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asses & MAINSTREAM

this Issue: **Peace, Culture and the People:**
EXANDER A. FADEYEV, MIKE GOLD, LADISLAV
OLL, WILLIAM GROPPER, HERBERT APTHEKER,
MUEL SILLEN · STORIES: *Louis Aragon, Phillip Bonosky*

May Day, 1949

"They are picked out because they are the leaders. Convict them, and our society is safe."

The prosecutor was Grinnell, not McGohey. The judge was Gary, not Medina. May Day spans the half-century from Haymarket Square to Foley Square. The men of money against the men of labor, the frame-up, the labor spy, the rigged jury, the Red Scare—today is a new chapter of the old story.

But now the frame-up is vastly greater. A Party is indicted; the ideas of Marxism are on trial; the Bill of Rights is in the dock. Not the gallows of Cook County Jail, but the structure of an American police state. Not the crude black-powder bomb of the provocateur thrown into the fledgling ranks of Labor, but the billion-dollar atomic bomb threatening the peace of the world.

Peace is a fighting word this May Day; the struggle against the warmakers is first on the agenda of the working class and all humanity. Central to this must be the defeat of the conspiracy to outlaw the Communist Party; the Federal Court is a decisive sector of the battle for peace. Remember that on May Day and remembering, *act.* Speak out, write, organize, recruit, donate, protest—*Free the Twelve!*

For May Day we have tried to bring you something of the spirit and meaning of our times—of people in struggle against the old enemy, of people on the march. Of Americans who refuse to be silent. Of the new democracies abroad, of socialist thought and values.

We dedicate this issue to the cause of peace, that the people may live; to culture, that our lives may be richer; to internationalism, that all peoples may be linked by bonds of brotherhood rather than the chains of imperialism.

—The Editors

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Drawings by Irving Amen, Philip Evergood, Helen West Heller, Leopoldo Mendez, Alice Neel.

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AMONG THE CONTRIBUTORS

LOUIS ARAGON'S novel, *Les Communistes,* will be published soon in France.

ALEXANDER A. FADEYEV, author of *The Nineteen* and *The Young Guard,* is General Secretary of the Union of Soviet Writers and a Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

MIKE GOLD, who has been living abroad during the past year, is at work on a new novel.

HANANIAH HARARI'S "On Safari With Harari" which was a popular feature in *New Masses* will appear regularly in *M & M.*

ALICE NEEL, a New York painter, is now at work on a series of studies of the Negro and Puerto Rican people in Harlem.

LADISLAV STOLL is Dean of the Academy of Political and Social Science of Czechoslovakia. His article in this issue was presented as a paper at the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace.

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Cover: The Madison Square Garden rally of the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace. Photo by Kate Morgan.

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BREAKTHROUGH FOR PEACE

by SAMUEL SILLEN

DESPITE their fumbling gestures of belittling the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace, the war-bent Administration and press could not cover up their alarm. The State Department, knotted up in the ingenious farce of outwitting itself, roused all reinforcements to put out the fire that was burning up its façade. Blackmail, counter-rallies, picket-lines, F.B.I.-visits, fearless invasions of the Waldorf-Astoria by Sidney Hook and Norman Cousins—no effort was too foolish or too vile for dividing and discrediting this great gathering of progressive intellectuals for peace. If anyone had beforehand underestimated the importance of this conference, its enemies soon taught him better. And their panic proved worse than futile, for the threats of violence and reprisal only served to sharpen the meaning of the war danger and thereby to stiffen resistance, just as the masterminding of Mr. Acheson succeeded only in giving a timely lesson in morality by the colorful way he dealt from his deck of visas.

The alarm of the strategists in Washington was understandable. For this conference was a major symptom of the popular will for peace breaking through the containing wall that has been carefully built for three years. Throughout the cold war period the chief tactical problem has been the step-by-step commitment to war of a population that does not want war. To carry out this tactic, as has often been pointed out, the men of war have had to present themselves demagogically as men of peace—witness Truman's election campaign. But since the disguise wears thinner with every war commitment, such as the North Atlantic military alliance, the strategists were determined from the outset to divide and silence the genuine voices of peace. It is not the Soviet Union that has been "contained" but the American people. The

conference was attacked with a ferocity out of proportion to its own specific strength because it threatened a breakthrough at many other levels of the underground stream of resistance to the war program.

But there were of course special reasons for the outcry against this broad assembly of writers, artists, educators, scientists, churchmen. They speak for many and they reach out to many. The stifling of public expression for peace means in the first instance the silencing of these molders of minds. As everyone at the conference was aware, workers in the arts and sciences had been the first casualties of the cold war. Present were men already facing prison for their opinions, like Howard Fast and John Howard Lawson; or men fired from their teaching posts, like Professors Butterworth, Gundlach and Phillips of Washington University. Nor, indeed, could anyone doubt that support of this very conference would be noted in the files of the F.B.I. This gathering, obviously composed of men and women of a wide range of political views, notably registered the failure of the Un-American Committee to rout the progressive intellectuals of this country.

"We have learned," said Clifford Odets in a powerful address, "that free speech is one of the highest priced luxuries in this country today. If I speak here Sunday I may be without a job on Monday." And even retreat into silence is no longer safe, for as Professor John J. De Boer of the University of Illinois pointed out: "As the climate of intolerance intensifies, even silence will not be acceptable; only open, aggressive participation in the war program will provide safety from the inquisitors." In the light of this terror Rabbi Louis I. Newman appropriately recalled the Rabbinic maxim: "Be rather among the persecuted than among the persecutors." Richard L. Lauterbach, who did not sponsor the conference but spoke with anger at the huge Madison Square Garden meeting, said: "Despite the official line that peace is subversive, there are thinking Americans who refuse to swallow the line, preferring to be live villains in Mr. Acheson's black book than dead heroes in the next war."

THIS decision to take a stand for peace and cultural freedom brought together the 600 sponsors, the 2,800 registered delegates, the 8,500 Americans who attended the panels and the 20,000 who filled Madison Square Garden. But the biggest achievement of the conference was not its numbers nor its outstanding participants, but its breadth and unity.

Assembled here were men and women of widely divergent views on many questions, people of all parties or of no party, people with varying philosophies. Every pressure was brought from the outside to magnify these differences, to play one off against the other. The full force of Red-baiting, the supreme divisive tactic, was brought to bear on the conference. Its enemies waited hopefully for bickerings and diversions. But in the face of every provocation, the conference kept its focus on the issue, the overriding issue of peace. In seeking and finding common ground, the conference, under the chairmanship of Dr. Harlow Shapley, marked a vitally significant stage in the fight for peace.

This unity of the peace forces was dramatized by the participation of the twenty-nine international guests. A rich contribution to the cause of international understanding was made by these visitors, most of whom came from countries that had felt the full brunt of the last war and that were now above all eager to carry through the task of peaceful reconstruction. All the warmongering lies about the Soviet Union and the people's democracies of Eastern Europe collapsed at this conference. The presence of a Shostakovich was itself a rebuke to those who for three years have conducted a campaign of vilification

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"... ON THE MOVE!"

I TELL you people of America, the dark world is on the move! It wants and will have freedom, autonomy and equality.... We know what the Atlantic Pact proposes for the protection of colonial serfs of European imperialists. We know why Italy has been promised Ethiopia's territory by the Department of State. We know why the President of the United States goes fishing when the charter of Negro American rights is laughed to death by Democrats and Republicans, and lynching and disfranchisement go merrily on. . . .

What we want is a decent world where a man does not have to have a white skin in order to be a man; where poverty is not a means to wealth; where ignorance is not used to prove race superiority; where sickness and death are not part of our factory system. And all this depends on world peace. Peace is not an end. It is the gateway to real civilization.—W. E. B. DU BOIS *at the Madison Square Garden rally of the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace.*

against Soviet culture. The forthrightness of a Fadeyev, his calm but firm exposition of his country's peace policy, strengthened the resolve of the conference to re-establish American-Soviet friendship as the basic condition for world peace. It is scarcely to be wondered at that the State Department ordered the visitors home, thus keeping Americans in other cities from hearing their peace message.

In a living way the guests from abroad gave substance to the resolution of the conference: "We wish to open and keep open the channels of communication among the peace-minded peoples of all lands and in particular between our country and the Soviet Union. It was to this purpose that the conference was called. We have succeeded in demonstrating that the channels can be kept open. . . . The interchange of ideas that has been achieved here is the way which our leaders on the highest level must take. All nations should judge every act of statesmen by whether their acts strive for peaceful negotiation and by whether they contribute to the settlement of American-Soviet differences on which the peace depends."

THE two main aspects of the conference, the fight for peace and for cultural freedom, were summed up in separate resolutions that seek to halt the plunge toward war and fascism. The basic theme of the peace resolution is the imperative need for American-Soviet understanding, for strengthening the United Nations, and for co-operation with other movements for peace throughout the world. It is a shortcoming of this resolution that it fails to mention by name the North Atlantic Pact which clearly violates the criteria set up by the resolution for judging acts that intensify the danger of war.

It is also a shortcoming, from my point of view, that the resolution fails to indicate clearly the nature of the forces in this country that are driving toward war. The fact is that the fight for peace, to be fully effective, must define the enemy of peace as an aggressive U.S. imperialism. But in this respect the resolution reflects the many currents of opinion expressed at the conference itself; it does find common ground; it does collide with the cold-war policy of the Administration and it notes the tragic consequences of that policy. To rouse the American people to protect the peace, the resolution instructs the sponsors of the conference to constitute themselves as the Cultural and Scientific Commitee for World Peace of the National Council of the Arts, Sciences and Professions.

The resolution on cultural freedom reviews the effect of the drive toward war on writers, artists, scientists, the heavy toll of thought control, the denial of democracy to the Negro people, the alarming increase in anti-Semitism. "The most precious heritage of the American people, their right to judge ideas and parties for themselves is being challenged," this resolution declares. "We have moved from technicalities concerning the so-called crime of contempt to heresy trials of political philosophies and attempts to limit and destroy the right of association."

The grim significance of these words is underlined by the heresy trial of the Communist leaders and by the wave of fascist laws railroaded through state legislatures, the outlawing of the Communist Party in Maryland, the infamous Feinberg Law in New York which makes teachers the prisoners of a modern Inquisition. Defense of the right to speak and think and communicate is inseparable from the defense of peace. In making clear the organic relationship between these two aspects of the same struggle the conference made a valuable contribution to the thinking of American intellectuals.

Both peace and culture can be defended only by rejecting the big lie of the Red-baiters, and essential to the strength of this conference was its basic clarity on this issue. Speakers of varying viewpoints held their ground. I. F. Stone said: "I came up to this conference from Washington because I believe the machinery of the American government is set for war. This is only saying what every smart bit of brass in the Pentagon takes for granted. If saying it aloud makes me a Red s.o.b. to the poor suckers outside, I am content to be a Red s.o.b." Clifford Odets declared: "I do not know who here is a Communist and who is not. But I am proud to reach out and shake the hand of any man or woman who has the courage to appear here—in this country of free speech—under the cloud of one of the greatest frauds ever perpetrated aaginst the American people: the fraud that the Soviet Union is making a war against the American people."

In a very moving speech, the Communist writer Richard O. Boyer compared the big lie of anti-Communism with the big lie of anti-Abolitionism in the last century. "I believe," he said, "that we cannot win world peace until we reject the obscurantist, fascist ideology that Communists and Russians are the quintessence of deliberate, cunning, unnatural evil and as such should be destroyed. From this lie stem all others; that those who speak for peace are traitors and those who plan war are patriots. . . . Under this great lie we say that when

the Soviet Union makes formal proposals for disarmament it is a move towards war and that when we vote twenty billions for engines of mass destruction it is an effort at peace. Under its dominion no one points out that if Truman is right now in describing communism as a world menace, then Hitler was right first and the American lives lost in fighting Hitler were criminally wasted."

IN A conference of this type, with a crowded agenda, it is perhaps unreasonable to expect detailed discussion of the implications for cultural thinking and production of the peace fight. Yet it is a cause for regret, I believe, that too little attention was paid by the panel speakers to the cultural worker as both craftsman and citizen. In this respect, is there not a great deal to be learned from the international visitors? The delegates from abroad, particularly those from the Soviet Union, expressed an integrated view of their function. As Shostakovich put it, workers of the arts who are fighting for peace "must participate in this struggle with our art, with its content, its ideas, its images, with its very purpose." How, he asked, can musicians and other creators serve the cause of peace and freedom with the power of their art? If the fight for peace is indeed the fight for the survival of culture itself, no serious artist can avoid thinking through this question.

The way in which this question was answered by Shostakovich, Gerasimov, Pavlenko and other Soviet delegates must have illuminated for many at the conference the real meaning of the recent discussions of art in the Soviet Union. Speaking with humanistic breadth, the Soviet artists explained their views. Is there a relation between the decadent trends in modern art and the fight for peace? Sergei N. Gerasimov, film director and screen writer, pointed to the "passionate misanthropy" which is becoming the esthetic principle of art itself, a trend to impose the wolfish law of war in films, with life held cheap, with "heroes" claiming the right to live by the fist and revolver—and the atom bomb. Shostakovich emphasized: "Against the machinations of reaction, which seeks to breed human hatred, which insults mankind, which portrays the world as a bleak desert, and man as a senseless wicked animal—we must place human and progressive art."

The Soviet artists persuasively traced the relation between war and the disfigurement of man in art, between militarism and misanthropy. Genuinely artistic values, Shostakovich noted, cannot be produced on the "scorched earth" of formalism, on art which lacks love of people,

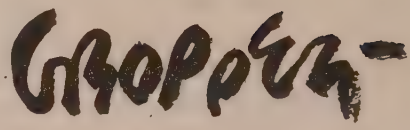
which is pessimistic and nihilistic. Shostakovich analyzed the decadent ideas of Stravinsky. Then he examined his own searchings as an artist.

"It seems to me," he said, "that if, in the past, I achieved a measure of success in some of my works, it was because in these works I managed to establish intimate contact with the life of my people. In any case, I strove in these works to embody significant human, progressive, life-giving ideas; I strove to find a language whose meaning could be understood. Conversely, in those of my works—especially those of the postwar years—in which I departed from the big themes and contemporary images, I lost my contact with the people—and I failed. My works found response only among the narrow strata of sophisticated musicians—but they failed to meet with approval among the broad masses of listeners. The people could not remain indifferent to the fact that artists from whom it expects their best works, great creative victories, have sunk into a world of petty, subjective individualistic introspection."

This concern for a living relation to the people, for realism and lucidity, for restoring to art its great social role, has a profound bearing on the struggle for peace today. As Shostakovich pointed out, the problems touched upon in the Soviet music discussions have *international significance.* A serious study of these discussions in the light of the conflict between the peace forces and the war forces in America today would contribute not only to the cause of peace but to the enrichment of art. Above all, the emphasis on the artist's responsibility *as artist* to the people challenges the progressive American creator to reexamine the effect of decadent tendencies on his own work. And a renewed search into our own democratic literary traditions will show how deep are our own roots in the social and realistic view of art that Shostakovich upholds.

RECOGNIZING that a conference is only a preparation for work, the sponsors have organized as a permanent committee to implement their resolutions. Meetings similar to the one in New York have been scheduled in a number of leading cities, though thanks to the State Department there will be no foreign visitors. "We are an independent American movement," the conference delegates declared. "We are but one voice in the crescendo of the American and world will for peace. We shall not cease our efforts until peace has been secured."

AT THE CONFERENCE WITH



SOME of the foreign guests to the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace were hosts to a delegation of Americans at the World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace last year in Wroclaw. I was there. I saw how the delegates from our country and others were received with cheers by the people of Poland, with music and flowers.

I remember that the U.S. delegation included members of the One World Committee, some of them openly hostile to the sponsoring group. They had come to Poland to dedicate a school in honor of the late Fiorello La Guardia. I remember the Mayor of Wroclaw and other officials taking part in the ceremony which was broadcast over the Polish radio and reported in all their press with courtesy and dignity.

At the Congress the hostile delegates spoke out freely; they were not denounced, picketed, insulted, told to jump out of windows, told to get out of the country. . . . They went with all the delegates to the opera, theatre, museums, universities, banquets, on tour throughout the country—they were free to go wherever they wished. They met and talked freely to the people. They saw the war orphans, the cities that were demolished; they heard the people everywhere cry out that they want no more war, they want peace.

You know what happened here, what the State Department and the press and radio did. The foreign guests have been kicked out, their cross-country tour cancelled. But the full record of the Conference will be published. The message of the Conference must be brought to all Americans; the movement for peace must sweep across the land.

Here I want to introduce to you some of the speakers at the conference in New York, with something of what they said.

Dr. Shapley

Harlow Shapley

(Chairman of the Conference; Director, Harvard College Observatories.)

We must remember that ours is a Conference for World Peace, not for unilateral or bilateral ill-will. We seek to promote the necessary understanding and goodwill, and not to incite further the atmosphere of distrust. . . .

In opening this Conference on the strife in a sick world, I appeal to you former soldiers, I appeal to all citizens, and I appeal especially to the Conference here assembled that you recognize the malady that endangers humanity, and seek with courage to find first temporary emergency remedies, and move then steadily on toward permanent world peace.

Dmitri D. Shostakovich

(Soviet composer; People's Artist)

Quite recently there occurred in the Soviet Union an active discussion regarding the creative and esthetic problems of musical art, of its past, present and its immediate future. Every section of the Soviet population actively participated in this discussion—workers, collective farmers, students and scientists. We are certain that the problems touched upon during this widespread discussion have international significance because we feel that our primary task—restoring to music its great social role, making it a force in the service of progressive mankind—should evoke sympathy among millions of people the world over. Without fulfilling this task we cannot answer the question: How can we musicians serve the cause of peace, democracy and progress with the power of our art?

Within contemporary art — music included—there is a strong and irreconcilable struggle between two artistic ideologies. The first of these is realistic—developed from the harmonious, truthful and optimistic concept of the world. This ideology is progressive and enriches humanity with its great spiritual values.

The second ideology is formalistic. We consider formalistic that art which is lacking in love of

Dmitri Shostakovich

the people, which is anti-democratic. Such art seeks merely form and rejects content. It is bred by a pathologically dislocated and pessimistic concept of life, lack of faith in man's power and ideals. This ideology is reactionary — nihilistic; it excludes music from humanity's spiritual equipment and actually leads to the degeneration and death of music as an esthetic form, as a category of the beautiful.

The degeneracy and hollowness of pseudo-culture which lacks a national and popular base, the disgusting features of cosmopolitanism which is deeply indifferent to the destiny of its people and all mankind — these features of pseudo-culture manifest themselves in the rejection of the desires of the broad audiences by contemporary formalistic music, and in its utter loss of national features. . . .

Millions of peoples, and with them the progressive musicians of the world—if they consider seriously the tasks and problems of contemporary music—will declare themselves against formalism. For the struggle against formalism is the struggle for the real emancipation of the creative genius of the musician and for the flowering of music.

Contemporary realistic art, carrying forward and developing the traditions of the classics, will be more diversified in form and richer than was the realistic art of past epochs. There are no blue prints, no fixed standards, no diagrams. The road of restless creative strivings is open to the artist. The closer the artist approaches to the life of the people, the more fully he reflects their progressive thoughts, feelings and aspirations —the more significant will become the result of his strivings.

Rt. Rev. Arthur W. Moulton

(Bishop of Utah, retired; Regional Vice-President, American Association for the United Nations.)

THE preamble to the United Nations Charter begins with these poignant words: "We the peoples of the United Nations determine to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war." The word is that word peoples, and the other word is that word determined. They are important. It is *peoples* and *not* people. It is determined and not just desirous. Peoples of the nations are determined to see to it that war is out forever. It is outdated and outmoded. At any rate it is obsolescent and we are determined to make it obsolete.

Bishop Moulton

Nicolas Guillen

(Cuban poet.)

WHO comprise this "trust" to sell war and to obtain the fabulous dividends of war?

Those who will not go to it.

A handful of ambitious governing men who will follow from their table, facing a map, the bloody march of the men whom they have sent on the way to death.

The merchants who are in a great hurry to sell their products, stored up by the crisis, so that their fortunes will not be destroyed.

The powerful rich who need to get richer yet.

The smooth egotistic politicians who themselves have closed the doors of the future and believe that they can open them with cannon fire.

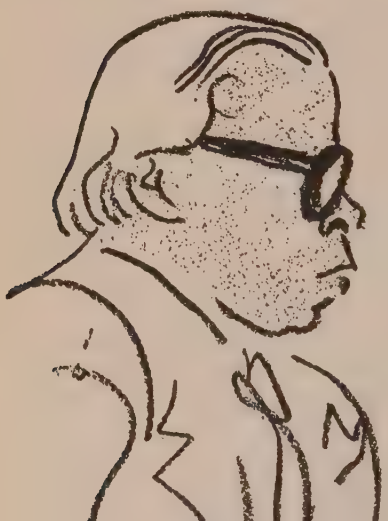
Those who never saw action during the war, but read it in the headlines.

Those who never have seen a city scorched, families dispersed and hungry; desperate people going around in circles.

This war would be fomented by stupidity, by hatred, by greed,

by ignorance, by lies, by the eagerness for power of those who buy and sell human beings as if they were dealing on the stock market.

Against them, intelligence must remain awake. For centuries, for milleniums, humanity has been slowly sedimented into stratas of culture that form the ground of an infinite spiritual territory. Between the Flint Axe and the Atomic Bomb there lies a vein of gold of which each and every artist has to be an energetic guardian.



Nicolas Guillen

Agnes Smedley

(Author, *Battle Hymn of China, China Fights Back.*)

THE vanguard of the liberation movement of Asian peoples remains the people of China whose victorious Liberation Army is now a flaming beacon to all the oppressed masses of the East. The military-political strategy and tactics and the militancy and heroism of that Army has shown Eastern peoples how even the strongest imperialist powers and native reactionaries can be dealt with.

The Chinese victories are shaking the foundations of imperialism and bringing China, and perhaps all East Asia, into the peace camp, making war in the Far East extremely difficult or even impossible. General MacArthur and other reactionaries, for example, had planned to transform Japan into a military bastion for a third world war, linking it up with South Korea, Formosa, various island bases and with China proper under Chiang Kai-shek. China was to be the source of raw material for revived Japanese industries as well as a market for Japanese goods.

All such plans have now been shattered, and every Chinese patriot of any brand is today a bitter enemy of our policy in Japan....

It is my opinion, and I believe it is the opinion of most delegates at this Conference, as well as the

Agnes Smedley

belief of most Americans, that the best way to make friends and influence the course of events in Asia, would be to extend the hand of sympathy and friendship to the new liberation forces of Asia. Certainly there will be no turning back in Asia where half the human race has been forced down into the swamps of despair and poverty for over a hundred years.

The crowned heads of Europe once banded together against the so-called Republican menace which arose to replace feudalism at the time of the American and French Revolutions. Our ancestors did not turn back, nor will the new Asia emerging from feudalism and imperialist subjection turn back today. Neither intrigue, disruption, terror nor war will keep them from keeping their rendezvous with history, which is the liberation of their peoples from native or foreign oppression.

Jiri Hronek

(Chief, Mass Communications Division of Ministry of Information of Czechoslovakia; Secretary, International Union of Journalists.)

We in Czechoslovakia are working for peace in everything we do. . . . We are building up a community of peaceful people engaged in peaceful occupations. Their labor is aimed at raising the standard of living for all who work without exception. We have no unemployed and we

Jiri Hronek

never shall for we are working according to a plan. We are planning the history of our nation. We are making sure that everybody can have a decent education. Old age is to be met by all without sorrow or anxiety. We want to provide happiness for all our people. We want them to enjoy to the full all the benefits of modern science and technology.

These are our aims—they are peaceful aims. We regard this as our contribution to peace. There is no war hysteria in our country. We have no time for it. We are too busy making our country a good place for everyone to live in. . . .

We are but a small country and we know that what we are doing will not decide the great issues. But we trust in the great force of peace which is the Soviet Union and we trust the other mighty force of peace which is the American people. These two forces can secure peace together with the mutual efforts of all peace-loving peoples for all men and women of good will on this earth.

Domingo Villamil

(Former Director-General, Department of Justice of Cuba.)

I AM *not* a Marxist. I am a Roman Catholic; a Christian Roman Catholic, not one of those whose actions have betrayed their principles, as I explained in the

Domingo Villamil

panel on Religion and Ethics. I am not in the Communist Party and do not intend to be. Nor do I intend to join any particular party. I am a scholar, a retired lawyer and a student of the Philosophy of Law.

Therefore, I am very proud to form a part of the Cuban delegation, and to have participated in this Conference in the company of so many men and women of every religious faith and of no faith at all; of every political party and of no party at all; of every school of thought and of no school at all. . . .

We of Latin America respect and love intelligent North Americans, in contrast to the detestable ones whom we refer to as repre-

sentatives of Yankee Imperialism.

We of the Cuban delegation denounce to the world the criminals and enemies of God and mankind, who are encircling the Soviet Union and hatching a Third World War; and we denounce them regardless of their high positions in the Church and the State, and whatever be their reasons or their pretexts.

William O. Stapledon

(British philosopher and psychologist)

Above all, let us remember that the "One World" which we all desire will comprise people of very different ideas and ideals. If we are to live and let live, we must tolerate our differences.

William O. Stapledon

A. I. Oparin

(Acting Secretary, Biological Sciences Sections of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.; author, *The Origin of Life.*)

Soviet science is not just a part of world science, developing within the territory of the U.S.S.R., but a science which possesses its own specific characteristics. It is, of course, connected with world science, is in a state of creative interaction with it, produces an effect on the development of science in the various countries and itself uses the fruit of the scientific achievements of other countries. But at the same time Soviet science possesses a qualitative singularity, due to its preceding history as well as new social, economic conditions in the country, new goals which face science, a new world outlook and new forms of organization.

The first singularity of Soviet science which is most vividly expressed is precisely its exceptional democratic character. As J. V. Stalin said, Soviet science "doesn't keep itself away from the people, but is ready to serve the people." . . .

We can say with pride at present that science in our country genuinely belongs to the people. The majority of the young Soviet scientists come from common people. In the Soviet Union every young fellow or girl from a factory or a farm can become a

genuine scientist given proper capacities, tenacity and zest to learn. All the material and moral bases for this have been created in the Soviet Union. Therefore we have at present an unprece-

A. I. Oparin

dented vigorous growth of scientists.. The number of scientific research institutions, higher schools, special laboratories, experimental stations is being increased uninterruptedly.

But in the Soviet Union not only the people who devote themselves completely to science take part directly in scientific research. Soviet science went out of the temples of the academies and universities to factories and peasant fields. It ceased to be the privilege of a select people and it became the common property of the common people. . . .

It is especially brilliantly reflected in our agriculture thanks to those original enterprises of scientific work which are now being carried out by our outstanding scientist—Academician T. D. Lysenko. Lysenko is not only a deep theoretical scientist and a research scientist but a talented organizer who can direct toward a single purpose the work of his close assistant-workers as well as the research of many hundreds of peasants—experimentors. He has found the most favorable base for it in our country.

The Soviet regime has given a wide initiative to popular masses, turning millions of toiling peasants into researchers who are seeking new ways continuously to increase crops and the productivity of livestock raising. The network of research institutions and stations is being complemented by the network of thousands of farm laboratories, experimental and demonstrative lands of collective farms and state farms.

Any good undertaking of scientists in our country is supported by thousands of skillful hands of

people who correct, complement and define more accurately this undertaking in accordance with the concrete conditions of the district or village. This makes it possible not only to solve rapidly a number of important economic problems but at the same time this brings inestimable benefit to theoretical knowledge.

T. O. THACKREY

(Editor of the New York *Post.*)

SOME conception of the desperate need for a conference devoted to means of achieving world peace has been gained by every delegate and every speaker who has witnessed the hysterical and fear-maddened picket lines around this Hall and the Waldorf-Astoria last night.

This Conference, the hate-ridden picket lines outside, the meeting scheduled this afternoon by those calling themselves Americans for Intellectual Freedom who refused to listen to this very address on the ground that theirs is a rival meeting . . . would it be fair then to characterize it as a Cultural and Scientific Conference for World War? . . . the very atmosphere in which we speak is symbolic of the problem to which we devote ourselves.

(*Since the Conference Mr. Thackrey has been fired from the* POST *for refusing to support the North Atlantic Pact.*)

T. O. Thackrey

JUAN MARINELLO

(Poet; Chairman, Popular Socialist Party of Cuba.)

I REGRET very sincerely that the enemies of this Conference—who are the enemies of the peo-

Juan Marinello

ple of the United States and the enemies of peace—have prevented the presence of the bona fide representatives of many Latin American nations. They would have expressed their condemnations of war and the firm desire for a democratic life which dominates the family of nations which extend from our frontiers to Tierra del Fuego. . . .

This democratic and anti-war awareness has led to the idea of holding, in the immediate future, an American Conference for Peace and Democracy. We know by now that each day it becomes more difficult to hold such a conference, since the recent military coups and the old dictatorships are invading an extensive portion of the continent. But the great needs, when they are fully understood and felt by the masses, will express themselves in spite of all the obstacles. There are actually being prepared in our countries national peace conferences, which will culminate in a continental meeting of rich and historic content.

Hustlers for War

by HERBERT APTHEKER

"WARM congratulations to you on the birth of a son!" "I thank you," responded the joyous parent, "with all my heart!"

The warmth was being spread by Herr Himmler and the one claiming a heart was Dr. Rascher, physician and SS officer. The touching exchange occurs in correspondence wherein the doctor proposes and the statesman approves the use of political prisoners, Jews, Poles, Russians and other "typical species of sub-humanity" in fatal experiments involving low-pressure, low temperature and the drinking of sea water.*

These letters came to my mind as I followed the arguments of those opposed to the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace recently held in New York. The entire press participated vigorously; indeed, so many spoke up that even Governor Dewey felt it expedient to open his mouth. He, too, denounced the Conference and urged support for Professor Hook's counter-rally—a sporting act since **half** the members of that sparse rally had supported *him* in the late election. Strangely, the voice of Ezra Pound was missing; perhaps this Laureate of the Bourgeoisie is even now producing a future prize-winning opus on the Battle of the Waldorf.

How noble the words in these arguments; how sinister the purpose! Professor Counts, of Eisenhower's Academy, was concerned, as he put it, with "ethical standards." This touched the Republican Mr. Walters of Pennsylvania so much that, "under leave to extend his remarks," he caused the entire anti-Soviet tirade to be printed in the *Congressional Record.*

Similarly, Mr. Frank Conniff, of the Hearst stable, reported in the

* See *Doctors of Infamy* by Alexander Mitscherlich and Fred Mielke, *Henry Schuman, N. Y., $3.00.*

New York *Journal-American* that the Conference was a "sickening spectacle," "really nauseating," for it was clear to this unregimented esthete that Shostakovich's "soul was no longer his own." The sensitive scribbler, John Dos Passos, chose the same family newspaper to express a feeling of "shame" (something he is still able to spell) that so many of his fellow citizens, "through ignorance or delusion" remained "dupes and tools of the masters of the Kremlin."

The distinguished Mr. Wood of Georgia, chairman of the Un-American Committee, added two points to the intellectual discussion. He remarked, in the first place, that his Committee had made careful note of the over 500 sponsors of the Conference and, in the second place, he twice rendered the name of the Soviet novelist, Fadeyev, as Fadiejew (*Congressional Record,* March 23, 1949).

The Dos Passos note about dupes reappeared throughout the edifying performance. Mr. Luce's *Life* provided the persuader in this regard by a two-page spread of the outstanding dupes, here labelled "soft-headed super-dupes." Among these unfortunate morons, all duly presented in rogues gallery fashion, were Albert Einstein, Kirtley F. Mather, Harlow Shapley, Walter Rautenstrauch, Philip Morrison, Charles Chaplin, Thomas Mann, Langston Hughes, Jo Davidson, Dorothy Parker, Dean Dixon, Arthur Miller, Louis Untermeyer, Aaron Copland, Lillian Hellman and Clifford Odets.

BUT the height of good taste was reached by the professor of bourgeois philosophy, Sidney Hook, whose every sneeze merited a headline. He took it upon himself to write personally to Thomas Mann —making certain, of course, that all press services received a copy of the letter—in order to *tell* Thomas Mann that he was a dupe, that he did not understand his name was "procured under false pretenses." This Sidney Hook professed great concern to Dr. Mann—"for the sake of your own good name"—that he had not yet "made the sharpest dissociation" between himself and such characters as Albert Einstein.

Other criticism was not altogether absent. Esthetic, for example. Here, too, however, it was of such a quality as to remind one of Lenin's remark made in 1894 under somewhat similar circumstances: "There is no need, of course, to reply to such things, which are positively indecent."

Thus, *Time* magazine dismissed Shostakovich's recent work as "a travesty on *Yankee Doodle.*" *Partisan Review* declared in its own inimitably obnoxious way, that the writers, actors, musicians and artists sponsoring the conference were people of inferior talents who owed their reputations to the fact that Communists controlled criticism in bourgeois publications. This, too, was why, asserted the high-minded editors of this journal, the said artists and writers did not withdraw from the conference: doing so might hurt their incomes and they might have to struggle along on the earnings of an Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., a Louis Fischer, a Bertram Wolfe, or a William Henry Chamberlin, whose integrity, fearlessness and anti-capitalist bias keep them out of the review sections of the Chicago *Tribune,* the New York *Times* and the *Herald Tribune,* as everyone has observed!

Somewhat similar artistic evaluations were offered the cultural savants of the 81st Congress by that keen critic, the Honorable Mr. Dondero, Republican from Michigan. Philip Evergood was dismissed as a "so-called artist." Max Weber, Ben Shahn and Robert Gwathmey owed their reputations, as *Partisan Review* had indicated, to the predominance of Marxist critics in the American press. Moreover, said Mr. Dondero, "If it were possible to show examples of the output produced by these artist politicos, I am sure most of you would agree that they are enemies of true art, instead of artists." Climactically concluding his devastating analysis of these enemies of art, dramatic Dondero disclosed that their work appeared frequently in *Masses & Mainstream!* (*Congressional Record,* March 25, 1949).

THE intellectual level of the argumentation coincided, on the whole, with the esthetic. That sty of Republicans, Trotskyites and Social-Democrats, the *New Leader* of April 2 said the Conference showed "that Stalin's interest has shifted to Asia," since of the nine speakers at the Madison Square Garden rally only one was from Western Europe (apparently Stalin, not Acheson, had barred delegates from England, France, Belgium and Italy) and many of these had "introduced constant references to Indonesia, China, India, Burma and Viet-Nam"—all obviously irrelevant to the question of peace. In the same issue, William Henry Chamberlin denounced the fake peace rally and showed his own devotion to the cause of international amity by remarking of the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary and

Bulgaria that—in true Cardinal Spellman style—"the more we can incite to sedition and treason in such countries, the better."

Professor Sidney Hook, leader of the Renegades' Rally operating under the supremely sardonic title, Americans for Intellectual Freedom, insisted, as his contribution to the discussion, that science was not national, but international. This strikingly original thought was hurled, apparently, as a challenge to Marxists generally and the Soviet Union specifically! That Marxists have been pointing this out for one hundred years, that this is basic to the defense of the national committee members of the Communist Party of the United States, that the Soviet scientist, Professor Kapitsa, declared at the 1945 celebration of the anniversary of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.: "There is only one science, devoted to the betterment of human welfare. Science must, therefore, be international"—that all this is true seems to mean nothing to Dr. Hook.

He, however, begins with phrases about the international quality of science in order to assert its alleged *classless* quality—but that is something else again. Internationalism is central to Marxism-Leninism, but so is its devotion to the working class. It is because of this devotion that the internationalism exists, and because the internationalism exists this devotion is present.

Bourgeois "science" is a reality and its foundation is idealism; proletarian science is a reality and its foundation is materialism. Those serving the first are serving that which is decayed and retrogressive, that which is subjective and false; those serving the second are serving that which is vital and progressive, that which is objective and true. That is why central to the Marxist's concept of science is "the betterment of human welfare"; while for Hook's definition of science, as he declares, "the *uses,* good, bad or indifferent" made of science are irrelevant to its character as science. No, dialectical materialism postulates the unity of theory and practice; and the uses of science are integral to science. Using scientific techniques to conduct experiments concocted in the reptilian brains of Nazi physicians was not science—it was sadism and butchery. Using atomic energy to create stockpiles of bombs for Wall Street is not science—it is criminal preparation for imperialist aggression.

Sidney Hook—and George Counts, Reinhold Niebuhr, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *et. al.*—carry their classlessness over from science

nto ethics and government. They speak at great length concerning lib-
rty and freedom—liberty and freedom, in general. "We all declare
or liberty," said Abraham Lincoln in 1864, "but in using the same word
ve do not all mean the same thing."

Again a generation later another emancipator, Lenin, made basi-
ally the same point: "'Freedom' is a grand word, but under the banner
of free trade the most predatory wars were conducted; under the
banner of free labor, the toilers were robbed."

The fugitive slave and the pursuing master are not agreed, then,
upon a definition of the word liberty. Messrs. Hook and Counts & Co.,
by deliberately ignoring the core of the question quite as deliberately
choose the side of the master. While doing so, they cautiously observe
and guardedly refer to some of the more obvious faults of the flesh-
dealer—he is not quite clean, and perhaps somewhat ill-mannered
(after all, they are not ordinary hunting-dogs)—but he holds the
whip in one hand and the money-bag in the other and we had better
join him—indeed, lead him—in the hunt.

Their finickiness made them deplore the picketing of the peace
conference. And Freda Kirchwey remarked that "one can only (!)
regret that so many noisy, tough plug-uglies" carried on as they did
on the picket lines, rather than with "the dignified language" of the
Hooks (*Nation,* April 2, 1949).

Let the dignified spouters save their regrets. The frenzied woman
carrying the sign: "Exterminate the Red Rats" did not have the well-
kept and benign face of Cardinal Spellman, but she was his repre-
sentative; the livid one shouting at Harlow Shapley, "Christ-Killer"
did not have the clipped Harvard accent of Secretary of State Ache-
son, but he spoke for that official; the hoodlum who chalked up the
walls of the Waldorf with "Kill the Jews" was not so learned a man
as Sidney Hook but he wrote for that professor; and how far was the
barbarian parading around with the poster reading, "Shostakovich,
Jump Through A Window" from the President of Yale University
who forbade the composer-musician to speak or perform at that insti-
tution since he could "see no educational value" in such an event?

These cultured ones want to retain their soft positions as members
of the Loyal and Polite Opposition. Let us lament and regret and have
pity and view with a heavy heart, but never doubt for a moment,
dear Lords, our supreme loyalty to capitalism—"so-called capitalism"

as the *New Leader,* organ of the Social-Democratic Federation of America, puts it now. They raise cries about "freedom"—in general—and Hearstian anti-Soviet slanders, as means toward their end, which is the end of America's ruling class—the provoking of war against the land of living socialism. They seek to divide and confuse the peace forces.

This is their role. They are capitalism's water-wings. Over and over again they have shown themselves in their wretched nakedness. Over and over again they have betrayed the proletariat of the world.

HERE are three brief, stark examples drawn from the pens of leading Social-Democrats themselves:

The first witness is Otto Bauer, leader of Austrian Social-Democrats. In his *The Austrian Revolution,* published in 1925, he tells us that late in 1918

> "the Government was still confronted with the passionate demonstrations of the returned soldiers, the workless and war invalids. . . . And the Government had no coercive agencies at its command. Armed force was not an instrument to use against proletarian masses filled with revolutionary ardor. . . . No bourgeois government could have grappled with the task. It would have been defenseless against the mistrust and hatred of the proletarian masses. . . . Only Social-Democrats would grapple with the unprecedently difficult task. Only they were trusted by the proletarian masses. . . . Only Social-Democrats could procure the ending of wildly excited demonstrations by negotiation and discussions. . . . The functions which at that time were the most important functions of the Government could only be fulfilled by Social-Democrats."

On March 4, 1933, the treason of the German Social-Democrats made possible the victory of the Nazi National Coalition at terror elections marked by the suppression of the workers' press, wholesale murder and the burning of the Reichstag. The next day the Social-Democratic Party was out with a bulletin written by Herr Stamfer, editor of the *Vorwaerts,* reading:

> "The victory of the Government parties makes it possible to govern strictly in accordance with the Constitution. They have only to act as a legal Government and it will follow naturally that we shall be in a legal opposition . . . if they choose to use their majority for

measures that remain within the framework of the Constitution, we shall confine ourselves to the role of fair critics."

Observe—not just critics, but "fair" critics—of Hitler and Himmler.

And in the *Jewish Daily Forward* of March 26, 1933, the high priest of Social-Democracy, Karl Kautsky himself, proudly wrote:

> "The party of the working class, the Social-Democratic Party, became just as large and important as the other parties, even greater and more important. This is evidenced by the great careers which the deserters from the Socialist Party later made for themselves in the capitalist parties. Thanks to the schooling and education that they received in our party, they became the most eminent political leaders in the bourgeois camp—such as Millerand and Briand in France, Mussolini in Italy, and MacDonald in England."

The *Forward* selected the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Karl Marx as the occasion for publishing these words! How apt is this graveside pronouncement: *In your name we rear renegades; calling ourselves "Socialists," we boast of the skilled servitors of capitalism we have trained!*

BUT we—and the people of the world—have learned much and have gained much since 1933. We will learn and gain more. It is because events such as the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace are means toward this end that they provoke the hysteria and fascist-like assaults of the boss press.

"The enemy is here before us," wrote Thomas Wolfe shortly before his death. That enemy, he said, "stole our bread from us . . . took our bread and left us with a crust, and, not content, for the nature of the enemy is insatiate—tried finally to take from us the crust." He is "sleek and fat" but "his own true face is old as Hell." He shall be swept aside for "a wind is rising, and the rivers flow."

So putrid is world capitalism that it no longer dares permit the people to live at all. Peaceful life has become a mortal foe for this surfeited enemy. Its end and not the people's end is certain. Never have the masses been so strong and the despoilers so bankrupt. Peace on earth has become anathema to Wall Street. But to the working people of this earth peace is sweet and necessary. With their strength they shall maintain it.

PROLOGUE TO A NOVEL, "The Communists"

by LOUIS ARAGON

FOR five days, as if bursting the country's dikes, the dark flood of the vanquished—a people carrying in their eyes defiance of defeat and a stunned sense of fate—poured across the Pyrenees. They were harshly received by the soldiers and gendarmes of a land where they thought they would encounter only grief—and French generosity. For five days, over every road, on foot, in wagons, in crowded trucks, hauling with them their last few possessions—pitiful remnants of a life that was already remote and swept clean—for five days they came. The authorities, caught flatfooted and in disorder, had provided no reception centers. They had foreseen nothing: neither this tragic invasion, nor the blood of the wounded, nor the women dropping from exhaustion on the roads, nor the old men dying wretchedly in the mud, nor the lost children scattered everywhere throughout the countryside. . . .

At Perpignan a man of about thirty-five, tall and thin, dark-haired and of a rather lively complexion, got off the train. He looked like what he was: a schoolteacher. He had been sent by a Committee for Aid to Spanish Intellectuals, the committee headed by Jules Baranger of the Institute of France, Nobel prize-winner in chemistry. Pierre Cormeilles had succeeded in convincing his principal that a number of professors were caught in the exodus and that the honor of the French academic world was at stake. Moreover, Baranger's name carried weight; and Pierre's associate, Moreau, had promised to take over his geography classes for a week.

All during the trip—he had taken the night train—Pierre had been kept awake by a kind of mental intoxication produced in him, as in so many others those fateful days, by the abrupt turn of events in

Spain. Had he not been in Madrid over a year ago with a delegation from the Teachers Union? The stupor and fever he felt simultaneously within himself were the dual emotions experienced by all France as it read the news from beyond the Pyrenees. Then suddenly, the French newspapers began to prepare an about-face: the Spanish people were dropped in favor of their new masters. From Paris where, at the great demonstrations of the People's Front, onlookers flung their hearts with their five-franc notes into the huge red-yellow-and-purple flags spread out and held at the four corners by young people who raised one arm in a clenched-fist salute; from Paris how could one physically imagine this incredible thing, this collapse, this injustice of history which entered into history, this tragedy across cities and fields—the triumph of the *Señoritos,* of the Falange, and of the Moroccan mercenaries?

Pierre wanted to dip his finger into this wound in Freedom's flesh; he needed tangible proof of the disaster. And in his *lycée,* with its student body drawn from the well-to-do suburbs of Auteuil and Passy, the very presence of his colleagues—their skepticism and irony—seemed to screen the fierce satisfaction which certain people felt. Rouse himself he must! So when this Committee for Spanish Aid. . . .

The ashen light that hung over the city as Cormeilles left the train summed up, as it were, the prolonged vigil of his trip. The slight red blotches on his cheekbones deepened from his lack of sleep. The teacher's dark eyes already looked upon everything as the anteroom to hell. So carrying his overnight bag and turning up the slightly frayed velvet collar of his overcoat—for it was damp and chilly outside—Pierre, red-nosed and stooping a little as was his habit, hurried to the address given him in Paris. It was here that a comrade had already opened an office for the Baranger Committee. Cormeilles did not have to ask his way for he had once taught in Perpignan.

He was more keenly aware of the city's unwonted activity, muted yet feverish, than would have been a stranger arriving here without knowing anything about the place. Many policemen were out. Official cars quickened the streets with artificial life. Groups of people stood talking on street-corners. The eerie light, the cold morning and the dirty streets provided a strangely appropriate setting for these long lines of ragged, emaciated men, still somewhat soldierly in bearing, which Pierre passed several times. They were being escorted by French soldiers—colonial troops with rifles slung on their backs—

and were to be interned further on. Some of them had bandaged heads or arms in a sling, with improvised dressings, dirty gray and blood-soaked; others leaned on sticks.

THE man from the Committee, Oustric, a fat little fellow who had not shaved for two days, was a southerner, a schoolteacher from the Aude district. Tubby, they called him here, and he was just the right person for this nightmarish scene. Made for sunshine, indolence and contentment, he contributed to the setting the inappropriateness of his sighs, his despair, his complete ineffectiveness and his consternation. "What to do?" he kept on saying. "What to do? I am alone here. The people from the Prefecture . . . oh, those swine! . . . if you only knew. . . . And the organizations are doing what they can, but . . . what they can. . . ." He did not know whether to say "Mr." or "Comrade" to this individual with the long nose who had just arrived; and when he talked he rolled his r's with a rasping sound like that of broken glass. He breathed heavily like a man who had just run a race.

It did not take Pierre long to realize why Oustric was so hopelessly muddled. His bewilderment might have seemed comic had it not been for these sad processions in the streets, these women dumped into a schoolyard—like an enormous human dung-heap—with their children, their wretchedness, their hunger and their filth, and without any protection against the icy wind . . . these abandoned buildings, roofless and windowless, filled with the odor of gangrene, where the sick and the wounded were dying pell-mell without attention, without a doctor, cared for by a lone woman in nurse's costume. She wrung her hands every few seconds, bit her wan lips, and with quivering facial muscles mistook every visitor for the surgeon who had been summoned to examine a groaning man with a fractured skull. . . .

The organizations were doing what they could, as Oustric had said. And as soon as Pierre began to visit the headquarters of the Popular Aid and the Party, he ran into Communists he had previously known . . . Then another fear gripped him, the consciousness of another horror in this horror: the mean, sordid, cruel and hypocritical squabbles between the organizations and the police, complicating in frightful fashion the help given to the thousands upon thousands of human beings carried off by the cyclone, undermining human devotion, stifling heartfelt impulses of generosity, mystifying men of good will. This

was perhaps even worse than the disorganization, the chaos, the helplessness. As if for sheer pleasure, elusive saboteurs of the people's sentiments—at every level of authority—seemed bent on dishonoring the country and blocking any humanitarian effort. At every level of authority. There were the local offices. There were the orders from Paris. There were those who, discussing the fate of the vanquished with a fine tremolo in their voices, insisted nevertheless that all that was very well and good but now we had to deal with Franco who was to be our neighbor; and the interests of the French Republic, in the words of Deputy Visconti, a member of the U.S.R.,* had to be placed ahead of those of the Spanish Republic.

OUSTRIC could not stop talking about Visconti, a slimy little man with his hair cut like a fringe over his forehead, with whom he collided at almost every step and every request. It was Visconti who told the Prefect: "Why, the very idea, *M. le Préfet!* . . . You're going to annoy Franco! What are we going to say when relations are resumed —why, it's as clear as daylight! . . . I've talked to Daladier, I know what he thinks. . . . It's a matter of weeks . . . England has just decided to send an observer to Burgos . . . and as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber I can tell you. . . . Besides, this Baranger, why is he butting in? These pretentious intellectuals, they're ridiculous. And if you were to listen to the folks around here . . . Take this Leopold Roques, for instance: to him everything is simple, all white or all black . . . the Communists are good and all the others, all of them, stink. . . . As if I don't know him! I see him come to every election-campaign meeting and I say to myself: Oho! Here's good old Leopold again. . . ." And he added that Jules Baranger would be better off tending to his test-tubes.

It was hard to say how much such remarks influenced Didkowsky the Prefect . . . but if they didn't influence him, it wasn't Visconti's fault! "That lousy big-mouth," snorted Oustric, "when he's around I can't get a word in edgewise." Then there was local politics: the revenge of those who for three years had not dared publicly admit that they hoped for a Franco victory; and among those who supported the Re-

* *Union Socialiste et Républicaine,* a splinter party consisting mainly of former right-wing Socialists, which for a time formed part of the People's Front coalition. (Translator's note.)

publicans, there were rivalries, discriminations among the victims, with some of the starving and dying favored over other starving and dying human beings. It was impossible to set up any order whatever because of these hidden struggles, because of the insane desire of this or that group to be the only one right. And the Spanish Republic had died of this anarchy, this contagion, and because of the presence of obscure elements whose aim was to turn the defeat into a victory for their faction. Then too there was the suppressed hatred for a special category of men, women and children—a hatred which was suppressed because the Communists were a legal party in France. But everyone knew that it was only for the sake of outward appearances that the pack howled against the anarchists or *pistoleros,* as they were called. Here, all at once, the lie became evident; and the fear of the Reds had but a single face.

A report circulated that among the refugees who had arrived the day before and were now quartered in a building where some comrades were in charge, there was a worn-out and asthmatic old man who, it appeared, had been a professor at the University of Madrid. Oustric and Cormeilles went together to the Prefecture to obtain papers for him so that he could be sent on to Paris. From office to office they went, where the civil servants very politely gave them the runaround for more than an hour. They were beginning to despair when suddenly someone on the Prefect's staff recognized the name of the Madrid professor and arranged everything in two minutes. He was a very distinguished-looking young man who was said to be a member of the P.S.F.* but who was a graduate of the Ecole des Chartes. "Professor V——?" he exclaimed. "Why, he's the author of that book on the Arab etymology of the proper names in the *Chanson de Roland!* And the hell with what Visconti says! After all, he's not the Minister of the Interior! Anyhow, he's getting out, he told me so a little while ago. . . . He's going to Antibes: good riddance! It seems the weather is lovely on the Riviera. . . . I hope he leaves us to our bad weather and our loused-up affairs!"

Coming away, Oustric naively remarked: "If only we had a lot more people like Cordier at the Prefecture!" Cormeilles shook his head

* *Parti Social Français*—the fascist-minded party of Colonel de la Roque. The Ecole des Chartes is a famous institution of higher learning in Paris. (Translator's note.)

He was not too convinced that a few more amateur etymologists would have been a big help in their work on behalf of the Spanish Republicans. . . . They found Professor V—— in the grimy little shop which served as the Committee's headquarters. The old man squatted amid piles of leaflets and abandoned printing equipment, his shoulders drooping under a nondescript blanket which someone had wrapped around him. He was sobbing in his thin and twisted fingers. He had lost his wife on the way. He knew that he would never see her again. She had a bad heart and for three years had not left their house, not even during the bombardments of Madrid. . . . He sobbed and murmured bits of phrases in senile fashion. "What is he saying?" Cormeilles asked. But Oustric, pausing to catch his breath, shrugged his shoulders: "Nothing interesting. He says the same things as the others. . . . He's a Socialist: he's cursing Leon Blum!"

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AT ONE point the road passed through the border village and cut across a hollow between two hills. Coming from France one walked down between little houses, most of them long since deserted by their inhabitants. At the customs post they were stopped to see if their papers were in order. Then the road went on for a bit, some three hundred feet, down to where there was a detachment of Mobile Guards. A chain stretched across the path: it marked the end of French soil. On the other side the road rose up again toward the Spanish village which would have seemed like any other village had it not been for the restless mass of refugees and the Spanish Republican soldiers, waiting for the right to enter France.

Thanks to the amateur etymologist, Cormeilles and Oustric had received as a special favor a pass from the Prefecture permitting them to cross over to the Spanish side and look for intellectuals. Since the preceding day the subsiding torrent of refugees had been inexorably halted at the gateway to safety. Cars and motorcycles drove up, and voices announced the approach of Franco's men. . . . Some of the unhappy victims came right up to the French chain and begged to be allowed to enter. But most of them, in houses, courtyards and streets, lying in cars or crouching on the earth, seemed immobilized in a kind of extraordinary dignity and disdain. After the chaos in Perpignan, this

Spanish calm and silence was amazing. There were the women dressed in black, their children clinging to their skirts; the men were seated with their guns between their knees. All their faces bore an air of somber resoluteness—and one wondered what they could be waiting for.

At the Spanish military post, the two delegates spoke to the officers who told them stories of the exodus, incidents of that terrible week, anecdotes of the last hours of Barcelona. Did they know, among the unfortunate refugees here, of any lawyers, engineers, professors, doctors . . .?

"Ah, *si!*" replied the young captain. "A doctor . . . *si,* there is a doctor. . . ." And he gave orders that the man be found. The doctor must have been in his fifties and he wore eyeglasses from which one lens was missing. He was stout, ashen-colored, with very small and nervous hands which he kept moving as he talked—always the same gesture, the quick hands gesticulating in front of his face. No, he could not accept. The French *señor* was very kind; but he would not cross the border. There was a wounded man here. And all these people, without a doctor. . . . Oustric could not budge him.

They accompanied the doctor to get a look at the wounded man. He had been placed in a cellar at street-level, under a gray stone staircase. He was moaning softly on his stretcher, with his hands pressed against his stomach—like a kind of stricken giant. He also had a wound in his leg. His nostrils were pinched and quivering, his skin was dark, his eyes seemed to bulge out of his head, and the stubble of his beard was blue.

"He'll be all right, doctor? He'll get better, won't he?" A French voice uttered these words from the shadows—in French. Cormeilles blinked and saw a man seated on a sack, a broad-shouldered fellow, dressed half in an army outfit, half in civilians.

"A Frenchman?" he asked. The doctor nodded and added in a low voice: "You see. I can't leave a wounded man. . . ." The wounded man sighed and turned to stare at the daylight. He said something. The Frenchman pleaded: "He's thirsty, he says he's thirsty! Can't you give him something to drink?" Better not, said the doctor. "You're French?" Cormeilles repeated, almost affirmatively. The man came out into the daylight with them.

HE WAS a big hulk of a fellow in the prime of his young manhood. Even under the makeshift things he wore—the uniform of the International Brigades, the leather belt, the gun and the cartridge belt—one could not fail to recognize him as a French worker. Funny, thought Pierre, even beards grow differently in our country. And then there was the inimitable way in which he wore his scarf, an old cotton scarf folded around his neck.

The man was thinking only about his wounded pal, Antonio. He hardly listened when Oustric told him he could fix things up with the border guards, who were fairly decent guys, and get him across the border, since he was a Frenchman. But he did not want to leave Antonio either. He was a Parisian and had served in the International Brigades since the end of '36. At first he was very reserved. Then all of a sudden, something or other that Cormeilles said about the Brigades, perhaps the mention of André Marty's name, made him thaw out. He even dared to ask: "You're a comrade, eh? Funny, I could tell. . . . You see, I've got to go back to France, but Antonio. . . ."

But it was senseless. Antonio could not survive much longer. Under the present circumstances, what could they do for a buddy who had a bullet in his stomach? What lousy luck: a bomb from a plane on the refugee column they were escorting. . . . "You can't understand," said the Frenchman, "Antonio . . . it's not that he's my pal . . . but it's such a loss . . . a guy like that . . . Antonio, god-damn it to hell!" He broke into a sweat.

"Look, comrade," Pierre began, "you can't let a chance like this go by. You don't know what they're doing over there on the other side with the boys from the Brigades. . . . We're all right, we've got a pass from the Prefecture, we can get you through. It's a break. It's too bad about Antonio, but it's no use, he's a goner. What's your name? I want to write it down."

"Raoul Blanchard . . . with a d, Blanchard. Born in Paris July 4, 1910. Let me tell Antonio. . . ."

He went back into the cellar. Kneeling on the earth, he gently brushed aside the wounded man's hair. Then with a handkerchief—something that had once been a handkerchief—he wiped his forehead. "Antonio . . . Antonio . . . can you hear me?" The Spaniard murmured something unintelligible. "Can you hear me, Antonio"—

Listen. . . . Life must go on. Antonio, do you understand? Life must go on. Don't think I'm walking out on you. . . . You understand, Antonio. The fight continues . . . I have to go, Antonio. Can't you hear me, Antonio? Yes? . . . I'm not letting you down . . . there's the doctor. Don't listen to what they tell you: you've got to live . . . you've got to get well. . . . We're going to carry on the fight . . . nothing is lost, Antonio, nothing is lost. You're going to be taken to a hospital, you're going to get well. Listen . . . remember this: when you're well again. . . . Oh, he can't hear me any more! Antonio! Antonio!"

Antonio had lifted his hand. He wanted to say something but could not.

"Antonio, remember this: Blanchard, 33 Rue Cantagrel . . . it's in the thirteenth *arrondissement* . . . in Paris. Antonio, will you remember? 33 Rue Cantagrel, thirteenth *arrondissement.* Raoul Blanchard. . . . That's where you'll find me, Antonio. . . ."

The doctor spoke a sentence in Spanish. Then he tugged at Blanchard with his nervous little hands. In the eerie light of day Blanchard was pallid. He repeated once more: "Antonio . . .", then thought only of his rifle. Should he leave it at the post? Or take it with him to France? That would be one less gun for Franco.

But it was out of the question. They had to appear before the border guards without arms. For form's sake they would say that Blanchard was an engineer. It was almost as hard for him to give up his gun as it was to leave his buddy. It was still difficult for him to walk: he had a bullet-wound in the calf of his leg, not yet fully healed despite a month in the hospital. That explained why he was still in Spain.

ON THEIR return, as they approached the troop detachment they had a disagreeable surprise. The Mobile Guards who had been there two hours before had been relieved by some Senegalese troops. The Mobile Guards were not bad fellows—it was easy to make a deal with them. Most of them shared the general sentiments against Franco. But the Senegalese? Could they understand what was happening? They came here after having listened to a speech by their white commanding officer, one of those speeches couched in terms which their officer thought "simple" enough for them to understand. Besides, the officer's attitude was: "Don't be easy on the Reds!" . . . So they stood there in this mountain pass in the Pyrenees, bayonets fixed, rifle

in two hands, standing at an angle as if ready to run through anyone who dared pass, shifting constantly from one foot to the other, in a kind of dance of death. There was surprise on their faces. One, two, one, two, they shifted from one foot to the other. Their bayonets were fixed. One, two—from one foot to the other. They were chained to duty, ready to carry out their assignment. The whites on one side—on their side—were against the whites on the other side. That was all. From one foot to the other. . . . The Spaniards gazed in terror as they shifted, these gigantic men, beside whom the French officer, when he appeared, looked like a puny little sparrow. . . .

Nevertheless, the passes with the seal of the Prefecture finally caused the Senegalese non-com to weaken. He sent someone off to get his orders; and when the soldier returned, he allowed Oustric, Cormeilles and their companion to pass. Nor was it a simple matter at the French frontier post. There they had to palaver and shout.—You gentlemen were supposed to bring back some Spanish intellectuals: you claim that this man—what's his name—Raoul Blanchard, is a French engineer. . . . Cormeilles took the offensive: "I have been sent by Jules Baranger of the Institute of France. . . ." He might not have succeeded but suddenly, from the other side of the border, they began to hear the sound of shooting. "What's up?" called the officer in charge of the frontier post as he rushed out of his barracks.

There was more coming and going. A Senegalese soldier came running up. Orders were given. Other soldiers were summoned. A French colonial non-com again started to jostle them with his elbows.

"Well, Lieutenant, are you going to let us pass—yes or no?"

The officer, impatient, swung about and flung at Cormeilles: "All right, get going now, beat it! . . . We can't bother about you. . . . Franco's army is coming. . . ."

From the other side they could hear shouts and bursts of gunfire. "Oh Christ, Antonio . . ." said Blanchard. But they had to take advantage of the lieutenant's good will; they could not give him time to go back on his decision. Oustric said so without mincing words. So they dragged Blanchard along, as he kept looking back over his shoulder. Franco . . . Franco . . . at the border . . . it was all over. . . . We did what we could. . . . Franco. . . . When I think how that bastard Visconti is going to gloat . . . with his sport-suit and his stringy hair —"What did you say his politics are, comrade?" Pierre asked, quick-

ening his pace. Oustric answered: "U.S.R. . . . claims to be with the People's Front. But in '35 he voted for Laval. Oh, that's not a party like the others—depends on what side your bread is buttered, I suppose. . . ." Cormeilles could not help shaking his head: not a party like the others? Well, my friend, how about the Socialists? And the Radicals? What about them!

THEY had left the car at the approach to the village. The chauffeur, a fellow from the Popular Aid, was drinking beer at a little bar crowded with soldiers where a radio was droning: *"I'm going back to Normandy—that's the place where I was born. . . ."*

It was only then that Blanchard, swallowing some coffee—lousy stuff, that, but it warms you up!—allowed himself to think of his Paulette and his Raymond, his little *Mondinet* whom he hardly knew . . . he's going to open his eyes wide, all right. . . . This man is my Daddy. . . . And Paulette, has she changed? More than two years. . . .

The first Franco soldiers came up, led by a captain on horseback. And as the French officer in charge of the border guards advanced with his men, the Spanish officer dismounted. Saluting his colleague on the other side of the frontier with his sword, he presented himself:

"Captain Pio Hernandez! *Arriba Franco!*"

The French lieutenant hesitated a little. This was an unforeseen situation. . . . But he quickly made up his mind. Bringing up his hand in a salute, he replied:

"Lieutenant Thierry of the French Army. . . ."

In the distance the sound of shooting could still be heard.

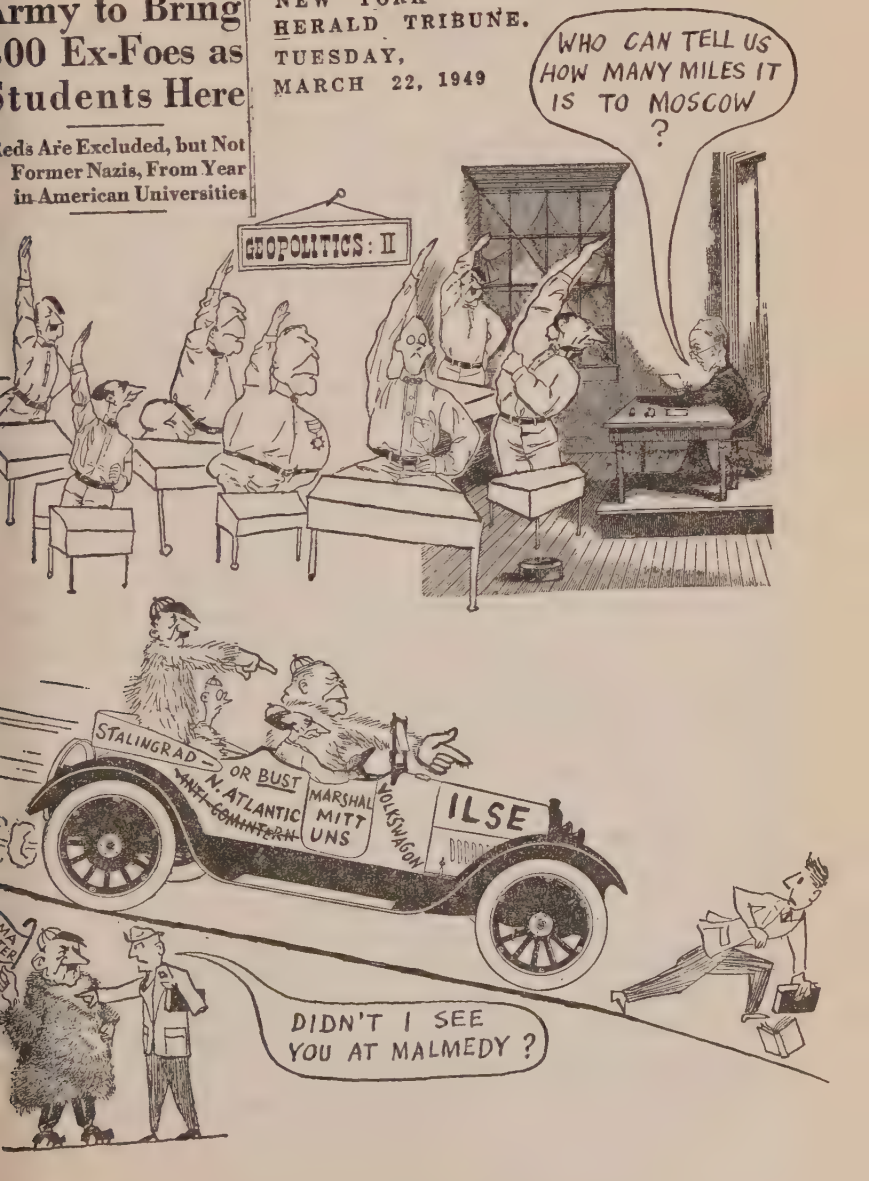
(*Translated from the French by Joseph M. Bernstein.*)

On SAFARI with HARARI

rmy to Bring 00 Ex-Foes as tudents Here

eds Are Excluded, but Not Former Nazis, From Year in American Universities

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE. TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 1949



The Land of Fuchik's Dream

by MIKE GOLD

I HAVE been inspired to write you a few notes from Prague, after a ten-day visit here. Nearly everyone who visits these new democracies comes back inspired, and I can see why. I think it's because one sees a people at work, a people hopeful and not depressed about the future. When Czechoslovakia took the road to socialism little more than a year ago, the usual Aldous Huxley nightmares, degenerate and false as the Protocols of Zion, were charged against her. But I defy anyone to walk through Prague on a sunny afternoon and say this is a barrack civilization.

It's a big, lively, modern city, full of crowded coffee shops (*Kavarnia*), and wine cabarets (*Vinarnia*), pastry shops, beer halls, cafeterias *à la Americaine,* automats. At night the neon lights glow as in Times Square; the cabarets and beer halls are jammed with citizens. They drink three kinds of good beer and eat their beloved Horky Parky, an excellent hot dog. They dance peasant and American jazz dances. They sing the beautiful Slovak folk songs. You say they are slaves? You say they are regimented? But they look and act like free men. And where are the Boris Karloff police and secret agents herding them? Not a goose-stepper, not a Ku Kluxer is visible!

The people crowd the department stores and other shops. They buy their daily necessities and they buy many luxuries. Textiles of every sort, shoes in many styles, toys, beautifully costumed dolls, chess games, goldfish and canaries, gardening tools, cut flowers, carpets, women's dresses, canned fish, fruit and vegetables, beds, dining-room sets, rosebushes, the wonderful Bohemian glasswares.

There are many movie houses, playing the best European pictures

and even some rootin', tootin' westerns. Several opera houses are going; I saw a fine version of an opera by Smetana, with an audience that loved it like a grandmother's familiar folk tale. A big Russian theatre company had arrived with 130 artists and scene shifters and was giving a three-week performance of its repertoire. A Polish opera company was also in town for a visit; a famous Brazilian pianist, Estrella, had just finished a tour, and Paul Robeson and Hector Villa-Lobos were soon expected, among many others.

And the bookshops! What magnificently-stocked bookstores in every neighborhood. Such variety of world literature, too, everything from the finest art albums to the Marxist classics, exquisite children's books, the novels of Howard Fast and Sinclair Lewis, the life of Clarence Darrow, the poetry of Emerson and Walt Whitman. At the chief Communist publishing house, Svoboda, for example, I saw in a showcase displaying their recent products some recent deluxe editions of *Alice in Wonderland* and the works of Guy de Maupassant. The editor seemed surprised when I seemed surprised at this "deviation" from the iron curtain.

You can read almost any American magazine you wish at the U.S. Information Bureau, a busy place on one of the main streets. The British bureau is just as crowded, and its outdoor picture displays of life in England attract the shopping crowds. You walk in, you walk out, you sit and read for hours, as I did, and not a secret agent bites your head off or gives you a Parnell Thomas investigation.

But I mustn't try to describe the face of a great, bustling and beautiful city. There isn't a New Yorker of normal human tastes who wouldn't feel at home in Prague. I merely cite the normalcy to refute the familiar lies.

I WAS a guest here at a writer's congress where the unions of Czech and Slovak authors combined in a single national body. Dylan Thomas, the Welsh poet, was present, too, and he marvelled with me that a country's writers should be holding a congress in the halls of Parliament. Their discussions received front-page attention in all the press, and they were addressed, among other speakers, by the Ministers of Education, Foreign Affairs and Information. Did this mean that writers were being regimented? No, it meant that for the first time writers were being welcomed into society as first-class citizens. They

weren't camp followers of business, entertainers somewhere "between the clowns and the trained seals," as John Steinbeck described his own profession.

Vaclav Kopecky, Minister of Information who supervises the administration of press and publications, spoke to them earnestly like the fellow-author he is. Some of the older writers, he said, were finding it difficult to adapt themselves to the new social order. "But the change in literature will be gradual," he assured them. "We will make many mistakes, no doubt. But we must learn from our mistakes." He reminded them that freedom of literature and art is guaranteed under the new constitution. Only forthright enemies of the people will not be permitted to flourish any longer. He assured them that under the nationalization of publishing, quality would not suffer. The Writers Union would share in deciding on all new works for publication equally with the editorial boards.

Young writers will not be neglected. Writers from among the farmers and workers will be encouraged. "But all of us must learn to look at the truth, at the new reality!" Dr. Kopecky pleaded, his dark strongly-modeled face glowing with fervor. "Don't sit at home, in your old rooms, trying to make up stories of the new life out of your tired brain. Go to life, go to the people! Look at them, live with them, listen and observe! It is no longer possible to live in the old way. It is as impossible to write in the old way. The people wait for you to record their heroic and hopeful life! Do not fail them! Do not fail yourselves in the great prophetic task laid upon the writer!"

A lanky young man, with the unruly hair, spectacles and baggy pants of the classic poet, appealed to the writers to write for children. He himself was a poet who wrote fables for children. "Give us your best," he urged, "not your second best." Another writer, a young playwright, said: "We are lucky, we enter the new life without the weight of old artisms. We can do what we always wanted to do but often dared not. I am going to live and work for three months among the miners of Kladno and write a play about them."

Skala, a lyric poet with the lofty forehead so typical of the Czech face, said he rejoiced in life and now believed in the meaning of things. He wanted to write an epic on the February events that had brought socialism to his country. He also pleaded for an end to the war between reviewers and authors. "Aren't we all on the same side now?"

he insisted. "Aren't we building the house of man side by side?" And Nevzal, another poet, fat and jovial, a former writer of surrealist poetry "with a proletarian and sensuous content" as someone described it to me, similarly rejoiced that "our road is clear; everything is plain now; we have taken our fate, our literature in our own hands. Our people has found its soul."

THESE are but a few samples of the discussion that was pursued for four days, in the Parliament or at the great castle near Prague. Here in a feudal park by a beautiful lake the Writers Union has its summer home and its retreat for study and work (like our own privately-owned Yaddo).

The former chauffeur of Count Colorado Mansfield, who owned the famous chateau, now serves as steward of the writers' hostel. He wore a Communist button and seemed pleased with his present job. Dylan Thomas and I estimated there was about a million dollars worth of fine bibelots, furniture, paintings, cabinet work, in the castle. It is a veritable museum, but the writers and their families live among the things as unselfconsciously as ever did the Count.

Here was given a delightful banquet with toasts to peace and brotherhood, and songs and then a snowball fight in the park between all the poets, critics and novelists. "The P. E. N. Club never fights with snowballs," lamented the Welsh poet, covered with feathery snow from hair to toes.

Dr. Ndnek Nejedly, Minister of Education, presided at the banquet. He is one of the intellectual and political heroes of Czechoslovakia, a great historian and musicologist who wrote classic studies of the Hussite revolution, a history of music which includes the first authoritative study of Roman music, the massive life of Masaryk and his times, and other works. Nejedly was Minister of Education under Masaryk. The new education act, under which the schools are reorganized, is known as the "Nejedly Act." It fulfills his lifework as a Socialist and democrat in education.

"The great significance of our educational system is that it will make our citizens equal not only before the law," he said, "but also in their education. We shall remove everything which makes for division among our youth. We shall even remove—and our new Act is very explicit about this—the discrepancy between mental work and physical work."

Irving Amen

Making his speech to the Czechoslovak Parliament when the law was being presented, Dr. Nejedly, this charming, witty, old hero, confessed a strong emotion. "After fifty long years of work devoted first and foremost to the education of the nation, I have now the deep pleasure of passing from theory to practice," he said.

THIS triumph of the democratic forces after decades of struggle has not been understood in America, I believe. The February changes here were not a sudden revolution, a complete break with the past, but the final stage of a long historic process. The class relations had changed forever but the reactionaries in the government, misled by advice from abroad and their own hatred, were too blind to realize it. It is a fact that the united Communists and Socialists had something like fifty-six per cent of the voters with them when they insisted to Benes that the reactionary ministers be allowed to resign and a true people's government be called into being.

Dr. Kopecky, at the writers' congress, hinted at this evolution, also, when he said that the "new literature will not be a break with our past." And present at the congress, to confirm this, were dozens of older writers like Ivan Olbracht and Marie Pujmanova, classics of their time who had expressed for fifty years the life of the Czech workers and peasants. Their books had been made into movies and plays; their literature had represented the nation in translations around the world.

Indeed, Dr. Nejedly's underlying thesis in all his historical studies has been that the bearers of the best traditions of the Czech nation have always been the people. After the Thirty Years' War the Czechs had no native aristocracy, were inferiors in the Austrian Empire. It was the peasants in the country, and the workers and lower middle class in the towns, who preserved the national spirit, and resisted, with the Hussites, the Catholic Inquisition. Later, with satire and song, with gun and political strategy, they fought the rotten old Hapsburg empire (*Good Soldier Schweik*), then still later, the Nazi occupation.

I visited a memorial exhibition in the National Museum dedicated to a young Communist poet, George Wolker, who died of tuberculosis in 1925 at the age of twenty-four. Wolker wrote ballads and lyrical songs that are sung everywhere. The exhibit was touching and also a wonderful composite of that time: the Communist leaflets and newspapers, hundreds of paintings by social-minded painters of the period,

books, photographs, demonstrations, the struggle for socialism. Now classes of school children wander among the halls of the museum and study their romantic forerunner. It is history; it is national. Today is the normal and logical consequence of that time.

I think it is this organic continuity of their history, and the immense popular basis on which their new government rests, that gives the people such a feeling of security in Czechoslovakia. The standard of living has been going up slowly and surely. There are no slums in Prague as there are in New York. There is a housing shortage, but no vile racketeering in housing such as one finds in New York, Paris or London. There's no black market in anything; the rich don't get all the food while the workers starve. There is a true socialist effort to see that every child has his equal share of the nation's milk, clothes, housing, education.

They have accomplished their Two Year Plan. Now they are entering their Five Year Plan in which they expect to raise the living standards of the nation by forty-eight per cent. Step by step, nationalization goes on, the main economy already being in the hands of the people. The bourgeoisie hates it, of course, but is badly divided in resisting it.

"I think this socialism is unfair to a businessman," lamented an old engineer in a beer hall. "But I am not against Russia. We must have Russia on our side, or the Germans will come back. I lost my family to the Nazis." This fear of the Germans is common, a national instinct. Thus the U.S. trusts, straining to revive a military Germany to be used against the Soviet Union, are losing even the Czech bourgeoisie.

Everywhere in Prague, as in Paris, there are little memorials in the streets marking places where some patriot was murdered by the Nazis. I visited Lidice, the little town of workers and peasants razed to the ground by the Nazis after every man and boy was murdered and the mothers and girls taken to a concentration camp. "They led all the cattle away before dynamiting the houses," said our chauffeur, a tanned, husky worker in a leather coat and cap, who had seen the smoke from a hill. "Then they removed all the furniture. Nazis were very careful of property. They were only careless with our lives."

The wounds of the Nazi occupation are still fresh in every Czech

heart. Nobody can rebuild a military Germany and hope to win the support of the Czech people.

WHEREVER I went in Prague I was haunted by thoughts of Julius Fuchik, that beautiful, luminous figure we all have learned to venerate from his book. Fuchik was a leading Marxist critic of literature as well as a political figure. He had the humor, tenderness and strength of his people. They are a gifted people, so good, so hard-working, so conscious of their long history of struggle against tyrants. Do you remember the half-dead, tortured Fuchik's words in his cell, telling his comrades never to remember him with sadness, but always with joy? There is a great deal of this joyousness in the Czechoslovak people; it underlies their most serious thought, reminding one of France.

Jan Drda is president of the Czech Writers Union. He is thirty-two years old, very fat, round and jolly, with a cherub face and curly hair like a young Rabelais. He writes humorous stories, drinks lots of beer and loves to sing. What would the anemic, degenerated Huxleys make of such a figure? How could they fit this happy warrior, this humorous Communist, into their stale portrait of the Communist robot?

We sat one night in the Manes Artists Club and drank beer with Drda and some thirty writers. It was a night of endless song. One song was a screamingly funny satire against the Hapsburgs. You sang a line, then stood up and saluted solemnly the name of the Hapsburg just mentioned—an uncle, cousin or other relative of the imperial line. In between stanzas everyone linked arms around the table and rocked to and fro until seasick, singing the chorus. It was an old regimental song that, under the Empire, had been sung by serious and devoted morons, salutes and all.

"One night before the war," said Drda, "we sang this Herzegovinian song in this same room. I remember that our dear Fuchik was with us that night."

Yes, Fuchik was gay, and a fighter, and he loved his people. I am grateful to have known his people if even for ten days. They have reaffirmed what I always knew: that socialism is no soulless machine but the tree of life, ever-renewing itself, ever flowering with new forms. Puppetry, for instance. What has it got to do with building socialism?

But there are 1,200 puppet theatres in Czechoslovakia. It is perhaps the most popular national art. Kladno, the miner's city near Lidice, for example, has a fine puppet theatre, with revolving stage and other modern technique. The grown-ups love puppets as much as do the children.

One night I visited the puppet theatre of the famous Dr. Skupa. The theatre was crowded, as on every night, with more than 500 enthusiastic men and women, many of them wearing Communist Party buttons. Dr. Skupa is a great master of the art. Under the occupation he resisted the Nazis with little playlets and satires whose Czech meaning they failed to get. But one day they arrested him and his company. Dr. Skupa survived the concentration camp and now is back in his popular theatre. He is helping build socialism in his native land—with the songs, burlesque and fantasy of his puppets. Life and socialism are ever finding new forms.

And, I submit, Czechoslovakia is in possession of her own soul. She is singing with her own free voice in the world chorale of the peoples. Only a liar can deny it. Only a slave can fail to rejoice.

Helen West Heller

THE HEADLINE . . .

Varga Accuses Soviet Press of Slandering Him

THE STORY

From the Herald Tribune Bureau
Copyright, 1949, New York Herald Tribune Inc.

MOSCOW, March 15.—Eugene Varga, prominent Soviet economist, made public today a statement protesting that he has been slandered by "organs of black reaction, radio, magazines and New World warmongers."

WARNING

"WASHINGTON—Louis Bromfield, author and Ohio dairy farmer, told Congress today that unrestricted sale of yellow oleomargarine would encourage communism and soil starvation." —*from a United Press dispatch.*

GOOD NEIGHBOR

"LIMA, Peru.—*President Manuel Ordria's junta government is considering a proposal to ask United States F.B.I. Chief J. Edgar Hoover to help develop a secret police force. The plan was presented to Gen. Ordria as the most effective method of securing his dictatorship. He would pick ten young men and ask Hoover to give them rigorous training, especially in 'loyalty' work.*"—From the New York *Post.*

PROGRESS REPORT

"Police used tear gas on Italian unemployed in Southern Foggia. Strikes spread throughout Italy. Premier de Gaspari said Italy has emerged from the isolation of fascist dictatorship."—*From the Chicago* Sun-Times.

SEQUITUR

"There is an unkillable rumor here that the United States Army has enlisted, is enlisting or will enlist Japanese former soldiers for a war against the Soviet Union. American women of the Occupation forces are the best customers of Japanese teachers of flower-arrangement." —A Tokio dispatch to the New York *Times.*

Our Road to Realism

by ALEXANDER A. FADEYEV

I AM of that generation of democratic intellectuals who were in their early youth when the Great October Revolution took place in Russia. Bearing the none-too-weighty burden of secondary education laid upon us by the old school, we entered the period of great battles between the new world and the old. The new world was made up of the immense masses of workers and peasants of Russia who, through their own efforts for a more just life, had won victory for the first time. The old world was that old world which was supported from abroad by all forces bearing a resemblance to it. In the Russian Far East the external force was, principally, Japan. This period survives in the people's memory as the Civil War time. It is also known as the "Campaign of Fourteen Powers Against Soviet Russia."

We had to decide whose side we were to take. We had to choose because our consciences required it of us. We had to choose, too, because those who took neither the one nor the other side nevertheless drew fire from both. The choice was not hard to make. We had been educated on the little that our parents could scrape together. My mother and father, who worked as physicians' assistants in a remote village, tilled the soil as well. My few comrades at school were in the same position. We were very close to the life of the workers and the peasants.

And so, full of the high hopes of youth, and with our volumes of Maxim Gorky and Nekrassov in our school-satchels, we joined in the Revolution. We were uplifted by the desire for liberation because at that time Admiral Kolchak was in power, a power more cruel than the old, in Siberia and the Far East. We were uplifted by patriotic feeling because our native land was trampled by the iron-shod Japanese interventionists.

I date my life as a writer from this time. I came to know the best

aspects of the people from whom I had sprung. For three years I tramped thousands of kilometers with them, slept under the same army overcoat and ate out of the same billy-can as the soldier. It was then that I knew for the first time the kind of men who led the people. And I realized that they were like the rest of us, only they were the best sons and daughters of the people. Had the people not found such as these in their midst, they would have remained sunk forever in poverty and oppression.

Sergei Lazo, the dearly-loved leader of the Far Eastern partisans, was captured by the Japanese and burned alive in the firebox of a locomotive. Vsevolod Sibirsev, my cousin, who was older than I, was caught at the same time and burned, too. This was my "pass to life," as one of the early Soviet films expressed it. I learned the significance of the Party for my people's destiny and I am proud that I was accepted into it.

How was Soviet literature first created? It was created by people like ourselves. When we began, after the Civil War, to gather from all parts of our boundless country—many of us Party members and still more of us, young non-party people—we were amazed to find so many points of resemblance in our biographies, different though our circumstances had been. Such was the path of Furmanov, author of the novel *Chapayev,* which, later adapted for the screen, became still more famous than the book. Such was the way of Sholokhov, a younger man and perhaps one of the most talented among us all. And there is the great feat of Nikolai Ostrovsky. When he lost his sight and was paralyzed as a result of wounds received at the front, he wrote his immortal work, *How the Steel Was Tempered,* about our own generation.

The writers of the older generation whom we joined were for the most part from the same social strata; only they had set out on their path before us. Foremost among them was Mayakovsky. A giant with a sonorous voice, he stormed and thundered from the platforms of workers' clubs and university lecture rooms, commanding our respectful and somewhat frightened admiration. While our youthful efforts were being published, old Serafimovich, who had behind him a whole series of books written in former days, launched his *Iron Flood*—the epic of the Civil War.

Wave by wave we surged into literature; we were many. We brought with us our own experience of life, our own individuality. We were

united by our awareness of the new world as a world of our own, and by our love for it. And those who came after us were linked by an ever-narrowing space of years with the past. At last, the writers who joined us were people who had grown from childhood in the new times. The eldest of them is Constantine Simonov. Now many names might be enumerated of writers who came to the fore during the Second World War and after, but you have not read them. In this war which our people rightly call the Patriotic War, one out of every three writers fought and 150 of them fell on the battlefields.

We Russians were not the only writers in Soviet literature. Year by year more writers joined us from the other nationalities in our country—the Ukrainians, the Georgians with their high poetic culture, and then the Kirghiz, a people who acquired their own written language only after the Revolution. And all of them brought to their work the inimitable atmosphere of their traditions and national forms.

For example, some remarkable novels have been written by Kazakhs, a people who in tsarist times could number only 1.5 per cent of literates among them. *Abai,* by Mukhtar Auezov, is a novel about their best classic poet who lived in the nineteenth century. Abai hated Russian tsarism but had the greatest respect for Russian culture. He translated excerpts from Pushkin's long poem, *Eugene Onegin,* and all his people sang Tatiana's letter to Onegin—turned by them into a Kazakh popular song. Take another novel, *The Millionaire,* by Mustafin. I must hasten to explain that the novel is not concerned with millionaires in the capitalist sense. For instance, M. Andre Pierre contrived to make even me into a millionaire in the French newspaper *Monde.* But in our country even a boy of five, wearing the Pioneer's red tie, knows that we have no millionaires. This novel is about people on a collective farm where they enjoy an abundance of the products of hard work. We have many of these collective farms and they are known as "millionaires."

ANOTHER process which should be noted here was that writers of another milieu, another education, came over to the side of the new world. The most prominent among them was Alexei Tolstoy. As is well known, he emigrated after the October Revolution, but he returned and dedicated his splendid talent to the Soviet people. As is well known, he was a count. How great, then, must be the power of truth of the Soviet people if even counts come over to their side!

The great writer Gorky was and remains the leader of Soviet literature. His origins lay deep in the social rank and file of Russia, he was the friend of Lenin and Stalin, he was our first and best educator in art. Among the writers of my generation there is not one who did not receive Gorky's blessing on entering literature.

Hence you may see how ignorant—to put it mildly—and how unscrupulous—to put it plainly—are the assertions of certain Western European journalists who allege that Soviet literature is not free, but is created almost by command. Soviet literature is created by Soviet life. The new society is the very air which fills our lungs. We ourselves are the founders of Soviet literature.

What did our artistic baggage consist of when we went in for literature, and what have we to say that is new to the world? We ask to be excused, of course, for not having Baudelaire and Verlaine, and still more for not having Mallarmé in our knapsacks. We would not have carried even Blok, the foremost of the Russian symbolists, had he not written *The Twelve* in which, in his own way, he lauded the advent of the new society. The great realists, the classics of the nineteenth century, were more to our taste. As was natural, the classics of Russia came first: Pushkin, Nekrassov, Tolstoy, Turgenev and Chekhov. The great realist classics of France and England were to our taste.

We Soviet writers regard literature, not as a pampered creature dwelling in an ivory tower, but as a teacher of life and an educator of the people. Some say this attitude to literature lowers its artistic side. Yet this was the attitude of Balzac and Stendhal, Leo Tolstoy and Dickens, Zola and Chekhov, Gorky and Romain Rolland. I think that this explains, in the main, the consummate artistic power of their gifts. They depicted life truthfully—hence the rare freedom and simplicity of their form. All great manifestations in literature owe their sources to the national soil, the people. And every important writer cannot but feel his responsibility to the nation and the people. It is through this humanistic content that the realist classics are close to us.

No small number of books have appeared in the postwar literature of Western Europe and America asserting in chorus that man is an anti-social creature, living according to the spontaneous will within and without, that he is feeble and pitiable, or if strong, it is only the wolflike strength of a predatory beast. Contemporary Western European and American authors number many in their ranks who are pre-

occupied mainly with the basest sexuality in which the spiritual is totally absent, and even on the crudest physiological manifestations in man. Books of this type always show a bias in favor of crime and perversion of every kind. The authors appear to have conspired to convince millions of persons that they are lacking in human reason and will power and cannot hope for a just arrangement of life.

This kind of literature is contrasted in both Western Europe and America to the contemporary progressive humanistic literature which we know so well at homé in the Soviet country and value highly. To this progressive literature in other countries, our Soviet literature stretches out the hand of brotherhood. Soviet literature can affirm after the great writer Gorky: "Man—that sounds so proud!" Soviet literature endeavors to restore to their rightful significance the true human values. It holds that love for one's native country and friendship between the nations are great human feelings, that the love of man and woman is noble and beautiful, that true friendship is disinterested, that the name of mother is sacred, that life is given to man for work and creation.

The old humanism can prevail in our country only because it has won the victory over social evil. And from the standpoint of socialist humanism, man is not man unless he works and creates. One of the features of Soviet fiction is that it portrays the average man or woman as a fighter, an active character, a worker, an innovator, transforming nature and society. This is the distinguishing characteristic of the heroes of many Soviet books and plays on the war and the titanic construction work undertaken by the Soviet people after the war. The characters in these books and plays, while they are convincingly real and alive, belong through their aims and endeavors to tomorrow. In their everyday, ordinary and yet creative activity, they do not drift, they anticipate the morrow and bring it nearer.

WHAT is socialist realism? Socialist realism is the ability to present life in its development, the ability to discern and to reveal with truth in life's today the seed of tomorrow. In this respect Soviet realism removes the contradiction that existed in the old literature between realism and romanticism. Flaubert was a realist but he did not believe in the possibility of development and improvement of the human species. Lacking in the larger ideals, his realism was not uplifting, was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too earthbound. Victor Hugo, who was imbued with high moral aims, had too little contact with the earth. His romanticism lacked the historical truth of life. Based on the truth of life in development, socialist realism contains revolutionary romanticism.

In a review of my book, *The Young Guard,* in a French newspaper, there was a note of dissatisfaction that I had not shown any vices and baseness in my portrayal of Soviet youth. The reviewer betrayed quite definite disappointment in the discovery that Soviet youth lives according to human laws and not the laws of existentialism. But I am not to blame for that and cannot help the reviewer.

It is sometimes said: Is it possible that the Party and the state power in the U.S.S.R. express their attitude to manifestations in literature and, so to speak, interfere in the process of literary development? Does that not hinder freedom in creation? But literature in the Soviet country is the expression of our contemporary national spirit, the spirit of the people, as are the Party and the state power. In the Soviet country the Party constitutes the best and highest that the people have been able to advance in the past half-century of life, in the thirty-odd years of the construction of socialism. The Party and literature have common aims. Neither Party nor state power in the Soviet country interferes in the artist's individual creative art, and have never dictated nor attempted to dictate to it themes and imagery, much less artistic form. Socialist realism is not a dogma, it assumes the existence of a wealth of individuality and a great variety of artistic form.

Soviet literature's standpoint in creation is its high responsibility to the people, to the nation, to the State, to all mankind. The Party fosters this sense of responsibility in writers. Only where this condition of responsibility obtains, can the true writer express the best aspects of his individuality; otherwise he is not an individuality but the slave of his caprices, and nothing great, public or universal has ever yet been created in the world out of sheer caprice. The Party "interferes," in particular, in literary affairs when it sees that tendencies alien to the spirit of the Soviet people, manifestations that lower the social role and esthetic significance of Soviet literature, have appeared in it. Then the Party points these things out truthfully and straightforwardly, reminding the writers of their high duty to the people and pointing out to them, on the people's behalf, splendid prospects of artistic fulfillment.

It is only the small man, accustomed to floundering about in the narrow and monotonous little world of his own individualistic emotional experiences, who perceives in these instructions of the Party interference with freedom of creation. To the contrary, like all that is great, truthful and honest, bred by the interests of the people, the interests of the nation, these instructions awaken the best forces in the creative writer's soul. Among those who are loudest in their talk of "freedom for creative work" in the columns of the bourgeois press are many who are dependent upon rich patrons, government institutions, private publishing houses, newspaper and magazine owners and the changing literary vogue. What kind of freedom is this? There is no power on earth greater than truth. Only truth is free. And before deciding who has the most freedom, one must decide on whose side truth is.

We Soviet writers can pass over with equanimity the inventions of our ill-wishers. We know our place and we know, too, that we have more friends than ill-wishers in the world.

The Social Function of Art

by LADISLAV STOLL

I WANT to discuss the social function of art, namely the ennobling force emanating from every true work of art be it a symphony, a painting, a novel or a poem. This force constantly reminding man of what it means to be a human being could be called poetry—poetry in the original broad sense. Historic experience indicates that this ennobling force of poetry is in closest relation with the interests of plain, working people who create human values. That is the reason why all great artists and authors always felt happy among working people and felt oppressed in the midst of the non-productive world of convention, empty politeness and hypocrisy.

Let us recall that Jean Jacques Rousseau had much to say about this, as well as the great American poet, Walt Whitman, who declared, "Only a rare and universal artistic spirit can grasp the many-sided broad qualities of the people, but the so-called 'elegant' classes who deprecatingly dub them the 'plebs' are always against them and cannot understand them." These words of a great American are very important from the point of view of scientific esthetics. Our own outstanding Czechoslovak critic, F. X. Salda, (although he was not a socialist), once wrote words very similar to those of Whitman: "My experience has shown me that nobility of feeling and understanding for poetry are not to be found in the strata of so-called 'nice people' but among the working people, among workers and farmers. In matters of poetry, I find the upper class 'nice people' to be often nothing more than civilized barbarians."

The so-called plain man, the worker, peasant, craftsman, represents in fact a particular mentality. He has a different relationship towards the world, towards nature, towards the people, an absolutely different way of living, something which is foreign to the mentality of the

so-called elegant world, the bourgeois world. And here one must realize where this mentality springs from, what the secret is of the difference between the two mentalities. The answer is, on the whole, easy. The worker, peasant, craftsman, in short, the working man, acquires his mentality, his way of living from the labor process, in other words from that active, creative relationship to the real and material world of nature which he is daily changing and molding with his ardent hands for the benefit of all people.

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And what is the labor process? Let us see how the founder of scientific socialism, Karl Marx, replies to this question: "The labor process . . . is purposeful activity for the creation of useful values; the adaptation of what is given by nature to human needs, the general condition for the exchange of materials between man and nature. It is the *eternal condition* of human life and hence not dependent on any forms this life may take, or rather, is common to *all* its social forms." From this it is clear that the labor process concerns the imperishable, let us say, the *eternal side* of human activity. Throughout all time people will change and adapt nature to their needs, create useful values and through them meet both their material and spiritual needs. Of course, and this it is important to realize, people will not eternally be producing for profit nor will they always look upon human necessities as objects to be juggled with in terms of money.

In the past, human necessities have become objects for financial juggling, namely, in the epoch of production for money, for profit, and this epoch in the history of humanity reaches its culmination in the period of capitalism when money relationships everywhere produce a terrible sameness, where almost every object which is needed by man

or is useful to him, even human labor-power itself, becomes a marketable ware, a form of merchandise. And all these things have acquired double characteristics, and people have learned to look at them from two points of view—that of their direct, concrete usefulness and that of their abstract value, as exchanged for money.

From the first point of view, the workers' relationship to the world is essentially a purposeful, warm, plastic, creative relationship. From the second, it is cold and cynical, the relationship of the financial speculator. Consider how a tinsmith, for instance, looks at a piece of copper plate, or how a potter looks at a lump of potter's clay, how a carpenter sees a plank of ashwood when a sweet-smelling spiral shaving curls up under his hand on the plane. That is the relationship in which matter smiles upon man with its poetic splendor.

Whitman and Salda were right. It is this relationship which constitutes the secrets of poetic creation, whether in plastic art or in literature.

THE money-minded individual, or speculator, naturally looks on the matter quite differently, since he sees in the object only a marketable article, only its abstract monetary expression, the fetish. A man of this sort is completely indifferent as to what he buys or sells, whether the plate is of copper or iron, whether the plank is of pinewood or ashwood. In such a man rich, radiant creative life, creative imagination, is extinguished; his brain is developed at the expense of his heart and passions, and abstract speculative considerations kill any fine, human, creative potentialities he may have, not only in his relationship to the world of objects but also in his relationship to people, to women, to children, to nature, to the nation or to a work of art. For such individuals people are only real in so far as they have money. A person like this never asks his neighbor if he is hungry or thirsty, if he loves, admires or hates, but only if he has got money. The activity of the senses in a person of this type is finally reduced to that of mere animal sense experiences. Ultimately, he becomes accustomed to buying and selling everything, even affection, love, friendship, convictions and human virtues.

In short, we are dealing here with a phenomenon which is peculiar to a certain stage of history, but mercifully only a *transitional* stage, a phenomenon which future generations will probably call "homo pecuniarius," or "money-minded individual." We are dealing here with a

peculiar being who appears in the likeness of a human being with a cynical mask of courtesy, decency and conventional refinement on his face.

In talking of the collapse of ancient, primitive, natural economy and the beginning of money, (the collapse of feudal patriarchal relations between people), Marx describes the advent of capitalism as follows:

> "Finally, there came a time when everything that men had considered as inalienable became an object of exchange, of traffic and could be alienated. This is the time when the very things which till then had been communicated, but never exchanged; given, but never sold; acquired, but not bought—virtue, love, conviction, knowledge, conscience, etc.,—when everything, (in short), passed into commerce. It is the time of general corruption, of universal venality, or, to speak in terms of political economy, the time when everything, moral or physical, having become marketable, is brought to the market to be assessed at its exchange value."

WE HAVE seen how capitalism has devastated human nature, what monsters the old world of money-changers has brought forth, how it has crippled, dehumanized and impoverished mankind both materially and spiritually. And here we see that our first positive task is to remedy as soon as possible these wrongs committed upon humanity, this impoverishment and robbery of mankind. What is necessary is that we should promise that we want all to be rich.

But let us insist at the very outset that our idea of human riches has nothing in common with the bourgeois idea of riches. A rich person in the socialist age is quite different from a rich person in the capitalist age. Indeed, the rich man of capitalism is a terribly poor man. There are many works of literature in the world in which the authors have striven to depict this poverty of the rich in the most varied types; Molière's Harpagon, Balzac's Grandet, Gogol's Tchartkov and so on. Private capitalist ownership has so robbed, emasculated and crippled man in his inner being that the socialist world and its culture will still have scores of years of hard work ahead of them before they can put these crimes right. It is not only the worker who is liberated and humanized by socialism, but all mankind. The bourgeoisie long ago wrote on its banner that private property is sacred; and even in those days the first socialistic humanists perceived that this private capitalist ownership was leading man to rob himself in his inner being.

The truly human way of appropriating the world's riches is that by which man really overcomes the world, in other words, *with all his senses, concretely.* And here it is not a question only of the five physical senses, for unlike the animals, man has a thousand glorious human senses, not only the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, but also a sense for music, a sense for poetry, a sense for plastic arts, a sense for science, a sense for mathematics, a sense for history, a sense for theory, etc. It is only when a man begins to satisfy the needs of these glorious human senses, which one and all are the product of historical development, that he can appropriate to himself all the beauties of the world and become *genuinely rich.* This is the sort of rich person we socialists, we socialist cultural workers, want to see in the world.

Capitalism replaces this rich human life, this truly human way of appropriating the world's riches, by a single, abstract sense, the sense of private property. In place of the many-sided, active, concrete appropriation of life and the world through which the individual says not only, "I see, I hear, I smell, I taste, I touch," but also, "I work, I study, I love, I admire, I struggle for a happier tomorrow"—in place of all this wealth of emotion capitalism makes one single emotion supreme: "I have."

WE HAVE declared a noble aim. We want to liberate and enrich humanity in mighty, harmonious co-operation with all the creative forces of the nation, with the workers and peasants.

We are children of a great revolutionary epoch. We are witnessing the death of the old bourgeois social order and the birth of the new, higher, socialist social order. This, however, is not a spontaneous process which comes about of its own accord. It has to be fought for by people; here there is no evading the issue. The dividing line between the two worlds, the old and the new, does not run only as a visible line on the political map of the world, it also runs within nations, within man. "Being exposed to the attraction of two historic forces, the bourgeois past and the socialist future, people manifestly vacillate," wrote Gorky. "The emotional principle draws them to the past, the intellectual to the future."

We cannot remain indifferent to this great contest between two historic forces, the past against the future, capitalism against socialism, a struggle which permeates the inner man as well. We must not imagine

that we can raise ourselves as "objective" onlookers above this conflict. This is a struggle to preserve as many people as possible for the future, and we must take an active part in it. The old and dying world will strive to drag with it into the mass grave everything living which allows itself to be swept under. And those who are threatened first and foremost are the vacillating and the irresolute. We want to save them and bring them to the new life. And so it is impossible not to take sides, not to join the struggle. And this common struggle of the artists and the people of all nations and all races is at the same time a struggle against *war* and for *peace* and *humanity*.

The Wishing Well

A Story by PHILLIP BONOSKY

BEEZIE went home that night after listening to the caddy and lay awake thinking of the bottom of the well building higher and higher with dimes, nickels, quarters and half dollars. That had been going on for years, the caddy had guessed; for years—the guys would throw the money into the water, and the girls would, and they'd "wish" —you-know-what-for, said the caddy. Then the girls would go down into the woods with the boys; but Beezie didn't care about that.

"Will you come with me?" he said to Kozik. "Will you come? Just watch, I'll go down. But will you come?"

"If they catch us?"

"Kick us in the ass and let us go. We're just kids," he explained.

"How can we get in?"

"I'll find a way, but will you come?"

Kozik's yellow eyes considered. Over them his lids fell and opened like the lazy wings of a moth.

"How much will you give me?"

"A third," Beezie said.

"No, a half."

"You'll just watch. *I'll* go down the well!"

Kozik stared away.

"How much you think is down there?"

"A hundred dollars!"

"Gee!" His lids opened wide. "A hundred dollars!" he echoed. "You're crazy! Who'd let all that money lay down that old well? *Somebody* would take it! You're crazy!"

"You don't *know!*" Beezie replied. "You don't know *them!* They're rich!"

They pooled their money and took two streetcars—the first one carried them out of town; the second one, ten miles into the country, through the little hamlets, until up on a green hill, like a pearl, sat the big white house, partly screened by elm trees. It was late afternoon and they were hungry, but had no money to buy food. They ate sour-grass. They had no money either to ride back home again in case they failed. They hadn't thought about that.

"We'll wait until it gets dark," Beezie said.

"Then the fellas come down," Kozik protested.

"That's why you gotta watch. They'd see us in the daytime."

"How about dogs?"

"Dogs?"

"Yeah, how about dogs?"

But Beezie didn't answer.

They sat on a rock at the point where the driveway divided from the road. They stared solemnly as the bright sport cars loaded with strange women and stranger-looking men drove up. The cars were jagged with tennis rackets, golf clubs, polo sticks—the unrecognizable tools of their living. The women's hair didn't look like hair to the boys; and the hair on the men was odd, too. They wore sun glasses—tortoise shelled or pink coral, in every shape. They also spoke differently, and though the boys heard whole phrases they understood nothing that was said.

They watched them like exotic birds from a green jungle.

"Besides," Beezie said, remembering the final proof, "it was in the papers—about their doing it; the wishing well, throwing money in it."

"How you going to find where it is?"

"Down there," Beezie said mysteriously, pointing to a clump of trees down the hill from the house. "Down there. That's where."

They were both hungry but didn't realize it. Their hunger was trapped inside their excitement. They lay beside the road, munching sour-grass or chewing orchard grass; they picked off the green haws from the bushes and threw them at ants and at birds. Cars came and went, and each time one arrived both fell silent and stared at its strange cargo.

"Suppose they catch us?" Kozik echoed.

It was still less than dark when, worn out with waiting, Beezie cried: "Let's start!"

"They'll see us!"

"No," he fired back. "Hear the music!"

They stood to listen. From the house on the hill came music. Lights had begun to shine, too. But the music, most of all, came; it made the house seem like a handful of another world set down on top of the hill in the middle of the woods and fields, being by itself.

"They're listening to that. They won't hear us."

There was a wire fence running along the road. It was tipped with sharpened, turned-over naked ends. When they touched it with their hands they jumped back.

"Oh!" Kozik cried, backing away from it and staring at it with horror. His lids fell heavily and then opened.

From behind the charged fence the music came. Beezie's hands tingled and his scalp had grown cold. It seemed to him for a moment that they had taken the wrong streetcar and this was the wrong place, it wasn't even in the same county.

Away from them the fence crossed a creek, and between the creek and the bottom of the fence was a foot and a half of space. They stood above it debating silently for a long time before taking the risk of climbing under the fence. But they only wet their shoes.

INSIDE the fence it felt different. Now even the music seemed nearer and clearer. Beezie felt his heart pounding right under his shirt; he wanted to still it with his hand.

They followed the creek because this would lead them to it; and as they crawled along, suddenly they heard the spatter of horses' hoofs and both sank like shadows into the grass behind the bushes. Sunk there, they saw a man and a girl get off; saw the man take the girl and kiss her.

Lying flat on the ground, suddenly rigid, they watched the man and girl, saw what they did. Kozik pushed his cheeks in with the knuckles of both hands. They burned on his knuckles; his body was straight as a stick against the earth. His teeth began to chatter. Beezie's own mouth was dry as if he had been sucking a stone. His eyes could not close, they burned until tears came, then stung as if filled with sand.

Long after the two had gone, they lay still. They could not get up. Putting his crossed arms before him, Beezie laid his hot forehead on them and closed his eyes. The thick musk of decayed leaves rose and

lled his nostrils. There was a glaze of whirling circles in his head. His heart slowly began to fade. He felt himself stretched along and nto the ground as he had clutched it and dug into it. He tried to speak hrough his tiny mouth, but could bring nothing out. He did not look t his friend. He only heard the stubborn chatter of teeth, which slowly lied down. He felt Kozik jerk like a dying fish.

Finally, Kozik cried: "Beezie, take me home with you!"

After a minute, he pulled himself up and helped bring Kozik o his feet. He could see his pale face, touched his hand and felt that t was cold and wet and shaking.

They followed the creek on, and when they heard horses again, Kozik shuddered and felt Beezie's hand tighten in his own as he held t to guide him through the dark. Beezie felt that Kozik had forgotten why they had come; he himself had forgotten it. He did not know where they had come to. It was like a fairyland, a strange one, a fearful one. He wanted to turn back with that, big in his head, and take it home, and go immediately to bed, away from every one, and think and think about it. It seemed to him that the fence they had passed under had been mysterious, filled with magic.

To Kozik he said: "Don't forget! Don't forget!"

The music, which somehow had disappeared, now suddenly charged on them. They could distinguish a cymbal clash; even, for one brief moment that made them stand still with cold, the crystal laugh of a girl; then it was shut off.

The creek led through thicker and thicker bushes. Beezie could smell crushed blackberries. A bridle-path followed along but they did not dare to walk the path; instead they threaded themselves through the bushes. When they arrived, at first they didn't recognize the spot. The well was under a pergola, over which grapes grew. There were stone seats around, off a little; inside the pergola was the stone well. It had an old wooden handle, an old green-mossy axle around which the rope wound which let down a wooden bucket into the well. A wooden lid with a hand-carved handle stood beside it, green with faint moss.

Kozik's moth-lids blinked. "How deep is it?" he asked.

Beezie looked at the well, then leaned over into it. He threw a pebble down and listened. A *plunk* followed, and he said, thoughtfully, "It's pretty far down, but not *deep,* I think."

He stood silent. Neither did Kozik speak. Fireflies suddenly swarmed out of the bushes and flew in and out. The music was faint again, but through the trees they could see the lighted windows; then the music, flung at them suddenly, crashed through and jarred him.

"Well," Beezie said, remotely. "I'll go down. You unwind it, slow."

"All right."

"And watch."

"All right."

"When I'm down, you put in the peg in there." He showed how to peg the winder so that it would no longer turn.

He took off his shoes and stockings and rolled up his trouser legs above his knees. The moonlight made his legs look pale. He climbed into the bucket. His white face hovered over the rim of the well for a moment and, hushed, he said: "We'll be rich, Kozik!"

"We'll count it when we get home," Kozik said.

"Yes," Beezie answered. Kozik began to unwind. His white face staring at him, Beezie disappeared.

THE wood creaked loud in the stillness. It unwound slowly, and the bucket bumped solemnly from side to side of the well. Looking up, he could see only gray, and with an upward leap of his heart, a single shining star. Kozik he could not see.

If the rope broke, he thought; but he gripped it and felt its strength. Suddenly the unwinding stopped and he dangled in the middle of the well. Looking up he saw silhouettes. Then heard voices. Suddenly money began to fall past him, plunking into the water; there was laughter upstairs. "I was right," he whispered to himself.

He sat twirling slowly, lazily, round and round. As he came near the wall of the well, he gently kicked it and swung away. The wall was slimy and cold to the touch of his bare toes; the well smelled of moss and frogs and salamanders.

Then the rope began to unwind again, its creaking sounding wooden and old, like an ungreased wheel. Abruptly he landed on the water and cried out: "Down!" and the creaking stopped. Kozik leaned his head over and cried: "Down?"

"Down," he answered.

He dangled his feet over into the water and began to reach through

t for footing. The water was so cold he gasped. He hunted with his foot but found nothing to stand on. "Jesus," he said to himself.

Now he took his trousers off and let himself over the rim of the bucket into the water, shuddering as he sank, and hanging on to the bucket stretched his feet as far as they could go. Still there was no footing. Now, closing his eyes, he let go of the bucket and sank down over his head. Touching bottom, he fell to his knees and began to grope along the pebbled bottom picking up coins. Then he shot to the water top and his lungs beating, and his teeth beginning to chatter slightly, he dumped the coins into the bucket. Again he let go of it and sank to the bottom; underneath he worked furiously, with slow motions, as in a dream, holding his breath until his head blew up with blood, then he burst to the surface again, and again dumped the coins into the wooden bucket. And again he sank down.

He seemed to rise out of the water like an icicle. His teeth were clenched in his frozen mouth. It was too dark to see what coins he had brought up; his head was so filled with cold he could not hear what Kozik shouted down to him. He heard a cry, but dived down again to the bottom of the well, scratched desperately, then both fists clutched with coins, rose again to the surface.

He reached for the bucket—treaded water reaching for it, his eyes still closed. Then, looking up suddenly, he saw it whirling slowly upward, and beyond it, over the rim of the well, the white face of a girl looking down.

Treading water, he only watched it, unable to think. His head was growing cold from the inside. His feet seemed to tread as if forgotten by him. Then he heard them.

"Look at that!" the man cried. "Money!"

"Oh," the girl said.

"It must have fallen into the bucket instead," the man said.

"This is our lucky night!" the girl cried, laughing.

"Throw it back in," the man ordered.

"No," she said. "If we were smart enough to bring the bucket up—we *win!*" she cried.

"Some of it, anyhow," the man said.

Money spattered down beside him, hitting him, falling around him.

He suddenly began to sink. Loosening one of his fists spasmodically and letting the coins sink, he flung a hand toward the wall and there

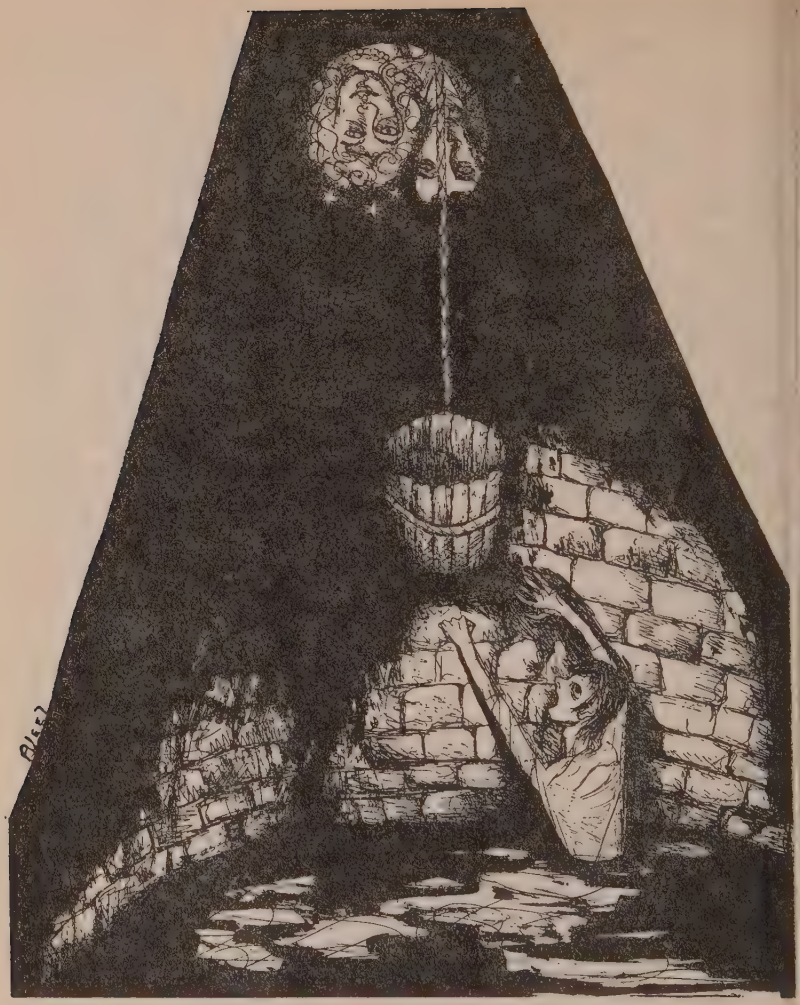

Illustration by Alice Neel

caught on to a crack filled with moss. Holding on to it, he rested. He smelled worms in the well.

Now the cold grew in his body; he felt it touch his bones, get into his stomach, encase his lungs with a film of ice. Like a sound over mountains, he felt the first pangs of cramps gathering in his loins.

begin slightly to clutch at his stomach. "Let them go away," he said.

In his other fist the coins felt jagged. His hand was shut so tightly over them it seemed to be locked. Trying to open it slightly, he discovered that he could not. He laughed at it, surprised, at his fist.

Above him they were still talking; no longer arguing, they were talking to each other. Where was Kozik? *Where are you, Kozik,* he cried. Did he run home, did he get scared and run home? *No money for you, Kozik,* he cried; *no money for you, you lost your share for running away! You're yellow; you won't get any at all. I'll keep it; I'll learn you to be yellow, Kozik,* he cried. *You'd better come back!*

He felt that his fingers holding the crack were losing sensation. Now, remotely, he felt his legs again. They were still treading, had been treading all the time. He felt grateful to them that they were still treading, because at this point he felt that they didn't need to if they didn't want to. Parts of his body became objectified: his fist was one, his legs were another, his free hand holding to the crack was another, his stomach was another; *himself* was in his head. He promised the parts things and chided them, too; he also reasoned with them. "Hold on tighter," he admonished his hand. To his fist he said: "You hurt."

The water was up to his neck. He had left his shirt on and it was soaked. Suddenly he thought of his pants. Did they throw them away? He cried, "My pants!" He was cold now, it would be cold, how could he go anywhere without pants? He wanted to laugh thinking of himself going home without pants; then his father whipping him—he wanted to cry now; then suddenly his body began to ache from head to foot. His head began to give in; it began to grow colder and colder and throb, it began to collect cold behind his eyes, at the back of his nose. All over it began to attack at once, and he saw himself shutting his eyes and slipping swiftly to the bottom of the well.

"Oh, Kozik!" he cried. "Kozik!"

He lifted his head to stare at the top of the well. The open circle of the well was gone. He couldn't see the star! They had put the lid over him! He was dead. I'm in my grave without a coffin, he said.

Suddenly he began to scream, pulling himself out of the water and falling back again. His feet thrashed beneath him as he screamed. His free hand searched the entire slimy wall for a place to put his feet.

Then he heard the clunk of the bucket against the side of the well.

He saw a rim of light, a nimbus, around the bucket, then he caught a glimpse of the star again. It was the bucket coming down. Suddenly he began to sob for it. *Come down, come down,* he cried. *Oh, come down, come down!*

It hit beside him, tilting in the water. It was too far away to reach with his fist; the fist was clenched shut, it could not open. The coins were jagged inside. He let go of the crack with his other hand and fell forward into the water, catching the bucket. It swung toward him and hit his nose, bringing cold tears. He pulled his arm over it, pulled himself half over on it, and lay still. In his mouth he felt the loud chatter of his teeth; they went so fast they began to hurt.

Now, slowly, the bucket began to rise. He lay half across it, his legs dangling, his head pointed downward, his eyes closed. He felt the thick rope throb against his neck. Then he was there; he felt hands, heard a voice.

KOZIK struggled with him, finally pulled him off the bucket and fell to the ground with him. He was crying, "Beezie, what's the matter, Beezie? Can't you talk, Beezie? They didn't go away! They kept talking and talking, Beezie, and kissing—they wouldn't go away! They kept kissing, Beezie!"

He looked down; he stared into the blue face of his friend and cried: "Beezie, God, Beezie! You look sick! What's the matter, Beezie, can't you talk?"

Beezie rolled over face down onto the grass. He gripped his teeth into the grass and bit. His shoulders began to shake. The other started at him with horror and fear. "Beezie!" he kept crying. "It's not my fault, Beezie! It's not my fault! I didn't say to come out here!" Then, suddenly, freshly: "They threw your pants away and I saved them!"

Bit by bit the quaking died down; he felt his separate feet and hands and stomach come together again. The ache subsided behind his eyes, the pain slowly dwindled.

The first thing he said: "Did you get the pants, you said?"

"Yes," the other replied, holding them up. "They're not even wet!"

Beezie stood up and put his trousers on. His fist was still closed. "Let's go home,' he said.

They began to walk through the woods; suddenly they began to run.

When they came to the fence they crawled under it, drenching themselves; and on the other side they kept running until they reached the car stop.

Beezie stretched his fist over to Kozik.

"Open it," he ordered.

Finger by finger Kozik pulled the paralyzed fingers apart and unfolded the fist. In it lay four dimes and two quarters. They both stared at it for a long time.

Slowly Beezie took one of the quarters and gave it to Kozik.

"This is your share," he said.

The other looked at the quarter. Then, taking a dime, Beezie said, "This is because you didn't run away." He gave it to him.

As they waited for the car to take them home, Kozik asked: "Shall we come back again?"

Beezie thought a long time before he finally answered.

"No," he said.

books in review

Lamont's Philosophy

HUMANISM AS A PHILOSOPHY, by Corliss Lamont. *Philosophical Library. $3.75.*

IN THIS very readable volume Corliss Lamont has, for the first time, formulated his mature philosophy of the world and man. As is to be expected from a person who has embraced socialism as his goal (*You Might Like Socialism*), studied and defended the Soviet Union (*The Peoples of the Soviet Union*), worked consistently for American-Soviet friendship, and exhaustively explored the myths about a future life (*The Illusion of Immortality*), Dr. Lamont's philosophy is far removed from the conventional bourgeois philosophy of the universities. This is true even though it is the product of a course he has been giving for several years at Columbia University. For one thing this is a youthful book, in the best sense of the word, and an exuberant one. For another, it is written for people, not for technical specialists. For a third, it concerns itself with real problems of real men—food, security, peace, love, achievement, happiness—and recognizes that far-reaching social change is required if the masses of men are to obtain the good things of life.

Lamont's eight propositions, which he calls the central principles of a humanist philosophy, occur at the beginning of the work and provide the text for all that follows. It is worth listing these in abbreviated form, inasmuch as they represent a radical departure from the dominant schools of bourgeois philosophy today.

The first rules out any supernatural being and affirms an ever changing world of nature independent of any mind or consciousness. The second affirms man's evolution in this world of nature and the inseparability of body and mind. The third holds that our thinking is a product of the functioning of our brains, and that ideas arise only in the interaction of such an organism as man with his environment. The fourth affirms man's ability to solve his problems by reason and scientific method and "to enlarge continually his knowledge of the truth." The fifth proposition opposes all forms of fatalism, asserting to the contrary that human beings can within limits, be masters of their

destiny. The sixth holds that ethics or morality is rooted in man's experience and that the happiness, freedom, and the progress of all mankind is the highest good. The seventh seeks for all men the widest possible development of art and appreciation of beauty. The eighth stands for "the establishment throughout the world of democracy and peace on the foundations of a flourishing and co-operative economic order, both national and international."

Now these are no ordinary propositions. They run counter to "official" philosophy in the U.S. today. Marxists believe in them without qualification, and would seek only to spell out numbers six and eight in more detail. What makes Lamont's use of them as the foundation of his philosophy especially interesting is that he neither is, nor claims to be, nor is taken for a Marxist.

Chapter 3, entitled, "This Life is All and Enough," is an eloquent development of a materialist conception of man, his consciousness and personality. He explains in dialectical fashion the relation of mind and body and related problems. He sees that religion continues as a result of the frustration of legitimate human desire and ideals, and adds: "Quite obviously a drastic change in the social and economic system in most parts of the world, ensuring to everyone a secure, abundant and socially significant life, would greatly weaken the chief incentives to a belief in immortality."

In Chapter 4, he goes on to show that idealism is another form of religious world-view and like all religion really pictures the universe after the nature of man, that is, anthropomorphically. He beautifully castigates those who try to save religion and God by redefining them to mean anything whatsoever. He carefully avoids defining matter in terms of a given stage in our sicentific knowledge of it, but gives it the meaning Lenin gave in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*: that it is the objective reality which "exists antecedently to and independently of the human mind, a Divine Mind or any other conceivable mind." In other words, in calling the world material, we mean (1) that it exists objectively to us, and (2) that it operates in accordance with the laws of matter and motion, and not as minds "operate," through ideas, plans, purposes.

There are a few details over which a Marxist could quarrel with Dr. Lamont in these central chapters of his book which contain the essence of his world-view. One is a certain confusion over free-will that stems perhaps from a failure to grasp completely the dialectical interrelation of freedom and necessity in human choice. (As a result he cannot understand what we mean by the

inevitability of socialism.) More fundamental is an uncritical acceptance of formal logic and a failure to accept the dialectical method, even while using it. But in the main these two chapters represent a fascinating approximation to a dialectical materialist world-view from more or less independent sources. Perhaps the direct Marxist influence is greater than appears, or than even Dr. Lamont himself knows. In any case, when eleven Communist leaders are on trial for teaching Marxism-Leninism, it is significant that there should appear from other sources a world-view similar to theirs in many basic respects.

Lamont's last chapter, entitled "The Affirmation of Life," also contains some valuable analyses, although here the limitations in his thinking, and especially the basic one that arises from his rejection of historical materialism, cannot but show themselves. On the positive side are the following: the rejection of any supernatural or eternal moral truths, the emphasis on a full and happy life of creative work for all people, the impossibility of separating means and ends, the recognition that society cannot be reformed by the moral regeneration of the individual but only by institutional changes, the essential unity of individual good with social well-being, and the analysis of democracy as requiring collective mankind's control of all of the conditions of its life. These principles are clearly formulated and only the blind could fail to see that they point inevitably towards socialism as alone providing the basis of their realization.

When all these good things have been said of Lamont's philosophy—and they richly deserve to be said here because they won't be said in the bourgeois press and the conventional journals—we are necessarily brought face to face with the underlying weakness of his position. This can be summed up as consisting in his rejection of historical materialism. The one thing missing, both from the opening historical chapters and the last chapter is classes and the class struggle. In most philosophy books this would never be noticed, but it is extraordinary in a book that has a materialist and even dialectical world-view and which points towards socialism. The total absence of any concept of classes in the ancient as well as in the modern world, causes the whole work to suffer from a lack of dimension, a lack of depth. We frequently find religious people who accept historical materialism in their social thought, but here we have the opposite—the implicit acceptance of dialectical materialism coupled with the rejection of historical materialism.

This failure of Dr. Lamont to accept Marxism as a science of society is in my opinion responsible for his calling his philosophy hu-

manism rather than dialectical materialism. Instead of appealing to workers, or to intellectuals and professionals to ally themselves with the working class and its leading sections for the struggle for socialism, he appeals to "men of intelligence and good will," for "service to humanity."

To him, "humanism is a man-centered theory of life, the viewpoint that men have but one life to lead and should make the most of it in terms of creative work and happiness; . . ." Correctly he recognizes that Marxists are humanists in this sense, but then he also includes Dewey, Santayana and Bertrand Russell. Since he sees no class struggle in society he sees none in philosophy, and this leads Lamont to seek alliance with the most disparate and antagonistic elements so long as they, however vaguely, and even incorrectly, *appear* to be men of intelligence and good will. But as Stalin has warned, the proletariat must base itself "not on the good wishes of 'great men', but on the real needs of development of the material life of society." This error is worse still when the men appealed to are neither great nor have good wishes.

It is not only theoretically wrong but dangerously misleading in practice to believe that socialism can be achieved by well-meaning men rather than by the organized struggle of the working class and its allies. Good will, separated from the class struggle, is not only futile but disarming.

HOWARD SELSAM

Chopin

CHOPIN: THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC, by Herbert Weinstock. *Knopf. $5.00.*

HERBERT WEINSTOCK has made himself the craftsman of a new literary form: the musical biography. The great biographies of composers in the past, like Spitta's *Bach,* Jahn's *Mozart* and Frederick Niecks' *Chopin,* were by men whose life-long interest was in their subject, rather than in the art of biography. To offer a "life and work" of a different composer every three years is to create a new genre.

There is nothing questionable about Weinstock's scholarship or love of music. Both are genuine. Nor is it a bad idea to get away from massive tomes and try to put over the essence of a "life and work" in more sprightly style and simplified form. But if we look upon a great artist as a representative of his age, if we look upon his creative work as his reaction to the problems his age offered to him, we cannot find this kind of biography satisfactory. The Victorian biographers at least were consicous of social problems and of the need for musical

interpretation. They were, however, pompous, narrow and arrogant in their moral judgments. In this respect, work like Weinstock's is a valuable corrective. It stays close to the ascertainable facts of the individual and his work, throws a cold stream of skepticism at previous generalizations, talks a good deal of common sense. But his present *Chopin,* like his previous *Handel* and *Tchaikovsky,* is not "modern" but only intellectually timid.

Thus, Weinstock is best in showing the effects of Chopin's tubercular infection upon his life, and in discussing his relationship with George Sand. The old portrayal of a hothouse flower of the musical salons is replaced with that of a man fighting heroically the obstacles of his own bodily frailty. The allegations of sexual impotence and perversion are rightly discarded. And in discussing Chopin's work, which he does in great detail, Weinstock rescues it from accusations of flabbiness, fostered by over-sentimental and capricious performances; he shows the music to have genuine structural power and originality.

Yet important problems remain untouched. One is Chopin's relationship to the Polish national struggle. Compare Weinstock's description of Polish life as "quarreling, sordid, futile" with this sentence from Niecks' *Chopin,* published in 1888: "The degradation of the burgher class, enslavement of the peasantry, and other devices of an ever-encroaching nobility, transformed the once powerful and flourishing commonwealth into one 'lying as if broken backed on the public highway.'" Today we must go further than Niecks; but Niecks shows more penetration into social realities than Weinstock.

Niecks gives us a picture of a weak middle class, a patriotic movement dominated by a corrupt nobility seeking only the restoration of its ancient feudal rights and power; a movement made ineffectual by the most violent chauvinism, including anti-Semitism, suspicious of all drives for democracy. These feelings were shared by Chopin who, although he was no aristocrat, was a protege of some titled families and adopted their thinking. And it explains much of the mood of his music, which is so genuinely patriotic in its fervor and longing for national freedom, yet is so much dominated by memories of vanished glories.

Another problem is Chopin's form, which cannot be solved on the simple level on which Weinstock puts it. To explain Chopin's handling of the sonata by saying that it is a "sonata by Chopin," not by Beethoven, or to describe works like the F Minor Fantasy only as "a unique pattern suitable to his own unique materials," is to dodge the question.

Leopoldo Mendez

To answer it, one has to move boldly into an area that Weinstock refuses to enter, that of meanings in music. To him, musical forms are "an arousing and fulfillment of desires." Desires for what? He fails to say, and yet it is what one desires that gives meaning to desire. He falls as a result into the pseudo-scientific criticism so prominent in our times which considers form an abstraction, its own justification, and thus tells us little more than that "A equals A," but in more abstruse langauge. Weinstock's outline of a form is made by stringing letters together, each representing a different theme, so that the A Flat Major Polonaise appears as ABC-BCDEBCFGHI. This tells a listener nothing more than what his ear can tell him.

It is true that Chopin's forms, for all their looseness, loom far above academic efforts, such as Mendelssohn's, to reconstruct previous monuments. Yet the looseness is also a fact: the absence of counterpoint, as essential to the movement of romantic as it is to classical music; the over-use of decorative figures and harmonic coloration to keep the music going; the development sections which are less an inner conflict and gathering of forces leading to triumph than an agitated departure from the opening and closing moods; the codas which are not summations but resignations. These are weaknesses. And their reason lies, I think, partly in Chopin's physical weakness; even more, in that he felt the struggle for freedom as essentially private, to be carried on in isolation, as a proclamation of a lost cause. So his form took the pattern of an inner monologue, instead of being created out of a discovery and recreation by the artist of the world of his audience.

Most important of Chopin problems is that of the national character of his music. This problem, too, Weinstock dodges with a hedging statement: "But despite his patriotism Chopin was no artistic nationalist, and in quantity and manner his music is as much Western as Slavic, as much French, Italian and Austro-German as it is Polish." Weinstock unthinkingly accepts a belief that modern research in music, and contemporary events in politics, have made untenable: that the "national" and "universal" are mutually exclusive, like oil and water.

Niecks, in his book on Chopin, studies a number of Polish folk melodies and discovers that their characteristic stresses on certain intervals and rhythmic patterns are found throughout Chopin's work. Liszt, in his admittedly flimsy, yet first hand, biography of Chopin, makes the same point: that Polish melody pervades not only

the Polonaises and Mazurkas, but the Nocturnes, Ballades, Etudes. He discusses the living, improvisational forms of the national dances themselves in order to throw light upon the much abused Chopin "rubato." He tells us of how Chopin, in Paris, kept in touch with every visiting Pole, who brought him new songs, "and when the words of these airs pleased him he frequently wrote a new melody for them, thus popularizing them rapidly in his own country although the names of their authors were often unknown."

WE SHOULD understand by now that the great national composer is not the imitator of folk song but the genius who acts as the spokesman for his people, absorbing their art until it becomes part of his thinking, recreating it into a new form through which it becomes a world possession. The "universal" is really a new stage reached by the national, a stage at which it loses its provincialism and narrowness but not its identity, moving as an equal in world culture. Such form, evolved out of the national, gives the people a fuller consciousness of themselves and their history. This was Chopin's achievement: that he made Polish music, and therefore the character of the Polish people, a world possession.

If we understand this, we can see why Chopin is today a national cultural hero of a new Poland. For Poland at last has achieved the independence for which Chopin longed, although in a form which he could never have conceived. Industry is thriving and at the service of the Polish people, not of foreign capital. Vanished are the feudal estates, and vanishing is the ancient chauvinism. And in this new, free Poland, there is a hunger for culture as could never exist before. Justice at last is done to Chopin, for his music is now, for the first time, really becoming a possession of the entire Polish people. He has come home.

And it is important for us as well, in this year of the centenary of Chopin's death, to re-appraise his music. We cannot make more of it than it is. There is a sickliness in some of it which has been exploited so much in the concert halls that many pianists and musci lovers have turned away from the music altogether. But it is one of the imperishable bodies of human song, turned into piano tones; song which people have taken to their hearts, and which keeps its power even in the manhandling it has gotten from Hollywood and Tin Pan Alley.

Weinstock's book, although it corrects previous biographies, leaves the definitive Chopin study for our times still to be written.

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

The Pasquier Family

SUZANNE AND JOSEPH, by Georges Duhamel. *Holt. $3.50.*

GEORGES DUHAMEL is a significant and prolific writer of the older generation in France. The present book is a commendable translation of the last two volumes of his *Pasquier Chronicles,* begun in 1933, in which Duhamel traces the history of a French bourgeois family in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Raymond Pasquier, the father, is a rather brilliant but wayward man who begins to study medicine in middle age, after all his children are born; Laurent, one of his sons, becomes an outstanding scientist; Joseph becomes a wealthy magnate, riding roughshod over all competitors; Ferdinand is a colorless and banal hypochondriac; Cecile is a gifted concert pianist; and Suzanne, the youngest of the Pasquiers, is a lovely and talented actress with an inexorable passion for her profession.

Indeed, all the members of this remarkable family seem to epitomize individual passions: Joseph, the passion for money; Laurent, mouthpiece for Duhamel's idealistic view of the world, the passion for science; Cecile, the passion for music; Suzanne, the passion for the theatre; and Ferdinand—the passion for the banal!

That some aspects at least of this family epic are autobiographical seems evident. Clearly the author has put the best of himself in the high-minded scientist Laurent. And his long familiarity with the theatre—he has himself written a number of plays and married an actress of the Theatre du Vieux Colombier—is shown in his vivid and convincing descriptions of backstage life at the Theatre des Carmes where Suzanne is a leading lady.

Suzanne and Joseph brings Duhamel's family saga to a close. It is a solidly built work, always competently and at times brilliantly written, rich and perceptive in many of its individual insights. Yet it somehow fails to satisfy. It leaves one cold—with a sense of unfulfilled promises and unresolved contradictions. Even from the point of view of structure the book ends inconclusively: Laurent Pasquier, who figures little throughout the volume, writes a long and detailed letter to his sister, Cecile, about their brother, Joseph, ostensibly the central male figure in the book. It is almost as if the novelist found himself unable to find a direct way of disposing of this thoroughly unpleasant protagonist.

How account for this feeling of let-down or anti-climax? What is there missing in the melancholy "dying fall" of the story? I do not find it in any inadequacy of plot, which is simple and straightforward enough. The first half

of the novel deals with Suzanne's experiences as a leading lady with her repertory company. She had "given herself body and soul to the theatre . . . this everlasting make-believe . . . took the place of life itself."

But a series of petty and sordid personal intrigues causes her dream to dissolve. She begins to realize that, as one of her fellow-actors tells her, the stage is "more or less poisoned by questions of money." Moreover, from childhood on this beautiful girl has been called "Suzanne the unreachable." In a desperate search for the personal happiness she has never found, despite her talent and beauty, she seeks to escape from the world of the theatre. She flees to an idyllic retreat in the country at the home of the curiously charming Baudouin family, where she is welcomed and loved. But here too there is no real peace for her. The lure of exciting premières brings her back to her troupe, and she sets out with her company on an overseas tour. As she lies in her cabin on board the ship that is taking her away from France, she is like "a glittering bird touched with sleep or death." And she seems to hear the ocean waves repeating rhythmically: "Suzanne-has-wast-ed-her-life. . . ."

The second part tells of the money-mad tycoon, Joseph Pasquier, who buys fame, prestige, political office and academic hon-

ors even as he buys servants, mistresses, businesses, country estates, town houses, works of art and Mexican oil wells. His fixation is so pronounced that he gives his individual oil wells the surnames of his children. He is the prototype of the ruthless modern finance-capitalist — a combination of Sir Henry Deterding, Ivar Kreuger, Samuel Insull and François de Wendel. To him, human beings are commodities like any other; and his opinion of humanity is summed up in the following passage:

"Incorruptible! There are no such men. At least I've never met one. The main thing is to find the chink in the armor of these alleged incorruptibles. With some of them it's money, but that of course is child's play. With others, it's their family. With others, it's honors. Windbags! With others, it's pride, vainglory. Some—and this is really funny—some can be got at through their virtue."

But at the pinnacle of his success his whole universe cracks wide open. His wife leaves him, his children forsake him, his trusted private secretary walks out on him after writing a devastating letter of resignation, his oil investments in Mexico are snapped up by a wilier group of magnates, and his fervent, almost ludicrous desire to be elected to the Institute of France suffers a crushing defeat. All the values in which he has believed suddenly collapse; all the power-drives that have motivated him abruptly stall. The predatory multi-millionaire is left a lonely, abject, abandoned hulk of a man—an object, not of pity, but of revulsion and contempt.

Why then, I repeat, does this story fail to move us as it should? The answer lies perhaps in Duhamel himself. This capable writer, this sincere humanist and distinguished member of the French Academy remains an *honest* bourgeois in a world of decaying bourgeois values. Duhamel the human being cannot break with the world which Duhamel the novelist so sharply dissects and condemns. Throughout his life he has manifested sympathy for the weak and disinherited—but it has always been a *personal* sympathy, a sympathy above classes, as it were. Hence his fatal dilemma.

He longs, in his own words, for "hope, trust, obstinate faith in happiness in spite of storms, unswerving desire for justice in spite of evildoers, love and harmony between reconciled souls." But where is he to find these virtues in the milieus he so accurately portrays and which he knows so well? In the shoddy world of the theatre of Suzanne Pasquier? In the vicious, dog-eat-dog world of Joseph Pasquier?

Duhamel's idealism reminds one of the poet Lamartine who, in the Revolution of 1848, sought "to suspend this terrible misunderstanding which exists among the different classes." What sincerity and pathos—but also what futility

—there was in such an attitude. And so much has happened in the world in the hundred years since Lamartine's vain plea!

JOSEPH M. BERNSTEIN

New England Story

TREE BY THE WATERS, by Jean Karsavina. *International. $2.25.*

JEAN KARSAVINA immediately won an enthusiastic audience for her first book for young people, *Reunion in Poland,* the story of the girl, Wanda, and how she grew up during the fight for a new Poland. Her new book is an American companion-piece to the first, and is equally moving. I enjoyed it in fact even more, and I believe young readers should be closely held by it—by all rights they ought to be eager throughout to learn the vital elements of a real world.

This world is that of a community of New England and Polish stock on the Connecticut River. Abby Chapin, daughter of an old-line craftsman in silverware manufacture, is in love with Gay Bemis, son of the manager of the local plant. Her father has put workmanship above the accepted ideal of pushing ahead, and so he (like his fellow craftsmen) has his skill, but the Bemises run the plant and have the money. As long as Abby is a kid, she is not particularly aware of class differences, but as she grows it gets harder and harder to keep up the assumed

democracy of childhood. After many novels whose whole intent is to gloss over differences and to sentimentalize the relations between the rich and the poor, it is good to have the truth presented, not acidly or mechanically, but with the touch of life. Everybody, including Gay and his father, talks about meaning well, but Abby has to find out painfully what is behind the talk.

While writing simply for young people, Miss Karsavina presents the phases of an industrial conflict truthfully. The Hartley silverware plant is a small subsidiary of a larger over-all concern, with scattered manufacturing units. Old-line craftsmen at Hartley are getting high wages. The company starts training new craftsmen at another plant at low wages, with the plan of transferring the skilled work there and introducing non-skilled work into Hartley. They hide this maneuver while a strike is in progress at the main city plant, and Hartley stays out of this strike. Then, slowly, realities are exposed, and the Hartley craftsmen see the plan that has been drawn up against them in all its nakedness.

Abby of course shares the experience of her father and brother, and as her sympathies swing with them, she finds good friends, Mac and Zosia Kowalski, among the local Poles. Her pseudo-loyalty to Gay and his father crumbles.

It is no accident that Poles and New Englanders are drawn together. The cohesive force is the old one of making a living in common. If Miss Karsavina uses a flood of the Connecticut River for her denouement, to point up this cohesion, it is not a contrived effect. The plant owners capitalize on the flood, a chance of nature, as a cheap means of maneuvering against the workers, deliberately flooding the plant so that they will seem justified in installing the new machinery for non-skilled work (which they had been keeping in warehouses nearby). As the workers uncover this final move against them, and as they fight the flood together, they abandon their indecision and decide that, "like a tree by the waters," they will not be moved.

Throughout the book is the fresh and imaginative use of auxiliary detail. Abby, for example, reads the diary of Abigail Chapin, a direct ancestor. Abigail describes her experiences at Hartley a century or more before, saying in part: "I, for one, have obtained much learning since coming here, and that without instruction, after I had labored in the mill twelve hours a day on the average through the year." Abigail goes on strike and finds it is not at all "unladylike" to picket with Irish "paddies." Like parent, like child. It actually is natural and wholesome in *Tree by the Waters* for people to love their neighbors and to fight for a better life, and it is about time this truth was oftener set down for the readers who will make up our coming world. MILLEN BRAND

films

Renaissance in Poland

by WARREN MILLER

ALTHOUGH motion pictures were produced in Poland before the war, any account of the Polish film from its beginnings to the present day can deal briefly with the pre-war productions: they were inconsequential, both as to content and techniques. The war destroyed not only the physical plant, the studios, cameras and equipment, but also, and even more important, the film workers. The revival of a film industry to play an active role in the rebuilding of Poland necessitated not only the construction of studios, but the education of technicians to man them. Even while the first films were being made in the newly constructed studios in Lodz, a Film Institute, based on the methods and curricula of the famous Institute of Cinematography in Moscow, was established. Here the film makers of the new Poland, directors and actors, cinematographers, set designers, are being trained.

In Poland, as in all the East European democracies, the peoples' governments are providing the leadership and the necessary support for the education of *all* youth and the restoration of culture. Pawel Hoffman, the Polish writer and delegate to the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace, speaking of his country's need for peace in order to continue the work begun, pointed out that the national budget contained two revealing figures: 12.2 per cent for military purposes, and 36.7 per cent for education. It is revealing, too, to point out that the first films produced in the new Poland were educational shorts. In 1946 a Polish educational film was awarded first prize at the Cannes International Film Festival. In 1947 another first prize was awarded the Polish film industry for the documentary *Storm in Poland.*

It was not until the need for educational and documentary films (at their best, they are the same thing) was at least partially satisfied, that the Polish film makers entered the field of the feature film. The first of these productions to be seen here, *The Last Stop,* is the most compelling and powerful film since *Open City;* as a documentation of the

meaning of fascism, it is unsurpassed.

The response to this film on the part of the metropolitan New York press is interesting, and might even be amusing in a period less tense than this; for the same newspapers that have written of the New Democracies as barren, sterile lands where the artist cannot function, speak of this film as "inspired." But how, in that dead land of "art-by-fiat," can inspiration be found? How can the repressed, suppressed, threatened, unfree artist be inspired? *What,* in that terrible country of police, godlessness and terror, can inspire him? These are questions they will not ask themselves; it is certainly more comfortable not to. For to find the answer would be to reveal the basic lie on which their newspapers build editorials and advertising revenue. Even to pose the question is dangerous.

What these men will not see is that the inspired, meaningful work of art (and this is most obviously true when one is dealing with the film medium) is not and never has been the product of one man, but it is the result of the labor of many men, in their influence, the cultural forces that surround and act upon the working artist. If the artist lives in a wasteland, then the consciousness of this will pervade his work. Even the very great cannot be excepted from this; for their sensitivity is not limited to light and shade, contour and word, but extends to all the areas of life.

In the New Democracies it is not only the democracy that is new; there is a new kind of artist: one who believes that the fullest expression of his talents can be achieved only through an identification with his country and people, their struggles and hopes.

"THE LAST STOP" was filmed on location at Auschwitz, the concentration camp where 4,500,000 human beings were put to death by the Nazis; most of the women who play in the film had been prisoners at the camp, as were the director and scenarist. The story centers on a group of women, nurses and attendants at the prison infirmary; here, where the suffering come for release, the heart of resistance locates itself and begins to grow. For the film's tremendous power lies not alone in its depiction of horror, but also in its evocation of hope.

The depiction of Nazi brutality adds no new item of information to our knowledge of human degradation; it again confirms what we knew and makes credible, for those who had ever doubted it, the fantastic and frightful excesses of fascism. Since the war's end, no better time could have been chosen for the presentation of such a film, for many have begun to forget what

fascism means. There is no more powerful reminder than *The Last Stop.*

If this had been the film's only achievement, it would have been a moving, authoritative document, like the newsreels of combat cameramen, or documentaries like Bunuel's *Land Without Bread* and Ivens' *Borinage.* But it would have lacked the human dimension that gives deeper meaning to misery and makes mute suffering eloquent.

It is just this quality—and it is not merely an addition, but one of those intangibles that make the difference between a statement of fact and a poem—that *The Last Stop* has. Having it, the film at times achieves, in spite of every physical obstacle of place and condition, a lyric quality that is, in its way, as powerful and bludgeoning to the mind as the scenes of torture and death. These scenes, like the fires in Milton's Hell, make the actions of the Nazis even more horrible.

It is interesting to note that in the very countries where Nazi oppression was most deeply felt, the film characterization of them is not without humor, although certainly it is a bitter humor. In a recent Czech cartoon film, an SS officer is seen holding hands with his young man. In this film too there are touches of grotesque humor—the cool "scientific" discussion on a new and more efficient method of extermination—

that can come only from a deep understanding of the fascist mentality. This development of rounded characters rather than flat villains makes their every act more believable and, instead of showing them as unthinking automatons, reveals them as beings capable of choice who must bear the guilt and the punishment for their acts against humanity.

It was this aspect of the Nazi that most Hollywood films lacked —in the days when Hollywood produced films about fascist brutality. It is one of the reasons why most of those films were merely adventure stories of escape and pursuit, with a new "twist," a new "angle." Certainly, this was not the only failing of the anti-fascist films made in the isolation of Hollywood. Their lack of understanding of the political nature of the struggle against fascism was their chief fault; these films were the entertainment equivalents of the Industrial Incentive films shown in factories by the Army and Navy. They were always exhortations but seldom clarifications of the political issues involved.

Such a criticism cannot be made against *The Last Stop*. Here the nature of the conflict is understood and those who fight against the invader understand the meaning of their acts. These women are heroic figures, but heroic always within human limitations; one can hope to emulate them, not simply to wonder at them.

The picture was directed by Wanda Jakubowska, one of the few who survived Auschwitz, and one of the few who remain from the old Polish film industry. Before the war she was a film editor; this was her first directorial assignment. Now she is in charge of production of two films in progress at Lodz.

On the basis of what has been seen of Polish film production and from what one has heard of the activity going on there, it does not take much daring to say that *The Last Stop* is but the first of a series of fine films that will be coming from the Polish sound stage. *Border Street*, the film story of the Warsaw ghetto, has had an enthusiastic response from French, Swedish and English audiences (it will not be seen here for some months). As a part of the Chopin Centennial Celebration, a *Life of Chopin* is now being made in Polish and French language versions. An enormous studio near Warsaw is in construction; it will be one of the most modern in Europe.

With the technical facilities established, the new Polish film makers, with their warmth and humanism, will provide further evidence—indeed, they have already done so—that the film can come into its own only when it belongs to the people.

theatre

Odets, Maltz, Trumbo

by ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

CLIFFORD ODETS has made his return to the theatre with a tragedy set in Hollywood. The tragic hero of *The Big Knife* is a movie star exploited to the point where the big money and the big lights only accentuate his consciousness of his decline to an imitator of his former artist self. Seeking escape, he finds himself inextricably caught in the gears and the foul wastes of the machine. The only escape open is suicide.

This is Odets' comment on Hollywood—and, by extension, on all culture in capitalist hands—and upon its pressures and its corruptions. To make his comment in this form instead of the easier and now conventional finger-pointings or rib-ticklings has brought something new and strong and courageous to the theatre.

But for all its power the play has weaknesses which were immediately seized upon by the critics of the big press. It will be no help to the cultural Left to ignore the weaknesses because these critics had obvious motives for enlarging on them.

The more noticeable weaknesses of *The Big Knife* are rhetorical writing whose eloquence is offset by far flights that, at times, pull the dialogue out of character; a reliance upon plot mechanisms that click where the emotions do not; and a treatment of Negro servants that comes close to offensive clichés.

But the critical weakness lies in the treatment of the central character, Charlie Castle. As portrayed here he is so will-less a victim, so passive as to make it hard to believe that he ever had personality enough to attract audiences, become a first-magnitude star, be desirable to women or, for that matter, be considered worth a mogul's notice. The exploration of his character is evaded and this overhangs the play like an undiagnosed sickness.

For corruption is a two-way process. The corrupter must have something corruptible to work on. This, which would have provided emotional conflict and made plot conflict less necessary, is never more than hinted at, never brought into clear focus and de-

veloped. So far as the audience is told, Charlie Castle's misfortunes are all accidents. The qualities that fostered susceptibility to such accidents are barely touched. It is this, I feel, that led to the secondary weaknesses, the resort to fine writing and plot devices as means to make up the deficiencies.

An indication of how effective the characterization might have been can be seen in the portrayal of Dixie Evans which is also, though in a minor range, a study of corruption and destruction. This girl was in Castle's car when he ran down a child—the hushed-up scandal which his producer has fixed up for him and which he uses to hold Castle in line. She has been paid for her silence with bit parts and contract money. The weakness by which she has let herself be bound to the lie has, as its consequences, haunting guilt, alcoholism, a persecution complex and hysteria in a destructive process that made her murder come as practically a mercy killing. All this is shown as an interaction of human weakness and unscrupulous power that, applied to the central character, would have made the play tremendously effective.

But this failure in dealing with the hero happens to be a common failure in literature in this phase of the capitalist era. The hero as good man is the defeated man, the victim; and in most other literary work in our time, as again in this play, lamentation takes the place of delineation. Lamentation may, at moments, wring the heart; but it does not create character.

The "good man" has, for a long time, been appearing in literature, depersonalized and almost inanimate, while the man of evil appears bursting with vitality and individuality. The critics who were so agile to point out the depersonalization of Odets' man of good will might have reflected on that phenomenon. What does it say of a society whose literature reflects the defeat, the frustration and the depersonalization of its men of good will, and the success and fulfillment of its villains?

However, because they had weaknesses to dilate on, the critics felt at liberty to ignore the intent of the play and the extent to which it achieved that intent. They ignored the fact that most of the other characters were effectively portrayed and that the writing rose to frequent eloquence. Most of all they ignored the seriousness and power with which the play presents the corrupting effect of big-business control over the movie industry and, by analogy, over the whole American culture.

Frequently as this theme has been dealt with, especially in literary nose-thumbings at Hollywood, it has never been treated with the seriousness, with the emo

tional involvement that Odets has here brought to it. Up to now attacks have been virtually romanticizations—Hollywood as the modern Babylon; and satire has been mostly kidding—the movie magnate as Mr. Malaprop or the lovable oaf. It is Odets' achievement to have cut deeper to the predatory reality and to have shown the actual human sacrifice bleeding on the altars of the modern Babylon.

There will be no easy laughing off of the portrayal of the three ghouls: the movie magnate, Marcus Hoff, played by J. Edward Bromberg; his goon-in-chief, Smiley Coy, played by Paul McGrath; and the ever-powerful and under-scrupulous movie columnist, Patty Benedict, played by Leona Powers. Their corrupting and enveloping power is made frighteningly clear.

It is in these roles, the most effectively written, that the most effective acting is also done. Other brilliant performances were those of Reinhold Schunzel as the agent, Nat Danziger; Joan McCracken as Dixie Evans; and Mary Patton as the Hollywood version of the spoiled, pleasure-surfeited, middle-class wife. The role of Charlie Castle was too much of a blank for even so gifted an actor as John Garfield to do more than decorate it.

ONE of the exciting events of the current season though, unhappily, only a tiny fraction of the New York theatre audience has been told anything about it, is the week-end performance at the Jefferson School of Albert Maltz's long one-acter, *The Rehearsal.* The director, Al Saxe, has for his company a group of Jefferson School students; for his auditorium a bare loft without even a platform; and, of course, nothing but make-shifts for props. He has met these handicaps with a resourcefulness that comes close to genius, a resourcefulness that turns the handicaps into advantages.

Out of his student actors he has drawn a spontaneity and verve seldom to be seen on the professional stage and which, indeed, provides richer acting satisfactions than all but the finest professional performances. And out of the very inadequacies of his loft-auditorium and his stageless and virtually prop-less proscenium space Al Saxe has drawn an authentic atmosphere for the production whose setting is a union hall and whose action is the rehearsal of an agit-prop type of play.

In his script Maltz showed an ingenuity in meeting his problem that matched that of his resourceful director. *The Rehearsal* was written as an indignant outcry against the Detroit massacre at the Ford factory gates. Maltz wanted to preserve the mass-chant quality, the slogan simplicity and the direct symbolism of the agit-prop play; at the same time he wanted

it to be enriched with some of the qualities of more developed drama, particularly a sense of the personalities of the figures and personal tension in the action.

Ordinarily such an attempt to fuse two disparate forms in the hope of gaining the best qualities of both results in diluting and frequently losing the characteristic qualities of each. Maltz, however, succeeded; he did, in fact, manage to preserve the qualities of each and strengthen each in the process. He did it with very simple means, handled with unobtrusive subtlety and skill. The agit-prop play was surrounded and penetrated by the interaction of personal relationships of the rehearsing players. Thus, while all the power of the agit-prop presentation—the effect of the mass chants, the linear directness of the slogans and the immediacy of its symbolism—is preserved, the emotional dimension of the personal was added, deepening each character and heightening every gesture.

Maltz's *The Rehearsal* is proof —it would be well were there more—that writing done for an occasion and as propaganda can have vitality and enduring relevance and artistic effect. Thirteen years after it was written *The Rehearsal* remains vigorous and fresh.

IF RUMORS are to be believed that during its production ordeal Dalton Trumbo's *The Biggest Thief in Town* evolved from serious drama into farce, one can understand the not quite integrated sense that the play gives. A subplot, involving the daughter and her boy friend, seems to preserve the seriousness of an earlier version; but it also accentuates the thinness that resulted from sacrificing substance to achieve lightness.

The process seems to have held the play short of its rich potentialities. For Trumbo has wit, understanding and imagination; and out of them have come sparkling lines and some sharp insights into the moral dilemmas that face honorable men under capitalism.

Atop the mountain that he owns, the mansion of the multimillionaire buccaneer. Troybalt, dominates Shale City. He has long overshadowed the community in other ways, though he has never had any real contact with it. Now the whole town, and from reports his own household as well —wife and ex-wives, half-wit heirs, servants and sycophants— impatiently await his death, declared by the doctors to be imminent.

It is awaited with particular interest by the Shale City undertaker, Bert Hutchins, although he has no hope of getting the lucrative funeral. The wait is whiled away over liquor, in the consumption of which he is joined by a doctor, by the local editor antici-

pating his first scoop over the press wires, and the local druggist, a hell-fire evangelist who gives heaven frequent cause to rejoice over his repentance. The drinking arouses sufficient alcoholic courage for Hutchins to attempt and carry out an act of piracy on the dead pirate: the abduction of his profitable cadaver, on the pretext of a supposititious call from the bereaved.

The farce attains hilarious climaxes as the corpse comes briefly to life and brings Hutchins' venture into free enterprise to a close. In the sudden and disagreeable character changes that this brief career as a free enterpriser produces in the hitherto honorable and kindly Hutchins, who has stayed in honorable poverty through his unwillingness to exploit the grief of his fellow citizens, Trumbo makes his trenchant comment on the ethics of capitalism and the sort of saints it produces. And this gives the play a weight and significance that Broadway seldom gets in its comedies.

In a generally well-acted production, to which Lee Sabinson and Herman Shumlin have contributed their experience and skill, Thomas Mitchell's performance is outstanding, one of the best pieces of acting to be seen this season.

letters

ON LOYALTY

To *M & M*:

I THINK the readers of *M & M* will find these words of interest today:

"You see my kind of loyalty was loyalty to one's country, not to its officeholders. The country is the real thing, the substantial thing; the eternal thing; it is the thing to watch over and be loyal to; institutions are extraneous, they are its mere clothing, and clothing can wear out, become ragged, cease to protect the body from winter, disease, death. To be loyal to rags, to worship rags—that is loyalty to unreason, it is pure animal; it belongs to monarchy, was invented by monarchy; let monarchy keep it. I was from Connecticut whose Constitution declares: 'That all political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their benefit; and that they have *at all times* an undeniable and indefeasible right to *alter their form of government* in such manner as they may think expedient.'

"Under that gospel, the citizen who thinks he sees that the commonwealth's political clothes are worn out, and yet holds his peace and does not agitate for a new suit is disloyal; he is a traitor.

That he may be the only one who thinks he sees this decay does not excuse him; it is his duty to agitate anyway, and it is the duty of others to vote him down if they do not see the matter as he does."

The quotation is from Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee.*

New York M. N.

MEANING OF ART

To *M & M*:

I AM sending my renewal to *M & M* but there are some matters on my mind I wished to speak of. . . . First, a number of the articles are over my head—the critical articles on art especially. This is due largely to my own deficiency and the magazine is not to blame for that. I make it a point to read these articles and get what I can from them, thereby increasing my understanding. But too much of such material is discouraging. I would ask that they be written more simply.

Then, some of the drawings mean nothing to me, some of them less than nothing, though they are supposedly great art. I like the attitude of the Soviet Union, that art is for the people and if it is vague or obscure or a mass of confusions it is of no value. And that is how some of these works impress me. Now again it may be due to my lack of understanding and appreciation. And I do not mean to convey the idea that no new form can be introduced because most of us are unable to get the point. And I have questioned others as to the meaning of some of these drawings but failed to get any light on the subject. Well, we are of the *Masses,* and, I think, reasonably intelligent. If these drawings have something for us, if a new form of expression is being offered us, would there be any harm in giving us a few clues, a little guidance toward interpretation and appreciation? . . .

D. A.

Wabash, Ind.

NERUDA IN WALES

To *M & M*:

WE GOT hold of enough copies of the October issue of *M & M* to arrange a recital by a workers' verse speaking group of Pablo Neruda's "Let the Rail Splitter Awake." It was wonderfully moving. And the excellent article in the February issue on "Writers and the American Century" dropped with beautiful timeliness into my lap, with precisely the material that I was looking for to make a lecture on modern American literature. I plagiarized fiercely but I know you'll forgive me. American writing becomes a topic of greater and greater interest to the militants over here. . . .

GWYN THOMAS

Barry, Glam, Britain.