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Masses & MAINSTREAM

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Du Bois and Peace

As we go to press, a week after the Martinsville massacre, we learn that Truman's "white supremacy" henchmen have opened Negro History Week by indicting one of the greatest living Negroes, Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, for refusing to register as a "foreign agent." This attempt to jail one of the greatest Americans of our history, together with four of his colleagues in the peace movement, is a crime of such infamy that it must surely boomerang against its war-crazed, Negro-hating perpetrators. It must be *made* to boomerang. The issue, as Dr. Du Bois points out, is the effort "to frighten into silence the tremendous feeling for peace now being expressed throughout our country." Moreover, as Roscoe Dunjee, noted Negro leader and editor of the Oklahoma City *Black Dispatch*, declared: "The attempt to indict Dr. Du Bois is one of the most shameful acts committed by the government of the United States against the Negro people."

Thus, the indictment has a twofold and interrelated purpose: to crush the rising peace movement and to crush the militant action of the Negro people for freedom, justice and peace. That the Administration picked on so eminent and widely beloved a figure as Dr. Du Bois, the Frederick Douglass of our day, shows a boldness born of desperation. It is all or nothing for the imperialists. They are whipping their creeping fascism into a gallop. But they will not so easily succeed, as Dr. Du Bois makes clear in his indignant statement on the government's action:

> "The desire for peace cannot be made an 'alien' sentiment when the fathers and mothers of America's children read daily of impending atomic devastation, and see on the front pages the high price paid for military adventure abroad. Attempting to brand those who work for peace as 'foreign agents' will not stem the tide of peace in America. . . . I am sure that every American who desires peace, Negro and white, Catholic, Jew or Protestant, the 3,000,000 signers of the World Peace Appeal and tens of millions more will join us in defense of the right to speak and to work for peace."

That right must be defended by a tremendous campaign to quash the indictments. This is a struggle for air and light—for the lives of all of us.

THE EDITORS.

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Drawings by Victor Arnautoff, Fred Ellis, Taller de Grafica Popular.

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Happy Birthday!

THE editors are proud to dedicate this issue of MASSES & MAINSTREAM to William Z. Foster on his seventieth birthday. Our thoughts on this happy occasion are well expressed in the pages that follow. May we add this personal word? Your lifework, Bill, has been a spur and guide for us on the magazine. Your leadership in the fight for peace, democracy and socialism is an unquenchable source of strength. With our readers we wish you many years of health and happiness!

AMONG THE CONTRIBUTORS

R. PALME DUTT is the editor of the British *Labour Monthly* and author of *Britain's Crisis of Empire, The Problem of India,* and a number of other distinguished Marxist works. His essay on Shaw is abridged from *Labour Monthly.*

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OUR TIME by Samuel Sillen

Mass Murder
"Back to the Twenties"
Sedition in Pittsburgh

Mass Murder

THE murder of the Martinsville Seven was brutally deliberate. This legal lynching of innocent men took place with the knowledge and approval of the highest United States officials. President Truman refused to see delegations on the ground that he was already "familiar" with the case. Chief Justice Vinson denied a stay of even an hour to review the frame-up trial by an all-white jury and an enemy court acting on the stale "rape" charge of a woman formerly confined to a mental institution. Governor Battle of Virginia could well brag that Washington endorsed his venomous haste to kill seven Negroes for an act, falsely alleged, which had never in his state's history drawn a death sentence for a convicted white man.

Only one conclusion is possible. The government took over the dirty work of the Ku Klux Klan. Truman's Civil Rights pretensions stand exposed as a cruel mockery. The long and bitter oppression of the Negro people by the white ruling class, far from being "ameliorated" as advertised by the Voice of America, has reached new depths of bestiality. The mass murder of Negroes—the modern word is genocide—is becoming as centrally organized and "scientific" as the slaughter of Jews by the Nazis and the liberation of Koreans with jelly-gasoline.

The names of the Martinsville martyrs will be enshrined in song and ballad—Joe Henry Hampton, Howard Hairston, Booker Millner, Frank Hairston, John Taylor, James Hairston, Francis Grayson—six youths and the father of five young children—victims of a shame that has shaken the soul of decent people everywhere. Millions throughout the world spoke in horror against the executions in Richmond, just as they had when Sacco and Vanzetti were murdered in Boston. Leading

the world-wide protest were the Negro citizens of Richmond who, together with many whites, held mass prayer meetings and marched through the streets of their city, capital of the Confederacy, wearing mourning bands and carrying floral wreaths. The six-day vigil before the White House, the mass meetings in Harlem, the avalanche of telegrams and phone calls from all over the country—these showed that the press had not succeeded in its effort to deaden the conscience and poison the intelligence of the American people.

But while the upsurge of protest was powerful, it was belated — only a beginning of the stiff fight that must be waged against new crimes already planned by the legions of "white supremacy." They have left no time for tears. We must act now, at once and with all our strength, to stop a whole series of legal lynchings:

Willie McGee, ordered to die in Mississippi on March 20.

The Trenton Six—Collis English, Ralph Cooper, James Thorpe, John McKenzie, McKinley Forrest, Horace Wilson.

The two Daniels cousins and Raleigh Speller in North Carolina.

Thomas Edwards in Maryland.

James Arrington in Alabama.

Paul Washington, Ocie Jugger, Edward Honeycutt in Louisiana.

Mrs. Rosa Ingram, her two sons, and Clarence Henderson in Georgia.

Wesley Robert Wells and Jerry Newsom in California.

The Groveland Three, whose appeal from death convictions in Florida is before the U.S. Supreme Court.

This is of course only a fraction of the story. There are the fifty Negro soldiers court-martialled to sentences of fifteen to twenty years at hard labor by white officers in Korea and Tokyo. There is Lieutenant Leon Gilbert, whom President Truman has consigned to twenty years of prison. And there are the countless "unofficial" murders of Negro men and women, such as the police slaying of the Army veteran John Derrick in Harlem.

And yet in the face of this how many are silent, and therefore accomplices in the crime! How many are like the writers whom Howard Fast addressed in an open letter following the Martinsville murders. Fast wrote, in part:

"My fellow writers: I address myself to you; I address myself to

the gentlemen of 'honor' and 'conscience' and 'integrity.' I address myself to the 'men of good will.' I address myself to John Steinbeck and Arthur Miller, to Erskine Caldwell and Ernest Hemingway, to Lillian Hellman and Irwin Shaw and Vincent Sheean and Budd Schulberg, to Archibald MacLeish, Carl Sandburg and Upton Sinclair, John Hersey and all the others of the great company of the silent. . . . I address myself to you not with a plea—the time for pleading is done with—but with a solemn warning that unless you raise your voices to protest this unspeakable thing that is happening here in America, your own walls of comfort and security will crumble away in the not too distant future, and the price you will pay will be no less than the price Hitler exacted from the intellectuals of Germany. Nothing except a great voice of wrath and horror can atone for the crime of your silence."

Every American with any shred of decency—whatever his views on other questions—will add his voice now to the outcry of wrath and horror against the murder of Negroes. We call on our readers to redouble their efforts in this fight. As we go to press, the most immediate case is that of thirty-five-year-old Willie McGee, victim of another "rape" frame-up. Mass protests and the heroic work of the Civil Rights Congress led by William L. Patterson have saved his life four times in the last five years. He must not die. Wire President Truman and Governor Fielding Wright at Jackson, Mississippi. Organize protest delegations in your community. Do not hesitate to write to us for any additional information you may need.

"Back to the Twenties"

THE current F. Scott Fitzgerald boom is cashing in handsomely on the writer's personal tragedy. The Fitzgerald partisans seem to think they are doing a great job of restoring his literary position. But whatever their intentions, the public effect of their best-sellers and sensational articles in *Life* on "The Fabulous Fitzgerald" is to exploit his weaknesses, his pathetic frustrations and failures. Budd Schulberg's novel, *The Disenchanted,* and Arthur Mizener's biography, *The Far Side of Paradise,* have revived Fitzgerald's alcoholism and his wife Zelda's mental illness as topics of small talk in bored parlors. I have searched the books patiently and in vain for some insight into the society which twisted

Fitzgerald's talents and against which he rebelled erratically in painful isolation. But all the nostalgic fluff about "The Jazz Age" merely befuddles the man and his time.

Underlying the boom is a "Back to the Twenties" movement, the latest form of sophisticated escapism. The argument of both Schulberg's novel and Mizener's biography runs like this: Fitzgerald was productive and appreciated in the Twenties, hence this was a glorious period for literature; but in the next decade, when writers started worrying about the social system, his star fell, hence the Thirties were a period hostile to literature. This theme is recapitulated in Schulberg's New York *Times* review of Mizener in which the alleged under-rating of Fitzgerald's *Tender Is The Night* is blamed on "the anti-literary trend of 'proletarian' literature at the time."

This is a favorite theme of the anti-working class intellectuals today, especially those who want to clear their skirts of any Left affiliations in the past. They were all "taken in" by the proletarian atmosphere, they say. It was all a big mistake, a form of fanaticism," writes Horace Gregory in his New York *Herald Tribune* review of Mizener . . . the same Horace Gregory who in 1933 published a book with the heroic title *No Retreat.*

The good old days before the Thirties are also celebrated in two recent biographies of H. L. Mencken. He was another victim of the "proletarian wave." Poor Mencken. He was really a defender of the faith. He denied the *existence* of the depression for a few years. When he finally had to face it he said, of the unemployed: "The people who die aren't worth saving anyway. A few more slaves, a few less slaves, what's the difference?" These immortal lines are quoted in both biographies, one of which is subtitled "The Life and Riotous Times of H. L. Mencken."

In any case capitalism has changed its spots, we are told in a special issue of the *Saturday Review of Literature* devoted to "America and the Mind of Europe." The guest editor, Lewis Galantiere, is a State Department man who berates American intellectuals because, "with a few exceptions," they were "sucked in by Communist propaganda during the Depression, rancorously determined to turn their eyes away from the changes that have since supervened in American capitalism and American statesmanship. . . ." No more wars, no more lynchings, no more super-profits, no more strike-breaking. Capitalism has changed

all that. And the free writers of this land are warned they had better believe this or starve and go to jail.

So these lofty spokesmen of freedom and purity go about their business: Shortly after Irwin Shaw disavows his peace play of the Thirties, *Bury the Dead,* he accepts a call from Samuel Goldwyn to do a pro-war film. That's art. And Budd Schulberg, who sheds tears over the "anti-literary" trend of the Thirties, proves his virtue by hooking up with Arthur Koestler in a scheme thought up by the warriors in Washington to "rescue" writers from socialist lands. The hypocrisy of these worthies is obscene; their exploitation of Fitzgerald unsavory; their desertion of their own moments of decency in the Thirties self-accusing.

Sedition in Pittsburgh

THREE Pittsburgh Communists — Steve Nelson, Andy Onda and James Dolsen—are being tried for "sedition" under a Pennsylvania law of 1919. The chief prosecution witness so far has been Judge Michael A. Musmanno, whose mentality may be judged by his declaration in court that the word "peace" is a "front for the proletarian revolution." This fascist-minded judge wants to put the three men in jail for twenty years because they were involved in the sale of certain publications. One is the *Benjamin Rush Bulletin,* a scientific magazine considered "seditious" because it carried an article by a Soviet psychologist. The other is MASSES & MAINSTREAM, also "seditious" because it carried an article in its August, 1950, issue by Herbert Aptheker on "The Truth About Korea."

The article, as our readers will recall, proved to the hilt that it was the Syngman Rhee regime, acting as a puppet of U.S. imperialism, that committed aggression in Korea. It foretold, moreover, that the U.S. policy was "no nonsense about a Thirty-Eighth Parallel"—which many Americans would not believe at the time but which events confirmed in the most costly way.

Musmanno does not argue that the article did not tell the truth about Korea. His point amounts to this: the truth is seditious. If he were consistent he would have to urge—and indeed may yet urge—the suppression of some of Aptheker's sources whose damaging admissions were copiously cited—the New York *Times,* New York *Herald*

Tribune, London *Economist, Pacific Affairs, Virginia Quarterly Review,* etc.

Musmanno will scare neither this magazine nor its readers. We're not going to lower our voice to please him. The Bill of Rights was specifically enacted to protect the American people against such tinhorns as he.

Musmanno has a special stake in the Pittsburgh witchhunt. He would like to cover up an investigation of rackets (numbers and prostitution) run by his political associates in his home town of McKees Rocks, a war industries center near Pittsburgh. A number of these associates have already been indicted. As good law-abiding citizens we trust they will be prosecuted right down the line.

We are pleased to tell our readers that the April issue will carry a thoroughly documented exposé of the Pittsburgh "sedition" frame-up trial written by Art Shields.

BILL FOSTER
An American Epic

by JOSEPH NORTH

SEVENTY years ago in Taunton, Massachusetts, William Z. Foster was born to a proletarian mother who brought twenty-three children to this earth before she died at fifty-three. The impoverished woman had spent her early years amid the roaring looms of England's textile industry. A Roman Catholic, she dreamed that her son—one of four children who survived early infancy—would become a priest. Foster's father, a carriage-washer, had fled here in 1868 from certain sentence to the gallows for his Fenian revolutionary work. Life in America proved scarcely more bounteous than that of Ireland or England. From the Boston region the family moved to Philadelphia where Foster got three years of schooling. Though poverty engulfed the family, the little home in the slums near Independence Square became the turbulent haven of Molly Maguires—the coal miners of Irish origin whose rebellion against the anthracite coal magnates made labor history. The child was nurtured on the passionate arguments for Irish independence that swirled about his head from infancy on. Fighting Irishmen, protagonists of national freedom, gathered to debate the latest developments on the Emerald Isle.

Foster's father had his ambitions, too. He yearned to see his eager, alert son carry on in his footsteps. Freedom, independence, rebellion against tyranny were the youngster's primer. The grim lamp-lit poverty of Philadelphia about Seventeenth and Kater Streets brought imperious questions to the young mind. Long before he had any inkling of socialism, writes Foster in *The Twilight of World Capitalism,* "I was taking sharp issue, however confusedly, with a situation wherein millions of people were compelled to work themselves into early graves in the industries and to live in poverty during their lifetime, while the

rich, who were obviously just so many loafers and wasters, enjoyed all the good things of life."

The son of the Fenian revolutionary began carrying his lunch-kit to work at the age of ten. His first job was to aid the artist-mechanic who moulded the statue of William Penn which now stands atop Philadelphia's City Hall. Twenty-six years followed in a startlingly wide range of jobs that carried him across the land scores of times and confirmed his earliest impressions, transformed the efficient worker into a conscious articulate rebel. He could have become a topmost bureaucrat in the American Federation of Labor had he succumbed to Sam Gompers' blandishments. But his was not to be a Horatio Alger success story.

His is a success story of a new type. Today, the poor child of the carriage-washer is known, loved, not only in hundreds of American factory cities but among millions throughout the world. Cablegrams bearing birthday greetings of affection and admiration come to him from every country on the globe. This son of the American working class—born ten years after the Paris Communards "stormed heaven" and fell short—has lived to see almost half of mankind tread the path he has chosen for himself. Mankind's victories are his.

For here is the Communist man, prevision of tomorrow's generations of Americans. His Odyssey as class-conscious worker, labor leader, strike organizer, to leading Communist—the foremost theoretician of Marxism-Leninism in this country as well as the greatest strategist and tactician our working class has produced—is a twentieth century American classic. A latter-day Dreiser will tell this epic.

The early Foster was a foot-soldier in the industrial armies of proud workingmen who pushed the frontiers to the Pacific. He had worked in Southern peonage camps; he had seen Negroes flee the K.K.K. He became tubercular working in a fertilizer plant. He spent three years at sea before the mast and regained his health. He homesteaded three years. He railroaded a dozen years, twelve hours a day, seven days a week. His was the itinerant life millions of American workers lived in the early years of this century. He knew the highways and railways of this country, its mountains and plateaus, its industrial cities and rural byways far better than a Harvard professor knows the Cambridge campus.

And what his keen eye saw, he understood and loved. "I, as other

Communists," he has written, "love the American people and their glorious revolutionary democratic traditions, their splendid scientific and industrial achievements." Calumnied most of his life by the brass-check press, the contemptible libels hurled his way have never swerved him from his life-long patriotism, never unmoored him: "And I love, too, our beautiful land, in every corner of which I have lived and worked. I want only the best of everything for our country and our people." The miners and their wives to whom he talked in their kitchens and on the picket lines can understand this readily: the sweated steel workers who remember the tremendous days of the 1919 Steel Strike, understand it today and send him messages of greetings on his birthday. The railroadmen know it. The men in packing-house and steel of Chicago send fond congratulations to "Mr. Militant," as they have called him.

He belongs to them and they know it. His was their life and theirs his. He knows the heart-break of the lay-off, the bare cupboard, the weary hours before employment offices, back-breaking hours of speed-up, the skimpy pay-check, the anger, the hopes, the dreams of the workingman. It is all in the fabric of his life.

At fourteen he saw his first strike, received his first police clubbing. And, most important of all, he saw the unconquerable—the spirit of workers' solidarity. Even the tough, unschooled kids who knew no other playground than the street corners of Philadelphia turned on the scabs in the streetcar strike which was his first. Before he was old enough to vote he had tried to organize a union and had been blacklisted. By nineteen he was a member of the Socialist Party, and promptly lined up with the revolutionary worker members of the party who resented its petty bourgeois, opportunist control: "I joined definitely with the proletarian elements that wanted to make of the Socialist Party a revolutionary organization."

THERE followed years of probing, searching, struggling for a program that would lead the working class out of the capitalist jungle: years of intense study while at the job, years of class struggle—De Leon and the Socialist Labor Party; the Wage Workers Party; the syndicalistic Industrial Workers of the World which he joined while still in jail in one of the great free-speech fights around 1910. The story of this stormy period of growth is brilliantly told in his political autobiography

From Bryan to Stalin and in the more personal *Pages From a Worker's Life.*

Then came the great strikes he led in 1918 and 1919: the packing-house workers and the men in steel, and millions of others had come to know his name, and respect it. For decades he had traversed the continent—more often than not riding the dangerous rails in his I.W.W. and Syndicalist days, and more than a dozen times a hair's breadth from death—to preach the imperative need of organizing the unorganized, building unions on an industrial rather than the outmoded craft basis. More than any other labor leader he charted the path millions took in the mid-Thirties which led to the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Incessantly, by word, deed and pen, he combatted the slippery opportunism of the Sam Gompers strain in the American labor movement. His voice was heard everywhere against the labor-skate, the pie-card artist, the oily Social-Democratic double-talker, the pure-and-simple trade-unionist. His book *Misleaders of Labor* is a classic.

From the outset he lifted his clear voice to achieve equal rights for the Negro workers in industry and the trade unions. The seventeen million jobless of the Thirties took heart from him. His call brought 110,000 out to Union Square, March 6, 1931, which began the epic series of Hunger Marches that ultimately brought America unemployment insurance.

The working-class theoretician has never been taken in by capitalist razzle-dazzle. He saw—before World War II ended—that the megalomaniacs of Wall Street had Hitler's disease: the itch to conquer the world. He led the struggle against Earl Browder's anti-Marxist theories of an "intelligent" capitalism altruistically raising the standards of the working class and voluntarily embarking on a postwar policy of friendship with the Soviet Union. Foster foresaw the danger of World War III and sought to forearm the nation's workers.

And as he worked and organized he thought, studied, wrote. Here was the genuine proletarian intellectual—a type totally unrecognized by the academic pundits of our time. How could they understand that this man, who had received no degree other than that which the working class bestows upon its partisans, is in fact the foremost American political and labor writer of his generation? Some hundred-


GREAT STEEL STRIKE
MISLEADERS OF LABOR
PAGES From a WORKER'S LIFE
From BRYAN TO STALIN
OUTLINE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE AMERICAS
W. Z. FOSTER
The NEW EUROPE
W. Z. FOSTER
AMERICAN TRADE UNIONISM
W. Z. FOSTER
The TWILIGHT OF WORLD CAPITALISM by W. Z. FOSTER
W. Z. FOSTER

Fred Ellis

odd pamphlets and thousands of articles for the working-class press must be added to his ten full-length books which today are crowned by his newest—a monument of Marxist-Leninist creation—*Outline Political History of the Americas.*

His writings dovetailed with the arduous, incessant, practical day-to-day work as labor organizer, and, since 1921, simultaneously as a foremost leader of the Communist Party of the United States. Through these years he has been the embodiment of the Communist precept that theory and daily practice must go hand in hand. All his life he appears instinctively to have realized this—or rather, the exigencies of the class struggle evoked it along his road to Communism. His visit to the Soviet Union three years after the Revolution, his readings of Lenin and his scrutiny of the new workers' republic, confirmed it. It was as plain as a pikestaff, he wrote, that the Socialist Revolution was achieved by a party of men who practiced what they studied and taught. "After carefully studying the Russian Communist Party," he wrote in *From Bryan to Stalin,* "with its combination of centralism and inner-party democracy, with its foundation on nuclei rooted in the factories, farms, schools, etc." and after observing that its membership consisted of the best fighting segments of the working class and poorer peasantry, with a record of victory in the face of superhuman difficulties, "I was inevitably drawn to the conclusion which I expressed at the time: that the Russian Communist Party was the highest type of organization ever produced by mankind."

He returned to America with that conviction. He realized that to best the American capitalist class, the workers of this country, "bearing in mind their own special conditions," would do well to learn the experience of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

And this leader of the American Federation of Labor became a member of the Communist Party of the United States in 1921. Today, his co-workers and multitudes in America and abroad regard him as the embodiment, the exemplar of the Communist. "My life in the labor, Left wing and Communist movement has been a very happy one," he writes, and were he starting out again, "I would take the same course as I have done." Naturally, he remarks, he would strive to avoid the political mistakes a man must make along a sixty-year

course in the working-class movement. And his advice is something that thousands of Communists and other progressives could well heed: "One thing I would surely do, despite the press of practical work, would be better to organize my time so as to enable me to indulge more than I have in the reading of the science and history that I love so much."

Foster has brought to the American labor movement—impeded by political lag despite its traditional militancy—a demand that it lift its sights, study and understand its status in capitalist society, scrutinize the world complex of economic, political and social pressures that produce the conditions of its servitude. The sense of international brotherhood was originally strong in the sailor who thrice circled the world. The son of the Irish revolutionary understood it as a trade-union and political imperative. Early he recognized the need for independent political action of labor, and simultaneously, the master strategist insisted upon the workingman's need to find allies, among the middle classes, the farmers, the professional strata of the land. From his teen-age days, he has sought to instill a strong consciousness of class among the American workers, the realization that they can engineer their own destiny. "The advent of world socialism, now standing historically at our doors, in fact, already across the threshold," he wrote two years ago, "will liberate man from his ages-old slavery and open up before him a perspective of freedom, development, and happiness that he now hardly dares dream of."

And so at seventy he is a confident man, whose ailing heart has lost not a whit of its stout, fighting quality. He is serene, come what may in the immediate days and months. The government seeks to jail him for five years (a veritable death sentence in his condition) under a thought-control indictment which has already condemned his eleven co-workers to prison. But he has never for a moment doubted the future. His book, two years ago, *Twilight of World Capitalism,* was dedicated to his young grandson "who will live in a Communist United States."

Those who know Foster personally know him as a plain, simple, quiet-spoken man, humorous, calm, without airs. Like the skilled American workers, he dresses in quiet garb, but neatly. He is nearly six feet tall, deliberate in motion. When he speaks it is without dramatics, simply, straight-forward, but always to the point, cogent, his ideas naturally organized. There is a great deal of the outline form

in his addresses and articles—A-B-C, subhead, 1-2-3. There is no mistaking the point he wants to make.

The range of his expression is wide: his speech combines the vernacular and the scientific language of the Marxist classic. He makes one word do when others would use two or three. He can speak of the grandest facts of humanity in plain, every-day language: "To do the 'impossible'," he has written, "is routine stuff for advancing world socialism."

His eye is sharp, and he owns an insatiable curiosity, the probing mind of the scientist. Those who know him best speak of his singular quality of concentration and memory. That quality he possessed as a child, a youth, and with his natural bent toward discipline and organization, he appears to have deliberately sharpened it through the years.

WHAT inner-spring impelled this unschooled working-class youngster to plunge headlong into the realm of literature, science, history, while he worked amid the stink and choking dust of fertilizer factories in his early adolescence? As he strode the floors crawling with maggots (which he describes unforgettably in his *Pages*) he walked with Darwin, Lecky, Tom Paine, Gibbon, Spencer—and this but in his teens. Capitalism had consigned him, as it had innumerable "mute, inglorious Miltons" to a lifetime of obscure ignorance. It permitted him three years of public schooling. But his mind wouldn't stay put. The metaphysical explanations of life's origin vanished as he devoured the classics. "There was very little, if any religion left in me," he writes, after he had, in his mid-teens, read Paine's *Age of Reason,* Lecky's *History of European Morals,* Draper's *Conflict Between Science and Religion,* Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* Darwin's *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man,* and Spencer's *Data of Sociology,* "plus many more works on science, sociology, history and religion."

All that was required for a totally materialist philosophy of life were the works of Marx and Engels which he was to read later. The works of Lenin and Stalin were unavailable to him until the Twenties.

An avid reader from the start, he remained so during his entire life. His three years at sea, so magnificently described in his *Pages,* were in effect his university years. Not only did he rub shoulders

and exchange ideas with people on all continents, he read hundreds of the lasting books.

An instance is related of his railroad days when he worked as a fireman. The engineer, a great Shakespearean, Foster recalls, offered him one of the Bard's dramas. These, remember, were twelve-hour work days. The following morning Foster handed the book back to his engineer. The latter glanced at him, startled, and asked: "What's the matter? Why didn't you read it?" Foster replied, "I did read it" and quoted a considerable passage.

He has never relinquished his love of classic literature. He keeps abreast of all modern developments in literature as those who participated in the discussion over the Maltz article, in 1946, recall.

Foster is an eager student of various fields of science, particularly genetics. The question of environment and heredity occupied him through the years. He possesses a wide grasp of the question. Likewise, in the field of medicine. During a polemic with the American Medical Association he wrote an article which not only discussed its reactionary politics, but its scientific attitudes and developments as well. A doctor wrote Foster indignantly: "Where do you come off to discuss medical studies?" He replied that as a Marxist it is his duty to examine all fields and he strives for more than a working knowledge of them.

Foster has read everything Darwin wrote and holds him in especially high esteem for his influence upon his early life. The former railwayman, seaman, building-trades worker, has a keen interest in the mechanical sciences as well and his intimates know that he is a steam engineer, a craft which he mastered by himself.

A major study for decades has been the Negro question about which he has read practically everything written. And not only on the Negro in the United States, but, as his new work reveals, on the Negro in the whole hemisphere.

His interest in linguistics is keen, and he has a command of German, Spanish, French, Russian and can understand Italian. He studies these languages in characteristic, driving yet meticulous fashion. He was in France a brief time and applied himself for six entire weeks mastering the language with a French grammar. At the end of that time he could read it, speak it fairly well, and translated political documents into English.

Little in life is alien to him. His sharp eye is involved in all phenomena, the commonplace as well as the extraordinary, and he has always had a deep love for nature. "We are in the park, one time," a friend relates, "Bill's eyes bother him a bit from reading so much but he spots a bird and he says, excited, 'See that bird there:' he names the species. "That bird is very rare in these parts.' And he begins to speculate. 'I wonder how it got here?' Foster, knows a great deal about birds, woodcraft, for he was a homesteader, you know, for three years in Oregon, around the turn of the century."

His eye, ever on the alert, is especially keen in his observations of humanity. Enroute to his office one torrid morning, he noticed the children of a working-class neighborhood playing in the broiling streets—a scene which all too many people take for granted. But Foster, upon his arrival at the office, wrote an article published next day in the *Daily Worker,* demanding with memorable feeling and eloquence that working-class children be given vacations annually at the city's expense.

TO ENABLE him to carry on his daily, practical work and to achieve the study he wants, requires a degree of self-discipline which can well be emulated by all. Every minute of his day is organized, and his secretary reports, he "has a tremendous grasp of time." Foster is not only determined to plan his time, but has learned to estimate how long a given matter will require. It has become part of his nature. He plans his schedule for the day and moves within it with great ease. He does not permit himself to be pushed around by events. With deft flexibility, he can adapt his day's plan to the unexpected, swiftly spots the characteristics of the new, gauges what must be undone, and thus never leaves someone waiting for him with whom he has an appointment.

Once he decides, he moves with determination, disregards almost any other factor—weather, surprise, health. "When he says he'll be somewhere at such and such a time, he is invariably there, to the minute, and not ahead of time." So he husbands his days, jealously, permitting no leakage. Friends say "he gets four or five times more out of a day than anybody we know." He adds a half hour here, fifteen minutes there, and thus achieves the maximum of the twenty-four hours.

His daily habits are instructive. He is up early in the morning, about

six, gets the morning papers, has read them before breakfast. When well he would go to the office and write until 11:30. He always has a writing project "on the griddle"—sometimes an article, sometimes a report, or a part of a pamphlet or book. He writes about a thousand words daily. No evening passes that he doesn't spend at least an hour, before turning in, poring over a classic of Marxist literature.

Despite his incessant work, he is easily accessible to those who wish to see him. Seamen off the ships will tell you how they would come to his office, ask for an appointment, and readily get it. Any person with a puzzling question will find his way to him. A typical instance is told of a time after the blizzard of 1947. The New York State Committee of the Communist Party had adopted a resolution which called on its members to help remove the snowdrifts that had overwhelmed the regular city clean-up staff. An Italian worker wrote Foster he disagreed, that this is a problem for the city to handle, and that the Communist Party should not undertake to solve the city's headaches. Foster felt that the obviously sincere worker had a wrong line on the matter, and he wrote a letter inviting him in to discuss it. The worker appeared and spent an hour talking it over with Foster. His ardent desire to help all is a personal, as well as a political, characteristic.

Associates and others who have written books—on a wide variety of subjects—have solicited his criticism, his advice, and he has never been too busy to read their manuscripts and offer his views. Be it a book on the Negro question, on trade-unions and strike strategy, on literature and criticism, on atomic energy, economics, or a novel, Foster's door is open.

All is done without fuss, without undue hurry, and his friends remark upon his quality of calm even in the sharpest struggles. "The only thing he wants to know is all the factors involved, so he knows what ground he's fighting on." Then he makes his decision and moves swiftly into action. It is a mistake to keep bad news from him, they say. The fury of the struggle doesn't bother him, the lack of information does. Once the crisis breaks, whatever its nature, his calm is icy.

NATURALLY, much is omitted in this cursory sketch of America's great Communist leader. His bold Marxist-Leninist imagination, his keen analysis that cuts through to the essentials of a problem in

swift, clean strokes characterize his qualities of leadership. Add to that a profound working-class experience as the foregoing pages could barely indicate, and one begins to understand why his Party and many more revere him.

But that is not the whole story. Underlying everything is his thoroughgoing confidence in the working-man, in the masses of the American people, which permeates all his writings, his speeches, his deeds. He knows the American workers, the American people, and knows that history will not find them wanting. The Wall Street colossus is a hollow man; the future belongs to the worker in the factory, the tiller in the field. And tomorrow is not far off, he says, it is almost here. It is "across the threshold."

And William Z. Foster, son of the American working class, heralds it.

FOSTER and Negro-Labor Unity

by JAMES W. FORD

IT IS impossible to mark the 70th anniversary of William Z. Foster's life without reflecting upon the character and significance of the span of years—so fruitful for Foster as a person and for the period that has felt his influence. It is the coincidence of his personal contributions and the historical setting that has provided Foster's life with its particular meaning and its rich texture. Foster has made his distinctive contributions in a period that witnessed the beginning of the imperialist epoch, that last stage of dying capitalism, with its wars and revolutions and its brutal suppression of Negroes, but also the beginning of the epoch of socialism. These seventy years have marked a qualitative change in the American working-class movement and the significant rise of the Negro people's movement. In both cases —in his leadership of the Communist Party—William Z. Foster has made and is making signal contributions.

I first met Foster when I joined the Communist Party in 1926. I had already been an active worker in the organized labor movement for seven years and had known of Foster's reputation as an outstanding militant trade-union figure. But during these seven years, and for many years before, I had been deeply suspicious and mistrustful of white workers, and even held hatred for them. I did not know the real source of the ruling-class ideology of white chauvinism or "race" prejudice as it was commonly called; I thought that all white workers, equally with white bosses, were enemies of Negroes. I had nonetheless been faithful and loyal to my local union—a union of Negro and white workers —and had held various posts in it, and eventually I was elected a delegate to represent it in the Chicago Federation of Labor. Then an event took place that made an unforgettable impression on me and changed my outlook.

One Sunday afternoon in the mid-twenties, I arose to address the

Chicago Federation of Labor on the problems of Negro workers whose position in the labor movement I had carefully investigated, especially the attitude of the A. F. of L. toward them. I might have been naive in the honesty of my purpose, but I charged the A. F. of L. leadership with discrimination and "immoral trade-union conduct" toward Negro workers. I had only spoken a few minutes when it seemed that a ton of bricks fell upon me. The officialdom let loose bristling anti-Negro abuses against me and especially against Negro workers whom it charged with being "strikebreakers." It whipped up a lynch-terror atmosphere and the thugs of the bureaucracy threatened to throw me from a window. I had indeed been naive to assume that any consideration of the interests of Negro workers would be forthcoming from such a pack of white chauvinist jackals. As I now recollect, the Chicago labor movement was also still feeling the earlier afflictions of the Palmer raids and the trade-union bureaucracy was no less vicious than their ruling-class bosses, aiding in deportation frame-ups and persecution of Communists, just like the present-day Social-Democrats and trade-union reformists.

But to my utter surprise I was not alone or without friends, although I was the lone Negro delegate at the meeting. A group of left-wing delegates were present and came to my defense. They not only supported fully the charges I had lodged against the bureaucracy but succeeded in forcing it to permit me to continue my remarks. I later learned that they were Communists and under the leadership of William Z. Foster. Their passionate defense of Negro rights was based on their Marxian convictions that "workers in the white skin cannot emancipate themselves as long as workers in the black skin are enslaved." I was also to learn that Foster was not only a militant trade-union figure, but also a relentless Communist fighter against opportunism and "race" prejudice in the labor movement, and what this meant so far as the fight for the rights of Negro workers and the liberation of the whole Negro people was concerned. I joined the Communist Party.

My outlook toward the working class underwent a profound change. The next few years I became intensely active in the Communist Party and in the Trade Union Educational League, headed by Foster, and closely associated with the trade-union policies of the Communist Party which Foster also molded.

A. F. of L. leaders, among them John Fitzpatrick of the Chicago

Federation of Labor, made claims of giving Negro workers a "square deal," but it was William Z. Foster's leadership of the stockyard workers and the 1919 steel strike that brought the problems of Negro workers to the fore in the labor movement when every obstacle of ruling-class policy was placed in his path, including the A. F. of L. bureaucracy itself. Foster's role was brought out sharply at a Commission which investigated the "Negro in Chicago" following the so-called "race riot" of 1919, which was unprovoked blood-letting against Negroes by hoodlums of the packinghouse bosses and the police.

FOSTER was called before the Commission. In his testimony concerning Negroes in the steel strike and in the stockyards, Foster stated:

"We realized that there were two big problems, the organization of the foreign worker and the organization of the colored worker. . . . But we realized that to accomplish the organization of the colored worker was the real problem. . . . We found that we had a tremendous opposition."

A report by Charles S. Johnson on the "Negro in Industry," growing out of the investigation, stated that "the difficulties inherent in the whole question of organizing Negroes were probably best brought out before the Commission by W. Z. Foster, who took a leading part in organizing Negroes in the Stockyards, the most important industry in Chicago so far as Negroes are concerned." The report also described how Foster appeared at a Negro church with his message of organizing Negroes into trade unions. The minister told him: "It nearly broke up the congregation, but we decided that you were going to speak in this church."

Opposition to organizing Negro workers was strong. It came not only from the bosses and the A. F. of L. bureaucracy but also from certain elements among Negroes themselves. The bosses made every effort to divide Negro and white workers. They stimulated antagonisms. They made efforts to organize company unions to oppose the Stockyards Labor Council (headed by William Z. Foster and the late Jack Johnstone). Negro followers of the bosses issued a proclamation: "Join the American Unity Packers Union."*

* This was a company union for Negroes only. The proclamation further stated: "This union does not believe in strikes. We believe all difficulties between labor and capital can be arbitrated." It called for "race solidarity."

Foster's experiences in the 1919 steel strike and in the stockyards were carried over into the Trade Union Educational League, later to become the Trade Union Unity League. Here the historic campaign to organize the unorganized, culminating in the C.I.O., was begun. Foster built around himself a corps of militants, and fought for the purity of its ranks in the fight against white chauvinism; for the organization of Negro workers in the unions on the basis of unconditional equality; for the right to work in industry and equal pay for equal work. Foster, a tireless worker, successfully stamped a mass trade-union policy on the Communist Party, without which the subsequent Negro-white unity could not have been achieved nor the advancement of Negro proletarians to a leading role in the Negro people's movement—so vital to the establishment of labor-Negro people's alliance.

In 1928 Foster headed a delegation of the Trade Union Unity League at the World Congress of the Red International of Trade Unions of which I was also a member. Here he further elaborated his mass trade-union policy and successfully opposed those elements of the American delegation who opposed industrial trade-union organization, an indispensable program for the most exploited sections of the working class, Negroes in particular. The broadening of our outlook brought us into contact with Negro workers of Africa and the West Indies. The Trade Union Unity League delegation undertook to extend these contacts. As a member of the delegation I was charged with establishing a Negro trade union committee. Together with William L. Patterson, Harry Haywood and other Negro forces and under the guidance of Foster and the Trade Union Unity League, "The First International Trade Union Conference of Negro Workers" was convened at Hamburg, Germany, in the summer of 1930. It brought together delegates representing 20,000 workers from eleven trade union categories of Africa, the West Indies and the U.S. "The First International Trade Union Conference of Negro Workers" stimulated trade union ties of Negro workers of the various areas and, coming just before the rise of Nazism to power in Germany, it prepared Negro toilers for the struggle against fascism and helped to create forces among them who became a part of the World Federation of Trade Unions at Paris in 1945.

In the years up to 1932 generations of Negroes, held in the bonds of the Jim Crow two-party system, had not found the path of real

independent political action with organized working-class allies. In this year the Communist Party nominated William Z. Foster for President of the United States and a Negro for Vice President on its national ticket. And as the *Afro-American* wrote, "this will go down as the first serious gesture of any political party of world-wide importance to place a colored man on the ticket as vice president."

In accepting the nomination Foster declared: "The national oppression of the Negro masses by the white ruling class means not only brutal economic exploitation, such as debt slavery, oppressive taxation, driving Negro croppers off the land, imprisonment for debt, but also lynchings, vagrancy laws, chain gangs and Jim Crow degradation, and the complete denial of any semblance of political and social rights." Here in these crisp and concise words, Foster described what he went on to call "the whole system of national oppression enforced by open, continuous violence and terror." The Communist Party through its own experiences (in the Scottsboro Case, etc.) had a clear understanding of the Negro question as a national question. By a firmer mastery of the theory of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, the Party came to a full understanding of the Negro question as a national question.

The 1932 national election campaign of the Communist Party was of profound historic significance for the Negro masses because, as one Negro newspaper wrote, by "the timeliness of its appeal to the workers of the nation and its unequivocal stand against Jim Crow, bigotry and color prejudices," it shook the hold of the two old parties on the Negro people. "Negro newspapers throughout the United States," wrote another paper, "even where their editors are normally tied up with the Democratic and Republican machines, are forced by the intense interest of their masses of worker readers to take real notice of the candidacy of James W. Ford, Negro, for vice president of the United States on the Communist ticket."

The Communist Party also ran Negro candidates on its state and local tickets. At the historic convention held at the Coliseum in Chicago, Foster was placed in nomination by a Negro. The late Herbert Newton was permanent secretary of the convention. "Herbert Newton," wrote the Pittsburgh *Courier,* "may take his place alongside the venerable John R. Lynch, former Congressman from Mississippi, who as the temporary chairman of a National Convention in 1884, was the first and only Negro to act in the capacity for a national political party."

Newton, however, stood ahead of Lynch because he was the "first of his race to be elected permanent secretary of the convention of a national political party," wrote the *Courier.*

There were those who violently opposed the position of the Communist Party so that, for instance, the Shreveport (La.) *Times,* a white capitalist paper in the deep South, wrote: "Communism clashes directly with almost every principle of true Americanism. Its desire to break down all color lines is only one incidental illustration of the manner in which the Communist program runs counter to the basic beliefs of the American people." These views were not only expressed by open and obvious enemies of the working class and the Negro people, but doubts of the "advisability of the Party's position" were expressed by elements not unfriendly to the general program of the Communist Party.

Foster answered all of these "critics" when he declared: "We must arouse and organize more masses in the election struggle for the fight against starvation, for unemployment and social insurance, for emergency relief for small farmers, for equal rights for the Negroes . . . [and] it is necessary to build up a firm working class struggle for these demands, and to resist all forms of terror, lynching and the suppression of the political rights of the Negro masses." The position of the Communist Party received wide support from the Negro masses. In my own campaign which took me from one end of the country to the other—North, South, East and West—I was interrogated about Foster and "his Party" by Negroes. "Will he say in the South what he says in the North?" they would ask. And when I answered "yes" there would be thunderous applause and hearty approval. When I arrived at a scheduled meeting at Oklahoma City, Foster had preceded me by one week. The local newspaper wrote, "today we are host to a candidate for vice president, last week the Communist candidate for President, William Z. Foster, was here and four local candidates were on the platform with him, two white and two black, and the meeting looked very much as if it means social equality."

The national election campaign of the Communist Party in 1932 was a warning and a prophecy to the war-mad men of Wall Street today who in their bid for world domination have unleashed war against hundreds of millions of "colored peoples" of Asia. Foster's latest book, *Outline Political History of the Americas,* gives new and much-

needed knowledge of the conditions and problems of the peoples of various countries of the Western hemisphere, including the great Indian and Negro minorities, who, together with the Mestizos and Mulattoes, number about 100 million people. We are winning and will continue to win new forces for peace and victories of national liberation.

WHAT about today? The perspective of American imperialism for the American people and for the Negro people is such that the white and Negro masses have got to wage gigantic struggles if they are to save themselves from a barbaric atom-bomb war. This means that the Negro proletariat must play a new, active role in the struggle for peace. It must give greater leadership to the whole Negro people. And it must do this by seizing hold of the link—combining economic, social and political demands—and winning the Negro people as a part of the broad, democratic peace front, a front embracing all genuine fighters for peace from every stratum of the Negro people. The consequences of American policy in the Far East are asserting themselves and are enormously sharpening the danger of a third world war. The Negro people, like the American people generally, have been feeling the effects of bankrupt American domination policies for many years now. But what is new is that the plans of aggression have given way to war against Korea and threats of armed aggression and this particularly in relation to the people of Asia, affecting hundreds of millions of "colored peoples."

American domestic policy is manifested by the McCarran Law, the Smith Act, repressive measures against civil liberties, the undermining of democratic rights in general and the savage, cannibalist execution of the Martinsville Seven. The New York *Times,* organ of American imperialist war policy, speaks of the attack against Captain Charles A. Hill, Jr., as "wicked foolishness." What does the *Times* say about the Martinsville Seven, the Trenton Six, and the mass murder policy against Negroes in general? It keeps absolutely silent about these atrocities.

But this imperialist sadism not only expresses itself in conditions at home. It reflects itself in the treatment of Negro soldiers in Korea, in the attempt to murder Lieutenant Gilbert and scores of Negro GI's in Korea. The question posed here is the real relationship between the

actual position of the Negro people and the tasks which the American imperialists seek to mobilize them for and impose upon them. This diabolical conspiracy against fifteen million Negroes in the United States and the hundreds of millions of "colored peoples" in Asia, this political crisis and genocide policy tears the real mask off Wall Street and exposes it in its naked brutality. It shows the interconnection between the conditions of the Negro people and the great liberation struggles of the peoples of Asia. The American imperialists are so bestial, chauvinistic and Bourbon-minded that they find it difficult to maintain a "democratic" façade. This two-fold aspect of the Negro liberation movement—domestic and international—arises because the imperialists are trying to undo the great Chinese and colonial people's liberation struggles and because they want to drown the struggles of the Negro people in blood.

The crisis of American domestic and foreign policy drives the American imperialists to pose new tasks for Negro reformists. It needs their services at home and abroad. If it does suffer defeats in Korea, it has no intention of giving up its plans for world domination and conquest. It has its eyes on Africa, and is already grooming whole sections of Negro reformists to serve as its agents and representatives in the conquest and enslavement of the peoples of Africa.

But although American imperialism may resort to bribery of sections of the Negro reformists it will not and it cannot bribe the Negro masses, whose welfare is inseparable from the mass, active struggle for peace.

The American imperialists are intensifying their murder campaign against the Negro people. But national chauvinism is also directed against the foreign-born and the workers of every nationality, and the workers of these nationality groups must understand that their interests can only be defended through solidarity with the Negro people in the struggle for peace.

These are just a few of the lessons and conclusions to be drawn in our reflection upon the character and significance of the span of seventy years covering the life of William Z. Foster and his own historic contribution to the solution of the people's problems: his leadership of the Communist Party, his fight for the strengthening of the Party as a Party of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, his fight for the interests of the working class and for equality of the Negro people,

his leadership of the camp of peace and democracy in our country in friendship with the world camp of peace and democracy—headed by the Soviet Union.

Together with democratic peace forces, wide sections of the Negro people join in greeting William Z. Foster and wishing him health and strength on the occasion of his seventieth birthday.

GREETINGS . . .

Gus Hall:

COMRADE William Z. Foster, whose seventieth birthday will be honored by millions in this and other lands throughout the world, is one of the great names of the century. It is hardly possible within the space of a few paragraphs to pay proper tribute to the contributions of this best son of the American working class, this towering revolutionary fighter and theoretician, true and tried leader of the Communist Party, this remarkable labor organizer who challenged, fought and undermined open-shop tyranny in our country and helped to build the present day trade-union movement.

One can write at considerable length of his energetic, untiring work over a period of thirty years to weld the strength and mass influence of the Communist Party of which Foster, along with C. E. Ruthenberg, its first general secretary, was chief builder.

One can also write extensively of his historic leadership of the Great Steel Strike of 1919 and his restless pioneering work and struggle to organize the unorganized into industrial unions in the years 1917 to 1937 when the inept, inert, corrupt, craft-bound labor leaders abjectly betrayed and abandoned the decisive forces of the working class, the masses of Negro and white workers in the giant trusts and monopolies. In those years, directly leading Negro and white shop and unemployed workers in numerous struggles, Foster reared a whole generation of

militant experienced fighters who were the best organizers in the famous drive which established the C.I.O. and expanded the ranks of the A. F. of L.

I shall, however, confine myself to his indefatigable fight for peace.

If the Communist Party is the foremost champion of peace—in fact the Party of peace—conducting an uncompromising and fearless struggle against Wall Street imperialism and its insane plans to unleash a new world slaughter, it is thanks first of all to the indomitable courage, fighting spirit and Marxist-Leninist foresight and clarity of William Z. Foster.

It was Comrade Foster who as far back as 1944 first signalled the bellicose course which American imperialism would take in the post-war period. At that time he stood virtually alone in challenging the rotten opportunistic, utopian line of Earl Browder, who prattled about a "progressive capitalism" which would introduce a long era of peaceful co-operation among nations, founded on a home policy of rising living standards voluntarily granted by a new "intelligent" capitalism.

Time and experience soon proved this a pipe dream and upheld the correctness of Foster's views. The Party rallied eagerly to Foster's leadership, cast off Browder revisionism and in 1945 reorganized its ranks on the perspectives and fighting position of Marxism-Leninism.

Since that time Foster's clearsighted, correct and forceful anti-imperialist stand at each stage of the post-war developments enabled the Party increasingly to unite the people and to expose the monstrous hypocrisy and crafty maneuvers of Wall Street imperialism which prepares war in the name of peace. Foster has spared neither energy nor health, and his leadership, along with that of the heroic Gene Dennis, gave to the Party strength and courage to ride against the storm in the first days of the Korean war, to hold fast to its course, to remain true to the interests of the American people despite savage persecution, in the best traditions of Lincoln, Douglass, Debs and Ruthenberg, to raise high the banner of internationalism and thereby defend the sacred cause of world peace.

Only a great working class with militant fighting traditions could produce a Foster. His strength stems from his many years of hard struggle as a workingman fighting poverty and capitalist exploitation, from his inseparable bonds with his class, from his devotion and fidelity to his Party and not least from his deep and constant study and growing

mastery of the science of Marxism-Leninism. Foster illustrates the inherent capacity and power of the American working class to learn, if the Party will teach, the invincible theory of scientific socialism and overcome the blind narrow practicalism (it is really impracticalism) which pervades its ranks and which remains a major hindrance to its advance.

Having reached the proverbial three score and ten, when for most people their work, if not their lives, is done, Foster remains buoyantly young in spirit and vitality. This is well exemplified by the completion of a colossal task which would have over-taxed the energies of even a young man. I refer to his *Outline Political History of the Americas,* a work designed to aid the cause of peace by welding more solidly the unity of Negro and white, the solidarity of the peoples of the Western Hemisphere in the common fight against their common foe —United States imperialism.

May our beloved Comrade Foster be spared for many long years and continue his inspiring work and leadership of the Communist Party and advanced forces of our country.

Howard Fast:

WHAT do you say about Bill Foster? Years ago, I lunched with Jacob Potofsky—he was not yet head of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America—and he asked me whether I wouldn't write a book about Sidney Hillman.

"If I wrote a book about a labor leader in America," I answered, "it wouldn't be Hillman."

"No," Potofsky agreed. "I suppose it would be Foster."

Not in deference to me or what I thought of Foster; but in simple acknowledgment of the fact that Foster was a giant, and that there was no other man in the labor movement who measured up to the great size of him. Even Potofsky recognized and paid tribute to the fact of William Z. Foster.

It is the peculiar and particular wholeness of Foster. In this time of cowardice and treachery and sell-out and renegacy, here is a man of seventy years whose whole life makes a uniform pattern. It is not only

the shape of an honest man—so rare these days—but a man of such profound yet simple integrity that even those so-called labor leaders who have sold and betrayed the working class time after time, find it most difficult to lie about one whose life exemplifies everything brave and good and decent, everything that they turned their backs upon.

I might say that in Bill Foster there is a singular significance for me, as a writer. He lives the answer to the defeatism, the obscurantism, the cheap and miserable pessimism, the brutality which pervades our literature today. In his own life, Foster is the confirmation of the strength and the goodness of human beings. He is the new hero whom the writer must seek today, a man who was formed and shaped out of the historic strength of the working class; and who realized it consciously and scientifically; and who never turned his back on the people who gave him so much of his strength and his stature.

Where are such men on the other side? Measure against him the dirty, conscienceless sell-out artists, the sniveling Social-Democrats, the murderous masters of death, the Dubinskys, the Murrays, the Trumans and the Eisenhowers. Measure them against him, and you will see clearly—so very clearly—why Bill Foster's cause will triumph.

A word on him as a writer and scholar. As a writer, I have always had real admiration for a man who wrote so beautifully and so understandably on the most complex of themes. His writing, as with other things, is a part of that wholeness of him—his closeness to the people and to the language they speak. And his latest work, a Marxist history of the Americas, is one of the foremost scholarly contributions of our times.

He has that full and varied stature which signifies a complete man.

Rockwell Kent:

THE *strength* of William Z. Foster—the strength of his character as evidenced by his undeviating, life-long devotion to the cause of labor, by his unwavering courage in the face of physical and moral intimidation, and of his frame that could endure so much—is a matter of record. Yet underlying and pervading that strength is the rare and very touching gentleness of his nature which has given purpose and direction to

his strength and won him that affectionate devotion so profoundly essential to great leadership. Surely Bill Foster's own realization of how much he is loved will continue to enrich his life.

God bless Bill Foster!

Michael Gold:

I AM OLD enough to remember when Bill Foster left the I.W.W. with a pamphlet urging rebels to return to the reactionary-led A. F. of L. in which the mass of organized workers had remained. Bill believed the A. F. of L. could be induced to abandon its outworn craft organization, to reorganize along industrial lines—the only effective form that could challenge the great trusts.

Wobbly leftists denounced Bill and thought he was just another opportunist. I remember it confused me, also, for the I.W.W. inspired a great loyalty in any one who knew the movement and its heroism and rugged humor. Yet Bill was proved right. The migratory worker was not the figure around whom you could organize millions of steel workers, railroad men, textile weavers, coal miners—all of them with roots in a region and an industry. The man with a family could not join in the gleeful defiance of "Hallelujah I'm a Bum!" and did not feel footloose. Bill's analysis was vindicated only a few years later. Under the pressure of the first world war and the Russian Revolution the wobblies dwindled into a small sectarian cult.

Bill gathered his forces in the A. F. of L., under the noses of the pot-bellied Old Guard, and pressured these to give him official support for his epic struggle to unionize the steel workers. Feudal slavery, a seven-day-week and dictatorial rule by murder and fiat prevailed in the Steel Empire. The strike led by Foster was like a storming of the Bastille by the unarmed Parisians. The strike failed, sold out mainly by labor's misleaders, yet it prepared the second and successful strike. And Bill Foster's ideas prevailed and were the foundation stone on which the C.I.O. was built.

What I have always admired and loved in Bill Foster is the simplicity of his nature. This square-hewn Irishman with his clear blue eyes and easy-going manner has never lost the emotions of his rank-and-file youth. He has remained warm, approachable, sensitive and a friend of

all, never the "great leader" *à la* Ebenezer Bullfinch, but reminding one rather of an Irish legend, the giant with the heart of a child.

There was a period in the Communist movement here when a superleftist jargon cloaked the most Babbitty and Philistine approach to culture. Poetry, novels, painting, music—all this was supposed to be an effete bourgeois luxury, and strictly anti-proletarian. The worker was supposed to be interested only in his pork chops. Every attempt to divert him from economics was supposed to be reactionary. It is amusing to remember that this phony "proletarianism" was nearly always preached by petty-bourgeois careerists like Jay Lovestone and the like. Bill Foster never succumbed to such shallowness. He shared the reverent attitude toward human knowledge of that Russian proletarian, Maxim Gorky.

I can never forget how around the year 1924 Bill Foster, the great labor leader and Communist, stopped me on the street to congratulate me on a poem I had written. He had actually read it and liked it. He did not despise poetry. He wasn't trying to pretend to be a horny-fisted, empty-minded, mythical "proletaire." I cannot tell the young writers of today how much his words of praise warmed my spirit and helped me continue writing in that milieu of hostile Philistines—both bourgeois and "Communist."

I cannot believe today that Bill Foster is seventy. But it doesn't matter, for I know his heart still beats strong and true with the feelings of a young labor militant to whom nothing human is alien.

Bless you, Bill! May you catch up with Marcel Cachin and Mother Bloor! May you see, with your grandchildren, socialism come to America!

FROM THE FURROW

by MERIDEL LE SUEUR

Shouting, laughing,
From the furrow
where the dragon's teeth were planted
by those who never went away,
Clods began to cry out . . . move.
Heads sprouted and up rose a crop of men—
shoulders, breasts, limbs, mouths speaking, singing,
hands upraised with weapons.
A crop of men with short names
Tom Abe Walt
Bill Foster
Manrise
marking their collective source and common nourishment
from the deep furrow of the working class.
Manrise . . . with weapons:
Do you hear the underground sound of drill and airhammer?
Do you hear the lowdown hidden voices secret in a hut?
Do you hear the last breath of the Martinsville Seven and somebody waiting to take the bodies home?
Is there a shout down the Appalachians crying—Steel! Steel!
Is there a voice talking reasonably in a union hall speaking of the organization of wheat and bread and peace?
Does he speak of the breast of Earth and Man and the protean release? Does he tell carefully of history, speaking within the stone of a mortgaged building?
Do you hear voice of teacher and prophet?

Bill Foster . . . asking
From the Vulcan furrow
What about the people?
the miner . . . the Negro fallen into steel heat to make a girder for our strength . . . the belt line worker . . . the woman garment worker with a little girl tenderly memorializing the bones of a miner . . . the grandmother thrown away like old refuse . . . the baby—nut and kernel of all history.

Bill Foster . . . teacher
Speaking of quiet seas and fields of wheat
and walls of laughing, shouting huzzas of resisting flesh
of the working class, the sole creative force of struggle,
of love, of revival.

Foster, Vulcan willing to fall from illusory heavens into the Heart of Man
giving him a hammer and a ship that holds everyone
and you can put it in the smallest pocket when you are alone.
At home, in the hidden betrayed sold American earth
some of us never leave,
Warm and cradled in our hearts forever . . . folded in the long
wind that turns around the eves of time and barns
where you grow delicate as violets in the dung
strong as plantain and lasting as long.

Bill Foster . . . recorder of history
The mouth shouting
Saying
A New World Is Found!
Saying
The Strength Is In The People!
Laughing from the furrow
Handing up the Hammer of Theory and Action.
Loamy lover of us all.
Never solemn . . . do not despair.
We are not waiting for the mad Ahab to sink the ship
and record the disaster in the best manner.

But organize is the name of our hope
Organize the name of love.
Organize the sound of the hive forming.
Organize the name of affection.

So shouting, laughing, the Mad Ahab silenced
We ride the big whale safely in—
Not witness but actor
Not reflector but transmuter
Not hater but lover
So the furrows sing sudden
the wheat has mouth and weighs seven times as much
and the history so lovingly preserved and valued of all
the anonymous Americans turns bright as birds on golden
straws . . . and the grass smoke of man's victory joins with
all the smoke fires of Indian, Peruvian, Argentinian, Brazilian,
all who have sent up a signal to be here recorded.

Bill Foster . . . seize the history
like a torch, make it ours.
Silenced, he appears simultaneously on his birthday
in seven cities of South America including the pit mouth
of a mine in Chile—
in a fishing vessel manned by exiles off a lost shore—
at the mine meeting of the North Mexican strikers.
And I saw him laughing, singing with an Indian child
in Sisseton, South Dakota.
Confined in a room, thousands hear him—
Mowed down he rises in warm bread in the morning
in many cities.

A Tyl Eulenspiegel he shouts, incensed from underground, murdered
returning alive.
Indicted
he is the only free one
Hung from a gibbet
he appears on the speaker's stand.
Silenced
he records seven hundred pages of entombed history.

Grieve for his illness
and he waves to you from greenstalks, shouting of bread,
encouraging lovers not yet born.
And all the rocks have messages
even the smallest pebbles say on them
A New World Is Found.
And another spelled out by a flock of starlings
above a meeting of bloody fat men
Saying
The Americas of the Future
Saying
A name for our affection is
Organize—the new must be born!

Manrise . . . Saying
from the dragon's teeth
Clods stirring, swell, burst.
Heads sprout from the colonial furrow,
shoulders, breasts, and limbs of men and women
Released from the sour soil of oppression.
Burst manrise millionth swarm of singing armies.

The voice of Bill Foster
teacher, seaman, worker, historian, organizer
Manrise
Shouting
Manalive!
Marxian radar reflects over the curve of earth
A vision—a reality.
Do you hear shouting . . . singing?
There is laughter.

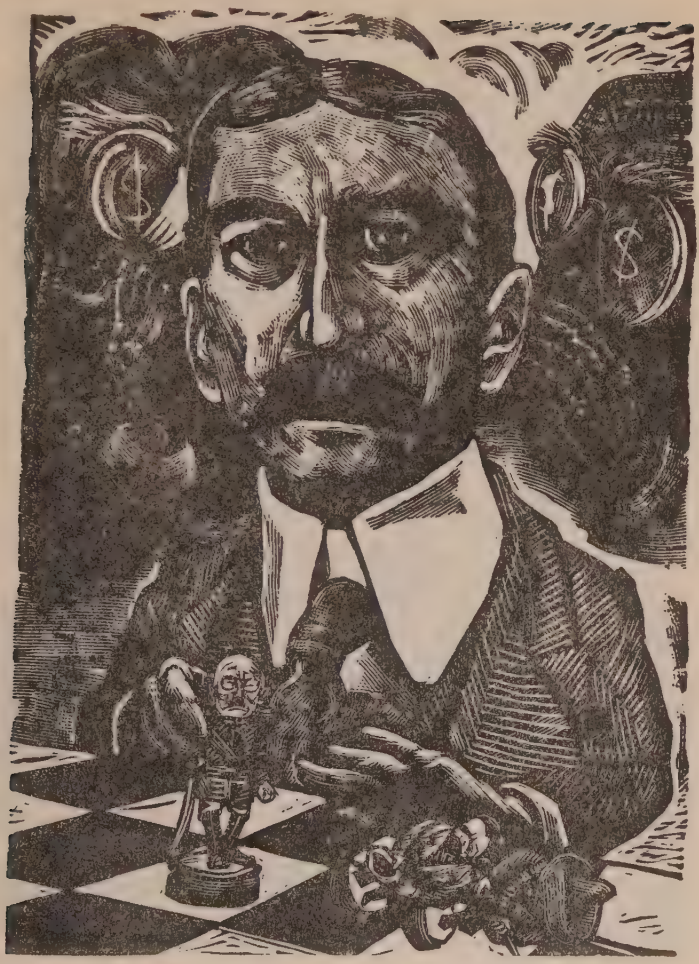
PRINTS OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION
by members of the Taller de Grafica Popular
Captions from William Z. Foster's
OUTLINE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE AMERICAS

ROBBING THE INDIANS OF THEIR LAND, *by Francisco Mora*

"The dictator Diaz [from 1876 to 1911] kept open house for the latifundists, so far as the public lands were concerned. He handed out big estates to the active supporters of his regime. He virtually gave away 135 million acres of the people's land, or about 27 per cent of the total land surface of Mexico."—*P. 305.*

TEXTILE STRIKE IN RIO BLANCO, *by Fernando Castro Pacheco*

"Every show of opposition by the people was brutally repressed . . . in Rio Blanco, in 1907, textile workers striking against the thirteen-hour day were massacred, 200 men, women and children being killed."—*P. 306.*



AMBASSADOR WILSON INTERVENES, *by Leopoldo Mendez*

"Porfirio Diaz was a perfect agent for the Yankee imperialists, and it was a great blow to them when the Mexican people threw him out. So the former began to plot immediately against his mildly liberal successor, Madero. When the latter's government fell in February, 1913, it was largely, if not mainly due to the open opposition of Taft's Ambassador Henry L. Wilson. . . . Indeed Huerta, who overthrew Madero, was practically 'nominated' in the U.S. Embassy offices."—*P. 314.*

EMILIANO ZAPATA, 1877-1919, *by Angel Bracho*

"'Land and liberty!' was his cry. . . . Zapata was the very symbol of the revolution—the fighting, indomitable peasant, determined to have the land at any cost."—*Pp. 308-9.*

FRANCISCO VILLA, 1877-1923, *by Alberto Beltrán*

" 'Pancho' Villa was an illiterate farmer who fought ably for the land. . . . John Reed, who was a correspondent with Villa's 40,000-man army, was full of praise for that general's political integrity and military ability."—*P. 309.*

REVOLUTIONARY WORKER, *by Jesús Escobedo*

"One of the major developments in the warfare against the Huerta counter-revolution was that for the first time the workers took part in the struggle in a general, organized form as a class. This was in the 'Red Battalions,' formed in 1914 by the Casa del Obrero Mundial (House of the Workers of the World) . . . a preliminary national labor center."—*P. 308.*

Morning

A Story by MARGRIT REINER

WITH the sound of the closing door Anni left fever and nightmares behind her. She did not, at first, open her eyes but, slowly and wearily, felt her way back to time and place.

The bed was strange and the room not her own. A woman was walking the length of the room treading firmly and decidedly as though walking off some excitement and fear. Anni remembered this step and waited, almost with relief, trying to place it and recall its meaning. It was as though the firm rhythm of these footsteps formed a line along which her memory slid back and at last, as the walking ceased, she found the courage to open her eyes.

Framed by the huge iron bedposts at the foot end of her bed the window opened directly in front of her. Half of it was covered by the woman's broad back bent over some kind of work, while the other half revealed a network of clothes lines and telegraph poles upon a grayish sky with freight trains shifting in the distance. The room was narrow, the old-fashioned bed filled practically all of it save for a crowded corridor between bed and wall. There was flowered wallpaper of a cheap faded pattern and garish calendars thrust upon it gracelessly. Anni took all this in in one glance, not understanding the shabbiness of it nor recognizing it for anything she knew. She had seen so many unfamiliar places in her fever dreams that what she saw now had little more finality than any of the others. Involuntarily, her lids half closed so that all that remained in her field of vision was the square of gray sky criss-crossed with clothes lines and telegraph wires. Franz, her lips formed, dear dear Franz. . . .

The bed was warm and snug under her. The sky between her lids and the warmth surrounding her gave her the sense of gliding freedom she so loved. It was this above all that meant Sunday mornings to her.

Luxuriously, she would hold on to this feeling, refusing to give in to either sleep or awakening until Franz stirred by her side and reached with drowsy limbs to embrace her. That was Sunday, the day so completely their own. It meant breakfast in full daylight with a clean tablecloth between them, not the groggy goodby after a gulped-down cup of coffee in the gray-dawn of a workday morning. It meant Franz singing while he shaved and eggs simmering on the range, and packing their knapsack with picnic lunch and a blanket. It meant streetcars full to bursting with young people and large families, and the crowded trek from the station to the woods. And then the Vienna woods—hidden paths leading away from the crowd, opening suddenly upon quiet green meadows surrounded by trees as though cut off from the world. Sunday was their day, an endless holiday with the evening descending upon them outdoors in all its glory. The wonderful tiredness on the way home belonged to this day, and the quiet joy of dinner in a wine garden. Bread and cold cuts and sour new wine, wooden benches to sit on and vines around you to make it private and in the swiftly falling darkness the simple sounds of fiddle and accordion.

ANNI startled. This was not Sunday and something was wrong. She did not remember—but she knew something terrible had happened. In sudden terror she opened her eyes wide as though to make sure she was not dreaming and, still seeing the woman's unmoving broad back, cried out for help. The cry came as a whisper, barely audible even to herself, and she tried it again and again, straining all her force to be heard. It was like fighting with locked doors in nightmares: as soon as one was forced open there was another one barring her way. When at last the woman turned towards the bed, Anni was in a cold sweat.

"Did you call me?" The broad friendly face was bending over her, the voice was anixous and warm. "You can hear me, can't you?"

"Where am I?"

"You're in my apartment. You've been here since Wednesday, with a fever."

"What day is it? Anni asked. As she formed the words her teeth were chattering.

"Saturday."

Thursday, Friday, Saturday. . . . Anni tried to focus on the face before

her, tried to think and remember. The voice was familiar, just as the foosteps had been. If only the face would stop swimming around in the room, if only it would stay in one place long enough for her to see. . . .

"How do you feel now? Would you like a clean gown? You're wet all over."

She was wet, the sheet stuck to her clammy skin the length of her body but she had not been aware of it until just now. For the first time also, the heaviness in her chest was materializing into sharp pain. Swollen and hard, her breasts felt like metal weights pressing down upon her. And as her restless fingers wandered over her body they found barren flatness where there had been bulging life. With a terrible shock Anni suddenly understood: from her paining nipples milk was dripping in heavy drops. Milk for her baby. . . .

"Let me fix the pillow. Now raise up just a bit, there—I'll stick this dry sheet under you. . . "

Anni could see the face now, and she remembered "You're Marie, aren't you?" she asked. Yet that was not the question she wanted answered.

"That's right. See, how you recognized me right away. Your getting along fine, really." The voice was like the pealing of a great big bell, it came from far off and rolled up against the wall with a hollow sound. With tremendous effort Anni lifted her hand from the thin cotton blanket. She held it in front of her in a small helpless gesture, asking to be heard yet begging to be kept from speaking. Then she dropped it limply.

"The baby," she said. It was not even a question.

Marie sat down carefully on the bed. She was a heavy woman and the bed sagged under her, making squeaky noises that filled the silence uncomfortably. She sighed and Anni waited and then some words came and both of them knew they were not the right words because there were no right words at this moment.

"It never had a chance," Marie said. "It must have been dead for some time."

Anni's eyes hugged the wall. The wetness was still there, milk dripping from her nipples, soiling the sheets and soaking the skin. I never even knew if it was a boy or a girl, she thought desperately. Ah Franz. . . .

He would put his hand on her forehead and it all would pass like

an evil dream. His hands were heavy and calloused with metal chips grown into the skin from work, but he could make them light and calm, Franz could. With his hand on her forehead she'd fall asleep easily and at once, as she had done so often. In the last months when she was big and sometimes uneasy he'd put his hand on her belly and together they'd feel the baby move. They would talk about it in the dark, feeling its unborn movements and guessing at what it would look like. Boy or girl—never guessing it would be dead and unnamed. Never guessing her milk would come in for nothing, just wasting into the sheets without purpose. . . .

FROM the open window came the sound of children playing. There was a little breeze, Anni felt it touch her cheeks and play with the ends of her hair. Marie's broad hand was patting her arm and Anni noticed only now that there was neither shooting nor rain. She remembered Franz' face, that sick worn face over the machine gun in Marx Hof all those days when the fascists had attacked the building. She remembered his look of despair and determination when it became clear in the end that the housing project would have to be surrendered. Yes, that moment when Franz had left her and gone with the other men to fight on elsewhere everything had been lost. Why did I have to wake up? Anni thought.

"It could have been lots worse," Marie said at last. "You're both young and well—you'll have plenty of kids yet."

Anni thought of the crib Franz had made, a sturdy white crib with a chest of drawers to match. When it was finished he'd painted pink roses on the drawers. "It's the only thing I know how to paint," he had apologized, "I hope he won't mind." Later, when the shooting had started he'd made her put both crib and chest of drawers in the kitchen away from the windows and she had covered them with rags so the falling plaster wouldn't soil them. Now they were white and pretty with roses and would stay empty and useless, always. . . .

"But I've got news for you," Marie cried suddenly. "Good news. I don't see why I kept you waiting so long, really. There is word from Franz, Watzek's wife sent her boy over."

"Watzek?" Anni asked indifferently.

"You remember Watzek, the one with the leg wound."

Anni remembered and she did not care. She remembered every-

thing: the three-day battle in the surrounded building, the last hours when the men left hopelessly, the aftermath in the rainy courtyard, the women and children standing with arms raised before the bayonets and machine guns. She remembered it all but it seemed centuries away while the one thing that had not left her even during her unconsciousness was what she would have wanted most to forget. The Commander's thin lips and the hard eyes drilling into her as she crumpled to the ground—it was at this that her memory ended as though nothing would ever happen after this that would matter in the least.

"Well, they fixed his leg in a splint and stood him up in court on crutches and sentenced him to two years in jail for carrying arms against the government. His wife had a chance to talk to him in court and he gave her word that ten of our men had crossed the Czech frontier. Franz was one of them. Isn't that wonderful?" Marie beamed. The mere telling of it seemed to her like a personal triumph. "Watzek found out from a fellow prisoner who got caught before he could get across." Anni just stared at her.

"Don't you understand, girl, Franz is alive and safe. . . ."

"Yes," Anni said. "Sure." Now it was certain Franz, too, was lost. If he tried to come back they'd arrest him. He was gone and he wouldn't put his hand on her forehead and make her sleep. No, nothing could ever make this go by. If Franz were here, by her side, it might be bearable. But he was gone, God knows where. "I wish I were dead like the baby," Anni said.

MARIE got up and turned her back to the bed. Again her firm footsteps covered the distance from bed to window and back and as she walked her face mirrored her anger. Suddenly she stopped and grabbed Anni by the shoulders without pity, looking straight at her and speaking like someone who has made up her mind she will be heard at all cost.

"Listen here, you," she said, not attempting to restrain the heat in her voice, "you've got no right to talk like this. Absolutely not. You should have been with me these last three days, running all over town to try and find Franz. You should've seen what I saw in the police stations and jails. They club 'em half to death with rubber hoses and they crowd 'em in filthy cells like pieces of wood. There are so many of 'em in the jails they haven't had time to take down their names.

And the sentences they get. . . . Ten, fifteen years. A year or two in Woellersdorf is the least, they only hand that out when they can't prove anything on a man except that he was in the fighting. You know what they would have done to Franz? No, girl, you've got no call to complain. . . ."

Her words came to Anni clearly, she understood them and listened. She remembered how Marie had nursed Watzek during the fighting, how she had cared for Franz and taken charge of the women. She recalled that she had wondered at the time, for she had known very little of Marie up to then, she'd always thought of her as a quiet middle-aged neighbor, ungainly and friendly, without particular qualifications. But now, as during the fighting, she found that she wanted Marie to trust her. Marie's opinion of her suddenly mattered. "Franz won't come back," she explained. "He can't come back, they'll arrest him. He's gone too, don't you see?"

Marie snorted. "You know better than that. . . ."

"And if he comes back—what about his job, what about our apartment? They'll take the apartment away from us, you'll see. I know it, that's just what they'll do." The words were tumbling out of Anni, there were suddenly so many words on her mind, so many things she wanted to say and she no longer cared whether it was right to say them or not. "What will we do without our apartment?"

"Find another one," Marie said calmly.

"But you don't know what this apartment means to us," Anni cried. "Five years we've been married and all the time we waited with the baby 'cause Franz says his kid's gonna grow up in an apartment with sunlight, no basement hole-in-the-wall like the kind we've been living in. All my life I've been wanting a place with running water inside—nice cool running water out of a faucet right in the kitchen —and I've been growing such beautiful flowers in my window-boxes. . . ." She clutched the blanket tightly to her body and suddenly began to sob wildly. "I saw them shoot right into my flowers with their guns. . . ."

Marie put her hand on Anni's forehead. She left it there for a long time and looked out of the window. In the freight yard an engineer leaned out of his cab and waved his hand at the yardmaster's house. Marie could see the white spot of his palm disappearing around the

bend. A woman was removing her wash from the line. A little dog crossed the tracks in the distance.

"Now take Watzek's Gretl," Marie said after a while. "Three kids and her man in jail. That's enough to get anyone down. But not her. Watzek was secretary of his Defense Corps platoon, y'know, so Gretl got hold of the membership list and before she burned it she sent the boy to all of them. He was here before you woke up. 'We've hidden the weapons,' the boy says. 'You'll hear from us and we'll need your help. Our free Vienna isn't dead, not by a long shot.' They're a good bunch, those Watzeks." She waited.

"Martha Kressner, my next-door neighbor, there's another one for you. She's a wrinkled old lady, pious and superstitious as they come. Every night she used to scream at that boy of hers: 'You keep out of politics, that Defense Corps'll only get you into trouble, you disgrace of a son. . . .' Well, her boy got killed the first day. Yesterday she came in here, Martha, with a ten shilling bill. 'I was gonna buy him a suit for Easter,' she said. 'You'd better use that for some of those poor kids who've lost their father. I'm praying for all of them when I pray for my boy.' And then she saw you and had to know all about you and this morning she came with a cake for you. I'd have never thought it. . . ."

Anni cried and cried, her teeth biting into the pillow. The more she cried the less she remembered. A mellow feeling of grief enveloped her, vague and comforting, like the arm of a friend. In the end she had no more tears, just the dull aching pain filling all of her and the room and the world. But there was a hand on her forehead, not Franz's but a good hand and gradually, reluctantly, Anni grew quiet.

"I think there's a good chance Franz will slip back across the border when this blows over. The police won't bother him, they've got their hands full right now."

Anni sniffed up her tears. "Yeah," she said bitterly, "He'll have to come crawling into his own house like a criminal. We've been beaten, all right. . . ."

Marie looked at her with quiet eyes and shook her head slowly.

At that moment Anni knew that Marie would understand what she

had to say. Her body was painful all over but she made a tremendous effort and lifted up on her elbows, putting her face close to Marie's. "I felt the baby moving to the last minute," she whispered. "It didn't need to die at all."

"Sure," Marie said. "They killed your baby just like they killed Martha's boy."

Anni sank back on her pillow. There it was and there was no escape from it. It would always be with her, this dull ache and the hatred that hurt like a festering wound. It was the kind of hatred she'd seen in Franz's eyes when he left that day. It had frightened her then and it frightened her still. But she knew it would make her go on living, it was part of her from this day on.

"We'll have to do something about the families," she said. "The families of the victims. . . ."

Marie nodded.

The little spring breeze lifted the curtains, blowing them into the room like big white sails.

Which Way for the Negro Writer?

by LLOYD L. BROWN

TEN years ago the editors of *The Negro Caravan*—Sterling A. Brown, Arthur P. Davis and Ulysses Lee—startled many readers when, in their introduction to that splendid collection of Negro writing, they denied the existence of any such thing as Negro literature. Such terms as "Negro novel" or "Negro play" were misnomers—and worse. The concept of Negro literature, these critics asserted, could only result in a double standard of judgment that would place the Negro writer in an inferior position to the white. In making this denial of the *national* character of Negro culture, it did not seem to occur to these editors that at the base of their fears was the fact of Negro oppression in this country. For no one asserts that the terms English novelist, French playwright, Chilean poet are demeaning. Only in a society such as ours, dominated by a white capitalist ruling-class, denying equality to fifteen million Negroes, can the terms Negro literature, Negro art, be considered "invidious."

The significance of this argument in *The Negro Caravan* was shrugged off by many at the time. What difference does it make? . . . Some people want to say "Negro writer" and others prefer to say "a writer who happens to be a Negro." So what?—as long as we get more and even better writing such as that presented in this collection. . . .

But that is the rub. Proceeding from the denial of the *concept* of Negro literature, a trend has grown in this field that threatens the very *existence* of Negro literature whatever you call it. This trend is highlighted in a recent issue of *Phylon,* a quarterly published by Atlanta University. The Winter-1950 number of the magazine is devoted entirely to a symposium on "The Negro in Literature: The Current Scene," with some twenty leading Negro novelists, poets, journalists

and critics participating. The value of this discussion is that it focuses sharply on the fundamental issues facing the Negro writer today.

Two of the questions submitted by *Phylon's* editors to the symposium participants are of key import. "Does current literature by and about Negroes seem more or less propagandistic than before? Would you agree with those who feel that the Negro writer, the Negro as subject, and the Negro critic and scholar are moving toward an 'unlabeled' future in which they will be measured without regard to racial origin and conditioning?" The response must have pleased the questioners, for most of the contributors directly express the viewpoint implied in these queries. With some notable exceptions, with which I will deal later, the majority of the contributors assert that the writer-who-happens-to-be-a-Negro must go in a "new direction" toward a greater goal. There are varied assessments as to the extent to which Negro writers have made the turn and there are some minor differences as to the precise nature of the goal. But there is a large area of agreement on four central theses, which I will cite for discussion here.

FIRST: *The Negro writer has been too preoccupied with his people and their problems.*

"Second to inability to write correct and effective English is an unwillingness to think in terms other than The Problem."—Era Bell Thompson, associate editor of *Ebony,* a Negro monthly modeled after *Life.*

"Today it is true that the expression 'Negro literature' finds less acceptance among intellectual circles than ever before . . . [but] the works of Negro writers, viewed as a whole, are still too narrow in scope; racial hypersensitivity is still too prevalent. . . ."—Thomas D. Jarrett, a *Phylon* editor.

This alleged evil is seen as both the result of a handicap and as a handicap itself. In considering the handicaps with which the Negro writer is burdened, William Gardner Smith, novelist, notes that: "The Negro writer is under tremendous pressure to write about the topical and transient—the plight of the Negro in American society today." Following a grudging admission that "propaganda from inside sources has frequently assisted colored people in their struggle toward equality and freedom," Hugh M. Gloster, faculty member of Hampton Institute, goes on to say:

". . . the preponderant use of racial subject matter has handicapped the Negro writer in at least four important ways. In the first place, it has retarded his attainment of a cosmic grasp of the varied experiences, humorous as well as tragic, through which individuals pass in this life. Second, it has diminished his philosophical perspective to the extent that he had made only meager contributions to national and world ideologies. Third, it has usually limited his literary range to the moods and substance of race in the United States. Fourth and finally, it has helped certain critics and publishers to lure him into the deadly trap of cultural segregation by advising him that the black ghetto is his proper milieu and that he will write best when he is most Negroid."

THE second thesis, presented as a correction to the above, is a *new direction and goal for the Negro writer.* The turn is simple: About face! The goal? To be a global writer, a universal writer, an American writer. The latter concept is, of course, synonymous with the other two now that we have entered upon the American Century! Miss Thompson sees the goal in less literary terms—"cake and Cadillac money." This factor is hinted at by several other contributors who note the success achieved by some writers who have already made the turn, but it would be grossly unjust to reduce the argument to one of simple opportunism.

Involved, in fact, are questions which have continually risen among Left and progressive writers, Negro and white. William Gardner Smith reminds us of the literary controversies of the Thirties and Forties when he poses "protest" content against "universal element," though this is perhaps the first time that the "topical and transient" which should be avoided by anyone aspiring to great Art is broadened to include "the plight of the Negro in America"—a mere matter of some 300 years and millions of people! Mr. Smith insists that "Novels which last through all time are concerned with universal themes. . . . [The] sense of the immediate problem confronts the Negro writer. But it is significant to note that we do not consider highly that literature which arose in protest against, say, the system of Feudalism, or even, in the United States, slavery."

Some of the critics who here advocate the "new direction" have been singing the siren-song of "emancipation" for several years. One of these, Mr. Gloster, wrote in his book, *Negro Voices in American*

Fiction: "Forced to become race-conscious by the nature and pressure of their environment, Negro fictionists of the nineteenth and of the first two decades of the twentieth century usually neglected art for propaganda and undertook to provide a literary defense for their people."

But it is dismaying to find among the proponents of this position writers whose works, in form and content, have been notable contributions to Negro literature. In a colloquy with *Phylon's* editors, Langston Hughes finds that "the most heartening thing for me, however, is to see Negroes writing works in the general American field, rather than dwelling on Negro themes solely. . . . I have been pleased to see Motley, Yerby, Petry and Dorothy West presenting in their various ways non-Negro subjects. . . . Edna Ferber originally wrote stories of Jewish life, but she broadened her perspective and went on to write *So Big, Show Boat,* and *Cimarron.* I think we are headed in the direction of similar and perhaps superior achievement."

And Margaret Walker, whose poems have pulsed with a powerful love "For My People," observes with seeming approval a "marked departure from the note of social protest" in current works by leading Negro poets. "Each one of the books is less preoccupied with the theme of race as such. Race is used as a point of departure toward a global point of view. . . ."

THE third thesis provides a rationale for the first two: *The struggle is over (or almost)*. The "new world a-comin'" is here (or just about). Integration has been achieved (at least for some).

Miss Thompson: "White journalism has always been open to the Negro, but never to the extent that it is today. . . . Current opportunities for the Negro writer are more than good. . . ."

Miss Walker: "With this announcement [the award of a Pulitzer Prize to Gwendolyn Brooks] comes not only the recognition of the fact that poetry by Negroes has come of age but also that the Negro has finally achieved full status in the literary world as an American poet."

Mr. Gloster: "The gradual emancipation of the Negro writer . . . has recently been facilitated by the rapid extension of democratic ideas and attitudes in this country and abroad . . . the publishing and writing

professions have exhibited an increasingly liberal attitude toward the Negro as author and as subject."

N. P. Tillman, managing editor of *Phylon*: "The American market no longer demands a specific type of story by a Negro author . . . with a ready market and freedom of choice of material, he has now, as never before in America, a happy combination of circumstances conducive to his growth. He can now, if he chooses, center his efforts on writing like an artist."

THE fourth thesis inevitably flows from the others: *Form is all-important and primary over content.*

The unanimity on this idea and the almost identical manner of expressing it makes it unnecessary to quote from the various writers. I will cite here only Miss Walker who most sharply advances this concept of formalism:

> "The new poetry has universal appeal coupled with another definite mark of neo-classicism, the return to form. They show an emphasis placed on technique rather than subject matter, and a moving toward intellectual themes of psychological and philosophical implications which border on obscurantism. These poems are never primitive, simple, and commonplace."

The first thing that should be said about the "new direction" is that it is indeed a fundamental break from the main historic channel of Negro writing. For nearly all Negro writers throughout American history the question of what to write about was compellingly simple: the pen was an essential instrument in the fight for liberation. This concept was not arrived at through any wringing and twisting; nor through any high-flown debates about Art-For-Art's-Sake *versus* Art-As-a-Weapon. Spontaneous and inevitable, it arose from the conditions of life—slavery and oppression. The very laws which made it a crime to teach a slave to read and write established the direction of Negro writing. If *learning* to write was an act against the slave-holders, then surely the *use* of writing would be a greater blow. This inescapable logic is exemplified with poetic clarity in Frederick Douglass. The slave boy, painfully learning his letters in defiance of his master, growing into the giant leader of his people and one of the greatest *writers*

in American history, pouring his passion for freedom through words of terrible beauty.

The special role of Negro writers was sharply outlined by Douglass in the first issue of his paper, *The North Star*:

> "It is neither a reflection on the fidelity, nor a disparagement of the ability of our friends and fellow-laborers, to assert what common sense affirms and only folly denies, that the man who has *suffered the wrong* is the man to *demand redress,*—that the man STRUCK is the man to CRY OUT—and that he who has *endured the cruel pangs of Slavery* is the man to *advocate Liberty.* It is evident we must be our own representatives and advocates, not exclusively, but peculiarly—not distinct from, but in connection with our white friends. In the grand struggle for liberty and equality now waging, it is meet, right and essential that there should arise in our ranks authors and editors, as well as orators, for it is in these capacities that the most permanent good can be rendered to our cause."

It was natural that the bulk of Negro writing expressed itself in direct forms of agitation and propaganda—pamphlets, leaflets, appeals, editorials. But early in the struggle against Negro enslavement the so-called creative forms of writing were employed. Negro Abolitionists like Douglass, William Wells Brown, Martin Delany and Frances Harper wrote short stories, novels and poems to advance their cause.

White supremacy survived the defeat of chattel slavery; from its wreckage, the structure of a new system of Negro oppression was salvaged and the Negro writers, with their people, confronted the old foe and continued to fight him. With the growth of the concept among themselves that the ex-slaves were a *people,* with special problems and interests common to all that were distinct from other Americans, a truly broader view of the role of Negro writing was seen. This view was clearly stated by Pauline E. Hopkins, a Negro novelist, in 1900:

> "Fiction is of great value to any people as a preserver of manners and customs—religious, political and social. It is a record of growth and development from generation to generation. No one will do this for us; we must ourselves develop the men and women who will faithfully portray the inmost thoughts and feelings of the Negro

with all the fire and romance which lie dormant in our history, and, as yet, unrecognized by writers of the Anglo-Saxon race."*

BUT what about today? It is not possible in these pages, nor is it my intention, to assemble the overwhelming evidence which contradicts the view that the struggle for Negro liberation in the United States has ended and with it the need for a literature of protest. I write this in the terrible hours of the mass legal-lynching of the Martinsville Seven, when the great mumbler for "Civil Rights" bars his Presidential door to those who cry for justice: he is too busy signing freedom papers for the convicted Nazis who, in the words of the New York *Times,* "were guilty of mass extermination of Jews and other minority groups."

Mrs. Edith Sampson is appointed as alternate U.S. delegate to the United Nations, and "integration" is won, we are told. But what about the mountain of facts contained in the appeal recently made to the U.N. by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—the documented indictment of Negro oppression prepared by Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois? The evidence is abundant—and irrefutable.

The award to Gwendolyn Brooks proves that "the Negro has finally achieved full status in the literary world"? For a spot check I turn to today's *New York Times Book Review,* Sunday, February 4. From the front-page review ("The Commanding Figure of MacArthur," who is extending democracy abroad with his order to shoot everything that moves in Korea) to the children's book section ("Robert E. Lee: Knight of the South," which shows "the great motivating forces of his life—honor and duty"), I see no evidence of a new day for the Negro writer. In thirty-two pages of reviews, articles and advertisements, no work by a Negro writer is mentioned. (A possible exception might be a Haitian novel, translated from the French, about "illicit sex and unhappy voodoo" which is reviewed by Langston Hughes.) Not one of the thirty-two best-sellers, nor the eight other books recommended by *Times'* editors is by a Negro writer—or even a-writer-who-happens-to-be-a-Negro.

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* Cited in *Negro Voices in American Fiction,* by Hugh M. Gloster. I readily acknowledge the many values of this book, not least of which is the evidence it provides to refute the conclusions of its author.

It is strange that the tidings of Jubilee, of opened doors and ready markets, of full status for the Negro writer, do not resound in the great media of American literary life—*Times, Tribune, Saturday Review of Literature,* etc.—but come to us in a Negro quarterly, published by a Negro university in the state governed by Herman Talmadge and represented in Congress by white men dedicated to the principles and practices of lynch law! It would appear that "integration" has been on a very small scale, largely limited to a few writers who have found a place high up in a segregated ivory tower. Ironic and tragic it is, that at a time when, as never before, the attention of the whole world is focussed upon the stark truth of Negro oppression and struggle in our country, so many of *Phylon's* contributors and editors direct the Negro writer away from his people.

There were important exceptions, as I mentioned before, to the self-alienation trend in the *Phylon* symposium. Sterling A. Brown's essay on "Negro Folk Expression," continues his invaluable work and direction. His scholarly research, like his poetry and criticism, is filled with love of the Negro people and a deep appreciation of the riches and beauty to be found in the soul of the Negro masses. J. Saunders Redding and Alain Locke point out the "great themes" in Negro life that cry out for development by Negro writers. Although Langston Hughes finds that the "most heartening" feature of Negro writing today is the movement away from Negro subject material, in another part of his remarks he points out that "the major aims of my work have been to interpret and comment upon Negro life, and its relations to the problems of Democracy. . . ." And with such notable success that I wonder if, in pointing out a different road to others, he is not like the preacher who tells his flock: "Don't do as I do—do as I *say* do!"

But it is Nick Aaron Ford of Morgan State College who directly and powerfully challenges the dominant trend of the symposium. He, too, places first emphasis on form, "craftsmanship and design," but then he goes on to say:

> "My second requirement for the Negro author is the continued use of racial themes. In certain quarters a great clamor has arisen for Negro authors to abandon racial material and launch out in the 'universal depths.' . . . In my opinion such perverted reasoning is

pure sophistry. In all ages and climates of man's civilization, one of the major purposes of literature has been to represent the thought and actions of men with as much truth to life as possible. Naturally a writer can portray life that he feels deeply and understands minutely with a greater degree of genuineness and truth than he can life which is more foreign to his experience."

AN EXAMINATION of the cry for "universal" perspectives and "global" points of view for the Negro writer will show that there is no single, simple motivation. Mingled here are a complex of forces, varied and contradictory: ideas of the white ruling class and distorted ideas of liberation struggle.

On the one hand this trend expresses, directly and indirectly, the philosophy of rampant American imperialism, the foremost enemy of national cultures, which strives to replace national arts by Hollywood junk, national literature by Superman. Cosmopolitanism is the cultural expression of that "internationalism" which grabs Taiwan from China, demolishes Korea, rearms the Nazis, Marshalls reluctant nations for war—the global viewpoint of a global appetite. As such it is the bitterest foe of the Negro people at home. And within our country this "universalism" represents an older evil: "Americanization" as conceived by the American Legion and the Ku Klux Klan, the "melting pot" where all so-called inferior cultures must be re-molded to conform to the Anglo-Saxon ideal. It was the spirit of contempt for "alien" culture which produced "black-face comedy," and all the mocking anti-Negro stereotypes against which we still contend today. In the field of music and dance the greatest contributions have been made by the despised Negro minority—but what Negro artists have been accorded the audience and rewards given two white men in burnt cork, Amos 'n' Andy? America's opera is still 100 per cent Jim Crow; only one Negro musician is employed in a major symphony orchestra in all the land; the foremost Negro radio and film actor is—Jack Benny's "valet." The "universal viewpoint" still cannot see the Negro with human dignity! The "extension of democracy" has still not touched the horrible Jim-Crow structure of Washington, D. C.!

This is not to deny that gains have been won by the Negro people: it is most necessary to note such advances because the manner in which

they have been achieved shows how greater gains can be won. *Those new positions that have been attained by the Negro people—and the Negro writer—are the fruits of unceasing, militant struggle waged by the Negro people and their progressive allies.* Indeed, Miss Walker in examining the renaissance of Negro literature before World War II, recognizes this factor:

> "Any literary development of the Negro in the Thirties was directly due to his social development. . . . Labor was stimulated by the unionization together of black and white labor and this in turn strengthened the political voice of the people. Consequently the literary audience widened and the Negro people themselves grew in intellectual awareness."

The struggle against the Jim-Crow ghetto—in jobs, housing and education—has also been waged on the literary field against the exclusion of Negro writers from the general avenues of expression. Jobs have been wrested (not many, but more can be) from the big-money press which is not and never has been "open" to the Negro. In a few instances Negro novelists have broken through the enforced limitation of themese—themes, as I will show later, that never included truthful presentation of Negro life. But there are some writers who confuse the essential and all-important struggle to break out of the *ghetto* with a false idea of breaking away from the *people* who are confined in the ghetto. "Integration"—for themselves.

The fact that growing numbers of the Negro upper-class are identifying themselves with slogans of U.S. imperialism in exchange for being integrated with some "cake and Cadillac money," demonstrates not that The Problem—as they sneeringly call it—has been solved, but that the masses of Negro people must look to the working class for leadership. And likewise, for the Negro writer, the true new direction is that which leads toward his own people and *through* them, *with* them, to the true internationalism which is sweeping the world.

To Margaret Walker who concluded her magnificent poem, "For My People," with the cry: *"Let a new earth rise. Let another world be born . . . Let a race of men now rise and take control,"* I would say —Look! Look at the great surging sweep of the anti-imperialist forces

of the world: there is the true global viewpoint. Not obscurantism, but clarity; not decay, but health; not racism and death, but brotherhood and life.

Out of isolation—yes! But with whom shall the Negro writer unite? With the literature of the graveyard—Koestler, Orwell, Gide, Sartre, Eliot, the rancid cults of Kafka and Pound? Or with the writers of socialism, national liberation and peace—the Soviet sons of the immortal Gorky, the unconquerable heirs of China's Lu Hsun, the living power and beauty of Neruda of Chile, O'Casey of Ireland, Hikmet of Turkey, Guillen of Cuba, Nexö of Denmark, Aragon and Eluard of France—giants of the race of mankind, prophets of the onrushing future?

The concluding installment of this article will appear next month. Mr. Brown will discuss the positive elements of the Negro writer's quest for universality, the question of "protest" content, and the outlook for the development of Negro literature.

Psalmnettes for the Dark Seraphim

by EDGAR ROGIE CLARK

How can I keep silent in these days? for a government based on Democracy is formed, yet crafty counsel is taken to exclude my people: second-rate citizens must wear a color badge and Black Laws are printed in pocket editions.

I often wonder why the bulwarks of the nation are so hysterical: governments of fiber at the grass roots need not fear destruction: yet panting passengers on the Freedom Train, jealously clutch their reservations: but there is no room for me on the Freedom Train: so here I stand with the stars and stripes waving in my face, while the train pulls out, rolling over the Land of Democracy.

"Where is the Land of Democracy?" someone asked, "where is this land of Burning Desire?" Yes, tell me too, tell me more about this soul-stirring vision of the new-freedom land: one day perhaps I'll get a ride to this Land of Liberty.

I am only a beggar sitting by the white crumbling walls of Democracy: hold the jeweled boot that kicks me, and let me help fix this old wall: there is a lot of spring plowing and sowing to do: I am delirious from roaming to find a place to lay my head: my tears are frozen and my heart is slowly turning into a stone: how much longer must I bear this boundless hatred of anti-brotherhood and those who have become addicts of vengeance?

They that make the laws, mock us: we have been made into a farce: they that wait at the polls laugh at us: and we are the joke of the drunkards.

Is Democracy a sorry heritage: and is it the voice of America resounding with a cracked and hollow note, the metallic timbre of hypocrisy?

Our defenders are scorned: and when we come into the courts, justice flees from us as the moon before the sun: they that hate us without cause are more than the hairs upon my head: they that would destroy us, being our enemies wrongfully, are mighty.

The makers of iniquity meet in the secret places and condemn innocent blood: proud Northmen plot against me: and mobs of Southmen assemble and seek after my very life: the very soil cries out against them: and the unfertile furrows likewise complain.

Men have become vain in robbing, and have set their hearts upon riches: they have laid snares to detain us from even common bread: our oppressors make us take vows, pay taxes, and make pledges: they have proclaimed unconstitutional laws: thy children, O God, are forced to eat in the back places and to ride the lower part of the ass, while our freedom lies vetoed on the law makers' desks.

Men of brutal might, old sleepy men who doze and spit in the capitol, you men of greasy tongues who collect votes and exploit my people, can you quote the price of cotton and steel in hell?

In the capitol we clean the floors and brush the boots of the cunning politician, he who makes the laws and dismisses us as a joke: while people are assailed on the highway, stripped of their rights, and even lynched and left for the pecker-woods to drill upon.

Sharecroppers wrestle with the stubborn soil: although watered with sweat and tears, the lynch-terror furrows produce no seed: poverty sings a barren tune in these confused times.

Someone is rapping at the door: "I am Deliverance, the hope of the common man, and the doom of the slave drivers who grind men to mechanical beats:" "only an Agitator," whispers one from within.

Women are exhausted from sewing on dreams, and little knots of patient-worn men with salty sweat streaming down their black bellies, are churning their strength: "it's a crisis," they shout: but the rulers only sigh: "a dilemma," they say, and appoint their Brotherhood Councils.

These links from Adam's ribs will once again defy the gaunt spectre of slavery hovering above our heads and break these galling chains.

The politician has prostituted our manumission: O God, prognosticate our freedom and repatriate the smitten from the exodus: must I labor and wait in vain: does God pervert judgment as man perverts justice?

Who will untie these years of toil from my hands: who will drive the curse of hate from my bleached brother's bones? and who will destroy the Unjust's gargantuan appetite for power and end this economic bondage?

The day will come when punishment shall belch upon them: for they have already signed their affidavit of doom, and being moored to evil, they cannot escape: one day the marble halls of the capitol will echo with their penance: the future is not in the ground, but in our hands: suffer the day when all men will learn the real dignity of man, and all the sons who fought for freedom, know the price of peace.

right face

HORRIBLE THOUGHT

"In the view of experienced diplomats there are indications that the Soviet Union intends to try once again to get what it wants in Germany through negotiations with the West. . . . 'Suppose Vishinsky were to agree to meet all the demands we have made on supervision of the elections and withdrawals of troops,' one diplomat asked, 'what do we do then?' "—*Drew Middleton to the New York* Times.

QUIT BRAGGING!

"Unless the reader is a saint or a fanatic, let him not boast that, under no conditions, would he sell his sons into industrial slavery, his daughters into prostitution, his friends for a good meal—or throw his new-born child out of a train window."—Gerald Barnes, in the *Antioch Review.*

VIEWPOINT

"Recommended Exhibitions: Arshile Gorky (Whitney). A memorial exhibition of painted drawings by a strange eclectic . . . this psychological colorist created a subconscious world that suggests a tragic insect looking into sparse grass."—*Art column of* The Nation.

OFFERING

"The greatest single contribution that the Christian church can make toward the preservation of peace is a teaching and a sacramental ministry to the souls of men, helping them by the grace of God to accept loyally the necessity of military service, high taxes, rationing, austerity, wage and price controls, and all the other sacrifices and irritations and frustrations that lie before us."—Reverend Leland B. Henry, executive director of the Commission on Christian Social Relations, in the New York *Times.*

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

George Bernard Shaw

by R. PALME DUTT

"IF THE world goes along the old path, I shall have to leave this world with sorrow." Shaw spoke these words in the Soviet Union in 1931, when he greeted with joy the victory of socialism in Russia, foresaw its victory in the rest of the world, and proclaimed that "the future lies with Lenin and Stalin." The aged traveller, in his seventy-fifth year, still looked forward with eager impatience to the victory of the world socialist revolution, and felt keen "sorrow" if he should not live to see it. The change that Shaw looked forward to in Britain and the Western world did not yet take place in the nineteen years of life that were left to him. Many cruel ordeals had still to be passed through, and have still to be passed through by the world. But changes enough have taken place in those nineteen years to show unerringly the path of the future, as one-third of humanity has moved over to the leadership of Communism. Shaw did not need to die sorrowful. "The future lies with Lenin and Stalin."

Shaw was an artist. He should not be judged primarily as a thinker, despite his prodigious mental energy and vigor. All the contradictions in the world can be found jostling one another in the ocean of his output. Greatness and pettiness of ideas rubbed shoulders, all illumined and immortalized in the alembic of a transcendent style and wit. He was a Marxist and an anti-Marxist, a revolutionary and a reformist, a Fabian and a despiser of Fabianism, a Communist and a crusader against super-tax. Only the dull would seek to construct an abstract intellectual system out of the myriad crossing strands and currents, of Ibsen and Marx, of Henry George and Jevons, of Nietzsche and Samuel Butler, of Lamarck and Bergson (but not of Freud—he never fell for that), of Plato and Thomas Aquinas, that weaved and interweaved and were transformed in the furnace of his thought and his imagination.

Therefore the theatre provided his best medium. His Plays will outlive his Prefaces. Through the creatures of his imagination he laid bare with unequalled power and human insight, with comic inspiration hovering on the tragic, all the contradictions of modern society, even where he could not provide the solution. His plays have been called plays "only" of talk, of discussion, of debate. It is true that some of his plays, especially the later plays, correspond in considerable part to this description. It is true also that he was a superb debater and pamphleteer. But through all his most memorable plays, and above all through the plays of his greatest period before 1914 and *Heartbreak House,* it is his creative genius as an artist, his broad humanity which expressed itself equally in his life and in his every utterance, his human sympathy and imagination, and his concern with the fate of humanity, that gives to them their power. He loved human beings. Therefore he was a socialist.

Beneath all the superficial contradictions and vagaries of his theories and day-to-day politics, his integrity as an artist, an integrity based on his broad humanity and social feeling, never wavered and never weakened.

He hated capitalist society. He hated all shams, cant, humbug, hypocrisy, servility, pompousness, cruelty, self-glorification, everything that debased mankind. He delighted to tear down all the polite fictions that concealed the rotting scrofulous ulcers of class oppression, parasitism and degradation. He exposed capitalist society with a passionate intensity that has never been equalled by any writer of English.

> "Modern English polite society, my native sphere, seems to me as corrupt as consciousness of culture and absence of honesty can make it. A canting, lie-loving, fact-hating, scribbling, chattering, wealth-hunting, pleasure-hunting, celebrity-hunting mob, that, having lost the fear of hell, and not replaced it by the love of justice, cares for nothing but the lion's share of the wealth wrung by threat of starvation from the hands of the classes that create it."

And in one agonizing sentence in his *Revolutionist's Handbook* he reveals alike the intensity of his feeling and the weakness of his intellectual construction. "The world will not bear thinking of to those who know what it is." He loved socialism. He worked for socialism. He

slaved for socialism. He devoted all his mighty powers to the tireless propagation of socialism. There was no drudgery too petty that he would not undertake to help the cause of socialism or to help socialists.

THERE is another element which must be borne in mind to sift the gold from the husks and chaff of the prodigal exuberance of his utterance, from which the pigmies can draw at pleasure to prove a pettifogging case, demean greatness or seek to diminish the stature of the man.

Here a trifling personal record from thirty-one years ago may be forgiven, because it helped the present writer to illumine understanding and learn a certain tolerance.

It was in 1919, on the day when the Treaty of Versailles was published. Walking with Shaw, I asked him his opinion of it. He said: "The Germans are prodigiously lucky; they are freed from the burden of armaments, and will forge ahead commercially, while we shall be ruined with an intolerable arms expenditures." With all the impetuous crudity of youth I set out to teach my grandfather the elements of politics and declared: "That may be witty, but it is not true," and argued that the Versailles Treaty placed heavy burdens upon the German nation, against which they would sooner or later revolt. Shaw looked at me compassionately, as at a neophyte, and said: "That may be true, but it is not witty; and if you only speak the truth in England, however brilliantly, nobody will listen to you; you will be ignored." He then proceeded to read me a long lecture of avuncular advice. He explained from his own experience that a young socialist writer must choose between two alternatives: either to write the truth to his own satisfaction in a few minute journals of infinitesimal circulation for a handful of an audience who would all violently disagree with you and abuse you for your pains; or to reach out to the millions by mixing up the truth with a fantastic amount of nonsense and conventional fictions, which would enable them to swallow the truth without knowing it. I remember that I obstinately answered back that there was in my opinion a third alternative: to tell the truth and also to reach the masses, that the Marxists in a certain number of countries had already solved this, and that, although it was more difficult in England, we should eventually solve it here also.

This episode has always remained in my memory, when confronted with some of the more absurd and exasperating of Shaw's occasional

utterances which might at any moment erupt from him. Not all that bore the signature of Shaw reflected the true mettle of the man. Much that he wrote may be happily forgotten. It is necessary to separate the grain from the chaff, the pure gold from an inordinate amount of dross.

But this episode also threw a light on his weakness, no less than on his strength. His strength was that, armed with the dazzling rapier of his incomparable style and wit, he consciously set out to reach the many-millioned public through all the clogged channels of publicity of imperialist Britain, and used without stint all the powers of his genius to awaken them from their slumbers ("I should always write on the assumption," he advised in the *Labour Monthly* of July, 1941, "that the English are brain-lazy, fatheaded and politically ignorant in the lump"), and to inculcate a sane, civilized socialist outlook. He brilliantly accomplished this task, as much as any one man could accomplish it. He transformed the ideas of politics into the language of life. Challenging capitalism to single combat in a world of capitalist publicity, he reached the top levels of public showmanship, so that the very avenues of capitalist publicity became his highroad—except for his most serious utterances.

But he had also to pay a price. The truths in Shaw always come forth in a twisted shape. The Shakespearean King's Fool could say so much, but not more; and the agony in his heart remains finally unresolved. Fighting alone in splendid isolation, with no contact with the mass movement, and with no confidence in the masses, he could only be a lonely preacher, an iconoclast, a heretic—never a leader. The bitterness breaks out from him in an occasional outcry, as in the Preface to *Major Barbara*: "I, who have preached and pamphleteered like any Encyclopedist, have to confess that my methods are no use." This sense of impotence of idealist isolation became more and more underlined in later years, as the victory of the realists, of the Marxists, of the mass movement which he had denied and despised, was demonstrated with the Russian Revolution and with the whole course of world history. His heart leaped out to them in their victory; his mental construction had led him along a different path.

The evil went deeper than the sense of individualist helplessness before the ruling powers of Mammon, of the Undershafts and the Horsebacks Halls, even while he exposed without mercy their bankruptcy. It twisted his philosophy. Fighting in isolation, he had to make terms with his adversary, even while he fought him. The final conclu-

sion is always missing in Shaw. The ruthless revolutionary diagnosis and analysis leads to no conclusion, because the only conclusion would be action, the action of the masses, and this Shaw had renounced from the outset as impossible. The soaring revolutionary analysis ends in a lame and impotent Fabian conclusion. The rocket of his thought shoots up in the sky to illuminate and dazzle the whole landscape and finally descends as a Fabian Blue Book or a Sub-Committee's Minority Report for Administrative Reform. The mental construction of the Fabian chokes and clouds the revolutionary insight of the artist. This is the conflict which Alick West has brilliantly analyzed, on the basis of the novels and plays, in his recently published study, *A Good Man Fallen Among Fabians.**

SHAW derived his socialism from Marx. He became a socialist by reading Marx's *Capital.* He wrote: "Marx opened my eyes to the facts of history and civilization, gave me an entirely fresh conception of the universe, provided me with a purpose and a mission in life." And again in 1943: "There are now only two orders of statesmen: the pre-Marx fossils and the post-Marx live wires. (*Daily Herald,* March 10, 1943.) He loved to proclaim himself a Marxist and a Communist, even while he freely mocked at Marxists and Communists, and displayed a most monumental innocence of what Marx wrote.

But it was the artist in Shaw which responded to the artist in Marx, to the mighty power and passion of the Titan and the Prometheus, to the immortal style of Marx, the encyclopedic knowledge, the sweeping vision which illumined the whole panorama of history and human existence. Shaw wrote to Hyndman in 1900: "I find Marx as old as Amos—*Das Kapital* a wrathful Old Testament (with New Blue Books) and nothing else."

The science of Marx was a closed book to Shaw. Shaw knew no science of history, of classes, of economics, of the strategy and tactics of class warfare; he knew only heroes and the helpless ignorant duped masses; patient all-wise Caesars and many-headed fools; prophets and scoundrels; rulers and rebels; artists and philistines; Fabians and romantic impossibilists; heaven and hell. Even the Russian Revolution was only comprehensible to him in terms of Lenin. The triumph of socialism in Russia meant for him Stalin.

Without the firm foundation of materialist dialectics there can be no

* Published in the United States by International Publishers.—*Ed.*

theory, but only ethical passion, empirical discovery and the scintillating play of ideas. Without the firm foundation of materialist economics, there can be no social theory and no navigation in the shoals and currents of the modern world.

Shaw boggled at the first school-boy's elementary conundrum over the theory of value, gave up the attempt to think a little further and master the key which unlocked the secrets of the laws of locomotion of capitalist society, and preferred to settle down with the tenth-rate platitudinous commonplaces of a Jevons or a Marshall, without realizing that he had thereby theoretically capitulated to the capitalism which his emotions detested. He looked at the visible picture of the working-class movement in late nineteenth century England, and wrote off the working class as incapable of playing any role. He looked at the little socialist sects and wrote off the conception of a socialist revolution as a romantic illusion. He retired into the dismal company of educated English ladies and gentlemen, horrified and repelled equally by what he saw there, but unable to conceive any alternative. In the intervals of dreary Fabian pettifogging, which he mistook for political activity, he sought relief from its horrors in mystical stimulants, which left him at the mercy of every vitalist charlatan and god-building religious mania, until he died in the arms (metaphorically speaking, let us hasten to add) of Lady Astor babbling to him of Mrs. Eddy.

BUT his heart remained true to the dreams of the socialist revolution, which his head rejected. If he abandoned the conception of the socialist revolution as an illusion, until 1917 began to open his eyes, he abandoned it, not with the self-satisfaction of the renegade, but with the tears of one disinherited. Again and again his revolutionary desire beat against the stifling limitations of his narrow empirical Fabian theoretical equipment.

In the very first Fabian Manifesto which he wrote in 1884 (the famous Tract No. 2, which was withdrawn) he concluded: "That we had rather face a Civil War than such another century of suffering as the present one has been."

In 1904 he wrote to protest against the notion "that there are two courses open to us: Parliamentary action and physical force, each of which excludes the other," and continued:

"This is not so. Parliamentary action is usually the first stage of

civil war. It is of course possible that capitalism will go under without a fight but I should regard any statesman who calculated on that as an extremely sanguine man. The mistake made by our wildcat barricaders is not in believing that the revolution will be effected by force, but in putting the fighting at the wrong end of the process." (*Clarion,* October, 1904.)

"The bitter tragedy of Shaw's life," commented T. A. Jackson recently in quoting this passage, "is that these wise words (which could be matched over and over again by equivalent citations from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin) were nullified by his verbalizings against Marx and Marxism, which helped to exalt these 'extremely sanguine men' into the official leadership of Labor-Socialism in Britain."

The Russian Revolution saved Shaw and finally resolved his contradiction. From the outset Shaw welcomed the Bolshevik Revolution. When others turned aside, and even a Kautsky, for all his previous pompous pedantry of Marxism, turned to denunciation, Shaw, the old Fabian, testified to the sterling truth that was in him, and declared with magnificent simplicity: "We are Socialists. The Russian side is our side." He loved to boast that "the two old hyperfabian Fabians, Webb and Shaw, have stuck to their guns like Fox (in his support of the French Revolution), whilst the sentimental Socialists have been bolting in all directions from Stalin, screaming like St. Peter. 'I know not the man.'" Yes; the Old Fabian leaders, the Webbs and Shaw—in contrast to the pitiful younger progeny of Fabianism today—redeemed themselves in their last year by their open support of Bolshevism and the Russia Revolution after its triumph had been achieved.

SHAW, like the Webbs, was no theorist. They reached to the Russian Revolution, and to the final recognition of its democratic and socialist achievement by the traditional English empirical road. They could not foresee theoretically the possibility of a serious Marxist revolutionary party (they still to the last pooh-poohed it in the countries where it had not yet won power) or of a successful socialist revolution; they had long ago dismissed such a conception as romantic fiddlesticks. But once the solid achievement was there, they had the courage and the honesty to recognize it publicly, and to build all their

ıter thinking upon it, even though it upset all their previous concep-
ions. Therein lay their greatness.

Even as late as 1928, in his *Intelligent Woman's Guide to Social-
sm and Capitalism,* Shaw was still retailing the conventional news-
aper nonsense about the failure of socialism in Russia and the return
ɔ capitalism.

But in 1931 Shaw went to the Soviet Union and met Stalin ("I
ever met a man who could talk so well"). Thereafter the change
ame. Shaw may have been no theorist to understand Bolshevik theory,
ut he was a sensitive, perceptive, imaginative, sharp-witted artist to
espond to human reality. He was an honorable socialist to respond to
ocialism. He was an honest man with the quality of greatness. The
isit to the Soviet Union in 1931 was the turning point (and it was
fter that visit that Shaw guided also the Webbs, fresh from the bitter
isillusionment of the Second Labor Government, to turn to the
ocialist Union for the solution). He came. He saw. Bolshevism
onquered.

Shaw stuck his colors to the mast. He stood by the Soviet Union. He
ever wavered. Even in the critical testing time of 1939-40, when
ll the rats ran to cover, Shaw stood by Stalin and the Soviet Union.
or that he was never forgiven.

In vain all the sycophants of the existing order seek to conceal,
ass over in silence, deny or distort the deep significance of the con-
ersion of Shaw and the Webbs to Soviet Communism in their final
hase, and to treat it as a regrettable vagary of aging years. They seek
ɔ vilify Shaw's support of Soviet Communism as a worship of dicta-
ɔrship, and to spread the legend that he was equally enthusiastic for
ıscism as for communism. This is false. It was not Shaw, but the
:ader of the Labor Party, Lansbury, who made the pilgrimage to Hitler.
haw may have let loose plenty of squibs in gay exuberance. But
e understood very well that fascism was merely a variant form of the
ıonopoly capitalism which rules in Britain or the United States, and
qually bankrupt. He wrote in 1937 (in the American *Story* magazine
ɔr October, 1937): "We have only to compare the development of
.ussia since the slump of 1929 with the utmost that fascism has been
ple to accomplish in double that period to see that fascism is subject
ɔ all the limitations and vices of capitalism, and can no more save
vilization than it could save all the earlier civilizations it has

wrecked." And again: "There is no remedy in fascism, but there is in Communism, and Communism is precisely what fascism teaches to abhor." Shaw's support of the Soviet Union and communism in his final years was based on full economic, political, moral and intellectual conviction. He wrote in December, 1937: "Russia is an example to all the world of the enormous superiority of Socialism to capitalism economically, socially, and politically." He welcomed in the Soviet Union the triumph of real freedom on the indispensable basis of Socialism:

> "The Russian statesmen have discovered that in a really free country—that is to say, a country which belongs to its people, and in which any group of public-spirited and able men can organize any public service they like without running to Parliament for Private Bills or paying monstrous sums to landlords and lawyers—the response to this freedom is so far greater than could have been conceived without practical demonstration that Russia has been able to effect social transformations in ten years that under our system would take a hundred." ("Stalin-Wells Talk," *New Statesman and Nation,* December, 1934.)

And Stalin he described sixteen years ago as "a statesman of unique experience compared to whom the rulers of the Western Powers, hanging on to an automatic and evil system with an equipment of empty phrases, fictitious histories and obsolete routines, seem like rows of rickety figures in a worn-out waxworks."

He recognized without hesitation, after his visit to the Soviet Union, the failure and bankruptcy of the ideas and methods of Fabianism and Labor Party Reformism in England ("Fabian Socialism has been an ignominious flop in England," *Daily Herald,* March 10, 1943) —even though he mischievously tried to claim in recompense that the "Fabian" ideas had triumphed in Russia. "The supposed conversion of Britain to constitutional Socialism by the Fabian Society made even less change than the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity by Constantine." (*Everybody's Political What's What,* 1944.)

He castigated without mercy the Labor Party reformist and imperialist leadership, and the successive Labor Governments, until by the time of the present disastrous Attlee Labor Government he was even writing in the *Daily Herald* of May 13, 1948: "Our Labor Front Bench

oratory is reaching a point at which it will be impossible for any Socialist who knows what he or she is talking about to endorse it, or even to remain in the Labor Party." In the same article he uttered a sentiment of timely significance for the Sheffield Peace Congress: "The Church of England has just betrayed Christianity by giving the atomic bomb its blessing."

YES, Shaw remained a fighter to the end. In moments of crisis, at the outbreak of war in 1914, and again in 1939, he had the courage to take an unpopular stand. For this he earned the hatred of the authorities, which they tried vainly to conceal in the later years behind their efforts to canonize him.

We salute in Shaw a great humanist and a great artist, a true fighter in the liberation struggle of humanity, a pioneer of socialist and communist ideas, the man whom Maxim Gorky acclaimed as "one of the most courageous thinkers in Europe."

Colossus in Our Time

by EVE MERRIAM

THE NEW COLOSSUS by Emma Lazarus
(the poem engraved on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty)

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

NOT like that freedom figure of past fame
With torch held high in welcome to our land;
Here at our barricading gates shall stand
A fearful sentry with a gun, whose aim
Imprisonment for thinking, and his name
Killer of Dissent. From his hostile hand
No world-wide greeting; his wild eyes command
The burning harbor, Bill of Rights in flame.

"Keep still, no one may speak but me!" cries he
With bloodshot voice. "Give me your knowledge, lore—
Inquiring spirits learning to breathe free—
Give me your schools, your pulpits, press and more;
All books, all art, all conscience yield to me:
I slam the lock inside the prison door!"

Oh, who will slake our country's burning blame,
Sweep out the silence from our ashen land?
Whose mothering fingers undo the iron band
Gripping this child in a vise of shame?
What woman shall be greatly found?
Her name
Known and unknown; from her dark-toiling hand
The will to force the padlocked gates that stand
Enclosing the future in a prison frame.
"Behold me, jailers, and beware the sea
Of my storming wrath! For I am the sick of war,
The mounting masses struggling to be free,
The laboring vision of a peaceful shore;
In me teem all who are the vast unfree:
And mine is the key to open wide the door!"

REMAKING China's Theatre

by P. C. Yu

CHINA is a nation of theatre-goers, and among all the theatrical arts, the classical theatre is pre-eminent. In addition to the hundreds of thousands who daily visit the cinemas, the Western style of drama and the newer forms of the theatre influenced by the revolutionary *yangko,* (a modern form of operatic art derived from the folk theatre of Northwest China), three million people daily crowd the playhouses, teahouses and booths of the classical theatre. There are no less than 350,000 performers of ninety different forms of this theatrical art in various parts of the country. In professional theatres, local festivals, entertainments and fairs, these artists are presenting to keenly receptive throngs the local dramas, comic dialogues, folk songs to the big or the hand drum, dances and acrobatic extravaganzas. But, say the actors, "All flowers bloom best in a garden." It is in the classical tragedy or comedy with its full stage effects (as in the *ching chu* or Peking Opera) that this ancient art of China is at its best.

The classical Chinese theatre is not like the Western realistic theatre with its illusionistic scenery. It is more like the Shakespearean theatre in its use of conventions. The stage is usually bare except for one or two essential tables and chairs. At the back, two curtained doorways to the left and right serve for the entrance and exit of the actors. The orchestra sits to the left of the stage and consists of lute, *hu chin* (violin), gong, big and small drum and wooden time beater. The actors sing to the accompaniment of the lute or *hu chin* and act or dance to the rest of the orchestra. Three or four plays or excerpts from plays are shown at

a performance and these are as well known to the theatre-goers as the classical ballets or operas of the European theatre are known to opera and ballet lovers in the West.

The performance usually includes a comedy or two, interludes with clowns, comedians, dancers and acrobats, and a tragedy and military play with themes taken from history, folk lore or the great popular novels.

The acting is conventional and so are the character types and costumes (the analogy here to the Western classical ballet or the Greek drama is instructive). There is no scenery, nor are there stage effects in the Western sense; "props" and sets being produced or changed in full view of the audience. The costumes are always gorgeously designed and executed with great richness. Symbols and symbolism of costumes, masques, gestures and sets are widely used. Acting, singing and dancing, prose and poetry are combined to produce an artistic effect of great expressiveness, variety and richness. While for many years during the Manchu times actors played both male and female roles, actresses have in recent years come to take their rightful place on the stage.

A SUCCESSION of talented artists, with Mei Lan-fang as the acknowledged star, have brought the classical opera to its present brilliance and widespread popularity. But, though that popularity is still unchallenged by other forms of the theatre, the classical theatre knows that it is facing a new and searching test, particularly since the day of the liberation.

The masses of the people, whose support has enabled the classical theatre to develop and flourish, have changed fundamentally in the course of the revolution. They have new interests, a new outlook. They are more politically conscious than ever before. They are being fired by the ideas and ideals of the New Democracy. They are therefore presenting new, modern demands to the artists of the classical theatre.

This theatre is historically the product of China's feudal culture

and is deeply imbued with Confucian and Taoist philosophy. It still bears deeply the marks of its origin. Its plays have propagated, for instance, the feudal concept of the hero, of filial piety and loyalty to the lord or family above the nation and a fundamentally fatalistic view of life. With the advent of the New Democracy, all such ideas are being discarded as incompatible with the new social conditions. The mass audience of today has a new concept of the hero: it is he who fights the power of reaction whether in events relating to political oppression or love. The reform of the Peking Opera reflects this new social demand.

Thus, in *The Assassination of the Tiger General* the comrades of Li Tse-cheng, who led the peasants' revolt that overthrew the Ming Dynasty, are today regarded as heroic rebels against a corrupt autocracy, and not as bandits that the official censorship formerly made them out to be. In *Lady Precious Stream,* moral censure is now directed against the profligate husband who kept his lady waiting for him for eighteen years. In the old days the emphasis was on the patient submission of the deserted wife.

Audiences of the New Democracy reject all superstition. The merely weird no longer excites their interest. They love the dramatic character of Pao Cheng, the celebrated judge of the eleventh century who defended the people against the illegal "laws" of the emperor, but they reject the dramatic device whereby he is given supernatural powers and is able to communicate with spirits in Hell who help him make out his briefs. But just as the modern Soviet audience delights in the fairy effects seen by *Sadko* in the Underwater Kingdom, so do audiences in modern China revel in the amusing fantasies with which the classical theatre abounds.

As a result of its long history of development under the old imperial feudal society and the war-lord and Kuomintang regimes, the classical opera has many elements unacceptable to a modern audience. Its leading artists are aware of this and realize that unless the art reforms itself it will fall out of popular favor just as the *kun chu* form of drama did, when, adapting itself more and more to the tastes and prejudices of the old *literati,* it lost the popular touch and in the end almost passed from the stage. This need for reform was realized as long ago as the start of the May Fourth Movement of 1919. It became an insistent demand with the liberation of the country from the forces of

reaction. Since October 1, 1949, the artists of the classical theatre have joined with all other artists in a radical re-evaluation and reform of their art.

DURING the past year the whole organization and repertoire of the classical theatre has seen rapid progressive changes. Attention was, in the first place, concentrated on the personnel of the stage. With the aid of the People's Government, the All-China Federation of Artists and Writers organized special study courses for the theatre workers. They became better acquainted with the political situation, with the place of art in society. They were helped to realize their own position and role in the new society, their new rights and responsibilities. The theatre in China has always played a didactic role, frankly realizing that "art is propaganda." Now the actors understand this in the modern, Marxist sense. As "engineers of the human soul," they realize that their entertainment should inspire the people with the ideals of progressive mankind, with faith in the revolutionary cause, in the creative genius of the people, that it should move forward in step with the progressive social forces and at the same time preserve the best of the cultural heritage of the past.

Before the liberation, the theatre workers, even such great artists and teachers as Mei Lan-feng, were never accorded their due rights. The Manchu society set them low in the social scale along with mercenaries and prostitutes. They were, as a general rule, underpaid. Many, unable to make a living, transferred to other occupations. Even those who gained the loudest popular plaudits had only "second-class" social rights.

All that is now changed. Theatre workers are accorded the same respect as writers, scientists, painters and other brain workers. In order to enable them to play their full part in the work of cultural construction, they have been brought into the political councils of the new people's state. Immediately after the liberation of Peking, the nation's theatrical center, four of the leading artists of the classical theatre—including the renowned Mei Lan-fang, the leading actor of *tan* (heroic female roles) and Chow Hsin-fang of Shanghai, famous for his performances of *lao sheng* (male roles)—were elected members of the People's Political Consultative Conference and participated in the organization of the Central People's Government.

All active theatrical workers have quickly found their proper place in the booming theatrical life of New China. Many have been invited to participate in the work of state-sponsored dramatic organizations to help revise the classical repertoire in line with modern ideas. These include Wang Yao-ching, now seventy years old, the tutor of Mei Lan-fang who is now teaching at the new state Dramatic Academy.

At the All-China Dramatic Workers' Conference recently held in Peking, Kai Chiao-tien, a veteran actor from Shanghai, addressed the 239 representatives of the various forms of theatre art from all parts of China. He told how he had been hampered by his lack of a proper schooling when a child, how, because of this he had tried to establish schools where young actors could get an education, but how he had failed to get help from either private or public sources. "The old society would not condescend to help an uneducated person educate others. But this time I am asked to speak at a national conference. I would never have dreamed of such a thing before. I am not an eloquent speaker. I can't express what is in my mind. But perhaps you will understand me nevertheless." His "unsuccessful" speech was eloquent in its very hesitancy. In his appreciation of the new status that the people's revolution has given to the acting profession, he had, indeed, spoken not only for himself but for every one present there.

EVER since the May Fourth Movement spread to the theatrical world, there have been workers of the classical theatre who have striven to reform their art and bring it into closer conformity with the revolutionary realities of today. Under the warlords and the Kuomintang, however, their efforts were hampered and very nearly nullified by the reactionary censorship. Many artists, like Mei Lan-fang, strove in an indirect way to attain their progressive aims. They stressed the positive, democratic implications in the old plays, and especially those that denounced the corruption of officials or the wickedness of oppressors. Now after the liberation and the raising of the political level of all theatre workers, the whole profession has been mobilized for these progressive aims under the leadership of the People's Government and the Chinese Communist Party.

The movement for reform has thus made rapid strides during the past year. It has been established in principle that none of the existing plays should be banned altogether unless they are of a hopelessly

reactionary nature, but that wherever revision is necessary it should be carefully undertaken. Those scenes that laud the idea of despotism or encourage a servile mentality should be ruthlessly discarded. Those that express the ideas of patriotism, or that show the courage, industry or wisdom of the people should be preserved and developed.

For instance, the modern adaptation of *The Monument of Li Ling* reduces the element of weakness and defeatism in the old general Yang Yeh in his struggle against the aggression of the Chin Emperor and the treachery of his compatriot Pan Hung. The emphasis is now on his mounting, righteous wrath against the internal and external enemies of his country. In *The Fisherman's Revenge,* the old fisherman's hatred for the landlord who cruelly extorts from him the fruits of his toil, was previously relegated to the background by the comic character of the landlord's bodyguard. Furthermore, the climax of the play, where the fisherman kills the landlord, was usually left out of the performances given in the later days of the emperors or under the Kuomintang. Now the original emphasis of the play has been restored.

A sharper line is now also drawn between superstition and fairy tale, between wantonness and pure love. In the original *Tale of the White Snake,* the heroine, a white snake who has taken human form, is snatched from her husband by the machinations of Fa Hai, a wicked abbot who changes her back into a snake. She fights bitterly though unsuccessfully against her enemy in order to regain her human form and the love of her mate. In the modern version, the air of mysticism is cleared away. The heroine personifies true love triumphant, despite the tragic ending, over the evil forces of prejudice.

No less than seventy-two of the old operas have been adapted along these lines and produced during the past year. The new versions have aroused very great interest among audiences and in some cases, lively controversies have been started which have resulted in further improvements. This number of new adaptations of the many hundreds of extant operas is being constantly increased in response to the popular demand.

LIKE all traditional arts that have deep roots in the people, the classical theatre is constantly undergoing changes dictated by social progress and has never for long lapsed into a set mold. This is indeed one of the main reasons for the assurance that it will survive the test

to which it is now being subjected. It has shown remarkable powers of assimilation and adaptation. Dynamic developments were taking place in the classical theatre even in the later days of the emperors when other arts stagnated. Thus it is by no means excluded that despite many arguments against it, some form of scenery or sets will be introduced. It is, as another example, only recently that the spacious modern stage has taken the place of the old two-pillared square one.

"It is absurd," says Chow Yang, the eminent literary critic and Vice-Minister of Cultural Affairs, "to cram the ever-broadening audience into a gloomy narrow theatre lit with oil lamps while footlights and limelights are being used in other theatres!" Again, modern ears have now quite accepted the second *hu chin* (violin) introduced by Mei Lan-fang to enrich the accompaniment of his songs. In view of these innovations, and particularly since the minds of theatrical workers are now more keenly receptive of new ideas and innovations than ever in the past, we should only be surprised if further metamorphoses of the classical theatre do not appear.

It has been through a series of profound discussions and arguments that theatre workers have come to the conclusion that the traditional form of the classical opera can be preserved only if it develops to meet the modern needs of the people. As Chairman Mao Tse-tung has said: "All arts must create new things out of old."

Reform has also changed for the better the relations between the workers of the profession. The old apprenticeship system that developed out of feudal traditions was an oppressive one. The young apprentice was accepted by his master-tutor under a contract that stipulated specifically that the latter could not be held responsible for the death of the apprentice during the period of training! It can therefore well be imagined what tortures the unlucky apprentice suffered. Furthermore, when his apprenticeship ended the apprentice was obliged to redeem his freedom over many years by giving all his income from performances to his master. And even then he was not free. Most actors were obliged to deal with theatre managers through the theatrical agents who took five per cent of the actors' wages as commission and were not above other extortions.

These and other bad practices and customs in the theatre that burdened the actors and acted as a brake on any attempts to reform the theatre and the position of the actors, have all been critically reviewed

during the past year. The relationship between the master and his apprentice has been entirely reformed and the old contracts have been nullified. The system will be completely ended in the near future as more of the modern dramatic schools are opened. The first of these —the Experimental Academy of the Drama founded in Peking in August, 1949—already has 154 students of both sexes from eight to nineteen years of age. They are receiving a complete education not only in dramatic art, but in ordinary school subjects as well, free of charge and with full board and lodging.

The actors themselves are ending the system of agents. Several new companies have been organized on a democratic and co-operative basis. The professional and social co-operation among the theatre workers has been strengthened. Immediately after the establishment of the People's Government, for instance, a Drama Reformation Bureau was formed under the direction of the veteran playwright, Tien Han. This organization co-ordinates the views and experiences of theatre workers for the reform of plays and all other branches of the classical theatre. It has enlisted the aid of leaders in other spheres of art such as the novelists (among them Lau Shaw, the author of *Rickshaw Boy*), critics and modern dancers, and thus brought fresh and vital minds to the tasks of the theatre. The theatrical profession is now organized in a special branch of the All-China Federation of Literary and Artistic Workers.

As Chow Yang noted in his concluding speech at the All-China Dramatic Work Conference which was convened by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, all the various forms of classical dramatic art are now being actively encouraged and developed, but it is inevitable that some will advance more swiftly and surely than others. Those that serve the people best will survive and flourish best.

The artists of the classical theatre are determined to bring their art to a yet higher level of perfection and popularity as a reborn art of the new people's China. No one doubts that it has a brilliant future.

books in review

Epic History

OUTLINE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE AMERICAS, by William Z. Foster. *International.* $5.00.

"THE writing of history," remarked James Ford Rhodes, one of the "standard" bourgeois historians, "is the hobby of the rich." Being himself a millionaire and son-in-law of Mark Hanna, President McKinley's boss, Professor Rhodes knew whereof he spoke. It was, then, somewhat unkind for Henry Ford to assert that "History is bunk," but if that savant had in mind such historians as Mr. Rhodes & Co., he spoke truly.

Basically for the reason indicated by Mr. Rhodes—that the rich control history-writing and thus determine the dominant interpretation of the past, the better to control the present—Frederick Engels pointed out that "All history must be re-written." Not the boss, but the worker; not the chauvinist but the proletarian internationalist; not the swivel-chaired philistine but the staunch organizer must do the re-writing. He must do the re-writing because he brings to the past his eyes sharpened by a clear vision of the future.

Those eyes will see old things in a new light and will discover new things which the bourgeois writers deliberately or otherwise ignored. The decaying bourgeoisie has made a cult of irrationality—"We must leave reason and return to instinct," said Hitler — and in their history one has today either the turgid mysticism of a Toynbee, the reactionary idealism of a Croce, or the weak-kneed eclecticism of a Schlesinger the Little. And from all of it comes a denial of causation, a scoffing at progress, a demeaning of the masses, a devotion to capitalism and an ideological preparation for fascism.

That which the proletarian historian sees is not only new, it is also true. It is, indeed, only the proletarian historian who can achieve that real objectivity whose existence is denied by the bourgeois academicians. This is because the struggle of the working class and its allies is a just struggle. As between boss and worker, landlord and tenant, imperialist and fighter for national liberation, warmonger and peace-partisan, justice and truth are always on the side of the latter. Therefore, to the degree that the historian succeeds in identifying himself with the op-

pressed, he produces true history. To prove this we have William Z. Foster's *Outline Political History of the Americas*. The foremost son of the American working class, leader for over fifty years of its struggles, outstanding Marxist-Leninist theoretician and Communist fighter, has produced in this pioneering volume a work grand in conception, encyclopedic in scope and heroic in execution.

The *Outline History* contains about 300,000 words, plus six pages of maps and twenty pages of reference notes. It undertakes for the first time to tell, in Foster's words, the "long and gruesome story of the despoliation and wasting of the natural resources of the western hemisphere, and of the enslavement and exploitation of its peoples for the enrichment of small ruling classes of parasitic landowners and capitalists... [and] the record of an endless and indomitable struggle on the part of the toiling masses against this ruthless exploitation and for human freedom."

The story and the record are here, from Canada to Argentina; and from the moment, over four hundred years ago, when the first Conquistadores "first fell upon their knees and then upon the aborigines," to the moment that Harry Truman screamed peace and raped Korea.

In this first assessment of a work that will be discussed, studied and used for many years in every corner of the world, we can mention only a few noteworthy features. Outstanding, of course, is its basic conception of the historic wholeness of the history of the Americas and the flood of light this throws on events—like the Revolution and Civil War in the United States—hitherto conventionally treated in isolation. Fundamental, too, is the sense of interpenetration and interrelationship that Foster's work provides in considering the development of peoples—as the Negro or the Indian peoples—hitherto also treated separately. In both these cases the isolation and separation, being artificial, served to distort the truth.

The volume strikes a tremendous blow against the notorious United States provincialism, which is really, of course, a reflection of Yankee imperialism. Foster shows that the University of Mexico was founded nearly a century before Harvard, and that the inhabitants of Lima read newspapers 150 years before those of Boston. And he treats, in great detail, with the continuing expressions of great creativity in Mexico, Central and South America which the propagandists of Yankee imperialism effectively hide.

Foster's volume keenly attacks several of the basic ideological props of white chauvinism. He shows what magnificent cultures were destroyed by the European conquerors in Africa and the New World. And he describes the

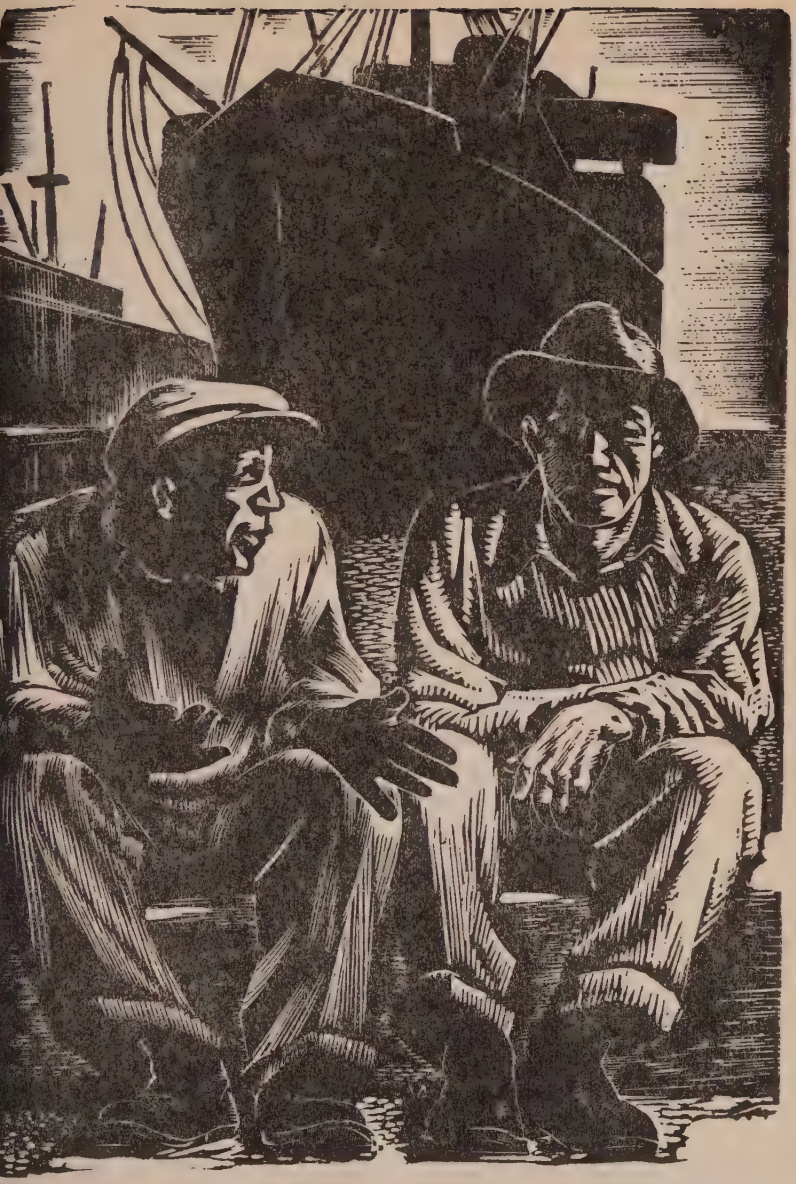
courageous, persistent and continuing resistance to enslavement and oppression offered by the Negro and Indian peoples, and the treasures of experience and militance those peoples bring to all democratic struggles.

This *Outline History* breathes the profound scorn and passionate hatred which its author has for the rich plunderers. Thus, referring to the period of the rise of United States monopoly capitalism, Foster writes: "While tens of millions of people lived in poverty and want, their capitalist masters reveled in luxury, piling millions upon hundreds of millions and ever clamoring for more. Their greed was equalled only by their ignorance, and their culture was nil. They had no sense of patriotism or of national obligation." And then the oppression and robbery are spelled out—vividly—so as to help the reader gain some of the purifying righteous wrath that has been one of the main themes of the author's life.

And his other main theme—the other side of the same coin—is his pride in and love for the masses of toiling and producing men and women. He details their struggles and dreams, their bravery and determination. He conveys in this volume the incalculable strength which the working people possess, their endurance and their indestructibility. In doing this the work helps bolster the confidence of the exploited and it is exactly this confidence which is the central target of "The Voice of America."

In developing these main theses, Foster pauses frequently to analyze provocatively some key lessons they offer for today. Thus, his remarks on the way revolutions proceed, on the nature of a bourgeois state, on the role of religion, on the formation of nations serve to illuminate central tasks before progressives now. The body of the work itself is divided into three parts: The Colonial Period, the National Period to World War I, and From Capitalism to Socialism. In each case the essence of the periods—as the destruction of feudalism, the national liberation movements, the fight against slavery, the land question, the appearance of monopoly capitalism, the development of the labor movement, the rise of imperialism and the struggle against it—is analyzed at length. The detail in the work is extraordinary. Here are pages on the French Canadians, the Mexican Revolution, the Aprista movement in Peru, the Americans for Democratic Action, the New Deal, and scores of other topics, all shown in their setting and analyzed in class terms. Brief histories of each of the American Communist parties are presented and the main features of the present hemispheric labor movement are delineated.

The most urgent political prob-



Victor Arnautoff

lems of today are posed: the question of war or peace, the question of national self-determination, of independence from U.S. domination, of improvement of living standards, of the industrialization of Latin America, of the redistribution of the land in the plantation areas, of the defeat of fascism. And not only posed; they are savored, weighed, illuminated.

The final section of the volume has as its thesis Foster's conviction that, "The great historical process that has gone on in the Americas for more than four and a half centuries . . . does not lead to a fascist, Yankee-dominated world of Wall Street, but to the new free world of socialism." That this is true Foster demonstrates by assessing the power of the camp of peace and freedom against that of war and slavery. He shows that we stand today on the threshold of a new life of abundance and decency, but that it is for us—for us, especially in the United States—to walk through that threshold.

There is nothing Pollyannish in Foster's book. He is not a man given to rhetoric and his book is above all a guide to action. Foster knows that when peace and freedom and socialism come they will come because men and women, in sufficient numbers, well-enough organized, guided by correct theory, *willed* them to come and went out and brought them in.

William Z. Foster's whole life has been and will continue to be devoted to this purpose. Everything he has done has had this end. He has done many, many historic and noble and courageous things, but nothing he has done has possessed these attributes to a greater degree than his *Outline Political History of the Americas.* The book is a monumental contribution to historical knowledge and, at the same time, a great instrument for the making of history. It is simultaneously a tribute to the Communist Party, U.S.A., for only a writer devoted to and benefiting by the collective work of that Party, its true patriotism and proletarian internationalism, could have produced such a volume.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

Celluloid Noose

THE NEGRO IN HOLLYWOOD FILMS, by V. J. Jerome. *Masses & Mainstream.* 25c.

IT WAS inevitable that the bankerized "art" of the Hollywood film factories would be converted into a cultural Big Bertha to take part in the Truman-Dulles barrage against peace and national sanity. V. J. Jerome, the editor of the Marxist-Leninist theoretical monthly, *Political Affairs,* has proven this brilliantly in his study of the film capital's series of "New

Look" creations dealing with the Negro question.

The production and circulation of such films as *Pinky, Lost Boundaries, Intruder in the Dust* and *Home of the Brave,* it will be remembered, coincided with Paul Robeson's dramatic statement of April, 1949, in Paris, that American Negroes would not support their oppressors in a war against peoples who had fought for human dignity. Robeson's statement was met with a hurricane of Washington rebuttal, for the Negro people's liberation struggles had reached the highest point since Reconstruction.

Moreover, with U.S. imperialism already eyeing its colonial possibilities among the world's colored peoples in Africa and Asia, Jerome explains:

"Their anxiety mounts at the evidence that the treatment accorded the Negro on the Hollywod screen exposes the Wall Street 'dispenser of democracy' as a false Messiah. The world-wide criticism of anti-Negro discrimination and terror in the United States is noted with grave discomfort by many apologists for American imperialism abroad. Thus Walter White [secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] . . . stated upon his return from a round-the-world tour that he had encountered everywhere 'questions about the contradiction of American ideals of freedom and racial and religious discrimination in the U.S.' "

Hollywood film "art," Jerome

continues, had to be turned from its old, and well-worn, path of crude white-chauvinist ridicule to better "box office fare," and at the same time "strengthening [monopoly capital's] basic strategy . . . to perpetuate the odious myth of 'white supremacy. . . .'" Of course, in adopting the "New Look," Jerome points out, Hollywood also bowed to the pressure of the Negro people and their allies in discarding for the most part the old Negro stereotype of the Stepin Fetchit variety.

In a brief, but trenchant, historical review of Hollywood's treatment of the Negro, Jerome shows how the middle-class view of monopoly as being distinct from capitalism had beclouded any real criticism of the outright lynch sentiment that dripped from early screen products. The author's revelations as to the treatment of the Negro in films from the turn of the twentieth century to the Thirties and after constitute a well-documented indictment of this gargantua of capitalist culture.

In the early 1900's when the Niagara Movement for Negro rights, led by the young Negro professor, Dr. William E. B. Du Bois, reached its height against untrammelled lynch law, America's new moving pictures were ridiculing Negroes with a "Rastus" and "Sambo" series, Jerome relates. These and other white-chauvinist crudities, "designed to portray the Negro as moronic, clownish and sub-human," deafened America's ear to the anguished and militant protests against the lynching bees; dulled the nostrils to the smell of black flesh which burned regularly on Southern pyres; strangled the national conscience with celluloid reels of white supremacy films. "The 'white supremacy' strategem," Jerome explains, "served the Southern plantation feudalists and the controlling finance capitalists of Wall Street as an ideological mainstay of their white ruling-class oppression."

But American imperialism, in the first decade of the twentieth century, had other conquests than the Negro nation in the Black Belt to "explain" and defend. The mind of America had to be bent, to be forced into imperialism's chauvinistic mold, as Jerome summarizes:

> "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 of the 'American Century' serving to conceal designs for global conquest, found expression at home in the white chauvinist ideology used as a weapon to oppress the Negro people. The 'white superiority' cult enforced the misshaping of American history and social science as a whole to Bourbon bias."

Jerome more than amply supports his indictment against the

imperialist ideology of the movies. He cites the films which distorted the history of Reconstruction, racist films intended to foment hatred of the Asian and Latin-American peoples, and the complete absence of any reflecting the real lives of these and the Negro people.

"It is highly significant," Jerome points out, "that Hollywood's first 'superspectacle,' (*The Birth of a Nation*), the longest and costliest film produced to that date, should have been a lying extravaganza glorifying slavery and vilifying the Negro people."

At every turn in United States history, from their first unsteady eye-straining flicker to the present, Jerome proves that the film industry has served monopoly capital's ideological needs. Against that background he discusses objectively the content and role of the "New Look" films.

Jerome declares that the "New Look" or "Negro interest" films, which he analyzes in detail, represent both "a tactical concession from the enemy," and "a new mode—more dangerous because more subtle—through which the racist ruling-class is today re-asserting its strategic ideology of 'white supremacy' on the Hollywood screen."

The ideological impact of these films on audiences is summarized by Jerome as follows:

1. White audiences are told that "the Negro must 'know his place' " and the Negro people are to be regarded as "unfortunate" beings, receiving moral "handouts," thereby perpetuating the myth of "white superiority."

2. Negroes viewing these films have the white rulers presented as their "friends" and the workers as enemies. So that while propping up white chauvinism in whites, the films generate hatred of white workers among the Negroes, thereby retarding the unity of the only force—the working class and the Negro people—capable of fully liberating the Negroes.

3. When the films deal with lynching, the struggle is made the "moral" property of the white rulers. Again, as in *Intruder in the Dust,* the white masses are the culprits.

4. Exploit the myth of the "exceptional" Negro, be "tolerant" toward him, but still view the mass of Negroes as being degraded, knife-toting, eye-rolling buffoons.

Jerome's critique is full-bodied, connecting the white chauvinism of the films with the Red-hunt, the persecution of Hollywood progressives, the financial structure of the film industry and its relationship with finance capital and its present drive for world empire.

There are two ways—in reality only one way with two sides—out of the Hollywood jungle, Jerome points out. Progressives in Hollywood will have to fight the film industry's white chauvinism in film content, in employment and in the assignment of roles. And "waiting for Socialism" is no answer.

On the other hand Jerome proposes the further development of *really* independent film production units which can "give truthful expression to Negro life and struggle, to Negro cultural achievements and endeavor. . . ."

In a final word to critics, Jerome writes that "scientific criticism of films dealing with Negro life requires as its basis the Marxist-Leninist teaching on the relationship of art and society and especially the teaching on the national question, with its concrete application to the national-liberation movement of the Negro people."

In this thoroughly readable, sharply-biting critique of U.S. capitalism's main ideological arm, Jerome has given his readers an admirable example of how to apply the method he advises. Professional critics, not completely corrupted or frightened into acquiescence by the chauvinist warplotters, will find much in this volume to improve the social worth of their work. For the mass of movie-goers, needing and seeking an antidote to the continuous stream of racist, pro-imperialist poison, Jerome's booklet is a must.

ABNER W. BERRY.

A Message from PAUL ROBESON...

WELL—GO RIGHT OUT AND ORDER A COPY OF *Iron City*, by Lloyd Brown. And in passing, give a vote of thanks to the editors of *Masses & Mainstream* for their foresight and understanding in becoming publishers of a novel such as this.

You will not put it down. You will not be able to put it down. No abstract answers to our problems here—but people, richly characterized, warm, honest, tender, angry human beings, struggling, fighting, suffering, and triumphantly living the problems and the answers.

Here is how one works in the Negro community — here is the courage of working-class men and women and youth—of Communist leaders, even though for the time being prison is their home.

I thought of all the brave men and women who have gone to jail for their beliefs and courageous deeds. I thought most of Gene Dennis—so quietly courageous, so full of human warmth and understanding, so eager for his fellow men to have a decent life. I thought of Communists I have met in other lands—always the finest of humankind.

This book gives one strength, hope, exaltation. It is grounded deep in the life of the Negro folk—with unforgettable, moving, heart-stirring people: Zach, Lonnie, Faulcon, Lucy Jackson, Rev. Buford. This is a book that moves to action in struggle for peace, liberation, and a decent America.

Thanks to one of our finest writers.

IRON CITY, a novel by Lloyd L. Brown, scheduled for June publication by *Masses & Mainstream*. Popular edition $1.50; cloth $3.00. Participate in making possible the publication of this major novel by sending your advance order, together with payment, to:

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