JULY
1949

masses & MAINSTREAM

n this Issue: LITERARY MARKETPLACE, by Ralph Hodgeman
ARKIN MARSHALL OF GEORGIA, *by JOSEPH NORTH*
OMMUNISTS IN NOVELS: II, *by CHARLES HUMBOLDT*
Story by BARBARA GILES · Arnaud d'Usseau · Norman
azden · Sidney Finkelstein · Eve Merriam · Samuel Sillen

MAKE HAY . . . .

REACTION will not take a vacation this summer, and *Masses & Mainstream* cannot take time out from the struggle. Come winter, come summer, the battle must go forward.

And because building *M & M's* circulation is an all-year-round concern of both its editors and its readers, we are appealing to you to help break new ground for our magazine this summer.

Judging by the number of "change of address" cards we are receiving these days, many of *M & M's* readers are preparing for their summer vacations. Wherever you go, whether it is for a few week-ends or for a few weeks squeezed in between activity for peace and progress, you will meet new people, make new friends in new surroundings.

We urge you to introduce *M & M* to these new friends.

You can help transform the usual summer "slump"—the plague of publishers—into a big advance for *Masses & Mainstream* by winning new readers for it.

Take along copies when you go. Write to us for subscription blanks (although a name and address on any piece of paper will do just as well so long as it is accompanied by $4 for a year or $2 for six months).

Every new subscription is added ammunition in the fight.

We are counting on you.

—THE EDITORS

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Drawings by Phil Bard, Peter Gourfain, Renato Guttuso, Leona Pierce.

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Cover: A union shop committee meeting, photographed by Helen Ormsby.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Financial conditions have compelled a reduction of the editorial staff. We deeply regret that the magazine has had to lose the services of Charles Humboldt as an associate editor. His contribution to *M&M* has been outstanding, and we look forward to his continuing participation as a contributing editor.—THE EDITORS.

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

THEIR NAMES —OR ELSE!

by LLOYD L. BROWN

"Your name? Speak. Your address? Speak. With whom did you have contact? Speak. Their addresses? Talk! Talk! Talk or we'll beat you."

THEY beat him. Finally they killed him. Julius Fuchik the Communist would not betray the anti-Nazi Resistance of his homeland. "Who else is a member of the Central Committee?" the men of the Gestapo had demanded. "Talk! Talk! Talk!" He did not talk—not to them. But millions since have heard him, and millions in many lands, Americans among them, love his name.

And Manfredi, the Communist hero in *Open City,* prototype of the legions of such anti-fascist fighters . . . remember the scene? Cruelly beaten and tortured, he is bound to a chair; his inquisitors promise him everything if he will expose the other Resistance leaders. The dying Manfredi does not talk: summoning up his last ounce of strength, he spits in the face of the fascist. The audience—the ordinary American men and women who see this film—applauds.

Not long ago our country was allied with the men who refused to answer in a war against the men who asked the questions. Among the millions of Americans who fought in that war were John Gates, Henry Winston, Bob Thompson and Gus Hall—four young men, one third of the Twelve who are in the dock at Foley Square. As I write, three of them are in jail: Gates, because he refused to answer some questions, and Winston and Hall because they protested his jailing.

Now it is true that the court at Foley Square, New York, is not a Gestapo dungeon. A black gown is not the same thing as a black shirt. America is not a fascist state. But the questions? The jailings? Surely

they must convince many who up till now have been reluctant to believe what the defendants and their Party have asserted: *that the trial of the Communist leaders is an attempt to overthrow American democracy, to nullify the Bill of Rights, to lay the foundations for a police state.*

The facts are simple. John Gates, first of the defendants to take the stand, was asked to name the other members of the Veterans' Commission of the Communist Party of which he was the head. He refused to name any of them except two of his fellow defendants. His reason was plain and he stated it: to save the others from loss of employment, from possible imprisonment and terror; to shield them from the vindictive reactionaries who have brought him and his comrades to trial because of their beliefs and membership in the Communist Party.

I know John Gates; I have known him for many years. We grew up together in that wonderful organization, the Young Communist League. So did Gil Green and Henry Winston and Bob Thompson and Gus Hall—and before our time, Jack Stachel, Carl Winter, John Williamson. All, my friends and comrades. Knowing Gates and the others, I knew they would never answer such questions.

But there are many Americans, ordinary decent people, who, although they do not know these men, will respect their actions. It is not only Communists who despise a stool-pigeon, who honor a man loyal to his fellow men. The common people of our country have always felt that way.

It is particularly apt to recall something that happened one hundred years ago. Before they finally resorted to force and violence in their attempt to overthrow American democracy, the slaveholders (then in control of Congress, the administration and the courts), put through the Fugitive Slave Law. Until that act, only a minority of Americans, the Abolitionists—black and white—and the slaves, had fought against the hideous system. Many more disapproved of it, but they were passive. But the passage of that infamous law, and the attempt to enforce it, brought masses of people into active political struggle against the slaveocracy for the first time. Why?

Because the Fugitive Slave Law attempted to force, by law, by the courts, every American to become an informer, a spy on the runaway slave and those who helped him to freedom. Against this law which decreed that every man must be a slave-catcher, our forefathers rose

in anger. What they did is recorded on the finest pages of our history. To Judge Taney—he who had proclaimed that a black man had no rights a white man need respect—their actions were Contempt of Court; but it was he who was found in Contempt of the People.

When John Gates and the other Communist leaders refuse to give names of their members to the capitalist court they are but following in the best traditions of the American working class from the first "conspiracy" trials of trade unionists until now. Without secrecy and the protection of their members from employer reprisals, labor unions could never have been formed and could never have grown strong enough for a man to go to work with a union button on his cap.

The Wagner Act, with its provisions for anonymity for union organizers and members, was the fruit of labor's long, uphill battle against the corporations and their courts, Pinkertons, and blacklists—the battle to win the right to organize. And only a few years ago the Supreme Court upheld the appeal of C.I.O. organizers who had been arrested for refusing to register as such with the state of Texas. The Justice Department—then—asserted that "The necessity of maintaining secrecy where it is suspected that the employer is hostile becomes evident by mere references to the lengths to which such employers have gone to ascertain the identity of union representatives."

Now it is the Justice Department that is planting spies, getting names, preparing greater reprisals than loss of jobs and blacklisting. Now it is a Federal Court that is violating this principle, demanding that decent men become informers and jailing them when they refuse.

The Communist Party is not a secret society; it has never concealed its aims. On the contrary, it has always exerted every effort to bring its platform before the people—by newspapers, radio, leaflets, books, canvassing, word of mouth. That many Communists cannot—dare not —disclose their identity as such is not of their choosing. *Rather it is an indication of the wholesale violation of their civil rights by the employers and the government they control.* The Red Scare, the witch-hunts, the Un-American Committee have made it a common practice for F.B.I. agents and local counterparts to go around asking neighbors and associates of a man: What does he say? What does he think? Who

comes to see him? What does he read? What does he belong to?

Once it happened—because these snoopers are also stupid—that one of these "investigators" rang my bell to ask about a neighbor. When I told him to go to hell, it was perfectly legal. But now it seems that they want to make such a simple ordinary response a crime. They want to *force* neighbor to "expose" neighbor; and if comrade must "expose" comrade then why not father son? Didn't one of the F.B.I. stools testify as a prosecution witness that he had reported on his own kin?

You see, there is really no limit to this evil thing. The barbarities of fascism are incredible—but they are real. The first victim may be the Communist, because he is the most resolute and clear-sighted anti-fascist, but all experience has taught us that every decent man, woman and child inevitably becomes the target.

And experience—the history of our times—has taught us something else: that an aroused people can dispel the nightmare. Julius Fuchik in his cell knew that. "If the hangman's noose strangles before I finish," he wrote, "millions remain to write its 'happy ending'." Those millions include America.

Bill of Rights Conference

In a call issued for a Bill of Rights Conference, a distinguished group of American progressives points out that the people "are faced with the need to defend our basic charter of freedom which is under unprecedented attack." The initiating sponsors for the conference to be held in New York on July 16 and 17 at the Henry Hudson Hotel, are Paul J. Kern, Acting Chairman; Bishop Cameron C. Alleyne, Hon. Earl B. Dickerson, Roscoe Dunjee, Prof. Thomas I. Emerson, Hon. Robert W. Kenny, Arthur Miller, Prof. Philip Morrison, Rt. Rev. Arthur W. Moulton, Prof. Linus Pauling, Prof. Frederick L. Schuman, and Prof. Colston E. Warne.

We urge our readers to support this conference, to help turn the tide which threatens us all. Write to the Chairman at 11 West 42nd Street, Suite 824, New York 18 for full details.—THE EDITORS.

The LITERARY MARKETPLACE

by RALPH HODGEMAN

We asked Mr. Hodgeman, a New York publishing executive, to describe the status of creative writing in the literary marketplace today. We hope that this article will stimulate a discussion of the crisis in creative writing which he depicts. M&M *invites articles and comment from writers, publishers and readers on this subject.*—The Editors.

THIS brief study of economic conditions in American publishing today has been made out of a concern for the future of creative writing, with special emphasis on the novel. It points out a number of commercial contradictions which are beginning to be reflected in shrinking lists of fiction overburdened by concocted, escapist entertainments written by formula. It presents some of the financial facts of a dilemma faced today by both the writer and his publisher.

First some facts and figures. Of the 9,897 new books and new editions published in the United States in 1948, new fiction accounted for 1,102 titles. This is 16 per cent less than 1947, and represents only 17 per cent of the total production of American publishers as against the previous year's 21 per cent. Broken down into several outstanding categories, the publishing picture for a given month, December, 1948, looks like this:

Biography, 44 titles; Business, 23; Fine Arts, 45 (higher in December because of the Christmas gift trade); Games, Sports, 21; Travel, 25; History, 51; Poetry and Drama, 98 (includes the production of numerous "vanity" presses, also higher because of the Christmas trade); Religion, 98; Science, 73; Economics, 38; Technical and Military books, 55; and finally Fiction, 65. (These figures, as most of the figures used in this survey, are from *Publishers' Weekly.*) Although a decrease of 16 per cent in the number of fiction titles published last

year is not too alarming in itself, a further analysis of the kind and quality of the fiction published and sold will, I think, reveal a situation tragically relevant to the fate of American writing.

The best seller of 1948 in fiction according to reports from book stores was Lloyd Douglas' *The Big Fisherman.* Published late in the year and launched with great pre-publication publicity and followed by a large advertising schedule, it had sold more copies by the end of the year than any other of the books which had many more months' selling time. There was an advance sale before publication of 245,000 copies; by December 31 the book demanded a printing order of 468,000 copies. Mr. Douglas' previous Biblical novel had been a best seller for thirty-two months, a record only outdistanced in recent years by the fabulous *Peace of Mind.*

Second for the year in fiction sales was Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead,* a first novel and war novel, which was a leading best seller for eight months. Mailer's book sold 137,185 copies plus about 60,000 through the Book Find Club. Third place went to *Dinner At Antoine's* by Frances Parkinson Keyes, author of many previous best sellers, with a sale of 114,249 copies in the first six weeks of 1948. *The Bishop's Mantle* by Agnes Sligh Turnbull took fourth place with a sale of over 100,000 in the trade. The list continues with Betty Smith's *Tomorrow Will Be Better* in fifth place, and runs through Irwin Shaw's *The Young Lions* in tenth position with a total sale of 78,050 copies in the last three months of 1948. With the exception of *The Naked and the Dead, Tomorrow Will Be Better,* and *The Young Lions* no serious critical consideration could be given to the titles among the first ten leaders in sales.

This list of best sellers was arrived at by tabulating book store sales alone. Actually the determining factor in popular sale in the United States is the great mail-order business developed by such organizations as the Dollar Book Club whose printings for titles range between 800,000 and 900,000 copies. An estimate of the best sellers of the year based on the number of copies which were bought by all readers would be: *The Golden Hawk* by Frank Yerby, *Came a Cavalier* by Frances Parkinson Keyes, *Yankee Pasha* by Edison Marshall, *The Bishop's Mantle* by Agnes Sligh Turnbull, *Unconquered* by Neil H. Swanson, *Annie Jordan* by Mary Brinker Post, *Pilgrim's Inn* by Elizabeth Goudge, *Shannon's Way* by A. J. Cronin, *Parris Mitchell of King's Row* by Henry and Katherine Bellamann and *Eagle in the Sky* by

F. van Wyck Mason. These titles speak for themselves. Although it is heartening to see as fine a book as *The Naked and the Dead* appear some place in the best seller picture, it is obvious that it is being smothered under a mountainous pile of the outsize bosoms of historical, romantic heroines.

ARE best sellers made or born? Certainly those authors who show up repeatedly on the book club and best-seller lists have a flair for telling the kind of story which contains a variety of satisfactions for a tremendous number of readers. That such readers and their friends look forward to each succeeding novel from the pens of these authors is undeniable. The truth of the matter is that given the potential of this vast audience as a starting point, best sellers are vigorously and systematically promoted into existence. In 1947, fifteen publishing firms spent almost $2,800,000 for newspaper advertising space alone. In 1946, 135 book firms spent about $8,000,000 in newspaper media. Two book clubs were listed among the 100 largest newspaper advertisers of all kinds in 1947: Doubleday with its various imprints and enterprises spending $1,015,178.

Here is a typical announcement of a new candidate for best-sellerdom, taken from the March 20, 1948, issue of *Publishers' Weekly.* The layout covers the first three, premium pages of the book trade journal; and begins on the cover with the question "What's going on here?" The illustration shows a chesty seventeenth century maid whose strapless gown has almost slipped below the Mason-Dixon line. She is struggling with a lace-cuffed ruffian who has seized her from behind with one hand and is brandishing a whip in the other. In the opposite corner, an aristocratic gentlewoman appears to be in the exploratory stages of rape on the part of two uncouth buccaneers. Turning the page, a double-spread informs the book seller that there will be a first printing of 100,000 copies of *The Golden Hawk* by Frank Yerby, with $25,000 of "Yerby-style advertising." Two and one-half million copies of Yerby's *The Vixens* and *Foxes of Harrow,* we are told, have been sold, "and now comes the most exciting Yerby best seller of all." It should be noted that one month before publication, the book is already being spoken of as a best seller. And why not? Here are the first two paragraphs of a synopsis of the story:

"In the brigand-infested, gold-laden West Indies of the 17th

century, a man and a woman became rivals and lovers. *He* was a yellow-haired giant from Cadiz, a legend among the conquerors and despoilers of the New World . . . a man in search of vengeance, driving himself to ever-greater conquest in plunder and love. He called himself Kit Gerardo. She was *Rouge,* an English noblewoman turned pirate, tormented by her hatred of men and defying all who claimed her. For this green-eyed buccaneer had her own dream of revenge—against the sadistic grandee, Don Luis del Torro. But hers were a woman's memories and a woman's scars, and they bred a woman's fury."

On August 21, 1948, the "Big best seller of 1948" is announced. *The Burnished Blade* is already a selection of the Literary Guild. It is

"an engrossing tale of love, intrigue, and high adventure set in France and the Near East at the dawn of the Renaissance. Here, for the first time in fiction, is a picture of the splendid, barbaric kingdom of Trebizond—sophisticated and polished, but seething with intrigue and amorality. . . ."

Here is the front page of *Publishers' Weekly*: "Three exciting scenes from *Cutlass Empire*—the new historical novel by an author whose popularity is measured in millions of sales." In this ad the bosom has its position of accustomed prominence. In a two-page spread featuring the jacket of the book, we see a piratical sea-dog with his arm around a "native" girl who, in her friendly innocence, is not only strapless but gownless. (A curious kind of salacious chauvinism condoned by the Post Office, the Church and other custodians of public morals says that all bosoms must be covered with the exception of dark-skinned, obviously non-Christian females.) *Cutlass Empire* is off to a good start.

Here is another front page of *Publishers' Weekly*: *Castle in the Swamp, A Tale of Old Carolina* "with all the best selling ingredients of *Yankee Pasha* and more!" Although the prominent bosom is surprisingly absent in the jacket illustration which depicts a tender love scene in crinoline and Spanish moss, the formula is the same: "A story of suspense and intrigue, of hatreds that thrived in the sultry heat of the Southern swamplands, of murder that lay hidden, of evil and strange passion . . . the story of a man who was reared for vengeance, only to fall in love with the woman he was sworn to hate."

THESE examples were chosen at random; no special effort was made to find synopses that would parallel one another. Boy meets girl in the seventeenth century; vengeance, violence and a dash of tabasco—this has been, in one form or another, the basic, guaranteed, sure-fire pattern for dozens of best sellers in the last decade.

Why have American publishers permitted themselves this unrestrained indulgence in the crudest, most demeaning pandering permitted by our competitive, commercial mores? The answer is given quite frankly by Jack Goodman, vice president of Simon & Schuster speaking before a forum devoted to the question, "The Publisher and His Cultural Responsibility." "Publishers," he said, "publish a certain number of books whose sole purpose is to keep them in business." It is openly acknowledged that in today's market it is the secondary income derived from the sale of rights to book clubs, magazines, the reprint houses and the movies which furnishes the operational profit of many of the larger publishers.

It should be borne in mind that we are discussing here income from works of creative imagination, not the bread-and-butter staples of publishing—cook books, "how to" books of various kinds, dictionaries, etc. Formulas for the concoction of best-selling fiction such as we have presented in the above excerpts are invaluable to the publisher; the payoff for such material by the mass distributors of books may spell the difference between survival or bankruptcy. (In recent months, for example, New York publishing circles have seen a bankruptcy, a "financial reorganization," a merger of an ailing firm with an older, larger house, and a crisis in which a seemingly healthy house was put on a strict C.O.D. basis with its manufacturers and suppliers.)

For the writer the temptation is more personal; but the knowledge that selection of a book for distribution by the Book of the Month Club means an immediate revenue of $80,000 to be equally shared by him with his publisher is a deeply persuasive influence which cannot readily be measured. Men have gone bad for less. The enhancement of such a book by selection and distribution to an eventual readership of close to a million people makes it a likely candidate for Hollywood screening and for reprinting in the pocket-size editions. The lure of such bonanzas is developing a group of craftsmen with words. They are not writers. They have nothing to say which only they alone can say. Has a decade of fabulous sales for the lucky authors

discouraged writers whose audience is smaller and more discriminating? There is no doubt about this, when we add the pressure of the publishers, who, squeezed by rising costs, are choosing for publication those books which hold a promise of larger sales than those on which they used to be willing to take a chance. I have indicated some of the techniques for making best sellers. Obviously those books which are bought and read by the multitude will receive most attention from the publisher, the book store and the public. The public can hardly disregard repeated invitations made in full-page advertisements to sample the forbidden fruits of as many as three wonderful, new books particularly when the sampling is ABSOLUTELY FREE!

These books, on the whole, receive little or no attention in the columns of the more respectable book review media. The same double standard applies in the criticism of these books as is involved in writing and publishing them. It is recognized that literature, in the sense of real conviction, freshness and vigor, is not under discussion. With few exceptions the potential best sellers are simply noted, described and even politely panned. Thus, not long ago a book which appeared on the New York *Herald Tribune's* weekly listing of the leading best sellers was, in the same issue, dismissed in a three-inch review which implied that publishing the book was a criminal waste of paper. The same issue of the *Tribune* carried a full-page ad for the book.

A DRAMATIC example of the kind of squeeze which takes place in the marketing of books is contained in the rather startling revelation made by Simon & Schuster and reported in a recent issue of *Time,* that on the sale of the first 100,000 copies of *Gentleman's Agreement* the firm netted a profit of only $100! It is true that the book went on earning money for S&S in trade sales, in reprint royalties and from the eventual Hollywood deal; but no reckoning is made of the amount of know-how, time and money which is involved in bringing any book, especially a "problem" book, to the hundred thousand mark. There are safe and sane business men who would not touch this kind of operation with a ten-foot pole. Obviously S&S had considerable faith in the ability of the book to reach a broad audience if it was backed with the full strength of their resources. The publishing history of *Gentleman's Agreement* is a success story almost

Alger-like in its combination of pluck and luck. What would happen to a promising first novel of limited appeal under the conditions indicated?

After consulting sales records for a number of novels by talented writers with something to say—and included here are two very gifted left-wing novelists—I found that a generous average for the sales of such books would be 4,000 copies. I propose to present here an economic history of such a novel.

Let us say that our novel runs to 352 pages and will be priced at $3.00. Because the manuscript is a promising one, and will take long and careful writing, we will make the author an advance against royalties of $1,500. The royalties will be ten per cent of the retail price of the book. To earn his advance, the author must sell 5,000 copies. That is the amount of books we will print and bind. Now let us begin to manufacture the book. Paper, type-setting and printing of such an edition at today's prices will cost at least 30¢ per copy. An adequate binding will cost 27¢; the jacket will add 3¢ more.

We now have a book ready to send out for review. It has cost us 60¢ a copy. To do any kind of justice to the book and the author we should spend at least $500 to announce the book. This would give us approximately one-third of a page in the *New York Times Book Review*. I am purposely setting this figure low so as not to overburden the manufacturing cost of a small edition of 5,000 copies with intangible expenses for exploitation. Actually, an appropriation of ten per cent of the retail price of the book should be made—$1,500 instead of $500. At the lower adverising budget our book now costs us 70¢. Adding the author's royalty of 30¢ to that, each copy of our book costs us one dollar. What does the publisher get when the book is sold? Allowing an average discount to the bookstore of forty per cent of the retail price, and adding another twenty per cent to cover salesmen's commissions, shipping, billing, etc.—the publisher gets $1.20 for each copy sold.

I am keeping the picture simple by eliminating other items of overhead, because I want the publisher to come out with a profit of 20¢ per copy. If we had made the larger appropriation for advertising, the publisher would merely break even. All this assumes that the whole edition of 5,000 is sold; but we already know that our book will only sell 4,000 copies. A little arithmetic reveals that the pub-

lisher is in the red for $200. To wipe out the debt we will sell the remaining 1,000 as publisher's overstock for 20¢ a copy. I must point out that I have rigged these figures so that the publisher would break even. In reality, it is more likely that with the higher advertising appropriation, and other incidental expenses, the publisher would lose about $1,000.

What do these cold figures mean in human terms? The author has received $1,500 for an immeasurable quantity of creative effort. The publisher has made a profitless gesture in behalf of literature. These are the economics behind the present policy of many publishers who reject manuscripts which do not show a minimum sales potential of 7,000 copies.

AN IMPORTANT obstacle in the way of publishing new writing for a smaller audience is the sharp rise in book manufacturing costs. Estimates of this rise since 1939 range from seventy to 100 per cent. At the same time book prices have trailed living costs. The rise in cost to the consumer for a representative group of fiction has been estimated to be from $2.50 in 1939 to a present level of about $3.15. Although books are, relatively speaking, still a pretty good bargain, the average reader has always found them to be a luxury item. There can be no question of a choice between books or butter. If publishers were to pass the rise in manufacturing cost to the consumer, books would soon price themselves out of the market.

Much study is going into the problem of cutting manufacturing costs by technological changes in printing and bookbinding. Some advances have already been made; notably in the use of adhesives in binding as a substitute for sewing. There are reports, too, of European experiments with one-operation case-making and casing-in which produces a book bound in specially treated boards. An increasing number of American publishers are binding in paper which simulates cloth.

However, none of the technological developments which are on the horizon offer any real solution to the problem of small editions. A basic printing for the Pocket Book series is said to be 250,000 copies. Initial printing orders for some titles in the Pocket Book series have been as high as 750,000 copies. The type of mammoth equipment set in motion to produce such an edition simply could not

be applied to a printing of 5,000 copies. It also raises the question of what the publisher could charge for an original edition in that format. Will the public pay a dollar to read a novel in the same format for which it is accustomed to pay twenty-five cents?

It must be borne in mind that before a title reaches the pocket book edition the costs (with a few specialized exceptions) have already been amortized by the original publisher. However, as an extension of the area of publishing the pocket-size editions have been one of the healthiest developments for author, publisher and public. In 1948 alone, according to an estimate made by Ian Ballantine, president of Bantam Books, six major firms in the field sold more than 135,000,000 copies, more than twice the total of the former record year (66,000,000) in 1945. Although the reported trend is toward sports books and romantic love stories, the major firms have maintained a fairly high standard of publishing. Certainly the pocket-size editions have come closest to making available to the people a wide selection of useful, entertaining, and frequently stimulating books at prices the people can afford.

It should be apparent, even from the modest survey presented here, that the future of American writing cannot be left to the mercy of the market. It cannot depend upon the personal sacrifice of authors and the altruism of publishers. Even within the restrictive framework of the current publishing crisis, enough works of promise have been printed to make it evident that the opportunities for a rich and diversified literature are present in the American postwar scene. All efforts to realize that promise, and all programs and plans to solve the problem must reckon with the economic facts which I have outlined.

The Pear Leaf

A Story by BARBARA GILES

THERE were brass knuckles in the sewing-machine drawer. A change of light showed their glint under threads and tape, and she looked away, for she had been cutting paper dolls until the gleam of the scissors was a dancing pain. So she turned again to the window and the pasture, where the late sun slowly colored the grass.

"Keep still," said her mother as Miss Lydia pushed against her chest to hold the pattern in place while with her other hand she felt for pins. Obediently Emily let her feet slide apart, bracing like a new calf. A long fever, recently departed, had unlocked her joints, and the brandied peach eaten an hour ago had stiffened them in her fancy only.

"You look," said Miss Lydia lovingly, "like a picked bluejay. I bet they won't call *you* Fatty anymore."

"No'm," she answered, brief and respectful as a child should be, with a small smile for the other's arch one. But she kept her eyes on the pasture, thinking with a sudden, surprised joy that turned the sensation of weakness into lightness and grace, "Tomorrow" . . . when her feet released from their creaking prisons of new sandals would run again, feel each point of grass under soles made tender by their long protection. The blades would be warm except under the trees, and moist in the coolest shadows. And if there was water in the long ditch—only a little was needed—she could salve the trivial soreness in mud. There might even be dew still—

"Mamma!" she demanded, though she knew it might annoy her. "Mamma—can I go out right after breakfast? Tomorrow, I mean?"

"She was never *very* fat," her mother finished replying to Miss Lydia with a glance at the dressmaker's grimly repressed but amazing bosom before she turned to Emily. "You can go whenever I tell you to, not before. And don't start *asking* for things. You should be glad you're alive."

"Oh, I am," Emily assured her. "I'm awfully glad, honest. Only I wondered if—"

"Well, I *hope,*" said Miss Lydia so playfully that the higher arches of her voice threatened to break, "—I *hope* you get *some* of those pounds back on you. My, you don't want to look like a little *Cajun,* do you? Or a pick*aninny?*"

"No'm," Emily smiled back; but she was already gone, her toes spread as she went like a flying plow through the deep dust of the road, across the road into the canefields and swiftly out again ("Bad men hide in there, big nigra men"), all the way back to the bayou. Down rough steps of oak roots to the water's edge, tensing the muscles of her instep on chunks of slippery clay . . . and later the cinder path hot and prickly, the satiny breadth of the gallery steps—. But not in the house, not for a minute. For once she would run alone, as far as she wished, with no game to stop her. ("I'm not playing today," she would say. "I guess I don't feel like it yet.") She would run as in hide-and-seek but farther and faster—until all the places that were "hers" came together in the swiftness of her finding them, the slight bitter perfume of wild-cherry leaves with the smell of green maypop vines, the clay under the bayou with the road's burning dust, and the wind blowing the sunlight through the leaves. . . .

"Nobody," said her mother in a quiet and terrible voice, "has ever called one of my children common-looking. Not even Mrs. Thompson—"

"Oh, Mrs. *Whit*more, I didn't mean—!"

"Nobody. Miss Laborde remarked to me yesterday—right after Mass—that Lois reminded her of a piece of Dresden china with her complexion and all. And Julaine is not as dark as she looks except in the summer. Only Emily used to be 'fat' and right now she may be a little too skinny; but just the same—"

"She's *precious!*" cried Miss Lydia with an intensity like terror.

The leather prisons held her feet again. She tried to force time past the angry moment, a half-hour forward to bread and milk with jello. And she tried to force it backward, recalling the bit of brandied peach she had pressed against the roof of her mouth until a spicy fume spread through her nostrils. It had been given her as a special treat, a secret—"don't tell the others," her mother had cautioned, smiling and almost gay, still warmed by the news that Mrs. Thompson had just lost her cook. Then while Miss Lydia worked they had talked, Miss Lydia mostly listening because she didn't really matter, she only came to "do a little sewing," and though her laugh was a hoot and a

howl and she resembled a lighted stove with her round solid flesh and high blood pressure, her coming and going left no more mark on the day than the grayish streak of no-meat on Friday. It was said, though, that she *could* be touchy—because she had no husband, it was said.

"Oh, I don't say that she's *pretty,*" Mrs. Whitmore proclaimed. "If words like 'cute' weren't sort of common—and I suppose you *might* say that pickaninnies were 'cute' *too*—but she's as refined as any child on the plantation. And I'm not forgetting her little Highness either, Beverly Dare—"

"Beverly Dare *Thompson?*" shouted Miss Lydia. "She's *hideous!* That hair! And her chin!"

"I don't believe she *has* any chin," the other declared. "Sometimes it almost scares me." She laughed abruptly, a harsh sound but offering truce, and Miss Lydia hooted with appreciation.

"*Mrs.* Whitmore, you *are* a scream!" She pushed Emily gently aside. "All right, honey, I can't do any more this evening. Tomorrow."

SLIDING around her, Emily sat down and slowly began to gather her paper dolls from the floor. Through the screen door she could see the long backyard to the abandoned garden. It was dimmer now, a thicker green. At the far end of the garden her pear tree grew, hidden by other trees. Two days before her fever she had come upon it in flower and it had looked like something never seen, never heard of—like a Christmas tree lighted on every twig with tiny white candles and put out of doors for the sky to show through the flames. She had stared up through the branches, then looked down for the pleasure of looking up again. And finally she had pulled off a leaf and fetched a thorn—long before then Lois had showed her how to write on a pear leaf with a thorn—but now she couldn't remember the word she had written. However she tried she couldn't remember.

Her mother spoke from behind her in the rocker—Miss Lydia had gone—"When I was a girl the Soulieres asked me to every one of their dances. Celeste was my best friend for two years. After they moved to New Orleans she wrote and invited me to her debut, and if Papa hadn't lost his position that year I might have gone." She boasted in the bitter tone of an old argument and Emily heard as in echo the sharp rhythm of the rocker she had stilled for speech. Her face would be pale, for she flushed only at the memory of an old compliment or a waltz; anger robbed her complexion. "You never heard

them use the word overseer about him, not with all their money and refinement. They called him their 'manager.' His family was as good as theirs and they knew it, as good as anyone's in Louisiana. I never did hear anyone use that word until Mrs. Thompson. *'Oh, Mrs. Whitmore',"*—her voice piped a savage mimicry—*"'what did your father do? He was an overseer, wasn't he?'* I just looked at her—I didn't say a word—and she shut up, I can tell you! . . ."

Emily crouched forward trying only to see, never hear. Another sound intruded from the kitchen, iron on iron, and her stomach moaned its longing. With food in her she might have climbed on a chair and gotten down the box of pictures from the top of the armoire. She might have asked, "Is this the one, Mamma, when you were dressed for the dance at Beaupre?" And "Where is the one of Great-Grandmamma with the brooch?" She might even have told—except that she wasn't going to tell anyone—how someday soon she would write a book about Great-Grandmamma and the dances and ruby brooches and Mamma herself, everything long ago and beautiful, like gold and satin. Her teacher had loaned her a book like that once. She could write one easy. . . .

"Even the darkies laugh at her. Victoria asked me one day, 'Miz Whitmore, that big black auto of Miz Thompson's they call a *see*-dan—ain't it look like a hearse.' I had to laugh; I couldn't help it. What's so grand about her, anyhow? Your dad is Mr. Thompson's own business partner and he had his position in the sugar office besides—you'd think, to hear *them* talk, it was the sugar *factory. . . ."*

She tried now to hear, listening for the voices outside to call goodnight, for Lois and Julaine to run in, her father to whistle from the front gate, while the nurse brought in three-year-old Franny and her baby brother. The yard was blurring, the garden had withdrawn. What word? she urged memory; which word? There was room for only one on a leaf. She closed her eyes to recall it and heard the rocker going again, the vehement creak more compelling than speech. A spark of resentment flared through her crouching patience: why did *she* have to be so mad? No doctor made *her* eat jello for two weeks instead of meat and gravy. She could go out whenever she pleased, and have Miss Lydia come and sew for her, and buy dresses too if she wanted. Grown-ups! Mrs. Thompson too, with her big sedan and fur piece and her despising look, crying when the frogs sang because she had to live in the country with common trash. . . .

Jumping up, Emily cried with more outrage than entreaty, "Oh, Mamma, I'm so *hungry!*" but her mother had leaped from the chair in the same instant and whirled to the window with a cry that drowned hers: "Where is that fool darky with those children? Does she think babies can be kept out all night?" Victoria came in with the lamp, asking: "You want I should go find her, Miz Whitmore?" and the other woman turned on her. "No! Tend to your own work and let Christine tend to hers!" For a moment they faced each other with nothing said and Emily felt a brief fear sharper than her dread of the time when Mamma would break out at Victoria for addressing her as Emily ("'*Miss* Emily', if you please! And don't forget!")—a time that should be near, since Julaine had reached it when *she* was nine, but how near she didn't know, there being no mark on calendar or clock to indicate to her or Victoria at what hour of growing up little girls became Miss.

But then Victoria set down the lamp and turned to leave, just as Lois and Julaine ran up the steps and a commotion in the kitchen, with the baby howling and Franny singing in a shout, told that Christine had come in by the back way. When the older children came over the threshold, taking her mother's attention, Emily slipped out and went quickly off to the kitchen too. In the middle bedroom she passed the two little ones with Christine, who called above the hubbub, with her two dimples showing, "Hi, lil skinny!" Emily only tossed her head and ran on, but in the dining-room she paused near the kitchen door to adjust her manner to the carrying out of a plan. Then she crept languidly in and drooped on a box of stove-wood.

"Oh," she moaned softly, "I'm starving."

Victoria was pricking the skins of some yams with a fork and she finished one before answering.

"Supper nearly ready."

"I can't wait," Emily said, this time with real feeling; the warmth of the room, the smell of the yams and oniony meat made her giddy, and her stomach felt as if it were weeping slow tears.

SILENTLY Victoria bent down to slide the pan of yams into the oven and straightened up again. She looked tall, Emily thought dizzily, with that lamp shining back of her—kind of like a shadow. There were unlighted places in her face—her eyes and around her nostrils—but you could see her motionless lips. Katie would have smiled. Katie

had cooked for Grandmamma and, until the people in the big house who owned the plantation had taken her, she had cooked for them. Christine, who was her niece, once told how she had saved Lois' life when Lois was very little and sick with something the doctor couldn't make out so he didn't trust food for her and she was getting weaker and weaker, just starving to death, until Katie fed her bits of bread and greens on the sly and she picked up again. Mamma said the whole story was ridiculous and a lie, but the way Christine told it Emily believed her. Remembering it, she had come in here. . . .

"You don't know what it feels like," she tried again, whimpering.

"Knowed a white lady once," Victoria remarked finally. She took the lid off a pot and looked in, then put the lid aside and searched on the table until she found a clean fork. "A widow lady. Her husband leffen her poor with three little chirren and nothing for their mouths." Dipping the fork into the pot she carefully brought out a few grains of rice. "One day she cut off her hairs and solen them to the hair man —solen them to make switches for other ladies." While she waited for the rice on the fork to cool she looked out of the back window, looking at nothing maybe, the way people look at rain. "When my Henry leffen me, and four chirren to feed, I would have solen my hairs too. Only they was colored hairs. Ain't nobody buying colored."

"All right, Victoria," Emily said after a few moments. "Well—I guess I'll go and see if Dad is here." She went out forgetting to drag her feet, and she didn't stop until she reached the semi-darkness of the middle room, which was lighted only at bedtime or when lamps were carried through. There was a quiver in her knees and her head roared faintly, like the roar of seashells, although she could no longer smell food. "Ain't nobody *buyin* colored hairs," she mimicked silently, as Julaine would have done it aloud—grimacing too in imitation of her "darky grin." Everybody would laugh if she told it that way. And she would laugh too . . . yes, she would. With her hands clasped against her belly, pressing it back from awareness, she went over the mincing high speech, held the mindless smile taut, until the quiver had nearly gone from her knees and she could hear real voices from the next room. One of them was her father's. She tore out and rushed at him as he finished kissing Franny and set her on the floor again. Lois and Julaine jiggled on each side of him, already started on the nightly chant: "You got any cents, Dad?" and Christine was giving Ralph his bottle while Mamma said to her, "You'll have to undress Franny later . . .

it's your own fault if you get off late. And take that look off your face; you could hang a bucket on your lower lip."

"Hi, Dad!"

"Well! How's my little tadpole?" His squeeze was too tight and his beard scraped her cheek, but tonight she didn't mind.

"Fine," she answered automatically and then, remembering: "Except I'm dying I'm so hungry."

"Hungry, eh?" He gave a sympathetic smack to her rump—according to Mamma he had grown up in the backwoods and had never learned the more graceful ways of affection—while with his other hand he picked coppers from his pocket. "Well! We'll have to do something about that." He handed them each a penny. Emily softly rubbed her cheek against his coat sleeve, like a coaxing little animal; the cloth smelled wonderfully of cigar smoke, the smell of his office a quarter-mile away, a world away from now, tonight, the moment.

"Lois—Julaine—Emily!" said their mother. "Stop pestering your father. Put those cents in your bank and stop pestering him. All you children think of is money and eating. Even Emily, even when she was raving with fever"—her voice sank to a sighing weariness as she bent down to jerk at Franny's dress in back—"she's such a good child, I thought she would talk about Heaven. But no, it was ice-cream sodas."

Lois and Julaine gave loud, cheerful shouts of derision, and their father laughed a little, silently—Emily could feel it in his arm—although he said reasonably, "Well, maybe she was thirsty."

"Right now I'm starving," she reminded him.

"All right, all right. We'll fix you up." He took off his hat, which had been knocked forward by the embraces, and raised his eyebrows inquiringly at his wife. "A cracker, maybe?"

"It's nearly suppertime. I don't want to ruin her appetite for the little she gets then. And you know what the doctor said."

Christine spoke unexpectedly. "You ruin *her* appetite," she said, "you needs an axe."

The others burst out laughing—even Mamma smiled—and Emily turned on them bitterly the accusation she had made to Victoria: "You don't know what it feels like! It *hurts,*" she added, surprised by the fact herself. "I bet it hurts like anything to starve to death."

They laughed again, and Christine said, "You ain't going to starve.

You ain't going to starve, don't worry." Though the words were reassuring, the tone, for her, sounded strange—too quiet and sort of hard somehow, almost unfriendly. What was the matter with everyone tonight?

Her father's voice held off the others'. "Want to come with me while I get my toddy?"

"Can I have the sugar at the bottom? After you drink it, I mean?"

"I guess so." His smile, as quick and conniving as a wink, promised that there would be more than that to her fixing-up; maybe a lot more.

Elated, she hopped alongside him on both feet, dragging at his hand. "Dad," she said, as they went through the middle bedroom. "Dad—did you know you could write on a pear leaf without tearing it?"

"You can? Well! I didn't know that."

"What would you write," she asked, "if you had to write something on a leaf—if you could just write one word?"

"What would *you* write?"

"I'd write—I wrote—'15'." Startled at having remembered, more astonished at what memory had turned up, she stopped still, trying to think what it meant. Oh, yes—with disappointment she recalled it—the fifteen cents she had estimated as the price of two pencils and a smooth tablet necessary to write a book. Nothing more unusual than that. And it wasn't even new; she had thought of the book before coming upon the tree.

Her father tugged at her hand. "Why fifteen?" he asked, as she resumed hopping.

"Oh, because—I don't know. I guess I was thinking of when I'd be fifteen and grown up, or something like that."

But while he was getting the things for his toddy she stood by the sideboard frowning and dissatisfied. Was that all? Just something about a tablet and two old pencils? Tablet—a very smooth, very white one, its pages waiting; as the pear leaf had waited unmarked in her hand. For a moment she stood outside the hot gloom of the dining-room in the cool radiance of an early sun and stared up at the blossoms, themselves reaching upward and carrying her gaze beyond them. *Not like candles—she was wrong—not at all like. White candles were church . . . First Communion. When you carried them in the sun, from convent to altar, the flames looked funny—the sun laughed at the flames. But flowers were bright inside. Maybe the tree too, where you couldn't see it. Reaching up, trying, lifting to the sun. Every-*

thing trying. The grass too and the vines. And maybe things she had never seen, even. And she had thought with excitement, *There are a million things I don't know yet.* And then she had thought "book": yet not a book for learning, one for putting things in—though she hadn't a word for it, not a single word.

Hearing her father come in from the kitchen, she jumped slightly and fixed her gaze pointedly on the jar of crackers. He gave her one, which she not so much ate as absorbed, then another which went more slowly. For the third he stole a little of the butter that Victoria had already put on the table, wiping the knife afterwards on his clean handkerchief. As she spooned out the whiskey-sugar, a half-inch thick in the glass, a seed of warmth and pleasure sprouting from her stomach sent long, delicate tendrils to her finger-tips and toes. Somebody, probably Julaine, began to pump out the Merry Widow waltz on the player-piano, and the lilting-banging rhythm swirled ruffled ball-gowns and candlelight around in her fancy. Gold and satin, satin and gold . . . and the music like this, the wine, the beautiful food . . . she would put Mamma in looking as young as in the picture, and gay, with a fancier dress! . . .

On the way back to the main bedroom Dad said invitingly, "Fifteen, eh?" but she only answered yes, and went on to tell him that Lois had shown her a piece in the last *Youth's Companion* about how to make real cups and saucers from ordinary clay and that she and Julaine were waiting for her to go outdoors again before they tried it. As she mentioned the outdoors it struck her that the flowers of the pear tree must have gone during her illness. Oh, well . . . maybe next Spring—.

"Emily," said her mother as soon as she saw her, "you've left my scissors just where you were playing with them, right out there on the floor. Do you want your little brother to cut himself to pieces?"

"No'm." She bent down and picked up the scissors, the waltz music still thumping in her, and put them back in the sewing-machine drawer. The brass knuckles glinted at her again, and this time she fished them out to get a better look.

"Mamma"—she brought them over to her—"Where did these come from?"

"What—?" Her mother took them from her with a surprised look that slowly changed to recognition and remembrance.

"I think," she said softly, "they must have belonged to poor Papa."


NEWSWEEK
WORLD TELEGRAM
ALL JEWS ARE REDS
ALL REDS HATE JEWS!
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
DOWN WITH THE JEWS IN AMERICA
DOWN WITH ANTI-SEMITISM IN RUSSIA!

A DAY WITH
Larkin Marshall

by JOSEPH NORTH

MACON: Glance up any street and you can see the lush foliage at town's end. Palm trees march down the city's main thoroughfare. The two-story buildings of antique red brick, brilliant in the Georgia sun, the languid tempo, the porticoed public buildings of pure white made me wonder how much had time altered the city since Sherman's men marched through.

I had come to see Larkin Marshall who publishes the tabloid weekly, the Macon *World.* His newspaper office on Cotton Street stands in the heart of the Negro section. He met me behind the small wooden enclosure that separates his editorial quarters from the drygoods store that occupies the entire front. He sat behind the railing when I entered, near a telephone, and he rose, tipping his spectacles higher on his broad brown forehead. He stood about five five, his philosopher's face furrowed with the cares of three-score and ten. His clothes hung carelessly on his bowed frame and as he extended his large hand in welcome, measuring me with a sharp glance, a memory was evoked which I could not place at once.

This was the Georgian who came upon the nation's stage with the birth of the Progressive Party. At that party's nominating convention the delegates chose him to oppose Senator Russell, the Dixiecrat, for office. Later the country had been startled by the news that Talmadge Georgia had turned in some 75,000 signatures for the Progressive Party. Larkin Marshall had no small part in it. Only Bibb County, his county, had licked Herman Talmadge in November. I heard in Atlanta that Talmadge himself had wryly commented that that damned Macon editor did it.

"Yes, I am glad you came," he said. "It is always good to see a friend from up North."

Mr. Marshall said his wife was fixing dinner and he hoped I could come. I said I would be happy to and he telephoned his wife. Then he turned to me and said his office was mine and was there anything he could do to help me during my stay here.

I glanced at the *World* on the ancient desk and noticed the headline of the week's issue, just off the press: TWO MEN FOUND DEAD IN MACON STREAM.

Outside, a police car crawled by.

Mr. Marshall looked up, then continued at his task, sorting a pile of correspondence that appeared to include advertising and circulation bills. A radio in the store's front blared and an announcer drawled the day's news. International news, national news, local news, the fervid commercial—no word of the two Negroes found murdered in the Macon stream. The violent death of Georgia's Negro citizens could not draw a minute's comment on the radio.

Mr. Marshall handed me one of the letters he was sorting on his desk: it was an engraved invitation to attend a Progressive Party dinner in New York to honor Henry Wallace and his guests from Italy, France and Great Britain. "I would like to hear them," he said thoughtfully. "It is good for Macon to know what is happening in Europe today." I had known from the *World,* which I had seen before arriving, that this man of Georgia scanned the world's horizons. A strike in Africa, an Australian dockers' strike on behalf of Indonesia—these were known in Macon through his columns.

I knew the pages of his paper waged stubborn war against the killings that were exploding with greater frequency these days in the nearby cottonfields, in the hamlet streets, in moonlight and in open day. The paper told of Negroes murdered and their wives violated, of Negro women beaten, jailed (a mother of twelve for life), and of Negroes meeting, protesting, assembling with whites, lifting their voices, pushing, moving, struggling. The Southern war. Its columns carried news too of Henry Wallace, of Vito Marcantonio, of the Civil Rights Congress. In Dixiecrat Georgia the *World* shone like a lighthouse.

I realized the Dixiecrats would not stand by and let this hardy warrior go untouched. Yes, in the capital they had said Larkin Marshall licked Humman in Bibb County and Gene's son, I figured, would not accept that setback with philosophical sportsmanship. It was not the Talmadge way.

And, in fact, retribution came swiftly: a hopped-up criminal libel suit had been entered against Mr. Marshall several months ago. And the week before, a jury of twelve white men listened dourly for three days and returned with their verdict in twenty minutes. For three days Negroes had crowded the courtroom. They had come in from the adjoining countryside, by bus, in jalopies, by foot. Mothers sat all day in the courtroom with their babies in arm. *Their* Larkin Marshall stood trial.

I had seen his letter to Councilman Benjamin J. Davis: "Your kind and ever welcome letter came to hand today and it was indeed heartening to hear from you and to realize that you were thinking of my case in spite of yours. I feel that you are going to win despite all the obstacles. We shall do what we can to mold sentiment and help in any way we can." The letter spoke of "cowards unwilling to stand up and tell the truth." And recounted the heavy legal expenses of the trial. "These have been paid," he wrote, "but we have not a dime to continue our fight." He wrote of a "rally here Sunday and I hope to be able to raise some money at this meeting as we are going to have to fight every step of the way."

The verdict had been five hundred dollars fine or six months on the chain-gang. Six months on the chain-gang was tantamount to a death sentence for the sixty-nine-year-old editor.

But the letter closed with a characteristic note: "The Macon *World* has been a free lance in spite of everything. They want it to die. So you can see what I am up against."

WHEN Mr. Marshall finished his chores he turned to me again. "And so you saw Mrs. Ingram yesterday."

I told him about the visit to the "state farm" at Augusta. I described how the delegation stood uneasily outside the prison gates. How the gates opened and a small woman in a thin pink dress came out into the enclosure before the prison. Three guards lounged by the stockade and laughed as the delegation talked to the little mother who said: "My heart hurts for my children. I miss my children so bad I don't know what to do."

I described the delegates from the North, how they had gathered friends in Atlanta and Augusta, and had been refused safe-conduct by President Truman. Nonetheless they came, impelled by the vindic-

tive tragedy decreed by the State of Georgia. I recalled how the little country-woman came out of the prison gates calmly, quietly, and spoke with an assurance that astonished the big-city women on the delegation. "Won't you-all sit down?" her first words had been as she motioned them to a bench beneath a tree. And how she hoped they wouldn't mind the dust, behaving all the world as though she were in her own parlor and some neighboring women had dropped in for a visit.

Mr. Marshall heard me through silently, intently. "She said 'Won't you-all sit down?'" he repeated softly.

I told him how Dr. Gene Weltfish had leaned over and kissed Mrs. Ingram and how the guards suddenly ceased laughing.

"We must get her free," he said slowly. The way he said it bore a world of meaning. Here, in the Dixiecrat heartland that is fortified by armies of police, guns, radio, prison, judiciary, the official violence and the covert, the hooded Klan and the swaggering Dixiecrat, this aged, bowed man said with inflexible decision. "We must get her free."

Then I recalled sharply the memory he had evoked when I met him a few minutes before: the people's generals I had met long ago, in the Spanish war. They too were small, solid men with an unmistakable air: the stoic confidence of common men beneath the Junkers and Condors—Enrique Lister, El Campesino, Modesto. His firm handshake, his sharp, measuring glance, his obdurate stance midst swirling dangers had brought the memory back. That was it: a people's general.

Larkin Marshall pulled a great round watch from his watch-pocket. Did I have any further tasks? Did I need copy paper for the article I was to write? If not, then maybe we had beter go along for Mrs. Marshall had just called and said dinner was ready. "And after dinner you must come with me. Some friends will want to hear about Mrs. Ingram."

He drove his 1934 Buick with an easy caution, switched off the key whenever the street took a downhill course. The car coasted and as soon as the street levelled again, he switched the key back on. The gesture of the turned-off key spoke worlds of the life a Negro editor led in the South. ("But we have not a dime to continue our fight. We shall have a rally here Sunday and I hope to be able to raise some

money at this meeting as we are going to have to fight every step of the way.")

We came, after half an hour up a dusty road, to a settlement of a dozen cottages on a green hill overlooking the valley. The homes stood white, bright in the setting sun, each with a different gaily-colored roof. Negroes live here, Mr. Marshall said. They had named it after him, Marshall Heights, and he stood looking intently at the homes as though he saw them for the first time. It was a dream of his come true: part true, for he had dreamed a bigger dream but too much had intervened after Roosevelt died. He described the dogged, protracted negotiations he had carried on to make it possible.

The eye of the Klan had fallen jealously on this settlement, so neatly and lovingly built. Negroes here had never lived in homes like these and white fears arose that this could be perilous precedent. But Marshall and his people had persevered, he had brought into play every strength, every craft, and here the homes stood.

A tall, lithe man with a Mine, Mill and Smelter button in his cap came from one of the houses, a child at his side. Both greeted Marshall warmly and the old man picked up the child. He introduced me to the unionist. "Came down here to visit Mrs. Ingram at Augusta," he told him. His neighbor regarded me with a new interest. "How did you find her?" he asked. I told him what had happened and the remarkable impression she had made upon the delegation, and that her heart was ailing for want of her children.

"Twelve," he said, shaking his head. He extended his hand again, took his child from Mr. Marshall and walked on, thoughtful.

THE editor's trim home stood on the highway and as we crossed into his yard I noticed the rows of blue pansies about the house. Mrs. Marshall came out to greet us and shook my hand warmly. As we were about to enter I noticed something lying in the middle of the yard, something that jarred my attention, like a sudden scream.

Mr. Marshall noted my start and said, slowly, "Come a minute." He led me to the thing I had noticed. As we approached I recognized it. "The Klan," he said. "Last November, during the campaign."

Before it he had received anonymous telephone calls, unsigned letters. "Told me to get out of town," he said looking at it. He told me what had happened: a car stopped abruptly one night as the sena-

torial candidate sat late in his study writing; men leaped out and in an instant the burning cross flared ten feet from his home. Neighbors came running and called the editor. They doused the fire and the entire settlement, the men, their wives, their children stood in the moonlight staring at the monstrous thing, now dead, divested of fire.

Mr. Marshall had looked at it long. Several men moved to pick it up, haul it away. "No, let it lay," he had said. "Let them come back for it. I'll tell them to come back and take it. Just let them come back and take it."

The men had looked at him, then backed away from it. And there it lay, all through the winter and spring to May, on its side, like a dead giant scorpion. You could see the little rusty twists of iron that had contained the gasoline-soaked wadding. From tip to base it lay about ten feet long.

"They never came back?"

The editor looked at me. "No," he said, "they haven't come back."

That night, after supper, I accompanied him to a meeting somewhere in the county. Eleven men and nine women crowded into a parlor: a picture of Christ holding a lamb hung over a bedstead. Mr. Marshall opened the meeting with prayer. "And may the Lord bless us and bring us peace."

Each rose afterward to speak in their custom. Simple words that repeat the monosyllables often: life, bread, free. They asked me to speak about Mrs. Ingram and when I finished a grandmother on a rocking-chair said, "God bless her."

Then Mr. Marshall spoke again. "We must know our rights. We must fight for our rights. We must know how to vote. We must build our party so these things can never happen again. Yes, we must know how to vote. That's the first." He took a crumpled piece of paper from his coat pocket and read from it. It was a list of questions Talmadge's government had recently drawn up to ask at polling booths to block the rising strength of the Negro vote. Wherever the editor went he took that list with him and catechised his listeners.

He placed his spectacles on his nose and, with a schoolmaster's air, read: "Who are the senators from Georgia?'

A young man in blue jeans answered.

The old man smiled his satisfaction. "Who presides over the Senate?"

Silence a moment, then a thin, young woman replied.

"Who was the first president of the United States?"

The old woman on the rocking-chair gave the answer.

"How many in the House and how many in the Senate?"

A long silence. The old man's face fell. A huge man in a sweater replied, a bit doubtfully, but he had it. Marshall's face brightened again.

So it went. "Good," Mr. Marshall finally said. "We'll continue this at our next meeting."

Then he spoke of the Civil Rights Congress and the need for Negroes to make it strong. "I spoke the Good Book's words a while back," he said. "We need the Lord's word," and a murmured "Amen" rose in the room. "But," he went on, "I ask you to think on this. Suppose you went down the road, Good Book under your arm, and you met a bear. That bear can't read the Good Book. That bear don't abide by the Good Book."

"He don't indeed," the grandmother responded.

"You need more than the Good Book then, don't you?"

A murmur rose as they smiled around the room. "'Deed you do."

"Yes, you need more," he said, and concluded his parable: "Together, we will be strong." He spoke simply of big simple truths, of the strength of united men, united black men and white men. He told of Truman's treachery, sunning himself in Florida waters while evil men killed the Civil Rights legislation. He reminded them of the Progressive Party warnings. "And now people will see who spoke the truth." he said. "Even the blind will see now."

A WORN lean woman with young eyes stood up: "I believe we should hold a collection. I believe we should have a treasury of money." Another woman arose. "Our cause must have strength. We must help Mrs. Ingram." Hard calloused hands promptly went deep into jeans, into change purses. Dollar bills suddenly waved in dark hands. A man collected the money in a battered hat and counted it: "Thirteen dollars and seventy cents," he said triumphantly. A murmur of satisfaction went round the room.

Soon afterward, one of the men went outside, glanced up and down the road, and returned. They filed out singly into the moonlight and silently went their various ways.

Not far, a crooked, charred cross lay on its side amid the flowers.

ON SAFARI with HARI

OLD REVOLUTIONARY SEEKS TO FREE RUSSIA

At the age of 79, Ivan Narodny, one of the last of the "old Russian revolutionaries," is coming out of retirement to seek again the "liberation" of Russia.... He plans to ask for the help of "my old friends," William Bullitt, former Ambassador to Russia, and Robert A. Lovett, former Under Secretary of State.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, MAY 13, 1949.

BIRTHDAY

by EVE MERRIAM

My parents begged for a boy, but I was born.
My cord was cut, my cord was bound
Among bills, between wars
In a brass bed on top of a store.

An elevated train swam by the window.
Treading water, the panting summer passengers
Could see the midwife spank my bottom,
Beach me on the shore. My mother rose
In her wrapper, returned to the stove;
Fed my sisters, my brother,
Stirred soup meat and debts for my father.

Across the street, neon flamed my future:
Princess, Princess; Beauty, Beauty.
My fame (in code) pretended to advertise wares.

My carriage rolled down to the corner and I could watch
The hosiery mills where fingers twitched like thread,
Where silken spools ran quickly out as lives.

Nuns passed by me, their granite skirts
Spread wide as the shadowing El.
Their high white collars roared but I could not hear;
They vanished into the Church. I was a Jew.

A path was charted to the public square
Where sparrows books and grass all sang together.

Past doorways identical, families like my own,
Their pavements stacked with crockery and flesh,
I stamped the sidewalks, marking *me, me.*

Past sunset, star-rise I flew, I fled,
Fixed on my neon noon proclaimed in my famous sky.
Refrigerators white as priests intoned
A Penny A Day Only A Vacuum Clean Your Way
To Glory: I turned aside,
Clutching the coins I did not own.

Beyond the dark saloon where swinging doors
Blared in, spent out, where spittoon and rail
Glittered golden as brass: I dodged:
Darted like a fish into the day after tomorrow.

Bloodshot as neon my eyes blinked on
And I wept for the lost brass bed.

I walked down the sky and it took me years;
The brass bed was sold at an auction.

The neon sun beat on my face; I never felt it at all.
I wore no hat and I rented a room
With a studio couch for a bed. The alarm was wound,
I went to work, and noon was shared in the streets.

Now my cord is bound, but my cord is cut
And the calendar reads today.

Images of Europe

by SAMUEL SILLEN

MY NEW friends, the architect Michaut and the engineer Gaillotte, were waiting for me when the train from Paris pulled into the station at Nancy. I had been invited here as an American delegate to speak on the peace congress which had ended two days before. Nancy is not far from the German border, and as my hosts showed me around this old city of Lorraine I found it hard to separate the invasion marks of the first world war from those of the second. On our way to the town assembly hall we drove past a big square. "We can't park in this area, you know," said the French engineer, "it is reserved for the cars of American officers." "The same place," he added, "used to be reserved for the cars of German officers." How shall I describe his tone? It was not very different from the tone a citizen of Portland or Binghamton would use if he had to describe foreign armies parking all over the main square of his city.

Few people in Nancy, I learned at the peace meeting, believe the U.S. Army needs quite so many men and guns for "registering graves." After my talk a heavy-set man of about fifty-five stood up and asked for the floor. He came to the platform and in a strong voice told his townspeople, three-fourths of whom were women: "All of you know me. Our American friend does not. I am a metal worker. I had a wife, she was a good woman, she was killed in the war. I had a daughter and I had two boys, and they are dead too." Then he turned to me, took my hand in his and said: "You must explain to your people they do not know what war is. You must make the Americans understand we will give up much but we will not give up hating people who would bring us war again."

Here peace is not a preference but a passion, and during my stay in France, Czechoslovakia and Italy I often recalled the metal worker's

message, part hope and part warning. I thought of him in Lidice, a green field this May broken only by holes that once were basements of homes — the new village is being built on a slope overlooking the old. I was standing near the ditch where the men of the village had been shot down by Hitler's squads. Two shawled women approached with a child who was limping. My interpreter suggested we talk with them. They were widows of Lidice. At the time the fascists came to blow up the village they had been visiting in a nearby town with the boy, then a baby of four months.

Now they were back, and the older woman, who looked sixty-five but was only thirty-seven, took me to see the simple monument to the martyrs of Lidice put up by the Red Army when it drove the Nazis out of Czechoslovakia. The woman said: "I am weak now and perhaps a little old, the war time was not easy for us. But I would find enough strength to fight an invader of our country. I would find strength to defend our liberator." Her words evoked the image of that tremendous massing of human forces at the Buffalo stadium in Paris and the workingclass women of France with the banners that said "Never will we give our sons to fight the Soviet Union."

EUROPE, this spring, was importing very little from us, and the Marshallized countries were gasping for air after the ardent hugs of a dollar dictatorship. Only the import of culture seemed on the upgrade. One morning in Paris, on my way to the Louvre, I stopped at a magazine stand for the new issue of *Les Lettres Françaises.* Next to the rack of French literary journals was a big display of U. S. comic books with translated captions. Gershwin's American in Paris need no longer feel blue. Not only is Superman strutting over the newsstands, but the movie houses feature Clark Gable epics of fifteen years ago as per the Blum-Byrnes deal limiting French films to a fraction of the Hollywood quota. The Louvre, at least, was reassuring. Renoir has not yet been edged out by Norman Rockwell.

I came to Rome as to a cinematic Mecca, the home of *Open City, Paisan* and *Shoe Shine.* But I was naive. All roads in Rome led to Hollywood Grade B's of yesteryear. Finally Senator Emilio Sereni, a leader of the Communist Party, came to the rescue and found me a movie house that was showing a fine Italian film, *In the Name of the Law.* I had wanted to see *The Bicycle Thieves,* but Sereni explained

that this film had been virtually banned by the De Gasperi government and the theatre owners, who for both political and economic reasons are collaborating in a vast cultural dumping operation. My mind skipped back to something I had seen that morning: Jim Farley's huge Coca Cola billboard that brightens the view of the Coliseum as one approaches it from the old Roman Forum.

In Rome, as in Paris, film artists and producers have formed a broad united front against the government policy of cultural colonialism. It is only in part a fight for jobs. It is also a struggle of ideas. In the Atlantic Pact countries the gospel of cosmopolitanism is being actively preached by reaction. It is the doctrine that art has no homeland, that the desire for a national film industry, like the desire for national sovereignty and independence, is only a provincial prejudice. In the name of this spurious "internationalism" the people of Europe are expected to accept, as broadminded citizens of the world, the rule of Wall Street and Hollywood.

MAY DAY in Prague begins early, and you must be up by six if you want to get anywhere near the parade. The whole city is out; there seems no end to the line of march that passes by the reviewing stand to wave at President Gottwald. Peace is the keynote, peace and work and socialism. Every building on Wenceslas Square is decorated with red streamers and pictures of Gottwald and Stalin. A thousand banners and floats of flowers proclaim the friendship of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, the work pledges of the new Five-Year Plan. A huge picture of William Z. Foster is held high in the parade. It is a day of song, the fulfillment of that first May Day in America over half a century ago. The holiday mood continues long after the seven-hour parade. "*Cest prace*" is the familiar greeting that one hears all over. "*Cest prace*—All honor to labor."

ONE evening in Prague I returned to the Hotel Alcron to find a note in my box. It read: "Welcome to Prague. I am in room 226. FW." Since I was in room 223 this seemed a reasonably close place to wind up with Franz Weiskopf, whom I had first met in New York ten years ago. After the Munich days the Czech novelist, who had been editing a left-wing magazine, managed to escape from the fascists with his wife Greta. I remember a New Year's party not long after they came

here. Franz raised his glass: "To the day," he said, "when I shall invite you to visit a socialist Czechoslovakia." We drank the toast, but those were bleak days and there were still more difficult ones ahead, and I am afraid some of us thought Franz was braving it a bit.

Now he had arrived from America and was on his way to Stockholm to serve as the Ambassador of his country, a people's Czechoslovakia that was well along the way to socialism. And as we drank a toast in memory of that earlier one I had in all honesty to ask myself a question. How many of us, in a full, living sense, see beyond the next obstacle in the road? In Europe it was impossible not to renew one's optimism, one's understanding that the peoples of the world are irresistibly on the march and that, however much tragedy it may yet inflict, capitalism is doomed.

I met other returned exiles whose lives reflected the sweep of history in our time. I spoke with Friedrich Wolf, who had come from Berlin to Prague with a delegation of writers including Ludwig Renn, Bodo Uhse, Willi Bredel and Hans Marchwitza. The author of that powerful indictment of anti-Semitism, *Professor Mamlock,* Wolf recalled his trip to New York in 1935 when his *Sailors of Cattaro* was produced by the Theatre Union; he had been invited, he reminded me, by Columbia University to lecture on the theatre and cinema of the U.S.S.R. in those good old days when hospitality to anti-fascists was not considered un-American. Wolf spoke of his imprisonment by the reactionary French government in Le Vernet, where he had shared a cell with Gerhart Eisler. He gave me a copy of his story, *Kiki,* dealing with the concentration camp and he inscribed it for Gerhart. We could not know, of course, that by the time I returned he would be seeing Gerhart in Berlin, another exile returned to freedom and home after an odyssey of suffering and heroism.

In Zurich a Swiss comrade whom I had met at the peace congress took me to see a humble dwelling at 61 Spiegelstrasse. We walked up the worn wooden stairs to the little flat above the restaurant, the apartment of the exiled Lenin in the months before he took his last trip back home in a sealed train through Germany. Then we walked to the library a few streets away and entered the reading room where Lenin had collected his notes for *State and Revolution.* One began to see in a new way the impotence of the bourgeoisie to banish the men and ideas of the workingclass.

WAR, *by Renato Guttuso*

GUSTA FUCHIK showed me the manuscript of her husband's *Notes from the Gallows*—the slips of paper, including toilet paper, that he had been able to smuggle out of the prison with the aid of a friendly guard. The manuscript was in a small, neat hand; hardly a word was crossed out; the "pages" were carefully numbered. "He had to work everything out in his mind before writing," Mrs. Fuchik said. "He could borrow the pencil from the guard for only a few minutes each day, and then not every day." The papers had been placed in bottles and buried in the earth. But for a time after the liberation Koltinsky, the prison guard, had been afraid to approach people because he knew their hatred for the police.

I had come to see Gusta Fuchik with Jiri Hronek, the journalist who spoke at Madison Square Garden during the peace conference in New York earlier this year. Mrs. Fuchik has been devoting most of her time to editing her husband's literary and political works, five volumes of which have already appeared. I soon discovered how meticulous an editor she was. She showed me editions of *Notes from the Gallows* that had been published in thirty countries. And then, gently reproachful, she said: "In the closing words of the American translation there is an error. It reads 'I loved you all, friends.' It should read 'I loved you all, people'." She felt that the difference was of great importance, for Fuchik spoke in his book to all people, not simply to his friends. And certainly in Czechoslovakia Fuchik is a national hero who belongs to all people, and they have given his name to theatres and schools and streets, and in one district where he carried on his activities during the underground the brigades of young shock workers have named their mine after him.

Mrs. Fuchik showed me copies of the newspaper *Rude Pravo,* mimeographed on single sheets, that came out during the illegal period under Fuchik's editorship—the May Day issue of *Rude Pravo,* she observed, was 1,200,000 copies this year in a country with a population of twelve million and a half. Then she leafed through a file of the literary journal *Tvorba,* also edited by her husband, pointing to an issue of 1938 which had a big blank space with a notation that this was where the government had censored out American press comments on Munich, including the Kansas City *Star,* the New York *Herald Tribune,* and *New Masses.* History was at home in this small apartment just above the one the Fuchiks had lived in before Munich.

IN THE lobby of the Salle Pleyel a young delegate to the peace congress came up to Ilya Ehrenburg and asked for an autograph. Ehrenburg, who practically got writer's cramp signing autographs in New York a few years ago, smiled knowingly to Howard Fast and myself and said "Americansky." No, the delegate said with emphasis, "Brazilsky." Ehrenburg's impatience with autograph hunters is understandable, but a few evenings later I was tempted and shamefully succumbed.

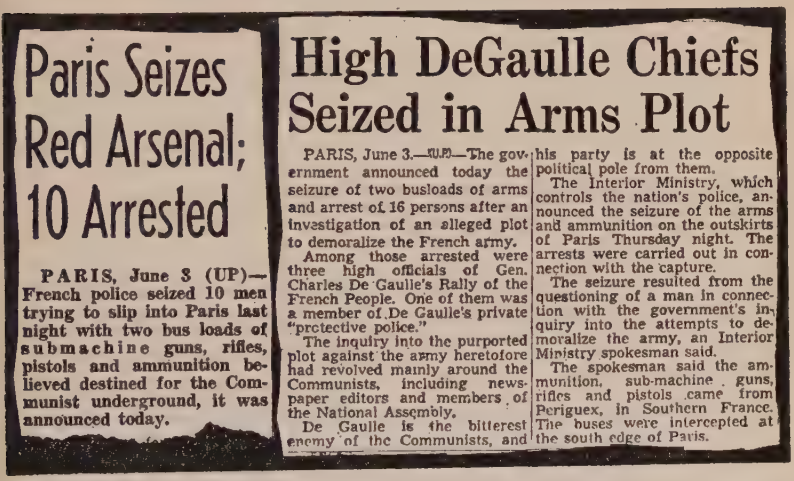
It was at a dinner given by the Paris circle of the Friends of *Les Lettres Françaises*. Claude Morgan was chairman and introduced the writers who were guests of honor. Pablo Neruda and Anna Seghers, Jorge Amado and Picasso, Joliot-Curie and W. E. B. Du Bois, Wanda Wassiliewska and Aragon—it seemed, after a while, impossible that so many of the world's leading intellectual figures were in this dining room. Until, that is, one remembered what had brought them together. It was not only the urgency of the fight for peace. It was a deep sense of belonging to broad masses of people, not simply a communion of intellectuals but of whole peoples.

In Paris there is no "Picasso question." There is a "Picasso question" in New York and Los Angeles, but not in Paris. How much more clearly, I found, he sees than the followers of his past ideas the artistic issues of our time, the need to break away from the old "individualism," to express and reach the working people. He would like artists to try their hands collectively on large public projects.

I spoke with Pablo Neruda and tried to tell him how much his great poem "Let The Rail Splitter Awake" had meant to our readers, how I had heard it read at public meetings in Minneapolis and Chicago. He told me, in English, that he had been glad to see the poem in a North American magazine, and he expressed confidence that he would one day, not too far off, be able to write his poetry again in Chile. He is a large man, soft-spoken, and one feels in his quiet dignity a tremendous force of character.

As I met and talked with creative giants like Picasso and Neruda and Amado, I was struck with the thought that Americans must travel abroad to meet them, for in our country they would be denied entrance as Communists. For an American intellectual it is not only a sad thought but an enraging one, sufficiently enraging, I should think, to make one want to turn one's talents fully and unreservedly to the fight against the destroyers.

YOU PAYS YOUR MONEY ...



Paris Seizes Red Arsenal; 10 Arrested

PARIS, June 3 (UP)—French police seized 10 men trying to slip into Paris last night with two bus loads of submachine guns, rifles, pistols and ammunition believed destined for the Communist underground, it was announced today.

High DeGaulle Chiefs Seized in Arms Plot

PARIS, June 3.—(U.P.)—The government announced today the seizure of two busloads of arms and arrest of 16 persons after an investigation of an alleged plot to demoralize the French army.

Among those arrested were three high officials of Gen. Charles De Gaulle's Rally of the French People. One of them was a member of De Gaulle's private "protective police."

The inquiry into the purported plot against the army heretofore had revolved mainly around the Communists, including newspaper editors and members of the National Assembly.

De Gaulle is the bitterest enemy of the Communists, and his party is at the opposite political pole from them.

The Interior Ministry, which controls the nation's police, announced the seizure of the arms and ammunition on the outskirts of Paris Thursday night. The arrests were carried out in connection with the capture.

The seizure resulted from the questioning of a man in connection with the government's inquiry into the attempts to demoralize the army, an Interior Ministry spokesman said.

The spokesman said the ammunition, sub-machine guns, rifles and pistols came from Periguex, in Southern France. The buses were intercepted at the south edge of Paris.

ABOVE LEFT: A U.P. dispatch in the Detroit *Times*. RIGHT: A U.P. dispatch published the same day in the Detroit *News*.

REPRESENTATIVES

"BAN METHOUT, Annam, Indo China.—Three hundred elephants today knelt here to Bao Dai, former Annamese Emperor and head of the new Viet Nam (Indo China) state, and to Louis Pignon, French High Commissioner. They were symbolizing the homage of a million Moi tribesmen in the mountainous south Indo China region about 180 miles northwest of Saigon."—*From a Reuters dispatch to the New York* Times.

SOLUTION

Interviewed by the Minneapolis Star *at the airport where the last American plane from Shanghai landed, John Falnes, an engineer for the Ming Sung Industrial Co., said: "There was panic some time ago, but not now. The rich Chinese are all gone."*

WE INVITE READERS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS DEPARTMENT.
ORIGINAL CLIPPINGS ARE REQUESTED WITH EACH ITEM.

COMMUNISTS in NOVELS: II

by CHARLES HUMBOLDT

This is the second and concluding installment of this article; the first appeared in our June issue.

AS THE class struggle grows more acute, ideological elements assume greater significance in literature. This applies particularly to books dealing with conflict in its direct forms and to characters in whose lives the struggle is waged. Here the critic has the keenest responsibility. If he is preoccupied with formal considerations, it will be hard for him to subordinate talent to truth. Yet in so doing he may find himself rewarded with genuine foresights, as we saw in Benjamin Davis' review of *Native Son.* Still, hindsight also has its place in criticism. The later career of a writer may confirm the presence of traits of thinking or personality which one might have suspected before. But suspicion is uncertain ground for judgment; though it may make the critic uneasy, it does not entitle him to voice his assumptions as facts. If the writer's subsequent development permits the critic to be sharper in his scrutiny, he will probably be called wise after the proof. Well, the critic must bear some cross for his caution, even when it is justified.

I am thinking of the generous moderation with which *Jake Home* by Ruth McKenney (1943) was first reviewed in the Left press, and of the significance we can now see in what appeared to be merely craft weaknesses, defects of structure or taste. The book is, first of all, a hodgepodge of genres: folktale, historical panorama, romantic biography, anecdote, gossip column. . . . Jake is a sort of home-made culture hero, a red-headed god who, like the Olympians, shares in our human failings. Perhaps the writer felt that in choosing such a figure she would counter the myth that the Communist Party is composed of drab, can't-see-beyond-their-noses people who obey orders from the

Center with an unquestioning conscience. Also, that Communists are untalented individuals who hate the rich out of frustration. She must present someone whose ability is so remarkable that his loyalty to the Party will not be attributed to anything less than his physical confidence and superior intelligence.

Jake is six foot three inches, weighs 210 pounds. He was three days aborning, and his mother's agony made the whole town of Luyskill, Pennsylvania, tremble. At the age of ten he could recite all but two lines of Hamlet by heart, and it is reported that the words "took him by storm." His inventive ability earns him, a poor miner's son, rapid advancement to an executive's job in the Altoona engine shops of the Pennsylvania Railroad. When this combination of Paul Bunyan and Frank Merriwell finally comes out on the picket line in support of the strikers, he is something of a gift to the working class.

Actually, Jake's fantastic qualities serve only to accentuate the mediocrity of his fellow workers, the shabbiness of his comrades, who have just enough imagination to be overawed by him. Our friend, now organizing longshoremen on the New York docks, has been told by Pete Risco, head of the Trade Union Educational League waterfront club, that he "ain't formed yet," whereupon

> "Jake turned sharply. Pete winced. In that single gesture, in that unconscious and untutored response, Jake displayed, like a lightning flash in the night, all his power, grace, skill, and deadly speed. Behind the suddenly narrowed lids, the blue eyes burned, flickering from the white, heavy, blank face with the red scar crooked across the ruined nose.
>
> "'Jake!' Pete's voice wavered. 'Believe me, I speak from friendship.'
>
> "Jake flopped down on a chair. 'Yeah?'
>
> "Pete swallowed. 'I never met a man like you before,' Pete said humbly. 'What am I? A hackworker. I know it. All day and every day and every year, I go about my business. I am the guy that puts out the chairs and tells comrades about surplus value, and runs the adding machines.' Pete laughed bitterly. 'Jimmy Higgins! I am the guy that haggles over the dotted i's and the crossed t's. I am the guy that reads other people's resolutions at meetings.'
>
> "Jake, in his anger, would not deny it. He looked Pete full in the face, silently."

This exchange is followed by Pete's calling Jake "my private Jesus." If this is an organizer speaking, how shall the rank and file abase itself, and if the writer thinks Jake is so unique, what must she feel about other Party members? There is not a single figure of any stature among them, and a few are portrayed as opportunists and bureaucrats with the venom of someone "in the know" who relishes unprincipled, personal quarrels. The women, whether Party members or not, are her special peeve. The plain ones are treated with compassion, the beautiful ones with severity.

Though everyone, including Kate, his second wife, tells Jake that he is a "great man," at which he wriggles "with horrible embarrassment" (so do we), one is kept waiting for the evidence. Jake's greatness is like those unreported conversations which inept novelists always assure us were so brilliant—we never encounter it. At every crisis of his life or of the labor movement he is whisked off to a new location. He skips town on two occasions to satisfy the conditions on which the police agree to drop charges of assault and inciting to riot against him, preserving himself, no doubt, for greater tasks than those he is abandoning. When a T.U.E.L. longshoreman is framed on a murder charge, the labor lawyers tell him to disappear, the waterfront club is closed down, and Jake takes the advice of a T.U.E.L. official to go off quietly to the Mott Street railroad yards.

Four days after meeting the tall, slim and wealthy Kate McDonough, who has come to ask his help on the Sacco-Vanzetti case, our hero, now city secretary of the T.U.E.L. has moved into her cozy house in Washington Mews. Jake's role in the case is dramatized by a series of speeches which he makes from coast to coast, of which the reader will remember only his quotation of a letter of Vanzetti's.

Even this trip is interrupted by detailed accounts of Jake's lake shore interlude with Kate, his emotion at receiving a combination gift of *Ulysses,* bedroom slippers and a bathrobe, and his purchase of a ring at Marshall Field's—episodes appropriate to a ten A.M. radio program. Beaten up in the Imperial Valley, Jake goes back East, broken in spirit, and marries Kate, though he is aware she has been having numerous other affairs and will probably continue to have them. The rest of the book is devoted to trips to Europe, Jake's efforts to reform Kate who has started drinking in earnest, psychoanalysis, Jake's escape from the perils of soft living (Hercules in the toils of Omphale), and the hero's

return to the working class, standing at a demonstration "in the sunlight, his strong face quiet and firm above the speaker's rostrum." For how long?

Can anyone believe in this preposterous giant whose only claim to our respect might be his enormous consumption of food? (all items of which are listed at the slightest opportunity: "sliced cold roast chicken, leftover steak, nice and rare, cold mashed potatoes, lettuce, mayonnaise, tomato, touch of mustard.") Jake is nothing but a fabrication, a composite of sectarian day dreams and yearnings for the best that money can buy, a righteous posture on a pedestal of commodities.

ALEXANDER SAXTON'S first novel, *Grand Crossing,* came out the same year as *Jake Home.* I'll not deal at length with this book since its one Communist is not a major character, though he is an important one. It is instructive, however, to contrast William Christmas, Negro medical student at the University of Chicago, with Ruth McKenney's hero in one respect. We know in general what the latter "stands for" (when he is on his feet), but despite his supposed intellectual breadth, we never learn what he thinks in relation to even a few of the innumerable questions which Communists have to answer on economics, religion, the state, tactics and strategy, the idea of progress, cultural matters, the Soviet Union, and the like.

Christmas, on the other hand, is pressed into situations which permit him the fullest expression of Marxist ideas. We learn not only what these are, but how *he* has absorbed and now applies them with his individual shrewdness and passion for clarity. Whether he is attacking reformist illusions, analyzing Plato's idea of justice, or explaining the nature of war and why he is not a pacifist, Christmas' arguments are salted with images from his past. He speaks to satisfy a need of his own being; and if he stands on a platform, it was built by his hands.

Unfortunately, Christmas' rank as a character is limited by his rather constricted role. He plays a little too much the part of a sage and comforter. His personal mannerisms, his formal speech and cartwheel watch do not make up for the impression of dryness with which he leaves us. In the one scene which might have released his potentialities—an incident which ends with the killing of his friend, Ben, by the police who are after a young Mexican boy wanted for a holdup murder—Christmas keeps everyone calm by dealing out poker hands.

A nice gesture, but neither this nor any other scene involving Christmas allows him to fulfill the promise of his confident intelligence. Yet that intelligence puts the Luyskill prodigy to shame.

THE insufficient dramatization of his Communist characters is felt more deeply in Isidor Schneider's *The Judas Time* (1946), particularly since his renegades are handled with so much verve in the classical tradition of comedy. Having reviewed the book at the time of its appearance, I find that I must pretty much repeat my criticism of this aspect of it. Nowhere in *The Judas Time* is there an adequate picture of the intellectual face of the Communist Party, of the ideas which move its members and which enabled it, during the period of which the book treats, the middle Thirties, to exercise such a vital influence on the social and political life of America. There were many opportunities for such a presentation in dramatic terms. In one scene a discussion on ethics takes place in which the un-Marxist views of the speaker are flayed by the potential renegade, Calvin Cain. Yet no Party member rises to mediate the dispute, either to answer the speaker or to point out the corrosive character of Cain's criticism.

Similarly, the poet Alan Bard is described as a forthright, hard-thinking man who goes to Spain because he believes that "the responsibility is his who feels it." Yet Bard's most ample opportunity for self-realization is given him in a rather banal love scene which reveals nothing new about him but merely projects an unconvincing and unaccounted-for contradiction in his character. And the longest presentation we have of the working of his mind is when he edits the autobiographical notes of a rich radical who thereupon makes a graceful exit from the movement! Such and similar portrayals of ineptitude in individual Communists and Party activity serve only to reinforce prejudices created and spread by its enemies.

The absence of any dramatically and intellectually strong figure of a Communist inevitably minimizes the role of the Party in a crucial period of American social and political development, and may tend to give the impression that the time and milieu of the book were dominated by Bohemians and renegades. It is obvious that Schneider had no such intention, but the very power of his contempt for scoundrels has played him a trick. It has produced the more convincing characters.

Further, the reader is apt to come away from the book with an

extremely limited view of the composition, activities and stature of the Party. Since the only individuals who can be said to represent the Party have relatively minor roles, its basic working-class character is missing. It was not necessary to introduce workers, but it was imperative that some major characters carry the consciousness of the working class and of its party into the area of conflict. The absence of such characters is the main fault of *The Judas Time.* It is only fair to remark, though, that the creation of such positive figures is a major problem; Schneider is not alone in having failed to solve it.

Of smaller consequence, but unfortunate and annoying, are certain careless phrases and badly thought-out observations, which a little editing might have corrected. For example, Jack Burrell, the district organizer, advises Cain to write for scientific journals for "the very purpose of raising his professional standing." Another individual is introduced as a clownish character from the very beginning, yet he is spoken of as a man whose "persistence might have turned him into a revolutionary leader had a revolutionary situation turned up." One of the chief positive characters, Alan Bard, is described as "quite the most illustrious catch of the literary Left." There are a number of such examples of individual opportunism and tastelessness which pass without criticism. These are particularly regrettable in a novel of ideas where the specific always tends to become the typical.

I should not want these remarks, withdrawn from an estimate of the book as a whole, to imply a disparagement of Schneider's work. It has a marvelously perceptive prologue, an imaginative projection of the character of the Biblical Judas. Its description of the psychological traits and ways of thinking of various renegades has contributed greatly, and in the most timely fashion, to our understanding of such individuals, exposing them where they least expected it, in the core of what passes for their hearts. But in so far as every desertion involves some conflict of feelings and ideas, we are justified in asking that both opponents be represented in sufficient strength to define and intensify the issues between them. This holds for intellectual comedy, like Schneider's, as well as for tragedy.

EVEN more than Schneider's book, Howard Fast's *Clarkton* (1947) was written to fill a specific contemporary need; among other things, to oppose, by example, the organized slanders of class-conscious work-

ers and Communists in the press, literature, movies and radio. To this end, Fast has employed his considerable tactical ingenuity. He has made his book easy reading, and packed, without crowding, enough individuals, relationships and incidents into its 239 pages for a much more complicated novel. His characters are deliberately weighted, with the intention that their actions should bear out, unmistakably, the truth about the social struggle in which they take part.

Fast has been accused of oversimplification in this book. The charge seems unrealistic to me. While it is proper to assess the potentialities and limits of any art form, one cannot insist that it satisfy the conditions of some other form. One doesn't condemn a lyric for not being an epic, or a line drawing because it isn't a mural.

In some ways *Clarkton* resembles Maltz's *The Underground Stream,* but rather than investigate the moral sources of its Communist characters, it confines itself to delineating their ethical attitudes and behavior in critical situations. In still other ways, it is close in its method to the fast-paced thriller which, as in Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest,* exposes social corruption.

The trouble with *Clarkton* is that it is not tough enough. Instead of making the best use of his form, Fast has tried to meet the conditions of the conventional novel as well. He has introduced elements of characterization and complex relationships, the development of which is precluded by the very nature and size of the book. These, unnecessary in the first place, must now bear critical blame for their insufficient projection. Moreover, these elements tend to blur the sharp outlines of conflict with psychological considerations that are superfluous in the sense that they do not determine or significantly affect the outcome of the action. This is particularly true of three of the Communist figures.

Mike Sawyer, section organizer, is a Spanish vet who served in what was presumably an O.S.S. outfit working with Italian partisans during World War II. A few weeks out of the army, he has already been assigned to cover all of western Massachusetts, and he now has to cope with the strike situation at the Clarkton plant of the "good liberal," George Clark Lowell. Mike is poor material for this job. He runs like a watch with a stretched spring. He is apprehensive of the responsibilities thrust upon him, and takes mental refuge in admiring the scenery, old bridges and the like, remarking absent-mindedly to Danny Ryan, a Communist worker at the plant, that Clarkton is a "mighty nice place to work."

He cannot see the threat represented by the arrival in town of the notorious professional strikebreaker, Hamilton Gelb, so that Ryan has to tell him, "This is a strike, not a picnic." He provokes Ryan to comment rashly on the Party's appointment of him: "If I ran my Ford the way they run their organization, I'd sell it for scrap." When the union leader, Noska, asks him suspiciously what the Communists are after, he can only say, "Mostly we're after the same things you are." After three days in Clarkton, he leaves to attend to other business (he will return in two weeks), though only that morning two men have been murdered on the picket line. He speaks and acts like a man who has aged overnight and puffs wearily up the steep flights of duty.

Could there be such an organizer? There might—though one imagines the Party made a mistake in sending him out. Is he typical? The Communist Party could not exist if he were. But if he is not, how are we to account for his paralysis before problems no more formidable than those he must have faced in Spain or as a guerrilla fighter? He has all the signs of an incipient breakdown. Is he "war weary"; does he differ with his Party on some tactical or theoretical position; or is he disturbed by some personal frustration, as his day dreaming about Ruth Abbott suggests? On the contrary, Sawyer's behavior is seen as more or less normal to his inexperience. As he leaves town he confesses, "I'm not ashamed. It's worse than that. I'm afraid." To which Dr. Abbott, a Communist, replies, "You'll stop being afraid. It works that way."

Now, one could say, with some justice, that I have fixed on secondary and not strictly literary oversights. But there *is* a literary question involved. Whether typical or not, Sawyer's hesitation is a distinct, in fact, paramount feature of his make-up. It should affect the action one way or another, even if it is not responsible for the deaths on the picket line. That it does not, converts Sawyer into a prop, a statue poised near a tragedy which he does not cause and is also powerless to avert. Although Sawyer's place would have to be taken by someone else, he himself is deprived of dramatic value by the very weaknesses which supposedly make him interesting.

Similarly, the old lawyer, Max Goldstein, winner of a Congressional Medal of Honor in the First World War, speaks of himself as a "stout slug . . . a museum piece. I got no business being a red." Goldstein muses that many of the world's evils are the result of a lack of humor, and he is shocked into depression when he discovers that Clarkton is no exception to the class struggle. This characterization has two

drawbacks. In the first place, for Max to be so innocent the Party in Clarkton would have to be quiescent, issuing no leaflets, distributing no *Daily Workers,* holding no educational discussions, in other words, utterly demoralized. But there is no hint of this in the book, and so the depiction is quite static and isolated. Secondly, Max' character, like Sawyer's in no way leads to his death on the picket line, except in so far as he decides to join it. He does not die as a Communist, but as an old man surprised in the middle of a green dream.

THE chief Communist character, Dr. Elliott Abbott, described by Max Goldstein as a professional revolutionary, which he is not, is equally possessed by indecision. He, too, has forgotten how to fight. Confronted with the fact that his good friend, the factory owner Lowell, has learned of his Party membership through a stoolpigeon, he "had the feeling that he himself had not been entirely aware of it a week ago." Once a doctor in Spain, he now sings Loyalist songs to Lowell's daughter, Fern, who is in love with him. But he has evidently not troubled her with his ideas, since she can drive through a picket line without compunction and make dates with a handsome young strikebreaker apprenticed to Hamilton Gelb.

Dr. Abbott's relation to Lowell, described as a liberal though there is no evidence for it, is just as vague. Their intellectual conflicts have always taken place over the chessboard. If tension grows between them because of the strike, it starts from scratch, having never arisen through any previous differences. Did Abbott suppress his thoughts to preserve the friendship? His affection for Lowell was not that strong, and in any case no effort is made to dramatize such a contradiction. So we are forced to assume that Sawyer's absent-mindedness has become chronic in Abbott. It is no wonder that when the strike throws Lowell into a moral turmoil—he wants no trouble and certainly no violence, though he is ultimately responsible for it—Abbott feels "very close" to him, closer in fact than to his wife, Ruth, who does not believe that "the essential decency of a human being" will prevent a capitalist from defending his profits with the worst means available to him.

In Abbott's final scene with Lowell he is aroused at last to remind Lowell of the revolutionary tradition of America and to accuse him of murder. Yet Abbott's tone toward his friend, though stern, is essentially forebearing and liberal; it is the author who must, in the last

paragraph of the book, convince Lowell that his kind is not merely guilty but dying. Here again the dramatic weakness of the book is felt. Abbott's self-deception in his relations with Lowell in no way decides the outcome or quality of the action. He remains a discrete entity, with no influence on the events of the tragedy.

This leaves the effective portraiture of Communists to relatively minor characters: Danny Ryan, Ruth Abbott, Joey Raye, a Negro worker, and the barber, Joe Santana. Ryan is the most carefully developed of these. However, when the priest in town offers Ryan an opening by asking what he believes in that makes him willing to die for it, Danny has no time to answer. In real life one muffs such opportunities, but in literature the writer cannot afford to, because there is no other way to render adequately the content or quality of an individual's consciousness.

In another scene, when Noska accuses him of wanting to take over the strike, Ryan tries to explain why he became a Party member: "I'm a Communist because I don't see anyone else willing to get his face pushed in or his throat cut or a bullet in his head because he's for the workers. I don't see anyone else who won't sell out." This, addressed to a non-Party union leader is not only mildly tactless; it is also incorrect. If no one but members of the Communist Party were capable of great personal sacrifice in the class struggle, social change would be unthinkable.

Ryan ignores the really distinctive element in a Communist's mentality: the influence of Marxist philosophy on his intellectual solutions and human contacts. This difference does not separate Party members from the working class; it knits them even more tightly to it. Ryan's statement, on the contrary, tends to place the Communists in some special category of the ethically elite. The error becomes accentuated because the Communists as a group are assumed to be, but are not represented, in a vital relation to the Clarkton workers.

Ironically, the most articulate, if slightly screwy, spokesman for the Communists is Gelb, the strikebreaker. He tells Lowell that the Communists are dangerous, "not because they want to overthrow the government, not because they are destroying the family, the church and everything else—these are old wives' tales for those who want to use them," but because they make the workers "aware of themselves and of what they can do when they get into motion." The only Communist

Leona Pierce

who comes close to this degree of assertion is Joey Raye who relates his life to the stoolpigeon Butler to make him understand how he became a Party member and why he will not kill Butler.

One can surmise why Fast handled his Communist characters with such restraint. I think that he wanted to show their basic humanity, to prove that they were personally no more formidable than your next-door neighbor, kind, tolerant and considerate of the tangled condition of all individuals in capitalist society. However, while investing them with these traits he could not, within the limits of his form, develop either in them or some other major character essential complementary qualities: intellectual clarity, determination, practical realism and energy. The collective impression is one of ineffectuality rather than strength. The reader's sympathy is gained, but what of his confidence? That will have to be won in a longer and greater novel, the shape of which may exist already in Howard Fast's teeming and courageous mind.

IN HIS review of *The Great Midland,* Alexander Saxton's second novel (1948) Fast makes the interesting point that the Communist in literature is inevitably modified by the subjective recognition of the reader. Not only does the latter see the character in the light of certain preconceptions or prejudices, but the writer as well often adjusts his character to reinforce or overcome these preconceptions. This is, of course, true not only of Communist characters, but is a general phenomenon in all periods of rapid social change when literary figures fight out, in their own fashion, the battles that shake the world. Whether such shifts of emphasis are judged as meeting a need or as succumbing to a temptation will depend first upon the reader's willingness to understand what the character represents beyond his simple individuality. Secondly, it hinges on the writer's power to preserve the character's individuality against the urge to turn him simply into a didactic symbol of his class or party.

Saxton, in *The Great Midland,* steers a delicate passage between shaping people who represent only themselves and sketching figures who express everything but themselves. He was helped in this by his experience as a railroad worker, which enabled him quite naturally to place all his characters in situations of which he had detailed knowledge. Compared with many of the books previously dealt with, his

novel has more texture in its dialogue, physical perception, overall realistic detail, rendition of the peculiarities of habit and outlook of workers in different jobs, and even in its occasional bursts of humor. His Communists are better integrated with their environment and their relations with other workers are more convincingly dramatized. Even more important: their actions do not revolve around some strategic aim of the author, but stem from their own life circumstances and temperament. This is an advance over the conscious search for moral sources or model responses to crucial tests which was the central concern of the best of the earlier books, excepting Dreiser's story. The concept takes its place in life without sitting on the throne.

Saxton's treatment of the Negro carbuilder, Pledger McAdams, illustrates the writer's development. Whereas William Christmas in *Grand Crossing* does little more than present finished ideas and points of view, Pledger is shown wrestling like Jacob for the knowledge that will set his people free. We had no sense in Christmas of the suspicion of white people which oppression might instil in a Negro, barring or delaying his achievement of solidarity with progressive forces. Christmas' assurance is described somewhat too statically, so that one overlooks how hard it had to be won. In fact, one can easily forget that he is a Negro and think of him as, say, some Vermont farmer's son who had never experienced discrimination.

Pledger's knowledge, on the other hand, is distilled from oppression. We first hear him cursing all white people after the young Communist, Dave Spaas, has approached him for help in organizing the unemployed: "I'll pray, God strike everyone of those white men. God strike them dead for what they done to us!" Very slowly, as Dave and he work together building the Unemployed Council, the tenants' leagues and the Negro Railway Lodge, Pledger's confidence and affection overcome his distrust, and he joins the Party. He is still a religious man and goes to chapel, but he asserts that if his belief were shaken he would act no differently: "Maybe you don't read the Bible, but there's a place where the Lord smites a fig tree because the tree don't give any fruit. Now the book don't say the Lord asked that tree what it believed or didn't believe. The book says, by their fruits you shall know them."

Later, as chairman of the Negroes' Independent Lodge, he must help his brothers decide whether or not to accept a Jim Crow charter

in the Carbuilders' Union. Here his way of working proves his maturity. "It would be easy to tear up the charter and laugh in their faces." But Pledger knows that as a Communist he must have a right position, not just one that will give him emotional satisfaction. He talks it over with the coach cleaners on the evening shift, argues it back and forth in his own mind until he falls asleep, and next day calls a meeting of the railroad branch of the Party at which he uses an anecdote to convince his comrades that unity is the key to victory and that the Negroes can fight Jim Crow better within the union than outside. Only then does he decide to recommend acceptance of the charter. Some readers may find Pledger less interesting than earlier because his passion no longer bubbles over; actually it runs in a deeper channel to freshen the earth, while before it could only widen a chasm.

Pledger's weakness as a character is quite simply that there is not enough of him. His growth is dramatized in only three or four scenes; the rest is left to simple narration. The last scene in which he takes a major part before he is killed by a railroad detective is only a little beyond the middle of the book. And, considering his importance for the novel as a whole, he could have played a less incidental role in its central theme: Dave's conflict with his wife, Stephanie.

THE relationship between Dave and Stephanie marks a tentative but significant break with naturalism. Saxton suggests very clearly that their clash of wills cannot be seen only in its obvious aspects. Stephanie, whose temperament is wholly different from Dave's, fears that her husband is willing to sacrifice her as well as himself for a cause about which she has very mixed feelings. Her love for him is spoiled by a hatred stemming from her ambition and anxiety. But it is when we are shown the ideological content of her ambition and the social roots of her anxiety that realism begins.

If the possibilities of this situation are not fully realized, the fault must be attributed in part to Saxton's conception of Dave. Stephanie describes him to her lover, Henry Martin, as a stolid, persistent person and even his mother finds him too hard and sensible. There is a good deal of truth to this, though their remarks reveal as much of Stephanie and Ann Spaas as they do of Dave. Now, Dave's personality, his single-mindedness and matter-of-fact vision, are very well done, if we consider him as a separate character. He is lively and engaging in his con-

tacts with other workers. Placed in the context of his life with Stephanie, however, his narrowness is a serious brake on the depiction of their relationship. It tends to appear as the cause of their conflict rather than as one facet of it. Furthermore, it whittles down Stephanie's responses from a full expression of her outlook on life to the petty complaints of a slighted woman. This is unfortunate because Stephanie's inner struggle is objectified in her quarrels with Dave and in her strained reactions to the Party, which she has joined after much hesitation. We may tend to miss the wider meaning of her personal turmoil, watching it draw near Dave as to a magnet.

Yet Dave is not altogether to blame. Saxton's account of Stephanie's resistance to discipline and responsibility is very sensitive, but he equates its varying elements too readily, so that the reader's sense of proportion is impaired. The more obvious psychological motives are emphasized while their ties to fundamental antagonisms in contemporary society are neglected. An example of this is Stephanie's dislike of her fellow student, Genevieve Leeds, whom she sees as a rich dilettante dabbling in the movement. Saxton hints that Stephanie's fairly ordinary irrational envy of Leeds merges with her erroneous conviction that only scientific progress is genuine, whereas political and other intellectual activity is relatively futile. "Sometimes I look at my white rats in the laboratory; I don't know very much about them, nor does anyone else either. But I know they'll make more revolutions than all the committees Leeds will ever organize—or all the dissertations you and Hawkins will ever write."

This is an excellent statement of Stephanie's fundamental mistake, but it is weakened because it is addressed to her lover, who actually is an academic opportunist, and its significance is buried in a resumption of Stephanie's commonplace complaints against Leeds. The lost opportunity has another consequence. Stephanie's fear of involvement in political work and her ambition to be successful in university circles is understood as a reaction to the poverty of her childhood. But this interpretation and her vague dreams of fulfillment are almost clichés. Her passionate defense of natural science, with its corollary underrating of political thought, is another matter.

Had Saxton expanded this important feature of her mind, showing how insecurely she uses it to bolster her self-estimation, Stephanie might have been a major literary figure, and her quarrel with Dave

would have reflected a great contemporary question: what is the position and what should be the aims of science? Instead, the divisions within Stephanie take disappointingly trivial forms that can only detract from her stature. Her final resolution to stay with Dave settles nothing, since it is founded only on her unstable feelings. The fact that she is aware of her own insecurity is a realistic touch but it cannot make up for her failure to realize her potentialities as a character, whether her thinking be right or wrong.

What makes this failure so tantalizing is that Saxton has a fine appreciation of the value of relating a character's cast of mind to his emotional responses and to his particular way of apprehending truth. He does this beautifully in a scene between Dave and Stephanie, where their contrary reactions to a poem of Whitman appear to Stephanie as a clue to her relations with Dave and to her own self-torment as well. The subtlety of the scene is augmented by Dave's lack of interest in looking for implications in their discussion of the poem. Much later, Stephanie remembers their dispute and understands why she had dismissed it from her mind at the time. For it reveals a basic difference in their attitude toward life. Stephanie feels life as a powerless foil against death, with people cramming "into themselves enough living to last for eternity." Dave is irritated by her negative phrasing: "No, that's not what I meant. People fight to stay alive. To live better and live longer. I guess that's what people have always been fighting for." And deep down, Stephanie knows that it is Dave and not she who believes in progress and that she has "tried deliberately to nourish in him the civil war of her own mind."

In this scene, as often elsewhere in *The Great Midland,* Saxton shows himself as one of the few American pioneers of social realism. If we note his detours, we should also remember that the road is scarcely marked.

FINALLY, there is Beth McHenry's and Frederick N. Myers' *Home Is The Sailor* (1948). This book is not so much a novel as a fictionalized biography, halfway between *Martin Eden* and William Z. Foster's *Pages From a Worker's Life.* It is one of the most likable depictions of a Communist that has been written. I say "it is" rather than "it presents" advisedly. For the subject here is the book itself; the portrait of Billy Farrell is incomplete unless we realize that what is said about him and

the way in which it is said are also bits of his mind, of his way of looking at things. When Billy, a sailor on the passenger liner *Rita,* meets Mary O'Connell in the ship's galley, he warns himself: "Watch it, she's probably got a kid and four small husbands back in Frisco." When he stands on the highway outside Oxnard, California, he looks back on the small coast town with disgust, and the writers remark, "It had about as much personality as the state of Kansas." The character merges with the narrator.

Following Billy from San Francisco to Valparaiso and Sydney, and from the reign of Hoover to the organization of the National Maritime Union, we know how the world appears to a worker who has never had any illusions about his own experience and who expects proof of the promises anyone hands out to him. His becoming a Communist involves no soul searching. When he is asked to join the Party, he thinks a moment. He has become convinced that its international outlook is correct, and he no longer resents the thought of discipline. More important, he has watched Communists working to unionize the waterfront. So: "Billy grinned. 'I was just thinking that I guess I haven't got any reason good enough to talk about,' he said. 'What do you have to do to join the Communist Party?'"

The way Billy makes this decision is typical of everything he does, both before and after he has become a Party member. It is no momentous step for him, requiring the mustering of all his resources of feeling. And it is entirely right and natural that he should not be invested with critical struggles of conscience to deepen the significance of his acts. (The account of his sexual adventures has also fortunately been spared the purification sometimes felt required in such cases.)

Yet if we compare this scene, or any other in the book, with a similar one in O'Casey's or Gorky's autobiographical novels, we see how the absence of a literary consciousness acting upon the raw material of experience affects the delineation of Billy Farrell. Since the narrator is so completely identified with the character, he recalls only what Billy might normally remember in telling the story of his life. The writers do not intensify this normal recollection or extend the meaning of Billy's actions beyond the limits of his immediate consciousness of them. What he does and thinks is recounted, but it is not actually recreated for us, since Billy rarely sees himself even so

much as we sense him from the book as a whole. This makes for a certain sensuous and emotional thinness in the story, which might have been overcome by a freer use of Billy's expressive language. But perhaps that is putting the cart before the horse, since the conception of the book has determined its style.

Sometimes, though, the very starkness of the narrative produces an epic effect. This is particularly true when some incident suddenly blazes like an exploding sun in Billy's mind. Such a moment comes when he learns of the death of the young sailor Thompson, brought about by the callousness of the chief mate: "Billy had planned to stay ashore a few hours. Instead, he returned to the vessel. He went below and lay in his bunk, thinking about the dead boy and all the others who had lost their lives because the company did not care whether they lived or not." Here the simple phrase opens an immense perspective and our feelings rush out to explore it. The writer must be able to kindle such flares in his own memory as will light every man's horizon.

IN THE foregoing summaries I have dealt with only one aspect of the novels in question: the degree of their success in the portrayal of Communists. I have tried to work inductively, suspending whatever inferences were in my own mind until now, when I have to draw some brief conclusions to justify my approach.

One of these assumptions was that Communists in fiction must fulfill conditions not always insisted upon for other characters. This requires modification in part, though not in principle. When we say that the Communist ought to be represented in action and his style of thinking dramatized, we are not asking that he be handled differently from other characters in the novel; we mean that the writer should return to the classical tradition of realism in fiction. This tradition, unlike naturalism, honors the individuality of human beings, refusing to concede that it consists solely of petty and insignificant differences which exert no force one way or another on the events of history, nor need even reflect them. This tradition, unlike symbolism, is capable of true generalization, resisting the reduction of significant personal differences to some common denominator of philosophy or political outlook. Therefore, in stating our requirements for the Communist

character, we were only suggesting that the writer avoid literary methods to describe him which have proved unequal to the job of rendering other characters as well.

This should help rectify the misconception that the Marxist critic insist on a hero *sans peur et sans reproche,* preaching and behaving as though he had strict instructions from some revolutionary etiquette committee. It is true, though, that critics on the Left have not sufficiently warned writers against restricting their emotional range, and have thus encouraged the maneuvering of characters to fulfill purposes other than their own. A character cannot work like a horse in the author's fields. He has to be given his own head and allowed to break down the fence. If he never surprises his creator, how long will he hold the reader? The novels about Communists are often lacking in humor, sensuality, heightened perception and even intellectual excitement. With few exceptions, their psychological insights are not only pre-Freudian, but come close to the oversimplification of the eighteenth-century rationalists. The arbitrary exclusion of new knowledge arises from a narrow conception of social realism and hinders it as an art form.

On the other hand, psychology is no absolute monarch whose caprices the novelist is obliged to indulge. The revolt of the irrational is the bourgeois writer's gesture of loyal opposition to capitalism. Unsupported by any analysis of the objective, material structure of capitalist society, he devotes himself to futile, foredoomed threshings of wounded personality. His novel becomes a free-for-all, no holds barred so long as the characters obey the laws of gravitation. The concealed counter-revolutionary nature of this literary trend becomes clear if we apply it to any progressive, and particularly to a Communist character. Then, everything in his make-up that might alienate him from his allegiance, lessen his love, weaken his comprehension, drive him to error, desertion or renegacy is magnified in the name of the mysterious and the tragic sense of life. Whatever sustains him, gives him intellectual clarity, expands his capacity for love and loyalty, increases his resourcefulness and energy, is minimized as obvious and superficial. This approach is well illustrated in such books as Koestler's *Arrival and Departure.*

If we point out that such subjective bias amounts to objective falsification, the writer frames a naive queston: "Why can't I represent a Communist who happens to be a heel?" Before we answer, we have

the right to know: is he asking as an artist or a scavenger? Or does he find the novel interesting only when the Communist turns out not to be a Communist at all? In any case, the question can be answered in practice only by the social realist.

THE social realist is no less alert to subjective factors than the naturalist and much more so than the symbolist. But he is infinitely more aware than either of the fields of force that constitute bourgeois society, and of how cause and effect are transposed in the process of social change. Therefore his novel shows the way in which historic conflicts, major problems and mass movements are translated into intense private experiences that revolutionize the individual and his way of seeing and acting in the world. In presenting the growth of consciousness and the cultivation of ideological elements in character, the realist insists that these shall be typical of their time and place. By typical he does not mean that the individual symbolizes his class, party, or even his ideas, but that his thoughts and acts are related to objective necessity, to social cause and effect. The realist shuns all representation that ignores such a context, and questions its validity as a reflection of the truth.

And that is how the question of deviation in the Communist character should be viewed. One cannot depict differences, outright opposition, degeneration or even criminality in a Communist and leave it at that. The writer must perceive both the specifically individual, and the more indirect social causes for the deviation; but, primarily, he must understand that it is a deviation and depict it as such. Steinbeck could not, from simple ignorance of Marxism, do this in *In Dubious Battle.* Others will not, for worse reasons.

But we are more concerned with Communists as positive characters, that is, with the essential and predominant elements in their make-up. We have seen them, in the novels under discussion, trying, each in his own way, to live what they believe. This fusion of thought and action should, whenever possible, take place under the pressure of situations which transmute and reshape the individual. He cannot be cold and fixed, in smug possession of his exclusive property, the philosophy of Marxism. He must, as in real life, be hurled upon events to prove himself and the power of his ideas. The range of such occasions can be greatly extended and the thoughts which the Communist brings to

bear upon them should be increasingly imbued with his emotion. Whether he puts forth one leaf or a shower of blossoms, all the juices of his being are released. Such characterization will avoid both stereotyping and its opposite error, the emphasis on intriguing exceptions and autonomous details that have no bearing on the basic action. The greater the degree of feeling and intellectual intensity, the less danger there is of creating figures so indistinguished that they do not have even their Party membership in common. Fullness is the answer.

WHAT of the Communist as hero? He must, first of all, be able to master the forces that overcome others: to resist oppression instead of being crushed by it, to make desire creative rather than be victimized by it, to defeat every effort to imprison or baffle his mind. In this he will be no different from the hero of the past.

In what respect, then, does he differ? Christopher Caudwell suggests that the distinction which can be made is an intellectual one, based on historical progress. In describing the hero of the future, he uses Lenin as his prototype. Whereas the hero of past history was impelled by social forces he did not understand, Lenin "took on much of the cognitive character of the scientist." ("T. E. Lawrence, a Study in Heroism," in *Studies in a Dying Culture.*) Caudwell points out that this new feature of heroism is inevitable in a man who was to "bring to birth a society whose essence, distinguishing it from all earlier social relations, is that in it human beings are cognitively conscious of social relations and understand not merely the environment of society like bourgeois culture, but society itself."

Implicit in this description is the degeneration of the bourgeois hero who can no longer fight for freedom or progress by instinctively battling his intellectual limitations. "Such heroes will like Lawrence only be strangled by their own consciousness." The Communist hero, on the other hand, following his Ariadne's thread of Marxist thought, finds his way out of the maze of social relations which appears to men's minds peopled with a thousand illusions. "The very demand of communism that man be conscious not merely of what he wills but of what determines that will requires an equal consciousness of a Communist leader."

Caudwell's remarks are a splendid contribution to the concept of the modern hero and can apply almost equally to the hero in contemporary

fiction. They should not, however, lead one to pass too lightly over the role of social consciousness in the lives of the revolutionary figures of the past, men like Spartacus, Thomas Muenzer, John Lilburne, Jefferson, Saint Just, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Chernishevsky, Frederick Douglass and Sun Yat-sen. In apprehending the deep political awareness of these giants, we also strengthen the ties of the Communist hero to a great tradition, just as we enrich our understanding of dialectical materialism by relating it to the most advanced thought of previous history. It is true, of course, that such figures were rarely the protagonists of drama or fiction, but that is because their significance was only too well appreciated. The "guilt" of the hero of revolt was no tragic flaw, but defiance of oppressors. If he perished, it was not through inner or ancestral taint, but at the revengeful hands of the ruling class. Resurrecting him in the historical novel and drama, we will at the same time increase the scope and meaning of modern tragedy.

We see, then, a continuity similar to that in history obtaining in literary descent. Social realism is neither a spontaneous and unique form, nor a method which merely continues without adding to the tradition it inherits. Its special contribution is the dialectical approach to human relations and social change. Whereas classical realism could describe with accuracy and power the lives of people under the existing order, the new realism carves individuals whose consciousness shatters the cast of bourgeois society. Therefore, no matter how savage that society becomes in its repression of liberty, these individuals are not its victims but its conquerors. That is why the Communist as hero cannot be invested with an anachronistic or partial social vision, no matter how noble or how appealing to the so-called average reader. He must, above all, speak the language of the revolutionary working class.

And this drives home my second inference, put forward as a question: Can the writer, with no special experience, understanding of history or Marxist theory, and without participating in the class struggle, hope to describe a Communist character? The answer is no, and it does not stop there. The writer is not exempt from the penalties of ignorance. He can no longer, without danger to his art, ignore the body of thought and the movement of millions that are freeing the world before his eyes.

books in review

Stage and Screen

THEORY AND TECHNIQUE OF PLAYWRITING AND SCREENWRITING, by John Howard Lawson, *Putnam. $6.00.*

DURING the war the original edition of this indispensable book was allowed to go out of print and consequently, for copies sometimes battered and soiled, the second-hand book dealers throughout the country were getting prices they usually attach to rare editions. But now the book has reappeared, and as a bonus for our patience John Howard Lawson has written a new introduction, added prefatory notes to the material on playwriting and extended the design to include a lengthy analysis of screenwriting. The new price is too steep; on the other hand, it is not a book one reads and then puts away. It is jam-packed with ideas; it is passionately reasoned; and after an acquaintanceship of more than a decade, I still find it stimulating and instructive.

"Contemporary studies of the drama," Lawson writes, "are sharply divided between esthetic criticism of a general nature and works which deal with the problems of craftsmanship. The division is unsatisfactory: general criticism becomes a collection of random impressions or metaphysical opinions; at the same time, technical analysis becomes narrow, divorced from general culture."

It is the aim and achievement of the book that this unsatisfactory division is done away with; the general and technical are brilliantly integrated.

Lawson is able to do this for a number of reasons. He is a working writer; his many plays and pictures have made him aware of the need to be always specific. He has also rejected the "intuitive approach"; writing is seen as a process of analysis and synthesis, not something "divinely inspired." But the most profound reason for Lawson's success is that he sees his material historically. For him the drama is not something in a vacuum, but like "all modes of communication reflects the customs, morals, lifeways of a given society." He is aware, too, that the artist is influenced by the world around him and that his work is an "extension of his own life, projecting social meanings, values, aspirations, hammered and shaped white-hot on

the forge of living experience."

Such a comprehensive approach demands enormous erudition. Lawson has it. His knowledge of dramatic thought from Aristotle to our own day is vast. Not that he is content merely to cite various dramatic theories; that would be the work of a pedant, and if that is what the reader wants, there are other books. Lawson's value lies in the deft way he separates the alive from the dead, and persuasively brings to the fore those ideas which can best serve us now.

At the same time that he discusses a number of dramatic theories, he outlines the development of philosophical thought, revealing brilliantly and systematically the close connection between the two. In some cases, the philosophic and dramatic thinker have been one: Machiavelli and Diderot are such examples. In other cases, the influence is not as obvious but just as real: Kant's influence on Goethe and Schiller; Hegel's influence on Ibsen, etc. Indeed, one of Lawson's main contentions is that the crisis in modern philosophical thought is the same crisis that exists in the drama.

That crisis is the conflict between idealism and materialism. Lawson is unequivocally on the side of the materialist, and as he discusses countless plays and playwrights, his judgments are those the materialist uses. He rejects mysticism, fatalism, obscurantism. He believes that character must be seen dynamically and within a social framework. As in life, the hero shapes the life around him and in turn is shaped by it.

It is his contention that all the great plays have possessed the qualities he demands, and that when they are absent the plays have lost dramatic impact and validity as works of art. The later plays of Ibsen are a case in point; so too are those plays of Shaw when he became enamoured of the "life force." Chekhov, on the other hand, avoided the idealistic trap. Lawson recognizes this, and pays tribute to Chekhov, but it is here that I wished for a more detailed consideration of Chekhov's work. Chekhov's plays were relatively few; his voice was pitched low; and because he introduced so many new technical ideas, there has been a tendency merely to celebrate his effects and ignore the underpinning.

Does all this sound heavy and rather formidable? It is not. For Lawson does not confine himself to the past and only the very great. He has much to say about a number of contemporary plays and though his demands remain as strict, his concern is sympathetic. He appreciates talent and passion, even when the dramatist has gone seriously awry in exploring his material. *Yellow Jack* by Sidney Howard is not a "great" play, but what Lawson has to say about it is as illuminating as his brilliant

comments on Ibsen's *Ghosts*.

There are several places in Lawson's discussion where I get lost, the most important of which is his use of the phrase "conscious will." The phrase seems to me curiously imprecise for all of Lawson's lengthy analysis of what is meant by the will and what is meant by consciousness. Does not the word "will" by its very nature suggest consciousness?

What, perhaps, he is getting at is this: that a character must have a starting point and a destination, and that during his journey he must be presented with a series of choices so that at the climax he has contributed to his own destiny. I agree with that. But I also believe that the motivations for the choices can be unconscious as well as conscious. Hamlet's conscious drive, prompted by the ghost, is to learn who murdered his father. His unconscious drives are many more. Indeed, the greatness of the play is that Shakespeare reveals the unconscious drives at the same time that Hamlet is making his various choices: to see the ghost again, to stage the play that will reveal the King's guilt, etc.

To my mind, the key word here is not "will" or "consciousness" but "choice." The whole problem of choice is omitted from a number of contemporary plays, and instead we have fatalism. Fatalism has long been a major tendency in our theater as Lawson makes apparent in his discussion of O'Neill's work. For a while, during the Thirties, with the social impact of the depression, it seemed to have diminished, but now it has returned. Perhaps its clearest expression is the rash of suicides on our stage.

Suicide, of course, is a perfectly acceptable climax for a play, but this demands that the character be presented with a series of choices that lead to the act: the conflict within, as well as the social forces around him must be clearly marked and dramatized. Fatalism avoids this challenge. The playwright frequently has made it easy for himself by conceiving his character as someone already doomed, and society as something fixed, somehow an expression of fate.

At one time or another I've looked into a number of technical books on playwriting and gotten no more than a mechanical idea about the rules of drama. What I have found is an attempt to simplify the process, just as Olivier tried to simplify the character of Hamlet when he said it was a story about a man unable to make up his mind. The unique achievement of Lawson's discussion of technique is that he does not try to simplify; indeed, he insists upon the complexity of almost any theme the dramatist chooses.

Which is not to suggest that if one studies the book carefully, and takes into account all of these complexities, one can automatically write a play. Any such book assumes the writer has a curiosity

and interest of his own about human behavior, society and language. What is sought, simply, is a creative understanding of the rules: why they exist, and for what purpose. Every dramatist must work out his own use of these rules.

IN DISCUSSING the theory and technique of screenwriting, Lawson applies pretty much the same approach he did to the section devoted to playwriting. However, he is quick to make several important distinctions. Playwriting is an art that has developed over several thousand years; the movies have only been with us for a brief fifty. More significant is the fact that when writing for the screen the American artist finds himself directly linked to Big Business. As Lawson notes: "We cannot explore the mind of the writer without also exploring the 'mind' of the corporation, and the forces that affect his 'thinking.'"

Thus, the first part is devoted to a brief history of the movies from the early days of the nickelodeon to the present period of monopolies and Hollywood witchhunts. Altogether, it's a depressing saga. The creative freedom of the early picture makers has passed and today censorship is almost complete. Europe has had much to offer Hollywood creatively, but each time Hollywood has choked off the stream or polluted it. As the wealth of the industry has increased, its creative opportunities have diminished.

The writer has played a shifting role in the development. At first, he merely sold material that had been cast in another form—the novel or the play. His function was minimal. Then with the advent of sound and the need for dialogue he became more important. But the only time that a writer has ever been able to establish his identity to any real degree is when he has been something else besides: a director or producer or both. Still, he is needed, and his craft is a complex one.

When Lawson comes to discuss the problem of motion picture structure much of what he has said about playwriting is made to apply to film making. Which is not surprising, for in discussing playwriting, he has not hesitated to cite any number of movies; he knows that the mediums are allied, and that in many ways the film is but an extension of the theatre. There is still the problem of telling a story, of writing material that must be acted, of providing drama. Perhaps the chief value of this section is Lawson's classification of the similarities and differences in the two techniques.

The differences are in the use of the camera, cutting, and the role of sound. The camera provides the writer with much more geographical range than he has in the theatre, and he must know how to use this range even when

he is adapting theatre material. Particularly interesting in this connection is the comparison of the opening act of *Watch on the Rhine* to the first sequence in the movie. Another problem for the writer is that of adapting the novel. Here the problem is almost the opposite as condensation is required. In each case, cinematic equivalents must be found if the same story is to be completely realized.

Though Lawson's chief emphasis is on Hollywood film making, he discusses the impact of Europe and the theories of Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Rotha. One of the greatest differences between Europe and Hollywood is that in Hollywood there has been practically no theory; that whatever has been achieved has been achieved pragmatically. One of the few exceptions to this is Lawson himself. I only wish that Lawson had given himself more space, perhaps written a separate book on the subject. If he does, or decides again to revise this one, then he should check several minor errors in fact: there are three, not four main characters in *The Best Years of Our Lives;* and Wilson did not beat Hughes by an overwhelming majority in the presidential election of 1916.

At the moment, Lawson is one of the ten being denied employment in Hollywood because he refused to knuckle under to Parnell Thomas and the Un-American Committee. His thoughts are dangerous, and they must not be allowed to contaminate the public. But with the re-issue of this book, I'm afraid that is going to happen. For in the book are the seeds of many plays and movies, outrageously subversive.

"One's self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse."

Lawson closes his book on these lines which Whitman used to begin *Leaves of Grass.* And they fit. Many ideas have gone into the book, but this is the root one.

ARNAUD D'USSEAU

The Negro People

THE NEGRO IN THE UNITED STATES, by E. Franklin Frazier. *Macmillan. $8.00.*

THE work under review comes from the pen of an outstanding American sociologist, a professor at Howard University. It is useful as a one-volume compendium of the basic facts concerning numerous aspects of Negro life, separately dealt with in the writings of Robert Weaver, W. Montague Cobb, Richard Sterner, Frazier himself, and others. Here will be found fairly extended treatments of such subjects as education, crime, housing, health—both mental and physical—the

church and the family, the Negro's great network of fraternal organizations, the development of Negro business and the stratification of Negro society.

The book's value is enhanced, too, by a good bibliographical appendix, the deficiencies of which, particularly in the area of recent historical writing, may be overcome by consulting *Race and Region* by Edgar T. and Alma M. Thompson (University of North Carolina Press, $5.00), and the readings listed in the summer, 1949, issue of *New Foundations.*

But Frazier's analysis is weak, and this failing runs through the entire volume. The approach to his data is basically classless and nondialectical and this leads him to conceive of the Negro question not as a national one but, in his words, as a "racial problem." In this regard his work represents no advance over that of Gunnar Myrdal though his care in connection with factual accuracy is greater.

The oppression of the Negro people has been and is maintained by America's propertied interests because of the power and the profit to be derived from the super-exploitation of millions of human beings. Based upon and in turn bolstering this fact—a fact permeating three hundred years of history—has been the pathological phenomenon of white chauvinism, prime weapon in the hands of the rich in the United States for the maintenance of their control.

Unless one begins with this—unless one *starts* with the class character and the special nature of the Negro's oppression—he may produce a work of descriptive value, but analytically it will be weak. This will, in turn, inevitably affect adversely the descriptive content.

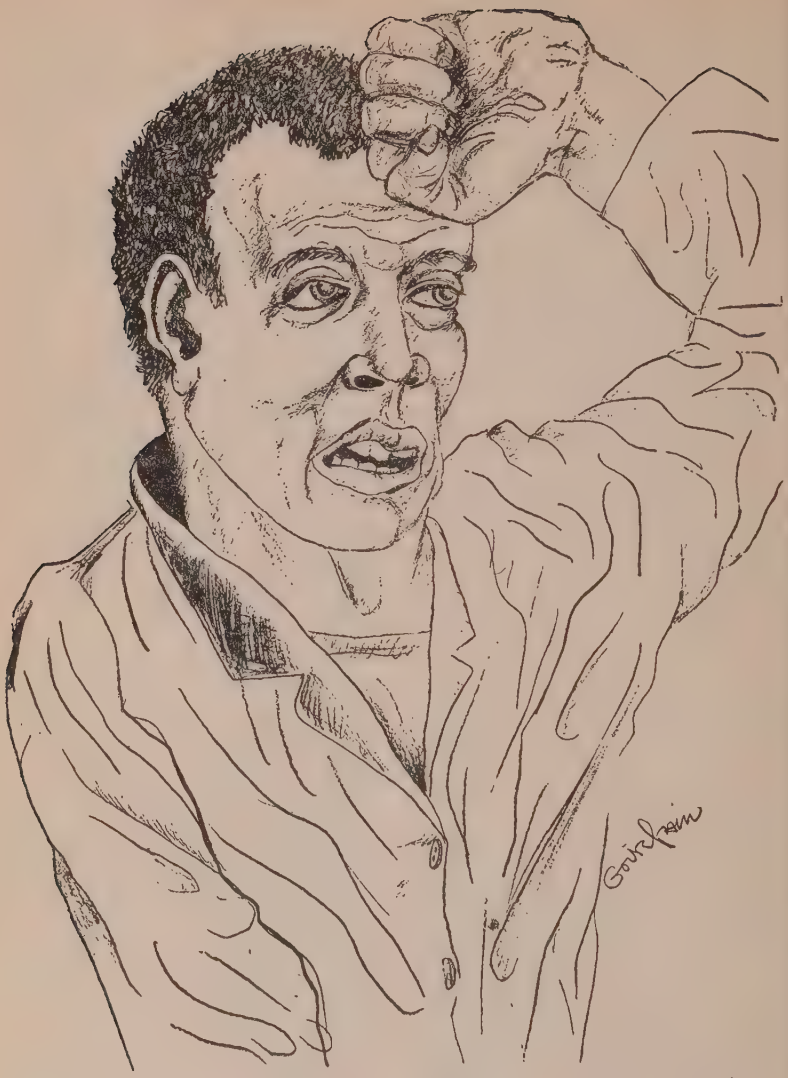
Thus it is that Frazier finds that "the Negro emerged as a race problem in the South" only with the achievement of emancipation. He arrives at this historically untenable position because he conceives of prejudice as the result of competition and so finds that where a "place"—a social status—is assured, prejudice is absent.

In his own words:

"During the period of slavery when the inferior status of the Negro was fixed, race prejudice tended to be absent. Whatever racial prejudice was manifested toward the Negro was directed against the free Negro. . . . Those who are prejudiced against a racial group are generally eager to keep the members of the racial group in a subordinate status. This explains why the Negro maid with her cap and apron may enter a hotel from which a Negro college professor or scientist is excluded."

Or again:

"To be prejudiced against a racial group involves an unwillingness to compete with members of that group for social position or economic goods.



Peter Gourfain

". . . During slavery there was no rivalry between slave-holders and slaves for social position and there was no competition for economic rewards."

This view is encountered frequently in the work of Hans Kohn, John Lewis Gillin, Robert E. Park and Louis Wirth, the last of whom wrote the introduction to Frazier's volume. An able refutation of this particular point may be found in Naomi F. Goldstein's *The Roots of Prejudice Against Negroes in the United States,* just published by Boston University Press ($2.50).

The fact is that competition of itself—competing for what, against whom, under what system of society?—does not *create* prejudice, but rather that oppression, exploitation requires as a rationalization and as a support the existence of "prejudice," the existence of racism, of white chauvinism.

This chauvinism developed out of the Negro's enslavement. It was the creation of his enslavers. The fact of enslavement—the ultimate form of oppression and exploitation — produced, indeed necessitated, the rearing of the entire vicious concept of the inferiority of those enslaved. This was basic to the system of American Negro slavery which was posited, ideologically, on the asserted *sub-humanity* of the Negro.

A system of chauvinism is not built simply on prohibitions. This is why the "Negro maid with cap and apron" may enter a hotel forbidden to the Negro professor; that she is admitted *as a servant only* is quite as significant a demonstration of prejudice as is the fact that the professor is barred. And both acts derive from the fundamental point of the super-exploitation of the Negro people, *as a people,* by the propertied-interests behind the hotel's rules.

There are several specific areas in Frazier's volume where his basic analytical error makes itself felt. Of these we select for discussion only some of the more significant.

It manifests itself throughout the book's historical interpretation. Though Frazier is familiar with, and cites, the work produced during the last decade demonstrating the Negro's individual and collective rebelliousness against slavery, he has not absorbed this in the body of his own writing. His awareness of these data is formal and, once acknowledging it, he goes on to present, in fact, the traditional Phillipsian concept of American Negro slavery as characterized by successful accommodation. Similarly, it leads him to equate the "exaggerations" of the Abolitionists and the "sentimentality" of the slave-holders.

He tries to explain why the "attempts of slaves in America to revolt have lacked generally the heroism" of such efforts in Latin America. But this is in vain because the revolutionary activity of

American Negro slaves had quite as heroic a character as similar activity on the part of any people, anywhere, at any time. And, in attempting to explain why Negro revolts in the West Indies and in South America sometimes succeeded while those in the United States did not, Frazier omits the most significant point: that in the United States Negroes never reached twenty per cent of the total population and even within the South never exceeded thirty-five per cent, plus the fact that the full forces of repression of the American Negro were located where he was, while in Latin America — *e.g.* Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica, parts of Brazil—the Negroes formed a clear majority of the inhabitants within a colonial area and the main section of the oppressors' might was located 3,000 miles away.

Similarly, Frazier, in handling the Reconstruction movement ignores both the class structure of the South and the dynamics stemming from the efforts of the Negro masses themselves. In doing this he even falls into the invidious verbalizations characteristic of ruling-class historiography, referring to Negroes who "did not understand," who were "ignorant and helpless" and who suffered from "shiftlessness and irresponsibility." The references to the great Populist movement and the key role of the Negro therein are again quite inadequate, with Frazier seeing the Bourbon and the Populist as "using" with equal success for their own particular ends allegedly inert Negroes.

With his erroneous conception of the roots of white chauvinism, it is natural for Frazier to insist that "individuals who are insecure economically or socially" are the most prejudiced. What experimental work has been done in this field—as that reported by Eugene L. Horowitz, Helen S. Lynd and, most recently, Ruth G. Weintraub (the latter in *How Secure These Rights?* Doubleday, $2.00)—demonstrates the contrary, demonstrates that prejudice rises *with* income.

Frazier's own work which correctly points to the considerable accomplishment of the C.I.O. in combatting discrimination in the days of its militant and progressive leadership might well have led him to re-examine his hypothesis. Instead, since he retains the hypothesis and yet reports this signal accomplishment so contradictory to it, he is led to misinterpret the accomplishment's impact upon the Negro. For Frazier holds that as the Negro participates in progressive unions and organizations "he tends to lose his racial consciousness and his interest becomes identified with the aims of these organizations."

The fact is that what Frazier mistitles "racial" consciousness and what is really national consciousness—the Negro's conscious-

ness of himself as a member of a specially oppressed *people* — is heightened and not lessened by participation within progressive groups. This is because such groups, and above all, the Communist Party, understand that integral to their aims is the liberation of the Negro people since this is necessary to the emancipation of the American working class.

Professor Frazier recognizes, courageously in these times, the role of the Soviet Union in eliminating chauvinism. But he does not see that this was the result not of assimilationism but of self-determination. He does not see that the monolithic unity of the U.S.S.R. arises from the freely given devotion of equal variants. He does not, in a word, see the *dialectical* quality of the Marxist-Leninist position of self-determination.

Frazier's over-simplified and therefore distorted interpretation of the social order carries over into his prognosis for America. He agrees with Myrdal who holds that "the American Creed"—equality, freedom, justice, opportunity—is "the highest law of the land." He finds that this creed "is accepted by both whites and Negroes" and that Negroes "believe that the nation is ruled by it." He states that "the American nation is committed to certain principles, the most important of which are human freedom and human equality," and this, he asserts "would prevent" even in case of economic crisis a "general reaction against the Negro as a national policy." The American Negro would be surprised to learn that the future held no possibility of "a general reaction against the Negro as a national policy," since this has characterized—with rare and brief exceptions—that policy throughout the past as well as the present.

The classless and therefore unreal quality of Frazier's "nation" is apparent. As for the American Creed it was hammered out by a class in its revolutionary days and even then because of that class's nature it had great limitations. Since that class is now in its dotage the Creed's limitations are in fact overwhelming. Negroes generally believe the nation *should* be ruled by that Creed—applied to the modern scene—but very nearly all of them know that it is not so ruled today.

Business Week, organ of the effective betrayers of the American Creed, had a different view of the future in case of severe crisis than that announced by Professor Frazier. Its editors remarked last spring (April 24, 1948) that "All the candy has been passed out now." And then, in italics, they concluded, "This time there *would be nothing left but the whip.*"

The Negro has not lacked experience at the business end of the whip. Sending that instrument to a future "Museum of Horrors" re-

quires combatting and defeating the class which creates and wields it. The national liberation struggles of the Negro people as part of and in alliance with the emancipation efforts of the American working class will accomplish this. There is no other road to freedom in our time.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

Emma Lazarus

THE WORLD OF EMMA LAZARUS, by H. E. Jacob. *Schocken. $3.00.*

IT WAS inevitable that the growing reputation of Emma Lazarus would reach a new peak on the occasion of the centennial of her birth on July 22, 1849. That a first, full-length biography, based on earnest original research, should be attempted was fitting; that Heinrich Eduard Jacob's should be the one published is unfortunate.

For thirty years Mr. Jacob has been writing books, most of them plays and novels. *The World of Emma Lazarus,* regrettably, is a work more of the fictive than the biographical method. He adds very little to the meager store of verifiable facts about his subject, and by mishandling even these he produces astonishing results. The book is the product not of much needed original research and the collection of unpublished letters and other data that are still extant, but of a creative imagination brooding over the little that is known, hatching "psychological insights," and setting forth the result with a novelist's narrative skill. Based on fact, such a method may be rewarding; based on disregard for fact when it contradicts the fantasy, the result is sad, even though, if one is utterly ignorant of the subject, the reading is smooth.

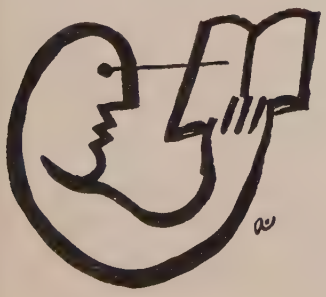
What Mr. Jacob undoubtedly regards as his most piquant "contribution" is his dwelling on what he calls "the chief enigma in the life of Emma Lazarus—her strong attachment to her father, which would seem to have precluded her marrying." Emma, the fourth of six sisters (only two of whom married), was peculiarly "father's girl." That was why, in Mr. Jacob's interpretation, she did not go to public school but was educated by private tutors (although the fact is that the rich parents sent none of their seven children to the public schools). Of course, Mr. Jacob condemns Moses Lazarus and his wife for "harming her with the love they bore her." In fact, to be up to the minute, Mr. Jacob calls this "an essentially un-American trait in him . . . it was something tribal, something rooted in another era, something related to the Oriental's desire to keep his wife shut up in the house."

Thereafter Mr. Jacob supplies us with a series of "father-substitutes" that kept Emma Lazarus pent: Emerson, with whom she cor-

responded and whose household she visited for a week; the father in the opera, *Lucia de Lammermoor,* which she saw at fifteen; Tsar Alexander II, whose assassination she condemned in a sonnet; Disraeli, about whom she wrote an essay shortly after his death; Shakespeare's King Lear as portrayed by the Italian tragedian, Salvini, and so forth! Browning, whom the poet met in England, barely escaped, and only, we are solemnly assured, because he worshipped the memory of the dead Elizabeth.

With such a melodramatic method, Mr. Jacob couples an insouciant attitude to facts. In addition to numerous minor errors that would be annoying only to scholars, there are major mistakes that vitiate many an exaggerated "interpretation" in this utterly undocumented book. Since he characteristically inflates a detail into a mountain, the deflation, when the detail proves false, is disastrous to his theses.

Thus Mr. Jacob would have it that when she learned that Emerson, who had highly praised some



of her poems, had failed to include her in an anthology he published in 1874, she "suffered a complete breakdown" from which she was partly rescued by a letter of praise from Turgenev. But the fact is that she received this letter a few months *before* she pathetically revealed her shock to Emerson! Moreover, Mr. Jacob would have it that when Emerson "jilted" her and her poetry, Emma Lazarus turned to prose, writing her novel, *Alide.* But this novel was already published nine months *before* she wrote to Emerson!

Mr. Jacob allows even his esthetic judgments, which are often keen, to be affected by indifference to fact: he regards the often highly-praised prose poems by Emma Lazarus, "By the Waters of Babylon," written under Whitman's influence and published in March, 1887, six months before her death, as "the failing effort of a failing spirit" because "composed with the haste of a person who no longer has much time to lose" and is racked with cancerous pain. But the author's own manuscript of the poems gives the date of *composition* as December, 1883, *before* her illness, and the very weeks in which she wrote two sonnets that Mr. Jacob properly praises, "The New Colossus" (now on the Statue of Liberty) and "1492"!

In treating a major problem in Lazarus interpretation, the process and stages of her developing interest in Jewish life that culmi-

nated in her becoming an eloquent spokesman for the Jewish people, Mr. Jacob is equally cavalier with fact. For instance, her play, *The Dance to Death,* dealing with a fourteenth-century German pogrom, was written, according to Emma Lazarus herself, "a few years" before 1882. But this testimony contradicts Mr. Jacob's theory that she *could not* have written it before 1881 because the name of one of the characters, Dietrich von Tettenborn, is not really a German name, but a German Baltic name, thus connecting it with the Tsarist pogroms of the 1880's!

Mr. Jacob is not only "interpretive"; he is also inventive. He fabricates a scene at a mass meeting held at Chickering (not Chittering!) Hall on February 1, 1882, to protest Russian pogroms: he invents a situation in which the meeting slips out of the hands of the chairman, Mayor William R. Grace, and Emma suddenly hears wild speeches in Yiddish, German, Italian, Spanish, and so on. As fiction this might be interesting, even if unhistorical; presented as *fact,* what can one call it, since there are ample, almost stenographic records of that meeting to challenge Mr. Jacob? Yet available and authentic reports of what Emma Lazarus saw when she visited the Jewish refugees on Ward's Island, accounts which might have teased Mr. Jacob's imagination, he ignores.

Likewise he ignores the impact of Henry George on her and understates the influence of William Morris, both of whom helped to broaden her horizon so as to include, even if only in a middle-class humanitarian way, some sympathy for the masses of the poor. George's *Progress and Poverty* impressed her mightily, evoked a sonnet she published in the *Times,* and elicited this in a letter to George, October 17, 1881: "no person who prizes justice or common honesty can dine or sleep or read or work in peace until the monstrous wrong [of mass poverty] in which we are all accomplices be done away with...." And while Morris did not make her a socialist, he convinced her of his sincerity deeply enough so that in 1886 she defended in print his right to his views and his integrity as a socialist artist. While these influences are not to be exaggerated, they should also not be obscured.

While space forbids further demonstration of omissions, distortions, misstatements of fact and hence dubious interpretations, one can but conclude that for her centennial Emma Lazarus deserved a better first biography. It is to be hoped that other biographies which have been in preparation for some time will soon be published; they are needed to help cancel the misleading effect of this one.

MORRIS U. SCHAPPES

Home of the Brave

by WARREN MILLER

DOSTOYEVSKY remarked that psychology "is a stick with two ends." Hollywood has clearly labeled the stick: Evasion at one end, Easy Out on the other. The psychiatrist has replaced the detective; he is the private-eye turned inward, every guilt is a clue, schizophrenia has replaced *rigor mortis* as a judgment. Instead of utilizing the knowledge of psychoanalysis as a means to a more incisive and richer kind of characterization, Hollywood has made a hero of the analyst and/or a way out for itself. In *Home of the Brave,* the most interesting (and what might have been the most important) motion picture Hollywood has attempted in quite some time, the psychiatrist is the means whereby the question raised is circumvented. The result is a suspect psycho-therapy, a damaged film and a disappointed audience —at least that part of the audience which for so long has been demanding a film that will search deeply and earnestly the subject of Negro oppression in this country.

It was this demand, the ever increasing concern of millions, together with the success of such related films as *Gentleman's Agreement* and *Crossfire,* that caused *Home of the Brave* to be made. (Two other films purporting to deal with the Negro question have just been completed: Louis de Rochement's *Lost Boundaries* and Elia Kazan's *Pinky.*)

While *Home of the Brave* is evasive and is itself guilty at times of the very attitudes it ostensibly denounces, it must be called progress. Its progress consists mainly in the fact that *for the first time in a Hollywood film* a Negro is the major point of interest, of audience concern; and, at the same time, the characterization is one that, on the surface, is not offensive. To be forced to call this progress is a most damning evidence of Hollywood's failure to reach social and artistic maturity in its fifty years of existence.

The film's failings and its dangerous conclusion are handily summed up for us in the synopsis provided by the producers. The story "line" is simple enough: four American soldiers led by a

young major are landed on a Japanese-occupied island on a "perilous map-making mission." One of the men, Moss, is a Negro; of the others, Finch turns out to be an old high-school friend of Moss. Another is Mingo who loses an arm in the action. The fourth is T. J.—the description of him in the synopsis reveals the same kind of amateur "psychology" that vitiates the film: "T. J. is a Northerner, he is afraid of life and quick to seize a whipping boy to torment so that he can assure himself and others of his real, final superiority. He hates Negroes."

The soldiers remain on the island four days. "Under the strain the men snap." T. J. baits Moss, there is a fight. On the last day they are spotted by enemy soldiers. As they leave the clearing for the beach and the boat that means safety, Finch forgets the map case.

"The breaking point comes when Finch . . . shouts out, 'I'm not asking you to stay, you yellow-bellied n——'." He does not complete the epithet; a moment later he is shot. Moss takes the map case and leaves. Then he realizes "with horror" that he has left his dying friend behind; he cannot decide what to do, is near hysteria. Finally, Finch returns and dies in Moss's arms. At the beach, Moss finds he cannot move, "for his legs are paralyzed."

The analyst, through whom the story is unfolded, comes to understand "what it was that Mossy needed. Mossy had to be reassured that he was not different from other men, and had to understand the artificiality of man-created barriers." Apparently, once the Negro can be made to "understand" that the color line is artificial, he can thereupon forget its terrible reality.

In the end, the message of the film is: Negroes are "not different" from whites, and Negroes are "too sensitive." Certainly the first idea is an advance over the racist notions of innate inferiority; but to say it, as this picture does, without revealing the super-exploitation of the Negro people is to be false and even dangerous. To assert that the Negro is "not different" is to make it easier for an audience to ignore the special character of the oppression of the Negro people in America; it is to evade the problem altogether. And the charge of sensitivity is an attempt to make the Negro feel that he is partly, if not wholly, responsible for his oppressed, exploited state. He is sensitive because he is oppressed and oppressed because he is sensitive.

Having pushed themselves into this absurd position, the film makers, with no apparent sign of embarrassment, turn their backs on the problem altogether and end the picture in such a way that the protagonist might have been any soldier of any nationality. We see then that the reason for the Negro's being "not different" is to

provide an easy solution, a way of ending the film without ever having to come to grips with the problems raised. Because he is not different, because he is just like the white soldiers, his difficulties cease once the analyst has "cured" him. It was just a case of severe shock, after all.

The official synopsis gives it all away: "That was it. That was the basic sameness—the strong will to live. . . . That was the sameness." All men fear death; all men are brothers. Doubtless this is the reason why Bosley Crowther of the New York *Times* can report that the picture has provoked "no evident partisanship" in its audience.

The portrayal of Moss, who is supposed to be "not different" from whites, actually reflects certain white chauvinist conceptions of a Negro. Throughout the film he is baited by T. J. At first, the terrible words and phrases are shocking, but they tend to become merely monotonous because they are seldom dramatically relevant. They are used to create a situation. Significantly, it is not Moss who fights T. J., but Finch, his white friend. The intention of this sequence is all too clear: the Negro himself does not hit back.

Again, the one pre-war sequence dramatized in the film is chosen with the same care. Moss tells the psychiatrist how, when he was a little boy, he was awakened one night by drunken white men howling outside his window. But this is not dramatized, merely stated; perhaps because a motion picture audience remembers what it sees more than what it hears. The civilian sequence that we see is Moss on the night of graduation from high school. Finch has invited him to a party at his house, but Moss won't go because he doesn't want to be "stared" at. The effect of this is ambiguous, and it may very well bolster the myth that the Negro is happier in his own ghetto.

These dangerous conceptions are so attractively packaged, colored with such dexterity, that it is all too easy to be taken in by the undeniable filmic power of certain scenes. Technically, the picture reveals a craftsmanship and a feeling for the medium superior to most Hollywood efforts. Mark Robson, a new director, brings with him what he has learned from

his experience in radio. In *Citizen Kane,* Orson Welles showed with what remarkable force devices and forms characteristic of radio drama can be utilized by the screen: off-screen voices, the criss-cross of conversations, the very timbre of the voices themselves. Robson, too, is aware that the myriad sounds of nature can be used to work directly on the audience: the rustle of leaves, the sudden shriek of a jungle bird, silence itself. He does not, however, exploit these means as artfully as did Welles, nor with anything like the sustained power.

As Clifford Odets recently wrote, we must not expect very much of a motion picture that is "conceived on the cold marble floor of a bank." *Home of the Brave* was born on this harsh and loveless cohabitation. It is more, much more, sophisticated than Edwin S. Porter's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1903); the Negro soldier is not so obviously servile, does not do a shuffle dance, nor kiss the hand of his master; now he has a high school education and a Garand rifle.

However, despite certain liberal adjustments, the basic attitude toward the Negro on the the part of those who control Hollywood reveals little change; the film's title has an irony its makers, I suspect, never wished for. Indeed, it must be counted a step forward, but both feet are still firmly planted on that cold marble floor.

theatre

OFF BROADWAY

by ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

IN RECENT years the challenge of the off-Broadway theatre has been far from vigorous; but it has persisted. Those who have kept in touch with it have been rewarded with experiences of a kind Broadway is too rich to afford. In a subsequent article I will give a comprehensive report on the subject. Here I want to deal with a new play, the product of one of the off-Broadway ventures, that may turn out to be a theatre event of some importance; and to call attention to a new company that may strengthen and extend the residual influence of the social theatre.

Readers of the magazine may recall previous references to the Dramatic Workshop which serves its student actors and a small outside public rather well by putting on performances of a well chosen, on the whole, repertory, "The March of Drama." In the several years that it has been running it has put before its audience a panorama of dramatic literature, from Greek and Chinese classics to recent outstanding American and Soviet plays. Frequently these have been given imaginative productions, coping resourcefully with the disadvantages of a small stage and home-made props; and they have, at times, been performed with a gusto and spontaneity that makes them preferable to the average over-polished professional stage.

For the acting classes these productions are a learning-by-doing process. To the repertory presentations have been added productions of new scripts which have been of similar service to the student playwrights.

The best of the student scripts I have seen performed is Ted Pollack's *Wedding in Japan.* It made such an impression that, at this writing, negotiations are proceeding to give it a Broadway production. Should that materialize, Broadway will see an absorbing and effective play.

Wedding in Japan deals with a triangle, a girl and two men. The girl, Aasan, is Japanese; the chosen lover is a Negro GI, Sergeant Mallet; and the rejected lover is a Southern white officer, Lieutenant Smith. It is clear that the girl,

Aasan, responds to the sergeant because of the tender, mature love he offers her as against the irresponsible, selfish approach of the officer, for whom it is a mere strut of sexual vanity.

The fury of Lieutenant Smith, intense enough at the suspicion that a man in the ranks is preferred to him, rises to psychopathic intensity when he discovers that the man is a Negro. At the same time his craving for revenge finds justification in the broader cause of an "insult to the white race."

Smith's first move is to order Sergeant Mallet transferred immediately to a distant post. This would foil the projected marriage of the soldier and the Japanese girl. When, on the intercession of a sympathetic white officer, the transfer is postponed to make the marriage possible, Smith instigates a frameup which not only halts the wedding but promises to insure him the ultimate in vengeance, Mallet's death. Mallet is accused and brought before a court martial.

The charges are rioting (the shooting up of a Japanese brothel placarded "for whites only") and an attempt to murder an officer (an alleged move by Mallet to kill Smith). The penalty demanded is hanging. As the white officers, who constitute the tribunal, assemble, they comment upon the case. Their remarks make it clear that justice and the validity of evidence are of minor consequence in the minds of the deciding majority of the judges, before the enormity of even a suspected design against the privileges of color and class.

The proceedings are markedly affected, throughout, by the double and related prejudices. "White supremacy" is linked and buttressed by the prejudice of the officer class against the man-in-the-ranks. The class prejudice is the more consciously concealed. It is rationalized and disguised as concern for discipline.

The third act, which is given over to the court martial, is written with great effectiveness. It is so well done that, in the present version, it is sufficient to carry the play, at the same time that it overbalances it. Even in sheer playing time it is longer, if I remember correctly, than the first two acts. And the rise in dramatic tension is so sharp as to be precipitate. By strengthening the preceding acts the author can get a better proportioned, more fluent and effective play. And in such a reshaping certain developments in the course of the court martial that now come as unprepared surprises, could be prepared for and made more convincing without weakcome as unprepared surprises for, in fact, an anticipated surprise adds a subtle satisfaction of inevitability and rightness to the satisfaction of the surprise itself.

I do not feel that the generally effective, though uncomplicated

character development in *Wedding in Japan* needs much elaboration. There are, however, points at which the characters need further development for the sake of more fully realizing the situation itself. For example the Japanese girl, Aasan, is pictured as the demure daughter of a tradition-bound Japanese family. She is represented as so bound by the taboos of her background that when she contravenes them she feels that hara-kiri is necessary; and this, indeed, is used by the playwright to bring about a climactic resolution.

But to make this convincing it would be necessary to deepen Aasan's characterization, to show her not only as strong but as adventurous-minded enough to have, perhaps, learned the English language and to have taken a position with the occupying administration. This would also help to explain her contact with American soldiers and officers, which otherwise would be explicable only in terms contradictory to her given character, and would make the hara-kiri attempt implausible.

I am confident that Mr. Pollack will satisfactorily meet these problems in his revision; and I hope that New York audiences will be given the opportunity to see it.

IF PRESENT plans go through, New York will have a summer stock company of a unique sort.

The company, Peoples Drama, Inc., is a professional group that will draw for its repertory on outstanding social plays.

The first performances have been set for early June. The opener will be John Wexley's *They Shall Not Die.* Originally written around the Scottsboro case, the play has a terrible timeliness in the new legal lynching that menaces the Trenton Six and the Martinsville Seven.

They Shall Not Die will be followed by productions of *Yerma* by Garcia Lorca, *Whole Hog Or Nothing* by Theodore Ward, *Plant in the Sun* by Ben Bengal and *The Private Life of the Master Race* by Bertholt Brecht. If People's Drama carries it off, New York may have more theatre excitement in the summer than anything the regular Broadway season has offered since Miller's *Death of a Salesman.*

HOW PURE IS MUSIC?

A Discussion by
Sidney Finkelstein
and Norman Cazden

Sidney Finkelstein:

Norman Cazden's article in the April issue of *M&M* raises the question "How Pure Is Music?" but does not wholly answer it. What he does is to attack only those theories of musical purity, or formalism, which derive from the so-called "chord of nature."

The "chord of nature" theory rose alongside of the harmonic system of the last 400 years: the system of major and minor scales, chords built on "thirds," and modulation from key to key. This musical system is based on the belief that certain tones in the scale, such as the "tonic" and "dominant," are "close" to one another; others are "distant"; that accordingly some keys are "close," others "distant"; that some intervals and chords are "consonant," others "dissonant"; finally that these feelings of nearness and distance, sweetness and harshness, consonance and dissonance, can be traced to the mathematical ratios of tone vibrations. "Consonant" relations are simple ratios; "dissonant" ones are complex ratios.

Cazden tries to demolish this theory of the mathematical basis for our reactions to music. Yet some of his argument is not altogether convincing. For instance, in pointing out that a certain note or interval is "consonant" in one key, "dissonant" in another, he forgets a fact basic to all music listening: that the ear hears relationships between notes as they follow one another, not only when they are played simultaneously. So it is perfectly natural to find a single note "dissonant" when it follows another note with which it has such a relationship.

Again he argues that most o

the music we hear is not in exact pitch, so that what we think are consonances (simple ratios) are really very complicated mathematical ratios. I would say, however, that in such cases the ear actually "hears" the simple ratio. In other words, if the ear receives a ratio of, let us say, 249:500, it hears 250:500 or 1:2. I don't know whether this adjustment takes place in the ear, the brain or the nervous system. But just as the eye "sees" a circle which can be proved mathematically to be not exactly a circle, so the ear "hears" a melody or chord even though it is slightly off pitch. And the adjustment is proved in a roundabout way: that when the same melody or chord is exactly on pitch, the ear hears it as "sweeter." I don't know of any case that works the other way, of an ear that would hear the off-pitch performance as more "sweet" or "right" than the on-pitch.

Cazden's central argument deals with various intervals or groups of tones that are considered "consonant," or permissible, in one society, "dissonant," ugly or impermissible in another. Certainly this relativity is a historical fact. But it is also true that certain patterns, such as the sense of the "octave" and of the "tonic-dominant" relationship, are found pretty far back in music, including much African and Asiatic. Another fact is that the progress of music, historically, is also a progress of ear-training, based on the development, perfection and widespread use of musical instruments. People are not born with an ear for exact pitch but develop this as they develop and use instruments which can train their ears, and the tuning of the instruments themselves is based on objective, scientific realities of wave vibrations.

And the conditions under which music is performed have a great deal to do with the musical materials that are favored. In the period before the rise of the concert hall (which took place in the 1700's), the greatest amount of music was collectively performed for the pleasure of the participants, mostly amateur, rather than for the passive listener. Music was naturally polyphonic, or "many-voiced," and intervals which are perfectly logical under such conditions, to the performer's ear, sound different when the accent is on the concert-hall merged-sound for a listener's ear.

Most important to remember is that the term "dissonant" does not mean ugly, unusable, inexpressive. Consonance in music is not synonymous with goodness. Actually pure consonance is the death of musical expressiveness. Expression in music is an interplay of different, opposing elements. Composers in one era will use combinations forbidden in another, not because they now find them to be "consonant" but rather because

they use their "dissonant" quality for expressive aims.

Bach and Beethoven made the most liberal use of chromatic tones and dissonances, but always for the most carefully calculated purposes. They wanted to stir their listeners in an unusual or disturbing way. When the Church fathers, trying to keep music "pure," denounced certain forms of folk song and dance as "lascivious," it wasn't that their pure ears were shocked; rather they wanted to censor certain national elements out of their concept of a universal Catholic music. Folk products have frequently been denounced as "lascivious" for similar reasons, which have nothing to do with ear reactions.

When in recent discussions in the Soviet Union certain systems of musical "dissonance" were criticized, it did not mean that composers were asked from then on to avoid dissonances. The discussion attacked the formation of arbitrary harmonic systems which tried to be in themselves a complete method and justification for music. Cazden's argument leaves open the way for such formalisms by theoretically making it possible for a composer to set up any system of chords of his own and say that their "consonance" or "dissonance" is simply a matter of the listener becoming adjusted to his work. Although Cazden wisely says that musical systems are shaped by the "collective purposes of men," not by arbitrary decisions made in a composer's sanctum, the entire weight of his argument works the other way. For when men work out their collective purposes and methods, these rest, like steam power and atomic energy, on realities in nature outside of them which Cazden does not admit.

MUSIC is not a science. Like all the other arts, however, it uses and profits from an objective knowledge and mastery of the scientific nature of its materials. Science can be treated mechanistically, and its theories made into brakes on human progress. As Cazden shows in his discussions of the "chord of nature," this has been done in music. But to fight mechanism, to affirm that man is the master of nature and always makes new discoveries, develops new tools, is not to say that science itself should be thrown out.

In his method of attacking the "chord of nature" theory, Cazden implies that the entire system of harmony, based on consonance, dissonance, near and distant keys, is wholly relative and arbitrary. I would argue the opposite: that it represents a real and basic achievement of music, opening the way to certain portrayals of psychological mood and conflict in music that are not possible without it—the kind of experience found in the Beethoven and Brahms symphonies, for example.

I believe that this is a permanent tool of music, based in part on realities of acoustics themselves. It can be used mechanistically, or academically, and thus result in very bad music. It can be ignored, and very justly, by composers who seek different experiences in music, who do not want to portray such psychologies and hence do not use the tools fitted for them. I do not believe it possible to discard this system and achieve the same psychological expressions with a wholly different musical system.

"New" systems, such as Schoenberg's or Stravinsky's, do not replace the old tools with others that are better, or even just as good. These systems are either fashioned to express certain limited psychological states, like pessimistic introspection, anguish and feelings of violence, or sometimes the avoidance of emotion altogether. I am not arguing for academicism, which is a way of making the practices of the past into a ball and chain on the present. I am arguing for a concept of progress which makes the fullest use of the tools of art which have painfully been brought into being. These tools have been achieved out of a real and growing knowledge of scientific realities as well as the ability to express new psychologies and human relationships.

How do theories of musical purity arise? Not out of the "chord of nature," although this has been used in modern times for some justification of them, just as in the past theorists would use anything that came to hand to bolster their argument. In every age of history, whatever the knowledge or ignorance of music, there have been battles between the "pure," or "formalist," on the one hand, and on the other the realistic, which looks to living human beings and fashions musical tools fit to describe them.

Theories of "purity" always have a class base. They are meant to censor. In medieval and early Renaissance times "purity" was based on Church modes and the battle against folk-inspired music. In the eighteenth century it was based on the demand for musical forms and sounds fitted for the pleasantries and self-praise of an aristocracy. In the nineteenth century it was based on the insistence that music portray only the "inner man," with no hint of the outer realities that gave rise to the inner conflicts. In our own times it rises from composers who out of pessimism, feelings of intense isolation or desire to take the easy way out of writing for their fellow composers, make up arbitrary, self-contained systems of manipulation of musical materials. Some of these systems, as Cazden shows, derive from the theory of the "chord of nature." Others derive from the relativism ("one system is as good as another") that his argument makes possible.

Norman Cazden:

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN raises a number of important questions with regard to my article, "How Pure Is Music?" I am glad to comment on these in the interest of further discussion.

Finkelstein is concerned over what may seem to be a rejection of science in my attack on the "law of nature" doctrine. Do not the teachings of acoustics and of the psychology of tone perception bear positively on the art of music? Are we to ignore these, and turn instead to some subjective, anti-scientific standard? Not at all. It is the purist "law of nature," cloaking itself in scientific-sounding formulas, which abandons science and which leads to a suspicion of science in this field. This mischievous falsification has driven many musicians to despair of a valid scientific explanation of musical problems. Thus it is only by pointing out the errors of the "law of nature" theory and the "pure music" myth which it serves that we can arrive at a useful application of scientific knowledge.

While we value highly the discoveries of psycho-acoustic science, we must learn to distinguish these from the loose mechanistic interpretations with which they are often joined. To do this we must judge what musical structures depend upon the raw nature of tone, and which of them emerge only on the level of the social activity of man, on the level of musical art. Raw nature, for example, does not provide us with a musical scale, with a series of distinct degrees of pitch. It gives us instead a continuous series of pitches, such as can be produced on a siren. With normal hearing we can perceive about 1,800 pitches at a loudness of 60 decibels. Now the scales of Western tonal music employ a very limited selection of these possible pitches; our musical expression is achieved with a total supply of 88 pitches.

Thus the origin of the scale must be sought in the principle of selection and not in the total series made available by nature. The evidence suggests that this principle arises in the history of the art of music. Thus the form of the scale already possesses an historical, social content. At the same time, the presence of the octave and the fifth in practically every scale known to musical history shows that at a very early date musical science recognized the special value of these two simple relations as natural standards. The reason for this is the ease of tuning these relations by the unaided ear. And so a natural property of tones does enter into the musical scale, though it does not determine the scale. We may say, then, that the musical scale is made possible by the nature of tones. But the scale standard is not derived from the laws of tone, it is imposed upon them

by the needs of art. There is nothing surprising in this. Spoken language also makes use of acoustic phenomena, and is limited by them; but neither the forms nor the meanings of any language derive from this fact.

As to the "natural" origin of consonance and dissonance, Finkelstein agrees that these terms refer to harmonic relationships in motion, and not to isolated euphonious qualities (sweetness, pleasantness). In the tonal system of recent Western music, dissonance means an active, unstable, tense moment of harmony which we perceive as tending to resolve. It resolves into consonance, a relatively static, stable, relaxed rhythmic moment. The intelligible pleasure resulting from the interaction of these moments depends upon the structure of the tonal system as a whole. Thus harmonic motion is fused with key feeling (tonality), with metrical rhythm, with the diatonic scale, with the major and minor modes.

This overall system of music, the tonal system, can be grasped only on a total cultural level, that is, in terms of the mode of musical expression belonging to a particular society at a particular stage of history. The essential fallacy of the mechanistic "law of nature" theory is that it seeks to "reduce" this cultural setting of consonance-dissonance relations to the elementary euphonious properties of tones, to their raw physical or psycho-acoustic properties. In this way the theory robs these relations of their musical meanings and then presents us with a "proof" for an esthetics of "pure," meaningless art.

Yet the euphonious effect of isolated combinations of tones (sonorities) does enter into music, and it even affects our response to consonance. The connection between euphony and consonance, however, is not direct. It amounts to a *limiting* factor in our perception of harmonic motion, not a *determining* factor. To be perceived as a consonant moment in harmony, a chord must have, in psychological terms, a minimum discreteness of its tones consistent with a maximum fusion; briefly, there exists what may be called a euphonious threshold for consonance. We know enough about this threshold to contradict flatly the "law of nature": for the simplest, most euphonious relations (octaves and fifths) do not have this discreteness, they fuse too completely. *And the fact is that in musical practice they do not serve well as consonant moments.*

Further, in terms of the history of music, there is nothing given in the nature of tones, of euphonious combinations, that would give rise to the higher level of a musical system at all, whether it involve consonance, or tonality or anything else. The raw material of tone merely makes these things possible, but they come into being

as the handiwork of man. Musical art consists of what social man has done with tones. As for changes in the meaning of consonance during musical history, a confusion results from the transfer of the word consonance from one reference to another. In the strict sense, it is not "permission" or "rejection" of consonance that varies in different historical systems of music. Consonance as we know it is a property of the tonal system, and in other known systems of music *it does not exist.*

WITH regard to standards of "off pitch" and "on pitch," Finkelstein has misunderstood the technical meaning of "just" or "pure" intonation. In describing deviations from what the "law of nature" predicts about intonation, I did not refer to incorrect pitch, or what we would hear as out-of-tune. I argued the correctness of a particular standard or norm of intonation, namely the allegedly natural norm known as the just or pure scale. Finkelstein rightly suspects that adjustments or approximations are involved in our hearing of pitch, and these have been carefully studied and measured. The results of the most exact measurements show that we *do not* adjust to the assumed "natural" scale. Neither do we adjust to the compromise "equally tempered" scale. What we hear, what we think we hear, what we prefer to hear, and also what musicians sing or play when they can, matches very closely a particular scale known as the Pythagorean scale.

This Pythagorean scale is further away from the so-called "pure" standard than the tempered scale is! The reason for this is that the tendencies of tones in motion may be more clearly followed in terms of this standard. In other words, for the purposes of tonal music, the meanings of moving tones and harmonies are grasped more readily, and this overshadows any "pure" law. Singers and string players indeed employ "untempered" pitch. But in doing so, they do not come *closer* to "natural" pitch than a piano does, they go *further away* from it. And they are quite right in doing so, though many of them are convinced they are doing the reverse.

Like performers, the ears of listeners adjust from the complex ratios they hear on a piano to simpler ones. But it is not the simple "just" ratio (major third = 4:5) that is preferred in practice, it is the highly complex Pythagorean ratio (major third = 64:81). For a simple comparison of these pitch standards: in just intonation, *F sharp* is lower than *G flat;* in equal temperament, as on the piano, *F sharp* and *G flat* are identical; in Pythagorean intonation, *F sharp* is higher than *G flat.* Ask any violinist what he plays! It must be emphasized that these intonation practices hold

only within the system of tonal music proper.

Finkelstein questions whether my position represents a kind of pure relativity of systems of music, which would allow of no dependable judgment of rightness or of scientific objectivity. Is there no absolute value in a musical system such as the tonal system? If not, the door is open to any arbitrary system, to any kind of musical esperanto. A composer or theorist may then claim for any scheme he concocts a value equal to any that has been achieved in the long history of musical practice. Indeed, he could claim a superior value, since artificial systems can readily be made to appear more "logical" or self-consistent than historical ones.

Such a point of view is precisely the one advanced by the numerous "modern" experimental schools. We have observed the succession of 12-tone systems, quarter-tone systems, eighth-tone systems, futurist systems of symphonic noice, tone-clusters, synthetic scales, dissonant counterpoint, dynamic tensions and others. The fundamental error of all such synthetic or arbitrary systems is that they relate to formal properties only. *And music can have no human meaning, no human purpose, if its forms do not contain within them an historical content.* In other words, if the listener or performer cannot associate the formal structure of a com-

position directly with his total previous experience of music, and therefore with its crystallization of the social history of the art, he finds it lacking in *both* form and content. (Usually he complains first of the unfamiliar formal qualities, because he has not been taught to verbalize the meanings embedded in forms).

Does this mean that music based on synthetic systems can have neither form nor content, that it cannot exist as music? No. For these private systems cannot be as "pure" as they pretend. The most high-flown atonal effects cannot escape being interpreted, even by their authors, in terms of the familiar tonal patterns. It is instructive to note that, despite the loud claims to sublime privacy by the atonal cult, their "pure" system has been incorporated into the most prosaic practice. It is the most appropriate idiom for psychological thrillers in Hollywood and for gruesome mystery serial backgrounds in radio.

Our use of the Western tonal system, and our understanding of it, are still shackled by academic narrowness, by the illusion of its having "pure" formal properties independent of its history, by an emphasis on "high art" usages at the expense of the little-explored popular practices from which it stemmed. But this tonal system has the inestimable advantage of current usage, of intelligibility, and therefore it remains the prime vehicle of musical communication today. I would venture no prediction as to whether the tonal system will remain so under the conditions of fundamental social change; though I may suggest that, broadly interpreted, it has significant advantages even in the strictly formal, technical, logical sense, over the highly touted sophisticated systems designed to replace it.

FROM another angle, the impression of a relativist theory seems to come about through my stress of the number of different systems of music practiced in various societies. In doing so, I did no more than place in evidence an important fact, a fact so often glossed over by the purists who are as provincial as they are pretentiously "cosmopolitan." Shall we say, however, that all musical systems that are practiced or that have been practiced are equally good? Shall we say that any musical system, however crude and ineffectual, is as valuable as the more highly evolved ones, simply because it applies properly to the society in which it arose?

In one sense, we must answer, emphatically yes — in the sense that it is to be valued as a cultural product. For what is the alternative view? The alternative is the arrogant claim that all non-Western cultures and peoples are "inferior" and "primitive," while absolute scientific validity is to be

affirmed (by Westerners) for Western tonal music alone. This is an anti-social view of the art of music, and it leads only to the obliteration of the musical modes of other peoples. The exclusive "superiority" of Western musical culture over Hawaiian music has been "proven," unfortunately, only by the deadly advent of the juke-box.

It is true that many "primitive" and Oriental musical systems do contain stagnant, over-stylized, limited and backward means of expression in both form and content. These stem from the retarding of social development, of science, and especially from the separation of ornamental feudal arts from popular roots, just as in a comparable era in Western music. But we must learn to see beyond these limitations to the more vital expression of historical and national qualities in these musics, and we should encourage their growth towards more powerful and developed means of expression.

In another sense, however, there has been absolute progress, and this has resulted from increased scientific knowledge. Western science has certainly outstripped many other cultures in the technical means it makes available to music. To Western science may be credited the better manufacture of more varied and dependable musical instruments on a large scale, the proper construction of

auditoriums, the reproduction and broadcast and publication of music. These achievements have made possible an unparalleled spread of the art—we omit for the moment at what a cost in terms of commercialization and consequent loss of standards, of direct communicative contact and participation in music. Likewise, the distinctively Western techniques of polyphony and tonal harmony are permanent enrichments of musical expression, and the symphony orchestra is a formidable modern machine.

Yet the beginnings of acoustic science and musical theory of the West are to be found in the tuned stone gongs of ancient China. And, apart from industrial techniques, it is too early to say whether the heterophony (simultaneous variation of melodies) and the flexible intonations and timbres of Chinese music are not of equal importance as musical means. A forced convergence of musical systems at this time would be a severe blow to musical art, though the export of "advanced" Western music moves exactly in that direction.

Actually, this relativity of musical systems hides certain universal qualities, which have not been properly studied because of the dominance of "law of nature" and other purist doctrines in musical theory. We know of some threads of essentially similar structures in the music of nearly all known systems. It is interesting that these appear mostly in the lowly folk arts rather than in the stylized media. The pentatonic system is common to Chinese music, American Indian music, some African and some European music. Tuning patterns of stringed instruments and the use of overblown tubes seem to have a natural basis, while the equally universal tetrachord limit seems distinctly conventional.

In sum, let us say that the total absolute progress of science and technique in musical art will contribute to the enrichment of all musical systems, though in the foreseeable future musical modes of expression will remain peculiar to the peoples who practice them.

In attacking the "law of nature" theory which sets up an eternal and inescapable scientific foundation for "pure" musical form, we do not discard either nature or science, either the facts of tone material in its physical or psychological properties or the advancing knowledge of those facts. We discard only the distortion and falsification of those facts and the misuse of that knowledge which has served to bolster a mechanistic philosophy of "pure" form in art.