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The G-Men

GERM WARFARE. That's what it is. You realize it, down at Foley Square, when you see them crawling out: budenz, philbrick, nowell, calomiris, younglove. . . . Brought in as prosecution witnesses, these loathsome things are in fact exhibits of the abysmal level of the conspiracy to frame-up the Communist Twelve.

Who has sought to infest organizations of the American people with these disease-bearing vermin? Who is carrying on this hidden war against the Communist Party, labor unions, progressives? The F.B.I. It's in the record: "I got as high as $60 a month"; "The union was holding an election . . ."; "I reported when anybody bought a new pair of shoes." And the paid-for lies: "He said the Soviets will invade from Siberia"; "They want rivers of blood to flow."

Then you think about force and violence—in America—that is *not* mythical. And about the F.B.I. The old story of Monroe, Georgia, is more important than new shoes, though J. Edgar doesn't think so. Nearly three years have passed since Roger Malcom and George Dorsey, two Negro ex-GI's, farmhands, were slaughtered together with their wives by a mob of white-supremacists. At the height of the great outcry that arose throughout the land against this massacre and for the speedy arrest of the hooded lynchers, the F.B.I. announced that it would "investigate." Its agents went to the scene, returned and reported: No evidence. Nothing—except that four riddled bodies had been found on a dusty country road and were given a decent burial by their kin. Case closed.

The glories of the G-Men are proclaimed in a million comic books, but they cannot find a lyncher. Don't want to find a lyncher. They're after bigger game—the Twelve times twelve million Americans who must be spied upon, terrorized, infected, crippled by the plague of fascism.

Roger Malcom and George Dorsey fought that plague abroad. It killed them at home. It will kill everything truly human and decent in our land unless the people unite—and act—against the germs, against the germ-breeders.

—THE EDITORS

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PARIS:
Springtide of Peace

by MIKE GOLD

PARIS has never known a fairer spring. The boulevards sparkle with humanity, the majestic chestnuts are again in bloom and up and down the bright Seine move the winter-bound barges.

And the World Peace Congress has just ended here. It was of a size and meaning that surprised its most hopeful organizer. It grew from day to day and went beyond all calculations. It became an event of history. Has one witnessed here the first session of the Parliament of Man? Perhaps.

Every stone of Paris has its story to tell of the people's martyrdom, of their courage and faith. How this great-hearted, historic Paris welcomed the Peace Congress! Picasso's dove could be seen on ten thousand Parisian walls and fences. Since the Liberation there hasn't been a political issue that so united the French people.

On Sunday, the Congress overflowed into a vast assembly at the Buffalo Stadium. Auto caravans arrived from every corner of France. There was even one group of a hundred that travelled here in a river barge strung with banners and slogans. The subways had to stop running, there were too many Parisians going to Buffalo. (The petty U.S. *Herald Tribune* of Paris said 50,000 people were present. The Paris edition of the British *Daily Mail* said there were 100,000. The Paris police doubled this figure, and the subway administration estimated it at 300,000. But it was nearer to half a million, as aerial photos indicated.)

Yes, Paris has seen a springtide of world peace! This Congress, this popular manifestation, leaves everyone with the new feeling that the forces for peace in the world today are stronger than those that want war. Peace is practical and possible. It is a vast natural power that needs only to be channelled and organized.

There were so many great personalities here, so many nations, so

many trade unions, women's organizations, professions, crafts, arts, sciences that no reporter can describe it all. There were delegates from seventy-two lands, representing some 500 million people. All the religions were represented, all the arts and sciences and the workers of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. A war cannot be won without people. Like Romans of the decadence, many North Americans have become insular, and fail to realize how many inhabitants the world has. No atom bomb could ever conquer these clasped hands and joined hearts—of Africans, French, Russians, Mexicans, Italians, Mongols, Hindus, Brazilians, Czechoslovaks, Poles, Australians, English, Scotch, Scandinavians.

I despair of conveying to North Americans living behind the Iron Curtain of Wall Street any idea of the numbers and feelings of this humanity. No doubt the Wall Street press in reporting this Paris congress repeated the familiar slander that it was but a "Moscow maneuver." Oh, the puny little minds! Oh, blind and backward fools of the muddle ages! They have just lost China with such peanut thinking. They will lose Europe, Africa and Latin America!

For in this European continent where every family has lost a son, a husband and a father, where millions of people still bear the scars and tattoo numbers of the Nazi prisons and concentration camps, the idea of another war is the most terrible nightmare. They will pray for peace, work for it and fight for it. They do not fear a congress where the Soviet people and the people of Eastern Europe are present. They welcome it.

Said Madame Dragoietcheva, a distinguished leader of the Bulgarian delegation:

> "Why did this movement for peace burst out like a flame, take hold of all the cities and villages of our land, reach the furthermost mountain huts, spread spontaneously through factories, workshops, cultural and administrative establishments? It is because our people do not want to return to the dark hours of the past, to reaction and fascism. Memories of hundreds of thousands of massacred people, millions of arrests, torture in police stations, concentration camps, shooting in the streets, the heads of partisans spiked on stakes, blockades of towns and villages for days and weeks—all this to gratify a handful of capitalists—no, our people cannot forget. They will resist any makers of a new war."

The Italian delegation was the largest. The organizers had expected some 300 delegates, but more than a thousand came. Professor Ambroisio Donnini, who spent his exile years in New York, then later was the new Italy's Ambassador to Poland, told me in a corridor, his handsome face gleaming with joy: "It's beyond everything we dreamed! The people took it out of our hands!"

It spread like the fires of a crusade. The Italian delegates were elected; every factory, peasant union, little mountain commune and big city council wanted to send its delegate. There were some thirty-four mayors, including the heads of the largest cities; hundreds of doctors, lawyers, academicians, authors, painters, cinema stars—the intellectual elite of the nation, as well as the trade unionists and peasants and mothers and eager young students. Tito Ruffo the singer was a delegate. There were hundreds of religious believers, and the artists who made *Open City,* and a miners' brass band and hundreds of banners of the people's organizations. "They represent over twenty million people," said Professor Donnini, "almost half our population. Nobody can fight against this revelation."

I HAD a brief word with an old opera singer. He smiled and said quietly: "Of course I am for peace. Who wants war? Italy has suffered enough from war. Tell America she cannot win if she makes a new war. The people of the whole world will be against her." A woman from Florence told me about her pilgrimage. She is small, blonde and good-natured, naive and unpolitical; she works in a stocking factory that employs 150 women. She said:

> "My factory is a place of widows who have lost their husbands and sons in the war. Many have little children to support. I am such a widow, and have two small children. Naturally, peace means a lot to us women. We are always thinking about it. We heard about the congress and began to discuss it. Our boss, a rich man who used to be a big shot in Mussolini's time, was furious. He warned us against meddling in the peace congress. There would surely be a war on Russia, he said. And the Americans would come back to Italy with their tanks and planes. Whoever gave a penny to the peace congress would be arrested, and the delegate we elected would be hung by the Americans. So we chipped in our pennies and elected a delegate. Here I am. I am a Catholic. I am a mother. I will fight for peace even if the Americans hang me."

It was such pennies that sent most of the Italian delegates. Their trains were stopped at every station in Italy by gatherings of peasants and workers. Day and night, by the torches and station lamps, mass meetings for peace were held. Collective oaths were sworn; it was a crusade. Let the American presslings smear the crusade as they will; it is real, it will go on, it comes from the depths.

A delegate in a red fez, who is a trade union leader in Algiers, told me that a mass meeting of some 20,000 workers and intellectuals had raised the money to send him here. I spoke to delegates from the Ivory Coast and West Africa; some were colonial Deputies in the French Parliament. "War means imperialism and a more terrible exploitation of our people. We are here to join the people of Europe in the common cause of peace."

A delegation of forty scientists, scholars and trade-union leaders from liberated China was prevented from coming to the Congress by the clumsy Marshallized stooges who temporarily run France. But these Chinese, as well as other barred delegates from Poland, the U.S.S.R., Mongolia, Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and other lands, held an overflow congress in Prague, with the whole nation bringing them gifts, flowers and the handclasp of peace.

From warmaker Bevin's England came more than 400 delegates, most of them members of the Labor Party and trade unionists. A young veteran blinded in the war was among them, and his wife. Several young miners and students came in their Scot kilts. Professor J. D. Bernal, "the wisest man in the world," as Bevin called him in wartime, when his services as physicist were invaluable, was with the delegation, as were the Dean of Canterbury, some Quakers, several Labor members of Parliament like Platt-Mills and Zilliacus, clerks, carpenters, sailors, iron puddlers, poets, plumbers——.

"There is a conviction among our people," said the eloquent, witty Zilliacus, "that whoever wins the next war, we are going to lose it. An Admiralty spokesman has casually informed us that we are to play the part of Malta in this war. But we don't believe in war. The will for peace is overwhelmingly strong in our people. We believe in civilization."

A beautiful little figure in luminous blue silks, a woman of Viet-Nam, spoke for her beleaguered folk. A woman of the people's Greece spoke. There were Indonesian lawyers and Australian longshoremen

and Brazilian physicists. There were delegates from the new state of Israel and the old state of Egypt.

The effect of it all was overwhelming. In my time I have been at other congresses against war and fascism. There was the big one in Madison Square Garden in 1917, when I was a boy just come into the socialist world. There was the Kharkov congress of authors in 1930; and the Paris congress of 1935, when so many world-famed intellectuals gathered in demonstration against the rising tide of Hitlerism and its coming war. But something was always lacking despite the brave and eloquent words. It was the sense of being a force, of being effectual. Now at this peace congress the word had become flesh. The idea of peace had penetrated into the masses. This was a great mass-congress, representing a third of the world, and war was no longer inevitable.

"WE ARE not assembled here to ask for, but to *impose* peace upon those who try to make war," said Joliot-Curie, calmly, and without the emphasis I have given to his main verb, as he opened the Congress. This great physicist, chief of France's atomic research and a Nobel prize-winner, is lean, tall and hard as a Vermont farmer. He was an outstanding fighter in the Resistance, is fighting as determinedly today for peace, and is president of the permanent organization that has come out of the Congress.

There were Hindu and Mongolian delegates, Turks, Iraquis, Iranians. The parliament of man rose to its feet and cheered wildly, with full heart and tears in the eyes, for our own dear Paul Robeson when he sang. Our great American testified for peace, he spoke of the Negro sorrow and shame in America.

There was a delegation of scientists, authors and labor leaders from far-off Brazil. They had been elected at a great mass meeting where the fascist police had attacked the people and murdered at least six. There was Lombardo Toledano and Dr. Narcisso Bassols of Mexico. General Cardenas sent the Congress his fervent greetings. Juan Marinello, revered by Latin America as another Romain Rolland and Nicolás Guillén, the great poet, were here from Cuba. I met Venezuelans, Uruguayans, Argentinians, Ecuadorians. There was a tumultuous moment in the Congress when Pablo Neruda, the great bard of Chile, appeared on the platform. This latter-day Walt Whitman is a hunted

man upon whose inspired head the Wall Street usurpers have placed a price. He read his poems, then sat beside Jorge Amado, Brazil's epic novelist of the people, also a refugee, and Howard Fast, our own literary victim of the Marshall Plan.

Pablo Picasso sat through all the sessions listening intently. He is short, tanned, with the stubborn round head of a Celt and keen eyes. He made a short speech himself, the first he ever made. Aragon, slim and fiery as a duelist, an immense national poet, also, curiously, a remarkable organizer who shaped the resistance of intellectuals against Hitler, and now was largely responsible for the Congress. Pietro Nenni, short, spectacled, earnest of soul, a Socialist who has never abandoned his people. Ilya Ehrenburg of such fiery moral fervor and profound culture and imagery; Fadeyev, the magnificent, tall and solid as an oak tree, full of the Tolstoyan grandeur; Madame Eugenie Cotton, French scientist, university head and leader of French women for peace, a spare, dedicated figure; Yves Farge, former Minister of Food in the French cabinet and famous in the underground resistance, speaking now with savage irony and militancy against the American stooges and warmakers; Arnold Zweig, Bernhard Kellerman and Anna Seghers, the near-forgotten but insistent voices of whatever remained alive of German humanity; and Zilliacus again, speaking French like a Parisian, down to the latest slang, commenting on the treason to the United Nations of these frenzied warmakers, these statesmen and financiers suffering from what he called "Forrestal's disease."

So many personalities from all around the planet, enough living science and labor and art to create a new world! It was the creative, not the parasite spirit that filled this Congress. Peace didn't mean idleness and emptiness to these people, but construction, vast dreams, time to build the palaces and homes of a radiant free humanity!

The honest leaders of religion must be included in the fight for world peace. There were 125 at this Congress, from every denomination. The majestic old bearded patriarch of Moscow, the Metropolitan Nicholas, spoke with deep feeling of the Nazi horrors he had witnessed. "But a new life advances to replace the old decomposing world. No power can stop it. And the Russian Orthodox Church joins with those hundreds of millions who have said No! to war." The Abbe Boulier, a French priest who fought in the Resistance, suffered in a concentration camp, and has become beloved of every French worker for his

courage and fidelity to the people, made a stirring declaration, as did that ruddy, handsome, vigorous old genius of Christian Socialism, the Dean of Canterbury. There were two Protestant bishops from Hungary, heads of the Lutheran and Calvinist churches. They brought the heartfelt greetings of their two and one-half million believers. And the Abbe Plojhar, a Catholic priest who is Minister of Health in Czechoslovakia, spoke with a ferver that shook the great assembly:

> "The dying world of capitalist-imperialism tries to enlist the churches for its own selfish aims. I solemnly declare that we priests who come from among the people will never betray the people. We will work with them for the great ideals of Christianity and Socialism. We will no longer allow reaction to use the most sacred of feelings for its inhuman ends. In the name of millions of believers, I swear that we will work and fight for peace!"

WHEN I look back at this vast World Congress, out of all the color, pageantry, heroic hopes and flying banners there emerges one tragic, beautiful face—the face of a Russian mother who lost both her children in the Nazi war. She is the mother of Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, a young partisan girl who at seventeen was tortured to death by the Nazis and has become the symbol of dedicated youth in the Soviet lands. Zoya's young brother, Alexander, followed her and died several years later in battle. Zoya's mother, a woman with a pure, noble face, told the story with difficulty. Her voice choked, her face was twisted with pain, she paused to regather her strength. But she told her story, to help bring peace to the world. And sobs and cries rose in the great hall, from these delegates of all the lands, uniting in reverence before this simple Russian woman, a teacher in a primary school and mother of the eternal heart of pain and sacrifice.

I have left our American delegation to the last. There were forty delegates, including O. John Rogge, Howard Fast, Mrs. Mineola Ingersoll, Elizabeth Moss, Samuel Sillen, Louis Weinstock, Donald Henderson, Maud Russell, Albert Kahn, Rockwell Kent, Shirley Graham, and, dean of all the delegates, Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois. There should have been twice forty, of course, if only for the honor of America. It is becoming harder every day to be an American. In the streets and factories and subways of Paris, London, Berlin or Amsterdam, the atom-bomb war lurks like a secret and shameful disease. It is a horror people fear

to think about. Even if they don't like Russia, they fear America more.

"What's the matter with you Americans? What do you want? What does Truman want? Our people are sick of war. Why do you Americans want another war?" I have heard such questions a hundred times. I have seen American students insulted in Paris by simple-minded, non-political French students. I have heard it in music halls and restaurants. It's in the air of Europe, this new fear and hatred of our country.

It is not "Communist propaganda"; it is the deepest feeling of the masses, religious, non-political, spontaneous. The great Congress for Peace only reflected some of this world feeling. America is isolating herself from the peoples of the world. And I am an American, and love my country where I was born and nourished on Jefferson, Lincoln, Walt Whitman, Emerson, Mark Twain and Carl Sandburg.

I was pleased that Donald Henderson was sensitive enough to catch this underlying spirit in Europe. This gaunt, earnest leader of the agricultural and food workers spoke simply to the delegates of Africa, Asia and Europe. His sincerity reached them, I believe, and made them realize that there is another America, still badly submerged by traitors and profiteers but alive under the ashes, the America of Lincoln and Mark Twain, the people's America.

> "We swear that the fight for freedom in America will not be betrayed. We will make America a word of sweetness again on the lips of humanity, a word representing freedom and human dignity. I know the American people, I know the workers. I believe I have the right to tell you that you will hear their voices raised with yours against the forces of war and fascism. Believe me, America is still in the ranks of humanity!"

And they did believe him. They applauded with all their most passionate faith and sympathy. They were the peoples of all the world. They knew there must be people like them living in America, too. We must not fail them. We must bring our beloved country out of its dangerous isolation. We must save America from ruin and the atom-bomb war. Peace can be won. But it has powerful enemies; it has to be fought for. Is there a more sacred cause today?

Song for Bolivar

by PABLO NERUDA

Our father who art in earth,
in the water, in the air
of all our wide and silent latitude,
everything bears your name, father, in our domain.
Your name the sugarcane raises to sweetness,
bolivar tin has a Bolivar shine,
bolivar bird over Bolivar Mountain,
the potato, saltpeter, the special shadows,
the currents, the veins of phosphoric stone,
all that is ours comes from your snuffed-out life:
your legacy were rivers, plains, and belfries;
your legacy, father, is our daily bread.

Your little corpse of a gallant captain
has stretched into immensity its metal shape:
suddenly your fingers emerge from out the snow,
the southern fisherman brings suddenly to light
your smile, your voice palpitating in the nets.

What color the rose we grow beside your soul?
Red shall the rose be that recalls your step.

How shall the hands be that touch your ashes?
Red shall the hands be that are born from your ashes.

And what like the seed of your dead heart?
Red is the seed of your living heart.

Therefore the circle of hands is about you now.
Within my hand is another, and another in it,
and another again, down to the dark continent's end.
And yet another hand you did not know
comes also, Bolivar, to clasp your own.

From Teruel, Madrid, Jarama, from the Ebro,
from the prison, from the air, from the dead of Spain
comes this red hand, a daughter of your own.

Captain, you fighter, wherever a mouth
cries Liberty, wherever an ear listens,
wherever a red soldier smashes a brown helmet,
wherever a free man's laurel blossoms,
wherever a new flag decks itself
with the blood of our illustrious dawn,
Bolivar, captain, your face can be discerned.
Again in the dust and smoke your sword is born.
Again your banner is embroidered with blood.
Scoundrels attack your seed anew;
nailed to another cross is the son of man.

But still your shadow leads us towards hope:
the laurel and light of your red army
gazes with your gaze across the American night.
Your eyes that watch beyond the seas,
beyond the oppressed and wounded peoples,
beyond the black burning cities,
your voice is born anew, your hand is born again,
your army defends the consecrated flags,
and a terrible sound of grief precedes
the dawn that's reddened by the blood of man.

Liberator, a world of peace was born in your arms.
Peace, bread and wheat were things born of your blood:
From our young blood that comes from your blood,
peace will grow, bread and wheat for the world that will be ours.

I met Bolivar one fine long morning
in Madrid, in the mouth of the Fifth Regiment.
Father, I said, are you or are you not, or who are you?
And looking towards the Cuartel de la Montaña, he said:
I wake up every hundred years when the people awaken.

(*Translated by A. L. Lloyd*)

COMMUNISTS IN NOVELS

by CHARLES HUMBOLDT

JUST twenty years ago, and a decade after the founding of the Party, Theodore Dreiser published the first important study of an American Communist, the long story "Ernita" in Volume I of *The Gallery of Women.* One can appreciate why this event was not hailed by the commercial reviewers. Less understandable is the neglect of left-wing critics and the fact that most readers are not aware of the story's existence. For it is rare that a writer, tackling a subject new and relatively strange to him, has given it such sure, classical treatment.

Since then, many novels have dealt objectively with themes involving Communist characters. They were not often favorably received. One could find obvious reasons for this in the political ignorance and prejudice of the above-mentioned reviewers, even the most gifted and honest of them. To go no further, however, would be to rest satisfied with an insecure consolation. If defects are there, we still have to examine them; if they have been surmounted, we should know how and to what degree.

One can't help approaching the subject with diffidence. The ease with which one can find faults is itself a warning that they involve more than failures of individual talent. There is a hint of this in Howard Fast's review of *The Great Midland.* "Here, for the first time in a certain area," he wrote in *M & M,* "is maturity—a maturity compounded out of action and understanding." The statement is a little sweeping, but it is forthright and it does focus on the two elements which are essential to the portrayal of Communists in fiction. For while other characters have been represented successfully as passive, or bemused, and with slight understanding of the basis of their lives, the Communist, to be credible at all, must be revealed in action, his style of thinking dramatized and the material roots of his thought shown in their strength and intricacy.

We may better arrive at understanding why this is so if we recall some of the novels of the past two decades in which Communists were more or less significant characters, and where the writer's intent was to describe them fairly, without malice or hostility. Perhaps we can learn from them what we propose to prove. If this method seems somewhat too empirical, short of a guiding principle, one should remember that when these novels were written the Communist was—as he still is—being shaped in real life, tested in a hundred situations differing in quality from those faced by other men, even those closest to him in their lives and ideas.

The Communist is not a different kind of man, personally unique by the mere fact of party membership. Yet because of the close tie of theory to practice among Marxists, the new intellectual content in a Communist's life is bound to alter not just his actions but the very nature of his experience. This change in consciousness may in some individuals amount to no more than a small displacement of thinking habits, a petty growth of social awareness. In others it works a revolution, a passionate, joyful awakening of their senses and imagination. The degree of change depends upon the capacity of the individual to feel deeply and act boldly, as well as on his grasp of the theory by which his party stands. In life, these factors will determine his stature as a Communist; in literature, his importance as a character.

The novelist, then, not only engages in his normal task, the creation of fictional characters; he also shares in the development of real people, Communists, who, reading his work, will tend to see and judge themselves in terms of his insights. Can the novelist meet this complex responsibility with the average writer's complement of talent, unsupported by any special experience, cultural preparation, understanding of history, class relations and struggles, or Marxist theory? The novels themselves must help us answer this question.

The proletarian novel of the Thirties was mainly an indigenous product. It was little influenced by such European classics as Nexö's *Pelle the Conqueror* or Gorky's *Mother.* Its chief concern was to depict the trade-union struggles of the period in a series of crucial incidents which would reveal the brutality of the ruling class and the heroism and resourcefulness of the workers. The tradition of naturalism is very strong; the descriptive passages are generally much sharper than the dramatic, and there is a certain absence of perspec-

tive in the characters. They seem to live entirely in the present, swiftly and unreflectively, and the reader must take for granted in them a richness of feeling and understanding which they rarely express. The pseudo-triumphant or conversion ending, so common at this time, stems from an inability or refusal to extend characters beyond their "normal" selves, to show the future burgeoning in their immediate consciousness. Though convinced that the working class would win the final victory, the writers of the Left often did not know how to create individuals whose actions dramatized that confidence. They had therefore to resort to a kind of well-meaning magic which satisfied the moral sense but reassured no one.

THE Communist, John Stevens, in Grace Lumpkin's *To Make My Bread* (1932), represents an effort to break through the impasse. Stevens, though, is a shadowy, symbolic figure who takes hardly any part in the action; he is merely spoken of as organizing meetings. There is little feeling of the worker about him, though he is supposed to have been a weaver all his life. He sings ballads against the rich and reads aloud Vanzetti's letter to his son. When his friend John McClure says to him in discouragement, "I was feeling as if everything was finished," he states flatly, "No, this is just the beginning." Stevens is only a device; the assurance comes from the author.

Greater, though superficial, realism appears in the person of Larry Marvin, the organizer of William Rollins' *The Shadow Before* (1934) in which the great textile strike struggles of the South are translated somewhat crudely to New England. Marvin is an idealized version of the then labor leader and future renegade, Fred Beal. He is a former Baptist Sunday School teacher from a New Jersey milltown, who retains his rather prim attitude toward women and tobacco. He takes a job as doffer in the mill in Fullerton and assumes leadership of the Communist fraction there. From then on Marvin is involved in such a whirl of activity leading up to the strike in the mill that there is little chance for serious characterization. Mannerisms take the place of thoughts. Marvin is always grinning or chuckling, presumably to emphasize his self confidence.

Rollins' preoccupation with surface events, getting the story on its way, finally reduces his hero to absurdity. Marvin's fate is somehow linked up with half-mad Harry Baumann, the boss's son, who has

been allowed to join the strikers for publicity's sake. Since Harry has all the potentialities of a provocateur, Marvin's association with him convinces us that he, Marvin, is a fool. To make matters worse, when he hears that one of his comrades has been shot he becomes hysterical with fear. "And they'll get ahold of me now. They'll get ahold of me and lynch me." The writer has lost control of him even more than Marvin has of himself. At his trial Marvin says and does nothing. He is sentenced without protest on his part and his last appearance takes the form of an unconvincing interior monologue. It is ludicrous to have such a character rant, "They can't lick the workers."

The Communist, Mario Quillermo, in Clara Weatherwax's *Marching! Marching!* (1935), promises to be a much more consistent and interesting character. His individuality is strongly marked; one gets the feel of a powerful, passionate man with no family or other attachments to relieve the harshness of his life. For such a worker the effects of oppression and oppression itself are almost identical, and it is therefore impossible for him to breathe without fighting the bosses, whether as longshoreman, pea picker, or lumber worker. He is portrayed without sentimentality or prudishness. Unfortunately, the early death of Mario, following his beating and castration by vigilantes, deprives the book of its major character. His life passes in review as he lies wounded and helpless in a field, but by then it is finished and the action passes into the hands of a collective hero, the Working Class. In this symbolic transfer all personal intensity is lost, giving way to high-level reportage, descriptions of strike organization, mass picketing, etc.

SIMILARLY, the Negro organizer, Rocky Jones, in *The Stricklands* by Edwin Lanham (1939), is beaten and later killed before he can play the role he is so impatient to assume: helping the Negro and white tenant farmers of Oklahoma to form a union. Rocky's brusqueness, his single-minded concentration on his task, are well handled. But his death takes place as the result of a pure coincidence. He is lying in a shack in the woods, recovering from his beating, when the bandit brother of his friend and fellow organizer, Jay, breaks in to fight it out with a posse, and both men are shot. In terms of action, the death of Rocky is pointless; it has no relation to his mission. As a symbol, the tieup with Jay's brother as another victim of society is dubious and mocks the meaning of his life.

Rocky's early martyrdom is less harmful than Mario's, since he is a minor character, but it injures the book because more significance is ascribed to him than he is able to realize by his own acts. His awareness, the catalytic agent of the action, is withdrawn too soon, and the subsequent development of those who might have been guided by him is diffuse, lacking in complexity and depth. Even Jay's tribute to him, in the form of a long soliloquy, has a formal, author-ex-machina quality about it.

Albert Halper's *Union Square* (1933), is not a proletarian novel. Its leading Communist character, Leon Fisher, is a fragile, moderately talented painter, surrounded by Bohemian friends and comrades. One cannot take Halper's people seriously. He has spoiled them all with tasteless, over-sprightly humor and malicious condescension. Leon is at best a sympathetic comic figure, foolish in love and helpless against the cynical goading of his repulsive "brilliant" friend, Jason. Apart from Leon, the picture of the Party might have appeared in the *American Weekly*. Its petty affairs and bickering are not even on the level of ideological distortion. The rootless irony of this book is not, however, intended specifically for the Communists. It defiles everyone, as though the author were at the time consumed with a self mockery which he could not contain, like Dante's Filippo Argenti who "on himself . . . turned his avenging fangs."

THE misrepresentation of the Communist Party in John Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle* (1936), is much more disturbing because the figure of its protagonist, Mac, is drawn in apparent good faith and even admiration. Mac is supposed to be a Communist sent to organize the apple pickers of the Torgas Valley in California. In reality he is not a Communist at all but an anarcho-syndicalist, an old "wobbly," many of whom joined the Party at the time without relinquishing their old views. Mac is more than this, however. He is a man preoccupied with violence in and for itself, masking his craving as political expediency. Such a man would be expelled from the Communist Party as a dangerous provocateur whose attitude toward the class struggle is, when not pathological, a parody of the Marxist position on the relation of means to ends.

Mac hopes that the pickers' strike will not be settled too quickly because the men will not have learned how to organize; he looks for-

ward to the vigilantes' killing some pickers (whom he speaks of as tramps) and to the calling out of the troops; when he looks over the list of sympathizers' names in the nearby town, he says sneeringly that one can get everything from them: knitted wristlets to shotgun shells. Obsessed with the need of spilling workers' blood, he sees their cause as a man-devouring idol to be served by high-priests like himself. He recruits an acolyte, Jim, who becomes even more revolting than Mac, with eyes "cold as wet river stones." Even Mac wonders at this Frankenstein of his and fears that he is not human, but he abases himself before Jim because the latter, unlike Mac, keeps his head, in other words, is able to do calmly and with foresight what Mac does too impulsively. Jim represents the voice of revolutionary authority, leading the listless herd of workers to power. But this authority has the face of a stormtrooper.

The literary consequences of Steinbeck's political travesty are what one might expect. The action staggers from incident to incident like a desperate comic strip. The dialogue is incredibly insensitive. Mac, having helped to deliver a child solely in order to win the confidence of the workers, says of the mother, "Course it was nice to help the girl, but hell, even if it killed her—we've got to use anything." When one of the older pickers falls from a loose-runged ladder, Mac must show that he understands the significance of the accident: "The old buzzard was worth something after all." It is no wonder that Jim reflects, "Everybody hates us, Mac." To which Mac answers, "Our own side and the enemy. And if we won, Jim, if we put it over, our own side would kill us. I wonder why we do it. Oh, go to sleep!"

In this book Steinbeck incorporated the worst features of his own anti-intellectual bias, which he was able to suppress to a considerable degree in the writing of *The Grapes of Wrath.* In his subsequent work, where he avoids social reality, this bent takes the form of a pseudo-naive simplicity, an appeal to return to the natural, wayward man who knows from nothing of the wicked complexity of the modern world. When he did face the conditions of the class struggle most directly, as in *In Dubious Battle,* Steinbeck's cultural equipment proved equal only to the handling of direct action, crude revenges, and ultimately sadism and provocation, devoid of ideas and stamped with a trademark of sentimentality. It is no wonder that he has abandoned a contest which he understands so little.

IT IS interesting to note that the two most persuasive Communist figures among the earlier portraits are women. The first is Dreiser's Ernita. In the opening paragraph of his story Dreiser defines both the limits of his method and the scope of his understanding: "I know Ernita. I know her honesty as well as I know her clear, unflinching, truth-seeking, love-seeking eyes, and I commend to your attention this outline of the circumstances which plunged her eventually into the very midst of one of the greatest social upheavals in the world's history."

Dreiser has used a form, the biographical sketch, which is more like the synopsis of a novel than the novel itself. Yet within this "outline," deprived of direct dramatic crystallization, depending for its effect entirely on the intelligence and depth of reminiscence, Dreiser has managed to describe and explain the evolution of a human being as none of the longer novels so far mentioned have done. In the latter we are confronted with a given entity, the Communist, at some critical moment of trade-union or political struggle. The writer must assume many things about him in order to set him quickly in motion according to the requirements of the objective situation. The reader is not prepared for these assumptions, however; he sees how a character behaves but does not really know why—what has brought him to this path of action. A conventional flashback which merely states the external circumstances of his life does no more than illuminate the past as feebly as a job record or medical history.

Dreiser, on the other hand, never forgets the external world, the kingdom of necessity, but he knows that what is paramount for the novelist is how this world appears and alters its look for each separate person. Action is determined by action, by human interchange; yet if this is not to be just a platitude, each term of a relationship, each individual calls for inexhaustible scrutiny, for infinite "gentleness" of comprehension. So Dreiser's love of the mind at work, in trial and error, is something close to physical possession. It enables him to transcend the limits of naturalism in understanding if not in intensity.

The Communist Ernita is not a given, fixed design. The greater part of her story is taken up with events prior to her decision—taken in the Soviet Union where she had gone with her husband, Leonard, to work on a construction project—to break with her old I.W.W. comrades. Particularly interesting is the way Dreiser shows the close ties between Ernita's sexual responsiveness and her mental affinity. She quarrels

with Leonard over the issue of war and this alienates her from him. Yet when he suddenly accepts her position and even suffers social ostracism thereby, she remains cold to him because his conversion seems too swift and violent. Later, she analyzes this and other reactions to her husband in a way that is characteristic of her extroverted nature: "As I think of it now, it must have been that he was not sufficiently definite in his convictions, or at least not sufficiently strong to establish them against mine. At any rate, I felt myself to be mentally the stronger, and that irritated me." She does not notice that she has expressed a desire to subordinate herself to Leonard which she would reject indignantly if it were put to her as an idea.

Dreiser's handling of Ernita's disillusionment with her fellow I.W.W. members not only makes the issue between them clear but again serves to throw light on her character. The I.W.W. men were "nothing more than strike leaders and had no more conception of the great constructive ideas of Marx and Lenin than any child." They were too much concerned with rights and privileges divorced from any social objective. "And so at last she decided to break with them, not too sharply or openly but slowly and surely, and go over to the new management, which she felt sure would do more for Russia than ever they could or would." At the same time she falls in love with an American Communist, an engineer, with whom she has a short but intense affair after Leonard's departure from the Soviet Union. The rest of the story deals with Leonard's return, his fumbling efforts to reestablish their relationship, their divorce, his final departure with their child and Ernita's determination to remain in the Soviet Union.

Dreiser's character is so much "rounder" than the others. She has not been tailored to meet an emergency, to fit an ideal, or to symbolize anything: to be The Communist, in short. Her late sexual awakening, her reluctant acceptance of family ties, her somewhat too fervid self-assurance are as much part of her as are her restless honesty and hunger for social justice. Yet her individuality in no way lessens the significance of her life or the magnitude of her choices. For it too is an expression of the crumbling of an old society and the birth of the new.

THE second major female character is Ishma Hensley in Fielding Burke's two novels, *Call Home the Heart* (1932) and *A Stone Came Rolling* (1935). In the first volume Ishma leaves her husband,

Britt, a North Carolina farmer, and her young son, Ned, to go off to a valley town with Rad Bailey, who has promised her a life of independence from the disheartening routine and stagnation of farm life. She goes to work in a textile mill, hears a union leader speak of Communism, and has many talks with her friend, the doctor Derry Unthank, who is a Communist. Her rapid intellectual development brings about her estrangement from Rad who cannot share her thoughts or experience. Like Ernita, in Dreiser's story, she finds sexual contact with him distasteful because of his intellectual limitations. At the same time, without reproaching herself for her desertion of her husband and son, seeing it in fact as an unavoidable step in her growth, she comes to realize her need to return to them. She therefore maneuvers Rad into marrying another girl and goes back to the mountains. But just before this an episode occurs which reveals to her that she has as yet little understanding of humanity or herself. Having rescued a Negro worker from lynching, she is still so steeped in prejudice as to strike his wife in physical repulsion at the latter's embrace. The incident fills her with self horror, sensing that she harbors a "thing inimical to the unity of life; that had left her ashamed and apart, a beast hugging its den, flattened against the walls of separation." This is rather curiously juxtaposed in her mind with her feeling that her frustrated physical desire for Britt also leaves her "dead to vision," that is, places the animal in her over the human and social being.

The scene with the Negro worker's wife is a courageous attempt to dramatize the contradictions and the persistence of racial bigotry in an individual otherwise advanced, but it is vitiated by a literary and a political flaw. First, the incident is utterly unprepared for. There has been no hint of such backwardness in the character of Ishma; it slips in almost as an afterthought or like the ghost of someone you thought alive. Secondly, the Communist, Derry Unthank, who witnesses the scene, merely smiles at Ishma "with high forebearance," like a complacent Episcopalian. Worse yet: Unthank expounds as distorted a view of the question of Negro liberation as it is possible for a well meaning person to have: "The black people are a handicap that may yet defeat us. We have enough to do to save ourselves without a race question to entangle us." His position is almost identical with that of the *I'll Take My Stand* Southerners for he goes on to say: "I'd like to see a black race keeping to its own line of life, intuitive, rhythmic

with nature, building its own shelters. . . ." Can the writer have believed it possible for a Communist to speak like this?

A Stone Came Rolling deals with Ishma's further education, her assumption of leadership in the organization of the textile workers, her fight against opportunism, class collaboration and the illusion of religious conciliation. Interwoven with these is the recasting of her relationship with Britt, whose temperament is so different from hers. Britt is killed in the course of a strike struggle. Later, having recovered from the devastating effect of his death, she resumes her role, is arrested and then freed by the workers in a symbolic storming of the jail.

In terms of knowledge and ideological breadth the book represents a considerable advance over *Call Home the Heart.* Ishma's whole life has become a song in praise of learning. She tells a minister that love for humanity is not enough:

> "'Wasn't it love of humanity—real love too—that burnt Bruno and Huss and Cranmer and the Salem witches? Look at this, Father.'
>
> "She reached up and from a nail driven into the trunk of a tree took a piece of dark-brown, long-seasoned pine board with a knot-hole in it. 'I don't doubt that great-grandmother Holder loved her family, and wanted to give them good milk. If a cow gave bloody milk, the cure was to milk her through this knot-hole. That is about as much as love without knowledge may do.'"

Ishma grasps, more firmly than any of the characters so far dealt with, the ultimate aim of the struggle in which she is engaged. She sees men fighting "not merely for treasure but for the right to create it. Not for a past with its grains of crystallized achievement, a past so brief that men could tell the tale of it, but for a future without end. A future based on the release of every human aspiration."

Ishma's persistent reiteration of her outlook on life, her drive toward fulfillment in the class struggle, coupled with reflective passages like the above, is the first significant self-conscious effort in American writing to state what Communists stand for. Yet the effort is a failure for reasons so obvious that it seems strange the author did not avoid them. The rather old-fashioned language and florid imagery are a minor matter; they stem from immersion in a time worn, somewhat sentimental tradition, and can be acceded to without condescension. The real harm comes from the romantization of the central character, who is more an incarnation of struggle than a human being.

Her precociousness and endowments are so extraordinary that it is difficult to place her, to remember her as a simple Southern mountain girl who goes to work in a mill. Not only her "cultured" speech, but the unnatural ease with which she comes by and is able to express difficult ideas gives her a spurious quality which is doubly regrettable since the ideas themselves are so valid.

The episode with the Negro worker's wife, for example, comes as such a surprise because one has been led to forget the simple common sense facts of Ishma's life. She has become too much like some radiant figure of Liberty flying over and exhorting the suffering throng. And this transfigured posture separates her from her past as well as from the very people whose condition she must share, whose hopes she must crystallize. The essential role of consciousness cannot be divorced from the material circumstances which give rise to it in the first place. Failure to integrate these opposites results in simple naturalism or romantic idealism, literary methods that are quite inadequate to the portrayal of Communist characters.

IN 1940, two important novels were published in which Communists appeared as major figures: Albert Maltz's *Underground Stream* and Richard Wright's *Native Son.* A third, Scott Fitzgerald's unfinished *The Last Tycoon* (written at that time but not published until 1947), has a rather amusing scene in which the hero, Monroe Stahr, a movie executive, meets a Communist whom he has ordered brought to him as though he were asking for a panda from central China. Stahr and the Communist, Brimmer, "a man from the *New Masses,*" engage in some inconclusive verbal sparring, after which Stahr gets pie-eyed and threatens Brimmer with a beating, forcing the latter, semi-reluctant, to knock him out cold. The episode is no more than a curiosity, but it does reveal that a certain spectre was here to stay.

The Communist Party had earned the right to speak for the American working class. It had taken part in, and most often led, every battle for economic security, cultural development, civil rights, peace, Negro liberation and for human liberty and progress: the Sacco-Vanzetti case, the organization of the unemployed and the fight for W.P.A., the building of the C.I.O., the saving of the Scottsboro boys and Angelo Herndon, the defense of China, Ethiopia, Spain, Czechoslovakia. It had won the respect of every democrat and anti-fascist in America.

Maltz's novel, like most of his other work, is a search for moral sources. Here his aim is to describe an ultimate test of spiritual strength and to light up the elements—the experiences, the human beings and the ideas—that go to sustain it. What keeps the Communist, Princey, a Detroit auto worker, from betraying his cause though threatened with sure death if he refuses? Maltz answers: his life as a worker, the thought of his comrades, the understanding that Marxism and his party gave him of the class struggle. He uses only three scenes for this.

The first is between Princey and his wife, in which her discontent with his neglect of her for union work provokes a discussion of their relationship, their problems and their desires for as rich a life as their working-class status will permit them. In the course of their argument, they come closer to each other and end by making love. The function of this scene is preparatory. There are certain didactic overtones, such as Betsey's warning to Princey not to succumb to a crisis psychology in his work. These, while important in themselves, are brought in too schematically so that at times one seems to be witnessing an agit-prop performance in which the players explain themselves away to the audience. Thus, though the feelings of the characters are not shallow at all, the emotional force of the scene is somehow dissipated.

The second scene takes place in a parked car where, for security's sake, Princey meets the Party functionary, Turner, and the latter proposes that he go to a training school, implying that he will then be ready for even more responsible work. Their talk reveals Princey's weaknesses: his impatience with discipline, his intolerance of slower thinking people, and his refusal to accept positions that give him prestige. His immaturity is contrasted with Turner's selflessness (unselfishness is not the word, since Turner's way of working springs not so much from an ethical attitude as from his utter absorption in the problems that confront him continuously). Turner's unsparing questioning, followed by his confession of short temper to rebuild Princey's self-estimation, as well as Princey's seeing through Turner's device and still being pleased by it—all this is vital and delicately handled groundwork.

Similarly the poignant search for the kidnapped Princey has many finely observed details and moving incidents, like those of the young worker rebuking his father for white chauvinism while the old man,

a Kentuckian, stubbornly defends his right to be in the Party and shamefacedly retires from the argument; the Negro, Ben Silversmith's rage and agony when he discovers that one of his own people has betrayed Princey; Turner's painful realization that even while Princey's life must be saved at all cost, his comrades have to be prepared against the possibility of his capitulating to his torturers. Each of these insights illuminates not only an aspect of individual character but also the complex demands which are made upon Party members and which they must make upon themselves in the war against oppression.

SO FAR we have had two scenes with Princey and a series of valuable but secondary ones with Betsey and other Party people. We now turn to Princey's big scene, his trial by temptation and fear. Here, though, is one of the book's two basic flaws. For the scene between Princey and Turner is also preparatory, like that with Betsey. It serves only to establish his character in conversation, not to develop it in action. As a literary figure, Princey is not ready for his tragedy. We have seen nothing of his relation to other, non-Party workers; we will never know what, if anything, the talk with Turner meant to him, though this talk should lead inevitably to a second meeting between the two men. In fact, everything that cries for expansion has been cut to the bone, and we are left with the small slice of wisdom that if Princey, in snobbish impatience, had not dismissed his bodyguard, he would not have been trapped. This limitation, of course, works to the disadvantage of the other characters since they can only be renewed dramatically through the depiction of their influence upon Princey or his effect upon them.

The second flaw derives from this. It mars the two-part scene between Princey and his tormentor, Grebb, personnel director of Jefferson Motors, on whose orders he has been kidnapped and who turns him over to the Black Legion to be killed. To begin with, Grebb's appeal to Princey to work for him is based on a premise of such melodramatic absurdity that any serious dialogue becomes impossible. He wants Princey to join him so that when they have helped bring about fascism, which is inevitable anyway, they will be in an advantageous position to work from within to overthrow it! (Since Grebb is pictured as a man of some intelligence, it is puzzling to observe the almost sexual frenzy with which he makes this marriage proposal.) More important,

however, is the fact that because Princey has had no chance to grow he cannot be adequate to the role assigned him. It is only Turner who has that potentiality, or who might have developed it in Princey. Consequently, Princey's answers to Grebb's provocation and threats take the form mainly of silence, questions and noncommittal monosyllables, as in a detective story. In the face of Grebb's demands that he tell what values he lives by, he can only say, "There's dignity, there's self respect," and speak vaguely of living in accord with one's principles. Maltz's imagination seems at a loss until at the last moment he hits upon the formulation from which the title of his book is taken: *"A man must hold to his purpose. This—nothing less—is the underground stream of his life. Without it he is nothing. I cannot yield. A man is nothing who yields his purpose!"*

But even if the reader believes it is Princey who says this, there is still too great a disparity between the expectation of this scene and its fulfillment. That gap would, however, have had to be filled earlier in the book, by subjecting Princey to many other tests as a man and a Communist before his martyrdom. Would this have meant a different book? It would have meant a still finer one. The scaffolding was already there.

"NATIVE SON" presents a problem of a different order from all the preceding novels. The two Communists in the book are represented sympathetically, though one with a degree of condescension. There is little distance between the writer's estimate of their personalities and the reader's measure of them, such as we found in Steinbeck's book. But Wright has so perverted the Communist position on the Negro people for his own purpose that one cannot accept the characters who are supposed to express it.

In his pamphlet, *How "Bigger" Was Born,* describing the conception and difficulties he encountered in the working out of *Native Son,* there is an interesting misreading of an anecdote about Lenin, which may be a key to Wright's outlook and to his subsequent alienation from the Communist Party. The story is of Lenin's walking with Maxim Gorky in London and pointing about him to say, "Here is *their* Big Ben." "There is *their* Westminster." Wright recalls how

> "at once, while reading that passage, my mind stopped, teased, challenged with the effort to remember, to associate widely disparate but

meaningful experiences in my life. For a moment nothing would come, but I remained convinced that I had heard the meaning of those words sometime, somewhere before. Then, with a sudden glow of satisfaction of having gained a little more knowledge about the world in which I lived, I'd ended up by saying: 'That's Bigger. That's the Bigger Thomas reaction.' In both instances the deep sense of exclusion was identical."

Now, that Lenin had the feeling of exclusion, the "Bigger Thomas reaction" which Wright ascribes to him, is in no way proved by the anecdote. What is clear, however, is that Wright has interpreted the story in a way that would satisfy his own psychological need. He sought in the Communist Party some mass political expression to escape the sense of isolation which he shared with Bigger. In addition, being a writer, he found a channel for objectifying his private conflicts through his characters. There were too many unconscious elements in the identification which Wright made with the Communist movement for him to be able to see it clearly; in the ambivalent feelings which were bound to arise from his misunderstanding, the seeds of disillusion were already planted. For if the Communist Party could not, in some way, be equated with Bigger Thomas, then it too would become part of the hostile world which denied Wright freedom of expression. The misreading of Lenin now appears as part of his drive to perpetuate his alienation as a supposed source of creative energy.

This is not the place to speculate at length on the reasons for Wright's disaffection, but they cannot be ignored if we are to account for his attempt to make the individual psychology of Bigger a symbol for the Negro people. Moreover, they are latent in Wright's handling of the young Communist, Jan Erlone, and Bigger's International Labor Defense lawyer, Boris Max.

The character of Jan is very sketchily drawn. His mistakes with Bigger, like his girl Mary's, are intended to enable us to appreciate Bigger's point of view. However, Bigger's automatic hostility loses a good deal of its force for the reader because Jan, through his awkward and insensitive overtures, provides him gratuitous provocation. When Jan, drunk, hands the sleepy Bigger a batch of pamphlets to read at once, and Mary says, "I'll see that he reads them," one suspects that the author is being as patronizing as his characters.

Jan is much more sensitively handled in the scene where he con-

fronts Bigger in jail after Bigger's killing of Mary, not to upbraid him but to offer him his friendship and help. He tells Bigger that while grieving for Mary he suddenly thought of "all the black men who've been killed, the black men who had to grieve when their people were snatched from them in slavery and since slavery. I thought that if they could stand it, then I ought to." And Bigger sees him as the first white man to become a human being to him: "a particle of white rock had detached itself from that looming mountain of white hate and had rolled down the slope, stopping still at his feet."

Yet, in introducing him to Max, Jan utters the irresponsible words that are to set the tone for the latter's fantastic defense of Bigger. When Bigger tells him that he does not believe in himself, Jan says, "You believed enough to kill. You thought you were settling something, or you wouldn't have killed." This, in its glorification of free-wheeling will power, sounds as though it came straight out of a Sartre play, a prophetic hint of Wright's recent stand. For, of course, Jan's reply is only secondarily an insight—and a questionable one—into Bigger's repressed motives. It is first of all Wright's fatal gift to the Negro people, his "revelation" that they must become what their oppressors say of them because their oppressors make them so. Is this generalization: We are all Biggers, a revolutionary slogan, as Wright would claim? No, it is more a drowning cry, as we shall learn from the lawyer's plea.

BORIS MAX is a deceptive figure, like all literary characters in whose conception contradictory impulses are at work. One is readily predisposed toward him for his warmth and his patient effort to arouse Bigger to a realization of his basic worth. He takes on Bigger's case aware of the widespread hatred he, a Jew and a Communist, will draw upon himself. He is fearless in the face of the prosecutor's bullying, and he does not hesitate at the coroner's hearing to violate "good taste" by accusing even Mary's father of responsibility for her death: "Now, Mr. Dalton, it has been said that you donate millions of dollars to educate Negroes. Why is it that you exact an exorbitant rent of eight dollars per week from the Thomas family for one unventilated rat-infested room in which four people eat and sleep?" Here he is on the offensive in the best tradition of the I.L.D., indicting the philanthropic hypocrites, uncovering the economic source of the crime of oppression,

and establishing the Communist Party as the leading organization in the Negro liberation struggle. This is the spirit of the Scottsboro defense, from which Max could have learned everything.

Instead, Max is possessed by the spirit of Richard Wright. He renounces a jury trial and throws Bigger upon the mercy of the judge, a strange act for someone who should above all understand the operation of class justice. He then pleads Bigger guilty of Mary's murder and rape, though Bigger did not rape Mary and killed her accidentally, in fear of being discovered in the bedroom to which he was forced to take Mary when she was drunk. Having written off Bigger's case as hopeless, he makes no effort to rouse mass support in his defense. Everything is made to hinge on the ability of the judge to be moved by Max's philosophical oration on the nature of the Negro people. In other words, everything hinges upon the false assumption of Bigger's guilt. Max's highest hope for him is life imprisonment!

Having abandoned Bigger on the practical plane, Max is ready for his grotesque "defense" of the Negro people, from which one would have to conclude that they are a nation of potential murderers whose condition is an accomplished and overwhelming fact of life. (In wanting to show that injustice is an inadequate word to describe what has been done to the Negro people, Max forgets that injustice, too, has been done. Intellectual vanity precludes such simple formulations.) "Multiply Bigger Thomas twelve million times, allowing for environmental and temperamental variations, and for those Negroes who are completely under the influence of the church, and you have the psychology of the Negro people." Just before Max says this he has made a great point of Bigger's acceptance of "the crime. . . . It was the first full act of his life; it was the most meaningful, exciting and stirring thing that had ever happened to him. He accepted it because it made him free, gave him the possibility of choice, of action, the opportunity to act and to feel that his actions carried weight."

Max goes on to describe the killing of Mary and Bigger's girl, Bessie, as examples of acts of creation on the part of a people who, "feeling the capacity to be, to live, to act, to pour out the spirit of their souls into concrete and objective form with a high fervor of their *racial characteristics* [my italics, C.H.] . . . glide through our complex civilization like wailing ghosts . . ." incapable of love, potential in crimes even though they may never commit them, their very existence a crime

against the state, as Max says of Bigger's life, though it is obvious that the existence of the capitalist state is really the basic crime.

It is almost inconceivable that this defamation should have passed as a profound apologia for the Negro people. Let us assume at best that Wright had said to himself, "I will take the worst slanders against my people and turn even these against their oppressors; I shall accuse them of fostering what they abhor." We should still have to ask: Why must one play that game; would it not be wiser to attack the lie instantly? To show that all life and all the heroes of Negro history disprove it? But for Wright these slanders *are* the fact; he is only concerned to find a subtle explanation for them, some super-revolutionary mystique of violence to frighten the bourgeoisie. (Actually, Wright's prophecy is an open invitation to terror against the Negro people. That is its objective role.)

Given the use to which Wright has put Max, the final scene between Bigger and the lawyer is a curious one. Bigger tries to put into his own words what Max has said of him in court. In doing so, he stirs up in Max all the things that should have been said. Max is horrified and helpless. Is it because he senses his mistake? In a rush of speech he gives Bigger a glimpse of social reality, the class struggle, the meaning of his life and impending death, and the ultimate victory in which Bigger cannot take part: "Who will win? Well, the side that feels life most, the side with the most humanity and the most men." But now it is too late for Bigger to grasp what Max wants to tell him. He falls back upon the delusion which Jan and Max fostered in him, that his desire to kill meant that he was restored to life. At this Max looks at him in terror. Does Max not judge himself? It is his fault that Bigger must die without knowing more, perhaps that he must die at all.

It is very late for the reader, too. Having heard twelve million people relegated to the realm of abnormal psychology, he is asked suddenly to consider the possibility that their Long March toward freedom may have something in common with other great revolutionary struggles. Since none of these could have been or can be won without true creativity, immense constructive vision, intellectual effort and positive emotion—all of which the Negro people display so abundantly in their life and history—one must ask why Wright waited so long to suggest that Bigger's feelings represent a distortion of his creative

impulses, and cannot be a direct expression of them. At the same time we must absolutely reject the symbol which Max has tried to make of him.

WHEN *Native Son* appeared, it was reviewed in the *Daily Worker* by Benjamin J. Davis (April 14, 1940). His criticism, to which I am indebted, was regarded by some readers and writers as too narrowly political, disparaging to a great talent. On the contrary, Davis treated the book with the careful attention due a serious and powerful work, with much greater perception, in fact, than did those who could not see or wanted to overlook its grave flaws. This enabled him to catch the destructive trends in Wright's thinking at the time of his proudest achievement. Those of us who have used hindsight to arrive at a similar estimate of Wright's book can learn more than we thought from Davis' ideological approach, which honors the writer most by demanding most of him.

The second and concluding installment of this article will appear next month. Mr. Humboldt will discuss the following novels: Jake Home, *by Ruth McKenney;* The Judas Time, *by Isidor Schneider;* Clarkton, *by Howard Fast;* Home Is The Sailor, *by Beth McHenry and Frederick N. Myers;* Grand Crossing *and* The Great Midland, *by Alexander Saxton; and will present his overall conclusions.*

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MILLENNIUMS

Martin Andersen Nexo

ON JUNE 26 the great proletarian writer, Martin Andersen Nexö, will be eighty years old. His life of struggle and creation began in 1869 in the slums of Copenhagen, "the city of hunger" as his mother called it. Martin was the fourth of eleven children born to Hans Jorgen Andersen, a stone cutter, and his wife Matilde who helped support the family by working as scrubwoman and pushcart peddler.

A frail and nervous child, he barely survived the poverty and wretchedness of his early life; "until nearly forty, I don't think I was ever entirely well a single day." At the age of seven he taught himself to read by figuring out street signs. His family moved to the town of Nexö on the island of Bornholm from which he took his name. When he was twelve he went to work as a farm laborer; later he worked for six years as a shoemaker's apprentice, then as factory worker and hodcarrier. The first great turning point in his life came on a construction job where he met a German worker "who was an ardent Internationalist and awakened my proletarian class consciousness."

In 1892 the widow of the poet Molbach took an interest in Martin and sent him to the Aksov Folk High School; he became a teacher and devoted his evenings to writing poems and sketches about the life of the working people of Bornholm. He wrote several novels before *Pelle the Conqueror* (1910) brought him world fame. Then came the trilogy describing the life of a peasant girl: *Ditte: Girl Alive!, Ditte: Daughter of Man* and *Ditte: Towards the Stars.*

Pelle the Conqueror, which Randolph Bourne called "one of the great novels of the world," is the story of two workers, Pelle and his friend Morten. Largely autobiographical, the novel mirrors the struggles of the Danish working-class movement before the turn of the century.

Nexö's new novel, *Morten the Red* (to be published here in the Fall by Gaer Associates), was begun under the Nazi occupation of his homeland during which the writer was put into a concentration camp.

A sequel to *Pelle,* it follows the careers of the two men as they grow more mature and take an active part in political life. Pelle becomes a professional politician, a typical Social-Democratic opportunist. Morten remains loyal to the working class; he grows disillusioned with his friend and with Social-Democracy and becomes a Communist.

We are happy to present in this issue a recent statement by Nexö on this theme.

Nexö at the Wroclaw Conference

MORE than half a century has passed since Martin Andersen Nexö decided to devote his life to the cause of the working class and its historic goal: "I want everything, from the dust to the highest heavens—for everybody." He stood with Gorky and O'Casey, a giant champion of the infant Soviet Republic when the hammers and sickles first broke through the tsarist chains and cleared the way for socialism. He fought in the front ranks against the Fascist terror; ten years ago in *New Masses* he wrote: "Nobody has the right to rid himself of the thought of what is awaiting humanity if this bastard offspring of the sergeant spirit . . . is permitted to subjugate the world."

Nor is he resting now. The Braunhaus is rubble, but in the Pentagon a new world war is being mapped; a Cannon speaks in Congress. And as this is written the unconquerable voice of Martin Andersen Nexö is raised in Paris—calling out for peace, for brotherhood—"for everybody."

Together with the millions around the globe who know and love this grand old man we say: *Happy birthday, Comrade Nexö!*

—THE EDITORS.

To a Social-Democrat

(An Open Letter to a Dutch Worker)

by MARTIN ANDERSEN NEXO

DEAR FRIEND:

First of all, my thanks for your good letter. I am very glad that you have seen the film based on my novel *Ditte, Child of Man,* and that you like it so much. But the credit for the film belongs entirely to the young couple Astrid and Bjarne Henning-Jensen, who created the film as directors in spite of Hollywood-like pressures, and stuck to it through thick and thin, like the incorruptible comrades they are. So far as I am concerned, the film is merely an illustration to a novel I have written; but it is due to these two young directors of genius that the film about Ditte reproduces daily life unprettified, and for that reason has become something of a world success. So healthy the general public steadfastly remains, in spite of all!

You call the movie proletarian, and it is quite certainly forbidden in the United States; but just the same I find this definition rather fluid. The tavern-keeper in the fishing village is certainly a valid representative of all-grasping capitalism, but neither Lars Peter nor the other fishermen are what we understand by proletarians. They let themselves be exploited and enslaved by the tavern-keeper without protesting, even—it may be—without finding anything wrong in all this. They accept everything patiently and piously. They are pre-proletarians; are still intellectually on the old, pre-Marxist evangelical level. In everything relating to the movement of the under-class they are completely illiterate, whereas the common man, in order to deserve the name of proletarian, must be militant, a fighter against all exploitation, whether it be of white, black or yellow men.

It seems to me that in your conception of what constitutes the proletariat you have fallen into this same cult of ignorance and evangelical piety, perhaps without being aware of it yourself. For otherwise you would hardly have called me a fellow Party member in your letter.

We are certainly contemporaries, but that is the extent of our fellowship. What is your position in regard to the bombardment of the Indonesian capital Jogjakarta? When Rotterdam was subjected eight years ago to an air attack, and thousands of innocent people were indiscriminately murdered, we both condemned that as inhuman, even bestial. But I find the bombardment of Jogjakarta just as bestial, and even more reprehensible. For at the bombardment of Rotterdam it was the dregs and scum of humanity which had free play and made use of their chance; here it is that movement which, more than any other, has assumed the role of guardian and defender of the innocent and defenseless, which now permits itself to go amok and murder indiscriminately. And you—where do you stand today, now that it is not Hitler who sends down his "devils of the air" to commit murder, but a Social-Democratic ministerial President? I am afraid that you are not sufficiently liberated as a human being, nor do you think sufficiently as a proletarian, to protest in behalf of our Indonesian friends. And I am grieved at the thought that you conceive of me as a Social-Democrat, as a fellow Party member, and hence as one who shares the guilt!

I was once a Social-Democrat, at the time when there was nothing to the left of the movement; when it went to the bottom of things and embraced precisely the interests of the lowliest and most oppressed. Now that the movement has cast overboard its only justification for existence—concern for the common people, the little folk—and has sold both itself and the people to those who wield and grasp for power, I have moved over to the left, where there still is room, because it is looked upon today as a No Man's Land, but where the future is at home. I have become a Communist! I have done so from a sense of decency and cleanliness. And because I am ashamed of what goes on inside Social-Democracy.

For a long time it had been my fairest dream to see the fraternal strife within the working-class movement resolved—until I realized that the division was not due to opposing points of view, but to the moral decay of one of the parties to it. "It would be easy enough to bring about a union," they have told us from your side. "You have only to give up your communism and come over to us, and then the problem will be solved!" But would it be a service to the working class if we also became aids to the Marshall Plan and helped to pour bombs on Rotterdam—I beg your pardon, Jogjakarta—in order to compel the natives to remain under the capitalist yoke?

We here in Denmark are also in the position, so comfortable for monopoly capitalism, of having a Social-Democratic government which cares for the peaceful development into—or rather, backwards to—the Middle Ages, in that it strictly follows the Marshall directives to lower the common people's living conditions at a feverish rate, and burdens them with heavy taxes and—by a policy that is imbecile from the people's point of view—drives them into threatening unemployment. Many of your fellow Party members can see that this is mad, but they excuse it by saying that it is happening in good faith, with the best intentions. But is this not the same as to give one's government a certificate of stupidity?

It is supposed to be an ameliorating circumstance that the evil imposed on a people is well intended, and for this reason one is to hold his tongue, keep silence and endure. And in the meantime things go as they do. Since the men proclaiming themselves for peaceful development have taken the wheel, unemployment and lack of housing have become chronic; the barracks thrown together during the First World War are still standing, and they are gradually thinking of throwing together some new ones, likewise "just temporarily." At the same time capable construction workers have no jobs and tile workers are unemployed. We can't contrive to get them working—or we won't! And not far from our very windows there lies a world we have been threatened and persuaded into spitting upon, because it sets us a good example: it is working full-handed and joyous, has freed itself of traitors, parasites and sloths, and is glad merely to be allowed to work in peace, without the need to exploit others.

THAT world of human beings has the allegiance of both my heart and my will. And now you come along and try to insinuate that I am a Marshallized Social-Democrat singing praises and hallelujahs to our insipid western world, with its lofty, well-cared-for lords and its servile career-minded misleaders of labor. That comes very close to being an insult!

But I do not take it too amiss from you; you yourself cannot help this. And I have no objection whatsoever to meeting you upon occasion. Whether that will happen in Holland is not easy to say, in view of my age. In any event, it would be amusing if we met on *proletarian* soil!

(*Translated from the Danish by Margaret Schlauch*)

right face

TOUGH LIFE

"TOKYO—Emperor Hirohito turned his hand at a menial task today. He shoveled dirt around three cyprus trees he planted in the Hakone national forest at the foot of Fujiyama. Then the Emperor climbed into his maroon Mercedes-Benz limousine and motored to the imperial villa at Numazu for a rest."—*From the Dayton (Ohio)* Daily News.

. . . THE HAND THAT FEEDS ONE

"MINEOLA, L. I.—*Gaines Gwathmey Jr., Wall Street customers' man, pleaded guilty in First District Court to biting the thumb of Joseph F. Zanio, a waiter in the Wheatley Hills Tavern in Westbury.*"—From the New York *Times.*

JUNGLE

"CHICAGO—The roaring of lions and trumpeting of elephants in Linne Woods, the forest preserve west of Evanston, after dark Saturday evening were a signal that the Maurice Stans' hunting party was in progress. It started at the Stans' home. . . . The hosts wore the 'bush' khakis they broke in on their safari in Kenya Colony, British East Africa, this spring . . . surrounded by trophies of the hunt, guests saw a colored moving picture record of the trip. . . . After the movies guests were supplied with helmets and guns (Army surplus!) and transported by truck to the forest preserve. There they hunted for the camp site, to the tune of off-stage animal sound effects. Negro boys, in leopard skins, tended the camp fire where the zebra roast (or a roast beef facsimile) was prepared."—*From the society page of the Chicago* Daily News.

MARXIST SCHOLAR

"I think socialism means a belief that the Government should operate certain industries. To me it seems a rather inefficient, unattractive, wasteful, and unproductive way of doing things which the nations of Europe have been fond of for almost one hundred years now. I do not think Karl Marx said anything about socialism."—From a speech by Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., of Massachusetts (*Congressional Record*).

WEST COAST REPORT

Lessons from Longshoremen

by HENRY KRAUS

AFTER the welcoming speeches and other preliminaries had been squared away at the biennial convention of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union recently held in San Francisco, President Harry Bridges called up the secretary of the rules committee, Charles (Chili) Duarte, a warehouseman from Oakland.

Rules of procedure are traditional in most organizations and given rather perfunctory attention. But Duarte had not gone far in his reading when the delegates began sitting up, exchanging amazed looks, and by the time he had finished, a dozen of them were on their feet, yelling protests. Among these were James Kearney of San Francisco, opposition wheelhorse, and other critics of the Bridges administration. This was a new one! No matter how sharply certain members might have heretofore differed with Bridges, never had he tried to choke off the expression of their views. What kind of totalitarian deviltry was this?

Two of the procedural proposals especially were stormed at. One of them, on rollcall votes, would require the consent of thirty per cent of the voting strength of the convention before such ballots could be taken. The other in effect did away with minority committee reports since it ruled that the majority recommendation must be discussed and voted on before any other proposals could be considered. Meanwhile, as the delegates heatedly voiced their opposition, in the background on the platform Bridges strode back and forth in his highstrung way, his tight lips curved in a Cheshire-cat grin.

Finally, Frank Andrews, a huge longshoreman from Olympia, Washington, the chairman of the rules committee, took the mike. "These rules were copied word for word from the Portland C.I.O. convention,"

he announced somberly; then his voice rising steadily to a roar: "Some of you guys have been yapping about wanting national C.I.O. policy. There's national C.I.O. policy for you. Go ahead and live with it!"

Bridges resumed the chair and brought the convention back to reality. "We can appreciate a joke." And he called on the committee to return and read the "real I.L.W.U. rules," which provided for roll-calls at the request of a mere twenty-five delegates and for minority committee reports to be given priority on the convention floor. Nor were these the only safeguards assuring freedom of expression since, soon after, according to the unique I.L.W.U. procedure, all appointed committees were declared open for volunteers from the floor. Many additions were registered in this manner; in one case fifteen delegates added their names to the original committee of ten.

The rules committee's ironic horseplay set the stage for the basic issue to come before the convention, one which was to reappear a dozen times in as many different forms: the question of freedom of thought and expression, or "autonomy" according to trade-union terminology. Hardly an intramural question! Involved was the I.L.W.U.'s contention that the C.I.O. has been following a calculated policy of invading the democratic rights of its affiliated groups. The underlying intention, according to the I.L.W.U., is the establishment of rigid control of the organization by a few top leaders.

The deeper content of this contest is of course political and economic. Though the I.L.W.U. argument holds that recent changes in C.I.O. rules are of a nature to make impossible *any* type of opposition in the future, the present controversy has assumed a very definite form. The purpose of progressive unions like I.L.W.U. is to keep alive the voice of opposition to the now clearly defined political goal of national C.I.O. leadership: to line up the organization behind the foreign policy of the State Department. Marshall Plan a Wall Street maneuver? C.I.O. Secretary James Carey demanded recently. Nonsense! This policy originated with labor.

The intra-C.I.O. debate, which had been going on quietly for some years, erupted into the open a year ago over the question of the endorsement of Henry Wallace. The national C.I.O. after being abandoned by its hopefuls, General Eisenhower and Justice Douglas, went all-out to line up votes for President Truman. Orders to this effect were sent to all city and state councils, a majority of which complied. However, several councils in bigger cities demurred. Yet, rather than

choosing to come into direct conflict with the national leadership, these councils adopted the procedure of making no endorsement for the Presidency, in effect allowing the various affiliated local unions to reach their own decisions.

The national C.I.O. chose, nevertheless, to consider this a slap at its authority. Aided by right-wing affiliates, it took over the administration of councils in New York, Cleveland, Detroit and, most recently, Los Angeles. But the process did not stop there. Accompanying it was a two-pronged attack at the chief source of non-conformist strength: the Left- and progressive-led internationals. Raids of these groups by other C.I.O. units were encouraged while opposition and secession movements created havoc from within. A majority of the right-wing affiliates lent themselves to this wolfish activity.

At the Portland, Oregon, national C.I.O. convention in November, 1948, the right-wing leadership, flushed with the Truman victory, proceeded to take steps to obliterate the opposition. Aided by an atmosphere of terror, constantly filliped by President Murray himself, free discussion on issues of moment was squashed, speakers representing important unions were hooted at and Jew-baited, and the subject of raiding—"liberation movement," the Right called it—was not even allowed on the floor. On the contrary, the procedure was formalized, the first victim designated being the Farm Equipment Workers, which was ordered by the succeeding session of the C.I.O. Executive Board to join the United Auto Workers within sixty days or incur punitive action.

Seen against this backdrop, the great meaning of the I.L.W.U. convention and its emphasis on autonomy seems to be a solemn decision of the C.I.O. progressives to fight back. The Farm Equipment Workers at its own convention held in March had already underlined the same determination, with the Right minority uniting with the Left in unanimously turning down the C.I.O. ukase and re-electing the union's progressive leadership by acclamation. Though not yet faced by as direct a challenge of its self-rule as the F.E.W., the I.L.W.U., knowing that such a threat might not be too far off, decided to put the matter at the very head of its convention agenda.

The contest between I.L.W.U. and national C.I.O. meshed with a

struggle that has been going on for some time within the I.L.W.U., between the officials and their majority following on the one hand and a vociferous minority, led by adherents of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (A.C.T.U.), on the other. The subject matter for the test could not have been better chosen. Autonomy—the right to speak one's mind—is one of the cardinal principles of this union, a faith that if the right of free expression is firmly maintained, the working membership will inevitably find the correct answers to their problems.

The attachment of the I.L.W.U. rank and file to the right of free speech must be witnessed to be appreciated. Here it is as it was presented by one delegate, John Maletta, Seattle longshoreman:

> "At the last election my two daughters—they go to Catholic school —came home and said the sisters wanted to know how I was going to vote. I told them: 'Wait a minute! You go right back and tell those sisters to go to hell. It's none of their damn business how I vote.' When I went to Catholic school we didn't talk about politics. We talked about the church and the Lord. I told my daughters if I heard any more of that kind of talk I was going to take them out of that school and *disaffiliate* from the church."

The great debate on autonomy was set to start on the second day of the convention. Bridges announced that the press would be cleared from the hall and the rules were suspended to allow for unlimited discussion. It lasted two full days. C.I.O. President Murray had been invited to attend and present his views but he sent in his place a trio of representatives: R. J. Thomas, former president of the U.A.W.; Tim Flynn, North California C.I.O. director; and Adolph Germer, freelance handyman for the national C.I.O. office. These representatives, while insisting that the autonomy matter was a "phony issue," spent several hours defending actions of the national leadership. The chief burden of their argument was that the I.L.W.U. was not involved in any of the disciplinary decisions of the C.I.O., that these had to do with rebellious city and state councils which had to conform to national policy because "how could you operate if you had 300 different policies?" This was tantamount to asking a longshoreman to have one opinion as a member of his union and another as, say, a delegate to a C.I.O. city council.

ON THE west coast this question has an immediate urgency since the C.I.O. has started with the Los Angeles council in "reorganizing" the rebellious delegated bodies of California along the most rigid lines. One rule of the new setup holds that council officers must recommend "favorable action" to all local affiliates on any policy of national C.I.O. "Any officer who refuses to carry out national C.I.O. policy or who makes public utterances against C.I.O. policy shall resign. Failing to resign, he shall be removed. . . ." While giving token assurances that the autonomy of local unions will be "preserved," the concrete working-out of the new arrangement was foreshadowed in the reply of Richard T. Leonard, a C.I.O. representative, to a question of what would happen in case a delegate to the council made a motion to table some recommendation of the C.I.O. "The presiding officer of the council would not entertain such a motion," Leonard answered. Further abridgement of democratic choice was a sort of "loyalty check" provision in the new constitution, forbidding endorsement for office of candidates "who are consistent supporters, or who actively participate in the activities of the Communist Party or any Fascist, totalitarian, or other subversive organization. . . ."

The C.I.O. argument that the councils are in effect nothing but a rubber stamp to national decisions strikes at the very core of trade-union democracy. As was pointed out by President Bridges and others, the C.I.O. itself was founded in a revolt against "national policy" when the internationals in the A.F.L. favoring industrial unionism were outvoted two to one at the Atlantic City 1935 convention. More to the point for the particular issue is the fact that at this convention a count of delegates from city and state councils, each casting one vote, showed a majority balloting in favor of the industrial union resolution! It was an enormously significant indication that the rank-and-file A.F.L. members were not in sympathy with the reactionary viewpoint of the officers of the big internationals who had cast the deciding votes at the convention. Yet this singular medium of checking on decisions of the national leadership and of gauging the true sentiments of the rank and file is now being jettisoned by the C.I.O.

In his peroration to the longshoremen, R. J. Thomas abandoned logic and persuasion to issue an amazing provocation, which was given flaring headlines by the press: "In view of the complaints and criticism of C.I.O. policy voiced here, what are you doing in the C.I.O.? If the

C.I.O. is such a poor organization why the hell don't you get out?"

But the I.L.W.U. leaders and delegates refused to pick up this gauntlet. The C.I.O. was their organization—they had fought for it, they had bled for it—not the possession of any official to give or take away. "Who in hell built the C.I.O. on the west coast?" Secretary Louis Goldblatt demanded. He listed the various battles in which the I.L.W.U. had led, calling the names of men sitting in the audience who had participated, right-wing and left-wing both. No union had given as much in men and money toward helping in the struggles of other unions. As far as money, the sum quoted was $225,000—an impressive amount for a union with only 65,000 members and which has had plenty of tough battles of its own to finance. Goldblatt asserted:

> "Let's get this clear. We are staying in C.I.O. Even if we disagree we will take our chance in C.I.O. When we were in the A.F.L. we took a whipping but we did not leave. We stayed and fought for the Committee for Industrial Organization. We fought for labor unity. We stayed and it finally took the suspension of five A.F.L. charters to get us out. . . ."

THE distinguishing feature of the two-day debate was not, however, these exchanges of the bigwigs. It was the extraordinary documentation that was given the I.L.W.U. thesis of C.I.O. interference by rank-and-file delegates, over thirty of whom participated. James Moore, of Local 209, Cleveland, told how his local had been ordered to hand over its mail-order house members to the Retail and Wholesale Workers. He went on:

> "There has not been a single local union election in the city of Cleveland in the last year during the course of which the C.I.O. regional director has not gone into the local, set up so-called right-wing caucuses and used his authority and his expense account to elect a union slate subservient to the policies laid down by C.I.O."

And Andrew Nelson, Local 207, New Orleans, a Negro leader, told how his members had acquired the courage to speak out their minds through the example of I.L.W.U.:

> "I don't want to be hushed up. The C.I.O. council in New Orleans

hadn't had a meeting in six months but after the question of Truman's endorsement came up they called a meeting in a big hurry. I was told 'Truman has been endorsed.' The vote was taken without the question even being called. I said I wanted to speak for the local which I represented. They said, 'Throw him out—he supported Wallace.' "

James L. Howard, a fatherly delegate from Local 218, Dallas, further documented the charge of C.I.O. interference with I.L.W.U., which had resulted in the virtual wiping out of his local: a reduction from 700 to sixty members. He turned to the platform and with extended finger dramatically singled out Tim Flynn, formerly representative for the C.I.O. in Texas, as the one responsible for the ejection of an I.L.W.U. delegate from the Dallas C.I.O. council.

". . . the council meeting was stacked for the purpose of throwing out our representative. I know because I was sitting beside him when six men grabbed him and started out with him. . . . A representative of P.A.C. was one of the instigators of the action against Meske. Meske asked to speak against a C.I.O. resolution. He was allowed three minutes. When he got through, Ellinger got on the floor and said a Communist was in the crowd. Who is he to say whether Meske or I are Communists because we take the right to get on the floor and state our side? . . ."

As the debate raged, the absent press built it up as a major onslaught on the Bridges leadership. James Kearney, president of the big San Francisco longshore Local 10 to which Bridges himself belongs, was played up as the heroic triple-threat man that was tweaking the I.L.W.U. president's long nose. Kearney, a member of the violently anti-Communist A.C.T.U., had been working for some time with the national C.I.O. in helping to foster a "boring from within" program inside the I.L.W.U.

The two-day debate on the resolution asserting the I.L.W.U. determination to "stand fast on its autonomy . . . despite national C.I.O. efforts to attack and penalize our union . . ." drew to a close. James Kearney asked for a roll call vote and ordered his delegation—which included Bridges and Germaine Bulcke, second vice president—outside the hall to caucus. Meanwhile, the poll proceeded. It proved an amaz-

ing demonstration of solidarity. Louder and louder grew the cheers greeting each successive announcement. As local after local rose to cast its unanimous ballot in favor of the resolution, the C.I.O. spokesmen on the platform could see among them a number of delegates who had originally spoken against it and who had evidently been convinced by the debate that democracy in the C.I.O. was at hazard and had to be fought for if it was to be saved. The nucleus of opposition which the C.I.O. had painstakingly sought to create inside the union faded almost visibly as the vote was clocked.

With the poll completed, except for Kearney's group, only one local, Ship's Clerks No. 34, led by A.C.T.U.-er Tom Kelly, had given votes in opposition, five votes going for the resolution, five against. The Local 10 delegates returned. Kearney asked that they be called individually to the mike. It was a moment of great tension. But after the first four delegates had voted "Yes," the convention broke into thunderous applause. With Bridges and Bulcke making the "pro-I.L.W.U." vote nine, Kearney's lone "No" left him high and dry in isolation, booed to the rafters, an opposition leader without a following. The final total reads: 613½ to 11½.

THE convention's overwhelming decision on trade-union democracy did not of course designate the actual lineup on all issues. The vote on a resolution condemning the C.I.O. for pulling out of the World Federation of Trade Unions and calling on the I.L.W.U. to take steps to reaffiliate with the W.F.T.U. carried by 564 to 59. That on foreign policy—calling for disarmament and peace, condemning the Marshall Plan for lowering the standards of European workers and returning Nazis to power in Germany and which saw in the Atlantic Pact "a departure from the United Nations"—was adopted, 513 to 115. The resolution on political action which "reaffirmed and continued" the policy of the I.L.W.U. of allowing locals "full autonomy" on such issues met only the opposition of James Kearney, who wanted included a condemnation of the officers for having supported Henry Wallace.

The debate on all important issues revealed an unfailing characteristic of this union to relate all such matters to "pork chops": i.e., what is of concrete benefit to the rank and file. The Marshall Plan? It had put 40,000 maritime and waterfront workers on the beach. Relations with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe? The

I.L.W.U. had approached this question too in a typical fashion by sending four rank-and-file members to Europe to have a look for themselves. The trip took three months, cost $15,000 and covered all the major European countries, east and west. And the findings of the delegation, quite different from the reports in the commercial press, were available at the convention in a 100-page booklet, well-written, documented, dispassionate.

Similarly, in the discussion on the W.F.T.U. resolution, Delegate Bodine of the Portland longshore local told of his assignment during the strike of contacting waterfront unions in foreign countries urging them not to handle cargo in scab-laden ships. All W.F.T.U. unions replied promptly in the affirmative, he reported. But the Dutch unions did not answer at all and the British unions sent sympathy but pleaded that they could not "jeopardize their contracts." Bodine went on:

> "And the dockworkers of Haifa port in Israel also replied. They said, 'Our country is at war. The supplies we receive mean life and death to us. However, rest assured that if any scab ship gets through to this port, we will not unload it.' . . ."

On the economic level, the union was able to propose a more direct test of the correctness of its policies: What had they accomplished for the rank and file? Had other unions with conflicting policies produced more? On the record, it is undeniable that the contract won by the I.L.W.U. as a result of the 1948 longshore strike is a magnificent one. Fifteen-cent raise; hiring hall preserved despite the Taft-Hartley ban; grievance procedure streamlined; two-year contract with yearly wage-reopening clauses; and a variety of lesser gains. The boost in pay was the *fourth round* for I.L.W.U., making it one of the few major unions to force this concession as yet, and bringing the total of wage increases since V-J Day to sixty-seven cents, tops for any union in the country. "Only one union has won more than we have," Bridges summed up, "and that's the United Mine Workers." And for this record he credited primarily the uncompromising manner in which both the I.L.W.U. and the U.M.W. had fought the Taft-Hartley law.

Subjected to contrasting ridicule were the current economic fantasies of Walter Reuther which have to a considerable degree become the offi-

cial theory of the C.I.O. Particularly criticized were such concepts as the tying of wages to productivity, of holding that wage levels have hit their peak and of seeking to substitute pensions for pay raises. (I.L.W.U.'s position on pensions, welfare plans, etc.: They are "things you have earned and you don't have to swap these things for wage increases.") The disastrous consequences of Reuther's doctrine are already becoming evident in such items as the General Motors wage cut, put through according to contract in the face of the greatest profit in the corporation's history. Every one of GM's 250,000 workers could have received $1,000 more in 1948 and the company still would have netted $200 million. Moreover, a speedup drive, unparalleled since pre-union days, is sweeping through the industry. Heretofore ignored by the union leadership, it is meeting with the spontaneous resistance of the rank and file, who have further signalized their discontent by overturning the Reuther leadership in a number of important locals in the recent elections.

The I.L.W.U. says: "The need for wage increases is greater now than ever." Also: "We will fight for wage increases to the limit of our bargaining power." The question is to the fore in the big 16,000-strong San Francisco warehouse local and especially in the Hawaiian locals of I.L.W.U., where wages are as much as forty-two cents an hour lower than on the mainland. A strike has consequently begun on the Islands.

ORGANIZED only in recent years, the Hawaiian I.L.W.U. membership has already reached 25,000 and takes in a wide sweep of the insular industry. The economic gains of these locals, enormous though they have been, are secondary to their political and social accomplishments. Most important perhaps has been the legal battle growing out of the big sugar and pineapple strikes of 1946 and 1947 which brought an epoch-making decision of a special three-man federal court holding unconstitutional the Hawaiian feudalistic system of justice that dated from the year 1715. The repressive assembly and riot acts were voided and the old grand jury system was ordered reorganized. Some of the arguments repeated by the court may well have repercussions in similar cases in this country. For example:

"There was evidence . . . from which we find that 84 per cent

of the persons who were selected and listed for grand jury service in 1947 came from the ranks of the employer-entrepreneur group and their salaried (non-labor) employees. The record demonstrates also that all other groups in the community, including labor, had approximately but a 16 per cent representation. . . . But male laborers in Maui County comprised approximately 79 per cent of the total male population. . . ."

The Hawaiian court case was a splendid illustration of the alert and aggressive policy of the I.L.W.U. on civil liberties, once more enunciated by the convention. Asserting that "labor history is full of attempts by reactionary interests to undermine unions by attacking civil liberties," the delegates noted that "I.L.W.U. has had at least its share of such attacks." Further: "The drive to deport Bridges was billed as a drive to deport a radical alien; while in fact it was an attempt to rid the Pacific Coast of one of its most effective trade union leaders."

Naming many of the leading victims of the present hysteria, the resolution goes on unequivocally: "The I.L.W.U. has a stake in all these cases. . . . We must fight militantly to protect the civil liberties of Communists because the destruction of civil liberties for any group threatens their destruction for all groups. In the same way we fight and protest against lynchings and other attacks on the Negro people wherever they occur, because such attacks necessarily destroy the solidarity and sap the strength of our union which is based upon nondiscrimination and the unity of all minorities."

With the near-unanimous adoption of this resolution, the I.L.W.U. voted in effect to merge its own battle within C.I.O. for democratic control with the nationwide struggle of all people of good will against the dangerous surge of repression. In the conquest of the traditional American freedoms, labor has always stood in the front ranks. The I.L.W.U., together with a few other unions like it, is fighting to keep its place there.

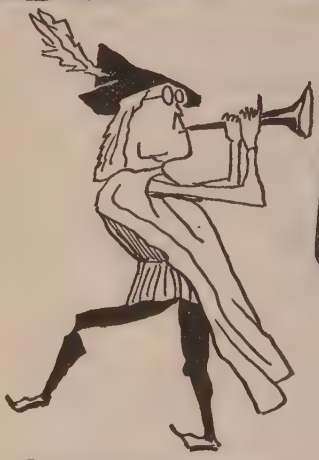
THE LUTE

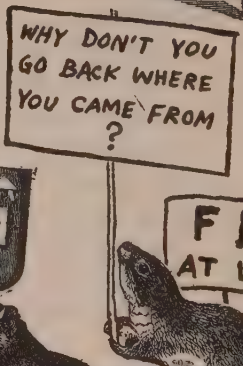
by MILLEN BRAND

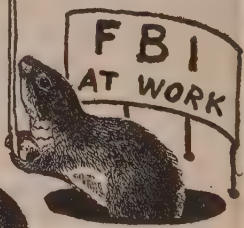
Before he went to Germany
Dr. Johnson read "all the lyrics"
of Goethe—the walk to Tiefurt—
the façade of the Opera House—
love, splendor, dream.
Who knows if, in a lyric pause,
he thought of Menno Simons
who wrote about such as himself:
"Called hedge preachers and heretics,
our recompense is fire, the sword, and death.
When others are entertained with the lute,
we fear that the catchpolls are at hand,
hearing the dogs bark." The question
of the "entertainment" of the lute
broken by the bark of the world
is troubling. The singing lute
is close and dear, into the listening ear,
and yet it is strong in its thin strings.
The whole man with his fear,
his suffering and his iron—
the real world out of "occasioned verse"—
pieces out the net of wire.
That trembling wire in its time
has caged the howling dogs
and comforted the tiring heretics.

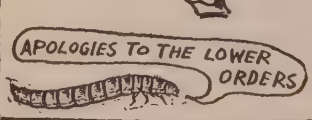
"The Lute" is from a book of poems, called *Local Lives*, which Millen Brand is doing about a Pennsylvania German community. The minister of the poem prepared for his calling by a long period of study abroad, then took a pastorate in the local Mennonite church, the "plain sect" founded by Menno Simons, a follower of Luther.

ON SAFARI WITH HARARI









NEWS ITEM: When asked who would be the next witness in the trial of the 11 Communist leaders, Prosecutor McGohey replied: "We will present a variety of witnesses."

I Would Remember

A Story by CARLOS BULOSAN

I FIRST saw death when I was a small boy in the little village where I was born. It was a cool summer night and the sky was as clear as day and the ripening rice fields were golden in the moonlight. I remember that I was looking out the window and listening to the sweet mating calls of wild birds in the tall trees near by when I heard my mother scream from the dark corner of the room where she had been lying for several days because she was big with child. I ran to her to see what was going on, but my grandmother darted from somewhere in the faint candlelight and held me close to the warm folds of her cotton skirt.

My mother was writhing and kicking frantically at the old woman who was attending her, but when the child was finally delivered and cleaned I saw that my mother was frothing at the mouth and slowly becoming still. She opened her eyes and tried to look for me in the semi-darkness, as though she had something important to tell me. Then she closed her eyes and lay very still.

My grandmother took me to the field at the back of our house and we sat silently under the bending stalks of rice for hours and once, when I looked up to push away the heavy grain that was tickling my neck, I saw the fleeting shadow of a small bird across the sky followed by a big bat. The small bird disappeared in the periphery of moonlight and darkness, shrieking fiercely when the bat caught up with it somewhere there beyond the range of my vision. Then I thought of my mother who had just died and my little brother who was born to take her place, but my thoughts of him created a terror inside me and when my grandmother urged me to go back to the house I burst into tears and clutched desperately at two huge stalks of rice so that she could not pull me away. My father came to the field then and carried me gently in his arms, and I clung tightly to him as though he alone could assuage my grief and protect me from all the world.

I could not understand why my mother had to die. I could not understand why my brother had to live. I was fearful of the motives of the living and the meaning of their presence on the earth. And I felt that my little brother, because he had brought upon my life a terrorizing grief, would be a stranger to me forever and ever. It was my first encounter with death; so great was its impress on my thinking that for years I could not forget my mother's pitiful cries as she lay dying.

MY SECOND encounter with death happened when I was ten years old. My father and I were plowing, in the month of May. It was raining hard that day and our only working carabao was tired and balked at moving. This animal and I grew up together like brothers; he was my constant companion in the fields and on the hillsides at the edge of our village when the rice was growing.

My father, who was a kind and gentle man, started beating him with sudden fury. I remember that there was a frightening thunderclap somewhere in the world, and I looked up suddenly toward the eastern sky and saw a wide arc of vanishing rainbow. It was then that my father started beating our carabao mercilessly. The animal jumped from the mud and ran furiously across the field, leaving the wooden plow stuck in the trunk of a large dead tree. My father unsheathed his sharp bolo and raced after him, the thin blade of the steel weapon gleaming in the slanting rain. At the edge of a deep pit where we burned fallen trees and huge roots, the carabao stopped and looked back; but sensing the anger of my father, he plunged headlong into the pit. I could not move for a moment, then I started running madly toward the pit.

My father climbed down the hole and looked at the carabao with tears in his eyes. I do not know if they were tears of sadness or of repressed fury. But when I had climbed down after him, I saw big beads of sweat rolling down his forehead, mingling with his tears and soaking his already wet ragged farmer's clothes. The carabao had broken all his legs and he was trembling and twisting in the bottom of the pit. When my father raised the bolo in his hand to strike at the animal, I turned away and pressed my face in the soft embankment. Then I heard him hacking at the animal, grunting and cursing in the heavy rain.

When I looked again the animal's head was completely severed from the body, and warm blood was flowing from the trunk and making

a red pool under our feet. I wanted to strike my father, but instead, fearing and loving him, I climbed out of the pit quickly and ran through the blinding rain to our house.

TWICE now I had witnessed violent deaths. I came across death again some years afterward on a boat when, on my way to America, I befriended a fellow passenger of my age named Marco.

He was an uneducated peasant boy from the northern part of our island who wanted to earn a little money in the new land and return to his village. It seemed there was a girl waiting for him when he came back, and although she was also poor and uneducated Marco found happiness in her small brown face and simple ways. He showed me a faded picture of her and ten dollars he had saved up to have it enlarged when we arrived in the new land.

Marco had a way of throwing back his head and laughing loudly, the way peasants do in that part of the island. But he was quick and sensitive; anger would suddenly appear in his dark face, then fear, and then laughter again; and sometimes all these emotions would simultaneously appear in his eyes, his mouth, his whole face. Yet he was sincere and honest in whatever he did or said to me.

I got seasick the moment we left Manila, and Marco started hiding oranges and apples in his suitcase for me. Fruits were the only things I could eat, so in the dead of night when the other passengers were sleeping Marco would creep stealthily in the dark and open his suitcase. He would come to my bed and wake me up, watching over me while I ate the juicy oranges and sweet apples. When we neared Honolulu, I became better and could climb up to the deck.

I was half-awake one night when Marco jumped from his bunk and started grappling with a shadow nearby. I heard the other passengers stirring in their bunks and peering through the dark to see what was going on. I sat up. Suddenly there was a scream and someone shouted for the light. I ran to the corner and clicked the switch and when the room was flooded with light, I saw Marco lying on the floor and bleeding from several knife wounds on his body. I knelt beside him, but for a moment only, because he held my hands tightly and died. I looked at the people around me and then asked them to help me carry the body to a more comfortable place. When the steward came down to make an inventory of Marco's suitcase, the ten dollars was gone. We shipped back the suitcase, but I kept the picture of the girl.

I arrived in America when thousands of people were waiting in lines for a piece of bread. I kept on moving from town to town, from one filthy job to another, and then many years were gone. I even lost the girl's picture and for a while forgot Marco and my village.

I MET Crispin in Seattle in the coldest winter of my life. He had just arrived in the city from somewhere in the east and he had no place to stay. I took him to my small room and for days we slept together, eating what we could buy with the few cents that we begged in the gambling houses from night to night. Crispin had drifted most of his life and he could tell me about other cities. He was very gentle and there was something luminous about him, like the strange light that flashes in my mind when I sometimes think of the hills of home. He had been educated and he recited poetry with a sad voice that made me cry. He always spoke of goodness and beauty in the world.

It was a new experience and the years of loneliness and fear were shadowed by the grace of his hands and the deep melancholy of his eyes. But the gambling houses were closed toward the end of that winter and we could not beg any more from the gamblers because they were also starving. Crispin and I used to walk in the snow for hours looking for nothing, waiting for the cold night to fall, hoping for the warm sun to come out of the dark sky. And then one night when we had not eaten for five days, I got out of bed and ate several pages of an old newspaper by soaking them in a can of water from the faucet in our room. Choking tears came out of my eyes, but the deep emptiness in my stomach was filled, and when I went back to bed the throbbing pain in my head burst wide open and blood came out of my nose. I finally went to sleep from utter exhaustion, but when I woke up again Crispin was dead.

Yes, it was true. He was dead. He had not even contemplated death. Men like Crispin who have poetry in their soul come silently into the world and live quietly down the years, and yet when they are gone no moon in the sky is lucid enough to compare with the light they shed when they are among the living.

AFTER nearly a decade of wandering and rootlessness, I lost another good friend who had guided me in times of helplessness. I was in California in a small agricultural community. I lived in a big bunkhouse of thirty farm workers with Leroy, who was a stranger to me in

many ways because he was always talking about unions and unity. But he had a way of explaining the meanings of words in utter simplicity, like work which he translated into power, and power into security. I was drawn to him because I felt that he had lived in many places where the courage of men was tested with the cruelest weapons conceivable.

One evening I was eating with the others when several men came into our bunkhouse and grabbed Leroy from the table and dragged him outside. He had been just about to swallow a ball of rice when the men burst into the place and struck Leroy viciously on the neck with thick leather thongs. He fell to the floor and coughed up the ball of rice. Before Leroy realized what was happening to him, a big man came toward him from the darkness with a rope in his left hand and a shining shotgun in the other. He tied the rope around Leroy's neck while the other men pointed their guns at us, and when they had taken him outside, where he began screaming like a pig about to be butchered, two men stayed at the door with their aimed guns. There was some scuffling outside, then silence, and then the two men slowly withdrew with their guns, and there was a whispering sound of running feet on the newly cut grass in the yard and then the smooth purring of cars speeding away toward the highway and then there was silence again.

We rushed outside all at once, stumbling against each other. And there hanging on a tall eucalyptus tree, naked and shining in the pale light of the April moon, Leroy was swinging like a toy balloon. We cut him down and put him on the grass, but he died the moment we reached him. His genitals were cut and there was a deep knife wound in his chest. His left eye was gone and his tongue was sliced into tiny shreds. There was a wide gash across his belly and his entrails plopped out and spread on the cool grass.

That is how they killed Leroy. When I saw his cruelly tortured body, I thought of my father and the decapitated carabao and the warm blood flowing under our bare feet. And I knew that all my life I would remember Leroy and all the things he taught me about living.

Havana to New York

by NICOLAS GUILLEN

I SAW New York for the first time a little over ten years ago. It was a fleeting visit. I was then on my way to Canada whence I sailed for Spain, to join in the heroic struggle of the Spanish people against Franco. I remained in New York only ten or twelve hours, caught up in the city's overpowering rush and remembering only a feeling of dizziness punctuated by metallic flashes of light.

This time I stayed a little longer: two weeks. . . . What can a person see in ten hours or in two weeks? If I were a journalist like many of the North Americans who go to Cuba, I would consider such a question as impertinence. They arrive in Havana, settle down for a week in a bar, and then write a fat book covering the ground from Columbus down to themselves—in other words, the two items they consider most important in their picture of the country.

This, therefore, would be a marvelous opportunity for me to avenge our offended national pride. Writing here in New York, I might invent a few amusing stories about the Yankee character and make some ill-tempered, sensational generalizations on the basis of a few isolated examples. But that would be unfair. It would mean imitating a bad example—something I for one cannot recommend.

Furthermore, why deny that there have been and are sincere and truthful journalists in the United States? In Camagüey, my native city, one of the leading public squares bears the name of Charles A. Dana, who was a friend of José Martí. Much of what we know about a great Negro woman who was in charge of well-functioning field hospitals during our War of Independence, we owe to a Yankee journalist. The name of the woman was Rosa "La Bayamesa," and the newspaperman, Robert Flynt, had been sent as a correspondent to report the war from the Cuban side.

Speaking in more general terms, I have the impression that in the United States Cuba is known or at least written about from superficial or picturesque angles—not with an eye to the broad outlines which give the universal meaning of a people. Many North Americans think that our most serious occupation consists of singing the "Peanut-Vendor's Song" beneath the pleasant shade of lush semi-tropical trees, while in the deep blue sky a hot sun beats steadily down on the earth. We frequently think in similar terms—for to many Cubans being a Yankee is synonymous with being a funny-looking tourist. The stereotype is familiar: a cap, a pipe, a fat paunch, a reddish angular face and two small bright-blue eyes.

Of course, no one denies that many people in Cuba dance the rhumba. But it is a straightforward and intimate rhumba, without the false veneer lent it by Xavier Cugat. Yet there are also many Cubans who can barely move their feet to that rhythm; but they do not thereby forfeit their civic standing. Do all the men and women from the U.S.A. insist on buying *maracas** in the port of Havana or on covering the night-spots in the Colón district? Incredible as it may seem, we realize that there are poor Americans who do not have "a dime" and who can smile warmly to a Negro. Similarly, I trust I will not be criticized if I say that there are many cultured and intelligent Cubans with a profound world-outlook, who are working seriously to make the world a better place to live in.

But ideas like these are acquired very slowly on both sides. Havana and New York are separated, not by five hours' flight—as the airlines' brochures say—but by boundaries arising from different mentalities, different origins and a different language.

"Do you know how to speak English?" a Cuban woman friend of mine was asked.

"Of course not," she replied with disarming frankness.

And "of course" the North Americans do not know a word of Spanish, nor do they think it necessary to learn it.

I MUST say right off that I came to the United States knowing that I would find here a faulty enough democracy. I know very well—it is enough to read the press dispatches—that there are many dark

* A hollow gourd with an attached handle and seeds inside, used as a musical instrument for dancing. (Translator's note.)

shadows cutting across the country's social life, narrowing down the concept of democracy from the universal meaning it ought to have and which it has acquired in other places in the world.

Perhaps for that reason I hastened to Harlem as soon as I arrived in New York. I confess that I was driven by an irresistible, an almost morbid impulse to get to know a Negro city imbedded within a white city. I wanted "to see with my own eyes" half a million colored people segregated from the rest of New York's inhabitants as if suffering from some dread contagious disease. So often had I heard people talk of Lenox Avenue, Seventh Avenue, 125th Street!

Harlem produced in me a slow feeling of anguish, a sensation of nightmare that will not easily be blotted out even if I do not return to New York for a long time to come. Oh, yes! I realize that the Apollo is the most important "Negro" theatre in the United States; and that Small's Paradise and the Savoy are two swanky night-spots for dark-skinned persons. I am not forgetting that from 145th to 161st Street some Negroes live in very elegant apartment houses on Edgecombe Avenue and Convent Avenue. But what about the other Negroes? On 111th, on 115th, on 138th Streets, they live in squalor—on the margin of the luxury, wealth and mighty power of the greatest city in the world.

Besides, the truth of the matter is this: the monstrous crime consists of Harlem itself—with its happy or sad, its rich or poor Negroes. For it is a terrible monument to racial prejudice against the colored people—a narrow world, an obscure prison. Harlem is not a "quarter" in the European sense, that is, a *voluntary* grouping of persons with particular affinities. And what is intolerable in North American civilization is that the Negroes are forced to remain in their section, unable to move permanently away from it and live in other places.

In Cuba there is anti-Negro prejudice. In certain fields, such as that of social life, Negroes are separated from the whites. They gather and dance in different clubs. They are also excluded from many important activities; hence they are limited in their economic opportunities and find it more difficult to have access to culture. In the de luxe hotels they are denied accommodations with a smile; and the same smile of refusal greets them if they look for a seat in a few of the fashionable cafes. Nevertheless, no one—not even the most reactionary and fascist-minded Cuban white—would dare to put forward the idea

that they be "Harlemized," crammed into one definite place in the city or country—the dirtiest and most run-down place.

Nor is there any Cuban Negro who would tolerate such vicious segregation. Because of the discontent caused by a much less serious incident, a Negro insurrection broke out in 1912 in the eastern part of the Island. It was headed by two veterans of our War of Independence, one of them a general: Evaristo Estenoz and Pedro Ivonet. The uprising was drowned in blood by President Gomez, but it offered a dramatic example of courage and militancy.

Meanwhile, what is serious for us Cubans is that Yankee racism is directly influencing our customs, not only crystallizing prejudices inherited from our colonial days but creating others. Slavery was legally abolished in Cuba barely more than a half century ago (1885) and the Island is still a fertile field for such discriminatory practices. American tourists provoke and increase them, working hand-in-glove with many native Cubans who are economically subservient to the U.S.A. Every year thousands of tourists disembark at Havana as if entering a conquered land. They impose their habits of white chauvinism on the numerous public places they frequent: night-clubs, cabarets, restaurants, and they impress many of the white residents of our country.

RECENTLY this phenomenon has also affected the actions of the Negroes. This can be seen, for example, in the way in which they visit the U. S. To Cubans in general New York represents an opportunity for getting to know almost immediately a great city, one of the leading cities in modern times. One jump and they land in the heart of Broadway. It is a constant invitation which not all Cubans, however, can accept. This is especially true of the Negroes. Apart from economic limitations, they fear the brutal impact of Jim Crow. To escape it or to take it more easily in their stride, these Cuban Negroes practice a kind of group racialism. They organize excursions or visits to the United States very much in the U.S. manner; and those who participate are assured a minimum of contact with the whites in a land where having a dark skin is a fundamental limitation. In reality, this is a concession to North American racism. For if they were not visiting the U.S.A., Cubans would pay no attention to color when organizing trips abroad.

I feel, too, that between the Negroes in both countries there exists

Antonio Frasconi

the same lack of mutual understanding as between white North Americans and white Cubans. Some nights ago I was chatting with a Negro woman in Harlem. She seemed to be very cultured and in general had a good grasp of many things in Cuba, at least in their broad outlines. But when she spoke to me of General Antonio Maceo, she referred to him as the man "who commanded the Negro troops in the Cuban wars against Spain." Hearing her say this was as surprising to me as it was for her to hear me refute the statement. To be sure, Maceo was a mulatto; but he commanded the *whole* army in the Cuban rebellion, made up of white and Negro soldiers. For racial prejudice was always kept hidden in the Cuban patriotic army, just as today in the Republic it is considered a shameful thing.

Moreover, this may be understood if we bear in mind the origins of the Cuban people. There were two basic historical nuclei: the white Spaniard and the African Negro, together yet apart during three centuries of slavery. At the beginning of colonization—the first half of the sixteenth century—most of the white inhabitants of the Island were Spanish. Thereafter not only did the native white group increase, but the Negro population, made up of imported slaves and their Negro or mixed descendants, also grew enormously. At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Negroes constituted more than fifty per cent of the population. They had the most profound popular roots and were in permanent contact with the dominant group upon which they exerted a subtle and inexorable influence. We cannot speak of the Indians, for they disappeared shortly after the coming of the Spaniards.

Subjected to merciless treatment in a new and unknown environment, the slaves had no other recourse than to take refuge within themselves and to draw upon the deepest resources of their spirit—music, dance, religion, language and folk-wisdom—with which in turn they penetrated the spirit of the whites. So in the depths of our people are found fused the permanent values of the two groups: they merge their universal characteristics to form a unique profile, our national character.

In Cuba, for example, the concept of "Negro" poetry in the United States manner is false. In Cuba such poetry does not so much express the sentiments of an isolated racial minority as it does the presence of this minority in the great popular mixture. The Negro is found in

Spanish literature—mother of our own—in the sixteenth century with Lope de Rueda, in the seventeenth with Góngora and Lope de Vega. In that same period his first traces appear in our music: in the song of the *Ma Teodora,* and he appears frequently in our popular literature of the nineteenth century, above all in poetry and the novel. Because of the social composition to which I have referred above, "Negroism," that superficial agitation in the postwar art of Europe some thirty years ago, was profoundly transformed when it reached the Americas and penetrated the Caribbean, where it acquired a human and a dramatic dimension it had hitherto lacked. The Cuban people thus had a specific vehicle of cultural expression in "mulatto" poetry, which corresponds to a broad historic process in which the two inhabiting groups have lived together and have assimilated each other.

Let me turn from these comments, which really belong in an essay rather than in a few brief travel-notes. One evening when I was with a circle of friends here in New York, one of those present asked me—not without a kind of detective-like curiosity—if in Cuba we feel hatred or ill will toward the United States.

"That depends," I answered, "on what aspects of American life you refer to. For example, our people realize more and more every day that their economic enslavement comes from the United States. There are many Cuban magnates (especially in the sugar industry) who sell their co-operation with imperialism at a price—and that price is our subjugation. We feel hatred toward those—in Cuba and in the U.S.A.—who prevent us from living. I mean 'living' in the physical, not in the literary or figurative sense."

I think I answered my questioner as best I could. That is, Cubans do not hate North Americans as a whole, *en masse,* because that would be stupid. But they know little or nothing about certain segments of the population in the United States where Cuba has potential friends who would understand our attitude toward the U.S.A. if someone were to explain it honestly.

On the other hand, the development and spread of the study of history among our people have put an end to the myth of Yankee "aid" in our quarrel with Spain in 1898. The younger generation is well aware of this; a third-year college student knows in its general outlines the crafty policy that was developed in the course of the nine-

teenth century and that culminated in the naval battle off Santiago. The "sentimental" aspect of Cuban-U.S.A. relations, so thoroughly exploited by American imperialism at the beginning of this century, has given way to a candid examination of the question on the part of those who are interested in teaching our people their true history.

Meanwhile, the reader is probably inquiring with a malicious smile what New York looks like to me. Well. . . . I have only a few rough impressions. Sometimes it seems as if the city were made only for those who make their daily living with their teeth, swallowing it rapaciously. . . . When does one study, relax, meditate? I do not know. Thousands upon thousands of human beings come to New York "to make a few dollars" and then return to a purer air. They seem to live on a hand-to-mouth basis, like a casual and wary immigrant ready to pull up stakes at the slightest sign of trouble. And thus, sitting on the edge of their chairs, like someone in a hurry to leave, death finally surprises them, pale, withered, panting, old, destroyed . . . and poor.

One afternoon I looked down on the vast city from the top of Rockefeller City. Everything that is harsh in New York on the street-level is amazingly delicate on high. At the twilight hour the towering buildings seem built of some fragile and porous substance yielding readily to the fingers' touch. As far as the eye can reach this wilderness of steel and concrete raises its multiple face. What gigantic harmony! What feminine softness and almost breathless calm hovering like a veil over so many fierce and bloodstained stones as they jut up toward the clouds! Is it perhaps a child's drawing, caught by a gust of wind which rustles the paper on which it is sketched? Oh no! Turn your eyes toward the city's abyss and you will see how the city rumbles and churns, how it turns on itself and crushes millions of human beings who struggle frantically to escape the mad rush. From the bitter depths of the city—from its very bowels—there rises in the quiet late afternoon a volcanic thunder, prolonged and menacing. . . .

The day is ending, but New York does not know it.

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

FREE ASSOCIATION

I thought I knew that man
because in one particular he looks like you.
Let's say hello . . .
Of course I know the way he walks,
his black curled locks of hair
and turn of chin can't really show
his politics, prevalent grace or sin, or
taste in music. Greek-mask mouth,
almost like yours, whether from South or North,
may not speak well of Johnnie (who is black),
may not whistle to birds. A Celtic face
may lack the twinkle that curves gloom
with nonsense words. Someone with twirled
ear-edges may look bleak and unamused
at Mrs. Barrelhouse. Handwriting quite like yours
makes me expect some words of poetry,
some new delight.—That man's quick step
and medium height may not connote
a single thought like yours.
Let's say hello to him—they might.

RUTH RAYMUND

NEGRO CHILD TO ITS MOTHER

Mother, is it true
What they say of me and you?
Hold me, mother!
Tell me if it's true.

(Now it's come at last!
The simple time is past.
Stand up son,
The simple time is past!)

EDITH SEGAL

books in review

Walk in the South

WITHOUT MAGNOLIAS, by Bucklin Moon. *Doubleday. $3.00*

AS HIS title suggests, Bucklin Moon has done without the conventional props of the "Southern novel." He has managed, also, without the insane nightmares of writers who see in the South nothing but grotesqueries and decay. He has assembled, with the intellectual sobriety of a sociological report, a large, varied cast whose lives, during one of the last years of the war, come together as a picture of the South in motion. His people throw long shadows across the somnolent, flat landscape of Florida—shadows which are an extension of their meaning, their dangers and potentialities as social forces. It is an unusual virtue of the novel that its people do not appear frozen with its pages at the end, as if, were it possible to meet them again after a passage of time, one would find them changed, speaking with a new consciousness; yet always, however, reflecting the typical.

This sense of movement comes from the form of the novel. Its canvas is a small Florida town with its border section of Negroes, lifted out of the ordinary by a Negro college on the outskirts, by war industries a short bus ride away. Its characters range from the Negro college president and a white Southern liberal to Negro workers and servants. The scenes shift constantly, smoothly, from one to the other, not for the sake of plot but of illumination. This accumulation of characters and quiet incidents fill a year in their lives, and it comes almost as a surprise to find at the end how much one has learned, within this apparently actionless frame, about the characters and how near they have all come to an enduring sense of their own strengths and weaknesses.

What emerges, however, most vividly from the novel is the picture it gives of Negro middle-class life. Around Dr. Rogers, the college president, are gathered the dilemmas and problems of the Negro bourgeois, attempting to play a role that the racism of the

white Southerners denies whenever he leaves the confines of the college and his home. Being a Negro, he cannot help but represent, in one direction, the thwarted aspirations of his people, but his class identification draws him away from them so that he is constantly creating illusions of himself and his function that will hide from his consciousness the slavish role that the Bourbon South creates for him.

"The Negro must learn to crawl before he can walk," is Dr. Rogers' maxim, but this gradualist, educational program becomes, as his story progresses, full of ironic implications. He cannot save the best professor he has secured for the college. His liberal white friend, as crassly as any Southern bigot, demands that he not reappoint him. And he acquiesces, though this strips him of his last illusion. The Negro is in motion everywhere. It is Dr. Rogers who is crawling.

If *Without Magnolias* makes a programmatic point it is that the solution of the Negro question does not lie in educating individual Negroes to an ideal that the white is supposed to have attained. The young professor, who without bravado speaks the truth whenever he can, gives up his idea of teaching in a Southern Negro college as his contribution to the struggle for Negro liberation. Dr. Rogers' veteran son decides to take a job with the C.I.O. instead of following in his father's footsteps. They leave the little Florida town at the novel's end but behind them remains the quiet hero of the novel—the Negro worker who has moved from a traditional job in a white barroom to one in a war plant. He had thought that a Negro was secure if he had a white patron to protect his job, but now he has joined the union, organizing for economic rights with white workers. The book leaves him and the other workers unsure of their future but certain of its direction.

There are many other characters in the book—the neurotic, uprooted girl who has lost her social identification in New York, the Negro mother who understands her children's new life but cannot participate in it, the independent, roving Negro with whom she begins to build a life for her declining years, the servant girl who marries and works with new joy in her own home. They all contribute to the aim of the novel: the social meaning, in all its variety, of being a Negro in America today.

It is in the deeply human ways that people respond to their social roles that the book is often lacking. One grasps many of the characters solely as an idea, so that their potential force is not completely realized. They contribute intellectually to the play of light and shadow that makes up the interesting social picture of the

book, but the emotional forcefulness that deeply revealed characters can give an idea in the heightened reality of the novel is seldom attained. When Bucklin Moon achieves this penetration of character—as in some scenes with Dr. Rogers and one moment when the servant girl at work recalls her childhood relationship with her employer—the novel achieves an immediacy that its panoramic canvas cannot evoke or duplicate despite its sustained interest.

It may be that the wide-ranging study of the town creates this detachment. Moon's documentation creates interest but its surface representation has kept his characters from an involvement in the action which would make them, through scenes demanding greater consciousness of themselves, a source of more persuasive identification for the reader. Thus, too, the quiet leisurely picture of a college year is created at the expense of scenes in which the tensions underlying the lives of the characters would be relieved by open conflict. Moon has not utilized one of the most effective resources of the novel—the rounded, full-blown scene in which the intellectual ramifications of the theme are brought into relief and possible resolution by characters in conflict—but he has illustrated a significant picture of Negro life.

JOSE YGLESIAS

McKeever's Quest

THE JOURNEY OF SIMON McKEEVER, by Albert Maltz. *Little, Brown. $2.75.*

THE journey of Simon McKeever is a two-fold quest: to find a doctor to free him from arthritis; and a search into the past for the significance of life and the spiritual reassurance to continue it. In both, Simon McKeever fails; and in sending him on these missions, Albert Maltz also fails. In trying to make his protagonist the symbol of the Common-Man-in-Eternity, the author has placed on him an impossible burden which neither he nor the book can carry.

Simon has been a worker all his life: an oil pipe fitter, a plumber; but at seventy-three, he is now an old-age pensioner in the Thomas Finney Rest Home in California, crippled by disease and facing the end of life. He is conscious of his imprisonment, both physical and spiritual; and unwilling to give up life, or to surrender to the spiritual emptiness of old age, he begins a long journey to Los Angeles seeking a cure and through it his rebirth as a man—which to McKeever means as a worker.

The trip to Los Angeles, by bus and by hitch-hiking, is a latter-day Pilgrim's Progress: searching for a soul, a significance to life, a state of grace. McKeever's journey demands that he should meet on the road those

adventures and those temptations and trials, open and in disguise, which would test in the extreme his nature and purpose and thus reveal the profundity of earthly truth and measure the full stature of man. And McKeever does find both good and bad on the road, but these are neither temptations of the flesh nor of the spirit: they are merely the accidental human driftwood that touches the traveler as he passes by.

All along the way, McKeever reads Havelock Ellis' *Dance of Life* which celebrates the "art of living"—every aspect of living except work; and, disgusted, McKeever promises himself that he will undertake an ambitious and resounding project. It will be an "anthology about the common man for the common man," to be called *The Path of Man.* It would be an answer to all those writers who, in recording Man's progress, omitted the heroism of the common man, the prime mover of the world.

McKeever manages to reach Los Angeles after some harrowing days on the road and induces the doctor, a woman, to examine him. She tells him his arthritis is incurable. "And where was his Jerusalem now?" Was the end of life to be this?

But what had been his life? He had had little education and had begun to work early. He met his wife in a Pennsylvania coal town, and lost both her and his child when they were burned to death by an exploding kerosene stove. "Why were there accidents in life?" he asks. The death of his wife and child plunges him into the first questioning of his life. He had believed that his life had significance, for he had been "part of a golden endeavor: the shaping of the earth by the generations of Man. . . ." But, now, an old crippled derelict, did he still believe it? "He was a bit . . . confused."

Still, "in spite of all this or because of it, and whatever he had held, relished or lost, he yearned and needed to believe that there was meaning to his life and that there was joy in being Man, even a common, anonymous man, and that Men together were more than beasts of the field."

Dreaming of his dead wife (in a scene almost mystical in its connotations), McKeever tells her:

> " 'Suckling the children and washing the dishes and raising the new generation. It's the good dance, Mary. Working the earth and changing it. Building a bridge or building a union. Losing the way and then finding it.'
>
> " 'And what will be the way for us?' his wife asked. . . .
>
> "He answered firmly, without sadness. 'Not for you to know of me or me of you. But to know the big thing only—the turning earth and the generations up from the apes, walking the path, striving and standing up, shouting and singing. I believe it, Mary, it aches in my heart. And all by

the doing of people like us, it's the fine wonder of it.'

"She was silent and at ease at last, pressing her face to his chest and weeping quietly. 'I'll turn in my coffin no more. I'll rest quiet now. . . .'

" 'And what's for you there, Simon?'

" 'Who knows? But it's the right path and surely I have to walk it. There's a dream at the other end.' "

Thus on this false poeticized philosophic note, notable for its emptiness and, worse, for its negation of consciousness, Simon McKeever's journey ends: ends in the self-delusion that he will write a book for which he has neither the insight nor the ability nor the time to attempt. McKeever returns to the Rest Home, after his failure in Los Angeles, and armed with the vision of the great book he would create, prepares to spend his remaining days in the bleak cell from which he had so passionately fled a short while before.

Maltz seems seriously to raise this illusion as a badge of courage, a banner of significance, as a kind of mechanical "positive" resolution to a life which was, in reality, a pathetic tragedy, a direct result of material forces from which there was no escape for the old man—or for all the others in the Home. To trail clouds of philosophic glory over this picture is to falsify it. Simon McKeever's life is excerpted by his absurd dream from the particular class relations which shaped it and is "raised" to the lofty philosophic level of the "Song of Man." To justify this, Maltz cites Gorky: "Man! That is magnificent!" But Maltz uses this concept of man triumphant over degradation to extract man from his real social relations, to blur class consciousness, to reduce man to a general philosophic vagueness, to stir him in a soup of sentimentality, to relieve him of the dignity of struggle and tragedy in return for a deluded "hope," a "happy ending."

There is a curious lag between Maltz's own consciousness and the evidence of it here in his comments upon life through his characters and situations. Maltz himself knows what the iron fist of class justice looks like. As one of the Hollywood Ten he has seen it up close in the Un-American Committee. He has seen Hollywood buckle and collapse with terror at the mere wag of Wall Street's finger, while he and his colleagues courageously refused to knuckle under.

It is all the more surprising, therefore, to see Maltz suddenly become so vague about the terribly concrete and current struggles of men (not Man of the Ages). This does not mean, of course, the writer must endow his characters with a consciousness they do not have; it does mean, however, that the writer's own consciousness must place his people, *even in their unconsciousness,* in the *real* frame of life.

PHILLIP BONOSKY

Sickness (Imported)

NAUSEA, by Jean-Paul Sartre. Translated by Lloyd Alexander. *New Directions.* $2.50.

SINCE the end of the war we have been exporting movies, Tin Pan Alley songs, comic books and *Reader's Digest* to France, and have received in return the collected works of Jean-Paul Sartre. It is hard to say which side suffers more. *Nausea,* the latest Sartre to be published here, is also the first of his novels, written in 1938—a fact which gives us hope that the bottom of the barrel has been scraped, and that from now on further appearances will be limited to the speed with which fresh little flowers of evil can be grown in his garden.

It is a poor novel which exhibits, however, those meager talents on which Sartre's inflated reputation has been built. He has a gift for pungent dialogue, mostly on a plane of sex comedy, and for clean-cut and vivid imagery. It is interesting to notice how much his imagery borrows from the various styles of modern painting. It is sometimes Fauvist in its hopped-up brilliance of color: "A young woman, leaning with both hands on the balustrade, raised her blue face towards the sky, barred in black by lip-stick." It is sometimes the kind of abstraction which takes a real object away from its human associations:

> "I draw my face closer until it touches the mirror. The eyes, nose and mouth disappear: nothing human is left. Brown wrinkles show on each side of the feverish swelled lips, crevices, mole holes. A silky white down covers the great slope of the cheeks, two hairs protrude from the nostrils: it is a geological embossed map."

It is sometimes expressionist, giving a wholly arbitrary personal tone to some object, like the "death-shamming streets." It is sometimes surrealist, with its nightmare evocation of primitive demonology:

> "I let my arm run along the woman's thigh, and suddenly saw a small garden with low, wide trees on which immense hairy leaves were hanging. Ants were running everywhere, centipedes and ringworms. There were even more horrible animals: their bodies were made from a slice of toast, the kind you put under roast pigeons; they walked sideways with legs like a crab. The larger leaves were black with beasts."

But talent for the novel is wholly absent. For structure, Sartre uses the device of a diary which helps him pad the pages with every random thought. The supposed writer of the diary is a middle-aged man, of independent income, jilted by his mistress; he is bored with life and occupies his time with a half-hearted effort to write the biography of a minor Napoleonic diplomat. He suddenly feels a state of intense nausea.

Everything he sees or touches revolts him. His attempt to understand this nausea is the plot of the book.

There is a chapter on a Sunday afternoon in the town, which enables him to show his contempt for the workers and townspeople; one on a visit to the museum, with a dissertation on its portraits, which piles on further bourgeois snobbery. A chapter is given to a discussion with the "Self-Taught Man," a clerk who decides to read all the books in the library in alphabetical order, and calls himself a socialist. This enables Sartre to polish off socialism and all forms of social thinking, ending with the announcement that he is not against social change, only against all people that advocate it.

The emotional climax of the book comes when he discovers that he will never get rid of his nausea; it is a permanent state of his life, in fact a true insight into the realities of life. All the world, he sees, has nausea. This leads to the philosophical climax, the discovery that there is no past, no future, only the present moment of existence. He repeats "exist, exist, exist," like an incantation.

We are privileged to see here the birth of the cockroach philosophy now associated with Sartre's name. It is true of the lower members of the animal kingdom that they have no memory or imagination and live for only each moment of existence, but that this has been taken seriously as a "new thought" for man by the philosophy departments of our universities is symptomatic of the decay of Higher Learning in America. And of course, since Sartre is too wise to rest his appeal on "pure philosophy," there is a melodramatic climax when the "Self-Taught Man" is discovered to be carrying on homosexual practices with little children in the library.

This sorry display gives us an inkling as to why Sartre has become the leader of a reactionary political group. There are many writers offering their services to reaction, but their talents are mostly on the trivial side. Reaction cannot afford to be choosy. And so this third-line poet has now been built up to a major name, a literary and philosophical "leader" whose every word is slapped into print, translated, put between fancy non-objective cover designs. Ten years from now he will be forgotten, for even in the prolific literature of sickness which our time offers he fills an inconsequential place. A writer like Kafka, in his self-revelation, towers far above him. Kafka, at least, had the power of his own suffering, and wrote to exorcise his own fears; but Sartre's philosophy is tongue-in-cheek; his violence is deliberately contrived. Only his contempt for people is sincere, and the truth is that it is his own image he sees in them.

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

Big City: Two Views

SHADOW OF A HERO, by Allan Chase. *Little, Brown. $3.00.*

SPIT AND THE STARS, by Robert Mende. *Rinehart. $3.50.*

FOR his first novel on an American theme Allan Chase has taken as his canvas the big city and the political machine that runs it. He has not gone behind the political machine to examine what forces operate it, except to indicate in a casual manner that big corporations profit by the existence of such machines.

The device Chase uses to pursue his theme is an old one that he used effectively in his nonfiction narrative, *Falange,* and in his novel on the same subject, *The Five Arrows.* That device is the gradual assembling of a jig-saw puzzle of information, hints, clues, blind alleys, incidents and personalities, until the total picture of what the investigator is pursuing becomes evident.

In *Shadow of a Hero,* the investigator is a book reviewer, Steve Rome. Sleuthing is not exactly his métier, though he has been a crack reporter in the past. But there was something about the legend of Arnold Kelleher that aroused Rome's interest. Kelleher had apparently died a martyr, after acting as an intermediary between the kidnappers of litle Marie Ansley and the distraught parents. The city authorities seemed powerless to solve the kidnapping. Kelleher therefore announced that he was going to give his personal information to the F.B.I. Within a day, Kelleher's home was blown to smithereens by nitroglycerine and the former athletic coach and city figure apparently perished in the blast.

With this scant information and driven by something he himself did not recognize for some time, Steve Rome went to work. He read up on the career of Arnold Kelleher; he began to make contact with people who had known the man. He soon discovered that Kelleher was not the knight in shining armor the Kelleher Memorial Committee was making him out to be. He discovered the purposes behind the committee's glorification of "The Coach"—the recapture of the city administration by the temporarily defeated Mullen machine.

The story Chase tells is exciting and suspenseful. It delves into the nature of political machines; it traces the roots of anti-Semitism and native fascist violence and reveals once more the power such forces have over the public. However, from the standpoint of characterization, the device gets in the way. It is too rigid to permit deep probing—into Kelleher's routine personality of a small-time *gauleiter* or even into the machine that utilized him for its own purposes. The jig-saw puzzle be-

comes far more interesting than the pattern that emerges when all the pieces have been fitted together.

IN *Spit and the Stars* Robert Mende, a first novelist, starts with the individual and develops the pattern around him. The individual is Gregg Haber, Jewish slum boy from the Williamsburg area. The pattern is the slum that envelops him and his neighbors and what it makes of them. We have seen this theme and background treated before by the early Daniel Fuchs, and there are aspects of the people and the problem in the work of Mike Gold, Clifford Odets and Arnold Manoff.

Gregg Haber is seen in his total development, from childhood to young manhood and marriage. It is the old story—of immigrant parents and second-generation Jewish youth; of scrimping and saving, penury and illness, conflict and love.

Mende is a young man and his first novel suffers from the self-consciousness of the inexperienced. He hops from the authentically poetic to the maudlin, from straight realistic treatment of character and situation to half-baked commentary and philosophic disquisitions on Life, Love and Society.

But what he has to offer is evident on every page. He can create characters, and he understands the basic motivations of these characters. He can and does demonstrate, step by step, the growing consciousness of a Gregg Haber from a typical, day-dreaming slum boy, through his hot-and-cold adolescence, his emulation of the sharpies for whom he works, into the maturity of class-consciousness and labor struggles.

Where Chase paints an overall picture of a broad community, skipping from one set of characters to another and touching only briefly on each, Mende stays with the Haber family and its immediate associates, neighbors, and employers. Where the author of *Shadow of a Hero* utilizes an ingenious method to catch the reader's attention and hold it throughout, Mende starts with the seeds of human personality and permits them to sprout until the entire plant and its soil are shown in their relationships.

In both novels, however, there is material to help make sense of the life we live today; in both the reader will find the roots of human corruption and human decency; in both he will find the pattern in which we all are caught and struggling.

ALVAH BESSIE

Chronicle of Glory

VOLUNTEER FOR LIBERTY: A Complete Collection of the Publication of the International Brigades during the Spanish War Years of 1937-1938. *Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, 23 West 26th St., New York, N. Y. $5.00.*

TO ANY man who fought in Spain or to the millions whose hopes lived in it this book is overpowering in its evocation of a past that is the present. For Republican Spain, these pages cry out, can never die nor can the volunteers who clawed their way over the Pyrenees to the sunny, tragic, blood-soaked plain to take their stand. This book transfixes you by its contemporaneity. A tempestuous decade vanishes and you relive those times, relive the glory of a battle whose thunder has died down but which is not ended nor will it end until the cause which inspired it is won. That is the story of this book.

That you feel as you see the dear faces of the dead looking at you from the pages and read their words: the boy you met first on Flatbush Avenue or at Ebbets Field or in Madison Square Garden or in the union hall or the college campus or on Michigan Boulevard: Dave Doran, Robert Merriman, Ring Lardner's boy Jim, Aaron Lopoff, Milton Herndon, Arnold Reid—the long roll-call of heroes who couldn't abide that word.

It's all there, those two years,

all the heartbreak and grandeur and deathless optimism. And these pages confirm their contention that World War II could have been scotched beyond the Pyrenees but for the treachery of imperialism. Yes, these pages explain again why Republican Spain became the conscience of its time and left its indelible mark on the heart and mind of mankind.

Once again you see why: the volunteers stand here in the Jarama trenches, storm Belchite, bivouac in the snow at Teruel, cross the majestic Ebro. Once again they probe the sentiment back home, inquire eagerly of the C.I.O. and A. F. L. and ponder uneasily the next moves of London, Paris, Washington, Berlin, Rome. The pages intimately chronicle, too, the course of the Republic: the perennial quest for the unity of all anti-fascist contingents, the earnest campaign for production, the battle against illiteracy, the cabinet changes, the icy bitterness at the air-raids on defenseless women and children—it's all there. Raw, naked, infinitely challenging.

It challenged. By your stand on Spain you were measured, are measured still. There were those who had their moment of manliness during this time but who could not stand its imperative demands—the summer soldiers who caught a glimpse of heroism and were warmed for a moment by its glow. Men whose faces and words appear in this book as partisans of the Republic, men like Herbert Matthews of the New York *Times.*

Recently I looked through his book again: *Two Wars and More To Come.* How well he wrote in 1937:

"The Spanish war is going to make its mark on the United States as it has on every country in the world. You may agree or not with the ideals that brought the Americans here, but you cannot ignore the meaning of it. They have all come to fight on the Government's side, not on Franco's. That is the most significant fact of all. And those of you who admire courage under the most trying circumstances can take your hats off to them. They have not only fought, but fought well."

Elsewhere he wrote:

"I wonder how many readers in the subways of New York or the buses of San Francisco have stopped to think what it means to have Americans fighting against Fascism in Spain? It is worth thinking about, for there has been nothing like it in our history. The outcome of the Spanish Civil War is not going to be changed by the advent of some 2,000 or more Americans. [Actually the number rose to 4,500 before the war ended.—J.N.] It is in the United States that they will make their deepest mark. They are going back after this war to continue the fight at home. If they were willing to die to prevent Fascism coming to Spain, how much more ready will they be to die for the same principles in their own country?"

But where is Matthews' voice today when the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade is put on Attorney General Clark's *Index Expurgatorius?* Where does he stand on the question of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee whose spokesmen, Dr. Edward Barsky, Howard Fast and others, have been sentenced to prison?

I have not seen his name on any petition favoring John Gates, whom he interviewed at the great battles at the Ebro. I remember because I happened to be there when he encountered the soldier after he had swum the Ebro. Gates became a lieutenant-colonel of the International Brigade and Matthews wrote glowing accounts of his heroism. What has he written, what has he said, what does he say today as the government seeks to clamp Gates and his eleven colleagues into a penitentiary for the next twenty years?

There are others like Matthews, but they are a dismal corporal's guard of deserters compared with the millions who took their stand with Republican Spain, with the International Brigades, with the Lincoln Battalion, and who stand there today.

Today, as the hucksters of war are snuggling up to Franco Spain, this book achieves an urgent timeliness. I pray that it goes into every library, into every union hall, into every classroom, into every corner of the land where the fateful debate rages: war or peace. For it tells a simple story that can never be shouted down: that all common men, all decent men who prefer democracy and peace must take their stand together.

Together, it says, they are invincible. This is the story of *Volunteer for Liberty* and it is written in the blood of heroes.

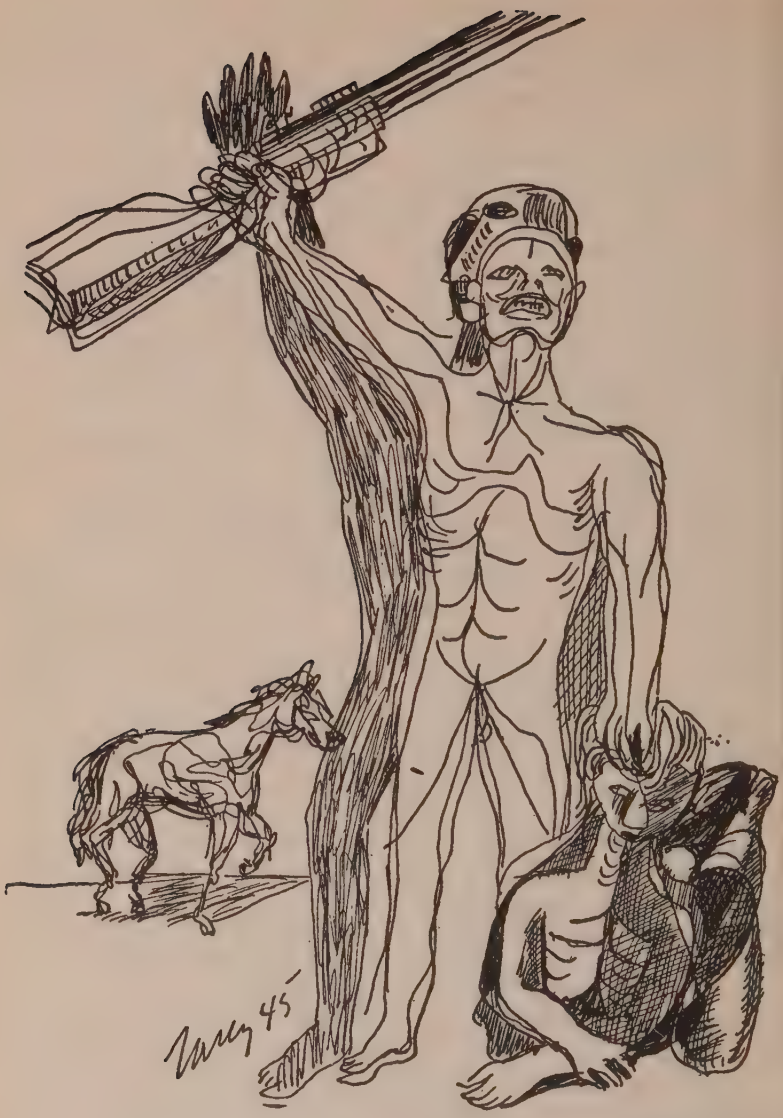
JOSEPH NORTH

The Question of Peace

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PEACE, by John Somerville. *Gaer Associates. $3.00.*

"I'M saying that we must stop acting on the idea that Nazi-Fascism and Soviet Communism are the same," Dr. Somerville declares at one point in his stimulating essay, "first because the facts do not bear out this idea, and second, because if we continue to act upon it in foreign policy, we will make war as inevitable as it would be made by regimes actually Nazi or Fascist."

Arguing this proposition, the author has given us a most useful book at a most dangerous moment. For he has seized on the central myth of the postwar scene, which has infected and befuddled such a large part of our people, and revealed its emptiness and its



Anthony Toney

menace by the method of a mercilessly rational and agreeably informal discussion. Anyone who has been talking to audiences which do not agree with him will appreciate the value of a method that argues and explores rather than asserts, and not only assembles facts but uncovers their meaning. With the lucidity that characterized his volume, *Soviet Philosophy,* Dr. Somerville continues here the patient task of trying to reach out and grapple with the ideas on the minds of our millions.

The advent of the atomic age, Dr. Somerville begins, makes certain mistakes of policy irremediable, and the most terrible of these would be a war between our country and the Soviet Union. To avert war, we must understand Soviet ideology and have one of our own. Exploring the first imperative, he sees the basic premise of Soviet ideology to be the desirability of peace, its stress on the value of the human being, the equal rights of all peoples, and its perspective a genuine democracy in which Man can control nature and human society.

Then surveying American ideology, he believes it to have been best expressed in Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas* which should, he says, "be recognized as the very Bible of American democracy." This ideology, and I paraphrase, stresses limitless and emancipating possibilities for mankind, refuses to be bound by the status quo, and likewise seeks control of Nature in the interests of Man.

"There are, of course," Dr. Somerville continues, "conflicts between the ideologies of capitalist America and communist Russia. However, there is nothing in the principles of these ideologies" (unlike fascist principles, he adds) "which would necessitate armed warfare between the two systems." He appeals for "a form of competition, and the whole point is to keep this competition peaceful. Each side has the kind of principles which at least allows it to compete peacefully if its opponents will do likewise."

Then follow conclusions for implementation. The idea of a war threat from Russia must be abandoned together with the premise of inevitable war. The double-standard by which security for America is taken to mean influence in the whole world while Soviet security is considered an expression of her alleged expansionism must be abandoned, too. The concept that America equals Rightism, that the spread of capitalism is normal but socialism "abnormal," the idea that we have some inherent right to keep other peoples from communism if they want it—all these are analyzed and rejected.

Yet, this book has the defects of its qualities. For one thing, its very discursive character tends, by

the end of it, to undermine the urgency implicit in the theme. It is all very well to appeal for more education about the Soviet Union. Yet one would have expected a philosophy for peace to conclude with more than a recommendation of U.N.E.S.C.O. as a "unique agency" for peace, all the more so since Somerville's reasoning on why the Soviet Union has not joined U.N.E.S.C.O. seems inadequate.

More central problems arise from the fact that "American ideology" is subjected to a far less critical examination than Soviet ideology. And the book contains a serious under-estimation of the problems involved in securing a reversal of our present foreign policy. It is quite true that Walt Whitman expressed ideals which millions of Americans uphold, and would lead to a different policy, if implemented. But why are they not implemented, and why do they become lip-service and hypocrisy? To answer this question would require a much more thorough estimate of the present structure of a highly-developed capitalist society, whose rulers are impelled to fear socialism, to hate Russia, and to seek ways out of their objective dilemmas by war.

Dr. Somerville goes to extraordinary pains to remove any suspicion of organizational identification with American Communists or the Left; and it is quite true that the argument for understanding Russia and living at peace with her does not at all demand advocacy of socialism for America. But while uniting people for peace may not require a conscious understanding of capitalism or opposition to it, a *philosophy of peace* reveals its shortcomings when it hardly poses the question of the causal relationship between monopoly-capitalism and war. The strength of this book lies in its facility in reaching Americans on the levels of their prevailing myths. It is also true, however, that the weakness of this book lies in the fact that it does not challenge the core of those myths.

JOSEPH STAROBIN

Rogge Testifies

OUR VANISHING CIVIL LIBERTIES, by O. John Rogge. *Gaer Associates. $3.00.*

"FREEDOM had been hunted round the globe; reason was considered as rebellion, and the slavery of fear had made men afraid to think." So wrote Tom Paine, celebrating the revolution-born American republic, to which the peoples everywhere looked with new hope.

Today it is the men of the American trusts who hunt freedom round the globe. In *Our Vanishing Civil Liberties,* O. John Rogge portrays an America in which rea-

son is considered as rebellion, and the slavery of fear has made too many afraid to think.

Rogge's canvas is a small one, framed by the law practice he has undertaken since Attorney General Tom Clark had a brace of F.B.I. men trail him across the country. They did not carry a warrant for the arrest of the then Assistant Attorney General — but a letter firing him from his post. Within this frame Rogge gives us more than a picture of American reaction at work. He also shows the anti-fascist men and women who have been his clients, and who dare to fight for freedom, to reason and to think.

With disarming frankness, Rogge tells the story of his own education since his dismissal from the Justice Department. He has learned much. Learning began when he was fired for trying—too hard—to convict the World War II seditionists after their indictment, and for revealing their connections with America Firsters who were then Senators and Congressmen, and with cartellists who now hold high public office.

The frustrated prosecutor of fascists like Gerald L. K. Smith soon became the defender of anti-fascists like Dr. Barsky and Howard Fast and others victimized by his former chiefs in the Justice Department. We feel the warmth of the friendships that developed between lawyer and clients.

Even those of us who think we

know all about the House Un-American Committee, the Loyalty Board, and class justice in the U.S. will be surprised at the impact of this book. It packs a hard punch, not only in its lively style, but in its convincing documentation. Here, for the first time, are well chosen excerpts from the record of the Inquisition organized by the hierarchy of corporate wealth. The questions put by anonymous Loyalty Board inquisitors, and by the members of the Un-American Committee, sound like something out of the trial in *Alice in Wonderland,* or Goebbels' diary. But they are out of the record, verbatim.

So are the replies of those whom labor and progressives know and honor. In its way, this book is a memorial to Harry White who gave and asked no quarter though it cost him his life to tell off the House Un-Americans. Here too, often in their own words, are the stories of Harold Christoffel, of the Trenton Six, the Hollywood Ten, and many other gallant defenders of the Bill of Rights. It is a story to hearten Carl Marzani, now languishing in the District of Columbia jail.

One of Rogge's many excellent chapters deals with the current trial of the Communist leaders. It is a penetrating statement of the issues involved in this political heresy trial, although it was written shortly after the indictment and before the prosecution re-

vealed fully the strategy of its frame-up.

JOHN ROGGE makes no bones about his differences with Marxist theory and the world outlook of the Communist Party. Even if he did not state them plainly (as he does) they are apparent in the book itself. Although he has written a useful chapter on the role of the monopolies in modern American life, Rogge's approach is essentially that of the philosophical idealist rather than of the historical materialist. That is why he has not yet grasped the content of working-class democracy in the Soviet Union.

But the logic of the anti-fascist struggle and the fight for world peace with which he has identified himself have led Rogge to reject Red-baiting. For this reason, *Our Vanishing Civil Liberties* has been largely ignored, or Red-baited, by reviewers for the commercial press. The "philosophers" of American imperialism cannot tolerate non-Marxists who champion the right of Americans to believe in, advocate, or study the working-class social science of Marx and Lenin.

This is a timely and a useful book. Despite the grimness of its subject, it is graced with a wit that makes it enjoyable reading. It is a book to read, and to give to others.

MARION BACHRACH

Eisenstein's FILM FORM

by WARREN MILLER

JUDGING by the cursory review in the New York *Times* and the condescending notice in the *Saturday Review of Literature,* one would supose the publication of a new book* by Eisenstein to have almost the same importance as the latest primer on mah-jong or gin rummy. It seems rather late in the day to have to tell the editors of literary supplements that Sergei Eisenstein is somewhat more important, in the cultural history of our century, than W. Somerset Maugham, or Louis Bromfield, or even Lloyd Douglas.

Like Eisenstein's first book, *The Film Sense,* this is a collection of various essays, papers, addresses, dating from 1928 to 1945. Out of the mass of material available for compilation, "this group," Jay Leyda points out in his introduction, "was selected to show certain key points in the development of his film theory and, in particular, of his analysis of the sound film medium."

It is impossible for a reviewer to compress or reduce Eistenstein's findings on the film medium to a neat kernel; his method of writing it is really a quality of his thinking) is as complex and tightly constructed as his films.

For example, the problem of montage. On page five it is defined with startling simplicity: "The minimum 'distortable' fragment of nature is the shot; ingenuity in its combinations is montage." But the problem of montage is central to the film medium, and it would be misleading to say that the ingenious pasting together of strips of film is montage. No one, of course, is more aware of this than Eisenstein, and he will go on to develop and refine this definition. But to follow him the reader will have to go through a fascinating description and analysis of the Japanese Kabuki Theatre, and a brief history of the Japanese hieroglyph and ideogram.

In this space it is necessary to limit ourselves to two sections of *Film Form*: the first chapter and

* FILM FORM, by Sergei Eisenstein. Edited and translated by Jay Leyda. *Harcourt, Brace. $4.50.*

the last. These are chosen because they will be of most interest to the general reader and because they may stimulate him to read what lies between.

In 1928 Eisenstein wrote: "It is my conviction that cinema is today's level of theatre. That theatre in its older form has died and continues to exist only by inertia." Eleven years later he refers to this statement as "youthful presumption," and contents himself with the statement that cinema is a more "advanced form" of theatre. Referring to his 1928 claim for cinema, he writes: "Of course, this was rather a fact from my own biography, for it was I that was growing up, out of the theatre into cinema." The first chapter is an engrossing account of that growth.

He traces back the first manifestation of "film tendencies" to 1920 when he was engaged in the production of a play based on a Jack London story. The climax of the play is a prize fight. "In accordance with the most hallowed Art Theatre traditions, this was to take place back stage (like the bull fight in *Carmen*) . . ." Eisenstein wanted the "event" to be brought into the theatre, rather than simply the "reaction to events." The boxing match was brought on stage.

In 1923 he worked on a play called *Gas Masks,* about a gas factory. It was decided to produce it in a real gas factory: ". . . the plastic charm of reality in the factory became so strong that the element of actuality rose with fresh strength—took things into its own hands—and finally had to leave an art where it could not command. Thereby bringing us to the brink of cinema."

Another of his projects was so ambitious that it would have required a specially built theatre—or the film medium. A production of a play was planned with "chase tempos." This was to have been accomplished in a manner that staggers one accustomed to the timidity of the American stage: ". . . quick changes of action, scene intersections and simultaneous playing of several scenes on a stage that surrounded an auditorium of revolving seats."

Summing up these and other stage experiences that led directly to cinema, he writes:

> "In *Gas Masks* we see all the elements of film tendencies meeting. The turbines, the factory background, negated the last remnants of make-up and theatrical costumes, and all elements appeared as independently fused. Theatre accessories in the midst of real factory plastics appeared ridiculous. The element of 'play' was incompatible with the acrid smell of gas. The pitiful platform kept getting lost among the real platforms of labor activity. In short, the production was a failure. And we found ourselves in the cinema."

The final chapter, "Dickens, Griffith and the Film Today," is an incisive, brilliant analysis not

only of these subjects, but also of the United States. Eisenstein, of course, would not make the mistake of writing about Griffith without writing about America.

He finds that the American film esthetic, "forever linked" with D. W. Griffith, grew from Dickens and the Victorian novel; and that "American capitalism finds its sharpest and most expressive reflection in the American cinema." These would appear to be two totally irreconcilable elements: The hectic tempo and frenzied roar of American capitalism, and the "peaceful, patriarchal Victorian London of Dickens' novels. . . ." But Eisenstein was no ordinary tourist marvelling at the glories of Times Square. He saw the essential sameness of the big city and the small town: their basic provincialism. "Mostly one is amazed by the abundance of small-town and patriarchal elements in American life and manners, morals and philosophy, the ideological horizon and rules of behavior in the middle strata of American culture." One must understand this, he points out, in order to understand Griffith.

Besides the novels of Dickens, from which Griffith obtained the idea of cross-cutting (showing two actions parallel in time by cutting from one to another), another important influence working on him was the late nineteenth-century melodrama: *Way Down East* and its many imitations. These plays, in their subject matter, and in the method of staging them, anticipated the early screen efforts of Griffith. (In this connection Eisenstein makes an important point that has escaped most American literary critics: that *Tobacco Road* and *Grapes of Wrath* "contain ingredients common to this popular genre. These two works complete a circle of rural poesy, dedicated to the American countryside.")

Eisenstein's analysis of Griffith's limitations and, in particular, the reason for his method of parallel cutting and why he never advanced beyond it are of special interest. This parallel montage, he writes, is a copy of Griffith's picture of the world, "running in two parallel lines of rich and poor towards some hypothetical 'reconciliation' where . . . the parallel lines would cross, that is, in that infinity, just as inaccessible as that 'reconciliation.'"

In recent years so much of our criticism has been limited to an occasional *aperçu* inflated to article length that reading Eisenstein is an exciting and somehow new experience. American letters have reached the point where to refuse to be merely clever is a revolutionary act of high courage.

Sergei Eisenstein is not a film worker dabbling in esthetics; for him, the setting down of theory was as serious a job as the making of a film.

Braque and Formalism

by WILLIAM THOR BURGER

A VERY fair comprehensive of the work of Georges Braque has been arranged by the New York Museum of Modern Art. A pioneer of the Modern school of Paris, he took part in innovations which helped determine the twentieth-century look of cities, homes, cars and magazines. As co-inventor of Cubism his paintings of forty years ago were thought of as violently revolutionary; but with the spread of the abstract style which owes him much, he is now accepted as an old master. Less creative than Picasso, less intense than Rouault, less witty than Klee, less pure than Mondrian, his special flavor among the modernists has been that of good taste. Nonetheless, to understand contemporaray art, one must examine the work of Braque which lies so close to its roots.

Braque began as an academic realist, but moved rapidly on through Impressionism, Pointillism and Synthetism until he arrived at the manner of such Fauves as Henri Matisse and André Derain. Like other Fauves he painted the random beauties upon which his eye chanced; and like them, too, he was more concerned with an intense statement of the subjective effect of color than with the older Impressionist standard of objective truth.

Around 1907 both he and his friend Picasso became dissatisfied with the somewhat disorganized color sensitivity of Post Impressionism in general and sought a more solid base for their art. They found it in the cubes, cones and cylinders of the work of Paul Cézanne. As had happened at other turning points in French art, they thrust aside the pleasures of color for what they believed to be the greater reality and sterner discipline of form. The Analytic Cubism at which they arrived by 1910 was limited to almost monochromatic brownish gray. Singularly monotonous in form, these early Cubist paintings are composed mostly of short lines indicating planes shuffled ambiguously one behind another.

In 1912 a new style appears, called Synthetic Cubism to indicate that the attention of the artist had shifted from an analysis

of natural forms to the creation of arbitrary ones. Certain new devices such as the pasting of bits of printed matter to the canvas (called collage), and graining to imitate natural textures, are used. Fewer, larger and more coherent planes are painted in greater contrasts of color and value.

The new style which Braque helped sire was in fact one of the key movements of modern Western culture. It expressed in an early and clear form deep changes in class attitudes. In the short space between Analytic and Synthetic Cubism stands a milepost beyond which the 500-year-old concern of European art with the representation of nature is abandoned. It is a milestone, too, in the recognition by the bourgeoisie that its role in history is no longer progressive.

Analytic Cubism was a last gasp of simple nineteenth-century materialism based on science which gives way, in Synthetic Cubism, to a belief in absolute ideals. The earlier Cubism aimed at scientific truth with its pretension to the simultaneous representation of multiple acts of vision in a pictorial fourth dimension. Like positivist science it abhorred general laws like that of perspective and sought truth in a mass of separate visual perceptions whose organization was left to the observer. Its attempt at scientific representation was doomed to failure since no matter what the painter was attempting to do as he worked, the spectator saw merely a collection of lines and tonal relations.

Whatever the results, Braque and Picasso found it pleasing. By 1913 they had stopped considering the picture as information about the real world and began to think of it as an object in itself. From experimental laws of vision they turned to "absolute" laws of painting and began to explore the purely formal relations between line, area and color. Leaving the real world with which painters had been absorbed since the rise of the bourgeoisie, they began the creation of arbitrary esthetic microcosms. This was a cultural boundary line which paralleled such other broad changes as that from free enterprise to monopoly, and from belief in progress through science to fear of science.

The reflection of the world seen in the Cubist paintings of Braque had at first the relatively wide range of references of Impressionism, but as he moved towards Cubism it became progressively narrower. One can see the sort of reductions that took place in the painting of the crucial "Large Nude" (1907). Braque set out to abstract forms from a model in the studio. He did not seek to simplify the form in the usual manner of art school casts and artist's sketches which diagram the general forms of human anatomy. Instead Braque sees the figure already flattened out as in

photograph; he smooths out its curves and draws tangents to them. He uses only those curves lying flat along the canvas, disregarding those which move out in the round to make the figure solid.

From these limited planes and edges Braque has selected one of a number of combinations interesting to him. His interest having shifted from the woman as a human being to forms in general, he has rejected a whole body of content previously normal. Not only are the woman's age, coloration, feelings, sex, beauty, social position, personal thoughts and emotions gone, but also missing are references to such physical facts as gravity, tangibility and even the coherence of solid bodies. Little but the painter's sensitive relating of form to form is left.

The world is still further reduced in such a fully developed Cubist painting as the "Still Life with Violin and Fruit" (1911). It has been pointed out that all of the objects which appear in Cubist paintings are instruments of idle sensations. The cards, pipes, mandolins, newspapers, fruit and wine glasses which are endlessly repeated are all cheap, mass-produced objects designed to while away moments of leisure by appealing mildly to the various senses. They are given by themselves, without the humans who manipulate them, and withdrawn from the space of a landscape or even a room to that of a table top.

They are all objects manipulated at random, perceived not by one sense alone but by varying combinations of several senses. In use they are objects we are barely aware of and then only as they cross the threshold of perception for a moment. They are perceived then, discontinuously, and in fragmentary aspects. That is how they appear in Braque's painting. Only when the world which the painter represents is made up of enormously trivial objects explored with minute sensory discrimination does he develop the interest or the ability to work out the formal relations upon which his painting depends.

What, then, accounts for Braque's fame and his command of a high-priced market? He tells us that his paintings are objects in themselves. But what sort of objects are they? No longer a form of symbolic communication between men, it has become something like wall paper, or a Victorian whatnot whose use depends on its overall form rather than its internal content. It is something of a given size and shape which traditionally is hung on a wall. Part of its peculiar property is that it has no overt use, like a portrait or a religious picture, but serves chiefly to indicate that the possessor can afford expensive, and therefore honorific objects. As Veblen pointed out, the social merit of objects such as hand-

done oil paintings is high, for these have not a trace of the vulgarity attached even to such slight usefulness as having a meaning.

The painter has reached the same point from another direction. Caudwell has labelled it commodity fetishism. That is to say, the painter has increasingly transferred his attention from the use or content of what he produces to the external forms of production, his craft and technique. His connection with the consumer of his product being broken by the intervention of the gallery, the artist comes increasingly to think of his work as having a value independent of use. He contrasts the uniquely individual nature of his handicraft product with the impersonal standardization of mass production. He comes to value the skilled and expensive uselessness of his product as a method of distinguishing it from the cheap but useful objects made by the collective work of the factory. In the case of Braque, he comes to the point of producing an object which is little more than a series of beautiful solutions of formal problems posed by his craft.

Lastly, the intellectural in capitalist society who is neither collector nor artist, not only takes his cue from the tastes of these specialists but finds his own taste formed by factors similar to theirs. His individual mind being for hire on the open market, he tends to value those qualities which make it unique. He therefore sees the intensely personal sensitivity and subtlety of a Braque as an expression of the qualities on which his social value, that is to say his salary, is measured. So in Braque's work the requirements of the spectator and the motivations of the artist meet to produce the mutual satisfaction whose public expression is fame.

Limitation of content, concentration on formal problems and disdain of communication combine in Braque to make an art expressive of the isolated individual in capitalist society. This is alienation and dehumanization in art, no matter how beautiful in a formal way the paintings may be. From the complex reality of things is filtered out the greater part, leaving behind a husk of forms.

Unlike Picasso, Braque's mature style is never abandoned once found. Never completely deserting Cubism, his style nonetheless becomes more free and personal. Richer in color, wider in content, more subtle in form though it may be, it has not the historic significance of his Cubist work, and therefore stands beyond our limits here. Taking rank with the best that Formalism has produced, it remains no less clearly a product of the declining years of the capitalist class.

TREASON

by ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

SELDOM have I seen so servile a bid for dough and official favor as the spy drama, *The Traitors,* produced by Jed Harris. Its author, Herman Wouk, had previously demonstrated his unerring eye for the leaping buck as a radio gagster and as a concocter of fiction, done to the formulas for "popular" literary success. His novel, *Aurora Dawn,* achieved the lower rungs of Book-of-the-Month classicism — but so low that the ordinarily docile book reviewers were provoked and said, "Tut-tut!" It is such talents, ripened by such success, that Mr. Wouk brought to the composition of his play.

As for the subject matter of *The Traitor,* one may concede that treachery is rampant in it. But what traitors may be identified are not in the play, whose synthetic characters have nothing recognizably human in them— not even treachery. Cardboard is too solid a substance to liken them to. If traitors are to be found, they must be sought among those who abetted the thing—author, producer, etc. For theirs is a treachery to the theatre, to art, to democracy, to the human intelligence.

Through *The Traitor* the forms of art have been compelled to serve the basest of contemporary passions and prejudices, the psychopathic sadism formerly localized in outrightly fascist countries and now being directed, in this country, at progressives; through *The Traitor* the theatre has been made a platform for its demagogy; democracy is made to hold out eager hands for handcuffs; and the human intelligence, in the person of a supposed liberal professor of philosophy, is made to deny the dignity of the human mind and to grovel before a new "master mind"—that symbolized by a secret service badge.

A brief synopsis will make that clear. A young atomic scientist, supposedly neurotically egotistical and intellectually arrogant (but influenced in *negative* ways by the Communists), sets out to bring peace to the world, all by him-

self, by handing over our atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. He has been the protégé of the liberal philosophy professor whose teachings on the subject of intellectual freedom have presumably brought him to this pass. Made to see the error of his ways by the master-mind naval intelligence officer (a Catholic), he helps to trap the young scientist; and in his penitential orgy he voluntarily signs a loyalty oath that he had previously resolved to ignore. And he now professes the new-found faith that there are times when the human intelligence should abdicate its functions. He makes this profession in terms that sound like a *Times* editorial, after hearing, from the secret service man, hardboiled cynicisms about the democratic processes in terms that sound like a *Daily News* editorial.

The lesson Mr. Wouk's play seeks to deliver to the theatre audience is that our democratic institutions are expendable—and right now; that even Congress, dismissed as a collection of "fan dancers," is too much of a risk to security; that for safety's sake let free-born Americans voluntarily enter a nationwide concentration camp under the omniscient guard of the F.B.I.

Not even sophisticated play-carpentering nor gangster cleverness sufficed to make this ominous homily palatable or this phoney structure credible to the theatre public. According to reports the play has been losing money heavily. For such a venture, however, angels willingly spread their wings.

And the critics collaborated by spreading their praise. They, with a few exceptions, lent themselves to the promotion of *The Traitor*. Apparently they wished to ride with what had been so palpably fixed to be a winner. The terms of their praise indicate a certain amount of sweating, and, indeed, it called for unusual critical contortions to manage it. But manage it they did, proving how possible it is, when a playwright reaches the fascist length of rationalizing the surrender of our liberties, for critics to voluntarily "co-ordinate."