective the struggle against anti-Semitism must include the struggle to replace monopoly capitalism and imperialism with socialism; simultaneously, this struggle for socialism, to be effective, must include a specific struggle against every form and manifestation of anti-Semitism. Reaction injects anti-Semitism into all its major campaigns, whether they be the drive to war, to cripple civil liberties at home, to smash the unions or to press ever downward the living standards of the people. The camp of progress, headed by the working class, must learn to make the fight against anti-Semitism a part of every one of its defensive battles and its counter-attacks. In the theoretical and cultural field the same necessity obtains.

How Green Is That Valley?

by THOMAS MCGRATH

IF YOU come into Wales from the North, going down through Herefordshire with its sleek cattle, its great horses as shaggy as mammoths, down the wide easy valley of the Wye with its fields like highly colored abstract paintings, the entrance into Glamorganshire is very dramatic. It is as if you went down a hill from the farming country where the sun shines and life is adequate and leisurely and found yourself under the black roof of a tent with no smoke hole in the top of it. The vegetation seems to change color; there are few flowers and the rhododendron bushes almost disappear. On the front lawns of petty-bourgeois homes there are monkey puzzle trees. When you get farther in, you notice the rivers: roiled and soot-black, when there is a sun they look like rivers of tar.

Pontypool and Pontypridd. These are concentration points for coal coming down out of the valleys. Porth—the "little America" where Sam Vine and Isaac Lewis, two characters justly famous in the Rhondda, toiled in their fabulous imaginary mines. Beyond the "big" towns you get into the valleys—Rhondda, Merthyr, Blinrhondda and the others. They run often almost parallel, separated only by a spine of mountain, toward the north, like the fingers of a hand.

The valleys are narrow and steep. In the little draws that cut back into the hills, or around neglected workings, it is possible to see what they must have been like before the mines became the chief industry, in the days when the valleys were heavily wooded. Now they are stripped bare, the trees having been long cut down for pit props. That is all that holds the mountains up, perhaps, because some of them would seem to have been worked almost hollow, crossed and recrossed with shafts and galleries. On the sides of the valleys, some of them almost as large as the hills themselves, are the tips of waste, a few of them smoking faintly like burnt-out volcanoes. Everywhere

there are the pithead structures like double windmills, and on the sides of the valleys the blind eyes of old shafts, dug before deep mining became the rule, or during old strikes when the miners had to steal coal to heat their homes.

The mining valleys of Wales are crowded. One town merges with another, following the flats along the rivers and hanging from the sides of the hills. On the bottom land the houses, like those of an American company town or Auden's "dead-straight line of dung-colored brick," with matched un-pearl-like precision—the little flights of steps at the front, the tiny yard and outhouse at the back—are set one against the other as if each one kept the next from falling down. On the sides of the valleys they follow the contours in slow curves, up and down again, like vertebrae in the spine of a dinosaur that has been only partly reconstructed.

We came into the Rhondda in the evening. It had been raining all day and the smog was thick in the valley. Just as we got to Llwynypia, beyond Tonypandy where the old-timers still want to hang Winston Churchill because miners were killed when he broke their strike, the clouds lifted for a few minutes and the few trees seemed a shocking and unnatural green. Miners were coming off shift, little bug-like black men, white only around their eyes and lips. Their steel-shod boots rang on the stone sidewalks with the sound of horseshoes, and over the clatter and the talk we could hear the birdlike sing-song of Welsh. Sheep ran down the streets ahead of them, stopping now and then to nose the cover from a garbage can in front of a miner's house.

DAI is a classical working-class intellectual. Forced to go to work in the mines at thirteen—and some of the old-timers went at an earlier age—he became head of his miners' lodge (union local) as soon as he reached an eligible age. Active politically from the time he went to work, he helped build and rebuild the Labor Party with the ebb and flow of the movement, until, as with many of the long-time militants, he became disgusted with its opportunism and shifted to the Left. Just now he has the "miner's disease," the silicosis which nearly all miners contract to one degree or other. He is the classical miner; when he dies they will give him the classical funeral: the doctors will remove his lungs and burn them to assay the percentage content of rock dust.

Dai is the sort of person who seems capable of anything. When he was a very young man he built the first radio to be heard in the Rhondda—an old-fashioned crystal set. During the thirties, when South Wales was the kingpin of "depressed areas," he went "up to England" for work and blundered into a job on an enormous estate where his first task was to design and superintend the building of ultra-modern dairy barns and laborers' cottages. "I didn't know bugger-all about it," he says, "but I went around and had a look at some dairy barns and figured I could do just as well." During the war Dai became the equivalent of a tool and die maker and the head of a department. Afterwards, because he "liked the valleys" (a vast understatement) and because the Communist Party was pushing for increased coal production in the newly nationalized mines, he returned to the Rhondda. Now he is living on the tiny compensation paid those who contract silicosis, and his chief activity is fixing watches for half the people in the valley.

"The dull bugger could make a bloody fortune, mon," one of his friends told me. We were sitting over a pint of beer in the Working-men's Labor and Progressive Club—one of the federation of miners' rec halls of which they are very proud, because they remember the days when only the Tory workingmen's clubs existed. "But he haven't enough bloody gall to charge a bloody farthin'. Dhu, you're a fat-head, Dai, bach," he said proudly.

"A Communist can't take money off his mates," Dai said, and that ended it. It was something they had been over before.

All around us were the twitterings and bird-song of Welsh, or the sound of the sing-song Welsh accent which makes English into the kind of scale work you might hear coming from the classroom of a voice teacher. Except for the crofters in the Scottish Highlands, Wales is the only place in the British Isles where the original language still has a kind of marginal survival. The Welsh have a tradition of kidding each other that operates in both tongues, and the conversations around us sounded as if at any moment they might erupt into fist-fights. None of them did. When arguments do reach the point where they can only be settled in battle, the antagonists are told to "settle it on the tip." To fight in the club rooms is a heinous offense, and the theory is that if the soreheads are sober enough and serious enough to climb the mountainous heap of waste in order to join battle with each other, they have earned the privilege.

TO AN outlander, Welsh seems an impossible language. The names of towns, for instance, may contain an inordinate number of syllables. The double L, which crops up so frequently, can probably only be properly voiced by a man with a cleft palate, but one can achieve moderate success with it by placing the tongue against the roof of the mouth, exhaling energetically, and adding to the snake-like hiss which results a crisp clicking sound similar to that of a current jumping a spark gap. If that is possible.

Welsh English, too, has its peculiarities. Without the adjective *bloody* and the noun (sometimes verb) *bugger* (a perfectly godawful six-letter word in English English—a novelist is allowed to use it only three or four times per book), it would certainly break down. The Welsh say "mon" (man) after the fashion of the Calypso singers, *dhu* is an expression of surprise, amazement, disgust or of various subtle and undefined emotions. Something which sounds somewhat like "vawk" but which is probably spelled *bach*—I never found out—means "little" and is used affectionately. "Dull" has a rather special meaning; it may mean stupid or slow or backward; or it may refer to a surface ignorance masking a kind of slyness as in the case of Dull Will, a character who is already taking on folk characteristics.

"How green was my valley," Dai said. "How dull is my valley! That writer just didn't know." It is a sore point with him; he feels that he should write a book that would put it down as it really is, but it is one thing he does not feel capable of, and he looks at his square hands rather reproachfully as if they were letting him down. Like my friends Mac and Ray in the States, Dai has a fund of marvellous stories, but he has the feeling that when he tries to write anything, the sense gets lost in thickets of words.

The talk in the club centers mainly on two things: "the dogs" (greyhound racing) and the work. The miners can't afford cynicism: they do something about a situation rather than talk about it, and all of them have had some kind of training in the school of political action. They remember the great strikes of the past, the lockouts and the sellouts of the slump, and they have a devout respect for honest union officials.

This is not remarkable. As in all areas where men are pushed against hunger and want, there have been endless betrayals, opportunisms, many piecards. Again and again they have elected Labor councillors,

for example, who, once in office, practice nepotism and graft like a Mississippi state senator. A couple of years ago there was a strike at a sweatshop factory which produced clothing in the north Rhondda. Most of the workers were young people. Brought up in a hard school of class struggle, they would probably have stayed on strike for months if a Labor M.P. from Wales had not come down and "arbitrated" the case for them. His advice was that they go back to work forthwith or (an old story in the States too) the boss would move the factory North. They went back to work. A couple of months later they discovered that the M.P. owned half the stock in the firm.

For the majority, incidents such as this have not yet ruined their faith in the Labor Party, nor has the failure of the party to carry out its program activized the mass of the miners. As with the British working class generally, they have a great feeling of loyalty to the Labor Party, an attitude which, however excellent, involves a contradiction: it is possible for the party to get away with murder (as with Ramsay MacDonald and Co.) before any action is taken. Once a Welsh miner is convinced he has been had, however, he is not likely to be taken again. For instance, there is the case of the miners' leader who sold out in the General Strike in the Twenties. After his treachery became known, his family, who still live in a town near the one in which we were staying, mourned him as if he had died. When he came back to the town, they would not recognize him; they walked on the other side of the street and turned their faces away as if he were a shameful thing.

DAI had some grim jokes about the slump and the miner's life. Some of them involved Dull Will. During one of the great periods of unemployment, when the best a miner could hope for was to steal a sheep once in a while, the family of Dull Will found themselves sitting down to a supper consisting of a single can of sardines. When carefully divided, there was still one fish left over, which was carefully placed in the center of the table as evidence that there was "lashin's and leavin's" of food, and the family proceeded to devour the creatures with the circumspect leisure of people who know that that is all they will get. Except for one boy. This one bolted his sardine without tasting it and while the others were still eating, kept savoring the remaining fish with his eyes. It got to be too much for Dull Will. Flinging down his fork, he turned to his wife indignantly. "All right!" he said. "Give

it to the silly bugger and let him burst his belly!" Everyone knows about that kind of overeating.

Another recurrent topic is that of accidents. There are few miners who have not been in an accident, from a simple rock-fall to some kind of explosion, and out of it they have evolved a contradictory piece of wisdom which allows them to believe that each time they go down the shaft they will come up under their own power. This piece of wisdom is that it is always the cautious miner who gets killed.

It is perhaps a necessary belief to a man who must continually work at top speed in order to make the best wages. This philosophy belongs to the coal cutter more than to the other miners. The coal cutter makes the top wage. But it takes six men to keep one collier at the coal face, and these men do not make the high wages which the newspapers impute to all miners: at lower pay they can afford to be a little more cautious. Even so, they all take the chance of being carried home some evening by their work mates while some Dull Will goes on ahead to break the news to their wives.

"Is this where the Widow Jones lives?" asks Dull Will in his blundering way.

"This is where Mrs. Jack Jones lives," the woman answers rather proudly, because she is newly married.

"*Mrs.* Jones, is it?" says Dull Will with some heat because he has been given a delicate task to perform and wishes to get on with it. "Dhu, you poor devil, and who do you think they're carryin' up the street there?"

Religion has played a powerful part in the lives of the miners. Nonconformism built its mighty fortresses; native revivalisms in the chapels swept the valleys like wildfire. In the early part of the century, one of the strongest of these movements almost closed the mines—everyone was busy converting his neighbor.

"Indeed to God, it was dangerous to cut coal then," Dai says. "You get a fall and your butty would be floppin' on his knees when he should have been gettin' a prop up. Or maybe you'd be workin' with a mate who was saved and you knew he was prayin' for an accident that would convert you."

Nowadays the religious influence is less strong and many of the hundreds of chapels—there are astonishing numbers of them in every village—are empty. Among the "godless" there is a surprising amount

of anti-religious feeling, which stems partly from the fact that the saints are generally unable to live within the strict ascetic limits of life according to the precepts of the chapel, partly from the fact that many of the church leaders are also petty landlords and in the bad years they put on the squeeze as hard as the heathen.

WHEN Art came to the valleys, in the form of the theatre, the "chapel people" looked on it and saw the mark of the beast. The theatre consisted of touring companies, thoroughly bad, whose repertory was composed of a few melodramas. These companies came down the valleys by caravan, great trailers containing costumes, props and cast, drawn by lumbering steam engines, and the chapel ministers proclaimed a holy war against them. They were met on the roads by hundreds of the faithful, praying, singing, exhorting. When these methods failed to soften the stone hearts of the players, the chapel folk turned to passive resistance and lay down in the road in front of the engine. These tactics were often successful.

Nevertheless the chapels could not check Progress—if that is what it was—even when its wheels turn as slowly as those of a steam tractor, and once the theatre reached the villages the miners became violent fans. Sometimes too violent. When the villain was presenting Little Nell's blind old father with the phony mortgage for signature, the walls of the theatre would shake with anguished groans, curses, prayers, shouted advice. Between acts, if the villain wanted to slip out to a pub for a pint of bitter, he learned to take along a bodyguard. If he didn't, some of his audience might catch him in the alley and give him the thrashing he so richly deserved.

One of the most famous of these old plays—always on demand in the valleys—contained a scene in which a character places a chair on a high table and a box on top of that and climbs the pyramid to straighten a picture on the wall. (The picture doesn't matter, but there has to be some reason for his being up there, doesn't there?) In the act of straightening the picture he has a heart attack and, to the immense satisfaction of the theatre-goers, falls about fifteen feet and lands like a sack of cement.

It never failed to bring down the house, but sometimes catharsis was not achieved with one performance and the enthusiasts would force the actor to repeat his specialty several times before the play

could go on. Such a role demands a master. At a later date another actor, not so accomplished, broke his leg on the first fall. While he lay on the stage calling for a doctor, the audience, convinced they were being cheated because he would not repeat the act, put on a violent demonstration against the iniquity of stage players.

"Nobody can get that worked up over a movie," Dai says a little regretfully.

A young guy comes up and greets him, and Dai fishes a watch from his pocket and gives it to the other.

"How much, Dai?"

"Buzz off," Dai says, waving his hand.

"Ta," says the other in thanks. He sets his beer down at our table and starts talking about trade union politics.

THE engine men who run the cages up and down are very happy to have greenhorns on the end of their lines. When visitors go in they are dropped into the black shaft like buckets down an old well, and before one's ears are adjusted to new pressures he is in the sump of the mine and in a new world.

It is a little like the subway at first, with the narrow-gauge lines going away into the black. Then the track is lost after you pass the last of the electric lights and there is only an occasional glint from your miner's lamp. Mines should be the quietest places in the world, but they are not. There is always the sound of seeping water, the scurry of rats, the echo of someone at work in another level. As you get farther along in, into the shafts where roof and ceiling are moving toward a marriage at the rate of four or five inches a day, there is the continual rattle of small stones as the roof comes down. Then a pit prop will snap, a ten thousand match-power sound, and you remember that it is dangerous and want to hurry, but there are only more roadways and shafts like the one you are in.

This is a "modern" mine. There are conveyor belts going back into the levels to bring out the coal, and there are pneumatic picks, and there are even a couple of coal-cutting machines; up on top there is a pithead bath—one of the few in the mines in Wales. It is a modern mine by British standards, unlike others which are so antiquated that it is impossible to get modern machinery into them. Nevertheless, whatever machines may be moved in, the work always comes back to

the miner who, unhappily, takes his life into his hands every time he comes down the shaft; and now, in this up-to-date mine, much of the work is still done on the stall principle, in the old-fashioned way, and pit ponies, which would be blind on the surface, pull the empty trams up to the coal face.

The coal seams here are not thick; and as they thin out the miner goes in after them, first working bent double, then, as he gets toward the thin end of the wedge, on his belly. The whole mountain is on top of him. It is hot, dirty, painful and dangerous and it is no place for people with claustrophobia.

Pit ponies lead restricted lives. Except for a long strike, a lockout, or a crisis in which the mines close, they never leave the pit. If they are brought up, they stand helpless in the light—they have adapted themselves too well to the midnight underground. Coming into the stable where they are kept is something of a shock. The place is loud with rats. George, the I.B. guy who worked in the mine and who was our guide, went ahead to scare them into hiding. But the stench of horses and of manure and hay, the strong ammonia smell of urine, and the bricked-off stalls in which the horses stood—these were the pleasantest aspects of the mine, the most human. You had to come to the stable to find it.

I was glad to get to the surface. I don't like closed-in places, things hanging over my head—one of my unhappiest memories is of a hold on a troopship, about four decks down, in which I went overseas.

"'Deed to God, mon," Sam Vine and Isaac Lewis would tell their friends, "these Welsh mines aren't as bad as puttin' your head under covers." This was after their friends had financed a trip to America for the two of them. They had taken the money and got as far as Porth, where they spent it all on drink, returning three or four months later, broke but with a fund of stories. "In America," they would say, "it takes you three bloody days to get to the coal face, you work a day, and it takes you three days to get to the surface. You ain't been in a tough mine yet, mate."

That is what they said. But then they never got to the States, only as far as Porth, and that is why the town is called "Little America."

RED-PROOF

"We are safe from Communism and all other 'isms' as long as our women can wear beauty like a badge of courage."—Veronica Dengel, cosmetic manufacturer, is profiled by the *New Yorker.*

BUSY SEASON

"It would be hard to imagine a more heart-warming scene than the christening of little Kelvin Cox Vanderlip Jr. in the gardens of the Vanderlips' beautiful Palos Verdes estate at Portuguese Bend. . . . The Vanderlips' guests were no exception to the rule that everyone is doing something these days—coming back from a vacation, going away, or building a house!"—From the Los Angeles *Times.*

WORKINGBROOMS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

"You can read all through *Das Kapital* or any of the writings of Marxists, and you will find that one thing is forgotten, the most important thing of all. That is man himself. . . . It's always the collective union, the clock, the store, the factory, the broom. Never man."—Barbara Ward, foreign affairs editor of the London *Economist,* writes in *Look.*

TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE PSYCHE

"Asked about the nature of the Soviet Union's sense of guilt, Dr. Ernest Jones, president of the International Psychoanalytic Association, said, 'Do you think the Russians have ever got over killing their Great Father (the Czar)?'"—From the New York *Times* under the headline, "Russia's Behavior Laid to Guilt Sense."

SERVICEMAN

"DID YOU EVER HAVE A CHIEF OF STAFF? Retired Regular Navy Captain and accomplished wife, both widely traveled, seek association with family who can afford the luxury of having unusual talents at their disposal. Fully qualified to help in business or social matters . . . experienced tutors . . . low handicap golfer . . . deep sea navigator . . . congenial companionship . . . there are a hundred ways life can be made pleasanter and more interesting for the right people . . ."—An advertisement in the *Saturday Review of Literature.*

books in review

Sailor's Progress

HOME IS THE SAILOR, *by Beth McHenry and Frederick N. Myers. International. $1.25.*

THIS is an unusual novel, an account of average people, American workers, and their first uncertain steps toward controlling history instead of being its victims. In it there is the rattle and bang of freight trains, the tight, faint feeling of empty bellies, the loneliness of seamen far from home, the resentment of men shuffling forward in breadlines for food they must pay for with a prayer. In its pages there is the smack of night-sticks upon the unprotected heads of pickets, the fumbling moves of the divided to become united, and an immense amount of authentic detail about ships and about men; about bucko mates, cargoes and hatches and tarpaulins; about riding the rails and riding blind baggage; about the lives and hopes of those millions of Americans who found themselves unemployed during the last depression.

More specifically *Home Is The Sailor* is a story of the American merchant marine, of Billy Farrell and his struggles, along with thousands of others, to form the National Maritime Union, C.I.O. In time it covers five important years in American life, from the Hoovervilles of 1932 to the rise of the C.I.O. in 1936 and 1937. In space it ranges the seven seas from New York to Valparaiso, from Frisco to Tasmania.

Home Is The Sailor moves forward rather baldly at times, but with a sincerity and immediacy that somehow transcends its shortcomings. For the novel's strength derives from its scorn of rhetoric, from its insistence on emphasizing what its writers believe with the whole power of their lives.

It is animated by a decent, humane spirit that provides the basis of a series of unforgettable portraits. Not the least of these is that of Billy Farrell and his slow growth from a tough, smart little cooky from the sidewalks of Philadelphia to a man who understands what makes society work and gives his life to the conscious effort to transform that society into something fit for humans. Billy's love affair with Mary O'Connell is movingly told. Then there is the old sailor, Petersen, whose thirst for righteousness is only equalled by his fear of the boss; there is the hungry kid from Nebraska retching and weeping while the freight train he is on

lurches down a mountain grade; there is the Greek restaurant owner who goes broke feeding the depression's hungry; and there is the matter-of-fact, unpatronizing description of a fine woman who happens to be a prostitute.

But in the main this is the story of a trade and an industry; of men fighting to improve food, quarters and pay, of fighting to transform ugly lives into lives sufficiently decent that they may contain homes, wives and children. The action moves from fo'c's'le to union hall, but its most important place is on the cobblestones of West Street flanking the North River in New York where the ships are picketed during the strikes of 1936 and 1937. With the integrity of first-hand experience, the book speaks of job actions and of goons, of dumpings and beatings. It contains a detailed description of the Communist-led Marine Workers Industrial Union and of its importance in helping seamen build what was once a democratic, rank-and-file union. Through many of its pages moves the figure of Harry Bridges. It tells of the fight of progressives, a fight often led by Negroes, to end discrimination because of race.

The novel breaks important new ground. It is one of the few novels which successfully present the Communist as a credible, every-day American devoted to the best interests of his class and country. It shows Red-baiting as a fraudulent confidence game played upon the workers by those intent on sweating them more while paying them less and it does so in terms that even a Joe Curran could understand if he dared to understand. In sober, factual terms it reveals the necessity of socialism. It has guts, an uncompromising honesty so unusual that it in itself becomes a literary quality. It shows the way, to a degree, as far as writing of an industry is concerned, to workers in auto, rubber, textile, packing, etc., and it indicates, I think, that stories of the fundamentals of American life can be written and must be written by the people who work in the industries. Writing comes from living and the most important living in America today is that being experienced by the workers of America.

But above all this novel is a weapon forged for the battle to save the N.M.U. from those fakers in it who would use the moth-eaten Red-scare to weaken and destroy it.

I cannot conclude this review without remarking on the skillful, precise use of sailors' working language. I liked the novel's specific, concrete quality, too, in such things as the extended description of how a ship is docked. I liked Brown, the Texan, who said to a Communist trying to recruit him after he had been beaten up by goons, "Brother, you must be right because them other sons-

of-bitches ain't fit to share the earth with." And Billy Farrell tells a thin, underfed little Limey, "Put a slug of red wine down you and it'd show up like a thermometer."

This is not to say that the book is without faults. Another rewriting might have changed it from a good book to a great one. A little broadening of conception, a determination to use the labor struggle to show all of American life from the Wall Street millionaire to the cop on the corner, might have improved the book—but then perhaps I'm talking about another book. The authors designed this for a specific job and it will do it. Still, when a book is good you always wish that it had been better. For all of this novel's warm humanity, its sense of beauty in the world even while it condemns man-made ugliness, it is a little bare at times and the strange complexity of human beings is scarcely indicated. The obscure and the instinctive, the dark corners of the human personality are missing from this book but they are not missing from the merchant marine nor from a world in which monopoly capital warps human personality. An extended portrait of a labor spy, or a profile of a renegade Communist, for example, might have given the novel a certain perspective, even another dimension.

But *Home Is The Sailor* is a significant, exciting story, told with vigor and dignity. It tackles the most vital subject of our time —the joint efforts of men to civilize a society which may kill them if they fail.

RICHARD O. BOYER

American Abroad

FROM THE HEART OF EUROPE, *by F. O. Matthiessen. Oxford University Press. $3.00.*

SENSITIVE Americans wandering in Europe have sought a variety of things: the skeletons of old cultures, a greater intellectual freedom, a revolutionary tradition. Whatever the quest, different eyes have time and again rediscovered Europe, and the continental experience has thus fixed itself in our novels and essays to the point where the "Old World" forms a massive bulk of the native literary heritage. I mention this in connection with Professor Matthiessen's new book because, while the reader learns very little about the essence of Europe from it, he does find a great deal that uncovers the shaping of an American mind.

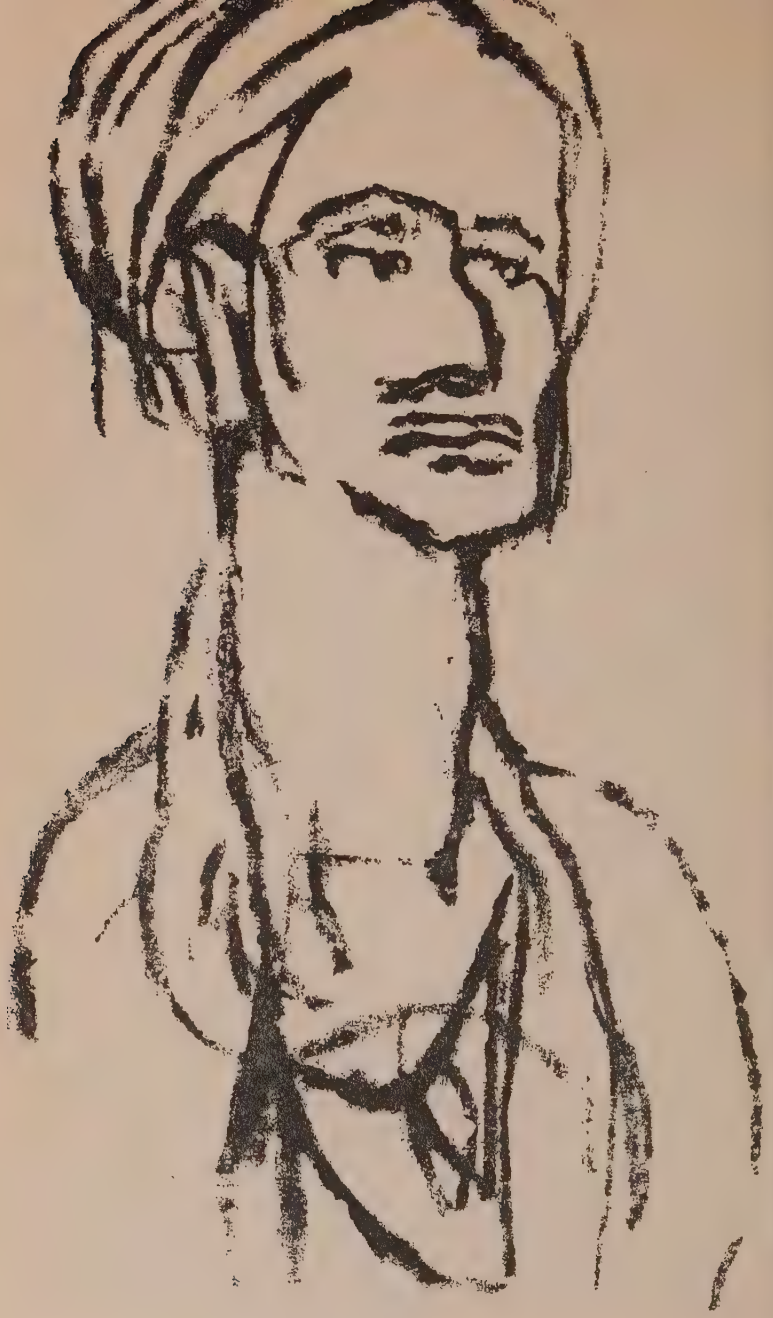
Matthiessen's six-months' stay in Salzburg, Prague and Budapest gave him the occasion to think about his own country under the impact of a Europe part desolate, part hopeful, and under the questioning of students curious as to what makes the United States tick. His book is thus a passage in auto-

biography, an earnest effort to trace his intellectual development and to discover what it means to be an American today. And because he is a critic and literary historian of stature we find in this journal an attempt to probe the components of American democracy in terms of a literature whose pivots, it appears, are Melville, Whitman, James and Dreiser.

When he lectured to his European students on Melville, it was *Moby Dick* that he used to illustrate not only Melville's Christian humanism but his own strong belief that an enduring literature is one deeply rooted in the life of the people. It is in these notes that I found the tokens of Matthiessen's warm and sympathetic spirit and those standards by which he measures America as well as his European experience. What he writes often has the ringing tone of anger, especially when he encounters barriers shutting men off from each other. He ridicules those American military representatives in Germany who will never be able to transform the country because they can never have any real relationship with the people among whom they live and from whom they are separated by "an imported American world, complete with orange juice, ice cream and coca cola." Behind their attitude of colonial overseers and their behavior as "civil servants of the new American empire" is the arrogance created by a foreign policy which insists that East and West are irrevocably opposed and must inevitably war on each other.

I do not find in what Mathiessen has written a keen perception of postwar European life. He leans too heavily on the small talk of limited circles of intellectuals who too frequently serve as his eyes and ears. There are, therefore, inaccuracies and misjudgments which at times are more imitative of the American newspapers he dislikes than reflective of his own impulses toward great communication among peoples. Where this latter holds sway he can see the immense changes that have taken place in Czechoslovakia and he can accept them (not without reservation) as part of the momentum toward socialism which only those with a vested interest in the inequalities of the past find distasteful. In broad terms, wherever the peoples of Europe have come or are coming into their own, Matthiessen shows a friendly interest, seeking to learn what in their experience will be useful to America. He thus looks upon the Russian Revolution as "the most progressive event of the century"; but more, he accepts it because to reject it is to distort the whole meaning of modern history.

He also believes, out of what he learned as an active member of the Teachers Union at Harvard and of the Massachusetts P.C.A., and now of the Progressive Party, that the responsible intellectual



Jean Halpert

needs the strong ballast of organized labor to lend discipline and reality to his work as citizen. The intellectual who fears alliances with labor runs the risk of losing himself in an idealistic void, of becoming a victim of nihilism, and of such perversions of reality as existentialism. "Our intellectuals," Matthiessen writes, "should know, after observing the rugged extremes to which our nineteenth-century individualism extended in the days of Henry Ford and Herbert Hoover, that our road, whether clearly open now or not, leads not toward further independent isolation, but towards a more fully shared existence, not towards anarchism but towards socialism."

The distinctive merit of Matthiessen's book is that he does not hesitate to move in the stream of history. But he is also diverted into shallows that retard his progress and can nullify what he is seeking. The shallows are made up in part of a metaphysical philosophy which he attempts to equate with his political position. He believes in the doctrine of original sin "in the sense that man is fallible and limited, no matter what his social system, and is capable of finding completion only through humility before the love of God." And he calls on Melville and Shakespeare to bear witness to his metaphysical doctrine of good and evil. Inevitably we have in Matthiessen a recourse to abstractions that bubble out of the unspoken resistance to a class analysis of society. It expresses itself in a preoccupation "to probe again to the nature of man" and how man can communicate with all men. The abstraction consists of a failure rigorously to examine what it is that has made for the brutalizing separations among men in our society. The abstraction is also the product of a failure to dissect the historical process which has constantly changed the nature of man when the relations of production have changed. In his theses on Feuerbach, Marx wrote that "The human essence is no abstraction inherent in each separate individual. In reality it is the ensemble of the social relations."

With his abstract approach Matthiessen cannot understand in a basic way what has separated the artist from the worker in the deforming enclosures erected by capitalism. He contends that the genuine artist has been the enemy of the state, but this generalization does not define the character of the state against which the artist has been forced to rebel and the kind of state in which he can fulfill himself through unity with the worker because both have expelled the class which divided and exploited them. Matthiessen's metaphysics obscures the reasons why the late Andrei Zhdanov, as a Soviet leader, could criticize the poet Akhmatova. In a classless society where man is reaching his full stature, the idiocy of craft ex-

clusiveness under capitalism no longer prevails, and each man is properly concerned with the work of his neighbor.

There are other things which detract from the value of Matthiessen's book: his flimsy and one-sided explanation of why the American Communist Party does not have more members—an explanation that looks in part upon the Communist Party as a participant in a popularity contest and not as the target of brutal persecution; his uninformed assessment of the struggle against Trotskyism; his passive definition of art which tends to negate its dynamic function in social struggle.

But the strong positive values of the book stand out—its reaffirmation of democracy, its exposure of the "lesser evil" fallacy, its awareness that only socialism can fulfill the American promise.

JOHN STUART

Deception by Allegory

THE PLAGUE, *by Albert Camus. Knopf. $3.00.*

FIRST and last it must be said of *The Plague* that it is a very boring book. It is so because Camus does not tell his story, neither the imaginary account of plague-stricken Oran nor the allegorically suggested and very real one of the Occupation. An impermeable curtain of quasi-philosophical disquisitions holds one back and whatever possibilities the material contains remain unrealized, stunted and restive under the burden of second-rate ideas and insights. The primary demand of the philosophical novel—the embodiment of thought in an action—is not met, and thus the experience for which any reader picking up a novel is attuned becomes impossible. For there is no story here: there is only academic moralizing which frequently brings one to a full stop.

Camus' failure is not the result of technical or imaginative lacks. The truth of the matter is that the material will not yield to his ideas. Let us examine his use of the allegory which he defends with a quote from Defoe: ". . . it is [reasonable] to represent anything that really exists by that which exists not." Writers have used the form often, and for one of two reasons or both. First, it has served as a means of speaking one's mind in repressive times, as Swift used it. Second and more strictly literary, it has been an inventive manner of dramatizing an idea, making it more pointed than it would appear in another environment, as, for example, *Penguin Island* by Anatole France. Camus' reason would seem to be the latter. Oran quarantined, its people dying of plague, is Occupied France.

But it becomes apparent im-

mediately that it is not a strict allegory. Only certain features of the experiences of this plague are pointedly analogous to France overrun by fascism, and here Camus uses his story as a parable to discuss the observations he made of the fight of the French people against the Nazis. At first they were surprised, not knowing what to make of it, the authorities slow to acknowledge the existence of plague. With an undercurrent of fear, people continued the same, with perhaps an effort to be livelier and to discount the disease. This is replaced by the open terror of the plague. Separated from their loved ones, they acknowledge their despair, are sullen and unfriendly with each other, hiding behind closed doors. Some try to escape. Others organize to fight the plague though there is no cure for it and all tactics are unavailing. They are only burying their dead with expedition and waiting for the plague to take its toll and spend its energy. As inexplicably as it came the plague dies out and the people rejoice.

This, of course, is hardly the story of Occupied France. And it is the reason, no doubt, why admirers of the novel have been boldly announcing that *The Plague* cannot be limited to so narrow a theme. It is, they would have us believe, the story of "the human predicament" itself. Camus' view of it is that all men carry the plague bacillus and it is, therefore, liable to become virulent at any moment. At such times one must be against pestilences, though one works in the dark and the fight is ridiculous. Man is more good than bad, but that is beside the point. Men must root themselves in "the solid earth of their distress," though they cannot, of course, master it.

Tarrou, Camus' counterpart in the book, tells his life to the narrator. He fights from youth what he calls "the death sentence" and joins with people all over the world who fight it. But he finds his allies also use the death sentence, and so he leaves them. "Those who want to get the plague out of their system feel such desperate weariness, a weariness from which nothing remains to set us free except death. Pending that release I know I have no place in the world today; once I'd definitely refused to kill I doomed myself to an exile that can never end. I leave it to others to make history. . . . There's something lacking in my mental makeup, and its lack prevents me from being a rational murderer."

It would seem, then, that the logical behavior for a man who would make no move that might result in the "death sentence" of anyone anywhere, even a fascist, is to remain perfectly still. But Camus doesn't, nor does his plague-resistance hero. Yet Tarrou is admittedly modest, while Camus

writes allegories in which, as the narrator avers toward the end of the book, he presumes to speak for all who fought fascism or the plague. And having seen his arguments one finds the third reason for the use of allegory, for Camus' plague does not dramatize the terror of fascism as vividly as the Occupation and the Resistance themselves did. Camus uses the allegory because the reality will not yield to his ideas. Thus, for example, it is possible to say of the volunteer sanitary squads workers: "Those who enrolled in the 'sanitary squads,' as they were called, had, indeed, no such great merit in doing as they did, since they knew it was the only thing to do, and the unthinkable thing would then have been not to have brought themselves to do it." And later the narrator "regrets" that there is no act of heroism to which he can draw attention: it was all routine work.

But such an argument would lose plausibility if written directly about the fighters of the Resistance. Suavely and superficially, Camus slides over the great moral drama involving the choices with which the fighters of the Resistance were faced. Nor is it a drama that involved solely one choice: their whole lives in the underground demanded of them acts which called constantly for choices under great moral tension. This was no round of routine: heroic decisions had constantly to be made for heroic acts to be performed. Camus' banal philosophizing founders when put to the test of a specific situation in a real place and in a real time.

Camus' subjective, unhistorical view prevents him, despite his large canvas, from projecting a single character with a sense of life. But this view does not prevent Tarrou or Camus, unfortunately, from making history. For though they played some part in the resistance against one plague, what is to insure that they will recognize another with all their animus against history and science? Though Camus can pardon the collaborators, as he does in the novel, might he not fight those who would use "the death sentence" (his symbol for state power) against the fascists? But the masses of people who felt the whip of fascism do not pardon collaborators or fascists and whom would Camus be fighting then?

There exists in the simplicity of Camus' use of allegory, as in the modesty of Tarrou's apologia, a hidden arrogance. It is the arrogance of ignorance, of those who *will* not to learn from life, and who are logically reduced, like Camus, to creating a setting that will appear to contain lessons mistakenly derived from another and real one. (How deliciously simple to make of fascism a moral condition!) They are the writers who do not find it necessary to study our society scientifically in all its

concreteness and change, writers who have no respect for their material. Where Stendhal, James and Proust viewed the social immoralities of their time with an analytical eye and produced a literature of decadence, these writers produce a decadent literature and an unhealthy one. For they carry with them everywhere the world of their psychology and imagine their limitations to be their forte, so that when they write a novel we cannot recognize ourselves in their characters as it is possible to see oneself in the characters of the most differing social classes and milieus whom a writer has truly bared for us. Instead, we are phantoms and illusions and we move as swimmers under water who touch, bump and go, held always in the envelope of water which is *their* philosophy. But such a view of life cannot hold *us*. We must come up for air.

Writers like Camus have their influence because they appear to be saying something, for life, at least in our day, can be terrible and our world obscenely phantasmagorical. But they deceive us when they say it is the natural condition of man and point to immutable laws for its existence. And fail as writers when they cannot illumine the depths. Camus' plague is impalpable and its source undiscoverable, but we can

see and point out fascism in our world, and its source in the structure of capitalism is the real "human predicament" today.

JOSÉ YGLESIAS

Sweet, Idle Tears

THE SKY IS RED, *by Giuseppe Berto. New Directions. $3.50.*

IN 1933 Robert Nathan wrote a depression fantasy, *One More Spring,* about an antique dealer, a violinist and an engaging young prostitute who lived in a tool shed in Central Park. These and other, subsidiary, characters were so charming that one quite forgot the situation to which the novel referred and which it was designed to ameliorate—in a spiritual sense at least.

There are curious similarities between Nathan's book and Berto's. The latter's park is a bombed-out and fenced-off area in a northern Italian city; his tool shed is the ground floor of a collapsed building. Nathan's characters were endowed with the innocence of children; Berto's are children, or hardly more, in age, and one of them, Carla, is a prostitute who accepts her role with the sensible practicality of Nathan's Elizabeth Cheney. Since a war is worse than a depression, Berto's novel is more somber than Nathan's, his tone pathetic rather than gay and wistful, and his conclusion hopeless instead of irresponsible. In both books, however, reality is kept carefully at one remove, dissolved in the idyllic sweetness or improbability of the characters.

The superficial affinity of the two novels is of no great importance; what is interesting is how each plays a similar function for its own time and place. In a slick story the unreal is made real, but with Berto, as in Nathan, the real is made to seem unreal. Social truths are not stood on their heads; but dialogue, characterization and action are handled in such a way as to make social truth unrecognizable. The status quo is not saved by mirrors so much as by sleight-of-hand.

In his "letter from the publisher" James Laughlin praises *The Sky Is Red* for being "a war book in which there are no battles, no party-politics and no speeches, no mention of patriotism, nationalism or of hatred between class or nation." In other words, no nothing. The locale of Berto's novel was chosen not in order to intensify the meaning of the war and the defeat of fascist Italy, but in order that there should be removed from the suffering, the hunger, the frustration, the oppression of men any hint of social reason. The condition of man is accounted for by the usual bourgeois platitudes: "the universal evil which had touched them had accumulated in-

side them—the certainty of having lost, for ever, things that belong to all humanity," etc.

Nowhere in the book is there any serious attempt to fix responsibility for the misery that is described; on the contrary any sense of responsibility is dissipated in a sly self-pity ensconced in the pathos of the story. Thus, Tullio, Carla's boy friend, who describes himself as a Communist, is made to say of the Americans, "I don't understand why they've brought so much destruction, if they're not bad." A while later, speaking of the fascists (who are never identified as such), Tullio asks, "what difference does it make that the people before [sic] did a few things that were good? In the end they pushed us into the war, and ruined everything. We're not the right sort of people to make war, and we weren't even prepared. . . ." Now this was the standard lament of the defeated Italian bourgeois and petty-bourgeois. Only conscious falsification could put it in the mouth of a Communist of any sort.

Tullio is a fine concoction in any case. This "Communist" is a pimp, a blackmailer and a highjacker of Allied supply trucks. He speaks of going to meetings, but these are never described; he needs medicine for mysterious comrades of whom one learns nothing; he guards stores of arms against the day when "it may be useful to have these things handy." In brief, he is the bourgeois' nightmare of a revolutionary. If he sends Carla out to work the street, that is only "because it serves my purpose." Doesn't the end justify the means? So this caricature, who wouldn't be allowed to remain within any Communist Party for a split second, is endowed with a very thoughtful manner and a calm and affectionate voice, and is presented to us as a working-class hero.

Let us suppose, charitably, that Tullio is no figment of Berto's malice or stupidity. He must then be the product of the author's conviction that anything is possible in character portrayal, that there is no limit to what people in a novel can be made to do. Well and good, but then the novel ceases to have any intellectual significance whatsoever and—since three of its characters die miserably—becomes a tearjerker for conservative middle-class readers. Here they can experience in romance what they never feel in real life, and have their fear of the future assume the nobler clothing of despair over the fate of mankind. Here is their catharsis, a chance to clear one's conscience with sweet, idle tears.

CHARLES HUMBOLDT

music

Mimi Will Die Again

by SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

THE announcement of the Metropolitan Opera Association that it was closing its doors for the coming season was nothing more than the repetition of an annual farce. "We cannot go on," says the Association, in tragic tones. When this is greeted with widespread apathy in music-loving circles, the Association answers itself: "But what about culture?" Back comes the first voice: "Ah yes, culture, but what about those damn unions?" The unions mutter the word "lockout," in unmusical tones, but this is ignored.

There follows a heart-rending account of all the money the Association has paid out in salaries for the past five years, ending with the outcry: "During the past year the payroll has nearly equalled the entire proceeds received by the Metropolitan from ticket sales for the entire season." This does not sound very shocking, since it is to hear the musicians and singers that the ticket-buyers presumably pay their money. Then follows the threat: "If we close there will be no jobs." The unions are impressed. Already faced with a mounting unemployment situation, they give in. There is a face-saving promise to "look into" the matter of social security, accompanied by a warning that this will have to be absolutely "legal" and a smirk directed at the anti-labor and social-security cutting laws that have been passed by the last Congress.

Mimi will die and Lucia will go mad again this year.

There never was any real danger that the Metropolitan would fold up. The deficit of $220,000 is picayune when split up among the millionaires who run the Association. And even this deficit is fake. It goes back into the pockets of the Association in the form of rent. The Metropolitan is tax exempt. The rent is a bonanza, for there is no other possible productive use to which this piece of vile architecture could be put, monument that it is to the royalty-aping taste of the robber barons of the 1880's. The Association members need the opera, as well, so that they can continue to entertain visiting nobility, have singers come begging for jobs, enjoy their monopoly of the private boxes and

wear the flowing garments of "patrons of music."

What lay behind the lockout was, in the first place, a plain hatred of dealing with unions. Secondly, there was the resentment the capitalist feels about having to pay for anything so long as there is a public to be milked and a worker to be squeezed. Unlike the old-world royalty, who gave back some of their unearned income in the form of musical circuses, our homegrown royalty want the glory and the money too. For the past fifteen years they have put on dark glasses and a tin cup, and begged for donations. Even the American Federation of Musicians kicked in, although without the perspicacity shown by the "philanthropists" who run the Juilliard School. These latter drove the bargain by which Juilliard students get first crack at Metropolitan jobs.

The Metropolitan Opera never filled a creative role in American cultural life, although there were times when it was a handsome adornment. Its role was that of an importer of musical luxuries, comparable in painting to that of the millionaires who went to Europe during the past century buying "old masters," and who, for all the horrible taste they displayed and the downright swindles they fell for, managed to bring some good pictures to these shores. The Opera House itself was built at the request of the wives of the post-Civil War rich, who found the older real estate millionaires entrenched in the boxes of the old Academy of Music. And so the new house was built, imitating the old-world monstrosities, including the horseshoe shape which cut off half the seats from a view of the stage but enabled the box-holders to admire each other's jewelry and hold private gossip parties.

American music, like American painting, has paid a heavy price for this "philanthropy." The "free-enterprise" robbers and their descendants now sit on our cultural life like the old man of the sea, preventing any honest exploration of American life.

The turning point in the Metropolitan Opera came after the crash of '29. Since then it has been begging for funds in all directions, crying that culture was a "public responsibility" but abhorring as "socialistic" any hint that the public might take on the job of direction as part of its "responsibilities." The Metropolitan now does not show any profit, since rent is a sacred cow omitted from its own figures and considerately ignored by the newspapers. At the same time it provides one of the fancier radio advertising exhibits. It is an adjunct to the phonograph record industry. It is a farm for Hollywood and radio talent.

Its performances have taken on a completely ersatz quality. Why hire the best singers and conduc-

tors, why provide adequate staging and rehearsals when there are press agents who can turn a sow's ear into a silk purse? Metropolitan singers get as little as $90 a week. The orchestra musicians, better organized, get $139.50, but this lasts for only twenty weeks, after which they must hunt up odd jobs.

Patriotism was employed as a mask for the new chiseling. American singers, the Metropolitan announced, were being given the long awaited break. However, the American singers who were hired —some of them with great potential voices—were trained in the most degenerate tradition of cultural cosmopolitanism. They sang in languages they hardly understood, ignoring the art of song as a communication involving real ideas and recognizable human experiences. They learned a set of stock gestures, ignoring the

"Oh, I didn't raise my boy to be a student . . ."

art of opera as a branch of theatre, as a recreation of living people in real situations. And they were paid in "glamour."

THE Metropolitan has turned opera into its opposite. Historically, its origins had been in the folk and people's theatre. It was upon these rich traditions of plays with music and *singspiel* that Monteverdi, Lully, Gluck and Mozart drew. The European ruling classes turned opera into a flattery of themselves, imagining themselves to be the Greek gods and ancient heroes they asked to be portrayed on the stage; but the popular traditions of opera were never lost. Mozart used it for sharp anti-feudal satire, Beethoven made it a medium for the glorification of freedom, Verdi made it a proclamation of Italian independence and a call to action. Smetana and Dvorak in Bohemia, Glinka and Moussorgsky in Russia, restored to it the music of the people.

In our own country, however, nothing of this people's tradition of opera has ever entered. Works that should crackle with drama, that are alive with social and political symbols, are turned into meaningless pageants, vocal recitals with costume. When occasionally the Metropolitan commissions a new American work, it encourages only those which fit its "traditions," meaning those which reshuffle the outmoded cultural imagery of the last century's romanticism. Together with the mouthed words and ham acting these "American" works are completely incomprehensible. Then the Metropolitan laments the fact that the public fails to appreciate its sacrifices for "American" art.

A true American tradition, of course, would have meant something quite different: works that would carry into music and music drama the qualities that Mark Twain, Whitman and Dreiser brought to literature, works that would draw upon the riches of American folk song, ragtime and blues. It would have meant opening the doors of opera to the Negro people among whom a new and truly American song art has been growing. Artists like Paul Robeson, Roland Hayes, Marian Anderson, give a new meaning and human content to the musical masterpieces of other nations as well as inspire an American song and dramatic art. But every suggestion that the Metropolitan hire these great singers has been met with a retirement into the mysteries of "pure art" and a request for additional donations so that the grandiose and gilded barn can continue to draw a rental.

And so the problem is not one of culture but of jobs, decent wages and security for singers, musicians and other employees. Had the unions held tight, opera would still have opened this year. The American capitalists need it. Not the least of the reasons is the

one cagily mentioned in the Association's announcement of the "implications" the closing of opera would have "in the foreign field."

There will be food for thought throughout the world in the fact that where "free enterprise" rules supreme, culture explodes with loud bangs. In the name of "freedom," not a single American composer can make a living out of his art. Not a single American composer has been encouraged to write an opera that would include, in both play and music, the face and character of the American people. The richest capitalist country in the world finds difficulty in keeping one solitary opera company going for five months, while the socialist Soviet Union is rebuilding its war-shattered opera houses, training new companies, fostering not one but a dozen fresh traditions of national music and theatre, reminding its best composers that its audiences are not satisfied with the past alone but want new and greater works.

The tragi-comedy of the closing and opening of the opera, the lamentations over culture and the attack upon the wages of the workers, will be repeated until we have a progressive city government that will decide to relieve the rich of the sacrifices which they find so heavy, build a real opera house in which the whole audience can see the stage and hear the music, hire a music director freed of society wire-pulling, present opera all year round with musicians and singers at decent pay, throw Jim Crow into the ash-can and encourage some realistic American music dramas.

art

JOHN MARIN

by JOSEPH SOLMAN

A NUMBER OF frail papers washed with water color by John Marin seem now, after thirty years, more spirited and substantial than most of the products developed by artistic fashions in our country during the past generation.*

Marin does not make any kind of completed statement in his art; he is not a builder of classic structures; he has almost never assayed the figure or portrait as a key to the human drama—he has not even been able to develop an oil painting as well as certain artists he has influenced such as Knaths and DeMartini. Marin's art remains distinctly fragmentary and expressionistic in character. But his search for apprehending the essential forms in nature, whether it be in a Maine island or a Manhattan skyscraper, has led to revelations of utmost lyrical vividness, imparting a love of nature as intense as that which we find in the work of Emily Dickinson and Thoreau.

To impart his particular vision, Marin has hammered out a series of staccato planes, bracketing and subdividing them like stray montage shots till the main elements of his scene—trees, boats, buildings—fairly leap at you in abrupt and startling rhythms. He has added so many new and powerful sonorities to the water-color medium, that one can justly say he has placed it on a par with oil painting. (We are prone to forget that the largest part of Persian and Chinese painting is also in water-color).

Marin's sometimes roughshod, fragmentary manner is part of a desire to impart the white heat of his emotion to paper as though the process of reacting and communicating were simultaneous. This certainly is one of the major tenets of expressionism. It is also responsible for certain of its limitations—the inability to cope with large-scale forms or to sustain an emotion long enough to make it part of a complex design full of deeper human values, such as Cezanne, Seurat and Rousseau have created.

* A retrospective exhibition of Marin's paintings and drawings of New York, 1910 to 1944, was shown last month at the Downtown Gallery.

Marin's art has constantly been termed "Yankee," "Native," and "American" by the same critics who have castigated any School of Paris influence on American painting. Yet Marin's debt to Cezanne and Cubism is clear. The deeper question the critics have not considered is why the Woodstock school, the American regionalists with their monotony of detail, the razor-edged stylizations of Blume, O'Keefe and Sheeler, or the current brands of abstract symbolism cannot produce works that breathe such life and excitement into a painting as Marin is able to do.

In so many phases of American painting we find a mechanistic approach to nature and form. We have either a laborious construction of reality without warmth or personal selectivity, or, at the other extreme, so sharp a stylization that the aridity of form resembles an arrangement of back-stage props. In taking his nature "straight" or his abstract shapes "straight," the artist misses the dialectic motivation of art. This means the assimilation of reality, the reconstructing or abstracting of forms from nature and, finally, bringing these forms back to the concrete world, their specific peculiarities transformed by the artist's creating vi-

John Marin

Courtesy of the Downtown Gallery

sion. Thus one regains that reality of actual things which is absent from all abstractions.

MARIN succeeds in doing this within the limits of his "nature poems." He tests his emotions honestly before nature, continually making a fresh, uninhibited investigation of the forms he beholds. He allows his technique as well as his sensibility free play. He does not come to nature with a formula, nor with the idealistic notion of experimentation for its own sake. He is so moved by discovering certain lyrical aspects of the world that he uncovers a method for the moment: a few gray washes may indicate a deathly calm sea or a splash of cadmium red projects the sun about to fall into a tumultuous city harbor. Marin himself expressed his idea in a letter dated 1919: "Mr.—— showed me some things made out of Mexican silver coins, made by the Hopi or Navajo tribe of Indians. You felt there was a symbolic expression, an abstract expression of their personal sight of things existing around about them, however abstractly treated, still gotten from those special things from their own lives. . . . No, at the root of the matter, however abstractly, however symbolically expressed, I would still have it, Town of Stonington, the boats of Maine, the people of Maine, seething with the whole atmosphere of Maine."

theatre

PLAY IN THE MAKING

by ALVAH BESSIE

IN 1940 Arnold Manoff published in *Story* magazine a novelette called "All You Need Is One Good Break." It was an important story at that time; it is still important, and translated now to the stage of the Actors Laboratory Theatre in Hollywood, it has become one of the most exciting evenings the theatre on the West Coast has ever provided. The theme is central to our time, even if it reveals but a single facet of the American Dream: "All you need is one good break"—to get ahead in life; to land a fine job; to get the girl; to escape the Depression, the draft or dandruff; to achieve the life-long dreams of travel, adventure, security.

The material of this piece—which is essentially a theatrical *tour de force*—hinges around a single protagonist, Martin Rothman, who is on the stage at all times and through whose eyes the action of the play and the interaction of all characters are seen.

Although Marty addresses the audience, he is never a "narrator" in the sense that that clichéd figure is currently employed. For his commentary is addressed to himself and to the world in general; it is externalized stream-of-consciousness; it is projected dream and reality on several levels.

The play details a day in the life of a Bronx Jewish boy during the Depression. Marty is dead broke. His family is on relief; his mother suffers from gallstones; his father is crushed; his kid sister is going mildly crazy. The play opens and closes with Marty in a cell, contemplating his fate. How did it happen? Did it really happen to him? How could it have happened? *What* happened is the action of the play.

Marty is convinced he is an unusual person who needs no more than one good break to demonstrate to the dull clods about him how superior he is. He is the small middle-class personality on his unwilling way into the working class. Defeated by forces he neither can understand nor cares to grapple with, he clings to the one straw our society holds out to him: "some-

thing" will happen; a break will come; the "law of averages" will manifest itself; it *can't* go on like this. And yet it does go on.

What do you do when you are frustrated? You build yourself up. If your dream girl will not date you, you can date a second-string dream girl named Diane Goldberg. But Diane rebuffs him too. Frustration. Wish-fulfillment. Frustration. One follows the other. The scenes are spotted all over the stage with Martin walking in and out of them.

But this is no Bronx version of *Dream Girl* or *Walter Mitty*. These dreams represent Martin's necessities, without which his tottering ego collapses and must be constantly rebuilt. So he rejects Diane in his mind. From this day on, Martin Rothman is a changed man. A man of steel! He wants a job; he asks for it; he is immediately recognized as a man of quality and gets it. In his mind he defeats all his enemies—with a blow of the fist or by example.

Marty drops in at a cafeteria where the "Reds" hang out. He greets them: "Fellow workers, I am here!" He looks down his nose at them. Sam Eisenstein, his old pal, has been to a meeting! Sam has joined the Workers Alliance! This is a *real* betrayal. He must find an answer to the siren song Sam Eisenstein has sung to him—the siren song of collective action, brotherly solidarity. And so he says:

"Oh people, people, dopes, people by the millions and each one individually a crackpot from his head to his feet. Sam the radical. A lot of good it'll do him with petitions, meetings and speeches on the street-corner. Sure he wants to save the world. Who doesn't? But he doesn't understand that everything happens by fate. It's all laid out in advance and nothin' is gonna change it. World, world, what is it? A round thing in the middle of nowhere with a lot of dirt and water, first animals and then people, flowers, insects, bacteria and germs, sum it all up and what did you get? Trouble, murders, wars, suicides! . . . Around us a whole cosmotic universe. The world itself is only insignificant as compared to the sun and likewise the sun to the stars. And the bigger it gets the more insignificant is the world. Life, what is it? A misery without explanation even for all the books in the world, astronomy, chemistry, philosophy, acrosophy, shmeosophy, salami and eggs for two, a cocktail in between, crap without even a flavor if you ask me. Me? Who am I? Nobody. But one thing I know. I'm fated to be a somebody. I'm different from the others. The thoughts that go on in my head nobody can understand but myself. Once it used to bother me that I was so different but then I realized that I was fated that way and nothing could stop it. In the end your fate worked out. And if that isn't true then nothing is true. . . ."

Martin's soliloquy ends like this:

"Tomorrow a new day with a break for me somewhere along the line . . . somewhere a break! Tomorrow! Special! I felt it. I felt it in every corpus-

cular atom of my being. It had to be. One more day like today and I'll go nuts. I'll blow my top!"

And that is precisely what Martin S. Rothman, the defeated, did. But not till he came home and learned that his mother had been carted off to the hospital. Not till his grief and rage over her being in a charity ward, to be operated on by "greenhorns" forced him to a desperate expedient. He decided to bluff the great surgeon, Dr. Ames, into operating. He told him on the telephone that he was Martin S. Rothman, vice-president of Rothman's Fancy Trimmings, Incorporated. The big professor was impressed and said his fee was fifteen hundred dollars. Martin promised to bring it to him and hung up:

". . . go be honest in a world of crooks! Legal crooks, illegal crooks, small time gyp artists, big time phonies, killers, kidnappers, murderers . . . [*with full anguish*] Who was honest in the world? Who had a heart? Who was a real friend? Who wasn't out for himself? Who cared whether I choked or cried or broke my neck or died in the sewer with the water rats waiting for my eyeballs? Not him, he, her, you, it, they! Die! Die! Yeah, yeah, okay, all right! But tell me what I did wrong! *What did I do wrong?*

Nobody answered, and Marty did not think to turn to his radical friends. So he met Doctor Ames at the hospital and the Great Professor spurned his phony check and didn't believe Marty had a gun in his pocket (which he didn't) and said something about not being intimidated by the gutter.

That was the point at which Martin Rothman cracked altogether and tried to beat up the Great Professor and landed with a broken head in jail. And even there he could not believe that it had happened. Even there he finally realized that if it *had* happened, it was only because his break was due; the sweepstakes ticket!

"Sure! The flash comes across the ocean. 700373! The winner! I hold the winner! They're looking for me the winner! They can't find me! Where is he? Where is the unknown winner! At last they find me! . . . One chance in a million! Socko! My lucky star! My fate! My break! At last! At last! *At last!*"

AT AN AUDIENCE forum at the Actors Lab, the play was criticized on several grounds; that there is no change in Martin Rothman from beginning to end; that he is a psychopath and the audience cannot identify with him; that there is no conflict within Martin between pursuing his individualist path into insanity and struggling, at least for a time, with the concepts offered him by his radical friends—if only to reject them in the end.

In a brief and moving speech in which he explained what he was trying to do in his play, Arnold

Manoff said that if Marty is a psychopath, then the streets and villages of America teem with them. "I'm not too much concerned," he said, "if Marty doesn't change too much, or whether the audience sympathizes with him or doesn't. I'm more interested in changing *audiences*—changing the way they think—in whatever form I work; the novel, screenplay, the theatre, the story. That is why I am a writer."

In this play Manoff was interested in illustrating—in forms recognizable and moving to every member of the audience—those aspects of illusion which the majority of us rarely shed. And he was interested in demonstrating—in terms of character and situation—those pressures which can and do lead to insanity in America and in other capitalist countries. The audience identifies itself with Martin for Martin speaks and acts (on many levels) in the accents of all Americans. And when he goes berserk, he goes berserk because he has reached a point where his individualist philosophy and his endless faith in the one good break can no longer cope with the situation with which he is faced—the possible death of his beloved mother. "But tell me what I did wrong! *What* did I do wrong?"

As a play, *Break* suffers from the fact that it is derived so strictly from its original. Manoff will have to get further away from the story, in future development of the stage-piece, before he will have the brilliant play that is so manifestly coming to birth here. He will have to realize that in both good and bad senses his play is more literary than dramatic. That it is literature on a high level—and close to poetry—is one of its greatest achievements. But its very literary qualities sometimes prevent it from achieving the theatrical embodiment Manoff is trying to give it.

He has borrowed liberally from the medium in which he has been working these past five years—the film—in adapting his story to the stage. And several times he has stretched the boundaries of the stage itself through the use of devices that are more commonly seen on the screen, though not in precisely the context in which he uses them. For here the dream, the vision, is something more than wish-fulfillment. Here the day-dream is used dialectically and is so closely wedded to the structure of character development that it sheds light on human personality and motivation in ways the film has rarely been able to achieve, except possibly in such early works as UFA's pre-Nazi *The Last Laugh* and *Secrets of a Soul.*

All You Need Is One Good Break may be produced in New York this season. It would be a break for Broadway.