MASSES & MAINSTREAM

HISTORIANS ASK NEW QUESTIONS

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STEPHEN CRANE: A Critical Study

By M. SOLOMON

IMAGE OF AN ARTIST

By DALTON TRUMBO

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Historians Ask New Questions

By HERBERT APTHEKER

TWO thousand professional historians assembled in Washington at the Seventieth Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, December 28-30, 1955. Each morning eight working panels met; there were eight each afternoon. I was able to be present at only two of these on any given day, and so could get a first-hand knowledge of but a fraction of the proceedings. Yet by inquiry amongst others I am confident that the panels I myself attended were representative of the temper and the outlook of the Meeting as a whole.

That temper and outlook was distinctly liberal and forward-looking. This meeting demonstrated what is true generally in our country—we are witnessing a definite turn away from the "New Conservatism." There is still a self-consciousness about it; one senses that the members were looking over their shoulders for any possible sign of the junior senator from Wisconsin. But he was not there and the vast majority of these teachers and writers rejoiced at that.

The papers read and the discussion from the floor added up to a repudiation of witch-hunting; to a minimum of Red-baiting; to an assumed dedication to the Bill of Rights; to a distaste for the obscurantist, idealist and mystical schools of history-writing; to a repudiation of Big-Business and isolationist revisionism; and, on a particularly pronounced level, a rejection of racism and specifically, white-supremacist history-writing.

Unlike some of the recent Annual Meetings of the Association, this one did not give the appearance of a joint conference of the lower echelons of the Pentagon, the State Department, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Society of Military Historians, and the Society of Business Historians had no panels at all. When, apropos of a discussion of Pearl Harbor, a Rear-Admiral in the audience rather belligerently lamented the alleged neglect of military history, one of the panelists, Mr. Herbert Feis, replied that Rear-Admirals would do well, when they wrote their memoirs, to pay more attention to the requirements of objective scholarship; another, Mr. James

Russell Wiggins, executive editor of the *Washington Post and Times Herald,* commented that wars were so serious that their histories should not be left to generals and admirals.

THERE were, certainly, from my point of view, distinct limitations even to the finest papers presented. All were rather abstract, tending to treat particular subjects in a mechanical and largely descriptive manner. All ignored or minimized the decisive contributions of the masses themselves in the making of history. The logic of the papers was invariably formal, with the reporters seeing discrete "forces" or "factors" or personalities rather than interpenetrating processes and social struggles.

In a panel devoted to the periods of the Revolution and the Confederation, the paper by Professor Merrill Jensen of the University of Wisconsin was characterized by a thorough and conscientious presentation of the various schools of thought (except the Marxist) as to the origins of the Revolution. But since these schools are characterized by the eclectic or ecclesiastical or agnostic approach and since Mr. Jensen concluded his remarks by announcing that he saw truth in all of them, one was left with a rather disjointed and unsatisfying compendium.

This made particularly appropriate an illuminating story told at that panel by the venerable Professor Frank Malloy Anderson. He informed us that shortly before the death of Charles A. Beard he had received a letter from him, which contained in the margin a well-drawn likeness of the letter's author, and then an arrow connecting the drawing with this description: "A Puzzled Man."

The Confederation period was reported on by Professor Richard B. Morris of Columbia University. Mr. Morris, as a continuation of his efforts to take revolution out of the American Revolution, was recommending that the Confederation period and its culmination in the Constitution be construed not in terms of varying class interests, but rather in terms of "particularists versus nationalists." On this ground he found the Federalists to be the ones really seeking change, and therefore the real radicals, with the anti-Federalists the conservatives.

This is not the place to comment at any length on the viewpoint of Mr. Morris, but this much may be said. Mr. Morris insists that the radical is one who seeks deep-going change, but his definition lacks substance. The basic criterion of the radical, in the 18th century and in the 20th century, too, is the attitude towards property ownership and towards the relationship between state power and wealth. It was indeed the

extreme Right in the post-revolutionary period which wanted the sharpest change—it wanted a monarchical and aristocratic society. But history writing so far, when it deals with both the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary eras, tends to ignore the existence of a Right, even more than that of a Left, and so misrepresents, I think, much of the crucial nature of American history from about 1765 through the administrations of Jefferson.

Again, in another panel, the rise of reactionary thinking in the United States in the 1890's was discussed without reference to the appearance of imperialism. Two hours were devoted to a consideration of "American Thought in the Nineteen Twenties," during which Coolidge "prosperity" was considered, and so were certain of the ideas of Dewey and Beard, Mencken and Paul E. More, etc. But there was not a word about the fundaments of American history in that decade—there was apparently no labor movement, no Negro people, no battle for women's suffrage, no Left, no Sacco-Vanzetti case, no Latin-American interventions, and no Soviet Union. Thus, of course, nothing concerning the enormous impact all this had on "American Thought" was even considered.

WHILE offering some critical notes on the Meeting, it is necessary to include, in a quite separate category, Mr. Bertram Wolfe's tirade, entitled "Political Context of the 'New Course,'" offered in the panel on "The USSR Since Stalin." The panel as a whole was exceedingly weak, but there were some pretensions towards objectivity and scholarship in the remarks on agriculture offered by Mr. Granick of Fisk University and on foreign policy by Mr. Hammond of the University of Virginia. Mr. Wolfe, however, filled to the full his professional role as arch-enemy of the socialist Soviet Union. His paper presented the leadership of the USSR from Lenin to Bulganin as made up of depraved and sadistic gangsters, who lived by waging war upon their own people and the people of the world. The political point of his presentation was to warn against Geneva—to demean it, to deny it significance, to insist on the unmitigated devilishness of Communism and the necessity not for coexistence but for extermination.

Without any doubt this was the low point of the Meeting, but the response to it from the four or five hundred members was a touchstone of the change that has taken place in our country during the past several months. On no single question has reaction made a greater impact upon the American public than in its slanders against the USSR, and I would be mis-reporting if I de-

scribed the response to Mr. Wolfe as one of hostility. It was not hostile; the tragedy is that when Mr. Wolfe finished he received a respectable amount of applause, and while he spoke many of his carefully rehearsed witticisms and "asides" did bring appropriate responses.

Nevertheless, the fact is that every one of the perhaps dozen people who took the floor after Mr. Wolfe, made remarks which were overtly contrary to or at least doubtful of, the content of his speech. Thus, one professor from Cornell introduced his comments by saying: "I was in Moscow and in Leningrad for three weeks in September, 1955." The audience—and Mr. Wolfe—hung on his next words and the gist of them was that he had found conditions to be very much better than he had been led to expect. He had found advanced, clean, well-equipped modern cities with their inhabitants busy and optimistic and healthy and well-dressed; and as compared with conditions in 1939, when he had been there last, there had been enormous improvement, despite the setback suffered because of the Hitler attack. This professor referred directly to Mr. Wolfe's remarks about the prevalence of "fear" in Russia; true, he said, he had been in only two cities and for only a short time, but he had spoken to hundreds of plain ordinary citizens and had observed thousands and far from seeing fear he had seen a strong and a self-confident people.

When this individual sat down, Mr. Wolfe took the microphone again and, ignoring altogether his remarks about living conditions in the USSR, said that when he had referred to "fear" in Russia he had not had in mind the people—these, he said, were objects, not subjects in Soviet politics—but rather the leadership; the leadership, he "explained," lived in constant fear of one another, and this is what he had had in mind. It would have been better for Mr. Wolfe, in terms of his rapport with the audience, if he had offered no explanation rather than this manifestly ludicrous and deceitful one.

Another speaker, from City College in New York, was of the opinion that the panelists had very much oversimplified the state of affairs in the Soviet Union and that the great advances made in that country and its great appeal elsewhere, notably in Asia, could not be understood in terms of the picture that they had presented.

Still another speaker, from the New School for Social Research in New York, took a somewhat oblique method of looking askance at Mr. Wolfe's contribution. He offered the opinion that American foreign policy and American propaganda needed great improvement and an infinitely

more imaginative approach; he thought that in the sphere of world public opinion the USSR was getting much the better of the United States.

A teacher from Long Island University spoke for perhaps a minute and his point was that there was no blinking the fact that a new society had arisen in the USSR and that it was one which had, apparently, a large degree of support from all elements of its population.

A professor from Columbia University began his remarks by paying tribute to the "brilliant and provocative" analysis of Mr. Wolfe and then went on to attack it, in fact, by saying that that analysis had ignored the people of the Soviet Union and that no discussion of Soviet politics was realistic which did that. A member of the Colgate faculty did very much the same thing—Mr. Wolfe's paper was brilliant and was this and was that, but it missed the point because it had ignored the Soviet people.

Perhaps most impressive was the fact that the commentator for this session, Professor Lobanov-Rostovsky of the University of Michigan, took direct issue with Wolfe's paper. Once again this was done very politely, but it was also done very plainly.

THIS professor, manifestly hostile to the Soviet Union, nevertheless made three points, which threw Wolfe's analysis into a cocked hat. He said first of all that it was a fact that the USSR had never conducted an aggressive war (with the possible exception of the war with Finland, he added, but even there, he said, the charge of aggression was far from proven). The USSR furthermore did not plan to start an aggressive war in the future; it did not operate that way, but rather, he held, by internal subversion. Second, he said that Wolfe's analysis of the leading personalities in the Soviet Union was "spectacular" but rather irrelevant in terms of understanding that country. What was important about the politics of that country, said the professor, was the manifest fact that the people supported the government.

Further, he continued, it is not too important as to how this was done—what diabolic means had been employed, etc.—the point is that the government was supported by the Soviet masses, and this was the basic source of the great strength of that government. And, finally, said Lobanov-Rostovsky, the fact also is that the Soviet government is leading a viable society; in the USSR they have built the first plant to employ atomic energy for peaceful purposes, they have built huge hydroelectric installations, they can build dams for Egypt and steel-mills for India, and this represents a great change in

terms of the Russia of the past and it is at the heart of any realistic appraisal of the Russia of today.

Mr. Wolfe, somewhat later in the program, attempted a reply to "his dear friend, Professor Lobanov-Rostovsky." He then stated that the professor was a good and decent man and so was unable to comprehend the truly monstrous character of the rulers of Russia; that he did not understand that those monsters did things that appeared to good people to be completely unreasonable but that they did them; that they had killed most of the engineers and most of the generals and most of the intellectuals. . . . At this point the Professor interrupted and called out: "That is not what I said; I did not discuss such things." Wolfe broke in, waving his hands: "Short-hand, short-hand, short-hand." The professor shrugged his shoulders and subsided and Mr. Wolfe continued with his "shorthand" repetition of his earlier tirade, concentrating again most particularly on the "farce of Geneva" and on the necessity to wake up fully from the daydreams that Geneva meant anything at all hopeful.

The audience did not like this part of Mr. Wolfe's act at all, and knew as well as the professor from Michigan that Mr. Wolfe may have been speaking short-hand, but his notes had no connection with Lobanov-Rostovsky's remarks.

The four or five hundred American professors at this panel on the USSR were not satisfied with Mr. Wolfe. It was clear that they felt his description did not fit reality—even as they saw reality—and did not explain what was manifestly happening both in the Soviet Union and in so much of the rest of the world. They were not hostile to Wolfe; they were almost indifferent. They had heard all that before a thousand times, but it did not answer the questions that they had raised and that the Michigan professor had stressed. They were uncertain; they wanted to know and they were ready to listen to some reasonable explanation of the strength and the appeal of the Soviet Union—this is a marked change and improvement as compared with but three or four years ago.

A VERY significant panel was conducted under the rather innocuous title, "The Use and Misuse of Historical Evidence." This was attended by perhaps eight or nine hundred people and was effectively chaired by Professor W. Stull Holt of the University of Washington. At it, two main papers were presented—the first by Professor Richard N. Current, head of the history department at Woman's College, of the University of North

Carolina, dealt with Lincoln and the attack upon Fort Sumter; the second by Herbert Feis, author of several studies of American diplomatic history, including *The Road to Pearl Harbor* (1950), dealt with Roosevelt and the attack upon Pearl Harbor.

To appreciate the significance of these papers it is necessary to realize that reactionary historians have attempted to demonstrate in the recent past that Abraham Lincoln was responsible for precipitating the Civil War by deliberately provoking the Confederacy into attacking Fort Sumter; and that F. D. R. was responsible for bringing the United States into World War II by maliciously inciting the Japanese to launch their attack upon Pearl Harbor, at the same time as he sabotaged the effective defense of that bastion in order to make the impact of the attack so great that the American people would eagerly support such a war. In the first case the historians functioned in terms of excusing chattel slavery and justifying the counter-revolutionary effort of the plantation oligarchs; in the second they ignored the reality of fascism, denied its aggressiveness and sought to justify a McCarthyite Republicanism.

Both papers represented persuasive, objective refutations of the revisionist viewpoints and the scholars more or less explicitly rejected the reactionary political motivations which were behind these revisions (to a more or less conscious degree, varying with individual revisionists). Mr. Feis, moreover, ended his paper with an eloquent plea for the elimination of wars in the future as the best insurance against new Pearl Harbors.

The panel commentator was the already mentioned executive editor of the *Washington Post and Times Herald,* Mr. James Russell Wiggins. This gentleman agreed vigorously with the viewpoints of his colleagues and added additional documentation, especially relative to the Fort Sumter attack, of great interest and value. Turning from this to a general consideration of the question of historical evidence, Mr. Wiggins moved the audience by a passionate call for the ending of severe government restrictions on the accessibility of news. He vigorously protested against the widespread use of classification by government agencies to keep news from the public and he denounced the government's policy of picking what to release and when to release what it desired. He said there was much too much secrecy in government and that this was reaching the point of undermining freedom of the press and indeed the freedom of the average American citizen. To rousing applause, he concluded his remarks by asking the historians to join in a demand for

the elimination of such restrictive practices.

In discussion from the floor no one spoke in favor of the revisionist viewpoints; on the contrary several scholars arose to bring forward additional confirmatory evidence of the untenable nature of those viewpoints.

I have already mentioned something of the panel on "American Thought in the Twenties" and have indicated my disappointment in it. Yet, as I have shown, its failings were mostly of omission and serious omission: it is necessary to add that except for the rather mystical and Freudian comments of Professor F. J. Hoffman of the University of Wisconsin, the papers and the discussion here (with the gathering chaired by Professor Commager) were distinctly liberal in content and tone.

BUT the most strikingly healthy aspect of the entire Meeting was its attitude towards racism and white supremacy. On this score the Seventieth Annual convening of the American Historical Association itself made history.

There were two panels devoted directly to this subject matter—itself an innovation. And at each of these panels, one of the two main papers was presented by a Negro scholar—a further advance on the part of the Association.

One of these, held under the direct auspices of the Southern Historical Association, was entitled "The Southerner as an Historian." Its chairman was Professor James W. Patton of the University of North Carolina, the commentator was Professor James W. Silver of the University of Mississippi, while the two papers were read by Professor John Hope Franklin of Howard University (author, among other books, of the exceedingly valuable *From Slavery to Freedom*) and Professor George B. Tindall of Louisiana State University, who recently published an illuminating history of the Negro people in South Carolina during the post-Reconstruction era.

Mr. Franklin's paper was devoted to the theme, "The South Looks at its History." He traced with great expertness and quiet humor the nature of the dominant historiography produced in the past century by white Southern historians. Without *ad hominem* arguments and with marked restraint he showed that, whatever may have been the individual motivation or the subjective intent, their books had suffered a fatal defect and that that defect was white supremacist thinking. He ended by calling attention to the more hopeful productions of such white southern historians as Bell Wiley, C. Vann Woodward, and Mr. Tindall and insisted that only by a

conscious effort to overcome the anti-scientific racist approach could accurate history, and notably, accurate southern history, be produced.

Mr. Tindall entitled his paper "The Central Theme Revisited," and he chose his title because the hitherto-standard historian of the South—the late Professor Ulrich Bonnell Phillips—had declared that the effort to maintain the supremacy of the white people (with which effort Mr. Phillips associated himself and to which he was himself no small contributor) was "the central theme of southern history." Mr. Tindall did not challenge this head-on, and did not bring forth the contrary concept of the struggle of the masses in the South—Negro and white—to overcome the domination and the exploitation of the Bourbons, which is the central theme of Southern history. Nor did Mr. Tindall demonstrate the relationship between the "central theme," even as expressed by Phillips, and the development of capitalism and imperialism in this country, without which it is not possible to understand Southern or any other aspect of American history.

But Mr. Tindall did insist that in the consciousness of the white southerner the principles and the ideas of the Declaration of Independence were deeply and immutably planted. He did say, too, that the principles of Christ were also in that consciousness and that these complementary principles were in direct conflict with the ideas and the practices of white supremacy. He traced something of this conflict in the history of his South and he made quite clear his commitment on the side of democracy. He put forth the perspective of the liquidation of Mr. Phillips' central theme and thought that with the real implementation of the principles of the Declaration of Independence, racism would be removed from the political life of the South, and—the implication was unmistakable—good riddance.

Professor Silver then commented on the two papers. He declared his general agreement with the views expressed by Messrs. Franklin and Tindall, though he did say that they were both perhaps excessively ardent and impatient. But the essence of his fascinating talk was as anti-white supremacist as anything anyone up to that point had said. He warned that the Citizens' Council in his own state—made up of the "respectability"—meant business and would fight hard to keep segregation, though he reported that they knew that they were fighting in a lost cause.

He stated that the low-income white was victimized by racism only less than the Negro, and he agreed with Mr. Tindall that racism was on its way out even in his state. Most

hopeful, he said, were the younger people; they were largely "immune to the hysterical cries of a befuddled older generation." He referred to a "reign of terror" in his home state—he mentioned especially Holmes County—and there was no question at all that Mr. Silver, too, passionately wanted democracy for his Mississippi.

Truly remarkable was the response from the attending members. Six or seven white professors arose, identified themselves and stated their affiliations with some Virginia or Georgia or Mississippi school, and stood forth without equivocation for the end of school segregation in the south. All of them spoke in the warmest terms of the papers and made clear their growing awareness of the dangers and the evils of white supremacist thinking.

A gentleman from Mississippi spoke passionately of the bad name being given his state by its "false leadership," and declared that this was hurting all the people of his home area. He made the point that there was growing opposition to segregation at home, especially among the youth, the women and the ministers. Another gentleman, who had been teaching in a southern college for over twenty years, hailed the revolution in historical thinking that was indicated in the papers he had that day heard, and paid warm tribute in particular to the scholarship of Negro teachers, such as Mr. Franklin.

A man arose, identified himself as from Georgia, and confirmed the fact that the youth and the women were ahead of the rest of the white population in their hostility to the worst aspects of racism. He said he could sum up the essence of this morning's panel by quoting the speech made by a student at Georgia Tech and directed to the Governor of that state—it was a long speech for a Georgia Tech man, he said—"Governor grow up."

At this point a teacher arose to ask whether it might not be well for the American Historical Association itself to really grow up. He meant, he went on, that in its seventy years of existence, it had never had a Negro office-holder or a Negro member of its Executive Council. There was warm applause. Then one of the elder statesmen of the Association, and a member of its Council, Professor Solon J. Buck, took the floor to say that the Association did not appoint its officers on the basis of race or of sex—we had had two women on the Executive Council, he said, apparently thinking he was thereby confirming lack of prejudice! It was just a question of scholarship and it was on this basis alone that officers should be or would be elected. Mr. Buck was here, of course, manifesting his own ignorance and his

own chauvinism, which helps explain his colossal discourtesy—for he had "forgotten" Carter G. Woodson, Charles H. Wesley, Horace M. Bond, Luther P. Jackson, Alrutheus A. Taylor, Rayford W. Logan—not to speak of the dean of American historical scholars, W. E. B. Du Bois. Nevertheless it is clear from this panel alone that the American Historical Association is itself on the way to growing up and that its membership, if not its present officers, is ready to welcome to their rightful place of leadership several distinguished Negro scholars.

ON THE last afternoon of the Meeting a panel was devoted to "Segregation and American Life," under the chairmanship of Professor C. Vann Woodward of Johns Hopkins University, whose studies of the post-Civil War South constitute a major contribution to historiography. The main papers were presented by Professor Alfred H. Kelly of Wayne University in Detroit, perhaps best known as joint author of the recent study of *The American Constitution,* and Professor Ulysses G. Lee of Lincoln University in Springfield, Missouri, distinguished literary critic and historian and one of the editors of the monumental anthology, *The Negro Caravan.* Mr. Kelly's paper concerned itself with an examination of the intent of the drafters of the Fourteenth Amendment; Mr. Lee offered a case study of mass violence directed against the Negro people by examining the details and the larger meaning of the Springfield, Illinois riot of 1908.

Mr. Kelly, after a careful and scrupulous examination of all the relevant data, found that without any question the essential intent of the drafters of the Fourteenth Amendment was to end segregation in all public institutions and facilities in the United States. He showed that the purpose of the old-time Abolitionist fighters like John A. Bingham of Ohio and the great Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, who were responsible for drafting the Amendment and securing its passage, was "to write the anti-slavery ideology into the U.S. Constitution," and Professor Kelly did not fail to point out that recent decisions of the Supreme Court were serving to vindicate their purpose. This, of course, is of great consequence at the present moment, for Professor Kelly's finding effectively refutes, from the viewpoint of history, the Dixiecrat's insistence that the abolition of segregation is contrary to the spirit and the letter of our Constitution.

Professor Lee, in a paper notable for exquisite style, traced the historical setting of the terrible Springfield riot, exposed the typically false charges that sparked the outbreak,

and explained the catalytic effect of the outbreak in bringing together the national forces that, in 1909, founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. As in Mr. Kelly's paper, the relevance of this story to the present in terms of the organized violence now being visited upon the Negro people and the mounting resistance to it, was vividly sketched by the reporter.

Again the discussion from the crowded floor took the form of additional confirmatory evidence or sympathetic questioning. Once more if white-supremacist apologists were present they kept discreetly silent. The whole impact of the panel was in the direction of emphasizing the need for cleansing American history-writing of the evil effects of generations of its domination by racism.

The Seventieth Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association brought together, with rare exceptions, very serious and conscientious and democratic-minded teachers and writers. It was very informative and very encouraging. It reemphasizes the magnificent opportunities now present to defeat reaction and advance the democratic interests of our country.

Image of an Artist

By DALTON TRUMBO

A testimonial dinner honoring John Howard Lawson, playwright, critic, and screen writer, was held in Los Angeles on November 12, 1955. *Hailing Lawson's great contributions to progressive culture on his* 61*st birthday were hundreds of persons, including many prominent artists and writers. Greetings from all over the world from leading artists, including Charles Chaplin, David Siqueiros, Paul Robeson, Mao Tun, Sergei Gerasimov, Witter Bynner, Walter Pritchard Eaton, Jack Lindsay, Dorothy Brewster, Jorge Amado and many others were read.* Masses & Mainstream *proudly joins, of course, in this tribute to one of America's leading cultural figures and to one of its contributing editors. The following speech was delivered by Dalton Trumbo, noted novelist and screen writer. Its beautiful words speak for us and for Jack Lawson's friends everywhere.* —The Editors.

I WANT to tell you something about Jack Lawson as a convict: how one night, handcuffed, he was led through crowds in the Washington station and placed in a compartment of the B. and O. Railway bound for Kentucky; how four armed deputies accompanied him, one occupying the compartment to the right of his, one the compartment to the left, while the remaining two put him in an upper birth, shackled his ankles, and remained with him throughout the journey; how at length he arrived at the federal penitentiary in Ashland, Kentucky—a man of fifty-six, the father of grown children, the first president of the Screen Writers' Guild, a writer known throughout the world—to be stripped, showered, examined in every orifice, photographed, numbered, clothed, quarantined and finally, thirty days later, assigned to a cot in a dormitory containing a hundred and nineteen other prisoners. Twenty-four inches from Jack's cot was mine. There we remained for ten months.

The men in our prison were mainly from the south—bank tellers who had been unable to support families on two hundred dollars a month; young men who had yielded too impulsively to that desire for a new automobile which torments most of us in one way or another; small

farmers from the mountain country who had not been able to support families on worn-out acreage, and who therefore had resorted to the old American custom of converting their grain into whisky and selling the product of their land and labor directly to the consumer, thus avoiding a federal tax which they consider an affront to the rights of a free citizenry.

Every night after supper Jack and I retired to our cots, hungry in a way that only convicts can understand for the small luxury of privacy and reading. And every night Jack's cot was surrounded by his fellow prisoners. They were there because they wanted to talk to him, because they felt in him a sympathy which impelled them endlessly to tell him of their troubles, of themselves, of their families, of their hopes.

Among those who made Jack their confidant was a tall, thin, tired-faced Tennessee farmer named Cecil. His last name I shall invent. Let us call him Cecil Spenser, for it was that kind of name. An old English name that had survived high in the Tennessee hills for almost three centuries among a people who still reveal in their speech overtones of Elizabethan England and the language of Shakespeare. A people who call low shoes "slippers"; who say of a policeman that "he wouldn't take pitysake on me"; of a hill that it is "steep as a horse's face"; of a horse that "he'll pull like a bulldog pup to a rawhide." If you buy a horse that has been so described, and find it balky or inclined to back up against the whiffletree instead of moving forward as a proper horse should, the courts will give you no redress, for you were fairly warned.

CECIL SPENSER, scion of pioneers, was unable either to read or write. He was thirty-nine years old, but his face was that of a man of sixty. It was a sad face, almost a timid one, with eyes that seemed full of forgiveness.

There had been much in his life to forgive. He was the father of seven children, the oldest of whom was a boy of eighteen. For the support of this family Cecil and his wife had slaved all the good years of their lives trying to wrest a living from seven acres of thin and rocky Tennessee hillside. In 1933, when the family was young and very hungry and there had been no food and no money, Cecil Spenser made up two barrels of whisky, and sold it, and was caught and sentenced to a year in the federal penitentiary.

His wife was deeply religious, and Cecil himself was passably so, and the disgrace of prison made a tragic impression upon both of them.

When he was released, Cecil resolved never again to get into trouble. The years passed, and the family increased, and the income did not increase in proportion, and so it chanced that in 1949 Cecil Spenser once more distilled a few kegs of whisky, and once more was apprehended and given eighteen months in prison. It was at this point in his life, lost and lonely, worried about a family that verged on actual starvation, a two-time loser greatly fearing denial of parole, that Cecil Spenser became one of the men who sought out Jack Lawson's cot.

Illiteracy is so common in federal prisons that the inmates' correspondence forms have a special line to be filled out by each prisoner who writes a letter for his illiterate friends. Jack quickly became the man who wrote Cecil's letters, and read to him the letters he received. Being all the while only two feet away, it was impossible for me not to hear Jack's voice reading to Cecil the letters he received from his wife, and then discussing with Cecil what reply ought to be made, and then reading back the answering letter that would go forth from the prison.

THE letters from Cecil's wife, as innocent of grammar as of orthography, necessarily brief since writing was so painful a task, chronicled an endless sequence of small, desperate woes. I can still hear Jack's voice reading them, pausing now and again to decipher the next word:

The twins had been sick. She was worried about Harling's britches, they was full of holes. Buck had helped them get in a little firewood. They were going over to Uncle Ned's to dig taters, they hoped to get two sacks for themselves. Hamish, the oldest boy, had been called by his draft board, and she wanted him to get deferment, but Hamish didn't want deferment, she was worried, she needed him so, and he didn't seem to want to stay on the farm. There was a revival going on, a wonderful preacher, and she went every Sunday. She sure hoped Cecil would make parole. . . .

And then Jack would ask Cecil what he wanted to write in answer. Cecil, who had listened with far-away eyes to the news from home, nodding his head gently as if in agreement or understanding, couldn't think of much to write. "Tell her I go to school here, but I don't learn my letters too good. Tell her I work on the farm, the hogs look fine, we butchered six. Tell her to go to Reverend Johnson about getting Hamish to stay out of the army, he ought to know better. Tell her I went to church Sunday. Tell her I sure do hope I make parole."

Jack would take this information and expand it into a full page of

simple and interesting news. At the end of the letters he always wrote "Love, Cecil"—something Cecil himself apparently never thought of.

Presently the wife was signing her letters "with love" also. And so it went—month after month of family history, of want and suffering and hard work and illness and prayers and hopes for parole, until Jack, I felt sure, knew each member of that family so thoroughly he would have recognized them at sight.

THEN came a particularly distressing letter from the wife. She was sick, didn't know what it was from. Then a period of silence. And then: "I'm up and around now but I sure do feel weak. The county took out all my teeth and my gums is sure sore. Sometimes I almost can't lift a stick of firewood. I don't know how I can get any new teeth because the county don't give them to you. I sure hope you make parole. You won't like me when you see me. I look awful old and ugly without my teeth."

Jack wrote back, in the name of Cecil Spenser, words which I can't precisely remember, but which conveyed this general message: "Don't you worry about your teeth. When I married you I didn't care one way or the other about your teeth. I didn't even give them a thought. I married you because you were you. I don't care about your teeth now, either. It isn't because of your teeth that you're pretty, it's because you're just naturally pretty and always will be. And you'll still be pretty when I make parole. I love you, Cecil."

The reply to that letter, halting and illiterate and almost incoherent, was the message of a young girl to her lover. It sang with love for Cecil, a kind of tender and passionate love that I'm sure is bestowed upon few men in this world. And that buoyant sense of love which before Jack had not once been mentioned in their brief, painful letters to each other, continued on a rising note until Cecil finally made parole—his letter of application having been written by Jack—and went back to Tennessee and his wife.

You see, Jack is an artist, and he was using his art in behalf of Cecil Spenser and his wife as he has always used it—to communicate that which people are unable to communicate for themselves. By his art he had changed a broken, humiliated convict into a youthful lover; he had transformed a tired, toothless, middle-aged mother of seven into a young bride, beautiful forever in the eyes of her beloved.

Do you wonder that I cherish Jack Lawson as an artist, and that I am so proud to be his friend?

Interview with
DAVID OISTRAKH

By MILTON HOWARD

A HALF dozen or so violins lay on the couch in the hotel room where we walked in to greet David Oistrakh, Soviet violinist. They were Strads, Amatis, a Guarnerius, the gleaming queens from the best collections in the United States. Ricardo Odnopossoff, Russian-born violinist, was running his fingers up and down the fingerboard of one of these beauties, and the room rang with the lovely sound.

Here standing before us was Oistrakh himself, about five feet-four in height, on the plumpish side. His rather deeply set brown eyes are warm, friendly, his face quite composed and tranquil. He stretched forth his hand to us as the introductions were made in Russian through an interpreter. His handclasp is vigorous as his speech is direct and simple. He looked tired. In explanation of some of the difficulties we had had in finally arranging our meeting, he said that he had hardly a moment to himself during the past week (this was a few days before he left on January 7).

"I have seen many people," he said. "Yesterday, I recorded four concertos for Victor in a single day, and you know what that means. I must record the Shostakovich tomorrow morning, and I have had much work to do. I have even broken promises to see people," he concluded ruefully with a charming smile.

We seated ourselves around him as he relaxed back into the soft cushion of the sofa. He folded his hands before him and prepared to meet our questions.

"We are grateful to you, Mr. Oistrakh," one of our small group said, "for letting us come to see you. Perhaps, later we can ask you your impressions as journalists are supposed to do. But now in the short time that we have we would like to talk about violin-playing with you, for even in the short time that you have

been here playing for our American public you have created an extraordinary impression on the musical public, and, if we may say so, you have brought a new surge of vigor into the field of violin playing, a new excitement and interest among the violinists themselves."

As our friend Paul Novick, editor of the daily paper, *Freiheit,* quickly turned all this into Russian, Oistrakh cocked his head toward him, his face breaking into a happy smile.

"Talk about violins and violin playing? That is for me the greatest pleasure. It is my work. It interests me above everything else."

"WELL then, for a starter," one of us said, "what influence would you say the violin schools of the Belgian, French and Italian players have had on the Russian violinists? How do your violinists consider figures like Eugene Ysaye, the Belgian, Fritz Kreisler?"

Oistrakh was intent now. We were happy to see some of the fatigue fade from his face as he began to reply.

"Let me begin," he said, "by saying that we Russian violinists have a deep appreciation and knowledge of the great violinistic schools. Ysaye was great, and for us Kreisler is the god of violinists. But it is not known enough perhaps that the Russian school has long traditions of its own. This school, contrary to some impressions, goes back far beyond the work of Leopold Auer, the teacher of Heifetz, Elman and many other such players.

"For example, Count Lvov, who composed the hymn which was the national anthem for almost a century was a leading violinist who made a tremendous impression when he played at the Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts. Robert Schumann wrote at that time 'If this is what Russian violin playing is like, we had all better go to Russia to learn how to play the violin.' And there were many others."

"As for influences," he continued, "naturally these schools learn from and affect each other. There has been a mutual enrichment by contact between our great players and those of other countries and styles. And this will go on, of course.

"For example, the great violinist Joachim's influence was felt among our violinists, and the Czech master, Hrimaly, taught in our conservatories. But Auer cannot be considered of the school of Joachim. Auer had close ties with Tchaikowsky, Balakirev, Glazunov, and other Russian composers, and his playing and outlook showed it.

"We are linked of course to the great schools of the 18th and 19th centuries which we have studied. The Belgian and French schools placed

a greater emphasis on the right arm, on the expressive power that can come from the bow. As for us, we strive to approach the dynamics and flexibility of the human voice, and for this we rely on the vibrato and the right arm together."

"Would you explain this," one of our group asked.

Oistrakh continued:

"In the music, no two notes should not be connected in some way. This can be done through dynamics, shading or legato. There should be dynamics, change of sound however small, in all the phrases. No passage, however small, should be without this feeling of dynamics, of expression. The closer the technique approaches this, the closer it will be to the expressive powers of the human voice."

THE American musical public which has heard Oistrakh play knows to what astonishing lengths he has embodied this concept of the art of the violin. He brings forth from the small wooden box, with the help of catgut and horsehair and bow stick, a sound of ringing fullness, searching, deep and eloquent. This tone is at the disposal of a fabulous bowing arm which commands a flowing, unbroken legato of enormous power and nobility.

This playing recalls the grandeur of Ysaye for whom the violin was the instrument for the expression of the deepest feelings of life. Oistrakh's stunning performances have added something of great vitality to the cause of the violinist's art. He has close friendly ties with such masters as Elman, Stern, Menuhin, Zimbalist, Francescatti, Heifetz and Kreisler. The latter's name came into the conversation. The aged master now lives in New York City, invalided, but still Kreisler, and his name brought a light of pride and joy to Oistrakh's candid face.

"He came to every one of my concerts," he said, "and came backstage to tell me how my playing pleased him."

We all knew what these simple words meant, for Kreisler was the genius of the violin who brought so much to it and enlarged the human depth of its voice and accents in an incomparable way (there was the lilt of the popular dance, the waltz, the sweep of the gypsy style in the village inns, the ardors of passionate love, and the impress of a tranquil and noble intellect). To win Kreisler's accolade was to win what every violinist in the world would give everything to have.

"Wait," Oistrakh said quietly as he arose from his seat. He went into the other room and brought back with him a photo. It was Kreisler's. Written on it in a firm, strong hand was the following: "To David Oistrakh, the great violinist, in pro-

found admiration from another fellow-violinist. Fritz Kreisler, December 22, 1955." What a world of meaning, of violinistic and musical history, there was in these generous words. Kreisler had heard Joachim, the nineteenth century giant. He had played chamber music with the towering Ysaye, the subtle Jacques Thibaud and the flawless Pablo Casals.

IT WAS to the mastery of Kreisler that the flaming young Heifetz, the youthful genius, had aspired. The fiddle has no secrets from Kreisler, and here he was giving his "profound admiration" to "the great violinist, David Oistrakh," signing himself in humility as a "fellow-violinist." We were deeply stirred. Oistrakh made no bones about his attitude to Kreisler. "He is the god of violin playing," he repeated. Two masters were greeting each other at the summit of art.

Oistrakh told us he was going to record the marvelous Viotti Concerto No. 22 in A Minor. What cadenza will you use, came the question from us. Kreisler had made this concerto virtually his own in the early '20's when he introduced it to the American public in a flawless style of Italian song, with a cantilena that spun its beauty and held us spellbound. Kreisler's cadenza to this music is famous, as wonderful in its way as his cadenza to the Beethoven Concerto. Oistrakh's eagerness to get the Kreisler cadenza was manifest. Kreisler has never published it. Would he release it? We talked animatedly as to how this could be done. Perhaps we may yet see this musical joy—an Oistrakh performance of the Viotti with the Kreisler cadenza.

One of us wanted to know about the violin teaching in the Soviet schools. "We have many young talents," Oistrakh said. "As soon as we discover them we make sure that they get to one of the many music schools. There the curriculum provides for a sound general education and culture, plus special arrangements for teaching the violin, for practicing, supervision, chamber music, and so on. When we have to send young violinists every year to the competitions in Europe, we don't know which ones to pick for we have thirty equal talents for the three we are permitted to send. Our government subsidizes all this, of course, to provide best conditions for musical development."

He went on: "When I began to study at the age of five in Odessa, we had a hard path. This was in the years just before World War I. The generation today has far better conditions. We have a broad stream of violinistic and musical talent flowing in our country."

Talking of violin study, he said, "One must begin early, one must

have talent, capacity, and above all" —and here he clenched his fist— "the quality of stubborness, tenacity to master all difficulties." He said this last in a most impressive way. He was picturing for us the mastery of the violin as a tremendous social and personal challenge demanding serious intellectual discipline even from the most gifted. "We use the classic studies in our teaching, Kreutzer, Wieniawski, Paganini, the great concertos and sonatas. There are many superb violins in the Moscow central state collections which are available to the best students. There are also many fine private collections and instruments."

OISTRAKH loves to play the viola in chamber music. "When I was still very young, my teacher, Stolyarsky, placed great emphasis on ensemble playing, and he wanted me to know the literature not only as violinist, but as viola player as well. I spent many wonderful hours that way, and whenever I play the viola now it brings back to me those cherished years." Someone mentioned William Primrose, the viola virtuoso, to him. "Yes," he said, "we made some music together here in this room. He is tremendous, a true artist." The rest of us looked at each other. What we wouldn't have given to have been in on this informal "music making" of these two master players! Every violin and viola player in America would have felt the same

It was interesting to the viola player who was with us to hear from Oistrakh that there are concertizing viola players in the Soviet Union. How he would have loved to break in here to discuss names, repertory, what instruments they owned, etc. But we didn't let him for our time was running short. Besides, at this point, Oistrakh turned to us as he asked if we had heard the Shostakovich Concerto he had played with the Philharmonic the night before at Carnegie Hall. None of us had been able to get in. We were planning to hear it of course over the Sunday broadcast. I asked him if we could glance at the score. "Here," said Oistrakh, "here is Shostakovich's original manuscript of the concerto with the piano accompaniment."

We peered at it, passed it from hand to hand . It is a very clean manuscript with few changes. As we tried to get some idea of it in this hurried way, Oistrakh said: "It is very beautiful, but don't try to judge it on the first hearing." The Shostakovich Concerto is dedicated to Oistrakh, as is the Prokofiev First Sonata, and other concertos by Russian masters. I asked him whether he had worked with Shostakovich on the concerto as Ferdinand David had worked with Felix Mendelssohn and Johannes Brahms had worked with Joachim.

"No," he said. "Shostakovich is a complete master to his very fingertips. The only help I gave him was to love his concerto." He added smilingly: "The composers have tailored their music for me to bring out my best points. I wish they would tailor them to avoid my weak ones."

One of our group wanted to present Mrs. Oistrakh with a gift. "Mama," Oistrakh called out to his wife in the next room. She came in, friendly, smiling and handsome. We were delighted that she was pleased with the gift, an ingenious kind of India ring.

OISTRAKH told us as our interview neared its end that he had been given the finest cooperation by all the conductors, by Munch, Ormandy, Mitropoulos, Dorati, as well as by the musicians of the Boston, Philharmonic, Philadelphia, Minneapolis orchestras. He admired the orchestra and singers of the "Met." "I wish to thank my musical colleagues in America deeply for their warm welcome," he said. "Musicians like to meet and talk about their work. Your public showed a great eagerness of the same kind which the American artists would find in my country."

We rose to go. It had been a memorable experience for us, and when Oistrakh's interpreter whispered to us the courteous, generous words, "He liked it very much," we felt even better. We had been in the presence of a great artist, of a master who had conquered the heights of violinistic and musical achievement. His was the serenity of a conqueror whose conquests were in the service of humanity and music. He radiated this message from himself and his country to us and our country.

"Civil Defense Chief Condemns Public Apathy"

By HAL N. SHAPIRO

Let others brag of lake and peak
In strident patriotic chorus:
The purple peak of which they speak
Was here ten thousand years before us.

In praise of steel, in praise of slag,
Let other poets do the yelling;
The steel and slag of which they brag
Belong to Du Pont, Ford and Mellon.

Why have the poets failed to praise
Our chiefest glory and defense—
Not killing ways with nuclear rays,
But beautiful Yankee common sense!

Day into year, by eyes, by ear,
Witch cries, war cries beat our brain.
Too deaf to hear? Too dumb to fear?
The country's still three quarters sane!

"This coming spring will be our last,"
Was every winter's cry of doom—
Telecast and siren blast
Announcing practice for the tomb.

But while a poor misguided few
Invested in a bomb-proof cave,
More glory to the millions who
Have built a cradle, not a grave!

And in the subway, as we read
The papers, here is more to praise:
For one who reads the editor's screed,
A dozen read of Willie Mays.

The doomsday shout is still about,
With deadly, lunatic persistence;
Where would we be today without
Our great American sales resistance?

Let others loudly scorn the crowd,
So low, so coarse, so dull and dense.
We in the crowd, let us be proud
Of our beautiful Yankee common sense!

STEPHEN CRANE
A Critical Study

By M. SOLOMON

STEPHEN CRANE (1871-1900) has been embraced by many modern American writers and critics as a fellow-wanderer on the road to isolation. They have taken Crane's themes and distorted them to meet their needs: if Crane deals with war, then he is preoccupied with their death-urge; if he explores the slums he must have done so to justify their contempt of masses; if his heroes have fears, then Crane's work is a justification of universal dread; if his heroes triumph, they must have done so in defiance of humanity; if his heroes fall, well, human strivings are impotent, doomed to failure. Thus is Stephen Crane embraced.

There were moments in Crane's life when he felt isolation, moments when he could find no affirmative note, sound no triumph. More to the point, in Crane's life and art, there were moments when there came a consciousness that life is indivisible, that other individuals were concerned with the same questions, experienced the same emotions, faced the same problems and were attempting to solve them. It is at such moments that human beings begin to escape a drift into darkness and glimpse widening dawns of existence. These are the moments of exaltation, when despair gives way to hope, cynicism to belief, weakness to strength.

It was thus with Stephen Crane. He spent his life, not in contemplation of doom, but in a search for rationality. He called this search "the beautiful war," and it carried him into the remotest corners of life in the 1890's—into the slums and coal mines, from Nebraska to the Cuban War, to Mexico and Greece and voluntary exile. He was armed with a creed: "To show people to people as they seem to me."

In a letter, Crane said, "A man is born into the world with his own pair of eyes, and he is not at all re-

sponsible for his vision—he is merely responsible for his quality of personal honesty. To keep close to this personal honesty is my supreme ambition." Crane's honesty can be granted; it has earned him a place among the great writers of American fiction. He set out in the world with a conscience and a pair of eyes. What must be judged is the quality of his eyesight.

CRANE'S first book was, like its heroine, Maggie, a frail streetwalker with no takers. Rejected by every magazine and book-publisher who saw it, this pioneer work of American realism was finally published by Crane himself under the pseudonym "Johnston Smith." No bookseller in the country would take it except Brentano's (which bought twelve copies and returned ten). Twenty years later, William Dean Howells, who had championed the twenty-two-year-old author, was writing: "To this hour . . . I shall never understand what was found offensive in the little tragedy."

Maggie, a Girl of the Streets is a novel set in the East Side slums of New York. It is not unique in setting. Dozens of American writers were spellbound by the East Side, drawn to it through sympathy, sensation or mere curiosity. The bohemians were attracted by the fantastic colors and sights which rose from this "whirlpool of life"; the humanitarians, following the path of Jacob Riis and Jane Addams, came to lend a soft, helping hand. Crane brought his passion for justice to the Bowery, and sought to get under its skin, to merge himself with its people so that he could plead their cause more effectively. Dressed in rags, battered hat and all, he wandered from bread-line to flophouse, discovering "how the other half lives." He never quite found out. But he came closer than most.

In another of his Bowery stories, "An Experiment in Misery," Crane "felt a sudden awe" at the infinite distance separating the haves and the have-nots. And since he was young and passionate, he spelled out very clearly (if somewhat artlessly) his thoughts on such matters:

". . . a multitude of buildings, of pitiless hues and sternly high, were to him emblematic of a nation forcing its regal head into the clouds, throwing no downward glances; in the sublimity of its aspirations, ignoring the wretches who may flounder at its feet. The roar of the city in his ear was to him the confusion of strange tongues, babbling heedlessly; it was the clink of coin, the voice of the city's hopes, which were to him no hopes."

And on this theme Crane wrote his first novel, perhaps inevitably selecting as his protagonist the romantic epitome of oppression and injustice—the innocent girl forced into

prostitution. There was a sudden emergence of this idealization during the last quarter of the 19th century, carrying over into the early twentieth. Zola, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Sudermann, France, Dreiser (among the writers) and Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, Picasso, Van Gogh, Orozco (among the painters) worked variations on this theme, which was to them the ultimate symbol of social decadence and of the hypocritical morality of bourgeois life.

Maggie, despite its seemingly "objective" style, is a romantic book. It is the outcry of an embittered youth against human degradation, a lament by young Crane for young Maggie Johnson, who had "blossomed in a mud-puddle." It is a wrathful book, holding fire on nothing. The church, the sweat-shop, the slums, the patriotic blindfold—all these had conspired to seduce and murder Maggie, and Crane attacks them without regard to possible objections. Indeed, he had foreseen that "the reader of this book must inevitably be shocked," but Crane would pull no punches to appease the admirers of the "genteel tradition."

They *were* shocked (and so was Crane at the almost complete suppression of his little book). The publishers and booksellers would eagerly have promoted him had he used his talents to sentimentalize poverty. But this is no whitewashed Bowery, seen through the eyes of a mission worker. Nor is it a narrative of oppression followed by redemption, for there is no redemption. Nor is it the usual tale of rich villain and poor hero, where meekness triumphs over evil.

Maggie, unlike the heroine of Mrs. Freeman's *The Portion of Labor,* does not marry the sweat-shop owner; she commits suicide. In *Maggie* Crane rejects the great American dream of the endless mobility of social classes, the gospel of Andrew Carnegie and Horatio Alger. Crane had "overlooked" the essential optimism of American social competition.

In reality, however, Crane overlooked much more. He unmasked other assassins of Maggie, and these became his main enemy—the oppressed themselves, the dwellers in the lower depths. Their crimes were cowardice and betrayal: "I tried to make plain that the root of Bowery life is a sort of cowardice," he wrote years later. "Perhaps I mean a lack of ambition or to willingly be knocked flat and accept the licking."

It is here that Crane founders on the rock of the doctrine of Social Darwinism as applied to literature and life, with its concepts of the survival struggle, the reversion to the primitive, the destruction of the weak. For at the same time that Crane rejects the ethical conclusions of Spencer—that the weak deserve destruction by the strong—he accepts the

nihilist principle of what Parrington calls "a depersonalized universe, wherein man is but a single form of imprisoned energy," living in a "ceaseless and purposeless flux to what final end the human mind could not forecast." Man is isolated in a hostile world. Typical is an early story, "A Street Scene in New York," where Crane describes the surging crowd surrounding a man who has collapsed in the gutter: "It was as if they fully expected to see blood by the light of the match, and the desire made them appear almost insane." Crane dwells throughout *Maggie* on brutality among the poor, from the battling street-children on page one, to the physical violence within the family, the callous rejection of Maggie, to the unseen horror of her death.

Not that meaningful art cannot flow from the theme of the mark of oppression, the acceptance by the oppressed of their condition, their adoption of the very philosophies and attitudes which grind them to the earth. But for art to achieve greater truth and stature its treatment must be manifold, contrasting surrender with resistance; and it must be deep, probing the sources of its characters —witness Gorky's *Mother* and Zola's *Germinal.*

Crane shared the aristocratic view of the poor so common among radicals of his time. The intellectual of conscience looked at the oppressed asking only why they did not rebel against injustice. Howells gave the classic expression of this in 1890, when he wrote, ". . . they were uncomplaining, if not patient, in circumstances where I believe a single week's sojourn, with no more hope of a better lot than they could have, would make anarchists of the best people in the city." And Howells' conclusion about these huddled masses: "Perhaps the poor people themselves are not so thoroughly persuaded that there is anything very unjust in their fate. . . . They at least do not know the better fortune of others, and they have the habit of passively enduring their own."

CRANE was not of the poor, though he was penniless. His childhood was spent in the surroundings of a Methodist minister's home, and he could not easily shed the heritage of his comfortable, "American" background to mingle with the people of the tenements as one of them. In the last analysis, his knowledge of the slums was acquired through "slumming." Essentially he was "gathering material" for his stories rather than welding himself to the lives and personalities of the impoverished. Their hearts did not open to this newspaper-reporter gambit. The result, of course, was that he saw much, but missed more. The East Side—where intellectuals debated conflicting theo-

ries and philosophies in the cafes, where Morris Rosenfeld and Morris Winchevsky sang their songs of the ghetto, where Talmudic scholars peddled match-books sixteen hours a day, where a Jacob Epstein sculpted in a tenement garret—was a closed book to Crane. The slum—out of which came the organizers and members of the Knights of Labor, the Socialist Party, the followers of Powderly, Debs, De Leon—did not open its door at Crane's invocation.

Crane's Bowery stories would be unread today, would be historical curiosities, if he had not captured some of the essentials. And they are read. Maggie, of course, does not live as a person, with her dull, innocent character, tossed will-lessly by fate. But even she, in whose eyes was something "about pumpkin pie and virtue," has her moments. She has a dream of beauty, unspoiled by any desire for luxury. This is less realistic than Dreiser's Carrie, but much more sympathetic.

Maggie's drunken mother seems on the surface to be a stereotyped degenerate. She has substance, however, particularly in the final scene where she is informed of Maggie's death. She screams: "Oh yes, I'll fergive her!" and we are surprisingly confronted with a mother who evidently despised her daughter for following in her own foot-steps, unable to break away. This touch is in Crane's best manner, worthy of his maturer work.

Although Crane cannot portray even one positive character here (because he sees none), he is on his mettle in his etching of Maggie's cynical brother, who had "studied human nature in the gutter" and wore a chronic sneer on his face. This is a memorable study, this youth who "became so sharp that he believed in nothing. . . ." But even here, we miss profundity; Jimmy has no consciousness that he can alter his condition, and finally the edge of his sharpness is lost when his role is established—to stumble upstairs late at night "as his father had done before him."

The two main characters of *George's Mother,* however, are superb. For in George's meandering dreams there is rebellion against the dull rote of his life, and in his mother's hopeful vision of her son's capabilities there is a real feeling of the unfulfilled passion for education and the sacrificial role which immigrant mothers adopted for their children. "Upon the dead altars of her life she had builded the little fires of hope for another." But the story ends in tragedy, with the embers of the little fire dying away.

With *Maggie,* Crane had worked himself into a corner. He had succeeded in writing one of the few "naturalist" novels which is truly determinist, where there is no hope, but only protest. For there is no sal-

vation in Crane's wistful inscription of *Maggie* to Howells: ". . . it tries to show that environment is a tremendous thing in the world and frequently shapes lives regardless. If one proves that theory one makes room in Heaven for all sorts of souls, notably an occasional street girl. . . ." In his search for rationality, Crane had fastened on a framework of an all-powerful Environment (replacing the all-good Reason of the Enlightenment philosophers). However, this created a contradiction beyond Crane's power to resolve. For if environment is all-powerful, then one must make room in heaven not only for fate-tossed Maggie, but for all her persecutors as well, since their evil was not freely determined; it was imposed on them by society. Naturalism thus gives no hope for salvation and at the same time absolves all of their sins.

Stephen Crane was drawn to the slums in his search for a social ethic. But the light was dim at the end of the alley that he explored, and he took it for a dead end. He found no ethic in the abyss, although the experience enriched his later work. What he proved, however, was that there were no "Gay 'Nineties" on the East Side.

II

WITH the publication of *Maggie,* Crane found himself a member of the critical wing of American fiction. Looking back on this period, he noted that while writing *Maggie* "I developed all alone a little creed of art which I thought was a good one. Later I discovered that my creed was identical with the one of Howells and Garland and in this way I became involved in the beautiful war between those who say that art is man's substitute for nature and we are most successful in art when we approach the nearest to nature and truth, and those who . . . fight villainously and keep Garland and I out of the big magazines. . . . If I had kept to my clever Rudyard Kipling style, the road might have been shorter but, ah, it wouldn't be the true road."

Hamlin Garland (populist, disciple of Henry George and powerful exponent of the oppressed farmers of the West) introduced Crane to Howells, who was the leading exponent of realism in American fiction and criticism. Together, Garland and Howells began a campaign of encouragement and praise which aimed to bring their disciple to the attention of critics and public. In April, 1893, Howells introduced Crane to a distinguished literary gathering with the words: "Here is a writer who has sprung into life fully armed. . . . Mr. Crane can do things that Clemens can't." Not to be outdone, Garland wrote, in B. O. Flower's radical magazine *Arena*: "Mr. Crane is only twenty-one years of age,

and yet he has met and grappled with the actualities of the street in almost unequalled grace and strength . . . [he is] a man who impresses the reader with a sense of almost unlimited resource."

The debt which the young unknown owed to them was never forgotten. In 1895, Crane inscribed a copy of *The Red Badge of Courage* to Howells: ". . . as a token of the veneration and gratitude of Stephen Crane for many things he has learned of the common man and, above all, for a certain re-adjustment of his point of view victoriously concluded some time in 1892."

When Crane said that his creed was *identical* with that of the two leaders of American realism, he did not equivocate. Crane believed urgently in the moral and educative purpose of art, in art as "an image of life." With Howells, he wanted "no reader of his [to] be misled, between what is right and what is wrong, what is noble and what is base, what is health and what is perdition. . . ." But even more, he too believed that "no literature can live long without joy. . . ." Garland, in *Crumbling Idols,* gives the classic exposition of this romantic basis for realism, of the contradiction between the real and ideal which lies at the root of every socially creative act:

"The realist or veritist is really an optimist, a dreamer. He sees life in terms of what it might be, as well as in terms of what it is; but he writes of what is, and, at his best, suggests what it to be, by contrast. . . . He aims to hasten the age of beauty and peace by delineating the ugliness and warfare of the present; but ever the converse of his picture rises in the mind of the reader. He sighs for a lovelier life. . . . With this hate in his heart and this ideal in his brain the modern man writes his stories of life. They are not always pleasant, but they are generally true. . . ."

Well then, to know what life might be, one must know what it is. Is the lovelier life here or hereafter? What is natural and what supernatural? In one of the great personal epics of U.S. poetry, *The Black Riders,* Crane wrestles with his religious past, seeking to cleanse his soul so that he might see life clearly. "I stood musing in a black world, not knowing where to direct my feet," he writes. And again he hesitates: "For truth was to me a breath, a wind, a shadow, a phantom, and never had I touched the hem of its garment."*

* These lines were penned sometime between April 1893 and early 1894 (the dates are not definitely established), probably prior to the completion of *The Red Badge,* a work which deals with the crucible of doubt and fear, but which is nevertheless written by Crane with much certainty of human values. If composed after *The Red Badge,* the intimate and cosmic problems raised in *The Black Riders* evidently had been partially if not wholly solved by the young writer prior to the actual realization of the poems, which would therefore form a retrospective odyssey of the youth's struggle to reconcile science with religion.

Amy Lowell has misread the meaning of Crane's mighty little verses when she writes that Crane was dealing with "the cruelty of universal law, and the futility of hope." Rather, Crane wrote of the cruelty of a supposed god of vengeance and the futility of seeking God in "a printed list, a burning candle. . . ." His venom was against the "Many strange peddlers," each "Holding forth little images, saying, 'This is my pattern of God.'" In one of his most ironic verses, Crane's Deistic hatred of organized, rigid forms is clearly seen:

"Two or three angels
Came near to the earth.
They saw a fat church.
Little black streams of people
Came and went in continually.
And the angels were puzzled
To know why the people went thus,
And why they stayed so long within."

Crane's true creed is that "The voice of God whispers in the heart

So softly
That the soul pauses,
Making no noise. . . ."

Nietzsche had shouted: "God is dead," but the small voice of this poor American novelist, son of a Methodist preacher, humbly asked: "If I should cast off this tattered coat, and go free into the mighty sky; If I should find nothing there . . . what then?" There was more than a tendency toward disintegration of Crane's religious belief, but he feared the death of God, and so could not countenance it. Dostoevsky's Kirilov summed up the problem: "If God did not exist, everything would be allowed." When Crane posed the question in this way ("God lay dead in heaven") it plunged him into depths of dread; he saw "monsters livid with desire" emerging from "caverns of dead sins" to wrangle over the world. This is the torment of an unbeliever who would believe, or vice versa. Belief remained in Crane, but unbelief lingered. And so Crane's art veers away from religion, he deals with people in human and social terms, but does not seek to impose transcendental solutions on their problems. In *The Black Riders* Crane arrived at a compromise and left it at that.

EACH writer approaches reality in his own way, with his own dream of Garland's "age of beauty and peace." And each struggles with his own convictions so that he might forge an approach which will lead him to truth. Unfortunately, there are no two ways about truth. We have seen how the dream which Crane poured into *Maggie* was warped by the dark glasses with which he viewed the people of the lower depths. Crane did not altogether stop his search in the slums; *George's Mother,* which explores the Bow-

ery still further, was completed after *The Red Badge.* But the East Side was no longer Crane's main inspiration. He was looking for an heroic attitude which he had hitherto failed to find; he sought courage and conflict—not acceptance. For the moment, he turned away from contemporary American life and delved into the past—into the Civil War of the previous generation. Surely, *there* was heroism.

III.

THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE established Stephen Crane as an American author of the first rank. Within six months after its book publication in October of 1895, it was becoming one of the great best-sellers of the 1890's, outselling such favorites as *The Jungle Books, The Sorrows of Satan, The Seats of the Mighty.* The book caused a sensation in England, and in ten months of 1896 went through thirteen editions in the United States. Crane became the fair-haired genius of our literature, fantastic stories (and scandals) began to circulate about his personal life, magazines vied for his fiction, and even *Maggie* was wanted for publication by one of the major houses. *The Red Badge* has remained an American classic, printed and reprinted up to our time in popular editions, a work which appears constantly on the 'best novels of the world' lists.

It must be said at the outset that *The Red Badge of Courage* is a study in the meaning of social responsibility and freedom. It is the story of a youth, Henry Fleming, who enters into the world of war with a dream of glory in battle, and who flees from the reality of war, killing and death. From the point of his desertion he embarks on a Dantesque Pilgrim's Progress through the hell of the rear-lines and of his soul, eventually attaining a consciousness of his sin, and gaining motivation for his return to his comrades at the front. It is in his return that he learns the meaning of freedom and responsibility, and joins the common struggle for victory.

It is in this treatment of the theme of the hero's search for humanity and freedom that *The Red Badge of Courage* belongs to the great tradition of classic literature, from the *Book of Job* and the *Oresteia* to *Hamlet* and *Egmont.* It marks the return to American literature of this vein which was explored by *Moby Dick* and *Ethan Brand.* Seen in this light, Henry Fleming becomes a figure of true heroic proportions in a literature which has since been largely dominated by animal nihilists and depersonalized imbeciles.

Crane makes his break with naturalism here (although he retains much of Spencerian terminology). His hero has the capacity to find freedom through defeat of his fear. His

is no automatic absolution for sin, no greased entry into heaven; he must fight his way in. Nor is defeat inevitable, for he triumphs. This is Garland's realism applied to human motivations and actions. What it is not is the positive value of *Maggie,* its critical realism and treatment of social evil; for in casting out the determinism of *Maggie,* Crane casts out its criticism of society. A fusion will have to be effected, but this will come later.

The novel opens in innocence: "He had, of course, dreamed of battles all his life—of vague and bloody conflicts that had thrilled him with their sweep and fire. In visions he had seen himself in many struggles. . . ." Henry's mother brings the story out of the mind and into reality with the keynote of the story:

"I don't know what else to tell yeh, Henry, excepting that yeh must never do no shirking, child, on my account. If so be a time comes when yeh have to be kilt or do a mean thing, why Henry, don't think of anything 'cept what's right, because there's many a woman has to bear up 'ginst sech things these times, and the Lord'll take keer of us all."

These ethics as yet have no meaning to Henry, for they must first be tested in life and death for him to comprehend them. He is caught up in the holocaust of war set against the beauties of nature, and he finds himself "in a moving box . . . dragged by the merciless government . . . taking him out to be slaughtered." Fleetingly, he experiences the collective and great purpose of the battle: "He felt that something of which he was a part—a regiment, an army, a cause, or a country—was in a crisis. He was welded into a common personality. . . ." And then the personal fears overwhelm him. He flees. And thus starts his pilgrimage of terror.

Crane had never seen a battle when he wrote his novel. His knowledge came from photographs of the Civil War by Matthew Brady, paintings by Winslow Homer, contemporary histories, talks with veterans, from the stories of Ambrose Bierce (there is a great debt here) and from his literary idol, Tolstoy. As Bierce remarked, "He knows nothing of war, yet he is drenched in blood. Most beginners who deal with this subject splatter themselves merely with ink."

Knowing "nothing," Crane sees the crucial fact of desertion and cowardice: "Since he had turned his back upon the fight his fears had been wondrously magnified. Death about to thrust him between the shoulder blades was far more dreadful than death about to smite him between the eyes."

CRANE now takes his hero through seven stages of hell. Chapters six through twelve of the novel each contains a lesson in the nature of

sin and the sense of humanity. But this is no Sunday-school catechism: it is a novel of blood and fire in which the ethic of loyalty and brotherhood arises out of the action seen through the reeling mind of the young deserter.

The first lesson strips the youth of his rationale for desertion—the regiment had not fallen under fire, but had stood fast. "He had fled, he told himself, because annihilation approached. . . . He had considered the time . . . to be one in which it was the duty of every little piece to rescue itself if possible. . . ." And now that the brittle blue line had held, "The youth cringed as if discovered in a crime. . . . He felt a great anger against his comrades . . ." His fellow-soldiers had stolen the mask of his "tactical retreat" and revealed to Henry himself the face of a coward.

Well, so be it. The coward will seek solace in the forest, away from the rumble of death, in the lap of Nature "where the high, arching boughs made a chapel" with green doors and a gentle brown carpet. And there he learns the second lesson, that there is no escape. In the chapel sat a dead man dressed in a uniform that had once been blue. "The dead man and the living man exchanged a long look." The corpse of his comrade brings back Henry's sense of sin, and he flees wildly from the idyllic place, imagining that "some strange voice would come from the dead throat" and accuse him.

The youth joins the grisly procession of the wounded returning from the front. Here is shown his instinctive desire to be with his fellows, to rejoin the living. But the dying soldiers in the march are more alive than the untouched coward. He meets the "tattered man," a soldier ". . . fouled with dust, blood and powder stain from hair to shoes . . .," his head bound with a blood-soaked rag and his arm dangling like a broken bough. He believes in his cause: "His homely face was suffused with a light of love for the army which was to him all things beautiful and powerful. . . ." In a brotherly tone he asks the youth: "Where yeh hit, ol' boy?" and the question pierces like a sword of vengeance. The youth has received his third lesson, that he has lost the sense of belonging—the social sense—he is isolated.

"Because of the tattered soldier's question he now felt that his shame could be viewed. He was continually casting sidelong glances to see if the men were contemplating the letters of guilt he felt burned into his brow.

"At times he regarded the wounded soldiers in an envious way. He conceived persons with torn bodies to be peculiarly happy. He wished that he, too, had a wound, a red badge of courage."

This wound motif, the desire for mutilation which appears here and throughout Crane's war stories, has given Freudian critics a field-day opportunity to expound on "castration complexes" and subconscious "Oedipal repressions," as though Crane were not a conscious author, but an unthinking instrument through which instinctual and emotional patterns are poured into a fixed mould. Indeed, one recent study alleges that Crane's "best work sprang in effect from . . . the episode of childhood and infancy," and that his life was "a classic instance of the 'prostitute complex' in Freudian thought."

Actually, the "red badge" theme is a miracle of realistic insight into the workings of Henry Fleming's mind, his desire for kinship with the wounded soldiers whom he has deserted, his reverence for their courage. It is an insight which illuminates the genius of Crane, an insight which, however, would have been impossible without the precept of Tolstoy, from whose *Sevastopol* stories it is in part drawn. All three of Tolstoy's tales of the Crimean War have central scenes describing the wounded: "Hundreds of bodies, freshly smeared with blood . . . now lay, with stiffened limbs . . . hundreds of men crawled, twisted, and groaned, with curses and prayers on their parched lips. . . ."

Sevastopol in December, moreover, pictures "an old, gaunt soldier" whose "sufferings inspire you over and above the feeling of profound sympathy, with a fear of offending and with a lofty reverence for the man who has undergone them," and even contains the question "Where are you wounded?" The dream of glory in battle, the youth torn between cowardice and gallantry, the desire for death, the constant juxtaposition of war against the beauty of nature ("And still . . . the dawn glowed . . . the twinkling stars paled, the white mist spread abroad from the dark, sounding sea, the red glow illuminated the east. . . .")—all these appear in Tolstoy's masterpiece and indicate how the young Crane, ignorant of battle, received knowledge of war and some of his insights into the psychology of the common soldier. And later in *The Red Badge* we will see Crane echoing the central thesis of *War and Peace* on the question of who wins battles—strategy or soldiers. So the sources of Crane's novel reside in life and literature (in knowledge, not instinct).

THE following chapter contains one of the most powerful scenes in American literature—the description of Jim Conklin's death. Here the lesson of the fruits of betrayal is brought home by the ghastly death of a comrade whom he had known in the ranks, wherein Henry appears to us as a repentant Cain, Judas or Paul, conscious at last of his sin. "The youth cried out to him hysterically: 'I'll take care of yeh, Jim.

I'll take care of yeh. I swear t' Gawd I will.'" In his encounter with the tattered man in the previous chapter, the youth knew that he was alienated, but not yet that he was responsible; here the personalization of his sin provides Henry with the seeds of knowledge that he must be responsible as well as guilty.

It is one of Crane's great ironies that Henry's furthest penetration into hell, his largest sin, occurs so soon after the death of Jim. Henry is not yet ready to become his brother's keeper. He again meets the tattered man, now on the verge of death, and, unable to endure the "simple questions of the tattered man . . . those arrows which cloud the air and are constantly pricking, discovering, proclaiming those things which are willed to be forever hidden. . . ." he flees, leaving him to a lone, agonizing death. Irrelevant is the certainty that the tattered man would have died anyway. Henry knows that he has assisted in a personal murder, and this is the fifth lesson, that social guilt is individual guilt.

The sixth lesson deepens this idea. Crane shows that the youth's one act of desertion, a seemingly small action, almost inevitably leads him to become an enemy of his own people, his own cause: he watches his army retreating—"There was an amount of pleasure to him in watching the wild march of this vindication. He could not but know that a defeat for the army this time might mean many favorable things for him. The blows of the enemy would splinter regiments into fragments. Thus, many men of courage, he considered, would be obliged to desert the colors and scurry like chickens. He would appear as one of them. They would be sullen brothers in distress. . . ." The youth struggles with these thoughts and sees their evil, their denial of all the ethics of a good life, of his mother's creed ("Yeh must never do no shirking, child . . ."). Henry "denounced himself as a villain . . . as he saw their dripping corpses on an imagined field, he said that he was their murderer."

The Union army is routed. The youth rushes among the wounded men. "He had the impulse to make a rallying speech, to sing a battle hymn, but he could only get his tongue to call into the air: 'Why—why—what—what's the matter?'" He is seeking a way out of his shame, a redemption. He clutches a soldier by the arm, who, confused and enraged, crushes his rifle against the youth's head. Thus, in the midst of his atonement, Henry receives the final lesson—crude justice. He has been repaid for his betrayal, crushed by his own army. He has received his red badge of courage—from his own comrade.

HENRY was not the only young soldier who deserted from the ranks and then returned. While he is being watched over with "tender-

ness and care" by his comrades in the regiment, he hears the many others: "They'd been scattered all over, wanderin' around in th' woods, fightin' with other reg'ments, an' everything. Jest like you done." Henry's story is therefore not unique, it is typical. The crucial question is why did he desert?

Henry deserted because war is hell, the most monstrous activity devised by human beings. Because war wrenches young people out of their path of life, thwarting their aspirations for work, education, love, marriage, family, self-development. Because it sets brother against brother, destroys the home, the land, the culture. Above all, because it brings death, destroys people who want to live, and kills them with brute force, with bullets and bayonet.

The individual soldier knows that he must kill or be killed. In the face of all this, some run as Henry did, after his dream of glory in battle, his romantic vision of war had been erased.

However, Crane also tries to show us that there is an ethic in fighting —the ethic of solidarity, the common struggle for a common goal. Rising from this is the desire to "belong," not to let the others down, the soldier's desire to prove himself the equal of anyone in heroism. Crane reveals the deserter as an outcast from the group, for by his flight he can cause the death of his buddies, or the defeat of his unit, regiment or army. And as Henry Fleming learned during his pilgrimage through the rear-lines, he became cut off, a renegade, a man without a cause, friendless, soulless. Crane's hero deserts, and Crane would have us believe that he returns because the bonds of brotherhood and loyalty are stronger than cowardice and fear.

This is all very good, Crane's affirmation of humanist ethics, his profound insight that man is a social animal whose responsibility is to his fellows and whose degradation lies in his desertion into crude individualism and a "save your own skin" morality. And in this interpretation we see the link between *The Red Badge* and *Maggie,* both being studies of desertion (Maggie deserted by society, class and family; the regiment deserted by Henry), and both containing a central attack on the "dog-eat-dog" philosophy of American life during the rule of the "Robber Barons." The new step in *The Red Badge* is the possibility of salvation, the return, the acceptance of responsibility. Henry knew that he had fled for self-preservation alone; he learned that there could be no life for him outside of his community, his society; and thus he returned to the regiment, with the lessons of comradeship, loyalty and dedication engraved on his soul. Once more, Henry Fleming "belonged."

A WORTHY theme, this, but when placed in the context of

war it leaves *The Red Badge* open to an interpretation which the rebel, iconoclastic Crane would hardly have relished. Henry's return to the regiment can "logically" be regarded as an acceptance, as Maxwell Geismar put it, of "the martial standards as a kind of absolute." In other words, on the face of it, Henry's flight can be interpreted as a blind rebellion against authority, against war, and his return as a submission to arbitrary power and to the military. What lends weight to this view is the undeniable fact that throughout the novel Crane never refers directly to the great issues involved in the Civil War. There is no concrete sense of history in *The Red Badge,* no exploration of the causes and meanings of the war.

But it does not follow logically from this, which is a weakness of Crane, that Henry Fleming's return is an act of surrender, nor does it follow that Crane "made the experience of war an end in itself," creating a "timeless" novel in which the social and historical realities of its setting are of no consequence.

Taking the latter thesis first (which is the dominant view of *The Red Badge*): true, the novel does not deal with the Union Army as a specific army fighting against an insurrection whose aim was the extension of the area in which human flesh could be bought and sold. On the other hand, *The Red Badge* clearly expresses what was, in fact, the truth of the war to the people, that it was fought for the preservation of the Union. In the development of the "myth" of the Confederacy, reaching heights today at which Crane would have been aghast, the truth has become glossed over that the Union soldiers (particularly from the middle of the war on and Crane's setting is April 1863 at the battle of Chancellorsville) had a higher morale than the Southerners. It was this morale, not "sheer weight of numbers" (another part of the above myth), that enabled the Union army to stand successfully at Gettysburg and to take Lookout Mountain. One of the great achievements of *The Red Badge* is that it throws light upon this morale. We have noted that in an early chapter Henry "felt that something of which he was a part—a regiment, an army, a cause, *or a country*—was in a crisis." (Italics added.) This feeling never leaves him, for it was part of the consciousness of every decent Union soldier during the war, deeply ingrained, taken for granted. It may be said that it is this sense of collective crisis which causes Henry's individual remorse during his desertion. "Tales of great movements shook the land," and Henry had burned with the desire to enlist. This consciousness of a cause motivates him throughout the novel. Call it a vague consciousness if you will, but it was present, and Crane's use of this motif was no accident. He reflected the typical Union sol-

dier's view, and it is this view that gives content to the patriotism and love of country, symbolized by Crane in his recurrent references to the flag:

"Here and there were flags, the red in the stripes dominating. They splashed bits of warm color upon the dark lines of troops." "The youth felt the old thrill at the sight of the emblem. They were like beautiful birds strangely undaunted in a storm."

And in the final, climactic battle, Henry bears the flag, proudly and with dignity:

"Within him, as he hurled himself forward, was born a love, a despairing fondness for this flag. . . . It was a creation of beauty and invulnerability. It was a goddess, radiant, that bended its form with an imperious gesture to him. It was a woman . . . that called him with the voice of his hopes."

This, of course, is only symbolic patriotism. The deepest patriotism of Crane's novel is found in his devotion to and confidence in the common people, who are the heroes of *The Red Badge.**

Thus can we establish the specific, historical and, in germinal form, *partisan* character of Crane's book. The timelessness here is the true "timelessness" which comes from a deep and correct insight into an age, not from an abstraction out of history. That Crane did not document the background fully is only a weakness, which enables the meaning of his book to be distorted today. Another novelist, a greater one, would have conceived his war novel more grandly, more maturely, as a web of profound and varied ideas on life and history woven together by the movement and counter-movement of many characters. Crane was no Tolstoy. Indeed, he had not quite grown up as a writer and thinker, and his insights in *The Red Badge* are the flashes of young genius rather than the considered discoveries of a mature artist. Hence the use of an impressionistic technique, with brief chapters and sharp, vivid, but often adolescent images ("His tongue lay dead

* It has been maintained by certain critics that this novel could have been told equally well from the Confederate viewpoint. The stress which Crane's book places on the common soldier, and his realistic picture of the horrors of war could never have been acceptable to the glorifiers of the South. They required acceptance of unreality, not realism; they required adulation of the leader, not of the rank and file soldier. W. J. Cash, in *The Mind of the South,* speaking of "the development of Southern unreality and romanticism," writes: "The growth of the Southern legend . . . moved, more powerfully even than it moved toward splendor and magnificence, toward a sort of ecstatic, tear-eyed vision of the Old South as the Happy-Happy Land. . . . And of course the sentimentality waxed fat on the theme of the Confederate soldier and the cause for which he had fought and died. . . . I doubt . . . that ever elsewhere any soldier became so identical with Galahad, the cause for which he fought with the quest for the Sangraal." It is no accident that the novelists of the Plantation Tradition never wrote of a Confederate deserter. And there were tens of thousands of Southerners who deserted 'the cause,' voting with their feet against the Chivalric myth, underlining in life their knowledge that this was 'A rich man's war and a poor man's fight.'

in the tomb of his mouth"). It is not surprising that Crane should have stripped the novel bare of everything except the central situation in order to highlight his main ideas and to simplify the structural problem. He even had a rationale for this process: "I try to give to readers a slice out of life; and if there is any moral or lesson in it . . . I let the reader find it himself."

TAKING the second main objection, which pertains to a supposed acceptance of martial standards by Henry and Crane, this simply does not square with the facts, either as regards Crane's convictions or the book itself. Crane's anarchistic defiance of authority and his unwavering Tolstoyan belief in mercy and love as guiding principles surely belie such an interpretation. The fact that the copy of *The Red Badge* which he gave to Howells bears his ironic, anti-war poem, "Do Not Weep Maiden, For War Is Kind," inscribed on the third flyleaf, is an additional piece of circumstantial evidence.

And with Henry' return to the front, the novel takes on a new dimension, which for the first time embodies the heroism which Crane sought in the Civil War. It does not preach acceptance; rather it teaches that people are not expendable, that life is the most valuable possession of man, that individuals have potentialities for growth and accomplishment far beyond even their own knowledge of themselves. And the struggle is two-fold: against the main enemy, the rebel army, and against those Union officers who, out of ignorance and arrogance, fail in their responsibilities to their men and seek to deny them as human beings.

The lieutenant of the regiment speaks :"You boys shut right up . . . All you've got t' do is to fight. . . . There's too much chin music an' too little fightin' in this war. . . ." Henry overhears the general and an officer decide to throw his regiment into the breach: "They fight like a lot 'a mule drivers. I can spare them best of any." The youth felt that he had suddenly become old. "New eyes were given to him. And the most startling thing was to learn suddenly that he was very insignificant. The officer spoke of the regiment as if he referred to a broom. . . ."

Thus begins Henry's struggle to prove to himself and to the officers and men that he and his regiment are not expendable, that they are not "mule-drivers," but human beings with human powers: "A scowl of mortification and rage was upon his face . . ." as he went into battle. And he realized that this feeling was not his alone; ". . . he noted the vicious, wolf-like temper of his comrades . . ." as they met the enemy and threw them back. They were fighting a war for respect and dignity, for recognition of their humanity.

"It had begun to seem to them that events were trying to prove

that they were impotent. These little battles had evidently endeavored to demonstrate that the men could not fight well. When on the verge of submission to these opinions, the small duel had showed them that the proportions were not impossible, and by it they had revenged themselves upon their misgivings and upon the foe.

"They gazed about them with looks of uplifted pride, feeling new trust in the grim, always confident weapons in their hands. And they were men."

Henry becomes a hero in the final, victorious battle, capturing the enemy flag and fighting with daring spirit. And all the men were heroes, for theirs was the victory; they had proved themselves, wiped out the contemptuous names of "mule-drivers" and "mud-diggers"; they had shown that people and armies win wars (not generals and officers).

Henry has finally redeemed his sin. "He saw that he was good. He recalled with a thrill of joy the respectful comments of his fellows . . ." He has not forgotten his inhumanity and cowardice, however: ". . . the light of his soul flickered with shame. . . ." The specter of the tattered soldier marches before him, "he who, blind with weariness and pain, had been deserted in the field." But the youth (now a man) can put his sin at a distance. He has learned the nature of his evil and he has fought for absolution. He will never do any shirking again.

He goes forward to a life of peace. "He came from hot plowshares to prospects of clover tranquillity, and it was as if hot plowshares were not. Scars faded as flowers. . . . He had rid himself of the red sickness of battle. The sultry nightmare was in the past. He had been an animal blistered and sweating in the heat and pain of war." He turns away from war easily, for he had no desire for conquest, and even in the midst of his heroism his hatred of war did not leave him. His love is for peace: "He turned now with a lover's thirst to images of tranquil skies, fresh meadows, cool brooks—an existence of soft and eternal peace."

The concluding section of this essay will appear next month.—The Editors.

Letter and Reply:
EAST-WEST TRADE

Dear Editors:

Some months ago a group of progressive economists were discussing the world situation and the developments in our country. We arrived at a sort of common viewpoint which we decided to submit to you for comment and discussion. Here are our views.

The U.S. economy in the autumn of 1955 was "moving at a brisk pace," as the *Survey of Current Business* (9/55) put it. It had reached a close-to-peak level, and "the output of most business segments is at or close to the highest recorded volume." There were soft spots, based chiefly on the overextension of debts, but, in general, the confidence of corporation heads and most of their economists was still unshaken by the violent tremors in the stock market.

Do these circumstances render obsolete the science of Marxist economics, as a recent *New York Times* editorial suggested? But Marxist economics is of course not to be construed as a rigid dogma mechanically spelling out annual predictions of capitalist collapse. It should be regarded rather as the continuing study of the contradictions of capitalism, which in a rapidly changing world will necessarily assume changing forms. The crisis of capitalism, which can easily be shown to be a very real one does not necessarily have to find expression in the classic manner of 1929, nor of 1914, nor of 1939. This article will examine briefly the new factors, not present before, that may shape the U.S. economy in the coming years.

The great truth discerned by Marx a century ago is not so much that capitalism is cursed by recurrent booms and busts, but that the latter are consequences of a fundamental contradiction, the private ownership of the nation's basic economic machinery, that lies at the heart of the capitalist system. The private appropriation of the wealth produced by the country leads to increases in productive output and capacity far in excess of the "normal" ability of the market to purchase the goods and services that could pour out of the productive mechanism.

CAPITALIST efforts to resolve this basic "unbalance" have traced a pattern of wars, booms and depressions in the economic history of a full century marked by a ruthless search for new markets. Marxist economists have never denied that the continuing process of capitalist accumulation would develop productive capacity hugely; they did assert that the "anarchy of production" which characterized the system would render this huge productive capacity a threat to the stability of the system rather than a blessing.

The above generalization is certainly still applicable to the U.S. economy despite the fact that seventeen years have passed without a major depression. Most of this period has been dominated by special factors associated with World War II and its aftermath. Production for war alternating with production for pent-up civilian demand deferred during war years has over this period provided sufficient outlets for the huge U.S. productive machine to maintain an outward semblance of "stability" at high output levels.*

And even today, long after the U.S. has been engaged in a major war, the military component of current U.S. output is large enough to constitute a major economic problem if serious efforts were made to cut it down to levels consistent with the world situation of co-existence which Socialist peace policy, the people's will for peace and the military stalemate have brought about..

As long as the tensions of the cold war could be invoked to support a heavy armaments program, the U.S. economy could hope to escape some of the economic consequences of the ever present contradiction between productive capacity and the available markets for its goods. But the political problems involved in sustaining the cold war are proving to be great.

The world-wide pressures for peace have forced relaxation of international tension to the point where, even before the August summit conferences, military spending had started to decline. Indeed, the 1954 recession is widely regarded as a product of the curtailment of military spending (about eight billions) which occurred in that year.

The big surprise perhaps to both bourgeois observers and to those Marxists who may have equated cuts in military spending with economic declines is that in 1955 the U.S. economy rebounded from the 1954 recession without the aid of gains in military spending. Bourgeois economists

* While the level of industrial output in this period has been high, Lewis H. Robb has pointed out (*Science & Society*, Fall, 1953) that in the decade following the close of the war, industrial output in the U.S. never quite equalled the peak levels of 1943-44. Since in this decade industrial capacity more than doubled, Robb has calculated that, in relation to the war years, the degree of utilization of capacity has actually been cut in half.

regard this, and rightly so, as quite a feat, even though it could be argued that the 1955 atmosphere of prosperity was a reflection mainly of a boom in automobile sales and residential construction, both of which continued to be heavily financed by credit expansion, fast nearing danger points. (For details, see recent issues of Labor Research Association's *Economic Notes.*)

BUT all this ignores the fact that there *is* something new in the economic air today which does make mere projections of past capitalist behavior unscientific. And this fact is the ironic paradox that the existence of the huge Socialist bloc in a world at peace can offer an element of economic stability that is totally unprecedented in the past history of capitalist development. For western European capitalism, for instance, the search for markets no longer exists in the form which had led in the past to two world wars.

West European capitalists are by no means free from serious economic problems, but, there is a new factor, the impact of trade between the capitalist and Socialist systems. Thus, if internal markets fall short, as is inevitable at periodic intervals, they can address themselves to the profitable task of supplying some of the true insatiable needs of a socialist world freed from all capitalist restraints on economic growth.

For this statement to hold, of course, it is necessary to confront western capitalist interests with a relation of forces that will compel them to surrender once and for all their counter-revolutionary dreams. The Socialist baby that Churchill would have strangled at birth is now a giant, who is obviously here to say. Can dominant capitalist interests be compelled to accept this fact? Will they increasingly take those steps with respect to the extension of credits and technological adaptation, necessary to serve the socialist markets? These are realistic goals of enormous significance.

The example of Finland is useful here to illustrate both the opportunities and limitations of such an adaptation. Reparations to the Soviet Union required a degree of capital investment on the part of the Finnish bourgeoisie which would admittedly not have been warranted by Finland's normal internal requirements or her previous trade position. However, after reparations payments ceased, Soviet purchases from Finland have been so large and consistent that Finland has assumed the paradoxical position of a capitalist economy operating at full capacity with a guaranteed market.

Despite the warnings of bourgeois observers of the "political dangers" of such economic dependence on socialist trade, there does not seem to be any reason why such trade should

not continue for a long time to come. Finland, of course, is not the United States or Britain. Yet its experience is instructive.

THE basic precondition for future peaceful transitions toward socialism is, of course, that war as the traditional mode of resolving capitalist contradictions be ruled out. But many other problems remain. It would be Utopian to expect or hope that trade with the socialist world could resolve the contradictions of U.S. capitalist economy. For instance, here the most serious problems will arise out of any attempts to liquidate the $40 billion annual rate of military spending, which most bourgeois economists project as a rock-bottom component of all future U.S. budgets, despairing of finding any peacetime equivalent. Yet, as the cold war recedes, political pressures to cut such spending will mount. And it is in such a context that trade with the socialist world must appear more and more as a useful necessity.

The foreign trade of the socialist world has been gaining at a rate six times greater than that of the rest of the world. It now stands at $20 billion. It will take less than 6 years, at the current fantastic growth rates (of the order of 30 percent per year) for socialist imports to equal $40 billion. This is a sum which bourgeois skeptics would find difficult to deprecate.

Of greater importance than the current magnitude of international trade, however, is the knowledge, increasingly admitted all over the world, that large-scale future economic growth is assured for so big a segment of the world economy. The Bandung conference has taught us that one must also make allowance for the growth possibilities of those countries breaking out of colonial bondage. In other words, this new assurance of stable growth is precisely a result of the degree to which the capitalist world, as the source of previous instability, has shrunk.

In England, France, and West Germany, it is possible to find capital expansion programs directly geared to the socialist markets of the future. And even here one can find with increasing frequency capitalist expressions of interest in socialist trade. But of course the old dreams die hard, and Dulles obviously finds his new role quite irksome. It is clear, in retrospect, how unrealistic these new perspectives would have appeared a decade ago when top Washington circles, unhurt and armed with the newly acquired atom bomb, surveyed a world in ruins with the calculating eyes of an unchallenged conqueror. Today, however, the Washington leadership is being compelled to co-exist, and it is this fact which could open new horizons for the American economy.

AN IMPORTANT element of the new air of optimism being expressed by the U.S. business press is the feeling that we stand at the threshold of a new era of technological advance, based on electronics, automation and atomic developments. Actually the obsession with military uses, as was revealed by the recent Geneva conference on atomic energy, has left the U.S. far behind other countries in peacetime atomic research.

Another reason for this lag is the fact that the U.S. economy is ill adapted to make full use of the promise of the atomic age. The prospect of producing power so cheap as to be virtually valueless may be dazzling to planned economies, but it presents serious problems to a capitalist economy.

Nevertheless U.S. Big Business has from the first maintained a dominant role in atomic development, on a cost-plus basis, i.e., with the use of government funds. And it is now beginning to invest directly in nuclear reactors and in research for industrial applications of atomic science. Such investment of course adds to the aura of expansion.

Thus, capital investment will be the strategic factor to watch in the coming months for signs that these subjective factors are being translated into concrete behavior. The government series on expenditures for new plant and equipment, which through the first quarter of 1955 had been steadily declining for two years, is now reported to be rising. If these estimates, as yet based on anticipated rather than actual investment prove to be valid with respect to movement and magnitude, it may well be true that we are now in another period of cyclical expansion. As always, such an expansion to the degree that it will add to our productive capacity, will necessarily be self-limiting because of the private ownership of the industries. But for as long as such a period lasts it would offer new opportunities to the American people and to the peoples of the world to consolidate the fight for peaceful coexistence.

EDITORS' REPLY:

Thank you for your letter. We like very much the idea of your looking for new developments and talking them over with us and our readers in the magazine. We agree with some of your opinions and disagree with others. Let us explain briefly.

We think that you have correctly noted the great value which American trade with the Socialist countries could have for the American people. First, it would presuppose peace and an end of the Cold War. This would be a blessing for the nation. Second, it would undoubtedly have a beneficial effect on the prob-

lem of "keeping the wheels turning." This is a problem which not even the unique post-war boom can gloss over, even in the thinking of the most deluded worshippers of "free enterprise." Marxism certainly is an ardent advocate of both ending the Cold War and of stepping up the peacetime trade and cultural interchange which can benefit our country and the Socialist lands. In fact this goal is central to working class and all anti-fascist, anti-war politics.

The power of the idea of peaceful co-existence has proved itself dramatically in recent history. Co-existence and trade are prime national interests for the United States, provided such interests are viewed from the standpoint not of the minority class of private owners, but from the standpoint of the nation as a whole and its majority. Here we would like to express our differences with your viewpoint.

We think that you are viewing the phenomena of the economic and political situation one-sidedly. You correctly see the new developments—the defeat of the "war now" forces, the rise of the powerful new world factors making for ever greater difficulties for the war-makers, and the resultant possibilities for the American working class and the country as a whole to switch from the rails of a permanent war budget of $40 billion to an economy of peacetime spending and world trade with the Socialist peoples. You see the "stability" possibilities which are very real and which it would be very wrong not to see. But you overlook other realities. These realities are that the contradiction between the productive capacity of the capitalist countries and the narrowness of their markets cannot be overcome, solved, or substantially mitigated by trade with the Socialist world market. Benefits for the country from such trade? Of course. But it still remains for the working people and their allies to face the fundamental job—to tackle the private monopoly owners of the industries for better wages, better conditions, and ultimately for a new social line-up in which the people of the USA will become the owners of America's industries. You forget, it seems to us, that the new factors promote "stability," but also increase the contradictions and antagonisms. Our job is to insist, and to get our fellow-Americans to insist, that these contradictions shall not lead to war as the "solution."

But while we urge and strive for the peace and trade we must have for survival, can we overlook the facts of "the other side" of the phenomenon, the side of the dangers which face the nation from the "built in" war spending, the imperialist hatred of democracy, national freedom and Socialism? Can we stop revealing these basic facts? Surely,

there is no contradiction between the two sides of such a Marxist, working class policy. For the way you present your views, it seems to us that the necessity for Socialism tends to fade away in a capitalism "stabilized" by a vast Socialist trade.

This is unreal. What is real—and here we are in full agreement of course—is that America's national interest requires an end to the Cold War, substantial trade with the Socialist countries on the basis of equality, and a halt to the war budget, lower taxes, and a defense of the living and working standards of the people. But this can only be won if we do not dim our view of the real economic facts, the growth of antagonisms within the growth of "stability," and the unending necessity for the people's struggle to counter-act the anti-national character of monopoly and all its works at home and abroad.

This whole subject merits thorough discussion, of course, and we invite our readers to join.

HELEN WEST HELLER

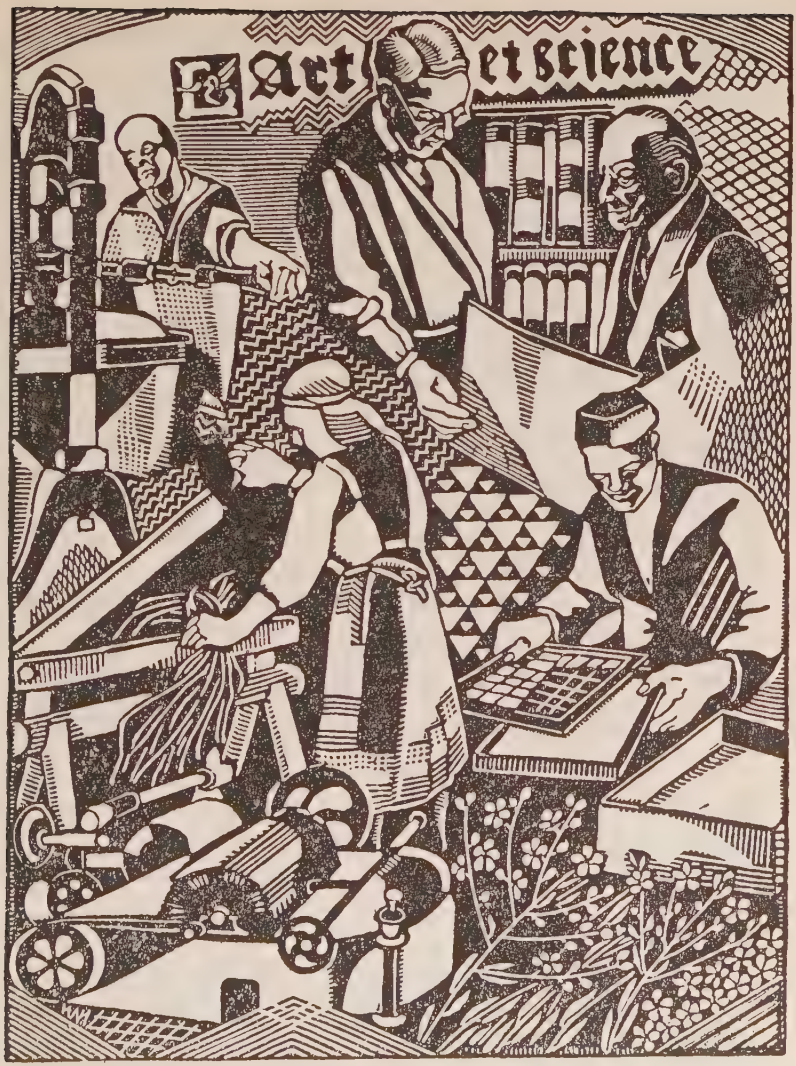
In Memoriam

On November 19, 1955, Helen West Heller, one of America's very greatest creative artists, died at the age of 83 in her cold flat on New York's East Side. Her body lay in the Bellevue morgue for ten days before the Missing Persons Bureau and her colleagues of Artists Equity Association could find any member of her family who would identify her body.

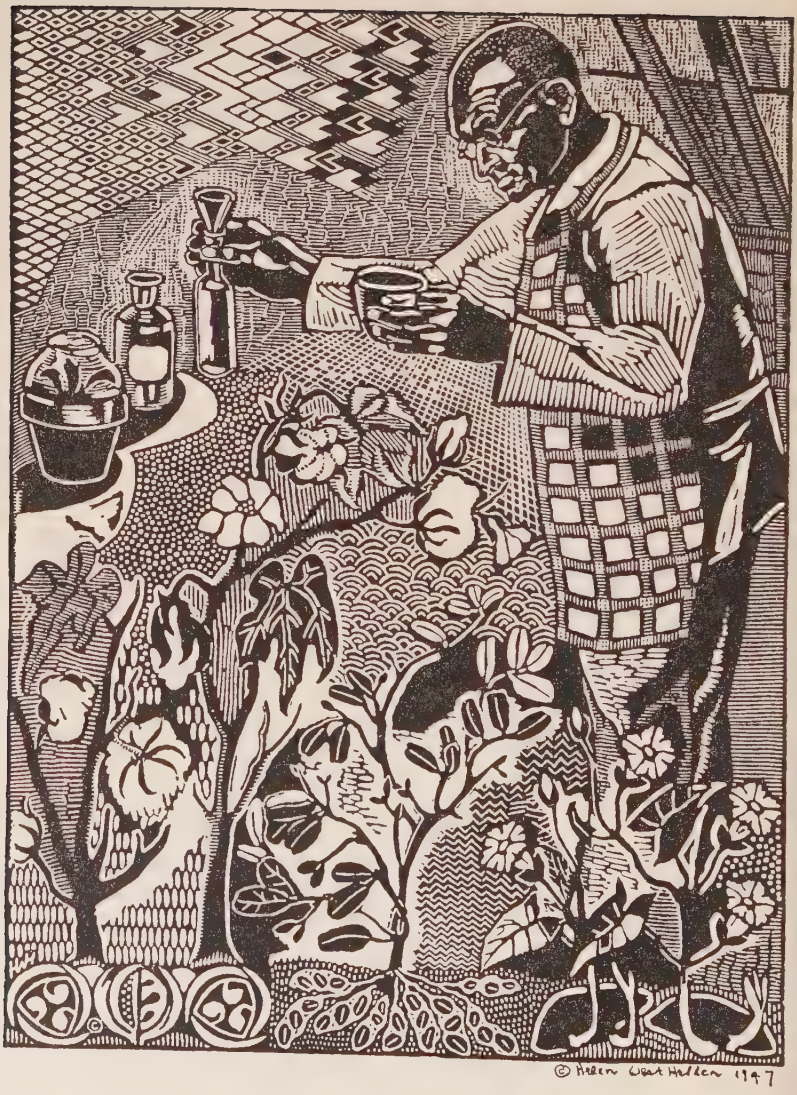
A supreme graphic craftsman, Miss Heller, undeterred by illness or age, never ceased working in the hardest of woods to embody her glowing humanist conceptions. She was an easel painter, mural artist and mosaicist as well, whose production may be seen in the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institute, New York Public Library, Brooklyn Museum, Bryn Mawr and Chicago Municipal Colleges, the Neponsit Hospital and the collection of Graphic Art of the Western Hemisphere sponsored by the International Business Machine Corp. She issued the first all-woodcut book, *Migratory Urge* in 1928 with a poetry text cut in wood. In 1947, Oxford Press, issued her *Woodcuts U.S.A.,* glorifying the labor and thought of the American people.

She was an associate of the National Academy of Design, and a member of the Society of American Graphic Artists and Artists Equity Association. But many artists will remember her best walking in May Day parades with the contingent of the Artists Union, the militant organization whose actions she supported with her inexhaustible energy and whose ideals she bore within her to her last hours.

We herewith reproduce examples of Helen West Heller's woodcuts. They had already appeared in earlier issues of *M&M* but since her recent work is not at the moment available, we felt that we could do her most honor this way.



NEWS PULP



ALABAMA BIOCHEMIST

books in review

"THE REBEL GIRL"

SPEAK MY OWN PIECE, *by* Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. *Masses & Mainstream.* Cloth, $2.75; popular, $1.75.

ELIZABETH Gurley Flynn won the beloved title "The Rebel Girl" in the throes of battle against the exploitation of labor, against bigotry and conformity and for a full realization of the constitutional liberties for which men and women before her had fought, been persecuted and died. She has used it tingly to introduce *I Speak My Own Piece,* her autobiography.

It is therefore not as contradictory it might seem to say that *I Speak My Own Piece* is the voice of militant labor. The credo set forth by is rebellious girl becomes hers as rough association in struggle with oor she learns the realities of the e of the working class and comes realize that struggle is the essence social growth and development.

This autobiography is American story. It is not the story as it is itten for public consumption by ose currying favor with or hired the owners of America's natural resources as their special pleaders. It will not be taught in Yale or Harvard, although were this done it could only be to the profit both of learning and democracy. But the platitudinous phrases about a "free world," so characteristic of history as the falsifiers and racists unfold it, despite our Mississippis and the great conflicts with predatory wealth which mark this twentieth century, are not to be found here. Gurley Flynn truly loves her native land. She discloses its social evils in order that millions may come to understand the drastic remedies called for by this era.

As Gurley Flynn outlines the story of yesterday your understanding of the contemporary scene becomes clearer. What is here is the reality of life for an American woman conscious of her affinity with labor, America's teeming oppressed minorities and terribly exploited foreign born who came to our country believing that here there had been "a new birth of freedom" which excluded none. Here, in language that graphically depicts the raw and bleeding flesh of white as well as black human beings, the sons and daughters of labor and of former slaves,

Gurley Flynn presents her faith in the ultimate victory of the people. Here this magnificent woman reveals that: faith without deeds will work no miracles. How prophetic in the light of today's liberation struggles.

Do you want to know with whose hands and sweat and blood our America was built? Then meet the men who made steel in Pittsburgh, the men who died defending the right to organize and to secure a wage that would guarantee that their children might live. Meet them here. Meet the iron ore miners who opened up the Mesaba Range, "controlled then, as now, by the U.S. Steel Corporation," men who for a starving wage produced the ore that fed the flaming maws of Pittsburgh's steel furnaces, those men who in heat and cold worked at shipping iron ore down through the Lakes, those who loaded and unloaded the ships. Meet the lumber jacks of the West Coast. They are all here.

Do you want to live through those hectic days when "defending the Constitution in Spokane" was almost worth your life and to see Butte, Montana, the stronghold of the Anaconda Copper kings, where "The city of the dead, the cemetery, mostly young miners, was almost as large as the living population"?

You can live through the strike of the textile mill workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, where thousands of Italians, Germans, French-Canadians, Poles, Lithuanians, Russians, Jews—"the melting pot of America"—organized their united front of struggle against all mill owners. You will understand why Debs characterized the position of the mill owners as "a disgrace to American manhood and a crime to civilization." You can follow "the girls' strike" in the sweat shops of New York, where young women "worked fifty-six hours a week in seasonal work, speeded up in dirty fire-traps." Here also is the record of the historic Paterson silk strike against a clique of infamous exploiters.. Here you learn something of the meaning of the term "The life of a strike," as you see the police terror, the strength and courage of the vast majority of the workers, the wavering and the many heartaches, the emergence of splendid leaders and the great joys of the workers in their moments of victory which for them meant a higher living standard and for the people of America a stronger democracy.

If you want to understand how the legal frame-up system, which the paid informer J. Edgar Hoover lauds, is created and used to send labor leaders who cannot be bought to prison or to the electric chair read on. You will see the Big Business interests carry through the frame-up of the innocent Tom

Mooney. You can be a witness of the attempts to frame the heroic leaders of the Western Federation of Miners. Then comes the classic Big Business frame-up. You get a close-up of the most infamous legal murders in American history. Gurley Flynn deals exhaustively with the "trial," conviction and the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. Fascinated, you can watch the mounting anti-labor hysteria, see how the venal "free" press operates, prepares the verdict, hear the decision of judges who have been bought and paid for, live through the murderous execution of two innocent men whose "crime" was that they interfered with the way of those lusting for maximum profits.

Here you find a graphic description of the decisive economic, political and social factors and reasoning of militant workers that brought the International Workers of the World (IWW) into being to fight for the interests of labor against those political parties which in that period used control of government to give vast tracts of land to the oil barons, railroad magnates, copper kings and lords of the cattle ranges.

In this book you will meet leaders of these struggles and other great Americans, some of whose names you perhaps never heard before: James Connolly, the Irish socialist speaker and writer, Big Bill Haywood of the Western Federation of Miners, Mother Jones, one of the greatest of America's women labor leaders, Helen Keller, Mary Van Kleeck, the McNamara brothers of Los Angeles, Eugene V. Debs, Tom Mooney, the young Fiorello LaGuardia, James W. Ford, Vincent St. John, Charles Ruthenberg, William Z. Foster, Lincoln Steffens, a host of men and women whose labors and struggles as labor organizers, strike leaders, agitators, defenders of the Bill of Rights. These are the people whose figures are ignored or distorted by the renowned historians. These are people fighting for ". . . an America free from poverty, exploitation, greed and injustice. . . ."

As this story advances you grasp the fact that these seemingly unrelated battles are hung together by the common aims of labor and its supporters. You gain also deeper comprehension of the inseparable unity of constitutional liberty, civil rights and the innate dignity of the human being.

The "rebel girl," a woman of warmth and a loving mother, reveals vignettes of her intimate personal life, of the poverty of home and the call to the streets, the people's parliament, where the needs of labor and the masses of humanity are most vigorously fought. With her you go to union meetings and mass demonstrations which are typically American.

The vastness of America unfolds and the scene shifts here and there. Yet the main theme is always the struggle. There is laughter and tears, but through both there breaks the sounds and the heroic scenes of people struggling for a tomorrow in which the dreams of today will be realized.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn has lived in that era after the rising industrial capitalists using the manpower of northern labor and the farmers abolished slavery for the good of the nation. Then they moved into the tempestuous epoch of the industrial revolution, ruthlessly wasting our raw material resources with the support of legislatures whose arguments had "logic" only for those who had a lust for profits and an insatiable urge for power. The rapid advancement of material wealth hid the monstrous exploitation that robbed the masses of the best fruits of their labor. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn details this story more intimately than it has yet been described by those who have dealt with the rise of America's "economic royalists."

It is through this book that you will come to know of the conspiracy of the official inciters and provokers of force and violence in high places. Here you will glimpse the men for whom force and violence has become a way of politics. The men who maintain two political parties and lavishly reward both.

You will find few Negroes in these pages, for as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn says, ". . . Where the IWW was strong, there were as yet few Negro workers." She has little opportunity to encounter those then fighting for the civil rights of their people. One must certainly deplore this fact for there were Negro stalwarts in that period battling for the extension of American democracy.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn has a profound and powerful answer to the issues through which she has fought. She accepts the Lincoln phrase: "What's good for labor is good for America."

Those who believe that what is "good for General Motors is good for America" should read *I Speak My Own Piece* also. The struggles of labor which it recounts are by no means ended. Nor will there be an end until the fundamental issues out of which these battles arose are resolved by and for the people.

Desperate struggles are fought around Constitutional liberties, civil rights and for human dignity in *I Speak My Own Piece,* and you are there!

This autobiography is at once also a history and a novel. It is a must if you want to see America in the making and take your place on the right side in the struggle.

WILLIAM L. PATTERSON

EPIC OF AMERICAN LABOR

LABOR'S UNTOLD STORY, by Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais. *Cameron and Kahn,* Cloth, $4.75; paper, $2.50.

WHEN labor united into the AFL-CIO, the American working class took a long step toward achieving a greater national and international role. Nobody could deny this obvious fact, though many attempted to discount it or distort it. What did it mean? How did it all come about? Where would it go?

Although the unification of the labor movement took place after the publication of this fascinating and unique book, still these questions are the questions that inform it, run through it, are its central theme. From the very outset of their inquiry into the origin of the American labor movement, the authors state the fact which in today's context has a new and compelling importance: the forces "that have swept the American people into action have been the very forces that have also molded labor."

The thesis therefore is that the "story" of the American labor movement is not to be segregated from American history as a whole. On the contrary, it is the heart of it, the living force which propels everything else: a truth still to be fought for in history as books, and in history as life.

This truth is obviously not accepted by the academic historians, who prefer to describe the struggles of the working class still as a sociological phenomenon untypical, subordinate to the main stream, to be viewed with a mixture of distaste and fear. The authors of this volume take the opposite point of view. The growth of America cannot be understood without understanding the struggles of its workers. True as that was of this country, especially since the Civil War, it is now an overwhelming truth that cannot be ignored.

This means that labor history should be studied and understood not only by "specialists" in the subject, as a subordinate department in history, but by everybody. This book is intended *for everyone who wants to understand American life.*

It sets out to show why, beginning with an explanation of the forces that brought on the Civil War, and then let loose the huge productive forces in the grip of the Robber Barons who proceeded to strip the country bare. One of the most fascinating aspects of this book is the way in which the authors show us how

thoroughly, ruthlessly and brutally the American land was stolen from the people by as choice a band of assorted cutthroats, thieves, murderers as history has ever produced. They bribed Senators wholesale, put up or knocked down Presidents, cut each other's throats, and ended by controlling the greatest combination of wealth the world has ever seen.

To do it, they had to squeeze profits out of people. Since they were in control of national development, they laid the railroads across the bones of the Irish. They mined the coal and buried the Polish workers in the mines. They erected huge mills, and slaughtered Slovaks by the thousands. They burned up men, women and children in sweat shops. They shot them down when they resisted. They slandered them, jailed them, deported them.

The greatest crime of all, in the eyes of Capital, was the astonishing and diabolical attempt by the workingmen to organize in a union of their own choosing so as to protect themselves somewhat against the mad dogs of capitalism. Is "mad dogs" too extreme? Boyer and Morais document exactly one such case—the story of the perhaps insane Franklin B. Gowen, King of the Reading Valley, who framed with the help of the Pinkerton spies, the Irish miners of Pennsylvania, known incorrectly as the "Molly Maguires," sent them to their death and then some time later, a defeated man himself, he put a bullet through his head. But the evil was done. The miners union for a time was shackled.

This book is full of pen-portraits of such "leaders" of the nation. It also performs another invaluable service. It restores the heroes of the working class to the working class. We see in this book the Debs as he really was, not the Debs watered down to the image of eccentricity—the gallus-snapping mid-western "hell-raiser," more colorful than real. The Debs it "hurts" to remember is the Debs who cried: "The master class has always declared war; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose—especially their lives. . . ."

This Debs they put in jail.

Boyer and Morris give us back a whole gallery of workers' leaders and heroes—William H. Sylvis, who headed the first national labor organization, Big Bill Haywood, Tom Mooney, Sacco and Vanzetti, and many many others in sharp portraits whose composite face is the real American face.

But the book is again not merely a picture gallery of past heroes and villains, though it is this superbly; it digs deeper. It shows how, in defense of itself, the declassed, small

armers, independent frontiersmen nd artisans that Whitman knew so vell, driven by the Robber Barons nto factory slums, organized to de- end themselves. At first the defense vas spontaneous, instinctive: and et in the process of defending *their* nterests, they found themselves orced to champion the interests of he Negro people, of the women, the oreign-born, of all those exploited y the small ruling class with its grip n the economic power of the na- ion. A great truth struggled to free self. It was that the American na- ion would find itself not through apital, but through labor.

The importance of this book lies n the way in which the authors trace ne drama of the beginning of this uth, the stages of its unfolding, ow it revealed itself to the consci- usness of the laboring masses, how resistibly it forced itself to the reground as the basic truth of his- ry, of our history, of all history.

The authors show therefore how turally and inevitably the question socialism arises in the labor move- ent. If labor is destined to be the ling class—if even the most or- nary worker feels in his bones that is posture of worker VS. capital nnot endure forever—then how is e change to take place?

There are a variety of answers to is question. Among those who of- r an answer are the Communists, and it is to the credit of the authors that they show the role of Communists within the labor movement as an inevitable, and indeed irrepressible current whose sources are American, whose roots are in American life. Agree with them or disagree with them, in any case they cannot be torn out of America. Attempts to do it have been disastrous. Tracing this in the various labor struggles, the authors show, to take one instance, how the correct approach to this question resulted in the great leap forward represented by the CIO; how the contrary approach resulted in the attempts to shackle, dismember and disarm labor, as illustrated by the Taft-Hartley and other repressive anti-labor laws.

Intertwined with this great truth, the authors make another important contribution. They give us a documented and carefully analyzed picture of the cold-war growth, its extremely dangerous effects upon labor, and the American people as a whole. They show how this "war" was brought about, and labor's role in it; they marshal overwhelming material to prove how cynically the national interests of the country were manipulated by a handful of finance-capitalists, even to the very verge of plunging the entire world into an atomic slaughter—the logic always implicit in it since its growth to great power.

Nothing in this book is dry. The pages crackle with humor, colorful bits, like this one-line description of the notorious stoolpigeon and frame-up artist, Harry Orchard, who murdered a governor of a state and tried to frame Haywood and Pettibone by means of it: "He made a practice of never examining his own thoughts too closely, for after all he didn't want to spy on himself and what he didn't know of his plans he couldn't tell."

The writing is uniformly fine, and at times reaches a lyrical peak, which attests to the deep feeling with which this "untold" story comes from the authors. In a sense this book is also a cry to the people—to the American people, workers first of all—to look at themselves and their proud history, to take heart in their power, to have faith in their destiny. "They knew there were great battles ahead and some dark days. But beyond the darkness they could glimpse the splendid light of a bright new day. And they had 'this consolation' that 'the harder the sacrifice, the more glorious the triumph.'"

A book of hope and courage.

PHILLIP BONOSKY

Letters:

More on Marty

Paddy Chayefsky's movie-TV play "Marty" has been the subject of lively discussion among our readers since the appearance of a review of Chayefsky's book of TV plays by V. H. F. in our August, 1955, issue. An article on "Marty" by Milton Howard also appeared in our October issue. We print below two letters expressing the general tenor of the opinion in the clash of views.

Editors, M & M:

Everybody, I take it, is jumping up and down over "Marty." But maybe the "Marty" provoking these plaudits is nothing at all. Everywhere is desperation and loneliness, and how enormously attractive a plain man can be when he's up there on a big theatre screen saying "I'm lonely ma, I'm lonely." Who doesn't suffer from this national disease? Who won't lend an emphatic ear to some fat fellow, looking like everybody's fat relative, yipping away about his loneliness—and with a familiar casualness in his diction?

What did Paddy Chayefsky write about anyway? How hard it is to make a buck? How harrowing it is to meet the time payments on time?

he problems on the job, of the job, ising babies, educating children, eading, writing, living? No. And et these were the problems that ould have intruded into the story f "Marty." If "Marty's" appeal lies his ordinariness, financial and hysical, his appeal rests on his kin-ip with almost everyone. But as arfully lonely as this population is is also beset by this multiplicity f problems that are part of every ve tale no matter how diminutive. There were no charges leveled gainst anything or anyone, directly by implication in "Marty." Mr. oward finds social reflection, but s eye has become entangled in his vn wants, in his exuberance to hold to the "Marty" type and not let fly away. But turning the cheek and ling in the voids with what should ve been but wasn't won't start a ossoming of the common man in V or the movies. Approbation of is half-baked dialogue doesn't mean at subsequent writers will sidetrack e "I'm lonely ma" palaver and start tting meat on their characteriza-ns. They will write this easy audi-ce identification stuff, harp on mple non-political themes that use the emotions quickly and thout thought. And having success-ly squeezed tears of bitter identi-tion from their audiences they will p rewards from the very sources t should flay them—the Progres-es, who are just so damn grateful for a crumb of ordinariness they won't demand the truth. Perhaps the critiques will come against those less artful than Chayefsky, against those who cannot help but put a literary foot in their mouth, but gratefulness for this manna, this "Marty," should not bottle up the progressive opinion now.

Mr. Howard dished out a lot of prose about the horror of the dance hall as a breeding ground of social relationships, but that wasn't Chayefsky. The Chayefsky dance hall was unpainted, a background where people danced but a woman didn't, and she cried, and the place had a nice band and a quiet crowd and decent tables, and who doesn't know and accept such places. Where by inference, inclination, inflection was the repulsiveness of such commercial conviviality shown? And what of the quote of the dialogue between the two mothers? The despair of the woman who prepares herself, just through motherhood, for an ultimate life of usefulness is a concern in almost everyone's home. To repeat this ubiquitous wail without leading to solutions is to gossip. And Chayefsky has an admitted keen ear for the likes of this gossip.

So what else was there to "Marty"? Something good? Oh yes. These characters were poor honest folk neither slandered nor sullied. Chayefsky did not say a great deal that wanted saying but he most assuredly re-

frained from that slanderous characterization, that libelous portrait of the common man that has been a part of most every movie I can remember seeing. His characters were neither brutes nor sadist nor fools. And because he chose to be inoffensive though ineffectual I am grateful to him.

It is not the imitators of Chayefsky who will do the debating about his worth, for gold has been struck and the mother lode goes deep into American society. What joy to envision all the simple lonely folksies who will be unlonelied in 60 minutes in TV and for hours in the movies. And it is not likely Progressives will be making the debates. Because being good true unorthodox thinkers they nest with the common man even if he be just a shadow. The languid audiences, expecting nothing and getting what they expect from the social sterility of all the "Marty's" that are and that are yet to be spawned, will make no debates either. Indeed, there *are* no provocations for thought about the state of our lives in these "Marty's." This should not be!

S. MILLER

Editor, M&M:

We should like to take issue with a piece entitled "TV: Electronic Bard," signed V. H. F., which appeared in the August *M & M,* and which purported to be a review or criticism of the newly published collection of Television Plays by Paddy Chayefsky.

"None of the six pieces," states VHF, "are interesting as literature, having neither theme, depth nor character nor any real mark of writing skill." After this blast, he continues, "Mr. Chayefsky's talent is like an air-conditioning unit in August which has not been plugged in. Without electricity, Mr. Chayefsky's produce is close to nothing." Then our critic admits, "Yet, electronically, all of this nothing has brought TV some of its better moments," . . . a concession he does not explain in the light of his general comments.

While it is true that Chayefsky falls short of a basic understanding of social forces affecting the psychology of people, he does project many positive qualities in his characters. Before we point them out, it is important to consider the manner in which VHF presents the substance and plots of "Marty" and "The Bachelor Party," to take two of the better known plays. He sums up the plot of "The Bachelor Party" in a flat and cynical manner reminiscent of H. L. Mencken's allusion to "The Boobery." He ascribes to Charlie a boredom with marriage and a desire to go out on a tear with his fellow-workers. Anyone who saw this play would know that Charlie's boredom stemmed from the monotony

f his job and the pressure of in-ufficient wages. . . .

One of the most potent aspects f Chayefsky's work is precisely his wareness of the profound social eed that people have for one an-ther and this is certainly the theme f "Marty" and "The Bachelor Party." f course, it is true that Chayefsky eals with symptoms and not with uses and it is to this degree that s work fall short of greater signif-ance.

As for Chayefsky's Freudian pref-es to the published plays: it seems at both VHF as well as Chayefsky ate that Freudianism is not inherent the plays. The creative human-n of the plays themselves is not fected by these Freudian after-oughts. His weakness, however, s in his subjective treatment of s characters as he sees them in the ntemporary milieu.

While Chayefsky does point up e basic goodness of men and eates empathy between the observer d the characters, an understanding ich leads to action within the en-onment is omitted. Consequently, ere can be no change or develop-nt either in the characters or their vironment. This is because Chay-ky does not seem to be aware the unity of the past, the present d the future of his characters ich results in his situations having causality and no future. They boxed completely in the present because the author seems to lack the historical sense. Hence his characters do not face up to the cause of their dilemmas but are fatally caught up in their personal psychology. Since there is no way out, there is, therefore, no place for heroism or nobility. The only virtues permitted his characters are doggedness, holding on and tears. Their plight is pathetic but not tragic. . . .

We are generally more ready to say what we positively disagree with than to try to suggest an alternative. In these mid-twentieth century times, it is essential for a writer to grasp the process of becoming. Reality is never the same—but today its rate of change is faster. There is something in the man and something in the events, and both are aspects of the same truth—the interpenetrating process of becoming. His responses to his environment—and his preceding awareness, determined by his past—makes up his consciousness. Knowingly or not, he changes his environment during each transaction with it, which also changes him.

A man lives in a country, in a city, in a pattern of relationships, surrounded by events that are happening—war, jobs, politics, religion, unions, machines, etc., and men for and against him. And with all this, he may hardly know why it is so. Or he may have illusory concepts concerning them. But it is the obligation of the author to know the

general laws and the specific effects on his characters and situations. He should be aware that motives, feelings and desires arise from the movement of social relations. He does not merely reflect them like a mirror, but concretely, materially.

A character may feel deep within himself the tensions of laws, jobs, morals . . . tensions that give rise to values, concepts and actions. New events disturb his complex of consciousness and his established habits arising out of his place in society and impel him to new thoughts, action and change. The future is stubbornly tugging at him, even if he does not know its drag by name. The character, concerned with his problem, may reason crudely in relation to its solution. Or he may depend upon his past thinking patterns and is mixed up and self-contradictory, but nevertheless, he acts wiser than he has in the past because of the pull of the future on the present. Somehow, he stumbles forward towards tomorrow, often misled or obfuscated by selfish men, but ultimately led on to the right track by the facts of history and by men who can interpret them truthfully. This is the responsibility of the writer to his audience, to himself and to his craft.

As recent history has shown, men are proving that they are learning to change the world and consequently, themselves. What Chayefsky shows us to some degree, is that men are molded by circumstances, but he does not indicate that men may also mold circumstances. That is to say, neither the characters nor the observers are given a comprehension of the nature and the compelling necessities of the circumstances. Therefore, the characters react solely on the psychological plane as if this were the only reaction possible in a pre-ordained and unchanging world.

Literature which attempts to reflect life truthfully, that is, realistically, must, we believe, in some way reflect the basic contradictions of our own times. While these contradictions need not necessarily be known immediately by the characters or the observers, it is essential that they be known by the writer, for it is this factor that determines his form and content. It is this insight on the part of the writer, and his ability to transmit to the reader through the learning process which affords the keenest aesthetic experience of creative writing.

We believe that Chayefsky, at this point of his career, merits the praise accorded his work and that with deepened social insight to buttress his fine talent, he will achieve a maturity that will be reflected in his creative development.

G. and A. MILLER

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SAMUEL SILLEN, Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 13th day of October, 1955.

MANUEL LICHTENSTEIN
Notary Public, State of New York, No. 03-2354800
(My commission expires March 30, 1957)

(Seal)