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The Case of the Rebellious Informer

By MILTON HOWARD

WE HAVE had our big "Red scares" before. This is noted by Robert Dunn in his comments elsewhere in this issue on the remarkable new University of Minnesota study, *Red Scare—A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920,* by Professor Robert K. Murray.

But "Red scares" cannot permanently alter the course of a national history however badly they may deform or distort it. They are an organized lie. The social reality inevitably replaces this lie with truth. Social reality cannot stand still, nor can it be frozen. The fears, illusions and frauds of any "Red scare" are impotent to "keep the lid on" when the underlying material needs and interests of the people are forced out into the open.

In my article "Turning Point for American Intellectuals" (February, *M & M*), I called attention to the fact that the basic axioms of the Cold War—on which American intellectual life had been based for nearly a decade—were rapidly and blatantly losing even the appearance of a believable mythology. (That is, Europe does not want us to "save" it by way of new Nazi Army, the German people dread our "leadership," the Asian nations view us as the aggressor not their liberator, the Japanese seek that trade with China which Washington sternly forbids, and the Pentagon fantasies of "atomic superiority" were never more false than now.)

But the other lies of the Cold War decade are equally tottering. The irrepressible domestic realities are forcing their way to the surface, imposing on American intellectuals the obligation of a "new look" at our national situation, and hence, at our intellectual-literary situation.

This is the meaning of what we may call The Case of the Rebellious Informer, meaning of course, Harvey Matusow, and his book, *False Witness.* And it is part of the same meaning of the appearance of a group of new books in which Americans of the most diverse social outlook take a hard look at the

major mythologies of the Cold War decade, the "Communist menace" forgeries, and their ravaging results upon the liberties and spiritual life of the American people.*

Every "Red scare," every frame-up, is always faced from the start with certain problems. New social changes are always brewing that will wipe it out and bring back the "enemy"—that is the people—in a new wave of militancy. Thus, the "Red scare" of the 1919-20 era succeeded only temporarily in cowing the country and the working people into a fear of making social demands. The 1929 crash wiped out the "Red scare" of the 1920's and ushered in the social battles which gave birth to the steel, rubber, oil and auto unions in the grimmest fortresses of the trusts.

But, there is also the danger that one or more of the personal agents of the "Red scare" forgeries may decide to reveal his crimes. That this has happened almost in the midst of the "Red scare" of the 1950's in the case of Harvey Matusow is a sign that the six-year hunt for "subversives" is producing its counter-literature, its social recoil. This is always inevitable. It is only a matter as to when and how it happens, whether it happens as the result of a national disaster in which the people's failure to resist the "Red scare" forces the nation to pay a terrible price in the massacres of war (as in Nazi Germany), or whether it takes the form of a national realization that the economic-social problems are still there, that wages are not paying the rent, the grocer bills, the installments due, or the mortgages.

THE "Red scare" of the 1950's—it is still very much with us, of course —had from the beginning this peculiarity, that it was let loose not during a time of economic decline, but during a post-war boom of unprecedented scope. What then was its "secret"? Why did we get the "loyalty" oaths under Trmuan and the Truman-sponsored "spy" trials and Smith Act jailing of Communists? Why did we get the subsequent McCarthy raids on the nation, and the "outlaw-the-Communists" manias of the Humphrey-Butler Act?

The answer can only lie in the fact that the aim of the Cold War "Red scare" went far beyond that of the 1919-1920 "Red scare," let us say. It had in view a gigantic political change in the internal and international position of the United States. If we so obviously had cornered three-fourths of the world's industrial capacity (United Nations data on production in

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* *False Witness,* by Harvey Matusow, Cameron & Kahn, $1.25; *Government by Investigation,* by Alan Barth, Viking, $3; *Grand Inquest,* by Telford Taylor, Simon and Schuster, $4.50; *The Fifth Amendment,* by Erwin N. Griswold, Harvard University Press, $.50.

the world of private property), and had by God's will seized a "monopoly of the A-bomb," then it stood to reason that we had emerged into a new world epoch loaded with "world leadership," meaning world domination. How else would we find places to sell our titanic national output or find a decent return on the accumulated hoards of bank capital (all owned by a small minority of course)?

What we were in for then was a break with America's past as that past was embodied in the American Revolution, the anti-slavery Civil War, and in the anti-imperialist humanism of a Whitman, a Frederick Douglass, a Mark Twain, a William James, a William Dean Howells, a Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, or the social literature of the New Deal decade.

When Professor Sidney Hook told the American intellectual that the time had come to ditch the First Amendment under the new sophistry of "Heresy, yes—Conspiracy, no," we were in for the systematic burial of American democracy and the rise of a new intelligentsia ready to serve as the poets of our new "world responsibility," that is our new world empire. Enter the American literature of Caesarism, of the "American Century"!

But John Steinbeck has just looked at Harvey Matusow's revelations (discussed in detail elsewhere in this issue by William Reuben) and is prompted to utter some blazing truths.

In a signed editorial in the influential *Saturday Review* (April 2) headlined "Death of a Racket," Steinbeck says:

"Matusow will have a much greater effect than he knows. What follows cannot be worse and may be better. It will surely be funny. . . .

"Matusow, swearing he was a Communist, was employed by the government to swear that hundreds of other people were Communists And now he says he lied. He swears that other professional government witnesses also lied. Now a wave of hysteria has swept over the investigators. . . .

"Matusow's description of the life of an informer is a sad commentary but a believable one. It is the story of Titus Oates all over again [Oates was a notorious informer who helped to send hundreds of Catholics to jail and to death by fingering victims during an anti-Catholic frenzy in 17th century England—M.H.]. . . . Remember that when Oates' first bill of charges was thrown out he countered with a second larger bill. The parallel is exact. . . . If one's information dried up one was finished. A very famous informer dribbled out his revelations over a period of ten years. He is the mean. None other has ever equalled his technique. . . ."

Steinbeck adds that "such were the winds of the times that certain basic

nonsense was allowed to pass unnoticed . . . the fact is that every bit of the testimony of the professional witnesses will have to be inspected in terms of the old-fashioned rules of evidence. . . . It is possible that much accurate testimony will be thrown out because of the perjured. . . . In the theatre the other night a reference to professional witnesses was greeted with roars of laughter. There is a great feeling of relief in the air. . . ."

Such sentiments by the author of *Grapes of Wrath* who was in haste to assure European audiences, under State Department auspices, that his early work had lost timeliness, will not be pleasing to the Attorney General, to J. Edgar Hoover, or to the frenzied McCarthy intelligentsia of the monthly *Freeman* or *The American Mercury.* It will not even be pleasing to Steinbeck's fellow-writer for the *Saturday Review,* Edward Ranzal of the New York *Times,* who did not feel it wise to simply tell his readers (he did the same thing in his *Times* review) just what it is that Matusow was telling the American public—just how he and Roy Cohn manufactured the "evidence" in the Communist trials.

Steinbeck's blistering anger comes from one who, on the record, helped to create those very "winds of the time" which made "certain basic nonsense pass unnoticed." He did not scruple to speak in fascist Madrid and over "Radio Free Europe" in accents which the State Department, seeking an atmosphere of "inevitable war," highly approved. The Department of Justice and the FBI hired a Matusow; but the same crowd over in the adjoining offices of the State Department hires some of America's most noted novelists, playwrights and poets.

BUT the "inevitable war" was not so easy to organize, it turned out. The Cold War decade, starting out in a flame of "on-to-Moscow" exaltation with practically all the intellectuals standing at attention, has now come up against the rocks of the new realities. We need not detail them here. But they could not spread their war in Korea. Nor could they prevent the cease-fire in Indo-China. Nor can they pretend that Europe, or even the West German people, favor the Washington plan for a new Nazi Army. Above all, the overriding world reality which undermines the "Red scare" is the collapse—inevitable of course—of the myth of "atomic superiority," and the new world realization that an atomic-H-bomb war can only spell national catastrophe and social upheavals of enormous consequences. There takes place therefore a breakaway, far advanced in West Europe, and moving upward in the United States, from the basic nonsense of the entire Cold War decade.

Steinbeck's heralding of the "little push which causes the pendulum of

common sense to swing back" leaves him still asserting some of the "basic nonsense" which he sees the country beginning to repudiate. Such is his statement that "the Communists would rather keep the investigations going with their harvest of fear and disruption," and that the Communists fear "a return to sanity." Aside from the absurdity of attributing a yearning for punishment to the Communists simply on the subjective side, this opinion is fearful of seeing that Marxism's proposals rise from real national need, not from the "agent" myth. For it is the "foreign agent" myth which the war-seeking leadership relies on to defame first the Marxists who challenge their suicidal policies, and then to stifle every other vestige of critical resistance to such policies.

The country which would not swallow McCarthy is changing the mood of its writers. It is equally true that the writers of America need to help speed the change of our nation back to the sanity of which Steinbeck speaks.

And the process is on the way. A sullen reviewer in the *Saturday Review* (Samuel S. Stratton) is angry that Dean Erwin N. Griswold of Harvard Law School refuses to grant in his new book, *The Fifth Amendment Today,* that there is a difference "between guilt in a criminal trial," where the Fifth Amendment should apparently apply, and "those reasonable practical judgments which legislators, administrators, and just plain citizens cannot avoid making (and acting on) in the face of silence as an answer to highly pertinnt questions." (April 2). This is the voice of the New Inquisition which hates the inconvenience of the American Constitution, that obsolete document based on old illusions, which specifically forbids the government to ask precisely those "pertinent questions" about opinions, words, books, or social doctrines which do not come within the purview of a "criminal proceeding." This sullenness of Mr. Stratton is the orthodoxy of the Cold War. But it is being challenged. That is the new thing.

THUS, Alan Barth, editorial writer for the Washington *Post,* in his new book dares to publish some truths about this governmental hunt for the "pertinent" opinions of silent witnesses which up to now has passed for a legitimate hunt for "information." Says Barth: "Witnesses who stood upon the First Amendment to the Constitution as a ground for refusing to answer questions regarding political beliefs and affiliations—maintaining that the right to speak freely implied a right to remain silent on matters of opinion —found it to be a quicksand."

Barth then notes the truth, as expressed by dissenting Federal Judge Henry Edgerton, that "the restriction of speech" resulted from Congressional probes of "subversion"; and this "restriction was its purpose; it aimed not

at discovering information for the guidance of Congress in fashioning legislation but at the exposure of individuals for the sake of punishing them publicly."

What is valuable in Barth also is his courageous statement of the obvious, but dangerous, truth; that is, that whereas "ex-Communists always seem to make their accusations with impunity," their victims must "prove their innocence," and "if the denial should result in a perjury indictment, the scales of justice, given the present slant of public opinion, might seem weighted heavily against them."

Barth says more: "A number of persons have availed themselves of the Fifth Amendment to avoid being forced to act as informers." Barth has the candor to explain why it is the McCarthy mobsters in the Senate have been able to manufacture the "refusal of witnesses to deny the most horrendous offenses such as espionage." He explains that this is a trap to get the witness to forfeit his Constitutional protections against answering other questions, such as the naming of other victims for the same procedure.

Barth, who wrote his book before the Matusow revelations, comments wryly: "Witnessing is a highly competitive calling in which the prizes go to the winner of the boldest headlines." Barth's discussion on the evident destruction of America's constitutional liberties goes beyond the books on civil liberties of last year. That he sees the struggle for freedom in the form of a need to remedy the "imbalance" between legislative and executive powers does not alter his contribution.

Nor does the acceptance by Telford Taylor, former Nuremberg Trial prosecutor for the United States, of the "basic nonsense" of the anti-Communist dogmas, nor his absurd equating of the 1930 probes of the Wall Street trusts with the hunt for "subversive ideas" as being equally illegal, undermine his conclusion. He says that the Congressional witchhunters are "tearing at the fabric of the Constitution."

WE RETURN to our opening proposition, that the "Red scare" is always the social instrument for crushing debate, difference, or social resistance to a given political or economic aim. Telford Taylor begins to glimpse some of this when he says that when Congress "enacted in a fit of selfish and unseemly panic" the Humphrey-Butler law to outlaw the Communists it was part of the "cold civil war" which he says is being waged by "the nationalists" against the American people, since "the nationalists" do not know properly how to "meet the communist menace." He says it should be met by "the long heads of the people" and not by the "long arm of the police."

Thus is some of America's reality being grudgingly admitted, with the new truths still overweighed by the power of the Big Lie on the nature of Communism or of any social doctrine.

Neither Barth nor Taylor nor Steinbeck tells us the social origins of "the Red scare" nor of the social realities which can defeat it. In a sense, the "men of property" have suffered a chronic "Red scare" since the birth of modern capitalist private ownership of the national means of production. In the revolutionary Paris of 1793, there was already a "Red scare" among the "men of property" as there was indeed in our own American Revolution in the battle between Federalist reaction and Jefferson democracy. "A spectre is haunting Europe," proclaimed the Communist Manifesto of 1848, thus defining the permanent "Red scare" of capitalist society. But this is not the "Red scare" which has been sold to us. We have been sold the class fears of the dollar trusts as genuine national dangers, as "imminent attacks by the Soviet Union," as "Soviet expansion" wherever a national-liberating movement has arisen.

For it is fear of "the long heads of the people" which is at the basis of any "Red scare." The goal of this "reign of fear," this "mummification of opinion" (Senator J. William Fulbright) is to forestall the nation from making national, popular decisions about real questions. What is important is that more and more Americans are finding out that the "Red scare" either does not provide real answers to real problems, or else provides evil, even suicidal answers.

The "Red scare" says we must get ready to die as individuals and as a nation in an atomic war; but the common sense of the nation says the opposite. Equally, the "Red scare" says that "big Labor" must be curbed, that the "Socialism" of such demands as guaranteed wages, jobs, etc. must be opposed. But the popular welfare dictates the opposite. The "Red scare" says that America's culture must teach the need to kill everywhere in the world where the "enemy" is. It needs sadism, cruelty, and doctrines of a master race. But the American heritage is in collision with this.

Thus, we are at a moment when the nation is being compelled to take a new look at itself, when the Cold War course, which seemed so imbedded, so invincible, now forces millions to ask "Are we being led to destruction?" If the country has learned some truths from the rebellious informer, can the responsibility of the nation's intellectuals be shirked?

THE CAMPUS ASKS QUESTIONS

By HERBERT APTHEKER

IN OUR country today there is a growing interest in what the Left has to say for itself. The Right has had a field day for several years and still very much dominates the action, but the spectators are becoming increasingly unsure and uneasy; a questioning spirit is in the air again. If any of the Left still talk largely to each other and no one else, it is not because the others are not interested; it is, in considerable part, because they do not seek out every means to get among them and to hear what they say and learn what they think and exchange thoughts with them.

These ideas will be listened to; they will provoke questions which are hostile and based on the crassest misinformation, but the questions will not be hostile in intent; they will be honest questions, in the sense that those who raise them are really interested in what the answers of the Left are.

I would like to cite some recent experiences of my own confirming these statements.

A short time ago about half the student body of Swarthmore College listened intently and respectfully for an hour while I tried to explain the dangers to civil liberties facing our country today, to show their source in monopoly capitalism, to demonstrate the fascist nature of McCarthyism, and to urge unity in resistance to reaction on the part of all who cherish the Bill of Rights. Thereafter for nearly three hours questions came thick and fast. The audience was very distrustful of me, though personally most cordial. At the same time, those young people were deeply troubled by the threats to democracy that they did see coming from the Right in our country; they did want to help repulse those threats and they were ready to participate in broad efforts along those lines.

Quite a few students accompanied me to the railroad station and kept asking questions until the train arrived; one, a young Negro woman returning to Philadelphia, rode back with me, and for another half hour I was asked question after question: What about China? Will the Supreme Court decision really smash Jim Crow? What's this about Communists wanting to overthrow the government? From Swarthmore a letter arrives: "Thanks for helping us think," it says.

Again, the American Friends Service Committee calls. There are about one hundred college students who gather Friday nights to talk about art and books and religion and politics and life, and they have unanimously decided that they would like to see a live Communist and hear from his own lips what he thinks about things and what he has to say about the charges hurled against his ideas in every page of almost every newspaper. So this is arranged, and for about fifty minutes I talk about Communism, about history and philosophy and things current and past. Then, until the wee hours of the ensuing morning, these hundred young men and women, Negro and white, ask literally hundreds of questions, or make little speeches of their own.

And this youth is very far indeed from the insidious rot of a Sidney Hook or the blatant filth of a Mickey Spillane. Certainly a lot has rubbed off—there is more cynicism than there is skepticism, but these youngsters have not been Hooked, nevertheless, and they face their own real problems and worry about conscription and getting jobs and thinking their own thoughts and realizing their own dreams.

MOST recently I find myself in Antioch College in Ohio, and there are three speaking engagements on the campus, in two days. Before it is over at least half the student body and a sprinkling of the faculty have come around to hear what this Red has to say. From the greeting I had received in one of the local weekly newspapers, I had half expected a barbecue, with me the pig.

A McCarthyite rag, called the *Greene County Journal,* which gags at learning and recognizes in honest thought its mortal enemy, has been howling at the College for years. Here was I, "a Communist, a criminal, coming into their midst, to demonstrate and practice his actual crime." Here was "an actual traitor invading the halls of Antioch to pour out his oiled words of propaganda" and "to say it is necessary to bring in a traitor to demonstrate his conspiratorial ideals and ideas is as nonsensical as to bring in a strangler to strangle some one to show his methods . . . that we should have to continue to listen to or condone the behavior of these immature, emotionally unbalanced children is intolerable. . . ." and more similar warmed-over bilge.

I was the guest at the home of a Professor and his wife and their two splendid children—all of them busy as bees, preparing lessons, writing papers, playing the piano, feeding cats and birds, studying, fussing, laughing, worrying. I was asked about this Marxism-Leninism — Marxism they had heard of, but what did this new-fangled hyphenated thing signify?

In the course of my stay I worried lest my presence bring additional

burdens to this wonderful family and lead to some embarrassment. The professor said that life was complicated as it was and teaching had its problems and its great rewards, and that he would have at his home any one he invited, and that if because he was a teacher someone was to usurp the right to tell him whom he might and might not have as a guest, well, as he said, life is complicated enough as it is and if that is the way things were, why he'd just stop teaching and go get himself a job doing something, he didn't know what, but something where a man and his wife could have a guest stay with them if and when they wanted to. All this was said as though it were just common sense, which it was, of course, as well as the hope of the Republic.

I learned, too, of a teacher elsewhere who had been fired just the other day—"for some damn political reason"—and had four children and a crippled wife, and the situation was simply catastrophic. He was not exactly fired, just suspended without pay pending investigation, and the thing had been pending for months.

When that happened two other teachers were given his classes, and since their work-load was increased, their pay was, too. Each of those teachers (and if they had ever had a political thought, no one had ever heard of it) kept that extra money separate, and every payday they both took all of it to the home of the suspended teacher and that is how that family of six was staying alive while the father tried to line up another job somewhere.

MEANWHILE, to bid me welcome came Professor Oliver Loud, the dangerous, un-American radical of the campus. Several people told me, "The guy is a saint"; the fact is that this tall, soft-spoken man is beloved by all. I met him, as I say, and the only way I can describe him is to say that if anybody could save the editor of the *Greene County Journal* and make him a human being again, it would be Professor Loud.

He said many things to me in the few minutes we had together that I shan't forget, though at the moment I do not want to share them, except one thing he said that I thought was wonderfully apt coming from this notorious character. He remarked that he had just inherited, from his grandfather, a hand-written campaigner's notebook that the old man had used when he had stumped the country, in 1856, for the upstart Third Party candidate, named Fremont, and that Party's seditious slogan—Fremont, Free Soil and Freedom!

The young people had hoped to arrange a panel to discuss questions of our time, and that I would be one member along with contrary opinions from one or more of the faculty. But none of the faculty would participate, and one of them who was asked

turned down the offer on the grounds that I would anger him and then he would haul off and hit me—on the grounds, I suppose that I was an advocate of violence! (I was told that this ferocious one attended one of my talks and did something far worse than hit me—he was seen to doze! Touché, professor!)

So, in each case the floor was mine alone, and in every case no one from the faculty asked a question, though they were explicitly urged to do so. But, as I have said, the students were not so shy, or did not feel themselves so fully informed, or had not the closed "open" minds recommended by Professor Hook, which ever seek the truth, while pledged beforehand never, never to find it.

There were many purely informational questions: what are political prisoners? What is the Smith Act? What is the status of the Communist Party today? Why was Claude Lightfoot convicted?

Most of the questions were loaded —in the minds of the questioners. But almost never was I baited. The questioners were uninformed, or terribly misinformed, but they were genuine questioners.

What about the Iron Curtain? (Students were astounded to learn that thousands of visitors from Canada and England and France and India and Italy and Finland, etc., regularly tour the U.S.S.R., and that the visits are returned, and that the United States forbids Americans from going to the Soviet Union. On the Soviet Union generally, the questions revealed a level of misinformation that was simply Hitlerian.)

What about partisanship and scholarship? The idea of cause? Of progress? Aren't people really naturally bad? Isn't democracy really a farce? (This asked of me—the "totalitarian"!)

WHAT'S the good of voting if the ruling class controls the government? Do the means justify the ends? Where is your allegiance? What is your idea of patriotism? Why did you oppose the Korean War? Could you make a speech favoring capitalism in Russia? (Who would come to listen? Suppose it had been advertised that I was to make a speech favoring the re-establishment of slavery—would you have come? Would you have thought I was serious, and if I was would you not have thought I was mentally ill? Note that the 13th Amendment forbids slavery, while 90 years ago slaveowners constituted the ruling class of this country. Note, too, that the forbidding of slavery means that any *act* looking towards the enslavement of a human being is a criminal offense and would be so punished, while a speech advocating slavery would be a joke or something so anachronistic as to have as an audience only a physician.)

No matter what you say I cannot give up my belief that Communists

favor civil liberties only for themselves and so I shall not come to your aid, and why should I? (All right, I cannot convince you, at least this time, that you are wrong about us Communists. But because you say I will not guard your civil liberties if I had the power to take them away, should you therefore allow mine to be taken away from me now, while you have the right to speak out against this? Are you not then doing, or at least allowing others to do exactly what you say I might do in the future when and if I have the power? And is it not a fact—does not every day's paper bring the news—that the assault on civil liberties has gone far beyond Communists? Is it not a fact that a general pall of fear and intimidation hangs over our land and is it not true that it is the Communist hoax, the Big Lie, that serves as the source for this wave of repression? Is not then your own freedom actually at stake in this campaign allegedly aimed only at "Communism"?)

Is there any difference between Left and Right? Aren't they both just personality aberrations?—deviations from "The Vital Center" (quoting Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.)? (Are there bosses and workers? Is there a difference between socialism and capitalism? Are there monopolies in this country? Is there a difference between the program of the Communist Party and the program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce? Does this indicate that there is a reality in the differences marking Left and Right?)

What *is* the program of the Communist Party? Is it printed somewhere? (In a nickel pamphlet, of course; we took orders for some.)

What's behind all the war talk? Does Russia want war? Does Eisenhow want it? Should the atom bomb be used?

And so on—hour after hour, literally hundreds of questions.

MOST people are dissatisfied, I think, with the answers the commercial press and radio and television have been shouting. There is intimidation but it is much less complete than many, including many of the Left, believe it to be. Certainly there is a deliberate effort to corrupt, not least the college youth, but this has not yet been successful.

One teacher asked a student: What are you reading these days? The young man replied: Melville, Bernard Shaw, some poetry. Melville, poetry? said the professor. Why do that? It's a waste of time. You ought to study up on that Bomb, maybe then you'll survive.

The great fact is, however, that American youth—or much of it much of the time—still is seeking out poetry and is reading it and refreshing itself, and so preparing to refresh our country.

A Historian's View—

"Red Scare" of the Twenties

By ROBERT DUNN

WE HAD our national "Red scare" before. In the intensity of its terrors, fears, forgeries and raids it was not too far behind what our nation is living through now. For the present generation, for whom the years immediately following the first World War seem as remote as some geologic age, it is most urgent that they get some historic outlook on the phenomenon of the "Red scare" and the hunt for Communists, a development which many seem to think has happened for the first time in the Cold War.

The appearance, therefore, at this time of an objective and cool study of the organized hysteria of the 1920's by a professional contemporary historian, associate professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania State, and also Secretary of the Pennsylvania Historical Association, with the book* having the imprint of the University of Minnesota press, is a notable sign that the challenge to the McCarthyite and official "Red scare" of the 1950's is on the rise.

For what is admirable in Professor Murray's study is not only its research and its exposure of the social roots of the "Red scare" but also its warning that very similar forces are at work in today's "Red scare" and that the result of such planned hysteria is always the loss of democratic liberty for the nation as a whole, that in fact such is one of the main aims of these fomented scares.

Professor Murray's book tells how the Open Shop corporations, their "patriotic" organizations and their agents, in government, in newspaper and in magazine offices, used the labor developments of that day to fashion some of the biggest "Red scare" lies of the pre-Hitler and pre-McCarthy decades.

Out of the normal struggles of the workers for wages, shorter hours and union recognition—the Great Steel Strike of 1919, the Seattle General Strike, the Boston Police Strike, the bituminous coal miners strike (all the subject of separate chapters in this volume)—the native Big Lie experts of 1919-20 created a vast Red Scare, a fantastic Radical

* *Red Scare—A Study in National Hysteria.* 1919-1920, by Robert K. Murray. University of Minnesota Press. $4.75.

Menace, a wild Deportations Delirium and a sensational attack on the foreign-born known as the Palmer Raids, directed by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and carried out by J. Edgar Hoover, our leading "anti-Communist" savior of the 1950's.

FROM this calculated terror and violence against workers' rights came also not only federal laws undermining constitutional rights but a swarm of state sedition laws, criminal syndicalism laws, criminal anarchy laws, and Red statutes on the books, and in 1919-20 alone no fewer than 1400 persons, both citizens and aliens, had been arrested under them and about 300 ultimately convicted and sent to prison.

Although the major attack was on labor and union radicals, very few persons prominently associated with any group left-of-center escaped the accusing finger at some time during the Red Scare. Typical of those called parlor Reds, dangerous radicals, Soviet defenders, Red sympathizers, tools of Moscow—the tags were similar to those used today by McCarthy, Jenner and Brownell—were the venerable anti-Marxist economist Thorstein Veblen; the leading social worker, Jane Addams; the outstanding liberal editor, Oswald Garrison Villard; the towering progressive Senator, Robert M. LaFollette; the head of the Federal Council of Churches, Rev. S. Parks Cadman; the Dean of the Yale School of Religion, Charles R. Brown; the outstanding professor of labor history, John R. Commons; the President of Vassar College, Henry N. McCracken. The list was indeed as distinguished as any you will find smeared today in the pages of *Counterattack* or in the Red Underground insanities of Herbert Philbrick.

The American Civil Liberties Union was condemned by 100 percent patriots as a "Bolshevist front" and "a supporter of all subversive movements" two decades before it was engaged in its own private witchhunt. The National League of Women Voters and the Foreign Policy Association were charged with being "tools of the radicals."

There was no reference then to "20 years of treason," but the *Wall Street Journal* raised the alarm about those in high places: "We talk of parlor Bolsheviks, but what of those other Bolshevists, in the Cabinet, or at any rate near the throne." And Dr. Murray reports that "some superpatriots even went so far as to label President Wilson himself a parlor Red." Yet Wilson was the man who refused to release Eugene Debs from Atlanta penitentiary where the great Socialist was sent for making anti-war speeches. (The Republican President Harding later responded to the mass campaign for Debs' freedom.)

And it was Wilson who "ardently supported Palmer in his drive for enactment of some form of peacetime sedition legislation."

The state of mind of the nation, that is of a good part of its top circles, was properly referred to as hysteria. An English writer, A. C. Gardiner, described the public mind in the U.S. at that time as "hag ridden by the spectre of Bolshevism. It was like a sleeper in a nightmare, enveloped by a thousand phantoms of destruction. Property was in an agony of fear, and the horrid name 'Radical' covered the most innocent departure from conventional thought with a suspicion of desperate purpose. "America," as one wit of the time said, "is a land of liberty—liberty to keep in step."

Dr. Murray emphasizes the way the press and all media of mass communication were used in blowing up the Scare:

"Every conceivable technique and form of public expression and propaganda was brought into use to proclaim the existing danger. Every ambitious politician, overzealous veteran, anti-union employer, super-patriotic organizer, defender of white supremacy, and sensational journalist jumped into the fray, using the issue of radicalism as a whipping boy for their own special purpose. As a result, never before had the public mind been so atrociously assaulted—and never before was it so successfully unstrung."

The result of all this was that, in the words of Dr. Murray, "the forces of reaction implicit in the 1919 economic, political, and social environment achieved their goal. Civil liberties were left prostrate, the labor movement was badly mauled, the position of capital was greatly enhanced and complete antipathy toward reform was enthroned."

THIS is a fair general summary of the results of the Scare. But it fails to allow for the splendid fight-back spirit engendered in at least a good-sized section of the labor movement. For example, in discussing the wave of anti-radical sentiment sweeping the press in 1919, Dr. Murray says: "It would have been wiser for labor leaders to have kept rein on their unions and bided their time until a later date." The Great Steel Strike, he holds, was "a stupid mistake."

And yet he admits that the cost of living had gone through the roof (up 99% in five years), that real wages had fallen. In fact he accurately reports no strike demand that sounds unreasonable, no matter what interpretation the flag-waving "American Plan" employers associations may have put upon it at the time. Certainly he could present no

effective argument as to why 10,000 Paterson silk workers should not have gone on strike for the 44-hour week and a wage increase in August, 1919.

This writer and Norman Thomas' brother Evan, a pacifist and a conscientious objector just out of Leavenworth, happened to be the "outside leaders" of that particular encounter. Although the workers had voted to strike on August 4 and their demands were simple bread-and-butter ones, the Red Scare made it possible for the police chief to close our headquarters and put four of us in jail for five days until a vacationinig judge could be found to sign a writ of habeas corpus. The charge: advocating the overthrow of the government of the United States and of the State of New Jersey and the establishment of a Soviet form of government! All based on the fact that at a prior convention of our national union, the Amalgamated Textile Workers of America, a simple fraternal greeting had been sent to the textile workers of the USSR. The indictments were never pressed, especially as the workers, undeterred by the Red Smoke, won a smashing victory over the employers, as they did also in many other strikes that Dr. Murray would have postponed "until a later date." To that extent the workers in various parts of the country were able to defeat the Red Scare.

The direct anti-labor character and aims of the Palmer persecutions are not as sharply drawn as they could have been by Dr. Murray. In our Labor Research Association book on *The Palmer Raids* we quoted Palmer himself to show how his under-cover agents were engaged in breaking up union organizing efforts in Connecticut brass plants, Pensylvania steel mills and in the coal mining industry. Not only suspected "radicals" but local trade union officials were victims of the dragnet, for example, the officers of the AFL cigarmakers union of Chicago. Indeed, the powerful Chicago Federation of Labor declared the raids were "a part of a gigantic plot to destroy organized labor by the employers." And even Samuel Gompers, the highly conservative A.F.L. president, came out publicly in opposition to Palmer's sedition bills.

The special persecutions, trials and mob violence against the I.W.W. are of course included in Dr. Murray's study, for this group of workers undoubtedly bore the full force of the murderous terror, especially in the Northwest. But they showed plenty of fight-back and their General Defense Committee, along with the Workers Defense League (headed by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn), the ACLU, and the Joint Amnesty Committee were among the organizations

that joined in resisting the reactionary tide.

And there were many lawyers who were not intimidated as they are today by the threats of an Attorney General. Few, if any, attorneys were disbarred for taking unpopular clients and, so far as we can remember, there were no local campaigns of intimidation against attorneys such as we find, for example, today in Pittsburgh where the courageous Hyman Schlesinger stands practically alone in defending Steve Nelson, deportation victim and Jim-Crowed Negro workers.

To be sure there were some then who cringed and crawled like the leaders of the American Bar Association. Referring to the I.W.W. in its issue of April 18, 1919, the *New York Law Journal* advised that "Lawyers may well consider whether they should give legal aid to such dangerous adversaries of our government. . . ."

SOME of the top legal brains in the country, however, refused to follow such advice and were not afraid to express themselves at least with reference to the unconstitutional barring of elected Socialist assemblymen from the N. Y. State Legislature. Charles Evans Hughes, later Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, was one of this group. And there were also the brave men of the law who signed the famous document called: *Report Upon the Illegal Practices of the United States Department of Justice,* including, among others, Felix Frankfurter, later Justice of the Supreme Court, Dean Roscoe Pound of Harvard Law School, Prof. Zechariah Chafee, author of the classic volume on *Freedom of Speech,* Frank P. Walsh, former Chairman of the Industrial Relations Commission, and Francis Fisher Kane, U.S. District Attorney in Philadelphia, who resigned his office in protest against the Palmer outrages.

It is an event of some significance that an historian of Dr. Murray's standing should write and the University of Minnesota publish at this time a book which demonstrates so clearly, as the writer says, that "the seeds of excessive hate and intolerance, which for the most part have remained dormant in modern American society, can suddenly develop into dangerous malignancies that spread with lightning rapidity through the whole social system."

He sees the present application of his analysis when he adds that "in view of current events, the Red Scare also can offer many valuable lessons to those of us who, like the people of that earlier postwar period, are presently bewildered and feel insecure in a restless world of rapidly changing moods and conditions."

And in the period of the Truman-

Eisenhower Cold War he is not revealing any special secret when he writes that "the underlying hysterical spirit of American anti-bolshevism, which the Red Scare so clearly represented, lives on. . . . Our present reaction to the Communist philosophy in large measure still reflects the first impressions we received during the years 1917-20, *which indicates that in thirty years we have made little headway in adjusting ourselves politically or psychologically to living in the same world with the doctrine."*

Note well that Dr. Murray calls it a philosophy and a doctrine and not a "conspiracy"—the formulation now written into U.S. statute books and the addresses of the President. This in itself is sufficient to have Dr. Murray recommended for the subversive list, or at least to be upbraided by the vigilante and conspiracy-informer Dr. Sidney Hook.

ALTHOUGH there are many differences between the present period and the days of the early Red Scare, Murray makes a fair observation when he writes: "The indications of similarity between the anti-radicalism of the years immediately following World War I and the present are certainly striking. Charges and counter charges are made daily concerning the degree of radicalism in organized labor. Violent discussions arise on all sides with respect to communism in the schools and in government. Intense public interest is focused on sensational congressional investigations which have done much investigating but thus far have turned up relatively few dangerous radicals. Spy trials and spy hunts fill the newspapers to a degree completely out of proportion to their relative success or importance. Loyalty oaths are being more widely applied than ever before. Even a new word, 'McCarthyism,' has been added to our vocabulary which makes the old 'Palmerism' fade into insignificance."

It is clear that Professor Murray's book could not be more timely for all Americans of all political shadings who have watched the rise of the organized "Red scare" hysteria of the 1950's, a scare which has brought the United States face to face with the greatest danger to its security it has ever faced. His book should be required reading in every school and university of the land. It could help Labor greatly if distributed widely.

Matusow, Roy Cohn and the "Evidence"

By WILLIAM A. REUBEN

HARVEY MATUSOW has enlightened the country on the inside workings of the machinery for organized perjury in the "anti-Communist" cases of the government.* The progressive movement has been given by Matusow a vivid demonstration of just how this machinery fabricates its necessary "evidence." On the basis of his own experience, Matusw has singled out the figure of Roy Cohn in his description of just how false testimony is, to use Matusow's word, "developed."

It is not likely that any progressive in America gained any new understanding or learned much from Matusow's admission that he was lying in the "anti-Communist" cases. Anyone with the slightest political literacy wouldn't have needed Matusow's affidavit to know that he was lying on the stand to enable the Justice Department to get convictions at the second Smith Act trial at Foley Square. Matusow's allegations about Alexander Trachtenberg, Pettis Perry, Arnold Johnson, George Blake Charney and Henry Winston, in ascribing to each of them a statemnet containing the magic words *force and violence,* were patently ludricous and clearly a fabrication.

As early as January 1953 the Alsop Brothers, writing in the New York *Herald Tribune,* called on U.S. Attorney General Herbert Brownell, as one of his first acts on taking office, to initiate an investigation "of the professional informers who now flourish in this country." The Alsops singled out some of the statements Matusow had made, to document their contention that a probe of the whole system was urgently needed. They pointed out that, while Matusow had declared publicly that "the Sunday section of the New York *Times* alone has 126 dues-paying Communists," the fact was that, including two part-time copy boys, the entire staff of the Sunday *Times* totalled only eighty-seven employees. Such an "informer," insisted this team of conservative journalists, could only bring discredit to the Justice Department and the government, if they continued to sponsor

* *False Witness,* by Harvey Matusow, Cameron and Kahn, $1.25.

this kind of "information."

But what neither progressives nor non-progressives could have known, or had any opportunity to become aware of, is the *method* by which the lie was fabricated. And it is in this area that Matusow has added to the nation's knowledge; for what he has done, in charging that government agent Roy Cohn knowingly induced him to give false testimony, has enabled us to gain a new perspective, and see exactly what equipment McCarthyite Roy Cohn had, in jailing "Communist spies," that brought him such fame, influence and power.

In singling out Roy Cohn, Matusow not only showed the role of such professional witchhunters in jailing Americans for their opinions; he also helped to show how a Roy Cohn had played his part in the general government fabrications around the "atom spy" and "Soviet espionage" forgeries. It is notable that this Cohn who proved such a nimble servant of the Cold War leadership in whipping up political frame-ups was a key figure in some of the most publicized cases which were later used to persuade America to accept loyalty oaths, security tests and the rest of the formidable apparatus of political repression.

THE country has been deluged with the mythology of the "spy" angles in the cases of Alger Hiss, Judith Coplon, William Remington, Abraham Brothman, William Perl, the Rosenbergs and Morton Sobell.

Despite the enormous headline value that the Hiss and Coplon cases have had in the past for the advocates of the "Communist spy" theory of history, neither of these two cases is likely to be relied on to any extent in the future. Recently the Justice Department announced that it would not attempt to prosecute Judith Coplon again, a tacit admission that the mountain of headlines built around this first of the so-called "Russian spy" cases was built upon nothing whatsoever—and nothing else was ever shown in either of her two trials—except the fact that she knew a Russian. Alger Hiss' sensational motion for a new trial, the facts of which were virtually completely suppressed by the American commercial press, relied on the sworn affidavits of several of this nation's outstanding document examiners to support the claim, as it was summed up by Hiss' attorney, Chester T. Lane:

". . . that the typewriter in evidence in the case was a fake, that the Baltimore Documents were forgeries, . . . (and) that every important point of the Government's case at the trial is vulnerable. Chambers was the Government's witness, its only real witness; and everything that he said, or did, or said he did, is tainted with fraud and forgery."

No reasonable person who has

ever examined this incredibly fabulous array of evidence accumulated by Hiss' attorneys could possibly dispute this judgment.*

BUT what is still available to the McCarthyites are the other "Communist spy" verdicts, the convictions of Remington, Brothman and Moskowitz, William Perl and the Rosenbergs and Sobell. There are two extremely important points about these cases that, in face of Matusow's recantation, are worth emphasizing over and over again:

1. Not one shred of documentation has ever been produced to indicate that any of these defendants ever engaged in any espionage activities, or any illegal acts of any kind. The entire structure rests on oral testimony, on the "confessions" of five persons who have claimed to have been involved in espionage for Russia: Elizabeth Bentley, Harry Gold, David and Ruth Greenglass and Max Elitcher.

2. Roy Cohn as the chief confidential assistant to the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, was involved with every one of these witnesses prior to the time their testimony was first made public, and every single one of them shows *precise parallells* to Cohn's method of "developing" Matusow's testimony, as it was fully and convincingly described in the latter's affidavit.

IN THE affidavit that Matusow sumbitted to the court, "to do what I can to remedy the harm that I have done to the defendants in the case of *United States of America v. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn et al. . . .*" the former government witness declared that during his appearance at that trial in July 1952, "the matters I testified to were either false or not entirely true, and were known by me to be either false or not entirely true."

Matusow cited five instances against defendants Pettis Perry, Alexander Trachtenberg, Arnold Johnson, George Blake Charney and Henry Winston, of having, in his testimony at the trial, falsely ascribed to each of them some statement indicating the need to use force and violence to overthrow the government of the United States.

What is particularly revealing about Matusow's recantation is the method by which this false testimony was "developed" by Assistant U.S. Attorney Roy Cohn. A most striking feature of Matusow's testimony is the disclosure that in every instance he did, in fact, see or meet with each of the defendants under the identical circumstances as described in his

* See Milton Howard's "A Faltering Frame-Up, *Sunday Worker*, May 13, 1953, and Herbert Aptheker's article in *Masses & Mainstream* on the Hiss case. I also deal at some length with Hiss' motion for a new trial in my book, *The Atom Spy Hoax*, and in 1952 the *National Guardian* published several articles by me on this motion.

testimony at the trial, and that none of the *incidents* was fabricated. What was fabricated, Matusow declares, was the injection of the magic words, *force and violence,* into what would ordinarily have been an innocuous and innocent conversation. Matusow's recantation regarding Alexander Trachtenberg provides the fullest account of the qualities Roy Cohn had to make him such a huge success in Cold War America.

At the Flynn trial, as the lawyers refer to the second Smith Act trial at Foley Square, the government was allowed to introduce into evidence Andrei Vishinsky's *Law of the Soviet State.* At the opening of the book, there appears a quotation from the writings of Marx and Engels containing the phrase that the proletariat "must demolish and utterly break up this machine and build its own new state machine"; and another phrase declaring, "the Revolution consists in the proletariat's destroying the apparatus of the government and the entire state apparatus, putting in its place a new apparatus." As a result of Matusow's testimony, that 100-year old quotation, written to apply to completely different conditions, was put before the jury in a completely out-of-context manner. This is the testimony that Matusow gave in 1952 at the trial that enabled the prosecution to get that passage into the record:

"Mr. Trachtenberg did say that the book contained the first comprehensive report of the Soviet concept of law and the Marxist-Leninist concept or law.

"He went on further to say that in talking about the book, The Law of the Soviet State, that the question of capitalism and socialism here, or the creating of a Socialist society eliminating class antagonisms, how that was to be accomplished through the establishment of socialism, how the diametrically opposed classes could be eliminated—were found in that book."

In his recantation, Matusow declared that he had, in fact, at one time talked briefly with Mr. Trachtenberg about the Vishinsky book, and that such a discussion did, in fact, take place at the Worker's Book Shop where Matusow was then employed. But, said Matusow, everything else in his testimony at the trial about this discussion, was a lie. In his sworn affidavit, he said:

"At no time in the course of the conversation did Defendant Trachtenberg make the statements that I attributed to him in the foregoing quoted portions of the testimony. At no time did Defendant Trachtenberg refer to the book in relation to the concept of revolution or overthrow of the Government. At no time during the many occasions that I met with and talked with Defendant Trachtenberg did he indicate that he advocated the overthrow of the United States Government by force or violence or any other means."

Matusow's description reveals a striking reversal of the usual criminal investigating technique. Matusow testified, under direct examination by Harry Sacher in the motion for a new trial by the defendants in the Flynn case, argued last February before federal Judge Edward Dimock, that justice, as administered by Roy Cohn and the other government prosecutors, was that first the "criminals" were indicted and *then* the authorities began acquiring evidence to indicate what "crime" they had committed. This is what Matusow said, after he had testified about an interview that was arranged for him with several members of the prosecution staff for the purpose of determining whether they would use him as a witness in the Flynn case:

Q: . . . —Will you tell us what was said and who said it in the automobile on the East River Drive on Dec. 19, 1951?

A: Mr. Cohn showed me a copy of the indictment thereto and . . . also during this meeting he asked me if I had ever read or knew of the law —the book, "The Law of the Soviet State," by Andre Vishinsky, and I told him "Yes."

He asked me if I could tie it up with any of the defendants in the case and I said I once discussed the book with Mr. Trachtenberg.

Cohn then told me that the Government had attempted to introduce the book "The Law of the Soviet State" in evidence in the trial of the United States v. Eugene Dennis, the first Communist Party trial, and that they were unable to—the Government was unable to tie the book up with any of the defendants, and Cohn said he was anxious to get the book in the record of the case coming up. He asked me what I knew about—what kind of conversation did I have with Mr. Trachtenberg in relation to the book and I told him that it was just a general conversation similar to—in relation to other books, wanting to know how the sales of the book were, in relation to many books in the Jefferson School book shop. . . . I said that Mr. Trachtenberg had discussed the book in a general sense as he had discussed other books, and the sale of the book.

Cohn then pointed to a passage in the book, the opening passage, and said that he felt—Cohn told me that he felt it was important to get that passage into the record because Cohn said it showed that the Communist Party advocated the overthrow of the Government by force and violence and he asked me to think and see if I had any other recollection as to the meeting and conversation with Mr. Trachtenberg.

I then said, "Well, I discussed the book with him and he said that it was too high priced, seeing the book was $15, and it would be good"—I said that Trachtenberg told me "It would be good if the book were brought down to a lower price so that it would be gotten out to wider circulation, more people could read it. . . ."

Cohn went on and said, "That's good but it doesn't relate to the passage, we want to get this passage in the book. Did you discuss the con-

tent of the book with Mr. Trachtenberg?"

And then I said, "No, that was the general sense of our conversation." Cohn continued on that line, did I discuss the content of the book with Mr. Trachtenberg, and when I gave him the answer—for instance, about the book being too high priced and containing the basic concepts of Soviet law, he said, "That's not enough. We need more."

. . . I specifically stated to Cohn that Mr. Trachtenberg only said that —only discussed the book in relation to other books in this book shop, the sales of the book, and when Mr. Cohn said, "Well, that won't be enough to get it in evidence. We tried in the other case to get this book in and there is no connection with the defendant this way."

I said, "He also discused the question of the book being too high priced containing the first concepts of the Soviet law, and again Cohn said, in substance, "This will not be enough to connect the book with the defendant and get it in evidence."

In our subsequent discussions, in the February meeting and in the meetings we had later, the question of the answer in relation to how it finally came out, that amended answer that I gave was worked out. Cohn continuously said, "This isn't enough," even though I said, "The content of our conversation was such that Mr. Trachtenberg only discussed the broad concept of a book being in a book shop.

But I willingly and knowingly participated in these conversations with Cohn and agreed to say these things and actually invented certain things after I had told Cohn that I didn't know any more than that.

In his affidavit, Matusow said: "Thereafter, in several sessions with Cohn, we developed the answer which I gave in my testimony, tying Trachtenberg to that passage. We both knew that Trachtenberg had never made the statements which I attributed to him in my testimony." Although it's not likely that any progressive needed Matusow's affidavit to realize he had lied, what about the average American whose mind for almost a decade of Cold War has been incessantly poisoned by those who own and control the media that serve him with his "facts" about Russia and Communism? How could he be expected to see through this fabricated testimony?

Cohn's denial that he had induced Matusow to testify falsely is feeble indeed, in face of two exhibits introduced in evidence in the motion for a new trial in the Flynn case. These are a 75-page report submitted by Matusow to the FBI in 1950, at the time he was placed on the government payroll, containing a full account of everything he had done and everyone with whom he had had any contact during the brief period when he was a member of the Communist Party; and a summary, dated April 24, 1952, prepared by Assistant U.S. Attorney Albert Blinder, of what evidence Matusow would be able to give in the event he was

used as a witness by the government. Neither of these written documents, both in existence prior to the time Matusow testified in the Flynn trial in July of 1952, has any reference to any of the force and violence references that Matusow now swears were false and which he now charges were subsequently "developed" by Roy Cohn.

And, although we do not as yet have any recantations to spell out the details, in every single case in this country purporting to involve espionage activities for Russia, this kind of evidence was "developed," by Roy Cohn and government agents like him and, without any exception, the circumstances are precisely parallel to the situation described by Matusow. In every single instance, the "criminal" was indicted and proclaimed guilty and *then* the government, in every major instance in the person of Roy M. Cohn, went out and obtained the evidence to indicate what "crime" had been committed.

THE tragic case of William Remington, for example, is one of the sharpest and clearest instances of this technique. By the time Remington went to trial in November 1950, five years after Miss Bentley had first given his name to the FBI, he was described by Cohn and his titular superior, Irving Saypol, as a "Communist spy" who had delivered "documents and vital information" to Elizabeth Bentley during World War II "for ultimate delivery to Russia." The testimony that was sponsored by the government, given by Elizabeth Bentley and Remington's former wife, unmistakably indicated, as it was summed up by Remington's attorney, William C. Chanler, "that all three of them are guilty of passing documents to a foreign agent in time of war, it was a crime of espionage punishable by death. I see no question about that." It was the government's contention, as expressed by both Saypol and Cohn, that such acts flowed logically from the fact that Remington was supposedly a member of the Communist Party, and that "incidental espionage activities on behalf of the Soviet Union go hand in hand" with Party membership.

Such terrible charges were completely different from the initial allegations that Miss Bentley had made about Remington, and the facts are beyond dispute that the magic word, *espionage,* was made a part of Miss Bentley's story only very belatedly.

It is a matter of record that she first went to the FBI in the summer of 1945, and supplied FBI agents with the names of some forty persons. Remington's was one of those names. The date that the FBI first interviewed Remington is a matter of record, and in and of itself indicates that Miss Bentley could not pos-

sibly have told the authorities anything suggesting that Remington had been involved in any way in espionage activities during war time, a capital offense.

Whatever statements Miss Bentley initially made to the FBI in the summer of 1945, have never been made public. But it is not conceivable that whatever they were had anything to do with espionage, for not until almost two years after Elizabeth Bentley had given her first "confession" to the FBI, did any agents even question Remington. As was shown at the Remington trial, he was not even interviewed by the FBI until the month of April, 1947.

There are even stronger indications of how belatedly the magic word, *espionage,* came into Miss Bentley's story. For a year and a half, during 1947-48, a special grand jury listened to the "confessions" of Elizabeth Bentley, Whittaker Chambers and Louis Budenz and, despite the intense efforts of the Justice Department and the FBI, adjourned without indicting anybody for espionage.

After that, in the summer of 1948, when Miss Bentley first achieved national notoriety as a result of her first appearance before a congressional committee, she gave sworn testimony, which has since been made public, characterizing her activity in Washington during the war years, not as espionage, but as "information gathering," and mentioned Remington as one source in government from whom she received press hand-outs which she said she turned over to Communist Party publications and journalists. Under cross-examination at the Remington trial, in 1950, this is the explanation that she offered for her lack of awareness in 1948 of ever having *previously* engaged in espionage activities for Russia:

. . . . The word 'espionage' had never been used or never thought of even.

Q. It was not even explained exactly in those terms, was it?

A. No, it was called information gathering, that is, that was the term we gave it.

Q. And . . . you thought you were gathering information for Mr. Golos and for articles in the *New Masses* and perhaps for the Communist Party?

A. I thought he was gathering it for the Communist Party primarily, and as a side issue possibly for any journalist who needed it, yes.

There are still other proofs that nothing was said about espionage in Miss Bentley's early allegations about Remington: The fact that the Loyalty Review Board of the U.S. Civil Service Commisison had thoroughly investigated Miss Bentley's charges against Remington and, on February 9, 1949, reporting that it had considered the "entire file in the case," concluded that there was no

basis for finding that Remington was in any way a security risk, let alone a person who had committed a capital offense. Moreover, there was the additional embarrassing circumstance that, following an appearance by her on a radio program, the first time that Miss Bentley ever made any statements about Remington (she called him a Communist) when she was not enjoying Congressional immunity, he promptly sued her and the National Broadcasting Company for libel and was awarded $9,000 in an out-of-court settlement.

It is apparent that, in 1950, Remington's clearance by a loyalty board, and his having been awarded an out-of-court settlement in connection with his libel suit, the government was sorely pressed to find a means for rehabilitating Elizabeth Bentley in the eyes of the American people. There was one common denominator to be found between the manner in which Miss Bentley's rehabilitation was accomplished, and the manner in which the magic of *force and violence* was made a part of Matusow's testimony.

That common denominator was Roy Cohn.

He was in charge of the Flynn case at the time he had his discussions with Matusow, and as "special, confidential assistant" to Irving Saypol, he in every way dominated the court proceedings at Remington's trial, being directly responsible for the examination of seven of the government's thirteen witnesses.

The technique of "developing" the necessary "link" that would provide the legal cover-up for the built-in conviction was fully displayed in this other Roy Cohn triumph. For while Elizabeth Bentley in all her various statements to Congressional committees had never contended that Remington had ever given her "unauthorized" information, in her revised testimony at the trial she produced for the first time a tale of a meeting with Remington in a car. This new testimony helped to give credibility to the testimony of the former Mrs. Remington. Questioned as to how she came to dig up this necessary "link" in the form of "meetings in a car" she had never bothered to remember before, the government witness sweetly replied: "Because little by little I remember facts when I think back over things."

The same method for "developing" the needed "evidence" peers out at us in every one of these "spy" cases or faked "perjury" cases.* Matusow's vivid portraiture of just one of the government's operators in the frame-up machine, Roy Cohn, should serve as a reminder that the method is mandatory for them all. It is inherent in the jailing of Americans for their political or social opinions and activities.

* *I have fully documented this astounding system of officially organized hoaxes and frame-ups in my book,* The Atom Spy Hoax.

Letters from Kansas

By AARON KRAMER

(*Section II,* A Ballad of August Bondi, *commissioned by the Jewish Young Folksingers as their contribution to the nationwide festivities honoring the tercentenary of Jewish life in North America. Music by Serge Hovey.*)

August Bondi, young Jewish revolutionist, had escaped with his family from Austrian terror in 1848, and settled in St. Louis. As soon as the Territory of Kansas was opened to claim, Bondi left home—determined to add his voice for a free soil. All through the Spring of 1855, he sent reports of his experiences to his parents.

I.

The slaveholders are all in great glee over their fake victory at the polls. For the time being, Kansas is in their hands. Near the border, at the place where we stopped for dinner, a cavalcade rode in. From them we had a fine account of their expedition to Kansas and of their doings there lately:

Let's hear about it! Tell us about it!
If we hadn't seen it all we surely would doubt it.

Well, there came a young Missouri man to Kansas in the Fall,
found himself a pretty little claim, prettiest little claim of them all;
laid four poles on the ground, like this, just the size of a squatter-shanty,
then the winds came around and tracked him down, chased him back to Jackson County.

Let's hear about it! Tell us about it!
If we hadn't seen it all we surely would doubt it.

Well, soon as the winds got sleepy, came a devil from Vermont,
with his devil wife and four devil brats, and they found the place they want,
and they built their devil shanty where the four poles lay—prettiest little claim in Kansas,
and if you want to smile, sit still awhile, there's only two more stanzas.

Let's hear about it! Tell us about it!
If we hadn't seen it all we surely would doubt it.

Well, us fifty come a-galloping—"Oh ain't it the devil of a shame!
You've built yourself a mighty snug nest—but Missouri's got this claim.
If you're still around next time we come, remember, Mr. Baker:
you'd better prepare a special prayer, 'cause you're going to meet your maker!"

Let's hear about it! Tell us about it!
If we hadn't seen it all we surely would doubt it.

Well, next time we come a-galloping, right at the door he stands.
Says brave Captain Pate: "You're the devil of a thief—snatching our slaves and our lands!"
Then we chopped his pretty chairs, and we broke his pretty beds, and whacked his pretty walls a-splinter,
and we whipped him at the tree, and if no one cuts him free, he'll be hanging there next Winter!

Let's hear about it! Sing it and shout it!
We'll do the same on every Northern claim, don't anybody doubt it!

II.

Work has been so hard, mother, I'd truly lost track of the calendar. But the day came, which I suddenly remembered must be different from all other days of the year. Alone in the wilderness, with only the stars as guests, I celebrated the Passover:

Where are the silver candlesticks,
the damask-covered table,

a sacred bowl in which to mix
the flour of Moses' fable?

Dear watchful stars—you should not scoff
that I've no damask cover:
the Matzoh's done—here, break some off
and mark my passing over!

The rite begins: *come, eat with me,*
all ye who know of hunger!
Last year my bread was slavery,
but I'm a slave no longer.

Now all at once the words resound:
No more shall fetters bind ye,
for ye have put the poison ground
of Egypt far behind ye!

Over the thorns ye stumble forth;
under the winds ye quiver—
yet shall ye stoop to kiss the earth
the day ye cross the river.

That day the sun thy wounds shall dress,
a cleansing wind pass through ye;
that day, that day the wilderness
shall hear thy Hallelujah!

III.

Perhaps I should not fret you with such news, mother. But you are strong of heart, and have the right to know. What happened to me this morning, has happened to all here who will not deny their love for freedom. Twenty galloped up to the door of my cabin:

WHO'S THE OWNER OF THIS CLAIM?
I am.
BONDI?

That's the name.
HOW LONG SINCE YOU'VE CROSSED THE BORDER?
Eighteen days—why must you know?
WE'RE IN CHARGE OF LAW AND ORDER.
Won't you have some biscuits?
NO!
THIS HERE AIN'T NO SOCIAL VISIT.
What's it all about? What is it?
WE'LL ASK QUESTIONS—YOU'LL GIVE ANSWERS!
TELL US STRAIGHT—NO FANCY TRICKS:
WHAT WIND BLEW YOU INTO KANSAS?
WHAT'S YOUR PARTY POLITICS?
I got weary—thought I'd stop
wandering, and raise a crop. . . .
RAISE A CROP! HO-HO, THAT'S FUNNY!
RAISE A CROP! HO-HO, THAT'S RICH!
WE KNOW WHAT YOU'RE RAISING, SONNY:
NEGRO-STEALING SON-OF-A-BITCH!
—And I want my crop to be
suckled by a soil that's free . . .
FOREIGN-ACCENT TROUBLE-MAKER!
PACK YOUR BAG! THIS SOIL IS SLAVE!
YOU'LL RAISE NOTHING ON THIS ACRE
BUT A TABLET FOR YOUR GRAVE!

IV.

Mother, here's news you'll like better than the last. This afternoon some thirty head of Devon cattle strayed into our field, and half an hour later came two men to drive them home. They were Jason and Owen Brown. They stopped about half an hour with us and told us they were Free State men. I said we might need some help, as the pro-slavery settlers would sooner or later try to drive us from the Territory. They cheered us and said: any time you let us know, we will come to your assistance. We are four brothers, all well armed:

We are four brothers, all well armed!
A lad came looking for liberty

when Boston was hardly a town.
He did not tremble much at the sea
that wanted him to drown.
John Brown was the name of that fool, and we—
we are the sons of John Brown.

A man grew mad from bending his knee
before King George's crown.
He promised his wife that the land would be free,
—no matter if he go down.
John Brown was the name of that fool, and we—
we are the sons of John Brown.

A soul cried out, "What's freedom to me,
till slavery's day is done?"
A gentle and loving soul was he,
but grim as a pointed gun.
John Brown is the name of that fool, and we
are each of us his son.
If you'd like to join our family,
there's always room for one.

This time, mother, I sign the letter not only as your devoted son, but also —as a son of John Brown.

PATH OF A NEGRO ARTIST

By CHARLES WHITE

BY APRIL, 1918, the United States had been in World War I for a year. In the decade before the war, and even more during the war years themselves, hundreds of thousands of my people, the Negro people, had moved out of the misery of life in the southern states, where the great majority of them, almost ten million, lived. They had no resentment against the southern land itself. In fact, they were deeply attached to it, for practically everything useful that had come out of the soil was largely a product of their toil. And they had no illusions that the North was a place free from prejudices. But in cities like Chicago factories were growing, and workers were needed, the demand growing with the war production boom. The employers discovered that a Negro's two arms could serve a machine or an open hearth in a steel mill as well as those of anyone else.

I was born in Chicago, Illinois, April 2, 1918. Both of my parents were from the South. My father, a railroad and steel worker, was a Creek Indian. The Creeks had been centered mostly in Georgia, where they were hounded and discriminated against like anyone else with a darker skin than white. My mother came from Mississippi. All her folks were farmers. Her own mother, my grandmother, had been a slave, the illegitimate daughter of a white master. I am not proud of this white man who was one of my great-grandfathers. A typical slave master, he did not regard the product of his seduction of a slave woman as his offspring. She was just another slave chattel. My mother was born free, but four of her relatives, two uncles and two cousins, were lynched in Mississippi.

Of my parents, it was my mother to whom I was closest. My father died when I was eight. My mother later married again, but she parted from my stepfather when I was thirteen, and from that time on we looked after one another. She loved music and art. When I was seven years old she bought me a set of oil paints, and I painted my first picture, which she still has. When I was nine, she bought me a violin and got me a music teacher. I scratched away on

the instrument for about seven years, but my all-consuming interest was painting and drawing. I liked music, and I think that music has had a deep and helpful influence on my painting. But I resented the time given over to practice on the violin, and whenever I thought my mother wasn't watching, I would drop it for the paint brush. My mother would have preferred me to be a musician, but in this, as in everything else throughout our life together, she had a wonderful fund of patience, always gentle with me, trying to understand why some things of which she thought less meant so much to me, never criticizing me sharply or harshly.

From the earliest years I can remember, I was made conscious of the fact that there were "differences" between Negro people and white. I played with white children. My mother was a domestic worker, traveling to white people's houses to scrub their floors, wash their clothes and cook for them. When I was a baby in arms she would take me to these homes, as there was nobody to look after me, and I would sometimes play with the children there. We lived in a very poor, ramshackle neighborhood of Chicago, and were for a time the only Negro people on the street. I would play with the neighbors' children, but the feeling that there were "differences" permeated the air, growing more intense, of course, as we grew older.

It became even more glaring when I entered an elementary school in Chicago. The idea that there were "differences" was ever present in the attitude of the teachers and in what we were taught. When I learned to read, there it was in the books, as well as in the motion pictures, cartoons, newspapers, "jokes" and advertisements. The Negro people were portrayed as grotesque stereotypes. And the "difference" was brought home to me again when I went out to earn money to help out in the house, which I did from the age of nine. I delivered groceries for a store, earning 75 cents a week, and made money in other ways apparently reserved for Negroes—shining shoes, cleaning and sweeping as a porter in shops. I couldn't define the "difference," let alone understand the reason for racism, but the fact of it was always there.

WHEN I moved on to high school, my odd jobs in the evening continued. I worked as a hotel bell-hop, and a counter attendant in an ice-cream parlor. A little later I was to be a valet and a cook. I had been a good student in grade school, and was marked out as especially gifted with the paint brush and pencil. This continued in high school, where the art teachers seemed to be proud of me. The school had about 2,000 pupils, of whom about 25% were Negro. All

the teachers, of course, were white. And prejudice was always there.

When I was sixteen, and again when I was seventeen, I won an art scholarship in a competition run for high school students by the State of Illinois, but these scholarships were denied me when it was discovered that I was a Negro. I was avidly interested not only in painting, but in literature and drama. The drama group in the school allowed me to paint the scenery, and design the sets and costumes. But I also wanted to act, and this was forbidden to a Negro.

My disturbed feelings sometimes broke out into open defiance, and in studies such as history I came to be regarded as a "problem." To explain how this happened I have to go back a little. When I grew too big to be carried by my mother to the homes where she worked as a servant, she would leave me for two or three hours in the public library. I became a voracious reader, and continued this throughout my school years. I went through everything in the children's section, and then, at the age of twelve, begged the librarian for a card that would permit me to enter the section where there were more advanced books. I was two years short of the requisite age, but finally won my point and was given a card that allowed me to enter this new area of books, and to take out four books instead of two.

I again read practically every book on the shelves, at first starting with the authors whose names began with "A" and hoping to work up to "Z." I grew impatient with this somewhat mechanical approach and browsed about, finding a writer I liked and then reading everything the library had by him. I thus read through the works of Jack London. Another favorite was the writer of historical romances, Rafael Sabatini. And I accidentally came upon books that had information which had never been imparted to me in school.

I discovered that the Negro people had played a proud role in history. A book that fascinated me, and opened up new vistas, was Dr. Alain Locke's *The New Negro.* I had never realized that Negro people had done so much in the world of culture, that they had contributed so much to the development of America, that they had even been among the discoverers of the continent.

For a while I kept this new-found knowledge to myself. It became a kind of secret life, a new world of facts and ideas in diametric opposition to what was being taught in the class rooms and text books as unquestionable truth. But then the clash began to come out in the open. I would ask my teachers why they never mentioned a Negro in history. I would bring up the name of Crispus Attucks, the first martyr of the American Revolution of 1776, or of

Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner and Frederick Douglass. I would mention the painters, Bannister and Tanner. My teachers answered smugly and often angrily. The histories from which we were taught, they would say, were written by competent people, and whatever they did not mention was simply not important enough to mention.

When I spoke up about these ignored great figures, I would be told to sit down and shut up. In public speaking classes, whenever I had a chance to speak, it would be about these discoveries of mine. The other Negro students were often embarrased by this. It had been deeply ingrained in them, as in me in my first school years, that to be a Negro was something of which to be ashamed; that the Negro people were an inferior people, illiterate, uncouth. And this was intensified by the clownish role forced upon Negroes in the cinema, by thousands of barbs and shafts in the comic strips, in the newspapers, in casual conversation of white people. Everything characteristic of Negro culture was isolated and distorted into an object of hilarity. And so it was considered best not to mention this embarrassing word or subject.

It is a terrible thing, this turning of children against their own parents and ancestors, robbing them of their heritage and the riches of their past, leaving them spiritually fatherless and motherless.

I grew to dislike school intensely. Many times I was on the point of being expelled. I was called stupid and arrogant. My mother was asked to come to school, and receive a list of complaints. And so whenever I didn't feel like going to school, I just didn't go. Playing truant, I would go to the Art Institute of Chicago and wander about its art galleries, looking at paintings, and dreaming of becoming an artist. Outside of my art teachers, who would come to my rescue when I got into trouble, I was very lonely in school. But I did find a small group of students struggling to break down discriminatory practices in school, and joined them. Thus at sixteen I had my first experience in an organized movement to attack some social problem.

IN THESE years I also began to feel more confidence in myself. I became friends with a white fellow student whose father was a professional sign painter. He taught us both the trade and we set up a little shop after school hours, doing signs and lettering, and even theatre displays. For a time we were hired by a theatre to do this work, and given $75.00 a week. Unconscious of the existence of trade unions—certainly the schools never mentioned them—we did not know, as we soon found

out, that the employer was using us to avoid hiring union members, and was thus saving an amount equal to what he was paying us.

During this time I also sketched incessantly, at lunch time or in whatever spare time I could find in the evenings. I drew whatever I saw: the people I knew, the streets about my home, events that had happened.

And I discovered that there were other Negro artists in Chicago. I read in a Negro newspaper of a Negro art group called the Art Crafts Guild, which met every Sunday. I was fifteen at the time. I timidly took a few drawings to their meeting, and was admitted. They met every week, mostly to work from a model or from scenes in the streets, and criticized each other's work. They had community exhibitions, and thus some of my work was first publicly seen, in places like a Negro Baptist Church, a Young Men's Christian Association House, a Settlement House or Boys Club. We would occasionally take over a vacant lot for our exhibitions.

We got to know each other intimately, and would visit each other's homes. Some lived in a garage which we rented for a studio. Dues were small. None of us had any formal art training except for one who had gone for a short time to the Institute, and was the Club President, chief critic, guide and instructor, giving us also some knowledge of the technical aspects of handling paint.

We decided we would give out prizes at our exhibitions, the judges being an elderly artist and one of the leading figures in the community. Then we determined we would get some formal art education. We raised some money through parties, and announced that the prizes would now be, instead of a few dollars worth of artists' materials, a "scholarship" to the Art Institute. We could not give a real scholarship, of course, which cost $250, but were able to pay the fees for a few night lessons. We also stipulated that whoever was the winner would have to teach us what he had learned.

In this way we all shared the prizes. Altogether we managed to send about a dozen club members to Institute classes. I never won one of these "scholarships," but I did get to do some drawing from life at a sketch class run by an artist, Todras Geller, who did a good deal of work for Chicago synagogues.

When I was 19 the most exciting event of my artistic career up to that time took place. I won a state-wide competition for high school graduates, the prize being a full scholarship to the Chicago Art Institute. And this time the prize was actually given to me. I still had to make a living working at night and vacation times, but I was able to finish the two-year course in one year. With this technical instruction behind me, I felt that

I was really set on the road to becoming a full-fledged artist. But how was I to find enough time to draw and paint? At this point, the W.P.A. arts project beckoned.

THE W.P.A. arts projects, instituted by the New Deal administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, were a form of unemployment relief. But they established the principle that the unemployed were to be given useful work, not simply a miserable few pennies of a dole. And they also embraced the principle—one practically unheard of up to then in United States history—that the arts were socially useful work.

And in a queer way, some of the very restrictions that "free enterprise" put on the projects worked to the advantage of the artists. For the work done by the unemployed had to be of a kind that did not compete against private business. And so the work done on the arts project—drawings, easel paintings, lithographs, murals—could not be privately sold, but had to be a public possession, hung in schools, post offices and other community and government buildings. Many of the artists on the projects found a gratifying new spirit entering their work, with the knowledge that it would be publicly seen and discussed, looked upon by the people as their own.

To be accepted on the project, one had to prove possession of the requisite skills, and also had to be unemployed, unable to find work, on relief, and a pauper, without any salable possessions. The latter part of this was easy. The Negro people were poor even in boom days. Since the crash of 1929 the great mass of Negro families had been unemployed.

But when it came to be accepted as an artist, racism again showed its face. The director of the Illinois art project did not think that Negro people could be artists, and on the entire project there was but one Negro, an elderly artist who had won a national reputation some years before. Otherwise no Negroes were taken on, although there were from fifty to a hundred who were fully qualified.

But an Artists Union had formed, which I joined. It went on strike against these discriminatory practices. We picketed the projects. Finally we won. And so my first lesson on the project dealt not so much with paint as with the role of the unions in fighting for the rights of working people.

Looking back at my three years on the project, I see it was a tremendous step for me to be able to paint full time, and be paid for it, although the pay was the bare minimum of unemployment relief. But the most wonderful thing for me was the feeling of cooperation with other artists, of mutual help instead of competitiveness and of cooperation between

the artists and the people. It was in line with what I had always hoped to do as an artist, namely paint things pertaining to the real everyday life of people, and for them to see and enjoy. It was also a thrill to me to see so many accomplished artists at work, and to be able to learn from them. I became active in Artists Union committees and also took part in the work of the League Against War and Fascism, and the organizations for support of the republican government of Spain.

It was obvious that the welfare of the Negro people, the progress of all the working people, and the cause of democracy were linked together. And this was also the basis for the progress of art. The artist could not spend his life in his studio. He had to play a role in social life.

When I was twenty-three I won a fellowship of the Julius Rosenwald Foundation. At this time I married an accomplished sculptor. With the fellowship grant we went to live and work for two years in Louisiana, Virginia and Georgia. I painted a mural for the Hampton Institute, a Negro college in Virginia. It dealt with the theme I had long before tried to argue about in high school, the contributions of the Negro people to the development of democracy in the United States.

THESE two years in the South were one of the deeply shaking and educative experiences of my life. I was in the real home of my people, where the vast majority had lived and worked from the days when they were brutally brought in the slave ships. In many places Negro people were almost the entire population. Yet, without the right to vote, without elementary civil rights, denied any protection of courts or government, they were domineered over by a corrupt ruling clique, who had the guns, and had the reins of the police, courts and politics in their hands. If necessary, the rulers could also unleash the violence of the Ku Klux Klan and lynching. They kept the population of the South, Negro and poor white, in poverty and illiteracy, making it a source for cheap labor. I felt the whiplash. In New Orleans, once, I walked into a tavern, and was brutally beaten, for Negroes were not allowed to enter such public places. In Hampton, Virginia, a streetcar conductor pulled a gun on me and could with impunity have pulled the trigger.

But I also learned to understand and love my people as I had never before. In Chicago I had still tried to defend them against misrepresentation, by showing that we too had our philosophers, our artists, our explorers, our orators, our military heroes. We were just like the white figures told about in the books. Like my Negro schoolmates, I had been so affected by the grotesque perver-

sions of Negro culture, by the ridicule heaped upon everything Negro, that even the genuine culture came to be something to wipe out of mind, and ignore. A touch of dialect, or the beautiful music of the spirituals, made us faintly ashamed, especially if there were white people present. Everything different from the Anglo-Saxon stereotype was fit only to laugh at.

And now in the South I began to understand the beauty of my people's speech, their poetry, their folk lore, their dance and their music, as well as their staunchness, morality and courage. Here was the source of the Negro people's contribution to American culture, and of the far vaster contribution they could make to the world in the future. Particularly the music affected me, the spirituals, blues, ballads, work songs, gospel songs, church songs and secular songs, and it has remained one of the most important influences on my work. It is not that I have ever tried to translate the music directly into pictorial art. But the music expressed so perfectly, in a way that touched the heart more directly than any other art, the dignity, the outpourings of tenderness, the social and comradely feelings, and humanity of the people.

It is this that has helped in my efforts, in paintings and drawings, to present a feeling of universal humanity within a particular image, so that all people of good will, looking at a particular image, would feel that something of themselves was contained there. It is this that the great Paul Robeson expresses in his singing in a marvelous way, so that he becomes the foremost bard of a whole people, symbolizing their common aspirations.

Questions that had long been raised in my mind began to be answered, a slowly developing process that had caused so much turmoil of mind and heart took a new leap, the hunger to understand the complexities of the life of my people began to find some satisfaction, although I still have so much to learn. Seeing the people living on the land, seeing the culture rise as part of life, long-standing confusions began to be erased.

I spent a year and a half in the army. There I contracted tuberculosis. Discharged from the army, I went to Mexico for two years, and this was another memorable chapter in my education. There I worked with the leading Mexican artists, including those of the *Taller de Grafica Popular.* I was especially moved by Leopoldo Mendez, the great master of popular wood-cut. One of the honors of which I am most proud is that of having been elected an honorary member of the *Taller.*

On my return from Mexico my wife and I agreed to a divorce. I spent two years in a hospital, trying to arrest the case of tuberculosis, and under-

went five operations. I then met the woman who became, five years ago, my present wife. She and my mother have been my two great teachers. What I learned from them was what an artist has to know about human beings in order to be an artist. My mother's moral strength taught me to see how much the peace and human dignity of the world will be protected and won by the simple, ordinary people. The guiding love and sympathetic understanding of my wife taught me again not only the wonderful potentialities of human beings but also their strength in the face of every adversity. It is one of the sources for the optimistic feelings that I like to think my pictures convey.

WHAT may be called in part a kind of honeymoon, and also one of the thrilling experiences of my life, was the trip my wife and I made to Europe in 1951. We went through France, England and Italy, and then attended the World Youth Festival in Berlin. From there we were invited to visit Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Soviet Union.

I had known from reading, of course, that there were many artists over the world who had taken a quite different direction from the inhuman and abstract direction in which so many of the young artists of my own country were moving. But it was quite another thing to meet and talk to these artists directly.

Formerly, at home, striving to give my art a more realistic quality, going so to speak against the tide of what apparently everyone was claiming to be the "new" and the "future," I sometimes felt very much alone. There were others, of course, thinking the same way, but scattered from one another, and all feeling alone. I now realized that the great forward-moving tide of art was realism, and that the majority of creative artists in the world were realists.

I can never feel alone as an artist again. I learned valuable lessons from what had been done in a short time, by artists, coping with basic problems, in Germany. How tremendously they had advanced in a few years! I realized for the first time the greatness of the classical social artists in Russia, particularly Repin. I learned profound and basic lessons from the Soviet and Chinese artists.

But even more important was the contact I had with the peace forces over the world. I began to understand something of the strength of the working class, and its role in the development of society, from the struggles and achievements in the people's democracies and the Soviet Union. I began to understand something of the mighty force that had been unleashed in the peace movement, reflecting the conscious desire

of the masses of people over the world, and their conviction that they could accomplish this task. I got a perspective that it is very difficult for the average American to attain, namely, the ability to see international questions as the primary concern of all peoples.

It is not easy for the average American to feel pride in his own culture and at the same time to be able to see the qualities it has in common with cultures apparently so different from his own, to be able to identify himself with the African people, Chinese, and other Asian people. At home I had begun to reach such conclusions theoretically, but only after this concrete experience was I able to make these feelings part of my actual painting and graphic work. I was able to look back and evaluate my own work, see the difference between a merely general humanist approach and one in which the character and world view of the working class, its internationalism and optimism, played a major role.

I will never forget the hospitality and warmth showered upon me, and what I can call the affection bestowed upon me, as a representative of the oppressed Negro people and of the people striving for peace in the United States. If I had come back with nothing else, this would have been the most powerful experience and influence on my life from then on.

IN MY work I have always striven, even when dealing with an actual personage or incident, like the case of the Trenton Six or Mrs. Willie McGee, to give the portrayals a general humanity, so that people looking at them will say "This is somebody I know," or "This is somebody I have seen." I feel that even more than in my work of three years ago, I have been able to engender a feeling of hope. Even in a scene exposing the harshness of life of the common people, such hope is latent and must be revealed.

In my early years as an artist, the problems frequently arose of what to paint. Now there is no such problem. The more I learn of the history of my people and country, the more I experience of the stirring events of our time, the more are there subjects which clamor for realization. My problem is to find time to work and freedom from financial worries.

I have worked in all media; painting in oil, tempera and water color, drawing in ink, crayon and charcoal, and reproducible graphic work such as lithography, etching, woodcut and linoleum cut. In the last nine years I have worked mainly in the black-and-white media. The reason is that such work reaches great numbers of people more directly, and I feel less bound to the single moneyed purchaser or art collector.

However, there are some themes of life which demand treatment in

color. In painting I have generally preferred tempera. It fits better my methods of work, which require that a painting be slowly built up, with many parts worked and re-worked over again. I like the opaque quality of tempera painting, and the feeling of it, better than that of oil. Oil paint seems to call for a more spontaneous approach to painting, and I cannot work so spontaneously. However, I feel that I have yet to master many problems of color, including the use of oil paint.

An artist should be the master of all media of his art. Drawing, to me, is as exacting a medium as painting. My drawings are built up slowly, like my paintings, and I make many preliminary sketches for a finished drawing. I find it difficult to work on a small scale, and generally prefer to work on a large scale, almost life size. In painting, my deepest desire is to do murals. In all my life I have had the opportunity to do only four murals.

Most of my themes are those that have been dwelling and growing in my mind for a long time. If I am planning a historical theme, I generally spend a long period reading the available literature on the subject before doing even the first sketches. I generally do not work from models—that is, from the beginning to the end of a painting or drawing. Sometimes, for the handling of a specific character, I refer to sketches or pictorial notes I have made of people in the streets, subways, homes and public places. My finished figures or characterizations embrace almost always the composite features of many people.

If a work is unsatisfactory to me, no matter how much time I have spent on it, I will discard it. It took me a long time to gain the mental strength to do this, but I feel that I have profited from it. Before I exhibit a work publicly I will try to get a frank opinion of it from friends and neighbors. I take their criticisms very seriously. If their response is largely negative and critical, I will try to find out what is wrong in the work, discard it and do it over.

MY WIFE and I live very simply. I no longer have my hopes and aspirations tied up with becoming a "success" in the market sense. I have had a measure of success in exhibits, some prizes, and awards, although not as much as I might have gotten had there not been certain "difficulties" presented by my speaking as part of the Negro people and the working class. But getting a market place success or recognition by art connoisseurs is no longer my major concern as an artist.

My major concern is to get my work before common, ordinary people; for me to be accepted as a spokesman for my people; for my work to portray them better, and to be rich

and meaningful to them. A work of art was meant to belong to people, not to be a single person's private possession. Art should take its place as one of the necessities of life, like food, clothing and shelter. I was happy when I learned that the portfolio of drawings reproduced by *Masses and Mainstream* had reached many lands, and was helping my people to be understood tens of thousands of miles away. When I heard that a group of share-croppers and factory workers in Alabama had combined whatever coins they had to buy a portfolio, had shared the pictures among themselves, and passed them from home to home, I felt that I had made a "success."

An incident I like to remember was that which took place when the African scholar, Dr. Matthews, to whom I had presented a portfolio, returned to South Africa. The Malan government had refused to extend his passport. When the officials in Africa discovered the portfolio among his belongings, they refused to let it pass, for the presence of these Negro faces was, to them, propaganda. Simple human dignity and brotherhood are dangerous propaganda to racists and fascists. They finally allowed the portfolio to go through, when they found one portrait of a white man among the six pictures. That made it "art." The portrait happened to be one of Abraham Lincoln.

I live in the United States as a progressive Negro artist. Like all artists, I have special problems. But I have reached a point in my life at which I know, with a conviction deeply rooted in reality, confirmed by small but potent and inescapable signs, that the future is very bright, and it holds great promise for the Negro people and all the working people of my country; I have tried to put this message into my art.

The Poet Prisoner

By CHARLES HUMBOLDT

For Walter Lowenfels

In this taut time of our troubled country
When those driven from the temple stand in all doorways
Selling their trash at the point of guns
While hooded guests sit between wife and husband
Jeering juggling coins spearing fruit with their knives
And it is forbidden to give anything away, what is not bought or stolen
Is worth nothing so that so many
Cannot conceive of simple unearned love
The speaker ashamed the answerer afraid.

When the twelve o'clock sleepers
Those drowning swimmers feel their arms
Cramp with a sense of failure—
All night the mice whisper
And serve them bills warrants a summons
To appear strictly alone
Without defense and they hear
The sentence of judges like rocks shouting

When the croak of keys the bark of doors
The rage that thinks itself inexorable
Sound like the bombing of a city
And all the inhabitants crouched in their dreams
Stretch the crushed cables of their eyes, once more
Hoping to see the splintered bridges the vacant towers
Cured of their fractures and their emptiness
As in a film run backward where the crumpled stack
And powdered walls rise from the flood of dust

When the night can only stare
At the howling and lying air
Then in the quiet of second thought
Suddenly
My blood outbeats the little lizard's throat
I smell the sweat of courage pressed from fear,
And light unfolds at four o'clock
As each man buried in this social grave
Wakes to my friend's poem, the caresser of life
Wrestling with his impatient memory
The new day flowering on the tip of his tongue
A great day for games and walks
No line of rain, the ocean friendly tiger
Licking the flanks of earth
The pleased motherly beach
Pushed and pulled in a vast
Love of fun and the sun setting in motion
Waves of the human voice and wheels within wheels
Of the musical brightly lit human heart

Prisoners listen, this day
Woke in the sea surrounded by leaping
It moved landward where men
Light as sparrows in the mottled forest
Led it on covered trails, a day of words
Defended by silence the calmest day
Protected by anger the gay day
Fenced with rifles. It questioned
Those who had the answers using
Benzine bottles bird cries and cat calls
Roofs cellars stairs alleys
Bursting through circles of enemies
With the brisk eyes of your childhood,
The dead city stony Lazarus
Rose without magic by this day's breath
Women left the doors of ruins offering
The salt and sweetness of the earth
And everywhere the day ran like a river
A crystal snake through woods and towns

The green flags tinkled and the crimson flared
In a wind fresh as cornflowers

And now his poem dawns
On the cots and corridors on the taped mouth
And lonely hands, the unswerving wish
That studies happiness like science
That plans the mind as a new house
Full of sunlight melts the uneasy locks
The luminous key the singing fire
Of man's humanity to man

Prisoners remember this day this poem
It will ebb from your shores
But your wide wake eyes
Followed it around the world
Let them follow it still
Through space filled with the breath of watchers
Millions of brothers undreaming sentinels.

THE WORLD OF SCIENCE FICTION

By SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

IN THE years since the end of the Second World War, the branch of commerical "popular" literature known as "science fiction" has become a major phenomenon in United States cultural life. It takes in an enormous sea of short stories, novelettes, novels, hard cover books, soft cover books, cheap magazines, expensive magazines, anthologies and comic strips. It has its fanatical followers, its high-brow production, its low-brow production, its established classics and its own specialized scholars and critics, who apparently devote most of their waking hours to reading its constantly appearing new works. It behaves like all other mass-produced popular art, which is produced like a commodity, is barred from dealing honestly with real life, but must strike a responsive chord in the public. Like them, its social significance far exceeds its artistic merit. Just as popular love romances tell us not about real love, marriage and family life, but about the yearnings for love in the hearts of the people, so science fiction gives us a clue to the fears engendered in the people's minds in an age of the atom bomb.

It does not reflect a great increase in scientific knowledge among the people. The science of "science fiction" is not the profound process of discovery of the laws of nature. It is predominantly "applied" or "gadget" science, invention of new and more intricate destructive weapons, thought machines, time machines, robots, rockets and space ships.

In this it reflects something of the condition of science itself in the country. As educators have noted with alarm, the percentage of study even in the great universities given over to theoretical science is steadily declining. An increasing percentage of students work on "practical" problems assigned by the Army, Navy and giant corporations.

And it is not an accident that a certain "myth" haunts so much of science fiction. It is the myth of a robot or Frankenstein which gets out of hand and defies its makers, or of vast destructive atomic and "ray" weapons in the hands of monsters who threaten to wipe out Earth. Under the present anarchic ownership

of the means of production, the jobs, happiness and standards of living of almost the entire population of the country are in the hands of a handful of multi-million dollar corporations and monopolies, responsible to nobody but themselves. Into their hands have passed the vast achievements of three centuries of natural science, of biology, chemistry, and physics, which are used overwhelmingly in the incessant drive for profits, including armament production.

Thus the "miracles" of applied science bring only threats of unemployment, the nightmare of depression is ever present, increasingly powerful atomic weapons are announced in spite of the universal revulsion of world humanity, and any rumor of a step to peaceful coexistence sends shivers through the stock market. Even the scientist loses his individuality, for great numbers of talented scientific minds are working in the laboratories of the corporations, losing even their own inventions, every step in which is patented and owned by whoever pays their salary. Science seems truly to have gotten "out of hand," or to be in the possession of some inhuman, mechanical monster.

Properly seen, the problem is not one of science advancing too rapidly, or getting out of control, but one of economic structure and class relations. But it is precisely this avenue of thought that is closed to the science fiction writers, unless they are extremely brave and even then they can only hint at this in a veiled manner. For the publishers of science fiction, of magazines and pocketbooks published in the millions, are themselves big business. And in fact the publication set-up of science fiction, like that of all commercial slick fiction, is itself like a gigantic "science-fiction" monster, a Frankenstein, a mechanical brain or thought machine, its laws those of commodity production, marketing, mass sales and super profits, devouring in its great maw rich human talents, brains and imaginations, using them to turn out masses of commodity stories that seem to be alive, that walk and prattle like human beings but are really formulas.

WHAT the science fiction of recent years primarily reflects is the deep insecurity of people, haunted by threats of atomic war, and their longings for peace. Thus, compared to the older forms of slick commercial fiction, science fiction takes up themes that are more broadly social. Recurring again and again in it are questions of world war or peace, world government, the future of man and of human society. And since it cannot deal with them realistically and rationally, it must take them up in a fantastic and irrational manner. Thus it pictures the Earth five thousand years from now, or

sends space ships not only among the planets but among the outer galaxies, tries to imagine life taking curious forms on other inhabited worlds. And to give substance to these stories, since it cannot draw upon a steady and clear picture of the forces making for progress and reaction today, it must draw upon the old, familiar slick fiction formulas, dressing them up in a "gadget science" jargon. Three of the most popular formulas are those borrowed from the adventure story, the ghost story, and the international intrigue and spy plot story.

The old-fashioned adventure story dealt with the "Wild West," the "frozen North," the high seas, the "mysterious" lands of Asia, Africa and South America. The science fiction version transfers the exploration to outer space, other inhabited planets, distant worlds. The decent side of the old adventure stories was a sometimes genuine love for nature, and portrayal of human courage. Their destructive side was their frequent chauvinism and racism, directed at the American Indians, Spanish-speaking American people, Chinese, and every other kind of "native" who did not fit a white Anglo-Saxon pattern.

The science-fiction version loses the sensuous feeling for nature, since its "new worlds" can only consist of distorted versions of the earthly mountains, glaciers, deserts, swamps, jungles and volcanoes. But it carries on the chauvinism on a cosmic scale, pitting its heroes who represent "civilization" against the frightful monsters of outer space. Even when it takes a kindlier attitude, and suggests that there are "higher" forms of life to be found elsewhere, these turn out to be by their descriptions so forbidding that the amazed reader would willingly put a stop to the process of evolution.

The ghost or "horror" story was always, in modern times, a reflection of the fear and hatred of the present-day, of the developments of science. Produced by people themselves haunted by fears, it attacked reason and revived the most ignorant superstitions. It drew heavily upon primitive magic and medieval folk tales, with vampires, werewolves, walking dead, witches, sorcerers who made pacts with the devil to get superhuman powers, Frankensteins, Wandering Jews and Flying Dutchmen eternally haunting human society.

The science-fiction version finds its horrors and ghosts in mysterious disappearances into a fourth dimension, journeys through the past or future in time machines, monsters infiltrating earth from outer space, robots, superhuman but heartless, crushing their makers. It is equally irrational and even more anti-scientific, for it transforms science from the source of knowledge and liberating force

it is, in human society, into a frightening enemy of the people.

A particularly virulent form of this science-horror story is what may be called the "reverse Utopia." It projects a future "science-run society," for which the readers are encouraged to read "socialism." The world has now become a gigantic machine, human beings are all cogs in the wheels, there is no change, people are forced to smile perpetually, and all problems are settled. Even love and the bearing of children have become replaced by laboratories and test tubes. Life has become unbearably dull.

Typical is a story, "Tolliver's Travels," by Frank Fenton and Joseph Petracca, in the anthology, *New Tales of Space and Time* (Pocket Books). A Hollywood screen writer is miraculously transferred to the chromium-plated civilization of the year 2051, is put to work, and this brilliant dialogue takes place:

> Tolliver announced bitterly, "I can't write."
>
> She studied the writing cubicle, looking from the floor to the ceiling for concealed wiring. "You sound awfully unhappy, Mr. Tolliver."
>
> "Well, I am unhappy, damn it!"
>
> Her smile instantly vanished. Her face became serious, and it seemed to Tolliver that hers was the first serious face he had encountered here.
>
> "You must not talk like that, Mr. Tolliver," she said guardedly. "Talk like that can get you atomized."

THE international-intrigue-and-spy plot story developed with the rise of imperialism, and its struggles for markets, raw materials and colonies, accompanied by mounting war tensions. Always in these stories the "we," meaning the people of the country in which the story was written, were honorable people, civilized, and gentlemen. The "they," the enemy, was made up of unscrupulous, malignant devils and bandits. And so the "we" were permitted to use every kind of lie, and stratagem, to strike below the belt, and murder, for after all this was in the interests of protecting the "honorable" people against the devils or "bandits." It is a fictional version of the kind of attitude which probably Winston Churchill, more successfully than anybody else, expresses in diplomacy. The science fiction version of this pattern simply transfers the potential enemy to some distant galactic empire ruled by a dictator commanding flotillas of space ships or mysterious cosmic ray weapons. They must be wiped out, for even though they have miraculously made tremendous scientific discoveries, they are barbarians at heart, and different from us. Only "we" are fit to rule, which of course we will do benevolently.

While such thinly covered war hysteria has become a major aspect of only the most depraved form of "science fiction," that found in the

comic strips, it is not altogether unheard of in the writing of the "high-brows." An example is the story "In a Good Cause," by one of the most anthologized and highly praised of these writers, Isaac Asimov. It is in the same anthology cited above.

The story takes place in the year 3000. There is a Coordinator of Earth, who is engaged in discussing peaceful coexistence with the emissaries of a distant galaxy of worlds, peopled by the "Diaboli." They are people who have almost no "individual consciousness," and "no such thing as politics," although they seem to have developed a remarkable science. They are not an aggressive, warlike people, and they want to have peace. But they are a menace to Earth, because they are so different. The Coordinator pretends to talk peace, secretly spreads forged documents to prove to the other of the "free worlds" that the Diaboli are planning aggression, institutes a surprise attack on the Diaboli, and crushes them. Then the Coordinator ecstatically announces that now interplanetary unity and peace are possible. "Disunion until conquest; union thereafter! But now union is easy. . . . The ancient writer Toynbee first pointed out this difference between what he called a 'dominant minority' and a 'creative minority.' We are a creative minority now."

The moral of the story is obvious. Hurray for "preventive" war, and for any lie to justify it. Drop the atom bomb now. Then we will have a peaceful world under our civilized leadership.

SINCE so many of the science fiction stories give us only the Rover Boys now moving into interplanetary space, or wars between galactic empires, or the old ghost and "weird" stories dressed up in a gadget-science jargon, it is inevitable that they should have nowhere among them a portrait of a real scientist. The real scientific mind fights for reason against irrationality, and for knowledge against ignorance and superstition. It prizes truth, and knows at the same time that the understanding of reality will never be complete, that each conquest of nature will bring new problems to solve. The real scientist is a social human being, with close ties to the people of his country and their problems. But in the hundred or so stories and handful of novels I have recently read, there is no such scientist, nobody in the tradition of a Kepler, Galileo, Morgan, Einstein or Joliot-Curie. Most often the scientist is portrayed as a super-magician, a cold-hearted master of mysterious inhuman forces that are enigmas to the rest of humanity, a member of a ruling elite of technicians, or an

engineer-servant of a dictatorial government, frightened at his own creations.

I have come across one notable exception to this, the English writer Arthur C. Clarke, who has some acquaintance with the genuine scientific mind, and also makes some pointed criticism of racism. His novel *Prelude to Space* (Ballantine Books) is a highly reasonable portrayal of the making of the first interplanetary rocket ship, and his *Childhood's End* (Ballantine Books) tries to give an optimistic twist to the future end of the earth. But even Clarke suffers from the pervading snobbish attitude of the popular science fiction of today, which completely ignores the common people, unless it portrays them as cogs in the wheels of a future machine-society.

One of the most remarkable facts about this stream of writing is that it is the first branch of commercial slick fiction in which the "happy ending" is no longer an unbreakable law, and there is a powerful pessimistic tendency. It is not found in the majority of works. But in enough of them to make a significant current, the prospect upheld is a dismal one; a few survivors watching the death or doom of humanity, eternal vigilance against invasions from distant galactic empires, wars upon wars forever, the earth blown up by atom bombs.

IT IS in this respect that the writings of Ray Bradbury are significant. For he is not only one of the most talented writers of science fiction, with a vivid imagination and touches of poetic style, but one of its outspoken pessimists. His literary ancestors are not Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, but Edgar Allan Poe and Ambrose Bierce. In other words, his field is the old-fashioned ghost or horror story adapted to science fiction, but he seems to have found in the field the opportunities for a genuine personal expression. He uses the science jargon as glibly as anyone else, although he does not take any pains to make it actually convincing. His stories are fantasies, whose power is that although they are set anywheres from fifty to a few thousand years in the future, their point of reference is unmistakably the United States of today.

He does not describe any future world governments, galactic empires, pseudo socialism. He names no names, but his imagery is obviously taken from the destructive forces operating in the United States today: the Dullesses, MacArthurs, McCarthys, the octopi of big business running the country, the mass production of pseudo art drugging the mind, the screaming commercialism and profit-hunting, the forces destroying the democratic and humanist traditions and making for a police state.

And he sees these destructive forces as all-powerful. His writings are haunted by the shadow of atomic war. And he does not Red-bait or witch-hunt. He holds no brief for any other country or power. But as he well knows, the madmen are here, in force. And the one thin hope he holds out is that when most of the world has destroyed itself, there will be a few people left,—people who have lived as hermits in the hysteria —who will pick up the threads and build a better life.

Among his current books are *The Illustrated Man* (Bantam) and *The Golden Apples of the Sun* (Bantam), both of which are collections of short stories; *The Martian Chronicles* (Bantam), which is a collection of stories with enough unity of theme and development of plot to make it almost a novel; and *Fahrenheit* 451 (Ballantine), which is a short novel. Each has been printed in hard covers as well as paper, and reached hundreds of thousands.

The Martian Chronicles deals with the colonization of Mars. Bradbury sees Mars as inhabited by a refined and cultured people, who are wiped out when the first landings from Earth accidentally bring a disease to which they are particularly vulnerable. Then the colonizers come with their search for mineral wealth, building super-highways, hot dog stands, beauty salons and screaming billboard advertisements. He sets up a conflict between the vulgar and blatant exploiters of the new land, and the more sensitive few who want to preserve some of the human and esthetic spiritual values of the vanished Martians. This gives him an opportunity for some sharp satire.

A particularly telling satire on racism, "Way in the Middle of the Air," tells of the Negro people of the South leaving in a mass emigration to Mars. This theme of racism recurs in other Bradbury stories. He does not really know the Negro people. His attitude is that of an embarrassed person who feels that the Negro people must hate all white people, including him, and hopes that they will be more gentle to their oppressors than the oppressors were to them.

The book ends with war breaking out on Earth, drawing back most of the colonizers, and in a great atomic holocaust, Earth and they are destroyed. The writing has a kind of macabre poetry.

A particularly effective story, "There Will Come Soft Rains," portrays a desolate Earth by describing a "modern," completely automatic house, which wakes up the inmates to the strains of music, announces the date, cooks toast, bacon and eggs and coffee for breakfast, turns on the radio, sweeps up and disposes of waste and garbage, cleans and dusts, makes afternoon Martinis, bathes the children. But the people are all

dead, and bit by bit the mechanism breaks down, ending by madly baking dozens of loaves of bread and strips of bacon, until the house crashes into ruin, and a last mechanical voice is piping, "Today is August 5, 2026, today is August 5, 2026, today is . . ."

FAHRENHEIT 451 is Bradbury's scream of fury against book-burning and cinema-television culture. Written with a prophetic insight of which science-fiction should be proud, it appeared at the time that McCarthy, Cohn and Shine were carrying on their book-burning antics in libraries, with State Department blessing. It describes a United States about fifty years from now. Two parties alternate in running a police state, making elections into a mockery. Books are forbidden. The universal entertainment, as well as education, is television, which has blossomed out to become a great "television wall," with many homes boasting four-wall "television parlors." Out of these walls pours a mind-drugging stream of picture and sound.

All houses are now fire-proof, and the Fire Department has the new task of hunting out miscreants who still keep books hidden away. They set fire to the books. There is a frightful increase in cynicism and brutality among the youth. As one character says, "Everyone I know is either shouting or dancing around like wild or beating up one another. Do you notice how people hurt one another nowadays? . . . I'm afraid of children my own age. They kill each other. . . . Six of my friends have been shot in the last year alone. Ten of them died in car wrecks." The headlines of almost any day's newspaper give a ghastly core of reality to this fantasy.

The central character is one of the new model firemen, carrying on the search for books and book readers, a search in which people who inform on their neighbors play a prominent role. Accidentally he becomes acquainted with some of the charms of the "old literature," and revolts against his job. He becomes a fugitive, miraculously escaping the automatic mechanical bloodhounds with poisoned fangs, and find himself in an "underground" with other former scholars who have turned hoboes. At the end the atom war comes. The big cities, as well as those of the "enemy," are turned to ashes, leaving only the few heretical book readers, who have memorized enough of the Bible, Plato, Shakespeare, Milton, Machiavelli and Albert Schweitzer to pass them on to the other survivors.

Similar themes such as the commercial and mass-produced degradation of art, the atom war which the people don't want but which they are helpless to stop, and the cultural brutalization of children, are found in the short stories of *The Illustrated*

Man and *The Golden Apples of the Sun.* Bradbury is not a writer with noticeable breadth. The last-named book, however, has a memorable story, "The Garbage Collector," which practically throws off the "science fiction" pretense. It tells of a simple-minded city garbage collector, who likes his job, until the orders come that the trucks are to be wired for radios, so that when an atom bomb hits the city, they will be given orders to go about picking up dead bodies. He wants to quit the job. His wife argues with him. Jobs are hard to get. They owe money. Think it over. But he is afraid that he may get used to the idea. How will they want you to stack the bodies, he wonders, "lengthwise or endwise, with the heads on the right or the feet on the right? Men and women together, or separated? Children in one truck, or mixed with men and women? Dogs in special trucks, or just let them lay?" This ghastly "fantasy" is not too many steps away from the conditions in the schools today, where children are drilled to hide under the desks, and "bad" children are threatened with a position nearer the windows, more exposed to "the bomb."

Exceptional in Bradbury is his deep honesty, his courage in making so explicit and unmistakable a criticism of the destructive forces he sees about him in his own land. These qualities raise him far above most of his science fiction colleagues. A young man of about thirty-five, he is oddly "old fogy-ish" in his thinking, something of a Victorian. Against the witch-hunts, television-cinema mindless culture, fascist trends, book burning, informing, war hysteria of today all he can propose is a return to the book-lined rooms where people, wept over the sadness of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" and discussed evolution versus religion.

Like many Victorian intellectuals he has a sweeping contempt for the masses of people, whom he sees led about like sheep. How did the degradation of books take place? A character in *Fahrenheit* 451 says, "There was no dictum, no declaration, no censorship, to start with, no! Technology, mass exploitation, and minority pressure carried the trick, thank God." But Victorian thinking has human qualities far above the cultural *gauleiters* of an age of imperialism, just as the primers from which children were taught to read a few generations ago had more decency and truth than the comic books, horror pictures and television murders which fill so much of their minds today.

THUS the mushroom growth of science fiction both opens up a welcome avenue of thought for progressive thinking people and strikes a note of alarm. The avenue it opens

up is its revelation of how occupied people are with questions of the organization of society, the relations between governments, the threat of war and the hope for permanent peace.

Questions such as those of the United Nations Organization, colonialism open and hidden, imperialism, monopoly, economic depression, socialism, the activities of scientists in helping create, sometimes unwittingly, such frightful tools of destruction as the hydrogen bomb and bacterial warfare, are reflected in the fantastic pictures of "future life on Earth," of strange and distant inhabited worlds and galactic empires. They are reflected as in a distorted mirror. And the alarm rises out of the fact of how little actual science, how little real knowledge of any kind, this literature gives its readers.

It poses an important task for progressive people. Just as they are the vanguard of those upholding and defending the democratic principles and institutions against the fascist trends, so it becomes necessary also to defend real science and the scientific world view, to teach what scientific thinking really is, to uphold the great tradition of science, against its perversions. And along with this the task arises of convincing people of the truth of optimism, arousing a faith in their fellow human beings and knowledge of their own strength. Capitalism, in its imperialist stage, can no longer promise the people a bright and happy future. Its only argument for its own dismal future is that there is no alternative.

TV Drama: Accent on Loneliness

WHEN the National Broadcasting Company learned from the speedy research organizations that some 65,000,000 Americans had viewed their recent presentation of Barrie's *Peter Pan,* starring the charming Mary Martin, they were awed by its enormous success. The cost to the sponsor was reported to be some $400,000.00 or somewhat more than .006 cents per viewer. This is pretty cheap when you are selling automobiles.

Statisticians hurrying along with their arithmetic pointed out that Mary Martin would have to play to capacity theatre crowds for a hundred years to reach such an enormous audience.

The Mary Martin skyrocket, however, is not nearly so impressive as the steady rolling barrage of the various weekly TV theatres. The weekly audience for these electronic theatres brings in a cumulative weekly attendance of many times 65,000,000. The annual audience is to be counted in the billions. While only five effective years of TV have been presented to mass audiences, more Americans have experienced the video theatre than have ever seen legitimate theatre in the entire history of the republic.

Not considering special presentations like *Peter Pan* and periodic Shakespeare, television theatrical "live" plays (Omnibus, Kraft, Robert Montgomery, U.S. Steel, Lux Video, etc.) bring us an estimated 350 to 400 original productions each year.

TV is bringing theatre by the carload to every corner of the U.S. By and large, like other products shipped by freight car, it is a theatre marked by a good deal of standardization. In form they are not unlike deep-freezes, slick and sparkling, in whose vault we find a hundred different colorful packages of almost every variety of quick frozen idea and emotion.

This quick-frozen kind of drama is indigenous to television. It cannot (by and large) be placed on a theatre stage. It must be thawed out electronically and filtered through the proportions of the three to four screen into the living room. Its interest to the audience depends on two things: the automatic intimacy

established by the home screen and the superb acting of the players. The scripts themselves are basically sound in TV craft but almost always make extraordinarily dull reading.

THE dominant TV drama by type is the one which deals with personal and emotional problems. The writers all seem to have a good smattering of psychological and psychoanalytical information. It is their most important tool in presenting their works. It frees the authors of many problems, such as mature and realistic expositon of character which is replaced by the easier symbols of Freud's world.

It allows for the full dramatization of minor ideas and characters. (The struggle of the young man to break Mother's Grip; the problem of the Woman Aged thirty and unmarried and how she finally did it; The Mother who wants her child to become a stage success more than anything else and almost ruins her young son and family; The Father who wants his unequipped son to become as Good a Man as Himself, and many similar problems).

In non-TV drama we expect that the sensitive author will display many insights into characters who are engaged in the broader actions the playwright has designed for them, but in TV it is the psychological insight alone which is dramatized.

The result is a huge theatre of "truthful confessions." As stage plays they would be worthless and dull and embarrasing but in the living room (gratis) the audience watches intently these skillful charades of private suffering.

Periodically, one theatre or another embarks on a broader attempt. It is not unusual to witness a drama involving "civil liberties" as a theme. A recent play dealt with "race prejudice." (A young man marries a girl whose grandmother was part Indian. His father casts them out. After much suffering we learn that Dad was ashamed of his own Indian blood.) It happened to be a poor play in spite of its fine cast. TV theatre also has dealt with the rights of anti-Communist "refugees" who are grossly misunderstood foreigners in small American towns. With themes of this kind "civil liberties" are handled with great passion. But the Negro American is not part of TV's war against prejudice; and, of course, civil liberties on TV begin only after exempting all Communists, progressives and other proponents of peace.

When so much theatre is produced it becomes a simple matter to rend play after play to critical ribbons. Yet the big fact of TV theatre is its quantity of production and audience. Millions of people are being brought ideas and entertainment of an order which did not exist a few short years ago.

The central feature of this theatre

is its isolation of people from society which casts its shadow dimly. People are left in pockets of loneliness and frustration in which they suffer deeply and solitarily. They hunt for the truth in themselves alone and find answers which are limited and even sad. There is no world to walk in and there is only a tenuous life which can only be compromised.

In these senses it reflects the brooding disquiet of middle-class American thinking and a refusal to think of the real world. It is all very bitter-sweet.

It is a theatre with many actors and no plays.

H. F. M.

More on Modern Poetry

By HAL N. SHAPIRO

In our March issue we published a discussion article by Martha Millet on "Modern Poetry: For or Against." We invited comment. In publishing the following response from one of our readers, we renew our invitation for others to join in the discussion.

"MODERN Poetry: For or Against?" The question is provocative, but it is beside the point. When Miss Millet argues that rhymed stanzas can be as decadent as free verse, or that the styles of Whittier or Whitman are impossible today, she is only proving what no one denies.

Nobody is "for modern poetry"—except the eclectic anthologist who finds a kind word equally for Pound and for Brecht. And nobody is "against modern poetry"—except the occasional academic of pre-World War I vintage who has managed to survive the New Critics deluge. But neither of these types is common among progressive poets.

The real question is this: how can modern poetry serve the people? This question involves (1) content (2) form (3) organizations and publications. There is plenty of room for clarification on all three points, but it is especially in regard to form that radically opposed views exist among progressives.

One view is that expressed by Miss Millet—indirectly, elliptically, but clearly nevertheless. There can be no one compulsory style, she writes. With this nobody ever disagreed. But does this mean there is no such thing as a decadent, obscurantist style? In discussing Eliot,

Pound, Cummings, she rightly points out their anti-human ideology. But it is their style, not their ideology, that clearly influences the work of many progressive poets. Is there anything wrong with this? Apparently Miss Millet feels not. She defends at great length stylistic changes in general; the question whether a particular change is for the better or the worse hardly arises. It becomes virtually an unpredictable accident that the innovations of Stein and Joyce turned into "repellent dead ends." And even then, these dead ends can become "live ends"! The only possible interpretation of Miss Millet's article is that, short of utter incomprehensibility, there is *no* form, style or technique of poetry that may not be "ours, equally, all of them." This view, to all appearances, is shared by many editors and critics of progressive publications.

But what is the other view, the view Miss Millet is arguing against? The view of those who, as she says "grow most voluble and heated on questions of form and content."

As one who on occasion does grow voluble and heated, I would make these points:

1. The vices of bourgeois "modern" poetry include: a seeking after strained, "metaphysical" images; a dependence on esoteric literary allusions and references; a breaking down of grammar (and sometimes even spelling!); a breaking down and destruction of verse forms, sometimes to the point of completely eliminating the element of rhythm or music. As Miss Millet correctly points out, this last is not universal, any more than the others are. They are all tendencies; taken together, they define the stylistic changes in bourgeois poetry in the past fifty years. Ambiguity is deliberately cultivated. "A poem should not mean, but be."

These characteristics did not appear simply through some abstract law of continuous, unexplainable "change." They are the necessary counterparts of an audience narrowed down to an academic-Bohemian coterie and a content devoted to frustration, despair, nausea, isolation, cynicism, mysticism.

2. The cause of peace, freedom and brotherhood is the cause of the countless millions. It makes no sense at all to write poems on themes of peace, freedom or brotherhood in a style meaningful only to a tiny group of readers accustomed to the poems of Eliot, Auden et al. Miss Millet mentions Neruda. I do not think this great poet would want the weaknesses he is struggling to overcome to be held up as virtues.

3. Clarity of expression and the unity of thought and word-music are essential for any poetry which is to be read by more than an esthetic clique. It is not quite true that "the people's movement has not yet

seen poetry as a living part of action, issues, or modes of education." I think of the verse that appears in local trade union papers; of Beulah Richardson's "A Black Woman Speaks"; of Langston Hughes' "Freedom Train"; of Edith Segal's "Loved One"; of Margaret Walker's "For My People." I think of Aaron Kramer, rarely printed and lukewarmly reviewed in progressive periodicals, but eagerly read by thousands of working class progressives.

None of these is a masterpiece of world literature. But the stylistic qualities that make them popular—clarity and musicality—are also found in the great poetry of *all* periods, from classical Athens to socialist Moscow. I submit that no poet can shirk the painful job of achieving clarity and mastering the rhythmic use of language on the ground that the Victorians are out of date.

4. If progressive poets are going to urge the people's movement to make poetry a vital force, they must work toward poetry that is capable of being such a force. Yes, new times demand new forms; and watered-down, third-hand Eliot and Pound is not a new form, but dead, deader than Whittier and Whitman will ever be. Let us modestly try to make our poetry for the people, before we expect someone to furnish people for our poettry.

Letters

Editors, *M & M*:

The following passage from Voltaire's Reason by Alphabet under the entry "Books" calls to mind the mental gymnastics of a Budenz or Matusow at a Smith Act trial testifying to the content of Communist books:

"It is sometimes very dangerous to make a book. There is hardly a single philosophical or theological book in which heresies and impieties may not be found by misinterpreting, or adding to or subtracting from the sense. . . .

"Perhaps it will hardly be believed that Dr. Tamponet maintained, 'I could set out to find a number of heresies in the Lord's Prayer, which we know to have come from Divine lips, if it had only recently been published by a Jesuit.

"'I should proceed thus: "Our Father, which art in heaven,"—a proposition tending toward heresy, since God is everywhere;—"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"—another proposition tainted with heresy, for again and again Scriptures say that God reigns eternally; moreover it is rash to ask that His will be done, since nothing is or can be done but by the will of God;—"give us this day our daily bread"—a proposition directly contrary to what Jesus Christ uttered, "Take no thought, saying what shall we eat, or what shall we drink—for after all these things do the Gentiles seek—but seek ye first the kingdom of God";—"forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" —a rash proposition which compares man to God, destroys gratuitous predestination, and besides, no convent in Europe ever remitted to its farmers a single penny;—"lead us not into temptation,"—a proposition scandalous and manifestly heretical, for there is no tempter but the devil.

"'You see, then,' said Dr. Tamponet, 'that there is nothing, be it ever so venerable, but that may be given a twist for the worst. . . .'"

HERB SIMPSON
Portland, Oregon

(The above letter is all the more timely in that Mr. Simpson is himself a victim of the witch-hunting Velde Committee, which last year cited him for "contempt" along with three other Portland residents, Donald M. Wollam, John R. MacKenzie, and Thomas G. Moore. Mr. Simpson, 33, is a native of Portland, who since his discharge from the Army has worked in the steel and woodworking industries. For defending constitutional rights against the Velde inquisition, he was fired from his job and was sentenced to ten months in prison. The Portland cases are now

under appeal. Support can be expressed through the Committee for the Defense of Constitutional Rights, P. O. Box 4374, Portland, Oregon.— Eds.)

Editors, *M & M*:

I very much liked the article "Turning Point for Intellectuals" by Milton Howard in the February issue. It based itself on what is new and growing in the situation and is especially valuable for singling out not only the degenerative trends among the intellectuals but also those of a progressive character. I think that some people have had too pessimistic an attitude toward many of the intellectuals

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER
New York City

Editors, *M & M*:

I recently read a story in *M & M* which inspired me to write a thank you note. Carl Sandburg tells of the Yankee farmer who told his wife, "Sometimes I love you so, I can hardly keep from telling you." The story was "Of This Time, Upon This Earth" by Meridel Le Sueur. That copy (Nov., 1954) is making the rounds among my friends.

The emotional impact and the affirmation of faith, I shall always remember. We are not too proud to confess our need of a re-affirmation of faith, from time to time, and our need for inspiration.

We want to tell you that we cannot remember seeing a Negro working man drawn in such grandeur, human dignity and depth of feeling.

MRS. G.
Des Moines, Iowa

Editors, *M & M*:

Enclosed is $6 for one year sub and a small contribution. Moving from Pa. to Cal. took a lot of money!

We specially liked Mr. Sillen's article on Thoreau. Bought extra copies of that issue (Dec., 1954) and sent them to some fellow members of a Great Books Club we belonged to in Bethlehem. We in the club had read and discussed Thoreau's "A Plea for Captain John Brown" and "Civil Disobedience" and Sillen's article shed a lot more "light" on the subject than did our discussion.

Thank you for the good magazine we'd hate to be without.

M. N.
San Francisco, Cal.

Editors, *M & M*:

I am sorry for the delay in mailing you this small donation and renewal of my sub, for I have a profound appreciation for the part *M & M* plays in the struggle for peace and freedom and a democratic people's culture. The February issue is outstanding, especially the article to the intellectuals ["New Realities for the Intellectuals," by Milton Howard].

H. M.
Los Angeles, Cal