MASSES & MAINSTREAM

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THE CIVIL RIGHTS *showdown*

By LLOYD L. BROWN

"NO DISTORTION . . . no 'ghosts,'" the television-makers brag of their newest models. The barest glance at program-content, of course, negates that first negation; and as for "ghosts"—well, I seemed to see, when viewing the Bi-Party conventions, the brooding spirit of Frederick Douglass and to hear above the calculated din his great voice.

"The relation subsisting between the white and black people of this country is the vital question of the age."

Dimly seeing, or seeing not at all, *why* this Negro question is such a central political issue in 1952—a century after Douglass uttered those words, most Americans recognize the fact. Indeed, there is no escaping that fact even though it is rarely faced and persistently dodged.

Consider: neither the Democratic nor Republican platform so much as mentions the word "Negro" or the term "colored people" or any variation thereof. And not even the arch-reactionary Herbert Hoover was allowed to be so specific even for demagogic purposes. The commercial press obliterated the fact that from the written text of Hoover's speech the G.O.P. bosses deleted these words:

> "The Whig Party temporized, compromised upon the issue of freedom for the negro [small "N" in the original, of course]. That party disappeared. It deserved to disappear. Shall the Republican Party receive or deserve a better fate if it compromises upon the issue of freedom for all men, white as well as black?"

Not even that weird reversal in the last phrase could make this speakable, or the fact of its deletion publishable news!

One can only speculate as to what the Voice of America will say about the central place of the Negro question in the current election campaign. Day after day the "truth" has been broadcast that there is happily no longer any such question in our part of the Free World. But no number of lies, evasions and deletions can change the fact—the enormously significant fact for all of us—that the question of Negro liberation is high on the agenda of our times.

Most significant of all is the reason, the *why* of it all. The answer can be given in the three-word demand of 15 million Negroes: *civil rights now!* And the last word is the key to it all.

The term "civil rights" has come to have the most specific and far-reaching meaning: it means, in essence, full equality for the Negro in America. It means F.E.P.C., anti-lynching laws, full representation, no more discrimination and segregation anywhere. It means complete democratic citizenship for the first time for a tenth of the U.S. population.

The "now" is the rejection of all empty promises, of all conceptions of "gradualism," "educational processes," the benevolent workings of "good will" and "tolerance."

Every effort is made to divert attention from the plain truth that it is the Negro people's insistence that has made this question a priority matter in domestic politics. Cynical pundits like James Reston of the New York *Times* would have us believe that this is all merely a matter of political finagling for votes.

Of course there is finagling, and the Negro vote has grown numerically and strategically. But even this fact has a deeper meaning. *The existence of two million Negro votes in the South is a reflection and result of the Negro people's struggle to throw off the shackles of oppression.*

And there is a deeper meaning than potential electoral votes in the phenomenal growth of Negro population in strategic urban areas in the North and West. There is a qu ity in this quantity, as columnist M jorie McKenzie observes in a rec issue of the Pittsburgh *Courier.*

"The hard, cold facts behind the warm arguments over the civil rig planks in both party platforms are to found in the 1950 census reports on creases in the non-white population in metropolitan areas . . . the rate of crease for this group was more than tw as great as that of the white populatio

The figures on Negro populat changes in the past decade are st ling indeed, and behind the figure the spirit of a restless, mobile, sea ing and struggling people.

New York: 775,529 Negroes— increase of 60 per cent since 19

Chicago: 509,437—over 80 cent increase.

Philadelphia: 378,968—nearly per cent increase.

Detroit: 303,721—a 101 per c increase.

Cleveland: 149,547—a 76 per c increase.

The percentages of increase even larger in the West Coast ci —Los Angeles, San Francisco Bay area, Seattle, etc. And, of g significance is a parallel growth Negro population in the Southern ies: Houston, Texas—40 per cent crease; St. Louis—41 per cent; Mo —57 per cent; Memphis—21 cent.

For progressives there are s deeper meanings here that go far yond any electoral considerati these figures show that *the ques*

of unity between the Negro people and labor is more urgent and crucial than ever before. The potential for progressive political and social action in these great industrial centers is enormously enhanced. All of us—cultural workers, professionals, white-collar unionists, students, supporters of the peace movement—who will take part in the current election campaign, must see this potential as a goal to be worked for with greater energy and consciousness.

The question which we have discussed and debated so much—*Negro representation*—surely must be seen to have a more urgent meaning in the face of these statistics. Not only in terms of political office and candidates but in all phases of social and cultural life. Only recently, in one of the cities listed above, a people's theatre was launched without including Negroes, without seeing that there can be no progressive movement that ignores the Negro population that is both numerous and militant.

THIS militancy of the Negro people has reached a new high in response to the rejection of their demands by the two major party conventions.

Here in Harlem, where I write, the pressure of the rank-and-file Negro Democrats has compelled such leaders as Congressman Adam Powell to threaten non-support to the national ticket.

The Negro voters have expressed complete disgust with the double-talk and double-dealing of the political bosses. Promises about civil rights have become intolerable, and this sentiment is typically expressed by the influential columnist of the *Afro-American* chain, Ralph Matthews, who writes: "For one, I want to hear no more about civil rights from either party . . . I'm tired of being a political football."

Mr. Matthews goes on to say that "I'll sit this one out," echoing similar statements by Rep. Powell and other spokesmen. More on this later, but here I would emphasize the all-important fact that today the Negro people are politically more independent in their thinking, less attached to any party, more determined to vote for their own interests than ever before in history.

There will be more betrayals before the campaign is over; momentary rifts will be patched up; and both parties will indulge in shameless demagogy in an attempt to win or hold Negro support.

Indeed, the demagogy is already in full blast. Sixteen leading Republican governors and congressmen proclaim their party as the champion of compulsory F.E.P.C. legislation, while Eisenhower, a real Dixiecrat himself, stands pat for "states'-rights" and is hailed by the extreme right in the South who (according to the New York *Times,* August 5) shout: "We Like Ike" and pour forth hate at all "half breeds and n----rs."

Stevenson is for "civil rights" while embracing his running-mate Sparkman who, as representative and senator, made his anti-Negro position clear

on every vote and has frequently boasted, as in these words from a speech in 1950, "I am against the civil rights program, always have been and always will be!"

The *Times,* which is satisfied with both parties' platforms on all basic questions, explains that all this double-dealing is quite in order:

"However illogical it may be, this sort of conflict is nothing new or abnormal in the history of American politics. A divergence of views among the supporters of both candidates is characteristic of our system; and it is in fact a mark of its strength and stability." (August 9.)

The bland words actually reveal far more than the editorial writer intended: Tweedledum and Tweedledee, heads-I-win-tails-you-lose, is indeed characteristic of the sham democracy which has bulwarked Negro oppression since Emancipation.

"There are no two parties," declared W. E. B. Du Bois in his keynote address to the Progressive Party convention. And all of the candidates "listen to their master's voice . . . the more than 200 giant corporations that wield the power. . . ."

PAUL ROBESON, joined with Dr. Du Bois in supporting the Vincent Hallinan-Charlotta Bass ticket of the Progressives, has given a clear direction to the demands of his people in 1952. Rejecting as ill-advised the "sit-it-out" policy advocated by some Negro spokesmen, Mr. Robeson has pointed to a way that can win a decisive victory for the Negro people despite the Bi-Party treachery.

"Whoever is elected President, groes want an F.E.P.C., voting rights an end to white-supremacist terror NO There is no reason, if we have the stren and vision to press now for these g unitedly, why we should have to until after the elections to get them."

While energetically supporting Progressive ticket and working ward getting a record vote for party, Robeson has called for t partisan unity of the Negro pe and their supporters to force thro "performances not promises" on rights. The sentiment among masses for such a united front is flected in a recent editorial in New York Negro newspaper, *sterdam News*:

"Civil rights and the North-South terests have tied up the Democratic tional Convention just as they tied up Republicans. . . . If we don't watch the millions of people concerned civil rights may end up having a scra paper, a mountain of words and not else. . . .

"What we get out of the platform gardless of their words, will depen the kind of organization, the kind of the kind of strategy that the inter minority groups can energize. It may depend on the capacity to put the 'fe the gods into the hearts' of those wh the powers-that-be."

Paul Robeson has put forwar immediate action program that so unite and energize the suppo of civil rights. Among these are: (1) A demand for a specia sion of Congress before Novemb

nact F.E.P.C. legislation; (2) The resident, by Executive Order, to wipe ut segregation in the nation's capi-al; (3) Issuance of a Presidential rder for an F.E.P.C. with teeth as did resident Roosevelt in 1941.

"We should strive," says Robeson, to face the Administration and its Republican opponents with the six to en million organized Negroes and heir trustworthy allies for full and qual citizenship now in every as-pect of our national life." To back hese demands, he urges mass meet-ngs in all major cities, North and South, similar to meetings already eld in Harlem.

A clear statement on the relation of civil rights to other issues in the election campaign was given by Paul Robeson's paper, *Freedom*:

"Civil rights, of course, is the prime but not the only concern of Negro voters in '52. Negro post office workers and government clerks have borne the brunt of the government 'loyalty' program. The Smith Act not only places white and Negro radicals behind bars; it threatens and penalizes the mildest protest in the fight for Negro rights. And Negro housewives and workers are hardest hit by the high taxes, frozen wages and runaway prices. . . .

"Most important of all, the Progressives offer the only major alternative to a *foreign policy of wars*—cold and hot, little and big—a policy on which the Republicans and Democrats are in substantial agreement. The Progressives are the Peace Party, and it is fitting that in their battle against colonial wars of conquest they have nominated a fighting Irish lawyer who has distinguished himself in the defense of labor, and a crusading Negro woman publisher and civic leader."

And here in Harlem the electoral battle is combined with the fight for amnesty for Benjamin J. Davis, heroic Negro leader imprisoned under the Smith Act. Some 13,000 persons have signed the amnesty petition, and a drive is underway to secure sufficient signatures to place the ex-Councilman's name on the ballot for state assemblyman. Truly here is a high level of political struggle that ought to inspire similar actions elsewhere.

"THIS Negro question," said John Brown among his last words, "is not settled yet." Ninety years, less a few months, have passed since Emancipation was proclaimed. And for nearly as long the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments have been inscribed in the highest law of the land, including such lines from the 14th: ". . . No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States."

But time is running out. Jim Crow's days are numbered. A sentiment is sweeping through the Negro people today that recalls the great spirit of Douglass who cried out at an earlier decisive moment: "Action! Action! . . . is the plain duty of this hour. . . . The tide is at its flood that leads on to fortune. From East to West, from North to South, the sky is written all over, 'Now or never.'"

The word is *now*. Civil rights now.

A Story of Spain

Prayer against Sunrise

By STEVE NELSON

MATT dreamed a woodpecker was hammering on the dead pine stub outside the hunting camp in the Pocono mountains, and woke to a soft, persistent rapping on the door of the hotel room. The room was dusky, so he knew he had slept all day. He rolled from the bed, and went silently to the door. "Who is it?"

"Deewitt."

He slid the bolts and the Committee man came in and Matt locked the door again. Deewitt grinned at him. "How's it, fellow?"

"Swell. I was asleep. I laid in that bath tub for two solid hours. Nothing in the world ever felt as good as that hot water."

"Fine. You feel all right, huh?"

"Sure I'm all right. Why? Am I —"

"Yeah. Tonight. Right away. Get your clothes on, and I'll tell you."

Matt's hands were shaking. He set his muscles against the shaking, and forced himself to be easy and casual. "How are the boys?"

"Great. I just left them. They we having a meeting. Three of them Murphy, I think—"

"Yeah. I know the three you me What happened?"

"They ducked out this morning, y know, the moment you got loose fr the jail. They went on a toot. C pie-eyed in one of the cafés, a didn't have any money to pay the b The café called the Popular Fro and they came and got 'em. Turn 'em over to your bunch. So they call a meeting. Man, were they sore! Th voted to expel all three. One of drunks—older fellow, getting bald-

"Leslie."

"He tried to pull the broken 'Yes, fellows, you're right, we d deserve to go to Spain.' But Joe did let him get away with it. Man, did tell 'em off! It was worse than whipping."

"What'll you do with 'em?"

"The Committee will help 'em jobs on a boat to get back to States. Meanwhile, we'll have to wa good money to keep them alive. .

Matt was lacing his shoes. He stood up and faced Deewitt expectantly. Deewitt said, "Ready? All right, here's what. We leave here, and you follow along about twenty yards behind me. Our man will be somewhere around the fountain in the public square. When we get there, I'll stretch—like this—my left hand will point directly at him. His wife will be with him. They'll start moving when they see me. You follow them. I'll keep going—out of the park—and the next time I see you it'll be in Spain."

They shook hands. Deewitt said, "Good luck, fellow. . . . Ah, I almost forgot; take this." He held out a small paper-wrapped parcel. "It's bread and cheese and dried fish. Don't let anybody talk you into giving it up. It doesn't weigh much, and you'll need it. . . . All right, let's go."

The street was dark, except for the circle of yellow, flickering light under the gas lamps. Deewitt's pace was intolerably slow. He strolled, he crawled, he crept at a snail's pace; he halted—incredibly and maddeningly—to knock his pipe against the heel of his shoe. He turned a corner, and Matt, stricken with sudden panic lest he lose sight of the man, scurried after him, half running, and almost charged full into his rear.

Matt felt himself growing red with embarrassment. He was sweating. He fumbled with his necktie, whispering curses, and stared hard at the sign over a butcher shop. A horse's head . . . that meant they had horse meat for sale there. Was Deewitt twenty yards ahead yet? Give him three more paces. Now. . . .

They approached the park. Matt stared past Deewitt's head. A man and woman were loitering by the fountain. He was sure they were the ones, because no one else was in the park; but he was afraid to glance away, afraid to wink, lest he miss some gesture of Frank's. The man and woman started to move away as Deewitt drew near. Deewitt's hands were jammed in his pockets. He turned to the right of the fountain, away from the man and woman. He took his hands out of his pockets. He stretched his arms, the left pointing toward the man, the right, flexed, clenched in the anti-fascist salute. Matt put his hand to his beret hoping Deewitt would look back. But Deewitt did not look back. He followed a path to the right.

The man and woman circled the fountain, moving slowly. Matt followed them faithfully, coming back on the same path by which he had come. He thought: *If anyone is watching me, I must look pretty damned silly.* His collar was too tight, and his heart hammering as if he had just run a foot race. A gendarme appeared suddenly around a corner: *O Jesus Christ!* The gendarme passed him without even glancing at him.

THE woman turned off at a side-street, and Matt followed the man alone. Pretty soon he heard footsteps behind him and looked back. The woman was there, following him to make sure they weren't being trailed, and to make sure Matt didn't get lost.

They passed the last street lamp

and the last houses, and they were walking along a country road, a white road with great poplar trees growing on either side. Moonlight filtered through the bare branches of the poplars, dappling the road with splashes of white light. He had seen this road—or its twin—from the train window. They were going southwest. He was sure they were going southwest, toward the Pyrenees, toward Spain.

A farmhouse stood a half-mile from the town, and beyond the farmhouse was nothing, nothing but the long sweep of the plain, and the mountains, and Spain. *If the man passes the house, that settles it—we are surely going to the mountains. Stay away from that house, mister. Don't go in there. Keep going!*

The man turned, went toward the house.

The house was dark, but in a moment light flashed through a half-open door. The man stepped back into the yard, beckoning to Matt. Matt sprinted for the house. The man closed the door behind him, and held out his hand to Matt. "Eh, comrade!" he said. He was a big fellow and his hand was hard, knotty with calluses, and his shoulders had the stooped, stiffened look that comes with years of hard, heavy work.

The woman slipped into the room. She was little, and her dark, lovely face was flushed with excitement and happiness. Her words rattled like hail around Matt. He put his hands out helplessly. "No parley—Français!" he said.

She drooped, disconsolate, a brightened and tried again, this ti in Spanish. Matt shook his he "Verstehen Sie Deutsch?" he offe hopefully. But that was no good ei er. So they fell back on sign-ta The man pointed to his open mou and moved his jaw, chewing, a twisted his eyebrows into a questi mark, and Matt nodded his head: Y yes indeed, oui, oui.

The woman brought out fo bread and wine, cheese and sausa and they stood and watched Matt e and he eyed them, hoping for so sign that the man was preparing a journey that night. The man h taken off his cap and coat. *But t didn't mean anything; he could them on again.* He lit a pipe, a stretched out comfortably in a ch *But that didn't mean anything; was resting.*

The man beckoned to Matt. He him into a little room, a bedroo He pointed to the bed, and to M and laid his hand against his ch as in slumber. Matt's face fell, a his heart collapsed within him. T French comrade noticed his sadn and endeavored to cheer him; prodded the bed, and exclaim "Bon! Bon! Ah, bon!"

Matt pointed emphatically tow the south wall of the room, and s "España! Me, España. Huh?" T Frenchman shook his head, and peated his hand-to-cheek instruct that Matt was to sleep. He closed door firmly, leaving Matt alone.

A fine thing. A very fine thi He didn't want to sleep; he had s

THE NELSON CASE

This story is part of a larger work by Steve Nelson dealing with his experiences in Spain, where he served as a leader of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

We again call on our readers to speak up for the release of Nelson, sentenced to 20 years in prison on a trumped-up "sedition" charge in Pittsburgh. He is still being denied bail. And now, together with five co-defendants, he is being tried on a Smith Act charge. From his prison cell in Pittsburgh Steve Nelson has made a stirring appeal for all Americans to defend their constitutional rights:

"Rights that the American people have enjoyed for generations are being denied. New precedents are being set up that involve not only me, and others who share my political views. . . . The people, regardless of whether they share my political views, must speak out if the Constitution is to be enforced."

Wire Gov. John Fine, Harrisburg, Pa., and District Attorney James Malone, Pittsburgh, Pa., demanding bail for Steve Nelson pending the appeal.

all day. He wanted to go to Spain. This was like running in a treadmill; you got all geared up, and you galloped like hell, and you got exactly nowhere. Maybe there had been another slip-up. Deewitt had said the Paris outfit had raised plenty of stink over his getting mixed up with the crowd on the boat. He was supposed to be put through in a hurry. There had even been talk of an airplane. Well, here he was, left to toss and stew all night in a French farmhouse, and another night and another day wasted, when he might have been in Spain—delay, delay, delay—Dallet, good old Joe, they'd snatched him away that morning without even a decent chance to say goodby to Joe, a wink and a nod, and a flip of the hand, that was all, and for what? So he could have a good long sleep. Where does sleep get you? And how could he sleep anyway, when he'd already slept all day long?

He slept.

HE WAKENED to see the sun bright on the window shades, and to hear the clatter of dishes in the next room. The lady was making plenty of noise with the pots and pans. A polite hint that it was time to get up, comrade.

Her husband had already gone to work. "Travail. Ah, oui!" The woman bustled around her kitchen, a bright room, spotless, neat, gleaming, a room which in its appearance reflected perfectly the character of the mistress of the house. Always she was forgetting that Matt spoke no

French; she would chatter to him as she worked, and then, remembering, exclaim, and drop her arms in despair, and grimace and laugh in exasperation that this so-stupid comrade understood not a word.

There was nothing to do. Matt did not dare show his nose out the door. The day dragged endlessly.

Toward sunset, the man came home from work. He was riding a bicycle, and he was excited. The moment he got into the house, he began doing a very peculiar kind of dance, lifting his feet up and down as if the floor were hot, and bulging his eyes, and talking French to Matt. Matt didn't get it at all. Finally, the man tore his hair and howled a little, and rushed out in the yard, and brought the bicycle into the house, and slapped it, and pointed at Matt, and made with his eyebrows. He wanted to know if Matt could ride a bicycle.

Matt said he could, but that was only the beginning. After a half-hour of concentrated effort, it finally became clear that unless a man on a motorcycle ("put - aput - put - put") came after Matt by seven o'clock, Matt and the Frenchman would start off on bicycles.

They had supper—a wide cut of horse steak and baked artichokes, delicious—and the clock hands didn't move, and then all at once it was quarter to seven, and Matt was watching at the window, straining his ears for the sound of a motorbike. He remembered his razor and toothbrush and the package Deewitt had given him, and went to get them. The package wouldn't go into any pocke He tried them all. The Frenchma knocked at his door, and called t him, and he fell into a panic of im patience. His hands shook, tying th package to his belt. He snatched u his beret, and ran into the other roo just as a motorcycle stopped on th road by the house.

The Frenchman had the door ope waving to the motorcycle; he m tioned for Matt to go. Matt pause at the threshold long enough to shak hands with his host, and the woma came rushing up with an apple in eac hand which she stuffed into Matt pockets; and she gripped his har hard with both of hers, and she an her husband both hugged Matt wi warmth.

They were both talking at onc The word Matt understood was "car arade"—over and over again, "car arade"; and then the words "And Marty" thrown after him as he r for the motorcycle, so he knew th wanted him to carry their greetin to Comrade André Marty in Spai He looked back and said, "Oui, Mar Oui," and saluted them.

The motorcyclist was a little cha still in his twenties, wearing a leath jacket and old black trousers tied at the ankles with string. He thru out a grease-covered hand to Ma smiling all over his face. He m tioned for Matt to sit on the bac The motorcycle had a one-cylinder e gine, and Matt couldn't figure o how that one little cylinder could ca them over the Pyrenees, but he g on.

THE man kicked over the starter, and they sailed off at top speed, put-aput-put-put. In the darkness, on the bumpy road, they seemed to be going a hundred miles an hour. Matt clung to the Frenchman, and ducked down behind his back to keep the wind out of his eyes, and waited for the crash. But no crash came. By and by, Matt decided they weren't going more than thirty miles an hour. He sat up, and looked around a little.

They streaked through little farming villages, the one-lung engine screaming like a sewing machine. They seemed to be following side-roads, avoiding the big highways, but Matt was sure the general direction was southwest, toward Ceret at the foot of the Pyrenees. In one little town, the driver stopped to ask directions of the local gendarme. Matt listened, quaking, while the gendarme obligingly pointed out the road; he kept his eyes on the ground, not daring to meet the gendarme's gaze.

After half an hour or so, they came to a stone bridge high over a narrow stream where some Frenchmen were fishing under the yellow glow of a street lamp. A little further on, they saw the tail lights of several automobiles, stopped on the road in front of them. The motorcycle slowed and stopped; the driver waved his hand for Matt to get off, pointed toward the bushes growing beside the road. Matt ran over, and hid in the bushes, pressing himself close to the ground. He was perfectly certain the cars were police cars. The motorcycle started up, stopped, turned back, halted by Matt's hiding place.

"Camarade! Ici! Ici! C'est bien! No gendarmes." The cars started up, and the motorcycle followed them. In about twenty minutes they halted, and their lights flicked off. The motorcyclist said, "Allez, allez!" pushing at Matt to get off, pointing to the field at the right of the road.

Matt ran into the field. He didn't know what it was all about, but he had set himself to obey orders. He heard footsteps off at his left, of men who had been in the automobiles. He stumbled over something soft, and a Cockney voice cursed heartily.

"I'm sorry," Matt said. He lay down on the ground and panted for a few minutes. "Any Americans here?" he asked.

No answer. Presently a voice asked, "Who are you?"

"Matt. Just out of prison at Perpignan."

"Oh, we heard about you. . . . We're English and Canadians. There's some Americans off to the left there —by that pile of rocks. Only just keep down and keep quiet, eh? Best to crawl, if you're going over there."

He crept cautiously toward the dark shadow that was a rock pile. He said cautiously, "Any Americans here?"

"Matt!" A figure rose out of the darkness before him, and fell on Matt and pulled him down and tumbled him on the ground.

Lewis. Lewis, from Chicago. Matt and Lewis lay side by side, laughing and calling each other bad names because they were glad to see each other.

They laughed and laughed — laughed at everything said, for no reason except they felt like laughing.

Out of the darkness a voice called softly, "Vamos camaradas." Lewis stood up. Matt asked, "What's he saying?"

"Let's go."

"Yeah, but what's he saying?"

"That's what he's saying. 'Let's go.'" They laughed again. Lewis had worked on a section gang in New Mexico and understood Spanish.

ALL around them shadows were rising out of the earth. Matt was amazed at their number, and Lewis told him there were thirty men in the party, English and Canadians mostly, with a sprinkling of Americans and others.

"You see those lights over there?" Lewis said, pointing. "That's Ceret. They used to take the boys right through town and up a road into the mountains, but the cops knocked over too many of them. So now we have to duck around. . . . For that matter, they used to take 'em across in buses, straight through to Port Bou, and all the Frenchmen stood along the road and cheered. But that was before Mr. Blum got in his licks. He and Chamberlain changed all that. . . . I'll bet you used to look up at these mountains plenty when you were in court over there."

"Man, it killed us," Matt said. "To be so close, and not able to get into them and across."

The guide had been counting noses. He said, "Vamos! Vamos!" and Matt moved toward his voice and found himself first in line behind the guide.

Clouds had covered the moon; they walked through inky darkness, each man following the steps, the heavy breathing, and the occasional muttered oaths of the man in front. They moved through fields, through what appeared to be a vineyard, through another field. A murmuring sound grew louder until it was recognized as the roar of a stream. A voice called softly, "Ici! Ici!" and the guide turned toward the voice.

The clouds were thinner or Matt's eyes were growing used to the darkness; he could distinguish vague shapes now. The guide and the man who waited by the river bank took up a long plank, a two-by-twelve, and thrust it out over the water, and the guide trotted down it. Matt followed, not happily, teetering gingerly above the racing water.

The end of the plank rested on a rock midway of the stream. A second plank was thrust out from the opposite shore. Matt achieved the crossing safely. The guide took him by both arms, and pressed down, as if fixing him to the earth—indicating that he was to stay there and wait. At one time a confusion of subdued yells and splashing told of someone's disaster on the improvised bridge. Lewis turned up, dripping wet. "Did you fall in?"

"Slightly. The guy in front of me took a header, and I helped pull him out. . . . Boy, I'm in fine shape to start

climbing around snow peaks!"

They walked for half an hour, then halted, and the guide went down the line with Lewis as interpreter, speaking to each man separately. They were to keep contact at all times with the man in front. They were not to smoke, or cough, or make any sound. Whenever a halt was made, each man was to be in touch with the man behind him, and let him know when the line started.

Ten minutes later they stopped again, and the guide muttered rapid Spanish to Lewis. Lewis said, "Pass the word back. We're going to go along between a canal and the river canyon. Hug the left. If you fall in the canal, you'll get a ducking, but if you fall off the cliff, you'll be killed. Everybody keep to the left past the sluice!"

Matt remembered the tale he had heard in prison, of the French youth bound for Spain who fell off a cliff and was drowned in the river below. This must have been the place of his death. Matt got willingly to his hands and knees, and proceeded with the utmost caution. Beyond the sluice, the guide waited anxiously. He seemed vastly relieved to have them safely past that spot.

THE clouds were breaking rapidly, and the moon shone with deceptive brilliance; it seemed as bright as day, and yet when the line halted, men thirty feet away were invisible, merged with the gray hillside. But at least you could see the ground underfoot. The ground had tilted up sharply; they were really climbing now, climbing into the black wall of the mountains. The ground was soft and wet and clinging.

The guide seemed to be leaping from rock to rock, and Matt tried to copy him, but immediately he missed his footing and sprawled full length in the mud. He seemed to be slipping much more than the others. The trouble, he decided, was with his shoes, the shoes Joe had given him. They were good shoes, but they had rubber soles, and rubber soles were no good for wet climbing. All the others had been given *alpargatas* — rope-soled sandals that tied around the ankles and were strictly non-skid.

The guide halted them beneath a big tree, and fumbled at the base of the tree. He spoke to Lewis. . . . "There's a marker there. Now we've got to turn off and edge along that narrow shelf until we come to the next point at which we can climb." The guide spoke briefly and passionately. "He's cussing out the cops. He says if it weren't for the goddam cops, we wouldn't be shinning around over these cliffs like a lot of goats."

They moved again, face to the mountain, shuffling cautiously along a ledge, an outcropping on the sheer side of the mountain. Word came up from the rear to stop, and the guide edged past them, toward the end of the line. Lewis and Matt turned and looked down. The lights of Ceret were directly below them; it was as if they had climbed a ladder out of the town.

Matt said, "I bet if I spit down, I

could hit the courthouse where we were tried. I bet I could spit right in the judge's eye."

"My legs are tired. Damn, they really are tired."

"No wonder. We must have been climbing for three, four hours. I used to think I was a pretty good hiker, but man, I'm feeling this."

Lewis said worriedly, "The way those lights look, we haven't come any way at all yet. If we don't get across before daylight, we're sunk. Probably we'll make better time later. One thing, we'll get our second wind before long."

The guide returned, cursing. Two men had missed the turn at the big tree. The guide was furious at their clumsiness. He set a stiff pace. They reached the end of the ledge, and started climbing again. The hillside did not look so terribly steep to the eye, but it was steep to the legs and heart and lungs.

They stopped to rest, and a fat little Dutch comrade sank down near Matt. He was an older man—forty-five. He groaned and panted and uttered tremendous Dutch oaths. "Foos—foos," he said. "Mein Gott, mein foos." He stretched his fat little legs before him and shook his fist at his feet.

"His dogs are playing out on him," Lewis muttered. "I wonder if he'll make it." They watched the Dutchman. When the time came to start, he had to struggle to stand up. The effort of rising seemed to take all his strength. Within ten yards, other men began passing him. A tall Canadian whispered, "We got to go slower. The old boy can't keep up."

Lewis spoke to the guide, and he and Lewis went back to the Dutchman, and Matt followed them. Lewis said, "Look, comrade. We got to get across before morning. It's one o'clock now—*ein Uhr.* Only four hours. Must hurry. *Mach schnell, ja? Wir müssen schnell machen* or something. *Versteh?*"

The Dutchman looked from Lewis to the guide. "Go 'head," he said. "Go 'head. I try."

THEY climbed through another heart-breaking hour. The trees were smaller here, and fewer. They crossed patches of soft snow, and then snow that was less slushy, and then they were walking on snow that was dry and frozen and there were no trees at all, only bushes, and the rocks were covered with deep moss. At the crest of a ridge, the guide halted them.

"He says we can rest for ten minutes," Lewis said. "We've got to skirt along another ledge. There's a spring here, gang."

The little Dutchman hobbled forward. Despite the cold, his shirt hung open to his waist; you could smell the sweat of his agony two yards off. His eyes were fixed and staring, and his breathing was that of a wind-broken horse. He said, "No—no—I cannot," and staggered and fell on his face in the snow.

Instantly the guide was beside him, pulling up the frayed, wet legs of his trousers. He began rubbing the

Dutchman's leg with snow. Lewis copied him, kneading and massaging the man's left leg; and Matt took the guide's place. The Dutchman's calf was like a rock under Matt's hand, the muscles cramped like those of a drowning man. They rubbed and prodded, and felt the muscles begin to loosen. The Dutchman's breathing improved. He relaxed, and his eyes closed.

The guide was waiting, ready to start. They helped the Dutchman to his feet, watching him anxiously as he swayed, his eyes wandering uncertainly. Matt said, "Can't we help him along some way?"

"Not until we're over the ledge. It's too narrow. You'd both fall off the mountain," Lewis translated. "He says it's not far to the next ridge, and there's a road there and then we can help him."

They tried to explain this to the Dutchman, using all the German that Matt and Lewis could muster between them; but whether he understood or not they could not tell. But he advanced with the others. Looking along the ledge, they could see the ridge before them. It did not look very near, in the moonlight.

Matt said, "Imagine the guy, at his age, tackling a thing like this. I'll bet he never climbed anything in his life before. There's no mountains in Holland. . . . Man, I know how he feels."

Bushes armed with long thorns grew along the ledge. "Look at the guide," Lewis said. "Skipping along like a mountain goat. He's sure at home here. The rocks and bushes are his old friends; they wouldn't hurt him."

"I guess," said Matt, "they don't know me so well, then."

The ledge widened and tipped up steeply and conversation stopped. A sharp, cold mist swept over them, wrapping their sweaty bodies. Lewis called back encouragingly to the Dutchman, and the guide hissed sharply for silence. The ledge ended, and the ground fell away on either side; they had reached the top of the ridge.

As soon as the guide stopped, Matt and Lewis turned back to the Dutchman. He stood for a moment, staring straight before him, a numb, bewildered look on his face. His knees buckled. He toppled and fell forward.

"He's through," Lewis said. "He's all caught up. We can't leave him here. What'll we do?" He called to the guide, and the Spaniard knelt beside the Dutch comrade for a moment, and then sprang up. He whipped a knife from the sheath on his belt—a Catalonian knife, as long as a bayonet—and with it cut and trimmed a sapling growing near by, and a second sapling. He laid the two poles side by side, and spoke to Lewis. "He wants belts," Lewis said. "He's making a stretcher."

Five belts were offered. The guide chose the three strongest and looped them between the poles, at each end and in the center. He worked swiftly, and yet not swiftly enough for his liking; he glanced often toward the eastern sky, scanning the sky for the

first streak of dawn. He jerked his long black serape over his head, and threw it over the belts. The stretcher was ready. A sweater came flying out of the darkness and fell at the guide's feet; he grinned and pulled it on.

Matt was rubbing the Dutchman's face with snow. He stirred and his eyes opened, and they rolled him onto the stretcher. Lewis and Matt and a Canadian and a Londoner each took a corner. Feeling himself lifted, the Dutchman groaned and muttered in protest, and tried to sit up; the guide thrust him down, and he lay back weakly, and began to cry. Tears ran down his round cheeks, and he snuffled and groaned and cursed his weakness and pleaded brokenly with the men to put him down, to leave him.

"I no good," he said, again and again. "I no good. Oh, mein Gott, I no good for notting."

THE weight of the stretcher pole on Matt's shoulder was less than expected. He looked up at the sky; the sky was blue-gray now, and the stars were fading. Below the ridge, on their left, lay a flat expanse of cloud, smooth and solid-seeming as a pavement. The guide waited for them, and hissed: "Shh! Shh! He motioned with his left hand: "Gendarmes!" With his right hand: "Patrol station!"

They went on, placing their feet cautiously, striving to quiet the hoarse rasp of their breathing. The pole cut savagely into Matt's shoulder. A hand touched his arm, pushing him aside. Without a word, four fresh bearers took over the stretcher.

The guide called softly, "Cam radas! Adelante! Adelante!" Faste faster. His voice was worried, urge and his anxiety reached out to t group and stung and hurried the They hastened after him, stumblin In the east, the sky was perceptib lighter. The guide pointed: "Dia He beckoned them on. Faster. Fast . . . *Stay down, sun. Stay away from now. I never prayed against sunri before, but now I am praying. St down. Give us just a little more tim of darkness, just a little more tim*

The guide rounded a great bould and the path suddenly became a na row ledge, and a tall Canadian, carr ing one corner of the stretcher cri out suddenly, and disappeared ov the bank. The Dutchman clutched t neck of the man on the other side keep from falling. They thought t Canadian was killed; but in a m ment he came scrambling up t ledge, swearing and raking snow o of his neck. But the Dutchman wou not be carried any more. He we forward on his own short legs, su ported between two other comrad

It was not possible for them to ru but they ran, and their breathing w like that of hard-pressed horses, running dogs, of the exhaust of locomotive heard far off—like an thing but men breathing. And st the guide danced before them, bec oning them on—faster—faster. H called out something, and Lew sobbed, "Five hundred—yards—ju —five hundred, boys!"

Then they sprinted — the leade slow-motion sprint of marathon ru

ners nearing the finish, bringing their knees up high as men do who are leg-weary, whose feet are weighted with iron, whose feet can only be lifted by a supreme, scalding effort. The muscles in Matt's thighs danced wildly, uncontrollably, as they had danced for hours; there was a slimy, sour taste in his mouth, and throat and lungs were on fire, and his blood was a roaring in his ears. And yet he himself, the real, the veritable Matt, was apart from all this, watching coolly, detached.

He saw himself running, his fists clenched, the muscles in his neck rigid and straining, his lips curled back from his clenched teeth, his knees thrown high at each staggering stride. He saw the others running in like manner. Even the Dutchman was running. He had torn himself away from the comrades who supported him, and he was running, his eyes starting from his head.

The sky was growing lighter. Lighter. A pale blue, a robin's-egg blue, a hateful blue.

The guide had stopped beside a heap of stones. He was dancing around the stones, patting them. He was grinning, shouting something. "España!" he was shouting. "Spain! Spain!"

They halted by the pile of stones, and stared down the slope into the valley before them. It looked very like the valley on the other side, the French side, but it was not like that valley because it was Spain. They were looking at Spain. They were standing in Spain. They stared down into Spain, and for a little while the only sound was the snoring, broken gasping of exhausted men.

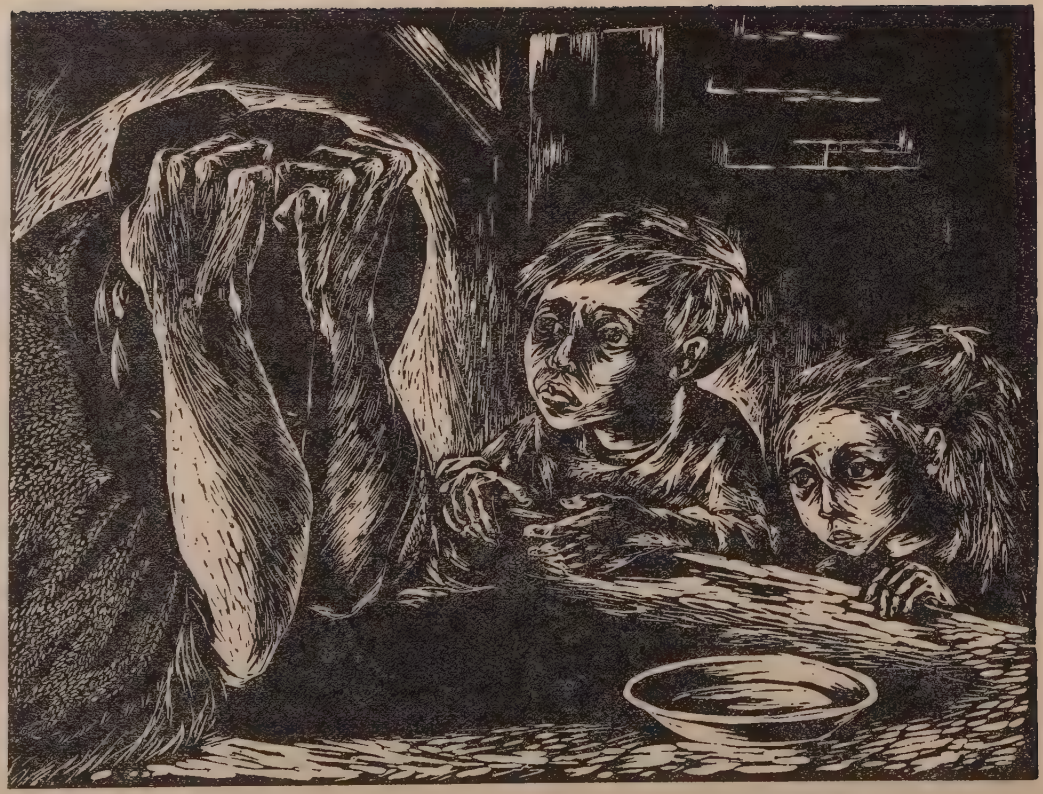
When they could breathe again, and before any man spoke, a big Welsh miner stepped forward. He had a broken nose and a blood-soaked bandage was wrapped around his ankle, where he had cut it on a rock in their journey of the night, and his face and hands carried the blue marks of the coal miner. The Welsh miner said, "Now, lads, this is a good time for a song, and I know a good song for this time."

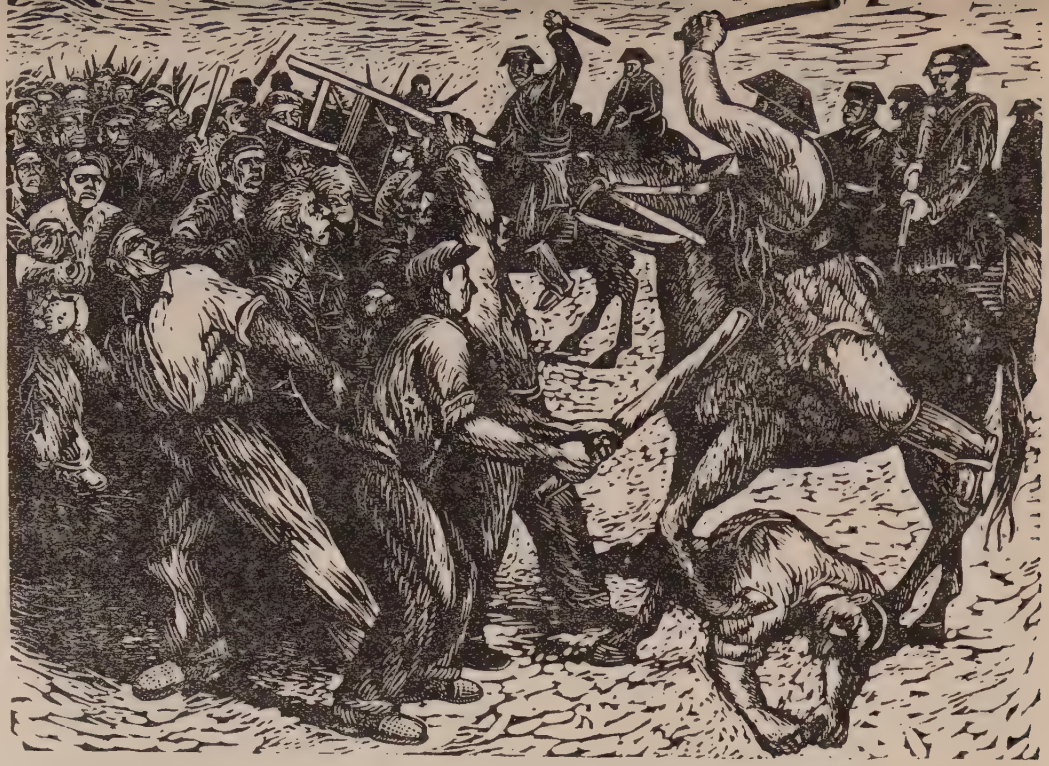
The miner's clear tenor voice rose sweetly into the morning air over Spain:

"Arise, ye prisoners of starvation,
Arise, ye wretched of the earth...."

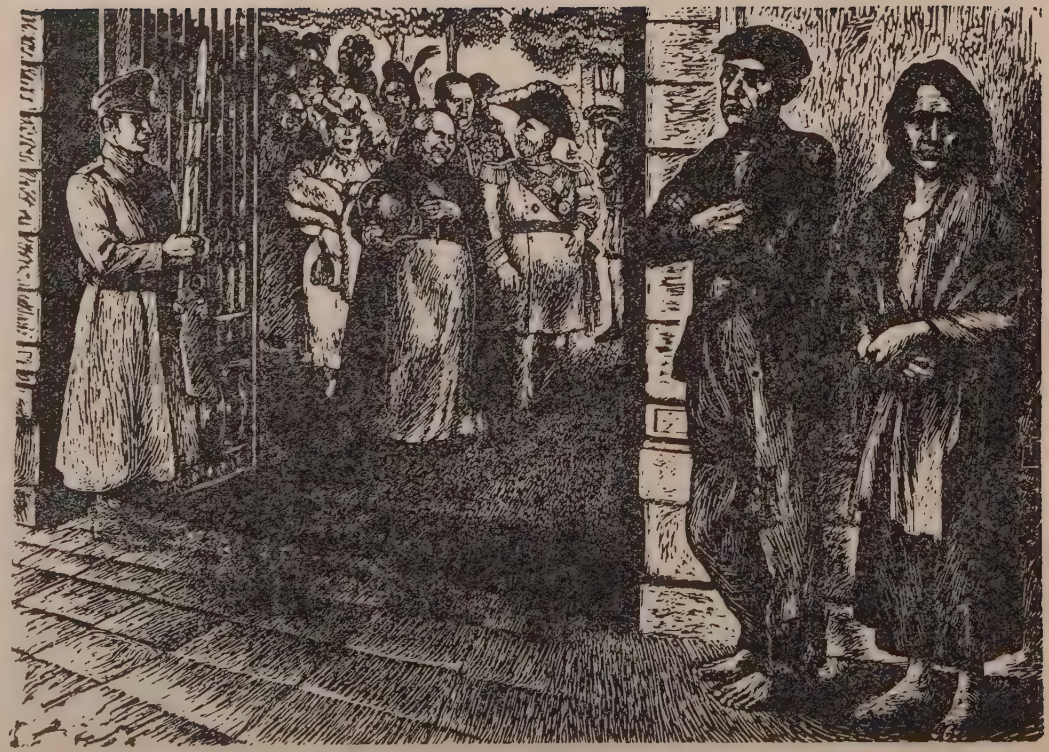
SPAIN, 1952: FOUR DRAWINGS

The drawings on the following pages are from a recent exhibition in Mexico City of the work of Mexican artists and Spanish artists resident in that city.

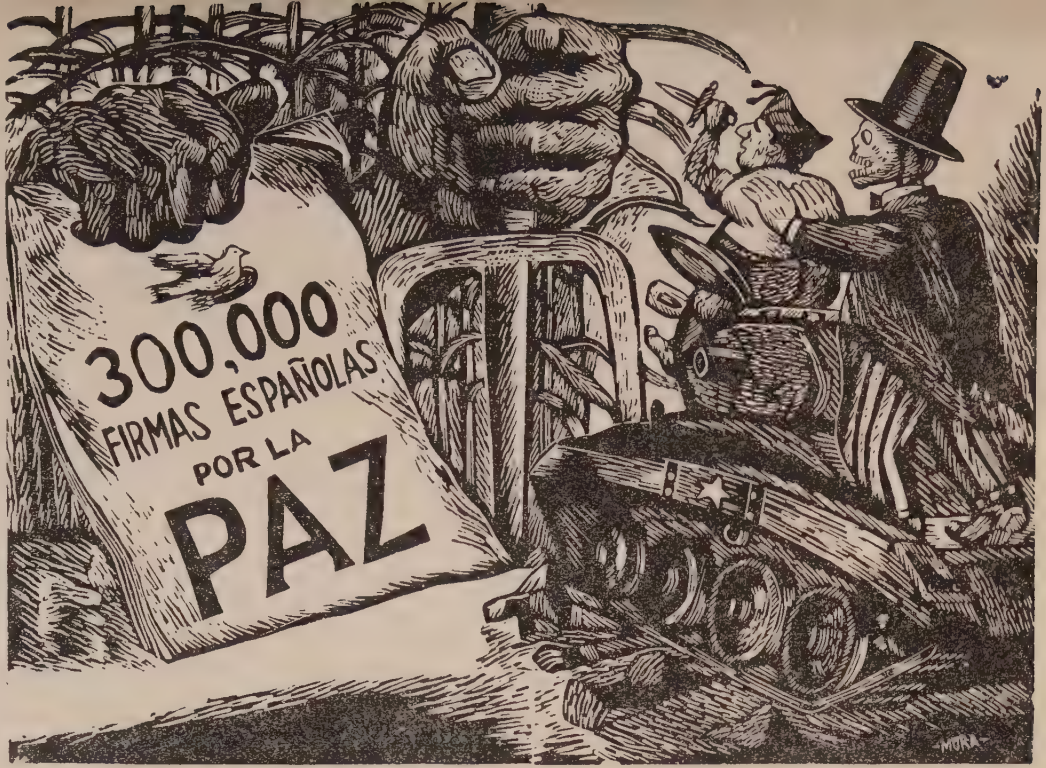




STRIKE IN BARCELONA, *by Adolfo Mexiac*



THE TWO SPAINS TODAY, by Andreu Gomez



300,000 SPANIARDS SIGN FOR PEACE, *by Francisco Mora*

ABSTRACT ART TODAY: Doodles, Dollars and Death

By SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

IN A 1940 radio broadcast Clifton Fadiman declared: "We shall be forced to be receivers, as it were, of a bankrupt European culture." The statement was arrogant in two ways: first, in assuming that the peoples of Europe were incapable of producing any further culture, and second, in assuming that the United States could represent or take up the cultural needs of the entire world. But this statement was prophetic in a way not intended by its author. Since the end of the Second World War the United States has become the world center, the receiver, of whatever was most bankrupt in modern European culture.

One of these bankrupt movements is the kind of painting generally known as abstraction, which had its inception in the early years of the 20th century, when the first shock began to be felt of the rise of imperialist cartels and monopolies, and the gathering forces for a redivision of world colonies and markets. Artists who took part in the movement to wipe out the real world from painting, did not of course see the problems that were afflicting them in this materialist light, or their a itself would have been differen Their reaction was one of bewilde ment, a feeling that the real wor itself had become chaotic, incompr hensible and hostile to them. This b wilderment and indeed sense of imp tence, thinly hidden in expressio of counter-violence, reached a clima in the period between the two Wor Wars.

Today an increasing number artists and intellectuals of Europ moved not only by the strong cu rents coming from the realistic a of the Soviet Union and the people democracies, but by their own stru gles against fascism, are lookin critically at this false and empty "mo ernism," breaking the manacles it ha fastened upon their power to invest gate and understand the real wor about them. And it is at this tim that the center of decadent art h moved to the United States.

What is especially fostered here that inevitable dead end of abstra tion known as "non-objective art," which the artist regards any resem blance in his work to real people

nature to be an unintended error, a product of his "unconscious." In no other country are the founders of non-objective" art, such as Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian, so devoutly worshipped, with not only every painting from their hand but almost every word from their lips regarded as a holy revelation.

Like the "futurists," the theoreticians of cubism of the 1910's, and the surrealists of the 1920's and early 1930's, painters here proclaim that they have "destroyed nature," "created new worlds." These "new worlds" consist of aimless swirls of line on canvas, cloudy areas of one color contesting for space with cloudy areas of another color, geometrical figures such as circles, triangles, rectangles and squares engaged in adventures with one another.

The past history of art is also being reinterpreted. Not only the great doorways to reality opened up by the artists of the Italian Renaissance, but the entire world development of realism from the most ancient civilizations of Egypt, India and China, are being regarded as a monstrous error. A strange kind of youth is appearing, which speaks like the most crabbed old reactionaries, announcing that all progress is a "myth" and that "truth" can only be found in primitive superstitions and totems.

This "revolution" in art, of course, is no reflection of the needs, feelings and desires of the American people. Its sponsors are mainly the wealthy patrons of art and the "foundations" established by millionaires for the development of "culture" and the avoidance of taxes.

THE years since the Second World War have seen the emergence of a group of American abstractionists who, as their admirers fondly proclaim, have taken up "world leadership" in this kind of art. And it is an abstraction that has cast off whatever pretenses at social ideas, realistic subject-matter, satire, "revolt," that once had been associated with it.

The artist still tries to cover his nakedness with some tatters of the banners of the 1920's and '30's. He is, he says, an "explorer," but what he explores he cannot say. He is an "experimenter," but what real problem aroused his experiments he cannot say. He has won "freedom," but the "freedom" is that of the single individual—himself—and of course this talk of "freedom" is itself childish, if not hypocritical. He can put his mind to sleep, and feel that his fingers are free to wander where they will. He can wipe out the real world on his canvas but he still lives in that world, which becomes far more oppressive to him, incomprehensible and frightening, because of his ignorance of it.

That this kind of art, by men like Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, William Baziotes, Willem de Kooning, Bradley Tomlin, is now the leading body of abstract work in the world, one can well admit. The rest of the world seems to be quite pleased to let us keep it. As the European critics remarked when

seeing some samples of it at the Venice exhibition in the summer of 1951—even the critics most keenly aware of the source of Marshall Plan money—it was somewhat boring because they had gone through all of that twenty and thirty years ago.

But to the publicists of this art, and they infest most of the art magazines, a true and distinctively American style has been reached. Thomas B. Hess of the Museum of Modern Art in New York writes in the *Art News Annual* of 1951 that "possibly it will be decided some day that it was at this point American painting began to come of age." Such remarks themselves indicate the anti-human attitude that saturates this art. How can an art be national in character, reflecting the real life of its land and people, if it is incapable of any human image whatsoever?

Actually this art is the high point of cosmopolitanism. It is a reworking of Mondrian, Kandinsky, Arp, Miro, Tanguy, who themselves went a long way in denying any relation of their art to their own nation and people.

The progress of cosmopolitanism is made possible by a virtual dictatorship over the art world, enforced through cunning and the naked exercise of money power. Sometimes it is attacked, along with all art, by fascist-minded legislators, such as Congressman Dondero, who find the intimation that all culture is "bolshevist" a useful weapon of oratory. And such art can find no support from the American people, who find nothing in it that concerns them. But its role is not to capture the mind of th people directly. Its role is to captu the minds of the artists, the youn looking for direction, deflecting the from the cultural heritage and th problems of real life.

This dominant position of dec dent art is supported by the pub museums, the millionaire "cultura foundations, the galleries in whi art is marketed, the art schools, th critics, and the corporations whi find the techniques of abstraction us ful for their advertising campaign

THERE are two shrines to abstra art in New York City, both r by millionaire tax-free foundatio They are the Museum of Non-Obje tive Art and the Museum of Mode Art.

The first, run by the Solomon Guggenheim Foundation, has t character of a millionaire's eccentr ity. It was set up in 1929, for t sponsorship of pure "non-objectiv art. Previously Guggenheim had p together a collection of representati works by the leading French arti of the late 19th and early 20th ce tury. In 1929 he was convinced two German artists, the Baron Hilla von Rebay and Rudolph Bau that the pure arrangement of t angles, squares, circles and curv represents the only "true art," t "vibrations of the spirit which, c ated by an elite, would redeem t masses from the grossness of earth materialism. He locked away his c lection of Seurats, Modiglianis, cassos, etc., and made Hilla Rebay t

director of his Museum of Non-objective Art.

Both Rebay and Bauer, who started as rather weak and shallow academicians, had gone through a period of imitative cubism and were now producing imitations of Kandinsky. Guggenheim bought Rebays and Bauers furiously, and since they were both rather prolific, the museum now possesses about two hundred paintings of each. It also has of course many Kandinskys, and a smattering of "pure" non-objective works by other artists.

These Rebays and Bauers which clutter up the walls of the museum are unbelievable in their vacancy, canvas upon canvas of the most aimless paint meanderings, or compass and ruler arrangements, given such impressively mysterious names as "White Fugue," "Cosmic Pleasures," "The Holy One," "Upward," "Symphony in Four Movements." The museum issues catalogues, booklets, and leaflets explaining this "art of tomorrow," mostly written by the Baroness Rebay.

This art is offered as a panacea for the world's ills: "The important progress for the nations of the world is humanity's education towards spiritual control; the realization of the infinite rhythm; the reaction to safer cosmic guidance." Earthly knowledge, objective facts, intellect, it declares, are harmful interferences with the great enlightenment offered by these triangles:

"If we acquire more culture than ever before, it will not be due to science, philosophy, poetry, painted copies of nature, or a civilization perfected in earthly conveniences, but to an education of intuitive capacity and such spiritual power which the world had never known before. Non-objective art alone can develop it."

Something of the cosmic spirituality attained by the Museum's director may be gathered from a statement she wrote recently for a German art magazine: "It is really a shame that the bombs did not work harder to destroy the old, so that finally our own time could fulfill itself." (New York *Times,* Aug. 5, 1951). The museum has no small influence through the literature it prints and the exhibitions it sends to other parts of the country.

THE Museum of Modern Art wields a much more sweeping influence. It does not suffer from the Guggenheim Foundation's air of being an artistic Salvation Army mission. It is efficient, business-like, well publicized, run almost like one of the great corporations with which it is so intimately connected. It is a power in the American art world, and also sometimes unofficially represents the country abroad, like a cultural wing of the State Department.

Founded in 1929 by six wealthy art collectors, it was developed by money from the Rockefeller and Carnegie Foundations. Its changing boards of trustees read like a roster of the finance capital aristocracy, with such names as Nelson A. Rockefeller, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Edsel B. Ford, Marshall Field, A. Conger

Goodyear, Beardsley Ruml, John Hay Whitney.

With the attitude typical of the modern "culture-loving" millionaire, who wants to keep his fingers on cultural work but would like the public to pay part of the bills, it charges admission fees. It has no trouble in getting them, for its publicity has made it one of the tourist attractions of the city. It also sells memberships, but the members of course have nothing to say about the policies of the museum. It has an art school, an extensive library and some facilities for research. It sponsors scholarly publications on contemporary art and artists. Its directors write for the leading art magazines.

The Museum of Modern Art pretends to a certain breadth in its attitude. Its basic collection covers most of the representative styles from the Impressionists on. It sponsors retrospective exhibitions of leading modern artists. It possesses Picasso's *Guernica,* although Picasso's present-day politics and peace activities have disappointed the directors deeply. If the Museum possesses any of Picasso's peace doves, it does not put them on exhibition.

Throughout the 1930's the Museum acted as a discreet counterbalance to the social-minded trends among American painters, its purchases favoring those artists who went in for a secret symbolism or an objective geometry. It is in the years following the Second World War, however, that the Museum has become practically a director of trends in the art world. Its purchases of new American work and its exhibitions give the chosen artists great prestige. Although it pre tends not to favor one esthetic theor over another, it has been the majo influence in raising the most vacan non-objective abstraction to the to position in United States art.

The particular style favored by th Museum, which it is trying to estab lish as the "American" style of th mid-century, may be described as marriage between the "objective" an "subjective" wings of abstraction. stands between the pseudo-scientif geometry of Moholy-Nagy and Mon drian, and the dream-images of su realism. Most, if not all, of this pain ing is done with sheer tongue-in cheek cynicism. Painters know wha is wanted, and by playing the gam they are occasionally able to sell larg areas of worthless colored canvas some members of the American rich who piously believe that they are bu ing the Rembrandts of the future.

The Museum has almost singl handedly established Jackson Pollo as the "great" American painter today. His works consist of large ca vases spread with thick layers paint, either dropped on or spre in aimless convolutions and scri blings.

The recent exhibition of "Fifte Americans" at the Museum must seen to be believed. One of the f teen, Clyfford Still, offers a canv large enough to take up a fair siz wall, covered wholly with black pai except for a trickle of white, like crack in the panel, in the upper rig

hand side. This masterwork is given the illuminating title of "Painting," plus a date. His other offerings in the show are equally substantial.

Included of course is the "great man," Jackson Pollock, whose works here look like enlarged ink spots, with, in one of them, pieces of wire screen embedded in the thick paint for variety's sake. These are entitled by number, such as "Number 3," "Number 7," "Number 30." Mark Rothko, another Museum favorite, offers even larger canvases than Pollock, broken up into geometrical forms, with their edges cloudy and blurred to indicate that he is not interested in the geometry of space but in the ghosts that haunt him.

Still another Museum "genius" is William Baziotes, whose amorphous shapes and aimless lines vaguely suggest cats, pythons, and totem poles, and are given such titles as "Night Mirror," "Toy World," and "Jungle," to indicate that he is obsessed by childhood and "primitive mysteries."

The sculpture in the exhibition is on the same level. Richard Lippold offers bits of wire and metal sheets put together in geometrical forms, which sometimes break with "pure" non-objectivity by actually imitating some form of nature, such as, by his own explanation, a snowflake. Frederick Kiesler fastens together shapes suggesting skeletons, worm-eaten tree branches and pieces of driftwood. It is called "Galaxy."

Five of the artists offer recognizable outlines of people or objects from nature, but expressionistically distorted as one would find it in Kokoschka or Soutine, and many cruder. Only one of the fifteen, Herman Rose, shows a real feeling for the world outside him, in the form of little scenes of city streets and roof tops, painted with tiny, mosaic-like brush strokes, and possessing a quiet loveliness, especially in contrast to the surrounding horrors.

EVEN sadder to look at than the works of "art" are the statements and "explanations" by the painters and their appreciators. One need not expect a painter to be an accomplished art historian, theorist or philosopher. But what a statement does give us is an idea of what the artist feels about life, the function of art, the relation of himself and his art to his fellow human beings. And these statements are more than confusion. They exhibit a terrible ignorance of world history and culture, an airy sweeping away of the entire development of human knowledge, of science and art, a blustering "know-nothing" attitude, a colossal self-centeredness.

Nowhere in these pages of statements by the "non-objectivists" can we find a spark of awareness that they live in a world shared by other human beings, that somewhere in the world there is human suffering, that war threatens millions of human lives. Nowhere do we find any hint that these artists have some unanswered questions, that there is something they still feel they have to learn; only a smug arrogance, behind which, if there is any human feeling at all, is

impotence and terror.

Thus Clyfford Still empties the history of science and art down the drain:

"That pigment on canvas has a way of initiating conventional reactions for most people needs no reminder. Behind those reactions is a body of history matured into dogma, authority, tradition. The totalitarian hegemony of this tradition I despise, its presumptions I reject. Its security is an illusion, banal, and without courage. Its substance is but dust and filing cabinets. The homage paid to it is a celebration of death. We all bear the burden of this tradition on our backs but I cannot hold it a privilege to be a pallbearer of my spirit in its name."

Rothko also decides that the stores of knowledge slowly developed by people and society are only "obstacles" to ideas. "As examples of such obstacles I give (among others) memory, history or geometry, which are swamps of generalizations from which one might pull out parodies of ideas (which are ghosts) but never an idea in itself." Thus speaks an elucidator of Jackson Pollock: "Thin paint and raw canvas are the vehicles for images full of the compulsion of dreams and the orderliness of myth. Black and white are sleep and waking. Forms and images dissolve and re-form into new organisms; like Proteus they must be caught unawares, asleep."

Richard Lippold writes:

"My preference for social action is simply to have my being among all the objects that exist in space, 'which loves us all,' and in which modes of communication today can dissolve barriers of time and energy, of nations and races. Although the word sounds old-fashioned, I thu have my faith in Space. Like every adven ture, this being in Space at all levels i full of terror, delight, question, and an swer. Has *any* Material, Society, or Belie had more permanence or finality?"

One might answer that the "finali ity" he is talking about is the finality of death.

These pathetic statements are onl chewed over and still further confuse versions of the proclamations an manifestoes of the "advanced" artist of Europe twenty, thirty and fort years ago, which themselves wer taken from the rusty arsenal of an archism. Mondrian, for example wanted to "liberate" the "new man from "time and space," in other word from life itself. The futurists c Italy, some of whom foreshadowe the coming of fascism, wrote in 191("The suffering of a man is in ou eyes no more interesting than that c an electric bulb which suffers wit spasmodic jerks and cries out in th most lacerating color effects."

And now Baziotes writes: "I wor on many canvases at once. In th morning I line them up against th wall of my studio. Some speak; som do not. They are my mirrors. The tell me what I am like at the mo ment." Motherwell, who is not in th exhibition but is another "great mar to the Museum directors, writes: "S a painter, in working on a canva sensing it all over, watching it shi and slowly emerge from its flat voi mere extension, may have the illu sion that the picture is not beir painted by him but rather is paintir

him, that he who is supposed to be the subject has become object, that the picture knows him better than he knows it."

THE Museum of Modern Art has the power to make artists, and to damage if not break those who do not play its game. A number of the galleries in which contemporary paintings are sold are quick to follow the lead of the Museum, quick to follow the trend of convincing purchasers of paintings that these horrors represent the "new" and "vital" art in which they had better invest their money. They begin to have a financial stake in abstraction.

The public museums follow suit. Their collections are mainly of "old masters," but they also periodically exhibit the abstractionists, not simply to show the public what is going on in art, not to create in the public some critical awareness of what they want of art, but only to foster utter confusion as to the nature of all art by appending to these works the impressively meaningless "explanations" about dream, sleep, "new worlds" and the "unconscious" like those quoted above.

The artists who are given prestige by the Museum of Modern Art become teachers, and one can imagine the kind of education provided by those who proclaim that human beings can know nothing, cannot even know what they themselves are doing, but must allow their paintings to paint themselves.

The result is a terrible devastation of the cultural life and the potential talents of the nation. This was indicated by two exhibitions in recent years at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, showing the state of art over the entire country: the American Sculpture show of 1952, and the American Painting of 1951. One got no reflection from them of the country, its life and people. On the one hand were the "advanced" artists, with their triangles and "primitive myths," and on the other hand there were the "traditional" artists, who with comparatively few exceptions revealed only formalistic hardenings or expressionistic distortions of people and objects. Among the onlookers bewilderment struggled with boredom.

The Museum of Modern Art, as might be guessed from its roster of trustees, is keenly conscious of the relations of art to business and industry. A continuous part of its exhibits deals with "modern design" in crockery, furniture and appliances in more or less geometrical shapes. These exhibits of expensive commodities are given the same appended explanations about "new spatial vision" and "liberation of the spirit" that are found on the "pure" paintings.

Thus "advanced" art justifies itself by becoming a form of interior decoration for the homes of the rich or the offices of corporations.

Also important to the Museum is modern advertising. There is a lucrative method to the madness of abstraction. Many corporations are realizing that its optical illusions, vague

shapes and divisions of space are useful eye-catching devices for their advertising campaigns. And indeed the theory of non-objective art fits this function perfectly. Since the artist is interested only in "form" and the "unconscious," he can allow the boss to provide the "content," such as toothpaste, stomach pills or automobiles, while the artist adds the "form."

At present the Museum of Modern Art has given over its sculpture garden to an exhibition of posters used in an advertising campaign by the New York *Times*. The posters have "abstract" backgrounds for the unvarying message, "Get all the News and Get it Right, The New York Times." The Museum describes this as "the most artistically significant institutional advertising being done in America today."

Meanwhile the condition of the United States artist is a desperate one. Among the top two hundred and fifty, those most praised and publicized, the average yearly income from their art is $1,200. Even this pittance represents the "success" attained after years of struggle. The young artist works with little hope of being able to live as an artist. And when this is added to the confusion of theory and practice in art itself, the prospect of abstraction becomes enticing — one can become a commercial artist in the daytime and use the same "spatial principles" without the "message" for pure art at night and on Sundays.

THE uncritical attitude toward abstraction has led to a degeneration of art theory. Most critics and teachers are not enamored of "pure" non-objective art. But all they can say is that they think it goes "too far," that there should be some added "interest" of subject-matter. Content thus becomes a superimposed tidbit of appeal; the true esthetic quality lies in the "form."

From such intellectual bankruptcy there can be no guidance. And in fact there is a widespread tendency among artists, critics and teachers to regard theory itself—the discussion of the artistic heritage, the direction of art, the question of what is genuinely progressive and what is destructive—as a kind of "dictatorship." The blind are assumed to be the most free.

Here are some representative examples of criticism. James Thrall Soby, a former director of the Museum of Modern Art, writes in the *Saturday Review*:

> "Thus the way was left open for the recognizable object to disappear altogether from painting, as has often, though by no means always, occurred in the advanced art of our own time. Once major nineteenth century artists had rejected history's vast accrual in favor of nature itself, it was inevitable that their heirs should attempt to explore what nature truly is. And nature is not a landscape or an object. It is a compound of psychological, spiritual and physical phenomena to which contemporary artists, as well as scientists, have discovered important clues."

What these clues are, Soby cannot say. History has been rejected. The object has disappeared. And all this is written on a real typewriter.

Aline B. Loucheim, art critic of the New York *Times*, writes:

"Humanism refers to the anthropomorphic philosophy of the Greeks, where man, at home in the world, made himself 'the measure of all things' and in which art expressed itself by the creation, within the world as it is, of an image of the world as men would desire it. Such thinking presumes an orderly, calculable universe with man separate and powerful at its center and a reality which in large part could be understood by man's perceptive powers. But with the exploration of the new science, such a picture of the universe is not possible."

And so modern science has "dissolved reality"; everything is now mystery, and the disclosures of science are accurately represented by the scribblings on canvas of modern abstract artists. All this is written from the point of view of a comfortable and orderly penthouse.

Eric Newton, an English art critic, writes a denunciation of painting in the Soviet Union. The great evil of this art, to him, is that it is healthy, depicts people as human beings, deals with real subject-matter and even history. This bourgeois critic complains that "education, culture, a full stomach, eternal justice and a contented smile" have in the U.S.S.R. replaced "soul-searchings," "mystery" and other such "cosmic themes." He writes:

"The human individual has always stood aghast and solitary in the midst of an unfathomable universe and out of his soul has been wrung a succession of little bewildered cries. These cries were works of art, and it will take more than a man-made ideology to stifle them. Decadence, thank Heaven, will one day emerge once more."

Eric Newton goes on to reinterpret Shakespeare, Rembrandt and Beethoven, those courageous explorers of life, social-minded battlers in the realm of ideas, as frightened and impotent men, in the image of the modern surrealists and automatists with their circles and dots. What such criticism is really interested in of course is not the true stature of the great artists of the past, but in assuring the people today that depressions and wars are "cosmic mysteries" in the face of which men can only emit "little bewildered cries."

Some of the progressive artists of the 1930's have deserted to the easy path of "automatism" and the "unconscious." But those who remain are stronger in that they are casting off the formalistic manacles which once seemed to be "progress." Together with young artists coming to them, they are mastering the methods of realism, seeking ways to make their art a force in the struggle for peace and democracy, for life against death. In them lies the hope of art in the United States.

MISS CHOU AND HER CHILDREN

By RALPH IZARD

BUSY with their outdoor baking, the women only looked up to smile briefly as I leaned forward over the scrubbed board on which lay cookies, cakes and fresh bread. Peering out of the brilliant sunlight into the rotunda before which their ovens stood, I could make out the billowing blubber—here carved in wood and gilded—of the enormous Buddha sheltered within the octagonal temple.

The vast Buddha still wore his enigmatic smile. But now it was without meaning, or at least without the meaning it had once had for that aged and evil woman who had herself been called by all of Old China, "The Old Buddha"—the Dowager Empress, Tse Hsi Tai-hou. Of course she would still have recognized the big square compound inside which we stood. Passing, she might even have nodded to her familiar, the billowing Buddha squatting within the small temple.

But tottering on tiny bound feet across this courtyard that had once been her summer sanctuary, the Dowager Empress would certainly have been at first amazed, then indignant, and at last royally furious to see the good uses to which it ha been put by New China. The inten efficient women baking on the ope stone ovens before her persona Buddha in the clear, golden sunligh of a Peking June morning, the mu muring, muted voices of the childre the soft singing that came now an then from the rooms surrounding th courtyard—all this would hav roused the Dowager Empress to on of her famous furies, just as it woul have likewise infuriated her eve scrambling Western heirs presump tive, those Americans, English French, Italians and Germans whos imperial prerogative it had once bee to picnic in this retreat, "so pictu esque! Such a bit of Old China!

Now a group of small childre all nearly of a size and about fou years old, began to file along one sid of the interior porch that ringed th compound. Like all small citizen to whom the whole world is new and a constant source for wonde they were extremely serious. W strolled over to talk with them. Sh as any children, they clustered aroun their trousered teacher, clinging to he while inspecting the overseas gue

with round black eyes. After some coaxing from their teacher, they consented to sing "The Liberation Song," on condition that I sing for them in turn. They quavered through its exultant phrases in fresh, childish voices, some falling silent in mid-song as their attention wavered. Even so, their performance was several levels above mine on "Hold the Fort, For We Are Coming."

As they filed off, they turned back to say, "See you again! See you again! T'sai chien! T'sai chien!" We wandered down into the ruined gardens outside the compound. Here some of the older children, those who had attained the responsibility of six years, were working under the gardener's direction. The smaller among them were watering flowers. Others were lossening the dried earth of the flower beds with small hoe-like tools.

Smiling and bowing politely, the gardener walked over to talk with us. He told us that this work was not part of the regular curriculum. The children had undertaken it themselves to restore some of the beauty that the Old Buddha's landscape architect had given her sanctuary, the beauty that it had surrendered to neglect in the 40 strife-torn years since her death.

The gardener explained apologetically that the sandy ruin of the soil had been heaped up during all the years when the Old Buddha's Western—and Eastern—heirs had ruled China, either directly or through Chiang Kai-shek. When the war to oust the Japanese invader had ended, Chiang had made his own direct contribution to the ruin of this relic of Manchu rule, using what had once been the personal sanctuary of the Dowager Empress as a concentration camp for those of his political opponents arrested in Peking.

But all was going well now, the gardener assured us. He swung an arm out to indicate the green fields beyond the gardens.

"Out there," he said, "we raise sorghum and our own vegetables. What we don't raise, we can trade for. The children did most of that. We just helped. We all work hard for China's great future. There is still a long road ahead. But things go well."

BACK inside one of the series of spacious rooms that formed the compound we found other and happier traces of China's occupation by the armies of Japan. We were inside one of the children's dormitories. Many of the small beds were covered with crisp, fresh sheets made from captured Japanese battle flags.

But on these small beds the glaring red of the Rising Sun empire's symbol had been subdued into friendly ducks, rabbits, cats, bears and dogs, through the simple addition of ears, paws, legs and other bodily parts cut from cloth dyed the same color. Small replicas of the immense Buddha in the compound's center smiled down upon

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the cots from vantage points upon the wall.

Another room signalled its use as a dining hall by the low tables with scrubbed tops that filled it—or almost filled it. Behind a screen in one corner were still more small Buddhas, part of the host that had enabled the Dowager Empress to maintain a conviction of personal sanctity while meditating on what part of Old China she should deliver next into the hands of the foreigners to maintain her rule.

In the room beyond the dining hall sewing machines whirred. Here drab coats and trousers of uniforms once worn by Japanese soldiers were also being reshaped to better uses. The busy women at the machines hardly had time to glance up and explain their work. But its happy nature needed little explanation: here a jacket, carefully picked apart at the seams, was being reshaped into a quilted coat, and brightened with color, for a child. And here too a few older children were happy at small tasks suited to their still untrained fingers, happy to be working beside those they loved.

"It is summer now. These are some of the older children here for the summer months, not regularly in our school." Chou Tze-kang, director of the school, had come up with us unannounced from her office, where she had been busy on our arrival. Formal introductions completed, we turned to leave the room with her. And again these other children turned to call after us: "See you again! See you again! T'sai chien! T'sai chien!"

WE WAVED back at them and smiled, as one must smile at happy children anywhere in the world. But Miss Chou was swiftly sketching in details about this nursery school that had been her Communist life for the 12 years since 1938. There were 340 children in residence now, she said, 40 more than the rated capacity of the crèche (the French word for "cradle," used throughout Europe, the Soviet Union and New China for such a child-care center.) Its full title was the same as had been given when first founded in Yenan—"The Los Angeles Crèche."

Startled, I asked Miss Chou if she remembered the origins of that name. Perhaps a gift from that city had given the crèche its title? Or had some Overseas Chinese returning from the Spanish-speaking Philippines thought such a title exact and appropriate for such an institution?

But Miss Chou could no longer recall the origin of the title. So much had happened in the 12 years since it had been named, so much history had been made by Chinese people, Chinese children. . . . "It is listed as the Los Angeles Crèche of the Central Military Committee of the People's Government," Miss Chou said.

We were in her office now. One of the teachers who had guided us about poured cups of tea. Miss Chou sketched in the organization of the crèche, whose children were divided among four main groupings: "Breast

ed children, pre-school children, the indergarten group, and those in the irst and second grade of primary chool."

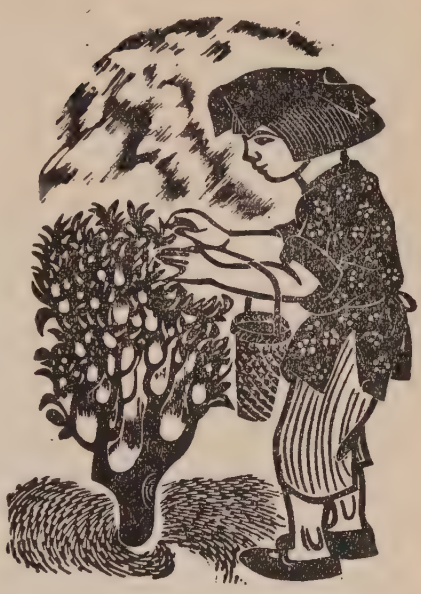
Before any child is entered in the rèche, the child's health is given a omplete check by the medical staff. When certified free of communicable liseases, or other deterrents, the child s registered in the center.

Further medical and psychological ests are made during the child's first wo weeks in the crèche. During this ime too, all clothing the child wore or brought with him is sterilized. If, during the first two weeks, no symptoms dangerous to the other children are found, the newcomer is free to mix with his own age group.

Miss Chou was speaking rapidly now, the swift North China speech that pulses with vitality, marking her paragraph pauses with the habitual, softly-breathed, "Ah! . . ."

"Weekly weight checks determine each child's caloric intake, and the duration and frequency of rest periods. Each child's health is checked once each month by the medical staff. Every three months every child must undergo a complete physical examination. This quarterly report goes to the child's parents. Loss of weight is prevented. Each child is continuously trained in personal hygiene.

"Outside activities are emphasized," Miss Chou smiled. "You know the schools of Old China produced only bookworms—round-shouldered scholars with weak eyes whose heads were crammed with rote-learned knowledge



PICKING TEA, *by Whuan Yung-yu*

without practical use. One high school in Peking we called 'the tuberculosis factory' because that disease afflicted most of its graduates."

She bubbled with plans, statistics, figures: All the children received a daily milk ration—those less than one year in age, a pound and one-half daily; those under three, one pound, and under six, half a pound. The crèche grew its own vegetables, did its own baking, made clothing for the children, "as you saw."

MISS CHOU turned to plans for the future of the school that was so much of her life. The man seated in the chair beside her inched forward. He unrolled some building plans drawn in pencil:

Plans for a new dining hall, to replace the one still partially peopled by small Buddhas. Plans for a new assembly hall, for a new isolation ward. Plans for a permanent kitchen to replace the provisional makeshift outside in the big Buddha's lap.

But the school architect was proudest of his plans for two new lavatories with flush toilets—one for the little boys, the other for the little girls. The latter was his special pride. He pointed out to us on the plan that each little girl would have her privacy assured by means of cubicles. And he pressed us to visit the site these magnificent new lavatories would occupy.

"We began this work in Yenan," Miss Chou said—Yenan, northern terminus of the 7,000 mile Long March of the Chinese Communists that even today, still in the lifetime of those who made it, is a heroic legend that the Chinese people will cherish for centuries to come. Yenan, whose caves carved from the sandy loess hills served as the nerve center for the long campaign to force Chiang Kai-shek to battle the Japanese invader.

"Chiang and the Japanese aggression made our work difficult at that time," Miss Chou went on. "But we conquered all difficulties. At first, when the decision was made to open a nursery school, we had only four children. But by the time we walked away from the Yenan hills, there were 96 enrolled.

"That was at the end of the anti-Japanese war, when all civilians were sent away from Yenan. From t day on until after the Liberation Peking we walked on through mountains of Northern China. In column of children the youngest seven months, the oldest six ye Most were three and four."

From Yenan, which lies in province of Shensi, inside the G Bend of the Yellow River, the c dren's column, with Miss Chou as marshal, wound its way some miles eastward into the town of angpoo in Southeastern Shansi, province neighboring Shensi to east.

"The children traveled on donk back most of the time, two child to each donkey, in baskets on ei side. One adult person led each d key and was responsible for the c dren on the donkey immediately front of him.

"Sometimes we edged along row trails, hundreds—yes, even th sands—of feet above the rivers. such times we carried the child on our backs, leading the donk because such trails were to nar for the donkey baskets. Dozens times we traveled over such nar trails.

"Sometimes the road was rough, rutted and full of holes, the children to ride in their don baskets. They would have been badly jolted. Then, too, we car them on our backs. We found th woman with a child on her could walk five (English) miles hour.

"Often we traveled by night, ca

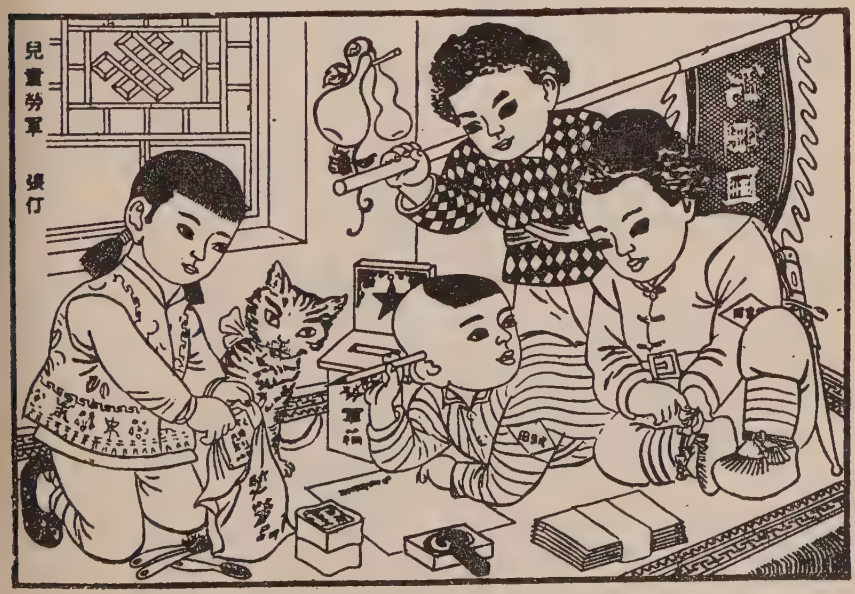
ing the sleeping children. This we were forced to do because the planes that the Americans had given to Chiang Kai-shek strafed the children by day.

"When we were forced to it, we could walk 40 miles in one day."

FROM Huangpoo, the children's column trekked on into Chinsuei, where they rested for 11 months. The next stage of their journey took them into Western Hupeh, the province in which Peking lies. They rested there with the peasant people for 11 more months, then trudged on again to K'ingsei, nearer to Peking. And all the while they trudged across the face of North China, or hid in its mountains, the mounting Liberation tide gathered force, drowning the crack divisions of Chiang Kai-shek that American imperialism had armed, washing away one hundred years of Chinese prostration beneath the armed might of the West, rolling on toward the South and the uttermost limits of all Great China.

"Our news of the battlefront came to us by word of mouth, from 'Old Hundred Names,' the peasant people. Sometimes, to avoid a battlefield, or to escape raiding parties of Chiang's troops, we walked as long as three days without sleep, carrying the sleeping children on our backs by night.

"On an average we walked about



PEACE FOR THE CHILDREN, *a postcard of the People's Republic of China*

23 miles (70 *li*) each day that we marched. But the distance varied with the news from the battlefront."

The vanguard of the children's column traveled ahead to the village selected as the terminus of the day's march. There they made arrangements with the village elders to bed down the children for the night, or the planned length of their stay. On overnight stops the small travelers shared the beds of the village youngsters. For longer stays, the peasant people would insist on sheltering the children in the best houses the village had to offer.

"Our personnel were always given the best rooms. But for long stays we would accept only stables, or empty houses. Once each week we made a long stop in some village. At such long stops all the children were given baths, and a complete change of clothing.

"While on the march all the children were fed on salt pork. Each got two ounces per day. Exercise? Yes, of course. Regularly we would take the children out of their baskets and let them walk a bit. That was their exercise."

There was no dysentery. A high level of sanitation was maintained among the children all during the march, Miss Chou said. Hygiene discipline was taught continuously, even to daily bowel regularity.

Twenty of the children who began the march from Yenan rejoined their parents before it ended. But all of the remaining 76 were with the column when it took to the road again after 11 months in K'ingsei. All 76 entered Peking with the column after Liberation of the ancient capital.

ALL 76 still live. Many of them come out to visit the crèche on holidays, or during summer and winter vacations. Others are widely scattered across the country, or even gone abroad, and are thus deprived of opportunity to visit those who cradled their lives with constant care and love when they were small, and great danger threatened all China.

"A keen and orderly government was responsible for the good job we did," Miss Chou said. "After we had come into Peking, after the long trek was ended, we felt that it had been nothing, nothing at all—just another job that we had accomplished.

"It was another kind of people's army that we were leading—the People's Army of the Future. Our slogan for the Long March of the Children was—

"Everything for the children! The whole heart for the children!"

RiGhT FaCe

Looking Backward

"Think back yourself to the last Republican decade—1920 to 1930. Those were the days—remember—when even the office boy and the janitor were playing the stock market; a strange occupation for starving people. They were the days of whoopee parties, when no matter how loudly the wolf was scratching at the door several million people always seemed to have enough to buy 'genuine' Scotch at bootleggers' price."—*An editorial sigh from the* North Adams (Mass.) Transcript.

Looking Forward

"The economic climate for even the next ten or eleven months looks a bit dubious to business economists. . . . But government economists disagree. They see no reason for a recession unless business and the buying public produce one by developing a recession psychology."—From the *Flint (Mich.) Journal.*

The Health Menace

"The physical regeneration of the peasant of the Middle East would make his economic condition unsufferable and so cause a serious social crisis, for which at the moment there is no solution."—*A. N. Poliak in* Middle Eastern Affairs.

Comforts of Home

"There is no discouragement for tourists in Greece when it comes to money. One quickly begins to feel like a Wall Street capitalist, with 15,000 drachmas offered legally for each dollar. . . . And if one gets stuck with a non-linguist taxi driver there are always enough United States sailors of Greek descent around from the Sixth Fleet, which is anchored off Piraeus, to be flagged down for a helping hand." From the "Resorts" section of the New York *Times.*

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

THE HERITAGE OF AVICENNA

By SADRIDDIN AINI

THE 1,000th anniversary of the birth of Avicenna, as the great Tajik scholar and thinker Abu-Ali al-Husain ibn-Sina is known in scientific literature, is a date of cardinal significance. A remarkable researcher, physician, philosopher and poet, he was indeed one of the great men of history; with his name is associated an epoch in the development of culture and science in the East and the whole world.

In observing the 1,000th anniversary of Avicenna's birth, we are not merely paying tribute to the hazy past. We are recognizing the great significance of his contribution to human progress.

Some press writers have referred to the present commemoration as the 1,000th anniversary of Avicenna's death. Actually it is the anniversary of his birth. According to the Mohammedan (lunar) calendar, which begins with the year of the hegira, Avicenna was born in the year 370 which roughly coincides with 980 A.D. The Mohammedan year, however, is shorter than the Christian, and this has created a discrepancy of several decades in the course of the past ten centuries. Careful calculations have made it possible to correct the unwitting error formerly subscribed to.

Volumes have been written about Avicenna in a great many languages and all the researchers who have delved into his life and work agree that this amazingly versatile man, the continuer of the traditions of Aristotle in philosophy and Hippocrates and Galen in medicine, ranked among the greatest thinkers and writers of his time.

A physician and a vizier at the courts of feudal lords, he was also a prolific writer not only on medicine, but on mathematics, ethics, physics, philosophy, logic, and on the theory of music as well. He is quite correctly considered one of the most erudite men in history whose knowledge was of truly encyclopedic scope.

For ten centuries the genius of the thinker of Bokhara has held the attention of enlightened minds not only in the East but everywhere in the world.

The glory of Avicenna is the glory of his people. A study of the great scientist's life and work throws light on Tajik culture at an early but exceedingly eventful period of its history. Indeed, how are we to explain the appearance in the East ten centuries ago of this encyclopedic genius

who left a heritage of treatises on a number of scientific subjects that remain to this day a model of scientific research and a testimony to the mighty powers of the human mind? To find the answer we must trace if only in brief the story of his life.

Until the age of 10 Avicenna attended a Moslem primary school. Later he continued his studies under private teachers who taught him primarily the secular sciences: grammar, philology, style and mathematics. Already at that early age the boy displayed such remarkable ability as to astound his teachers. He also successfully mastered jurisprudence, philosophy and medicine. In the last of the three sciences he excelled at the age of seventeen when in spite of his youth he already had the reputation of a skillful healer.

Avicenna's youth was spent in Bokhara, which, besides being the capital of the vast dominions of the Samanid state, was a major cultural center in the East. Shortly before Avicenna's time the great poet Rudaki lived there, and Firdousi, the author of the "Shah Namah," spent some time in the city. As a hub of learning and art, Bokhara vied with the very capital of the caliphs, Bagdad.

SADRIDDIN AINI is a prominent Tajik public leader, scholar and writer, the author of several novels and treatises on philology and the history of literature. He is President of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic and Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

If we analyze the historical reasons for the eminence of tenth-century Bokhara as a scientific and cultural center, we shall find one of the principal factors in the long period of tranquillity it enjoyed under the Samanids. Peace over a hundred years stimulated economic activity, the handicrafts thrived and so did trade. A flourishing economy could not but make for an upswing in thought.

A growing sense of nationhood resulting from the overthrow of alien domination provided the soil for this advance in the sphere of philosophy, the arts and sciences. Naturally enough, the great poets of the time—Rudaki, Dakiki, Firdousi and others—based their art on the legends and folk wisdom of their people and created masterpieces in Dary—the accepted language of the Samanid state. Avicenna, too, contributed much in this respect. Writing his famous *Danish Namah* (The Book of Knowledge), which treats of logic, physics, metaphysics, astronomy, the theory of music, as well as some other works, in that language, he created a scientific and philosophical terminology in his native tongue.

AVICENNA'S path was by no means smooth. He shared the fate of so many other great medieval thinkers of both the East and the West. Exile from his native land, the dungeons of feudal despots, hounding by fanatics—all this fell to his lot. After the fall of the Samanid state, the young savant had to leave his native soil never to return. Several years he

spent in Khorezm, where he enjoyed the patronage of the vizier of the Khorezmian shah, who happened to be an enlightened man.

Avicenna experienced the full measure of the malice of medieval potentates. Legend has it that for years he was persecuted by the powerful sultan of Khorasan Mahmud, a fanatic who sought to stamp out all living thought, who went through Northern India and many other lands with fire and sword. Time and again Avicenna, whom Mahmud considered an infidel, had to flee the tyrant's wrath and hatred.

Hardship failed to break his indomitable spirit and indefatigable striving for knowledge. Avicenna continued his researches and wrote books in practically all the sciences known at the time. In the dungeon to which he was confined by the potentate of Hamadan he finished works he had begun in freedom, and wrote the philosophical treatise *Hayy ibn-Yaqzan* (The Living One, Son of the Vigilant), which should not be confused with a work of the same name by the Arab writer ibn-Tufail, who lived after Avicenna.

All of his works, which have retained their significance to this day, and there are scores of them, bear the imprint of a universal genius, and earned him the title of "Prince of Savants," a distinction enjoyed by no other learned man of the East either before or after him.

His *Canon of Medicine* is truly an encyclopedia of the healer's art which ensured his fame through the centuries. In the *Canon* he revived the ancient medicine of Hippocrates and Galen enriched by the experience accumulated through the centuries by the peoples of the East. The humanistic ideas that permeate this book, as well as other writings of Avicenna, give the work a signal purport. He regarded the human being as the most precious thing of all, and for man's sake, for man's happiness and well-being, he spared neither time nor labor. The legends still current among the people testify to his skill and devotion as a physician, and to this day his wise counsel and his methods of diagnosis and treatment are held in high esteem in medical science, as is his knowledge of anatomy and physiology, which was profound indeed for his time.

One of the greatest philosophers of the early Middle Ages, Avicenna has been called the "second Aristotle." This perhaps best defines his place in the history of Eastern civilization. His philosophical system, which insisted on strictly logical proofs of the truth of a proposition and counterposed knowledge to superstition, considerably strengthened, despite the inconsistencies inherent in it, the scientific outlook and stimulated creative thought. Hence it is no wonder that the philosophical writings of Avicenna continue to hold the attention of scientists to this day.

The eminent savant was also a talented poet who deeply influenced such titans of Tajik and Iranian letters as Omar-Khayyam and Nasir-i-Khusrau. Indeed, many Tajik prose

writers and poets have experienced his influence, including myself, especially in my younger years, when I wrote poetry. Avicenna's quatrains, written in his native tongue, which are superb both for content and form, are to this day included in our anthologies and textbooks on literature.

A great deal more could be said about Avicenna. He left behind more than 100 works, many of them running to a large number of volumes. For instance, his *Book of Recovery* consists of seventeen volumes; *Canon of Medicine,* of five; and *Kitab al-Insaf,* which unfortunately has not survived to our time, filled twenty volumes. But to world culture more important than the quantity of his writings are the ideas of humanism, peaceful harmony and concern for the full development of the human personality which constitute the priceless legacy the great thinker and poet who believed in mankind's radiant future left to posterity. It is this that makes Avicenna an eternal fount of reason and light.

IT IS regrettable that Avicenna's legacy has not been studied more thoroughly. Before the Revolution nothing was done in this direction, for pre-revolutionary Tajikistan had neither scientific centers nor personnel for such work. Now, however, systematic study of his work is carried on in the land of his birth. The Academy of Sciences of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic—the youngest of all the Soviet academies—is preparing special monographs for the 1,000th anniversary of Avicenna's birth. The people of his native land, who in Soviet years have produced many scientists specializing in the most diverse branches of knowledge, are now successfully building up a new culture and science on the foundation of knowledge accumulated in the course of the centuries.

The Avicenna anniversary is being marked beyond the bounds of the Soviet Union, too, as all mankind joins to pay homage to one of the great men of human history whose genius lights up the path of its progress. We fully agree with Frédéric Joliot-Curie, the eminent French scientist, who, commenting on the celebration this year of the anniversaries of Victor Hugo, Nikolai Gogol, Leonardo da Vinci and Avicenna, declared:

"The people have a common possession in the great works of science, literature and art that carry the imprint of genius through the centuries. This cultural heritage is for mankind an inexhaustible fount which acquaints people of different centuries with one another and helps them to discern in the present the bonds that link them together. It opens to them a prospect of general concord and understanding. Unceasingly it instills in them faith in man, and this at a time when mutual understanding is more essential than ever."

The Petition

A Story by **MARGRIT REINER**

"DON'T worry," Mrs. Epstein said solicitously, "you'll get used to it soon. I remember when I first went canvassing — let me see that was around 1916, '17—the suffrage, yes, that's what it was, and 'Keep America out of War'—same business as now. Canvassing was tough then. . . . Didn't think you were much of a lady if you knocked at a strange door. As I was saying, nothing to worry about, you'll get used to it in ten minutes."

I wish she'd shut up, Lois thought. Just let her calm down till we get to the first house. I shouldn't have gone with her, she's definitely peculiar. Nobody will listen to her long-winded stories, that's for sure.

"If my feet were better I'd canvass three times a week—keeps you on your toes, so to speak." Mrs. Epstein laughed heartily.

"I have only an hour, you know." The way she said it sounded pretty unfriendly, considering that Mrs. Epstein knew all about the complicated arrangement: Gladys Gregory would take care of Lois' children plus her own, Jane Salzman was watching five kids to free two other mothers for an hour and three teams of husband and working wives would go out tonight. The small Peace Committee had spent a good three weeks organizing the details of this first attempt at canvassing and the entire membership was involved one way or another. "My little fellow is shy—I can't leave him alone too much," Lois tried to explain.

"I know, dear, I understand. Well let's start here."

If the first one throws us out, I'll die, Lois thought. I don't see why women should do this kind of thing anyway. Suppose a man answers the door. . . .

Mrs. Epstein had rung the bell and stood patiently waiting, a pleasant smile spread out on her face. The door finally opened and a small boy appeared, overalls drawn over his flannel pajamas. "Who are you?"

"I bet you have a cold," Mrs. Epstein guessed.

"Nah, I cough."

"Well, call your mother." Lois smiled at the little fellow. Just about Carol's age. . . .

"Mom," the boy bawled, not budging from the open door, "Some ladies."

"What is it?"

"We would like to talk to you for a few minutes. We're from the neighborhood Peace Committee—"

"I got no time now. My boy is sick and the baby—" The woman came closer, wiping her hands on a dish towel. "What kind of committee did you say?"

"The Peace Committee — just formed a little while ago. The idea is we're worried over the war—cold war, hot war—any kind of war someone's bound to get hurt is what I always say, don't you think? The way I look at it, the mothers should have something to say about war, not the politicians. If all the mothers got together and said no war, there couldn't be any war."

The woman nodded.

There wasn't much in the kitchen, Lois noted. An old refrigerator, a washing machine with a hand mangle, the baby's bassinette wedged between the table and the wall, the little boy's toys littering the floor.

". . . and the petition goes to your Senators asking them to see that the war in Korea is ended. I also have a petition to the President. There—read it for yourself, I wouldn't want you to sign anything you don't read for yourself."

"Some President," the woman said.

"Hmmm. Did you vote in '48?" Mrs. Epstein asked. "I don't mean to put you on the spot, dear, but so many people just got disgusted and didn't vote and that's the way—"

"It's all fixed anyway," the woman said. "Get away from the door, Vincent, with your cough. Maybe I should've voted. . . . My husband always does, y'know how it is."

There were diapers on the line outside the kitchen window and breakfast dishes still in the sink. The baby's formula had been made, but the beds remained to be done, the cooking, probably ironing, shopping, feeding the baby. It doesn't matter what the kitchen looks like, Lois thought, it's all the same for all of us. The woman looked like dozens of women she had passed when taking the children for a walk, sitting on the stoop in the late afternoon, in repose and idle, but their feet and backs weary, a ten-hour-day already behind them and the evening's work still ahead.

"Here you are." The woman handed the petitions to Mrs. Epstein. "It won't do no good anyway."

"Can't hurt either." Mrs. Epstein scanned the signature. "I'm Mrs. Epstein and pleased to have met you, Mrs. Imber. This is Mrs. Lewis, she's got two children, same as you."

"Well, you know how it is."

MARGRIT REINER'S article, "The Fictional American Woman," appeared in our June issue.

"Thank you so much, Mrs. Imber. We'll come back in a few weeks and let you know what the Senator has to say—we may even send a delegation to Washington with the petition."

"Thanks for coming." She stood in the hallway for a moment, wiping her hands. "Who the hell wants Korea anyway. . . ." Then she closed the door.

"That went fine," said Lois, encouraged.

"Some good, some bad, as long as your feet hold out. . . ."

THAT was just about what it amounted to, good feet and lots of time. And would the heart hold out? Over the years the stairs all became one and the causes ran together into one composite campaign, running through Mrs. Epstein's life like a wire thread, strong and shining and endless. The doors became one, too, and the thresholds she had crossed, the harsh light of the many kitchens, the small children staring past her into the hallway curiously uncurious, taking their cue from the wary eyes of their mothers.

Sometimes there was the sink loaded with dishes, sometimes the soup boiling on the stove and always, in the end, the shiny worn chair by the kitchen table at which she sat while the women studied the fine writing of the many petitions, hesitated, feared, groped through to questions. That's the way it was looking back and at times it seemed to her she had crossed the country back and over, walking that many stairs, and the many causes a roster of all the progress and heartache of the people over her lifetime and she just a little woman with an accent and bad feet.

But she remembered the people every one of them. Not that she remembered their names or the circumstance of the particular campaign it had been, but their faces were with her, their questions, sometimes a grateful handshake, a mute gesture of pushing a cup of coffee across the table. Their faces were live on the canvas of her memory together with the details of the lives of her loved ones, the children, grandchildren, the distant cousins in the old country whose fate she had followed with such warmth and concern through the stingy script of letters. They were her fountain of knowledge and came to her when needed, they steadied her and held her, lent soul to her smile and certainty to her words.

But would the heart hold out? They had asked once, she remembered, long ago when she was still working in the shop and the children were small, how come she could do this and find the time? And what for? what for? She was young then and Abraham still alive to come home to at night and sit and talk after dinner over the empty coffee cups—but instead she was out so much, night after night, and they asked her what for? She remembered thinking long how to answer so stupid a question.

She was a needle trades worker, liv

ing from pay-check to pay-check, and no thought that it might be different ever or better. She remembered what she had said then—these things we campaign for, the vote for women, unemployment insurance, minimum wages, all those things, I feel like I own a piece of them, like I helped make them. So the causes were not really all one, and old age wasn't so bad and lonely when she could sit by the lamp at night and sort them out in her mind, those many issues, those pieces of good work she had helped make.

But would the heart hold out? There was still that question. Climbing stairs becomes harder and the women have won the vote, but look what they did with it. . . . The wage laws won, but it's the Smith Act now; the union won and became a power, but wages still don't keep up with prices and the union bosses talk the same as the foreman used to. Sacco and Vanzetti killed and Tom Mooney freed — and she owned a share in that like another woman owns a necklace—but there was still Willie McGee they murdered and so many other good men in jail.

She was getting old now, there was something about the young people that made her heart ache. So easily discouraged, so unconcerned, so cynical. Nowadays they said what's the use so often, shrugging their shoulders and turning their backs. We've been through it before, what's the use. . . .

Her smile had to go far back now to the longest and hardest campaigns and remember the changes, the sudden changes in those kitchens, when everything all at once got too much and they began saying "That's enough pushing around." They had said it before and they would again, but the stupid lies were harder to answer and the stairs were steeper and longer.

Sometimes Mrs. Epstein got so tired she felt like sitting in a chair and just being old. . . .

SEVERAL more went easy. One woman even said "God bless you." Then a man looked at them, straight through them like wielding a knife and the hatred in his eyes laid shadows over his chin, the stingy mouth barely opening. "Ought to run you Reds out of the country. I'm for war now the sooner the better." And snapped the door shut.

"All steamed up and no place to go," Mrs. Epstein philosophized. "Probably he has ulcers."

But Lois was outraged. "You read that in the papers, but to have him say it out loud like that. . . . I thought anybody'd be ashamed to admit he wants war."

The next door somehow seemed crucial. "You talk to them." Lois suddenly acknowledged the older woman's experience. She had a way of walking right in and being welcome. . . . Lois felt better now about going with Mrs. Epstein.

"Come in, why don't you . . ." the same kitchen again, very neat and carefully tended, a church calendar

on the wall, in the living room the television set enthroned like an honored guest. The young woman studied the petition carefully. "That sounds all right—what am I supposed to do?"

"Put your signature on it, dear. It goes to the President."

"Oh, I can't do that. I promised my husband never to sign anything. You have to be so careful."

"Do you agree with what it says here?"

"Sure—this war is just terrible. And I do think the women should stop it. I'm sorry I can't sign it. I wish you luck, though."

"Maybe you talk it over with your husband and next time you'll sign. Goodby now."

But Lois stood in the door, stubborn, refusing to budge and, worst of all, arguing. "I always used to say that—let my husband decide—have to ask my husband. But why, really? If he gets drafted, you suffer just the same. If there's a war, it hurts you just like him. The children are yours and his. Why shouldn't you decide for yourself?"

"That's all right, that's all right," Mrs. Epstein broke in. "We've got to go now, Lois, come on."

"I don't mind her saying that." The young woman idly polished the handles of the stove. "She's right."

"If everybody were afraid like that we'd have war already. Don't you think we've got a right to let the President know how we feel?"

"Well, it's a free country. . . . I'll sign it."

"Now I feel better," Mrs. Epstei said. "There should be more peop like you, that's all."

They left the best of friends.

"I shouldn't have argued, shou I?" Lois asked outside. "She migh have taken it badly."

"You feel that way about it, sa what you think. That's never hu anybody yet."

BUT the way she felt had hu somebody — herself. For ho long now? Lois tried to remembe Back home, in the cramped apar ment in Philadelphia's tenement there had always been a "pushke a collection box on the kitchen she next to the salt and pepper and th blue box of matches. Standing thes matter-of-factly to receive the od pennies, a daily tribute to the mar loved causes—Israel, the local com munity center, later Spain, the vi tims of Nazi terror.

Always present next to breakfa and pay-check—and even the chi dren's pennies finding their way the "pushke" with the noble pric of sacrifice, of doing the right thin for others because one was not alon and the world was a lot larger tha the hot Philadelphia streets. And ha this not been the way of the me who stood at Independence Squa and proclaimed to the world a ne nation of the free and the brave Somehow the collection box was lik the Liberty Bell to the growing chi and things were simple even if the weren't easy.

Standing in the rain in front of the White House later, and crowding into Union Square, was the right thing, too, like joining the Waves had been and serving in the war. . . . But then it began to change. It wasn't because of Jack, Lois was quite certain, rather because the war was over and they'd surely done their share and now was the time for thinking of oneself and setting up a family. Moving to New York, first the Bronx, then the larger apartment in Queens.

There was more work after the second baby than there had ever been, a constant absorbing round of children and curtains and making her own clothes and stretching the dollars so they might buy that house they'd been planning for. Still and all, she might have kept a "pushke" in the kitchen — certainly she might have and there was no lack of good causes.

But she didn't and saved pennies for an electric mixer instead. We've got to watch ourselves, Jack had said when he'd cancelled their subscription to the progressive magazine they had been reading since before the war—that stuff could lose me my job now. . . . But could it really? And if so, why? Since she had no time anyway for reading the magazine Lois had found no time for asking these questions, much less for answering them. And so, over the months and without much notice, fear had become their house guest and, at last, their constant companion.

They had changed to the *Star* like most of their neighbors; they had lost track of many of the old friends. And the change had been so gradual, their new interests so lively and the loss so slight, that Lois had hardly known anything was different. Till the day Mrs. Gregory asked her to sign a peace petition and she refused.

Yes—the way she felt about taking care of her family first and letting the world go its own way had hurt somebody and now Lois saw it. It had hurt her and Jack and the children and the country, for if it had happened to her it had happened to others and here was a war knocking at their doors and they didn't know why.

Here were men dying once more and the A-bomb mushrooming over the sky and they had not noticed anything was happening except that butter was higher and the housing shortage worse than ever. But if it was not safe or sensible to ask for peace and a sane world for one's children. . . . So Lois signed that petition after all and that was a step. A small step across a lot of forgotten territory. . . .

THEY knew by now what the kitchen would look like. Also the church calendar and on the shelf —Lois felt strangely humiliated—the collection box for the Little Orphans of St. Francis.

". . . and you sign here for peace. So the boys will come back," Lois explained, having noticed the soldier's picture.

"Peace. . . ." There was something torn and restless in the old woman's face. Her misshapen hands trembled

on the kitchen table. "My boy—Korea. . . ." The English words came with difficulty, but it went deeper than the language. "My only boy."

She suddenly turned to them, looking first at Lois and then fastening on to the older woman as though there were more comfort for her in old age. "I don't know even where is Korea."

"He'll come back." Mrs. Epstein put her arm on the woman's shoulder. "Don't you worry—he'll come back."

The woman shook her head, tears streaming down her face. "I worry —you excuse me—I'm a sick woman, the arthritis and I got a bad heart. Can't sleep, can't work—I worry so —you excuse the crying. . . ."

"That's why we go around with this petition," Lois faltered. "So boys like yours—"

"You write the English?" the woman cried. "You write letter for me, please, missis. The priest he write letter for me to draft board, the dottore he write—but they take my boy anyway."

"That's what a petition is," Mrs. Epstein explained gently. "A letter to the President. Here—I'll read it to you."

As she read the woman nodded. Her crippled fingers fumbled for the handkerchief. "Bene," she said more firmly. "You sign my name, missis —Augustina Finucci, mother of Frank Finucci—New York City. Bene." She looked searchingly at Mrs. Epstein's face. "You good lady —your boy, he a soldier, too?"

"No," Mrs. Epstein said quiet "Not now."

"You write another letter for r missis, please. Write senatore—" S got up anxiously and searched notepaper and pencil. "Here—wri Dear Senatore. This letter is fr Augustina Finucci, mother of Fra Finucci. My boy is soldier now. sick with the arthritis and bad hea an old lady—he my only boy. right for my boy for to fight for cou try—but not way over there—wr in Korea—I don't even know wh is Korea. You write that? Say, Senatore, I want my son home. Y get my son home. You got that, m sis? You read it to me?"

"Bene," she said with more cal ness in her voice than at any ti before. "Now you write—I w other women sons home too. Eve body. Yours—how do you say? Tru that's right."

"I'm sure the Senator will pay tention to your letter, Mrs. Finu Because there are so many oth mothers writing letters like this." M Epstein shook the woman's ha warmly. "You don't worry now your son will be back."

"God bless," Mrs. Finucci cal after them. "Good ladies, God bles

THEY walked down the street silence, Lois carrying the woman's letter. "It makes you like a missionary," she said at l

"I didn't want to tell her ab my son. I lost him in France. A my brother in the first war. Yeah

d now her boy."

What was there to say. . . . A le step forward. . . . Lois thought Carol and Danny and Jack. If we omen don't stop it. . . .

"You want to go out again tomorw, Mrs. Epstein? Maybe I could rk the children with Gladys."

They're not cynical, Mrs. Epstein thought. Look at her—just starting out and all afire. . . . Maybe the heart would hold out after all—if not her own so surely that of these young ones, these wonderful bright young women learning to conquer their fear and speak out boldly.

"I think I can manage it," Mrs. Epstein said.

A concluding section of John Howard Lawson's booklet on Hollywood films, parts of which appeared in our last two issues, will be published in the next number and will deal with the struggle against reaction in the motion picture industry.

LONDON LETTER

London.

THIS year has so far seen little creative work published of any importance, but two developments have been going on which are of great significance and may well be seen later as the crucial phase of separation-out from decadent trends and of re-rooting in the people.

The first event to which I refer is the survival and strengthening of the Authors Peace Appeal. The lack of funds and organization has slowed down the pace of the peace-movement among writers, but steady growth has been achieved. And the fact that this is so, in the face of every sort of calumny and discouragement, does point to a deep and widespread need among writers to resist the war trends, however confusedly as yet. If this goes on, the effect must begin to show up in novel, story, script and poem.

Meanwhile our projects of countering the war-propaganda, though slowly, are gathering momentum. It was of interest, for example, that the B.B.C. feature, *The Soviet View,* which purports to set out objective accounts of the Soviet press, and so on, a few weeks back showed an uneasy awareness that we were on trail. It gave a defensive progr explaining why and how the B. carried on its European broadc The examples of its work tha self-righteously gave were so obvi ly vicious, indeed dementedly so, even the radio critics in the capit press had to mutter words of cau

And I can give an example f my own experience that shows seriously the movement is feared February, I gave a lecture in W saw, on the Writers of Britain Peace, and the first and second se taries of the British Embassy (an American colleague, and two resentatives of the British Coun took the unprecedented step of tending and trying to sabotage ceedings with provocative questi

Further, the movement is pro ing at long last an intellectual cli to offset the pessimist tone of all official culture. It is significant Cecil Day Lewis, now Professo Poetry at Oxford, has been retur to something of his allegiance of Thirties. At a recent meeting hel the Authors Peace Appeal, he r an excellent statement, which cluded the following:

"Our first task is to offset fata to keep alive the idea that p opinion can affect the issues of p and war. I think the Authors P Appeal has an importance alr because any body of people wh ganize for peace are setting an e ple of non-apathy. That is why should welcome the smear camp in the press, rather than be i

ınt about it. The more we are neared, the more people hear about ;, and mud does not stick to a good ıing forever."

It is a long time since an author of is standing has made such a state-ıent in public.

Six members of the movement vis-ed the Soviet Union at the end of une—Naomi Mitchison, the leader f the delegation; A. E. Coppard, the hort-story writer; Doris Lessing whose fiction on the color-themes of outh Africa is of high quality); Arnold Kettle, lecturer on English Literature at the University of Leeds a Marxist); Richard Mason, novel-st; and Douglas Young, Scottish poet ınd classical scholar. Mrs. Mitchison ınd Young are active members of the Labor Party.

On their return they have been one ınd all enthusiastic about the world hey found in the U.S.S.R. Asked if he fact that the Soviet writers wrote for the people and not for the rare few meant a lowering of standards, they unanimously said no. "We found many bookshops everywhere, selling books that are very cheap and often beautifully produced," said Young. Ten living Soviet poets enjoy a circulation of more than a million for their books, he added, and the royalties they get are never less than 40%!

Doris Lessing described traveling in the subway "between one person reading Pushkin and another reading Dostoyevsky." She discussed Dostoyevsky with the chambermaid at her hotel, and the latter said, "He is a great writer, but life is not like that any more for us." Miss Lessing was astonished at the breadth of international reading among the 15-year-olds at school, and at the extent to which they knew English literature.

The group took a number of English children's books that they thought should be done in Russian, and found that most had been already translated. Naomi Mitchison had a good look at the children's magazines, to compare them with the American comics now flooding Britain. "They are mainly about all kinds of sport, dancing, ballet—every little girl in the Soviet Union is mad about ballet," she remarked. "But we never saw a war book, or a nasty picture. We never saw a comic strip from beginning to end of our trip."

Some of these tidings are not so new to some of us; but the fact that this group from the Appeal will be reporting, writing, and talking along such lines means a heavy setback to anti-Soviet propaganda among writers.

THE second cultural development to which I referred is one of a very different character, and yet in the long run it will link up with the rebirth of a progressive spirit among writers that the Appeal defines. This is the rapidly-maturing demand for a party literature which has been showing itself in the Communist Party here. A party literature, I said, but the phrase must not be taken in a narrow sense: it means a literature aimed also at the broad masses of the organized Labor Movement, and so

reaching out further to all progressive sections of the community.

This cultural demand is a definite expression, I believe, of the sharply-intensifying class-struggle which 1952 has seen, and in turn of the new responsibility laid on the Communist Party, the need to build up a mass party and give effective leadership to the militant sections of Labor and the people in general.

Our magazine *Arena,* both by its virtues and its weaknesses, helped in focusing this demand, which came strongly out at the cultural conference held last year on the threat of U.S. imperialism to our cultural tradition. It was decided to start a new magazine directly based on the new situation; but various events, in chief the intrusion of the General Elections, delayed things. The Conference on the British Cultural Tradition held in late May, however, brought the demand to a head again, with clarified objectives. And from September onwards many things should be happening—the magazine, the first trials at a Battle of the Books (on the lines of that in France), and steady attempts to find a large number of forms for activizing literature.

For several months the feature page of the *Daily Worker* has reflected the growing demand for a fighting and popular culture, with discussions on the problems of the working-class writer. We are rich in talent among our working class, and there is every reason to believe that now we shall begin to make organized and effective use of it, develo ing it and finding outlets for its pression. This autumn there will pear a novel by myself on the per 1946-47, *The Betrayed Spring,* wh will be the first novel written h with the active aid of workers.

The broad "non-political" mo ment of the Authors World Pe Appeal, and the highly political c tural development that is going inside the Communist Party, are so unrelated, it will be seen. B are reactions to the general degene tion of the political scene here, a ing in their own ways at a reassert of humanist ideals and at a fresh eration of our truly national for For that reason I believe they add together to a very hopeful leaven our flattened scene, and they must the last resort be both linked w the increasing restiveness of our p ple at the plans for our war-servitu shared alike by Tory and Rightwi Labor.

I could add a hundred anecdotes pressive of this restive mood—fr the running-up of our national flag the midst of the U.S.A. Third Fo at Ruislip on July 9th, to the marks of a farm-laborer made to a few hours ago. And indeed witho this rebellious mood in our peo the two developments I have detai would not have a very clear futu They have that future because t genuinely record and intensify po erful changes going on among c people.

—JACK LINDSAY

books in review

The Unconquered Heart

THE HEART OF SPAIN, edited by Alvah Bessie. *Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, 23 West 26th St., New York, N. Y.* $4.50

"AND when everyone stood at the bridge in Le Perthus, looking anxiously down the road for the first signs of the fleeing army, what they saw was not a routed force, but a group of internationals on parade, withdrawing with discipline and pride from Loyalist Spain—flags flying, songs on their lips, and fists raised in the Popular Front salute. Never had they been such a symbol of the ideals for which they fought as when they marched up, four abreast, to be reviewed by André Marty, Luigi Gallo, and Pietro Nenni, while the French officers looked on with respect and the Spaniards present cheered, and wept to see them go. . . ."

The day was February 7, 1939—the year Spain fell, done in by assassins, bleeding from a thousand wounds.

In the more than a decade since the New York *Times'* Herbert L. Matthews filed his magnificent dispatch, "The Last Days," we have seen the sparks of Madrid explode a world conflagration. We have seen continents given up to smoke and ruins, great cities fallen, and some of them delivered free. We have seen the patchwork peace and the paid sellout.

Recently a publisher saw fit to reissue a book by George Orwell with a special preface by Lionel Trilling. In its review of the volume, the *Times* crowed that here at last was a much needed correction of the unfortunate belief that the defense of the Spanish Republic was a symbol of the people's fight against fascism. Where the word Spain is spoken in fashionable circles these days, there is a frantic attempt to stiletto history. Hardly a week passes that some editorial does not describe Franco's treason as a chaste crusade for Motherhood and Christian Glory.

Yet in spite of all the clever little butchers, the true heart of Spain stubbornly goes on beating. It is alive in this new "anthology of a people's resistance," edited by Alvah Bessie.

In his preface to the superb collection of poems, stories, reportage and speeches, Bessie states: "This is a partisan anthology. It proceeds from the conviction that life, decency and progress were on the side of the Spanish Republic; obscenity, retrogression and death, the stigmata of its enemies."

No commercial publisher would touch the book It remained for the veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade to accomplish once more what they accomplished so often at Teruel and along the Ebro: with thin resources they bare-handedly did what had to be done.

In a moving introduction, Dorothy Parker describes a visit to the American Embassy in Paris, and the tidy young man there who, when he heard she was going to Spain, advised brightly, "You'd have much more fun on the Franco side." But Miss Parker went on to Madrid and Valencia and into the torn fields beyond, "and I became a member of the human race. I met the best people anyone ever knew. I had never seen such people before. But I shall see their like again. And so shall all of us."

You will meet many of "the best people anyone ever knew" in this book. There are the poems of Federico Garcia Lorca, whose pure voice was stilled by a fascist firing squad, and a fearless, passionate speech by Catholic novelist José Bergamin, and a piece by Julio Alvarez del Vayo who was the rare bird, an honest diplomat, and also the indestructible cry of Dolores Ibarruri, La Pasionaria; *"We prefer to be widows of heroes rather than wives of cowards!"*

In its hour of agony, Spain spoke across the world to the conscience of man. And the answers echoed back from a hundred lands. From France's Aragon, and Russia's Ehrenburg, from Cuba's Nicolas Guillen, and England's John Cornford, and our own Lillian Hellman and Langston Hughes.

But it was the poet who most of all seemed to find his hour in Spain. There is a great deal of poetry in this collection, all of it varied, and almost all of it brilliant. The poems range from Norman Rosten's simple and shattering verse about the dead children of Guernica—

"Do not weep for them, madre.
They are gone forever, the little
ones
straight to heaven to the saints,
and God will fill the bullet-holes
with candy."

— to the astonishing imagery of Pablo Neruda's "The International Brigades Arrives at Madrid":

"and through your abundance,
through your nobility, through
your dead,
as through a valley of hard rocks
blood
flows an immense river with doves
of steel and hope."

There are other writers in this anthology whose names do not appear in the literary supplements. And it is their work that is perhaps the most significant—the bare, urgent writing of the fur workers, machinists, truck drivers, union organizers, lumberjacks, doctors who went to fight in Spain. Few professional reporters have equaled the restrained and spine-tingling account of a convoy of battered ambulances making its

way across icy mountains, as described in "The Road To Los Olmos," by Dr. Edward K. Barsky. And it is a fitting postscript to the story that Barsky did not waver from the road after it led from Spain. And it was this loyalty to the truth of his experience that led to his serving a jail sentence, rather than betray friends of the Republic.

Also among the works of the veterans themselves are Joe Gordon's "Bringing in John Scott," and Harold Smith's "Action at Brunete." Smith vividly relates a soldier's sick terror at being trapped in a murderous crossfire. And then:

"There was no conscious decision but he knew he would not turn back. His decision had been made before. He had picked his way of life and this was it."

It is interesting to compare the work of these Spanish volunteers with some of the much-heralded recent war writing. In the quiet, knowing pieces by Barsky, Gordon, and Smith, and in others by Irving Fajans and Alvah Bessie, you will find none of the self-conscious, arrogant prattle of Hemingway's wine-bottle general, none of the self-pity of James Jones' poor lost soldier-boys.

The Heart of Spain is lit throughout with lightning flashes of fine writing—a savagely ironic column by Heywood Broun, a gentle memorial by Ring Lardner, Jr. to his fallen brother Jim, a series of penetrating sketches by Joseph North, a short story, "El Fantastico," by Steve Nelson.

Nelson is one of those veterans of the Lincoln Brigade who, like John Gates and Robert Thompson, made it safe through the bombings at Brunete and survived the shellfire on the Ebro, only to become casualties in their own country.

Recently, a drumhead court of Franco army officers handed out jail terms to the Barcelona strike leaders. Made wary by international protest, the fascists decreed four-year sentences. But in Pittsburgh, a court found Steve Nelson guilty of violating a dragnet sedition law, and gave him the unbelievable sentence of twenty years! That sentence is not unconnected with the events in this book. For it was Spain that helped shape the clarity and courage that made Nelson dangerous to the steel industry caudillos and their judges.

The Heart of Spain is not only a salute to the Republic, but an indictment of its enemies. And do not imagine that these are only the soldiers of the Civil Guard "with their patent-leather souls" as Lorca describes them, or even Franco himself. Franco would never have set foot on the neck of Madrid had it not been for the non-intervention policy of Britain and the United States. And the Franco regime would not remain in power now, were it not for the continued support of the same allies.

This book is more than a historical record. It is a portrait of what was in the Thirties, and is now, the central conflict of our time.

From one side echoes the slogan of

Franco: "Peace does not exist. Peace is a constant preparation for war." With hearty bravos from the refurbished Nazi generals, from Hoover and Dulles, from the Pentagon.

And opposed are the strikers of Barcelona, and the underground workers of Catalonia and the Asturias. As well as those who came out of Spain to continue in Paris, in Naples, in Sacramento and Cleveland their fight for the dignity of man. As well as all those in every corner of this sweet earth who fight for peace, their rising voices echoing La Pasionaria's:

"They will not pass, the fascists will not pass! They will not pass because we are not alone"

MILLARD LAMPELL

Heroes of China

DAUGHTERS AND SONS, by Kung Chueh and Yuan Ching. *Liberty Press.* $3.50.

THIS is the most exciting book I have ever read. On the great North China plain, from the Upheaval Summer of 1937 to Victory of Autumn 1945 you see the heroic struggles of the Chinese peasants, the woman Mey and Da-shwey and the Daughters and Sons of the countryside against the Japanese, against the collaborators, the spies, alien capitalists and native betrayers.

Mey is a fitting tribute to the Chinese women, oppressed, unable to read and write, who fought through these bitter years to free their country. Da-Shwey, Twur, Nyur and the Communist leader Blacky Tsay and others who do not live to see Victory 194 crowd the pages, rallying around th Ba Lu, the liberation army, unifyin the forces of the nation; the clash o old and new, the patient, wise leade ship of the Communist Party and th love they had for Mao Tse-tung. Yo see the development from instinctiv action of survival to the developmen of Marxist theory and the rising o courageous and splendid heroes.

The deep courage and touchin love of comrades, the high moralit and dignity makes you shamefull conscious of dulled sensibilities an how long it has been since you hav read a book where hell was no others, with the solitary, anguishe Sartre hero with his private adver turism and hallucinations passing a "eternal truth." Here no one suffe even one page from guilt, or seve ambiguities on eight levels. The wri ers are simply partisan, the enemi are clear, the heroes are beautifu heaven is others in action togethe and the beauty and wonder of the tremendous victory with what Ma Tse-tung called "the whole weight o history upon the shoulders of th proletariat and its political party,"— all this is to me the great, the stirrin wonder, reality of our time, and o this book.

The critics say it is too simpl the heroes too heroic, the villain (landlords, foreign aggressors) to villainous and the lovers are brough together in the end and the Chines people win! Has it become a stupi

thing in our literature to win? Are we too scared to dare point out the enemy or cry danger, or point the simple direct way to live? Could it be that our literature has become a deliberate mask to cloak and shield the villainy of capitalism, and obliqueness a camouflage? Have we become so subtly brutalized that simplicity, forthrightness, the heroic struggle of a woman like Mey is not literature, not life, not truth?

This is a great book to me because it cuts clean to the bone of these pretensions and shows that anguish and loss is not art necessarily, guilt and neurosis is not the central passion of our time, that "abstention from movement" and meaning is not literature.

This book points strongly to the high level of present-day revolution, the heroism of a new kind developed in man and woman, issuing from understanding of conditions and forces of society. Here men and women of a new kind, with love and faith, struggle with others creating the great free individual and the new nation.

These daughters and sons of a long-oppressed countryside learn action and theory and like titans leap over centuries, creating "a world of light that never existed before." This is the greatest reality and the greatest literature. Every worker I know couldn't put the book down, was touched to the quick, learned many lessons and went to work without sleep, but refreshed.

The writers Kung Chueh and Yuan Ching, husband and wife, are young members of the Communist Party who were attached to guerrilla forces in North China during the war against Japan. They are now script writers in the Motion Picture Bureau in Peking.

Many reviewers and readers of this book seem to feel that writing for the millions of Chinese peasants who have just learned to read and write (20 million attended the 1950 winter schools) requires some over-simplification and writing down. Exactly the opposite I should think would be true. These men and women have been raised to a high level in both theory and action in their struggles, with no help from our "high civilization and culture," our sophisticated and cosmopolitan literature.

This is not a remembrance of things past to be read or written in a cork room. It is a book that requires the most vigorous and athletic reading. It challenges our responsibility and morality. It is a challenge to our skill and literary "form" and often paralyzing beauty of prose, that often illuminates nothing but the bright maggot glow of death.

This book is of the greatest art and invokes the highest feelings of new kinds of heroism and communal love; reveals and uncovers again the springs of courage and the belief in the indestructibility of the human struggle. It is a cry from the great drama of our time, the thrilling emergence and heroic struggle of the colonial peoples, of the workers of the earth. Now their great cultural

renaissance may embolden and regenerate us.

And if you are not excited and the book resists you, it may be that your moral sense has been blunted and the capacity for partisanship with the strong, the valiant and the good has been paralyzed and the remembrance ossified of the time when revolutionary America also was heroic and gigantic, full of song.

You may be in that awful fortress where the woman Mey led her comrades, that ancient fortress full of rats, collaborators and landlords. The Ba Lu yelled up to them to come out. "You fellows have been living in there too long," roared the masses, "Come on out. We want to destroy the fortress. The tiles and the wood are ours. We're waiting to take them back."

Mey led her groups in the song she had taught them:

"The birds fly toward brightness,
Men must take the road to life!
Don't be a foreigner's slave,
Change your heart and mind; be a new man.
Turn over your gun and be our friend."

This is a splendid book for us all; and a contribution by Liberty Book Club in making it available. It makes you resolve not to trail behind reflecting old deaths, and it makes you hunger and search to attach yourself to the chariot of social progress and change.

MERIDEL LE SUEUR

The Plot Against Peace

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF THE KOREAN WAR, by I. F. Stone. *Published by* Monthly Review, *distributed by Citadel Press.* $5.00.

I. F. STONE'S book should have a prominent place in the literature of the peace movement. Essentially it is a brilliant exposure of United States war aims in Korea, written in the best tradition of liberal journalism. It also has the weakness of that tradition, insufficient attention being paid to basic causes, the deeper political significance of the conflict, of the movement of people's forces. But even within this lesser scope, the book is a powerful dose of sanity in an atmosphere of war hysterics.

The central accomplishment of *Hidden History* is to prove, from American sources exclusively, that the aim of both MacArthur and Truman was to keep the war going under all circumstances. Mercilessly, Stone analyzes the communiques from Tokyo headquarters, Washington statements and hearings, and reports by journalists to reveal glaring contradictions, ridiculous claims and obvious fabrications. It all falls into a single pattern: every device, ranging from a new batch of atrocity stories to a new military offensive, was employed to head off a truce whenever it seemed within grasp.

Furthermore, Stone shows this was a deliberate policy on the part of MacArthur because he saw Korea as the fuse of world war to be launched

mmediately and in Asia; and on the part of Truman and Acheson who feared that a let-up in tension arising from an armistice would interfere with their longer-range war program.

At times Stone seems to be saying that Truman was stampeded by MacArthur who confronted him with *faits accomplis* which he could not circumvent, and thus Truman is sometimes made to appear as a victim rather than as a prime mover. But if the general was able to force the President to follow his lead on occasion it was because, as Stone himself makes clear, keeping the war going was as much Truman's policy as MacArthur's. If the general was useful to the President as personification of the threat to spread the conflict, Truman was useful to MacArthur also, for he provided official sanction for the criminal war itself.

This leads Stone to the conclusion that if there had been no Korea one would have been created by Pentagon provocation, since such a war is indispensable to Washington's foreign policy. This conclusion throws considerable light upon the origin of the war, although Stone is content to leave this crucial question hidden in mystery. True, he throws tons of doubt upon the official version that it was launched under Soviet instigation by the North Koreans, but he renders no judgment on the ground of insufficient documentary evidence.

Here Stone falls victim to his own approach and method. His use of material emanating only from the U.S. side has its value in that his exposure

of official policy is authenticated by the very sources which have flooded the American people with a Niagara of deception. But it also has its limitations, since it is impossible to give a complete picture of the war without a serious examination of data from the other side.

A war must be seen in its entirety —the policies that led to it as well as its relation to the world objectives of the principal powers concerned. Obviously, Stone is handicapped by the same myopia that led him, at the beginning of the conflict, to accept the official version of the war as an act of aggression from the Soviet side. As Stone reveals, it took a trip abroad, where he could observe events in an atmosphere less infected with Pentagon propaganda, to achieve a more objective approach.

But he did not get rid of all handicaps in his thinking, as is shown by his observation that we have "dictatorships" to thank in the Soviet Union and China for imposing upon their peoples a policy of resistance to provocation which could lead to the outbreak of world war! This is rather naive, coming from a journalist like Stone who is certainly well enough informed to know that the policies of the Soviet Union and People's China are not the whims of "dictators" but are the expression of the peace desires of the peoples. Actually, Stone does show very dramatically in his book that, in contrast to the provocative actions of the United States, both the Soviet Union and China followed a consistent peace policy by seeking every possible opening to bring t Korean war to an end.

But we should not expect a libe journalist, even of Stone's undoubt talent, to be logical or consistent all times. In failing to set the Kore war more solidly within the fram work of U.S. imperialist policy sin the end of World War II, Stone dc only part of the job of education th is now necessary. But he does th part effectively, and in terms t American people can understand a accept.

His well argued and carefully dc umented book will convince ma Americans who, like Stone, at fi tried to justify U.S. intervention as counter-move to "Soviet aggressio but who now subordinate the que tion of the origin of the war to t aim of establishing peace. By readi Stone's book they will discover wh is responsible for the continuation the war, and they will also discov that MacArthur, Truman, Dulles, a Acheson are equally culpable.

They will learn more. The tot effect of the book is to present th Korean war as the most abominab crime in the entire history of U aggressive and punitive wars, excee ing in sheer barbarism (against bo the North and South Koreans), cynical deception of the people, ar in Machiavellian intrigue the gra of Puerto Rico and the Philippine seizure of the Panama Canal zon and the armed interventions in Lat America.

A serious defect in Stone's ma thesis leads him to miss out on on

of the most compelling arguments for peace. It is quite correct to show, as he does, how the Administration and the Pentagon exploited the Korean war to speed up the war economy, the draft, the subordination of the NATO powers, the anti-Communist drive at home, and all else required for the aggressive world program. To achieve these ends, Tokyo headquarters and the Pentagon invented fantastic stories about threatening Chinese "hordes," playing on the old chauvinist theme of the "Yellow Peril."

In exposing these fables, Stone seems to have lost sight of one of the central aspects of the war. Thus, in explaining MacArthur's precipitous retreat from the Yalu after the collapse of the "home-by-Christmas" offensive, he leaves the impression that this was a mock retreat, with the aim of drawing large Chinese armies deep into Korea to be followed by the atom-bombing of Manchuria. It is true that at the height of the retreat Truman did make such a threat, and strong pressures were always at work to extend the war; and MacArthur's claim that vast Chinese armies had been committed to the Korean battlefield is of course nonsense. But the fact remains that his forces would not have taken to their heels so pell-mell unless they had felt the powerful blows of the North Korean army and the Chinese volunteers.

Stone thus fails to give due weight to an outstanding fact of contemporary history: the biggest imperialist power has suffered a military stalemate at the hands of "colonial" peoples. This fact indicates the profound change which has occurred in the colonial world with the success of the Chinese revolution. The stalemate also has extensive positive implications for the global peace struggle. For Korea has shown that war nowhere can be a walkover for the U.S. Gargantua; that its allies can be expected to give only token assistance with the United States itself bearing the main burden; and that the warmakers now confront a new military power in the liberated colonial peoples and those seeking liberation such as no empire has had to face.

This is a powerful deterrent to war. In failing to assess basically the stalemate in Korea—the product of military genius and expert diplomacy, born of a people's fighting stamina in a just cause—Stone has also failed to draw the necessary lessons for the American people, lessons which will help them fight their own warmakers.

It is a sign of the times that *Hidden History* could find no publisher in England and that its publication here had to be improvised. Yet its promotion should be the concern of those organizations and individuals engaged in the fight for peace. The book will influence numerous people to do something for peace. Stone has nothing to say in this book about the people's fight for peace, but this should not prevent the peace movement from promoting actively this excellent exposé of the warmakers' plot.

JAMES S. ALLEN

An Editor's Creed

By AL RICHMOND

(Al Richmond, executive editor of the *Daily People's World,* togeth with 13 other California working class leaders, has been sentenced to fi years in prison. Part of his statement to the court on receiving senten follows. We urge our readers to give every possible support to the pen ing appeal of the California Smith Act victims.—Eds.)

WHAT I HAVE advocated during these past years with the greate passion, the greatest devotion, is what I believe to be the most fund mental, the most profound and overriding truth of our day, and th is that peace is possible, that the American people can find a path peace, not through big stick diplomacy, not through staggering arm ments, but through genuinely seeking friendship and understandi with all nations, and this truth I have proclaimed.

The prosecutors have chosen not to introduce here the products of n labor as an editor . . . I have tried to live and work by the ancient maxi "Know the truth and it shall set you free." But this prosecution, and t repressive hysteria of which it is a part seeks to impose a different, co tradictory dictum upon the American people: Seek the truth and you w land in jail.

Well, I have landed there, but I don't think the quest will stop, and the people in their search will be led to those books that used to be those exhibit cabinets, they will go there and no power will stop ther and the quest will go on, as it has gone on through the centuries, despi crucifixion, despite inquisition, despite witch burning, and I am sure t people will find the truth and there will be my vindication.