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lasses & MAINSTREAM

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North, South, East, West . . .

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Messages like these greatly encourage us in our constant effort to make *Masses & Mainstream* a better magazine, a more effective means of combating the war-makers and book burners, for winning more people to the cause of peace, equality and freedom.

To do this, however, requires a much larger circulation and for this task we need the help of all our present readers. Your warm appreciation of *M&M* can build our circulation if you spread the word to your friends and get them to subscribe.

Thanks for your continued support.

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AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ELLIOT CLAY is a free-lance writer who has spent considerable time in Mexico.

STEVE NELSON'S sketches are selected from the manuscript of a longer work dealing with the anti-Franco struggle.

ART SHIELDS, veteran newspaperman, is on the staff of the *Daily Worker.*

FRED WHARTON is a Mid-western graduate student in American literature.

SARA ZIE is a young writer now living in Paris.

COVER: A photo of John Howard Lawson, author of *The Hidden Heritage,* who is one of the Hollywood Ten completing a year's prison sentence this month.

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OUR TIME by Samuel Sillen

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Plan for "Iron City"
Writer As Hero

Continuous Performance

AT THIS writing, the House Un-American Committee is lavishly setting the stage for its 1951 Hollywood witch-hunt. The timing of the spectacle is noteworthy. Fresh batches of subpoenas are going out at a moment when a number of the Hollywood Ten, having served a year in jail for the crime of defending the Bill of Rights and their fellow artists, are slated to be released. Thus do the Un-Americans disabuse any who were naive or cowardly enough to hope they could coast along on the sacrifice of the original victims. The case was never closed. The repeated prophecy of the Hollywood Ten has been borne out. It should now be plain as daylight that the attack on them was only the opening gun of a thought-control offensive aimed at crushing *all* writers and artists with a gleam of independent intelligence, *all* who are reluctant to serve as propaganda-puppets for war and fascism.

This is *not* history repeating itself. The world has moved on since J. Parnell Thomas blinked under the Klieg lights in the Fall of 1947. At that time John Howard Lawson warned that the forces of reaction running the country "know that the only way to trick the American people into abandoning their rights and liberties is to manufacture an imaginary danger, to frighten the people into accepting repressive laws which are supposedly for their protection. . . . They don't want to muzzle me. They want to muzzle public opinion. They want to cut living standards, introduce an economy of poverty, wipe out labor's rights, attack Negroes, Jews, and other minorities, drive us into a disastrous and unnecessary war."

That warning was piercingly accurate. Since October, 1947, the

American people have had clamped on them the most repressive law in our history, the McCarran Act. They have been dragged into a disastrous and unnecessary war in Korea. A "national emergency" and the war economy that goes with it has been piling up super-profits for the trusts while the living standards of the people are sliced. And Martinsville has become a world-wide symbol of the developing policy of mass-murder and legal lynching of the Negro people.

But other things have happened too. To see the new chapter of the inquisition in its right perspective, one must keep in mind the vast growth in strength of the world forces of peace and freedom headed by the Soviet Union. Since 1947 China has set up a powerful indepent People's Republic under the leadership of the Communist Party headed by Mao Tse-tung; hundreds of millions have joined the world peace movement; fear of the ruinous domination and mad war policies of U.S. imperialism has aroused the masses of western Europe. In our own country the peace sentiment of the people has grown in the course of the unpopular war in Korea. The liberation struggle of the Negro people has become a decisive anti-imperialist force.

Seen in this setting, the Hollywood hearings assume a new significance. The basic intent is to force every writer and artist, under penalty of blacklist or jail, to become a propagandist for world war. The pattern of the Committee's thinking was clearly indicated in its questioning of the prominent Marxist editor and writer, V. J. Jerome. Rep. Harold Velde revealed his objective when he asked Jerome on which side he would fight in a war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Jerome firmly branded this question as provocative:

> "I believe there is no basis in reality for this provocative question that could only serve to promote war. The interests of the American people would not be served by breaking down all possibilities of establishing amity between the two countries and driving the mentality of the people into a war situation. I won't be a party to helping build up an uncalled-for war hysteria. At this time, when a meeting is taking place to bring the four powers together, the hysteria raised by such a question cannot further the good interests of the country. I believe the position I take is joined in by most of the American people. They want peace, not war."

A second and inter-related purpose of the Committee is also dis-

closed in its encounter with Jerome. It is not a matter of chance that he was called for "investigation" shortly after the appearance of his incisive and widely discussed booklet, *The Negro in Hollywood Films,* published by *Masses & Mainstream.* To quote Ralph Powe, Negro attorney for V. J. Jerome:

> "My client has shown that the film industry, partly as a result of carrying out directives of the State Department, is consistently gilding American Negro life in an attempt to conceal a reality that daily horrifies the world, stripping America of its democratic pretensions. . . . The thousands who have read Jerome's work will have no difficulty in understanding that this attack on him is an attack on the Negro people, an attack on peace, and an attempt at thought control and book burning."

The hearings of 1947 started with some apparent differences between the committee and the Administration on the one hand, and between the committee and the film industry on the other. But having common interests centering in Wall Street, they have long since closed ranks. The film moguls, the Un-Americans and the State Department are united in demanding the unconditional submission of workers in the arts. There is to be no criticism of their policies whatsoever. The war-mongering output of Hollywood is to be stepped up.

And this time they have cast a bigger net that takes in not only writers and directors but actors, not only films but radio, television and stage. Naturally they will play *ad nauseam* on the familiar theme of some sort of Communist "conspiracy" in the arts. This is of course the shabbiest kind of hokum. For one thing it is designed to make the people forget that every movie and every television program they see, every radio program they hear, is manipulated by bankers and manufacturers. To make the Communists responsible for the degrading pap that commonly passes for art is adding insult to injury. But that is not the most important point. The truth is that Communists do have views on culture and they make no "mystery" about these views. They write and speak, and will continue to write and speak on these views, and every American artist with a shred of dignity will insist on his right, if he so wishes, to read and listen to what Communists have to say and to make up his own mind.

One's own mind. This is what the fight is about. And any artist

who is silent or compliant today is selling short the peace of the world and the worth of his craft.

Writer As Hero

THE honest writer, in the United States today, must be something of a hero. It has become just about impossible for him to make a living by his pen unless he stops being honest. And at the same time it is no easy matter to find time and energy to write if he earns his living some other way. The point made by Karl Marx a hundred years ago still holds: "The writer must, naturally, make a living in order to exist and write, but he must not exist and write in order to make a living." It was this philosophy that sustained Marx in his own heroic labors as an author who suffered pangs of hunger, anxiety over his family in an unheated flat, excessive night work that ruined his health. To live according to the prescriptions of the doctors, he wrote, "one must be a *rentier* and not as poor as a church-mouse devil like me." To Engels he wrote in 1853, while he was working on *Capital*: "Three-quarters of my time goes to scurrying after pennies." And again in 1857: "I was forced to kill a day working for pay. . . . I am not the master of my own time but rather a servant."

And yet one cannot imagine Marx writing a line that would please the class enemy and violate his own sense of truth in order to pay the grocer. When he finished the first volume of *Capital* he wrote triumphantly: "I laugh at the so-called 'practical' men and their wisdom. If one chose to be an ox one could of course turn one's back on the agonies of mankind and look after one's own skin. But I should really have regarded myself as *unpractical* if I had pegged out without completely finishing my book, at least in manuscript."

I think we can all agree that the world has passed rather decisive judgment on the question of whether Marx was "unpractical" when he persisted, against incredible odds, in finishing *Capital*.

The rulers of the system that Marx dissected in that book are fond of boasting they are the patrons of a free culture. They sponsor the best writers. Like Walt Whitman, perhaps, who had to publish *Leaves of Grass* on his own crude printing press. Like Thoreau, whose *Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* sold 219 copies in four years; when the printer returned the rest (the writer had put up the money,

earned by pencil making), Thoreau said: "I have now a library of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself." Or like Melville, who complained bitterly: "What I feel most moved to write, that is banned—it will not pay. Yet altogether write the other way I cannot."

What set me thinking on the heroism of honest writers under capitalism was the new biography of Theodore Dreiser by the late F. O. Matthiessen. The story of Dreiser's experiences with publishers and censors will never be broadcast to the benighted world by Voice of America. His first novel, *Sister Carrie,* was rejected by Harper's in 1900. It was then published by Doubleday, Page on the enthusiastic recommendation of Frank Norris. But when Frank Doubleday and his wife read the book they decided it was vulgar and immoral. The publisher issued an edition of 1,000 copies to fulfill the contract which had already been signed. But he insisted that the contract only mentioned *publishing* the book, not *selling* it. So it was stored in a stockroom and remained there till it was issued by another publisher a number of years later.

Or take *The Titan.* Harper's was now ready to publish a Dreiser book and by March, 1914, had printed 8,500 sets of sheets and begun to advertise the novel. But the sheets never reached the bindery. Harper's halted publication because they feared Dreiser's realistic portrait of financiers would antagonize tycoons on whom the firm was dependent. Other U.S. publishers rejected the book, calling it "unsaleable," or "slanderous," or "sensational." The noted publisher George H. Doran called Dreiser "a very abnormal American." The book was finally published by a British firm.

Similarly, Dreiser's *The 'Genius,'* though published by a British firm, was withdrawn by the publishers following threats of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. Dreiser fought like a tiger. Noting that "the rich strike the poor at every turn," Dreiser said: "Personally, my quarrel is with America's quarrel with original thought. . . . A literary reign of terror is being attempted. Where will it end?"

It never did end for Dreiser, and it never will end for any honest writer as long as he is dependent on the purse-strings of his bourgeois publisher, the capitalist press slams, the nod of the boss politicians. What reviews Dreiser got! A Chicago *Tribune* patrioteer, whipping up the martial spirit in World War I days, said he would not admit a

novel by Dreiser, who was of German descent, into his home "until I am ready to see the American flag trailing in the dust dark with the stains of my sons, and the Germans completing their world rule by placing their governor-general in the White House." A reviewer of *Sister Carrie* in the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* acknowledged that "as a work of literature and the philosophy of human life it comes within sight of greatness," *but* "you would never dream of recommending it to another person to read." And, currently, a reviewer of the Matthiessen biography in the New York *Times,* praises Dreiser for "the magnificence of his supreme achievement" and adds that "What distinguishes Dreiser from his contemporaries is a kind of stupidity. . . . Stupidity is a weapon, for an artist, almost as powerful as intelligence."

The weapon of stupidity was used against Dreiser with such effect that he was thrown into a state of near-suicide at the beginning of his great career. For a time he was able to make an elegant living as editor of a slick magazine, but he was able to chuck that—to exist in order to write, rather than to write in order to exist.

Plan for "Iron City"

DREISER once started an independent venture to publish young and honest writers, but it did not pan out. But his instinct was right. And where he failed, we of *Masses & Mainstream* are confident that we can succeed. Because more and more commercial publishers are taking their marching orders from Washington and Wall Street, because the big ones are themselves a part of Big Business and because the little ones, for the most part, have allowed themselves to be frightened out of their wits, we believe the time has come to break through the iron publishing curtain. We are confident that independent publishers of truthful, hard-hitting books will be supported by a large body of readers.

We are proud to be the publishers of Lloyd L. Brown's first novel, *Iron City,* of which an exciting chapter appeared in the December, 1950, issue of *M & M.* This is a superb book, a memorable book which we know our readers will enjoy enormously. As Paul Robeson, one of its enthusiastic pre-publication readers, has said:

"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 char-

acterized, warm, honest, tender, angry human beings, struggling, fighting, suffering, and triumphantly living the problems and 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. . . .

"This book gives one strength, hope, exaltation. It is grounded deep in the life of the Negro folk. . . . This is a book that moves to action in struggle for peace, liberation and a decent America."

Iron City is a book that fights for you, and I believe it is a book for which you will want to put up a fight. The success of this book, which no commercial publisher would touch because of its theme and point of view, will place our frankly experimental venture on a firm footing and make possible the publication of other working-class books under our imprint. The book will be issued in June. To make a go of it we must build up orders in advance. That is why we have devised a subscription plan, and that is why we urge you to send in your orders and the orders of as many friends as you can persuade of the really crucial significance of this venture for progressive writing. The popular edition sells for $1.50, the cloth for $3. I hope we will be swamped with orders. It will mean a great deal to the young Dreisers of today, and it will mean a great deal to you.

I TAKE MY STAND

by W. E. B. Du Bois

All decent humanity was shocked when the Truman administration indicted Dr. Du Bois as a "foreign agent." To see the 83-year-old dean of American letters frisked, handcuffed and mugged was one of the most shameful events in the sordid history of United States imperialism. Dr. Du Bois has devoted over sixty years to the struggle for peace, justice and freedom, and he is now at the summit of his marvelous career.

The following statement of his position on peace, for which he is threatened with imprisonment, was written by Dr. Du Bois prior to his indictment. We urge our readers to write Attorney General McGrath demanding that he quash the shameful indictment of this great man.

THE world is astonished at recent developments in the United States. Our actions and attitudes are discussed with puzzled wonder on the streets of every city in the world. Reluctantly the world is coming to believe that we actually want war; that we must have war; that in no other way can we keep our workers employed and maintain huge profits save by spending seventy thousand million dollars a year for war preparation and adding to the vast debt of over 200 thousand millions which we already owe chiefly for war in the past.

Our present war expenditure must be increased, yet we cannot tax the rich much more since the lawyers who make the tax laws can also break them and let the bulk of wealth go untaxed. We cannot raise the taxes on the poor much higher because rising prices leave less and less to tax. Citizens have borrowed 200 thousand million dollars on homes, farms, and furniture, and the poor and middle class have spent nearly all their savings. Yet we cannot stop; either we spend more and more on top of what we are spending or our whole industrial organization, with its billions of private profit monopoly, will face collapse.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union whom we are determined to

destroy does not at present seem willing to fight. We have warned and dared it. We have publicly and privately insulted it. We have eagerly given currency to every charge which anyone at any time makes against the Soviet Union, its economy, its morals, its plans. We thought that at last in Korea we had them where they must fight and we prepared jauntily for World War III almost with shouts of joy.

We were sure the Russians had started the Korean uprising, were furnishing arms and ready to march to war. Henry Wallace actually saw them and ran backward so fast that he tripped over his own resolutions, and stepped in the faces of his friends. Still the Soviets did not fight and began instead to call for world peace; for union against the atom bomb; for peace congresses. But the United States was not misled; not they. They stopped the peace appeal. They picked up and jailed advocates of peace. They barred from our shores foreign advocates of peace, persons of the highest reputation.

Highly placed public officials and military men began openly to declare that if the Russians would not attack us, we would attack them to keep them from attacking us. The Wild Man of Tokyo, who remembers shooting down World War I veterans in Washington, and who is turning Korea into a stinking desert, has received the President of the United States in audience. Whatever they talked about, the result, if MacArthur has his way, was not peace now or ever; until we seize China, conquer southeast Asia and drop atom bombs on Moscow. Meantime, wave after wave of our young men are being trained for murder, and Congress is on the verge of calling every youth in the land for this purpose.

This is what Europe sees us set for, in contradiction to everything we once professed—liberty, free speech, truth and justice. To this our masters will lead us unless you intervene: unless right here and now you, the people of the United States, say No! Enough of this hysteria, this crazy foolishness!

Our slow but steady descent into belief in complete and universal war and our determination to make all men agree with what some believe, rather than to let them exercise their free American heritage of choosing truth—this literal descent into Hell in our day, and in this our own country, has been so gradual and complete that many honest Americans cannot believe what they actually hear and see; and sit bewildered, rubbing their eyes in order to get some vague concep-

tion of what can have happened to the land which once declared "These truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal; that they were endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

No American born before 1900 could possibly conceive that the United States would become a land approaching universal military service; with its armed forces in every continent and on every sea; pledged to conquer and control masses of mankind, order the thought and belief of the nations of the world, and ready to spend for these objects more money than it ever spent for religion, education or social uplift altogether.

When men arise and say this and try to prove its truth, every effort is made by secret police, organized spies and hired informers; by deliberate subversion of the fundamental principles of our law, to imprison, slander and silence such persons, and deprive them of earning an honest livelihood.

Avoiding all hysteria and exaggeration, all natural indignation and instinctive defense of the right of free speech and hatred of thought control, it is clear to all Americans who still dare to think, that my description of this America is true, and if true, frightening to all men who once thought of this land as the Land of the Free.

My platform then, like the platform of every honest American who still dares believe in peace and freedom, takes its unalterable stand against war and slavery. There was a day when most men believed that progress depended on war; that by war, and mainly by war, had modern men gained freedom, religion and democracy. We believed this because we were taught this in our literature and science, in church and school, on platform and in newspaper. It was always a lie and as war has become universal and so horrible and destructive that everybody recognizes it as murder, crippling, insanity and stark death of human culture, we realize that there is scarce a victory formerly claimed by war which mankind might not have gained more cheaply and more decently and even more completely by methods of peace. If that was true in the past, it is so clear and indisputable today that no sane being denies it. And yet of all nations of earth today, the United States alone wants war, prepares for war, forces other nations to fight and asks you and me to impoverish ourselves, give up health and schools, sacrifice our sons and daughters to a Jim-Crow army, and commit sui-

cide, for a world war that nobody wants but the rich Americans who profit by it.

If war were a matter of careful study and grave decision, of prayerful thought and solemn deliberation, we might take its fearful outbreak as at least no more than human error, soon to be stopped by decency and common sense. But when did you ever vote for war? You who have spent most of your lives in a fighting, murdering world? When did you ever have a chance to decide this matter of maiming and murder? Never! And you never will as long as an executive of his own initiative can start a "little police action" which costs the lives and health of over 50,000 American boys, in order that big business can interfere with the governments of Asia.

OF WHAT are we in such deathly fear? Have we been invaded? Has anyone dropped an atom bomb on us? Have we been impoverished or enslaved by foreigners? Is our business failing, and are our millionaires disappearing? Has the rate of profit gone down, is our machinery less cunning, or our natural resources destroyed by strangers? Is there any sign that the United States of America is victim, or can be victim of any foreign country? No! Then of what are we afraid, and why are we trying to guard the earth from Pacific to Atlantic and from the North to the South Pole, unless it be from ourselves?

Our rulers are afraid of an idea; tempted by a vision of power which this idea fights. The power they crave long misled and slaughtered the peoples of Europe and Asia, and now insidiously creeps into our own fever-mad heads; and that is Imperialism—world rule over the world. Once this was sought through black slavery: then it was made easy by yellow coolies: then by all "lesser breeds without the law," who could furnish a "white man's burden" and let him strut over the world, and lord it in Asia and Africa, and rule and rule without end, forever and forever. That was the vision of the nineteenth century. The fever of imperialism caught the United States as the nineteenth century died and we choked a few islands out of dying Spain. But these were but small change which whetted our appetite. With the first World War came the vision of an Imperial United States as successor of the empire on which the sun already sets. We rushed so madly at the spoils left by European empire, that we brought down

our whole industrial system about our own ears.

It would seem that the memory of the great depression of the Thirties would convince all thinking men that war is not the path to the millenium, and that what we need is reform of our own system of work and industrial organization, before we attempt to teach the world what to think or how to live.

But what the men of Big Business ignored was that the industrial system which they were seeking to re-install had already met a terrible and costly reverse; that modifications of imperialism and monopoly capitalism had already been suggested and tried. Such efforts comprehended loosely by the name "Socialism," were not invented by Russia nor first tried by Russia. On the contrary, Socialism is an English, French and German conception and was tried in Russia because that unhappy land was one of the last and worst victims of the capitalist system.

If tomorrow Russia disappeared from the face of the earth, the basic problem facing the modern world would remain: and that is, why is it, with the earth's abundance and our mastery of natural forces, and miraculous technique; with our commerce belting the earth, and goods and services pouring from our stores, factories, ships and warehouses—why is it that nevertheless, most human beings are starving to death, dying of preventable disease and too ignorant to know what is the matter, while a small minority are so rich that they cannot spend their income?

That is the problem which faces the world, and Russia was not the first to pose it, nor will she be the last to ask and demand answer. The nineteenth century said that this situation was inevitable and must always remain because of the natural inferiority of most men; the twentieth century knows better. It says that there can be food enough for all; that clothes and shelter for all can be provided; that most disease is preventable and that the overwhelming mass of human beings can be educated; that intelligence, health and decent comfort are not only possible, but should be demanded, by all men; planned by all states; and made increasingly effective by all voters in each election.

BUT the powerful who today own the earth and the fullness thereof; who monopolize its industry and own its press and screen its news, have another answer. They order us to fight an Idea, to "con-

tain" and crush any dream of abolishing poverty, disease and ignorance; and to do this by organizing war, murder and destruction on any people who dare to try to plan plenty for all mankind. From the nineteenth century, they attempt to take over imperialism to bribe the workers and thinkers of the most powerful countries by high wage and privilege, in order to build a false and dishonest prosperity on the slavery and degradation, the low wage and disease, of Africa and Asia and the islands of the sea; and to pay the price for this, they demand that you, your sons and daughters, in endless stream, be murdered and crippled in endless wars.

This is why we are fighting or preparing to fight in Europe, Asia and Africa—not against an enemy, but against the Idea—against the rising demand of the working classes of the world for better wage, decent housing, regular employment, medical service and schools for all.

It does not answer this world-wide demand to say that we of America have these things in greater abundance than the rest of the world, if our prosperity is based on, or seeks to base itself on, the exploitation and degradation of the rest of mankind. Remember, it is American money that owns more and more of South African mines worked by slave labor; it is American enterprise that fattens off Rhodesian copper; it is American investors that seek to dominate China, India, Korea and Burma; who are throttling the starved workers of the Near East.

Yet is it not clear that such a program is sheer insanity? That no nation, however rich and smart, can conquer this world? Have not Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Rome, Britain and Germany taught us this? And also that no Idea based on truth and righteousness can ultimately be suppressed by force and murder?

I never thought I would live to see the day that free speech and freedom of opinion would be so throttled in the United States as it is today. Today in this free country, no man can be sure of earning a living, of escaping slander and personal violence, or even of keeping out of jail unless publicly and repeatedly he proclaims:

—that he hates Russia.

—that he opposes Socialism and Communism.

—that he supports wholeheartedly the war in Korea.

—that he is ready to spend any amount for further war, anywhere or at anytime.

—that he is ready to fight the Soviet Union, China and any other country, or all countries together.

—that he believes in the use of the atom bomb or any other weapon of mass destruction, and regards anyone opposed as a traitor.

—that he not only believes in and consents to all these things, but is willing to spy on his neighbors and denounce them if they do not believe as he does.

The mere statement of this creed shows its absolute insanity. What can be done to bring this nation to its senses? Most people answer: nothing; just sit still; bend to the storm; if necessary, lie and join the witch-hunt, swear to God that never, never did you ever sympathize with the Russian peasants' fight to be free; that you never in your life belonged to a liberal organization, or had a friend who did; and if so, you were deceived, deluded and a damned fool.

I WANT progress; I want education; I want social medicine; I want a living wage and old age security; I want employment for all and relief for the unemployed and sick; I want public works, public services and public improvements. I want freedom for my people. And because I know and you know that we cannot have these things, and at the same time fight, destroy and kill all around the world in order to make huge profit for big business; for that reason, I take my stand beside the millions in every nation and continent and cry *Peace—No More War!*

A new era of power, held and exercised by the working classes the world over, is dawning and while its eventual form is not yet clear, its progress cannot be held back by any power of man.

Pittsburgh:
PEACE ON TRIAL

by ART SHIELDS

THE big Mellon Bank calendar is the only decoration on the wall to the right of the judge's bench in the huge, barnlike courtroom in Pittsburgh where three Communists are being tried on charges of "sedition." The Mellon calendar is symbolic. Judge Thomas Mellon, the founder of the fortune of the second or third richest family in America, presided over this Court of Common Pleas eight decades ago. And the hands of the Mellons are seen and felt in this courtroom today in the trial of the men who demanded the withdrawal of American troops from Korea.

One of the hands that served the Mellons can be seen when the labor spy, Matt Cvetic, grips the witness chair that stands between the judge and the calendar. In the last ten years this stoolpigeon's hand has written scores of spy reports on the workers of the Mellons' Crucible Steel Co., the Mellons' Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp., the Mellons' Westinghouse Electric Manufacturing Corp., and the Mellons' Aluminum Company of America. Cvetic also stooled on the workers of the House of Morgan's U.S. Steel Corp., and on hotel and restaurant workers and school teachers too. But the Mellons seem to have gotten the biggest cut of his F.B.I. time.

This disgusting creature was recruited for the Mellons and U.S. Steel by the F.B.I. after he was arrested on charges of assaulting his sister-in-law in a night attack. He broke her wrist and covered her body with bruises, the court record reveals. She was under medical care for a month. Nevertheless the case was eventually nolle prossed in a curious deal in the Pittsburgh Court of Common Pleas. Cvetic agreed in this deal to pay his sister-in-law some $300 damages. He was then permitted to keep a job he held with the United States Employment Service. And he soon went to work for the F.B.I. as a stoolpigeon.

"A hero? He's just a sneak," commented his former wife, who had divorced him years before, when a delegation from the American Slav Congress asked her about Cvetic. Yet this "sneak" has been qualified by the prosecutors of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in whose administration the Mellons have so much to say, as its No. 2 "expert" on Marxism-Leninism. This "sneak" has been selected to give the police-state version of the historic social philosophy that is guiding hundreds of millions in their struggle for emancipation from landlords and capitalists.

Cvetic's name is signed to the charges in the "sedition" indictment. The labor spy is bracketed in this court document with his co-signer Judge Michael A. Musmanno of this Court of Common Pleas. The judge and the spy had raided the headquarters of the Communist Party together last August 31, and seized the Marxist literature that is piled up on the prosecutor's table as the "evidence" of "sedition."

Judge Musmanno is the son of an Italian immigrant who came to the steel suburb of McKees Rocks, Pa. The immigrant's son went back to Italy to study after Mussolini came to power. He boasted in court that he took a graduate course in "criminology" at the University of Rome in 1924 [the year Matteoti, the Socialist deputy, was murdered by Mussolini]. The Fascist institution gave him a Doctor of Laws degree of which he is proud. He mentions it in his official biographical sketches. He appears to have strayed from his overseas' Alma Mater's ideals for awhile after returning to America, for he served as a volunteer defender of Sacco and Vanzetti, the two martyred Italian workers, for two or three months in 1927. But he has spit on the memory of Sacco and Vanzetti long since. And his Rome professors of 1924 would claim him again as their own if they could see him testifying as the frame-up gang's chief "expert" on "Communism" in the present "sedition" law trial.

It may be that Mussolini's graduate takes special pleasure in prosecuting Steve Nelson, one of the three defendants. Steve fought Mussolini's troops with arms in his hand in the Spanish war fourteen years ago. He was the daring and much loved commissar of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He was badly wounded when the fascists were routed at Belchite. But this big, friendly, shrewd, courageous soldier of freedom recovered to come back to America to fight fascism at home. And Steve was leading the

struggle in Mellon Town itself as the chairman of the Communist Party of Western Pennsylvania, when the frame-up began.

Musmanno also scowls fiercely at Andy Onda and James Dolsen, the other two defendants. Onda, the son of a Slovak immigrant, is the Communist Party's organizer in the coal and steel towns of western Pennsylvania and Ohio. He got some of his first big industry experience as a young worker in the Mellons' Jones & Laughlin steel mills in Pittsburgh. Dolsen, another veteran of the labor movement, is a *Daily Worker* correspondent.

THE defendants sit at a central table with their three Civil Rights Congress lawyers, Hymen Schlesinger, a Pittsburgh labor lawyer who has never been intimidated by the coal and steel trusts; Basil Pollitt of New York, and John T. McTernan of Los Angeles, the captain of the legal team. The courtroom, which lies in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh, is usually crowded with 200 or more spectators, including many Pittsburgh workers. The defendants get many warm greetings.

The present trial is intended to outlaw the Communist Party in this big industrial state, with its tremendous coal, steel, aluminum and metal fabricating industries, by convicting the Party's leaders and spokesmen of "sedition."

"Sedition?" By that they mean *PEACE.*

All peace movements are called "seditious" by the masters of the seven billion dollar Mellon empire that stretches from Pittsburgh to the oil fields of Venezuela and Colombia and the bauxite mines of British and Dutch Guiana, and the electrical equipment industries of Franco Spain, and the power plants of Taiwan (Formosa). The Stockholm Peace Petition is one of the prosecutor's chief exhibits in this Court of Common Pleas trial. A peace telegram from William Z. Foster, national chairman of the Communist Party, asking Pittsburgh workers to protest against the criminal intervention of U.S. troops in Korea, is another "sedition" exhibit in these frame-up proceedings. Foster knows the people of Pittsburgh, where he led the Great Steel Strike years ago. He knows they want peace. But to voice humanity's welling desire is considered "seditious" by the war profiteers and their stooges who run this steel town.

Peace is "seditious," yet I saw some heads nodding in assent as

Musmanno was reading selections from Herbert Aptheker's article on "The Truth About Korea" from the August, 1950, issue of *Masses & Mainstream.*

"Sedition?" The frame-up gang also means militant unionism, when it speaks of "sedition." The prosecution of the Communists really started in the coal strike last February, when Cvetic began fingering the men and women who were collecting food for the miners as "Reds." And the Mellons cannot forget that Communist organizers were the key men, the front line men in the victorious trade-union drive that smashed the open shop and built the mass labor organizations in the company towns in the mid-1930's. Without the Communist organizers, whom the workers trusted, the victory of the C.I.O. in these company-police towns would have been uncertain. Men like C.I.O. President Philip Murray, a Pittsburgh man, who abets the Matt Cvetics today, depended on the skill and courage of the front-line Communist organizers in the big drive.

"Sedition?" All resistance to fascism is held "seditious" in Pittsburgh's Court of Common Pleas. That's why Assistant District Attorney Loran Lewis, in his opening statement to the jury for the prosecution, cited Steve Nelson's military record against Franco as "evidence" of "sedition."

MOST of the prosecutor's so-called "evidence," however, consists of books, for this is a book-burning inquisition.

Of course, books were not the main reason for the attack on the Communist leaders. Musmanno told the Court that the war in Korea was the determining factor. The decision was made to raid Communist headquarters and get "sedition" indictments because the Party opposed the war. It wasn't practical, however, to make the war the chief official pretext. There simply wasn't any mass enthusiasm for the war in Pittsburgh outside of the newspaper offices, the radio stations and such temples of imperialist finance as the Mellon Bank building. And it was rather absurd to ask a jury to convict men of "advocating" the "overthrow" of the Government of the State of Pennsylvania by "force and violence," solely because they were asking peace in Korea. So the sale of classical revolutionary books—the kind of books the Mellons want to burn—was made the chief official pretext for the indictments.

The book-burning spectacle in the Court of Common Pleas follows

the technique used in Medina's Foley Square Court in New York in the trial of the eleven Communist leaders—but in cruder, company stooge fashion. Musmanno testified that books used as "sedition" exhibits were selected by himself, Cvetic, and Cvetic's manager, Attorney Harry Alan Sherman. This trio picked their Marxist targets with the precision of a company gunman aiming at a picket line with a sawed-off shotgun. Thus James Dolsen was accused not only of selling the *Communist Manifesto* and some classical political studies by Lenin and Stalin, but also of keeping Marx's famous handbook on economics —*Value, Price and Profit*—in the Party bookstore across Grant Street from the Court of Common Pleas. The definition of surplus value had become "seditious" in the eyes of the master surplus-value grabbers of this steel city.

Culture has also become "seditious." When I saw the title of one of the exhibits that Loran Lewis gave to Musmanno to read to the jury I thought of the Nazi barbarian's remark: "When I hear the word 'culture' I reach for my gun." This exhibit was the Summer, 1950, issue of the scholarly *Benjamin Rush Bulletin,* named after Jefferson's scientist friend, Dr. Rush of Philadelphia. The prosecutor objected to three paragraphs criticising the Mendel-Morgan theories of heredity and the behaviorist psychology of Watson. Musmanno read them to the jury as "evidence" of "sedition."

Such "evidence" seems crazy. But it is no crazier than that used against Dimitrov in the Reichstag Fire Trial. It is no crazier than fascism. And the frame-up trial in Pittsburgh—which will be imitated in other states if the battle isn't won—is part of the active preparation for fascism by the Big American armament trusts.

THE police-state law, under which Nelson, Onda and Dolsen are being tried, is nearly thirty-two years old. It was signed in June, 1919, when American troops were invading Soviet Russia and company gunmen and cops were killing many strikers at home. They killed twenty-two in the Great Steel Strike later that year. The Pennsylvania law was one of many such measures passed by thirty-nine state legislatures in the same witchhunting period, when a war-fattened plutocracy was trying to crush the workers' movement at home and abroad. The Communist Party was not yet in existence when the frame-up law was enacted. But the manufacturers and steel kings and coal operators and

railroad owners and J. Edgar Hoover, the twenty-four-year-old chief of the Department of Justice's General Intelligence Division, knew what they meant by "sedition." And they were already denouncing militant A. F. of L. members, I.W.W.'s and all opponents of foreign intervention as "Bolsheviks" and "agents" of Russia.

The "sedition" law was sponsored by an anti-union manufacturer named Flynn, who was fronting for the Mellons and Judge Elbert Gary of U.S. Steel and the Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association, led by old Joe Grundy, the Republican machine leader. The law was obscurely worded. The clauses forbidding incitement to "violence" and alleged "advocacy" of the "overthrow" of Government by "force" and "violence" and language and actions tending to bring the Government into disrepute were very vague. The vagueness was deliberate. It gave the frame-up gang the flexibility they needed to jail workers in many kinds of situations. "This law is so broad," explained Andy Onda to me, "that the police can frame-up peaceful pickets who are demonstrating for Negro rights in front of some Government building. They can charge them with actions tending to bring the Government into disrepute."

Many workers saw this danger in 1919 and began fighting the bill before it was passed. Some top labor leaders fought it too. The latter were quicker to see the real enemy of the workingclass—the boss—than the bosses' "Labor" buddies who fraternize with Cvetic today. One of these foes of the bill was Tom Kennedy, then President of District Seven of the United Mine Workers in the anthracite region. And old timers recall how Kennedy led a delegation of 1,000 coal diggers to the Capitol in Harrisburg to demand the defeat of the strikebreaking measure.

Old Jim Maurer, the President of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor, was among the workers' leaders who rushed to Harrisburg to kill the hated bill, and the State Federation and other unions kept demanding repeal of the act at annual conventions. Jim Maurer, whom I knew, regarded labor spies like Cvetic with measureless contempt. That feeling was general. It was a common saying that a scab needed a stepladder to get into hell, but a labor spy was too low down ornery for the devil himself. No labor leader, no matter how phony, would have dared in those days to make a Mellon police informer an "honorary" member of his union. Yet that's just what James Carey, the Secre-

tary-Treasurer of the C.I.O. with its three to four million members, did last year when he took Cvetic into his International Union of Electrical Workers.

Well-known liberals aided labor in its fight against the Mellon police measure. Some forty Philadelphia liberals, for instance, went to Harrisburg to speak their mind against the "sedition" bill. And Gifford Pinchot, the future liberal governor of Pennsylvania, came down from his home on the upper Delaware to tell the "sedition" gang off. But the Mellon-Grundy machine, with the big employers and gamblers and bootleggers and organized vice racketeers behind it, rolled over the labor-liberal opposition. The evil police state bill was signed by Governor Sproul, a multimillionaire coal mine and shipyard and newspaper owner.

That was a period of frenzied ruling class violence. "Red Raiders" in 1919 and 1920 were arresting thousands of progressive workers. Young James Dolsen, who still shows no gray hairs at sixty-five, was one of the first victims of that early witchhunt. Jim was caught in Oakland, California, in the big federal raid of January 2, when more than 5,000 Communists and sympathizers were arrested in many cities. That was exactly thirty-one years to a day before he went on trial in Pittsburgh after another nocturnal arrest. A founding member of the Communist Party, Jim was secretary of the Party in California at that time. Put on trial under the Golden State's thought-control law, Jim defended himself so skillfully and boldly that he won six of the prosecutor's carefully selected jurors to his side and got a mistrial. He split the jury again when he defended himself and four other comrades the next year. The present governor of California, Earl Warren, was the prosecutor who lost out against Dolsen that second time.

IN THE first years of the Pennsylvania "sedition" law drive the defense movements freed nearly twenty indicted workers. These victories were won with the help of the International Labor Defense, the predecessor of the Civil Rights Congress that is defending Nelson, Onda and Dolsen today. The union of effective courtroom tactics and mass demonstrations and freedom petition campaigns got results.

But arrests still continued. The climactic frame-up was staged by the Mellons' own company police on Armistice Day, 1926. Some local Communist steel workers and their friends had gathered in a private

home in the steel town of Woodlawn (now Aliquippa) on the Ohio River below Pittsburgh. This town was run by the Mellons' Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp. The cops, paid from the steel company's treasury, were known as the Coal and Iron Police.

The members of the little group of Jones & Laughlin steel workers were exchanging ideas on how to build a union when the company police came stamping in. The Mellon cops grabbed up the men and some Marxist literature. They then raided another private house and made more arrests. All the prisoners were charged with "sedition."

"I remember that frame-up well," said Steve Nelson to me as we chatted during a recess in the present trial. "I had worked in the J. & L. mill some time before. I didn't know much about unionism then. But I belonged to the carpenters' union and I looked for a labor organization to protect my rights when I got the J. & L. job. But there wasn't any union. Conditions were terrible. The company hired men through an employment shark, who sold promises of jobs at two dollars each. They were often just promises. So the town was flooded with unemployed men who competed with each other for jobs. The speed-up in the mills was terrific. Accidents were frequent, and the pay was so low that the workers were always in debt to the company store.

"Eleven workers were arrested by the Mellon police that night," continued Steve. "But the International Labor Defense did a great job. Most of the eleven political prisoners were eventually freed before the trial. Another was freed on appeal. But three good men—Pete Muselin, Tom Zima and Milan Resetar—got five years in prison. Milan was a veteran of the Serbian Army in the first world war. He had been a rugged man. But he died from bad treatment in prison."

Steve then explained why the Mellon cops didn't bother to make up a story that their prisoners had committed any violence. "They didn't need to frame the case that way," Steve explained. "No Pennsylvania prosecutor ever alleged that any sedition trial defendant had ever committed any overt act in violation of the law. The evidence in Pennsylvania sedition trials is only about books and ideas. And the frame-up consists in distorting these ideas."

The Mellons doubtless expected to crush the Communist Party and to keep more trade unions from rising. More Communists were being arrested on various charges. And others were beaten by cops. But the Party kept its flag flying—and grew. The places of Muselin, Resetar

and Zima were taken by younger members. And by 1927 the Communists were organizing a great relief campaign for the coal miners.

Pittsburgh Communists had won the respect of thousands of persons outside their ranks. They were now able to build a united front movement against the vile "sedition" law, which threatened all workers and all believers in free speech. The American Civil Liberties Union finally entered the fight against the Hitlerlike measure. And the Mellons and their stooges and allies found it necessary to lay the "sedition" law on the shelf after Muselin and Zima came out of prison.

Frame-ups continued, of course, but not on "sedition" charges. Communists and other militants went to the workhouse for participating in strikes and demonstrations, and in 1941 the crooked courthouse gang railroaded more than thirty Communists to prison—eight for one year or more—on false election charges. But the gang didn't dare to use the discredited "sedition" law. It still lay on the shelf.

THE "sedition" law lay on the shelf for nearly twenty years. It lay there so quietly that many workers thought it was dead. But the trusts were merely biding their time. The time came when American troops landed in Korea last summer and the press and radio hate-campaign against Communists and other peace lovers reached a frenzied pitch.

Judge Musmanno, the Doctor of Laws from Mussolini's school, then took this opportunity to stage his raid on Communist headquarters while press cameras flashed. The judge was then making his unsuccessful election campaign for the lieutenant-governorship of Pennsylvania on an outlaw-the-Communists platform. He had opened this campaign on March 7 nearly six months before when he expelled a woman office worker from the county grand jury on the pretext that she had been called a Communist Party member by labor spy Matt Cvetic. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court admitted in a written opinion that Musmanno's action was utterly lawless. But he got away with it, and by August 31 the judge was screaming for the indictment of the three Communists.

Nelson, Onda and Dolsen had been arrested at their homes after midnight the night before at Musmanno's demand. And the hate-the-peace candidate got big headlines in the Hearst and Scripps-Howard and Paul Block chain papers in Pittsburgh that day and the next.

Musmanno stole this fascist show away from all anti-Communist publicity-seeking competitors. But the drive to indict the Communists had actually been launched during the coal strike six months before by a small, but well-financed Red-baiting committee calling itself "The Americans Battling Communism." This hate group, which included courthouse judges and political associates of the Mellons, had introduced Cvetic to the newspapers and the House Un-American Activities Committee, when food trucks began rolling into the mine fields. Cvetic then began naming the food donors as "Communists." And the "ABC" crowd, as it is called, has been directing Cvetic's activities since.

The hate group's present chairman is Cvetic's manager, Harry Alan Sherman, whom we mentioned before as one of the prosecution's "experts." He testified recently that he collected thirty per cent of every dollar paid the labor spy by the *Saturday Evening Post* for his reminiscences of a stoolpigeon published last summer. Sherman can be seen escorting his pet pigeon in and out of the "sedition" trial courtroom today. He often sits at the prosecutor's table as an adviser to Assistant District Attorney Loran Lewis. And the State credits this hate merchant with helping to select the Marxist exhibits that are being used as "evidence" of "sedition."

This police-state "expert" on Marxism has, as one would expect, a white supremacist attitude toward Pittsburgh's oppressed Negro population. One of the "ABC" chairman's slurs again Negroes stirred the conservative Pittsburgh *Courier,* a Negro newspaper, to denounce his "race prejudice" in its issue of November 4, 1950. Sherman had presided at a Carnegie Hall meeting of North Side real estate owners, who were opposing a municipal housing project for Negro and white families from the crowded Hill district. And the *Courier* indignantly quoted Sherman as telling the white property owners in his keynote speech that: "We want no outcasts here." He was referring to Negroes from the Hill. Sherman then added that such housing projects smacked of "Communism." He apparently considers public housing "seditious."

Sherman has a bad name with Labor. He was denounced as an anti-labor figure by the C.I.O.'s Steel City Industrial Union Council of Pittsburgh in 1945.

The C.I.O. Council blasted Sherman after he had succeeded in splitting a small local union of the progressive United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers away from its parent body. Sherman, who was

then doubling as a part-time attorney and as a part-time labor leader, was business agent of the little splinter local union. He was using this post as a base of disruption in the district organization of the U.E. and the C.I.O. Council, which represented steel workers and workers in other industries. And he had just been expelled by the U.E. district organization when the C.I.O. Council and its chairman Federoff denounced him. Sherman's disruptive activity was highly useful to the Mellons' Westinghouse interests that were spending large sums in a drive to split the U.E.

THE present leaders of "Americans Battling Communism" showed little zeal against Hitler during the war. Sherman himself called two strikes in war production plants during the war on petty pretexts. His strikes tied up production of needed military parts, and they were denounced by the district organization of U.E. and by Chairman Krug of the War Production Board. The treasurer of "ABC," Paul Kazimer, is a Slovak-American misleader, who is closely associated with a notorious Slovak war criminal who helped Hitler fight against the liberating allies in Europe.

On the surface "ABC" leader Kazimer appears to be just another Democratic machine politician in Pittsburgh with a phobia against Communists and peace. He is chief clerk in the office of the Register of Wills in the City County Building, and is busy getting votes for Judge Musmanno and other Democratic Party candidates at election times. Kazimer has international political interests, however. He is the president of the ultra-reactionary Slovak paper, *Slovak in America,* published in New York. And this paper is a political mouthpiece for the unhanged war criminal, Ferdinand Durcansky, who was condemned to death by the Benes Government of Czechoslovakia after the war. Durcansky was Foreign Minister in the Tiso cabinet of the Nazi puppet regime in Czechoslovakia after the Nazis took over. Tiso was hanged as a traitor by the people, but his Foreign Minister escaped to Spain and later to Canada. He carries on his propaganda through the "ABC" leader's paper.

Another "ABC" leader, Judge Blair F. Gunther of Pittsburgh, is a Polish-American politician, who once belonged to the progressive American Slav Congress. He split with the Slav Congress when it supported President Roosevelt on a win-the-war and defend-labor program

in 1944, and jumped on the bandwagon of Tom Dewey.

Gunther has been associating with pro-fascist Polish political exiles since the war, and he has been working closely with Mellon men in the Republican political machine. He had the backing of that machine when he became the first chairman of "Americans Battling Communism." He helped Sherman stage the first press conference for Cvetic last February; and he loudly called for the indictment of Steve Nelson and other Communist leaders. His reward came quickly when Governor James Duff, a Mellon politician, with investments in coal mines and oil fields, made Gunther a judge of the State's Superior Court at a salary of $21,000 a year. Gunther was just a county judge before that. His job in his new post is to pass on appeals of persons convicted of violating the state "sedition" act or other statutes in the State's legal code.

The "Americans Battling Communism" kept clamoring month after month for "sedition" indictments against Nelson and his comrades. But the county's District Attorney, William Rahauser, who is in charge of the prosecutors' offices, was openly opposed to the idea at first. Rahauser may have remembered how U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, another Pennsylvanian, was politically ruined as the result of the "Red Raids" he staged in 1920 with the help of J. Edgar Hoover. And Rahauser turned down the "ABC's" demand for indictments in a statement upholding the right to belong to the Communist Party.

He told the *Post-Gazette* last June: "I'm against Communism one million percent, but I'm not in favor of indicting people because they belong to a political party which I oppose." "He said," reported the *Post Gazette,* ". . . that before he would prosecute the Communists he would have to have 'evidence of acts of violence.'" He was opposed, that is, to prosecuting persons just for their opinions, as the "sedition" law provides.

PITTSBURGH'S chief prosecutor never got such evidence. It doesn't exist. But Rahauser eventually succumbed to the Red-baiters and had the Communists indicted on thought-control charges. The prosecutor joined the witchhunt when the heat was turned on him for protecting the vice, gambling and numbers' racketeers, who collect $200,000,000 or more annually in this county with the help of grafting officials. The *Post-Gazette* estimates the yearly numbers' take alone at

$100,000,000 or more. And honest Pittsburghers shamefacedly admit that their racketeers are among the rottenest gangsters who ever gambled money away from school children or debauched American women in vice dens where the sex slaves are exploited twelve hours a day and seven days a week.

Rahauser's protection of the racketeers became the subject of press stories and grand jury investigations. The grand juries were called by Charles J. Margiotti, the cynical Republican Attorney General of Pennsylvania. Margiotti is a rich Pittsburgh corporation lawyer with directorships on eleven corporations, among them several coal mining companies. This "reformer" did not deny charges last year that he had recently been a business partner of Sam Mannerino, the millionaire racket boss of neighboring Westmoreland County.

Lincoln Steffens once described Pittsburgh politically as "hell with the lid on." The cynical Margiotti lifted the lid just enough to scare and smear Rahauser and have some rival Democratic politicians indicted as grafters and racketeer associates. He let the county prosecutor off with the scaring and smearing, however, after the latter had the Communists indicted last October.

The racket investigation came close to Musmanno. Some sixteen officials and Democratic Party officials in his home community of McKees Rocks were indicted on charges of protecting the numbers racketeers and the bawdy house keepers, who operate in open violation of the law in spite of the frequent appeals of Negro clergymen to Rahauser to take action. Police Chief Antonnelli, a close friend of Musmanno, was one of the indicted men. But Musmanno, who has been very, very easy on the racketeers who come before his court, was not named. Margiotti is his personal friend.

Rahauser, meanwhile, was rushing the Communists to trial ahead of forty numbers' racketeers, out of an estimated 10,000 in this county, who had been indicted. And he assigned his first assistant Loran Lewis, who had scarcely learned anything about Marxism in his many years of association with the courthouse gang, to prosecute the case.

The defense has been systematically laying bare the frame-up technique of Lewis and Musmanno from the start of the trial three months ago despite the constant rulings of Trial Judge Henry X. O'Brien for the prosecution.

John T. McTernan, the brilliant and fearless chief counsel, began by

exposing the shameful intimidation of the jurors by the prosecutors' detectives. Lewis, angry and red-faced, kept objecting. But before McTernan was through with this phase of the case Lewis stipulated that his plainclothesmen had investigated the "political affiliation" and the "religious affiliation" and the jobs and financial circumstances of every member of the jury panel. And McTernan pointed out that it was impossible to get a fair trial when detectives were questioning jurors' neighbors and filling jurors with fear that they would get in trouble if they voted against the prosecutor's wishes.

And day by day McTernan has been exposing the motives of the enemies of peace, the fascist school training of Musmanno, the lies of the hired spy Matt Cvetic, and the crude fakery and ignorance of the Marxist "experts" who say, like Musmanno, that Lenin planned the Russian revolution from New York City.

Lewis couldn't control himself one day when McTernan asked the "expert" Musmanno if he had read Foster's remarks on the increase of crime under capitalism in the *Twilight of World Capitalism.* "What has this got to do with sedition?" the prosecutor shouted with flushed face.

And McTernan was quick to reply, while the packed courtroom listened: *"Yes, what has your whole case got to do with sedition? This is a trial of books and ideas. Not a shred of evidence has been presented connecting the defendants with any crime against morality or society."*

THIS is a trial of Peace; it is a trial of Labor; it is a trial of the free speech amendment to the United States Constitution, which the fascist-minded prosecutors and war profiteers would trample in the mud. It is a trial framed by the big monopolists against the bravest defenders of the people.

This trial will not be won *only* or even *mainly* in the Court, despite the magnificent legal defense. It will be won with the help of the protests of an outraged people, as all great working-class defense cases are won.

NOTE: *We urge our readers to send contributions to the Committee to Defend the Pittsburgh Frame-up Victims, P.O. Box 502, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

Destination Spain

by STEVE NELSON

THE boat was about thirty feet long, pointed at bow and stern, with a single mast and a one-cylinder engine. It was manned by two diminutive French fishermen, thin, wiry, agile as monkeys. Joe, who had stood on the pier counting noses, was the last man aboard. He said, "Allez!" in a tight, cautious voice, and one of the boatmen dropped through the after hatch, and the engine, which had been kicking over slowly, picked up speed. The second fisherman pulled in the board which served as a gangplank. Water boiled under the stern. They felt the boat move under them; the black line of the pier and of the shore faded and disappeared.

France was behind them. They were on a boat, and the boat was taking them to Spain. Some of the boys shook hands solemnly, and others capered on the deck and cheered quietly. They stood around the deck, trying to keep out of the way of the second sailor, who was setting the sail and working mysteriously with ropes. They were anxious for him to get through his work, because Joe had told them that he would bring out food for the crowd as soon as the boat was under way.

Joe was talking French to the man who stood at the tiller, steering the boat. From time to time, Joe paused and translated hastily. The French comrades had been having the devil's own time with the boat. The pig's snout of an engine had refused to function, and they had labored over it all day, since earliest morning. Moreover, the mayor of their village—an unfriendly man, and deeply suspicious—had sent gendarmes to observe them, and it had been necessary to satisfy the gendarmes. Hence their regrettable lateness in arriving, for which they apologized to the American comrades. They brought greetings from the comrades of their village. They wished the Americans to know that this boat had been purchased with money raised by the Party branch of their village—the gift of the French workers to the Spanish

people in their struggle against fascism, the common enemy of all peoples everywhere.

The boys said, Swell, and Gee, that's wonderful, when they heard this, and those nearest the steersman patted his shoulder and saluted him. The boat represented a lot of money—an incredible amount, measured by the incomes of a handful of fishermen, railroad workers, teachers, postmen, dock workers.

A dim glow came from the forward hatchway. Down in the hold, the second sailor had lighted a candle and was pulling out loaves of bread, long cylinders of sausage, round cheeses, strings of onions, flasks of thin red wine. He arranged them on the floor of the hold, on the gunny-sacks in which they had been packed. He grinned up at the circle of heads peering hungrily over the hatch coaming and motioned for the boys to come and eat. With the knife from his belt, the sailor cut off chunks of bread, cheese, salami, picked up a small, flat wine flask with a long spout projecting from it, and sprang up the ladder to the deck.

Joe said, "Everybody grab what he wants in a hurry. We got to put out the candle." There was a chorus of protests, and he explained: "The light shines through the cracks in the boards. French patrol boat might spot us. Or the fascists might. Either way, it'd be the jug for us. You think it's worth taking a chance?"

Silence, while the men thought soberly of the danger of capture. "I got mine; let 'er go out!" . . . "Wait, put that bottle where I can reach it in the dark." . . . "Now let me see, where's my mouth?" . . . "Tiny! Get a move on, will you? You heard what Joe said!" . . . "All set, gang? Here she goes—*whoof!*" Darkness closed over the hold.

Friedman said, "Joe, did you ask him when we'd get in?"

"Yeah. He said they usually made the trip in six hours, but tonight it'd take longer because the wind is starting to turn against us, so they can't use the sail, only the engine."

"But that'll be after daylight!"

"Certainly," the Professor said dryly. "It's about three now. Six hours would make it nine o'clock. . . . Yes, the sun will be high in the heavens when we approach Spanish shores."

Murphy's voice rose over the hubbub. "That's fine. That's wonderful!" he said bitterly. "Why can't they send us over in speed boats, instead of a worn-out old scow like this?"

"Sure," Tiny said. "they shoulda borrowed a yacht. Maybe Rocke-

feller woulda loaned 'em his. Or would a nice battleship suit you better?"

A burst of laughter rewarded him, but Murphy persisted doggedly: "That's all right. But look, you guys. It don't make sense. They spend money on this leaky tub—they send us out in it—we get captured. So what's it add up to?"

"Shut up!" Tiny's voice squeaked with anger. "By cripes, you talk that way any more, I—You think if they had a better boat we wouldn't be on it? They do the best they can, same as we all do. The Frenchmen—the Spaniards—they didn't asked for this war, did they? It was dumped in their laps. So they fight it however—with whatever they can get. Sure it ain't the best. But it's all there is. Where do you get off, beefin' about it?"

"That's tellin' him, Tiny!" . . . "Good for you!" . . . "Pour it on him, the dumb cluck!" . . . "Come on, gang," Joe said, "lets' go up on deck while we can. We'll all have to lay low as soon as it gets light."

They climbed to the deck, stumbling: "Ow! Get off my hand!" . . . "Next up." . . . "Look out! You wanna push me overboard?" . . . "Pipe down, you guys; cut the racket. Sound travels over water."

MATT sat alone in the bow of the boat, seeing the stars gleam—for the rain squalls had blown past—seeing the white foam running away from the boat. He strained his eyes to the right, trying to believe he could glimpse the looming mass of the Pyrenees. He wondered if Joby was in the Pyrenees, if he had gotten through, if he was waiting for a boat somewhere. And Matt's chief worry came and sat on top of his mind: Had there really been no way to get him into Spain sooner? Had someone made a bungle? Should he have done something about it himself, instead of just going along where he was told? But they knew—Jack knew the special nature of his set-up. But supposing we're caught now—and here I am with this gang. Alone, I could get away with an excuse—but here I am with this bunch, and if we're caught, no excuses will go. . . . He took hold of the worry, and forced it down out of sight, and thought about Julie and about home and about the letters from Julie that would be waiting at the base.

A streak of light showed in the east. Joe called, "It's getting daylight. We'll have to go down in the hole pretty soon." Bill Dimmer found a pail and rope and brought up a bucket of water over the side. He was

going to scrub some of the sand off of him, he said. Who cared about a little wind? he asked, stripping off his shirt. He plunged into the bucket, swooshing loudly, splashing water over his head and bare chest and shoulders. He rubbed a cake of soap thoroughly into his hair, over his face and neck and chest, under his arms. The soap was fresh-water soap. With the ocean water it formed a thick, sticky paste, waterproof, full of sand. Bill swore. "What's the matter with this stuff? It won't lather. It won't come off.'

The Professor explained, and the boys jeered at Bill. He swore again, disconsolately. "Who's got a fine comb?" He raked the comb through his hair. "Look, fellas. Lookit all the sand comin' out. You got this sand all in your hair, too."

The streak of light grew broader. Without orders from anyone, the boys went down into the hold. By common consent, in a common weariness, talking ceased, and some fell asleep.

BLUE SHIRTS AND DUNGAREES

SUNLIGHT filtered through the cracks in the side of the boat and poured through the open hatchway. The air in the hold was thick with gasoline fumes from the engine and the smell of tar and old fish and onions and urine and stale tobacco and sweaty bodies. The boys had not slept long—some of them not at all. They were bleary-eyed and lame and short-tempered.

Shorty Friedman yelled, "Yah! I can see the Pyrenees! *I can see Spain!*" He had his eye glued to a crack in the planking. The others clustered around him, excited, begging for a look, but he clung to his place. "Go find a peek-hole of your own. This is mine. Lay off! Wait'll I get through looking."

The knowledge that they were actually within sight of Spain did something to the boys. They racketed around the cramped hold, all talking at once, laughing at nothing. Young Walker—called "Nancy" because he was cursed with a high squeaky voice, though there was nothing else about the boy deserving such a name—found a second peephole through which the mountains were visible, and put on an imitation of a sideshow barker. "Step up, gents, see the Pyrenees, see Spain for a dime, ten cents, a tenth part of a dollar!" Friedman, abandoning his peephole to Tiny, found two small sticks and turned up a

fish tub lying on the floor of the hold. He beat a long roll on the tub. "Ta-ta ta ta ta ta-ta-," he sang. "We're in Spain! Soldiers, get in line!"

Leslie roared at him, "Soldiers, get in line! What kind of a way is that? Listen!" Leslie stood very straight, clicked his heels, howled at the top of his voice, "Companee—*'ten-SHUN!"*

Friedman looked up at him steadily, his eyes bright and challenging. "All right, Leslie," he said. "We'll learn."

On the deck above, one of the French comrades had spread fishing nets on frames. He was pretending to mend the nets, or maybe he really was mending them. The landsmen in the hold couldn't be sure. Occasionally he grinned down at the roistering Americans. And then, suddenly, he was leaning over the hatch, calling out to Joe in a sharp, excited voice.

Joe said, "Pipe down! Pipe down, gang! Oh, for—something's happened! Everybody quiet!"

They were still instantly, breathing hard, listening. The hatch cover slid into place, leaving the hold in semi-darkness. From somewhere outside they could hear a rapid throbbing, a kind of flutter in the air. "A Diesel," the Professor whispered. "A big one, by the sound."

Ray Locket was peering out through a crack. "I see it!" he said aloud. "Jeez, it's right beside us!" The fishing boat rocked suddenly as the wash from the other vessel struck it. Ray remembered to whisper. "It's big," he reported. "It's gray. I can't see the flag. The crack's too bloody narrow. . . . It's stopping!"

"Relax," Matt said. "Take it easy, gang. It's probably non-intervention patrol. The worst can happen, we go to jail a while."

A roar of chain slipping through a hawse hole. Joe groaned. "O God, they're anchoring! Quiet, everybody. Give me a chance to hear what's being said."

The French comrade, seated casually on the hatch cover, answered questions shouted at him from the patrol boat. Joe whispered breathless translations. "They're asking for his papers. The other comrade's getting them." Silence. The engines of both vessels were stopped. There was no sound but the lapping of the water against the side, and the heavy breathing of the men crowded in the hold. A voice from the patrol boat. "What's he say, Joe? What's he say?"

"Give me a chance!" Joe whispered. "They want to know what cargo's being carried. . . . Furniture. He says, furniture."

"Holy smoke," Tiny breathed. "Sounds like he's right in the boat with us."

"He's alongside," Joe said. He listened intently. "Quick, guys! Scram over to the sides! Hurry!"

"Where do we scram to?" Murphy growled. "We're packed in here like sardines already."

"Shup up and crowd over. Squeeze, fellows! He's making him open the hatch."

THEY crowded against the sides, up into the bow, pressing themselves away from the hatchway. They watched the hatchway and tried not to breathe. A streak of light showed above the coaming. Matt, looking up, saw a gold-braided cap, a heavy-jowled face, a tremendous red mustache. A hand appeared, stroking the mustache thoughfully. The hatchcover slid back into place.

"The jig's up, boys," Joe said. He was still whispering, and none of the boys moved. "He's razzing our comrade. 'Furniture!' he says. 'You're lying, Red; that's a fine kind of furniture. Here, catch this rope,' he says. They're going to tow us."

The roar of Diesels broke the spell. The men in the hold scrambled to their feet, talking, swearing, yelling. The fishing boat lurched, and began to slide swiftly through the water.

Matt said, "Tear up everything you have. All the papers. Here, somebody help me. I'm carrying a list of names. Grab some of the sheets—we'll have to eat this list, and do it fast."

Joe shouted in French toward the deck: "Comrade! Can we throw anything into the water?" He listened. "They say to stay down and not move. They're having to stand up there with their hands up. . . . We're being towed to a French port. Hey, Matt, pass me a hunk of that confetti."

"What'll happen to the French comrades?" Walker asked.

"Same as to us. Jail. They'll do their time, and come out and start in the same thing all over again."

Tiny said, "Look, Matt, I got this chewed to soup. Do I have to swallow it?"

"No. It's okay by now. Spit it out."

Friedman gave an outraged yelp. "Why didn't you say so sooner? Mine's down already."

Joe said, "All you guys! Don't forget, we're American tourists! Everybody stick to that when they question us."

Tourists. Remarkable tourists, these—ragged, filthy, caught at dawn crammed into the hold of a fishing boat. Matt whispered to Joe: "We've got to change that story. We can't tell anybody we're tourists now. It's ridiculous."

"I know it's ridiculous. But we can't take it on ourselves to change the decision." Joe spoke aloud, and instantly the others were listening, their eyes intent on the two men to whom they looked for leadership.

"Circumstances have changed the decision for us. That yarn was never meant for a thing like this. We must tell them we're volunteers for Spain."

Gretz said heavily, "I am sooprised, comrade. We moost stick to the decision. You should know dot, comrade."

"Yes—by all means—must avoid international complications," the Professor said nervously. "Stir up a frightful mess—telling them we're volunteers."

Friedman said, "It seems to me Matt's right. The committee—they couldn't have foreseen anything like this. The tourist story would have been okay maybe, back in the village, but this—"

"The Professor's got the right dope," Tiny said. "We can't take it on ourself to—Holy cow, the boat's stopping! We're there!"

The roar of Diesels had ceased. Matt said, "Comrades—" He cursed himself for not having foreseen the situation and been prepared for it. They had thought of capture, worried about capture, ever since they got on the boat—and now, at the last narrow moment, they debated what to do in face of capture. Arguments, persuasions, jostled in his mind. But there was no time. The boat was barely moving. "Comrades listen. The French workers will support us. It's our only chance. How can they organize a defense for a bunch of tourists?"

He knew he had spoken badly. But a lot of the gang were nodding agreement. Joe said dubiously, "We certainly would make a screwy lot of tourists. It looks like that might not be so hot—but still—"

The hatch opened. Red Whiskers looked down at them and spoke. "He says to come up on deck," Joe translated.

Matt moved quickly to be first up the ladder. He was right; he knew he was right. Sure, you had to carry out decisions of higher bodies, but you had to adopt new tactics to meet new situations, too. No sense

in being mechanical. A voice said, "Well goddamighty, what are we going to say?"

"Tell 'em the truth!" Matt answered over his shoulder.

THE fishing boat lay beside the patrol boat, and the patrol boat was moored to a wooden pier, and beyond the pier were warehouses and behind the warehouses a town lay on a hillside sloping down to the harbor. A rope ladder hung over the side of the patrol boat, a French naval craft. Red Whiskers pointed to the Jacob's ladder, and Matt climbed it. Two other officers waited on deck of the patrol boat; one held an automatic counter in his hand. He clicked the counter as Matt came over the side. The other officer ran his hands over Matt's chest and flanks and legs, frisking him. He pointed to a spot on the deck where he wanted Matt to stand. The others, as they came aboard, were ranged beside him in single file.

People were gathering on the pier, and on the street by the warehouses. They had seen the patrol boat coming in with the other vessel in tow. They were curious. Probably there was a lot of smuggling went on around here. Probably they were used to seeing patrol boats coming in in the morning, towing smugglers. Matt looked down at the people on the pier, and they stared back, intent, speaking to each other in low tones, watching the men lining up on the government boat. Probably they were not used to seeing twenty-five men, foreigners, come out of the hold of a smuggler.

The onlookers were men, mostly. More and more men kept coming all the time. Nearly all of them wore blue shirts and dungarees. A lot of them had bale hooks stuck under their wide leather belts; they were longshoremen. Longshoremen, fishermen, teamsters—working people. They looked good to Matt, those small dark men in blue shirts and dungarees.

A group of gendarmes were waiting on the pier, at the foot of the gangplank. They glanced often at the crowd of blue-shirted men behind them. It seemed to Matt that the gendarmes were uneasy and that Red Whiskers was uneasy too. Red Whiskers, too, had one eye on the crowd. He kept telling his subordinates to hurry, telling the Americans to hurry. As soon as the Americans had been counted and frisked and lined up, he motioned Matt toward the gangplank, motioned for the others to follow. The men in blue shirts and dungarees moved closer,

crowding toward the gangplank for a better look at the prisoners.

Midway of the gangplank, Matt halted and snatched the beret from his head and flung up his clenched fist.

"Viva la republica Espagnol!"

The men in blue shirts and dungarees opened their throats and roared an answer: "Viva!" Their fists shot up, hundreds of fists, a forest of clenched fists. Joe and the others behind Matt had their fists up, and were yelling. Joe bellowed, *"Viva le Front Populaire!"* and the crowd's answer shook the air. A little gendarme ran up the gangplank, and tugged at Matt's arm, shouting. Matt allowed the gendarme to lead him down the gangway, through the ranks of the men in blue shirts and dungarees.

They marched through the cobblestoned streets of the ancient town on their way to jail, and children ran into the streets, and women leaned from windows, and men came hurrying from the stores and shops and little factories. The Americans marched with their heads up and their fists up, and they grinned at the men and women and children, and shouted, "Long live the Spanish Republic! Long live the Popular Front!"

MONSIEUR KRAPPE AND THE COUNCIL

THE wicket in the great iron door flew open, and the jailer yelled, "Dallet!"

"What is it?" Joe listened, and translated: "The American consul's here. He wants to see any two who can speak for the group. Who'll it be?"

A half dozen voices answered him, "You and Matt."

"Any other nominations?"

"No—no—that's okay—go ahead."

The big door creaked and groaned, swinging open. The door was of a piece with the rest of the Perpignan prison—cumbersome, antiquated, decrepit. They had been brought to Perpignan the night before, after a day spent in the crowded little jail in the port of their debarkation; a day in which they had driven the local police officials into a state of frothing, red-faced fury by their refusal to answer questions, their inability to remember names, places, hotels, dates—anything. They had been brought to Perpignan by bus, chained together two by

two; and in the bus, Bill Dimmer had unlocked the handcuffs fastening him to Roy Locke and had presented the handcuffs to the astounded guard. The incident had thoroughly alarmed the Perpignan jailers. Dangerous fellows, these Americans. Behold, how the newspapers had headlined their arrest, even the newspapers of Paris! Had they not incited to riot the longshoremen of Port Vendres? And followed that by defying the police, even the prefect of the district—denouncing him to his face as an agent of fascism, *par bleu,* and refusing to permit the ordinary routine of inoculation by the police surgeon, required of all men on entering jail. "No," said the crazy Americans, "you can't shoot your Hitler germs into us."

The consul was waiting in the warden's private office. He was a young man, a portly man, a sleek, well dressed, red-faced, well-shaven man. Matt and Joe had not shaved for three days, and they had eaten nothing but stale bread and black, luke-warm water—that was coffee. The consul greeted them warmly. Joe introduced himself and Matt, and they shook hands with the consul.

"And this," the consul said politely, "is Monsieur Krappé, the warden of the prison."

Joe and Matt eyed the warden and were silent. The consul grew a trifle redder and said hastily, "Sit down, sit down, fellows. Here—have a smoke." He held a light to their cigarettes, and leaned back in his chair, smiling and smiling. "Well, fellows, you may not realize it, but you men made the headlines of the press of the world, yesterday."

Joe said, "Okay, so now the whole world knows there is perfect co-operation between the French government and Franco and the Non-intervention Commission."

The consul looked pained, and lifted his hand protestingly; but Matt cut in before he could speak. "Twenty-five Americans want to go to Republican Spain—and are arrested by the democratic French government. Meanwhile, whole regiments of Germans and Italians go openly into Spain to help Franco—and the same press that headlines the twenty-five keeps mum about the regiments!"

"I wouldn't know anything about that," the consul said. "After all, you know—out of my sphere." He laughed lightly. "I merely came over here to see what I could do for you fellows."

"Of course," said Joe. "We're American citizens. We expect the full protection to which we're entitled under the law."

"Oh, certainly. Naturally. . . . Of course you realize you have broken the French law. That's a matter for the French courts, naturally." The consul coughed delicately. He drew a folded paper from his pocket. "As a matter of fact," he said, "I have received a cable from Secretary Hull, ordering me to lift the passports on this list. Are all these names here?" He read rapidly from the list, keeping his eyes fixed on the list: "Blair, Blakesly, Carpenter, Dallet. . . ."

Joe listened. He cocked an eyebrow sardonically at the consul. The consul finished reading, and looked up expectantly at Joe. Joe said, "So that's the kind of co-operation you're going to give us."

The consul said with dignity, "I'm sorry. I'll be glad to do anything I can for you fellows personally, but those are my orders."

"It's nice," said Joe, "to see how this neutrality operates. For Mussolini and Hitler, against Republican Spain."

"I don't make the policy," the consul said sharply. "I can't help what the laws are." He stood up. "Any thing else you want to say?"

"Yes. Ask the warden for permission to take a letter out for us."

"To whom?"

"To the Popular Front Committee in Perpignan."

"You don't have to write to them. They just phoned. They're on their way here."

Matt exclaimed, "Swell!" and Joe said, "*They're* right on the job, anyway."

The consul seemed to take this as a reflection on himself. He glanced, offended, at Joe. "Now, about those passports——"

"We're keeping them," said Joe. "They're our property, and we won't give them up."

"Listen, fellows, there's no use making trouble about it. All we have to do is notify the consulates, you know, and void your passports. They'll be no good to you anyway."

"That's your business," Joe said shortly. "Now, before you go, there's one more thing. Come out here and take a look at the cell we're in."

The consul appeared to misunderstand Joe. "Oh, that won't be necessary," he said brightly. He donned his hat—a gray hat, neatly brushed, beautifully dimpled. "I don't have to see the other boys. You can tell them what I said."

"It's not to see the boys. It's to see the stinking hole the boys are in. Come on—it'll only take you a minute."

"I'm afraid I haven't the time right now. Well, so long, fell——"

"What's the matter—afraid you can't stand the stench? This place is the filthiest dump in the world. It's not fit for hogs, let alone humans."

"Oh. Well, I—Really, fellows, I'm afraid there's nothing I can do." He escaped through the outer door, and the warden went with him. The warden appeared anxious to show courtesy to the gentleman from the American consulate.

MATT and Joe returned to the cell—the bull pen it would have been called in an American jail. The bull pen was a room sixty feet square. With the Americans, the room now held eighty men. The floor was of brick, the walls of heavy gray stone, pierced by two small windows high up near the vaulted roof. Obviously the building before it became a prison had served some ecclesiastical purpose—a monastery perhaps.

At one side of the room was a small wooden platform. It looked like a speaker's platform. That was not its real function, but Joe used it for that. The Americans gathered around and listened to his report, and many of the French prisoners, who were in prison for political reasons, also listened. A Belgian, wearing a khaki uniform with big, floppy trousers tied in at the ankle like ski pants, translated Joe's report to the French prisoners.

When Joe told the boys what he and Matt had said to the consul about the neutrality laws and the non-intervention commission, they cheered and laughed: "'At's telling 'em!" And when he reported that the Popular Front Committee was coming to help them, they yelled like mad.

Already there was a clear cleavage between the two groups of men in the bull pen—the political prisoners, Americans, French, Spanish, Italian, or whatever; and the criminal offenders, petty thieves. The two elements were not unfriendly; they co-operated in the jail routine, but they tended constantly to separate. Now the latter group, the "non-politicals," were gathered near the rusty little coal stove at one side of the great room. The three Americans went toward them.

Beside the stove a man was crouched—a man in his forties, dark, ragged, incredibly thin. With his right hand the man was scratching his left arm. He held in his hand a contrivance, a bunch of pins tied together, and he moved his hand slowly up and down the full length

of his arm. The arm was raw and bleeding. One of the prisoners spoke to Joe in French: "He does this, as you see now, each day."

At this the crouching man ceased the slow motion of his hand, and turned dark, mournful eyes up at the Americans. He unbuttoned his shirt, baring his breast to them. Joe fell back a step, whispering profane horror.

"The French comrades say he's been here two months," Friedman said. "He's been getting worse every day. They've pleaded with the warden to take him to a hospital or something—but nothing happens."

Joe was scowling, his face sharp with anger and disgust. He strode back to the Americans who had fallen silent, watching the three. "That guy by the stove," Joe said abruptly. "He's—it's—listen, if we get whatever it is that's eating him, we're done for. No Spain, no nothing."

"The Belgian thinks it's syphilis," the Professor said. "I think it must be some form of leprosy. I've seen——"

"Whatever it is," Joe yelled wrathfully, "we've got to get him out of here! The man's falling to pieces. He's dying!"

Tiny said, "I make a motion that our delegates take this matter up with the warden right away."

They approved. Joe turned to the Belgian. "Is that agreeable to your other comrades?"

"Certainly. By all means. We too have protested. We have tried many times. We will support you in any action you take, but——" The Belgian shrugged eloquently.

Joe said, "How'll we start, comrades?"

"We start by banging on the door. We'll work out the rest as we go along. So let's bang."

They banged. The iron door responded with a most satisfying clamor. The wicket flew open. The jailer was red with anger; he cursed Joe in French, demanding that the uproar cease. But Joe's face was redder and still more angry, and he cursed in three languages, and yelled louder than the jailer. The jailer drew back, appalled. Three minutes later, the delegation was once more on their way to the warden's office.

HALF an hour later they returned. They were accompanied by the warden, clothed in the majesty of his office, with uniform coat and cap heavy with silver braid. The jailer screamed at the prisoners

to stand at attention, to remove their hats, to show all visible signs of respect inasmuch as the warden of Perpignan prison was in his own person entering a part of that prison. Joe led the warden to the unfortunate crouched by the stove. "Open your shirt!" he commanded. He turned to the warden. "There! See for yourself."

The warden looked. He beckoned for the sick man to rise and follow him. The iron door closed on warden, jailer and the diseased man. Instantly the bull pen fell into pandemonium. The prisoners of all degrees and all nations joined in celebrating the victory they had won, indifferent to the pale face of the warden peering in at them.

"The Art of Vigilance"

IN POLAND TODAY caricature is known as "The Art of Vigilance"—a term that vividly expresses the important political role of this form. The five drawings that follow are examples of the satirical art being created by the people themselves whether in factory wall-newspapers or school magazines. They are taken from a recent collection entitled *Polish Political Caricature* (Warsaw, 1950) containing scores of brilliant sketches using the weapons of laughter, mockery, irony in the struggle for progress. The editors of this collection write: "The enemy whom Polish caricature attacks first and foremost, whom it attacks in a common advancing front with Soviet caricature, with the caricature of People's Democracies and with progressive caricature in capitalist countries—is the enemy of peace. . . . What can be more laughable than those gestures and speeches expressive of the endeavors of imperialists to rule the globe as they look down the road to happiness and peace along which the world is advancing?"

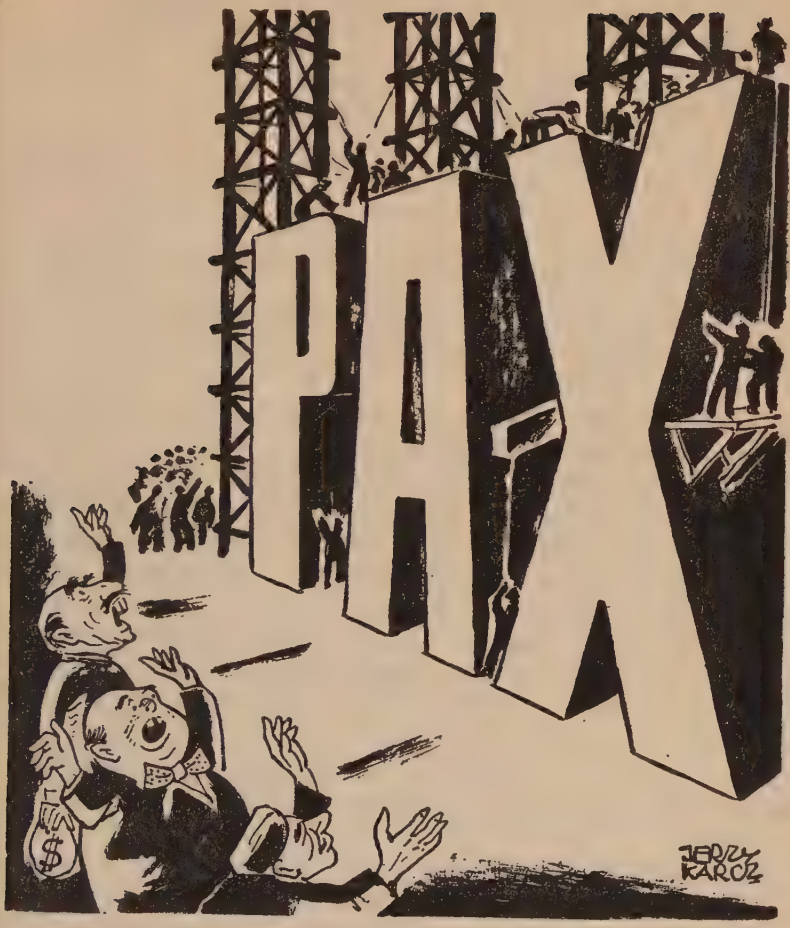
The essence of caricature is struggle. In the United States this form has a rich progressive tradition—the tradition of Art Young, Robert Minor, William Gropper, Fred Ellis. We think the time is long overdue for a full-scale revival of this powerful art form as a major weapon in our own struggle for peace.—*Ed.*

THE CONCENTRATION OF CAPITAL

AID TO FRANCE

AMERICAN CANNED GOODS

"And now let's hear from the Voice of America the real depths of the famine in Poland. . . .!"



THE "MENACE" OF PEACE

WHICH WAY FOR THE NEGRO WRITER?: II

by LLOYD L. BROWN

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

IS CONCENTRATION on Negro themes a barrier to the Negro writer's quest for universality and equal status?

A complex of factors must be noted in the literary movement which insists upon a yes answer to this question. In the first part of this article I pointed out that the dominant force influencing a growing number of Negro writers and critics to this position is the chauvinist ideology of American imperialism—the enemy of peoples' culture at home and abroad. But the clarifying discussions needed to halt this trend, which threatens the life of Negro literature in our country, must reckon with the fact that ideas and motives of liberation struggle are also involved here. Among those who follow the banner of the "new direction" are writers who consider the march a stormy advance rather than a dismal retreat. What are some of the positive elements in this movement?

1. For many Negro writers the fight for "universality" is resistance to an old foe—the Jim Crow publisher, who restricts the writer to limited themes and publishing quotas. These limitations imposed by the literary market-owners were described several years ago by Langston Hughes.

> "Here are our problems: In the first place, Negro books are considered by editors and publishers as exotic. Negro material is placed like Chinese material or Bali material or East Indian material, into a certain classification. Magazine editors will tell you, 'We can use but so many Negro stories a year.' (That 'so many' meaning very few.) Publishers will say, 'We already have one

Negro novel on our list this fall.' The market for Negro writers, then, is definitely limited as long as we write about ourselves. *And the more truthfully we write about ourselves, the more limited our market becomes.*" (My emphasis, L.L.B.)

Surely here is a condition which Negro writers—*and certainly white writers in unity with them*—must ceaselessly fight against. No quotas! No dictation of form and content! No suppression of Negro literature! Indeed this is a key sector of the general battleground against capitalist control and perversion of culture. But surely too, since his enemy strives to prevent him from writing truthfully about his people, it is not progress but *surrender* for the Negro writer to seek a way out by turning from his people—the primary source, as I shall try to show, of his strength.

2. The steady growth of awareness among the Negro people that their problem is not a "narrow racial issue" but is bound up with great world issues is reflected, though as a distortion, by some Negro writers who disdain "pre-occupation" with a minority question. Just as in the first part of this article I cited word and deed of Frederick Douglass on the special role of the Negro writer, so here I would give that great leader as an examplar of how the Negro spokesman, while properly centering his attention on his people's fight for freedom, sees its connection with the great economic, political and social issues of his time. The works of Frederick Douglass offer abundant evidence of this concept in theory and practice.*

And here too, I would say, is overwhelming contradiction to the statement by Hugh M. Gloster in *Phylon* that the "preponderant use of racial [i.e., Negro] subject material has handicapped the Negro writers . . . [and] diminished his philosophical perspective to the extent that he has made only meager contributions to national and world ideologies."

It is inconceivable that Mr. Gloster could have read Douglass and still make that statement. The man Douglass is dead—but Du Bois lives. Did *his* preponderant use of Negro material prevent him from becoming the dean of American letters and a world figure? Only an acceptance of the abysmal standards of white supremacy can blind

* See *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass,* Vols. I & II, by Philip S. Foner. International.

a Negro writer to the monumental works of Douglass and Du Bois—great Negroes, great Americans.

3. By writing on general subject material Negro writers seek to show that they are as capable as any in handling such material. This tactic is traditional in the liberation struggle. From the earliest days the Negro people have been compelled to buttress their claim for equal rights by *proving* an equal humanity and capacity. The more areas where examples of Negro excellence might be cited the better for the argument. This tactic is valid even though it is sometimes based upon the illusion that proof of Negro achievement—or even, in cases, superiority—will by itself shatter the White Supremacy system. It is also valid despite the tendency to hail a successful "Negro first" without regard to its value or merit.

But it should also be pointed out that writing on themes and in forms unrelated to the Negro question is not a "new direction" for Negro writers. The work of Phillis Wheatley (1753-84) may be recalled here. Paul Laurence Dunbar wrote several novels about white people and indeed Charles W. Chesnutt won literary acclaim before his identity as a Negro was made public.

4. To some extent the retreat from Negro subject material is an attempt to break away from the limitations of the Richard Wright-Chester Himes school—a narrow range of frenzy, shock, brutality, frustration, in which the Negro character is reduced to an inhuman, helpless victim.

5. Increasing number of Negro writers, especially among the youth, wish to express themselves on truly universal themes, to reach out, to make contact with masses of people, Negro and white. Their instructors—unfortunately in many Negro schools as well as white—channel these aspirations in the direction of the "higher," i.e., white, bourgeois, concepts of "universality" which of course are not universal enough to include the Negro people and their culture. The tower is ivory, not ebony.

THE quest for universality is as legitimate for the Negro writer as for the writer of any other nationality. What is necessary is that he see the highroad to his goal and not be misled into blind alleys. It must first be clearly established that there is no contradiction between Negro subject material and Negro forms on the one hand and uni-

versality on the other. This concept has been proved in life. Long before emancipation our people developed a great art that was not the less universal because it was particularly Negro—the poetry and music of spirituals. An oral art that in its power and living spirit was not limited to so-called art forms, but became embodied in the everyday expressions of such heroes as Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth. Consider these words with which Harriet Tubman described the Union assault on Fort Wagner:

"And then we saw the lightning, and that was the guns; and then we heard the thunder, and that was the big guns; and then we heard the rain falling, and that was the drops of blood falling; and when we came to get in the crops, it was dead men that we reaped."

Casually spoken words—but what American poet has achieved such monumental simplicity, power, imagery and cadence in so few words? I know of none. A miracle? No. The reflection of a great art, compressed of the blood and tears of a great people enslaved but never yielding, never ceasing to cry out, never ceasing to resist, never ceasing to aspire to freedom. A universal art based on a universal theme uniquely expressed by the black slaves in America. *A greater art than any yet produced on American soil.*

Some will ask here: Back to the spirituals? No. The spirituals will live, but the material conditions which gave rise to them are largely gone. *Nevertheless, the great theme which they expressed is still one of the greatest American and universal themes—the epic struggle, still unended, of the Negro people in our land.* Today, as never before, this struggle is of world-wide interest and significance and therefore there is no subject at hand to an American writer with a more universal appeal than this one. White writers deal with this subject and more of them should (with the necessary knowledge, that is) but the Negro writer is naturally much closer to this epic theme and has a unique advantage and opportunity. What tragic folly for him to turn away from the virtually untapped richness of this subject toward some nebulous and non-existent "universality"! The whole history of art and literature cries out against those who would mislead the Negro writer away from his people. For the indispensable quality of every great, universal artist was that he drew upon and dealt with the lives and times of his people.

The term "creative artist" is often misunderstood by young writers

who see in this concept the image of some great alchemist transmuting the baser things of life into purest gold: time and place are irrelevant and other men are necessary only as wondering audience. This classic misconception obscures the basic truth—the creative power of a writer is great to the extent that through his work is revealed *the creative power of his people.* I say *his* people because they are the ones he knows best; and being people, that is, having a common humanity with all others, he can thereby deal with truly universal themes. The Irish poet Yeats said that in its literature a nation should see "the sacred drama of its own history; every spectator finding self and neighbor there, *finding all the world there* as we find the sun in the bright spot under the burning glass." If this integral unity of the unique (national) and the general (universal) is seen in considering Negro literature, then the writer's search for universality will draw him closer to his own people.

A giant figure in our country exemplifies this concept in another field of the arts—Paul Robeson. Here is a man who is the foremost people's artist of America and a world artist. He sings the songs of the peoples of the world in the languages of those peoples and touches their hearts; they call him brother, son. And what is the primary source of his universal art? His people. His art is great for it has a great foundation—the rich national culture and psychology of the Negro people: sorrow song and jubilee, work song and dance song. . . . The surging soul of a people—terror and triumph, living, dying, preaching, teaching, raising crops, raising hell, driving mules, driving steel, straining, striving, mocked at, mocking back, working harder, eating less, crying more, laughing more, held down but always climbing! *A nation of fifteen millions—bigger than 41 of the 60 nations that form the United Nations!*

IN THE field of Negro creative writing we have no Robesons. It is important to find out why not.

The trouble with Negro literature, far from being the alleged "preoccupation" with Negro material, is that *it has not been Negro enough* —that is, it has not fully reflected the real life and character of the people. There is a historic cause for this limitation. For most of the Negro people and for most of the time that Negroes have been in America, written literature has not been and, under conditions of

slavery and peonage, could not be a major form of communication among themselves. The specific *Negro* quality of the poetry and music of the spirituals arose from the fact that this art form was developed by the Negro masses and for themselves. The Negro writer, on the other hand, could get his start only under conditions in which he was physically removed from the masses of his people and their basic economic life. To a large extent his writing was directed to white Americans and while this was a necessity it created certain limitations upon the content and form of his work.

It is this factor which largely explains a remarkable paradox: in Negro art for the most part the folk forms, which are supposed to be more simple and rudimentary, are in fact richer, more subtle, more creative, more artistic than written literature which is supposed to be a higher and more developed cultural expression. The relative thinness of the written to the oral literature is not due, as many now assert, to the fact that it has been primarily a literature of protest, for the rich folk-art itself is based largely on liberation themes. It is rather a result of the gulf which exists between the production and "consumption" of Negro writing on the one hand and the Negro masses on the other. It is this separation that accounts for one of the most striking defects of Negro literature—the absence of humor.

One of the chief expressions of the national psychology of the Negro people is their humor. Broadly speaking, it reflects and represents that quality of the Negro people which has made it possible for them to live and struggle and grow under the most inhuman conditions of oppression. Oppressed but not *depressed.* It is an expression of the vitality and strength of the people. It embodies the wisdom, the resilience, the resourcefulness of the people—their humanity in all its complex fullness. And yet Negro humor has been largely unrepresented in Negro writing. In his contribution to *Phylon's* symposium on the Negro writer, William Gardner Smith describes this condition and its limiting results:

> "It seems that it is difficult for the Negro writer to add to his weighty diatribes the leaven of humor. . . . Too often in Negro novels do we witness the dull procession of crime after crime against the Negro, without relief in humor or otherwise. These monotonous repetitions of offenses against the Negro serve only to

bore the reader in time; and in so doing, they defeat the very purpose of the writer, for they become ineffective."

But it is not so much a question merely of change of pace, or lighter moments of relief. A key phrase here is "crimes against the Negro." Those crimes are real and monstrous; they must ever be exposed and denounced. But in dealing with this question the Negro writer has too often left the matter at that with the result that the Negro character is distorted into the limited and one-sided image of Victim. Here again it is useful to recall a lesson from Douglass. He was not content to stay in the role of Exhibit at Abolitionist meetings, baring his back to show the scars of slavery. He insisted upon telling *his* story and later he insisted upon speaking and writing upon *all* of the questions of contemporary interest. He was a victim but he was more: he was a *man,* a full man. He would not only be seen, he would be *heard.* Yes, and he would be *read*—and in *his own* paper.

THIS limitation of Negro-as-victim is a reflection of the fact that the patterns and themes of Negro writing have been set mainly by forces outside the Negro people. In his report to the recent national convention of the Communist Party, Benjamin J. Davis put his finger on the essentially anti-Negro quality of this distortion as it is reflected in contemporary political life: *"Tendencies to treat the Negro people as mere victims of oppression, without seeing their unique positive and revolutionary role in the struggle against capitalist reaction are a patronizing form of white chauvinism."**

This lifeless, abject Negro-Victim caricature inevitably has no humor. But there is another reason for the absence of humor from Negro literature. One of the most marked qualities of Negro humor is its "among-ourselves" character. It has a subtle and sly quality that depends for its effect upon a common understanding that comes from common experience and outlook. It is ironic, ambiguous, and shielded from the hostile ears of the oppressor. It is often expressed in forms which are difficult to translate into writing. Here I would like to give an example of this from an Army experience.

Louis Armstrong's band was playing at our post theatre and our Ne-

* *The Negro People in the Struggle for Peace and Freedom,* by Benjamin J. Davis. New Century Publishers, N. Y.

gro outfit was Jim Crowed (as usual) in one section of the audience. One of the numbers sung by the band-leader was the Tin Pan Alley tune, *I'll Buy That Dream.* When he came to the words: "We'll settle down in Dallas, in a little plastic palace . . ." Louis Armstrong cast a sly glance to our section and a roar of laughter arose from the Negro troops. It was a keen joke and the more delicious because of its private nature. It would take a long explanation to even inadequately convey the complex quality of this jest that was only a knowing look. Involved were all of the factors of time, place and circumstance—Jim Crow, the South, the Army, Texas, the banality of the song . . . and lots more. And there was too the warmth that came with the identification—the artist was ours and we were his. He and we understood it all. We were putting one over on "the white folks" and that is one of the oldest themes of Negro humor.

The power of communication and appeal in Negro humor is well known to and used by those Negroes who address themselves directly to their people—preachers, singers, musicians, comedians, columnists, local politicians, lodge officials. But for the most part the Negro creative writer has in mind a different audience—white people, most of whom do not know and understand Negroes. Inhibition arises from a fear of being misunderstood and from a consciousness of the all-pervading atmosphere of white chauvinism. For Negro literature is written in a language shared with the oppressing nation: unlike the spoken word it cannot be private from hostile, hating eyes. A writer in general depends upon a common understanding of character and situation between him and the reader; the Negro writer knows only too well the enormous gap that segregation has created and maintained.

There is something else: the Negro writer usually comes from or aspires to the middle class. Although it is bound to the Negro working masses by a common oppression, the Negro middle class tends to look for its social and artistic values to the ruling class which is not only white but *anti-Negro,* as it is, in fact, anti-human. This middle-class characteristic is wonderfully and bitterly satirized by Langston Hughes in *Simple Speaks His Mind,* in the chapter where a venerable Negro artist castigates a "high society" Negro group who are honoring him—because the New York *Times* called him a genius! It is this tendency that causes the Negro writer to restrict and distort his handling of Negro material to suit the tastes and desires of white

capitalist editors, publishers and critics. And it is this tendency that underlies the preachment that the Negro writer should cease to write about his own people.

I HAVE said that Negro literature has not been Negro enough. In no sense do I mean to advocate a nationalistic direction for the Negro writer. The narrowness of bourgeois nationalism, like the "broadness" of bourgeois cosmopolitanism is a blind alley. I have in mind, rather, the Marxist-Leninist concept that a people's culture should be *national* in form; and that the struggle for national liberation includes, indispensably, the struggle to preserve and develop the culture of oppressed peoples. But primary to form is *content* and here the Marxist-Leninist concept of "national in form" adds: *but working-class (i.e., socialist, internationalist) in content.*

Any writer must have a philosophy and in our times his philosophy will reflect, with varying degrees of clarity, one or the other side of the world crisis—imperialism, capitalism, which is decadent and dying, or socialism and national liberation which is the side of life and progress.

Which way for the Negro writer? One of the writers in the *Phylon* symposium, William Gardner Smith, considers this basic question. He rejects capitalism, for he knows it; he rejects socialism because of what the capitalist propagandists say about it; and therefore he projects a "middle way." But in the very manner he states the problem, Mr. Smith reveals the inevitable path for the Negro people.

> "Seeing the Negro ghetto, feeling the prejudice, his relatives and friends experiencing unemployment, injustice, police brutality, segregation in the South, white supremacy—seeing these things, the Negro writer cannot kiss the hand which slaps him. Looking at China, at Indo China and at Africa, he cannot avoid the realization that these are people of color, struggling as he is struggling, for dignity. Again, prejudice has forced him to perceive the real, the ticking world. . . . Repelled now by both contending systems, the Negro writer of strength and courage stands firmly as a champion of the basic human issues—dignity, relative security, freedom and the end of savagery between one human being and another. And in this stand he is supported by the mass of human beings the world over."

That is no middle way. And I cannot believe that Mr. Smith is truly repelled by the world of socialism, for the goals he projects are part of the great goals of that system, *are already in fact solid achievements in the Soviet Union.* The liberation of nations formerly oppressed in Czarist Russia has led to giant advances in the economic, political, social and cultural lives of these peoples.

TO CONCLUDE: In this article I have discussed what seem to me to be the central issues relating to Negro literature today. This is a large subject which includes many questions that I barely touched on or omitted entirely. I hope that other writers will join in this discussion. For just as the Negro people are one of the strongest forces for progress in our land, so Negro literature must be a source of strength for all Americans who stand for culture against the cult of racism, for reason instead of thought-control, for building instead of bombing, for life instead of death.

SIQUEIROS: Artist in Arms

by ELLIOT CLAY

THE jury of the 25th Biennial Exhibition in Venice, by awarding to David Alfaro Siqueiros the International Prize, not only sounded a challenge to the exponents of Paris formalism; its choice marks a crossroad in world art history. Mexico, invited for the first time to participate in the important exhibition, submitted works by Diego Rivera, Siqueiros, the late José Clemente Orozco and Rufino Tamayo; the fifteen representative paintings of Siqueiros received the 500,000 lire award of the Museum of Modern Art of Sao Paulo, Brazil, constituting a predictable and long overdue recognition of a movement which has been gaining momentum for many years, a movement generally known as "new-realism."

In the words of Siqueiros: "The prize which I have been awarded means the recognition, by the contemporary European world, of the necessity of a realistic, human meaning in the face of the abstractionist and formalist hysterias which have characterized the bourgeois world in the last stage of its decadence."

Such words come naturally to the Mexican master who has spent his adult life struggling toward an art which is public, human and collective and which has nowhere come closer to realization than in the Mexican movement; and if his craggy, incisive face revealed pride when he spoke them, it was pride for these of his fellow painters whose struggles toward a social art have, through him, received the accolade.

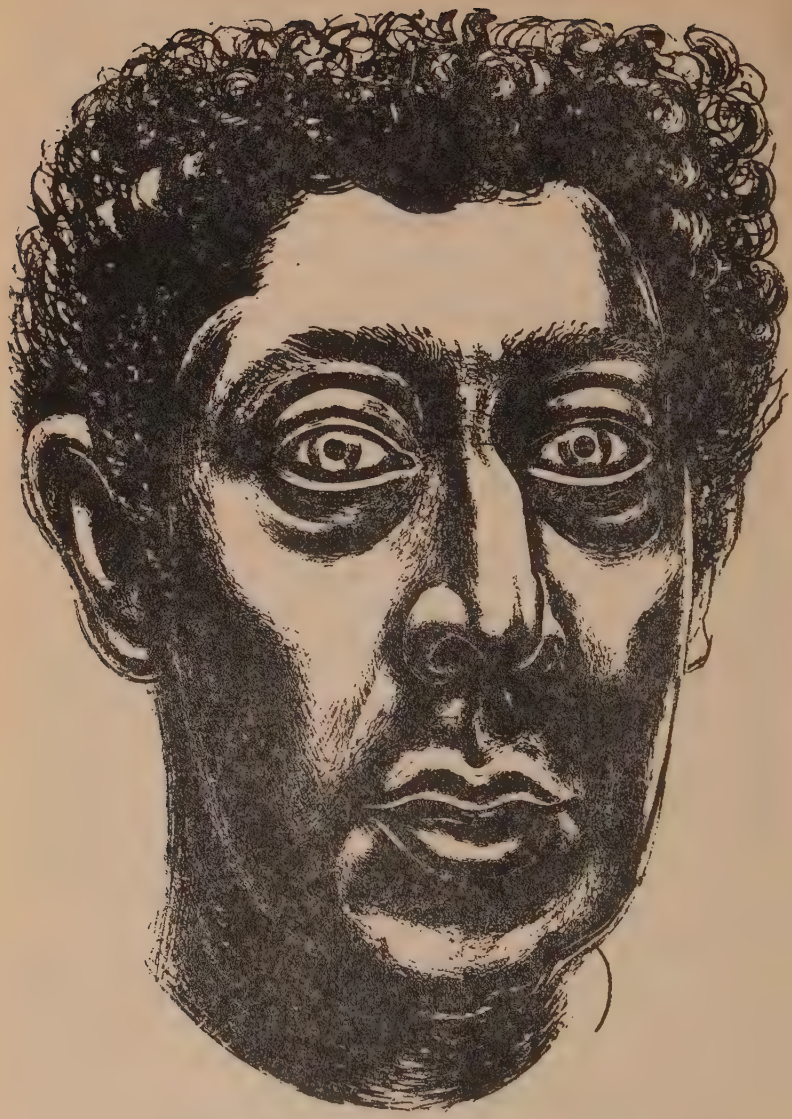
Siqueiros is tall with a military bearing acquired in real battles, tempered with the humility of one who seeks the truth not within himself but in his fellow men. His searching green eyes see through and beyond the beauties of form and color and the picturesque folklore which seem to form an opaque curtain over the perception of many of

his Mexican contemporaries. Aptly dubbed "the modern Benvenuto Cellini" by his colleague Diego Rivera as a tribute to his versatility, Siqueiros himself is the best example of what he discribes as the "new artist." Participation in armed revolution produced a serious, intense breed of artists with a profound respect for humanity, a deep pride in their country and a sense of values which told them what was important and what was trivial. After having seen human aspiration, suffering, defeat and victory they could never again respond fully to the preoccupations of the isolated, introverted "personal" painter.

The Mexican Revolution, begotten on the moribund body of Porfirian feudalism, was a hybrid of diverse antecedents. Marxist revolutionaries fought shoulder to shoulder with individualists, opportunists and bourgeois reformers, and the historical purposes they served were as various as the protagonists; but one important function was that of bringing a significant group of Mexican artists into nourishing contact with political realities in the most human sense.

It is in his assimilation of these revolutionary experiences that we must seek the extraordinary achievement of Siqueiros, rather than in his earlier development. Born in Chihuahua in 1896, the boy José David was educated in parochial schools and showed early talent by copying religious paintings. By 1910 the young Siqueiros, consciously in the shadow of the revolution, began to deviate from his conservative, religious family by becoming an adherent of the liberal Madero, who opposed the Diaz dictatorship. The next year he enrolled in the art school of San Carlos and it was not long before he was embroiled in a student strike, led by Orozco and others, against academic teaching and demanding, in response to the impressionist stimulus, the establishment of an open air school. "It was that action," says Siqueiros, "infantile though it was, which established our first contact with the living problems of Mexico and its people." The students won.

By 1913 the opportunist Huerta had seized power and the students at the new school of Santa Anita divided their time between experiments in impressionism and conspiracies against the usurper. Conspiracy provoked persecution and many of the students fled northward to join Carranza's Constitutionalist forces, forming part of the famed "Mamma's Brigade" of youth which fought its way from ridicule to glory during the ensuing years. Siqueiros was a lieutenant and later a captain on the General Staff of the brigade.



SIQUEIROS: *A Self-Portrait*

WHEN the revolutionary government seemed to be securely in power a period of reconstruction began and Siqueiros was sent to Europe to resume his studies; in Paris he was plunged into the midst of the post-cubist movement and met Diego Rivera, beginning three decades of polemics, the bitterness of which has been matched only by their fecundity in propagating the theory of the new-realist movement.

The culmination of Siqueiros' three years in Europe was the germinating and the publication of a famous manifesto to the artists of America "to create a monumental and heroic art, a human art, a public art, with the direct and living example of our great and extraordinary pre-Hispanic cultures." Mexican revolutionary art was launched, and by 1922 he, Rivera and Orozco were at work to revive mural painting, a social form which had been virtually lost, along with art's social function, since the Italian Renaissance. These murals, in Siqueiros' case, served chiefly to demonstrate the tremendous gap between his advanced theories and their realization. His discovery that even the religious painting of the Renaissance had been propaganda art made him eager to develop a new art which would serve the cause of the revolution, but the concrete expression of this concept was not to be achieved without many years of struggle, not only in the studio but in the streets, in the unions, in jail, in war and in exile.

A "Union of Revolutionary Painters, Sculptors and Engravers" was formed with the newspaper, *El Machete,* later to become the official Communist newspaper, as its organ. Siqueiros, Orozco, Xavier Guerrero and other collaborators felt that in those times of political unrest *El Machete* should be used as a graphic medium to reach the widest possible audience; at that time the graphic arts began to vie with the mural as a social medium, and the major artists still use both forms for public expression.

Newspaper work brought Siqueiros into more direct participation in the effort to make Mexico's amorphous revolution serve the cause of the workers, and from 1926 to 1929 he abandoned art altogether to organize miners of the state of Jalisco, the first effective organization of Mexican mine labor. He became Secretary of the State Labor Confederation and later held a national position, activities which took him to Moscow in 1927 as a labor delegate to a trade-union conference.

For being unfashionably literal about revolution he spent the greater

part of 1930 and 1931 in jail. Under police surveillance in Taxco during this period he resumed painting and resolved to stick to it from then on, in the belief that past political activity would translate itself into adequate art forms. But for a man of his stamp, the antithesis of a political dilettante, escape from the concerns of his fellow men was impossible; his painting output increased because of his enforced abstinence from politics, but the general pattern of his life remained unchanged. In the United States soon afterward he expressed his umbrage at anti-Mexican discrimination by painting a Mexican peon crucified and surmounted by the Yankee eagle; he was expelled, leaving behind a few "practice murals" executed with the participation of students and artists whose interest in wall-painting had been aroused by the Mexican revival. These were of importance in his technical development but are not considered major works.

Taking refuge in Buenos Aires he made important technical advances in the use of modern industrial media while painting a mural called "Plastic Exercise." With characteristic consistency he was expelled from Argentina for political activity and returned to New York where he established an experimental workshop in which art was more closely allied with political action and the modern plastic paints were investigated as fine-arts media. This sojourn in our highly industrialized country was decisive in determining Siqueiros' techniques, tools, and procedures, and hence his style. The plastic media have not only the advantage of permanence and physical resistance; they permit faster and more flexible work on a large scale; ideas can be translated into reality with more directness and immediacy, and corrections or improvements are less painful and costly in time. The physical properties of the pyroxilin paints (such as duco) are such that amazing depth and richness can be obtained by a series of quick-drying "glazes" which with old-fashioned media are either impossible or prohibitively time-consuming. By addition of other materials such as marble-dust, gravel, fibers and sawdust, heavy impastos are easily applied and quickly become as hard as rock. The repeated vandalism which was the excuse for covering up Rivera's recent fresco in the Hotel Del Prado would be difficult to perpetrate on a technically modern mural; the sharpest knife makes almost no impression on the plastic paints, a mundane detail to be considered where art is publicly accessible.

FOR this seasoned soldier the Spanish war required more tangible anti-fascist action than the paint lab could offer and Siqueiros went to the front commanding a motorized brigade; he saw action at Teruel, La Granja, Sierra Herrera, Caballon and Guadalupe, ultimately earning the rank of colonel. The latter title was disparagingly corrupted to "Coronelazo" (Big Colonel) by the predominantly pro-Franco Mexican press which pretends to this day that Siqueiros is a foreigner. He was severely attacked by the press for his successful agitation to have Spanish Loyalist refugees admitted to Mexico; the name "Coronelazo" stuck and he is proud of it, using it at times to sign his paintings.

The artistic product of these military and political activities was "The Process of Fascism" painted in collaboration with Antonio Pujol, Luis Arenal, José Renau and students. The trenchant and specific message of this mural, painted for the Electricians' Union, in contrast to the vague "revolutionism" characteristic of much previous Mexican painting, is executed with the brutal and unmistakable realism required by the subject. In it we see the steady progression from capitalist exploitation to monopoly to imperialism to fascism to war, opposed by the indomitable peoples' movements; the vigorous and passionate whole demonstrates an historical prescience unusual even among revolutionary painters before World War II. And for the benefit of the casual or inattentive audience the theme is clearly described on a caption which is part of the mural. The caption idea has been criticized by artists who say that the picture should speak for itself, but it is undeniable that the exact message is disseminated more widely by means of a few words of orientation. Painted in pyroxilin on three walls and the ceiling of a stairway the mural has perfectly withstood contact with the audience who walk through it. I say "through it" because the mural is organized spatially being best seen from the various viewpoints of the spectator ascending or descending the stairs.

The attitude of Trotsky toward the Spanish War stung the loyalist veterans to demonstrations of protest, and of course Siqueiros was there. Later, when Trotsky was assassinated, the "Coronelazo" was the subject of false suspicion by the police, was jailed and later fled to Chile. In Chile he painted one of his finest murals, "Death to the Invader," the first major application of his "spatial" or "intramural" composition on a concave architectural surface. After a tour of lectures

and observation in South America he painted a mural in Havana, "Allegory of Racial Equality," which has been wantonly destroyed by a private owner.

BACK in Mexico he was again forced into hiding and painted his magnificent "Cuauhtemoc Against the Myth," an integration of his plastic, esthetic and socio-historical development as well as a great technical achievement, combining some of the revolutionary concepts which will be discussed later. Here his "objectivization of the subjective," expressing, for example, the defiant will of Cuauhtemoc by showing the warrior's beating heart in the arm which is hurling a spear against the invader, illustrates Siqueiros' attempt to establish a new symbolism. The *conquistador* is a blond-bearded centaur, as the amazed Indians saw him; the cross in his hand is also a sword, and the defeatist Montezuma, much reduced in stature, is shown without a face. Much of the content remains subjective, and the work has been criticized as obscure. On the other hand, this new symbolism has been gaining a wider acceptance among younger artists and may finally emerge as a vocabulary perhaps richer and with greater emotional value than the somewhat hackneyed language still widely used in the graphic arts and in painting (*e.g.,* the top hat, the exaggerated prostitute, the skeleton, the machine as an instrument of evil and such cartoon cliches).

But it is undeniable that Siqueiros' symbolism has not yet become an adequate means of communication, and the message of the Cuauhtemoc mural is susceptible to ambiguous interpretation. Despite an almost baroque sense of movement achieved by muscular tensions and anatomical exaggeration, as well as by multiple images and the integration of several architectural planes, despite the rich harmonies and dissonances produced by his heavy application of browns, golds and reds counterpoised with blue, the total effect is one of excitement rather than comprehension, a sacrifice of meaning for the sake of form.

Siqueiros' most recently finished mural is "New Democracy," flanked by two panels called "Victims of Fascism," in the Palacio de Bellas Artes, a work in which his trend toward greater realism, simplicity and unified social impact is apparent. The gigantic central figure, full-breasted and muscular, shown from the waist up in its seismic emergence from the volcanic soil, is a brilliant solution to the problem of creating a monumental figure in a long, low rectangle. The outstretched

arms, drawn in double perspective to produce a dynamic effect either from the front or from the acute angle of vision of spectators approaching from the sides, are still in chains, but the fists, one of which has struck down a faceless figure representing fascism, and the other clutching the torch of liberty, are pregnant with the power to break those chains. Browns, yellows and reds predominate, and there is a characteristic and effective use of the deepest blacks and a crescendo of explosive whites.

"New Democracy" is inspiring and clear, but whether it can be called "new realism" is debatable. There is something cold and superhuman about it, and the style has been compared to the over-dramatic spectacles of Delacroix. We must ask ourselves frankly whether this colossus can be easily and unmistakably related to the experiences, feelings and needs of the people for whom it was painted. Should our criticism of an undeniably great work of art seem presumptuous, let it be noted that the criteria applied are those of the artist himself.

THE Venice award, won in competition with Rivera and Orozco, not to mention Picasso, Braque, Leger, Gris, Utrillo, Portinari, Marin and other recognized masters, came as a shock to those who have not followed closely the career of Siqueiros. Although famous throughout Latin America he is little heard-of in the U.S., where the commercial press, never very sympathetic to the Mexican art movement, has pulled down the paper curtain where Siqueiros is concerned. In fact we are forbidden to see him in our own country; the tyrannical dictator Videla is invited to speak in our Congress about "democracy" but the truly democratic ideas of Siqueiros are considered dangerous and he cannot get a U.S. visa.

Actually, his mural output has been small compared with that of Rivera and Orozco, a fact which brings us to a question frequently repeated by his admirers: Should a man of his genius "waste" his time on politics, agitation and protest, or should he not devote his life to enriching culture? The answer seems simple enough; if you subtracted the human compassion, the intense striving for justice, the uncompromising integrity which force the man into political action, your artist would be merely a talented cipher. To him politics—the politics of mankind in its struggle for liberty, justice and peace—is life itself. Art is one of his weapons in this struggle, and conversely

the struggle is the well-spring of his art; the two cannot be so neatly separated as the Paris painters and their disciples have amputated form from content.

This integrity points up significant differences between the major painters of the "revolutionary movement." In the past Rivera has changed his politics and his style with equal facility, to the detriment of both. The Mexican Revolution, with its lack of direction and theory, was all things to all men: to Rivera it was an end and to Siqueiros it was a beginning. To Orozco it was drama, violence and anarchy, and much of his work shows his addiction to turbulence for its own sake; his was an art which, because of its ideological confusion, was finally to degenerate from "liberal nihilism" into abstract chaos. Dr. Atl, who has shown anarcho-syndicalist tendencies, was the original proponent of the "Mexicanization" of art long before the Revolution, and when the fighting started he seized upon and cherished the nationalistic aspects of the conflict to the extent that later even Hitler's nationalism exerted an hypnotic effect upon him. Tamayo, not an active revolutionary, mistook the early folklore stage of the art movement for the movement itself and used it as an adjunct to his Paris abstractionism to establish a sort of nationalist-colonialism, a sterile dead-end which unfortunately has a deadly attraction for collectors and hence for many of Mexico's younger painters.

As a conscientious critic of his contemporaries Siqueiros takes to task those of his colleagues who, despite a progressive social orientation, seem to him to err in the direction of technical stagnation and the establishment of a new academism. He is dissatisfied with the archaic media used by the famous *Taller de Grafica Popular,* urging the use of technical methods which will permit wider distribution of their valuable prints. The engravers and painters of the *Taller,* Leopoldo Mendez, Pablo O'Higgins, Alfredo Zalce and other prominent members of this outstanding center of collective social art, are reciprocally critical of Siqueiros' occasional obscurity and subjectivism, as well as the discrepancies between his categorical theories and their practical expression.

Many of the younger painters are getting mural commissions today, but few artists are able to make a living painting in Mexico. There has never been, and probably never will be a private market in Latin America, and the painters who persist in producing individual, pri-

vate art find that most of their buyers are from the United States. The colonialism and imperialist pressure to which Mexico is subjected do not spare art, and the economic influence being exerted favors second-hand Paris abstractionism, academic folklore or outright tourist souvenir painting. Siqueiros finds it necessary, for financial reasons, to paint portraits, and U.S. citizens are among his most solvent customers. The vaunted Mexican art movement is imperiled and Siqueiros believes that the only way out is continued and increased state support.

IF ASKED whether public, political art does not degenerate into propaganda, Siqueiros will reply that the most important work in all the great periods has been propaganda art. Great art, whether Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine or Renaissance has invariably fulfilled a purpose beyond esthetics. There have always been secondary forms: small paintings, bibelot sculpture, master drawings, limited editions of prints, ceramics and other decorative arts for the enrichment of the home and private delight; they should always exist. But the major forms almost without exception have had a role in promoting beliefs, attacking or maintaining a specific way of life. The rise of liberalism after the Renaissance, followed by the hegemony of the bourgeoisie, gradually turned art into private property created for the gratification of the wealthy; the dominant forms, monumental sculpture, the mural and large paintings for public edification were replaced by secondary and less important decorative work, physically dwarfed to fit inside the home and socially and esthetically stunted to fit the taste of the bourgeois owner.

The demolition stage of the moderns was virtually a dismemberment; the severed limbs are still trying to survive without roots or soil. The Mexicans chose the support of the state in preference to the petty, irresponsible, selfish dictators who ride rough-shod over the artists in countries where free enterprise reigns. The government was only too glad to throw a sop to the real revolutionaries in order to embellish its own revolutionary façade, and thus it came to pass that an art of social revolt was sponsored by regimes whose goal was only liberal reform. This circumstance, plus the political pressure exerted by organized workers in the arts, has made possible the attainment of considerable freedom to paint socially; but the prevailing economic system still has an enervating effect upon esthetic values and Siqueiros,

far from being content with this compromise, is an active fighter for a state in which art can be 100 per cent social. His lifelong battle has been to reverse the trend which, by making art private property has sequestered it from the vitalizing currents of human history.

In his passion for integrating painting and architecture, Siqueiros is intensely concerned with painting *space* rather than isolated planes; he avoids the conventional mural panel and delights in attacking irregular, broken, concave or convex surfaces, combining curves and planes into a unified composition. Not only that, but recognizing that the spectator neither stands rigidly in one spot, as conventional perspective postulates, nor revolves on a fixed axis as the devotees of curvilinear perspective seem to assume, Siqueiros has attempted to create a perspective which allows for the infinitely complex movements of the onlooker through the architecture, presenting from each possible point of view a distinct and meaningful image. The architecture here considered is the architecture of social function and the spectator is studied in his social activities in conjunction with the architectural-pictorial unit. "The theory of the dynamic spectator," still in embryo, promises to be Siqueiros' major contribution to art theory.

Siqueiros has believed from the beginning that a revolutionary art required new forms, new media, new techniques and new tools. Rivera, Orozco and other fresco enthusiasts felt the sting of his invective for using so anachronistic, cramped and perishable a medium. "It is possible to play the Internationale on a church organ, but the choice would be unfortunate." Siqueiros needs a more flexible instrument for his music. One of the most distinctive features of his mural painting is his practice of creating directly on the wall rather than "enlarging" a preconceived smaller painting. He feels that he must do it this way because it is impossible to anticipate how his work will look from all possible spectator angles, and the size itself works unpredictable changes in the appearance of a picture. Fresco, involving tracings and successive completion of small adjacent patches, is completely unsuitable for such work; hence Siqueiros paints with quick-drying, durable pyroxilins (automobile paint) and vinylite, frequently applied with an air-brush. Mechanical mixers, rolling scaffolds, ultra-modern abrasive and scraping tools, cameras, stereopticon and other optical equipment form a part of his tool kit, and these are not merely conveniences; they are actually esthetic determinants.

The very manner in which pyroxilins flow and blend has made possible such a wide range of "accidental" effects that a whole new school of painting has grown up around them. Jackson Pollack, one of Siqueiros' early students, has built a career on exploiting some of these tricks. Siqueiros uses these intriguing "accidents" not for their own sake, but to obtain rich and suggestive color patterns and textural interplay to enrich his ideological content.

FOR the physically gigantic creative process of mural painting only the collective method is feasible. Collaborators or assistants are necessary in order to keep the process alive and moving, and their contribution of new ideas and intellectual interchange invigorates the creative process. Collectivist painting is, of course, no innovation, having been used by most great painters of the Renaissance. However, the idea has to be sold anew to individualist artists, many of whom avoid collective mural painting for fear of hampering their cherished, if illusory, independence.

The collective method lends itself to various interpretations, and in Mexico the *Taller de Grafica Popular,* with its amorphous collectivism in the graphic arts, questions the genuineness of the collective method a la Siqueiros in which the group is directed in the creative process by the most experienced member or members. However, the results of both have been so remarkable that their respective procedures would seem to be vindicated.

The winner of the Venice prize has said repeatedly that he doesn't consider his victory a personal one but rather the vindication of a collectively developed art, and refuses to regard the prize as his personal property. He plans to use the half-million lire (about $4,000) to found an experimental workshop open to any painter who chooses to use it, a place for joint effort in attaining the technical and theoretical advancement so necessary to new-realist painting.

One disadvantage of public art is that the painter is at the mercy of his public while working. When Siqueiros, Diego and their comrades of the Sindicato were painting their first murals in the Preparatory School they had to carry pistols to protect themselves and their work from the outraged onslaughts of the conservatives. Now that Siqueiros' fame has made him "respectable," however, he has no weapon against his admirers. His work is constantly interrupted by a con-

stant trickle of artists, students, old acquaintances, job seekers, autograph hounds, reporters, photographers and tourists. And the working time of an artist is limited indeed when he happens to be a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and of the Peace organization, a director of the National Mural Commission, a leader in artists' groups, organizer and contributor to benefits, protests, boycotts, delegations and demonstrations, writer of pamphlets, articles and books (*How to Paint a Mural* will appear in English soon), a speaker at rallies and mass meetings, conscience of the art movement and the country's most influential art critic (second, perhaps, to the U.S. dollar).

The murals on which he is working now are the "Patricians and Patricides" in a Mexico City treasury building, and a pair of panels in the Fine Arts Palace which will be a monument to Cuauhtemoc, the memory of whose defiance of the *Conquistadores* is the nucleus of Mexican anti-imperialist sentiment.

Another mural in the art school at San Miguel de Allende, in which Siqueiros, with the help of twenty student veterans from the United States, was to put his dynamic-spectator theory to the ultimate test, was interrupted by contract difficulties with the profiteering owner. When the students and faculty, indignant at other abuses, adhered to a boycott of the owner by all organized Mexican artists, the U.S. Embassy hustled the GI students out of town by withdrawing approval of veterans' subsistence and showed its contempt for Mexico by refusing to recognize the reorganized school (incorporating the same students and faculty) set up with the assistance and approval of the Mexcan government. Work on the mural, his largest, has not yet been resumed.

ALTHOUGH Siqueiros is known chiefly as a muralist, the Venice prize was awarded on the basis of his easel paintings. He considers the smaller form secondary and, with the exception of bread-and-butter portraits, most of his easel work consists of studies for murals, predominantly on strong social themes. Few people realize that, although he has few murals to his credit, he is extremely prolific; a catalog, now in preparation, will illustrate nearly 400 works, and is far from complete. A glance at the material reveals that this advocate of realism is himself a skilled abstractionist although he emphasizes that such work is not

created *per se* but serves the same purpose as piano improvisations for the composer.

The distinction between a Siqueiros easel-painting and one of his murals is arbitrary, and it would seem that he takes malicious pleasure in producing paintings too big to go through the door of a private dwelling. Even his portraits are of heroic proportions. Nevertheless, it is shocking to realize that most of the work of this champion of public art is hidden away in private collections, uterly unknown and unavailable to the public.

Paradoxically the painter whose genius has just won world acclaim would resent being called a success at this stage of his career. Perhaps in no other period of his work has he been beset by more doubts and uncertainties about how to proceed toward transmuting his theories into practical reality. It is probable that his aspirations will never be fully realized; he has made a bold and brilliant sketch of the future but the details remain to be filled in. He aspires to an art which is socially functional in the truest sense, a collective, integrated art which embraces all the plastic arts; to technique and methods adequate to the comprehensive social concepts they will complement; to an art which, rather than pretending superiority to the mass of the people, partakes of the peoples' strength and adds its utmost to that strength.

THE CASE OF THE *S. S. Figaro*

by SARA ZIE

TWO journalists in a Paris courtroom symbolize the clashing forces in the world today. They are David Rousset, who considered himself libelled because he was accused of having falsified documents, and Pierre Daix, who wrote the accusing articles. Their lives and characters are as fiercely contrasted as the symbolic vices and virtues in a morality play. The play itself is this year's revival of The Anti-Soviet Scandals last seen here with Kravchenko in 1948. The current version has a couple of new twists, but hasn't changed much basically.

The prologue was a series of articles by Rousset in *Le Figaro,* a Parisian newspaper nicknamed S.S. Figaro because it has run so many Nazi memoirs. In this series Rousset proclaimed a personal crusade against concentration camps in the name of the survivors of the German death camps. The series turned out to be devoted almost entirely to alleged Soviet slave-labor camps, whose existence Rousset claimed to prove by means of certain documents. When these documents were branded as falsifications by Daix in an article in the progressive weekly literary newspaper, *Les Lettres Françaises,* Rousset brought suit for libel against the author, the paper and its editor, Claude Morgan.

Pierre Daix is just under thirty. This is his fourth appearance as the accused in a French courtroom; the first three were for his activity in the Resistance movement. He had organized and led student demonstrations on the Champs Elysées when he was nineteen, and carried the French flag at the head of an anti-Nazi demonstration. Leader of the Resistance movement among the university students, he became a captain in the F.F.I. He was caught by the "French" authorities in 1942, dragged from one prison to another and finally turned over to the Germans. The government citation awarding him the Resistance medal and the Croix de Guerre stated: "He valiantly withstood all

tortures, bringing the spirit of the Resistance everywhere in the service of his country." The Germans deported him to the extermination camp at Mauthausen where he became a member of the international underground resistance organization in the camp. One of Daix's fellow prisoners testified at the trial how during a night of horror in February, 1945, when four hundred deportees were put to the axe in the central court of the camp, Daix, in constant peril of his life, was able to save many who were due to die. After the war Daix spent five years writing (in addition to his work as a journalist) *La Dernière Forteresse,* a novel about the camps. A novel to evoke, to render forever unforgettable those who had died fighting for freedom and peace.

Rousset is an older man; he had been a journalist and author for over eighteen years. He is a Trotskyite. During the Nazi occupation he was deported to the camp at Neuengamme. Fellow deportees at the camp say that they remember Rousset only as "a soup chaser to the detriment of his comrades." Upon his return to France Rousset wrote two books based on his camp experiences, *Jours de notre mort* and *L'Univers Concentrationnaire,* both of which were attacked by former deportees as giving a false picture of life in the camps.

When, at the beginning of this year, Rousset tried to split the organization of survivors of the camps on the issue of support for his concentration camp campaign, he succeeded only in attracting a few deluded persons. The Brotherhood of Former Deportees to Neuengamme unanimously voted a resolution challenging Rousset's right to speak in the name of his imprisonment at the camp of Neuengamme. "David Rousset does not belong to the Brotherhood of Neuengamme, which includes almost all the survivors of the accursed camp. The Brotherhood believes that he is not particularly qualified to raise and to pose the questions of deportation camps by reason of the memories he left in the camp of Neuengamme." A spokesman for the Brotherhood emphasized that "the attitude taken by David Rousset at Neuengamme was such that no one would even allow him to participate in a demonstration side by side with survivors of the camp." The spokesman recalled that among other things Rousset "distinguished himself by the servile solicitations that he constantly addressed to the sadistic block chiefs and kapos, particularly to the one under whose aegis he worked." And the spokesman concluded by indicating that this was the unanimous opinion of the Brotherhood on Rousset's "morality."

THE hearings in the libel suit brought by Rousset against Pierre Daix, Claude Morgan and *Les Lettres Françaises* began November 26, 1950. Rousset claimed that Daix, the paper and its editor had damaged his reputation to the extent of 10,000,000 francs (about $30,000) by asserting that he had falsified documents in his articles about the Soviet Union. One of the documents in question was a map supposedly showing the location of concentration camps in the Soviet Union. "This map was drawn by a deportee well-placed in the administration of the Russian camps," wrote Rousset. Actually the map had formed part of the handbook for the Nazi "International Exposition against Bolshevism," an exposition that had served the double purpose of general propaganda, and recruitment for the infamous "volunteer legions" from the occupied countries. Earlier the map had been used for similar purposes by Mussolini. Rousset's copy was reproduced from the U.S. ultra-reactionary magazine *Plain Talk;* it was even marked "Copyright *Plain Talk,*" an indication Rousset thoughtfully eliminated.

"Why did you suppress the origin of the map published in your article of November 12?" asked Paul Vienney, one of the defense attorneys during the trial.

"It is of no importance," replied Rousset.

The other document appearing as an illustration in this article of November 12, 1949 was a reproduction of a Russian text, which he captioned as being "An extract from the Code of Corrective Labor, organic part of the Soviet penal code." He furnished the following translation of this extract:

"Article 8: Are directed to corrective labor those who were condemned to it by:

"(a) Sentence pronounced by a court;

"(b) Decree of an administrative body."

From this text Rousset deduced that there were concentration camps in the Soviet Union. However, there are in all this several "errors" and certain "omissions," so to speak.

Firstly, an error: The text is not from the penal code as the caption claims. It is taken from a collection of *administrative* regulations applying to persons who have previously been tried and convicted—administrative regulations similar to those of a parole board.

Secondly, an omission: In the article Rousset translated all of the

extract reproduced except the title. This is not strange since the title reads: "Works of reeducation by labor *without privation of liberty.*" (My emphasis.) But since concentration camps were the subject of the article, how publish . . . "without privation of liberty?"

Thirdly, another error: The phrase in article 8 "condemned to" reeducative work is incorrectly translated. It should read "assigned to this work." But Rousset could easily say "condemned," since he omitted "without privation of liberty" and claimed to be discussing a penal code.

Fourthly, another omission: Rousset had published the reproduction without paragraph C, which, in the context of the complete and correct text reads (my emphasis on corrected errors):

Extract from a *collection of administrative regulations*

"Works of reeducation by labor without privation of liberty

"Article 8: Are directed towards works of reeducational labor those who are *assigned* to these works by:

"(a) Sentence pronounced by a court;

"(b) Decree of an administrative body;

"(c) *Decree of a commission for the contemplated release.*"

Paragraph C, like the title, shows that this text deals not with people being condemned to jails or camps, but with people who have been paroled from prison or who were not condemned to prison at all. Compare the whole sense of the two extracts, the correct version and Rousset's "incorrect" one and you can see how precisely these four errors had to be preconceived in order to reverse the facts.

During his cross-examination Attorney Vienney asked: "Why did M. David Rousset omit paragraph C of article 8?"

ROUSSET: "Paragraph C, but what paragraph C?" (Great to-do of looking through his papers.) "I don't see any, I don't have it in my copy."

VIENNEY: "Your copy doesn't contain paragraph C? But we have the complete text here."

(*An interpreter is called, who translates the two Russian texts.*)

VIENNEY: "Is the text complete?"

INTERPRETER: "Paragraph C is missing."

VIENNEY: "And the title?"

INTERPRETER: "The title is not here. 'Works of reeducation by labor without privation of liberty.'"

VIENNEY: "Why, David Rousset, did you suppress paragraph C?"

ROUSSET: "Because it wasn't in my translation. . . . Besides it doesn't add or subtract anything. It's of no importance."

VIENNEY: "Did you treat the subject as if it concerned people deprived of their liberty?"

ROUSSET: "Yes."

VIENNEY: "Now you based this demonstration on a text which showed precisely in a formal manner, in a title that you did not translate, that this text applied to people who were not deprived of their liberty. That is the falsification committed by David Rousset."

THE legend of Soviet slave labor camps was not, of course, originated by David Rousset. In 1931 the Swedish lumber merchants, upset by Soviet competition on the British market, subsidized articles in the British press alleging that the U.S.S.R. had its lumber cut and transported by forced labor. The British Federation of Wood Workers sent an investigating delegation to the Soviet Union, who attested on their return, "Our investigation allows us to say that there doesn't exist the least indication proving that forced labor has ever existed in the U.S.S.R." When Goebbels took it up, it was already an old refrain.

". . . You live in fear and you are hungry. You were promised an existence of free men and you were made into slaves. You were promised bread and you are reduced to famine. You are slaves, you enjoy none of the rights of man. You die every day by the millions in concentration camps and on the icy Siberian steppes." Thus spoke Hitler on June 22, 1941, the day of his invasion of the Soviet Union. On February 14, 1949, Thorp, U.S. representative to the United Nations, launched a proposal for an investigation of Soviet slave labor camps; and the next day, February 15, the A. F. of L. presented a memorandum to the same effect to the U.N. Social and Economic Council. This memorandum included the map used by Rousset. The Soviet delegate accepted the proposal of a committee of inquiry, suggesting that it be composed of union representatives from the most important unions in Socialist and capitalist countries. The only stipulation was that the inquiry be conducted not only in the Soviet Union, but also in the other major countries and their colonies, as was only fair and consistent with national integrity. This proposal was rejected.

On July 21, 1949, the question of an inquiry in the Soviet Union

was raised again, this time by His Majesty's minister, MacNeil, in the House of Commons. This marks the appearance of the same Soviet text subsequently used by Rousset in his article, in a form almost identical with his. On August 3 the British representative to the U.N. Economic and Social Council renewed the demand for an inquiry. The Soviet delegate once more proposed a commission of union members and demanded that the question be submitted to the next meeting of the U.N. General Assembly. In October, two months later, the Soviet delegate did present before the General Assembly a proposal for an inquiry by a commission of trade union representatives into the question of the existence of slave labor in all the major countries and their colonies. This proposal was again rejected.

A month later, in November, Rousset was suddenly inspired to launch a campaign against slave labor camps. He added nothing new even basing himself on the same "documents" already used by the British and Americans—the only difference was that he claimed to speak in the name of the ex-deportees, an excellent way to excite public opinion, but, as we have seen from the statement of his fellow-prisoners, something he had no right to do. The Soviet proposals did not figure in his crusade. During the trial Attorney Vienney asked Rousset: "Do you think it was fair of us [France] to have refused the possibility of an inquiry as proposed by the U.S.S.R. at the U.N.?"

ROUSSET: "If I had been representing France, I would have accepted this proposal."

VIENNEY: "You have scarcely reported this in public."

THROUGHOUT his articles Rousset had claimed to be leading a campaign against concentration camps everywhere. To support this claim he had actually condemned Ilse Koch, spoken of the Franco jails and the Greek camp at Makronissos. But Rousset, a Frenchman, had never even mentioned the camps, the massacres taking place in the French Union. He overlooked the slaughter instituted in Madagascar in which 89,000 people were killed in the year 1947-48 alone, which included incidents like the mass execution of 107 people—there were sixteen women and four children. The deportation to Corsica a few months ago of hundreds of Spanish refugees, many of them Rousset's former fellow prisoners in Germany, also slipped past his attentive eye.

In what kettle was this libel suit cooked up? Was it at the "Congress

for Culture and Peace" in western Berlin where Rousset, Arthur Koestler and James Burnham, among others, met under the financial auspices of the American services in Berlin? In the course of the Congress Koestler had said, "Every compromise between East and West must be prevented." And Burnham proclaimed without concealment, "I hate the Soviet Union and my campaign has only one purpose: to prepare the mind for the crusade, for the holy war against the monster."

At the trial Vienney asked concerning this statement: "This declaration is by M. Burnham, one of your friends I believe."

ROUSSET: "He is indeed one of my friends."

VIENNEY: "Do you blame him for this declaration?"

ROUSSET: "Perhaps, I don't know . . . Mr. Burnham has the right to express himself just as I have."

Also, Mr. Burnham had already "expressed himself" quite specifically on the question of who were the best cadres to be used in campaigns against the Soviet Union. Referring to the renegades from the East he has written: "They are a rich vein which is already exploited, but which would produce even more if it were worked more systematically. . . . These emigres should not be considered simply as human material destined to be utilized passively in the espionage services, but as active participants in their work."

This advice was not lost on Rousset. It turned out that this "human material" did participate most actively in the work of this trial, in the character of witnesses. The fifty-five witnesses called by Rousset were almost all renegades, spies, ex-spies and relatives of spies who had been caught, people whose anti-Sovietism is their profession. He collected them from all over, from DP camps in Germany, from Palestine, from the United States; he kept them here in Paris for the four weeks of the trial. And who supported all these good people, who had paid their carfare, and their expenses while they were here? At first Rousset claimed that he had paid all these himself. But after some questioning he had to admit that he really couldn't have afforded it. "The money which permits me to act here . . . was given me by the Free Trade Union Center."

This is only natural when we consider how closely M. Rousset's actions and campaigns coincide with the sentiments of the directors of these "free unions." One of them, James Carey, declared, "In the last war we united with the Communists to fight the fascists. In the next

war we will unite with the fascists to fight the Communists."

It was not only the money for putting on this trial that came from the United States. The Marshall Plan includes a budgetary provision for the press favorable to the plan and hostile to the Soviet Union, a fact that may help explain the simultaneous campaign against the so-called Soviet camps in four Parisian dailies.

The witnesses did their best to give the backers their money's worth. One witness, the Spaniard Ester, after executing a very brilliant bit of Soviet-baiting, made the mistake of claiming to have been the Spanish member of the international directing committee of the underground at the Mauthausen concentration camp, where Daix had been. However, the French representative to the committee, Octave Rabate, who was in the courtroom as one of the defense witnesses, easily corrected Ester's mistake by confronting him with the simple fact that he was not on the committee—thus discrediting the rest of Ester's testimony.

Another witness, a certain Czapski, revived the old Goebbels' story of Katyn, in which the Nazis had tried to pin on the Soviet Army a massacre committed by themselves. The Nazi orders for this massacre in all their horrible detail had formed part of the allied evidence at the Nuremberg trials. When Czapski tried again to accuse the Soviet Army of the crime, the defense attorney cried, aghast: "But that's a Goebbels' story!" Czapski: "No, I said it a year before Goebbels. He got the story from me."

But the star witness was El Campesino; he was to be chief attraction of the whole event. His arrival was greeted with "ah's" of admiration and satisfaction from the "guests" in the audience. El Campesino is the Spanish general who fled to the Soviet Union for refuge after the defeat of the Spanish republic, but who refused to fight during the anti-Hitler war. On the witness stand he screamed, shouted, waved his arms wildly so that it seemed a little more than was quite normal. But the flash bulbs exploded left and right, and it was considered a real star event. Only it was all to have been in vain. The day of his final plea Joe Nordmann (one of the defense lawyers) received a telegram from General Modesto and other important military leaders of Republican Spain, El Campesino's former comrades-in-arms, who had fought the Nazis during the war. It explained that the poor man had been treated for mental derangement in the Soviet Union. He had

received a pension as a mental invalid from the Soviet government.

"If my adversaries would like," Nordmann said, "Let them choose a psychiatrist and we will choose another and have El Campesino examined. Would you like us to make an examination of El Campesino, the mythomaniac and paranoic? No answer from the other side of the bar."

THE whole affair, from the articles inspired by U.S. propaganda to the witnesses paid with American money, was no spontaneous performance. It was all a well-integrated part of the American war plan. Rousset clearly followed the blueprint laid out by Burnham, adviser to the State Department. It is obvious that the case did not take place for the purpose of clearing Rousset's "besmirched" name. Its true purpose was to bestialize public thought about the Soviet Union, to prepare the mind for war against the Soviet Union. Rousset's original series of articles and his campaign were part of this preparation. The trial was merely a more sensational addition to the propaganda stock-pile. The whole affair was promoted like a new brand of soap. The hearings were even transferred from their usual courtroom to a much larger one, on what the court was forced to admit was "the request of a foreign embassy." The staging of the case was part of the war preparations of the Atlantic powers, as directed by Washington. The play is played out. The judgment is only an epilogue. Daix, Morgan and *Les Lettres Francaises* have been convicted of libel. Do you care to know how the judge justified his verdict? He said, in effect, that a falsification by omission doesn't count. He said, just as Rousset had during the questioning, all that is of no importance. He said that Rousset "had by his writings and his action, made himself an ardent defender before public opinion of the cause of liberty and of the dignity of the individual, and so let him utilize for this purpose the notoriety that he has worthily acquired."

For Daix it is the fourth of his various convictions. The first three were by Nazi and Vichy courts; this time the orders are American. The reason for the condemnation is still the same, the struggle for the honor, independence and peace of France. The last word hasn't been said yet. The case is being appealed, and the people of France may yet force from the courts a more worthy verdict.

right face

RIGHTS OF MAN

"One of the foundation stones of private business is that the employee must be loyal to his employer . . . so long as the employment continues, every employer has the right at any time to ask his employee to declare his loyalty."—*The Second Appellate District Court of Appeal of California upholds the Los Angeles loyalty ordinance.*

NO CHANGE

"Prices of beef remained unchanged last week, even though on Monday the Agricultural Department 'upgraded' the cuts, marking 'good' beef 'choice' and choice beef 'prime.' It means you'll pay the same price for poorer quality meat."—"This Week in Business" section of the New York *Times.*

FREE WHEELING

"TOKYO.—Emperor Hirohito of Japan went to market today—for a shiny 1950 American Cadillac automobile. . . . During the heyday of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, the emperor drove a Rolls-Royce—made in England. During the early days of the Tokyo-Berlin alliance, he drove a German-made car."—*A dispatch to the Los Angeles* Daily News.

DEMONSTRATION

"What first aroused public attention to the changed attitude of the Duchess of Windsor was her behavior in public places. Previously she had been most reserved and dignified; then suddenly, she became the life-of-the-party type. . . . One social leader in New York made a comment the other evening that seems to sum up the situation when she said: 'I have to dine with the Windsors tonight, but she is acting so outrageously I simply will NOT wear my best jewels!'"—"The Social Whirl" is reported in the Chicago *Sun-Times.*

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

Sinclair Lewis

by FRED WHARTON

AFTER the death of Sinclair Lewis, *Time* magazine carried an article (typical of the articles on Lewis in *Newsweek, Life, The Nation*) belittling the value of the novelist's best work. Lewis was "not a great writer, nor even a very good one." *Time* complained that he did not write of the America that has "billions of money and tons of faith," and insisted that his "great merit was that he gave to the U.S. and the world a sense of the enduring strength . . . of Main Street." Thus, *Time* stands on its head to wipe out Lewis's novels of the Twenties which lay bare the corruption of capitalist culture, of the "American way" which the U.S. State Department is trying so hard to sell to the rest of the world.

This is not to say, of course, that Lewis was a radical. On the contrary, the driving motive of Lewis's entire career was to reform and save the middle class, a class (to him, the "respectable income" group) which he identified with the whole of the United States. But in the work for which Lewis will be remembered, he contradicts his own purpose, bitterly condemning the bourgeois existence he was trying to save.

In his earliest work—from *Our Mr. Wrenn* (1914) to *Free Air* (1919)—Lewis sets out to teach Babbitt how to forget the dollar and learn "to live," consistently advising his businessmen (or white collar workers who later gain managerial positions) to seek "new horizons," love and "culture." All these earlier novels generally follow the same pattern: escape from business, travel, love, assimilation of culture, and finally a happier readjustment to business. The emphasis is nearly always on escape, the romance "beyond the hills."

Not until *Main Street* (1920) did Lewis turn to a realistic examination of life in the Midwestern town, Gopher Prairie, satirizing what he considered the town's chief faults, dullness and hypocrisy. Lewis's heroine, Carol Kennicott, the "artistic" young woman who comes from

the city to marry the small town doctor, is sympathetically portrayed mainly because the novel is more her story than the doctor's. The writer of a screen play taken from *Main Street,* called "I Married A Doctor," states what is actually Lewis' purpose in the novel: "They [Carol and the doctor, Will] are a mating of opposites, each possessing what the other lacks, ideally mated if they can ever become one."

Lewis stands between these "opposites," aiming his satire in both directions, at Will and also, though less obviously, at Carol. Carol is basically silly and ineffectual in her "revolt." She is more interested in the romance of "uplift" work than in understanding and changing the conditions under which she lives. She is, in fact, somewhat pretentious, "Lady Bountiful to the Bjornstams and Blas and Oscarinas [the workers and farmers] whom she loved and patronized." She expresses her dissatisfaction in such "non-conformist" behavior as her mild flirtation with the effeminate artist, Valbourg. And finally, after escaping to Washington, she returns to Gopher Prairie to "work from the inside" to convince the townspeople that they should read Goethe by lamplight.

But Carol's search for romance does not obscure the reality of middle class life in the small town: the subjugation of women, their endless housework and the humiliation of their economic dependence on their husbands; the smugness and chicanery of the town gentry and the ineffectiveness of the town rebels' individualistic revolts. The life of the lower middle class, whether of schoolteacher or hardware salesman, is depicted as a life of emptiness and mediocrity, of "vacuousness . . . and spiteful gossip."

But Lewis's own involvement in the values of both Carol and Will, his middle-class outlook, limits the effectiveness of *Main Street.* Though Lewis is pictorially accurate and vivid, he does not achieve the impact, the powerful illumination of middle-class decadence, of, say, Dreiser. Lewis' picture—though revealing the parasitic existence of the town gentry—has a case-study rigidity, a lack of movement, of progressive conflict. Yet Lewis' principal characters are real life-and-blood people, especially the stolid and narrow Dr. Kennicott.

IN HIS most famous novel, *Babbitt* (1922), Lewis intensifies his criticism, shifting his attention to the businessman in the industrial city of Zenith. Unlike Kennicott, Babbitt has almost nothing to sustain

him in the hubbub of Rotarianism, the monotonous world where mechanical devices are regarded as "symbols of truth and beauty." He tries to remain satisfied with the routine of his job, with his wife Myra, and with the ribaldry of the Athletic Club. But in spite of his back-slapping and his efforts to reassure himself, he is constantly trying to escape his narrow environment.

His one joy is his friend, Paul Reisling, with whom he sometimes manages to find a partial escape. But even this consolation is denied him. Paul is sent to prison for shooting his wife, and Babbitt becomes completely lost. He dreams of the fairy child who tells him he is "gay and valiant," and he is "haunted by the ancient thought that somewhere must exist the not impossible she who would understand him, value him, and make him happy." In desperation he has an affair with one of his real estate clients, but this, as everything else, ends in failure and disgust. The more he tries to escape, the more he entangles himself in the mesh of Zenith Rotarianism.

At one point, becoming convinced that his entire life is a sham, he tries to find salvation in revolt and independence. When a strike breaks out in Zenith, he refuses to join the anti-labor organization, the Good Citizen's League. But he can stand neither the horror of ostracism nor the threat of economic insecurity, and he soon rejoins the fold. His only gesture of independence is his advice to his son, Ted:

> "Take your factory job, if you want to. Don't be scared of the family. No, nor all of Zenith. Nor of yourself, the way I've been. Go ahead, old man. The world is yours!"

Babbitt is for a time Paul Reisling (the critic of middle-class values) taking up arms against the Virgil Gunches (the keepers of middle-class "virtue"). But the Gunches are, or appear to be, omnipotent. As they tighten their hold on Babbitt, they become sinister, much more threatening than the wooden soldiers of *It Can't Happen Here.* And Babbitt's submission is inevitable.

For the moment, as the tyranny of the Gunches reaches its peak, everything else is stripped from the picture. Lewis shows clearly the cruelty and hypocrisy of the Gunches, their pious talk (for the public) of democracy and freedom but their real advocacy of force and vio-

lence against workers and their insistence that all members of their class think the same way.

Babbitt, hearing Mr. Drum's speech on strikers, makes a mild protest and soon finds himself threatened.

> "'Fine work nothing!' groaned Mr. Drum. 'If I had my way, there'd be a whole lot of violence, and I'd start it, and then the whole thing would be over. . . . I tell you these strikers are nothing in God's world but a lot of bomb-throwing socialists and thugs, and the only way to handle 'em is with a club! That's what I'd do; beat up the whole lot of 'em!'
>
> "Babbitt heard himself saying, 'Oh, rats, Clarence, they look just about like you and me, and I certainly didn't notice any bombs.'
>
> "Virgil Gunch intimidatingly said nothing. He put on sternness like a mask; his jaw was hard, his bristly short hair seemed cruel, his silence was a ferocious thunder."

Later Babbitt is visited by a delegation from the Good Citizen's League; and Colonel Snow, owner of the *Advocate Times,* tells him:

> "Babbitt, the G.C.L. has been talking about you a good deal. You're supposed to be a sensible, clean responsible man; you always have been; but here lately, for God knows what reason, I hear from all sorts of sources that . . . you've actually been advocating and supporting some of the most dangerous elements in town. . . ."

The Gunches themselves, as they press forward, seem helpless in their action, driven men who fight, heedless of anything else, to maintain and advance their material interests—to preserve precisely the type of existence which Lewis is satirizing. And ever present in the background looms a standardized money society which turns everything into its opposite, makes "foul fair, wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant."

But Lewis's reality is, of course, one-sided. Though Lewis imagines that he is dealing with the whole of society, he leaves out the monopolies and also, except for a few vague references, the working class, the only class where he could have found a protagonist capable of resisting the stamping and labeling, and of defeating babbittry itself. In ignoring the working class, Lewis not only limits reality—and from the

standpoint of the whole twists it—but eliminates the real protagonist, the force struggling to change society and build a genuine culture.

Lewis could only see Babbitt imprisoned by a money culture, and demand that Babbitt free himself, raise himself by his own bootstraps. Yet Lewis shows that Babbitt cannot escape, cannot revolt, because, according to the necessities of his existence, he is forced to live the identical life of the Gunches. Whatever Lewis's intentions, his achievement lies in the power of his critical realism, his ability to portray with an amazing accuracy and vividness a significant facet of the petty bourgeoisie—its subservience (and service) to Big Business.

IN *Arrowsmith* (1925) Lewis turns to a portrayal of his ideal—the lone middle-class hero in search of truth and independence. The young Doctor Arrowsmith, possessing the persistence, vision, and courage which Babbitt lacks, slashes through the obstacles of commercialism to become a great research scientist. The background of Arrowsmith's struggles, and the main target of Lewis' satire, is the capitalist control of science—such as the demand of a pharmaceutical company that Dr. Gottlieb patent an unproven serological process:

> "My dear fellow, I quite sympathize. Personally I should like nothing so much as to spend my whole life in just producing one priceless scientific discovery, without consideration of mere profit. But we have our duty toward the stockholders of the Dawson Hunziker Company to make money for them. Do you realize that they have—and many of them are poor widows and orphans — invested their Little All in our stock, and that we must keep faith?"

But it is Arrowsmith's struggle, rather than Lewis' satire of the capitalist control of science, that dominates the picture—dramatizing Lewis' ideal of self-realization through personal work.

Arrowsmith's spiritual guide, the inspiration of his search for truth, is the brilliant and austere Dr. Gottlieb, who has left Germany for the American Midwest in the hope of finding the freedom to carry on his research. Lewis sets these two doctors in opposition to the pettiness of babbittry.

Yet there is a curious similarity between the viewpoints of Babbitt and Arrowsmith. Arrowsmith expresses a social viewpoint which is

in many ways as narrow as Babbitt's—an insistence that one must find "the courage to be decently selfish," a righteous isolation from everything except individual work.

Arrowsmith's work, his discovery of the phage, is indeed socially beneficial and his devotion to science is often heroic. Nevertheless, the obstacles which both Arrowsmith and Gottlieb face are partially attributable to their determination to be let alone, their refusal to be concerned, except in their own work, with the chicanery of the pharmaceutical companies. It is true that Arrowsmith and Gottlieb cannot be bribed, that they hate intensely the men who use science and medicine for commercial purposes. But Arrowsmith's and Gottlieb's attitude that they should not concern themselves with anything but test tubes, their belief that morality outside the laboratory does not extend beyond being "forcibly kind to all sorts of alarmed stray beggars," is not only narrow, but useful to those who defeat the purposes of honest scientists.

The real significance of *Arrowsmith* lies in Lewis' realistic portrayal of the capitalist corruption of science. Lewis shows how the pharmaceutical companies and governmental agencies, interested only in profit and power, cast aside the honest and brilliant Gottlieb while giving an important position to the foolish and subservient Pickerbaugh. It is only through Lewis' legerdemain that Arrowsmith (who is forced to struggle to maintain his integrity) is able to escape capitalist control by retiring to the country to work free of organized science.

AFTER *Arrowsmith* Lewis returned to his earlier Babbitt theme in *Elmer Gantry* (1927), a sharp satire of hypocritical ministers and the moral flabbiness of the church, a novel which has the promise of greatness. One of the most moving passages in Lewis' work is his description of the Shallard incident: the dismissal of the honest minister from the pulpit and his subsequent mutilation by "prosperous . . . citizens" —the tragic irony in the contrast between Gantry's comfortable success and Shallard's oncoming blindness. And other parts of *Gantry* (*e.g.*, the portrayal of the fantastic evangelist—Sharon Falconer) possess a vigor lacking in much of Lewis' writing.

But Lewis' understanding does not equal his clear and honest eye. Much of *Gantry* is taken up with endless religious arguments which are not particularly relevant to contemporary America. Since Lewis

attributes the weakness of the church to false doctrine and to the faults of some ministers, his main purpose is to reform, to shock by the portrayal of the notorious Gantry—to show Gantry as a wayward individual who should have been a salesman rather than a minister. Lewis' concentration on Gantry's profligacy—on Gantry's drinking excursions and sex escapades—becomes all important in itself. Gantry's manner takes the place of substance, of social meaning. Lewis even seems attracted by Gantry—the father's love of the wayward son—angered but at the same time amused by Gantry's antics, regarding Gantry as a likeable liar and hypocrite. For as Lewis himself tells us, he likes "the Babbitts, the Dr. Pickerbaughs, the Will Kennicotts, and even the Elmer Gantrys rather better than any one else on earth."

This admission, revealing that Lewis' view could be as shallow as the life he satirized, is a prologue to *Dodsworth,* Lewis' serious study of the "good" Midwestern businessman in search of "new ideals." Dodsworth, the automobile producer, takes a trip to Europe and there begins to long for something more than middle-class Zenith can offer. His tragedy is shown as dependent on more than the spinelessness of Babbitt or the ill will of the middle-class lords—Colonel Snow and Virgil Gunch. Dodsworth's factory has been taken over by the gigantic Unit Automotive Company, and Dodsworth is left without the satisfaction of "work," and not the slightest understanding of his predicament. But this experience softens him, broadens his mind, and makes him more conscious of the world in which he lives: ". . . the opening of his eyes to the possibilities of misery in the world made [him feel] . . . akin to everything that was human; . . ." Dodsworth finds the "not impossible she who would understand him, value him, and make him happy" and settles down to live on the money he has obtained through business. Thus Lewis, far from presenting an ideal businessman, shows rather the desperate attempt of a businessman to find refuge in escape.

But while Dodsworth was in Europe, attempting to become "gay and valiant," business was suddenly confronted with the crash and a major depression. Lewis shifted his approach. Where he had before demanded reform, even dreaming of some kind of loving harmony between Debs and Babbitt, he now glorified what he considered Babbitt's essential greatness. Unlike Dreiser, who gained in insight, seeing clearly the suffering imposed by capitalist production and taking his

stand with the working class, Lewis closed his eyes and withdrew into the myth of middle class heroism.

In *Work of Art* (1934) Lewis creates his first full-blown Babbitt hero, Myron Weagle, the hotel keeper who finds his ideal, his "quest for God," in the struggle to manage a perfect hotel. In *The Prodigal Parents* (1938) Lewis extends his theme, presenting the true saint, Fred Cornplow, the small town businessman—giant of the ages.

> "From Fred Cornplow's family, between B.C. 1937 and A.D. 1937, there came . . . nearly all the medical researchers, the discoverers of better varieties of wheat, the poets, the builders, the singers, the captains of great ships. Sometimes his name has been pronounced Babbitt; sometimes it has been called Ben Franklin. . . . He is the eternal bourgeois . . . who is most of the population worth considering in France and Germany and these United States."

This giant, Fred Babbitt Cornplow, engages in a crusade against his enemies—against shiftless relatives, esthetes and radicals. He saves his "wayward" children from the dangers of alcohol, psychiatry and the "Communist," Gene Silga, who is a vicious caricature in the style of Hearst. Cornplow tells Silga:

> "I do know there's a lot of things wrong in this world; mining is dangerous and badly paid; Tom Mooney was railroaded and ought to be released; the Southern share croppers have a terrible time—*and* so do most of the plantation owners! . . . But unlike you Communists, I don't feel that I'm Almighty God. I can't do everything in the world at once. I'm the president of the Mind Your Own Business Association. . . ."

Fred Cornplow has indeed, since the Twenties, experienced a regeneration. He is now transformed, this Babbitt, into the heir of history, who singly shaped and determined the course of the world. Not only is he identified with the upper bourgeoisie, but also with Franklin, Emerson and Mark Twain.

IT WAS out of Lewis' deep concern for the petty bourgeoisie that he wrote *It Can't Happen Here* (1935), supposedly a warning against the dangers of fascism in the United States. And Lewis does achieve in the opening scenes a sense of a real threat determined by social

forces. Army generals speak at club meetings, praising war as a means of strengthening the character of the nation. Representatives of the N.A.M. denounce the coddling of labor and demand a stronger government to curb "irresponsible" labor leaders. Buzz Windrip, the dictator, comes to power by serving the capitalists while pretending to workers that he is a socialist.

Throughout the novel all the familiar methods of fascism are present —the destruction of labor unions and of civil rights, the ruthless oppression of national minorities, the iron rule of the concentration camp. But Lewis does not go any further than appearances. He does not see any connection between fascism and monopoly capitalism. His Buzz Windrip becomes an "independent" dictator who fools the rich as well as the workers. Both the fascist ruling clique and the anti-fascists are made up of the middle class.

The whole opposition to fascism is represented by the liberal newspaper editor, Doremus Jessup, and the Republican leader, Walt Trowbridge—who struggle alone while the Communists hide in the hills. Doremus even dreams of "State Socialism" through the Republican Party (a "Socialism" which has an ironic resemblance to the state that Windrip promises).

Obviously, Lewis' overall picture is only the shell of fascism—in a world where only the middle class exists. The value of *It Can't Happen Here,* in spite of its myriad confusions, is in those scenes in which Lewis portrayed what he actually saw, not in Germany but in the United States, and in his warning, over fifteen years ago, that fascism *could* happen here.

Though Lewis in 1943 wrote a mild satire of a Babbitt professor, *Gideon Planish,* it was not until 1947 that he again assumed the role of the angry keeper of the middle-class conscience. In *Kingsblood Royal* Lewis returns to a major theme—an attack on white chauvinism in the United States. At the beginning of the novel Lewis sets his stage, a "civilization in which you own a cadillac but black your own shoes; and a sound civilization it is, too, in which you may bully only the servants that are made of steel."

It is characteristic of Lewis to think one thing, "sound civilization," and then to show another, the essential cruelty of a society that produces white chauvinism. Lewis shows with compelling honesty many of the manifestations of Negro oppression in the United States:

"That week a Negro veteran was lynched in the deep South. From the Mississippi Delta to the Howard Law School to . . . Harlem ran a shudder . . . and dark Communist and Fundamentalist were united." . . .

But unfortunately the fact that Lewis sees so much but understands so little is painfully apparent in the world in which Neil Kingsblood lives. Lewis makes Neil his hero, a white middle-class man who discovers that he has a Negro ancestor. In announcing the fact, he finds his whole role reversed in the white community. Lewis' emphasis on this gimmick weakens the novel. From the very beginning, there is an air of unreality. The preoccupation of Neil and Belfreda (the Negro domestic worker employed by Neil) with their own relationship, especially Neil's obsessive hatred of her, is not sufficiently motivated nor integrated with the main conflict. Though Neil's revolt, which Lewis confines within the usual middle-class framework, can expound a theme, it cannot show the struggle of the Negro people for liberation and its relationship to the struggle of the working class in America.

But *Kingsblood* is in many ways a hard-hitting novel. Though overmechanical in character portrayal, it lays bare the truth that the oppression of the Negro people is an essential part of Truman's highly boasted "democratic capitalism."

IN THE last years of his life Lewis shifted from the *Kingsblood* theme to his fantasy of middle-class "soundness." In *The Godseeker* he tells the story of an earlier Fred Cornplow, for a time a minister, who after a number of adventures in the early Midwest, builds his own factory, leads his workers in forming a union, and finally takes decisive action to eliminate race prejudice among workers. *World So Wide,* his last novel, is "a love story set in an American colony in present day Florence." Just before Lewis died he was working on a novel which was to have as its theme "the middle class, that prisoner of the barbarian twentieth century."

This theme of middle class as prisoner characterizes the driving motive of Lewis' career and sums up his lack of insight into the main forces of American life. But this lack of insight did not prevent Lewis from portraying the rottenness of a culture dependent on exploitation and profit. In the Twenties Lewis was an honest reformer, hating

bitterly the dullness and hypocrisy around him, and believing in a better future for America. He had nothing but disgust for the writers of doom and despair, a healthy loathing for the "elite" decadence of the Eliots and the Pounds. And his individualism, though it often blinded him, prompted him at times to speak up for civil rights, for genuine freedom of expression.

It is, of course, difficult to say what Lewis might have been. But it is certain that he had the opportunity in the Thirties of growing into a greater writer. At a time when Babbitt's world was falling apart, if Lewis could have freed himself from the middle class, could have seen that the future lay not with the Babbitts but with the workers, he would have given his work a greater meaning and scope. But unfortunately Lewis saw not more but less. And he became more and more a part of Babbitt, in his last days parroting the inanities of the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Reader's Digest,* saying just before he left for Italy that there was less danger of fascism in the United States than ever before.

But Lewis, of course, will not be remembered for his inanities. He will be remembered for his best work in which he lambasts the sterility of bourgeois culture, vividly portraying the chicanery and hypocrisy of the "American way," a portrayal which has more pertinency in this day of Marshall Plans and Truman Doctrines than ever before.

letters

To the Editor:

HAVING spent some time in Bulgaria in the past few years, and having learned to love the country and its people and to admire its revolutionary history, we would like to advance some serious criticisms of the four drawings by William Gropper entitled "Bulgarian Countryside" which appeared in the February issue of *M & M*.

Gropper's drawings seem to us to distort the content of the Bulgarian people's revolution—in fact, not only distort but ignore it altogether, concentrating instead on the "primitive" and "colorful."

This is not the first time that this type of error has been made by western progressive intellectuals in portraying Bulgaria. Because of the rugged character of the country and its people, and the comparative lack of industrialization, the great revolutionary traditions of the Bulgarian people as well as the magnificent achievements of postwar construction have tended to be submerged in an over-emphasis on a "ruritania atmosphere." The four Gropper drawings, with all due respect to his great contributions to American progressive art, might just as well have appeared in any bourgeois travel magazine.

While it is the most "progressive" (in that it is the only one with even a hint of one aspect—access to culture—of the new life in Bulgaria), the first of the four drawings, entitled "Student," might well be misunderstood by a Bulgarian (and others) as bordering on chauvinism. While the artist's intention was to show that in the new Bulgaria even the poorest peasants are learning to enjoy literature, the drawing's effect is, rather, to ridicule. Perhaps there are some who may see something "pathetic" about this poverty-stricken, barefooted old woman reading a book in the midst of her squalid surroundings. We can assure readers of *M & M* that there is nothing pathetic about the hundreds of working men and women in the countryside we saw sitting in new brick schools reading poetry or scientific and political reviews after their workday in the fields. Rather, there was inspiration, optimism and heroism.

To concentrate on this poverty-stricken scene, furthermore, is to give a distorted impression of Bulgarian country life under the system of people's democracy. Throughout the country, new industrial centers, power stations, whole towns and completely new villages are springing up, and it is this aspect which typifies the new Bulgaria, rather than the hovels of yesterday, even though there are still many of these hovels to be seen.

Likewise, Gropper's "Tobacco Pickers" might well be a portrayal of the semi-serfs of prewar, semi-feudal eastern Europe, or even of sharecroppers in the American South. In Bulgaria we saw brigades of men and women workers in the fields, singing as they harvested, the new spirit with which they worked symbolized by the red banner and the Bulgarian national flag waving over them from the top of a mound or fastened to the bonnet of a new tractor or combine harvester.

Gropper's drawing of the village priest is simply puzzling. If he wanted to portray an obese and oppressive village priest to whom barefooted peasant women pay homage, he is distorting present-day reality—those days are gone forever; if he wanted to show a "people's priest," men of the people and allied with the people, such as we saw not only in Bulgaria but also at the Warsaw Peace Congress, there is no indication of it in the drawing. If it is just a picture of quaint village life in the primitive Balkans, it did not need a progressive artist to do it. And why this emphasis on barefooted peasants? They are not the rule in the new Bulgaria.

The last drawing, of a shepherd, again conveys nothing except the "picturesqueness of the Balkans." We have interviewed many shepherds active in increasing livestock and dairy production, men who with shining eyes told us of their achievements in co-operatives and on state farms, who proudly displayed their medals on their chests (in the People's Democracies workers are decorated for outstanding contributions to the well-being of the people); one Bulgarian shepherd, a Hero of Labor, was a delegate to the Warsaw Peace Congress. Such people would have been far better subjects for a people's artist of Gropper's great talent and reputation.

PETER FURST.
JUNE CANNAN.

The above letter is one of several communications from readers expressing similar criticism of the "Bulgarian Countryside" group by our distinguished contributor, William Gropper. We believe that the criticism is correct and that it was a mistake on our part to present the group of drawings as a representative depiction of rural life in the new Bulgaria. In dealing with the lands of People's Democracy, M & M *should consistently reflect—in our art work as in articles—the inspiring accomplishments of the* new *life, the building of socialism. In other drawings, some of which we published in the past, Gropper has vividly shown us features of the new life. We look forward to presenting more in an early issue.*

THE EDITORS.