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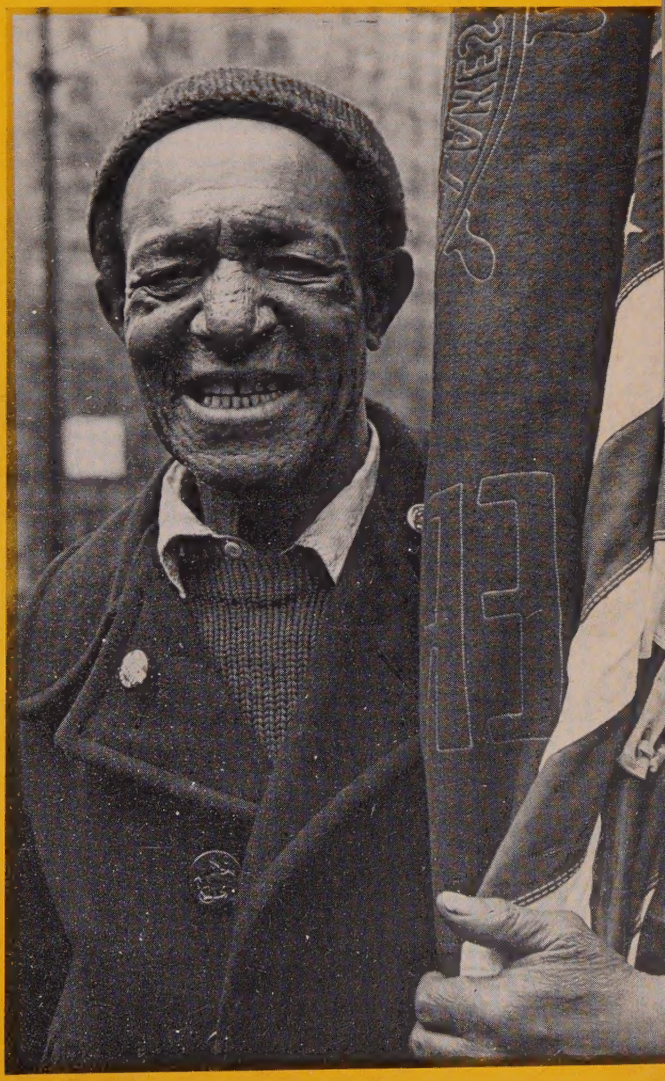

***ds and White Chauvinism,* by LLOYD L. BROWN**

Progress Report

Our fund drive is off to a good start. During the first month we received $4,500 from readers in every section of the country. This brings us close to the mid-way mark.

A splendid beginning! And we are grateful to all those hundreds of readers who responded so quickly and generously to our appeal in January. We thank them too for the scores of warm, encouraging letters telling us how much *Masses & Mainstream* means to them.

But half is not enough. We cannot trim our goal of $10,000. As we pointed out in our appeal, this remains the minimum needed to carry on the magazine efficiently for 1950.

So we roll up our sleeves for the second half of the campaign. We can wrap up the fund drive by our March issue, which, incidentally, will mark the second birthday of *M & M*—the first issue having appeared in March, 1948.

Some ten thousand readers have not yet made a contribution. We urge you to do your share in keeping this magazine in fighting shape. You have many other demands to meet, we know. But we ask you to remember that every contribution, no matter how small, is absolutely essential to the magazine.

We appeal to you not to postpone. We appeal to you to add your voice—today—to the call for *M & M* to carry on more and more effectively in the fight for peace and progressive culture.

We count on you to help us announce in March that we have gone over the top.

THE EDITORS.

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CHARLES WHITE, a leading Negro artist, will have a new show beginning February 12 at the A.C.A. Gallery in New York.

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COVER: Negro Seaman. Photo by Richard Alexander.

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Words and White Chauvinism

by LLOYD L. BROWN

JIM CROW is a talking bird, and it was inevitable that his raucous speech should become part of the American language. Just as the ystem of Negro oppression required and produced an ideology—white hauvinism, so did that ideology in turn require and produce a dis-nctive means of expression—white chauvinist words.

But this causal relationship of system-ideology-language is not a imple one. The evil growths, flowering from the basic system, produce ew seeds which help perpetuate and extend the system itself. That is vhy Marxists, while recognizing and insisting upon the fundamental eed to *uproot* the system itself, expend great energy in combatting he ideas of white supremacy and the means by which they are xpressed.

In this article I wish to discuss only one phase of the many-sided truggle—the question of words and white chauvinism. In this area ve find that even among those who fully agree with the Communist osition on the Negro question there exists a great deal of disagree-nent and confusion. At the outset I would disclaim any special au-hority for my views on the controversial aspects involved. I offer hem merely as a beginning of the fuller discussion which is needed.

First there is a whole body of words and expressions about which here can be no debate among those who support the Negro people's ight for liberation. These terms directly express the concept of Negro nferiority. But to say that is somehow terribly inadequate. No verbal haracterization of such words can fully convey the whole complex of meaning, emotion and psychology that they express. Take the word "nigger." I have heard some say that this corresponds to such epithets as "frog," "guinea," "dago," "spick," "squarehead," etc. But it doesn't; there's a qualitative difference. It is a word that expresses more than

contempt, more than hatred. It burns like a branding iron; it chokes like a lynch rope; it lashes like a whip; it smells of the slave-ship. It is a word that conveys the sum total of the unparalleled oppression of a people; behind it stand 300 years of human torture, misery, poverty, pain. That such a monstrous word is commonly used, spewed forth from kindergarten to Congress, is evidence of the racist cancer which has festered and eaten into our society and which stinks before the whole world.

Such explicitly anti-Negro words can be grouped into categories which reflect each phase of white chauvinist thinking. The slave-holder who bought, sold, worked, beat and killed his slaves as if they were animals, had to insist that they *were* merely animals. Words denoting that concept were regularly used by him. Thus a strong worker was a "prime" field hand; a male slave was a "buck," etc. Today these words are still in use together with many others which designate the Negro as a brute. Let a Negro suspect be questioned: invariably he is a "burly Negro" in the capitalist press. Let a Negro be arrested (or hunted) in a "crime wave": he is an "ape-man." Many newspapers, magazines and books insist upon spelling Negro with a little "n"—a proper noun is too proper for this one nationality.

The white chauvinist insists that the Negro is not only brutish but also childish. To the Southern white ruling class every Negro male is a "boy"; no Negro is ever mature enough to be dignified with the title of Mr. or Mrs. In the North the expression of this is commonly found in the designation "girl" for Negro domestic workers regardless of age. The Bourbon insistence upon calling all Negroes by their first names is another form of this white "superiority." Negroes are not religious like other people: they always have a "child-like" faith.

The brute who must be hated and feared, and the child who must be treated as such is also a very comical person who must be laughed at. His name is Sambo or Rastus. His color is inherently funny and inspires a never-ending series of humorous designations: snowball, chocolate drop, spade, shine, dinge, eight-ball, etc. These are indispensable for telling anti-Negro jokes.

The "superior" white not only exploits, cheats, segregates, beats, insults and lynches the Negro—he also insists he loves him. This strange love has given us many terms of master-class "endearment": darky, pickaninny, auntie, uncle, mammy. And many expressions of

praise": good Negro, intelligent Negro, etc. (In this peculiar system of commendation the noun modifies the adjective.)

Here I have tried to be illustrative rather than exhaustive—there are more such categories and, of course, many more such words (new ones are being coined as I write.) These are not simply "bad" words which the "well-bred" will avoid using in public. They are *criminal* words, their use is anti-social, anti-human in the most profound sense. Had we a more advanced society, socialism, all of these foul terms would be illegal as they are in the Soviet Union. One of the most vicious aspects of their widespread use is that they are usually the means whereby white children first become infected with chauvinist ideas. Usually, too, they are the first blow with which Negro children are initiated into the social order. The poignant shock of this experience has been recorded in Countee Cullen's famous little poem, "Incident."

The unceasing struggle of the Negro people in the first place and of other progressive Americans against these words has reduced their public use in comparison with former times. But the evil is still enormous and pervasive. Recently, for example, Kate Smith used the term "darky" on her network program. To say that for Marxists and progressives the reactionary character of these words is undebatable does not, of course, end the question for them. I heard of one organization that drew up a list of anti-Negro words and decided that its members will never use them. Period. But it is clearly not enough personally to refrain from using such words. It is necessary to carry on a persistent *struggle* against this deadly poison wherever and whenever it appears—on the radio, in the press, in books and magazines, films, schools, jokes, conversations.

THERE is, however, another kind of terminology about which a great deal of confusion exists. I refer to the wide range of words and phrases in which the concept of blackness or darkness has an invidious meaning: blackguard, black market, blacklist, blackball, black reaction, etc. It is maintained by some that such words and combinations, even though their origin may have nothing to do with the Negro question, assume a white chauvinist character in our society.

There is much to lend validity to this contention. We have already noted that many anti-Negro words focus upon the skin color of the Negro people. And in a society in which, as the Negro folk expression

has it, "white is right," the use of such words and phrases mentioned above can have chauvinist overtones. In fact every effort is made by the white supremacists to associate the Negro people with the supposed evilness of their pigmentation. Thus Roget's *Thesaurus,* a standard bourgeois work, associates under the word "blackness" such words as "smut, raven, crow, negro [small "n"] blackamoor, smirch, nigger, darkie, Ethiop, dingy, murky," etc.

A typical example of this color association in social life is given in *Moby Dick,* where Melville shows a sailor taunting a Negro shipmate with these words: "Aye, harpooneer, thy race is the undeniably dark side of mankind—devilish dark at that." Elsewhere in this work, in a chapter discussing the quality of whiteness, the author himself makes this same point. Referring to the traditional honored place accorded the color white, he says that "this pre-eminence in it applies to the human race itself, giving the white man ideal mastership over every dusky tribe. . . ."*

Surely there never can be any justification for the use of the invidious words and phrases relating to darkness or the purity and sublimeness of whiteness when discussing *peoples.* I recall an incident from schooldays. Our teacher in giving us a lecture on "tolerance" (after a playground fight caused by a chauvinist insult) assured the class that "in God's eyes *all* children are white." I don't remember the classmate's epithet hurled against me, but the teacher's words burned themselves deep.

In my opinion the question of *context* is decisive. When Africa is called the Dark Continent, the chauvinist connotation is implicit. But I cannot see anything chauvinistic about the term Dark Ages, referring to medieval Europe where clearly no association with Negroes or their character is implied. When the song-writer writes about "darktown strutters," the chauvinistic meaning is obvious (and deliberate). But when the speaker says that the "outlook is dark for capitalism," it is absurd to charge him with chauvinism (as has happened).

The seemingly innocent phrase "white hope" is indelibly stamped with anti-Negro meaning because of its origin and widespread use

* This chauvinist statement of Melville's is in curious contradiction to the spirit and content of this book. *Moby Dick* would be an American classic if for no other reason than the fact that in it Melville pioneered in the portrayal of Negroes and other non-whites in truly human and heroic characters.

at the time when Jack Johnson was the first Negro heavyweight champion and the cry of the press was for a "white hope" to dethrone him. But what about a word like blacklist? There are those who insist that such words should not be used. I suppose their reasoning goes like this: blacklist is bad, Negroes are black, hence to use black in a bad sense is to say that the Negro people are bad. But the word blacklist has a specific meaning which has nothing at all to do with the Negro people any more than the phrase "caught redhanded" has anything to do with the "Reds."

There is no end to the possible confusion if the *meaning* of words and phrases is lost sight of. But because this happens, some people are found denouncing as chauvinistic words like "blackeye" and "whitewash."

I WOULD cite the following case to further clarify the importance of context. During the war I learned that in the Post Exchange at Fort Riley, Kansas, Negro soldiers would be served standing at the soda bar together with whites. But if they wanted to consume their refreshments sitting down, they had to sit at a separate table painted black! Clearly here the table color was invidious. But what is the central fact? The paint job was but the fillip, the final hideous touch to the structure of Army Jim Crow. Had all of the tables been painted black, the enforced separation would still have existed. Had they all been white, the same fact would remain. Had the colors been switched —the same. The extra viciousness of the single black table had, you can see, nothing to do with the fact of its color but with the *meaning* expressed. Had there been no segregation enforced, no one would

THIS ISSUE is dedicated to the twenty-fifth annual observance of Negro History Week which will be celebrated this month. Founded by the eminent Negro historian, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, Negro History Week emphasizes the living connection between the struggles of the past and the liberation movement of today.

—The Editors

have been bothered by the fact that one table was differently colored.

I think it would be both a divergence from the struggle and an impossibility to attempt to change the whole sector of the language which has to do with the evil or ominous connotations of black or darkness. This conception goes back to the earliest experiences of mankind. It is a natural result of the conditions of life, the significance of the sun as the source of light, warmth and growth. Obviously if one wished to eradicate the sinister connotations of darkness, one would have to expunge the beneficent meanings of its opposite, light (dawn, brightness, etc.). In other words, not only would our speaker have to avoid reference to dark outlook, but he would also not permit himself to speak of a bright outlook. A hundred similar examples could be cited.

Not only is such an endeavor quite impossible, but altogether needless. The Negro people who have always led in the fight against white chauvinist words have not been concerned with this question. Consider this fact: there is a song, "Lift Every Voice And Sing," which is popularly known as the Negro national anthem. It is generally sung at conventions, commencements and formal occasions concerned with Negro life and struggle. It contains this line:

"Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us. . . ."

And not only is the oppressive past of slavery "dark," but the future of liberation is

"Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast."

If this conception was inherently or even inferentially white chauvinist, we would have the anomally of a militant people adopting an anthem which vilifies itself! But obviously, here, the Negro people are merely using the traditional color symbols for their general meaning.

It is true that there have been in the past and still exist (though on a diminishing scale) efforts by sections of the Negro people to abolish the use of the term Negro. These efforts, however, have not been based upon the fact that the word is from the Spanish for black, but rather because the term historically has been associated with an enslaved people, an "inferior" race, etc. Joseph D. Bibb, a columnist on the *Pittsburgh Courier* (a leading Negro newspaper), continually cam-

paigns on this issue. He would like to disavow also all such reminders of chattel slavery as the spirituals. Though such efforts are well-intended, the Negro people generally recognize—and the establishment of Negro History Week proves it—that their past is not only not something shameful, but as proud and glorious a chapter of heroic struggle against barbaric oppression as that of any people in the world. In any case, the shame of slavery is forever branded upon the slave masters.

I would further cite as evidence of the needlessness of a struggle around general "color" words the fact that in our thoroughly chauvinist society there is no prejudice at all against those colors as such. All of the terrible meanings associated with the term black do not inhibit at all the widespread use of that color (or brown, tan, beige, etc.) in apparel or other commodities. This goes even for skin color: it is the mark of highest fashion to be deeply tanned, not only in the summer time but in the winter (perhaps more so then—the dark-tanned person obviously has just returned from an expensive vacation in Florida!). More of the faces of our greatest national heroes (including such strange "heroes" as Robert E. Lee and Jeff Davis) are cast in bronze than in white marble—and even a Rankin is not outraged at this. And has not every pulp magazine sung the glories of Tall, Dark and Handsome?

No, a dark skin is "inferior" only if its inhabitant is "non-Caucasian," and a Negro is still a Negro though his skin be as fair as any "Nordic." Only a complete charlatan like Walter White can propose that the solution to the Negro question is chemically to change the color of the Negro people.

As I see it, the problem is not to do away with the general meanings of words and phrases relating to color, *but to attack the idea that these conceptions have anything to do with the character of the Negro people.*

This thought can be illustrated by another example: according to the white supremacists, the most significant characteristic of Negroes is their "inferiority." Hence in their literature the two words, Negro and inferiority, are invariably joined together. Obviously, this practice does not make the word "inferior" evil in itself. In fact it is a useful and necessary word and the fight for equality will not be advanced

by abolishing it. What must be combatted is the *concept* that the Negro people are inferior. Let the word black mean, among other things, gloomy, dismal, foreboding, shadowy, somber, or anything else that is evil—what has that got to do with the Negro people? Certainly they do not accept these terms as applying to them, else there would not be a Negro newspaper named the *Black Dispatch* or a nationally-circulated magazine called *Ebony*. Nor would we have the Negro proverb which maintains that "the blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice."

In other words, it is necessary to carry on the struggle against those who painted the Fort Riley table black—and their foul ideology and system—rather than a quixotic crusade against black tables.

Recently I was told about a progressive group in Brooklyn that held a picnic last summer. They had just had a discussion on white chauvinism and felt themselves alert to the danger. Therefore they voted down a suggestion that watermelon be served—that would be chauvinistic! Fantastic, but it shows how people can be disoriented when they forget the *content* and purpose of the struggle. The time-worn stereotype about the Negro and watermelons (vicious as all such stereotypes are) really has got nothing to do with watermelons. It could just as well be pumpkins. If that group never eats a watermelon for the rest of their lives, the struggle for Negro rights in Brooklyn will not be advanced one iota. No, while they are beating watermelons over the head, the cops will continue to club Negroes on the streets.

I will give another example of this kind of thinking. A white singer wrote that he was distressed because "even our most progressive Negro concert singers continue to sing spirituals and work songs in 'dialect' . . . Paul Robeson may change offensive lines in Old Man River, but he keeps on singing spirituals in the old manner, as does Marian Anderson and many others. Maybe he thinks there's nothing wrong with it; maybe he hasn't thought about it at all. Next time I see him I'm going to tell him I wouldn't do it myself and wonder why he should." Such singing, he said, "becomes an aspersion on a whole people . . . it perpetuates the myth that folk songs come from illiterate people."

Now there are so many things wrong in the few words quoted that a whole evening might well be spent in discussing them. But here I will focus on the one pertinent angle. The fact that so-called Negro

dialect has always played a big part in white chauvinist jokes and insults is here confused with the quality of Negro spirituals. Not down with white chauvinism!, but down with the spirituals as they were originally composed! The great Paul Robeson whose magnificent songs and heroic struggle against the oppressors have won the hearts of millions must be "corrected" by this arrogant critic. Surely no more glaring example could be found of where this peculiar method of "fighting" white chauvinism can lead to—to an attack, in essence, upon the Negro people and their foremost exponents! Were such a view highly exceptional, I would not discuss it here, but unfortunately it is not. I recall a white progressive telling me that the most chauvinist thing he ever saw in print was a scene from a play by Theodore Ward published in *Masses & Mainstream* (May, 1948). Why? Because Mr. Ward, the leading Negro playwright of our country, wrote in dialect. (By that token Sean O'Casey must be the worst anti-Irishman in the world instead of the most brilliant spokesman of his people!)

The question of the use of dialect is too large a subject to be dealt with in this article, but these examples are useful in indicating the dangerous confusion which arises on the subject of words and white chauvinism.

THE significance of these errors is not that they are "over-zealous." No one can ever be too energetic or too militant in the struggle against the monster that is white chauvinism. It is rather that these wrong tendencies distort and confuse the struggle itself and lead up the blind alleys of fetishism and formalism. The fight against white chauvinist ideas has nothing in common with word-play. Nor can it be conducted separately and isolated from the general political, economic and social struggle for Negro rights in every neighborhood, factory, office and school.

The interest in this subject indicates a heightened awareness of the problem of white chauvinism in speech by the labor and progressive movement. However, we must emphasize that it is necessary always to bear in mind that the Negro people are slandered and vilified *because they are an oppressed people.* The struggle, based upon the closest working unity of Negro and white, against that oppression is central and paramount.

Upsurge in Africa

by ALPHAEUS HUNTON

SIR PERCY SILLITOE, head of M.I. 5, secret section of the British Military Intelligence Service, made a very hush-hush flying trip to British East Africa and down through Rhodesia to South Africa not long ago. "In the past few months," reported South Africa's Rand *Daily Mail* in taking note of Sir Percy's visit, "almost every police chief in British Africa has been to Scotland Yard. They have been schooled carefully in the dangers of Communism in their territories."

Clearly, British officialdom is worried. Wasn't Africa, with its tremendous untapped resources and enslaved colonial labor, supposed to save British imperialism from gasping its last? Wasn't it supposed to solve the economic dilemmas of the whole United States-Western European axis? Doesn't American Big Business assume that it has only to move into Africa—in a big way, that is—and the guaranteed profits on its investments of surplus capital, as promised by Mr. Truman's Point-Four Program, will be as good as money in the bank? Well, Sir Percy and his colleagues know that it won't be quite so simple.

The present and would-be exploiters of Africa have left just one thing out of their precise calculations and pat blueprints—the *people* of Africa. The 180 millions of them are rising, organizing and fighting with increasing strength to break their chains, and this spells the nemesis of colonial exploitation in the last continent left to the imperialist gang.

How long can they hold Africa? With the help of guns from the United States, arsenal of world imperialism, the government agents of European and American monopoly are engaged in a brutal war of repression against the African people in a desperate effort to postpone their V-A Day as long as possible. Since World War II, national revolts and wide-spread strikes have swept every area of Africa. Take the French colonies, for example. In Algeria, at the very time when we

were celebrating V-E Day, French authorities slaughtered 60,000 people and put scores of thousands more in jails and concentration camps. In Madagascar suppression of a national revolt was achieved only after two years and with the killing of 90,000 Malagasy patriots. In French Morocco, Tunisia and French West Africa, strikes involving many thousands of miners and railway workers were broken only by French troops using armored cars and tanks.

It's the same story of armed might holding down the people in the British colonies. At Enugu, Nigeria, twenty coal miners were slain by the police last November when the workers went on strike for an 30¢-a-day wage. A year before that, at Burutu, Nigeria, employees of the United Africa Company (subsidiary of Lever Brothers, one of the world's biggest monopolies) had their strike smashed in the same way. In the Gold Coast, once called Britain's "model" West African colony, police in 1948 opened fire on a procession of unarmed ex-servicemen carrying a petition to the governor. To crush the ensuing revolt which rocked Accra, the capital, and spread to other towns, troop reinforcements and naval vessels were rushed to the colony. The Africans counted twenty-six killed and 227 wounded.

In Uganda, East Africa, also formerly known as a "model" British colony, the people have revolted against their white oppressors and the set of black puppet-officials placed over them. Strikes and riots were crushed five years ago only to break out again last April when police fired upon a crowd of 5,000 Africans gathered to petition the Kabaka (king) for democratic reforms.

As in Nigeria, Gold Coast and Uganda, so in the Sudan, Kenya, Rhodesia and the rest of British Africa, including the Dominion of South Africa where on three occasions last fall Africans fought back against the police until shot down, and where in 1946 the strike of 60,000 black workers in the gold mines marked a new stage in the Africans' fight against white supremacist tyranny. And so likewise in the rest of Africa, from Cairo down to Cape Town and from Dakar across to Zanzibar, Africans are fighting back against their oppressors and exploiters.

IT IS in the British and French West African territories that we find the most highly developed national liberation movements. "After India and Palestine, perhaps Nigeria," the London *Economist* says

gloomily, forecasting that this colony with its population of nearly 30 millions may become "Britain's main imperial preoccupation in the next ten years." The Gold Coast has a smaller population—some 4 millions—but there, too, Britain has serious worries. In the neighboring French territories there is taking place the phenomenal growth of the Rassemblement Democratique Africain (R.D.A.), or African Democratic Rally.

At the head of the Nigerian liberation movement is the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe—or "Zik" as he is popularly known throughout West Africa. Organized in 1943, the N.C.N.C. today represents a broad coalition of about 200 political parties, trade unions, professional and business associations, peasants', youth and cultural organizations. The N.C.N.C. has taken a much stronger stand against continued British rule than older organizations in the country such as the Nigerian National Democratic Party and the Nigerian Youth Movement.

The same need for an anti-imperialist united front to supplant existing political movements in the Gold Coast led to the founding of the United Gold Coast Convention in August, 1947. A conflict soon developed within the U.G.C.C. between the "moderate" wing, headed by successful business and professional men, and the more militant wing, led by the young, American-educated Kwame Nkrumah. The latter appealed primarily to the country's youth, and its demand for "full self-government now" has become a popular slogan. The militant wing broke away from the U.G.C.C. last June and established its own Convention People's Party.

The R.D.A. is the beacon light of freedom in French Africa. Since its organization in 1946 it has enlisted a million members throughout all of the French colonies below the Sahara. The R.D.A. is especially significant for the way in which it has combined struggle on behalf of the people's needs at the lowest village level with political education linking the African masses with the world-wide battle for peace. Gabriel D'Arboussier, Secretary General of the R.D.A., was one of the chairmen of the Paris Peace Congress last spring and also a delegate to the later All-Soviet Peace Conference, together with Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois from the United States.

Freedom movements of various kinds are found in almost every other section of Africa. Thus the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan has its National

Front which boycotted the fake "elections" to the first Legislative Assembly in November, 1948. East Africa has its Bataka Party in Uganda, outlawed by the government after last year's uprising, its Kenya African Union, and several lesser known secret organizations. The Somali Youth League, which vainly sought independence at the last U.N. General Assembly meeting, has 100,000 members and three times as many additional supporters. South Africa has its African National Congress, founded in 1912.

The central significance of these organizations is summed up in the following words of a black poet in South Africa, H. Dhlomo: "A new people is being born. These people call themselves Africans. For them the tribal labels have little or no meaning save as inspiration and foundations upon which to build the future nation. The tiny isolated worlds of the Zulu, the Xosa, or the Basuto have gone, never to return. Eight million people [in South Africa] speaking with one voice cannot just be ignored indefinitely."

The degree to which national consciousness has broken through the old narrow tribal bonds varies, of course, in different areas of Africa. Where the old forms of social organizations and production have been long established and little disturbed by the foreign overlords, as among the Moslem Emirates of Northern Nigeria, the advance of national consciousness is relatively slow. But don't let anybody tell you that consciousness of nationality is restricted to a few coastal cities. The Africa of 1950 is not the Africa of 1920 or 1940.

AMONG the common characteristics of the African liberation movements, first to be noted is that it is the middle-class intellectuals—lawyers, business men, journalists—who constitute the main leadership. It is important to emphasize, however, that Africa has no class of wealthy and powerful indigenous land-holders and industrialists such as are found in India; therefore, at the present stage, the basic demands of the African middle class are in harmony with those of the workers and peasants.

One of the most important means by which the African's national consciousness is molded is through his newspapers. Azikiwe, for example, wields a powerful weapon in his West African *Pilot* and his four other daily newspapers in Nigeria. Nkrumah mobilizes support for the Convention Peoples Party in the Gold Coast through his daily

news sheets. In East Africa and South Africa many papers published in the native languages and/or English also serve the cause of the liberation movement. But there are hazards, imperialism being no respecter of freedom of the press. Colonial authorities can and do shut down these papers at will. They levy heavy fines and jail sentences on editors for allegedly seditious or libelous statements. Such attacks on the African press have come with increasing frequency and severity during the past two years.

What are the fundamental demands of the African liberation movements? For democracy, political power and independence; for the return of land robbed from the Africans; for an end to the profiteering and strangle-hold of the monopolies; for a decent living wage and better living standards; for the right to manage and develop their country for their own benefit.

The winning of political power is everywhere recognized as the first and fundamental requirement for African advancement. In most colonies the African has no voting rights whatsoever. In all the colonies the governor sent from abroad is the absolute dictator. The Africans can no longer be satisfied with occasional constitutional changes which alter nothing fundamentally—a system of "freedom on the installment plan" as Azikiwe calls it. They will be satisfied with nothing less than democratic self-government.

Do the Africans want the white man to quit Africa completely? No, not if he is willing to behave himself and accept the rights accorded any minority in a democracy. But otherwise, yes! "It is the system of imperialism that we must hate and not personalities concerned," said the noted poet and journalist, Dr. Bankola Awooner Renner, addressing a Gold Coast audience, "but if anybody identifies himself with that system we must hate that person, too, hate his very shadow, his very steps."

Action programs toward achieving self-government have thus far mainly taken the form of petitioning government authorities and the United Nations. The next stage of action now being talked about in some sections of Africa is the use of the national boycott weapon. The Africans have had experience in this: for example, when an effective boycott against the cocoa trust was organized by Nigerian and Gold Coast cocoa farmers in 1937. And lessons have been learned from the general strikes like the one in Nigeria in 1946. Some African

leaders have been influenced by the technique of civil disobedience or passive resistance as practiced in India and used by the Indian minority against South African Jim Crow restrictions. Africa will undoubtedly learn much more from China's great freedom victory.

Africa is a vast continent. There are differences not only among native languages, but among the languages of the overlords in adjoining territories. Moreover, the rulers of Africa have deliberately blocked unification of the African peoples. It is accordingly not strange that no unified liberation movement embracing the whole continent yet exists. In British and French West Africa, however, these limitations are being surmounted. There is awareness of the tasks ahead. "Our nationalism," says a writer in an African newspaper, "must transcend the barriers of nationality and geography and discover in the peoples of Africa brothers in a common struggle to assert the dignity of Africa. It is suicidal for us to think along different lines when the European powers and settlers are co-ordinating their thinking and their plans and as far as possible pooling their resources."

ORGANIZED labor spearheads the national liberation movement in the colonies, spurring the middle-class leaders and their organizations forward and showing through example how to fight the monopoly exploiters, the real enemy behind the façade of government.

In Nigeria the question of labor's relation to the united front movement has been fully discussed both theoretically and practically. The Nigerian Trade Union Congress was at first affiliated with the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons. In 1948 it withdrew on the ground that it was necessary to form a political party for labor independent of the existing middle-class-led parties. Progressive-sounding arguments seem to have been used to try to hide what was in fact a retreat. The leadership of the N.T.U.C. was at this very time under fire for having fallen down in its fight for the workers—some of the officials had accepted government scholarships to study trade unionism in London. Rank-and-file dissatisfaction led to the establishment of a more militant Nigerian National Federation of Labor in 1949, and it immediately joined hands with the N.C.N.C. The leadership of this federation recognizes, as its Secretary Nduka Eze says, that "the workers constitute the bed-rock of Nigeria's independence," and that the objectives of the united front movement do not go far enough. But it also realizes that

in the present stage of the development of their country, labor's first responsibility is to help cement a strong, united liberation movement.

What is the strength of African organized labor? There is no simple, easy answer. Its strength is not measured in numbers, but in its influence over and example for the unorganized workers. An organized strike in one industry can set up a chain reaction among other workers resulting in a spontaneous general strike paralyzing a whole city and spreading to other centers. This has happened time and again. The great expansion of industrial activity in Africa during and after the last War has meant a considerable growth in the number of black wage-workers. But we would be mistaken in thinking that labor consciousness among the Africans is something of recent origin. In South Africa, the most highly industrialized section of the continent, African trade unions developed during World War I and made rapid advances between 1919 and 1926. In 1929 the Non-European (non-white) Federation of Trade Unions, embracing eleven unions and over 100,000 workers, was organized in Johannesburg—despite the fact that African unions were not and still are not legally recognized in South Africa and black workers on strike face a jail sentence or a police bullet.

Representatives of this Federation and of organized labor in British West Africa participated in the First International Trade Union Conference of Negro Workers held in Hamburg, Germany, in 1930. Fifteen years later, they played an important role in the establishment of the World Federation of Trade Unions. The Pan-African Labor Conference held by the W.F.T.U. at Dakar in April, 1947, was attended by fifty-one African delegates representing twenty-one labor organizations with a membership of over 800,000 workers in all areas of Africa except Egypt and the Portuguese colonies.

The colonial workers are the shock troops of the liberation movement. Police, troops and the whole government apparatus are at the service of the monopolies in fighting them. Where trade-union organization has been legalized, it has been done in order to provide better government controls over already existing unions: the unions must be registered and keep their accounts and membership rolls open for inspection, and so-called "labor advisors" are sent to the colonies to "guide the unions in healthy channels." Yet with all these handicaps and despite the fact that the workers are too poor to support a staff of organizers, African trade unions are making tremendous advances.

Established unions are consolidating their forces on industrial lines, and unions are to be seen now in East and Central Africa where they never existed before.

IN ADDITION to labor, peasants, women and youth constitute important sections of the African national liberation movements. Since in traditional African society land was always owned collectively, the African has escaped the evils of native landlordism seen in India and other countries. But another evil has beset him: the theft of his land, particularly in East, Central and South Africa, by European settlers, by big plantation and mining enterprises and, more recently, by gigantic state-controlled agricultural ventures like the British peanut-growing fiasco in East Africa. Where he has not been forced off the land and into agricultural wage labor, the African peasant farmer is at the mercy of the European trusts which fix the low prices for his cash crops of cocoa, cotton and other produce. The peasants, therefore, have banded together in organizations like the Cocoa Farmers Union in West Africa, the Kikuyu Central Association in Kenya, and the African Farmers Union in Uganda. The two last-named have been outlawed by the colonial authorities and their leadership jailed.

In Africa, as in Negro America, black women have been in the vanguard of the fight for freedom. They have gone on strike against the vicious pass system in South Africa and against the head tax in Nigeria. They have been jailed and beaten and killed along with their husbands and brothers. In the leadership of African nationalist movements are women like Mrs. Fummilayo Ransome-Kuti in Nigeria, President of the Abekouta Women's Union, member of the Executive Committee of the Nigerian Union of Teachers, and one of the seven members of Azikiwe's N.C.N.C. delegation to London in 1947.

African youth is impatient, aggressive. Like the black workers, the young men and women have allied themselves with progressive international movements. Delegates from British West Africa, South Africa and French North Africa attended the World Youth Festival in Budapest last August. Allied with the youth are organizations of thousands of African ex-servicemen who fought in the last war. They, too, have their grievances—unkept promises of employment and pensions. It was a demonstration of such ex-servicemen which touched off the revolt in the Gold Coast in 1948.

THE imperialists are caught in their usual dilemma: they demand more and more black labor yet struggle desperately to prevent the development of a black proletariat. They try to bolster up the long-lost authority of the chiefs, hoping thereby to preserve the tribal divisions. In Nigeria they try to pit the Hausa and Yoruba peoples against the Ibo people among whom the N.C.N.C. is most solidly based. In East and South Africa they try to divert the Africans' anger from themselves to the immigrant Indians. And of course they do not fail to buy off the people's leaders whenever and wherever they can.

The anti-Communist crusade has been taken up by the rulers of Africa as another method of attacking the liberation movements. "The task of denying Communists the opportunity of spreading their insidious propaganda [in Africa] has been pretty firmly tackled; and I think we should not be squeamish in such a matter," said Ivor Thomas, British M.P., last year, speaking to the Royal Empire Society. The fact is that the only organized Communist party south of the Sahara is the nineteen-year-old party in South Africa. There the Malan-Nazi regime is following out Mr. Thomas' advice to the letter. But despite the government's repressive measures, including a two-year-long unsuccessful sedition trial of South Africa's eight top Communist leaders, two of them Africans, black South Africans chose a Communist candidate as their representative to the Union Assembly (the equivalent of our House of Representatives) in 1948 and another to the Cape Provincial Council last year.

In West, East and Central Africa, although no organized Communist party exists, there are many youth and labor leaders who eagerly study the writings of Marx, Lenin and Stalin. "Yes, the present inclination of the average West African youth to socialism is simply natural," says an editorial entitled "Toward a Socialist West Africa," in the West African *Pilot*. "We have come to a stage in our development when we can distinguish carefully between what is living and what is dead, between what is still vital and what is putrid and rotten." Since World War II many Africans have come to realize that, as one of them said, "the success and strength of the Soviet Union are our weapons in refuting the myth of the incapacity of peoples to govern themselves." When he was in London last fall, Azikiwe was guest speaker at a "Freedom for Africa" meeting held by the African Committee of the British Communist Party. He stated that although he was not

a Communist, he could say that the Communist Party's policy was "not one whit different" from the program of his organization, the N.C.N.C. "We speak one language," he said; "we regard imperialism as a crime against humanity which must be destroyed."

The African people are on the side of democracy and world peace. They, together with the Viet-Namese, Malayans and other colonial peoples, are in the front line of battle—in actual physical combat—with the imperialists. The colonial peoples' resistance is at the very core of the present world struggle. Without Africa's bases, resources and man power at their disposal, the American-Western European imperialists' schemes are doomed.

Here in America, too, the Negro people's struggle for full equality and democracy is at the core of the fight against American fascism. The fight of black Americans for their rights is the Achilles' heel of American reaction, supporter of reaction throughout the world. Thus are the struggles of the 180 million Africans and the fifteen million black Americans closely linked. To allow these front lines of the war against imperialism to be breached and broken is unthinkable; to strengthen them is to guarantee the successful building of a new world order of peace, friendship and equality among all peoples.

"LIFT EVERY VOICE . . ."

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TOWARD LIBERATION

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THE LIVING DOUGLASS

THE SOUTH OF
William Faulkner

by BARBARA GILES

THERE is some truth in the assertion that to understand Faulkner one must first know the South. While his works have been discussed intelligently by non-Southerners, certain nuances may not be wholly grasped—or accurately measured—except by a reader who is familiar with the peculiar complex of emotions which inspired that most classic euphemism of the South's ruling citizens, "the lost cause." It is not only peculiar; it is far more involved, with infinitely more subtleties of expression than Hollywood or the second-rate novels have conveyed.

We are acquainted with the smell of banana oil in the magnolia-labeled perfume of a *Gone With the Wind*. It is quite unlike the odor of decay—the decay of the lost cause itself—which Faulkner examines in his novels. Nevertheless, we must go back to the euphemism for a certain illumination of Faulkner's novels also. With it we may find a proper starting point and at the least avoid getting lost in the forests and swamps of more esoteric discussions, which have started and ended with a "new angle" or turned into a frenzied game of Hunt-the-Symbol with one player announcing excitedly that he has found the word "tree" twelve times on so many pages and the tree is a well known symbol of . . . while another cries, Look! here's a Faulkner character who was abandoned by his mother for three days before he found a home, and wasn't Christ resurrected in three days so isn't that a genuine old Biblical symbol? . . . We may even, with a proper starting point, eventually find an answer to a question never yet answered: How can a writer who believes man is evil and therefore doomed, who hates the evil and welcomes the doom, hating most of all any effort by man to avert it—how can such a writer produce works with all the appearance of creative vigor and passion, an immense richness

of imagery and sensation, and a compelling power of artistry? The thinking of the "lost cause" is far from being all Technicolored. There are delicate lights and shadings, there is darkness as well as an over-violent and garish sun. All of them possess the common quality of making things appear the opposite of what they are. Surely no other class of people in all history has graced a military defeat—the defeat of a shameful uprising in defense of the "right" to buy, sell, whip and brand human beings—with such a wistful, semi-poetic phrase. It could come only out of a lost world—not literally lost because not even a world, since it was purely of the fancy—in which gestures and forms could replace actuality, and finally words could replace even forms. (Thus the forms of courtliness and gallantry—made possible by money and leisure derived from the actuality of slavery—were sublimated into sonorous words like "honor" and "courage.")

One result of this fantasying was a host of sentimental clichés of the "Mammy" and "Marse" variety, which are readily derided by serious or merely sophisticated people. But another kind of verbalism, more literate and involved, may proceed from the same source. The following quotation from Faulkner is offered not as an expression of the author's thinking (which might be unfair) but as a description of a certain type of Southern thinking. It is from the Appendix to *The Sound and the Fury,* and refers to Andrew Jackson: "who . . . above them all set not his wife's honor but the principle that honor must be defended whether it was or not because defended it was whether or not."

That may understandably baffle readers who have met Southern honor only through the bombast of the swords-and-roses school. A native of the South will have less difficulty in recognizing the "principle" that whether honor exists or not, once you call it that and defend it, then it *is* honor ("whether or not"). The word not only precedes the content, it creates it!

IT WOULD be superficial, however, to assume that such shadings and subtleties are merely a matter of varying levels of verbalism. More importantly involved are varying levels of seriousness, moral sensibility and perception of reality. A man may condemn slavery without relinquishing the lost cause. He may scorn magnolia labels without relinquishing it. He may, as Faulkner does, refuse to lighten the pictures he sees of decay and cruelty in the South today with fashionable

touches of pity and "sensitivity"—and still not wholly relinquish it. He then has a problem: How can he cherish remnants of inverted values, inverted thinking, in a context of moral sensibility and real perception? He cannot. The attempt requires an elaborate and intense concealment of the very intention, an ambiguity so subtle and involved that the result is itself a huge inversion, with the appearance standing in exact though hardly perceptible opposition to the actual.

Begin with an obvious element in Faulkner's novels, that of violence. The amount of it in his works has been generally taken by critics as a valid part of the Southern picture—which it is. A few of these critics have also complained that his characters are comparatively rather static. But the real point, it seems to me, is that the violence is actually a device *used to cover* an enormous passivity. The latter not only pervades the books, it embraces more than a failure by certain characters to resist their fate or their inevitable frustration if they do resist. It is an attitude toward life illustrated by the author's treatment of death.

Almost all the deaths in Faulkner's novels are violent: through suicide, murder, manslaughter, war or dramatic accident. The violence is used in different ways to the same purpose. In *Sartoris,* it serves simply to glamorize young Bayard's search for self-destruction. A violent end, deliberately risked, is presented as the "doom" of all the Sartoris men for generations; their very name, Faulkner tells us, has "death in the sound of it, and a glamorous fatality like silver pennons downrushing at sunset." So Bayard, returning from World War I, is compelled by the wish to die like his twin brother, John, who has perished in a daredevil war exploit. He finally succeeds, after some sensational but futile accidents through reckless driving, when he manages to crash a plane—as John did.

The book is one of Faulkner's earliest and least complex; the Sartoris' rejection of life is unexplained except as acceptance of the family doom, and the one clue to the acceptance may lie in Bayard's memory of war:

". . . of a life peopled by young men like fallen angels, and of a meteoric violence like that of fallen angels, beyond heaven or hell and partaking of both: doomed immortality and immortal doom."

He and John will be reunited in death; and in death is immortality. But note what kind of death is required: it must be "meteoric," sug-

gesting not the actuality of nothingness and decay, but an almost dynamic quality.

In *As I Lay Dying,* the violence and horror follow after the death, in the form of flood and other disasters that befall a family in its struggle to bury the wife and mother, according to her dying wish, in a town a few miles away from their home. These people, the Bundrens, are desperately poor, their task is infinitely complicated by that fact, and it takes them eight days to reach the burial spot—eight days of macabre adventure in a July sun, followed by buzzards. Here the actuality of decay becomes almost unbearable; the Sartoris glamor isn't even conceivable.

But the accidents and horrors have another purpose than to provide "action" and to underline the Bundrens' fanatical persistence in their mission. They are used to de-emphasize a theme which is subtly articulated in the last line of the novel—so subtly, indeed, that the line has bewildered more than one critic. After all their travail and tragedy, their gigantic determination, when the burial has finally been accomplished and the family is about to return home, the father suddenly appears with a new set of false teeth and a strange woman whom he introduces to his sons: "Meet Mrs. Bundren."

Why this farcical anti-climax to a drama of such fearful struggle, frustration, and achievement? Thinking back over the book, we are not so startled. Along with the family's desire to carry out the dead woman's wish, there runs through the story like an unobtrusive but steady thread still another motive: the simple but powerful wish of poor rural folk to go to town. Each of them, except the boy Darl (the "dreamy one" who goes out of his mind during the journey), has his own reason: to buy a phonograph, to show off a wild-spirited horse, look at a toy train, get some bananas, purchase an abortion at the drugstore. In fact the father says when he looks at the still-warm body of his dead wife, "She's gone. Now I can get my teeth."

But death, which was to have furthered their plans, very nearly thwarts them. The corpse they must carry, despite the indignities to which it is subjected, has more power over them than the living woman had. And if they finally achieve some of their desires, how cheap and sordid those desires are made to seem—the desires of the living—by the experiences that another's dying has forced them through! The dignity and the triumph still belong to the dead.

THE SOUND AND THE FURY presents us with an exception. There is little violence, although the situations are potentially violent; and here Faulkner tells us directly that Quentin Compson ". . . loved death above all, loved and lived in a deliberate and almost perverted anticipation of death as a lover loves and deliberately refrains from the waiting willing friendly tender incredible body of his beloved, until he can no longer bear not the refraining but the restraint and so flings, hurls himself, relinquishing, drowning."

A superficial likeness between Quentin and Bayard Sartoris emphasizes their difference. As Bayard wishes to join his brother in "doomed immortality," Quentin longs to "cast himself and his sister both into hell where he will guard her forever. . . ." Both the Sartorises and the Compsons are old-Mississippi-family although the Compsons can no longer support their position with material means. But Faulkner's treatment of the two men creates an immeasurable difference in complexity and depth. In fact his own development as a writer, from the one book to the other, is extraordinary.

The Sound and the Fury represents the highest level of his work so far and in more profound ways than as a *tour de force* of novel construction. It has none of the vainglorious poesy of *Sartoris,* the self-conscious exaltation of the male and the aristocrat. Sensationalism yields to intensity, and the intensity is enforced instead of weakened by an element of tenderness not found in Faulkner's other novels. If the word "doom" echoes here also, it echoes less emptily; we understand more of its source and patterns. The source is that of decay; *The Sound and the Fury* is the story of a ruling-class Southern family, the material foundation of their pride wrenched from them, the pride itself fanatically sustained by a myth, the resulting retreat and turning inward (to neurasthenia, alcoholism, incest) until the last "sane" member, who knows that only money can sustain real pride, becomes in his greed the meanest man in the world.

Faulkner's telling of this story combines to a remarkable degree the exact proportions of detachment and identification necessary to great works of fiction. The very ruthlessness of his perception is the source of his empathy. In the long second section of the novel, related through Quentin himself on the day of his suicide, there is ten times the psychological depth of other interior monologues by Faulkner. Yet an oddity must be noticed here. One does not get from this section the

feeling of a lyrical and "positive" love of death ("as a lover loves") which Faulkner describes in the Appendix, but rather a haunted, feverish, tragic despair of life so insupportable as to make death a relief. We find, however, that the Appendix was written some seventeen years after the book. Is it possible that the author did not remember the Quentin section exactly? Or is it possible that he himself, having "refrained" from writing it as a lyric to death, can now "no longer bear not the refraining but the restraint and so flings, hurls himself, relinquishing. . . ."? The speculation is not impermissible in view of the tenor of his works as a whole.

When death is not in order, its next-of-kin or more distant relatives are summoned. In *The Old Man* a convict battles the terrifying flood torrents of the Mississippi to rescue a woman caught in a tree above the water, brings her to land, assists in delivering her baby—and chooses jail again as a sanctuary from life. The hero of *The Wild Palms,* an interne who performs an abortion on his mistress that causes her death, rejects suicide for jail, where he may "remember."

These, however, are only circumstantial examples of passivity, and while there are more of them the final sum still may not represent a conclusive total. It is open to questions: Are not death, decay and frustration the natural attendants of a rotting social order? Shouldn't we value for its truth exactly what repels us, the unsweetened record of the lethal and corrupting effects of a culture erected, in Faulkner's own phrase, on "rapacity and greed?" Yes—of course. But the answer is also open to questions: How free is the recording itself from corrupting and lethal elements? How much do they affect the reality of the total? And finally, what do they have to do with the philosophy of the Lost Cause?

LET us look more closely at the nature of the passivity in Faulkner's characters. It is not true that they are static in that they fail to act. There is plenty of action, often frenzied if not violent. The convict is in motion every moment, as he must be in order to battle the flood. It is a spectacular battle, wonderfully described, affording a maximum of suspense. The reader is involved, he participates emotionally in the struggle. But when the story has been told, we are left with an irony —the convict receives an additional sentence for "trying to escape" and he accepts it gratefully—while we know only some external cir-

cumstances of his life to point up the irony and explain his preference.

We can all agree that he is a "victim of society"—but what meaning has the phrase? The action has been forced upon him (as the Bundrens' fearful journey was forced upon them), he performs throughout in "baffled outrage" and later relinquishes the whole experience with relief and mild bitterness. We have had vivid conflict, a highly imaginative and accurate rendering of sensation and physical detail—but we have not had a character. We have not, that is, had the inner man, and without that the story also lacks a truly active interrelation of external forces with mind and emotion. It is "symbolic"—with the symbolism itself passive—but its only real force derives from natural accident and disaster.

The Wild Palms is Faulkner's only full-length book dealing entirely with "normal" passion, between a man and woman not of the same family. It too has action in plenty, situations of conflict, and this time a tragic denouement. But it has no passion. The characters arrive at their infatuation at the moment of their meeting; we do not understand enough of either of them to understand or feel their love. They do not even attempt to express it either then or later, except for some adolescent ravings by the woman which are merely embarrassing. The whole long story of intense striving and frustration against material obstacles (he is poor, she married to another) lacks the power not of motivation but of a motivation that is *felt.* We are given instead the power of the author's genius at description and narrative: unique situation and suspense, the exact sensation of near-freezing, the expression of a face, the tension of suffering, the sickness of fear . . . so that we are absorbed till the end, but again left with nothing.

The Wild Palms may also be taken as a certain condemnation of society: Harry cries out about the victimization of love to a machine civilization; Charlotte feels the savage threat of their poverty. But the real devil that pulls the strings of all this drama is neither poverty nor passion. It is guilt: the paralysis of guilt, the self-punishment of self-defeat, the passive, shrinking foreknowledge of "doom" that makes action futile while it makes it more frenzied, that does not even permit the creation of a genuine, articulated love. Nowhere in the book is this made explicit. It is only hinted in Faulkner's observation that Harry and Charlotte's husband are both "aligned" and doomed before "the female principle," and we must look to Faulkner's work as a whole for

ull assurance that the female principle is that of flesh and seduction. Nevertheless, an examination of Harry's and Charlotte's reactions to her pregnancy and abortion will make it clear—and its role throughout the story then becomes apparent. The novel itself is one of Faulkner's lesser ones, but the underlying pattern is important; it is the pattern of guilt, doom, defeat, destruction, which is more deeply and artistically overlaid in his other books.

(At this point the objection will be raised that *Intruder in the Dust* features characters whose guilt is a positive thing in that it impels them to take action vigorous enough to prevent a lynching, and therefore the author has made a long and significant step forward. Unfortunately this is much too quick and easy a conclusion, as we shall see when we examine the book later.)

True, the Snopeses in *The Hamlet* act with a purpose and succeed. They are without any guilt, without even conscience. But the Snopeses, though they are made real in speech and behavior and in their thieving, horse-trading manipulations, are almost allegorical figures of evil, untouched by any quality save the compulsion of their greed. They make success itself an evil and a doom. The truly dignified or virtuous characters are still those who merely "endure."

It is interesting to see how Faulkner operates this moralizing view in the treatment of both social and personal phenomena. And here we come to the thinking of the Lost Cause. In this connection the author has given us not a hint but a full exposition, in the course of "The Bear," a long short story (a novelette really) appearing in the collection *Go Down, Moses.* Since the protagonist of the story, Ike McCaslin, is one of the few Faulkner characters who can be identified as his spokesman, and since his exposition covers the fate of man from the Garden of Eden to the post-Reconstruction period, it is well worth our attention. Briefly, it goes like this:

When God created the earth He gave it to man only to hold in His name, so that no one man should own part of it—and all he asked in return was "pity and humility and sufferance and endurance and the sweat of his face for bread." But man dispossessed God by owning, selling, and buying his earth—and man dispossessed man—until God gave man one more chance, opening to him the great wilderness of the American continent. This too, however, was already "tainted" by the

Indians' ownership of land; and the dispossession went on in both North and South, with the South adding to its sin the "curse" of slavery. Nevertheless, God loved the South more because He had created it in so much natural beauty and abundance. So, having decided that man could learn nothing save through suffering, God sent the North to scourge the South, to lift the curse. But the North misunderstood its mission: instead of merely scourging, it stayed on to plunder and dispossess further, so that the land is still cursed. Man has not yet learned pity, humility, endurance, and suffering.

One might say that despite the Biblical terminology and the impossible ideal of a primitive, communal brotherhood, there is a certain truth in this description of dispossession through private ownership of land and finally of men. No one will deny that slavery was an evil and a curse; or that Northern capitalism has enforced and directed Southern capitalism in plundering and dispossessing. However, two very important things must be noted here. One is that notwithstanding the talk about evil in the South, the sins of the North are made to seem more despicable because the men who commit them—including, especially, the men sent by God to scourge—are made despicable. The sinners of the South are not; if they offend God they do it like gentlemen, having "love of land and courage"; whereas the Northern armies are portrayed as disunited poltroons, clerks, grubbers and gabblers, forced to fight by their very terror of the South. The ferocity of McCaslin's attack upon the Abolitionists ("the rich descendants of slavers, females of both sexes") and the Reconstructionists far outweighs his grieving, bitter but dignified condemnation of the planters' godlessness—outweighs, also, his judgment against the North's money-makers in the South.

THE other thing to be noted is the emphasis on punishment. Again one might have to be a Southerner to appreciate the importance of this—to be a Southerner and to have heard the lingering, pleasurable emphasis on the *lost* in the "lost cause"—and the twin emphasis on punishment. Defeat was not without a certain compensation for the counter-Revolutionists of the South. Despite their sublime words and their rationalizations, they could not have failed to know that their "peculiar institution" was abhorred by most of the world

utside the South and a large part within it. Some of them undoubtdly had a private sense of guilt, while others were bound to feel ne moral repugnance of their opponents as an injury at least to their ride. The Union victory forcibly separated them from their crime; efeat and the "punishment" of Reconstruction seemed to absolve hem.

In this sense they were free for a time—free to pity themselves, o assume the voice of "victims" and the emotional privileges of the misunderstood," to glorify themselves in an unrestrained, conscience-ree rebuilding of their fantasied (and now "lost") world of honor, ourage and *noblesse oblige,* a fantasy that had obscured reality before and could doubly obscure it now since there was not even an appearance left for refutation. And if this was thin consolation for their real loss of enormous wealth in land and slaves, they made the most of it.

They still make the most of it. With the end of Reconstruction —the end of "punishment" and the return of "sin"—the self-pity was elaborated into a more involved defense, the defense infused with a bolder arrogance. But all the rationalizations, defensive or offensive, include three primary claims, and two of them are: the extent of the punishment and the baseness of the accusers. We are all evil, yes; we have suffered and will continue to suffer ("endure") for our sins; but we are not all contemptible. The contemptible are those who appoint themselves not to carry out God's program of suffering and doom but as saviors against doom. This thesis has inspired some curious suppositions, never stated but familiar to many who have grown up in the South.

One is the idea that defeat itself has rather more honor than victory since the latter is more readily achieved by coarser or perhaps more "commercial-minded" people. Another is the assumption that greedy men of finance and industry are purely greedy and evil while landhogs are somehow touched with the dignity and splendor of their land. (Compare, for example, the revolting characteristics of the Snopeses, representing the encroachment of money manipulations in the rural South, with the grandeur and tragedy that attends the ambitions of Thomas Sutpen, the rapacious landowner in *Absalom, Absalom!*)

In Faulkner's application we will also find two kinds of doom Some people, like the Sartorises and Sutpens, are doomed with dig nity; others, like the Bundrens and the convict, without. And ther are two ways to endure: to submit, if one is not in power; to d nothing, if one is. Which brings us to the third and major clain of lost-cause apologists: that the Negro is a strictly separate and in ferior being who must be kept separate and submissive, and who ca be understood and helped out only by the "homogeneous" white peo ple of the South (the quoted word is Faulkner's and one of hi favorites).

I have left this central subject, the author's treatment of Negroes until nearly last because it is central: it needs to be fully under stood, and we can best understand it in relation to the author whole philosophy and technique. On the surface he shows consider able "progress" in his portrayals of the Negro. Beginning at th lowest level, in *Sartoris* (1929), he baldly compares a Negro to mule ("whose mental processes he most closely resembles"). I *Light in August* (1936) he merely says: "Perhaps only a Negro ca tell whether a mule is awake or asleep." In "The Bear" (1942), Mc Caslin actually says of Negroes that they are "stronger than we, they will "endure." We have observed, however, that there are tw ways to endure. The word occurs elsewhere in "The Bear" when during Reconstruction, a McCaslin exhorts a Negro man who ha presumed to take his emancipation seriously:

> "Granted that my people brought the curse [of God] onto th land: maybe for that reason their descendants alone cannot resis it, nor combat it—maybe just endure and outlast it until the curs is lifted. Then your people's turn will come because we have fo feited ours. But not now. Not yet. Don't you see?"

See what? That he (the Negro) must wait and endure his "curse while the white man also "endures" it ("not resist it, nor combat it" until, if the latter does not "outlast it," the Negro may then begi enduring again but in the white man's way. And what if the Negr refuses this highest role of pure passivity, this endurance which lack even the force of self-preservation? Then he is removed, as a literar subject, from the setting of political-historic rhetoric and place again in the artistic-dramatic allegory of sin, corruption, doom an

h. Like the woman who fails to "endure," he represents a cor-ing power akin to "the female principle" of flesh and seduction ne dangerous potential of the dark, the unknown, the "irrational" "instinctual."

n fact a reading of Faulkner's works will reveal a most subtly im-ed equation of male and white, female and Negro. It doesn't lie y in the simple evidence that the women of his novels who are ose"—seductive and predatory—bring corruption and disaster to ncipled or ascetic men, as miscegenation brings disaster to a family e the Sutpens. It goes somewhat further than that.

n *Light in August* the protagonist, Christmas, is a product of mis-genation *and* sexual indulgence, a bastard and a white man who is mented by his knowledge that he is part Negro: Two "horrors" gov-n his life: a horror of the softness and fleshly contamination of omen, and of the Negro in him. He runs in terror from Negro women. ne obvious, unwilling attraction he feels to both objects of his repug-nce only heightens his disgust. He is seduced, first by a prostitute d then by a most respectable, seemingly austere, white spinster hose life has been spent trying to promote better education for egroes (she is the descendant of an Abolitionist). To our astonish-ent she turns out to be nymphomaniac, so abandoned that she can rrupt Christmas (who has already committed a murder) until, to cape her, he kills her. While he is trying to get away from a lynch ob, he runs into the home of a minister and starts to shoot him, but oesn't. Because—one of Faulkner's "good men" explains it—

". . . it was the black blood which snatched up the pistol and the white blood which would not let him fire it. . . . It was the black blood which swept him by his own desire beyond the aid of any man, swept him up into that ecstasy out of a black jungle . . . and then the black blood failed him again. He did not kill the minister. . . . He crouched behind the overturned table and let them shoot him to death, with that loaded and unfired pistol in his hand."

Death, the "white blood," and the male have finally triumphed ver ecstasy, the "jungle" and the "fecund" flesh, over the "black lood." Comment is hardly needed on this perverted alignment of evil" against "good." It should be said, however, that the alignment

does not stop there. On the one side we have, besides death, white, male, such allies of good as innocence, immaturity, serenity (the sexless ladies who "endure"), submissiveness, and the aristocrat's childish conception of honor. Incest brings disaster also, but it brings it in tragic suicide; while miscegenation brings sordid crime and murder. (Is incest more "homogeneous"?) In the opposing alignment we have besides Negro, female, lust, such enemies of man as softness, fertility, ambition, greed, relish of life, and active opposition to doom.

COULD any view of life be more denying and uncreative? We may understand better now why, in terms of reader resistance, Faulkner penetrates the first defenses but not the second; why, while he may absorb and excite us by superb drama, an immense reality and richness of surfaces, activity of sensation as well as of incident and events, he does not stir the heart. We are always promised something, which is always being withheld—he is a genius at withholding, at suspense—and we get much of it finally in terms of plot and explanatory circumstances—but we do not get what we demand first from the novelist, the psychological insight, the deep understanding of character which proceeds from the development of character in action. There is no development. Each major character is a monomaniac, with a single fierce compulsion which impels him to his doom. Again this makes for greater violence but not for *action* in a dynamic sense. And again the effect is to promise: to promise a depth that will match the complex intensity of the surface. Only, the depth is not there. The very fire of his writing, the meteoric effects, the high eloquence of his moralizing, the imagination and reality he brings to certain perceptions, as well as the violence, are summoned by the necessities of his defense against life, the need to deny history, denying the human potential most fiercely where it exists most strongly.

In *The Sound and the Fury* (and to a lesser degree in *Pylon*), where his need of defense seems to have been relaxed, we get a glimpse of what his writing can be when the craftsman's genius is allied with objectivity and real feeling. *Intruder in the Dust* is an example of just the opposite. Here defense has turned into apologia with overtones of hysteria. One moral of the book is that no novelist with a philosophy of negation should use the elaborate concealment of the "positive." The result is not convincing, and it isn't good literature.

Professing to be a book against lynching, *Intruder in the Dust* pre-
nts us with an old set of Faulkner's ruling-class characters equipped
ith fresh nobility and new resolves. No longer will they simply
ndure their sins: they will "expiate." One of them, lawyer Gavin
evens (since relegated to the role of gentleman detective in *Knight's*
ambit, a collection of mystery stories) delivers long editorials about
xpiation which are fantastic exercises in high-flown, esoteric, and
nvolved speech to convey the idea that the Negro's friends in the
Jorth ("the coastal spew of Europe") had better not interfere with a
nomogeneous people's" privilege of expiating their sins in their own
weet time. The idea, which was greeted by many critics as a startling
nd profound contribution to current dissertations as "the moral di-
emma" of white Southerners, is as old as the Lost Cause. Gavin Stevens
resents it with solemn intensity; one may also hear it, as it has been
eard for generations, in the refined whine of the ladies and the
umbling rhetoric of their lords at the genteel Bourbon's dinner table.
n our revulsion toward a Rankin and a Bilbo, we sometimes forget
ow much cruelty and malevolence lie behind this genteel tradition,
with its condescending "concern" for the Negro. It is the tradition of
he landowner as against the overseer. Its followers' hatred of a Rankin,
like their hatred of a Snopes—or of "the coastal spew of Europe"—is
derived from caste rather than morality. The real fury of their offended
pride is turned upon that voice of conscience which they indiscrimi-
nately label "the North."

With what pomposity do these Gavin Stevenses arrogate destiny to themselves, scornfully rejecting all genuine movements rooted in history (both North and South) for the true liberation of the Negro. With what smugness do they present—under cover of confession and expiation—their mystical and elite program which rules out the Negro himself as a participant and assigns him, as their slaveholding ancestors did, "a God . . . a hearth . . . a little earth for his own sweat to fall upon." This pious bombast is supported by a plot—the actual prevention of a lynching—and a set of characters that turn the action into a farce. Again it is hectic action; but the circumstances are so wildly improbable, the protagonists wrenched so far out of character, that one's credulity is destroyed. Where an imaginative representation of real struggle is demanded, we get a melodrama contrived to suit a viewpoint.

Some reviewers were impressed by the dignity they found in Faulk-

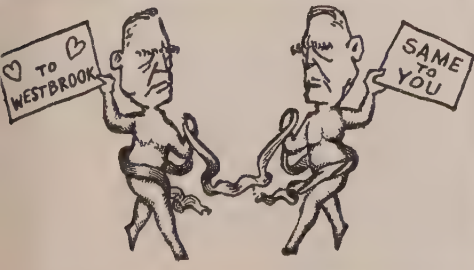
ner's portrayal of Lucas, the Negro threatened with lynching. It is true that the portrayal begins with dignity—though we are reminded that Lucas has "white blood," a circumstance that played a large part in his dignity when he appeared previously in a short story by Faulkner, who even granted him then "the face of a thousand undefeated Confederate soldiers." (We are not reminded, though we may remember, that Gavin Stevens also appeared in *Light in August* to utter the sentences quoted above about "white blood" and "black blood," surely one of the most despicable passages in American literature.) But less than halfway through the book, Faulkner can maintain the dignity no longer: he falls back on a favorite stereotype, the "cute" old Negro, whimsical and stubborn, who forces the white folks to his bidding by the very childishness of his persistence. That is the stock comic-sentimental representation of the Negro. Before we conclude, let's look at the sinister representation, also by Faulkner. At the end of *Absalom, Absalom!,* only one descendant of Thomas Sutpen is left, the half-witted Jim Bond, who is part Negro and part white. A college boy who has been discussing the Sutpens' downfall with his roommate makes a prophecy:

> "I think that in time the Jim Bonds are going to conquer the Western Hemisphere. Of course it won't be quite in our time and of course as they spread toward the poles they will bleach out again like the rabbits and birds do. . . . But it will still be Jim Bond."

There is the white supremacist's nightmare; for the relics of aristocracy in the South—the Sartorises, the Compsons, and the Faulkners themselves—it is part of a larger nightmare, the overwhelming invasion of industrialization in "their" South. Unable to cope with modern life, they attribute the "half-wit" face of capitalism to the workers as well as the owners of the hated machine, to the exploited as well as the exploiters—so that the resistance of the former becomes, through force of numbers, the most terrifying vision of all. Members of a dying class, they cling to their self-loving myths of the past, glorifying themselves with the gaudy legends of their ancestors until the sound of their own names becomes to them like "silver pennons downrushing at sunset." In love with their very dying, they can offer to others no greater boon than death.

ON SAFARI WITH HARARI

"BE MY VALENTINE"



AMERICAN DOCUMENT

W. E. B. DU BOIS: "Behold the Land"

February marks the birthdays of Washington, Lincoln, Douglass and —Du Bois. Eighty-two years ago William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born and for sixty of those years, as teacher, editor, novelist, poet, historian and organizer, Dr. Du Bois has been a fighter for freedom.

Among the many historic documents which he has produced none outranks that printed below. "Behold the Land" was delivered in Columbia, S. C., October 20, 1946, at the closing session of the Southern Youth Legislature, sponsored by the Southern Negro Youth Congress, and attended by 861 Negro and white delegates.

THE future of American Negroes is in the South. Here three hundred and twenty-seven years ago, they began to enter what is now the United States of America; here they have made their greatest contribution to American culture; and here they have suffered the damnation of slavery, the frustration of reconstruction and the lynching of emancipation. I trust then that an organization like yours is going to regard the South as the battle-ground of a great crusade. Here is the magnificent climate; here is the fruitful earth under the beauty of the Southern sun; and here if anywhere on earth, is the need of the thinker, the worker and the dreamer. This is the firing line not simply for the emancipation of the American Negro but for the emancipation of the African Negro and the Negroes of the West Indies; for the emancipation of the colored races; and for the emancipation of the white slaves of modern capitalistic monopoly.

Remember here, too, that you do not stand alone. It may seem like a failing fight when the newspapers ignore you; when every effort is made by white people in the South to count you out of citizenship and to act as though you did not exist as human beings while all the time they are profiting by your labor, gleaning wealth from your sacri-

ices and trying to build a nation and a civilization upon your degrada-ion. You must remember that despite all this you have allies, and allies even in the white South. First and greatest of these possible allies are the white working classes about you. The poor whites whom you have been taught to despise and who in turn have learned to fear and hate you. This must not deter you from efforts to make them understand, because in the past in their ignorance and suffering they have been led foolishly to look upon you as the cause of most of their distress. You must remember that this attitude is hereditary from slavery and that it has been deliberately cultivated ever since emancipation.

Slowly but surely the working people of the South, white and black, must come to remember that their emancipation depends upon their mutual co-operation; upon their acquaintanceship with each other; upon their friendship; upon their social intermingling. Unless this happens each is going to be made the football to break the heads and hearts of the other.

White youth in the South is peculiarly frustrated. There is not a single great ideal which they can express or aspire to that does not bring them into flat contradiction with the Negro problem. The more they try to escape it, the more they land into hypocrisy, lying and double-dealing; the more they become what they least wish to become, the oppressors and despisers of human beings. Some of them, in larger and larger numbers, are bound to turn toward the truth and to recognize you as brothers and sisters, as fellow travellers toward the dawn. . . .

If now you young people instead of running away from the battle here in Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, instead of seeking freedom and opportunity in Chicago and New York—which do spell opportunity—nevertheless grit your teeth and make up your minds to fight it out right here if it takes every day of your lives and the lives of your children's children; if you do this, you must in meetings like this ask yourselves what does the fight mean? How can it be carried on? What are the best tools, arms and methods? And where does it lead?

I should be the last to insist that the uplift of mankind never calls for force and death. There are times, as both you and I know, when

"Tho' love repine and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply,
'Tis man's perdition to be safe
When for the truth he ought to die."

At the same time and even more clearly in a day like this, after the millions of mass murders that have been done in the world since 1914, we ought to be the last to believe that force is ever the final word. We cannot escape the clear fact that what is going to win in this world is reason if this ever becomes a reasonable world. The careful reasoning of the human mind backed by the facts of science is the one salvation of man. The world, if it resumes its march toward civilization, cannot ignore reason. This has been the tragedy of the South in the past; it is still its awful and unforgivable sin that it has set its face against reason and against the fact. It tried to build slavery upon freedom; it tried to build tyranny upon democracy; it tried to build mob violence on law and law on lynching. . . .

NEVERTHELESS reason can and will prevail; but of course it can only prevail with publicity—pitiless, blatant publicity. You have got to make the people of the United States and of the world know what is going on in the South. You have got to use every field of publicity to force the truth into their ears, and before their eyes. You have got to make it impossible for any human being to live in the South and not realize the barbarities that prevail here. You may be condemned for flamboyant methods; for calling a congress like this; for waving your grievances under the noses and in the faces of men. That makes no difference; it is your duty to do it. It is your duty to do more of this sort of thing than you have done in the past. As a result of this you are going to be called upon for sacrifice. It is no easy thing for a young black man or a young black woman to live in the South today and to plan to continue to live here; to marry and raise children; to establish a home. They are in the midst of legal caste and customary insults; they are in continuous danger of mob violence; they are mistreated by the officers of the law and they have no hearing before the courts and the churches and public opinion commensurate with the attention which they ought to receive. But that sacrifice is only the beginning of battle, you must re-build this South.

There are enormous opportunities here for a new nation, a new economy, a new culture in a South really new and not a mere renewal of an old South of slavery, monopoly and race hate. There is a chance for a new co-operative agriculture on renewed land owned by the state with capital furnished by the state, mechanized and co-ordinated with city life. There is chance for strong, virile trade unions without race discrimination, with high wage, closed shop and decent conditions of work, to beat back and hold in check the swarm of landlords, monopolists and profiteers who are today sucking the blood out of this land. There is chance for co-operative industry, built on the cheap power of T.V.A. and its future extensions. There is opportunity to organize and mechanize domestic service with decent hours, and high wage and dignified training.

There is a vast field for consumers co-operation, building business on public service and not on private profit as the main-spring of industry. There is chance for a broad, sunny, healthy home life, shorn of the fear of mobs and liquor, and rescued from lying, stealing politicians who build their deviltry on race prejudice.

Here in this South is the gateway to the colored millions of the West Indies, Central and South America. Here is the straight path to Africa, the Indies, China and the South Seas. Here is the path to the greater, freer, truer world. It would be shame and cowardice to surrender this glorious land and its opportunities for civilization and humanity to the thugs and lynchers, the mobs and profiteers, the monopolists and gamblers who today choke its soul and steal its resources. The oil and sulphur; the coal and iron; the cotton and corn; the lumber and cattle belong to you the workers, black and white, and not to the thieves who hold them and use them to enslave you. They can be rescued and restored to the people if you have the guts to strive for the real right to vote, the right to real education, the right to happiness and health and the total abolition of the father of these scourges of mankind, *poverty.*

"BEHOLD the beautiful land which the Lord thy God hath given thee." Behold the land, the rich and resourceful land, from which for a hundred years its best elements have been running away, its youth and hope, black and white, scurrying North because they are afraid of each other, and dare not face a future of equal, independent,

upstanding human beings in a real and not a sham democracy.

To rescue this land, in this way, calls for the *Great Sacrifice.* This is the thing that you are called upon to do because it is the right thing to do. Because you are embarked upon a great and holy crusade, the emancipation of mankind black and white; the upbuilding of democracy; the breaking down, particularly here in the South, of forces of evil represented by race prejudice in South Carolina; by lynching in Georgia; by disfranchisement in Mississippi; by ignorance in Louisiana and by all these and monopoly of wealth in the whole South.

There could be no more splendid vocation beckoning to the youth of the twentieth century, after the flat failures of white civilization, after the flamboyant establishment of an industrial system which creates poverty and the children of poverty which are ignorance and disease and crime; after the crazy boasting of a white culture that finally ended in wars which ruined civilization in the whole world; in the midst of allied peoples who have yelled about democracy and never practiced it either in the British Empire or in the American Commonwealth or in South Carolina.

Here is the chance for young women and young men of devotion to lift again the banner of humanity and to walk toward a civilization which will be free and intelligent; which will be healthy and unafraid; and build in the world a culture led by black folk and joined by peoples of all colors and all races—without poverty, ignorance and disease! . . .

—W. E. B. Du Bois

The Struggle Inside the Ranks

by HERBERT APTHEKER

WHITE chauvinism is a problem only for the exploited; for the exploiters it is a weapon—carefully forged and regularly refurbished.

The ideology of white supremacy is not new; on the contrary it was born of slavery and has been American reaction's trump card for three centuries. The struggle against it also is not new and progressives today who understand this to be a life and death matter would do well to study something of that history.

As a beginning toward this aim I shall examine some of the evidences of the presence of white supremacist thinking within two of the major progressive efforts of the past—the Abolitionist and the early labor movements—and shall focus attention upon the struggles against this evil conducted by Negro participants.

The entire movement against chattel slavery was permeated with the fight against white supremacist thinking. For essential to that system was its rationalization—"if it could be proved," said a slaveholder to the visiting English author, Harriet Martineau, "that Negroes are more than a link between man and brute, the rest follows of course, and I must liberate all of mine."

From before the Revolution to the enactment of the thirteenth amendment Negroes devoted themselves to refuting this slander. You complain of British tyranny, wrote "An African" to the American colonists in 1774, but "Are not your hearts also hard, when you hold men in slavery who are entitled to liberty by the law of nature, equal as yourselves? . . . pray, pull the beam out of thine own eye, that you may see clearly to pull the mote out of thy brother's eye." "There could be nothing more natural," wrote the Negro Abolitionist, Hosea Easton, in 1837, "than for a slave-holding nation to indulge in a train of thoughts and conclusions that favored their idol, slavery. . . . 'The

love of money is the root of all evil'; it will induce its votaries to teach lessons to their little babes, which only fits them for the destroyers of their species in this world, and for the torments of hell in the world to come." And, in 1860, a committee of New York Negroes, in appealing for universal male suffrage, asked questions terribly relevant today: "What stone has been left unturned to degrade us? What hand has refused to fan the flame of popular prejudice against us? What American artist has not caricatured us? What wit has not laughed at us in our wretchedness? What songster has not made merry over our depressed spirits? What press has not ridiculed and condemned us? Few, few, very few. . . ."

Such an atmosphere was not without its effect upon white Abolitionists: many of them thought of the Negro as not quite human, or as childish, stupid, meek. There developed within the movement an attitude of toleration, an air of patronage, a feeling of condescension, and among the many invaluable contributions of the Negro Abolitionists to that movement was their persistent struggle against this racism.

The very first editorial of the earliest Negro newspaper (*Freedom's Journal,* N.Y., March 16, 1827) rather gently, but still firmly, remarked that "our friends . . . seem to have fallen into the current of popular feeling and are imperceptibly floating on the stream—actually living in the practice of prejudice, while they abjure it in theory. . . . Is it not very desirable that such should know more of our actual condition; and of our efforts and feelings, that in forming or advocating plans for our amelioration, they may do it more understandingly?"

Characteristic were the impassioned remarks of Reverend Theodore S. Wright before the 1837 convention of the New York Anti-Slavery Society. There, insisting upon the falseness of white superiority and the presence of its advocates within the Abolitionist movement, Wright said: "I fear not all the machinations, calumny and opposition of slaveholders, when contrasted with the annexation of men" with such views. "These points," he continued, "which have lain in the dark must be brought out to view. . . . It is an easy thing to ask about the vileness of slavery at the South, but to call the dark man a brother . . . to treat the man of color in all circumstances as a man and brother—that is the test." He went on at length: "I am sensible I am detaining

you, but I feel that this is an important point" for he knew that "men can testify against slavery at the South, and not assail it at the North, where it is tangible. . . . What can the friends of emancipation effect while the spirit of slavery is so fearfully prevalent? Let every man take his stand, burn out this prejudice, live it down . . . and the death-blow to slavery will be struck."

ONE of the most persistent manifestations of white superiority within the Abolitionist movement was the assumption that its white members were to do its "thinking," with the Negroes appearing as exhibits or puppets. Among certain of the whites there was a feeling that they were to do the writing and editing, formulate policy, devise strategy; the Negroes were to assist where they could, learn, improve—and keep on fleeing the patriarchal paradise! Negro Abolitionists did not fail to denounce this arrogance and to insist upon the terrible injury it was doing to the cause.

A prime example of this occurred in 1843 in connection with a Negro National Convention held in Buffalo. Here a leading Abolitionist, Henry Highland Garnet, proposed that the convention urge the slaves to go on a general strike demanding freedom, and that, when the demand was rejected and the masters attempted to break the strike with violence, the slaves answer this with insurrection. After prolonged debate, the convention rejected—by one vote—the proposal.

Most of the white Abolitionists were then still largely tied to the Garrisonian ideas of moral suasion as the only proper anti-slavery method and so denounced Garnet's idea. This, Garnet received as an honest difference of opinion, but when certain of the whites expressed *scorn* for the thinking of the convention that was something else again. And when Mrs. Maria Weston Chapman, a well-known poet of the period and, in Garrison's absence, acting editor of *The Liberator*, organ of the American Anti-Slavery Society, took a similar position and added her fears that Mr. Garnet had "received bad counsel," she was favored with a scorching reply. Garnet, himself an escaped slave, reminded Mrs. Chapman that no one knew slavery so well as a slave and that those who had escaped came "to tell you, and others, what the monster has done and is still doing." Moreover, he went on, "You say that I 'have received bad counsel.' You are not the only person who has told your humble servant that his humble productions have been

produced by the 'counsel' of some Anglo-Saxon. I have expected no more from ignorant slaveholders and their apologists, but I really looked for better things from Mrs. Maria W. Chapman. . . ." For Mrs. Chapman it is to be said that Garnet's letter was published promptly in *The Liberator* and unquestionably had a salutary effect.

The patronizing attitude was also an important factor in the opposition which cropped up within the Abolitionist movement to the frequent and vital city, state, regional and national Negro conventions and societies that played a key role in the struggle against slavery and discrimination. This, too, was part of the hostility within anti-slavery groups to the establishment of newspapers and magazines by Negroes themselves. It is to a great degree what Frederick Douglass had in mind when, in the first number of his Rochester newspaper, *The North Star* (December 3, 1847)—the establishment of which met much hostility from the Garrisonians—he declared that he had begun the paper not from a feeling of "distrust or ungrateful want of appreciation of the zeal, integrity or ability of the noble band of white laborers in this department of our cause." Rather, he had done this because of the fact "that the man who has *suffered the wrong* is the man to *demand redress*—that the man *struck* is the man to *cry out*—and that he who has *endured the cruel pangs of slavery* is the man to *advocate liberty*. It is evident," he concluded, that "we must be our own representatives and advocates, not exclusively, but peculiarly; not distinct from, but in connection with our white friends. In the grand struggle for liberty and equality now waging, it is meet, right and essential that there should arise in our ranks authors and editors, as well as orators, for it is in these capacities that the most permanent good can be rendered to our cause."

It is this same weakness, this failure to insist upon the absolute equality of the Negro, which is important in understanding the decision of the majority of those in the American Anti-Slavery Society to disband in May, 1865, when the demise of chattel slavery was clear. The Negro delegates to the Society's convention of that year—like Robert Purvis and Frederick Douglass—opposed the move. They pointed out that the constitution of the organization called for the elimination of discrimination as well as slavery and they insisted that freedom for the Negro was still very far from complete both in the North and in the South. Until, said Douglass, the Negro in the South had full

political, economic and social equality and until all Jim Crow vestiges of slavery had been abolished throughout the land, the national society dedicated to these aims should hold together and fight. Slavery, he said, "has been called by a great many names, and it will call itself by yet another name; and you and I and all of us had better wait and see what new form this old monster will assume, in what new skin this old snake will come forth."

When it is realized that such an appeal did not convince a majority of even so advanced a group as the American Anti-Slavery Society, it should be clear how significant to the aborting of Reconstruction was the failure among progressive groups, to grasp the key importance of the Negro question.

THE same failing has plagued the labor movement since its inception. After the Civil War, with its destruction of chattel slavery, its preservation of bourgeois democracy and the integrity of the nation and its tremendous boost to industrialization, the trade-union movement leaped forward. But from the beginning white supremacist thinking and behavior crippled it. And from the beginning it was the Negro who most clearly saw and most persistently pointed out the necessity of unity and who, in the cause of this unity, attacked all signs of chauvinism.

A very early post-Civil War strike in the South illustrates the condition. In 1866 the white bricklayers of New Orleans, having formed a Jim Crow union, struck for higher wages. Negroes continued working and the bosses filled the places of the strikers by hiring more. As a result the strikers issued a call for a general meeting of all bricklayers and the Negro newspaper, the New Orleans *Tribune,* organ of the Radical Republican party, editorialized: "We hope that the colored bricklayers, before entering into any movement with their white companions, will demand, as a preliminary measure, to be admitted into the benevolent and other societies which are in existence among white bricklayers. As peers, they may all come to an understanding and act in common. But should the white bricklayers intend to use their colored comrades as tools, and simply to remove the stumbling block they now find in their way, without guaranty for the future, we would say to our colored brethren: keep aloof, go back to your work, and insist upon being recognized as men and equals before you do anything."

SANDHOGS, *by Sid Gotcliffe*

This particular effort and strike failed and it failed precisely because e white workers, poisoned as they were, failed to recognize "their lored comrades . . . as men and equals."

The pattern repeated itself in the history of the first national fed- ation of trade unions in this country, the National Labor Union, unded in 1866 under the leadership of William H. Sylvis. Indeed, ylvis' own greatest weakness, which so tragically vitiated his fine ualities—class consciousness, enormous energy, personal honesty and reat administrative ability—was white chauvinism.*

What was true of Sylvis was true of the National Labor Union. In 866, 1867 and 1868 it refused to accept Negroes though the issue was rought to the fore by the independent organizing activities of Negro orkers, their calls for unity and the awareness of the need for such nity from certain of the white leaders. Finally, with the accumula- ons of all these pressures, which brought Sylvis himself to call more ctively for Negro-white unity, nine Negroes were seated among ne total of 142 delegates to the 1869 convention of the National abor Union. These Negroes, representing hod carriers, caulkers, mold- rs, railroad workers and painters were led by the greatest pioneer figure n the history of Negro trade-union organization, Isaac Myers, a Balti- hore caulker.

IN PHILADELPHIA on August 18, 1869, Isaac Myers, speaking, as he said, for all the Negro delegates, made one of the most significant ddresses in American history, and while he spoke, reported the New ork *Times,* he was "listened to with the most profound attention nd in perfect silence."

"Gentlemen," he began, "silent but powerful and far-reaching is he revolution inaugurated by your act in taking the colored laborer by he hand and telling him that his interest is common with yours, and hat he should have an equal chance in the race for life." Unity, unity on the basis of equality, was the essence of his message; that and nothing else would guarantee the potency of the American trade-union movement. "I speak today," he concluded, "for the colored men of he whole country, from the lakes to the Gulf, from the Atlantic to

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* In his "Letters from the South," published in the Philadelphia *Workingmen's Advocate* (1869), Sylvis consistently calumniated the Negro—while formally calling, within the N.L.U., for Negro-white unity!

the Pacific—from every hill-top, valley and plain throughout our vast domain—when I tell you that all Negroes ask for themselves is a fair chance; that you shall be no worse off by giving them that chance; that you and they will dwell in peace and harmony together; that you and they may make one steady and strong pull until the laboring men of this country shall receive such pay for time made as will secure them a comfortable living for their families, educate their children and leave a dollar for a rainy day and old age. Slavery, or slave labor, the main cause of the degradation of white labor, is no more. And it is the proud boast of my life that the slave himself had a large share in the work of striking off the fetters that bound him by the ankle, while the other end bound you by the neck."

Though this stimulated the adoption of good resolutions by the convention and the appointment of a Negro organizer, the resolutions were not implemented and the organizer was not used. Negroes shortly thereafter, again led by Myers, held their own convention of the Colored National Labor Union, in Washington from December 6-10, 1869. Over 200 delegates attended from Negro organizations and trade unions in twenty-three states including eleven in the South. In their address to the American people they insisted they opposed "discrimination as to nationality, sex, or color." "Any labor movement," they asserted, "based upon such discrimination . . . will prove to be of very little value." Indeed, it would be "suicidal" for it would encourage "dissensions and divisions which in the past have given wealth the advantage over labor." Specifically urged was a common phalanx of the Irish and German and Chinese, the Northern mechanic and the Southern poor white, men and women—all who labor and had been "so long ill taught" that their "true interest is gained by hatred and abuse of the laborer of African descent."

How pertinent for the American labor movement today is this call from the doubly-exploited, and therefore doubly-sensitive, Negro workers of eighty years ago!

The immediate post-Civil War labor movement failed and among the several reasons for this is the influence of white supremacist thinking within the workers' organizations.

A SOMEWHAT similar course marks the record of the next great national labor organization in American history—the Knights of Labor. Here, however, the degree of Negro-white unity achieved was

considerably greater than within the National Labor Union. The Knights, founded secretly in 1869 because of boss hostility and persecution, grew through the early Seventies, maintained a precarious existence through the terrible years of the "Long Depression" (1873-79) and expanded mightily in the next decade. Class conscious in its vigorous years, militant, organized along industrial lines and welcoming women and Negro workers, it had by the middle Eighties something like 550,000 members.

However, this organization by no means made a complete break with white supremacist thinking or conduct and maintained Jim Crow, as well as some mixed locals, but it did have about 70,000 Negroes. That at least ten percent of the Knights were Negroes—when Negroes totalled about thirteen percent of the population, with the vast majority in agriculture, domestic service or other occupations largely untouched by unionization—speaks well for the degree of unity achieved and the eagerness of Negro workers to enter unions.

Evidences of the overcoming of white chauvinism, especially when this took the form of concrete action, were hailed by the Negro people. Thus, in October, 1886, a New York Negro wrote: "I had a letter sent me from Georgia by a colored man asking if colored men would be recognized in the Knights of Labor, and I have had similar questions from others of my race. . . . My answer is Yes. . . . I myself belong to a local that is wholly composed of white men, with two exceptions, and I hold a very high position of trust in it. . . . I will say to my people, Help the cause of labor. I would furthermore say to colored men, Organize. . . . Let us break this race prejudice which capital likes. Let us put our shoulders to the wheel as men and victory is ours."

Ida B. Wells, a courageous Negro newspaper woman of Memphis, wrote early in 1887 of having attended a local meeting of the Knights. "I noticed," she commented, "that everyone who came was welcomed and every woman from black to white was seated with the courtesy usually extended to white ladies alone in this town. It was the first assembly of the sort in this town where color was not the criterion to recognition as ladies and gentlemen. Seeing this," she added, "I could listen to their enunciation of the principles of truth and justice and accept them with a better grace than all the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal of a minister, even though expounded in a consecrated house and over the word of God."

Nevertheless, Jim Crow locals existed and much of the top leadership, including the Grand Master Workman, Terence V. Powderly, were quite opportunist on this question. Increasingly as compromising tactics developed in the Knights in face of burgeoning monopoly capitalism, the deterioration faithfully reflected itself on the Negro question.

Typical of the keen awareness of this disastrous change was the letter, written in the summer of 1887, by a Pittsburgh Negro steel worker. So significant and characteristic is this document that I will quote it at some length. "As a strike is now in progress at the Black Diamond Steel Works, where many of our race are employed," wrote the worker, "the colored people hereabouts feel a deep interest in its final outcome. As yet few colored men have taken any part in it, it having been thus far thought unwise to do so. It is true our white brothers, who joined the Knights of Labor and organized the strike without conferring with, or in any way consulting us, now invite us to join with them and help them to obtain the desired increase in wages. . . . But as we were not taken into their scheme at its inception and as it was thought by them that no trouble would be experienced in obtaining what they wanted without our assistance, we question very much the sincerity and honesty of this invitation. . . . I am not opposed to organized labor. God forbid that I should be when its members are honest, just, and true! But when I join any society, I want to have pretty strong assurance that I will be treated fairly. . . . If white workers will take the colored man by the hand and convince him by actual fact that they will be true to him and not a traitor to their pledge, he will be found with them ever and always; for there are not under heaven men in whose breasts beat truer hearts than in the breast of the Negro."

The status of American labor in our own time demonstrates the exact truth of the words of this Negro steel worker written in 1887—*"If white workers will take the colored man by the hand and convince him by actual fact that they will be true to him and not a traitor to their pledge, he will be found with them ever and always."*

IN CONCLUDING this brief survey of the efforts of Negroes to combat white chauvinism within two of the greatest people's movements in our history I re-emphasize that this barely touches the general subject.

A history of white chauvinism would delve fully into its basic socio-economic origins, and trace the appearance and development of its numerous stereotypes and manifestations. It would examine its impact upon the totality of American life, and would shed new light on every major facet of our past. From such a study fuller understanding would emerge of the Revolution, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the numerous third party movements (and especially the Populist movement), the fight for women's rights, the battle against imperialism, the development of socialism.

White chauvinism today is the specific tool of American imperialism. That imperialism is the main bulwark of world reaction; therefore the struggle against this chauvinism, led by the Communist Party, assumes world-wide significance. During the Civil War the life of the nation depended upon Negro-white unity; today that remains true, and, in addition, the universal fight against fascism and war requires this Negro-white unity. The duty and necessity for this struggle, devolving first of all upon the American white masses is, then, crystal-clear. On the success with which Negro-white unity is forged depends, quite literally, the firm establishment of world peace and the progress of our country towards democracy and socialism.

The Golden Eagle

A Story by LAWRENCE EMERY

LEE snapped awake on his canvas cot in the little wall tent under the big live oak tree. Hurry, hurry, hurry. He ran to the tent flap and looked out: the sun wasn't over the brow of the low hill yet. Hurry, hurry, he could make it before breakfast if he hurried. He put on his faded blue jeans and the faded blue chambray shirt. It was summer time: no shoes.

Belle, the black and white English setter, came awake in a corner of the tent. She looked up at Lee with her moist eyes without lifting her head from her forepaws. Her tail thumped a greeting on the tent floor. "Don't get in my way," Lee said. "I'm in a hurry."

He padded barefoot across the rough boardwalk to the porch of the two-room clapboard shack, an untidy weatherbeaten sagging little house half way up the hill beside the dirt road that wound down the Sierras from Wawona and twisted through the old town here in the foothills and wandered on till it flattened out on the floor of the valley at Madera. Lee dipped some water from a rusty bucket into an enameled wash basin and splashed some on his face and his long light hair which he combed back with his fingers. Hurry, hurry, but easy now with the creaking roller towel, no noise, don't wake them in the thin-walled house.

Ugly old house, the rough unpainted clapboards warped, knotholes in the uncovered pine plank floors inside, the yellowed wallpaper peeling off. Good thing it *was* too small for him to sleep inside. Living in the tent was like camping out. At night he went to sleep with the sound of the brittle oak leaves rasping against the canvas roof in the easy wind. He could hear the coyotes howling at night under the moon, and in the mornings there was always the call of quail. In the city he had known only street noises at night, the sound of trucks and streetcars in the early morning. Sleeping alone in the tent, having his own place, made him feel free and grown up. He was eleven years old.

Now the woodbox. He took a doublebitted axe, the curved handle orn satiny-smooth with sweat and callouses, and ran to the wood-pile rther up the hill. Hurry. The sound of the axe was pleasing as it unked into the sawed sections of scrub pine. Hit it hard. If it doesn't olit with one blow it counts against you. The axe over the shoulder, eaching way back. The hands spread on the smooth handle for lever-ge. The swing up over the head, rising on the toes. Now the hands rought together for the downward swing. Lean on it with the whole veight. *Chunk!* Right in the middle, a clean split. Two armfuls, run-ing with them to the porch, but slowing there to put the heavy pieces n the woodbox, one by one, silently. Put the axe back. "I want that xe kept out of the weather," his father had said. "If I ever find it in he open you'll know about it. Damn a man who lets his tools rust."

Lee ran to the tent for his .22 rifle. He clucked to the dog. "Come on, foolish. I'm not hunting this morning, you can come along. But f there's a coyote in one of those traps you'd better keep away from him." The boy and the dog went up the path, past the little engine room and machine shop at the top of the hill—the powerhouse for the project that had failed—and down the other side. The sun was just clear of the horizon, enormous in the cloudless morning sky. A wild dove sparkled past Lee. The dog bounded ahead, her ears flapping. Silly Belle. She had never been trained and was useless for hunting because she was too old to break from her habit of chasing game instead of behaving as a pointer. "I'd shoot that beast if I had my way," his father had said. "What good is she?"

NORA came out of the shack onto the porch. The sun was well over the low hill now and she could feel the threat of the heat of noon. Already the waves of warmth shimmered in the distance like transparent flames. The grass was scorched to tinder and a dry powdery dust filmed the leaves of the old oak. She looked at the hateful landscape: the levelled spaces cut into the slope of the hill with the huge round shallow evaporating tanks, the warehouse on its high stilts beside the road, the winding trestle of tracks with the little rusty dump cars, atop the hill the engine room and the pumps, all of it dead and worthless and stinking of sulphur and rotting drily through the hot days and the dry nights.

"Lee," she called, "Lee, time to get up." When there was no answer

she remembered the traps. He had found them somewhere yesterday, two old traps rusted seemingly beyond use. But he had worked at them all afternoon, scraping and cleaning and oiling them. Late in the day he had run off over the hill to set them for coyote.

"You'll never trap one," Morton had told him.

"Why not?"

"Because coyotes are smart animals and hard to trap. They don't get caught by small boys."

"Well, I can try, can't I?"

Nora had broken in. "Leave him alone. If he wants to trap coyotes, let him trap coyotes."

Maybe coyotes *were* smarter than people, she thought. Look at this trap—their savings decaying on the side of a hill in a dead ghost town in a forgotten corner of California a million miles from everywhere and no way out. The bait had been so simple: a title—General Manager and Chief Engineer—and a promise. It was all to have been so easy: the ore from a worked-out copper mine would produce copperas and bluestone, the hot summer sun drying up the solution in the evaporating tanks, leaving the pure crystals to be sacked and sold. But it had been the promoters who had evaporated, after selling what stock in the scheme they could. Now "The Works," as the town called it, was collapsing into ruin and they owed a full year's bills they couldn't pay.

It was a true ghost town. The abandoned granite quarry, which had sustained it, gaped at it like its own grave. Just pitch the whole thing in, house by house and relic by relic, and cover it up. "The Works" could stand as the headstone. Only nobody would recognize that it was dead.

Morton came out on the porch beside her. "Another hot one," he said, looking at the bleached-blue sky. "If I can get those pumps going we can really get production while this heat lasts." Nora turned her back on him and went into the kitchen. Morton went to the washstand. "Why can't that kid empty the basin when he uses it?" he shouted after her.

WHEN Lee came to the top of the small knoll he stopped. From here he could see, far ahead, the spot where he had set the traps. The dog ran on. "Belle!" he shouted, but she didn't stop. She just looked back over her shoulder once and kept on. Lee stared ahead to where

the traps were set. There seemed to be a dark brown shape. . . . Yes. It moved. I got one, he told himself, I got one. He was running, racing recklessly through the scrub brush of sharp-branched chaparral and manzanita, keeping his eyes fixed on the dark shape, running without caring where he put his feet.

When he came closer he saw that it wasn't a coyote at all. It was nothing but a bird. Probably a buzzard attracted by the dead squirrels with which he'd baited the traps. He could hear his father's voice: "Well, how many coyotes did you catch?" And Nora would say, "Oh, let him alone." And he would shoot two more squirrels and bait the traps again and this time he would be very careful and try not to leave any trace of his own smell. Coyotes *were* smart. But he'd catch one.

"Belle!" he shouted. If only she wouldn't scare off the buzzard before he got close enough for a shot at it. He hated buzzards. He hated the way they wheeled and wheeled, always so high that a rifle bullet couldn't reach them, smelling out death and decay, dropping down furtively when they found it, to feed on carrion, dipping their hideous naked heads. "Belle," he shouted; but she wouldn't stop and he began to run again. The dog was far ahead and was drawing close to the bird. It would flap away any moment now. He wouldn't get a shot at it. There, it spread its wings. Lee stopped and sighted at it with his rifle, but he knew it was out of the range of his old .22, even with the long-rifle cartridges. He lowered the gun. That wasn't a buzzard. It was too big for a buzzard; the wings were shaped differently. And it didn't leave the ground: it just stood there with its wings out. The biggest bird he had ever seen.

The dog stopped when the bird spread its wings. She backed up a few steps, then turned and ran several steps further before turning to look at the bird again. Lee dashed forward. He knew he had an eagle caught in one of the traps. No other bird could be that big. It had to be an eagle.

MORTON stirred up the batter. There were two things he could make better than anyone else: sour milk pancakes and mayonnaise dressing. He hadn't made mayonnaise dressing for a long time. He made sour milk pancakes every morning. "I know what you're thinking," he said, beating the batter. "But if we hang on till I find

a market, we might make a go of it. We owe it to the people who put their money in it."

"Don't be so noble," Nora said. "You didn't take their money. We've lost more than any of them. We're hanging on, all right. By our necks."

"What do you want me to do?" he demanded.

"You know what I want you to do. Give up. Move back to the city. We can both get our old jobs back. At least, Lee can go to a decent school."

"Right back where we started." He poured batter into the hot skillet and watched for the little bubbles to form and break. "Right back into the same old rut."

"It'll be a little more comfortable than this rut," she said. "You won't be Chief Engineer and General Manager, but there'll be an income."

"You don't have to get mean about it," he shouted, turning to look at her. "Maybe I know when I'm beat. Maybe I don't like to admit it. Maybe I like to keep hoping. All right," his voice rose, "I'm beat! Does that make you feel better?"

She looked at him calmly. "Yes," she said. "Yes, it does. Because you won't do anything about it until you do admit it."

They were eating when Lee burst in, breathless from running and trembly with excitement. "Dad, mother, I . . ."

"You're late," Morton said. "I've told you to be here when breakfast is ready."

"But, dad . . ."

"I ought to make you go without," Morton said. He turned to Nora. "Can't you do anything to discipline him?"

"Dad, listen," Lee said. "I've caught an *eagle!*"

"You'll catch something else if you don't learn to do as you're told," Morton said. "Sit down and eat your breakfast."

Lee stood the rifle in a corner and took his seat at the table. Nora watched him and saw him look at his father with the expression of wondering resentment she had come to fear. But she said, "You'll have to be here on time, Lee."

"But breakfast is only just ready," Lee exclaimed. "I'm not really late. And mother, dad, listen, I caught an *eagle.*"

"Caught an eagle where?" Morton asked.

"In one of the coyote traps. I'll bet his wing-spread is about eight

feet. You never saw such a big one. Dad, you have to help me let him out of the trap."

"There aren't any eagles around here," Morton said. "I never heard of one getting caught in a coyote trap anyway."

"But, dad, it *is* an eagle. A golden-hooded eagle, and he's in the trap. Honest, dad."

"We've been here a year and a half and I haven't seen an eagle yet. They don't come this far down in the foothills. They're mountain birds."

"I know, dad," Lee protested, "but this is an eagle. I don't know where he came from but he's in the trap. Dad, won't you help me let him out? I can't get near him. He's *fierce,* dad."

"You'd better eat your breakfast," Nora said.

"Gee, mother," he said, "I've got to get back there. I can't leave him in the trap. Something might happen to him. I'm not hungry."

"It's probably just a big chicken hawk," Morton said.

"Dad, it's an eagle," Lee cried. "Won't you come and help me, dad? We have to let him out of the trap."

"I'm not going hiking over the hills to turn a chicken hawk loose," Morton said. "If you can't get near him, shoot him."

Lee jumped to his feet. He ignored Morton and turned to Nora. "Mother, honest, I've got to go back there." He ran out the door.

Morton half rose from his chair. "Lee," he shouted, but the boy was gone.

"Let him go," Nora said. "Why couldn't you go with him?"

"Now, by God," declared Morton, "there you go siding with him again. When are you going to stop pampering that kid?"

"Oh, sometimes you make me sick." She stood up abruptly and went into the bedroom. She slammed the door so hard it sprung open again. Morton waited for it to slam again. When it didn't, he went on with his breakfast, chewing sullenly.

LEE moved without thinking much about what he was doing. He had to get back to the trap—suppose somebody else found the eagle? Suppose something happened to it? Somehow he had to let the bird free but he had no notion how to do it. Then he ran into his tent and snatched a blanket off his cot, wadding it under his arm as he ran up the hill. He was frightened—afraid not only of the

fierce bird he must face, but of his father. He was in trouble now never before had he been so defiant. He couldn't remember ever before daring openly to disobey an order. But he had done it, and he would have to pay for it. He couldn't help it; he had to get back to the eagle

Half way up the hill he turned and ordered the dog back. He didn't want her in his way. "Go home, Belle, home," he shouted. At the top of the hill she was still following him. "Go back!" He stopped and picked up a stone and flung it with perfect aim. The dog yelped and stopped. She looked at Lee, then turned and went trotting rapidly back toward the house. Lee wanted to drop the blanket and run back and caress her. He hadn't really meant to hit her. Now he was in trouble even with his dog. He ran on over the hill.

When he came near the trap he stopped and dropped to the ground He had run all the way; his heart seemed to fill his whole chest and the pulse in his temples hammered giddily. His legs trembled.

The eagle appeared not to have moved. When Lee approached, i lifted its wings slightly and the hard hooked beak opened a little bu then closed and the wings settled again. The bird stood absolutely motionless and stared at Lee sideways with one unblinking yellow eye Lee, still breathing heavily, stared back. The bird was nearly three feet tall. It stood perfectly erect and perfectly still. The head feather were a tawny, golden color, the rest were a dark brown. The legs were heavily feathered all the way to the feet and the left one was clamped tightly in the trap. The talons seemed savagely sharp and were perfectly matched with the cruel curve of the beak.

When Lee was breathing normally again he stood up, shook the blanket out to its full length and took a step toward the eagle. Instantly the bird was furiously alert. The talons tensed, the beak opened, the wings were outstretched and the hackles rose: the neck feathers stood out like a ruff.

Lee was not at all certain of what he was about to do. But perhaps if he could throw the blanket over the bird and protect himself from those talons and that beak, he might somehow spring the trap. He stood as close to the bird as he dared and gathered the ends of the blanket together and waited. As he stood motionless the eagle slowly folded its wings and Lee made an awkward throw. The eagle's head was as swift as a snake's; it struck savagely at the blanket, then ducked The blanket missed. Twice more Lee made the clumsy effort and twice failed. His legs were trembling again.

He drew back and looked at the bird. It was breathing heavily, too, and the yellow eyes seemed to glitter in the sun. The hackles were still up, the beak open, the wings half extended in a posture of eager defiance.

Lee walked away and searched the ground until he found two small but heavy stones. He knotted these into the corners of one end of the blanket, then again crept as close to the eagle as he dared and waited until it drew in its wings. This time the weighted blanket bellied out and covered the bird. Quickly Lee threw himself upon it, drew the blanket down tight and hugged the eagle's legs with his arms. He was frightened almost to the point of nausea, perspiration stung his eyes and his strength melted, but he clung desperately to the blanket until the thrashing bird began to tire. And he could think of only one thing: "I hope I haven't hurt him, if only I haven't hurt him."

MORTON, working over the pumps in the engine room, heard Lee's voice, and when he stepped outside he saw the boy some distance away struggling with the eagle, still wrapped in the blanket but raging furiously. "Help me, dad," Lee called, and Morton ran to him. The boy was bleeding from scratches on both arms and hands, and there was a long scratch on one cheek. The trap was still dangling from the eagle's leg. "I couldn't get it off alone," Lee explained breathlessly. "So I dug up the stake and brought him home. I tried not to hurt him, dad."

Morton seized the bird's legs firmly. "You can let go now," he said. "But hold the blanket tight. If he gets his head loose we'll both be in trouble."

Together they carried the bird into the engine room. While Morton held it, Lee released the spring on the trap and removed it from the leg. The boy was trembling from excitement and exertion. Morton said, "It's an eagle, all right. It's a big one, too."

"Do you think he's hurt, dad?" Lee asked.

"His leg's a little chafed," Morton said, "but he's probably all right."

"Then we can turn him loose?"

"Well," Morton said, "maybe we'd better keep him a couple of days and make sure. We ought to take a better look at him. We can keep him in that old chicken coop down beyond the house. There's some cord over there on the bench. Bring it to me."

Lee brought the cord and together they stretched the blanket tightly

down around the bird's legs and Morton tied it securely. "Now we can work on him," he said.

"What are you going to do, dad?" Lee asked.

"Well, we'll put a band on one leg. And we'll put a chain on the band and then we can put him in the chicken coop and stake him down and take the blanket off."

While Lee held the bird's legs Morton found a small strip of metal and trimmed it to size with a big pair of shears and drilled a hole in each end and wrapped it thickly with cotton waste so it wouldn't chafe and with a small nut and bolt he clamped it tightly to one of the eagle's legs. "Now what will we use for a chain?" he said.

"I've got those old dog chains in my tent," Lee said, and he ran out and came breathlessly back with them. Morton bolted them together and connected one end to the clamp on the leg and then, Morton carrying the bird and Lee holding the coiled chain, they went down the hill and past the house to the old coop, a square enclosure of chicken wire they had never used. Morton fastened the free end of the chain to a corner post. He cut the cord binding the bird's legs.

"You go out first and hold the door open," he said. He released the eagle, snatched the blanket off and ran out the door. Lee closed it quickly. They both stood quietly then and watched the captive.

The big bird stretched its neck and twisted its head swiftly from side to side and fluffed out its rumpled feathers. The eagle took a tentative step, and then, feeling the weight of the chain, bent its head and slashed at the steel with the great beak. Then the eagle stood erect and spread its enormous wings. With powerful thrusts which raised eddies of dust the bird lifted itself a few inches from the ground before the chain brought it up short and spilled it forward into a humiliating writhing heap of feathers.

Lee caught his breath as the bird first rose. When it tumbled sprawling he too felt wrenched into a sense of shame and humiliation.

Morton chuckled. "I guess that'll hold him for a while," he said. Lee turned and ran toward the house. Morton watched him go. "Damn fool kid," he muttered. Then he looked back to the eagle. "You'd like to get your beak into me, wouldn't you?" he said aloud.

LEE woke the next morning before the sun was over the low hill. He dressed in the gray light and ran to the chicken coop and looked at the eagle. The bird stood erect and alert in one corner, it

eathers ruffled. It moved as he approached, but only to twist its head o keep one yellow eye fixed on him in a cold stare of hostility and uspicion. Lee stood quietly at the chicken wire fence and stared back nd was disturbed and perplexed by the haughty pride and untouchable atred of the bird. He wished he could stretch out his hand and stroke he eagle's golden, tawny neck and talk to it like he did to the restless orses when he went down to the old corral with his good friend Barney. "Steady, boy, easy now," he'd say, in the gentle crooning voice he horses seemed to like, and he'd stroke the eagle's neck and soothe t and they'd understand each other and be friends. But looking at the ird Lee knew that nothing could touch its wild, implacable heart. He sighed and turned away and went to the porch and washed and then chopped his morning wood.

When he finished the day was hot and again there were no clouds and the sun beat down on the dry hills to burn the dry grass a darker brown and all day long the lizards would sit motionless on the granite rocks and soak in the heat. Maybe today they would turn the eagle loose. Lee imagined the bird freed of its chain, standing with its head up to take a last defiant look at all of them, and then, neither in haste nor in fright but slowly and deliberately to spread its wings and soar in easy and effortless flight straight up into the sun, higher and higher until it became a tiny speck finally disappearing altogether.

When he went into his tent he heard a thump-thump under his bunk and he knew the sound. "Come on out, old Belle," he said, and the dog came crawling slowly toward him. Lee sat down on the floor, put his arms around her, scratched her ears and said, "You old fool, you're jealous," and he put his head next to hers. The dog squirmed and quivered with joy.

When he got up and walked out of the tent she followed him happily and he led her to the old warehouse. She bounded in ahead of him and then turned to see if he was following. And when he shut the door on her the hurt and the reproach in her eyes made him feel like a cheat and a murderer. But he couldn't help it. He had to go and hunt a rabbit for the eagle to eat, and he couldn't take her with him.

PEOPLE from the little dead ghost town started coming to "The Works" early that afternoon to see the eagle. Word of its capture had spread. Old "Doc" Brandle, the veterinary who had little to do because there wasn't much livestock left in the region, came with

his son Floyd who had nothing at all to do. Oscar, the hunchback wi collected in a little two-wheeled cart drawn by a tired burro all th town's garbage to feed his hogs, came to look. Big Hughie, who worke in the town's combined garage and blacksmith shop, came; he w free because there were few horses to shoe and fewer automobiles repair. Elderly Miss Wilma, the teacher in the town's one-room scho who had no occupation at all in the summertime, came to see th eagle. And so did red-faced Craigie, the town's butcher who ran h own slaughterhouse.

Lee stood at a little distance watching the people staring throug the chicken wire. When Morton came down from his engine roo atop the hill to greet them Lee walked over and joined the group.

"Mighty big bird," Doc Brandle said as Morton came up.

"He's a beauty, isn't he?" Morton said.

"First one I've seen in years," Brandle said. "Used to be quite few of them around here. Seems like they left when the people did

"Is there anything wrong with him, Doctor Brandle?" Lee asked.

"Can't much tell," Brandle said. "Looks all right from here. But I' not a bird doctor, boy. I can fix up a sick horse or cow, and I can docto a man if there's not much wrong with him, but I never doctored a eagle." Brandle turned to Morton and said, "What do you intend to d with him?"

"Nothing," Morton said. "What should I do with him?"

"We're going to turn him loose," Lee broke in. "As soon as we' sure he's not hurt."

"Turn him loose, boy?" Brandle asked. "What would you want t go and do that for? Eagles aren't caught every day, you know. An they're becoming pretty rare in this part of the country. That remin me," he continued, turning to Morton. "I'd forgotten about it, bu several years ago there were a couple of fellows through here lookin for eagles. They wanted a couple for the zoo in the park at Fresn They went on up into the mountains. Don't know if they got any not. Should be quite a few places where you could sell a bird like tha though. Why don't you check around?"

"Hadn't thought of that," Morton said. "Sounds like a good idea

"Dad," Lee cried, "you said we'd turn him loose if he wasn't hurt

"Well, son," Morton said. "Let's just figure things out a bit. H might be a valuable bird. As Doc says, they're getting pretty rare. Le think it over a bit, what do you say?"

Lee looked at his father disbelievingly. "We got to turn him loose, l," he said. "You promised!"

Miss Wilma came up and put her arm around Lee's shoulder. "You ɔuld be very proud, Lee," she said. "Not every boy catches an eagle."

'But I didn't *mean* to catch him," Lee said.

'I only wanted to catch a coyote. He got in by mistake. I would have ned him loose right away, but I couldn't, alone."

"Do you know that the eagle is the emblem of our country?" Miss ilma asked in her school-teacherish voice.

"Yes, ma'am," Lee said. "But not this kind, though. This is a golden gle. The other is the bald eagle."

"That's right," Miss Wilma agreed. "But some people think this is finer bird. It's bigger and stronger. And now that we have one close hand I think it would make an excellent subject for our natural story lessons when school starts again. The eagle has some very in- resting habits. What do you think we ought to do with him?"

"We're going to turn him loose, Miss Wilma," Lee said. "As soon we're sure he's not hurt."

"Turn him loose?" she said. "But why? Lee, you could make a won- rful contribution to the school. It would be a lovely gift. You could ven have your name on a little plate, telling how you caught it, and ɔu'd always be remembered. Don't you think he'd look wonderful n top of the big bookcase?"

"How could you put him there?" Lee asked.

"Why, we'd get him stuffed, Lee."

Lee stared at Miss Wilma and there was fright and revulsion in his yes. But Miss Wilma didn't notice. "I think it would make a lovely ift," she repeated. Confused and repelled, Lee turned to Morton, who as still talking to Doc Brandle. And as he turned, Lee saw red-faced raigie, the butcher, poking a long stick through the chicken wire ɔward the eagle. In a sudden fury he leaped to the man and began ounding him violently with his small fists. Craigie dropped the stick n surprise.

"Why, what's gotten into him?" Miss Wilma asked.

"Lee," Morton shouted. He pulled the boy away from the astonished utcher and slapped him sharply on the side of the head. "Go into the ouse," he ordered.

"I only wanted to make him spread his wings to see how big he is," Craigie explained.

"That's all right," Morton said. "I don't know what's the matter wit the kid." He gave Lee a push. "Go into the house and stay there," h repeated. To Craigie he said, "I guess the excitement of catching it ha upset him a little." Lee walked off slowly toward the house. He didn know that Morton owed the butcher many months of bills for mea

NORA was sewing in the combined living room and bedroom. Whe Lee entered she asked without glancing up, "What are all thos people doing out there?" When Lee didn't answer, she looked at hin "Well," she said, flouncing the sewing on her lap in a gesture of resig nation, "what's the matter now?"

Lee looked at his feet. "Dad sent me inside," he said.

"What for?"

"Oh, that old Craigie was poking him with a stick," Lee said.

"Poking who?"

"The eagle!" Lee almost shouted. "Dad doesn't want to turn hin loose," he continued after a moment, and the tears were close now "Doctor Brandle says we ought to give him to a zoo. And that old Mis Wilma! Mother, she wants to *stuff* him!" The tears broke forth, an Nora put aside her sewing and drew the boy toward her.

"There, there," she said, brushing the long tow hair away from h face. "No use crying about it, and getting all upset. After all, it's no so important. It's only a bird. Lots of people stuff them. And they hav them in all the zoos."

"Oh mother, you don't understand," Lee said, drawing away fro her.

"You meant to catch a coyote, didn't you? Would you have turne a coyote loose?"

"A coyote is different, mother," Lee said. "A coyote is nothing b a little old prairie wolf. And they're harmful. But this an *eagle.* O mother, they're *different!"* Lee looked beseechingly at his mother, ho ing she would understand.

Nora picked up her sewing again and said in a tired voice, "Mayb I don't know about such things. I don't see much difference. Anywa we'll have to talk it over with your father. When you get older you have time enough to make your own decisions."

Lee walked out of the room. She didn't understand. She hadn

ardly even *looked* at the eagle. None of them understood. But couldn't ey *see?*

When Morton came in for supper he was quite cheerful, and seemed eady even to forgive Lee for his attack on Craigie. As they sat down o the table he turned to Nora and said, "Brandle's driving in to Madera n the morning."

"Is he?"

"I'm going in with him," Morton said.

"What for?" Nora asked.

"Maybe we could all go," he said, ignoring the question. "Take a lay off. He's taking the small truck. We three could sit in front and ee could ride in the back with the eagle."

Lee stopped eating.

"You're taking the eagle in?" Nora asked.

"Brandle thinks we can sell him," Morton said. "Says zoos usually want them. Some fellows went through here a few years back looking for some. If they don't want it in Madera he's even willing to drive us down to Fresno. He says it's the biggest one he's ever seen; thinks we might get as much as fifty dollars for it."

"But dad," Lee began.

"Now, Lee, let's not have any more nonsense," Morton said firmly. "I didn't say we'd turn him loose. I said we'd keep him for a few days and think it over. When you're older you'll know the value of fifty dollars and you'll think twice before you let it go flying off into the air."

"Fifty dollars," Nora said. "My God, with a little more it would be enough to move us back to the city."

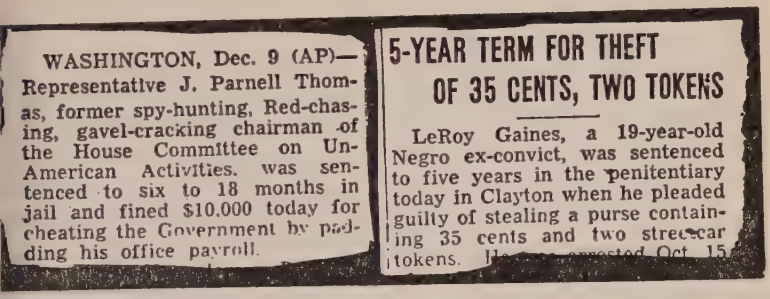
LONG after Nora and Morton were asleep Lee was awake. He had undressed and crawled into his bunk in the tent, but later he had gotten up and dressed again and walked out to the coop and looked at the eagle. It was a clear, warm night; a high moon silvered the hill behind the house and in its soft light everything seemed lovely and clean. The weatherbeaten stains of the old shack were invisible; the rusty dump cars sitting on the rusty tracks looked like little toy cars on a toy railroad in a fairyland and all the trees glimmered in the dull glow. And Lee felt sad and forlorn and lost. Through the chicken wire

he could see the great eagle standing high and proud and immobile and after looking for a long time he thought he could see the fiery gleam of its burning yellow eyes. Again he wished he could put out his hand in friendship and sympathy and stroke the golden feathers on the bird's neck and shoulders.

It was impossible now for him alone to remove the shackle from its leg. With the freedom of movement allowed the eagle by the long chain he knew he couldn't enter the wired enclosure. And as he looked at the bird through the chicken wire he thought of the narrow bars of a cage in a dusty park in a crowded city and there were curious gaping people standing before it poking sticks at it huddled on a perch in a dirty corner.

Then he thought of the eagle soaring straight into the sun and as he looked at it now he felt lonely and betrayed. Without thinking he turned and ran to his tent and in the corner he picked up his old 16-gauge shotgun. He put one shell into the full-choke barrel and when he came back to the coop he knew what he had to do, but he had to do it quickly now or never at all. He lay flat on his stomach and crept as close to the wire as he could and it was easy to aim in the light of the moon. When the gun blasted, Morton and Nora startled awake. When they came out they found Lee lying on his face sobbing hysterically and the eagle's head was blown off cleanly just where the golden feathers merged into the darker ones.

. . AND JUSTICE FOR ALL."



WASHINGTON, Dec. 9 (AP)—Representative J. Parnell Thomas, former spy-hunting, Red-chasing, gavel-cracking chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, was sentenced to six to 18 months in jail and fined $10,000 today for cheating the Government by padding his office payroll.

5-YEAR TERM FOR THEFT OF 35 CENTS, TWO TOKENS

LeRoy Gaines, a 19-year-old Negro ex-convict, was sentenced to five years in the penitentiary today in Clayton when he pleaded guilty of stealing a purse containing 35 cents and two streetcar tokens. He was arrested Oct. 15

—Both clippings from the St. Louis Post Dispatch *of Dec. 9, 1949*

ERVICE TO CIVILIZATION

"Turkey did not commit the error of entering the war against the Axis and becoming occupied by Germany so that Russia could 'liberate' ier. This service on Turkey's part, a service first to ourselves and then o the whole civilized world, is a masterpiece of Turkish foreign olicy."—*Turkish Information Office in Washington.*

MINORITY RIGHTS

"Wealth under our free capitalist system must never be a bar to olding office."—Stephen T. Early in the *New York Times Magazine.*

NGRATITUDE

"BERLIN.—Gerhart Eisler is now comfortably installed in a high governmental position of the East German Democratic Republic. Since hen, he has been at work applying the knowledge gained during his thirteen years in America against that country which did its level best to embrace him."—Dayton, Ohio, *Daily News.*

NEW WESTERN DEMOCRACY

"Tito sat in on the parliament session, called primarily to approve a 1950 budget and review the past year's expenditures. There was no discussion from the floor."—Associated Press.

We invite readers' contributions to this page. Original clippings are requested.

books in review

Ehrenburg's War Epic

THE STORM, by Ilya Ehrenburg. *Gaer Associates.* $3.50.

I SHALL never forget the tribute the partisans in the forests paid Ehrenburg. Recall the story of the hunted guerrillas who had read, re-read and worn thin the copies of *Pravda* they passed from hand to hand in the dim woods. Deprived of practically every sustenance they found the lack of cigarettes a nagging hardship and finally tore their newspapers into strips to cover the weed they smoked. But none could do that to Ehrenburg's columns. "It would be like destroying a letter from home," a bearded partisan said. "Each contains a piece of our heart."

What the dispatches did piecemeal, *The Storm* achieves as epic. Here, in this massive, swirling novel, a masterpiece of socialist realism, is the heart of Soviet man: the multitudes of plain men and women who fought and won this war.

Plain men, plain women, did I say? Yes, but Soviet men, Soviet women: Serge, Dmitri, Osip, Natasha, Raya, Valya, Lida, scores more. Man as socialist. On these pages you see them as they have proven themselves to be: an heroic human form, taller by a head with a realized dream they are defending. On these pages you see them grow as they meet the challenge of invasion, fighting as no people fought in all time.

Ehrenburg knows why, as the partisans in the woods attested. They should know: they could fight alone because they knew they were not alone. Ehrenburg's novel says the Soviet peoples fought like heroes because on the socialist sixth of the earth they are brothers. This is the new, the socialist morality. For a millenium men dreamed it: here it is true.

The story begins in the Paris of 1939 where Serge, the Soviet engineer, is invited to the home of Lancier, a French industrialist. The air is rank with treachery: Munich is in the offing. Serge's cultured acquaintances fly at him in the words we heard so often then and which we hear today. "You don't go into heated arguments about English art or German art," Serge replies. "You argue about ours, and it seems to me you are not arguing about art, but about our existence."

The conversation veered to the

mpending war and Serge replies o a veiled taunt. Perhaps, he says, know nothing about art but I now my people. They will not urrender. "If we're attacked, we hall fight, and fight so hard that t makes you frightened to think of it." This is the text of Ehrenburg's novel.

A book about war, this is a story about love. This the Philistines will never understand, no more than a Pharisee understood a carpenter who said, "Love thy neighbor." The reviewer who sneered at this novel in the New York *Times* as "characteristic propaganda" reads his sermon in the pay-check. *His* neighbor is an enemy who might get his job. How could he understand a man like Natasha Krylova's father, tireless, irrepressible Dmitri to whom anybody in trouble came. One day the Party organizer said: "Look after yourself, too, Krylov. You're no longer young. Those seeking aid should go to the proper authorities." Krylov flared up. "If I'm a Communist then absolutely everything concerns me."

Krylov's highest praise went to artless Valya, whom he proudly introduced to his wife as "the girl who stood up for her neighbor." Ehrenburg's nation is a people of neighbors.

The episodes roar across this panoramic novel like bursts from the multiple-shot Katusha. Though some are troubled by the host of characters we should realize that Ehrenburg "contains multitudes." A nation in which nearly every family lost a loved one will recognize them all. Ehrenburg can catch a soul on a page, a tragedy in a paragraph, impale an enemy on a phrase. His epigramatic prose is poetry that cuts with the satiric edge of a Heine, his passionate tenderness is an artistic expression of Stalin's dictum: people are our capital, our treasure.

Ehrenburg's is an epic of people who wanted so fiercely to live they did not fear to die. And they live in these pages. Mark Slonim of the New York *Times* was moved to observe recently that Soviet war novels, unlike ours, are "almost entirely devoted to the glorification of courage, moral stamina and self-sacrifice." They are "overwhelmingly optimistic." And why not? Life has confirmed their dream and no morning can surprise them. Ehrenburg knows the future will not arrive like a chrome-trimmed car on wheels, F.O.B.

Ehrenburg's characters hold no illusions about the postwar world. Serge says, "They shall never forgive us our victories," and others at the front see the truth as the Second Front is delayed again and again. They see that the menace of war will continue, that though Hitler may be destroyed the threat of fascism will not end with victory.

For they know that the clash of class interests continues. It is

pictured in the novel's treatment of France. Though Ehrenburg's French characters brave death in the underground, the bourgeoisie takes profits as Hitler's partners. Though the Resistance is inspired by the socialist man, the collaborators are sustained by the motives of capitalism. Throughout, the interplay of characters reveals the complex of class, national and socialist currents aswirl in the world. They give the novel the dimensions of our time.

Here, too, is the beast, the Nazi. The novel inimitably catches the awful process of a people's degradation. Keller, the anthropologist turned Superman, muses on the plains near Moscow while the panzers still roared on: "There is something in war that responds to human nature. Hitler realized it." But he who called Russia "Arctic Africa" dies in the cold at Stalingrad, a ragged scarecrow of a man, thrust from a hut by an armed Soviet woman who had a moment ago sat by candlelight reading Pushkin.

These *Uebermenchen* could quote Schopenhauer and smash a Russian child's head against a stove. They raced across the steppes in Tiger tanks to execute Soviet women and children at Babi Yar. The scene at Babi Yar is awful in its horror, magnificent in its tenderness. Woven through the plot is the moving story of the Jewish family whose mother and little grandchild are driven into the death march of thousands down Lvov Street to the ravine edge where the tommy guns sputtered. How quickly so many have forgotten!

Gentle Raya, the child's mother, learns of it at the front where she had, like many other Soviet women mastered the rifle, become a sharpshooter. Later, considerably later, when somebody said, "We'll pay them out in the same way," she shook her head disapprovingly. "No German mother will be made to feel what she had felt when she learned about Babi Yar," she thought.

Though Ehrenburg's hatred roars, it is not at a nation, but at fascism which changed people to beasts.

And the magnificent Frenchmen. The novel fuses the decisive effort of the Soviets with the resistance of the French it inspired. Here the story is dominated by Mado, who loved Serge and who became "France" in the Underground. Serge's love for Mado and hers for him is one of the most beautiful tales of the book. Mado is inspired by the Russian's zealous, eager soul, his poetic spirit, his courage. It is a keepsake for her through the dark days when death piled on death and only an heroic faith could survive the terror.

Most of the characters in the book go to their deaths, yet the story is one of undaunted optimism. You mourn them like

friends, loved ones, but their deaths inspire you to the life they sought. In Greek tragedy one knew the doom that impends; in Soviet literature one knows the triumph that will prevail.

The book closes as Vasya, a man like Serge, returns home to his wife, Natasha, and their child. They stand at the window, overlooking Moscow, as day breaks. The silence is strange, after the storm. "And suddenly both started: someone was laughing merrily—little Vaska had waked up."

So it ends—with a beginning. Serge had said: "A mother will never surrender her child, and everyone of us has a child in his heart—the future which is not only mine, not even ours—it's the whole world's." Serge dreamed of peace, of a time when man shall never again pass along the edge of Babi Yar's ravine.

JOSEPH NORTH

Report on China

CHINA SHAKES THE WORLD, by Jack Belden, *Harper. $5.00.*

A LARGE part of this book consists of vivid and important documentation on the Chinese Revolution from the Japanese surrender to the crossing of the Yangtse by the People's Armies in the spring of 1949. Other parts of the book form a curious mixture of interpretation. It is good when it paraphrases the writings and reports of the Chinese Communist leaders; it is bad to the point of absurdity when the author leans upon one of his apparently favorite writers, the French reactionary, Bertrand De Jouvenal. In between the good and the downright bad interpretation the author frequently probes the meaning of the Chinese Revolution in many of its myriad aspects with a partial success which springs from a combination of warm-hearted enthusiasm for what he has observed and a woefully scanty knowledge of Marxism.

The weaknesses of the book should not be emphasized in such a way as to turn readers away from it. The great bulk of the volume consists of valuable, first-hand and exciting material. No other American has done such a thorough and extensive reportorial job on the last two years of this revolution which has changed the face of the world. Mr. Belden is an excellent observer who frequently speaks with warmth and passion.

He had an unusual background for writing *China Shakes the World.* He had been in China for several years before World War II and had acquired, among other things, a fair knowledge of the language. He had been in Peiping when it was under Japanese occupation, long before Pearl

Harbor, and had left that city in 1939 with Colonel Joseph Stilwell. He had written the well known story of the Burma campaign, *Retreat With Stilwell,* and had himself been a combatant. Now, for this story, he returned to China at the end of 1946, just at the close of the period covered by the mission of General Marshall.

He travelled extensively in liberated territory in North China, visited Manchuria to witness the Kuomintang debacle, journeyed to Formosa to get the story of Chiang Kai-shek's misrule. He was in Nanking before it was liberated. But his articles and dispatches were turned down by the leading magazines and newspapers in America. The truth about China could not get through Truman Doctrine censorship.

Of course some Americans—though far too few—are by now familiar, in a general way, with how the people of China rose up to expel the American interventionists, to bring to utter defeat Chiang Kai-shek's feudal bureaucrats, to overthrow landlordism, to free the land, the people and the nation. In Belden's book they will find a great deal of new first-hand material which will enrich their understanding.

The treatment of several questions deserves special mention. The effect of the revolution upon the position of women is dramatically brought out in an extraordinarily interesting account of one woman's life—"Gold Flower's Story." "Why a General Revolts" is the personal account of one of Feng Yu-hsiang's former generals who goes over to the people's armies to escape the rottenness of service under Chiang Kai-shek. There is an illuminating analysis of the connection between Chiang's clique and the most reactionary elements in America in a chapter called "The Republican Party and Chiang Kai-shek." The chapters on Formosa, the "Loot of Manchuria," and the Kuomintang's alienation of the intellectuals contribute documentation not easily to be found elsewhere.

Washington's interventionist policy in China is excoriated throughout the book; and the author, it should be added, at several points in the book takes healthy swings at the domestic counterparts of this policy, namely Red-baiting and witch-hunts. Unfortunately, Belden's book itself is marred by Red-baiting, by unfamiliarity with Marxist writings and with the attitude taken throughout this period by American Communists and other progressives.

At one point Belden says that "the professional friends of the Chinese Communists"—a loaded expression itself—seemed to believe "that a Red soldier merely had to appear in a Chinese village and the peasants would rise up and shout, 'Long live the Commu-

nist Party.'" Naturally, no friend of the Chinese Revolution and certainly no Communist ever believed anything so ridiculous.

In discussing China's revolution in contrast to Russia's, the author refers to Mao Tse-tung as "switching tactics from proletarian dictatorship to a union of all groups" and adds that "that horrified orthodox Marxists." At another point Belden states that "The movement led by the Chinese Communists has meant different things to different people." True enough. But the next sentence consists of this fabrication: "Orthodox Marxists have called it reformism"! Again: "Thus the Chinese Revolution, contrary to Marxist Doctrine, has not dismembered state power. . . ." Once more: "Dependence on Marxist philosophy instead of concrete experience, on intelligence instead of touch, theory instead of practice, could conceivably lead the Reds into errors of far greater magnitude than those made by Chiang Kai-shek." And listen to this one: "The power of the Chinese Revolution was not built by generalized philosophy but by scattered revolutionaries working on their own initiative and dealing with concrete situations." To cap this pile of nonsense Belden misquotes Mao to the effect that theory is useless.

There is a great deal of such dangerously misleading material in Belden's book. These distortions can confuse the unwary reader and add to the carefully nurtured imperialist myth that Chinese Communism has a special nature that is fundamentally different from Marxism, and that perhaps with careful plotting Wall Street can produce another Titoism.

The gross errors made by Belden in interpreting the Chinese Revolution are all the more extraordinary because of the painstaking care he employs in recording what he saw. This accurate observation, fortunately, makes up the bulk of his book. And what he reports is important for Americans to read.

FREDERICK V. FIELD

The Young Gorky

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MAXIM GORKY, translated by Isidor Schneider. *Citadel.* $3.75.

THIS is the first American one-volume edition of Gorky's famous autobiographical trilogy—*My Childhood, In the World,* and *My Universities.* Published separately here a generation ago these works were loosely edited and hastily translated; they have long been out of print. This new edition, therefore, with the full text restored in a superbly fluid and sympathetic translation by Isidor Schneider, in effect opens the door to a modern classic. And this calls for a celebration, as I know you

will agree when you read the book.

For read it one must if one is to understand and properly measure the strength of the greatest figure in world literature during the past half century. After reading the trilogy I can appreciate anew the joy with which Jack London greeted Gorky's novel *Foma Gordeyev* when it appeared here in 1901. London spoke of a writer with clenched fist who brought not airy, beguiling romances but big, brutal realities; of an ardent, passionate man who raised the cry of the miserable and the despised; of a Russian on whose shoulders the mantle of Tolstoy and Turgenev had fallen. "It is not a pretty book," wrote Jack London, "but it is a masterful interrogation of life—not of life universal, but of life particular, the social life of today."

Much the same could be said of Gorky's recollections of his childhood and youth. Truth outweighs pity, he reminds himself when, wounded by horrible memories, he has an impulse to dispute and disown the reality. When he recalls the daily cruelty of existence he experienced, whether in his own loneliness and humiliation or in the brutal poverty, ignorance, stagnation he saw around him, he is led to wonder if there is any point in recording "such atrocious memories of our bestial Russian life." But he repeatedly assures himself in *My Childhood* that "this is no mere autobiographical passage; it is a picture of the stifling, pent-in atmosphere in which the ordinary Russian lived—indeed, lives to this day."

Gorky wrote this, of course, in the days before the Socialist Revolution (*My Childhood* appeared in 1914) and prophetically he adds a further reason for recording the loathsome facts which must be uprooted from the memories and souls of the Russian people:

> "Repellent though [these brutalities] are, and though many beautiful souls are burdened and crushed to death by them, yet the Russian remains spiritually so young and sound that he can and does transcend them. In this extraordinary Russian life not only does our animal self thrive and fatten, but along with it, and triumphant despite it, grows a brilliant, creative, wholesome human type which encourages us to seek our regeneration, a future of peace and human living for all."

The heart of Gorky's autobiography is precisely this insistence on facing the most foul truths of people's lives distorted by capitalism, the beatings, the brawls, the boredom, even "the savagery of one's own tribe," and at the same time the searching out of the submerged strength in people, the fist that is there to be raised. Learning in a hard school—in saloons, workshops of icon painters, bakeries, brothels, boats on the Volga—he can never prettify the lives he treats so vividly that we come to know intimately scores

of individuals through this book. The alleged hard-boiledness of so many American writers seems milksopian next to Gorky. Where they with flexed muscles submit to evil, he with angry heart fights it. And where the decadents removed from any real contact with the masses, deride and degrade man, Gorky finds in "the lower depths" optimism about the future. While he sees that the Populist intelligentsia abstractly and wrongly idealize "the people" he feels that they are at least on the right track in their aspiration for a better world.

Throughout there is in him a difficult struggle. There are moods of overwhelming disgust that lead to a desire for withdrawal and submission. He even attempts to take his own life. But an underlying strength of opposition, of restless curiosity, of desire to rebel and to change life asserts itself. And this too is born of other people. His grandmother, particularly, certainly the most arresting character of this painful odyssey, is a source of strength—this old woman who takes a pinch of snuff before telling her marvellous stories and singing her folk songs.

"On this earth, darling, you have to learn from your own experiences," she tells the orphaned boy. "If you can't learn from yourself, you can't learn from anybody." The scene in which she encourages the boy to take the ruble bet that he will sleep all night on a coffin which contains a supposedly ambulatory corpse is a delightful example of her worldliness which is interwoven with so much superstition. She is a novel in herself. As indeed is grandpa with his cruel God, his dole of weekly whippings and his class philosophy that "the sturgeon keeps apart from the catfish."

But it is as hopeless to attempt to deal with the rich portraiture of the book as it is to give an adequate sense of the magnificent psychological insights of Gorky represented by such a quietly reverberating remark as this: "I felt sorry for mama when she beat me, because she seldom had cause." And one would wish to speak too of the fascinating interweaving of the meaning of books in young Gorky's life, of his relation with his first wife Olga, of his beginnings in the revolutionary movement, of his rejection of religion and the beginnings of his literary career as sketched at the end of *My Universities*. But this work, with its strains of lyricism, its nobility of spirit, its vividness of imagery can only feebly be introduced. It must be read as a consummate work of art that reveals the sources of Gorky's revolutionary energy, his hatred of capitalism, his passionate devotion to the Soviet Union.

Without knowing the Russian, I am enthusiastic about Isidor Schneider's translation, which

seems wholly lifelike and which has range and flexibility, capturing both the colloquial speech and the more formal style in a finely textured prose. There are occasions, I feel, when the colloquial overspills into a disturbingly anachronistic slang like "night spot" and "scram," but the brightness of the speech is all to the good. Also, I believe that while it is wise to drop the diminutives and middle patronymic that confuse the American reader, the decision to give English equivalents for Russian first names is not sound. To translate Andrei as Andrew is not only unnecessary from the point of view of avoiding confusion, but, more seriously, destroys the integrity of non-Anglo-Saxon names, which in literature as in life should be maintained in American usage. These are of course minor quarrels with a distinguished translation of Gorky's wonderful work.

SAMUEL SILLEN

Hellenic Heritage

STUDIES IN ANCIENT GREEK SOCIETY: The Prehistoric Aegean, by George Thomson. *International.* $10.00.

IN HIS preface George Thomson, professor of Greek at Birmingham University and member of the Central Committee of the British Communist Party, tells us what impelled him to undertake this series of studies. The Hellenic heritage had, in the great days of humanism, been a source of hope for the future. Today Greek studies have become separated from the forces of human progress and serve largely as a pastime for a leisured minority. These studies can be rescued from the Mandarins and restored as a vitalizing cultural force through a Marxist re-interpretation. This is the task which Prof. Thomson has set himself.

The present volume, as its title indicates, is a necessary forerunner of others that will deal more directly with the written records. It is also unquestionably the most difficult to write because of the nature of the evidence from which conclusions have been drawn. This evidence may be classified under three principal headings: archaeology, linguistics and anthropology. These fields have been cultivated by specialists who have drifted farther and farther from one another with the result that individual contributions appear to have little or no relation to a unified picture.

Thomson aims to show that the unity and continuity of human progress is a real thing. The whole story, he believes, must be told from beginning to end; this "would not only reveal the present as a continuation of the past —it would lift the veil on the future. There's the rub."

He is redirecting scholarship along the course of bold, progressive discovery begun in an earlier

period of capitalism. Thus, in the first division of his work, he re-examines Lewis Morgan's *Ancient Society* both in the light of the evidence Morgan had and of the subsequent advances in knowledge. He concludes that Morgan was very much on the right track and that his pioneering work should still serve as the starting point for investigation.

In Part Three, "Communism," he writes:

"Marxists are sometimes accused of distorting facts to fit their principles. The shoe is really on the other foot. It is a habit of the bourgeoisie to charge their opponents with their own delinquencies. . . . In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the comparative method, without which modern science would not exist, was applied by bourgeois historians with magnificent results; but in recent times, with far more material available, they have abandoned it. Confronted with the growing power of socialism, they have retreated from one position after another which their predecessors had gained."

This is clearly brought out in the discussion of the development of private property from the communism of tribal life. Any reader of the Homeric poems, encountering those passages that deal with land tenure, cannot fail to realize that we have here something entirely different from modern property relations in land. Moreover, as Vinogradoff wrote in 1905, "There seems to be hardly any-

thing more certain in the domain of archaic law than the theory that the soil was originally owned by groups and not by individuals, and that its individual appropriation is the result of a slow process of development." Despite this, says Thomson, the problem of early Greek land tenure is settled in the *Cambridge Ancient History* in one sentence: "The Greeks had long outlived the stage, if it ever existed, when land had been owned in common by the clan and private ownership was unknown."

Thomson then proceeds to show how an examination of the evidence employing Marxist theory and the comparative method not only makes clear the land question in Homer, but also illumines many points in later history. That is, individual property in land was preceded by a stage in which land was allotted not for ownership but for use, and was periodically redistributed. If this was so, and his argument is very convincing, then the demand of the Attic peasants in the time of Solon for redistribution of the land was not, as it is usually presented, "a revolutionary one—a subversive challenge to the sacred rights of private property." It was rather "a protest against the appropriation of the land, which was violating the sanctity of the old communal rights."

Equally illuminating is Thomson's treatment of the origin of the kingship that we see reflected in the later period of the Homeric age. He points out how the adoption of a pastoral economy, which preceded the appearance of the Greek tribes in the Aegean, had important consequences. "Game is perishable; land is immovable; but livestock is easy to seize, divide or exchange. Being necessarily nomadic, pastoral tribes are quick to augment their wealth by cattle-raids and war; and since warfare is waged by the men, it re-enforces the tendency inherent in their economy for wealth to concentrate in their hands."

Thus we have at once, within the tribal framework, the ground prepared for the development of private property through the distribution of surplus seized in war, the strengthening of a patriarchal control which will survive contact with the matriarchal centers that the Greeks overcame in the Aegean, and the emergence of a kingship such as that of Agamemnon in Homer, a king whose power in such matters as control and distribution of booty is secondary to that of the people (the tribes) who make the awards. For "war demands unitary leadership and hence in these tribes kingship is militarized. After a successful campaign the king and his subordinate chiefs are rewarded with the lion's share of the spoils . . . and the wealth thus accumulated promotes inequalities that shake the whole fabric of society beginning at the top."

Students of literature, especially those acquainted with Thomson's *Marxism and Poetry*, will be delighted to find here a fuller treatment of poetry, especially epic poetry. This section is remarkably rich in content and insight.

Professor Thomson's scholarly integrity and thoroughness are conspicuous throughout the book. He does not, however, make any claim to having said the last word; he is fully aware of the vast territory to be covered and the extent of the problems yet to be solved. This book will undoubtedly be a great impetus to further research.

JOHN BRIDGE

Off Key

MUSIC OF THE NATION, by B. H. Haggin. *William Sloane Associates. $5.00.*

B. H. HAGGIN takes as his guide to music criticism a quotation from George Bernard Shaw: "His hand is against every man's, and every man's hand against his." To Shaw, writing in the 1880's, this may have seemed a declaration of independence. In Haggin's hands, only the reactionary implications of this motto remain—the acceptance of the jungle law of bourgeois competition. Weekly, in the pages of

The Nation, Haggin rides out like St. George to do battle against such imposing enemies of human culture as the hammy actors on the Metropolitan opera stage, the singers of pseudo-classical numbers on the General Electric hour. He announces that Horowitz plays Chopin too fast and Heifetz' violin sobs too much. Now a selection of these teapot tempests is offered in book form, only serving to confirm the low level to which music criticism has sunk in our country.

Criticism today functions as a consumer's guide, telling the public which performances are worth five dollars and which only fifty cents. It appraises over and over again the standard works of the past century as they are offered in new and fancy performer packages. It is exactly this debased role that Haggin the "militant" accepts. The impression he gives of carrying on a veritable revolution in the music world is that where the majority of the public and critics approve of Wagner and Brahms, Haggin flees to Mozart and Haydn, about whom he writes as if they were his personal discovery; where the majority applaud Hoffman and Horowitz, Haggin bows before Landowska, Aitken and Rupp.

When he comes up against contemporary composition, Haggin writes as if it were a deliberate conspiracy to offend his ears. His descriptions of the works of composers like Bartok and Copland are an overworked, incessant use of such words as "hideous," "tripe," "repellent," "rubbish," "trash." Even when music deserves to be exposed as incompetent, or as triviality masked as profundity, such vituperation gives the reader no inkling of what goes on in the music, expressing only Haggin's feelings of destructiveness towards it.

Our age has produced, for the most part, an unheroic music, and criticism must beware of idolatry. But one of the tasks of criticism must be to show an understanding of the obstacles with which so many composers of talent and genius wrestled, frequently wrecking themselves. In the case of American music, where the composer has no chance to develop himself as a creative artist, to make a living by composition, to serve the masses of people, and where so many have accordingly accepted the small role alotted to them, Haggin scornfully denies even the existence of a material problem.

This great opponent of market-place standards defends the callousness of the market-place system, finding abundance in the miserable scraps of existing patronage. "And it is not for the lack of occasion to exercise their talents—occasions provided by Guggenheim fellowships, by commissions of orchestras and other such organizations, by prize com-

petitions and recently by government employment—that our composers are not producing music comparable with the great music of the past. It is for lack of what it takes in musical and personal resources to produce such music."

Ironically, Haggin's theory of music as an art is exactly the formalist one, the search for the secrets of art solely in the arrangements of its materials, which has caused many composers to produce the music he finds offensive. He repeats incessantly his favorite phrase, "the eloquence of pure form," which explains nothing because it has no meaning. He will discuss only "eloquence" and not what is communicated through this "eloquence."

The result is that he cannot even recognize great form when it is under his nose, for just as a living form can be created only through a wrestling with real experiences and ideas, so it can only be recognized through a sympathy with these experiences and ideas. Such an abstraction of "form" is always a worship of the forms of the past, out of their context, and it prevents the critic from understanding even the past.

Haggin's sole ideas about past music consist in carrying on a battle against the idea that there is some connection between this art and the events and struggles of its times. "To be amused by biographical detail is not to be sensitive to the eloquence of pure

form." This is a small-minded approach which regards biography as a record only of the coffeehouses in which a composer drank. But a great man's life is itself carved out of his reactions to the deepest problems of his age. The actions of his life and the products of his mind are one, each throwing light upon the other. Art introduces us to great human beings, to a world becoming conscious of itself, not to a collection of pretty objects on a museum shelf.

This collection of Haggins' *Nation* reviews throws no light on any problem of music, past or present, but gives us only a display of ill-temper.

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

Birth of a System

AMERICAN CAPITALISM: 1607-1800, by Anna Rochester. *International. $1.50 (cloth); 75¢ (paper).*

IN HER new work, Miss Rochester offers a rich interpretation of the colonial and Revolutionary periods, during which the forms of American capitalist development were generated.

The book is divided into two sections, so planned as to place emphasis on important trends and at the same time maintain a clear chronological sequence. The outstanding feature of the study is the

rst part, a scholarly essay on the rigin of mercantile capitalism in urope, especially in England. Miss ochester indicates how the rowth in productive forces was eflected in the spheres of the tate, land ownership, commerce, ndustry as well as in the social rder in general; and how the ettlement of America was a prodıct of these developments.

Few have described so adequately and sympathetically the contributions of the Indians to the colonists in their struggles for survival and growth. The author also presents a clear account of the role played by forced labor in our early history and the importance in the accumulation of capital of such varied practices as slave-trading, piracy and appropriation of the land. In a notable treatment of the land question, Miss Rochester shows how the great estates were formed and how landlord and tenant holdings emerged; how the large landlord, the speculator, the tenant soon became familiar figures on the economic scene along with the small farmer.

Capitalist economy did not mature here within an old feudal order even though feudal remnants in land tenure and inheritance were introduced in many of the colonies. Miss Rochester correctly indicates that the key to many of the conflicts of the period lies in the efforts of the British Government, through the mercantilist system, to restrict the economic development of the colonial people and the reaction to this policy. She also explains the nature of the class struggle within the colonies through a vivid summary of the grievances of the masses in the back country and in the towns against the colonial aristocracy.

The second section of the book shows the close connection between economic developments in the years before the Revolution and the events that follow. The revolt of the American nation was more than a struggle for self government. It was a prelude to western expansion and economic growth, both impossible under continued British domination, especially after 1763. The treatment of the Revolutionary War is somewhat episodic, but there is a valuable synthesis of the post-revolutionary period and of the years immediately following the formation of the Federal Government in 1789.

I found the treatment of the nature of commodity production somewhat confusing, and I would have welcomed some examination of Calvinistic influence as well as a more extended treatment of the Loyalists during the war. But in a short work it was undoubtedly difficult to treat all facets of the story. Both the general reader and the student will find this compact work highly rewarding.

JACK FONER

Three From Abroad

by WARREN MILLER

IT WAS in the immediate pre-war period that England made its most significant contribution to the development of the cinema. This was the establishment of documentary film units, supported by certain government offices, under the direction of John Grierson. Films like *Song of Ceylon* and *Night Mail,* short documentaries produced for the Empire Marketing Board and the Post Office, created a tradition that influenced the best of the British feature film makers. The finest British films have not been those monsters of prestige like *Red Shoes* and *Hamlet,* but the quiet little pictures like *Brief Encounter, I Know Where I'm Going,* and several others in this genre. Such pictures, through modification and re-emphasis of the documentary tradition, brought a new vigor and freshness to British cinema.

Since the war's end, the interest in documentary waned, the Rank empire grew, and the quality of British films declined. The documentary discipline gave way to the pretentious, the false, the fake-Hollywood trash of such recent imports as *Blue Lagoon* and *Christopher Columbus.*

But along with these mediocre motion pictures has come a film, produced at the end of the war and, for some reason, not shown here till now, that is as moving a film document as we have seen for some time. It is *Fame Is the Spur,* produced and directed by the Boulting Brothers, with Michael Redgrave playing the leading role. Adapted from the novel by Howard Spring, it is the story of a Labor Party politician, from his first speech in a half-filled church to his final speech when he has been knighted, an elder statesman, a man "above" party. It has been compared to the career of Ramsay MacDonald; actually it is the story of many a Social-Democrat leader. This is a study of betrayal and renegacy, of

a man tainted and destroyed by the bourgeois notion of personal glory: fame, not the aspirations of the working class, was his spur.

It is also the story of the first Labor government; and it is the first film that, to my knowledge, treats seriously the Suffragette movement. Some of the most powerful and moving scenes in the film are of the women rising at political meetings to ask the speaker how he stands on women's rights, and it shows the well-dressed gentlemen slapping these women, and the women in jail on hunger strikes. The feeling of the pre-war years is made exceedingly, frighteningly vivid by Boulting's use of newsreel clips: Chamberlain leaving 10 Downing Street, the Tories invited to join the Labor cabinet.

Michael Redgrave has now revealed himself as one of the great actors to have come out of the film medium. In his first speech, as a young man, in the most subtle way, he permits the film audience to see his falsity: he is too perfect, every effect is calculated. And, as an old man, utterly corrupted, his speech falters, he mumbles, begins to talk gibberish. At every turn we are reminded of one or another of that long and infamous list of politicians and labor leaders who have deserted their strength, which is the working class, to become gibbering old men without the strength of age and the youthful and renewing vigor of struggle.

VITTORIO DE SICA, director of *Shoe Shine* and the recent magnificent *Bicycle Thief,* is the foremost director among that group of left-wing film makers that contains Italy's finest film talents. Examples of their work seen here have been Vergano's *Outcry* and De Sanctis' *Tragic Hunt.* Yet to be seen is the work of Lattuada and Visconti, who, along with De Sica, were honored at the Fourth International Film Festival recently held in Czechoslovakia.

The Bicycle Thief, like most of the new Italian films, tells a simple story in a straightforward way, uncluttered by sub-plots and such conventions as "love interest." It is the story of a worker whose bicycle is stolen. Without the bicycle his job is lost, without the job his family will starve. He spends Sunday with his little boy, going about Rome, looking for the bicycle so that he can go to work on Monday morning. He does not find it, tries to steal one, fails. On this slim structure, De Sica constructs a great film.

It is made out of human compassion, a profound political understanding and flawless taste. The fact that De Sica used a worker to play a worker, a slum boy to play a slum boy, does not itself insure against falsity; it is, throughout, De Sica's sure hand and unfailing eye that make every moment genuine, every emotion real. There is hardly an incident in the film that is not a political

statement; this could not be otherwise since the film is rooted in working-class experience. And it is expressed with a quality of understatement, sometimes in the form of comedy, that makes it all the more powerful.

When the family pawns its sheets in order to buy back the bicycle needed for the job, we see that they are not isolated in their poverty but that, rather, their condition is the common one. And we are shown this solely by the camera, not a word of explanation is needed and none is used. The clerk takes the bundle of sheets to a rack containing similar articles; he begins to climb up this rack and the camera moves with him, higher and higher, until we see that an entire wall, stories high, is packed with the bedding of thousands of families.

There is a scene in a church mission that is, at the same time, high comedy and a ruthless denunciation of such religious charities; the men who have come for a bowl of soup are locked in for prayers, and society matrons pass out hymnals to the starving men. Seeking shelter in a shallow archway during a shower, the father and the boy are surrounded by a group of chattering, young, effeminate German seminarists: the invaders return as priests.

Indeed, this film is so rich in detail, in insight into human relationships, that there is hardly a minute's length of film that could not be chosen as an example of De Sica's mastery. Like all artists of his kind, he is difficult to write about because his artistry lies in his apparent artlessness, the simplicity of his technique. Actually, of course, it is not—it never is—simple; a great deal of thought, planning, and complex arrangements of structure and rhythm have produced the effect of simplicity.

Essentially, De Sica's aim was to show how a dying and savage social system has, quite literally, forced an honest worker to commit a crime. De Sica has not chosen to answer the worker's problem, but the case against the social system is so powerfully presented that a demand is made of the audience to judge the true nature of such a society. This is not, as some would have it, an evasion of the problem, but a projection of the problem into the lives of the audience, where it will be worked out in living terms. This, I believe, is a high form of revolutionary art.

THE grand tradition of Soviet cinema is being carried forward in the Soviet Union by such figures as Donskoi, Ermler, Gerasimov, Dovchenko and others. Sergei Gerasimov, when he came to this country a year ago to the Waldorf peace conference, brought with him a new film, *Young Guard*. It was based on a novel by Fadeyev; the score was written

by Shostakovich. In French and British film publications one read such exciting reports of this film that its showing was awaited here with great expectation. After many viewings by the Customs officials, it has finally been released. Because of the economic considerations of programming, over a third of this three-and-a-half-hour film has had to be cut. What remains, therefore, cannot be fully judged as a film. But the impressive, powerful, though disconnected, sequences give more than sufficient evidence that, in its entirety, it is a magnificent motion picture.

It deals with the Young Guard of Krasnadon, an underground youth organization that fought the German invader. Even in its truncated form it is a moving, tremendous song to the heroism of the young men and women of the Komsomol. There are scenes of marvellous humor, of intense, harrowing drama.

For an American, the attitude toward violence is especially striking. Not for a moment does the film descend to the level of pure adventure, of what Hollywood calls "spine-tingling" suspense. This is not to say that it has not moments of tenseness, of excitement. But for these young people war is not a game; there are no glib comparisons, in official O.W.I. prose, to football; nor is the act of killing ever a source of pride.

One of the most intense and revealing sequences is an assault on a lightly guarded prison enclosure by a Young Guard detachment. A German soldier is standing guard over a group of Red Army prisoners; a thin, scared boy crawls up behind the soldier. He has a knife, he is to kill the German. But he cannot bring himself to plunge the knife into the German's back. He waits until the German turns around, until the moment of killing has been forced upon him.

Although his subject matter is totally different from De Sica's, Gerassimov's methods are much the same. There is that same feeling of artlessness, of a consummate skill for never permitting the mechanics of cinema to obtrude, a conscious effort to conceal the directorial hand. As with *Bicycle Thief,* the impact of the film is not a sudden one, but grows: days later, a scene, a gesture, will come to mind. It is the mark of great art. Those critics who praised De Sica's film and dismissed *Young Guard* are, of course, oblivious to these similarities and the political, ideological, considerations from which they spring. Somehow it became fashionable to like *Bicycle Thief,* and the bourgeois critics are concerned with fashion, not with art.

Gerasimov's film, even though it is of a country at war, nevertheless leaves you with a feeling that for two hours you have been living in a world of sanity and decency.

theatre

NOT MUCH ADO

by ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

ON THE one new play at the end of 1949 that faced up to social reality my report must be a mournful post-mortem. *How Long Till Summer* by Sarett and Herbert Rudley had an idea but it was treated like a gimmick. Potentialities for a moving drama of the frustrations and fears imposed on the Negro citizens of America oozed away in unsure understanding and weak characterization.

The principals of *How Long Till Summer* were a Negro lawyer in a Northern city who has just been nominated to Congress on a reform platform; his wife whose devotion and love is based largely on her faith in him as an uncompromising leader of their people; and their son for whom they are determined to make the world a little safer and more decent to live in than they found it.

The drama turns on the sudden exposure to the wife that her crusader husband is actually in the pay of the very racketeer he is supposed to be fighting and that his campaign is shadow boxing. Actually he is being sent to Congress to forestall a congressional investigation of his client's firetrap housing in which many of his people have lost their lives. He has chosen a way to make the world better for his son, but for his son alone and heedless of the rest of his people.

But on that very day his son has had his first and inevitable experience with Negro oppression. He has been brutally humiliated and maltreated by the father of his white playmate who has been forbidden ever to see him again. In his depression he shuns even his parents and goes to bed without his supper, seeking to burrow into sleep away from the terrifying new thing that has come into his life. But sleep does not protect; it brings only nightmare revivals of the experience. In his mounting terror he reaches a pitch where his very hysteria communicates what has happened to him. Then it becomes tragically clear to the father that the only world that will be safer for his son to live in is one in which it will be safer for his whole people to live in; and he renounces his opportunist course.

This synopsis suggests a clari

that the actual movement of the play lacks. The basic conflict is submerged in unconvincing minor conflicts of soul and is made banal, in addition, by the cliché of the wife as the exteriorized conscience. And the plot dissolves in final absurdity by a scene with a philosophic goon that strains all credulity. Further, the child's hysteria was so disproportionately developed and in such literal dream symbolism as to approach bathos and, at times, even caricature.

Josh White's son brought an appealing wistfulness to his part as the boy in the play, but the adults in the cast were unable to overcome the confusion in the script, to embody a reality that was lacking in the writing.

There is little to say of the rest of the year's-end output. Our cold war atmosphere seems to require a great deal of compensating animal heat, judging from the products of all of America's entertainment industries. Broadway has seldom been more blatantly lascivious. December added *Clutterbuck* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* to the revived *Diamond Lil,* which cosily reduces the world to the hemispheres on Mae West; and the French Ballet, which emphasizes what is most communicable in Marshall Plan culture.

Clutterbuck chats away an evening over the devices and delights of adultery and the lines are quite

smart. Ruth Matteson, Ruth Ford, Claire Carleton, Arthur Margetson and Tom Helmore contribute appropriately seductive nuances of gesture and voice. And not even the ghost of an idea or an emotion intrudes.

And while *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* devotes itself to demonstrating that "diamonds are a girl's best friend," it also has Carol Channing and Anita Alvarez. The former manages expressions like a gargoyle's on a singularly handsome though oversized blonde face and postures like a graceful clown's with a singularly shapely figure. In her amiable and logical practice of the profession,

gold-digging becomes a sound business and certainly agreeable to watch. And Miss Alvarez' dancing manages to be muscular but graceful and subtle, all at the same time. When these two performers are off the stage, however, the proceedings sink to the level of an alley-cat serenade and parlor entertainer antics.

For any substantial artistic gratification those who went to dance recitals were better served than those who tried the theatre. Isadora Bennett brought together some of the best of the modern dancers in a series of remarkably impressive programs. Apart from the beautiful dancing of nearly all the performers, who have a freedom and sweep of a sort lacking in the classical ballet, a number of the dancers, notably Sophie Maslow and her troupe, revived the identification with the people that was the great quality, unfortunately now almost lost, of the proletarian Thirties.

Equally memorable was Uday Shankar's troupe of Hindu dancers and musicians. This troupe reminded me of performances given in Moscow by dancers and musicians from the central Asian Soviet Republics. In its repertory classical offerings are similarly enriched with popular folk dance and music. A beauty deeper than the exotics of Oriental costuming and cadences is made accessible to Americans by this notable troupe.

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