MASSES & MAINSTREAM

Malraux: Art as Religion

PIERRE MEREN

Dreiser and Balzac

SAMUEL SILLEN

The Battle of Ideas

MILTON HOWARD

Man Without a Name

ANNA SEGHERS

A Night in the Woods

MERIDEL LE SUEUR

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Malraux: Art as Religion

By PIERRE MEREN

THERE is much ado about André Malraux's writings on esthetics. eferences to his ideas are multiply- g in art books, press articles, art- ic journals, and even, recently, in icial expositions. However, the mber of people who have really ad his books is small. The studies voted to them hardly exceed a few icles, though the book by the tics A. and J. Brincourt has tried put his chaotic jumble into logical opositions. Actually, his procedures, rmulas, even his words (like yle") are being diffused all the ore easily since Malraux's concepts ve only crystallized a series of com- onplace ideas that are scattered iongst the intellectual circles of the cadents. . . .

For Malraux's work presents it- f, from the outset, as much by its ethods as by its tone and it form, "antiscience." Thought, reduced a series of flashes, asserts itself thout justifications or demonstra- ns. It explodes haphazardly with- t progression of reasoning. And of this is done in a jargon and with a "pathos" which make a great verbal tom-tom, fascinating for some, but discouraging for the sane majority. . . .

We would like to show how his esthetic conceptions, which follow the idealist current flowing from Kantian formalism, how they try to harmonize with irrationalism and pessimism which come from the bourgeois thinkers of the imperialist epoch, from Nietzsche to Wilde, from Spengler to Frobenius; how this mixtures seeks to launch a religion of art based on the plastic arts, to turn men away from the real transformation of the word, transforming art into an opium to lure the intellectuals away from the real historic movement. . . .

"Works of art have finally been liberated from their functions," states Malraux. "The fan of invented forms" has opened in the succession of published reproductions: works that have been bled white are arrayed, all alike, anonymous skins. If the works, when they were an integral part of a civilization, used to

represent opposites and conflicted with each other, at present a profound kinship is said to emanate from their juxtaposed images: "works separated by several thousands of years are joined in a unity. . . ." Such is the most profound metamorphosis, the "glory" of "the West" and of Malraux, who is its prophet and commercial distributor.

ONE can see the movement of falsification which is at the base of this scaffolding. The very *bringing together* of forms is supposed to have revealed them to themselves, enriched them with their own truth. He thus transforms into a supposed enrichment what is actually a real historic process, or, else a formalist interpretation of works of art, both of which lead to a growing abstraction and impoverishment of art. Everything which is, in fact, loss or insolvency he carries on the credit side of the ledger because it is supposed to bring out better the alleged purity, autonomy and specificity of art.

Destruction (by man and by time) which has turned Greek temples into bleached ruins under the open sky devoid of all sculpture, which has reduced them to the extreme, to "pure" architectural forms, to interplay of surfaces and to volumes pleasing to the eye by their order and their proportions, are presented by him as the sources of artistic resurrection. Justifying his taste for decapitation, Malraux calmly writes: "a Gothic head is rarely more beautiful than when it is broken."

The inadequacy of museums which only too often leave the visitor alone with the exhibited work, is supposed the better to reveal the "essence" of the artistic work. But the museums which surround the work with documents and reintegrate it into the history of mankind, actually bring out the content in their diversity and richness, and on the other hand bring out these forms as a means of expression of the content. At Budapest I saw a museum which placed the pictures of a period in their recreated framework—each social class had its outstanding works—and thus rendered more palpable the social contents of the canvasses. Finally, far from salvaging the human values which they conquered through and against religious alienation, all that Malraux does is to extract empty forms from the religious works of the past.

In certain esthetic circles, they talk glibly of "the plastic universe," "the musical universe," "the film structure," etc. An artistic element, thus carried to the absolute, becomes autonomous and glories in the loss of all relationships, in the loss of everything that once made it rich and living. Just as the drop of water ordinarily perceived becomes by the enlargement of a camera lens an entire world, an element of form is inflated

the point of causing the real world vanish. And to this single element attributed characteristics which the *pearance* of a world confers: inde-ndence, density, totality, coherence, ucture. Whatever is "gestalt" or nfiguration is particularly empha-ed as is shape (whence the im-rtance given to reproductions of ulpture, which put forward, to the triment of volume, this single pect of form.) This manoeuver eets with more or less success in the rious artistic circles according to e complexity of relationships they aintain with reality and the atten-n paid to them by the people. (It noteworthy to recall for example e total failure of the "pure cinema," it had been formulated and at-mpted by certain German and nerican esthetes who had reduced to the point of being a succession lines, arabesques and abstract ots.)

T IS the trick of philosophic ideal-ism which, after having severed element from its relationships, ries it to the absolute. Not only is form then isolated from content, t an element of form is taken out its ceaseless living relationship h the entirety of forms, and thus the Marxist, Henri-Lefebre, writes, rm itself is mutilated."

Certainly Marxists do not deny s "relatively autonomous" element form, but they put it in its place and by so doing give it its meaning. Since in reality content and form are intimately united, it is all the more artificial and abstract to separate, to dissociate form itself.

If—in the abstract—one removes from form that which is relative to content, that is, if there is the effort to make form adequate to all the richness of content, if there is effort to transmit content in a fully sensitive and immediate manner; if, therefore, one indulges in this kind of analysis and retains only the particular aspects of form which do not depend on this fulfillment of content, there remain combinations of color, proportions of form, relationships of composition which constitute a reality proper to each domain of the plastic arts. . . . Painting, for example, has been approached by the laws of color combinations, of their reciprocal action which the neo-impressionists expressed. The Soviet critic Trofimov writes: *"the laws of painting (without which this art cannot exist) which were used, for example, by Velasquez, Delacroix, Sourikov, Repin, etc. . . . are also followed by Soviet artists who represent a new life, distinct from what the others represented."* On the mastery of these artistic laws and their handling in the expression of content depends the unpredictable part in the elaboration of form, that is, the part of invention, of talent or genius, of the creative freedom of each artist.

Thus, if it becomes clear in the study of our great painter Le Nain that he links the composition of his characters, lined up one by one as in a frieze, to the expression of the 17th century peasant world still locked in the traditional communities, nevertheless on the road to the awakining of the individual consciousness, a world full of dignity and real grandeur which enjoys the painter's full sympathy. If from this same content one can expect the sombre gamut of colors used to express it, it would be ridiculous, however, to want to explain all the details of the form from this—for example, the fact that in certain canvasses a touch of red happens to bring out the values of the greys, browns, ochres, terra cottas, etc. . . .

When one refuses to envisage it with a scientific spirit, the monstrous overemphasis given to any isolated element of form is typical of idealist and metaphysical positions. At the other extreme, equally abstract and unilateral, there is the positing of content as a mechanical product of history.

THIS dilemma of idealism and vulgarized "sociologism" which engendered each other is merely repeated again by Malraux. Quite naturally he falls into the off-repeated banality of an autonomous history of art—here again carrying to the absolute the real rôle played by the inner dynamics proper to each sphere of human activity. Back in 1936, he said: "Art obeys its own logic, which is all the more unpredicable since to discover it, is precisely the function of the genius." Abandoning as "old-fashioned" the words *school* and *influences,* he sees the history of art as a succession and rupture of forms of styles: "the history of art is the history of invented forms against inherited forms. . . . The painter passes from one world of forms to another world of forms; the writer from one world of words to another world of words, in the same way as the musician passes from music to music."

Thus the "style" is not achieved essentially on the content, but on "style," in a conflict with earlier forms of art. When the artist makes copies of the great masters' paintings, it is not because he wants to acquire mastery of a language which he will put at the service of a new content which in turn will demand new forms; it is because he is *"fascinated"* by works which he imitates passionately until the day when he rejects them no less passionately in order to create new ones.

Here intervenes a mysterious "inner scheme" which, groping and seeking to realize itself, brings about the rupture with imitated forms. Still with the same mysticism, Malraux explains the "artistic calling" on the basis of emotions experienced solely

a result of contact with works of
t: "Even a Rembrandt, a Pietro
ella Francesca or a Michael Angelo,
the outset of his destiny, is not a
an who looks with more intensity
an others upon created things; he
an adolescent fascinated by certain
ictures which he carries with him
ehind his eyelids and which suffice
distract him from the world." The
tist thus cloistered in "the imagin-
y museum" in tête à tête with
orms, has no public other than the
tists of genius, his peers.

Malraux writes of Goya: ". . . his
t has the ideal admirer neither the
ope, nor the king, nor the people
ut the other artists." Blind to the
orld, the painter creates all the bet-
r his own style. Malraux says of El
reco's last works: ". . . eternal
arkness could have descended upon
e world, and his painting would
ke no heed of it." There is here
collection of vulgar monstrosities
hich do violence to the relationship
f art and reality, whether it be nat-
re, history or life. *All* the great artists
epeated ceaselessly that they couldn't
qual in their art the inexhaustible
iversity and richness of the real
orld; but Malraux, scornful, has to
ject their endless testimony: "Rodin
lks all day long about Nature but
ulpts Balzac and is thinking only
f sculpture." Artists starved for
he totality of the manifestations of
fe" become solitary priests in desert-
d temples of art.

THE falsity of this raving idealism is so undeniable that it bursts through, even in its own examples. It states for example: "The architectural schema of Cézanne was not engendered by a conflict with the trees, but by a conflict with the museums." Now everyone knows that the painter began his career by copying and imitating paintings; it was known as his "black" period, which later he rejected when, helped by Pissarro, he opened his eyes to the world. Far from turning away from nature, one might say that he remained "tied" to nature, and it would be difficult to find an artist of this period more attached to rendering on canvas his perception of the world, rich in depth, forms and volumes, in all its fullness, and desperate over not being able to attain it. Did he not then declare: "The real and prodigious study to undertake is the diversity of nature's picture"?

IN ALL areas—definition of art, history of art, process of artistic creation, problem of the public, relationship of the artist with other works of art—Malraux always resorts to a monstrous and frantic idealism to resolve the fundamental problem of esthetics, the relationship between art and reality.

He does this in order to deny, by any and all possible means, the scientific, materialist solution of art as the specific reflection of the real

world, a solution which unites art and science by the primacy of their common object, the objective world. With Malraux, everything which is a conquest of reality, every deepening of the knowledge of reality by art, breadth, truth and depth of the reflection in the artistic image is systematically evaded with all the resources of idealism.

First of all—and this is common to all the reactionary currents in esthetics—there is a purposely maintained confusion between realism and naturalism, that is (in terms of theory of knowledge) between specific reflection which attains the essence of the real, and copy, imitation of appearances to the extreme photographic illusion. Malraux confuses the two concepts in the ambiguous term "representation"; this confusion is continual.

Another distortion consists of reversing the relationship of reality and art, of making of the end the means, of giving primacy to form, and finally of using the world as a supplementary ingredient in the constitution of the world of form; "Painting tends much less to see the world than to create another one; the world serves style." Or again: "Representation is a means of style, not style a means of representation." And finally: "One doesn't create in order to express oneself, one expresses oneself to create."

All of these declarations seek to exploit and validate the idea spread by modern formalist art, namely, of reality as a pretext which is dissolved for the benefit of the self-contained pictorial world.

Thus we have a Chardin who is no longer respectful of objects and the profound emotions they stir in him: "Chardin's humility implies less a submission to the model than a secret destruction of it for the aggrandizement of painting." Same business with Vermeer who paints his wife's face over and over as a "means of art." The case is particularly clear with the portrait, which no longer refers to the psychological and social meaning of the model: "The portrait ceases being the portrait of anyone in particular." So what is Franz Hals doing with his model, Descartes? "The touch of Hals is a metamorphosis of him (Descartes) into painting."

Finally appears another idealist variant—the one which claims that man achieves no objective knowledge and can grasp the world only through the prism of his subjectivity. The mysterious "internal schema" reappears with its function of "filtering" reality, of extracting what it needs to be transformed into form, or style. Rembrandt, who is "neither Dutch nor of the 17th century," had a "schema" which "called forth" Christ. 'Rembrandt's Christ penetrates into the work which called him forth."

The ultimate consequence of this

citude reduces to mystical terms, mouflaged by the vocabulary, the oblem of artistic survival, the per-anence of the masterpieces which tain significance and artistic value nile the societies which produced em have vanished. Concerning this fficult problem, if it is not entirely lved by Marxist esthetics, Marx's dications here show that it is a atter of looking for the explana-on from within the *content* of the asterpiece. For the idealists, it was ways an "indefinable something" the form, which explained the de-nitive work. Thus for Malraux it is e forms of contemporary painting nich assure survival of the forms of e past: "It is in answer to the call living forms that dead forms are ought to life again."

N this reasoning, one finds more understandable the mutual sup-rt which contemporary formalist t and the heritage of certain forms om the past lend each other, each ne justifying the other.

From the outset, it seeks "a paint-g which is nothing but painting," "sculpture which is nothing but ulpture," devoid of content. At the me time, this leaves the possibility taking up again the realist works the past under the aspect of for-alism alone. Thus, Chardin is a aque in disguise, "a genial Braque, th just enough clothing on to de-ve the public"; the same Braque opens access to Sumerian sculpture: ". . . to the degree that he brings about a consciousness of the specific character of art, he renders visible that sculpture which people no longer were seeing." From this method, comes the tendency in art books, reviews and exhibitions to bring together ancient works and modern formalist works. They thus manage with one fell swoop to falsify the meaning of the art of the past and to justify formalist art in the eyes of the public today. . . .

The important thing is to struggle by all means against realism, and Malraux tells us why he is concerned with Vermeer, Chardin, Goya or Corot: ". . . our period which puts these painters in the highest ranks has no difficulty in seeing emerge from their works not a realist art, but modern art."

It is clear: against the critical assimilation of the realist art of the past, against the inventory of each national patrimony, its contribution to the common treasury of humanity, Malraux stacks the cosmopolite heritage of all the forms bled white. Of all the forms? He himself admits that his choice is oriented (and by a content!): "Our (culture) revives everything that reinforces our irrationalism." . . .

This confirms, on the contrary, the correctness of the Marxist analysis which finds the reason for the survival of masterpieces in their con-

tent: they are inexhaustible because they contain in an immediately perceptible manner the pulsation of life, the richness of the content they have captured; as the epochs and the classes vary, this content is taken up again and reinterpreted or misinterpreted: *"In each historic situation, the masterpiece acquires a new light. Classes and different epochs seek in masterpieces that which preoccupies them. This explains the sudden rise of some, the eclipsing of others, not by function of their intrinsic value but by function of the problems which confront society at that particular moment."* (Jean Freville, *On Literature and Art*). The decadent bourgeoisie, however, which fears the real, and wants to veer art away from it, retains on the one hand only the *forms* of the masterpieces, and on the other hand only works of irrational content.

A CERTAIN logic of formalism results in an art which imitates nothing, reflects nothing, says nothing, means nothing, which is a "pure" pleasant arrangement of lines and colors; in short, it results in a certain decorative abstract art. We have seen throughout this analysis that Malraux's "ideas" were only an exploitation of formalism enveloped in verbal glitter—which accounts for such formulas as "creation never serves anything but the object of its own pursuit." But is it incoherence, contradiction, hairsplitting? Malraux rejects this logical result of an art which would be only pleasure for the eye, of a picture which would dissolve into a spot. It is comical to see certain bourgeois ideologists worry over his infidelity to this nothingness and arrive at positions as unsustainable as solipsism. Thus M.Blanchot holds fast to the principle of "a painter who serves painting and a painting which serves nothing." He reproaches Malraux with substituting for "the temple of images" the temple of "civilizations religion, historic splendors." As for this critic himself, he ends up with the perfect "purity": with exaltation of "nothingness," of "absence" as the acme of art. He asserts "absence is eternity."

But Malraux, after struggling to empty forms of all concrete historical content, must reject those forms which mean nothing. Therefore he tries to fill the void which his own ideology has created, to find, a meaning for the forms, his own myths. These he then lodges in them. The revived forms will no longer be only visible and present; *he will make them talk.* Dead civilizations are going to develop voices—the Voices of Silence. But what can they really tell us?

FIRST of all we must try to define precisely the notion of "style" which we have already encountered

ıd which there is a general tendency
abuse. It is an ambiguous, unstable
ɔtion which since the end of the
9th century has been serving to
ɔver up the irrationalism of bour-
ɛois esthetics. In Spengler, confusion
ıd gibberish sustained each other:
Style is . . . that which is not ac-
ɛssible to the artistic intelligence;
ıe revelation of a metaphysics, a
ɛstiny." In Focillon's *Life of Forms*
ıe finds this no less obscure defini-
on: "The word *style* preceded by
ıe definite article signifies a quality
f the work of art which permits it
transcend its time." With Mal-
ıux, we continue to welter in the
ıysterious, in the "certain some-
ıing," in the tautological: "Art is
ıat by which forms become styles."
In truth, it seems that the notion
f style is the stumbling-block in
Ialraux's contradiction. As *form,* it
supposed to be an autonomous,
ırely plastic universe. But at the
me time, it is supposed to mean
ıe capacity of a certain art to ex-
ɛss Malraux's content, his myths.
yles do not mean for him the
ɔjective content of civilizations.
ɔreover, the only meanings were
ɔse which are *lived* by participants,
ıd they are now beyond grasp for
time: "we can no more experience
e emotion of Plato before the Acro-
ɔlis . . . than of Suger before his
silica."
Art, therefore, can never testify
r a civilization, or help the pre-historian or the archeologist to know that civilization. Inversely, specialists' studies of bygone civilizations in no way concern art, nor do they ever enrich our esthetic emotion. Thus, "with the failure of science," art exists as an *idea* which we have of civilization. Malraux's commentator, G. Picon, writes solemnly: "Egyptian statues are more Egyptian than Egypt." . . .

AS a young man, André Malraux wanted to "shake off" Europe. But he came back to it very fast and intoned new hymns: *"Europe* today is the highest intellectual value. . . ." And so he builds his *Imaginary Museum* to which he attaches the proclamation of man's "freedom" and "grandeur" as supreme benefits of "Atlantic civilization." Style then becomes man's revenge and redemption; it is the "anti-fate"; it cries out man's honor in the face of solitude, death and fate. The artist's hand justifies man: *"that hand, whose trembling in the twilight has been witnessed for thousands of years, trembles with one of the most secret and most lofty forms, with the strength and honor of being mankind."* Taking up certain facile effects borrowed from Pascal, we have Malraux prophesying: *"the greatest mystery is not that we have been thrown haphazardly between the profusion of matter and the profusion*

of heavenly bodies, but that in this prison we can draw from inside ourselves images powerful enough to deny fate."

Is this Esthetics? No. It is Religion!

Behind this mystic pathos surrounding "man" and "art" there lurks a dangerous caricature of true humanism. For, fundamentally, we have here a fear and a depreciation of reality, a negation of its objectivity and its rationality. From all of this flows an intensified pessimism in regard to consciousness, science, technique, political action—in short, to all the means of which man disposes to penetrate the laws of reality and effectively dominate the world for man's benefit. It is a caricature in favor of a lonely art disfigured and mystified, separated from all other human activities, torn out of history, winning illusory victories, magic triumphs which change nothing in real relationships.

He asks: *"What is the Greek acanthus? A stylized artichocke. Stylized, that is humanized, such as man would have made it if he had been God."* So much dust to mask the flight of reality! All of this marks a significant turn in the life and evolution of André Malraux. He who, already denying the objectivity of the real and of history, had exalted that caricature of action, "adventure." Now he thinks he has a means of still better ridding himself of everything that weighted him down: artistic contemplation. His faithful have talked about "exalted submission," about "deliverance from anguish. . . ."

Isn't it striking that he whom the bourgeoisie proudly used to present to the youth as being always on hand "when something was happening in the world" should now have himself photographed in his apartment with the photos intended for his *future* books spread all over the floor?

FOR history has advanced in recent times. Malraux has felt it. For him it has become less and less the source of experience and lucidity that he used to find it. It has become for him an absurd chaos, *"a fatality laden with death,"* without fundamental value, of which one must unburden oneself. *"The last incarnation of fate is history,"* he writes today. And, commenting on the pleasure he derives from contemplating the canvasses of the primitive painter, Rousseau, he says: *"They are an evasion of history that you experience like a deliverance."*

To all this he himself gives the key: "Europe is "threatened"; history is "threatening." Let us translate this clearly. The bourgeois world in which he has a vested interest, and which he defends desperately, is more and more threatened. Therefore he brandishes in one hand the horror of pessimism, of the death of Europe or of

an, of an atomized humanity, in rder to despair and to disarm. And en from the other hand is offered e consoling music of art: "There is mething more important than his- ry; it is the constancy of genius." Isn't it Malraux's role to crystallize nd reinforce that tendency which ould make art a substitute for re- gion, by turning man away from real nd concrete tasks, by submitting im to one of his highest creations hich, escaping from him and crush- ng him, becomes an absolute to which e sacrifices himself? The effort had ready been made, at the end of the ineteenth century, to give this role music, particularly to Wagner's orks. But the mystique of music id not go beyond a small coterie. n the contrary, one can note a quali- tive change since the war in the elationships of the plastic arts and ne general public, at least with cer- in social strata of the public.

In Malraux's work, numerous are ne appeals to an "impassioned sect" f artists and amateurs. One could uote dozens of passages in which ne content, the tone and even the ocabulary indicate this religious nction attributed to art: *"Here, ho is God? Not nature; painting. has become a domain in which e fused intoxication and the abso- lute."* The museum which was a col- lection becomes—and it alone—a sort of temple: *"The Annunciations get no less a peaceful contemplation in the National Gallery of Washington than in the churches of Italy."*

This fetishism of art lulls the agony of the bourgeoisie, and at the same time would detour from real social action the intellectuals, the artists who, in ever greater numbers, are tempted to join the struggles of the working class. This new opium which Malraux sells, this new religion of which he wants to be pope, denies man the grandeur and the freedom which are found in an art which puts itself at the service of true human- ism. Art, for Malraux and for the bourgeoisie, no longer serves man's age-old effort to bring about a world truly human; it refines all of man's power of transformation into an en- terprise of resignation, which con- sists of substituting a satisfying imaginary universe for a real world left intact and unchanged. In the face of this pernicious and inhu- man mysticism, let us remember that simple phrase of the founders of Marxism, so confident in the future of man in a culture to match his stature: "In a communist society, there are no painters, but, at the most, men who, among others, also paint."

Translated from the French by E. SECOR

Notes on Dreiser

By SAMUEL SILLEN

December marks the tenth anniversary of Theodore Dreiser's death. On this occasion we pay tribute to the memory of the great novelist with several features, including the following notes, the publication of hitherto unprinted letters by Dreiser to John Howard Lawson, and the famous letter addressed by Dreiser to William Z. Foster applying for membership in the Communist Party of the United States.

1. The Impact of Balzac

The early critics of Theodore Dreiser were certain they saw the influence of Emile Zola in his work, but Dreiser himself told H. L. Mencken that he had "never read a line of Zola" as a young man.

It was not Zola but Balzac who had a decisive impact on his imagination. His reading of the great French realist was a "literary revolution," Dreiser recalled in *A Book About Myself*. For a long time, he said, "I ate, slept, dreamed, lived him and his characters and his views and his city."

This was in 1894, six years before Dreiser published *Sister Carrie*. He was then 23, working as a reporter for the Pittsburgh *Dispatch*. Assigned to cover police headquarters, he spent more of his time across the street at the Carnegie library, where "a new and inviting door to life had been suddenly thrown open to me" by Balzac. He read *Père Goriot, The Wild Ass's Skin, The Great Man from the Provinces [Lost Illusions], Cousin Pons, Cousine Bette.*

"Here was one who saw, thought, felt," Dreiser wrote. "Through him I saw a prospect so wide that it left me breathless—all Paris, all France, all life through French eyes." At first, young Dreiser's identification with the "magical" characters of Balzac was highly personal. He thought of himself as "the brooding, seeking, ambitious beginner in life's social, political, artistic and commercial affairs (Rastignac, Raphael, de Rubempre, Bianchon. . . .)"

But then he began to make that same "vivid translation into American terms" of which Henry James had spoken a generation earlier (as

law student at Harvard, James iewed Mrs. Upham's boarding house n Cambridge through the eyes of ne Vauquer boarding house of *Père Goriot*). In Dreiser's autobiography nere is a passage on Balzac that is ighly important for understanding is own preparation as a novelist:

"His grand and somewhat pom-ous philosophical deductions, his asy and offhand disposition of all nanner of critical, social, political, istorical, religious problems, the nanner in which he assumed as by ight of genius intimate and irrefu-able knowledge of all subjects, fas-inated and captured me as the true nethod of the seer and the genius.)h, to possess an insight such as nis! To know and be a part of such cosmos as Paris, to be able to go nere, to work, to study, suffer, rise, nd even end in defeat if need be, so ascinatingly alive were all the jour-eys of his puppets! What was Pitts-urgh, what St. Louis, what Chi-ago?—and yet, in spite of myself, hile I adored his Paris, still I was btaining a new and more dramatic ght on the world in which I found yself."

Dreiser goes on:

"Pittsburgh was not Paris, America as not France, but in truth they ere something, and Pittsburgh at ast had aspects which somehow ggested Paris. These charming riv-s, these many little bridges, the sharp contrasts presented by the east end and the mill regions, impressed me more vividly than before. I was in a workaday, begrimed, and yet vivid Paris. Taillefer, Nucingen, Valentin were no different from some of the immense money magnates here, in their ease, luxury, power, at least the possibilities which they possessed."

So Dreiser found himself marvelling at "the chance for pictures here as well as there," Balzacian pictures of American life. For months the enchanted discoverer would walk out of the library into a setting which had been illuminated for him by Balzac and which was to be reflected in his novels. "I gathered all sorts of data," he noted, "as to the steel magnates—Carnegie, Phipps and Frick especially—their homes, their clubs, their local condescensions and superiorities. The people of Pittsburgh were looked upon as vassals by some of these, and their interviews on returning from the seashore or the mountains partook of the nature of a royal return."

"I smiled then, and I smile now," he writes in a Balzacian mood, "at the attitude of press, pulpit, officials of this amazing city of steel and iron where one and all seemed so genuflective and boot-licking. . . ." And how easy it was for the young Pittsburgh reporter to recognize the world of journalistic corruption which Balzac

so brilliantly revealed: "My city editor, cool, speculative, diplomatic soul, soon instructed me as to the value of news and its limitations here. 'We don't touch on labor conditions except through our labor man,' he told me, 'and he knows what to say. There's nothing to be said about the rich or religious in a derogatory sense; they're all right in so far as we know. We don't touch on scandals in high life. The big steel men here just about own the place, so we can't.'" So much, added Dreiser, for the freedom of the press.

2. *Dreiser, James, and Balzac*

Dreiser once said he would reject most of Henry James as "too narrowly and thinly class-conscious." The judgment is too sweeping, but it does suggest the gulf of class feeling between Dreiser, the immigrant weaver's son, and James, the patrician expatriate.

The profound impact of Balzac on two such dissimilar writers indicates how much the author of the *Comédie Humaine* has to teach the novelist who seeks to penetrate American reality, a fact of which too few contemporaries, judging by their fiction, seem aware. And it suggests the need for critics to take a closer look at the formula that James and Dreiser represent irreconcilably clashing trends in fiction.

Henry James was not yet twenty when he was introduced by the American painter John La Farge to the teeming world of Balzac. Over the years he wrote four long essays on the writer from whom he said he learned more about his craft "than from anybody else," the man "who of all novelists is certainly the most of one—Balzac."

James, like Dreiser, saw in Balzac, with his "huge, all-compassing, all-desiring, all-devouring love of reality," the supreme realist, a Gulliver among the pigmies, as he said. "The real, for his imagination, had an authority that it has never had for any other," wrote James.

He found Balzac's greatest strength in the "identity of his universal with his local and national vision. . . . What he did above all was to read the universe, as hard and as loud as he could, *into* the France of his time; his own eyes regarding his work as at once the drama of man and a mirror of the mass of social phenomena."

But from the same master James and Dreiser derived somewhat different influences which corresponded to each writer's background and temperament.

Henry James' sympathies, unlike Dreiser's, were with a class that had been doomed by history to extinction. In F. O. Matthiessen's *Henry James: The Major Phase* we read that James, together with Henry Adams,

grew increasingly conscious of the aning of old energies. Both looked ack to an American world that had een shattered by the Civil War, a orld in which the Adams family ad power, and in which the James mily had been able to live in a armed circle of leisure, happily blivious of the rising giants of busi- ess. Neither Adams nor James could e said to have remotely understood e American world of their matur- y. Adams could approach its new nergies only by a brilliant but dubi- us analogy between the laws of story and thermodynamics. James peatedly confessed that the world American Balzac would have to aster—the world of industrial and nance capitalism—had been a closed ook to him from his youth."

James removed himself to the older nd apparently more firmly fixed so- ety of England and the Continent. e thought he would be more at ome with the remnants, tattered ough they soon proved to be, of istocracy. He felt that our country as too new and raw for high art. mes' alienation from American life nd in it that quality of snobbery hich Dreiser spoke of as "too nar- wly and thinly class-conscious."

But that does not exhaust the mat- r. James had said of Balzac: "Money the most general element of Bal- c's novels; other things come and , but money is always there." This passage, as Matthiessen suggested, may well have been in James' mind when he came to write about American financial corruption in his unfinished novel, *The Ivory Tower.*

Certainly he was offended to find that "the main American formula" was "Make so much money that you won't mind anything." And no sensitive reader of his work can deny that James produced many striking images of the "almost cruelly charmless . . . material and political power" heaped up nearly overnight by the new plutocracy. This is one of the dimensions of his genius that made a rich contribution to American realism. James is miles removed from the latter-day glorifiers of those whom we are no longer permitted to call robber barons. And his satire on the decaying aristocracy, too, is sometimes very keen.

But Dreiser's challenge is more central. He searches not for a past but a future. He immersed himself in the life of the great American cities. There is in him no nostalgia for a pre-industrial society. He confronts the new reality with bold curiosity. As Randolph Bourne said forty years ago, Dreiser gave his readers "the taste and smell of the primitive business-jungle" and "These crude and greedy captains of finance with their wars and their amours had to be given some kind of literary embodiment, and Dreiser has ham-

mered a sort of raw epic out of their lives." And he came to see, though this is not embodied in his fiction, that only the leadership of the working people can save the country from the jungle-law of profit that too largely governs human relations under capitalism.

3. Storm Center

For many decades Theodore Dreiser has been a storm center of American criticism. Some of the angriest literary controversies of this century have raged around his name. Academic critics tried to howl him down as an "animalist," a terrible Zola of the American gutter. Esthetes painfully raised their eyebrows at the "elephantine" Dreiser who split his infinitives in the course of portraying the tragedy of a man's life.

All of which moved Dreiser to say as far back as 1901, in a New York *Times* interview: "It makes me feel that American criticism is the joke which English literary authorities maintain it to be. . . . When it *[Sister Carrie]* gets to the people they will understand, because it is a story of real life, of their lives."

The storm is not over, though now it takes a more fashionable form; that is, abusing Dreiser for joining the Communist Party in the last year of his life. In taking this step, which he had been considering for a long time, Dreiser said he was fulfilling the logic of his life and work. But the critics know better, as we can see from a new volume, *The Stature of Theodore Dreiser* (Indiana University Press) edited by Alfred Kazin and Charles Shapiro.

Kazin keynotes the new-style tributes to Dreiser by explaining that he was "lonely and confused" and "in his decline" when he took up with the Reds; Granville Hicks says it was a "farce" for Dreiser to join the Communist Party after Hicks had the good sense to tear up his own card; Lionel Trilling holds that "Whether or not Dreiser was following the logic of his own life, he was certainly following the logic of the liberal criticism that accepted him so undiscriminatingly as one of the great significant expressions of its spirit, which establishes the social responsibility of the writer and then goes on to say that, apart from his duty of resembling reality as much as possible, he is not really responsible for anything, not even for his ideas"; John Berryman finds that "What distinguishes Dreiser from his contemporaries is a kind of stupidity . . ."; Saul Bellow carefully explains to the reader that "Dreiser understood many things better than he did politics"; etc.

It is evident that Dreiser's joining the Communist Party sticks in the craw of these critics. They are impel-

H to carry out a double falsifica-
on. They have to distort the char-
ter of the Communist Party, which
not too burdensome a task since
they do is echo one or another
hrase from the lexicon of McCarthy-
m. And they have to twist Dreiser's
vn words on the subject, which is
so not hard since the words are
ot quoted.

What several of them do, includ-
g Kazin in his introduction, is pour
use on F. O. Matthiessen because
e concluded his thoughtful biog-
phy of Dreiser, published post-
umously, with this statement: "His
ajor concern was the prevention of
rther wars, which he was convinced
ould destroy civilization. He had
owly learned the lesson that there
uld be no humane life in the Unit-
States until the inequities should
removed that had thwarted or
stroyed so many of his characters
his fiction. He now believed that
e next step was to do everything
could to break down the destruc-
e barriers of nationalism, and so
rk for equity among all the peo-
s of the world. Otherwise there
uld be no world in which to live."
The fact is that Dreiser's 1945 let-
to William Z. Foster applying
membership in the Communist
ty was deeply prophetic, and it
gs with profound truth today. We
rint this letter, which was virtu-
ignored by the nation's press
when it was made public. And we ask our readers to judge if the country would have been better off during this past decade of cold war and McCarthyism if these words had been more widely known and heeded.

4. Encounter with Churchill

It is an interesting fact that Dreiser, like Mark Twain, met Winston Churchill and twitted him on his Tory blind spots. Twain told Churchill what he thought of British conduct in the Boer War, during which the young imperialist had made his name as a war correspondent. Dreiser met Churchill in 1928. It was at the time of the novelist's trip back from the Soviet Union. As Dreiser recalled in an article for the magazine *Common Sense* in 1939: "It was Winston Churchill who in 1928 told me when I came out of Russia that the idea was all wrong—that it would not work and that seven years would see the end. Well, it is eleven years, and now, to Mr. Winston Churchill himself, it is the first military power in the world. Why? Is Mr. Stalin doing it single handed? Or has he? Or is it possible that there is a rejuvenated and encouraged and maybe—even—an inspired Russian mass—175,000,000 strong—who believe that the horrors of social inequity . . . should end."

Well, it is now eleven plus sixteen

years, and it still appears that Dreiser was the superior prophet. Dreiser persistently fought against the organized misinformation of the American people concerning the Soviet Union. "Our western world," he wrote in 1939, "seems inclined, as in the dark ages, to live only on propaganda. No one reads the Russian papers. It is a crime. No American paper will publish a truthful line concerning the enormous work being done there —the new world being made. . . ."

The enforced ignorance of the Soviet Union did harm to the cause of peace and the interests of the American people, Dreiser understood. He devoted much energy over the years to defeat the war-minded lies and provocations in the anti-Soviet press. As early as 1918 he opposed United States intervention in Russia. In 1930, when war sentiment was being whipped up here on the ground of "religious persecution" in the U.S.S.R., Dreiser denounced the attempt at a "holy war" and the effort to becloud Americans "in regard to some of the ills with which unrestrained capitalism is now threatening us." And at the end of World War II he again urged that friendship with the Soviet Union was in the interests of the American people, just as during the war itself.

Dreiser was therefore an ardent spokesman for cultural exchange between the two countries. In the Soviet Union, as we are told in Robert H. Elias' biography, *Theodore Dreiser: Apostle of Nature,* "He was, of course, introduced to writers and artists, dining with the poet Mayakovsky, discussing the Moscow Art Theater with Stanislavsky, and talking about the movies with Eisenstein." And he was eager for Americans to know their work more widely. On his return from Russia, Dreiser tried to organize sponsorship for an American tour of the famed Ballet which he had seen in Moscow. He urged that Russian films be presented by the Films Art Guild in New York.

Inspired by the "tremendous and humane concepts" of socialist society, Dreiser wrote in 1934: "With the advent of the U.S.S.R., and even throughout the struggle of its early years, there was provided that most instructive and unanswerable reference, an example, and now a successful one. Here, for all the world to see, was a nation which said, in effect: By our system, the producer, not the provider of capital, shall benefit, and benefit by every equitable and comfortable condition of life which the genius, the art, the sciences, the general humanitarian forces of the human mind can conceive and practise."

In the same article, appearing in the Soviet magazine *International Literature,* Dreiser had some very inte-

ing things to say about Soviet ting, which he followed carefully. answer to the question "What do think of Soviet literature?" eiser wrote:

I find, for one thing, satisfaction the present trend toward a lite- ure which is not wholly and solely pagandist, or, better, which does concern itself entirely with the nutiae of doctrine. I do not at all stion the extreme necessity for insistence on Soviet principles technique while there was still d of utilizing every field to dem- trate and educate and to triumph r the ancient prejudices and iner- which held captive so great a of your nation.

But now, when so much of this k has been accomplished, and icularly since the years which e given you a new generation whole-heartedly bent on the preservation of its incalculable advantages over the rest of the world, it is refreshing and vitalizing to find that your writers can and do turn to an easier and less limited expression, and to the task of giving the world a more generously rounded picture of your life—and to which it can look with envy."

In turn, the interest of the Soviet reader in Dreiser's work has always been very keen. A Moscow correspondent of the New York *Times* recently spoke of the Dreiser "fad" in the Soviet Union. But if the correspondent had been in Moscow ten years ago and twenty years ago he would know that this is one of the longest "fads" on record. We still, unfortunately, have a lot of catching up to do on this score.

Dreiser Discusses Sister Carrie

In 1928, a young and forward-looking Broadway producer, H. S. Kraft, made contracts with Theodore Dreiser and myself for a dramatic presentation of Sister Carrie. *I went to work on the play, in which Paul Muni was to perform the role of Hurstwood.*

The plan fell through, largely because of my inability to provide an effective dramatization of Dreiser's massive and subtle novel. We discussed the use of a symbolic device—a series of interludes in which a tramp, a man destroyed by society and wandering in its lower depths, would give a poetic and prophetic sense of the fate awaiting Hurstwood. Looking back over the years, it seems obvious that the suggestion was artificial, and that it conflicted in mood and method with the naturalistic technique and profound psychological depth of the novel.

It seems to me that Dreiser's letters on the subject are of interest for two reason: they illuminate aspects of the problem of translating a novel into dramatic terms. More importantly, they express the author's feeling concerning the social background and significance of one of his greatest stories.

JOHN HOWARD LAWSON

Aug. 10, 1928

My dear Lawson:

I wished to answer your last note before this but had nothing to contribute. Since then, though, I have thought to the following effect. One of the important things of the book—*the* important thing, really—is the mental and social decay of Hurstwood. This as you know can scarcely be more than hinted at in the last act—though it's the thing that moves all of us to wish to dramatize the story. Now I have a way by which (I believe) Hurstwood's decay can be put over and the story itself strengthened by it. I offer you a choice of two prologues, one to be called *A Lodging for a Night.* This would present the old captain hous-

ng his company of bedless bums—as in the book—the house in Madison Square, his solitary presence, the gathering of the bums, his appeal and their being marched off to the Bowery. But no suggestion of any connection with the play proper—just a picture inducing a proper psychic mood for the story that follows.

Or you may take *A Cycle of Decay,* another prologue. In six scenes or eight or ten—ten-second scenes spotted against a black stage. You could show the daily content of a failure with life. He is dumped out of a full bed in a lodging house at 7 A.M. He walks the Bowery, eyes a restaurant, attempts an appeal here and there, rests wearily on a park bench or in doorway of a back street, but is driven off, tries a "mission" for warmth and a handout; does a turn in the workhouse, or begs a night in the police station, or sleeps over a warm subway grating. There is also the breadline, a snow-shoveling brigade—anything, everything. The idea though is a quick series of scenes spotted—and over in three or four minutes—yet running a complete cycle. After such a prologue—but with no direct reference to the play, the play itself might end where Hurstwood stands in the vacant room and says "Left me; left me." The minds of all, I am sure, would return to the prologue and so complete your effect. Let me know your reaction.

My compliments.

My sincere good wishes.

THEODORE DREISER

New York City, Oct. 10, 1928

My dear Lawson:

It does seem to me that you are getting much nearer the drama as well as the spirit of the book. And after a fashion I like the idea of the bum or down-and-out as suggesting what I emphasized—the need of presenting clearly the drama of Hurstwood's decay. But I think you will not get this straight, or be able to present it to the best advantage, until you ask yourself, as I asked myself a long time ago, what was it exactly that brought about Hurstwood's decline? What psychic thing in himself? For most certainly it could not have been just the commonplace knocks and errors out of which most people take their rise. It is not enough to say that he is not a strong man, or that he lacked a first class brain. Granted. And it is obvious from the book. But there is something more. A distillation not only of his lack of strength and his mediocre brain,

but of the day and the city and the circumstances of which, at say forty-odd, he found himself a part. And this is of a twofold character. First —a sense of folly or mistake in him because of his having taken the money of his employers and so having lost not only their friendship and confidence but the, for him, almost necessary milieu of Chicago— its significance as the center of his home, children, friends, connections —what you will. Next the ultimate folly of his hypnosis in regard to Carrie. For as the book shows her charm betrayed him. He erred, as he later saw it, in taking her, because she drifted from him—went her own mental way—did not sustain him. These two things, once he was out of Chicago and so away from all he had known and prized, concentrated to form a deep and cancerous sense of mistake which ate into his energy and force. It was no doubt finally the worm at the heart of his life. And wthout the power to destroy it he was doomed. And it is that *conviction* which is the thing that is stalking him and that is necessary to symbolize in some way. But how? By your bum who becomes a detective and then a bum again? In part, yes, I am inclined to think so, although I think it might be better if the bum never became a detective.

On the other hand, by some words of Hurstwood's here and there throughout the play—a Hamlet-like meditation, or phrase now and then —it is necessary to indicate the unchanging presence of this cancerous conviction of error—its almost psychic reality—a body and mind of defeat. For I do personally believe that in the super energies of all of us lie amazing powers. We can and do embody in the world without many things which fight or aid us. You, as you go along, will best see where and how the truth of this can be shadowed forth. But once it is in I think your listeners are likely to feel the essential awfulness of the man's fate. And so the real drama of the book. If so we are likely to have a successful play. I hope so. I like the spirit of your present outline very much and only wish I might read the completed play.

THEODORE DREISER

Dreiser on the Communists

Hollywood, Calif.
July 20, 1945

illiam Z. Foster
ew York, N. Y.

ar Mr. Foster:

I am writing this letter to tell you of my desire to become a member the American Communist organization.

This request is rooted in convictions that I have long held and t have been strengthened and deepened by the years. I have believed ensely that the common people, and first of all the workers—of the ited States and of the world—are the guardians of their own destiny l the creators of their own future. I have endeavored to live by this th, to clothe it in words and symbols, to explore its full meaning in lives of men and women.

It seems to me that faith in the people is the simple and profound lity that has been tested and proved in the present world crisis. Fas- n derided that faith, proclaiming the end of human rights and human nity, seeking to rob the people of faith in themselves, so that they ld be used for their own enslavement and degradation.

But the democratic peoples of the world demonstrated the power t lay in their unity, and a tremendous role was played in this victory the country that through its attainment of socialism has given the atest example in history of the heights of achievement that can be hed by a free people with faith in itself and in all the progressive es of humanity—the Soviet Union. The unity of our country with great Soviet Union is one of the most valuable fruits of our united ggle, and dare not be weakened without grave danger to America f.

Communists all over the world have played a vital part in welding the unity of the peoples that insures the defeat of fascism. Theirs were the first and clearest voices raised against the march of aggression in China, Ethiopia and Spain.

Dr. Norman Bethune, the great pioneer in saving war wounded through the use of the blood bank, died in China helping the free peoples of that country withstand the Japanese hordes years before the democratic countries came to their aid. His dying request was that it be made known that since many years he had been a Communist.

Out of the underground movements of tortured Europe, Communists have risen to give leadership in the face of terror and all-pervading military suppression. Tito of Yugoslavia won the admiration of the world for his leadership of his people to victory. The name of Stalin is one beloved by the free peoples of the earth. Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai have kept the spirit of democracy and unity alive in China throughout the years that divisive forces have split that country asunder.

In the United States, I feel that the Communists have helped to deepen our understanding of the heritage of American freedom as a guide to action in the present. During the years when fascism was preparing for its projected conquest of the world, American Communists fought to rally the American people against fascism. They saw the danger and they proposed the remedy. Marxist theory enabled them to cast a steady light on the true economic and social origins of fascism; Marxism gave them also a scientific understanding of the power of the working people as a force in history which could mobilize the necessary intelligence, strength and heroism to destroy fascism, save humanity and carry on the fight for further progress.

More than 11,000 Communists are taking part in that struggle as members of the armed forces of our country. That they have served with honor and patriotism is attested to even by the highest authorities of the Army itself.

More and more it is becoming recognized in our country that the Communists are a vital and constructive part of our nation, and that a nation's unity and a nation's democracy is dangerously weakened if it excludes the Communists. Symbolic of this recognition was the action of the War Department in renouncing discrimination against Communists in granting commissions. A statement signed by a number of distinguished Americans points out that "the Army has apparently

taken its position as a result of the excellent record of Communists and so-called Communists, including a number who have been cited for gallantry and a number who have died in action."

It seems to me that this ought to discredit completely one of the ideological weapons from the arsenal of fascism that disorients the country's political life and disgraces its intellectual life—Red-baiting. Irrational prejudice against anything that is truly or falsely labeled Communism" is absurd and dangerous in politics. Concessions to Red-baiting are even more demoralizing in the field of science, art and culture. If our thinkers and creators are to fulfill their responsibilities to a democratic culture, they must free themselves from the petty fears and illusions that prevent the open discussion of ideas on an adult level. The necessities of our time demand that we explore and use the whole realm of human knowledge.

I therefore greet with particular satisfaction the information that such leading scientists as the French physicist, Joliot-Curie, and the French mathematician, Langevin, have found in the Communist movement, as did the British scientist, Haldane, some years ago, not only the unselfishness and devotion characteristic of the pursuit of science, but also the integration of the scientific approach to their own field of work with the scientific approach to the problems of society.

I am also deeply stirred to hear that such artists and writers, devoted to the cause of the people, as Pablo Picasso of Spain and Louis Aragon of France, have joined the Communist movement which also counts among its leading cultural figures the great Danish novelist, Martin Anderson Nexo, and the Irish playwright, Sean O'Casey.

These historic years have deepened my conviction that widespread membership in the Communist movement will greatly strengthen the American people, together with the anti-fascist forces throughout the world, in completely stamping out fascism and achieving new heights of world democracy, economic progress and free culture. Belief in the greatness and dignity of Man has been the guiding principle of my life and work. The logic of my life and work leads me therefore to apply for membership in the Communist Party.

Sincerely,

THEODORE DREISER

A Night in the Woods

By MERIDEL LE SUEUR

We are pleased to publish the following excerpts from a forthcoming novel by Meridel Le Sueur dealing with the life of the great Irish patriot Robert Emmet. Of this excerpt Miss Le Sueur writes:

"This takes place just prior to the rising of 1798 *in Ireland, where the Irish peasants, the new city worker, and some liberals, and members of the old aristocracy, mostly with pikes, and ancient blunderbusses, held out against Cornwallis and his mercenary army armed with the new gunpowder, and came near winning."*

THAT day and the next night were never to be forgotten by Rob Emmet and Myles Byrnes, as if the ideas they had held disembodied were now come to an image, lodged in the faces of men and women, in a sudden action, in a dark summer tragedy that stood awful in their minds and transformed them for the first time from spectators to actors, identified them always now with men like Gowan the blacksmith, and as if lightning illumined in their brain the young mad wife screaming running down the incline, rocks falling after her, and the big blacksmith holding the child inert in his hands, and as if in the heat of his own forge his life's anger was tempered.

Rob slept at the Byrnes' smoky cabins, in a dilapidated part of a great estate that had been owned by the Byrnes family before Cromwell. Big and dark since the last Lord had gone to Virginia with cotton and black slaves, the house had stood until the new Squire, rich from the mills of Belfast, had moved in. The old patriarch Byrnes with his long beard, and the matron mother, and the seven small ones still in the smoky cabin, were residuary legatees of a civilization a thousand years old, children of Kings, sons of Milesius.

The great Gaelic house had once shared a common culture with the hut and cabeen, but the grandfather told how as slaves to the conquerors they had served thousands of native birds at the lavish tables, and received a salted hide every year, two pairs of brogues. Now Rob walked past the empty weavers' sheds, where the local flax had been carded and spun, the slaughtering pens, the empty kitchens, the shacks once housing the drover, the thatcher, smiths, carpenters, ploughmen and tinkers.

They stepped over rusted chains, pikes, spades. The present newly rich

uire was now his own judge, with s own jail, carried out lashings and ecial tortures often himself, after night of a bout with women he ought from Dublin or from France, a dunken hunting week with his cious hunting hounds in which ore animals were wounded than ere brought home. He was a big nglishman and could hang a man his back. Myles said they heard ny an awful tale from German rvants and French stablemen, from ck servants from Haiti, come at ght swinging lanterns, knocking in e darkness to speak a few words, l a few stories and find some Irish iskey. But many letters were uggled by sailor, exile, slave, veler. Myles said it was a joke that Byrne from Elizabeth's time who s exiled to Holland, sent back rly directions how his land should treated and asked for a report and rned in every generation that a son uld return.

Old Byrnes was often dragged be- e hangman Jack for gathering od or help on his own land, or oting a rabbit, and the Byrneses er forgave him for refusing to let m even gather nettles during the nine. They buried four children ile the alien gentry hunted as al, with foreign visitors, drinking, mbling, even duelling, and the ses fatly fed. The old man was a olar in Gaelic and Latin, and Rob taken his Gaelic from him. Young men came often, paying in bacon, sacks of potatoes, firkins of butter, eggs, even sods of turf; all his own children could Latin you anything at the age of eight. Full of Gaelic tales behind his beard, unearthly music that he heard, and seeing each May day for sure Hugh O'Donohue gliding over the lake.

Myles' mother scoffed at these fantasies. She had a fierce and stubborn reality, and the stories she told were of fighting men. Her hatred for Queen Elizabeth was as for a woman next door. "The flight of the Earls, wild grouse of the hills we were," she cried, "to be hunted, shot, and they might have eaten us but we would scarcely be a parcel of a dish on their stolen platters!" Their land seized, they were driven off, hunted, and the garrisoned army lived off the country.

She hated English Protestants and Catholics alike. Her father's land had been parcelled in lots to court favorites, her people lived back in the hills under the evergreen boughs on fish and deer, and her grandfather came down at night and stole his own cattle, but at last they had to creep back as slave and vassal. Since 1600, for two hundred years they had stood like the grass, rising in new children, clinging in matted, interlocked hands to their earth. Myles, before he could understand a word, heard his mother's fierce words, her thin fierce black head, the mouth bitterly open in

grief as she keened in her very milk the story of their insult, and as he crawled around her loom fiercely she sang the bitter songs, her body thin and bitter with children, and her heavy black hair abundant upon her. And Myles always saw her path amidst foes, as she sang.

THE sun was sinking as Rob and Myles came through the unhinged gate. The jackass brayed and five scraggly hens flew before them, a scrawny pig eyed them balefully as if, Myles said, they might be Englishmen, and the scrawny little ass kept on braying. Merriman, the poet, said he welcomed brothers. He was sitting on a bench.

"Wouldn't be put out to see ye both with horns according to the rumors, and I, my lads, am only a pore indigent deplorable lamentable needy and diseased unfortunate misfortunate friendless scholar, a most banished, famished, perished and deprived man and unless you look upon my want and necessity, my indignity and calamity by taking my poor sorrowful head and aiding and comforting me upon nothing or something or anything or everything or some way or no way to give me bread, brandy, a waistcoat, breeches, and tobacco thrown in."

"Hush, hush, what's all the talk now, when Rob Emmet and me youngest boy Myles is come?" Mary Byrnes lifted her hands and took first the face of her son and then Rob's between her hands. "Ah, it's a pair ye are."

Myles' mother had dinner waiting. The six o'clock sun fell golden inside the long room with the great hearth where Mary Byrnes cooked. . . . There was Catherine, Etta, Mary, Pete, John, James, and they all had tow heads like Myles and the same delicate bonny faces, and high heads, and the blue blue eye. The father had a beard red as his youth, although his hair had whitened, and his face was burnt in the haying which he did alongside of his sons, priding himself on the great feat of a man of his years, twitting them at their slow labor.

Now he embraced his son Myles, and Rob looked dark as a child of Dublin and slight beside them all. Rob had always, since a wizened child, felt the sun and health of this family, and the deep resounding chord of their attachment, no break as in his own, no strange silences and tensions that made them all thin and touchy, even his own mother from Kerry, whom once he had seen with Mary Byrnes at a funeral, keening together.

Old Byrnes reached out and swept him into the embrace and he smelled the red beard like red clover hay . . . and the sound and smell of summer in all their flesh, as outside in the setting sun of that day the geese spoke to each other, a cricket made

gay mock of time, in a minute hythm of his own. Mary came over nd held Rob out with her strong ands and he saw her arms shining s the sun struck across them and he said, "How's your mother? Boy lear, and it's tall you're getting, it's he English blood in ye keeps you allow and pale. Come down to Kerry, eave them smelling Dublin streets, he death of us all. And is the castle till sittin' on the hill, a shame to very Irishman and the Irish parliament settin daily to shame us all."

They asked about Dublin. Rob and Myles were put to it to keep up with he questions, political, cultural—the vide reading of the old man always tartled Rob. He seemed to draw nowledge out of every man and voman and child of any degree. He vas a scientist, a humanist of the broadest kind, and what he lacked n humanity or human compassion Mary Byrnes was quick to contribute. Their family had long broken from oth Protestant and Catholic and the Gaelic was to them a rich source of heir culture, but the superstitions nd ignorance had for three generaons been sedulously weeded out and hey entertained scientists in their abeen. The famed school of mathematics was where Byrnes sent his ons. Old sheds held laboratories as hey all studied Geology, Chemistry, otany.

He snatched on every dorry that nded on the beach for information and in many ways was an authority on the French revolution, knowing nooks and crannies garnered from eye-witness bandits, smugglers, who saw many things not recorded by historians. His talk was rich with the personalities of river wharf men, of Robespierre, of Marat, Condorcet. He had entertained Negroes at his hearth who now wrote him from Haiti. His mind was a vast humanistic forest, tall spired—shadowed, lighted—with vast spaces of darkness and sudden shafts of the new light.

TONIGHT he was excited by the coming meeting and the old mountain friends he had greeted, as he and his sons mowed by the road, and kept a keen eye on the heavy road traffic of walkers, riders, signed up every friend for the United Irishmen, right there in the August sun.

"They better had signed," Mary said. "Stuck his fierce beard in their faces and his fist in their ribs and the pencil in their hands!"

"Well, it wasn't hard, they came down to sign. I know the mountain men," Byrnes smiled.

But during the meal old Byrnes gave his oratory a brush up, the coming meeting heated his tongue. "Pharoah was a mighty man at thinning out the human race but nothing to Pitt, only a bungler, a child. England is now dreaming of the pride of her success, moving out on sea and land, she will be one of the most suc-

cessful destroyers of the human race. Clap the padlock on the mind, lock every man woman and child to the devilish spinning jenny. She should be smashed is what I say, smashed down to the earth. We used to be a nation of brave men. Why, in my time the Liberty boys would take any man jack who sold or bought in the foreign market and they'd strip and tar and feather him good and march him out of the city.

"Why we used to meet on the first of May, me lads, in the tobacco meadows, there were the fields in every outlet called the commons, belonged to all, and the lads and lassies from sunrise to dark making merry with syllabub cakes, dancin', courtin', all hunted for a snail to put on a pewter plate with salt on the bottom and the snail twisting and turning would write your sweetheart's name. The maypoles went up amidst the dancin' fires, fun and humor because every cabeen had its spinning wheel, and our own parliament, nothin' but Irish but now no more wealthy tradesmen, native dealers, in a short time we're becoming from a nation of honest industrious cotters to a nation of swindlers, bankrupts, and beggars.

"I tell you, Rob Emmet, they mean to murder us by famine, tell this to your brother Tom who wants us to keep settin' in Parliament, no shootin', no violence. Why, the violence is being done to *us,* man, they mean to murder us by famine, no use mincin' the matter, we'll all die of starvation in this quiet. Will our cry reach any throne o' mercy? They do not ask us to double or treble work, no they ask us to do nothing at all, let the land lie waste and let us die quietly of hunger. Pharoah drowned, but what is to be the fate of those who put up the place of execution, or ask us to exile ourselves, or die quietly, what will be their doom who are ready to sweep off silently tens of thousands of the human race?"

"Say that tonight at the meetin'," Mary said, "you're arguin' with those who agree with ye, what's the good o' that. Save yer ammunition."

When they were about to rise from the table a young neighbor, his wife and three young children came to sign up for the United Irishmen and go to the meeting. The shy wife sat close to the big young shepherd and the three children climbed him as if he were a tree, as he tried painfully to put the scrawl of his name on the paper old Byrnes held for him. "Don't they follow you, Brother Emmet? It's a wonder to see our young men signing up members—a brotherhood of affection—I like that, I should think liberty is worth risking life for in a cause like this. The spirit of the country is bad." He paused, putting his big paw on the heads of his sons.

"I think I should have courage enough to brave death, yes I think I

ould. For my part it does not much
nify to lose my life but I grieve
breed children to be slaves. I
uld gladly risk all to prevent it
fore it is too late. My wife here
rees on this, we have talked it over
d we have come to be among the
ople."

HOOED by Mary, they all started
for the meeting, Old Byrnes
ll spouting oratory as a wrestler
rms up before the bout, and the
n cast its long low light on them
d every traveler coming now slowly
if by accident cast a long shadow.
e young farmer with his youngest
n astride his neck began an old
ng, after laughing heartily that
ery man had a black shadow now
ound his neck. They took up the
rds, and it was picked up by
ers joining them on the road as
y got bolder as their numbers
reased. Girt round with foes . . .
gland's fatal cord around our neck,
se beneath the gallows trees, we
sed the brothers lovingly . . . true
home and faith and freedom to
last . . . never till the latest day
ll the memory pass away . . . our
, a nation, free and grand. And
sound now swelled, Mary swing-
along, beckoning all to join. . . .
gh upon the gallows tree, swung
noble hearted three. . . . By the
ageful tyrant stricken in their
om. . . . But they met him face
face, with the spirit of their race.
. . . And they went undaunted to their doom.

Rob said to Myles, "It's big. They're all coming."

Myles said, "Scary it is. Who would have thought from the hills?"

Rob said, "It's glorious, I say."

The people had gathered on the meadow, setting up tents, markets, flea circuses; the gypsies and the tinkers were suspect. Everyone from far, not known, was suspected as disguised Orange boys, informers, spies for the Castle or the Crown. Rob fell in with Rattling Bill McCabe, helped set up his booth for his puppet show. McCabe had a patch over one eye, and the one remaining, keen, piercing. "Keep a lookout, see that tinker just came in beating his donkey, a merry Andrew, see the people are laughing, keep an eye out." McCabe could speak any of the dialects and could wear many disguises. Travel the length of Ireland in them, ferret out informers, gain access to meetings of Orange men, come back to Dublin to report every kit and kaboodle and what fish were biting where. He had a puppet very like himself, a variation of Punch, of an Irish shade, with a big nose, a radical guy who had been like McCabe all over the world, and had an "in" to what was going on, of violent temper under his red wig, sometimes it was green, and a piercing button eye like McCabe's. The people knew him and expected to hear what was to

happen as well as courage for it. Myles came to pull the curtain so Rob was to hold the puppet that was the doctor in the Pitt sketch, but McCabe spoke for all, with a loose scenario which he varied and added to from the comments of the spectators who became actors if the times were good.

Rob rang the gong, the children ran, the people crowded close. The first sketch was an encounter between this Punch and an Irish Lord of Parliament who wanted to do him good and bit by bit divested him of his coat, britches, bonnet, brogan and at last his red wig, all for his own good, and the crowd roared and groaned as he lost his corn, potatoes, wife, was taxed to death, sons exiled. And at last he was singing, Black Potatoes White Potatoes, and the audience sang with him and then he hung up the skeleton of a herring —Potatoes and Sniff and take a bite of potato and smell the herring bones!

THE next was a play of which there were many jokes called Pitticisms. The audience pressed up closer to hear and to protect each other and to take part in the play. It was the elder Mr. Pitt with his black velvet-encased gouty legs, velvet cape and the face of a death's head. He had called a doctor, he had diarrhea. The doctor told the audience it was too much of a temptation to attend a King—and McCabe winked wickedly with his one eye at Rob. "And a prime minister was too prime."

"For death," someone yelled.

"Look at him!" the doctor cried back. "He'll murder himself. Let him go to the well with his violence once too often. What kind of a Pitt was this—peach pit, plum pit. . . ." "British Pitt," someone yelled.

"Pitt of Hell," a woman cried and the laughter stopped the show.

"Mr. Pitt from Pitthell. What is the matter with me? said the terrible Mr. Pitt. I've been sick since 1776, then I got worse in 1789."

"The year of the American revolution," the crowd roared.

"The year of the fall of the Bastille," they roared again.

And the Doctor shouted, "He's sick from French claret!"

"And Irish whiskey!" an old man boomed.

"And what about British ale?"

The doctor leaned over to the people. "I will have to give him an emetic to throw up the French situation, Ah yes," he said looking down Mr. Pitt's throat, "also the correspondence societies of the English workers will have to come up. Irish whiskey and French claret and British ale mixed in any man's stomach——"

A woman with a baby on her hip shouted, "Must have had some of the Queen's cake too. We'll worry your

gullet, your honor!"

McCabe made a note to put that in. "Nothing goeth in now and nothing cometh out," the Prime Minister said. The doctor was sad. "I can't cure you with a fast, that would be too much like the starvation of the colonial countries you decree, that's a luxury reserved for the poor. Is there no remedy then for the conqueror?"

"Nothing for the conqueror," the children began to chant.

"Then we will have to purge the stomach," the Doctor said.

"Perish the stomach," cried the Minister, "let the Constitution live!"

"What Constitution? To hell with your Constitution. We want our own!" a young man shouted.

"The Americans and French have their own Constitution," someone cried.

"Ah, I have it," shouted the Doctor. "Give him food and prevent its escape." The Prime Minister screamed: "There is no precedent for stopping up the Prime Minister." They howled like Banshees at this, some boys rolled down the hill in exuberance, the old men had to sit down from laughing. "Stop him up full of three continents, he'll surely die."

"Quick, think of a good deed," the doctor said. "Maybe that will purge you." Mr. Pitt could think of none. "They're aren't any," some one said. Mr. Pitt then went into a delirium and thought the pot under the bed was the river Shannon ready to drown him.

"Drown him," a woman cried. "My three sorrows, nine times over, flow deeper than the Shannon to drown him—my sons with bodies brighter than a hound's tooth." Another woman keened, "My lover perished before the bridal bed for old men's greed." "Die! die!" some women screamed.

"Mr. Burke," Pitt screamed, offering him the bed vessel, "this is your reward. I have no accusers."

"We accuse!" The crowd now was rocking with McCabe, and Rob could see his sweating contorted face now absorbed, leaning over the two ridiculous puppets who strangely on a dangerous day gave curious vent to torrents. They began to name the accusations—exiles, massacres, corn famines. It was Mr. Pitt who excused the dashing of babies' brains out. Nits become lice, he had said. Exterminate the Irish, he had said in Parliament. Plan more famines. "Don't send him to hell, send him to Ireland," McCabe shouted.

"I am not a murderer, gentlemen," Mr. Pitt said, "I am a dilpomat. I never uttered a falsehood unless it was necessary. Save me. Give me the creed. I am the stone of avarice, without heart—this is not the creed. I am dying!"

"Here, here," The doctor gave him a last pill then turned to the crowd. "I've give him the pill of Irish Unity." Mr. Pitt gave out one scream

and Rob let him fall kerplunk against the stage and then rise and sink slowly into oblivion.

THE thin nervous secretary of Kildare, a vegetarian, teetotaler, follower of Rosseau, called the packed meeting to order. Held in the old weavers' hall, it was jammed with, as Michael told Rob, every trade and class that could crowd in: wheelrights, wickermen, chicken pluckers, pudding fillers, bonesetters, pig stickers, salt purifiers, tarriers and farriers, saddlers, cobblers, spinners, weavers and some spies, even the dead perhaps who had been brought in to vote; and of course despite Michael and Lord Edward scrutinizing every face, probably some Orange boys in disguise.

McGovern pounded his gavel They all had a unique respect for him, for his high morality, soberness. They knew the source of his purity was the fact that his wife, mother, child, was the United Irishmen. Now he stacked the organization's books soberly kept and preserved by him. In his high nasal voice he reported that the elections had been tampered with, a farce, the Squire and Lord Stewart had of course been returned to Parliament, and now what was the next step? Now what was their pleasure? . . . It was Wolfe's belief that there was too much speaking by leaders, that men and women must speak again. The men rose to speak, telling how in some districts they ate periwinkles again, and cows were being bled at night again, and the Kerry cows knew Sunday as the old saying was, boiling the blood with sorrel it kept the children alive if you put them to sleep early and let them sleep late, so they'd cry for only one meal. "Not a belly-hungry weaver here," they cried, "but knows that two morsels might have been ours without the impost on foreign corn, rents, interest on moneys." Paine was quoted, the declarations of the rights of man. "There is no repose between the landlords and this declaration, or between me and the lords."

McGovern tenderly drew them out. It was not a time for talking—Wolfe Tone apprised this—it was a time for resolution. They were not on the anvil. Even Shawn Gowan stood with his huge arms folded at the back of the hall, even the children crouching in the aisles listened. "We've stuck to law," they cried, "Parliament, free elections, taxation without representation." They had counted the United Irishmen, they had had the majority. What price that with the dead voting and the votes counted by the castle gang and the Orange boys voting many times and getting so much a vote.

By the time O'Connor and Lord Edward spoke they rode the tide of the anger and their words crested the wave. The audience spoke as much as Lord Edward, repeated chanting

phrases. Rob thought he had never seen his people like this. He felt carried, lifted by them, and saw the sweat stand on Myles' brow as it did on many with the intensity of moving from their private thought out into the collective thought, into the hazardous action with others.

WHEN Wolfe Tone jumped up over the pit into the stage, they all rose crying, for they felt in him a new kind of leader, the first of the democratic leaders, organizers of the people with a strong theoretic understanding, playing not merely upon grievances or offering the aristocratic aid of native lords like Rowan and Edward, but rousing in a great feudal mass of hidden and underground people, their own power, and when they heard him the ash of their servitude, insult and hopelessness, flickered, moved out of feudal darkness, and together became a conflagration lighting new areas of knowledge and action.

Without oratory, he reached into every brain, into every memory, harvested all grievances, chiseled away doubt of each other, roused in them their mutual giant strength. United. Unite. Mr. Pitt would die yet of their unified strength. They saw it clearly. Now act. He moved directly into it —the meeting at Belfast, send a delegate, organize, drive for more United Irishmen. He explained the organization, "a brotherhood of affection," leave your name with Michael, a delegate would come to visit you. Get down to business.

Then Rob saw what always amazed him, the organizational skill of uneducated peasants, these people of whom it was said they were lazy drunkards, uncouth, uneducated, of a lower species, fit only to be exploited, without light and heart. A new thing happened in the long night of Eire. McGovern and three assistants took down reports. They rose and gave them. "Brother, make it short. We must be accurate. About two miles thravelin' from Benclody there at the head of the Upper Baronial you'll find cached some Orange rifles, and down again to ould Ross some more. From there to Newton Barry, its landlord a Colonel, and a bitter foe to liberty and poor Ireland as ever tuck the book to swear allegiance to the king, has stocked for use of his own yeomanry, mercenaries I might say, enough guns and dynamiet for a regiment and I do wish you would keep it in mind sir to save his lands and his goods and his chattels confiscated back again to the right owners when the tree o' liberty do be flourish in our country."

"Keep to the point," they shouted.

"I only tell you as a piece o'news that the Colonel would ate a Catholic every good Fridey and ax no sauce for his meat. They all shushed him, fearing he was insulting some one.

The district committees were re-

ported on, the tailor made his report on getting members, how easy it was, members were pledged from each district. It was recommended that there be more method, system, organization, the physical power of the country was standing ready, the people were industrious and would rather mind their own work if they were left to mind it but now they were not left and they were not wanting.

The smoky lamps swung, the children slept, the meeting bent to the colossal task of history. There was a commotion in the back. Someone cried "Spy." Another, "An Orange boy." A limp fellow was held up by the scruff of the neck. Everyone rose. Tone shouted for order—bring him up. He was pushed, thrust up from the hands of the people. "Pay him his reckoning. Let's see him, we'll weed the land of every murderin' son. May I have many animals before my deer, none before yours, go and milk the ducks. If I had an egg, I'd give you the shell. How many pieces of silver, Judas?"

The young man strained from the holding arms and yelled, "Jacobins . . . Devil's got. Pockets full of red silver. Black lovers. Reds." They surged towards him and then a yell from the back turned them around and the guard cried, "They're comin', a whole regiment of armed yeomanry. Flee for yer lives. They got guns. Guns, man, guns."

Michael Davitt whistled, and out of them sprang men, one here, one there, armed, and they gathered in front of the people. The lights were doused, they could hear the rhythm of the marching and the song of the Orangemen. "They're armed!" screamed the provocateur. "They're armed!" The marching ceased, there was an order, a moment of confusion. Michael and his men stood in the vestibule where the weavers' market used to be, their guns cocked.

The sound of the marching reversed as they moved back to the village, but the silence held until someone started to sing.

"Rise up, poor croppies, you're
long enough down.
And we'll pike all these Orange-
men out of the town
Down, down, Orangemen, lie
down."

Michael broke from the little group of armed men, turned and shouted, "Every man back to his cabeen, get all the arms you can. Watch this night out!"

The Battle of Ideas

By MILTON HOWARD

THE author of the book* under review believes ardently in what has come to be known as the battle of ideas. He knows that ideas are of enormous importance in the daily life of the American people despite the fact that our country has not been known to place theory on a very high level in the scale of values.

But Marxism teaches that the production of ideas goes on as constantly as the production of material necessities. These ideas—in a society where the national productive machinery is largely owned by a private minority—are largely the ideas of the dominant economic group. It was for this reason that the founders of scientific Socialism were most explicit in their statement that the people's movement for a better life, and for the social change to the Socialist ownership of industries, entails *intellectual* no less than economic and political struggle. Marx went so far as to say that the social victories of the working class are "heralded by intellectual victories."

AS a Marxist historian—his researches into Negro history are contemporary classics — Aptheker takes ideas and scholarship seriously. Vigorously, even angrily, he scorns the notion that to take philosophical, historical, or critical thinking seriously is to be a sort of dopey "perfessor," in the mythology of the anti-intellectuals.

But he knows just as well that the workings of the intellect must not be cobweb-spinning. It must be serious work in the service either of mastering nature or of aiding in one way or aonther the advancing cause of the people. His collection of essays gives us a stirring example of how he views his function as a fighter in the battle of ideas. These essays, dealing with a variety of subjects, appeared during the past decade, the decade of the Cold War. They are the product of that decade in which there was turned loose against the social philosophy of

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History and Reality, by Herbert Aptheker. Cameron Associates, $3.00.

Marxism, and against its adherents, a reign of terror and a torrent of falsehood, abuse, and malicious hatred which not only sent innocent men and women to jail but did deep damage to the soul of the country and severely crippled its political liberties. In his journalistic activities during these times, Aptheker rolled up his sleeves and slugged back with the accuracy of a scholar of the first order, with passionate devotion to the ideas and interests of the working class, and the fervor of an American patriot.

THE heart of his work is the defense of Marxism, of its real ideas, against those who through ignorance or malice, lie about it and its indispensable place in the nation's life. With this as a basis, he turns his attention to the out-and-out reactionaries, to the more restrained but no less hostile theoreticians of "The New Conservatism," the attacks coming from the eager ranks of such professional anti-Marxists as Sidney Hook, and to the influential writings of Arthur Schlesinger Jr. Aptheker has the honor of having tackled this wide array of intellectual opponents almost single-handed; he has let none of their works get by him. He has traded intellectual punches with the mysticism of Toynbee, with the professional historians who advocate an attitude of helplessness and hopelessness before history (Michael Oakeshott, F. M. Fling), with the arrogant and un-Reconstructed historians of the New Confederacy who sing the glories of the Old South and reviye the crimes of that tyrant Abraham Lincoln. He has tackled Reinhold Niebuhr, David Riesman, Walter Lippmann, Allan Nevins, and in a different spirit but nonetheless with unabated critical insight, such varying defenders of our democratic heritage as Henry Steele Commager, Elmer Davis, Alan Barth, and Zachariah Chafee, Jr. I cite these names only as exemplifying the wide range of his interests and his creative alertness to the different intellectual currents of the time.

In his essay "History and Reality," Aptheker strikes some ringing blows against those old but always present slanders against the Marxist theory of history—that it is fatalistic, leaving nothing to human action; that it is indifferent to the influence of thought or the power of aspiration, will and desire. He shows that Marxism alone makes way for the real freedom of men in human societies since it reveals to them how to combine knowledge of the objective laws of development with the profound impact of human thought and action. It makes action guided and effective as it makes humanity free to take such action in the interests of its own dignity and fulfillment.

FROM this position, Aptheker develops in a number of essays the counter-attack on the New Conservatives or against the McCarthyite propagandists who have deluged the nation with the myth that Marxism is a conspiracy. His sword-crossing with the malicious poisoner of American thought, Professor Sidney Hook, is a superb demonstration of skill and vigor in unmasking a falsifier both of Marxism and of the American tradition.

Especially valuable in this connection is Aptheker's confronting of Hook with the real quotations from Lenin on "subterfuge" which Hook, along with the government police in the Smith Act persecutions, continually cites to brand the Communists as deceitful conspirators. Aptheker proves that these quotations are torn from context and indeed that, in context, they prove exactly the opposite of what political police and their theoreticians say.

Thus, Lenin was—under conditions of Czarist denial of all liberties, or under conditions of anti-Communist persecutions in Germany—urging the Communists to wage an all-sided struggle to win democratic freedom, to refuse to let repression deprive them of their right to be with their fellow-citizens in trade unions and political movements *where their ideas could be discussed, accepted or rejected according to the interests of the majority.*

The elevation of deceit to a principle is shown by Aptheker to be the hallmark of the professional anti-Communists rather than of the Communists who make the public, social test of truth one of the main tenets of their philosophy.

APTHEKER shows himself not only a resourceful and excellent thinker in the battle of ideas, but also shows in his essays on a frame-up in Guam, the Hiss case, the Scales case, and the Rosenberg case, to be a crackling journalist in the great tradition of American expose writing. They are crushing in their piling up of evidence, cool in argument and hotly angry against injustice and falsehood. An unshakeable and powerful belief in morality and truth rings through these pieces, and the clangor of their passionate ideas is all the stronger in an America which was subjected to a terrible assault on its conscience and sense of decency.

A NOTABLE aspect of the book is the introduction written to it by Professor Robert S. Cohen, Assistant Professor of Physics and Philosophy at Wesleyan University. Professor Cohen is not a Marxist, as he points out. He is part of the tradition of scholarship which believes in a thorough knowledge of your opponent's thinking, a respect for his intentions and intelligence, and holds

the common aim of a better society.

Cohen is critical of some of Aptheker's opinions and methods as he is admiring of others. But Cohen, in an appeal which has a national significance beyond the confines of the book or the small progressive audience, declares forthrightly: *". . . the point I am making is that the America of the Cold War has denied both that Communism is reasoned and that a Communist can be moral. It is time that we questioned this view. We need to test the reasoning and judge the morality of those intelligent men and women who have become persuaded of the Communist way. . . . We can place Aptheker as an American Communist within the national heritage of radical dissent; we can also see him as part of an international movement. That Aptheker's Marxist conceptions came originally from abroad is not particularly relevant to their appraisal. . . . With Aptheker, the reader can find ground and reasons to accept or reject the author's views."*

Cohen is thus not only stating his own admirable readiness to engage in the free discussion of ideas with Marxists on the basis of a common desire for truth and human progress. He also summons the academic, intellectual and political circles of the land to do the same. Aptheker's work, arousing such a response, is no small part of his contribution to the fight for a truly democratic America as well as for the ideas of Socialism.

Cohen's criticisms are made with a sense of responsibility, even if, as would be natural, we do not agree with him on all points. Yet Marxists can indeed learn from that kind of criticism. Cohen remarks that "the Marxist thinker sometimes substitutes a proposal for a proof, a program of theoretical explanation for the required explanation; on the other hand, the same thinker may brusquely dismiss a rival theory."

Cohen raises a number of controversial points, such as the relation of Marxist thought to Freudianism, to the philosophical views of Albert Einstein, the logical theories of Rudolph Carnap, and the historic and aesthetic ideas of the Italian thinker, Benedotte Croce. Cohen feels that Marxists have been too "brusque," to use his word, with the achievements of these men. He cites Aptheker's characterization of Croce as a reactionary thinker who remained to serve fascism, if not completely then in his own way. Cohen notes that one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party, Antonio Gramsci, felt otherwise about some aspects of Croce's work, and believed actually that Croce in some of his work had reached "the highest point of liberal Italian culture and hence was the starting point for a new and creative development of Marxist philosophy. But of this Aptheker

gives us no hint; on the contrary, he ignores what is challenging and alive in Croce while emphasizing what is negative and dead."

It is greatly to be hoped that the debate on these points will expand; only good can come of it. I am convinced that a complete case can be made against the thinkers whom, Cohen says, Marxists had handled "too brusquely." But can it be asserted that the Marxist case has always been made against these reactionary (for such I am convinced they are) thinkers with complete persuasiveness? Such criticism helps us to search out those aspects of Marxist thought which are taken for granted, which are poorly assimilated, or which need creative development in the light of new conditions and new facts.

I myself feel, for example, that Cohen has a point in his remark that often Marxist writers, including the writer of this review, sometimes skip over assumed positions which cannot be taken for granted at all, which need constant proof.

I feel that Aptheker in his treatment of certain writers and of their opinions strikes the necessary blows against their basic incorrectness, but sometimes fails to take into account the specific peculiarity of the writer's development, and the special quality he brings to the social situation. Thus, I think that his thorough disclosure of the development of the ideas of Walter Lippmann as fundamentally reactionary, deeply hostile to democracy and the will of the people, is a first-rate job. But I also feel that his analysis tends to a glossing over of the significant differences which separate Lippmann from the democracy-hating fanaticism of the McCarthyites or the racist anti-democratic cults of the Nazis. Thus, he puts before the public the vital and not-to-be forgotten data on Lippmann's readiness to ditch democracy for the sake of fascist repression "if necessary" to prevent democracy from leading to Communism (as it inevitalby must). But he must admit that following World War I, Lippmann saw the futile folly of the attempt to crush the rise of Communism by force against the USSR. Lippmann, in his role of adviser to the imperialists, urged that they have a "sanitary Europe" instead of a "cordon sanitare" around the Soviet Union. That is, Lippmann for his own pro-imperialist reasons was opposing the wars of intervention and counseling a policy of necessary social concessions in Western Europe. We know that this view was not based on any love for the masses. It was based on a correct reading of the relation of forces. But does it make no difference that Lippmann advised concessions instead of naked force alone? Does it make no difference that Lippmann raised his voice—from his standpoint of adviser to Big Capital—

against taking the McCarthy-fascist road in the United States even while showing himself ready to accept it for Italy? It is not a matter of here having any illusions. It is a matter of the concreteness of analysis (time and place) going along with the analysis of fundamental positions.

Aptheker writes convincingly: "Lippmann rejects the tactical approach of the McCarthyites as being untimely, crude and unnecessary *at this juncture of events.*" (Aptheker's emphasis). This is a sound judgment. But can the italicized portion of his statement be viewed only as part of the proof that Lippmann, along with most bourgeois thinkers, is no devotee of democracy come what may? Or is it not also a fact that the italicized part of this estimate shows Lippmann to be a careful judge of the relation of forces in the United States, that it displays his estimate that the democratic impulses of the nation are far from obsolete or feeble, and that the policies of the bourgeoisie do not require—will actually be harmed—by the fascist proposals of the McCarthyites?

Yet this same Lippmann, as Aptheker well analyzes, is working out the doctrine for some form of public rejection of the democratic philosophy of Jefferson and Lincoln. The democratic philosophy of these early leaders of the American nation is bound to become increasingly inconsistent with the needs of the present imperialist-monopolists. This is the spur to much of Lippmann's thought these days.

But it is also the spur to a new grasp by Marxist socialism of the vitality and meaningfulness of the American democratic tradition and Socialism's correct relation to it in the defense of the interests of the working-class and the nation. Aptheker quotes Jefferson and Lincoln against Lippmann. This is no mere device of rhetoric. It is a historic necessity. That it is a Marxist who does this is significant too.

But I do not grasp clearly in this context Aptheker's remark that "even advanced 18th century political scientists—like Paine, Madison, Alfieri, etc.—thought of "the people" in almost as a limited a sense as some individuals now think of "Society," that is, of "the 400." (page 61).

This is, I believe, a serious oversimplification. I do not think that the passionate revolutionary-democratic beliefs of a Paine are in any way continuous with, certainly not "almost as limited as," the decayed ideologies of those who view society as "the 400."

In his own work, Aptheker shows a better use of the ideas of 18th century revolutionary democracy than that. In fact, Aptheker rightly says (page 72) that "there is a kinship in the words of Jefferson and Lincoln with those of Engels and Stalin. . . ." He is wisely concerned with

the need to keep clear the basic propositions of Marxist Socialism as the *sina qua non* of any united front of activity with others. But this sometimes leads, in my opinion, to a taking in of too much territory, or what he and I would call over-simplification. (Cohen incidentally notes this in his introduction). Thus, in my opinion, Aptheker's badly-needed, slashing essay on the fashionable delusions of David Riesman could have been made even sounder by the recognition that while the exaggerations of the Riesman mythology about the "new capitalism" are ludicrous, there are in fact quite remarkable elements in the history of American capitalism. It is basically the same as all capitalist countries, but it is also different, specific.

The illusions of "exceptionalism"—the theory that Marxism does not apply to U.S. capitalism—need not deter us, must not deter us from a study and recognition of what is specific to it. Certainly, the post-war development has proved that to us. I feel that Aptheker, speaking for us in his rebuttal of Riesman (the only one thus far attempted by a Marxist), should have given more recognition to the special social features which give rise to Riesman's thinking and make his ideas seem true to many people. For in fact, they have kernels of truth in them, as they must to have influence. Thus, more analysis of Riesman's dogma of the "lonely crowd" is needed. Aptheker rips apart Riesman's claims to the inherent loneliness of man, etc. This is the standard claptrap of the decadents today. But Riesman could not have made headway with his doctrines had he not fastened on to a social fact in the United States which Marxism foresaw and for which Marxism has the solution—that is, the intense dehumanization of money culture, the constant destruction of the family and of the values of love, human solidarity, sincerity, and devotion to truth and usefulness. This enormous alienation has its roots, of course, in the alienation of the worker from the product of his work. But it is also intensified by the growth of decadence and bourgeois values gone wild. Marxist criticism of the illusion of the mystical writers will be more effective if it turns its attention to the realities which give rise to these mysticisms and which they are intended to cover up.

Aptheker's essays are documented with an exceedingly rich variety of quotations, facts, and references which make them highly useful in any present-day discussion. They are useful for us now in another way. That is, they emphasize the need for a constant exchange of criticism between Marxism and those other pro-democratic currents with which it seeks unity of action against reaction.

There is, of course, a difference

between such a necessary exchange of criticism (it cannot be a one-way street) and the intransigent assault which must be made on the ideologists of McCarthyism and atomic war. It seems to me that in this connection the recent comments of John McManus, editor of the *National Guardian,* on Aptheker's book are wide of the point. In his review (*National Guardian,* issue of Oct. 31 1955) McManus, a notable figure in the fight for democratic freedoms, believes that Aptheker's sharp criticism of Professor Schlesinger is inconsistent with the advocacy by Communists of uinted action with liberals of that persuasion, especially when they are in the Democratic Party. But the essence of Aptheker's criticism of Schlesinger was his disagreement with Schlesinger on the subject of whether or not Marxists and liberals could unite, with Aptheker saying a vigorous yes and Schlesinger an equally vigorous no. Schlesinger was misrepresenting the Marxist position on this subject, and Aptheker proved that he was.

The united action of Marxist, liberal and other democratic currents in the United States is indispensable to any national advance. But this assumes a constant interchange of critical discussion among all the elements of any such united action. It appears to me that McManus' question to Aptheker—how can you unite with people you have so drastically criticized—not only overlooks the point that the debate with Schlesinger was intended to let the liberal public know that he was wrong in his warning to the liberals against Marxism, but also makes the untenable conclusion that you can't have united action with people you criticize. But it is not criticism *or* unity; it is unity *and* criticism. Neither is fully effective without the other. Naturally, mistakes can be made in how this is done. But the principle is the same.

Even this lengthy review has had to ignore a good deal of the intellectual riches and factual data in Aptheker's book. The appearance of many of these essays in *Masses & Mainstream* was a strength of the publication. Certainly books like these show what Marxists can do to help enlighten their country. May it be the first of a harvest of studies on all aspects of our nation's throbbing life.

Canto for Freedom's Martyrs

By JOSEPH FELSHIN

Only their eyes and wounds speak
These are the tortured
Whose agonies prepared this time
Who fed on stones
Whose pint of blood
Was poured into the earth
Who fought with lopped-off hands
Whose blood-stained triumph
Is our harbinger of peace

A canto in mourning
For freedom's martyrs
Who will not return
To hear the cock
Crowing in the earth
Or see hunger's face
In the high windows of the city
Nor listen to the breathing
Of a loved one at the hour
When dew dissolves the morning stars
And sunrise stains with fire
All the thresholds of the world

A dirge in slow measure
For liberty's slain partisans
Whose night begins
Where we enter new dawns
Whose naked will
Held the engulfing darkness
Until our eyes discovered
The fabulous light
Of the Socialist future

A canto in dedication
To unknown heroes
Who perished in glory
As a mountain
Whose western shoulder and eye
Enflamed by the fiery sinking sun
Stems for an instant in their flight
The tidal waves of stars
Then hurling the incendiary torch
Into the hissing sea
Plunges the massive firmament
In brief and temporary night

Man Without a Name

By ANNA SEGHERS

The following is from a novelette by the distinguished German author of The Seventh Cross, The Dead Stay Young, *and other novels.*

A GERMAN soldier named Herman Mueller, who had been a tinsmith before the war, came back home alive. He had survived every mortal danger on land, on the sea, and in the air. Twice he had been gravely wounded. Now he looked forward to seeing his family and resuming his trade.

The little town in which he thought he would find both family and trade again was an hour's ride from Berlin. Herman Mueller knew from personal experience what it meant for human beings and houses to be "situated in the battle zone." Yet when he saw what was left of his home town, he was horrified. Nothing remained of his house but a few piles of masonry and a foundation. A shell hole yawned where the house had stood. It was almost filled with the rubble of what had once been his workshop—and in which perhaps his family now lay buried. A handful of survivors still crept here and there through the debris of the town. In their stupor they could not remember Herman Mueller. Nor did he recognize them any more.

In fact, he could no longer remember anything distinctly. So it is not clear how, shortly thereafter, he came to Berlin. Probably with a swarm of refugees. All at once he found himself in a courtyard on a street near the Alexanderplatz. In the rear was a bombed-out house. A gaping hole led through this house to a second courtyard—amid charred ruins and, here and there, fragments of bright-colored wallpaper. He followed someone, who was looking for someone else, into the ruins at the rear of the second courtyard. There he noticed a man standing waist-high in a cellar entrance and grappling with a twisted metal pipe that lay on the courtyard pavement before him. Herman Mueller bent down and lent a hand, helping the other man to straighten out the pipe. It was as if this dim reminder of his trade—the twisted pipe—kept the tinsmith,

forsaken by God and men, from going insane. Instead of dragging away the straightened pipe, the man in the cellar entrance shoved a second, narrower one in it. This one too was quite battered-looking. Again Herman Mueller proceeded to display the skill of his craft, which otherwise might have been blotted out of his mind with the wreckage of the past.

Soon the people who lived near the courtyard knew that a man had come who could make them all sorts of things out of tin and zinc. They all needed almost everything, because almost everything had been destroyed; but there were many things in the ruins that could somehow be salvaged and put to use. On his own, Mueller would not have undertaken anything—he was too stunned for that. But he did what he was told to do. As if his mind lay in his fingers. Whatever they brought him—stove pipes, pails, kettles, furnace parts—he soldered, hammered, and rebuilt. He worked with frantic haste, as if still carrying out orders. They found a cellar doorway for him, where he could continue to ply his useful trade. And he managed to get what he needed to keep alive: a little stove, even a soldering torch, a straw mattress, a horse blanket—and occasionally something to eat. He was soon registered on the official lists. He became a resident of that street; and the people got used to having him around.

But despite all his activity, he remained feeble-minded and stunned. He could barely remember his prewar occupation. Since his arrival in that courtyard weeks and months had gone by—perhaps even more than a year.

ONE DAY a young man quickly entered the next courtyard from the street. He ducked immediately behind a porch post and flattened himself against it. Above him perched the remains of a second-floor apartment, triangular-shaped—what had once been a brightly wallpapered living room. Tensely he eyed two men coming toward him: a policeman carrying only a club and a Russian soldier with a rifle. The two men peered in all directions, then left. The young man stepped out; but after a glance at the street he turned around again crossed the courtyard, and plunged recklessly into the heaps of rubble He reached the rear courtyard through the gaping hole in the house. He looked around once more. Noticing that he was being followed, he made a swift sideward leap. Herman Mueller was standing, like his predecessor chest-high in the cellar entrance. He also had some kind of a pipe that was too long and unwieldy to be worked over in the cellar. So he had spread it on the pavement and was hammering and turning it. Suddenly the stranger kneeled with his back to the courtyard and propped up the

twisted pipe. This enabled the tinsmith to complete his job.

Meanwhile the policeman had returned with two soldiers. They looked in at the rear courtyard as well. Just then a woman approached the tinsmith with a broken-down kitchen utensil and various parts. The policeman and soldiers again left. The young man helped the tinsmith drag the coiled pipe into the cellar entrance. He did not look around any more but rushed straight into the cellar. Herman Mueller busied himself as usual at his soldering torch—seemingly in a daze as he worked. The young man watched his movements and assisted him. It grew dark early. It was autumn. Lights flickered here and there in the ruins, somberly yellow like the sky itself. A few stars twinkled in the jagged sky, but they were soon hidden by massive moving clouds. The lights too went out, as if swallowed up by the ruins.

The young man had no more hope. He was afraid, and he was cold. He was afraid not only of those hunting him down. He was cold not only because he wore no coat. The world had burst asunder, and he was alone in an abyss. The emptiness was all around him as well as inside himself. Aware that his companion was chewing something, he got hungry and reached out toward the sound. He snatched a piece of bread. Herman Mueller groped vainly for it, then let out a howl. But the stranger was strong. He also seized the horse blanket which Mueller used as a cover and wrapped himself in it so quickly that all Mueller could do was to tug at it. The tinsmith snarled for a time. Then, since that was no use, he pressed closer to the stranger's big warm body and, shivering with cold, spent the night thus.

The next morning, however, when the sun came out, he found it hard to recall how the night had passed. He felt no hatred toward the stranger since his mind could no longer grasp any reason for hatred. The young fellow immediately helped him with his work but made it a point not to emerge from the cellar again. Both of them seemed spellbound by their work.

THE people noticed suddenly that another man was living in their courtyard. He was much faster and cleverer than their usual repairman. Maybe he's a relative, they thought; and before long they believed it. The young fellow looked strong and intelligent, so they did not dare take advantage of him as they did of his slow-witted uncle. They paid him rather well for his services—sometimes with American cigarettes, or various kinds of foodstuffs, or useful little knick-knacks. Craftsmen were rare, and many refugees were setting up house in the ruins. So everyone was pleased that the soldering torch in the cellar kept on burning. They

were glad to run errands for the stranger or to stand in the endless lines in front of the government offices for him. For in the meantime he could fix an object urgently needed. Because they needed his labor, in the course of time he also got what he himself needed.

Business had long since revived. On every block the black market was flourishing, as if it had crawled out of the ruins. Soon the young man felt so sure of himself that he made specific demands: socks, sausages, a scarf.

Often he stared at his surroundings, which were no longer bleak and bare but teeming and restless. His brain too became teeming and restless; but emptiness was still all around him as well as within himself.

At times he looked more closely at Herman Mueller with an expression of disgust. But Mueller never took offense at his companion, as though the latter were really his son or nephew.

Prompted by self-interest, the neighbors had seen to it that the old man was made a resident of their district and registered in all the offices and lists covering their block. So now the young man received the same advantages—almost as a matter of course. In their chaotic lives, with the war just over, the people rushed avidly to be registered at all the offices and bureaus; they seemed to feel that, once their name was stamped on a list, it meant they were protected body and soul. And so far the young man had managed to get rid of everything he felt especially incriminating. Then one day an ashgrey, ageless face with hard eyes appeared at the cellar window. It called him out and growled that one list had not yet been filled out. As his neighbor, he had risked taking the questionnaire home, although that was a punishable offense. Then he placed the paper on the ledge of the wall and steadied it with a brick from the swept-up pile of debris. The young man clambered up into the courtyard. He glanced at the questionnaire. A few people were standing idly around. One of them lent him a pen.

The young man thought: I've got to write down something, anything —fast. His head was empty. He read the questions printed on the sheet: *name — birthplace — age — family status — occupation — party affiliation — military service —*. He could think of nothing to write. He stared at the blank columns he was supposed to fill out. He had a feeling they could swallow up the mountains of rubble together with the afternoon sky, which was as ash-grey as the neighbor's ageless face, the strange hateful faces around him, the tinsmith gaping out of the cellar, his own youth, and the war. He raised his head and stared at all the faces; the faces stared back at him. The

sheet of paper lay between him and them alike an ocean. He had to get back in the cellar at once, or he was done for; and if he didn't get a move on, he was certainly done for.

Then a cheerful voice sang out: "Heinz!"

A young fellow calmly pushed his way through the onlookers and came toward him. He looked straight at him and said: "Well, I'll be—! Heinz Brenner! How did you do it? All the way from the desert here!" He turned toward the wide-eyed people: "You see, we were in Africa together. That's where we said goodbye to each other. We were in the 999th.* He came out of jail, I from a concentration camp. Whoever was put in that division wasn't supposed to come back home alive. But we made it! The two of us."

THE young man looked at the fellow—he was a stranger. He was about the same height and his face was now close to his own. It was completely expressionless; just a little sleepy around the eyes, which were cold, icy blue, and gleaming. They were trained on him. The young man felt that somehow, somewhere, that look—hard to avoid yet hard to meet, as expressionless as it was accurate, as penetrating as it was cold—had once before been directed at him.

"Heinz, fill out that paper fast, so we can go out and celebrate."

The young man felt the stranger's arm on his shoulder. Over his shoulder, he sensed the stranger's eyes on the questionnaire. All of a sudden he found it easy to fill out all the blank columns. The unknown acquaintance immediately took him in tow and made a move toward the street. Then the little man who had brought the questionnaire stepped in between: "Hey, wait, wait! You've got to fix my pipe first. Didn't I bring this thing to you? I'm liable to get arrested. What do you think—I did it because I like the color of your eyes? My pipe is still leaking. More water runs out on the floor than into the boiler." "Go ahead," said the stranger. "I'll wait." He laughed. When he did, his eyes got a shaded color. When he grew serious, they lighted up.

The young man fetched his tools out of the cellar. When the stranger said: "Go ahead, I'll wait," the words had such a familiar ring that he was sure he would be able to place the fellow right away. But now he was too tired to think about it. Relieved and tired—as though he had finished a tremendous job. After he repaired the pipe, he wasn't even sure he would find the stranger in the courtyard again. Maybe he had disappeared, like a phantom, just as he had appeared. But there he was, leaning quite comfortably with his long sinuous limbs against a crumpled wall and smoking. Again the stranger

* A special army division set up by the Nazis for political opponents. Assignment to it meant almost certain death. (*Translator's note*).

came right up to him, peered straight into his eyes, and drew him toward the street.

Evening came. The streets swarmed with people. Voices called out: Do you buy silver? herring? butter? —I'll exchange pillowcases for bread cards!—A girl for five cigarettes, I'll bring her here.—Here, let me open this can before your eyes. Convince yourself. It isn't sand, it's real corned beef!

The unknown acquaintance drew the young man now named Heinz toward the main square. "Let's get out of this crowd in a hurry. I guess the collapse hit you pretty hard. Say, you are Walter Retzlow, aren't you? My name's Berg. I visited you a couple of times with Riller, the officer who swore us in. Toward the very end you replaced Melzig, didn't you? You gave us the tip, and we combed through your outfit twice in a row. Remember?"

THE street hawkers gathered at corners in tiny knots. A whistle blew. It was their warning signal. Then, somewhat farther off, a police whistle sounded. This whistle froze the young man to the very marrow. At first the vendors melted away, then re-formed in little clusters on other street corners.

Berg continued: "That was just before the gates were shut. Then the last order was issued. You fellows were able to beat it, but we stayed to the end. Finally we had to mak a clean sweep in your place. Specia squad. But I'm still up and aroun as you see."

The main square appeared bleal and deserted. The farther they ad vanced, the more it seemed to extenc Two church spires hung by their tip in the evening sky. In the dusk th church fused with the devastate city. Heinz, in reality Retzlow, nov remembered everything. He remem bered Berg. His mind had formerl had such a clear image of Berg, al though he had scarcely spoken to hir in actual life, that when he agai met the real Berg, the latter seeme pale by comparison. In the railwa car just as they were pulling ou before hell really broke loose, the asked one another all sorts of ques tions: "How come these guys wer still with us? What were they doin in our outfit? . . . A fine mess. Three quarters of them foreign worker Poles and Russians. . . . Oh, yo ought to be glad you're not still wit them. . . . They're under fire nov too. . . . But maybe the foreigner got through. . . . Maybe, and mayb not! They got theirs—in a hurry!

The tracks were jammed wit trains. Their own train was com pletely hemmed in. They were cor stantly under fire. Jumping out c the car was senseless; staying in equally senseless. The soldier wh had said: "Maybe the foreigners g through," soon got his; and so di

the one who had said: "They got theirs—in a hurry!"

Four or five of them survived. Retzlow, now named Heinz, came to Berlin. He wanted to change his clothes at his mother's and find some place to hide. But the house was bombed out. He couldn't find out if she was still alive. At the sight of every Russian uniform he went cold. As if the army had entered the city in order to take revenge on him personally.

Now he realized how stupid he had been. Who could have found him out? How? In what way? He didn't even have any tattoo marks on his arm. He hadn't joined the S.S. until the last year of the war.

The war had burned itself out. But it was still smoking and smoldering over half the earth's surface. And thousands of cities lay in ruins. The earth ran red with blood. Worn-out armies marched over it, bands and hordes of refugees. Jails and concentration camps were torn open, and the liberated prisoners were homeward bound—to twenty, thirty countries. But the last period, which had made him most uneasy, was the one he had to worry about least. For they had no witnesses. He thought back: The instructions which Melzig left with me I had to pass on. Those were my orders. It was my duty. It wasn't my final instructions that made them clean out the outfit. Was I such a big shot? I was an assistant to the assistant. What did I do anyhow? Compared to Berg, practically nothing. Compared to all of them, ditto. So why should anyone have paid attention to me?

All at once he felt a lightness around his heart. But it did not make him any happier. Quite the contrary. The feeling of meaningless emptiness increased, as if by losing his fear he had also lost all equilibrium and was whirling about in space like a shrivelled leaf. He thought: how unimportant all this is. Why did I save myself? The Fuehrer is dead. The Reich has gone under. I'm going under too. In one way or another. . . .

BERG led him down a street. It was abandoned-looking but not demolished. The house to which he took him looked as if Time had ordered a halt to every other kind of destruction, saying: I, Time, am the only one here that can destroy. The tenants had not dared to break up the winding banisters and use them for firewood. Everything seemed dead. Not a sound. Not a light. Berg opened the door of an apartment. They walked down a long hall toward a hubbub of voices. They passed through a well-furnished apartment, brushing against vases and armchairs in the half-darkness. Then Berg opened a door.

The room was crowded and thick with smoke. All the faces turned toward them. Someone cried: "Wal-

ter!" At first the young man was unable to recognize the woman, who broke into tears when she saw him. Oh yes, Mrs. Mellner, his mother's best friend. Her upper lip is much too small;she often used to complain about it. The young thing over there was her daughter, married to his friend Helmut. She laughed when she spied him and started to pat him. —Well, look who else is here: Ahrendbeck himself! His commanding officer, before he was transferred to B. How thin Ahrendbeck was: he looked like a statue in a park. Aloof, aristocratic, and disgustingly bald.— There's Bergendorf too, and the von Briesens . . . I know that tall cheerful-looking fellow too, ah yes !It's Berg, who brought me here.

He gazed through the curtainless windows at mountains of ruins. Jagged clouds scudded low, like giant ocean waves breaking into surf. The two Mellners, mother and daughter, gathered around him: "You poor boy, how awful you look! We'll have to bathe you, comb your hair, and dress you up again from head to foot!"

They fondled him and prattled on: "Your mother's in Hannover. She's remarried. To Rewald, *your* Rewald. Yes indeed, she married him. His wife died. Your brother Gustav's gone—dead. Good heavens, didn't you know?"—He was silent. Rewald and his mother had often measured him to see if he wasn't tall enough to join the S.S. His brother Gustav, like Rewald, bore the S.S. blood-insignia tattooed on his arm. Every time it turned out that he wasn't tall enough yet, his mother was disappointed.

"Walter's back! This calls for a celebration!"

"Lotte dear, go get the wine."— "Yes, of course, what are you keeping that bottle of Mosel for?"

They clinked glasses and drank. He wondered: how can I get out of the room, through the hall, down the stairs, across the enormous square and back to my cellar? He had to depend on Berg, but Berg had no intention of leaving yet. He drank with Ahrendbeck. Ahrendbeck was saying: "So the last strip of land hadn't been taken yet. We held out another week. The Russians to the east of us, the Americans to the west. We hear that the Americans would still go together with us and march against the Russians. . . . But we went on arguing and fighting among ourselves; then both of them let loose on us at the same time."

The young man mused: I thought that all these people sitting around here were long since dead. Are maybe they are. Then why do the dead make so much noise?—They even began to sing. The old song which were now banned.

Then the door sprang open again: it was Helmut, his best friend, badaged on his head and shoulder. H

had escaped from the army hospital so as to be taken prisoner. The Mellner girl danced attendance on him; he paid no attention whatever to her. He just kept staring at Walter with anguished joy.

Helmut drew him into the next room. His eyes, unbandaged, gleamed in the darkness. He spoke in a monotone but with excitement, heedless of the fact that Walter remained silent: "You remember? In Van der Bruck's book? There was a passage there—we didn't just read it, ate it up. Remember where he wrote: even if it turns out that Germany goes under in a terrible war, its crash will be so overpowering, its downfall so terrific, that it will drag all men and all peoples with it into the abyss. That's what our country is like. Remember?"

Walter said nothing. For an instant he felt a sharp pain. As if he realized once again, in his unutterable emptiness, what he had lost. The Mellner girl stuck her head in the doorway. They went back into the lighted room, and Helmut said: "Some overpowering abyss, eh?—my mother-in-law's living room."

"HEINZ" finally left with Berg. But when he crept back into his cellar, the place to which he returned seemed just as disgusting as the place he had left.

He was glad he did not run into Berg the next few days. But one day Berg suddenly called him out into the courtyard: "We've got to get away quick—but not to the Mellners."

They rode out of Berlin. A little village on the Spree. They met Helmut in a bar. "The Russians have finished rebuilding the bridge we blew up before retreating. The first train is scheduled to cross it tomorrow. It won't cross. What we blew up, stays blown up. Two or our boys are in the work crew they hired to speed up the job. Early this morning von Briesen slipped through the guards, with the help of our two comrades. Now we're waiting for his signal."

"What'll we do then?" Walter asked.

"You'll find out," Helmut answered. "From now on, we're not going to operate in a disorganized way, each one on his own. Right now others are waiting, just like us, near a temporary bridge over the Havel. And others behind the Silesian Railway Station. Still others at the power plant. Our plan is beginning to work."

Berg listened silently, with a long serious face and laughing eyes. He seemed terribly amused about something or other.

The tavern was now crowded with people. They were changing shifts. The factory on the other bank was again working night and day. Suddenly a signal came from the bridge-

head. But not the one they expected. Through the cracked window panes, repaired with strips of paper, they saw many people running down the river bank. And in a downpour of rain. Berg said nothing. His eyes did not stop laughing. Helmut said: "Today it'll be the bridge. Tomorrow a power plant."

A few workers, soaking wet, dashed in and out of the bar.

Suddenly Berg got up. They stepped outside, under the projecting roof. A couple of trucks manned by Russian soldiers roared past. Then came a group of workers. Someone ran up to them: the workers pressed around the man to hear his story. Although "Heinz" couldn't make out a word, he felt something menacing in the calm tones of the explainer; and there was also something menacing, aimed straight at him, in the eyes of the workers, when he darted a quick glance at them. The rain poured down their faces and their features were distorted in the lurid light.

A couple of them savagely cursed the Russians and the rain. One shouted: "What the hell's wrong now? Why don't they leave us alone!"

Then they learned that the whole area was surrounded and a house-to-house search was on. They waited uneasily for their signal. Instead, they got a message that they had been betrayed. With great difficulty they managed to slip away. Their undertaking had ended miserably, befor it had begun.

AFTER that, the young man los all desire for ill-advised adven tures. He found himself more inte rested in putting together a sewing machine, out of stray wheels an screws that were fished out of th ruins. Was Berg involved in som enterprise that seemed a little les childish? At any rate, he had disap peared without a trace. The Mellner took for granted that the young ma had also moved to a different neigh borhood. Maybe they had their ow reasons for being careful. . . . Fo a while, then, no one came lookin for him. Nor did he have any desir to see his friends again. He had feeling of revulsion when he wen out on the street and then came bac to the courtyard and crawled int the cellar. The tinsmith Herma Mueller revolted him.

Then suddenly, on one of the blac market streets, he bumped into Berg The latter began:

"I've been looking for you fo several days. I must tell you some thing."

His eyes gleamed as he added "Helmut's dead. He shot himsel yes. . . ."

They stared at each other. All o a sudden the young man felt lik raising his fist and bashing in Berg bright blue eyes. He started to squa

off, but Berg had vanished in the crowd.

Heinz, as everyone now called him, returned to his courtyard. Where else could he go? He crouched down beside Herman Mueller in front of the soldering torch. Both men were equally mute and dour when they worked. They warmed up their soup, cut off a carefully marked-off piece of bread, and scraped a little corned beef out of a can.

Heinz had long pre-empted the right to dole out everything. So Mueller would hold out his spoon or the bread, or just stick out his tongue. He obeyed Heinz without any opposition. Now Heinz took all that was left of the corned beef and spread it on his slice of bread. Mueller lay down to sleep. Heinz remained squatting in front of the cold soldering torch. Rarely did the summer night penetrate their murky cellar; yet a few stars did shine inside, for the wall of the house opposite them had collapsed. Heinz thought: Helmut has shot himself. Why am I still alive? He did what had to be done. He obeyed the voice which ever called to us, from victory to victory, and now once again calls from the abyss. But nothing calls me any more. For me, everything is mute.

He recalled a story someone had told him as a child: it was about an elk—a strange animal, shy and proud. He escapes from his hunters and plunges into a lake. He prefers to die there rather than come out on the shore and be captured or killed.

This story had made a deep impression on him as a boy. He had often thought about it. Now too he thought of the story, but it left him cold. He was not an animal, neither strange, nor proud, nor shy. He was a man, and he did not want to die.

Translated from the German by JOSEPH M. BERNSTEIN

Letter

Editors, *M&M*:

I would like to comment briefly on Martha Millet's poem, "Mississippi," which appeared in the October number of *M&M*.

There is no question, of course, as to the deeply-felt horror at the sadistic lynching of young Till that Miss Millet felt and nobly sought to express. There are, however, some questions of content that are raised by this poem, which I would like to comment upon.

The poem, mistakenly, I think, treats Mississippi as one undifferentiated mass of backwardness and savagery. In the first place, at least half of the population of Mississippi is made up of Negro people, who are struggling with inspiring fortitude for liberation; that heroic struggle is certainly as much a part of Mississippi as are the abominable repressive activities of the state's present rulers. Secondly, of course, the white people of Mississippi never have represented and do not now represent one solid bloc of opinion or conduct. There are workers and tenant farmers and small farmers and petty businessmen and students and professionals, a well as bankers and large plantatio owners and jackals for the Wa Street lions, among the whites Mississippi. And many of thes whites understand that they are op pressed by the same forces and class which especially oppress the Negr masses; many of them now unde stand—and more of them will in th future understand—that their ow democratic fulfillment depends on th freedom of their Negro neighbors.

We must under no circumstanc simply consign Mississippi to rea tion; there is a mighty *struggle* goi on now in that state and there, everywhere in the world, that stru gle will be won by the masses, and will be hastened to the degree th unity among them is achieved.

The poem also ignores the fa that it is Big Business—and basicall *Northern* Big Business—which dom nates the economy of Mississippi a which is the real force behind t terror now raking its inhabitan This is why, fundamentally, the fe eral government keeps its hands and why both parties keep the

nouths shut in the face of atrocities nat have shocked the world.

Further, note should be taken of ne fact that there are clear signs of nounting opposition by white peole in Mississippi to the terror—this as come from clergymen, trade unonists, students; it has found expresion in letters to the press and in ublic statements, not least the reent speech by William Faulkner, f Mississippi, before a meeting of outhern historians. There are, also, ncreasing evidences of opposition oming from white people in other outhern states—not only such magificently developed and advanced outhern white fighters as a Junius cales and a Carl Braden, but from ank and file men and women, as nanifested in the demonstration by several thousand students of Georgia Tech.

Observe, again, that the Negro people in Mississippi, and outside it, have by no means consigned Mississippi to its worst elements and its worst enemies. They have decided to fight *for* Mississippi. This is epitomized in the activities of such a magnificent people's leader as Dr. T. R. M. Howard of Mound Bayou, who is fighting for Negro liberation and for the salvation of Mississippi—and the South, and our republic. Once again, as during the Civil War, it is literally true that the salvation of the whole Union is inextricably bound up with the full liberation of the Negro people.

HERBERT APTHEKER

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATIO
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SAMUEL SILLEN, Edi

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 13th day of October, 19

(Seal)

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(My commission expires March 30, 19