MASSES & MAINSTREAM

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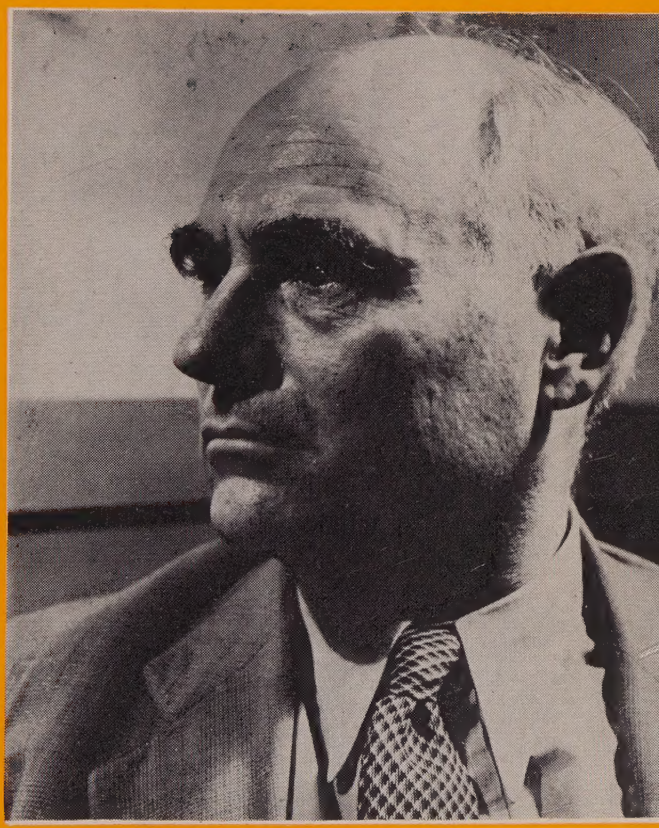
JOSEPH NORTH

oviet Literary Issues

Interview with

STANTIN SIMONOV



ROBERT MINOR

HOUGHTS ON CULTURE

By GUS HALL

LENIN AND TOLSTOY

By SAMUEL SILLEN

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Our Time

By SAMUEL SILLEN

Lenin and Tolstoy

IN HIS *Days With Lenin,* Maxim Gorky recalls that on one of his visits to the leader of the October Revolution he found him with a copy of *War and Peace.* "Yes. Tolstoy," said Lenin. "I wanted to read over the scene of the hunt. . . ." Then he smiled, screwed up his eyes, and in a lowered voice said:

"What a colossus, eh? There's an artist for you. And do you know something still more amazing? You couldn't find a genuine muzhik in literature until this Count came on the scene. Can you put anyone in Europe beside him? No one."

This enthusiasm is also noted in the memoirs of Lenin by his wife, Krupskaya. Their copy of *Anna Karenina* "was read and re-read a hundred times" during their exile before 1917. In Geneva they went to see Tolstoy's *The Living Corpse* played by Russian actors, and "Ilyich, deeply stirred, wanted to see the play a second time."

Fortunately, Lenin himself wrote at length about the titan of modern novelists. During the years 1908-1911 he published no fewer than seven essays on Tolstoy. These appeared on various occasions, such as the novelist's eightieth birthday in September, 1908, and his death in November, 1910. While some of the essays have previously been available in English, they are now at last presented in their entirety to American readers under the title *Tolstoy and His Time* (International Publishers, 20c).

Lenin's essays have tremendous value for us today. For they not only illuminate Tolstoy, but also furnish a scientific guide to the study of literature and art in general. Like the writings of Marx and Engels on Balzac, like Stalin's treatise on linguistics, here is a brilliant model of the application of historical materialism to questions of culture.

Indeed, only by mastering Lenin's critical method can we dispel some stubborn confusions that hamper the growth of Marxist literary criticism in this country. Lenin's analysis teaches us how to combat two chronic ailments: on the one hand, a schematic, pseudo-Left approach which ignores the complex nature of works of art and tries to press them into narrow molds; and on the other hand, an eclectic, "classless" approach which embraces, in the name of cath-

olicity, values that are hostile to the outlook and interests of the working class. Such opportunism, whether of the "Left" or Right variety, is alien to Leninism in art as in politics.

What is the primary criterion in judging the work of art? What is the relation between the artist "as artist" and the artist "as thinker"? How does one evaluate the contradictions, the strengths and weaknesses, of the artist? These are among the basic problems solved by Lenin in his discussion of Tolstoy.

NO SERIOUS analysis of literature is possible without a grasp of the concrete historical conditions which it reflects. This leading thought is contained in the title of Lenin's first essay: "Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution."

Lenin recognizes that many readers will find this idea puzzling:

> "To identify the name of a great artist with the revolution which he has obviously failed to understand and from which he has obviously alienated himself, may at first sight seem strange and artificial. How, indeed, can one describe as a mirror that which does not reflect things correctly?"

After thus raising frankly, as was his characteristic, a difficult question in its most challenging form, Lenin gives the key to his interpretation:

> "But our revolution is an extremely complex thing. Among the mass of those who are directly making and participating in it, there are numerous social elements who have obviously failed to understand what is taking place and have also alienated themselves from the real historical tasks with which the course of events has confronted them. And if the artist we are discussing is really a great artist, he must have reflected at least some important aspects of the revolution in his works."

And Lenin proceeds to show—in all seven essays—how Tolstoy's work does reflect faithfully essential features of his epoch; that is, from the abolition of serfdom in 1861 to the first Russian Revolution of 1905. It was a period when, as a character in *Anna Karenina* says, "everything has been turned upside down and is only just taking shape." These years of Tolstoy's main writing activity saw the breakup of feudal Russia and the rapid growth of capitalism.

This period of upheaval was marked by contradictory social conditions. Survivals of serfdom permeated the economic and political life of Russia. The masses of peasants were emancipated from serfdom only to find themselves looted by landlords and capitalists, suffering new degradations, poverty and ruin. "The whole past," wrote Lenin, "has taught the peasantry to hate the landlords and the government officials, but it has not taught, and could not teach them where to find the answer to all these questions." So we find, side by side, protest and despair, seething hatred and impotent dreaming, a maturing striving for a better lot and political ignorance.

Tolstoy mirrored these contradictions. In his work we see both the necessary rise of the revolutionary

struggle of the masses and their unpreparedness for this struggle:

"Tolstoy is great as the expresser of the ideas and sentiments that took shape among the millions of Russian peasants in the time when the bourgeois revolution was approaching in Russia. Tolstoy is original, because the sum total of his views, taken as a whole, expresses what is precisely the specific features of our revolution as a *peasant* bourgeois revolution. From this point of view, the contradictions in Tolstoy's views are indeed a mirror of those contradictory conditions under which the peasantry had to play their historical part in our revolution."

How were these contradictions reflected in Tolstoy's works? In a series of vivid contrasts Lenin describes the genius of realism and the muzzy mystic, the wrathful critic of ruling class hypocrisy and the teacher of "the Universal Spirit," the bold voice of oppression and the advocate of "non-resistance." Thus, Lenin found in Tolstoy's work both the might and limitations of the peasant mass movement before 1905.

By faithfully depicting an entire epoch with freshness, sincerity, fearlessness,

"Tolstoy was able to raise so many great questions in his works, was able to attain such heights of artistic power, that his works occupied a place in the front rank of world fiction. Thanks to the light thrown upon it by Tolstoy's genius, the epoch of preparation for the revolution in one of the countries groaning under the yoke of the feudal landlords presented itself as a step forward in the artistic development of the whole of mankind."

IN ARRIVING at his conclusions Lenin indicates the solution for several major problems of critical method. I should like to suggest some of them here.

To begin with, it is instructive to compare Lenin's approach to Tolstoy with that of Plekhanov, his older contemporary. While Plekhanov made many valuable contributions to Marxist criticism, some of his essays are shot through with unscientific ideas. On the positive side, in his writings on Tolstoy he combatted reactionary interpretations of the novelist and exposed the efforts of the Second International to "touch up" Marx with a bit of Tolstoy's religious teachings. In his work *From Here To There,* Plekhanov pointed out the inner contradictions of Tolstoy and defined the limits "from where to where" the writer could be accepted.

But how did he explain these contradictions? For Plekhanov, Tolstoy is "the ideologist of the upper class, the Homer of the life of the gentry." Tolstoy, then, was motivated by a narrow class outlook, a subjective effort to conserve by means of reactionary theory the dying class of feudal landowners which he represented. Tolstoy's glorification of peasant morality is explained on the same principle; that is, the gentry needed the support of the peasantry in resisting the new bourgeois order.

Lenin takes a quite different view. He examines Tolstoy not primarily in terms of his class origin or status, but rather in terms of the reality which is reflected in his work. In fact:

"The abrupt breakdown of all the 'old foundations' of rural Russia sharpened his power of observation, intensified his interest in what was going on around him, and caused a change in his whole world outlook. By birth and education, Tolstoy belonged to the higher landed nobility of Russia, but he abandoned the habitual outlook of this milieu. . . ."

The novelist's inconsistencies are not rooted in his own psychology or in his own class alone:

"they are a reflection of those extremely complex, contradictory conditions, social influences, and historic traditions which had molded the mentality of the different classes and different strata of Russian society in the *post*-reform but *pre*-revolutionary epoch."

The basic measure of his genius, then, is the truth of his work, the reality it embodies. His was "one of the greatest triumphs of realism," as Engels said of Balzac. As a "really great artist" he broke through the narrow outlook of his class, though he could not achieve the scientific outlook of the working class.

Plekhanov's error, it should be noted, is bound up with a broader

MURDER: 1

JULIUS and Ethel Rosenberg are scheduled to die in the electric chair the week of January 12. They were convicted in an atmosphere of hysteria on the basis of false testimony. They were given a vengeful death sentence—unprecedented in peacetime—by a judge who made the fantastic charge that they had caused the Korean war.

The editors of *Masses & Mainstream* are profoundly convinced that the Rosenberg case is a hideous frameup, of the same genre as the Dreyfus, Mooney, Sacco-Vanzetti, Scottsboro and Dimitrov frameups. Increasingly public opinion here and abroad is coming to the same conclusion.

D. N. Pritt, former Labor M.P. and one of the most distinguished members of the British bar, has made a searching analysis of the trial of the Rosenbergs, which has been published as a pamphlet. He states:

"It is my considered professional opinion that a conviction based upon such evidence from such sources, without independent corroboration, cannot be regarded as reliable and should not be sustained."

The Rosenbergs can be saved, as Dreyfus, Mooney, the Scottsboro Boys and Dimitrov were saved, by the mass protest of millions. We urge you to act to prevent this monstrous murder—TODAY—NOW. Write President Truman and insist that he commute the death sentence against the Rosenbergs. Get your friends and organizations to do likewise. Join in public protest in all parts of the country. The hours are ticking away.

olitical error; that is, his failure, ogether with that of the Mensheviks vith whom he was associated, to unerstand the revolutionary significance f the peasant question. Lenin's proound insight was tested and conirmed in the Socialist Revolution and n the whole subsequent developnent of the Soviet Union.

If Plekhanov's over-simplified approach to Tolstoy flowed from his inderestimation of the role of the peasantry, there is still another major point in which he differed from Lenin. For Lenin does not support the division suggested by Plekhanov between Tolstoy "as artist" and Tolstoy "as ideologist." This also is much too simple. Lenin stresses the interconnection between Tolstoy's work "as an artist and as a thinker and preacher." There is no wall between the two categories; they interpenetrate. While there is a contradiction between the writer's "incomparable pen pictures" and his mystical obsessions, between Tolstoy the realist and Tolstoy the prophet, these oppo-

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MURDER: 2

MURDER wears many masks. In Pittsburgh a great American hero, a man whose name will be sung by free America in generations to come—Steve Nelson—is being tortured in an effort to destroy him physically.

It is not enough that this man was sentenced to twenty years for "sedition" after a nightmare trial presided over by a judge who was a member of an outfit called Americans Battling Communism.

It is not enough that following the savage sentence, he has been put on trial again, together with four colleagues, under the Smith Act.

It is not enough that he has been deprived of his constitutional right to bail while his conviction under the state sedition law is being appealed.

As punishment for his courage, his unbreakable spirit, Nelson was recently for the second time thrown into "the hole." A sick man, requiring hospitalization for infected ears, he was forced to subsist in a lightless dungeon on bread and water, denied adequate clothing against the cold, with only a board for a bed.

The steel and coal barons want to do what the Franco fascists were unable to do to this hero of the Spanish war: to kill Steve Nelson.

The Steve Nelson case, like the Rosenberg case, is the shame of America. We strongly urge you and your friends to wire or write to Judge Harry M. Montgomery, County Courthouse, Pittsburgh, Pa., and to Gov. John S. Fine, State Capitol, Harrisburg, Pa., demanding they take steps to halt the torture of Nelson and grant his release on reasonable bail.

sites are not accidental; they exist within an organic unity; they are both traceable to the contradictory social conditions described by Lenin.

BUT does one, then, have to embrace all of Tolstoy uncritically? Or is it correct to say "From here to there"? How is his heritage to be evaluated?

The official literary critics of tsarist Russia seized, of course, not on the positive revolutionary significance of Tolstoy but on his most backward features. Lenin's essays are polemics against the reactionary interpretations which characterize bourgeois criticism to this day. The bourgeois writers, he observed, including the "liberals," glorify Tolstoy's weaknesses in order to evade all the concrete questions of democracy and socialism which he raised so sharply. The "Tolstoyans," both Russian and foreign, were considered utterly wretched by Lenin because they wanted "to convert into a dogma precisely the weakest side of his doctrine."

Bourgeois critics, Lenin noted, and his words hold good today,

> "*cannot* frankly and clearly express their opinion of Tolstoy's views on the state, on the church, on the private ownership of land, and on capitalism, but it is not because of the censorship; on the contrary, the censorship helps them out of their difficulty! They cannot do so because every thesis in Tolstoy's criticism is a slap in the face of bourgeois liberalism; because the fearless, open, and ruthlessly sharp *presentation* by Tolstoy of the most burning, of the most vexed questions of the present day is in itself a *glaring exposure* of the stock phrases, the threadbare rhetoric and the evasive 'civilized' falsehood of our liberal (and liberal Populist) journalism."

What the bourgeoisie does is to "put to the fore that which expresses Tolstoy's prejudices and not his reason; that about him which belongs to the past and not to the future; his repudiation of politics and preaching of moral self-perfection and not his impassioned protest against all class rule." Only from the standpoint of the working class, leader of the struggle for the people's freedom in alliance with the peasantry, can a correct appraisal be made.

Thus Lenin gives us a twofold principle for defining the heritage of the artist, and this principle is repeated several times in these essays. First, it is necessary to distinguish between that which has "retreated into the past" and that which "belongs to the future." Second, such a critical differentiation can be achieved only from a working class outlook. On the occasion of Tolstoy's death Lenin could already note that "This heritage is accepted and is being worked on by the Russian proletariat."

HERE we can see a dramatic anticipation of Lenin's fight against the so-called Proletcult of the early years after the October Revolution. The Proletcultists scorned the finest cultural creations of the past on the ground that they were produced in feudal or bourgeois society. Lenin

tacked these pseudo-revolutionists culture. He taught that Soviet culre is not an invention of "experts," at the logical development of the ılture received by the proletariat om past generations. The building f Socialist culture, he stressed, preıpposes the critical assimilation and reative reshaping of the best in all revious culture.

At the same time, Lenin conemned the servile worship of bourgeois culture, and he attacked those ho forget its class character. He owed how bourgeois culture inevitly decays in the period of imperialm; its mystical, anti-popular ideas rve only to prop the tottering doinion of the capitalists. Thus, Lein gives no comfort to those who ight wish to "salvage" a Faulkner, t us say, by a distorted transfer of ıe analysis of Tolstoy. Aside from ıe obvious gulf in literary genius, e need only compare Tolstoy's reıtion to the oppressed masses of arist Russia with Faulkner's relation the oppressed masses, especially of ıe Negro nation, in the bourbon outh. Lenin's method does apply, ut only to point up the essentially nrealistic and reactionary character f the Faulkners.

How much, too, we have to learn om Lenin in our approach to merican classics like Melville, Mark wain, and Dreiser—let alone a nelected Negro novelist of power like harles W. Chesnutt. And especially day, when the intellectual lackeys f the ruling class are seeking to lot out the true significance of our greatest writers, remolding them in the image of chauvinism and obscurantism.

Lenin wrote in 1910:

> "Tolstoy the artist is known to an insignificant minority even in Russia. To make his great works really accessible to all it is necessary to fight and fight against the social system which has condemned millions and tens of millions to ignorance, oppression, slavish toil, and poverty; a socialist revolution is needed. . . . Tolstoy wrote works of fiction which will always be prized and read by the masses when they have created human conditions of life for themselves after throwing off the yoke of the landlords and capitalists. . . ."

Has any prophecy been more richly fulfilled? In the Soviet Union Tolstoy is the prized possession of all the people. His works are read and loved by scores of millions. Thirty million copies of his books have been published, and men and women of all nationalities—Georgians, Armenians, Uzbeks, Kazakhs—read him in their native languages. His plays and dramatized novels are enormously popular on the Soviet stage. Endless pilgrimages of admirers visit his home at Yasnaya Polyana, and young people flock to lectures on his work.

Yes, on this twenty-ninth anniversary of Lenin's death, the really "human conditions" which he founded have come to fruition. And Soviet society, as Stalin has shown in his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.,* is advancing to the higher stage of communism in which the many-sided potentialities of man will at last find their full expression.

M&M Needs Your Help

NEXT month *Masses and Mainstream* will round out its first five years. Yes, five good years—despite the McCarrans and McCarthys!

But it's the *coming* year we are thinking about right now. Two things we know for sure:

1. The battle for peace and freedom and truth *will grow sharper.*

2. The need for a magazine like *M & M*—a rallying center of progressive culture in America—*will grow keener.*

So we must have in 1953 the same kind of support that made the first five years possible. *Your* support. Your moral as well as financial support.

We badly need $7,500 to keep us punching for the next twelve months. That is the sum we asked for last year. You came through then. We are confident that you won't let *M & M* down now.

With that money we can also continue our book publishing program which has already brought you such works as Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois' *In Battle for Peace,* Lloyd L. Brown's *Iron City,* V. J. Jerome's *A Lantern for Jeremy,* Pablo Neruda's *Let the Railsplitter Awake.*

We have just sent to the printer another exciting book—Steve Nelson's own story of his experiences in Spain. We feel this is a major contribution both in a literary sense and as a weapon in defense of Steve Nelson and all other victims of the jailers and murderers.

And we plan to extend our activities still further—to hold regular public forums on vital cultural themes; to offer literary prizes as an encouragement to writers, especially younger writers; to publish special issues, such as next month's issue on Negro History Week.

We have kept our deficit down to a minimum in the face of rising costs. We have held on to our circulation in the face of reactionary pressures and boycotts. *Now we mean to move forward.*

To help us do all this, we ask you to give generously to the magazine that speaks and fights for you. *Every dollar counts.*

Won't you send us your contribution now?

And a happy, free and peaceful New Year to all our wonderful friends everywhere!

THE EDITORS

My People Will Be Free

By LUIS TARUC

The Hukbalahap, the liberation movement of the Filipino people, has been consistently lied about in the American commercial press and its members described as "bandits" and "terrorists." The truth is, however, that the Hukbalahap is a patriotic movement that was in the forefront of the struggle against the Japanese occupation and is today leading the fight against the United States occupation and the native mercenaries of American imperialism.

Below we present an eloquent glimpse of the truth about the Philippines in an excerpt from the autobiography of Luis Taruc, the legendary commander-in-chief of the Hukbalahap. Entitled Born of the People, *it is to be issued shortly by International Publishers.*

THE final pages of this book are being written in a very small nipa hut, somewhere on the slope of a mountain above the central plain of the island of Luzon. It is a temporary shelter, newly built, and it may have to be abandoned quickly, perhaps today, perhaps this afternoon. Perhaps even as I sit here writing, an alarm will come. The enemy is not far away.

There is no furniture in the hut. I balance my notebook on my knee. The roof is so low that I must bend my head where I sit. Bits of sun come through the branches overhead and through the nipa roof and fall on this page. It is very quiet in the forest. Down the slope, below the hut, I can hear the water on the rocks in the little stream from which we drink. The tuko (native bird) calls from the tall trees in the sun. Crickets are chirping incessantly, and frogs sing, deep-voiced. These are the sounds of peace.

They are deceptive. At any time may come the sound of guns.

This hut is big enough to hold five sleeping men, lying close. Its sides are open, so we can roll out fast, if need be. It sits under dense trees, to escape aerial observation. Washed clothes drying in the sun are pulled from sight when a plane is heard. Cooking, when there is something to cook, is done in the early morning and after dark, so the smoke of the fire will not be

seen. To the enemy, from above and below, there must only be the trees. The mountain is a friendly mother sheltering us.

Under other trees, ten meters away but barely seen, are other huts. In them are sleeping a squadron of the Hukbalahap soldiers. They are without uniforms, ragged and barefooted. They do not look like an army, but they are one.

This is the mobile headquarters of the people's army of liberation.

In this tiny, barren, simple place I sit completing a book about my life at a time when at any moment the armed hirelings of tyranny may burst in upon me and end it brutally with their guns. In the midst of death I write about life. That is significant because it is not my own life with which I am primarily concerned, but the life of the movement to which I belong and of the people's cause which it serves. In this place death is not the important event, but the birth that our struggle is bringing about.

My comrades urged me to write this book. "Write about yourself," they said. "To the people you symbolize the movement." Looking back through these pages I find that there is less of me here than there is of the movement itself. And that is as it should be. The people's movement is made up of many, many lives, and all the struggles of which I have spoken are but a part of the life of our people as a whole. In a most important respect this book is not an autobiography; it is a chapter in the biography of the Filipino people.

THIS mere act of sitting on a rough floor of a hut in the forest is not an isolated incident today. It is being duplicated by the armed men of liberation movements in Indo-China, in Indonesia, in Malaya, in Burma, and wherever the masses of Asia are stirring themselves. The facts and the men are everywhere, and towering over them all is the enormous fact of the Chinese people, who have emerged from their mountains, and from their huts in the forests, into the towns and the cities, into their own.

On the corner poles of this hut hang all my possessions: a light, packed knapsack, and a carbine. Both are the unintentional gift of American imperialism. None among us has more. Something else, however, is ours: the love and comradeship of each other and of thousands more like us in a thousand huts across our country and of the masses of people to whom we are the hope of the future. That is more than enough to keep alive a man's body and his spirit —indefinitely if necessary.

With us, too, is the unquenchable memory of all those who have fallen in the present struggle, and who did not survive to see the final triumph but whose victory it shall be, nevertheless:

Vicente Lava, who disregarded the chemistry of his own body until he exhausted his strength making the movement strong.

Juan Feleo, treacherously assassi

nated while seeking to prevent the slaughter of which he became the first victim.

Manuel Joven, kidnapped and murdered by the agents of Roxas* for unifying the struggle of the city workers with that of the peasants.

Fernancio Sampang, who died in the forest for need of medical attention and whose very grave was hunted down and desecrated by the enemy.

Roman Maliuat, who was known to the people as Luna, then James, the courageous chief of our intelligence, who died by the guns of the enemy as an aftermath of the Quirino amnesty.

All of the hundreds of peasants, soldiers and civilians, who have died in the fields and barrios (villages). None will be forgotten; all will be remembered, all honored.

OUR friends in Manila refer to us as being "outside." That is incorrect terminology. For seven of the past eight years I have lived as I am living now, in the forests, in the swamps, wanted and hunted (with a price of 100,000 pesos on my head today, dead or alive), but never have I felt truly "outside." Rather, we are on the inside, close to the heart of the people. We are on the inside of the struggle. Whoever joins in the struggle today, whoever joins the people's movement, has an inside place in the most decisive events of our time. That is a proud and enviable role.

We do not live normally, of course. The life of a guerrilla has many strange features. The soldiers in the nearby huts, for instance, are sleeping in the day time—they do so because at night is the time they move. They are more contented with a moonless night than with the mid-day sun, for then they are unseen. The plain below changes hands at night: in the daytime it is an oppressed area, ruled by PC's and civilian guards, but when night falls it becomes a liberated region, where the people receive our soldiers with open arms.

Soon, when the sun of our victory comes, the day, too, will be ours.

It is also strange that a guerrilla is happiest when it rains, for then the countryside is deep with mud, then he is safest. The tanks and the armored cars and the PC boots stick in the mud and are useless, and the Huk can move freely, even during the day. "Huk weather," we say when the rain pours down, and we plan our movements.

We plan, too, for the day when rain to us will mean time for planting and hope for good crops.

By shifting my head just a little bit I can see, through the trees, a large section of Central Luzon. The plain is streaked with sun and with cloud shadows and I can see the barrios faintly in their clumps of trees, squeezed tightly on all sides by the rice fields. Each of those barrios I know, and there are many; I have

*Manuel Roxas, member of the Japanese puppet cabinet during the occupation, after the war became President of the Philippine Republic.

been in them, and I know their people. I can chart the path of my life, from barrio to barrio, as a fortune-teller might read the lines on the palm of my hand.

DURING the period of "amnesty" in 1948 I made the announcement to the press that I was a Communist. The workers and the peasants accepted the fact, but certain individuals expressed astonishment and consternation. They shouted that a foreign ideology had seized control of the peasant movement, and that I was carrying out the dictates of the Communists in the Soviet Union. If I had them here with me now I could show them the exact places where I learned to accept the logic and truth and the need of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

I could show them the exact places where I worked in the fields, the places where the constabulary shot down striking peasants, and the locations of the largest landed estates. I could point out a barrio and tell them how its people live, the possessions they have, the extent of their education, and how much of a chance they have to be happy. I could indicate the barrios where landlords ejected tenants before, and where the PC's shoot them now. I could show them Clark Field, where the American army owns a whole corner of Pampanga for 99 years. I would prove that any ideology that would better the lives of the people is foreign to those who rule and exploit the people.

There are Communists everywhere because there is exploitation everywhere, except where the people led by the Communists have ended it. The tenant-farmer of Central Luzon is the same as the tenant-farmer of Indo-China, or of India, or of the state of Mississippi, the same as the peasant of old Tsarist Russia, or of the old China. All have been exploited in the same way. It is not surprising, then, that they should all arrive at the same answer for ending their exploitation. The millionaire imperialist of Wall Street is the twin brother of Chiang Kai-shek or of an Andrés Soriano or of a millionaire plantation owner in Malaya. They all act together and have the same beliefs. By the same token, the people of all countries are the same, and the Communists they produce are alike. I am not a Communist because of what happened in Russia: I am a Communist because of what has happened and still is happening in the Philippines.

The peasants in the barrios below me are Filipinos, but they are brothers in toil to the Chinese peasant and to the American factory worker. No struggle by any of us is isolated. The freedom of the Filipino people from the American imperialists will be a blow for the emancipation of the American workers, just as the victory of the Chinese people over their imperialists and feudal rulers was a triumph for the Filipino peasant and a warning to their oppressors.

Here in this small hut on the side of a mountain, looking out upon the soil that bred me, upon the land

of the people of whom I was born, I complete this book, which is more their record than mine. The struggle of which I have written, and to which I have tried to contribute, is still not completed, but it will be, and the people will triumph.

How many men in our history have lived as I do now, in hidden places, fighting for liberty from our forests and mountains? Diego Silang, Juan de la Cruz Palaris, Apolinario de la Cruz, Francisco Mangio, del Pilar and Malvar—our history rings with the names of those who fought for a free Philippines, untrammeled by tyranny. Their unfinished struggles will be completed in ours.

The sun is going down. The squadron awakes. I must go. In the barrios the people are waiting for us.

It is necessary now to get on with the work that needs to be done.

"Help Prevent This Crime" is the title of this poster on the Rosenberg case, issued in Mexico City. Thousands of copies have been pasted on walls in the city streets. The drawing is the collective work of that group of extraordinary artists, the Taller de Grafica Popular. Below the drawing is an appeal to Mexicans to request President Truman to halt the execution.


SALE
Robert Minor

ARTIST AND PEOPLE'S LEADER

'Fighting Bob' Minor

By JOSEPH NORTH

I WAS a neighbor of Bob Minor's for the past twelve years and I hastened to the Ossining Hospital when I heard he had been stricken. I stood in the dim, scrubbed corridor and I could see him on his narrow white cot in the general ward, amid the plain folk he loved so well, a great mound of a man beneath the sheets, his lean Texan face growing paler as he fought through the long hours to a flitting instant of consciousness to murmur the names of Steve Nelson and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.

It had taken the angina pectoris five years to kill him. He fought it with the dogged gallantry that was his way for the best part of his sixty-eight years. He spent his vitality (enormous even in his deadly illness) at tireless labors in the defense of his comrades who are in the dock on Smith Act indictments. He spared no hour of the day or night at this work.

I know. For daily I passed his home, the rambling, shingled house behind the maples on the high hill, and many a time after midnight, when I would return from the city I would look through the tangle of branches and see the glow of lamplight in his study. It was good to see that light, for I felt all of us were safer so long as it burned, so long as Bob was alive to give us the riches of his enormous experience and wonderful talents.

As he lay dying, I thought of the first time I had seen him. He was down then, too, on the hard granite of the pavement outside New York's City Hall. A dozen sweating policemen kicked at his great, bald skull until he was unconcious. We tried to get to him when a troop of horse-cops charged. They dragged him through the door into the shadows of the City Hall basement. It was an unemployed demonstration in 1930. They virtually fractured his skull that time, but he bounced back to work, his head in bandages, within a few days. I knew then why thousands loved him and called him Fighting Bob as they saw him so many times stand his ground before the charge of the police, shouting in his booming voice not to give way.

In those last hours I thought of the times I had seen him in Spain, radi-

antly cheerful in the darkest moments. He would clap on his big felt hat with its hint of the Texas sombrero and walk out into the night during the air-raids as the searchlights criss-crossed the sky, listening to the people in the doorways and speaking with them. I remembered his way with workers who would come, haggard, worried, to the offices of the International Labor Defense in the early Thirties and how he would take their hands in his big paw, bend low to listen to every word with that rapt intentness that was his when he was with workers. Every workingman, to him, was an ambassador from his class, none too obscure for his unflagging attention.

I remembered his way with children, his wonderful love for all children he knew, those of his neighbors, his friends, his comrades, those who were named for him and those who were strangers. How many times had I seen him get down on all fours and scramble about on the floor, play-acting as though he was one with them. He would tell them magnificent tales, always of heroes and giants of good, and they sat on his lap with shining faces. They loved the big bear of a man with the bright, reddish-brown eyes.

THIS scion of America's founders, who numbered among his ancestors Mildred Washington, the aunt of George Washington, was fierce as a panther in defense of his Party. He loved it as the greatest assembly of patriots in his revered homeland. "*Our Par-ty,*" he would say, dividing the word into two sonorous syllables as though he were savoring the sound. The Party was the quintessence of all that was good in America, in the globe, the vehicle on which mankind would ride from the Kingdom of Necessity to the Realm of Freedom.

He became the greatest cartoonist America had produced—a judgment confirmed by many eminent artists themselves, men like the late Boardman Robinson and John Sloan, like Bob's co-workers Fred Ellis who learned from him, and Bill Gropper and Hugo Gellert. He was an American Daumier, or, as Mike Gold called him, a Michelangelo of the cartoon.

He was also one of our greatest reporters. Go back and read his "I Got Arrested a Little," his "Wars of West Virginia," his magnificent credo when he became a Communist, "I Change My Mind a Little." His words had the ferocious bite of his drawings and added up to the massive, overwhelming quality of his cartoons, like "Exodus from Dixie" or "The Evolution of the American Peasant."

He combined these gifts to become perhaps the nation's foremost champion of laboring men and women, Negro and white, who had been thrown into prison because they worked for freedom. His job in the Mooney case saved the A.F.L. labor organizer from the gallows. Later he was the Communist representative in the defense of the nine Negro Scottsboro Boys. I was a witness to his driving, imaginative, con-

fident—forever confident—work in that case. And there were too many other cases to name here.

Nor is that all. He was orator, organizer, and editor, a Paul Bunyan who yet was a Jimmy Higgins. No job was too big or too little for him.

BOB Minor was born in San Antonio, Tex., on July 16, 1884, into a family of impoverished upper-class Virginians, who had left the Tidelands to emigrate to Texas. His father, who had studied law, felt, along with others of his generation, that he had to pull stakes and move West to make a go of it. He drifted into schoolteaching, and later was elected to the office of district judge. During the first years of Bob's youth the family was dirt poor although its cultural tradition was rich. Bob got only four years of formal schooling, but there was much talk around the lamp of an evening, talk of Shakespeare, Plutarch, Gibbon. His mother, a hard-working, practical woman, early confided her tribulations to young Bob, who felt obliged to leave school and help the family's exchequer.

San Antonio those days was bang-bang frontier land, and I recall Bob's stories of the Indian chiefs he met as a child, and of the picaresque Jesse James characters of the old Southwest. But there was more. Many of the German revolutionary refugees of '48 settled in the flat country down there, publishing progressive newspapers in German. The dusty dry plains of the Alamo heard the names of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, and early in his life, Bob heard about Socialism.

The young Texan took the jobs all the children of the poor take: he clerked at a hardware store, ran errands, was a Postal Telegraph messenger. In his early teens he learned carpentering, and became a member of the AFL Carpenters Union in 1903. His big hands loved the feel of the hammer and the clean bite of the saw into the resinous wood. Early he became fascinated by the art of the sign-painter, for in those imaginative frontier days, before the juggernaut of commercialism had flattened out all folk craft, signs were really signs.

"I remember I saw a man painting," he told me once. "It was a big red whale-boat and a crew, rowing hard against huge green waves. I stood for hours watching the man, fascinated." The youngster wanted to draw but in those days of the Southwest the artist's craft was "lady's work". "No he-man was supposed to be an artist."

Sign-painting was different. He got a job in a made-over stable where they painted the panels on wagons. The older men taught the apprentices, using the planks of the floor as guides to lettering. Bob learned the art of lettering which many of us remember in his notes that could only be his: the carefully rounded A's and B's, each wrought as finely as the Latin characters on an illuminated manuscript of the Middle Ages. He could do nothing carelessly.

As big at fifteen as he was at forty, he worked the railroads. An old Irishman with a corn-cob pipe

watched him at one of his first road jobs and, at an appropriate moment, took him aside: "Boy, you won't last a day like that," he advised. "Learn to smoke a pipe, like this, and when the going gets too hard, just lean over and tamp it on your heel, like this, and fill it, slow-like, like this, and catch your breath." Bob understood. In these early days he sensed that there were two classes of men, those out to sweat others to death, and the others who must struggle to preserve their very life's breath.

One day, walking home on the flat, dusty plain after work, a team pulled by many mules, a big freight-wagon, halted at his side. The driver, an aging, gnarled man, leaned down. "You a working-man?" he asked. The flattered boy replied quickly in the affirmative, and the man said: "All right, jump on. I'll give you a ride. I only give rides to working-men." And the old fellow talked to Bob of socialism.

That was the first time.

THERE was always the lure of art, the impulse to set down on paper the essence of the life he saw about him. When he discovered that cartooning was man's work, he went around to the San Antonio *Gazette* and got a job that included everything from sweeping up the floor, delivering the paper to newsboys, putting the paper to bed, all for the sake of doing some drawings. Here he learned the mechanics of his craft.

By the time he was eighteen he spread his wings, and was off to St. Louis. Here he got a room in a boarding house, found work painting colored labels on jars in a cannery, living on incredibly small pay.

He broke his way into the big-time newspaper world by drawing a picture of bear cubs at the St. Louis zoo, which he sent to the *Post Dispatch*. The Pulitzer paper printed the life-like drawing which made a hit with the readers and he had his job. He accompanied reporters on assignments, pulled out his drawing pad as they interviewed, stood off to a side, hunching his big frame over to be as inconspicuous as possible, and sketched away.

In those days before newspaper photography was perfected, the city editor sent him down to the morgue, early in the morning before breakfast, to make drawings of the corpses—shot, drowned or naturally dead—on the marble slabs. That done, Bob would snatch a meager breakfast, and hurry to the office where the city editor scanned his teeming sketch-books, his fifteen, twenty drawings, to choose one or two for the day's stories.

"It was decidedly unappetizing work for a big kid with a big appetite," Bob told me, "but it was first-rate training." Three years of this and O. K. Bovard, the famous city editor, recognized the youngster's genius and put him to work drawing the daily cartoon. National fame came shortly afterward.

When he was twenty-three he came to know a real, live Socialist, a man by the name of Leo Caplan, who had

read and studied Marx. "I was amazed at his wide knowledge and his skill in trying to find out everything that was in my head and straightening out my ideas," Bob says in one of the chapters of his unfinished autobiography. "My admiration and love of him surpassed that of any other friendship I had ever known."

Bob recalled the exact circumstances and the mood of the day that he joined the Socialist Party. Every Monday, a pay-day, he stopped at the old post office on Eighth and Olive Street to buy a money order for five dollars to send to his mother. One day in August of 1907,

> "I lingered a little longer at the standup writing desk in the post office corridor in order to say in my letter to my mother that I had become intensely interested in the subject [socialism], that it opened up an amazingly new perspective in life and that I would probably join the Socialist Party. A week later I received from my father a letter warning me of the errors of socialism and a copy of Henry

Child Labor

Daily Worker, Dec. 22, 1924

George's *Progress and Poverty.* I sat up reading it, that old bible of the dusty radicals of the 1880's and 1890's. Two nights I lay awake and read and I said that's wrong; that's rotten. The next day, about September 1, 1907, having just turned twenty-three, I went to the office of *Labor* during my lunch hour, made out an application and took from Otto Paul a little red card of membership in the Socialist Party. I walked on air for many days, with a permanent smile on my face and lively new thoughts running through my head. To every real friend I had I showed that red card: it was a beautiful deep red."

BOB became a Socialist at a time when great tides of social thought swept across America in the 1907 "Panic." The Moyer-Haywood-Pettibone case was agitating labor; Bob drew up leaflets and ranged the hot streets of St. Louis with his frontiersman's stride, distributing them. By the time he was twenty-four he was a member of the city council of the Socialist Party.

This was a time of education and Bob, already recognized as the foremost cartoonist in the country, read everything he could lay hands on. He began to perfect the technique that changed the course of American cartooning. Drawings were made with the point of the pen—you have seen the work of Art Young, for example, the best in that style, called the cross-patch by cartoonists, where shadow is indicated by lines criss-crossing each other. The furious elements in Bob needed something more massive than this, and he took a crayon, applied it to rough paper, worked at his cartoons like a painter, catching a new dimension of depth, giving his characters and background shading and new perspectives, that vast quality which is so uniquely his. He could make a picture trail off into infinity and his contrasts were as sharp as the contrasts of life that he had observed.

The younger Pulitzer, Ralph, then in charge of the dynasty's New York newspapers, sent Bob to the metropolis. He was there a short time when he left to study in Paris in 1913. He enrolled at the Beaux Arts, and soon discovered that he could not brook the teachings of the academicians. In Paris he became acquainted with the anarcho-syndicalists of the French labor movement and was strongly attracted to their ideas. He had, in 1912, quit the Socialist Party when its New York leaders, with the minds of shopkeepers and pettifogging lawyers, expelled Big Bill Haywood from national leadership. Ignorant in America of the genuine Marxists of the Lenin-Stalin type of tsarist Russia, he was drawn by what he regarded as the more vigorous, more proletarian movement of the anarchists.

WHEN war broke out in 1914, Bob was working on the New York *Evening World.* His powerful anti-war cartoons were immensely popular, but after a year or so, Bob's line became unpopular with the editors. Soon they sought a way to put him on the shelf. That was the practice then. You did not fire an outstanding but obstreperous man; you

kept his contract and left him on ice until you thought his public had forgotten him. Bob devised a way to break his contract. He drew a cartoon for an anarchist publication, *Mother Earth,* and had a friend send it into the editor's office with a horrified scribble: "Is this the Robert Minor who draws for you?" That terminated his work with the Pulitzers.

Bob was now drawing for the *Masses* and the Socialist New York *Call.* In 1915, he was accredited by the Newspaper Enterprise Association to go to Europe as a war correspondent and artist. He traversed the war-weary, bloodied roadway of France and Italy and saw the hideous face of war for profit at first hand. Then he returned to the United States and went to Mexico to cover Blackjack Pershing's expedition designed to browbeat the revolutionary Mexican government. He came back up through the western route to Los Angeles.

While he was in Los Angeles, he received a wire urging him to come to San Francisco to head the defense of a workingman framed on murder charges. The wire was sent by a gifted artist and poet named Lydia Gibson. Tom Mooney, a brave, militant organizer of the streetcar men, a Socialist, had been indicted with four others on the charge of exploding the bomb on Market Street during the Preparedness Day parade, July 22, 1916. Seven persons had been killed and twenty injured.

Bob left for San Francisco that night. His experiences in the Mooney case form one of the completed chapters of his autobiography—as magnificent a story as I have ever read: brilliantly vivid, politically prescient, with his remarkable eye for detail, it tells a tale of duplicity that is staggering.

Bob Minor learned his lessons about justice as it is dispensed in the jungle of capitalism and he never forgot them. He fought back, tiger-fierce, pursuing every clue leading to the proof of Mooney's innocence.

During the trial of Mooney's fellow-victim, Warren K. Billings, photographs showing Mooney and his wife Rena watching the Preparedness Day parade from the roof of a building were in the hands of the prosecution, but were not introduced as evidence. The roof was that of the Eilers Building, which was located a mile and a quarter from the scene of the explosion. Bob observed that the photographs contained a tiny street clock, the size of half the diameter of a pin-head, whose face was blurred and the hands obliterated. He saw to it that the defense attorneys fought to get the negatives and they finally did. The clock's face was blown up three thousand times larger until the hands stood out straight and clear—2.01—proving that Mooney could not possibly have been at the scene of the explosion when the prosecution said he was.

He put it all down on paper in a pamphlet—*The Frame-up System*—that finally reached a circulation of 2,000,000 and went around the world. Before he and his associates were

through, workers were marching on the streets of a dozen foreign capitals shouting "Free Tom Mooney," and Woodrow Wilson had to intervene to save him from the hangman.

THERE is a poignant chapter in his autobiography that describes Bob's meeting with Mooney after the death verdict and after the various proofs by the defense that Mooney was innocent. Mooney was overjoyed at the exposés by the defense, but he had not yet grasped the enormity of the forces determined to kill him. It was Bob's painful task to set Mooney straight:

"In the jail Tom grabbed my hand through the bars and said: 'Bob, what do you say? I think we ought to act quickly now to get a big tour arranged—for me to speak in Chicago, New York, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and New York—in the biggest halls in all of the big towns.' The labor organizer was aflame with fight, confident that the exposés would win him a new trial and that the massed forces of American labor would speed to his defense. He asked how soon he would be out."

Tom repeated his question, a little more slowly this time, "What do you think, Bob?" He had believed his release on bond would be a matter of days.

"Tom," Bob said, "I think we have to adjust ourselves to a longer perspective than that."

"How long, Bob?"

"I think, Tom, it's going to be a long and hard fight. It's going to be more than just a few days that we could count on now. I think, Tom, that we have to be ready to adjust ourselves to a fight that may last and be measured in years. We know what kind of a fight it is. What has happened? It has been absolutely proven that you are innocent. But didn't they know that before? Doesn't every son-of-a-bitch in every law court, police station, bank and editorial office know that you are innocent, and haven't they known it for many months?"

Mooney, as Bob relates, was desperately clutching at all the straws, the howling facts of the exposés. "How can they hold me?" he asked incredulously. And Bob gently, slowly, choosing his words carefully, outlined the truth to him; that "we have been operating with a thin layer of the labor movement so far." The defense hadn't yet won the big majority for real action to get Tom and Billings out. "We'll have that majority now, but only if we fight like hell—harder than ever before."

"Tom's face was rippling like the surface of a lake under a heavy wind. There was a contraction of muscles like those of a man in great pain; but that passed . . ." After a few more despairing questions, Mooney's face "settled into hard jaw-set lines again" as he saw the full truth.

Then, as Bob recalls, "We settled down and had a long talk about the campaign in the trade-unions from coast to coast . . ."

That was 1916. Twenty-three years later Mooney walked out of prison, a free man, walked down Market Street, San Francisco, while thousands wept and cheered on the sidewalks and the first person Tom kissed was Bob Minor.

BOB, a seasoned fighting man of 34, was in Russia after October, when John Reed, Albert Rhys Williams, Col. Raymond Robbins were there. Bob interviewed Lenin for the New York *World*—he was one of the first foreign correspondents to interview the great leader of the Revolution. And in socialist Russia he saw, with his own sharp, questioning eyes, that a new era in mankind's history had begun. "The whole beautiful land," he wrote a friend in New York, "is even more glorious than I had thought and no one should stay away from here a minute . . . It is better than the dreams." He exhorted his friends back home to aid the beleaguered young republic in every way possible.

On his return, he passed through Germany and back to Paris and one day went down to the headquarters of the railroad workers and made a speech. He told them of the new workers' country and that they would be cutting their own throats and mankind's if they loaded the freight-cars with munitions for the White Guards. The next day, at breakfast in his little French pension, three dicks walked in and took him to headquarters.

They bundled him off to Coblenz, headquarters of the American military occupation, and confined him to the medieval fortress, not saying whether he was indicted, what the charges were, why he was arrested, nothing. His account of this episode in the *Liberator*, "I Got Arrested a Little," is a gem. Finally he ascertained that he was being held on charges for which the military judge advocate would demand the death penalty.

But the news got out; French, British and Italian working-class newspapers were full of "L'Affaire Minor," and mass presure—which he understood so well as the only safeguard for Mooney's life—worked for him. Shortly after the armistice was signed, Woodrow Wilson dropped the charges after he was advised by men like Lincoln Steffens that it would be unseemly, in the moonglow of the Fourteen Points, to hang America's best known cartoonist.

Bob returned to the States and toured the country, speaking to masses of workers, professionals, anybody who would listen, telling them that it was a crime against humanity to sanction our State Department's policy of throttling the new republic. Drawings, articles, poured from his pen, but he had not as yet rid himself of certain reservations about the Soviet regime and the Communist Party. These were hangovers of his anarchist years, and he told the story with magnificent honesty in his "I Change My Mind A Little."

He wrote that he felt he could not answer all the questions of the audiences to which he spoke; that he was unclear himself. Somehow, he said, he felt the workers were dissatisfied with the speeches. "Slowly I began to sense in the Labor masses a current as profound as the tides of the sea. I was bothered with the elusive impression that a great natural law was

at work which I did not understand." He was never the one to stay bothered with an elusive impression. "There couldn't be anything the matter with a natural law, so I thought there must be something the matter with me."

He settled down in some out-of-the way place to study "and to discover what was the matter with my understanding of the Russian Revolution. I took with me the three heavy volumes of Marx's Capital." He discovered that his knowledge of Marxism was sketchy, that he understood only its broadest, general principles.

At this moment someone handed him an English translation of Lenin's work, *State and Revolution.* It was a turning-point in his life and he remembered "with chagrin" that he had never read that book. He re-read it four times. He discovered that Lenin's book took as its starting point Frederick Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.* He studied that. And the last of his "elusive impressions" vanished.

He contrasted Lenin with Prince Kropotkin, "my Prophet," whom he had seen in Moscow in the spring of 1918, "the dark days when the Revolution staggered in the bravest fight that men have ever seen, under the heaviest blows that the world has ever rained upon the prostrate defenders of an ideal. I found Kropotkin surrounded by American YMCA boys, who addressed him as 'Prince' and his sole concern was that 'Allied democracy should win.' I went away sadly pondering on what could be the matter with a man who let himself be called Prince."

Bob's article closed with the sentence: "I withdraw every reservation that I made in my praise of the Russian Soviet Republic." In August, 1920, he joined the Communists of the United States and remained a leading figure of the party to his dying day.

HE WAS a geyser of energy, the cartoons, articles, speeches, pouring from him in an incessant stream. He traveled the country as a master reporter, illustrating his own pieces. To Albany, to cover the expulsion of the Socialist assemblymen in "Dissolving the Duma at Albany"; to West Virginia, to cover the coal miners' strikes and the murders of the Felts-Baldwin gunmen in the "Wars of West Virginia"; to Shamokin, Pa., to cover the hunger in the hard-coal country in "The Outlaws Are At It Again"; to Minneapolis, to cover a meeting of the farm cooperatives; to Chicago to see Big Bill Haywood about the Wobblies and get the low-down on the defection of Harold Lord Varney in "The Great Flop."

Varney, a figure of some reputation in intellectual circles of that time, had fled to the New York *World* with an "expose" of the I.W.W., after he was indicted for criminal syndicalism. Bob's sulphurous scorn for the cowardice of renegacy poured into this piece: "Varney decided that the IWW is just an exciting adventure for young fellows, a sort of 'pirate game' for boys, and that when it begins to rain and get dark, and

the crickets begin to sing, the bats to flutter and the ghosts to hover in the shadows, it's time for little boys to come in to mother and be tucked safely in bed—with the mangy hag, Capitalism, acting the role of 'Mother'."

When the Communist Party headquarters moved to Chicago, Bob, now married to Lydia Gibson, moved too. He was already a top leader of the Communist movement. Lydia and Bob lived on the South Side of Chicago and it was here that the Texan, whose father's father fought for the Confederacy, began to realize the gigantic scope of the Negro question, its central, decisive significance in the struggle for America's freedom.

His article, "Ten Million Negroes," in the February, 1924, issue of the *Liberator,* of which he had become editor, reflects his growing awareness. "The Black Man," he wrote, "has a culture of his own: his musici-

The Unemployed

Daily Worker, Dec. 20, 1924

ans, his poets, novelists, actors, students, his bourgeoisie, his scientific men and—his apostles for liberty." He continued his study of the Marxist-Leninist view of the national question, covered the meetings of the Garvey movement, the conventions of the NAACP, studied the history of slave revolts, and became a foremost Communist spokesman on this question.

But Bob was not one to separate theory from practice. Every Friday night he marched down the streets of Chicago's South Side with a handful of his comrades, Lydia at his side, and set up a speakers' stand in the heart of the Negro neighborhood, placed on it a huge easel with a colored map of Africa, and lectured on imperialism's stakes in the great, rich continent. The crowds grew larger and larger, and the police grew more apprehensive. The cops began to charge the platform, smashing the meetings, inciting white hooligans to come down and attack the speakers.

That was the way life went in Chicago, where Bob was also an editor of the newly-founded *Daily Worker,* of which he became chief editor when it moved to New York. He was editor when the stock market crashed. Then came March 6, 1930. He was on the platform in Union Square with William Z. Foster, Israel Amter, and other Communist leaders before a crowd of 110,000. Minor, Foster, Amter and Harry Raymond were hustled off to prison when they went down to City Hall to try to see Mayor Jimmy Walker. They served six-month sentences on Welfare Island because they were spokesmen for the hungering millions who demanded relief.

AFTER Bob's release came the Scottsboro case. Here again, basing himself upon the experience in the Mooney case, Bob played a major role. He was in and out of a thousand offices of trade-unions and Negro organizations, North, South, East and West, with his message, his party's message, that the youths could be saved. Representing the party in the International Labor Defense, he helped devise the tactics and strategy for the defense of the innocent Negro victims—both in the courtroom and on the streets of America and the world.

Then, in early 1937 came Spain. Here I saw Bob again at work. He was 53 now, a tall man in a beret who traveled to the fronts, seeking out the boys of the Lincoln-Washington battalions, and sending his penetrating political analyses to the group of working-class newspapers he represented. Often after one of his grueling visits to the fronts, I would come upon him in the middle of the night in his hotel room, under a dim light poring over Spanish textbooks, learning the language by translating the classics, marking passages of Cervantes and *The Cid* in that red and blue pencil of his.

I was with him the day he went up to Belchite. He drove day and night across the mountains, afire with impatience to find the American

who had won the historic victory, reducing the fortress town in the Aragon that was regarded as impregnable. Hour after hour he drove, speaking to me in Spanish, telling of the grandeur of republican Spain. As we approached the highland front, nosing through a dense fog, a small, chilled sentry in a shawl halted us.

Bob addressed him with that same deference I had witnessed in the early I.L.D. days when he talked to the families of men who had gone to prison for striking. The sentry suggested that we wait until dawn before proceeding because *los fascistas* were a few hundred yards off there to the right and we might blunder into their terrain in this fog. Bob carefully asked for exact directions to avoid the blunder and explained that we could not wait, we had to find the Lincolns.

"Claro," the sentry said, saluting. "I understand." We reached the fork in the roads the sentry had described, and Bob emerged from the car, looked carefully to the right and left, peering into the fog, then climbed back in and proceeded until we came upon the Lincolns bivouaced in an olive grove. He had determined to find them before they moved up again and he did.

And I remember his infinitely tender concern for the wounded, his profound pride and love for them. It was here that he found Steve Nelson, grievously wounded after his brilliant work as a lieutenant colonel in the International Brigades. That was the beginning of Bob's deep friendship for Steve.

SO BOB worked through the years and one day, in 1947, after taking an active part in defending the Negro victims of Columbia, Tenn., he had a heart attack. For five years he was confined to his home, advised by the doctor that more than one trip down the stairs of his home might prove fatal. I saw him often then, a big gray cap over his shining bald head, his eyes gleaming bright as always, working at his autobiography.

He put that aside, in the main—though he continued working at it in his spare hours—when the first twelve Communist leaders were arrested by the government under the Smith Act. And for more than three years he devoted himself to their defense and that of all the others who were subsequently arrested. The men and women in the dock knew that he was living on borrowed time—time given unstintingly to their defense, the defense of the rights of all Americans.

And the lawyers, as Harry Sacher said at the funeral services in St. Nicholas Arena, discovered in him a layman who knew constitutional law as well as the foremost authorities; but more than that, he was a working-class leader who knew that every case of this sort was a political case and that we must fight it as a political case and not, as the prosecution would have it, a criminal one.

Each case was a manifestation of class forces and must be regarded—in every move in the court—in that light. Yes, master every legal technicality, but never forget that these courts are instruments of capitalism and the judges will never hesitate to break a legal code to win a class battle. Everything Bob did, in these cases, was designed to appeal to the mind of the higher court, the supreme court—the people of the land. And at that he worked to his dying day.

THUS a great artist and fighter lived and died. Yes, it was a major loss that he put aside his crayon in the middle Twenties to fight with other weapons. Yet always and everywhere the same magnificent compulsions that made him the great artist moved in him as orator, organizer, writer, leader.

How would you sum up this man? He would want you to say: *"Here is a Communist."* That was the highest praise he would give a man, and that would be the praise he would want for himself.

Something he wrote back in 1920 gives us the essence of the man. It was a piece he wrote on attending an exhibit of drawings by Boardman Robinson, his colleague on the *Liberator,* who died a few months ago. The piece was called "Man (X) His Mark."

Bob describes the show-window of a dinky art store in Paris:

"A piece of paper, torn and turning yellow, bearing the name: Daumier. The piece of paper shouts at you, and laughs and tells . . . you to love and hope—yes, and to hate them that don't love . . . Yes, it tells you to live and breed and fight; and maybe, to die. Oh, that picture invades your ears and your lungs and your loins and your biceps and plays with your meat as it wills; and it walks into your heart without asking, and picks up the muscles in the most disconcerting way, and pulls and stretches them around the heart till the blood pumps and surges and you can hardly get your breath, as if you'd been fighting or loving. 'Daumier.' That means: 'Man (X) His Mark' " . . .

"All mankind draws all pictures," Bob wrote. "What does the name 'Daumier' mean in the corner of that piece of paper? Why, that's just the name of the hand with which mankind drew."

Robert Minor, too, was the name of the hand with which mankind drew—and wrote, and fought, and battered at prison walls, and tore at the chains of slavery, and beat against the steel of tanks and cannon.

Yes, and that built—with that magnificent artist's hand of his—the shining palaces of tomorrow, the shape of which can already be seen on the plains and mountains of one third of the world.

Workers of the World, Unite!

Daily Worker, 1926


HEAVEN
OFFICE
CIVIC LEAGUE
RECOMMENDING
Robert Minor

British Imperialism
AMERICAN IMPERIALISM
AUSTRIAN IMPERIALISM
IMPERIALISM

Exodus from Dixie

The Liberator, June, 192

Capitalism: "Hey, there, you're taking one-sixth of the world?"
Labor: "Yes, and the job's not finished yet!"

Daily Worker, April 26, 1924

Two Poems

By REWI ALLEY

THE ACCUSED

With all those bombs
Bought by gangsters
Paid for by working people
Dropped by able, well set up young men
Jokingly,
    come
Statistics of results
    easily remembered
Forty-five per cent women
Thirty-three per cent children
    who could not
Hit back; who held no guns
    in their hands
Who wanted only peace
    to live and work.
        who is most guilty?
        think over it!
        who permitted it?
        who is cashing in on it?
        think hard
        think fast . . . you
        the accused.

Kids in schools
Women washing clothes by streams
Old ladies standing by their homes
Peasant children minding animals,
Would that we could take all their pitiful corpses
Pile them up high against the doors of UNO
Line the corridors of the White House with them
So that their very stench would bring understanding,
Fill every treacherous Wall Street office with them

pile them in elevators
in penthouse gardens
in luxurious bathrooms
in swanky cars

Torn, ripped bodies
That loved and toiled
Were blasted and soiled
by you
The Accused.

BACTERIA

infected flies, infected ants
infected rats, infected thanks

to our Lord God for profit made
out of corpses neatly laid
awaiting earth from a burial spade
in Korea.

then a leer, now a sneer, for all the things
good men hold dear

sweet arms of children around
a peasant mother's neck; creative eyes
with fire in them; clean
suntanned limbs, building bridges; laughter
ringing through the morning calm.

poison that spreads in children's heads
children of those
whose power goes in teaching men
to spread typhoid in rivers
where kids on a summer's day
swim and shout in cheerful play
in Korea.

we are too near, so very near, to the madness
that will do from fear,
anything; yet do we know that germs

can retrace their steps, back into
Presidential palaces, crawl up fat legs
under swivel chairs, then among pampered babies
in nurseries; into all those places where now

infected eyes, look in surprise
on a woman who dies
in Korea; surprise
then sheer boredom; for it's good business
you know; it would be quite a blow
to stop it,
in Korea.

for though the germs on lice are not quite nice
nor the saliva that drools
from the lips of fools, hogging loot,
yet ours is ours, and we want yours as well
we need it, you know, and are rather surprised
you object

so reasons many an infected brain
that would kill and kill, and kill again
in Korea, in all Koreas.

forcing the common man to stand
and stop the spread of poison that may
carelessly spread
leaving countless dead
not only
in Korea.

Rewi Alley is a New Zealand poet who is widely known as a pioneer cooperative worker in China.

Letters from Prison

BOOKS, BASEBALL AND BIRTHDAYS

By GUS HALL

We publish below excerpts from personal letters written by one of our country's outstanding political prisoners, Gus Hall, national secretary of the Communist Party. The letters were written to his wife, Elizabeth, and his fourteen-year-old daughter, Barbara, from the federal prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. These excerpts deal in the main with cultural questions.

Hall is one of the eight Communist leaders now serving five-year sentences after being framed up and convicted under the Smith Act in the notorious first Foley Square trial in New York in 1949. He was later sentenced to an additional three years after Mexican secret police, working under instructions of the F.B.I., kidnapped him in Mexico City and delivered him to J. Edgar Hoover's Gestapomen.

Gus Hall is a son of the American working class. Born in Minnesota in 1910, *he left school after the eighth grade to go to work as a lumberjack and on the railroads. He early became active in the trade union and Communist movements. In the thirties he was one of the principal organizers of the CIO Steel Workers Organizing Committee, headed by the late Philip Murray. During the war he served in the Navy in the Pacific theatre.*

The Arvo referred to in these excerpts is Hall's five-year-old son.

DEAR ELIZABETH:

. . . After reading the raving reviews in the press of Hemingway's new novel, *The Old Man and the Sea,* I was very much interested to read it. To me it was a big disappointment. It can almost be put in the class of a technical book on the art of fishing. It is not symbolic of anything, it does not mirror or reflect the life of any land, people, group or section.

In fact, it has no positive social significance of any kind. It is a representative product only of the present-day Hemingway. He has isolated himself in the hills of Cuba and he writes that he has cut off even his yacht from radio or newspapers.

The Old Man and the Sea is a slumber-on-feather-bed product. Because of his past writings, the publishers and reviewers, I suppose, always worried a little about what his new novels would be like; and so when they get

such a meaningless empty piece as this they feel relieved and are so happy and write such raving reviews.

Some reviewers agree about its emptiness, but say it is beautifully written. I couldn't think of a sharper or more negative thing to say about a piece of literature. . . .

DEAR BARBARA:

. . . I received the very nice birthday cards from all of you. I also received the birthday painting of myself by that promising young artist from Saywell Avenue—Arvo. I think it is very nice.

With the coming of cooler weather I have increased my reading. Odd as it may seem, there is something to be said for and something to learn from prison reading. Of course, one reads more, and prison life lends itself to a consistent, systematic, seven-day-a-week reading. But even more important is how one reads. So often you hear people say how they got so much more from a book on a rereading. It is only testimony to haphazard reading in the first place.

Too often speed seems to be the important thing. It is how many books you read and not *how* you read—what do you get out of a book. In prison one is not in a hurry. There is no place to go, so the aim is to pass time. The difference between prison reading and reading on the outside is like that between just every day dusting around the house and a complete spring house-cleaning. Here you have time to get at all the corners, all the hidden covered up spots in a book. One really reads a book from "kiver to kiver."

I don't know if it is so with other folks, but at least I used to kind of dust around a book. You know, skip over parts and generally plow through in great haste. Here I take my good old time. I stop to meditate over a thought, I reread a section, reflect and ponder over an idea. If I don't finish in September, I'll finish in October, or in 1953, etc.

I must say I get greater enjoyment from this kind of reading, especially of classical novels of greater depth. With the rush of present-day living, with radio, television, autos, movies, papers, comics, if you want to read, you have to have self-discipline and a plan of set hours for reading of books. Reading is a very important part of your growth and education that you will get only on a self-help basis.

We are still having nice weather here. I hope you are going to make Arvo a Hallowe'en pumpkin like we used to. He is old enough now to enjoy it.

DEAR ELIZABETH:

Well, my favorite season, autumn, is here in all its beauty and splendor. This time of the year I annually regret that I am not a painter. You must

take Barbara and Arvo to see the country. I hope the birthday cakes were good. Birthday parties without the guest present must seem more like memorial affairs than birthday parties, because then also the "guest" is not present.

I keep reading in the press about the harassment of teachers, especially of college professors. Considering the low wages to start with in this profession, one wonders if the concept expressed by the diseased and degraded mind of one of Dostoevsky's characters has not become a widely accepted outlook. He said, "I am a sick man. I am a spiteful man. Now I am living out my life in my corner, taunting myself with the spiteful consolation that an intelligent (educated) man cannot become anything—it is only fools who become anything. I am firmly persuaded that a great deal of consciousness, in fact, every sort of consciousness is a disease."

So it logically follows, why pay wages or respect "diseased" people; rather attack the alleged sickness, try to isolate it, destroy the books as germs. Dostoevsky's character could not see that consciousness and education in general appeared to him as a disease only because of his own sick and warped mind. Because of his own diseased mind he attacked everything healthy and decent. He also could not see that his disease was one of environment.

DEAR ELIZABETH:

. . . I have read with interest the reactions of the male species to a female having the unmitigated gall to sign up, of all things, to play baseball. What a horrible thing this little girl did! Managers of clubs threatened to resign, umpires stated they would not umpire, players said they would not play ball. The baseball bigwigs called hasty conferences, newspapers printed special editorials, sportswriters were speechless, boycotts and court actions were mentioned and words like "travesty," "impossible," "ridiculous," were used—all because a female wanted to play professional baseball.

Not wars, famines, presidential elections or taxes have aroused the male sex to such a high pitch of anger and indignation as did the action of this little girl in Harrisburg, Pa.

Now of course, we men are for full equality of sexes, but baseball happens to be one of those special fields of endeavour reserved for men only. As long as the female does not invade our special fields—why, we are for full equality. We even go so far with our liberalism that we do not any more throw stones at women when they play baseball—by themselves.

What a relief—after all the dust has settled down, the sportscasters victoriously and proudly announce the danger is over, the Harrisburg ball-club has gone on the road—the one female rebel has gone to her typewriter—back to the kitchen. Not so long ago there was a male protest against women using typewriters.

I suppose some psychoanalyist will come to our defense and say our male reactions flowed from our instinct of self-defense. Because, after all, once the women learn to swing the bat, who knows what they will swing at?

DEAR BARBARA:

Glad you got home all right. It was very nice to see you again. You should not give another thought to a few tears when you visit me. After all, a family get-together in a prison isn't the usual happening in our lives.

Did you happen to notice, in last Sunday's *Plain Dealer,* a photo and a news item about a pile of old dusty paintings someone found in a storeroom of the Public Auditorium of Cleveland? If I had money and I was in Cleveland I would bid to buy the whole dusty stock. They are the paintings of Cleveland artists, painted on a government unemployment relief project during the depression of the 30's.

I am sure in that dusty pile there are paintings by many of my old friends. Many of them are from the brush of able craftsmen who had national and world reputations, but were forced on relief. Others are by newcomers who have since mastered the art of the brush and won fame for themselves.

These paintings were not forgotten because of their quality, but rather because of their origin. Some thought these projects were the beginning of the end for creative art. Personally I think they were the cause for the greatest forward spurt of popular art in our history. It was sort of a blessing in disguise. It was an unfortunate hardship fo the artists, but a blessing for art.

These projects not only developed very many artists, but for a moment tore this cultural medium from the grip commercialism has on it. The artist was free to express on canvas not what the highest bidder wanted, but rather what he thought the people would enjoy and admire.

Because of this, in those years art came closer to depicting and expressing the real America than at any other time. The ivory towers came tumbling down and the artists mixed with and understood the common folk.

Of course, it is not necessary to have another depression for art to get such a boost. If the city council goes through with its plans and puts these paintings on display, go and see them and then write and tell me what your reactions are. One thing I'm sure of: there you will see, possibly not always the best colors and proportions and shadings, but the best reflection of those depression years on canvas anywhere.

DEAR ELIZABETH:

. . . Life is a great teacher, even of teachers. I read with great interest in the *Plain Dealer* the statement of the faculty of Oberlin College. When I spoke at the college in 1949, they all objected to the idea of any danger to academic freedom. However, one can't help but admire their courage. They

echo a very deep feeling by the masses of our people.

Now that fall is here I hope Arvo has a football. He should make a good football player with his broad shoulders.

Let me know how Arvo takes his first days in school.

DEAR BARBARA:

. . . Most people must be glad that this election campaign is over. I know that this campaign has set at least one new record—for verbosity. To that profound observation I would only add what a newspaper man said about the speeches of one of our illustrious ancestors running for office around the crucial days of 1863. He said: "His speeches are like a train: twenty passenger cars, a lot of noise, whistles blowing, brakes squeaking, smoke and steam blowing in all directions, and when it comes to a halt—one lonely passenger steps out."

DEAR ELIZABETH:

It is always saddening to hear the news of the passing away of someone with whom you have had personal contact. And so it is with the news of the death of Philip Murray, even though I had not seen him for many years. I got to know Murray as a co-worker during the earliest and stormiest years of the steelworkers' union. In such close contact one gets to know each other's more private thoughts.

Many will remember him for his work during those early days of the CIO. In my memory these sentiments will be mixed with the unalterable fact that he did not have the courage of his convictions about social problems. To gain prestige, for personal comfort, for honor and to keep in step, he paid the highest possible price any one can pay—he buried the convictions he had arrived at early in life as a youth in the coal fields of Scotland.

Murray rose into prominence in the period of the New Deal. Now it seems that the era and the man, both given birth to by our people as a by-product of the economic and political crisis of the early thirties, pass away together after twenty years on the stage of history. Future historians, with the advantage of telescopes of greater depth and width that only separation of time can give, will I am sure chalk down these two score years as very important.

Many future developments in the life of our people will be traced to the roads imbedded in the events of the past twenty years. Like the contributions of every person in public life, history will evaluate objectively, critically, but will be generous with any praise due those like Phil Murray, the young Scot coalminer, who during the days of the New Deal was raised to the leadership of the steelworkers and the CIO . . .

DEAR BARBARA:

. . . I suppose, Barbara, you have not yet read Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. While it was on the shelf there, I only breezed through it before. Now I have spent some time with old Walt. It seems we both have time for it now.

As they say in the songs, "I have mixed emotions over" Walt. Without question he is the conscience, the poetic ghost of the best sentiments, dreams and hopes of the America of a hundred years ago. His poems tie together the spirit, the thoughts of the people of 1776—the war for an independent nation, with those of his time, especially with the Civil War years. He was a grass-roots poet. He spoke for the man on the street and the man behind the plow handle. Walt's poetry reflected the wide open spaces, the great outdoors, the health and vigor of a new land, a new democracy. His words hammer for brotherhood and friendship.

He was an enemy of tyranny and oppression of every kind, a foe of conceit, of self-righteousness and fakery: To question is a necessary prerequisite to learning. To know what to question is in itself already knowledge. To study, to dig, to find the answers to your questions makes for wisdom.

I do not feel Whitman's verses always rise to the level of general knowledge of his time. He asks many questions, right questions, but does not indicate as many answers. "And what is reason," "What is life," etc.

Also I think some of his lines are just trash, nothing more. He says: "What we call poems, being merely pictures." Correct. But Walt should have more closely heeded his own advice. From some of the verses, the picture that emerges is like the formless, meaningless, paintings of the painters of the modernistic school. They seem to be in the book only to fill space.

But as a whole Whitman is rare in our past literature. And as the pile of literary trash grows, *Leaves of Grass* in relief stands out ever brighter. His verses are as youthful and refreshing as was our nation that he sang about. I especially like his "O Captain, My Captain," "Song of the Broad Axe," "A Song for Occupations."

Last Lines

By PAUL ELUARD

I was able to do all and I was able to do nothing
I had the power to love all but not enough.

The sky the sea the earth
Had swallowed me up

Man gave birth to me again.

Here lies one who lived without doubting
That the dawn is good to all ages
When he died he thought of being born
Just as the sun rose again.

I have lived wearily for myself and for others
But I have always wanted to lighten my shoulders
And the shoulders of the poorest of my brothers
Of this mean burden which we carry to the grave

In the name of my hope I have put down my name against darkness.

Stop and remind yourself of the forest
Of the brightest field under the living sun
Remind yourself of the vistas without shadows without remorse

My life is effaced yours has replaced it
In having summer in being alive we continue
We crown the desire of being and of enduring.

(*Translated from the French by Milton Blau.*)

For Paul Eluard

By EVE MERRIAM

Poet, shall we sing you safely dead?
Pass off your convictions as passing fancies
That would have fled, fled had you but lived—

Had you but lived a lie
Had you but lived and died.

So gone, gone
Dead of an old war wound
In a year of unwar a year of yet more killing
That we must make millenium of peace
To the farthest outpost freezing fire
Where man stands taller than animals
Daring to walk upright
As even in my country we shall stand.

One missing from among us.
Gone, gone
Taken by death
As you were taken with life in a crimson alliance
Evergreen passion for
Grass, grain, and most of all, growing humankind.
The wind blows gray upon your silent voice.
The wind blows golden, scatters your manna of words
Sisters of hope The family of hands
Now gather together
Growing humankind

In praise of the poet and his life
Our life
The vision still new and stiffly queer to us
Familiar to his reach and pen:
At home in robe and slippers
With bread of work, with wine of love

With crippled and jobless doorways healed into parks;
The plans for building at hand:
Man, the marvelous architect of tomorrow.

Oh, he grew embarrassing in his middle years
Just when a poet should have settled down
To his secret mistress of symbolism,
Clandestine affair with unmeaning—
He ran to fidelity,
The elopement open and forever.

Gone, gone
You can no longer tell us
What made you choose and climb the difficult stairs
From your partitioned room
To the presence of millions
(Now homesick for your eyes, your midnight warmth,
Your morning voice)

As we mourn and do not mourn
But climb, climb
Singing and striking and making our way
At the head of our procession
No casket no final wreath

At the head of our procession
The beginning
The poet undying
Into the future walking
His heart and pen outreaching to the world without farewell:
Come, come along home.

The death of Paul Eluard last November at the age of 57 was a grievous blow to all who love poetry and peace. Our magazine was proud of the friendship of this distinguished French Communist poet. His *Last Lines*, part of an as yet unpublished work, appeared posthumously in *Les Lettres Francaises*. We hope to publish an article on Eluard's work in an early issue.—The Editors.

KONSTANTIN SIMONOV ON

Literary Issues in the U.S.S.R.

An Interview by JOSEPH CLARK

Moscow, U.S.S.R.

Among the many questions that have been hotly debated in the Soviet literary and art world—which means not only the "professionals," but the masses of working people—are questions of conflict or lack of conflict in Soviet writing, the question of satire and the struggle against bourgeois nationalist influences in literature.

I sought an interview with an outstanding Soviet literary figure, Konstantin Simonov, to get a representative viewpoint on these and other questions for Masses & Mainstream. *Simonov, like so many Soviet writers, is a man with a crowded schedule. Three days a week—when there isn't a peace congress taking place—he is hard at work on his latest novel, play and poetry. On the three days a week that he is available he is editing* Literaturnaya Gazeta, *which appears Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. But "available" means chatting with this remarkable concentration of energy while he's checking galley proofs and page proofs of the paper. In a way, however, those circumstances turned out quite favorably. Simonov asked if he could answer the more basic questions in a communication.*

Incidentally, the novel Simonov is working on now will be published in five large volumes. The novel's scope is big—from the beginning of the European war in Spain and ending with the cold war of 1946.

Only thirty-seven years old, Simonov was no bystander of the events he describes. As a correspondent he covered the fighting of Soviet and Mongolian troops against the Japanese in Mongolia in 1939. During World War II Simonov participated in submarine action and flew with heavy bombers. He served in General Dovator's Cossack cavalry and in the infantry fighting at Stalingrad. After the war he visited the U.S.A.

Simonov wrote the following answers for Masses & Mainstream.

I AM sending you answers to some of the questions which I did not manage to answer during my interview with you.

You ask what role did cultural questions play at the 19th Communist Party Congress, especially questions

relating to literature and art, and what will be the effect of the congress decisions in this field.

If one speaks of culture in the broad sense of the word, problems of the further development of culture occupied a very important place, both in the reports and speeches and in the work of J. V. Stalin, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR,* published before the opening of the congress.

And if one speaks of cultural matters directly applying to literature and art, then certainly no little attention was paid to these fields. They were dealt with at the congress by Suslov, Mikhailov, Fadayev, Bagirov, Gafurov and several other speakers.

Considerable space in G. M. Malenkov's report was devoted not only to the general problems of evaluating the work of Soviet writers and cultural workers, but also to important theoretical problems: problems of the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the typical, the question of conscious exaggeration and emphasis in art, of creating the positive character, and creating satirical works.*

There is no doubt that the profound and correct presentation of these questions at the congress in the report of the Central Committee will, after the congress, help our critics and literary specialists to elaborate these problems thoroughly, as it will also help our artists to embody an understanding of these problems in their creative work.

I think too that—as is the custom in our country—the criticism directed in the congress at our writers and cultural workers and their public organizations and unions will also be useful. It will help the artists fight against dull, characterless works lacking sharpness—in short, untalented works. It will help concentrate our efforts to further heighten craftsmanship in our literature and art, to attain a high level of artistic form, for without a high level of form there can be no real works of art, no matter how worthy the ideas and intentions in the author's head.

YOU ask: how can there exist sharp satire, in the tradition of Gogol and Shchedrin, if class contradictions in Soviet society have already been liquidated?

When the question is put: can or cannot a thing exist, the simplest way to answer is by an appeal to what already does exist. There are examples of Soviet satire that one can cite without difficulty.

As an example I can mention the play *Front,* by Alexander Korneichuk which contains the most biting satire of obtuse people who are out of touch with life, of toadies and frauds, of loud-mouths and liars. From both the social and artistic standpoint I should consider myself justified in calling this satire merciless, and from these same standpoints it is fully in the tradition of Gogol and Shchedrin

* This section of Malenkov's report was reprinted in *Masses & Mainstream,* November, 1952.

It is not, I think, superfluous to add that in this work the objects of the satire were by no means persons of third-rate importance, minor employes, but were people of higher military rank, including even a general commanding a front, who was the principal negative character in the play. This satire was written in the summer of 1942, in the days of our army's most difficult military trials, and it was printed in full in *Pravda*, which means that it was printed in millions of copies.

From all this it follows, not only that for us there is no theoretical question as to whether or not such satire can exist—it does exist in the history of Soviet literature—but also that the appeal, voiced at the congress and in our press, for the production of satire in the tradition of Gogol and Shchedrin is not something unexpected: we have always attached great importance to this question.

In connection with this I want to answer your next question. You ask: in spite of the fact that there is a struggle btween the new and the old in Soviet life, a struggle against people and tendencies representing survivals of the past, does not satire in the tradition of Voltaire and Gogol demand an onslaught against an existing social system?

I answer your question with another question: to which social system do you refer?

If we consider the writers whose names have been mentioned—Voltaire, Gogol, or, let us say, Shchedrin —we find them to be enemies of the social system against which their satire is directed. Voltaire scourges French feudalism from the position of an adherent of a bourgeois reorganization of society. Shchedrin scourges Russian feudalism and the Russian bourgeoisie, which was then gaining life and strength, from the position of a democrat, a fighter for a democratic and socialist reorganization of society.

One must suppose that neither great satirist would have remained indifferent to a reorganization of society, if it had taken place under his eyes. I think that if they had witnessed the victory of the social system in whose name they had aimed the shafts of their satire at another social system that was hateful to them, they would not have changed the direction of their satiric fire simply because in the view of certain idealist theoreticians the satirist, according to the essence of his creative art, must direct his blows against the dominant social order.

Shchedrin, for example, if the democratic forces had been victorious in his lifetime, would hardly have switched around 180 degrees and started to direct his satire against these democratic forces simply because they had become dominant. It is more logical to imagine the reverse: Shchedrin would have continued to direct his satire against all the remnants, the still live and dangerous manifestations of the ousted social order, manifestations against which he had fought while that social order was dominant. I speak of Shchedrin, but I think the

analogy is fully applicable to Voltaire also.

If we consider our own time then of course satire has in no respect changed in its essence as a literary genre; as before, it demands of the writer implacable and resolute attacks upon one social system in defense of another. If we speak of the direction of our Soviet literature, its satire is directed against one of the two social systems now existing in the world, against the capitalist system, in support and defense of the other social system—socialism.

I should consider a division of our satire into satire on foreign themes and satire on domestic themes to be an attempt at mechanical classification. Our satire is one, both when it is directed against the capitalist system beyond our borders, where this system dominates, and when it is directed against all the survivals of this capitalist system and bourgeois ideology, against all its manifestations and all people connected with this ideology when these survivals, manifestations and people live within our boundaries.

I do not see why our satire should be implacable in its attack on a hostile social system and ideology abroad and become toothless in its attacks on each and every manifestation of the echoes of this system and this ideology in our country.

It seems to me that decisiveness in attack, the implacability of the satire, in one case as much as in the other, is dictated by the genre itself, and by the temperament of the writer. It is only a question of the objects of the satire, the bearers of that ideology, inimical to the writer, against which he hurls his satirical weapons. The monopolist owners abroad, with their billions in profits openly gained from the exploitation of the labor of the common people, and the petty money-grubbers in our society, who secretly strive to profit from the labor of others, are in the final analysis bound up together for the Soviet satirist with the idea of the same world of capitalism, its ideology and its morality—although of course the methods of satire can and should vary, depending on the objects of the satire.

AND now permit me to pass on to your question on the criticism directed at Sosiura.

You say that from a superficial acquaintance with the criticism of Sosiura and other poets and writers, who have been criticized for nationalist deviations, you sometimes get the impression that poetry in praise, say, of the natural beauty of the Ukraine is not at all encouraged. You ask what serious forms these bourgeois-nationalist tendencies took, and what role can lyrical themes of nature and love play in good, socialist-realist poetry.

Of course the poet Vladimir Sosiura—a talented man, whom I for one have known well for a long time, both through his poems and personally—was criticized not at all because he loves the Ukraine, or because he loves the natural features of his country, the beauty of its fields and

forests, its rivers, mountains and steppes. Quite the contrary! It is impossible for me to imagine a real poet holding socialist views and at the same time not loving his native land, being blind to its natural beauties, to its landscapes and all their natural features, to its customs, to the songs and dress of its people.

Just recently, while working on an article, I had occasion to look through several dozen newly published books of poetry. How much is contained in them about nature—about Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian nature, about nature in Georgia and Armenia, in Latvia and Kazakhstan! How many truly national characteristics in these descriptions of nature!

No, of course it was not for this that Vladimir Sosiura was criticized. Otherwise one would have to criticize every one of our poets for loving the natural features of their native lands with the exception of bad poets who do not possess a truly poetic eye and do not write about the beauty of nature simply because they understand nothing about it.

Sosiura was criticized on quite other grounds. Judge for yourself. A new social order has existed in the country for 35 years. Man is transforming life and introducing changes into literally everything, including nature. In the Ukraine and along the Volga the forests grow green as they did before, but alongside them stretch lines of new tree-shelter belts. The Dnieper, about which Gogol used to write, flows majestically as before, but on this Dnieper has risen the Dnieper Hydroelectric Station. The Volga rolls on as before, but its waters have merged with the waters of the Don, and boatmen no longer haul barges by ropes along its waves, but thousands of ships travel them.

Wheat ripens in the fields of the Ukraine as before, but this is no longer the same wheat and these are no longer the same fields. Instead of the narrow peasants' strips, there are vast, boundless fields of wheat, sweeping on sometimes for many kilometers. The white Ukrainian cottage looks different now than it used to look. On the outside it is white, as before—its national coloration is preserved—but the cottage is no longer stooped as it used to be. And its windows are no longer half-blind little openings, and the roof is different.

New beauties have appeared also in the industrial landscape of the Ukraine. In the Donbas, destroyed by the fascists and newly restored, the waste heaps are green. Formerly these were gray, gloomy mountains of slag; today they are more and more frequently planted with green shoots, they are becoming green—which appeals to the eye both from a distance and from a close view. In the midst of the steppes blue networks of new canals are appearing, and this has its own new beauty.

In old paintings women are depicted reaping grain, men mowing grass with scythes, and though this is heavy labor, the human vitality and strength displayed in this labor had a beauty of its own on the artist's

canvas and in the poet's verse.

Still, I for one find deeply poetical the picture that may now be seen in the fields of the Ukraine: limitless fields of grain, and across them, like unending caravans of ships, on the horizon, against a background of sunset, go the combines. Aside from the fact that in your consciousness this phenomenon is connected with man's emancipation from previous unbearably heavy labor, from the purely visual point of view this picture is beautiful in itself. I could cite many other examples, but I think it's time to go back to Sosiura.

No one would think of demanding of a poet that he stop loving sunsets or sunrises, the whiteness of the cottage in which he was born, or the gold of the wheatfields—on the pretext that such sentiments are incompatible with his socialist views. But when in the poet's own land, by the efforts of people of that nation of which he is a son, so much has been transformed, as has happened in our country; when, thanks to the free labor of people building socialism, so much new beauty has been created; when this beauty, organically united with the ancient beauty of the land, has become an indelible part of the people's consciousness—one asks, how can it not form part of the consciousness of a poet who thinks as a socialist?

How can he fail to see the new beside the old, Dnieper power plant beside the Zaporozhye rapids of Hortitsa, the oak saplings in the shelter-belts beside the age-old oak tree at the crossroads? How can he fail to notice the beauty of the truly extraordinary landscape presented by the mighty kolkhoz (collective farm) fields? How can he not feel the poetry of the waste heap suddenly sprouting green, when it had been dark and gloomy for centuries?

And so, when a poet does not see all this, when with him the national element is not connected with that new flowering of both people and the land which is bound up with the concept of the socialist nation and the socialist state, when even in nature he sings only of the traditional, only of what has existed since before the revolution, and fails to notice anything new—that is when one gets the feeling that this poet is so bound to the old, to the bourgeois and nationalist in his perception of the world, that his descriptions of the beauties of nature lack any token of the new. This arouses in the reader a sense of protest, a sense of inner mistrust.

That is how matters stand regarding the criticism of the work of the poet Sosiura, who is a gifted man, but in whose creative work are manifested certain bourgeois-nationalist survivals. Right now he is working on new poems, and I for one want to believe that he has profited from the criticism and that he will yet contribute new, talented verse.

YOUR next question is: while naturalism and a decadent taste for pornography characterize many works in western bourgeois literature, one occasionally has the impres

sion that Soviet literature leans in the opposite direction, that it treats of love between man and woman with extreme diffidence, if at all. Does this represent a conscious policy?

In answer to your question—in the first place in my view a decadent taste for pornography removes the works in which it appears beyond the confines of literature. As for Soviet literature, with respect to questions of love, it is developing in the tradition of Pushkin, Tolstoy, Chekhov.

True, these classical writers are very individual in their approach to questions of love, but still I think we are justified in speaking of what was characteristic in the general classical traditions of Russian literature: a profound and bold approach to questions of love, showing the whole depth and power of this feeling, while at the same time disdaining to titillate the reader with sexual details which, to put it bluntly, do not make literature more sensuous in its perception of the healthy man and the healthy woman. Sexual details intrigue those who are incapable of strong and healthy love.

In this respect Soviet literature, in its best works, follows our classical literature, where love is shown with a depth and force that reveals the power of the passions, without petty rummaging in bedroom particulars.

I speak of the best books. I cannot quote passages here, but I think it will suffice to cite the examples of such books as Sholokhov's *Quiet Flows the Don, The Road to Calvary* by Alexei Tolstoy, *The Ninteen* and *The Young Guard* by Fadayev, Gladkov's *Cement*, or, among recent books, Nikolayeva's *Harvest,* or a book which has been the subject of many disputes, but which I like on the whole, *Ivan Ivanovich* by Koptayeva, or Wasilevska's *Simply Love.* These examples will suffice, I think, to confirm what I have said.

At the same time I must admit that in some books, including several good ones, such as the widely popular novel by Azhayev, *Far From Moscow,* love is, as you put it, handled timidly, not of course in the sense that the authors of these books are afraid of something when they write about love, but in the sense that love is the weakest element in their novels. They write about it somehow without confidence, treating it sometimes cursorily, sometimes superficially; in general, to put it briefly, they do not in their novels give to love the very great importance that it has in people's lives, especially in the lives of people in our society, where love is not dominated by commercial principles, where it is not bought and sold, where marriage for love is the normal thing and marriage for convenience is the rare exception.

We of the writing profession engage in many disputes on these problems, in the pages of our magazines and newspapers. Naturally, as is always the case where art is concerned, there is no unanimity of opinion on these matters among us writers.

However, if we look through the critical articles on this theme, we see that most of them express what is

in my opinion the correct view that when a writer writes a novel or a story and shows his heroes only at their work, in their struggle, and forgets such an important aspect of their lives as love, he impoverishes his heroes, and in his portrayal their labor and their struggles appear less beautiful and attractive than if they were made to glow with the warmth and excitement of love.

As for me personally, I find it rather difficult even to imagine how one could write a novel or a play or a book of poetry in which love is not present, in which it would not be said that a man loves a woman, a woman loves a man, and that this is as inalienable a part of their lives as breathing. Perhaps I sometimes write badly about this (it is, after all, a matter of talent), but timidly I never did write about it, and do not expect to quake before this subject in the future.

YOU ask whether I would like to express an opinion on the current trial of V. J. Jerome who has been indicted for having committed the "overt act" of writing the pamphlet *Grasp the Weapon of Culture.* As a matter of fact, last June *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* of which I am an editor, had an editorial article on the question of the so-called "crime" of V. J. Jerome. And I have little to add, except that, if one stops to think of the future, then to be sure it is easy to imagine that all mankind, recalling those distant times when in the United States of America it was possible to have such trials as the trial of V. J. Jerome, will look upon such prosecutions as truly barbaric. They will seem just as barbaric as do today the trials once staged against the scientists of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance by the inquisitors who declared their victims to be heretics and sorcerers and demanded that they be burned. Between the laws of the epoch of Torquemada and the laws of the epoch (if one can call it an epoch) of Medina, there is in truth so much similarity that the analogy comes easily.

And in fact, even if one were to think long and intently about what corresponds most exactly to the word "barbarity," it would be hard to think of anything closer to this word than the attempt to convict a man for wanting to preserve peace for mankind and for condemning those who by their deeds and words call for the violation of that peace.

To my regret, owing to a trip out of town, I have not managed to answer some of your questions as fully as I should have liked. Please forgive me for this.

RiGhT FaCe

Two of a Kind

"Dr. Cazier's primary interest was in the Mexican tiger beetle. . . . He took 12,000 of these alone, and found in northwestern Sonora a new species which Dr. Cazier is naming Cicindela Rockefelleri in honor of David Rockefeller, who helped finance the expedition.

"Dr. Cazier described the tiger beetle as a ferocious, predatory insect found all over the world except in the polar regions."—From the New York *Times.*

Pleasure Trip

"At sea we'll coddle you and make you comfortable. . . . You'll sip the world's choicest wines and other fine potables in our friendly lounge. . . . Seventeen days later you'll step off the gangway. . . .

"And when you have finished buying trinkets from the African natives and marveling at the many strange sights, we'll take you behind the color and gaiety and show you Africa's commercial wealth. . . .

"Here is an abundance of more than 80 raw materials, many in short supply at home. . . . Indeed, a great part of Africa south of the Sahara is a land of opportunity for the foresighted businessman. *—Farrell Lines in a full-page magazine ad, "Happy Ships to Africa."*

Proof

"Mark Aldanov is without any serious competition for the eminence of being considered the finest living Russian writer. A refugee from Russia for more than thirty years, he lived in Paris and is now a citizen of the United States. . . .

"In 'To Live As We Wish' Mr. Aldanov has neglected the usual story-telling function of fiction more completely than ever before. Rarely have I read a more diffuse, loquacious, rambling and static novel than this one."—Orville Prescott in Books of the Times, New York *Times.*

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

A COMMUNICATION

On Literary Criticism

I HAVE had occasion recently to re-read Milton Howard's contribution "Hemingway and Heroism," in your October issue. The second reading only served to deepen my earlier impression of its high quality. Particularly in view of the fact that in the sphere of literature and the arts, Marxist criticism in the United States is still on the first rungs of the ladder, it seems to me that so fine a critique as Howard's deserves to be noted publicly long after its first appearance in print.

What gives the article its strength is the Marxist dialectical method which informs it. It is one of the features of this method, classically developed further by Stalin, that it reflects social life in its revolutionary process, on the basis of the unfolding of inner contradictions and their conflict; thereby it guides us to base our orientation on those social strata that constitute the new and the developing, the bearers of the future.

From this it must follow that in any work of art the choice and treatment of the hero cannot be viewed apart from these social considerations. For the choice of the hero must be viewed as a social responsibility and its validity tested by the question: with which of the two basic and contending class forces in our society is the hero identified—the decaying and regressive, or the developing and ascendant?—the entrenched concealers of truth and the un-heroic tremblers before the oncoming tomorrow, or the forward-striving laboring masses, the chief force in the process of production and the source of all essential heroism in the world of today?

This methodological principle can be said to underlie Howard's critique of the "hero" in Hemingway's novel, *The Old Man and the Sea.* Thus, he answers the exaltings of the "tragic heroism" in Hemingway's new novel on the part of Wall Street and its literary claque: "The Hemingway hero does not frighten them in any way, nor does he make them uneasy. And that is because the Hemingway hero . . . in no way challenges or exposes them." It is a hero who is "palatable to a class that is incapable of heroism."

Thus, too, regarding Hemingway's choice of the "worker-hero," the iso-

lated and brooding Cuban fisherman, Santiago, he points out: "Hemingway's hero operates outside of contemporary society. . . . Hemingway has turned this fisherman into an abstraction. He is a fisherman who does not hate the rich nor the men of the market who rob him. . . . Hemingway is stealing the heroism of work for literary 'effect.'" What is avoided is "the concrete heroism of social struggle."

The Marxist dialectical method is further evident in Howard's discussion of Hemingway's style, as when he says of "this hardened style which is supposed to seize so powerfully on life," that "one longs for a breath of the life of living men, the heroic men of labor who stand so infinitely superior in morality and human vision to the dying class of the money men." He speaks of "this frozen English, so artfully beaten as with a hammer, so remote from the accents of men who know history and are mastering it," and adds: "This style, which seemingly teaches heroism, fits perfectly the politics of evasion and fatalism."

Such integrated discussion of style should especially be welcome in view of a notorious failing in the literary criticism of our movement: the fact that works of literature are for the most part not accorded artistic analysis, but are discussed pretty much on the same plane with books on current events and various political tracts, exclusively "for their ideas."

Finally, let me add that Milton Howard's article also establishes by example that criticism of "creative writing" must itself be creatively written.

V. J. JEROME

As we go to press, we learn the thrilling news that Paul Robeson has been awarded one of the 1952 Stalin Peace Prizes. The citation to Mr. Robeson calls him the "standard bearer of the oppressed Negro people and all honest Americans struggling against imperialist reactionaries preparing a disastrous war for the Americans." This award dramatizes the fact that the great artist and people's leader is for all mankind the symbol of the finest aspirations of the American people. We warmly congratulate our distinguished contributing editor, who in accepting the award said: "For the peace fighters in America, this award has the greatest significance. . . . For me personally, it is a moving experience—a great honor which I shall cherish all my life."

We congratulate too the other winners of this year's Stalin Peace Prize: Rev. James Endicott of Canada, Eliza Branco of Brazil, Ilya Ehrenburg of the Soviet Union, Saifuddin Kichku of India, Yves Farge of France, and Johannes Becher of the German Democratic Republic.—THE EDITORS.

books in review

More of O'Casey

ROSE AND CROWN, by Sean O'Casey. *Macmillan.* $4.75.

O'CASEY'S autobiography, of which this is the fifth volume, is a work whose power may often seem to come from its extraordinary sustained literary effects. The reader feels himself carried along, like a canoe over rapids, on spurts and stretches of language, caught in an eddy of images, then shot through a sunny spray of words onto the broad, bright river of meaning.

But to study these effects in themselves alone is to delve into the body when it is already cold; one has to see them as growing from the triple-rooted life of self, nation and class. O'Casey makes this easy. His sources are never concealed nor his awareness of them clouded: his own nature, Ireland, and the proletariat in whom he always retained unswaying membership.

It is clear, then, that the present book cannot be judged as though its quality depended simply upon the way it was written. Even the most creative man's life is unequally rich at various times, and if one feels at moments not so much disappointment as a diminished interest, the lack here is more in the kind of experience that fed the artist than in the man himself.

When O'Casey went to England—the scene of the greater part of *Rose and Crown*—the Irish revolution, lacking a strong working class movement to carry it forward, had been smothered in political, clerical and cultural reaction. The effect on O'Casey was twofold.

First, he felt that he had to leave behind him a stifling, utterly frustrating atmosphere which Joyce and many others had fled and from which even Yeats found it imperative to take prolonged vacations. Second, deprived of the living reality of Irish working class life, O'Casey began to abandon the direct, "naturalistic" forms of presentation in his plays and to try out more symbolic devices, by means of which he felt the playwright's ideas could be made unmistakable to his audience. (Of *Hamlet* he writes, in justification of himself, "the play is largely a biography of Shakespeare's thought.")

To decide whether Yeats, in criticizing *The Silver Tassie,* was right or wrong is less relevant than to understand that Yeats was never concerned with and could not remotely appreciate the problem with which O'Casey was wrestling. For O'Casey

reached toward a future in which Yeats had little interest. When he tried to tell him something about Communism, the latter "saw the little streets hurling themselves against the greater ones" and "didn't like the sight entrancing."

To introduce that future into a concrete present, or, what was still more difficult, into a present darkened by great and small defeats, this was of no concern to Yeats. While for O'Casey it was a matter of growing or withering, saying something new and in anger, or being praised for his humanity and universality because his audience could pretend that he had not specifically attacked anyone or anything.

Yeats went further than criticizing. He saw to it that the Abbey turned down *The Silver Tassie.* Much of O'Casey's book is shadowed by this initial rejection, the attacks of the clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, upon him, the pettiness of the London theatrical milieu, and the struggle to keep body, soul and family together through years of rankling poverty.

The need was no longer that of O'Casey's earlier days, easier to share and so a little easier borne. It was the gray, exhausting penury of a writer, not supposed to be mentioned in polite or even literary circles, inhibiting friendships and keeping every contact a little cooler than it might have been.

The strain of such a life shows in this book. It reports controversies and conversations with Yeats, Shaw and others that never seem to go far enough, curious meetings, cropping out like rocks in a field, with people like Stanley Baldwin and Ramsay MacDonald of whom some amusing and some sad, wise things are said. There are random, not too revealing impressions of Beverly Nichols, H. G. Wells, George Jean Nathan, Eugene O'Neill, etc., and of a visit to America, which are sometimes sharp but more often uncharacteristically banal.

The descriptions of Yeats and Shaw repeat, but add little, to the treatment of them in previous volumes. One does not feel the same exuberance in their portrayal, much as it still appears in the style. Also the acute judgments, from which even the most complex and personally sympathetic individuals used not to escape, tend to become blurred in too thick a haze of kindliness.

If any lesson is vital for us today about the ideologists of compromise and the betrayers, the oppressors and their dupes, surely it is not that they, like everyone else, are all-too-human. What is gained, for example, in the course of refuting the charge that there is a special streak of brutality in the American character, by saying that "all nations in tensive times and peculiar circumstances have a streak of cruelty in them," and that therefore what is happening in Korea is no different from what occurred during the Sepoy uprising, the Black and Tan period, and the Irish Civil War? Who is most comforted by the platitude? For whom does it seem to provide extenuation, if not for

O'Casey's enemies and those of all mankind?

In general O'Casey's view of the United States is commonplace. Influenced by his bitter experiences in Ireland and the clerical attacks on the Boston production of *Within the Gates,* which forced the play to close, he subordinates an examination of more basic economic and social factors to a cheerful picture of the rise and spread of the secular outlook as symbolized by Rockefeller Center. His mellow impressions of the American business man and ménage leave something to be desired. (More unfortunate is a well-intended but chauvinist-worded passage whose inclusion could have been avoided had his American publisher shown sufficient awareness and sense of responsibility both to the Negro people and to O'Casey.)

Yet whenever the just but choking grievances are laid aside or the shallow, distracted traveling lecturer's observations are discarded, there arises the clear, bright imagination of O'Casey, who finds in every quick leap or slow immense unfolding of history the spirit and effort of those who labor. In his lists Bernard of Clare needs only one thrust to be knocked out by Peter the Ploughman.

When the General Strike is called off he sees "the homes fit for heroes to live in that had been bobbing up and down on the waves all around the coast" disappear over the horizon. "There will never be any houses fit for heroes or humans to live in till the heroes and humans build the houses themselves."

As for the charming ones, the gracious ones who will not listen till they are made to listen, he recalls how when he was young, "The rich and noble lay safe in the sweet shade of the green bushes, fed and attended by their true love, the quiet people. But they have lost their love. So confident beside the green bushes they never saw, never felt, her go, and woke up one morning to find the dear one gone."

He does not mourn for these, but rather for such as his countrymen drowned in the Atlantic on the western passage. "What crowds of glimmering ghosts floated aimlessly about underneath all these waters from the years of the famine to years of the first World War! How many of the Irish fleeing the famine in the coffin ships fell into their keen, cold, undulating grip, and found their never ending silence there!" Long forgotten dead, no sweeter singer could enter that silence to bring them forth.

CHARLES HUMBOLDT

The Filthy Rich

THE LAST RESORTS, by Cleveland Amory. *Harpers.* $5.00.

IN DESCRIBING the ethics of those whom a less hypocritical age than ours agreed upon naming the Robber Barons—and who are so precisely characterized by the folk-term, "the filthy rich"—Thorstein Veblen referred to "the ceremonial canons of pecuniary decency, which

are reducible to the principles of waste, futility and ferocity."

Today, Pulitzer Prize historians, like Professor Allan Nevins, insist that the Robber Barons were really "the heroes of our material growth," and where Veblen saw waste, futility, and ferocity, the newly-crowned Dean, Louis M. Hacker, finds "boldly venturesome and socially creative" personalities. Well, now along comes Mr. Cleveland Amory, a most proper Bostonian, himself born at exclusive Nahant, to give us a five-hundred page, painfully detailed work that he subtitles *A Portrait of American Society at Play.* And when Mr. Amory says "Society," he does not mean society, but rather the scum temporarily on top.

Reviewers of Mr. Amory's book in the commercial press have given the impression that it deals with an amusing, dead past, an idea suggested, too, by the author's "clever" title. Thus, typically, Orville Prescott, in the New York *Times,* speaks of it as "a richly entertaining book" chronicling "the decline and fall of a way of life," and doing the job—thank Heaven! —minus "social significance."

Actually, the work is by no means confined to the past, for while it does draw heavily on the last half century for its data, it includes considerable contemporary material. Indeed, Mr. Amory joyously reports that "current tax structures permit the idle rich to remain both idle and rich." And when Mr. Prescott, in relief, finds an absence of "social significance" and therefore lauds the "deft hand" of the author, what he really means is that Mr. Amory is not a hostile witness of the antics of the multi-millionaires, but on the contrary, a sympathetic one.

Mr. Amory's obvious good-will towards his subjects makes all the more devastating his disclosures of their habits and values. For example, at one point the author turns his attention to changing "society" fads in relation to gigolos. Today, he observes, the "young sport" (as he calls the species) need only be a capable dancer, dress in accordance with current styles, and be a competent card-player—others will meet his gambling debts. His chances of real success are good, we learn, because, writes Mr. Amory: "Society (is) primarily dominated by widows who, among other things, are always on the lookout for the possibility of making a joint return on their income tax," and therefore the young sport "has excellent opportunities of marrying for money. Beyond this, if he proves sufficiently incompatible, he has equally excellent prospects of divorcing for money."

Mr. Amory permits himself a restrained burp of indignation at only two points in his edifying chronicle. He finds, among Society, an especially intense anti-Semitism and remarks that the record in this regard "is an extraordinary one." His own attitude becomes clear, however, in the loving prose he devotes to Mr. Bernard Baruch's understanding of such "unfortunate" failings, an understanding which leads Baruch to stay away

from places where he is not wanted!

He notes, too, the completely Jim-Crow character of Society. But here he has nothing but approval, his volume reeking with white chauvinist "jokes." He finds that the banning of Negro residents—or visitors—from the premises of the elite, adds to their "regal impression."

And, secondly, the author unequivocally frowns upon the conduct of a particular member of the elite whose passion is young girls and horses. This gentleman "especially enjoyed . . . taking young girls to his farm in Kentucky where, if they proved difficult, he would tie them up without their clothes and force them to witness, at close range, the breeding of his horses." For these somewhat extraordinary tastes the gentleman appears to have suffered from a mild ostracism.

Others had less violent eccentricities. Mrs. Lanier would ride a pet bull into town; Mrs. Spencer insisted on entertaining with a "smartly groomed pig" at her side; Mrs. Foster "always wore black velvet eyebrows." These were permanent modes of conduct; at parties—and one was always going to, coming from or giving a party—really interesting things happened. The Du Ponts show up as elephants, and James Hillman occasionally appears as a seal-trainer, complete with seals—i.e., his three attractive daughters, dressed in tight black satin, who, at the suggestion of their father-trainer, roll around the floor.

These, be it observed, are merely the eccentrics. Mr. Amory notes that "an extraordinary number" of the Society members go completely insane, though for one outside the charmed circle, like this reviewer, the nice distinction is not always readily discernible. For example, none of the above individuals are anything other than normal Society members with certain characteristic peculiarities. And every once in a while very formal dinners are given, with a formally-attired monkey as guest of honor, but none of the participants, including the honored guest, is apparently insane. And then at Newport, one hundred dogs, in fancy dress, had their own dinner—all elaborately served (by humans) at a dining table but again sanity was not in question.

Mr. Amory does find insane the behavior of an individual who, believing himself the Prince of Wales, hired, on a permanent basis, actors to impersonate Court officials, imported an expert on Court etiquette from London, regularly received "Ambassadors" (these were sane fellow-members of Society), and every day donned the uniform of varying principal regiments of a score of countries.

This Prince of Wales, Mr. Robert Garrett, had other responsibilities. He was, for instance, president of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Isn't it extraordinary how rugged these individuals are—running a court and a railroad at the same time! We will grant Dean Hacker's "boldly adventuresome," but his "socially creative"?!

There are, of course, more normal, num-drum pursuits. Gambling, for nstance. "Card-playing," says Mrs. Ralph Robertson (she had been Mrs. James Clews and then Mrs. George Blumenthal, but when this book went o press she was Mrs. Ralph Robertson), "saves our lives." The loss of $200,000 in one evening, by John Studebaker, was somewhat unusual, but only somewhat. Marrying, as another instance. The name of the present Mrs. Marjorie Merriweather Post Close Hutton Davies is, in its length, not unusual for Society.

And there are cultural pursuits: books, as an example. A book-dealer who concentrates on the Society market, reports his customers "are not particular about content." Rather, the important thing is the color of the book-jacket and if this is approved by the interior decorator, "we can get rid of anything" at "a flat rate per shelf."

But the main recreation is pure money-spending—the Florida household of the Stotesburys costs $650,000 to operate per year; Mr. Merrill, the Wall Street broker, manages his Florida "cottage" at a mere $360,000 annually.

And the main pursuit is money-making. But Mr. Amory does not go into that. That would be vulgar; it would show a lack of deftness. That would touch dangerously close to "social significance."

Yes, these are the rulers as depicted by a court-scribe. They have the morals of goats, the learning of gorillas and the ethics of—well, of what they are: racist, war-inciting, enemies of humanity, rotten to the core, parasitic, merciless—and doomed.

HERBERT APTHEKER

Jews in Old Russia

THE LANDSMEN, by Peter Martin. *Little, Brown* and Co. $3.75.

IN THIS story of the dispersal of nineteen Jewish families in a small Russian town in 1885 under the blows of anti-Semitic persecution, Peter Martin has not given us a nostalgic, pretty picture. The brutal, calculated anti-Semitism of the Russian aristocrats and landowners is brought out in its unrelieved horror and inhumanity. Nor has Martin neglected to portray the degeneracy of the landowners who persecuted the Jews of the town.

Martin has pursued the familiar theme of Jewish life and sufferings in the small town of the Pale with an extremely ingenious technique. The plot is developed through the first person stories of nine leading Jewish characters, in which the events are interwoven and carried forward with considerable skill. This reader felt, however, that the method is so clever as to draw attention to itself and therefore to make one wonder if the ingenuity is not overdone. Despite this possible defect, the book is a thoroughly competent piece of story-telling. It abounds in vivid and penetrating bits of writing. For instance, in describing the squire of the town, Martin says: "Like stones

flung into a stream the circles of his anger touched all who lived on the many circumferences of his arrogance." Martin's translations of Yiddish folk phrases, however, do not seem to convey the flavor and connotation of the original. Nevertheless, this first novel is no beginner's effort, but a solid, talented achievement.

The reader is left with no doubt as to whom the book is *against.* The picture of anti-Semitism in Tsarist Russia is etched with acid and the source of it in the Russian upper class is indicated. Brief glimpses of the life of the town's Jews who flee to America and of their children reveal with bitterness the rootlessness and futility of their bourgeois life in America. But the book contains only the barest hints of any kind of positive outlook. In this connection one inevitably thinks of the contrast of V. J. Jerome's *A Lantern for Jeremy.* The latter novel portrays a similar life two decades later. Jerome conveys the class consciousness of the Jew in the small Polish and Russian towns as this arises out of his daily life, and the novel is permeated with a hope that was actually realized years later in the Soviet Union and people's Poland. But there is little of this hope in Martin's book.

It is true that the movements which provided the basis of this hope were more developed by 1905, the time of Jerome's story. However, the beginnings of these movements already existed in 1885 and Martin even makes veiled and obscure references to such beginnings. The most explicit viewpoint in Martin's book is expressed by Laib and is the anarchist philosophy of the state versus the individual. All other viewpoints are at best vaguely intimated, like that of the pivotal character Mottel—"I lived by No and it was insufficient." The book ends with the admonition of Mottel—and this can be taken as the view of the novelist himself and as the upshot of the story—"Make friends with the earth." Except for such infrequent, vague observations, the burden of the book is pessimistic and lacking in prospect. On the whole, therefore, Martin's approach is "naturalistic," that is, it is a portrayal of a sector of life without informing it with historical perspective and a framework of aspiration for the future.

Nevertheless, *The Landsmen* stands out as a book which has a genuine concern for human beings, in contrast to the prevailing man-hating pessimism and decadence of literary production today.

LOUIS HARAP