OCTOBER
1950

# masses & MAINSTREAM

*this Issue:*

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Martha Dodd

Howard Fast

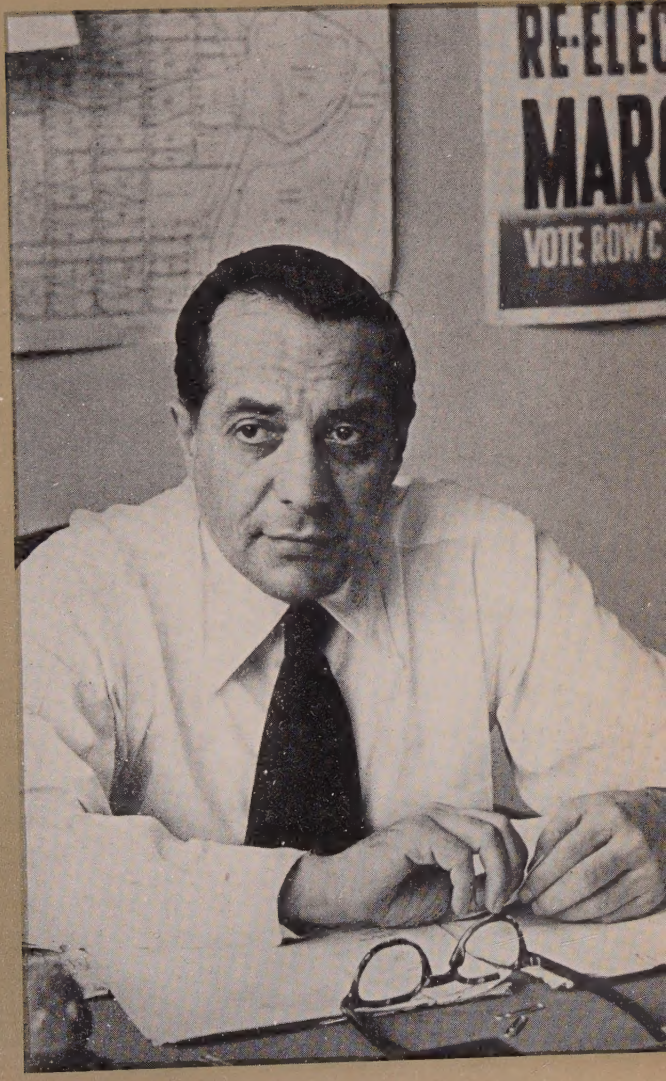
V. J. Jerome

Margaret Maltz

to Marcantonio

Joseph North

Samuel Sillen




"Florence," A One-Act Drama by ALICE CHILDRESS

# *"Tell Themselves in Time"*

I SAY we had best look our times and lands searchingly in the face, like a physician diagnosing some deep disease. Never was there, perhaps, more hollowness at heart than at present, and here in the United States. Genuine belief seems to have left us. The underlying principles of the States are not honestly believed in, (for all this hectic glow, and these melodramatic screamings,) nor is humanity itself believed in. What penetrating eye does not everywhere see through the mask? The spectacle is appalling. We live in an atmosphere of hypocrisy throughout. . . .

The depravity of the business classes of our country is not less than has been supposed, but infinitely greater. The official services of America, national, state, and municipal, in all their branches and departments, except the judiciary, are saturated in corruption, bribery, falsehood, maladministration; and the judiciary is tainted. The great cities reek with respectable as much as non-respectable robbery and scoundrelism. . . .

True, indeed, behind this fantastic farce, enacted on the visible stage of society, solid things and stupendous labors are to be discovered, existing crudely and going on in the background, to advance and tell themselves in time. Yet the truths are none the less terrible. . . . In vain do we march with unprecedented strides to empire so colossal, outvying the antique, beyond Alexander's, beyond the proudest sway of Rome. . . . It is as if we were somehow being endowed with a vast and more thoroughly-appointed body, and then left with little or no soul.

Walt Whitman, *Democratic Vistas* (1871).

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# *AMONG THE CONTRIBUTORS*

ALICE CHILDRESS is a Negro actress and playwright. She is a member of the board of New Playwrights, which will soon produce her one-act drama which appears in this issue.

MARTHA DODD is the author of a novel, *Sowing the Wind*, and of a book, *Through Embassy Eyes*, dealing with her observations in Hitler Germany as the daughter of the late Ambassador William E. Dodd.

V. J. JEROME, editor of *Political Affairs*, has published a number of Marxist studies, including *Intellectuals and the War* and *Culture in a Changing World*.

JOSEPH NORTH is at work on a book of which "In the Golden Land" will form a section.

A. E. SHANDELING is a woman writer living in California.

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COVER: Congressman Vito Marcantonio, American Labor Party candidate for re-election, in his campaign headquarters. Photo by John McKenzie.

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# OUR TIME by Samuel Sillen

Bury the Living
They Have Made Faces
Not Since Shakespeare

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## Bury the Living

A CHARACTERISTIC symptom of the Atomic Crusade for Freedom is the haste with which certain intellectuals separate themselves from convictions that, in milder times, they were rash enough to profess. Repentance is the fashion—as it is the price—of the hour. Writers who once prided themselves on their non-conformity (no "uniforms" for *them*) beg forgiveness for the innocent abandon with which they sowed wild oats. Crowding each other in the confessional press, they breathlessly advertise the propriety of their present mood.

Thus, playwright Irwin Shaw has shrewdly anticipated J. Edgar Hoover by means of a simple expedient. He has lit his own bonfire and, with true anti-Communist fervor, has fed the flames with his anti-war drama *Bury the Dead.* Nobody, "here or abroad," will henceforth be allowed to show this play, Shaw promises the Un-American Committee and the F.B.I. through the letter columns of the New York *Times.* Please understand, he beseeches the new arbiters of his literary conscience, that *Bury the Dead* was written in "the emotional climate of the Nineteen Thirties." Weren't we all naive then—even, as Shaw astutely recalls, such irreproachable warmongers as Robert Sherwood and Sidney Kingsley? We thought war had something to do with bankers and munitions-makers; we succumbed to the absurd illusion that young people have a right to live out their lives; and so we wrote anti-war plays filled with the indignation of our lyrical youth.

But now we are all grown up and we realize, says Shaw, that we must "balk" the Russians. Endlessly ingenious are the devices for "balking" the Russians. The manufacturers of Jell-O have dealt a crippling blow

to the Kremlin by removing actress Jean Muir from their "Henry Aldrich" television program. Victor and Columbia have torpedoed the Stockholm Peace Appeal by recalling all their recordings of "Old Man Atom." The Monogram Studio has foiled the Communists by shelving, in the nick of time, a film about the Five Nations' peacemaker, Hiawatha. If Secretary of the Navy Matthews can be an "aggressor for peace" and Congressman Rankin a "lyncher for liberty," why can't playwright Irwin Shaw be a "bookburner for democracy"?

At the risk of betraying my country, I peeked into *Bury the Dead.* As I read on behind the drawn shades I began to understand Shaw's embarrassment. His own untutored observations of American capitalism in 1936 led him to make statements which are today deemed a criminal offense. In the midst of war his newspaper editor says that the people "have a right to know nothing," and his patriotic banker exclaims "DuPont's passed a dividend!" and his pompous general hypocritically proclaims "We are fighting this war to protect the foundations of the homes of America!" Did these characters grow out of an "emotional climate"? Were they invented by Communists? The fact is that to "balk" the Russians Shaw must wipe out some fairly obvious truths about American society today, truths about people like Martha Webster who on eighteen-fifty a week was "afraid of everything—of the landlord, the gas company, scared stiff every month that I was goin' to have a baby!" and people like Private Driscoll who rises from the dead to exclaim: "I got things to say to people now—to the people who nurse big machines and the people who swing shovels and the people whose babies die with big bellies and rotten bones. I got things to say to the people who leave their lives behind them and pick up guns to fight in somebody else's war."

## They Have Made Faces

IN THE "emotional climate" of the thirties other liberal intellectuals were able to use their heads a lot better than in the "non-emotional" climate of 1950. I recently re-read Malcolm Cowley's *Exile's Return,* which predicts "great days ahead for artists if they can survive in the struggle and keep their honesty of vision and learn to measure themselves by the stature of their times." Cowley, who was then under the influence of Marxist ideas, warned his readers:

"The mellowness and liberalism of the present ruling class are merely the ornaments of its prosperous years; in times of danger they give way to brutality direct and unconcealed. Its cherishing of individual freedom gives way at critical moments to a call for unquestioning blind obedience to the State, and its fostering of science is replaced by the dark myths of race and war and destiny. Eventually it threatens the complete destruction of culture, since its inevitable and insoluble self-contradictions are leading it toward wars in which, tomorrow, not only books will be destroyed, but the libraries that contain them, and not only museums, universities, theatres, picture galleries, but also the wealth by which they are supported and the living people for whom they exist."

Well, the "tomorrow" that Cowley was talking about in the thirties is appreciably closer today, and the ruling class is showing its fangs. But where are the Cowleys? In years of relative "mellowness" they formed a kind of loyal opposition to capitalism and were capable at times of being bold, ironic, insurgent; but in a period when capitalism is stripped of its ornaments it is suddenly they who indulge in "mellowness." They had made faces, but there was no determination in their hearts. They had made stout pronouncements of their intention to resist imperialist war and fascism, but when the time came to put up or shut up they elected to shut up.

Or rather, being men of lofty ideals, they were "not content with confirming our belligerent gesture," as Randolph Bourne accurately noted of the ex-liberal intellectuals in 1917. "They are now complacently asserting that it was they who effectively willed it, against the hesitation and dim perceptions of the American democratic masses. A war made deliberately by the intellectuals! A calm moral verdict arrived at after a penetrating study of inexorable facts! Sluggish masses, too remote from the world-conflict to be stirred, too lacking in intellect to perceive their danger! An alert intellectual class, saving the people in spite of themselves, biding their time with Fabian strategy until the nation could be moved into war without serious resistance!"

As Bourne wrote in his famous essay on *The War and the Intellectuals,* "Only in a world where irony was dead could an intellectual class enter war at the head of such illiberal cohorts in the avowed cause of world liberalism and world democracy." In the great spiritual adven-

ture led by MacArthur, the editors of the *Nation* join hands with the bigots who have suppressed their magazine in the schools. In 1917 the *New Republic* helped Mr. Wilson and Mr. Morgan wage a war to end all war; in 1950 the *New Republic* helps Mr. Truman and Mr. Morgan wage a war to liberate Korea by bombing the Koreans. Henry Wallace finds common cause with those who would "balk" the Russians by regenerating the Nazis and stuffing Franco's purse, by silencing Paul Robeson and sending members of the Progressive Party to concentration camps.

## Not Since Shakespeare

IN ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S new novel, the fifty-one year old Colonel says to the nineteen year old Countess: "Let's have a fine time, let's not think about anything at all." Then they have a fine time and do not think about anything at all. This is how it is when they eat lobster and drink the very dry Martinis, and it is the same in the gondola on the Grand Canal and not much different in bed. They do talk, however. There is, for example, the stimulating dialogue on sleep:

> " 'Daughter I could sleep good straight up and down in the electric chair with my pants slit and my hair clipped. I sleep as, and when, I need it.'
>
> " 'I can never be like that,' the girl said, sleepily. 'I sleep when I am sleepy.'
>
> " 'You're lovely,' the Colonel told her. 'And you sleep better than anyone ever slept.'
>
> " 'I am not proud of it,' the girl said, very sleepily. 'It is just something I do.'
>
> " 'Do it, please'."

It is in such passages of thought-intoxicated prose, with their subtle revelations of character, that Hemingway confirms John O'Hara's claim that he is "the most important author living today, the outstanding author since the death of Shakespeare." If Hemingway maintains his present pace, and if bourgeois critical standards keep rising, he may yet become the most important author since the death of Homer.

Hemingway, in a recent cable to *Time* magazine, said his credo is

"to write as well as he can about things that he knows and feels deeply about." That is a good credo. But what does Hemingway know and what is he feeling deeply about? In the full maturity of *Across the River and into the Trees,* he has progressed from bull-fighting and lion-hunting to duck-shooting. He has again written about the fear of death by a virile American man who is submissively adored by a long-legged lady from England, Spain or Italy. He has not for decades written about the United States, nor ever, really, about working people or about men who have minds or women who have minds of their own. Once he came close to the living heart of his time, but his novel about Spain was a stab. More and more he has moodily nursed the illusion that he could run a war better than anybody else, except, possibly, General Rommel, Omar Bradley and Joseph Lawton Collins, whose talents he now salutes.

When Colonel Cantwell gets his final heart attack in this new novel, Hemingway's first in a decade, you feel a vast unconcern about the character. His life was of no consequence, and so his death is of no consequence. What is significant is the author's deterioration. This is a book which reflects the disease of aimlessness and self-pity with which contemporary bourgeois letters are fatally smitten. It conscientiously avoids the real lives of useful people. It is worthy of no respect.

# *To Nazim Hikmet*

*by* HOWARD FAST

THE way your own walls could not contain your words,
so did they find us, my brother,
nor could our walls exclude them.
And there came to me that day in prison,
speaking in the prison whisper you know so well,
that gentle writer, Albert Maltz—
Like you, his crime was words that sang of life,
of peace and hope and the things men cherish—
and told me you were free.
Free, he said, Nazim Hikmet's free,
and walks in freedom on his own good native ground,
and sings loud and proud, for all men to hear.
How can I tell you, friend, comrade, brother too,
whom I have never seen but know so well,
and hold so high, in such precious esteem—
how can I tell you what this meant?
For in that moment we were free.
For in that moment my heart sang a song to equal yours,
and I knew you as well as ever I knew a man,
knew you and all your kind, our kind,
such a brotherhood that surmounts nations,
and they think to quiet us,
to make us silent behind walls.
A small blow once we struck in your behalf,
yet I tell you that you freed us,
two writers of a land five thousand miles from yours,

like yours a land where evil men do evil things,
like yours a land where freedom bows her head in shame,
but will awaken yet.
When you went free we understood
the small moment of our own walls,
erected by clowns and smirking killers,
a small moment in the march of man toward light and glory—
yet do I have to tell you,
when surely you heard the song our hearts made!

# *TRUST THE PEOPLE!*

*by* VITO MARCANTONIO

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MR. MARCANTONIO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to have my position stated clearly for the *Record.** Not only do I oppose this legislation, which I deem to be an extreme assault upon the Constitution, but I likewise oppose the legislation which the gentleman from New York (MR. CELLER) has introduced in behalf of the Administration. One assails the Constitution, and the other rips the Constitution. I oppose both.

As far as this particular legislation is concerned, I think it would be wise for the Members of the House to go to the library and have brought to them the edicts that were issued by Mussolini and the laws promulgated by Hitler. In fact, I put in the *Record* a parallel comparison in 1948 when we debated the Mundt bill. You will find the similarity between the fascist-Nazi laws and this legislation shocking. The similarity is frightening, and, incidentally, the conditions under which those laws were invoked against the people of Italy and Germany are the same as we have here now. Always throughout history, whenever a hatchet job had to be done on the liberties of the people, we have heard speeches similar to the one we have heard today and that we have heard on other occasions when we have had this type of legislation before us. Hitler and Mussolini uttered similar speeches to destroy the constitutional rights of the Communists—singling them out first; then the Jews were put in concentration camps, and trade unions and the liberties of the people destroyed all the way down the line.

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* The remarks of the Hon. Vito Marcantonio, American Labor Party Representative in Congress from New York, are reprinted from the *Congressional Record,* August 29, 30, 1950.

I do not want to make any personal reflections here, but I think that despite the hysteria which motivates most of you—and someday this veil of hysteria is going to be cast aside, and the truth is going to be seen by the American people—this form of domestic fascism will be regretted by honest men here. You see the difference between me and those who want to repress people is that I have faith and confidence in the intelligence of the American people, and have always had.

THE SPEAKER *pro tempore* (MR. LYLE). The time of the gentleman from New York has expired.

MR. MARCANTONIO. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield me one additional minute?

MR. COX. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman one additional minute.

MR. MARCANTONIO. I am confident that the American people are going to see this thing through. Those who are against them say they want this kind of repressive legislation to preserve freedom. What freedom? The Taft-Hartley freedom that you who promote this legislation have imposed on American labor? The Jim-Crow freedom that you leaders in this drive to impose this tyranny on America have imposed upon 15,000,000 Negro people in this nation? What freedom? You are destroying the freedom the founders of this country of ours laid down in this Constitution; you are destroying the ten amendments written with the blood of Americans who fought a revolution to win them. We seldom hear this word "revolution" used in this Chamber, but it was only through revolution that the ten amendments were written into the Constitution. You are ripping them; you are tearing them to pieces. You are using the war hysteria to do it, and incidentally to promote an insane war policy about which there is so much confusion and which no one has as yet attempted in honesty to justify. . . .

MR. MARCANTONIO. Mr. Chairman, I could not help but think as I was sitting back there what would happen to a great portion of the membership of the House if this legislation became law, and its stated as well as its unstated objective were carried out. Let us assume that you killed off communism and destroyed it and there were no more Communists left—I wonder what you would do for speeches? It would be pretty sad for a lot of people. You would

have to face some of the real issues confronting the people of this country because this red bogey would not be used as a dodge by which to evade the real responsibility that the legislators have to the American people in these critical times.

As for this bill, I think the committee let the cat out of the bag when it wrote this report. I call your attention to the language beginning at the bottom of page two. It says, "In considering the merits of the various proposals before it, the committee found that it was confronted with a most perplexing and difficult problem—"

And now get this, "one which the framers of the Constitution could have had little conception, and one which required the most comprehensive analysis and study."

I do not think that is so. Anybody with any knowledge of American history must admit that that is not so. The framers of the Constitution wanted no part of this repressive legislation. The Constitution was adopted in 1787, and in 1798, shortly thereafter, similar attempts as the one before us to smash the people's liberties were made. The Alien and Sedition Acts were imposed by the Congress then under similar conditions and the Alien and Sedition Acts were wiped out only two years later by the people who had won the Revolution.

Then again the committee reveals and confesses its game here when it says on page five, "To make membership in a specifically designated existing organization illegal per se would run the risk of being held unconstitutional on the ground that such an action was legislative fiat."

This is what has been bothering the committee. Then again its guilty conscience is revealed when the committee says: "This legislation does not constitute a fiat."

In other words, you could not write into the law what you are trying to do. You know the Constitution prevents you from doing it. You could not pass a bill of attainder proscribing individuals and sending them to jail for mere membership in any organization. Nor can you illegalize that organization without doing violence to the Constitution. So what do you do? You try to do by indirection what you cannot do directly. You try to bypass with this legislative device known as the Wood bill the prohibition in the third clause of Section nine of Article I of the Constitution, "No bill of attainder or ex post facto law shall be passed."

At the same time you bypass the fifth amendment, the prohibition against self-incrimination. Here is how you violate both of these fundamentals of American freedom: You require that members of certain organizations must register. If they do not register they are subject to five years' imprisonment, and for every single day thereafter that they do not register they are subject to another five years' imprisonment. Then what do you do? Then you define those organizations, and you actually give the dimensions, the height, the width, the size of the people you are trying to persecute here. Then they are put up against this situation: If they do not register they go to jail for not registering; but if they do register, what happens to them? Well, you state here a few things that happen to them. You deprive them of the right to travel, the right to work in government, even in certain plants, but you add something else. When you read the definition of the organizations that must register as Communist action organizations, and you read in connection with those definitions the legislative findings which you incorporate in them, you subject these people who register to prosecution for many and vague crimes. You say organizations that advocate the forcible overthrow of government, organizations that are part of an international conspiracy, organizations that infiltrate, and so on—I have not been able yet to analyze the number of crimes—

THE CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from New York (MR. MARCANTONIO) has expired.

MR. WOOD. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentleman one additional minute.

MR. MARCANTONIO. I have not been able as yet to discern all of the large number of crimes that a person can be charged with the moment he registers as a member of a Communist-action organization. So that by registering he is forced to incriminate himself, and by this device you are legislating guilt against specified individuals. Your device is obvious. You are trying to bypass the Constitution, trying to bypass the prohibition against bills of attainder and the prohibition against self-incrimination.

Now, what else are you doing? You are also violating the first amendment. The violence is quite clear under many of the court decisions, which I shall incorporate in the *Record*. When you label a person you set up a restriction of freedom of speech. The Communists were labeled in Germany. Look at all the others who were later

labeled in Germany. You are following the road that leads to the concentration camp, and I say that is un-American. This un-American device of yours is put over under the hysteria of a war which is not in the interests of American democracy or of the American people.

MR. MARCANTONIO. Mr. Speaker, we have had a most unusual situation here today. At least one part of this House has temporarily reformed; one part of this House got Constitution conscious today. I submit that my vote has been a most consistent vote on the question of these citations upon which the House has just voted. I always believed that the first amendment to the Constitution was applicable to 150,000,000 Americans and that it was applicable to all of them, irrespective of their color, race or political beliefs. Part of this House has decided today to apply it to Mr. Rumely, I think only because of his political beliefs being of the extreme right, or of a reactionary character, I have no respect for Mr. Rumely; I have no respect for his views. I deem him to be a domestic fascist, but he is one of the 150,000,000 Americans and the first amendment applies to him just as much as it applies to anybody else. For this reason, and no other, I voted against citing him for contempt. I think the day is not far off when Members of this House are going to rue the fact that the Constitution is being disregarded daily in this House and that the Bill of Rights is being destroyed daily in this House. We are repeating the fascist story of Italy and the Nazi story of Germany. . . .

Now, William Patterson has been a courageous fighter for his people and the rights of his people for years. He is a Negro. The Civil Rights Congress has been listed by the Attorney General, because it happens to be one of those organizations militantly fighting for civil rights, and one which has exposed the hypocrisy of this Democratic administration on civil rights. The action of the Attorney General was sheer political vengeance. Despite this persecution the Civil Rights Congress has been doing tremendous work. Yes, it was the Civil Rights Congress that only recently went down to Mississippi and saved William McGee from the electric chair. McGee, a Negro, is the victim of a vicious frame-up. This gives you an idea of the kind of activity in which Patterson and his organization are engaged. This activity is the kind of lobbying this committee chose to investigate.

MR. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

MR. MARCANTONIO. I yield to the gentleman from California.

MR. DOYLE. I wish to say to the gentleman that this committee

TWO AMERICANS: WILLIE MC GEE AND KARL MUNDT

was not thinking in terms of individuals. We selected these three as representing typical lobbying organizations.

MR. MARCANTONIO. Yes, but the gentleman confessed that they had two citations of the right, so he said, "We had to have a sample of them among the left" and the Negro Patterson was the sample. In other words, they had to have a victim from the left in order to make a pretense at impartiality, irrespective of whether or not the Civil Rights Congress was a legitimate subject of this investigation or even remotely came within the purview of the investigation.

The kind of work the Civil Rights Congress does is not what Congress intended by lobbying in its resolution establishing this committee. It has been constantly, in every state of this union, fighting for the civil rights of the Negro people and it has been defending Negroes who have been deprived of their rights in the various courts and by officials in the various States of this country. So, Mr. Patterson received a subpoena to come in here. A victim from the left had to be produced. Here was the victim, and he was a Negro. This record is very, very illuminating as to how this Negro was treated before this House committee, and I think it is about time we examine this record and hang our heads in shame. I call your attention to the report containing excerpts of the hearings.

Read the following on page three, "The chairman asked Mr. Patterson: 'Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?'"

The last speaker, the chairman of the committee, and the gentleman from Oklahoma all admit now that this question did not come within the purview of this committee. Then why did you ask the question? Why did you ask the question if it did not come within the purview of these investigations? Why did you ask it? The answer is obvious. The Negro victim from the left had to be smeared and this was the beginning of the smearing of that victim. Mr. Patterson was late. He was in the gallery according to the testimony. He noticed the chairman of the committee on the floor of the House, and he figured because the chairman of the committee was on the floor of the House there would be no committee meeting without the chairman. He did not know anything about the appointment of an acting chairman. What happened? When Mr. Patterson did not get there on time that afternoon, when he was a few minutes late. MR. LANHAM, acting chairman of the committee, said, "See if the

officers can locate him and ask him to come in. We will wait a few minutes. Otherwise, we will ask the clerk to draw a citation for contempt." I wonder if officers would have been sent after a white witness.

Do you get the anxiety here? They wanted to get this victim. It had to be a victim from the left. So they sent out the officers for him. He appeared by himself. The point is, he appeared immediately. He was there. Then let me show you what short shrift they gave this man when he tried to explain his position. He was asked questions about documents and records and the record shows here that many of these documents had been obtained by subpoena *duces tecum* served on the bank in which the organization keeps its funds. The only thing that Mr. Patterson refused to give was his list of contributors, and you gentlemen who voted "no" on the Rumely citation had better bear in mind that there is no distinction between these two cases, because the Civil Rights organization is also publishing pamphlets and selling pamphlets on the issue of civil rights and on the various cases which it has been handling. So that there is no difference between this case and the Rumely case. Of course, I know a lot of people are going to split hairs and are going to make up a lot of arguments to try to show a difference. However, any such difference will be synthetic and fake. But there is no difference and anybody with common sense and honesty will not challenge this statement. Let me get back again to show you how they treated this Negro victim from the left. Mr. Patterson said:

"And I say that for this reason—

"MR. LANHAM. Never mind your reason, go ahead with something else."

This is a Negro before this committee. Short shrift with him. This is the kind of treatment he received while he was being questioned. Mind you, this man is not a lobbyist. He is a defender of his people. What has he engaged in? He has asked the Members of the Congress to vote for the civil rights bills that have come before the Congress. What has he done? He has sent letters. Yes, there have been delegations coming down here, public, open, mass delegations of hundreds of people coming down here to ask the Members of Congress to live up to the pledges on civil rights which they made at the time they sought to be elected. He was not a lobbyist for special privilege. He was not a lobbyist for the real estate crowd,

He was not a lobbyist for the loan to Franco. He was not a lobbyist for the special privileges—special privileges that go up and down these Halls of Congress, infesting the Halls of Congress like cockroaches, and doing so with immunity despite this committee. He has been petitioning the Congress of the United States. What kind of deal did he get from this committee? He was twice called a liar by the acting chairman. He finally wound up before that committee by having his race insulted, and by having 15,000,000 Negro people vilified when he was called "a black *****" epithet by the acting chairman. That happened before that committee. That happened to this witness, yes this Negro victim from the alleged left. I say that somebody is in contempt, Mr. Speaker, somebody is in contempt, but it is not Mr. Patterson. I tell you we in the House, all of us, are in contempt when we permit that kind of language and that kind of insult to be hurled at 15,000,000 Americans and we do nothing about it.

Oh sure. Let somebody now get up here and try to wash it off by hollering about "atheistic Russia," or communism, or set up the red bogey. But I tell you what we are facing here is a challenge, a challenge to fairness and justice and decency. The challenge is, shall we by voting for this citation, by voting to send this Negro victim to jail, put our stamp of approval on the use of the language in Congress to which this Negro was subjected before this committee. You want the Negro victim from the left. I cannot stop you from taking him. You have him; but you know deep down in your hearts that you are not doing what is just. Crucify Patterson. Crucify him the way you vilified his people, the 15,000,000 members of his race before your committee. Go ahead and crucify him. That is within your power, but you are not only violating the Constitution, you are undermining the faith of Americans in the justice and integrity of this Congress.

# MARIA

*A Story by* MARTHA DODD

THERE was a strong cool wind blowing from the sea, slapping against the sturdy ceiba trees, lifting the serrated fronds of the palms high into the air like wild loosened hair. It was fresh and moist and bore a pleasant odor of salt, seaweed and fish. Flowing in and out of the waterfront houses whose windows and doors were flung open to the street it cleansed them of the smells of stale cooking, of wet peeling plaster, of rancid oils, of people living too close together.

A block from the waterfront was a small dimly lit square of smooth worn beauty, with an ancient ochre-colored stone church at one end. In the center was a miniature park with a few benches under the rich-leafed tropical trees, a statue of the Cuban liberator, a patch of grass and a bougainvillaea vine which spilled over the edge of the low stone wall surrounding the park.

A young Negro woman, slight, dark, with enormous, gentle eyes and large sweetly shaped lips was sitting on a bench outside the park. She was wrapped in a voluminous black-knitted shawl which also covered the little girl she pressed close to her side. They sat quietly in a stillness of attention and memory. Every now and then the scarf moved and shook as the child coughed. The mother would rearrange the folds of the material and draw the child nearer. María had heard from her sister that the strong moist wind from the sea was good for a cough, so she and her little girl came here every night after supper, almost the only time they left the two-room waterfront tenement where seven people lived and slept and ate. Sometimes she wondered if her sister had told her this in order to be alone with her own family. But she knew the real reason was that her sister had become somewhat impatient with her sorrowful brooding.

There, across the cobblestoned street under a yellow street light

stood a fruit stand. It was piled high with oranges, maméys, tangerines, papayas and grapefruit. She wished she could afford to buy the little Josefina all the oranges she wanted. Or better the large round grapefruits which Josefina had preferred above all in Camagüey, the sugar and fruit growing interior of Cuba where they came from. But here in the city at the fruit stands they cost fifteen *centavos* apiece and even a big orange cost five *centavos!*

Her sister's husband worked intermittently as a longshoreman and what he made was not enough to take care of three grown people and four children. María sighed deeply. As soon as she got used to the city, to being without her José, she would look for work. But work was hard to find these days, even for the most willing.

She knew that José would not have wanted her to take charity. But from your own family it couldn't be called that. He meant begging. There had been several times in the last few weeks when people, seeing her sitting quietly with her child wrapped in the old shawl, would offer her coins. She would twist uncomfortably and flush painfully as she shook her head. It would have been so easy. It was hard to be proud when you had nothing, absolutely nothing. If José had been there he would have risen angrily from the bench and cursed the givers. She was not like that. Her husband had told her that to have no anger or to have anger and keep it inside, was a bad thing. She was a gentle young woman from the provinces and fearful and alone in the hard fiery atmosphere of the city, she buried her hidden anger even deeper.

But at least since he died she had done nothing that would have shamed him. In the last years together he had even come to accept her steady quietness and see great good in it. He would have liked her refusing the alms even though she had done it without protest. Maybe if he had known how hard it would be for her and Josefina. . . . No, that was not true. He could not have endured the sight of his wife begging with his daughter looking on.

A LITTLE over a month ago, José had been waylaid on the road to the sugar fields and beaten to death by the overseer of the plantation. That, of course, was not the story *they* told but that was what really happened. He was a good worker, a fine tall man, strong and spirited. The other workers loved him, looked to him as their de-

fender and were learning to respond when he told them to help one another like brothers. That was why the sugar people had him killed; they were sure the workers would be afraid to act like brothers when José was not there. They had guessed wrong. That day the workers in the sugar fields, all of them, had stopped work and marching in deadly quiet had brought him back to María. After the first screaming shock, she had relapsed into a deep stupor which she cherished as her protection. She had tried to shield the child from seeing the mutilated body of her father. But Josefina had stared and stared again, dry-eyed. She knew how her father had been killed but she would not cry; she scarcely spoke a word even to her mother. It was a terrible thing for a seven-year-old to have seen.

They told María there would be trouble on the plantation, that she should take her child and go to her sister's in the city. When they said José would have wanted her to go that settled it. After the funeral she packed their clothes and at the last minute stuffed José's good suit in the small bundle to bring to her brother-in-law. She sold her household possessions for a few *pesos* and bought a ticket on the bus. Soon after they arrived in the city Josefina began coughing. At first María thought it must be the change in weather. She would take her to a public clinic if she did not get better soon. María, struck with the fear and horror of what had happened, was aware that her feeling for life had been dulled, even for the precious life of her little girl. She sensed that Josefina had her own way of mourning her father—her sharp hard coughing and her unnatural, nearly unbroken, silence. Only hunger or painful longing would occasionally break through into words.

María had recently moved to the bench outside the park. Inside and alone with the child under the dark trees, her thoughts had pressed heavily and her memories had stabbed even deeper. Instinctively she felt the need to get closer to the sounds and sights of life. Children played boisterously in the shadows of the streets, couples talked to each other as they passed. Before her eyes, living scenes were enacted which, like little burrs, began to prickle in her mind and emotions. Now and then if she looked down the alleyway to the docks she could see the cargo boats move slowly over the water, heavily, richly laden with fruit or tobacco or sugar.

Strangers wandered here, kinds of people she had never seen before,

Americans and other foreigners, very rich people who walked and talked as if they owned everything and could do anything. She did not care about these people but a tentative curiosity began to stir in her. She was wary of most Americans, maybe because José had told her that they thought Cubans were dirty and dishonest and cruel. He would always add "certain kinds" of Americans; then he would say "certain kinds" of Cubans were bad too—that they all worked together to make the other Cubans crawl in the gutter. Without understanding fully the reasons for these things, she knew they were true. Anyway, José had always been right! And she could not hate, no, she just could not. Then she shuddered and pulled the shawl closer. The child looked up at her quickly and pressed her hand. María was thinking of the overseer. Oh, God forgive me, the Cuban *azucareros,* the sugar people! That was different!

The square had been quiet for some time. People had called their children to bed and the streets were emptying. The wind still blew hard but the air was as soft as silk. She would have to take Josefina home soon.

AT THE fruit stand with her back to Maria stood a woman with a long bright string bag over her arm, half as long as she was! She was holding it open for the fruit-man to stuff in the oranges. In the alley, a few steps away, was a dark grey car. Her interest aroused, María watched intently trying to make out the scene. There was something curious in the way the woman stood by, never taking her eyes off the fruit. Sweet Jesus, there must be over a dozen inside already! From the back María saw that she was a tall thin woman who wore high heeled shoes and silk stockings. Her fur coat was a soft silver color with a faint sheen of brown almost the color of the silky underbellies of the rabbits María used to see in Camagüey. It made you want to stroke it with your hands.

What could she be doing here? Had she been to the church on the square and made a vow to buy and give away fruit to the poor? Or had she simply been attracted by the piles of fruit? She looked and acted in so strange a way that María concluded she must be an American.

María's little girl held her mother's hand, nervously squeezing it now and then. She stared at the oranges piling up in the swollen bright

bag and her eyes opened wide. They both sat up stiffly and waited to see what would happen. When the oranges were packed the woman pointed to two big fat yellow grapefruits, the fifteen *centavos* kind.

As the fruit-man laid them on top the little girl's tension broke and she cried in an excited voice: "*Mamá, fruta, fruta.* Look at the *toronia,* the beautiful grapefruit, like at home! Oh, Mamma, can I . . .?"

The woman turned around suddenly, attracted by the child's voice. María's heart sank and she turned away abruptly.

But the little girl jumped off the bench and began to press her hands together longingly as if she were feeling the fruit.

"Oh, the grapefruit . . . Mamma . . ."

The woman stood very still, looking at the child. Then a smile crossed her face. It did not soften her face or make her eyes happy.

María cast another sharp glance at the woman and then pulled hard at her daughter's sleeve. The second look confirmed what she had sensed a moment ago. She saw the sureness in the quick movements of eyes, the way the mouth was curled, the chalky skin of indolent *palacio* women. Only a Cuban could be sure that the woman was that "certain kind" of *blanco,* predatory and rich, the Cuban of the sugar plantation!

"Be quiet, child. Sit down. *Estate quieta, niña."* Her voice, though low, was so hard and bitter that the child sat down immediately, almost afraid, and looked up wonderingly into her face.

Then from the corner of her eye María saw the woman pick out a big grapefruit from the stand, lower her white arm and with a graceful twist of the wrist send it rolling across the cobblestone in their direction. María was so horrified that she neither moved nor spoke, though her blood raced as she felt the releasing flood of anger sweep over her. The little girl like her mother sat rigidly watching the yellow fruit roll over the stones and stop suddenly, abruptly in the gutter at her feet. The Cuban woman across the street said nothing, smiled her curious smile again and waited for the child to pick it up. The child, unmoving, stared straight ahead. The fruit-man, one hand in his pocket, made an obscene gesture behind the woman's back and retreated to the rear of his stall.

The woman, thwarted and impatient, moved restlessly.

"*Levantaló,* you silly child," she cried, "go on and pick it up."

With the dignity of a slow gathering but inevitable rebellion María

stood up slowly, gave the woman a long hateful look, cleared her throat as loud as she could and spat hard and full at the golden fruit in the gutter, and then kicked it savagely across the street again. Trembling with rage she sat down and moved close to the child on the bench.

THE woman, as if struck by fear, stood still for a moment. The fruit-man walked slowly to the front of his stall and stopped near the woman. She met his eyes briefly, as she had met María's, and then suddenly scurried toward her car without a backward glance. Her body was bent over from the load of fruit she carried and she twisted herself into the front seat like a cripple. It was almost as if a weight were on her back, a loathesome burden which she was powerless to throw off, pressing her down . . . down into the earth.

The fruit-man watched the car streak toward the main boulevard. Then he looked down at the grapefruit lying in the gutter near his stand. Raising his arms and clasping his hands over his head he shouted to María:

"*Bien, bien,* my friend. Well done! That is the way, all right, yes, that's the way."

María straightened her shoulders and blinked against the sudden tears. Her rage burned now softly like a small hot stone, warming her whole body. This was what José had meant when he said it was good to have anger inside and to express it. Yes, it *was* good!

She looked at her little girl and for the first time in a month she saw a timid smile part her tight lips. Josefina stood up, took her mother's hand and gingerly crossed the gutter where the grapefruit had been, her small bare feet lifted high.

"*Mamaíta,*" she said in a small bright voice encircling her mother's waist with her thin arms, "hug me, hug me tight!" Her mother pressed her close to her body, leaning down to kiss her dry, warm, curly hair. Josefina sighed deeply and sweetly. "I'm sleepy now, really sleepy, let's go home."

It was so good to hear the child's happy voice and see her smile that María laughed deep and loud. "Yes, Josefina, think of it! I'd almost forgotten! And now you're so grown up you have to tell your mother when to go to bed."

She glanced across at the fruit stand and called out proudly: "*Buenas noches, frutero.*"

"*Buenas noches,*" he cried back. "*Buenas noches, señora,* and good luck."

Hand in hand María and the child walked down the alleyway to the waterfront. Their slight forms threw strongly etched shadows which, lengthening and expanding, seemed to engulf the street ahead of them.


From the Mexico City monthly, *Cultura Sovietica*

# *Korea and Liberalism*

*by* HERBERT APTHEKER

AS PART of the current reassessment of America's anti-Communist friend, Franco, Mr. Sulzberger of the New York *Times* reports: "In analyzing the political justice of Spain there are certain things that must be remembered on the 'good side.' Although the system as a whole is rotten and the people are frequently condemned to prison for no good reason, the prisons themselves are relatively good."

Sulzberger is expressing the classic role of American liberalism—the counterpart of European Social-Democracy—namely, to tidy up the ruling-class prisons. In a somewhat similar manner, Chiang Kai-shek, when declaring the Communists in open rebellion, remarked: "We have never attempted to castigate Communism as a theory or idea." He would not touch the brain—he would cut off the head! This defines the essence of the Republican-Democratic split—the first would club the "Communist" (as defined by Rankin) to a pulp; the second would slit his throat!

The propaganda task of the American ruling class is to make a policy of enslavement appear to be one of liberation; it is to transform devastation into salvation, death into life. The problem is posed with varying degrees of frankness and clarity. Professor Howard S. Ellis of Stanford University, for example, puts it somewhat cryptically:* "We need a policy that is more sophisticated in its aims, more flexible in finding means and more convincing in its public justification." Clearer are the words of Dr. Charles Malik, Minister to the United States from that bastion of freedom—Lebanon. He finds the crucial need is a movement which is "revolutionary without being subversive."

* Howard S. Ellis, *The Economics of Freedom,* introduction by Gen. Eisenhower, published for the quasi-official Council on Foreign Relations by Harpers (1950).

"If the Western world," he continues,* "can show a way to eradicate the shame and scandal of poverty, of exploitation, of oppression, of greed, without resort to social revolution and class-struggle . . . then the necessity for communism would vanish."

The American ruling class would find it less difficult to discover water without wetness, fire without heat, humanity without struggle than the means—assuming the will—of ending exploitation without social revolution.

Clearest is Hanson Baldwin, military editor of the New York *Times.* Recalling Napoleon's dictum that a military outcome is decided by the sword and the spirit, Mr. Baldwin finds, in his column of August 21, that the American government has not emphasized sufficiently the spiritual aspects of its Korean crusade. "Bombs," he charmingly remarks, "are a bad way to win friends and influence people." Should we, then, stop hurling them? Perish the thought! Let us continue the bombing, but let us accompany each bomb with a happy, cheerful and highly spiritualized message. The distinguished military historian offers his readers an example of the type of conduct he has in mind, lest there be any confusion. Mr. Baldwin writes:

> "In their extensive war against Russian partisans, the Germans found that the only answer to guerrillas, saboteurs and spies in the combat zone of a foreign country, was 'to win friends and influence people' among the civilian population. . . . But no such happy result can be achieved unless the population of Korea is convinced that we do not come merely [merely!] to bring devastation, unless these simple, primitive and sometimes barbaric peoples are convinced that we—not the Communists—are their friends."

Is it quite certain that, having invoked the Nazi as an exemplar, Mr. Baldwin will succeed in convincing simple, primitive barbarians of his friendship?

The Chief of Police himself swears to the Korean people that his sole aim is to see to it that they become "free, independent and united." He implores God to purge himself and all the other policemen of any possibly remaining bit of "selfishness and meanness." Just in case,

* Charles Malik, *War and Peace,* published by the National Committee for a Free Europe, Inc. (1950).

however, that neither Mr. Baldwin's history nor Mr. Truman's prayers are efficacious, the House of Representatives adds sixty-two million dollars to the seventy-nine millions already appropriated for the Voice of America. Alas—the same week that the House votes sixty-two millions to strengthen the spirit, the Senate votes sixty-two millions to strengthen the Caudillo!

It is perhaps worth noting in passing—though one hesitates to insert so sordid a note—that there is one area of American life singularly devoid of a spiritual vocabulary. I refer, of course, to the market place, to that great arena of practical men and practical language, to that epitome of the American way, where men of business—"that all-consuming word"—carry on the activities that really matter. Here one learns—and the source, picked at random, is the August 4 issue of *U.S. News and World Report*—that with Korea, "Businessmen see . . . fatter profits . . . a chance to clean up . . . more money, fast," with only one fly in the pie—"if a real 'peace scare' should now develop, watch out." Did Mr. Truman mention meanness?

But returning from the mundane to the metaphysical—from the masters to the mannequins—how fares the spiritual crusade? Alack—ill is the report!

The Taiwan correspondent of the *New Leader,* Mr. Edward Hunter, relays, from "the reassuring upholstery of the sofa in a hotel bar," his conversation with "a man from Korea." The man has told Mr. Hunter of the ever-present guerrillas haunting the freedom-fighters. What follows is verbatim from the *New Leader* of August 19, 1950:

> "'How could they do so?' he was asked.
>
> "'Because the great rice bowl of Korea is full of pro-Communists,' he said.
>
> "'Why can't the South Koreans infiltrate the same way behind the Communist lines?'
>
> "'Because they'd be betrayed and killed.'
>
> "'And the same doesn't happen to the Northern troops in the south?'
>
> "'No.'
>
> "'Why?'
>
> "'That's what's so hard to understand.'"

Mr. Hunter's prodigious intellectual capacities are equalled by those

of Mr. Robert Trumbull, a New York *Times* correspondent in India. Asked to comment on the war of ideas in that strategic land, Mr. Trumbull reported on August 20:

> "U.S. Information Service libraries in the major cities are popular, but American literature is scarce on the bookstalls, while Soviet books and pamphlets are plentiful everywhere. The Communists charge for all their reading matter, although only a few cents. This seems to make it more valuable than the free American material. . . . We suffer another disability in this propaganda war that the Russians do not. Indians do not like to feel that they are being propagandized. Therefore, American operations in this field are suspect and sometimes have an effect opposite to the one intended. But somehow the Russians get away with it. Probably that is due partly to the innate leftist tendencies in the Asians."

A WAR'S character is revealed by the way in which it is conducted. The abracadabra of U.N. sponsorship does not and cannot hide the nature of the Korean war as being in origin a counter-revolutionary *coup d'état* engineered by a desperate and completely unpopular Rhee clique of traitors at the behest of its creators and maintainers—the American ruling class. And this—the way in which the war is being conducted—is the irrefutable reply to the verbal facade erected by the liberal pallbearers gathered prematurely for democracy's burial.

The *New Republic* (August 21) may lament MacArthur's "area bombings" as "a weapon of indiscriminate destruction," but the heavy-hearted mass murderer remains a mass murderer. Lewis Mumford may plead in the New York *Herald Tribune* for the greater efficiency, in a political and military sense, of old-fashioned artillery and infantry rather than B-29's and gasoline-filled half-ton bombs and atomic weapons and bacteriological warfare; but the techniques of an army reflect its politics, and the overwhelming inhumanity of modern imperialism's weapons mirrors the inhumanity of modern imperialism's nature.

In this "police action," American soldiers, says the New York *Herald Tribune* on July 13, "are understandably inclined to fire first and ask questions later when meeting any distinguished-looking Korean." In this "police action," writes Pvt. Glen Dupey of Tuscon, Arizona, to his mother from Pusan on August 5, "We are instructed to shoot all Koreans we see . . . men, women and children." Fine

mail American mothers receive these days! In this "police action," John Osborne reports in *Life,* we are "forcing upon our men in the fields acts and attitudes of the utmost savagery" and information is extracted "by means so brutal that they cannot be described." This "police action" makes even the flesh of a Hearst correspondent creep. He himself feels "like a Nazi" in Korea and he describes the mental torment of an American "liberator" who finds that he is required to "kill the kids or get killed" (New York *Journal-American,* August 20).

Thus, the organ of our "labor" ally across the Atlantic, the *New Statesman and Nation* says on August 5: "The Americans . . . would have to destroy the country they are liberating, finding themselves in the end in the absurd position of having permanently to occupy it as a conquering army."

And why occupy it "permanently?" Because, writes Thomas J. Hamilton in the New York *Times* for August 24, after Korea is conquered—excuse me, liberated—"there is a strong probability of an over-all Communist majority if elections were held before the communization of North Korea had been undone, and before a United Nations reconstruction program had assuaged the bitterness of North and South Korea against the destruction of their homes during their liberation"!

In a word—to undo the land and labor and social reforms instituted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the imperialists of the world—led by the American government—must devastate the land, annihilate the masses of the population and permanently occupy the graveyard while transforming it into a base for more grandiose liberation efforts elsewhere!

Meanwhile, the liberal camp followers—Henry Wallace, Vera Micheles Dean, Edgar Snow, etc.—cry out in the *Nation* and the *New Republic* and the *Saturday Review of Literature*—We will do it better! Please, more moderation! It is "not too late to save Asia!" Take from the Communists their slogans—let *us* give the land to the peasants, for land to the landless actually increases the number of property-owners.

Fifty-six times in one *Nation* article Vera Micheles Dean uses that indispensable, classless pronoun, "we." Miss Dean and MacArthur, Miss Dean and DuPont. "We" indeed!

During the American Revolution certain British generals suggested

that were England to announce the liberation of the 750,000 Negro slaves the revolting colonies would be crushed. Why not? Because British industry and commerce was waxing fat on the enslavement of Africa, the slave trade and its million slaves in the West Indies. Because many of the wealthiest planters in the rebellious colonies were Tories; because the class interests of the British government were reactionary and oppressing.

During the American Civil War certain Confederate officers urged the liberation of the slaves and their enlistment in the armed forces as a sure means of defeating Lincoln. Physically, Jefferson Davis *could* have written an Emancipation Proclamation, but ideologically, in class terms, he could not and he did not. The effective rulers of the Confederacy said that liberating the slaves might win the war, but it would not win *our* war. Programs are not haphazard; they are reflective of social reality, of class divisions. Slave-holders will lose *their* wars rather than liberate their slaves, because their wars are fought in order to enhance or ensure the possession of that property.

MacArthur and Rhee and Bao Dai and Chiang *are* the landlords, are the bankers. They and their class are and have been responsible for Charles Malik's "scandal of poverty, of exploitation, of oppression, of greed." This scandal is not extraneous to imperialism; it is not baggage to be taken or discarded by a traveler. The poverty and the greed are to imperialism what the fingers are to the hand. Landlords will fight for peasants, and bankers will fight for workers when Herbert Hoover fights for the release of Eugene Dennis.

The increasing brutality of American imperialism in deeds is reflected in a growing brutality in words. Joseph Barnes is correct when he reports in the *New Statesman and Nation* that "American liberals who back President Truman's action but want to strengthen it with a consistent political program with some promise of liberation and economic opportunity for Asiatics are now more lonely than ever if they dare to speak out." This is not because of deficient verbal skill; the increasing isolation is due to the more and more nakedly reactionary character of that program which therefore becomes increasingly intolerant of the slightest deviation from the desire of the ruling class for fascism and war. Thus, the more hideous the foreign policy the more repressive the home policy.

If the President declares himself ready to drop atomic bombs, why should not his Naval Secretary demand for the United States "a

proud and popular title . . . the first aggressors for peace?" If the President violates the sovereignty of China, unilaterally places sea and air forces at Taiwan, invades Korea, sends men and arms to prop up decayed governments in the Philippines and Indo-China, why should not his Supreme Commander in Asia announce the Pacific to be an American lake and demand "aggressive leadership" in order to impress "Oriental" minds?

MacArthur's "timing" may be off, as David Lawrence remarks in the New York *Herald Tribune,* August 29, but otherwise, he correctly points out, what MacArthur said "does not conflict with State Department policy." As for Secretary Matthews—a man, writes Hanson Baldwin in the *Times* on September 1, "noted more for his political loyalty, than for his breadth of vision"—he is "always open to suggestion from his superiors" and his speech "was clearly a trial balloon."

The transparent demagogy of Truman in these incidents in foreign affairs is paralleled by the Administration's policy in connection with domestic witch-hunting legislation. While ostensibly opposing McCarran's omnibus alien and sedition bill, Truman's whip in the Senate, Mr. Maybank of South Carolina, makes clear that the differences are purely tactical. Indeed, in the act of opposing McCarran's maneuvers he joins Republican Governor Duff of Pennsylvania in calling not for the registration of "Communists" but for their execution! Communists, said Maybank in the Senate on August 17, "ought not to be put under control, they should either be put in jail, or under the jail." And on September 2 we find the Trumanite Senator Kilgore of West Virginia proposing "to put all Communists in concentration camps," thus outgestapoing a fuming McCarran.

WHAT has turned the American rich into frothing Cains who keep whipping their obsequious liberal lap-dogs? What drives a ruling class to the stark madness of firing a Jean Muir for fear she may make Henry Aldrich subversive?

Its impending doom accounts for this. Indian peasants prefer paying for its opponent's literature rather than accepting its own as a gift. Its selected "labor leaders" report that American policy in Western Europe "had damaged the morale of the workers and opened the way for effective Communist propaganda" (*Nation,* September 2, 1950). While Chiang Kai-shek "staged a mass execution of a thousand men" in Taiwan in the spring, still it is clear that in an emergency the peo-

ple there would take "great pleasure in blowing up bridges and roads at the back of Kuomintang forces" (*New Statesman and Nation,* August 5, 1950). And over a hundred-thousand ground troops, the entire American Pacific Air Force and naval power, plus important increments of power from Australia and Great Britain, have been unable to intimidate, let alone conquer, the people of Korea—of tiny Korea!

Meanwhile, according to front-line correspondents in the capitalist press, American troops persist in asking, "Why are we in Korea?" From twenty-five to thirty percent of drafted men still fail to appear. Arthur Krock reports that Congress' mail shows "the war is unpopular" (New York *Times,* August 27, 1950). Two million Americans sign the Stockholm Peace Pledge despite unprecedented intimidation. David Lawrence finds "the big problem now for President Truman and his advisers is home-front morale" (New York *Herald Tribune,* August 8, 1950).

COMMUNIST leaders have repeatedly pointed out that a bourgeoisie which takes the path of fascism confesses its *weakness.* And where fascism comes, it comes not because of the strength of the rich but because of the division of the exploited. It is just here that the bourgeois-begotten liberal word-weavers play their key role of instilling doubt, nursing timidity and thwarting action.

Marx pointed out that the will of the capitalists is unlimited but their power is limited. This was true when it appeared in *Value, Price and Profit,* but how much more profound and more significant is its truth in our day! The will of the rich, their greed, is indeed insatiable and faced by an ever-shrinking area to exploit, the lust drives them berserk. But the shrinkage lessens their power and enhances that of their enemies.

What a strength lies latent in the mighty American people and how the day of their awakening is feared by their deceivers! The enforced silence of one giant who sings truly is more eloquent than a hundred transmission stations of the so-called Voice of America!

# *Florence*

*A One-Act Drama by* ALICE CHILDRESS

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PLACE: A very small town in the South.
TIME: The present.
SCENE: *A railway station waiting room. The room is divided in two sections by a low railing. Upstage center is a double door which serves as an entrance to both sides of the room. Over the doorway stage right is a sign "Colored," over the doorway stage left is another sign "White." Stage right are two doors . . . one marked "Colored men" . . . the other "Colored women." Stage left two other doorways are "White ladies" and "White gentlemen." There are two benches . . . one on each side. The room is drab and empty looking. Through the double doors upstage center can be seen a gray lighting which gives the effect of early evening and open platform.*

*At rise of curtain the stage remains empty for about twenty seconds. . . . A middle aged Negro woman enters, looks offstage . . . then crosses to the "Colored" side and sits on the bench. A moment later she is following by a young Negro woman about twenty-one years old. She is carrying a large new cardboard suitcase and a wrapped shoebox. She is wearing a shoulder strap bag and a newspaper protrudes from the flap. She crosses to the Colored side and rests the suitcase at her feet as she looks at her mother with mild annoyance.*

MARGE: You didn't have to get here so early mama. Now you got to wait!

MAMA: If I'm goin' someplace . . . I like to get there in plenty time. You don't have to stay.

MARGE: You shouldn't wait 'round here alone.

MAMA: I ain't scared. Ain't a soul going to bother me.

MARGE: I got to get back to Ted. He don't like to be in the house

by himself. (*She picks up the bag and places it on the bench by* MAMA.)

MAMA: You'd best go back. (*Smiles*) You know I think he misses Florence.

MARGE: He's just a little fellow. He needs his mother. You make her come home! She shouldn't be way up there in Harlem. She ain't got nobody there.

MAMA: You know Florence don't like the South.

MARGE: It ain't what we like in this world! You tell her that.

MAMA: If Mr. Jack ask about the rent. You tell him we gonna be a little late on account of the trip.

MARGE: I'll talk with him. Don't worry so about everything. (*Places suitcase on floor.*) What you carryin', mama . . . bricks?

MAMA: If Mr. Jack won't wait . . . write to Rudley. He oughta send a little somethin'.

MARGE: Mama . . . Rudley ain't got nothin' fo himself. I hate to ask him to give us.

MAMA: That's your brother! If push come to shove, we got to ask.

MARGE (*Places box on bench*): Don't forget to eat your lunch . . . and try to get a seat near the window so you can lean on your elbow and get a little rest.

MAMA: Hmmmm . . . mmmph. Yes.

MARGE: Buy yourself some coffee when the man comes through. You'll need something hot and you can't go to the diner.

MAMA: I know that. You talk like I'm a northern greenhorn.

MARGE: You got handkerchiefs?

MAMA: I got everything, Marge.

MARGE (*Wanders upstage to the railing division line*): I know Florence is real bad off or she wouldn't call on us for money. Make her come home. She ain't gonna get rich up there and we can't afford to do for her.

MAMA: We talked all of that before.

MARGE (*Touches rail*): Well, you got to be strict on her. She got notions a Negro woman don't need.

MAMA: But she was in a real play. Didn't she send us twenty-five dollars a week?

MARGE: For two weeks.

MAMA: Well the play was over.

MARGE: (*Crosses to* MAMA *and sits beside her*): It's not money, Mama. Sarah wrote us about it. You know what she said Florence was doin'! Sweepin' the stage!

MAMA: She was *in* the play!

MARGE: Sure she was in it! Sweepin'! Them folks ain't gonna let her be no actress. You tell her to wake up.

MAMA: I . . . I . . . think.

MARGE: Listen Mama. . . . She won't wanna come. We know that . . . but she gotta!

MAMA: Maybe we shoulda told her to expect me. It's kind of mean to just walk in like this.

MARGE: I bet she's livin' terrible. What's the matter with her? Don't she know we're keepin' her son?

MAMA: Florence don't feel right 'bout down here since Jim got killed.

MARGE: Who does? I should be the one goin' to get her. You tell her she ain't gonna feel right no place. Mama, honestly! She must think she's white!

MAMA: Florence is brownskin.

MARGE: I don't mean that. I'm talkin' about her attitude. Didn't she go into Strumley's down here and ask to be a sales girl? (*Rises*) Now ain't that somethin'? They don't hire no Colored folks.

MAMA: Others besides Florence been talkin' about their rights.

MARGE: I know it . . . but there's things we can't do cause they ain't gonna let us. (*She wanders over to the "White" side of the stage*) Don't feel a damn bit different over here than it does on our side.

(*Silence*)

MAMA: Maybe we shoulda just sent her the money this time. This one time.

MARGE: (*Coming back to "Colored" side*): Mama! Don't you let her cash that check for nothin' but to bring her back home.

MAMA: I know.

MARGE (*Restless . . . fidgets with her hair . . . patting it in place*) I oughta go now.

MAMA: You best get back to Ted. He might play with the lamp.

MARGE: He better not let me catch him! If you got to go to the ladies' room take your grip.

MAMA: I'll be alright. Make Ted get up on time for school.

MARGE (*Kisses her quickly and gives her the newspaper*): Here's something to read. So long Mama.

MAMA: G'bye, Margie baby.

MARGE (*Goes to door . . . stops and turns to her mother*): You got your smelling salts?

MAMA: In my pocketbook.

MARGE (*Wistfully*): Tell Florence I love her and I miss her too.

PORTER (*Can be heard singing in the distance.*)

MAMA: Sure.

MARGE (*Reluctant to leave*): Pin that check in your bosom, Mama. You might fall asleep and somebody'll rob you.

MAMA: I got it pinned to me. (*Feels for the check which is in her blouse*)

MARGE (*Almost pathetic*): Bye, Ma.

MAMA (*Sits for a moment looking at her surroundings. She opens the paper and begins to read.*)

PORTER (*Offstage*): Hello, Marge. What you doin' down here?

MARGE: I came to see Mama off.

PORTER: Where's she going?

MARGE: She's in there; she'll tell you. I got to get back to Ted.

PORTER: Bye now. . . . Say, wait a minute, Marge.

MARGE: Yes?

PORTER: I told Ted he could have some of my peaches and he brought all them Brandford boys over and they picked 'em all. I wouldn't lay a hand on him but I told him I was gonna tell you.

MARGE: I'm gonna give it to him!

PORTER (*Enters and crosses to white side of waiting room. He carries a pail of water and a mop. He is about fifty years old. He is obviously tired but not lazy.*): Every peach off my tree!

MAMA: There wasn't but six peaches on that tree.

PORTER (*Smiles . . . glances at* MAMA *as he crosses to white side and begins to mop*): How d'ye do, Mrs. Whitney . . . you going on a trip?

MAMA: Fine, I thank you. I'm going to New York.

PORTER: Wish it was me. You gonna stay?

MAMA: No, Mr. Brown. I'm bringing Florence . . . I'm visiting Florence.

PORTER: Tell her I said hello. She's a fine girl.

MAMA: Thank you.

PORTER: My brother Bynum's in Georgia now.

MAMA: Well now, that's nice.

PORTER: Atlanta.

MAMA: He goin' to school?

PORTER: Yes'm. He saw Florence in a Colored picture. A moving picture.

MAMA: Do tell! She didn't say a word about it.

PORTER: They got Colored moving picture theatres in Atlanta.

MAMA: Yes. Your brother going to be a doctor?

PORTER (*With pride*): No. He writes things.

MAMA: Oh.

PORTER: My son is goin' back to Howard next year.

MAMA: Takes an awful lot of goin' to school to be anything. Lot of money leastways.

PORTER (*Thoughtfully*): Yes'm, it sure do.

MAMA: That sure was a nice church sociable the other night.

PORTER: Yes'm. We raised 87 dollars.

MAMA: That's real nice.

PORTER: I won your cake at the bazaar.

MAMA: The chocolate one?

PORTER (*As he wrings mop*): Yes'm . . . was light as a feather. That old train is gonna be late this evenin'. It's number 42.

MAMA: I don't mind waitin'.

PORTER (*Lifts pail, tucks mop handle under his arm. Looks about in order to make certain no one is around. Leans over and addresses Mama in a confidential tone*): Did you buy your ticket from that Mr. Daly?

MAMA (*In a low tone*): No. Marge bought it yesterday.

PORTER (*Leaning against railing*): That's good. That man is mean. Especially if he thinks you're goin' north. (*He starts to leave . . . then turns back to* MAMA): If you go to the rest room use the Colored men's . . . the other one is out of order.

MAMA: Thank you, sir.

MRS. CARTER (*A white woman . . . well dressed, wearing furs and carrying a small, expensive overnight bag. She breezes in . . . breathless . . . flustered and smiling. She addresses the porter as she almost collides with him*): Boy! My bags are out there. The taxi driver just dropped them. Will they be safe?

PORTER: Yes, mam. I'll see after them.

MRS. CARTER: I thought I'd missed the train.

PORTER: It's late, mam.

MRS. CARTER (*Crosses to bench on the White side and rests her bag*): Fine! You come back here and get me when it comes. There'll be a tip in it for you.

PORTER: Thank you, mam. I'll be here. (*As he leaves*) Miss Whitney, I'll take care of your bag too.

MAMA: Thank you, sir.

MRS. CARTER (*Wheels around . . . notices* MAMA): Oh. . . . Hello there. . . .

MAMA: Howdy, mam. (*She opens her newspaper and begins to read.*)

MRS. CARTER (*Paces up and down rather nervously. She takes a cigarette from her purse, lights it. Takes a deep draw. She looks at her watch. Speaks to* MAMA *across the railing*): Have you any idea how late the train will be?

MAMA: No mam. (*Starts to read again.*)

MRS. CARTER: I can't leave this place fast enough. Two days of it and I'm bored to tears. Do you live here?

MAMA (*Rests paper on her lap*): Yes, mam.

MRS. CARTER: Where are you going?

MAMA: New York City, mam.

MRS. CARTER: Good for you! You can stop "maming" me. My name is Mrs. Carter. I'm not a southerner really.

MAMA: Yes'm . . . Mrs. Carter.

MRS. CARTER (*Takes handkerchief from her purse and covers her nose for a moment*): My God! Disinfectant! This is a frightful place. My brother's here writing a book. Wants atmosphere. Well he's got it. I'll never come back here ever.

MAMA: That's too bad, mam . . . Mrs. Carter.

MRS. CARTER: That's good. I'd die in this place. Really die. Jeff . . . Mr. Wiley . . . my brother. . . He's tied in knots, a bundle of problems . . positively in knots.

MAMA (*Amazed*): That so, mam?

MRS. CARTER: You don't have to call me mam. It's so southern. Mrs. Carter! These people are still fighting the Civil War. I'm really a New Yorker now. Of course I was born here . . . in the South I mean. Memphis. Listen . . . am I annoying you? I've simply got to talk to someone.

MAMA (*Places newspaper on bench*): No, Mrs. Carter. It's perfectly alright.

MRS. CARTER: Fine! You see Jeff has ceased writing. Stopped! Just like that! (*Snaps fingers.*)

MAMA (*Turns to her*): That so?

MRS. CARTER: Yes. The reviews came out on his last book. Poor fellow.

MAMA: I'm sorry, mam . . . Mrs. Carter. They didn't like his book?

MRS. CARTER: Well enough . . . but Jeff's . . . well Mr. Wiley is a genius. He says they missed the point! Lost the whole message! Did you read . . . do you . . . have you heard of *Lost My Lonely Way?*

MAMA: No, mam. I can't say I have.

MRS. CARTER: Well it doesn't matter. It's profound. Real . . . you know. (*Stands at railing upstage.*) It's about your people.

MAMA: That's nice.

MRS. CARTER: Jeff poured his complete self into it. Really delved into the heart of the problem, pulled no punches! He hardly stopped for his meals. . . . And of course I wasn't here to see that he didn't overdo. He suffers so with his characters.

MAMA: I guess he wants to do his best.

MRS. CARTER: Zelma! . . . That's his heroine. . . . Zelma! A perfect character.

MAMA (*Interested . . . coming out of her shell eagerly*): She was colored, mam?

MRS. CARTER: Oh yes! . . . But of course you don't know what it's about do you?

MAMA: No, miss. . . . Would you tell me?

MRS. CARTER (*Leaning on railing*): Well . . . she's almost white, see? Really you can't tell except in small ways. She wants to be a lawyer . . . and . . . and . . . well, there she is full of complexes and this deep shame you know.

MAMA (*Excitedly but with curiosity*): Do tell! What shame has she got?

MRS. CARTER (*Takes off her fur neckpiece and places it on bench with overnight bag*): It's obvious! This lovely creature . . . intelligent, ambitious, and well . . . she's a Negro!

MAMA (*Waiting eagerly*): Yes'm, you said that. . . .

MRS. CARTER: Surely you understand? She's constantly hating her-

self. Just before she dies she says it! . . . Right on the bridge. . . .

MAMA (*Genuinely moved*): How sad. Ain't it a shame she had to die?

MRS. CARTER: It was inevitable . . . couldn't be any other way!

MAMA: What did she say on the bridge?

MRS. CARTER: Well . . . just before she jumped. . . .

MAMA (*Slowly straightening*): You mean she killed *herself?*

MRS. CARTER: Of course. Close your eyes and picture it!

MAMA (*Turns front and closes her eyes tightly with enthusiasm*): Yes'm.

MRS. CARTER (*Center stage of white side*): Now . . . ! She's standing on the bridge in the moonlight. . . . Out of her shabby purse she takes a mirror . . . and by the light of the moon she looks at her reflection in the glass.

MAMA (*Clasps her hands together gently*): I can see her just as plain.

MRS. CARTER (*Sincerely*): Tears roll down her cheeks as she says . . . almost! almost white . . . but I'm black! I'm a Negro! and then . . . (*Turns to* MAMA) she jumps and drowns herself!

MAMA (*Opens her eyes. Speaks quietly*): Why?

MRS. CARTER: She can't face it! Living in a world where she almost belongs but not quite. (*Drifts upstage*) Oh it's so . . . so . . . tragic.

MAMA (*Carried away by her convictions . . . not anger . . . she feels challenged. She rises*): That ain't so! Not one bit it ain't!

MRS. CARTER (*Surprised*): But it is!

MAMA (*During the following she works her way around the railing until she crosses about one foot over to the white side and is face to face with* MRS. CARTER): I know it ain't! Don't my friend Essie Kitredge daughter look just like a German or somethin'? She didn't kill herself! She's teachin' the third grade in the colored school right here. Even the bus drivers ask her to sit in the front seats cause they think she's white! . . . an . . . an . . . she just says as clear as you please . . . "I'm sittin where my people got to sit by law. I'm a Negro woman!"

MRS. CARTER (*Uncomfortable but not knowing why*): . . . But there you have it. The exception makes the rule. That's proof!

MAMA: No such a thing! My cousin Hemsly's as white as you! . . . an' . . . an' he never. . . .

MRS. CARTER (*Flushed with anger . . . yet lost . . . because she doesn't know why*): Are you losing your temper? (*Weakly*) Are you angry with me?

MAMA (*Stands silently trembling as she looks down and notices she is on the wrong side of the railing. She looks up at the "White Ladies Room" sign and slowly works her way back to the "Colored" side. She feels completely lost*): No, *mam.* Excuse me please. (*With bitterness*) I just meant Hemsly works in the colored section of the shoe store. . . . He never once wanted to kill his self! (*She sits down on the bench and fumbles for her newspaper.*)

(*Silence.*)

MRS. CARTER (*Caught between anger and reason . . . she laughs nervously*): Well! Let's not be upset by this. It's entirely my fault you know. This whole thing is a completely controversial subject. (*Silence*) If it's too much for Jeff . . . well naturally I shouldn't discuss it with you. (*Approaching railing*) I'm sorry. Let *me* apologize.

MAMA (*Keeps her eyes on the paper*): No need for that, mam.

(*Silence.*)

MRS. CARTER (*Painfully uncomfortable*): I've drifted away from . . . What started all of this?

MAMA (*No comedy intended or allowed on this line*): Your brother, mam.

MRS. CARTER (*Trying valiantly to brush away the tension*): Yes. . . . Well I had to come down and sort of hold his hand over the reviews. He just thinks too much . . . and studies. He knows the Negro so well that sometimes our friends tease him and say he almost *seems* like . . . well you know. . . .

MAMA (*Tightly*): Yes'm.

MRS. CARTER (*Slowly walks over to the colored side near the top of the rail*): You know I try but it's really difficult to understand you people. However . . . I keep trying.

MAMA (*Still tight*): Thank you, mam.

MRS. CARTER (*Retreats back to white side and begins to prove herself*): Last week. . . . Why do you know what I did? I sent a thousand dollars to a Negro college for scholarships.

MAMA: That was right kind of you.

MRS. CARTER (*Almost pleading*): I know what's going on in your mind . . . and what you're thinking is wrong. I've . . . I've . . . eaten with Negroes.

MAMA: Yes, mam.

MRS. CARTER (*Trying to find a straw*): . . . And there's Malcom! If it weren't for the guidance of Jeff he'd never written his poems. Malcom is a Negro.

MAMA (*Freezing*): Yes, mam.

MRS. CARTER (*Gives up, crosses to her bench, opens her overnight bag and takes out a book and begins to read. She glances at* MAMA *from time to time.* MAMA *is deeply absorbed in her newspaper.* MRS. CARTER *closes her book with a bang . . . determined to penetrate the wall that* MAMA *has built around her*): Why are you going to New York?

MAMA (*Almost accusingly*): I got a daughter there.

MRS. CARTER: I lost my son in the war. (*Silence . . .* MAMA *is ill at ease*): Your daughter . . . what is she doing . . . studying?

MAMA: No'm. She's trying to get on the stage.

MRS. CARTER (*Pleasantly*): Oh . . . a singer?

MAMA: No, mam. She's . . .

MRS. CARTER (*Warmly*): Your people have such a gift. I love spirituals . . . "Steal Away," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot".

MAMA: They are right nice. But Florence wants to act. Just say things in plays.

MRS. CARTER: A dramatic actress?

MAMA: Yes, that's what it is. She been in a Colored moving picture, and a big show for two weeks on Broadway.

MRS. CARTER: The dear, precious child! . . . But this is funny . . . no! it's pathetic. She must be bitter . . . *really* bitter. Do you know what I do?

MAMA: I can't rightly say.

MRS. CARTER: I'm an actress! A dramatic actress. . . . And I haven't really worked in six months. . . . And I'm pretty well known. . . . And everyone knows Jeff. I'd like to work. Of course, there are my committees, but you see, they don't need me. Not really . . . not even Jeff.

MAMA: Now that's a shame.

MRS. CARTER: Your daughter . . . you must make her stop before she's completely unhappy. Make her stop!

MAMA: Yes'm . . . why?

MRS. CARTER: I have the best of contacts and *I've* only done a few *broadcasts* lately. Of course, I'm not counting the things I just wouldn't do. Your daughter . . . make her stop.

MAMA: A drama teacher told her she has real talent.

MRS. CARTER: A drama teacher! My dear woman, there are loads of unscrupulous whites up there that just hand out opinions for. . . .

MAMA: This was a colored gentleman down here.

MRS. CARTER: Oh well! . . . And she went up there on the strength of that? This makes me very unhappy. (*Puts book away in case, and snaps lock.*)

(*Silence*)

MAMA (*Getting an idea*): Do you really, truly feel that way, mam?

MRS. CARTER: I do. Please . . . I want you to believe me.

MAMA: Could I ask you something?

MRS. CARTER: Anything.

MAMA: You won't be angry mam?

MRS. CARTER (*Remembering*): I won't. I promise you.

MAMA (*Gathering courage*): Florence is proud . . . but she's having it hard.

MRS. CARTER: I'm sure she is.

MAMA: Could you help her out some, mam? Knowing all the folks you do . . . maybe. . . .

MRS. CARTER (*Rubs the outside of the case*): Well . . . it isn't that simple . . . but . . . you're very sweet. If I only could. . . .

MAMA: Anything you did, I feel grateful. I don't like to tell it, but she can't even pay her rent and things. And she's used to my cooking for her. . . . I believe my girl goes hungry sometime up there . . . and yet she'd like to stay so bad.

MRS. CARTER (*Looks up, resting case in her knees*): How can I refuse? You seem like a good woman.

MAMA: Always lived as best I knew how and raised my children up right. We got a fine family, mam.

MRS. CARTER: And I've no family at all. I've got to! It's clearly my duty. Jeff's books . . . guiding Malcom's poetry. . . . It isn't enough . . . oh I know it isn't! Have you ever heard of Melba Rugby?

MAMA: No, mam. I don't know anybody much . . . except right here.

MRS. CARTER (*Brightening*): She's in California, but she's moving East again . . . hates California.

MAMA: Yes'm.

MRS. CARTER: A most versatile woman. Writes, directs, acts . . . everything!

MAMA: That's nice, mam.

MRS. CARTER: Well, she's uprooting herself and coming back to her first home . . . New York . . . to direct "Love Flowers" . . . it's a musical.

MAMA: Yes'm.

MRS. CARTER: She's grand . . . helped so many people . . . and I'm sure she'll help your . . . what's her name.

MAMA: Florence.

MRS. CARTER (*Turns back to bench, opens bag, takes out pencil and address book*): Yes, Florence. She'll have to *make* a place for her.

MAMA: Bless you, mam.

MRS. CARTER (*Holds handbag steady on rail as she uses it to write on*): Now let's see . . . the best thing to do would be to give you the telephone number . . . since you're going there.

MAMA: Yes'm.

MRS. CARTER (*Writing address on paper*): Your daughter will love her . . . and if she's a deserving girl. . . .

MAMA (*Looking down as* MRS. CARTER *writes*): She's a good child. Never a bit of trouble. Except about her husband, and neither one of them could help that.

MRS. CARTER (*Stops writing, raises her head questioning*): Oh?

MAMA: He got killed at voting time. He was a good man.

MRS. CARTER (*Embarrassed*): I guess that's worse than losing him in the war.

MAMA: We all got our troubles passing through here.

MRS. CARTER (*Gives her the address*): Tell your dear girl to call this number about a week from now.

MAMA: Yes, mam.

MRS. CARTER: Her experience won't matter with Melba. I know she'll understand. I'll call her too.

MAMA: Thank you, mam.

MRS. CARTER: I'll just tell her . . . no heavy washing or ironing . . . just light cleaning and a little cooking . . . does she cook?

MAMA: Mam? (*Slowly backs away from* MRS. C. *and sits down on bench.*)

MRS. CARTER: Don't worry. That won't matter with Melba. (*Silence. Moves around rail to "Colored" side, leans over* MAMA.) I'd take your daughter myself, but I've got Binnie. She's been with me for years, and I can't just let her go . . . can I?

MAMA (*Looks at* MRS. C. closely): No, mam.

MRS. CARTER: Of course she must be steady. I couldn't ask Melba to take a fly-by-night. (*Touches* MAMA'S *arm.*) But she'll have her own room and bath, and above all . . . security.

MAMA (*Reaches out, clutches* MRS. C'S *wrist almost pulling her off balance*): Child!

MRS. CARTER (*Frightened*): You're hurting my wrist.

MAMA (*Looks down, realizes how tight she's clutching her, and releases her wrist*): I mustn't hurt you, must I.

MRS. CARTER (*Backs away rubbing her wrist*): It's all right.

MAMA (*Rises*): You better get over on the other side of that rail. It's against the law for you to be here with me.

MRS. CARTER (*Frightened and uncomfortable*): If you think so.

MAMA: I don't want to break the law.

MRS. CARTER (*Keeps her eye on* MAMA *as she drifts around railing to bench on her side. Gathers overnight bag*): I know I must look like a fright. The train should be along soon. When it comes, I won't see you until New York. These silly laws. (*Silence*) I'm going to powder my nose. (*Exits into "White Ladies" room.*)

PORTER (*Singing offstage*).

MAMA (*Sits quietly, staring in front of her . . . then looks at the address for a moment . . . tears the paper into little bits and lets them flutter to the floor. She opens the suitcase, takes out notebook, an envelope and a pencil. She writes a few words on the paper.*)

PORTER (*Enters with broom and dust pan*): Number 42 will be coming along in nine minutes. (*When* MAMA *doesn't answer him, he looks up and watches her. She reaches in her bosom, unpins the check, smooths it out, places it in the envelope with the letter. She closes the suitcase*): I said the train's coming. Where's the lady?

MAMA: She's in the *ladies'* room. You got a stamp?

PORTER: No. But I can get one out the machine. Three for a dime.

MAMA (*Hands him the letter*): Put one on here and mail it for me.

PORTER (*Looks at it*): Gee . . . you writing to Florence when you're going to see her?

MAMA (*Picks up the shoe box and puts it back on the bench*): You want a good lunch? It's chicken and fruit.

PORTER: Sure . . . thank you . . . but won't you . . .

MAMA (*Rises, paces up and down*): I ain't gonna see Florence for a long time. Might be never.

PORTER: How's that, Mrs. Whitney?

MAMA: She can be anything in the world she wants to be! That's her right. Marge can't make her turn back, Mrs. Carter can't make her turn back. "Lost My Lonely Way"! That's a book! People killing theyselves 'cause they look white but be black. They just don't know do they, Mr. Brown?

PORTER: Whatever happened don't you fret none. Life is too short.

MAMA: Oh, I'm gonna fret plenty! You know what I wrote Florence?

PORTER: No, mam. But you don't have to tell me.

MAMA: I said "Keep trying." . . . Oh, I'm going home.

PORTER: I'll take your bag. (*Picks up bag and starts out.*) Come on, Mrs. Whitney. (PORTER *Exits.*)

MAMA (*moves around to "White" side, stares at signs over door. Starts to knock on "White Ladies" door, changes her mind. As she turns to leave, her eye catches the railing; she approaches it gently, touches it, turns, exits.*) (*Stage is empty for about six or seven seconds. Sound of train whistle in distance. Slow curtain.*)

# ROOTS OF Hollywood's Racism

*by* V. J. JEROME

THE film medium, because of its power for mass impact, has sometimes been invested with inherent qualities that transcend classes, that make it "humanist" and "popular" in essence. The former head of the U.N. documentary film unit, Jean Benoit-Lévy, asserts that "the very mission of the cinema is to make men realize that they are brethren."*

This idealistic and mystical approach to the film medium has been reflected in the United States even by some who write presumably as Marxists. These critics have fallen into the error of viewing the motion picture medium inherently as a people's art or as an art form developing by its own inner laws into a progressive cultural weapon.

Thus, a film reviewer in the *Daily People's World* of San Francisco writes: "Critics on the left have reacted subjectively, have developed a scornfully immature attitude toward the cinema, for the most part seeing Hollywood only as a corrupt institution, the source of nightmares of decadence and ideas of reaction."

He is led on by this reasoning to express criticism of Maxim Gorky for his forecast, in 1896, of the inevitable corruption of the film by capitalism. That year, upon viewing the first showing of *Lumière* in Paris, Gorky said:

> "Rather than serve science and aid in the perfection of man, it will serve the Nizhni Novgorod Fair and help to popularize de-

NOTE: This article forms a chapter in a study of the Negro in Hollywood films, by Mr. Jerome, to be published soon.

* Jean Benoit-Levy, "The Mission of the Cinema," *The Penguin Film Review*, London and New York, No. 4, 1947, pp. 10-11.

bauchery. . . . There is nothing in the world so great and beautiful but that man can vulgarize and dishonor it. And even in the clouds, where formerly ideals and dreams dwelt, they now want to print advertisements—for improved toilets, I suppose."

This remarkable prediction is for our critic "Gorky's pessimistic prophecy." He writes: "Gorky, in 1896, could not yet see the possibility of the film's development as a creative weapon in the hands of the artist."*

The arrogance of this statement is matched only by its absurdity. Where, amid the constant rubbish ground out by the bourgeois film-mills of Hollywood, is there evidence today of "a creative weapon in the hands of the artist"? Weapon?—yes! But it is neither creative nor in the hands of the artist. It is destructive and in the hands of the monopolists. It is a weapon used against truth, against culture, against liberty, against peace, against man—against artists like the Hollywood Ten.

This in no sense means that progressive screen artists should not, in their various creative spheres and through organization, struggle against the reactionary, war-mongering program of the film monopolies. They must, however, combat all above-class conceptions of the film medium, all illusions about that happy state of developing free creativeness for the Hollywood artist in the atomic year of 1950 which poor Gorky, alas, back in 1896 was unable to pre-appreciate.

The fallacy in the idealization of the cinema derives from confusing the magnitude of this mass medium, which influences millions, with a people's art. When Lenin said after the October Revolution that "of all the arts, the most important for us is the film," he had reference to its value for socialist construction. And the epic grandeur of the Soviet film art has richly confirmed Lenin's emphasis on this great cultural medium. Under capitalism, however, the film serves monopoly, not only as a source of colossal profit, but as its most potent ideological weapon to master the minds of millions. How Gorky's prophecy has been confirmed is stated in the report of M. Suslov to the November, 1949, meeting of the Communist Information Bureau, which refers to the role of American films in the imperialist preparations for war:

"One of the important means of ideological preparation in the

* Matthais Pierce, "On Criticism and the Film," *Daily People's World*, June 30, 1949.

'Americanized' countries is the flooding of these countries with American crime literature and Hollywood films, in which gangsters, murderers, sadists, corrupters, bigots and hypocrites invariably appear as the main heroes. Such 'art' and 'literature' poison and stupefy both reader and spectator."

THE fact is that the imperialist credo of chauvinist nationalism and "white supremacy" dates back to the very origin of commercial film making in the United States. It is no mere chance that the very first dramatic film, which was shown in 1898, the year in which American imperialism, fully emerging, announced its "Manifest Destiny" with the launching of the robber war to wrest colonies from Spain, bore the title *Tearing Down the Spanish Flag.* No less significant is the fact that in 1901—within two years of Secretary of State Hay's announcement of the "Open Door" policy for the spoliation of China—the public was treated to the racist film *The Boxer Massacres in Pekin,* designed to "prove" that the anti-imperialist struggle of the Chinese people constituted a "yellow peril" to "white civilization." *Street Scene in Pekin,* released the same year, portrayed British police in front of the Legation breaking up a demonstration of Chinese "unruly citizens."

The imperialist mythology of the *Anglo-Saxon super-type* was methodically cultivated in a variety of motion pictures, of which *Fights of Nations,* released in 1905, was perhaps the most viciously chauvinistic. In that picture the Negro was caricatured as a "razor-thrower," the Jew as a "briber," the Mexican as a "treacherous coward," the Spaniard as a "foppish lover," the Irishman as a "drunkard," while in the final tableau America is presented as the bringer of peace to all the nations. As a contemporary trade publication described it: "The scene is magnificently decorated with emblems of all nations, the American eagle surmounting them. In harmony, peace and good will the characters of the different nations appear, making it an allegorical representation of 'Peace,' with the United States presiding at a congress of Powers."* How prophetic of the day when this imperial eagle would surmount the United Nations to commandeer them into line for its mission of atomic "Peace"!

The policy of setting native-born against foreign-born, white against

* *The Moving Picture World,* March 9, 1907, quoted by Louis Jacobs, *The Rise of the American Film,* New York, 1939, p. 75.

Negro, non-Jew against Jew, of dividing all in order to conquer all, but with the special, racist design to keep the Negro people upon the bottom rung of the ladder—that has been the studied policy of the rulers of this land. In this service they have methodically used the motion picture medium.

Were the film an inherently progressive art, as its special pleaders claim, it would not have appropriated, at the very outset, the stock attitudes toward the Negro that were reflected ad nauseam in the earlier entertainment media which served the ruling class. It would have given us truthful and eloquent portrayals of Negro life and Negro struggles. It would have given us Nat Turners and Sojourner Truths instead of "Rastuses" and "Sambos." It would have afforded a promising and ever-expanding medium for Negro talent.

It did none of these things, because it could not transcend the limitations of its class controls. It took over in toto all the slanderous attitudes of its forerunners in the bourgeois amusement field—the Negro minstrel show, the garish and buffoon vaudeville performances with their inevitable "blackface" comedians, the ludicrous stories of writers of the "white supremacy" genre portraying Negroes as innately and naively "children." It made hardly a token effort to utilize Negro talent, for many years assigning Negro parts to white players—parts that were uniformly stereotyped and offensive. And only such humiliating roles were open to the severely limited number of Negro players whom Hollywood in the course of time engaged.

Artists of the stature of Paul Robeson and Charles Gilpin expressed the burning resentment of their people toward the Hollywood racist pattern by spurning roles that maligned the Negro. The motion picture monopolists, allowing no other characterizations, made it impossible for self-respecting Negro actors to manifest their talents honestly on the screen. Moreover, this oppressive policy denied to the Negro actor his right as an artist to portray characters without regard to color line —Hamlet as well as Othello. Thus, American culture was immeasurably impoverished at its most popular level.

The commercial film did more than appropriate stock attitudes and stock racial characterizations. It multiplied a thousandfold the audiences for racism presented as "entertainment." It enabled the whole theme of "white supremacy" to be presented with new subtleties and a whole new range of major deceptions that were not possible in older

media. It gave the white ruling class new techniques of production and new methods of advertising to justify its reactionary chauvinist myths.

The ruling class, be it remembered, had long before the advent of the cinema betrayed the Negro people in the South to the counter-revolutionary plantation oligarchy. The Hayes-Tilden perfidy of 1876 had sealed the restoration to power of the Bourbons in the post-Reconstruction state governments of the South. In the opening years of the century, with the newly emerged epoch of imperialism marked by "reaction all along the line," the completion of the systematic disfranchisement and segregation of the Negro in the South was carried out, in full violation of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Constitutional Amendments. Colossal fraud, terror, lynch-law and the Ku Klux Klan ruled the South to keep the Negro in "his place." The "white supremacy" strategem served the Southern plantation feudalists and the controlling finance capitalists of Wall Street as an ideological mainstay of their white ruling-class oppression. Wall Street's Manifest Destiny ideology, first projected to rationalize the brutal oppression of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Hawaii and Cuba, and in its latter-day form of the "American Century" serving to conceal designs for global conquest, found simultaneous expression at home in the white chauvinist ideology used as a weapon to oppress the Negro people. This ideology increasingly permeated the bourgeois cultural field in all areas. The "white superiority" cult forced the misshaping of American history and social science as a whole to a Bourbon bias.*

The economics and politics of "white supremacy" found their reflection on the screen in film after film that maligned, ridiculed, and disparaged the Negro people. Not only was the life of the Negro people ignored, not only were their struggles and aspirations undocumented, but such characterizations of Negroes as were given were the vilest caricatures, the most hideous stereotypes, designed to portray the Negro as moronic, clownish, menial and sub-human. One need only bear in mind such characteristic titles as *Rastus in Zululand* and *How Rastus Got His Turkey,* which were made about 1910; the equally insulting *Sambo* series, which were turned out between 1909 and 1911; and the above-described *Fights of Nations.* To that high level of capitalist culture belonged also the series of shameful racist screen

* For an enlightening study of this point, see Herbert Aptheker's article "American Imperialism and White Chauvinism," in *Jewish Life,* July, 1950.

"comedies of errors," typified by *The Masher* (1907) and *The Dark Romance of a Tobacco Can* (1911), in which the man in quest of a woman ends in "consternation" when he discovers the object of his quest to be a Negro.

TOWARD the opening of the second decade of the century—roughly from 1910 until the outbreak of World War I—a new trend came into evidence in Hollywood's treatment of the Negro, side by side with the continued slap-stick, low comedy films of the past. The new trend was the Uncle Tom ideology.

To understand this turn, we need to see the political and social background of the United States during the years immediately preceding World War I.

It was a period of "popular distempers" and mass stirrings, brought to a head by the severe economic crisis of 1907. It was a time of strong anti-trust currents among all sections of the people, of agrarian discontent, of mass wrath against the spoils system and against corruption in administration. Anti-militarist sentiments pervaded the country; everywhere demands rose for the outlawing of war. The woman suffrage movement was gaining momentum, together with the struggle for equal rights of working women.

It was a decade of significant advances in trade-union organization and of bitter strike struggles, among which stand out the bloody Chicago Teamsters' Strike of 1905, the great Lawrence Textile Workers' Strike of 1912, and the strikes led by the fighting Western Federation of Miners. Those years saw the rise of the militant Industrial Workers of the World, reflecting the strong trends of opposition to the politically reactionary and organizationally constricting policies of the old-line Gompers leadership in the American Federation of Labor. Those were the years, too, of the growth of the Socialist Party and of mass socialist sentiment, which was registered, in the Presidential elections of 1912, in a vote of 900,000 for Eugene Debs. Within the Socialist Party a tide of struggle had set in, marking the rising challenge of the Left-moving proletarian rank and file to the petty-bourgeois opportunist leadership—a struggle which led to the organizational splits of 1909 and 1912. The great defense movement of 1906-07 in behalf of the framed-up leaders of the Western Federation of Miners, Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, which forced their acquittal,

further evidenced the temper of the workers. Thus, President Theodore Roosevelt wrote in 1906 to a leading senator: "The labor men are very ugly and no one can tell how far such discontent will spread."

To stay this rising tide of "discontent," the bourgeoisie, by a division of labor, both intensified its exploitation of the masses and assumed the mask of reformism. This was evidenced especially, during the 1912 election, in Roosevelt's demagogic attempt to capture the popular vote with his "Bull Moose" offshoot of the Republican Party. As in the simple binary fission of the one-celled amoeba, science could reveal no basic organic difference between the "Grand" Old Party and the Rough-Riding "Progressives." One need only note the fact that the "Bull Moose" convention nominated a Southern "lily-white" as Roosevelt's running-mate. Capital trotted out its most consummate hypocrite in the Messiah-tongued Woodrow Wilson, whose "New Freedom," purporting to blow taps over the trusts, proved to be the proclamation of license unlimited for corporate plunder.

THESE developments found their reflections in the film—basically and predominantly carrying the message of reaction, but also expressing to a very minor degree the militancy of the people's struggles.

In those years immediately preceding World War I, there emerged a series of anti-trust films, and a number more or less sympathetic to labor. *The Power of Labor* (1908) showed industrial workers on strike carrying their struggle to victory. *The Egg Trust* (1910) served to expose profiteering in food. *Tim Mahoney, the Scab* (1911) dealt with the shame of a worker who betrayed his union brothers. Another film with working-class sympathies was *Locked Out* (1911). Notable in this series was the screen version of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1914).

The fact that a number of such films were produced in that period cannot, however, be taken to mean, as certain film historians have claimed, that in those early years of filmdom the screen reflected the point of view of the "nickelodeon" masses. Such a view, which has even been reflected in Left-wing interpretations in this country, is related to the conception dealt with above that the film medium is endowed with a "mission" and is inherently progressive. Rather, it should be understood that at that time the process of trustification of film production and exhibition had not yet been completed, and there

fore the possibilities for achieving progressive features—never basic—in theme and treatment obtained to a certain extent.

It should be borne in mind, in this connection, that the first attempt in 1909 by the "Motion Picture Patents Company" trust, to monopolize production and distribution of films failed because of the resistance of large theatre operators and independent producers. Indeed, it was during this period (around 1913) that Hollywood was established as a counterpoise to the older eastern monopolists, and for a few years the battle between the rival groups slowed down the process of trustification and allowed a certain formal creative independence to find hesitant expression. For the older eastern trust tried to halt any advance beyond the cheaply made one-reeler, while Hollywood was forced by its efforts to win first a foothold, and then complete victory, to experiment with longer "feature" films under the influence of the European art film. But by 1914 the older trust had been decisively defeated. Long financially involved in the developing film industry, Wall Street now threw its weight fully behind the hegemony of the new Hollywood producers, who proceeded to take over control of distribution as well as production, and brought forth the strangling monopoly we know as Hollywood today.

THE period of mass ferment before World War I involved also the continuing struggles of the Negro people, marking the beginnings of the present-day Negro liberation movement. These struggles inspired to action a section of Negro middle-class intellectuals, advanced in thinking and fired with zeal for the freedom of their people. Under the leadership of W. E. B. Du Bois, then a young professor at Atlanta University, there sprang into being in 1905 the militant Niagara movement. Its birth was a Declaration of Independence challenging the dominance of the Booker T. Washington ideology of accommodation and acquiescence to the white ruling class, of dependence on the good graces of the white bourgeoisie for "improvement" of the Negro people's "lot." The Niagara organization made clear its stand, in the ringing declaration of its spokesmen: "We claim for ourselves every right that belongs to a free-born American, civil and social, and until we get these rights we shall never cease to protest and assail the ears of America with the stories of its shameful deeds towards us."

Although the Niagara movement was short-lived, its effect on the

white ruling class was unmistakable. Recognizing the growing ferment among the Negro intellectuals, the capitalist masters of America worked assiduously to "take over" the leadership of the emerging movement of the Negro people. To this end, they sought to impose on the movement a deadening "patronage," which could only have the effect of retarding a militant movement of the Negro people, led by Negroes and consciously directed toward the goal of national liberation.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People appeared in 1910 and reflected in its origins both that militance and that patronage. The former was shown in the fact that nearly the entire membership of the Niagara Movement merged with the N.A.A.C.P.; the latter in the fact that the new organization's entire official leadership, with the lone exception of Dr. Du Bois, was composed of whites. As Harry Haywood remarks in his *Negro Liberation,* ". . . with the launching of the N.A.A.C.P., a new pattern in 'race' leadership was set. It was the pattern of white ruling-class paternalism which, as time went on, was to cast an ever-deepening shadow over the developing Negro liberation movement, throttling its self-assertiveness and its independent initiative, placing before it limited objectives and dulling the sharp edge of the sword of Negro protest."*

In the face of these developments in the political sphere, the screen portrayal of the Negro could not continue solely on the buffoon level of the *Rastus* and *Sambo* films. Hollywood continued, and even extended, its depiction of the Negro as mentally "inferior," continued his relegation to slap-stick roles. Yet, simultaneously, the times compelled something of a tactical departure from the old stereotype. Thus, there emerged in a number of films of that period a "sympathetic" Negro type—the classic Uncle Tom.

The Uncle Tom theme found expression in such films as *For Massa's Sake* (1911), *The Debt* (1912), and *In Slavery Days* (1913). The first of these shows a "faithful" slave who tries self-sacrificingly to discharge his white master's gambling debts by offering himself for sale.

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* itself appeared during these years in three film versions, with distorted emphasis upon the theme of Uncle Tom's devotion to little Eva, thus eliminating Harriet Beecher Stowe's central indictment of slavery.

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* Harry Haywood, *Negro Liberation,* New York, 1948, p. 181.

It was also in this period, during 1911, that *The Battle* was directed by D. W. Griffith, who, four years later, was to make *The Birth of a Nation*. *The Battle* set a precedent for all future Hollywood pictures dealing with the Civil War. It romanticized the Old South and the "sweet slavery days." It crystallized for film audiences all the high-flown, hypocritical legends of the slaveocracy—the "generous" colonels, the fine, indulgent masters, the "happy, carefree state" of the plantation slaves portrayed side by side with their "brutishness."

What was the significance of all these pictures? Essentially, they represented a shift in tactic to counteract the new liberation movement of the Negro people, as well as to hold back Negro and white unity. The main stereotypes of the Negro—"primitiveness," "childishness" and "buffoonery"—could no longer serve as sole rationalizations of "white supremacy." Uncle Tom was needed.

The tactic must deflect the rising mood of struggle for Negro rights while the turn was being made. Servile acceptance of inequality, collaboration with imperialism, the nostalgic beatification of slavery, the "mistake" of the Civil War and the North's "illegitimate" victory—this was the new poison-potpourri served up in the Hollywood fare. This has been the thesis of films dealing with the slave South and the Civil War during the forty years since.

During that time, too, to make the tactic more effective, Hollywood began to release its series of "white supremacy" films dealing with the "curse of mixed-blood." Those racist melodramas, typified by *The Octoroon* (1913), clearly were designed to stamp the Negro people as "social pariahs" for whom there was no liberation and with whom there was no association. The "mission" of such films was to accomplish, under new conditions, in the "serious" and "tragic" way what the utterly slap-stick, low-comedy pictures had been manufactured to do in their way.

BUT as the war drums began to beat, this tactic was found wanting. Hollywood made a decisive turn with the outbreak of imperialist World War I.

Woodrow Wilson's call in August, 1914, upon Americans to be "impartial in thought as well as in action" was but the opening note in that ascending scale of monstrous demagogy which served the re-election of He-kept-us-out-of-war Wilson—five months before he plunged us into war.

Involvement of the United States in the war was plotted from the first by the dominant circles of Wall Street imperialism. The ominous signs were present in the increasing direction of United States trade to the side of the Allied Powers, beginning with 1915; in the functioning of the House of Morgan since mid-1915 as central purchasing agent for the Allies; and in Washington's "benevolent neutrality" toward Britain's illegal blockade of United States shipping, in contrast to the stern notes addressed to Germany against her blockade.

War preparations demanded charging the atmosphere with the ideologies of jingoism, chauvinism, racism and brutality. Wall Street's plans for empire demanded the glorification of the white American "super-race." On the home scene this meant intensified attacks upon the Negro people. The flames of hatred were kindled against the Negro people in line with the policy of visiting the war burden upon the Negro and white toiling masses as a whole. To cope with the mass anti-war sentiment which prevailed over the land, it was necessary to undermine the markedly developing Negro and white alliance. The envisaged war production, which would necessarily absorb many Negro workers into industries, had to be guaranteed against the solidarity of Negro workers with white workers. With the cessation of the influx of cheap foreign labor consequent upon the outbreak of the war in Europe, Northern manufacturers had begun to stimulate the Northward migration of Negroes from the South. "Justifications" had to be prepared for residential segregation of Negroes, for the Jim-Crowing of Negro soldiers in the impending war, and in general for the increased national oppression of the Negro people.

Thus, we read in Du Bois' autobiographical account of that period:

> "With the accession of Woodrow Wilson to the presidency in 1913 there opened for the American Negro a period, lasting through and long after the World War and culminating in 1919, which was an extraordinary test for their courage and a time of cruelty, discrimination and wholesale murder."*

It was in 1915 that Hollywood, in keeping with its main strategy, produced *The Birth of a Nation,* which Wilson promptly praised in the words: "It is like writing history with lightning."

It is highly significant that Hollywood's first "super-spectacle," the

* W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn,* New York, 1940, p. 235.

longest and costliest film produced to that date, would have been a lying extravaganza glorifying slavery and vilifying the Negro people!

If, prior to that, the Negro had been stereotyped as clown or Uncle Tom, he was now disfigured as "beast." The foulness of capitalist "culture" has never been more glaringly revealed. By viciously falsifying the Negro's role in the Reconstruction period following the Civil War, by monstrously contriving scenes like that of the Negro legislators in session "lounging back in their chairs with their bare feet up on their desks, a bottle of whiskey in one hand and a leg of chicken in the other . . . the while intimidating white girls in the gallery with nods, winks and lewd suggestions,"* this picture set the style for all future slanders of the Negro people and distortions of the Reconstruction period. The film, concretely, aimed to "justify" the denial of civil rights and equal opportunities to Negroes, and to rationalize frame-ups, terror and lynchings.

A storm of protest arose when the film was released. Many theatres exhibiting it were picketed. Foremost in this campaign against the picture were the Negro people themselves. The protest actions of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People encouraged other sections of the population, including prominent individuals, to engage in the fight. As a result, the film was banned for a time in a number of states.

The picture has been revived repeatedly since then, even during World War II, at which time vigorous protest from the Negro newspapers, as well as from the Communist press, forced its withdrawal. The pledge of the Chief of the Bureau of Motion Pictures of the Office of War Information that the film would not be shown again has, like many such bourgeois promises, remained unfulfilled. Today this evil picture is again on display in various parts of the country.

No doubt, *The Birth of a Nation* contributed to the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan, which it glorified—an organization which by 1924 counted five million members.

From that time on, all Hollywood pictures dealing with the South or the Civil War have had a pro-Confederate bias. In not one is the North shown to have waged the just side of the war, or to have legitimately won the war against the slaveowners. Such pictures have

* Peter Noble, *The Negro in Films*, London, p. 37.

proved an ideological support for the alliance of Wall Street and the Southern plantation system in all its racist, pro-fascist, imperialist policies.

In the thirty-five years of capitalist film making since *The Birth of a Nation* there has been no more classic example of Hollywood's ruthless basic strategy with regard to the Negro people, undisguised by such tactical adjustments and manoeuvres as became necessary in later periods.

The basic strategy, as we have seen, is to perpetuate the myth of "white supremacy" in order to hold back the movement of the Negro people for national liberation and to prevent an effective labor-Negro alliance for common struggle against capitalist oppression. This strategy dominates the entire half century of the capitalist-controlled film in the United States. Concrete, scientific study of this film output shatters the claim that in the area of Negro theme and treatment, or in any other area, the motion picture medium is by its very nature a "progressive" or "people's art form. Such study definitely refutes any conception that the bourgeois film can develop along lines of increasing democratic content, as "a creative weapon in the hands of the artist." Or that the Hollywood motion picture, which is a key propaganda medium for promoting imperialist aggression and a third world war, is endowed with a "mission . . . to make men realize that they are brethren." Such theories are carefully cultivated by reaction in order to weaken the struggle against the capitalist degradation of the film, a struggle which today more than ever must be vigorously waged by both the people and the artist.

# right face

*ASIA FOR THE AMERICANS*

"The Independence days in Washington are as varied as the countries that celebrate them. . . . Washington does not put too fine a point on its definition of independence and, so long as the liquor is abundant and free, the occasion is held to be worth celebrating. One of the characters served up instead of firecrackers at the Siamese party said loudly, making the only immortal remark of the evening, 'My wife owns that part of Bangkok, Siam, which is not under water.' His name was not Pooh Prabhailakshana, or Mom Kuang Chuan Chuen Kambhu, all good Siamese names; it was Kelly."—*Elise Morrow covers Washington Society for the* Chicago Daily News.

*AMERICAN ABROAD*

*"'I feel,' said Miss Elsa Maxwell, 'I should do something about the grim international situation. I am therefore giving a dinner party at the Hotel Ritz in Paris tomorrow night, to emphasize the new unity between France, Britain, and America in the face of Communist aggression.'"*—The London Observer.

*C'EST LA GUERRE*

"Ninety members of the Officers Wives Club of Fort Hamilton, many with husbands now serving in Korea, pledged themselves to give up canasta for Red Cross canteen service for the duration."—*The New York Times.*

*NORMAL*

*"98.6° by Leon Z. Surmelian: A young college student discovers love, lust, and the Lord during a four-year battle against tuberculosis. Dan learns about love from Mildred, a fellow patient, and indirectly is the cause of her death. After receiving his discharge, Dan puts aside intellectual matters for carnal pursuits. He winds up at death's door but gets religion and makes a miraculous recovery. So-so tale."*—A review in *Retail Bookseller.*

# *In the Golden Land*

*by* · JOSEPH NORTH

HE SAW none of it when he arrived about the time of the Big Hunger in 1907. True, he saw the wide expanse of the blue Delaware and it brought a nostalgia for the Ukrainian river that flashed past the big shipyards at Nikolaiev, a hundred or so miles from the Black Sea.

It was strange, he said afterward, to feel that he had traveled five thousand miles across a continent and an ocean to settle in a town that resembled the town from which he had fled; was rearing a family in a Pennsylvania town much like the ancient town where he had lived his youth; working to feed his family at much the same work that brought him food under the puny Czar Nicholas.

He did not know that the Swedes had come first in the seventeenth century and settled nearby in the sullen, wooded heights which they called Ooplandt. It is now known as Upland. William Penn arrived some decades later to oversee his empire that rolled from the Delaware to the green mountains along the Monongahela and the Allegheny. The trunk of the tree to which Penn fastened his frigate is still there and he passed, many a time, the bronze plaque and rusty iron fence a few feet from the tracks of the Reading Railroad which skirts the waterfront. But he could not, nor ever could, read the inscription.

There the Negroes live. Some of them can trace their ancestry to the days of the Underground Railway. It had been strong in these parts. The Abolitionist Quakers persisted in their outlawry despite the forbidding ordinances godless men wrote in Washington.

A few miles from town, in the fertile backwoods near Swarthmore, some of the Negro freedmen remained to till the good Delaware County soil. In my youth you could encounter them amid the tall corn and

they still wore the plain, drab garb of the Quakers and addressed each other with "Thee" and "Thou."

The Swedes . . . the Englishmen . . . the Negroes . . . and now, the Slav.

LIKE his predecessors here, my father was a simple man, not prone to gnaw on regrets, but a few things puzzled him. They had called this the Golden Land, but work during this first year had been bitterly elusive. Months had fled by before he had been able to enter the high fence to wield the big, familiar hammer on the hard iron of the Baldwin Locomotive Works. Food was as hard to lay hands on as it was during the frequent famines of his youth. The bosses growled in a tongue different from those he had known under the Czar, but the tone was the same, unmistakable, carrying the ancient timbre of authority which demanded more, ever more, expended energy from his heavy sinews.

More, and this too puzzled him as he would saunter on Sundays along the river's bank listening to the lonely clang of the bell-buoy in midstream. As a skilled mechanic in the Frenchman's Shipyard along the ancestral Bug he had earned enough pay an hour, a day, a week, to bring his apple-cheeked bride to a neat, three-roomed apartment above the cobbler's store. It had had shiny furniture, the kitchen was stocked with food that satisfied even his huge appetite after a day at the forge.

He had traveled across half the world to find work in the Golden Land which paid less than he got under the Czar. But he shrugged his wide shoulders. Why complain? It was done, he was here, here to stay. Later when he had mastered enough of our tricky language he used to remark that he had got a wage-cut.

But then there was compensation. There were no pogroms here, he told his good friend, the gay blade Fedyos, who would visit him of a Saturday night with his long, dank hair slicked down with goose-grease. No pogroms. Besides, they say a workingman could better himself, could even, they say, become the great president of the great land —even though, he thought, as he scanned the saloon-window pictures of the vast, triple-chinned president they called Mister Taft, this was no workingman. The Czar's governor too had had his share of chins and stomach.

But then, it was a new land. You could move about, there were no rigamaroles of passports, police inspections, no abracadabra of kowtowings, Your Excellencies, Your Humble Servant and all the rest.

A man could be a man, nonetheless, he felt. He bore no cargo of illusion. He knew this earth was no easy conquest. But here even a Jew might be a man, upright, spared the need to cringe uneasily behind the walls at Easter, uncertain whether the Black Hundreds would swirl this day onto the streets with bludgeons. He had had enough of that.

For he was a Jew. True, he did not deal in commerce as he learned his neighbors had expected of him when they discovered his ancient religion. He had a trade, as his fathers and brothers had had; one cobbled shoes, another cut saddles, a third tailored clothes. He had learned the *kovil's,* the blacksmith's trade, and he was well satisfied with it. He liked the glow of the hot iron, the shower of sparks, the smell of hot metal and the give of hard iron to his hammer. It had netted him a good enough living and he felt confident, hammer in his broad hand, that he could bludgeon a livelihood out of any hard time.

He stood five-eleven, wide at shoulder and hip, barrel chested, heavy legged. His big, quickly smiling face rarely lost the cheer so characteristically his. A thick, drooping handle-barred mustache fell almost to his chin. A pair of shining, pitch-black eyes lay wide-set in a broad expanse of face. His cheeks bore a fresh bloom which he never lost until the day he bled to death at the age of thirty-eight.

That day his face was ashen, and I saw it and I shall never forget it.

Jehovah—whom he could take or leave—as he used to say, endowed him with a span of ten fruitful, sweated years in the Golden Land, during which he had built locomotives, mostly. Later when times grew slack there he fashioned axes at the nearby foundry, and finally when that plant shut down, he had worked in the great acid vats of the Viscose mill at Marcus Hook, sloshed about in long rubber boots that reached to his waist, heaving the huge barrels which, the superintendent believed, could only be handled by the wide-chested Slavs and rangy, sinewy Negroes. They always took him to be Slav.

HERE he met his fate. Few could survive long at this evil task: the fumes of acid corroded their lungs and soon they hawked blood; the weight of the barrels strained their guts and most men wilted here after a few years.

There was in him a profound pride of craft. I recall how he would walk down to the Reading Railroad along the riverside and watch the trains pass, the thundering passenger and the lumbering freight. I remember his excitement when he saw them pulled by a locomotive of the type he had worked on. "We made that," he would say quietly, pointing. I noted that quality when I worked in the nearby shipyard, a dozen years later, and I recall how the men who built the ships followed the career of their handiwork for years afterward, studied the shipping news to keep track. If one of the craft got into a mishap at sea they took it as personal tragedy.

He abhorred the post of overseer, foreman, superintendent. They were in league with the opposition—the Company—and hence could never be trusted. He had rejected an offer to become a foreman. This or that foreman might be a nice fellow, but. . . . There was always the But. And though a foreman lived across the street from us he never came to our house, nor we to his. The blacksmith was never his friend. The superior was "Mister," and I recall the foreman striding down the street, his sharp, angular face rising from a stiff, celluloid collar. I remember bridling, though I never knew precisely why, then. It was the same with the children of other workingmen in the neighborhood. We early imbibed a certain stiffness, an apartness, a separation from the sons of those who represented the Company. We would get wooden, move off in our games, when one of them appeared on the scene.

Early, I sensed in him a dignity that transcended the prevailing code which regarded the worker as an inferior in the social scale. He *knew* the trains would not run without him or those like him. He *knew* the social order would collapse were it not for his skill, his labor. And he expected his due for it.

"The worst job," I recall him saying, "is asking for one." The blacksmith regarded that necessity as the most galling of the tribulations that beset the sons of labor. I recall during the slack times, when men "got the sack," and the faces of the women grew haggard and the men's sullen—that his was the most forbidding of all. Then the dark eyes flashed ominously, the mustache seemed fiercer, and we kept out of his way. He remained at home, brooding, hostile, resentful of the company, the superintendent, the foreman. "The hell with him," he would say. "The hell with licking his boots for a job."

When my mother would suggest that he go personally and see about

work he would snap, "He knows where I live." At such times m mother would finally put on her shawl and go to the foreman herse to plead in the little English she knew that he be taken back. Th blacksmith pretended ignorance of her intercession. When she woul return and say, quietly, looking obliquely away, "He says they nee you there," he failed to reply, but would rise the following mornin bright and early, and catch the No. 37 trolley car to the plant.

Often I brought him his lunch, crossing the myriad of railroa tracks to get to the long, dark glowering building where he worke and we would sit on a stack of iron plates or on a wooden box ar he would open his lunch box cheerfully. It seemed he would alwa find an omelet between two great slices of bread. I remember how I would lift the bread to see if there was some variation on the eg "Sometimes," he would say with a smile, "sometimes I dream it w be meat." But, knowing the size of his paycheck, he did not complai

In fact, he rarely complained. I recall him mostly as a tender, sunn tempered giant of a man who would, during the cold, winter nigh carry us on his back to bed in the unheated upstairs chambers. H knew the sheets were icy and he would lie down on them to warm place for us. We regarded that as a parental rite and were surprise when we learned that the fathers of other children did not do likewis

In a vague way he was religious. It sprang from the customs of h youth, in the main, but he held—as many churchgoing workingm hold—a skepticism toward those who live by religion. He lost detail of the rabbi's departures from the simple, abstemious life regarded fitting for those who represent Jehovah on earth. And it w natural that he became the ringleader in the little religious war th scandalized our community and which is one of my earliest memori

After a time the city's Jews divided into two camps, like all oth immigrants: those who climbed the backs of their fellows to becor "pillars of the community," the others, who cobbled shoes, mend clothes, repaired windows—the shoemaker, the tailor, the glazier. Th latter group felt themselves to be of small consequence in comparis with the well-to-do. And the little men, the poor, clubbed together the Sabbath and during the week days, chafing at their inferior positi in the synagogue's affairs.

"We have a right to equal voice," he said to the shoemaker w

was a huge bear of a fellow with a shaven head and sharp, squirrely eyes. The cobbler nodded. The carpenter was there, too, a small, wizened man whose ramshackle home was overrun by a dozen children. The tailor who wore octagonal spectacles sat often in the corner of our small parlor, cross-legged, as though he were in his shop, stroking his small, pointed brown beard.

There they hatched their plans. The synagogue which they had nurtured and which became the focus of their community life had presently been usurped by the men clustered around the department store owner, a quarrelsome, arrogant boor who would, when it suited him, change instantaneously to a sweet-tempered, smiling fellow. They said of him that at such times he could urinate olive-oil.

"He regards us as house servants to run his bidding," the shoemaker said. The murmurs rose in the room lit by a big, smoking lamp that threw fitful shadows on the whitewashed wall.

The Jewish community had grown and the boor had decided they required bigger quarters, fancier, for the flock. He jammed through a resolve to abandon the small, three-story crumbling brick building in the poor quarter of town to build a large, "modern" structure near the city's center. The poor disagreed. "The synagogue suits us," the tailor had said quietly. "God will hear our evening prayers on Third Street as well as on Market."

But the boor was not to be swerved from his decision. The day came when the poor Jews gathered at their synagogue to find a steel padlock on the door. The rich had declared war.

Another conference in the lamplit room where the shadows flickered on the wall and they came to decision. That Sabbath they marched like a band of the dedicated to their synagogue. The burly shoemaker carried his hammer and with one blow the lock flew from its fastening. They walked in resolutely, certain that Jehovah stood by their side and they began the Sabbath prayer.

Word flew to the enemy and half-way through services the boor arrived in full fury. With him stood a big, embarrassed policeman who hesitated to venture past the outside threshold. The sight of the intruder, the bluecoat, with his club and revolver at his side, infuriated the cobbler and shoemaker. The very notion that the department store owner had dared to call upon minions outside the little settlement of Jewry proved incendiary.

A babble of cries rose within the Holy Place; and within a momer the little hall roared with sacred and profane epithets. The shoe maker jostled the boor; the little bearded tailor raised his voice a he pulled at his coat-tails. The policeman coughed, and stepped forwar menacingly.

Suddenly, amid the hubbub, the mustached blacksmith departe with the Holy Scroll which he bore in his arms as a mother carri a baby.

The startled silence froze the shouting, excited throng and th policeman gazed bewildered from one to the other. "Stop him," th boor shouted. "In the name of God, and the Law, stop that man."

The policeman stalked warily after my father, his worried eye c the mysterious object covered by purple velvet which bore golde Hebraic script.

I do not recall where my father said he planned to hold the Ho Scroll in safekeeping, nor whether he even had a plan, but he ha marched out into the bright sunlight of the street, the Holy of Holi in his arms.

The policeman dogged his footsteps, uncertain of his next actio "Arrest him," cried the boor. "Leave him be," cried the cobbler.

The policeman resolved his quandary by calling the precinct hea quarters and within a twinkle a police wagon rolled up to the sid walk. Four officers of the law forced the blacksmith and his Tor into the patrol wagon and off they went to the city jail. There th booked him and the Holy Writ and placed them in a cell. Throughc he refused to surrender the Torah, holding it with great care. T police, puzzled, and a bit fearful, hesitated to wrest it from h despite the adjurations of the department store owner.

So he sat in his cell bunk with the Holy Writ. Finally he laid carefully on the bunk and roared through the bars: "You have p God in jail."

The Chief of Police arrived, shook his head dubiously and parted. Elders of the synagogue came, men from both factions, a stared through the bars. Finally they retired, discomfited, to the an room where they consulted in low, worried tones. "Who ever he of such a thing?"

They cursed the boor for precipitating such a scandal and t prevailed over him. No charges should be preferred against

blacksmith: this was a matter that must be resolved within the family, so to speak. This proved the consensus and they persuaded the police authority to free the prisoner and his precious cargo.

The conclusion proved satisfactory to the poor Jews: the lock was taken from the door and they were permitted to retain their synagogue while the others went to theirs. The boor lost face among his followers, the majority of whom, ultimately, declared that the rebels had the right to maintain their own place of worship.

This I remember distinctly for it colored my attitude toward religion. As it did my father's. And I suspect, of all concerned. He spoke rarely of this episode, for, I believed later, he was uncertain that he had done the right thing. Even the hot-headed shoemaker made a wry grimace when he discussed the affair. "The Holy Scroll in a police wagon," he said slowly. "Where was it written? When did it happen before?" He clapped his hand to his cheek, "The word of God in a police cell with bars." And my father replied: "God's word is the poor's as well as the rich."

"We got our synagogue back," he would maintain calmly, obviously concealing the turmoil within him. "We got what we wanted. Sometimes," he shrugged his shoulders, "sometimes a man does things he would not do when it is peaceful. But it was a war."

I WAS about eight, and another thing I recall distinctly of that time. The religious war had passed over, but something new had entered the household. This was associated with the Holy Writ episode somehow perhaps because the attitude toward the man bore a worshipful quality. I knew this new man was not invested with the halo of sanctity, but there was something of reverence, respect, a commingling of love and veneration. The new man's name was Debs, and though nobody knew him in person, the way my father spoke of him made him a familiar figure in the household.

"He is for the poor man, the workingman," my father said to the shoemaker and the tailor in the shadowy parlor. There must have been considerable talk of Debs at the foundry. No Socialist party existed in the town, but the workers learned of Debs through word of mouth, and possibly a few read the *Appeal to Reason* which went into a thousand small communities in that time.

The great elections of 1912 came around and there were torchlight

parades in Market Street. The Republicans traditionally carried the town, and their ward-heelers suddenly evinced an interest in the people of our streets. There was more than the usual drinking on a Saturday night and I recall the tone of voice with which my father spoke of the five dollar bills that passed hands for the vote.

"Five dollars a voter," he said scornfully, "and some will even sell it for a glass of whiskey."

Our ward, like every other in the city, expected to go Republican and it did. My father went to the polls that Tuesday: his black hair slicked down, his droopy mustache carefully combed and he wore his Sunday best. The responsibilities of citizenship bore heavily on him, for he had just received his hallowed "papers."

Though he had not learned to read or to write English except laboriously to scrawl his name—he went off to the polls with an air of determination. He had forearmed himself with considerable study of the formation of letters that spelled the name of his candidate. He knew that the letters D-E-B-S did not spell T-A-F-T, the fat man, the "banker's man." And he knew that the other candidate had nine letters to his name R-O-O-S-E-V-E-L-T. All this he had learned from the undertaker's wife who lived a few doors from us and who visited our house frequently. She was a big, florid woman with a booming sense of humor who seemed to like the quaint ways of the immigrants. She had responded humorously to his many questions. He worried that he might confuse the four letters of Debs' name with the four of his detested opponent. So he had our neighbor write Debs' name out on a small slip of paper which he carried with him to the polls. "Everything's easy now," he thought, as he carefully folded the slip of paper in his wallet.

He came home, triumphant, for he had cast his vote for his man and he awaited the election returns. When they appeared, and our neighbor spelled them out for him, informing him of the results in our ward, he sat heavily by the table, listening intently.

"And how many for Debs?" he asked quietly.

"None for Debs."

My father exploded. "But I voted for Debs! Where is my vote?" Our neighbor regarded him carefully. "Not one vote for Debs," she repeated. "Maybe they didn't count your vote. Maybe they lost it."

He sat silently a while, then rose, put on his clean shirt, combed his

hair, dressed himself in his election clothes and left. He went to the ward-heeler who lived in the big, three story brick-house on the corner. He knocked on the door and when the "politician" opened it, my father unceremoniously demanded: "Where is my vote?"

The ward-heeler looked him up and down. "How the hell do I know where your vote is?"

"My vote," my father said, "my vote, I voted for Debs. I want to know where it is."

The ward heeler slammed the door. My father stood there, uncertain, then pounded on the door. The ward-heeler shouted from the other side of the door. "Go to hell," he said, "you and your Socialist vote."

My father continued to pound the door. "If you don't get away from here," the harassed ward-heeler replied, "I'll get the cops."

The blacksmith stood, hesitant, for a long moment. Then he turned away and returned home. He sat glumly for a long time, looking out the kitchen window.

"I voted and they didn't write it down," he muttered. "I got my papers, I voted for Debs, and there wasn't one single vote for him."

The little tailor with the pointed beard sat cross-legged on the other side of the room, drinking tea from a glass, sipping it through a square of sugar he kept in his teeth. The big shoemaker scratched his bald head and yawned.

"They counted the vote for the fat one," the shoemaker said.

This troubled my father for a long time, for years afterwards. It colored much of his later attitude toward politics. It certainly had an effect on mine.

# SCREEN FOR CONQUEST

*by* MARGARET MALTZ

*The following address was delivered at the "Message From Three Wives" meeting held at the Hotel Capitol in New York on August 30 under the auspices of the National Council of the Arts, Sciences and Professions.*

IN THE summer of 1947, the Hollywood Chapter of the Arts, Sciences and Professions Council conducted a two-day conference on thought control. It was and remains one of the notable achievements of that chapter. My husband and I came for the conference from the Island of Catalina where we were spending the summer with our children, and my husband addressed one of the panels on the subject of "The Citizen Writer." He said then, "If the gates of prison close on Howard Fast then the shadow of Rankin will fall across the desk of every writer in the land. And it will not leave of itself."

Day before yesterday I saw Howard Fast and Dr. Lyman Bradley in their prison blues at Mill Point, West Virginia. They had served their sentence—it was their last day. And I left behind, in the shadow of Rankin, Edward Dmytryk and Albert Maltz.

No, the shadow of Rankin has not left of itself—it has grown greater in these three years. It rests not only on the desks of writers, it hangs over the whole American scene, like the smoke pall that hangs over the lovely Kanawha valley in West Virginia, where the steel mills pour out smoke and fumes and ash over the green countryside.

The summer of 1947 was a time of some innocence. This was in the days when the Truman doctrine was new, and the Marshall Plan had just been announced. I remember that I heard it said at this very conference, and from the platform, that the Marshall Plan was the exact opposite of the Truman doctrine, and had been fashioned because of its failure. Some few storm signals made a few people uneasy.

But most people felt that Dr. Barsky and Howard Fast and my friend Charlotte Stern and the others would never go to jail—just as three years later many believed that the Hollywood Ten would not.

This was a time, too, when the menace of war seemed very far from the American people. The words "cold war" were to be found as a warning in the liberal press—they were never used in official government pronouncements as they are now. Yet at this time, when most Americans had not even heard the phrase the Hollywood Ten declared that the Thomas investigation was an attempt to tie the movies to the needs of a war drive—an attempt to enlist the most powerful of the mass arts for war, cold or hot.

To this prediction the hearings themselves gave evidence. Thomas and the committee members hammered away at the Hollywood producers "Why did you make *Song of Russia?*" "Why did you make *Mission to Moscow?*" "When will you make an anti-Communist picture?" At the end of the third day Thomas said bluntly, "*We* will make the proper suggestions to the producers." And he did. And I say that they were *im*proper suggestions. The blacklist of the Ten was the first of his improper suggestions. With the collaboration of the banks that own this highly centralized industry, the motion picture producers established the first public blacklist in years in this country.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that this blacklist was intended solely as economic punishment of the defiant Ten. It had the classic intention which workers in other industries know too well. And it partially achieved its purpose, intimidation of the rest of the movie makers, and through this a stranglehold on the screen. The committee's public demand for "hate movies" that would name the Soviet Union as the potential enemy was implemented in secret by what the committee called the "pay roll route." J. Parnell Thomas is a greedy little man quite unable to control his light fingers. He thrust them into the public till, and into the people's culture, and he stole more the second time. He embezzled what maturity and human dignity there had been in American movies.

WHAT has been the result of this meddling censorship? Let us leave to one side the ridiculous handful of "hate" movies which were rushed into production at Thomas' demand—*The Red Danube, The Iron Curtain, I Married a Communist*, which lost so much money

that it had to be retitled to look like a murder mystery on the marquees. The American public voted down this trend by staying away from the theatres. It had its effect, no doubt, but the damage to American culture has been deeper and more pernicious. A story conference in Hollywood today is likely to include suggestions like these, "How about we have him lose control of the car, and they both go over the cliff; the car burns but you see him thrown clear and crawling up the slope to her dead body." "No, I've got a better idea. This is really fresh. How about when she starts up the car she doesn't know it's in gear and smashes him against the garage wall. That's never been done." Scenes of torture, closeups of smashed features, sequences of anguished fear. The whole cult of blood and brutality in American films—what have these accomplished if not to prepare the unthinking to say, "Drop the bomb, and the sooner the better?"

It is possible that the people in this audience are not regular attenders at the movies. But the American boys in Korea have been regular attenders at the movies. They have seen *Kiss the Blood Off My Hands, White Heat, Brute Force, Gun Crazy, The Gun Fighter, Colt 45, Winchester 76,* and *Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye.*

Do you think these evenings of violence, blood, and sadism have not helped to prepare them for what the senior correspondent of *Time* and *Life* in the Pacific calls the "ugly war"—the "especially terrible war," in which "acts and attitudes of the utmost savagery" are forced upon our twenty-year-olds out there? With the full knowledge of these past three years, we shall be naive if we do not see that it was intended so. Thomas made the "proper suggestions to the producers." Those who profit from war dictated these "proper suggestions."

If there can be any doubt of this, the Appellate Court decision, which sent the Ten to jail, placed the issue. Because the Supreme Court refused to review this decision, it now stands as the law of the land. "No one," the decision reads, "can doubt in these chaotic times that the destiny of all nations hangs in the balance in the current ideological struggle between Communist thinking and democratic thinking people of the world. It is equally beyond dispute that the motion picture industry plays a critically prominent role in the moulding of public opinion." This being so, the Court concludes, people who work in the sensitive job of preparing scripts must be deprived of their civil rights.

So this is the meaning, and no less weighty explanation of the case of the Hollywood Ten will do. Or of the whole attack upon the intellectuals. It is an attempt to confuse and divide them, to frighten them off from using typewriters, paint brushes, movie screens and television screens, teachers' lecterns, and pulpits as organizers for peace. Those who plan war know well that the atom bomb, or even the hydrogen bomb, will not be sufficient ordnance unless they can count on the minds of the American people.

LAST Thursday the Senate passed a resolution proposed by Senator Edwin C. Johnson of Colorado, the same Johnson who proposed a scheme for licensing films a few months ago. The resolution, supposedly directed at Roberto Rosselini, "warned Hollywood that it objected to movies made by Communists, Nazis and fascists." It was buttressed by a report from Senator Johnson's Interstate Commerce Committee which besides castigating Rosselini mentioned the Hollywood Ten. Presumably if Senator Johnson can find the way to do it, he will try to ban their films from interstate commerce.

The American people must not be reminded of the concepts of democracy as given to the people of the Philippines, in *Back to Bataan.* When Edward Dmytryk, who directed it, went to jail in Washington, *Back to Bataan* was playing in the Washington theatres. They must not be reminded of the way the Nazis worked, by seeing *The Master Race,* which was conceived, written and directed by Herbert Biberman. They must not see *Blockade,* that memorable film written by John Howard Lawson about the Spanish war. And *Destination Tokyo,* written by Albert Maltz, which played here and in Hollywood a few weeks before its author went to jail. Warner Brothers begged the public to come to see it with a radio plug, repeated every half hour during the weeks it played four theatres in Hollywood: "Come to see one of the pictures which helped to win the war."

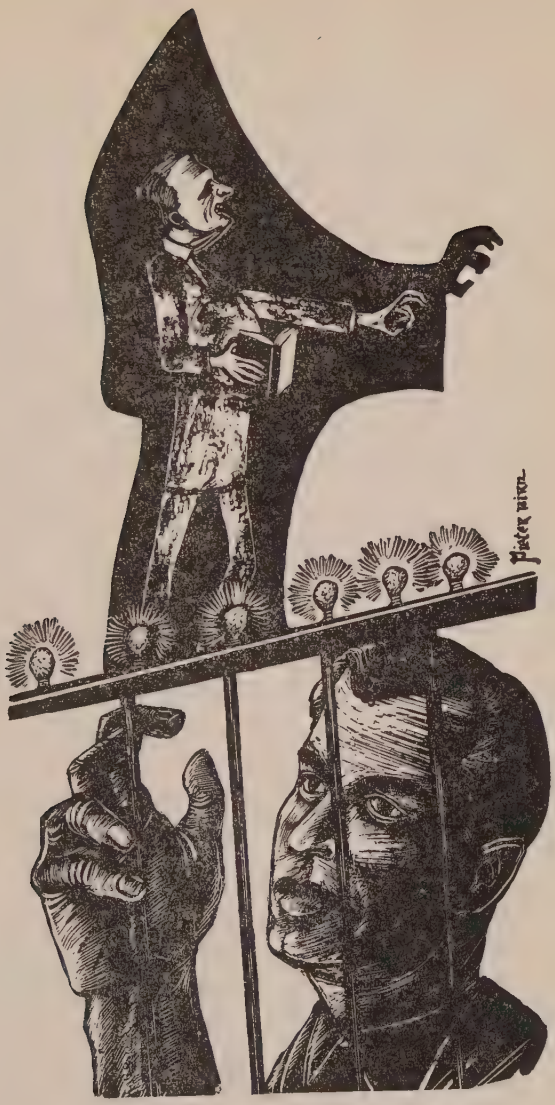
I have an addition to the resolution which I wish to offer to Senator Johnson. I was told by a friend who had seen it with his own eyes, that the former head of R.K.O. has a glass showcase in his bedroom, in which he keeps the plaques, medals, citations, and loving cups awarded to *Crossfire.* Mind you, *Crossfire* was finished and in the cans before he became Executive Producer of R.K.O. His sole contribution to this significant film was not to forbid its release. The rider which

I propose for the Senate resolution is this: along with the golden profits which R.K.O. is to cease and desist from collecting, let Dore Schary cease and desist from showing his medals—the medals that rightfully belong to the men who made the picture, his two former personal friends, whose friendship he denied on the witness stand, and whom he helped to blacklist, Adrian Scott and Edward Dmytryk.

NINE of the Hollywood Ten are in jail—the last man soon to go. It would seem that the issue has been lost. The men do not feel it is lost. The wives do not feel it is lost. You do not feel so, or you would have stayed at home this hot night. For more and more people recognize in the case of the Hollywood Ten, the fatal direction, the atomic fate, toward which our government is leading us. They see a signature for executive clemency for the Ten as a vote for peace.

And as we have seen here tonight, this attitude has spread over the whole world. It has not escaped notice in France that ten creative artists are jailed by the Truman government, author of the Truman doctrine. French newspapers mention their own Zola in this connection. Germans and Italians remind themselves—and President Truman—that our land gave refuge to scores of their leading intellectuals when fascism demanded that they silence their opposition to its anti-intellectual, anti-humane, and pro-war purposes. The Russians call on the memory of their great writers of the nineteenth century, who opposed their persons and their art to the tyrannies of the czar. In their bitter wisdom of the past two decades, the Europeans skip over the technicalities. They know well what winds are blowing when a government begins to imprison its writers and artists on the basis of ideas. A few weeks ago in Berlin there was a great mass meeting, in a hall about the size of Madison Square Garden. I have a photograph of the event. Across the platform, behind the eminent speakers, there is spread a banner. It reads, "Fast, Maltz, Bridges—victims of American reaction."

Yes, they are victims, perhaps the first of many. We lost those skirmishes, but we cannot lose this fight. We must not cripple ourselves with despair, we must challenge others who wait in cynical lassitude for the total destruction of their lives and their world. Let us protect ourselves, our sanity, our fighting strength, our true patriotism, by joining with others to return the world to Peace.



TWO AMERICAN WRITERS: T. S. ELIOT AND ALBERT MALTZ

# *A Day in the Life of*

*A Story by* A. E. SHANDELING

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AS HE drove his car up Telegraph Hill, Dr. Leslie Packer realized that for the past fifteen minutes he had spoken no word to the man at his side.

"Why don't you put the window up?" he asked sharply.

Professor Wyatt responded with comic alacrity, turning the lever energetically. It was late to close the window, now that they were almost to the end of the short trip, and the closing was an admission between the doctor and his passenger that they had welcomed the cold wind's intruding.

"I thought you were always alert to discomfort," said the doctor, half-smiling. "To your own and everybody's. It's your philosophy, isn't it?"

"And isn't it yours also?" Wyatt replied, amused.

"Medicine," said the doctor, "is not a philosophy with me, I'm sorry to say. It's a business."

"Such an unjust evaluation," protested Wyatt. "What of Jules? You give him every care and refuse any recompense."

"It's a matter of degree," said the doctor. "Do you want me to be altogether a bastard?" And the souring of this conversation sent the professor back into his acquiescent silence.

When Jules dies, the doctor was thinking, this friendship between you and me will come to an end. For a year he had known Professor James Wyatt, treating him for hardening of the arteries. They had talked together of the news of the day and the historical tracing of it, the doctor regarding his patient's knowledge simply as a garnering of diplomatic secrets unavailable to the layman. Then, three months ago, Wyatt had brought him another patient, Jules Long, editor of a Communist newspaper. So the doctor had learned that the history teacher

had a theory of history. Since that time his respect for the professor had lessened. There was something of the farmboy about this sixty-year-old man, something gullible in the spring and shyness of his body, in the way his iron gray bangs grew down to his little blue eyes. In his alliance with radicals he was like a farmboy studying for the ministry. It was only because of Jules, whom they both loved, that a friendliness, or semblance of it, remained between the doctor and Wyatt. But when Jules died, and he was to die in a few days, there would be nothing between them but an ideological disagreement. Wyatt, sitting by him with a thin erectness that was expectant of rapprochement, his hands lying expectantly, palms down, upon the black portfolio in his lap, was already a figure of the past.

Near the summit of the hill the doctor parked his black Buick. When he stepped into the street he heard below the hill the sounds of industry along the docks. It was impossible, he knew, that the men below, loading and unloading the ships, should spot him, should recognize him by his car and satchel and pause in their work to watch him cross the street, a small figure high, high on the hill. Yet, as he crossed, he did not glance down at them, afraid that he would catch their faces turning upward. The men down there were Jules' friends, had become his friends in San Francisco's great strike in 1934, when in his column of the newspaper he had told their side of the matter; or before that, when he had been a longshoreman himself, a lanky eighteen-year-old, reciting his Joe Hill kind of poetry to them. In the exploratory operation two months ago so many had offered their blood that they had drawn straws among themselves for six men to answer the call. It was this love of theirs that embarrassed the doctor. Why should he be one among them, susceptible, like them, to hero worship? This visit he wanted to unburden himself, to tell about himself to Jules, since the next visit Jules might no longer recognize anyone, and the struggle against this compulsion had strained his nerves all day. The struggle caused a kind of ridiculous, resisting jerk in his knees, like locomotor ataxia, as he went up the outside wooden stairs to the second floor apartment, but he knew that this was more an imagined thing than an actuality, unnoticed by the professor who followed a few steps below him.

Sarita, Jules' wife, let them in. Clasping the professor's hand, she sat him down beside her on the couch. Dr. Packer stood above her

while she told him of this and that in the patient's behavior, her dark eyes quivering with nervous exhaustion, her slender face and neck straining upward to him with an odd rigidity that came of agony and resignation interlocked. She had never held his hand, never sat with her elbow cradled in his elbow. Wyatt brought an affinity with herself and Jules that was more precious than the doctor's love for his patient and morphine to ease the pain. Since Packer had met her, he had tried to disparage her as a woman in order to assuage the troubling knowledge that she was not attracted by him, not spiritually, and therefore never physically, not even when her grief was over. His profession and the aristocratic touch that it gave to his comeliness, to his tall body, his long, plump face and thinning, blonde hair—this coalition of forces left her unimpressed. She was Mexican, of a revolutionary family, an agricultural organizer, and the doctor had tried to make himself believe that her philosophy was rather like an omnivorous thing, destroying her womanliness. But this disparagement had not worked. It had not worked, for now, as he stood above her, the pain of rejection came sharply to his chest. She was more womanly than his wife, possessing a dimension that his wife, and the women of his life, did not know enough about even to wish for. Harried on his way by this jealousy of a rejected suitor, he continued on to Jules' room.

Under the twisted blankets Jules was lying on his side, his head upon the mattress edge. He lifted his head at the doctor's step and complyingly laid it back upon the pillow. "Les," he said, "I thought you left. Did you forget something?"

Dr. Packer sat down in the leather rocker, tucking his hat and satchel beneath it. "Jules, I don't like to see you any oftener than you like to see me," he replied, and this mock friction brought to the doctor in full force the friendship that had been established between himself and this patient.

He sat immobilized by his rapid heart, his knees pressing into the bed's edge, his hands upon his thighs and was pained to see how the late afternoon sun found its own color in the patient's face and how each heightened the yellow of the other. He was ashamed that he cared so much for this man. This sentimentalizing was an emphatic reaction against his years of disbelief in any man's goodness. He had never believed that a man could be honest in humanitarianism. But something in him must have wanted to, because Jules was like someone he had

been looking for all his life. Jules—all the things he had done in his life, organizing the waterfront in San Francisco, soldiering for the Republicans in Spain, the writing of numerous pamphlets on urgent issues, and the writing of labor songs that were sung, Wyatt had told him, even in other countries, all this had been done with a naturalness that made it unnatural to question his motive. Even the physical plainness of him attested to his honesty, for with his small, square face, his rope-color hair, his gangling body and his big hands upon which the knuckles rose like periwinkles though he was still a young man—only forty, the doctor's age—he was the son of the proverbial washerwoman or the son of the miner. No one else had given the doctor a pride in his own background, in his father who had tanned leather, in his brothers who followed lowly trades. Jules turned the lives of common people legendary.

"Wyatt is with me," the doctor said. "He stopped by at my office, and we were both on our way to see you."

"Is Sarita treating him right?" Jules asked. He had closed his eyes, and his lips moved against the pain like the lips of a child slowly and earnestly learning to talk.

From the other room came the voices of Sarita and Wyatt, her voice both swift and tired, having a quality of revelation that stemmed from her curious and generous nature, a nature that learns and shares the learning. Packer, listening, knew suddenly how he would begin this story of himself. He would tell about his wife, Phyllis.

"DO YOU know," Jules said, "that Wyatt has been dismissed from the university for refusing to sign the loyalty oath?"

Dr. Packer nodded stiffly as if the news had already been given him by Wyatt. "That's bad," he said, disgruntled for having been left out. "But I don't see it. It's a loss of status he'll be sorry for. When a professional man makes a martyr of himself it's a little foolish, isn't it? He should leave that to the ones who have nothing else to do." He spoke half-in-truth, half-in-jest, in a way that would stimulate Jules to an awareness of his physician's needs, but Jules said nothing. It was upsetting for the doctor to have his words accepted at face-value by this man who, up to now, had always pointed out to him his misconceptions. And as if Jules were to die within the hour, the doctor said hastily, without preliminaries, "Do you know why I haven't brought

my wife to see you?" and sat alarmed by his plunge, his mouth moving once in a spasm of relief and regret.

"You make professional calls," said Jules, smiling. "Is it usual to bring your wife?" But he moved his head alertly.

"Don't make light of my friendship for you," Packer scolded. "She wouldn't like you," he explained. "You wouldn't like her, either."

"If you blame her for that," Jules said, "then you blame her for more than that."

"Blame?" he asked. "Nobody's blaming anybody." This was his confession, to tell as he liked, and he was rankled to have it taken over. "There's not a hell of a lot to blame anybody about. Do you know when I was a boy my mother made me a pair of socks from an old flour sack? She sewed them up and I wore them because the ten cents that a pair cost was enough to buy the family a loaf of bread? If I've looked out for myself, it's forgivable, isn't it?—if I've given in to my wife's concern for status? There's a great fear in me of hunger," he said, "—and contempt."

Jules did not open his eyes. "We're all afraid of hunger and contempt," he said, "but there are different ways of fighting them. Some of us fight only for ourselves, and some of us fight for everybody, including ourselves."

"Let me tell you about my wife," he insisted, "and don't interrupt me." But his confession was bogging down. He had hardly got started and here it was bogging down like a wheelbarrow in a muddy road. With a despair rising in his chest and extending down his arms so that he could not move his hands from his knees, he tried to continue, and it was like beginning for the first time. "Over the years," he said, "I've seen the gulf widen between us. I was, for her, a young man with promise. Rather brilliant, I guess, with a kind of persuasive personality that I was surprised to learn I had. You can say that, for my part, I married her for her social position. It's true, because, although she's a beautiful woman, I can't say that I would have fallen in love with her if she hadn't had her background, and property. It's common practice," he said. "I remember that the resident surgeon's wife made a list of the unmarried doctors on the hospital staff, and we were invited to upper crust parties, things like that." He cleared his throat. The despair had not left, although he was talking along as he pleased, but had caught like a melting pill in his throat. "But the essential me—" he said

"There's been a groping after, well, after some meaning." Despite himself, a high note of petulance edged his voice, as if Existence were a wealthy patient who had not paid his bill.

JULES' eyes were open. Slate-dark with pain they were fixed upon the doctor's hand, which was on a level with them. "Les, tell it to a live man or I'll think you want it buried with me. You want to remember this as an hour of clarity, and this hour, you think, should be enough to atone for a life that doesn't set well and never will. Why don't you talk with Wyatt about it? Ask him what he found in declaring himself against the oath, instead of what he gave up. But you don't want to do that. You'd rather not. Because Wyatt is going to continue to live, and so he'll be like a judge, one who expects action after you tell him your yearning. But I'm going to die, and so it's all right to tell me." He turned his face upward, and it was shining with sweat. "Go tell it to a live man, Les," he urged.

When the doctor left the room, he had almost to feel his way, for to be dismissed so abruptly from confessional brought on a touch of nausea. After Sarita and Wyatt had gone in to see Jules, the doctor remained for a few minutes in the front room before returning to his patient. A faint cold sweat had broken out over his body. He had cared too much about this man's estimation of him, and in trying to explain himself he had lost his footing, he had lost his dignity. On the mantel was a little clay bowl of cigarettes, and he plucked one, and a match from another bowl, and lit a cigarette, handling it with trembling, flute-playing fingers. Then he returned to the bedroom, on his way picking up a kitchen chair for himself.

When he was leaving, Sarita, who followed him to the door, asked, "If you've no call to make now, why don't you stay and have some supper with Wyatt and me?"

"Oh, but I'm sorry," he said, opening the door, not even turning his head to speak over his shoulder but sending his voice down the stairs. "My wife's expecting me. She's having a few guests."

As he went down the narrow stairs, the lamps came on across the street. Along the Embarcadero lights were already burning on the ships. To breathe, to cleanse his face, he paused on the curb, threw back his head as if taking note of the evening sky. No, he could not have sat down to supper with her and Wyatt. Something in

that would be reminding of his years of hunger, his years at the university, of his abject maneuvering among his acquaintances to be favored with a meal. If he stayed, if he sat down to supper with them, he would be as much the outsider as he had been then among the well-fed. With his face turned casually up to the gray fog moving across the sky, he felt a strong, almost gagging revolt against the thought of being again, at this late date, the beggar at the table.

In the vestibule of his house, as he laid down his hat and satchel on the table, he heard women's voices from the living room, and underwent a peculiar fright, felt a reluctance creeping along his skin, like a sorcerer must feel who has called up some voices conversing in the future. Lowering his head to glance into the round mirror, he saw his face entirely surrounded by plum-color walls. With his palm he stroked his hair along his temple, as if, in the gesture, he could allay the expression that Jules had put into his eyes. Fortunately, his wife's guests were going to believe that this quarry's look was occasioned by their visit: He was, they believed, cornered by their shortcomings. They liked this estimation of themselves, they preferred not to be his equals in the rigors of experience. With a mild arrogance that he always assumed toward them ready on tap, he opened the living room door.

Phyllis was standing by the fireplace, a drink in her hand, her dark head to the side, listening for him to turn the knob. "Oh, Les!" she cried, coming to meet him. She put her hand upon his shoulder, gently pulling down the padding of his coat. "Can you spare a few minutes to visit in your own home?"

Her guests laughed. With his arrogance suddenly failing him, he said his good-evening to them, to Mrs. Kyle, a tall, elderly woman, to Mrs. Dunnigan, little and sullen, estranged from her husband and from everyone else; and was introduced to Mrs. Kyle's daughter, a Mrs. Fitzgerald, visiting from the East, and shook hands with Mrs. Fitzgerald's sixteen-year-old son. His own son, in dark blue suit and saddle oxfords, sat in the discomfort of ten-years-old, his arms in stiff, self-conscious ease along the arms of his chair.

"May I have a drink of some sort?" he asked his wife, and no sooner was he seated by Mrs. Kyle on the couch then a whiskey was in his hands.

"We see him only on the rarest occasions," she said to her guests

perching herself on the arm of Mrs. Fitzgerald's chair. With this attention to his absences she pointed out to them that by her tolerance she accompanied him on his duties, that she effected cures and shared in his humaneness.

Dr. Packer set his glass to his knee, clasping it in both hands. Jules' accusation was as obvious upon him, he felt, as a grave-digger's shovel. He shrugged, to rid his shoulder of it, but it remained. Lifting his eyes, then, to Mrs. Fitzgerald's, he gazed into them with such a need of commiseration from her and from them all that her eyelids went down with a tremor.

"I've just come from a patient of mine, a man I've been treating three months now," he said. "I tell you about him because I want to answer those persons who speak with slanderous tongues against men of my profession. For I've been treating—treating without cost, mind you, not one cent for myself—a radical, a Communist, a man with whose theories I strenuously disagree. But through the humanity of my heart—" And to his surprise he found that he had lifted a hand and was tenderly, with three fingers, tapping his heart. The shame he felt for desecrating this friendship led him into a shameless use of an actor's gestures. "—I have been doing my utmost night and day. He came to me when it was already too late, unfortunately. It's a case of cancer. But there are always things to be done in mitigating pain."

Then he dropped his gaze to his glass, leaving the company stricken. Their eyes were aswim with sympathy for the doctor, their breasts were on the verge of heaving.

"Is there no cure?" Mrs. Kyle asked.

They were all asking it through her, for cure would be affirmation of the doctor's nobility and of theirs too, for recognizing his. A cure would have nothing to do with the patient.

"None," he replied, shaking his head.

Succor was given him here. He had come home to have his nobility revitalized by these women who sat among glowing lamps, making soft harem music with their voices and the clink of their rings against the crystal. With his eyes wearily closing, he lifted his glass and drank.

# *Literature & People's Democracy: II*

*by* JOSEPH REVAI

THE sense and purpose of the debate with Comrade Lukacs* is to overcome in our own ranks those views that have hindered the unfolding of the fresh, young forces in our literature, the turning of our literary life toward the People's Democracy and socialist construction. Such views have held back the education of our writers in the spirit of socialist realism and hampered their learning from the rich experiences of Soviet literature.

There are still some who fear that the development of Hungarian literature will be stunted and the freedom of the writers' creative work taken away by the Leninist principle of Party literature, by the leading and guiding role of the Party in the field of literature. They fear that the continuity of Hungarian literature may be interrupted. If there is a certain break in the continuity of Hungarian literature, it is not we who are "responsible" but life itself. There is a break not only in the development of Hungarian literature but in the development of Hungarian society. Whoever imagines that a revolutionary transformation like the one that has occurred in our country does not affect the "continuity" of literature, has no idea of the inter-connection of social and literary life. It is useless to whine about a certain break in the continuity of literary life; one must boldly face the facts.

Besides, the mourners forget certain important, positive factors which are organic to the so-called "break in continuity." They forget, first, that the leading role of the Party in literature, the assertion of the principle of Party consciousness, means an unprecedentedly intimate

* This is the second and concluding installment of this article. The first appeared in our September issue.

connection between literature and audience. The "freedom" of the writer in bourgeois society was, at the same time, a hopeless isolation from the people. In the society of socialism in construction and of socialism already built the people no longer want to buy "ready-made" literary works—manufactured literature, so to speak; the people participate in the creative work itself, making known their wants and tastes and striving to induce the writers to "tailor" their works to "measure."

The leading role of the Party means, in the final analysis, conveying to the writers the "orders" (that is, the requirements and criticism) of the people. It involves the fitting of literature into the life of the working people from which it was torn as a result of a century-long process; it means making literature serve socialist construction, social education. Does that imply pulling the strings, ordering around, battering down? Not at all. The Party wants to guide literature by means of its ideas, by creating a literary public opinion which is not independent of the opinion of the people, the working class, the Party.

YET, it may be objected, some writers have become silent. But is the reason for their silence that they are not allowed to write, or is it that they cannot write because they do not know what to write and for whom? In times of great revolutionary transformations it is inevitable that a number of old writers should be left behind, that the ground should slip away from under their feet. We are compensated for this break in literary "continuity" by new writers emerging out of the people "with new songs of new times."

Whoever falls through the sieve of time should blame himself. We certainly cannot be reproached with having failed over the years to draw sufficiently wide the circle of those whom we tried to persuade to turn against their own past and join with the People's Democracy.

After 1919, there was, heaven knows, no lack of "self-criticism" on the side of those writers who ever committed anything against the old order. There was plenty of breast-beating when the question was one of making themselves, like prodigal sons, acceptable again to the restored order of great landlords and big capitalists.

After 1945, there was no trace of anything like that, and there was far more reason. For quite a few writers under the Horthy regime, even among those who were in the "opposition" and bemoaned the

people's troubles, fraternized with the ruling regime, exchanged toasts with the "historic class," flirted with the fascist "ideal of the epoch." Such writers were guilty of disloyalty to progressive mankind, the revolutionary working class, the Soviet Union—in the last resort to the Hungarian working people.

Did we hear one honest self-critical word in connection with this? What is one to think of a writer's loyalty toward his own work (not to speak of his loyalty toward the people) when he does not consider it necessary to face himself and analyze his own past errors? A rather considerable part of our old writers will be able to integrate themselves decently and honestly into the creative literary work of our People's Democracy only by practicing serious self-criticism. Let it be understood well: it is in the first place not we who demand that, but their own literary honesty, if they have it, and the interest of the true continuity of their own spiritual and literary development. Otherwise the past will become a dead weight drawing them back and preventing them from creating truly significant literary work.

Does all of this mean that the Party orients itself exclusively on the new socialist writers and abandons the continuity of Hungarian literature, the work of our old writers? No, it does not mean that. This has to be emphasized with particular force, for lately certain "leftist" sentiments and tendencies have emerged which seek to use the Leninist principle of "Party literature" apart from time and place, not as a means of education but as a cudgel, excluding from the literature of democracy each and every one whose work does not measure up to the Leninist standards.

THE struggle for Party consciousness in literature, for the assertion of the principle of Party literature, does not rule out "fellow travellers" and allies on the literary front. The Bolshevik Party of the Soviet Union has from the moment of the birth of Soviet literature educated writers to embrace the Party position and fought for the hegemony of proletarian literature. But, at the same time, it has always taken a stand against conceit, for helping ideologically and supporting in a friendly way the peasant writers, against alienating the "fellow travellers." In 1925, the Bolshevik Party stressed "the need for the greatest tact, discretion and patience toward those literary groupings that can and will march with the proletariat." This is repeated in 1928: "The proletarian writers have to fight against all inclinations to treat

the fellow travellers in a light-hearted or contemptuous manner." The struggle for the hegemony of proletarian literature and the patient education of the allied writers: this was the ideological process out of which a united Soviet literature, which is Party literature in its entirety, emerged.

Our "leftist" zealots forget that Soviet literature, as Party literature, is the result of long steadfast work which entailed the struggle against enemy literature, the criticism and support of the well-meaning section of the allies and fellow-travellers' literature, guidance, help, but also constant criticism and self-criticism in regard to proletarian literature and against the phenomena of "leftist" conceit, guild-like self-isolation and striving for literary absolutism that cropped up within it.

Our own literary development, of course, must not and cannot copy the development of Soviet literature. The differences stem from the peculiarities of the social development of the two countries. The Soviet Union started in 1917 with the dictatorship of the proletariat, continued with the civil war and with war communism, then went over to the New Economic Policy, giving a certain leeway to capitalism in order to push it back step by step and then to liquidate the capitalist elements by a general offensive and to build socialism in the course of the Stalinist five-year plans. We did not start with the dictatorship of the proletariat; we did not have civil war and war communism; we gave a certain leeway to capitalist elements but not after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the period of war communism; they had enough "freedom" in the coalition period of the People's Democracy; we are building but have not yet built socialism. All of which means—to put it schematically—that our literary development can be relatively "more peaceful" than was that of Soviet literature but can at the same time and to a certain extent also proceed faster. We do not have to organize the proletarian writers as a separate fighting group and trend in order to achieve socialist realism, the victory of the principle of Party literature; we can skip the so-called R.A.P.P. period of Soviet literature. At the same time, we have to reckon much less with strong hostile literary groups and we can undertake much faster to educate our allies and well-meaning fellow travellers and develop their literature into a truly socialist-realist literature.

Even keeping in mind the significant differences in our development and the possibility of "leaps" we must know that there are two basic tasks that we cannot "skip" precisely because socialism is not yet built

in our country and our literature is not yet a united, socialist-realist, Party literature. We cannot skip the task of the struggle for the hegemony of proletarian literature, of socialist-realist, Party literature, nor the task and stake of the competition, of the mutual intellectual challenges between the different literary trends and writers. Comrade Stalin said in 1929: "Of course, it is very easy to criticize and to demand the outlawing of non-proletarian literature. But that which is easiest must not be considered the best. The point is not to outlaw but to push back step by step the old and the new non-proletarian trash in the way of competition, by displaying true, interesting, artistic Soviet-conscious plays, that can replace it."

Stalin said this in connection with the repertory plans of certain Soviet theatres. Of course, we must not interpret his words to mean that because we have no "old and new non-proletarian trash" we ought to create it in order to be able to compete with it, but the methodological essence holds true in our present stage of literary development. The "leftist" zealots must understand that it is impossible to create a new socialist literature by administrative measures; the task is to educate and to be educated. On the other hand, the allies and fellow travellers among the writers ought to reflect that being allies and fellow travellers can be only a transitional stage, a stepping stone at which one cannot stop. They are being urged on to develop toward socialist realism, toward Party literature not by us alone but by life itself. Serious literature—whatever the art form—must mirror the developing reality, must occupy itself with the great questions in the center of national life whose solution is being tackled by the people. In the center of our life stands the building of socialism, the leading role of the Party is inherent in life itself. All this cannot, in the long run, be pictured in any other way than by the creative method of socialist realism. The building of socialism, the leading role of the Party in the life of the people, cannot be, or at least can less and less be, depicted from the standpoint of an outsider above the people's struggles, from a neutral standpoint, by the "objectivism" of the old realism. This is proven, for instance, by the development of Peter Veres. This peasant realist writer while depicting the new life of the peasantry—that is to say, not on the basis of some preconceived "political" purpose—bumped into the question of the producers' cooperatives, of the communist peasant, of the role of the Party, and he developed in the course of the literary solution of these questions,

under the compulsion of creation as it were, from peasant realism into socialist realism. It is proved—even though for the time being from the negative side—by Gyula Illyes whom unfolding life will furnish less and less possibilities of artistic experiences and material for the writing of such beautiful poems as "Both Hands" which takes a stand, apart from time and place, for the working man generally, but avoids every reference to the man of today, who does not work in the abstract but is building socialism.

THE hegemony of proletarian literature cannot be ordered. It must be earned. There is a strong tendency among our "leftists" to underestimate or ignore the classical traditions of Hungarian literature. Here, too, Soviet literature should serve us as an example. The Bolshevik Party has consistently fought the underestimation of the classical heritage, seeing this as a major symptom of the "leftist" deviation of proletarian literature and its self-isolation, a hindrance in the realization of its leading role.

Our "leftist" zealots often argue that the time has not yet come for us to claim the Hungarian classical heritage, for today we would thereby be carrying water to the mill of the "right wing" and endanger the popularization and spreading of Soviet literature.

Is it worthwhile to spend paper refuting such foolishness? Unfortunately, it is necessary, for this foolishness exists and is dangerous. It is due to this "leftism" that in our factory libraries Janos Arany, Zsigmond Moricz, Kalman Kikszath often cannot get a "place." This is why in the cultural columns of our papers (alas, the cultural column of *Szabad Nep* is no exception either) we find scarcely any critical evaluation of our classical literature. This is why certain of our "radical" critics consider the task of popularizing Soviet literature as being in conflict with the task of popularizing the Hungarian classical literature. This is why, in tracing the revolutionary-democratic line of our poetry, some people throw out Janos Arany or Mihaly Vorosmarty.

Save us from such "leftist" friends, for it is easier to deal with our enemies. Whenever Soviet writers and artists visit us, their critical remarks and friendly counsels invariably include the opinion that we Hungarian Communists neglect the classical heritage of our literature and art. To them it is natural that the creation of Hungarian socialist culture, which involves learning from Soviet culture, is inseparable from the revaluation and assimilation of the traditions of our own

progressive culture. Soviet people had to discover Mihaly Munkacsy for us. The Soviet writer, Tikhonov, had to explain to us what treasures we have in the past centuries of Hungarian poetry.

WHY must our proletarian literature, our Party literature, every worker on our cultural front, radically change this attitude? In no small measure because of the requirements of craftsmanship. The serious study of classical literature is necessary, among other reasons, in order that our new writers should learn how to write better, how to depict men more fully and profoundly, how to talk to our public in a more beautiful Hungarian. Our classical writers—let us admit it —have depicted their world better than our new writers have depicted our world. Our young socialist writers are certainly going to develop. But for that it is necessary that they should learn from life, from the Party, from Soviet literature and last but not least also from the great Hungarian writers of the past.

One cannot depict the present without knowing the past. The new socialist man has become what he is and will develop to a higher stage by conquering the old. How can one come to know the past world better than from our classical literature? We can instill patriotism only by awakening and keeping alive in our people the consciousness that there is a deep inter-connection between the struggles of the present with those of the past, that even while creating the new we are still continuing and consummating that which the best of the Hungarian people had started. Without the critical assimilation of the classical heritage there is and can be no patriotic education. Socialist culture is a fighting humanist culture. But our struggle for socialist humanism, for a truly human society rid of exploitation, is strengthened and broadened by the realization that the old inhuman world was hated not only by us but also by those great critical realists—like Jozsef Eotvos, Kalman Mikszath, Zsigmond Moricz—who have exposed with dramatic power the corrupt rottenness of the old world. We are the executors of the death sentence upon this old world, but Moricz in his novels, *Squires' Orgy, Relatives* and *Till Dawn,* already proclaimed that this world was doomed.

Valuing and studying the classical realist heritage does not, of course, imply that we give up criticizing the weaknesses and the class limitations of our great realist writers. We know that Jozsef

Eotvos was not only the author of *The Village Notary* and *Peasant Revolt* but also the man who got panicky in the storm of 1848 and who compromised after 1867. Likewise we do not forget that if Mikszath criticized the Hungary of the gentry with murderous satire, he also observed this decay with cynical humor without giving voice to the people's bitterness. Zsigmond Moricz in the last phase of his life recognized the people's revolution as the way out from the desolation of feudal Hungary, yet could not emancipate himself completely from a certain nostalgic sympathy, from a certain sense of "Hungarian solidarity" toward the pack of debased gentry who in *Squires' Orgy* set not only their own homes, but the whole country on fire.

Thus we do not close our eyes to the class limitations of our classical realists or to the shortcomings arising from those limitations; however, we know also that their work, their significance, their role in the history of Hungarian literature cannot be understood if one sees only their class limitations. Can we understand Jozsef Eotvos merely from the fact that he was a baron and cabinet minister of that compromising Batthyany government that left freedom in the lurch? Can we understand Mikszath merely from the fact that he was Kalman Tisza's card partner?

Those who belittle the classical heritage often mask themselves by sticking a "class" label on the great critics of the past. However, we have by no means evaluated the whole work of the critical realists merely by calling them "bourgeois." Of course they were bourgeois, and some of them even stood with one foot on feudal ground. Yet we should not forget that the best spokesmen of the bourgeoisie were also once the spokesmen of progress, which means that in their own age they voiced the desires and strivings not only of the bourgeoisie but of the whole people. That is why we must regain the living contact of ideas with them, knowing well that our culture, which is socialist in content and national in form, is built to no small extent on the culture of the Hungarian people. To this culture belong these great writers who criticized and exposed the past and thereby expressed the judgment of the people.

THE Party will support with all its strength the young and developing shoots of our new socialist-realist literature. This support involves, however, not only goodwill and even some tolerance toward

the inevitable, initial difficulties of growth, but also criticism, the raising of demands and requirements. The hegemony of socialist-realist, Party literature depends in no small measure on whether we succeed in raising its level.

The main weakness of our young and growing socialist literature is a certain schematism of characterization. In the novels, in the plays, the figures do not yet come sufficiently to life. Often one has the feeling that it is the writer rather than reality itself speaking through the characters. What Marx stressed in his discussion with Lassalle by contrasting Shakespeare's and Schiller's creative methods is as valid for socialist literature as it is for the literature of the past. The writer should write the truth, should describe reality; he should not interfere with what his figures have to say, he should let them talk. This by no means runs counter to Party consciousness in literature. Quite the contrary. The writers should not bring the role of the Party into life from the outside, for it is inherent in reality itself.

In this connection we encounter two extremes in our new literature, in the attitude of our writers. One is an infantile disorder which our new writers will outgrow: a superficial enthusiasm which assumes that a poem becomes a good socialist poem by putting the Party in it—whether with small or big initials—like an exterior decoration. The other and more dangerous extreme is lack of feeling, deteriorating into cynicism: while Party consciousness and labor enthusiasm more and more permeate life itself, some people write as if this deep feeling and consciousness were not an organic part of reality but merely its artificial and exterior appurtenance. The disbelief of such writers in the new reality thus degenerates into cynical "objectivism." We see this tendency unfortunately in the otherwise talented young Sandor Nagy.

A certain schematism of our young socialist literature, a certain anemia of its characters, comes from the fact that some of our writers shrink from describing the inner life and from describing the problems of personal life. This may be an understandable reaction to the extreme introspection of bourgeois-reactionary literature, its masturbatory "psychologism"; but let us be careful not to throw out the baby with the bath. Let us not forget the magnificent words of Stalin: "The writers are the engineers of the soul." The man of socialist construction, the worker, the peasant of the producers' co-operatives, the engineer par-

ticipating in the brigades of the Stakhanovite movement, is not only overfulfilling the plan, not only busy with deep-ploughing, not only introducing technical innovations. In close interaction with his work he grows and changes in his psychological life. Our socialist-realist literature must not neglect this side of the development of our society and our people; otherwise it is bound to become arid and stiff.

Connected with this is the other question: some of our writers turn their backs on the problems of private life. Bourgeois literature turns its back on public life, its heroes and characters are mostly non-political beings; they have seemingly nothing to do with society, with class struggles. Proletarian literature correctly depicts men consciously acting, participating in public life, fighting. But people who participate as fighters in public life have also their private life which is not independent of their political consciousness, of their social work, but stands in close interaction with it. The Stakhanovite also loves, has a family; but he loves in a new way and molds his relationship to his family, to his wife, to his child in a new way. Our literature cannot turn its back on these problems.

Everybody who knows life knows how many difficulties and even conflicts arise in the family, in the relationship of men and women for the very reason that socialist transformation radically changes the old family life, causes crises due to the productive and public work of the man or the woman, due to the faster development of the one or the other. It is the duty of literature to illuminate these often painful and difficult problems and to help create the truly human forms of family life and love built on our new ethics.

Our new, developing, socialist-realist literature will certainly overcome these infantile disorders if it is ready to learn from life and deeply study reality in all its wealth. This is the most important thing. Acquiring the Marxist-Leninist ideology, the knowledge of the laws of development of the moving forces of society, is a decisive pre-condition but it is no substitute for the knowledge and study of life itself in all its rich many-sidedness.

Our socialist writers, young and old, should be bolder in the depiction of reality. They should not be afraid of describing the difficulties, they should not simplify life, they should not strengthen the feeling in our people that "everything goes smoothly," but rather that there are and will be difficulties but that we are going to overcome them.

They should not be afraid of criticizing, even of sharply attacking our shortcomings: our People's Democracy building socialism is not a weak and sick infant around whom one can only walk on tiptoe and whom one has to guard from every breeze.

What shall the writers write about? We do not want to tie their hands with regard to the choice of themes. The literature of socialist realism can occupy itself also with the past—proof of this are numerous creations of Soviet literature from Gorky's *Klim Samgin* to Gladkov's last autobiographical novel *Childhood Years*—for showing the past as a road to the present is a good and worthwhile literary task. They can also depict the enemy without underestimating or making a cardboard figure out of him, but, of course, also without making him into a "central hero" and thus magnifying him willy-nilly into a "tragic" figure. A number of our writers are inclined to portray the enemy not from a proletarian class standpoint, that is to say, to a certain extent by necessity "from without," but "from within"; they draw the enemy as he sees himself, as his situation is reflected in his consciousness. (The play by Tibor Deri, *Mirror,* is a horrible example of this mode of characterization.) There are some who make a whole theory to fit this false way of characterization, claiming, for example, that the central figure, the hero of a play can be only a man who himself "stands in the middle." Gyula Hay develops this theory in connection with Gorky's play *Enemies,* while Ferenc Hont asserts that dramatic conflict must be situated within the person of the central hero himself. (All these theories were supported by the writings of Comrade Lukacs on the books of Sholokhov and Virta.)

We do not tie our writers' hands on the choice of theme and hero, but neither do we encourage them to write pieces in which the central hero is the enemy or some sort of proletarian Hamlet. We orient them toward positive heroes and themes whose material makes possible the full human unfolding of these positive heroes, through difficulties, errors and conflicts. The positive hero of the new Hungarian socialist-realist literature should be the working man putting the Five-Year Plan into practice, in the full richness of his social work and his inner life. Only such literature can fulfill its great task of educating our people and our youth for work, selfless heroism, for patriotism.