Mainstream

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THE SALT OF FREEDOM

CHARLES HUMBOLDT

> *Timon will to the woods, where he shall find*
> *The unkindest beast more kinder than mankind.*
> Act IV, 1

SINCE OUR editorial invitation to discussion did not exclude the editors themselves, I should like to take advantage of the implicit permission to comment on the article by "Timon" which appeared in our August number. The issue raised therein—based on a consideration of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Mandarins*—is one of the most crucial of our time, as many have known, some claimed to know, and others are learning for the first time. *Is intellectual freedom compatible with social commitment?* The question has a somewhat indirect but pertinent corollary; to what degree is personal liberty nullified by the exercise of authority over the individual? Neither of these dilemmas, as Timon calls them, is academic and he has raised them in a briskly provocative manner. And where I have qualms about his formulation, I broach them in order to share them with him.

For the idea, like the fact, of freedom is an extraordinarily baffling one. Through ancient slavery, millions were deprived of it, so that others benefiting could lead the way to greater freedom—a result they neither desired nor foresaw. When the English barons forced Magna Carta upon King John in 1215, the free men whose rights they were defending were themselves, not their bound serfs, and helping them was the Church whose heaven-fixed art was the image of earthly subordination. The tree of bourgeois liberty *was* watered by the blood of tyrants while—or but, which do you choose?—the freedom of the bourgeois entrepreneur in England in 1860 was secured and expressed in the following manner:

> "Children of nine or ten years are dragged from their squalid beds at two, three, or four o'clock in the morning and compelled to work for a bare subsistence until ten, eleven, or twelve at night, their limbs wearing away, their frames dwindling, their faces whitening, and their humanity absolutely sinking into a

stone-like torpor, utterly horrible to contemplate. . . . The system . . . is one of unmitigated slavery, socially, physically, morally, and spiritually." (From passages quoted by Marx in his chapter in *Capital* on the working day.)

Yet in the eyes of the factory owner he was merely exercising his right to hire children and the child its right to offer itself for hire. "We declaim against the Virginian and Carolinian cotton-planters," said the *Daily Telegraph,* a newspaper of that time. "Is their black-market, their lash, and their barter of human flesh more detestable than this slow sacrifice of humanity which takes place in order that veils and collars may be fabricated for the benefit of capitalists?" Bravo, cried those champions of human freedom, the Southern slaveowners. Our liberty (to traffic in slaves) may be detestable, but it is not as bad as theirs. Nevertheless, that liberty had to give way to a greater one, Emancipation, and the slaveowner might even say that he was no longer a free man. Then, when in a certain country, namely the Soviet Union, the capitalist lost his inalienable claim to buy labor power, it was demonstrated in lecture rooms and from pulpits that the worker was deprived of the inestimable privilege of selling that commodity, albeit at some loss. It is an ironic sign of the widening circle of freedom that those in power find it important to prove what is obviously false: that all men are equally free, rich and poor, employers and workers, judges and judged, bureaucrats and citizens-on-the-street. Only by relieving men of the responsibility that freedom entails could the fascists soften them and make them fear freedom as an evil.

Another trouble with freedom was that, like progress, it could not be more than a pre-condition for happiness. Often, the pains of the effort to achieve it made men, and women, too, wonder if it was *that* desirable. Others, loosed at last, found themselves confronted with problems which, because they were new and unexpected, seemed to them worse than their enslavement. In one sense, the tragic view of life is a luxury by-product of the sufferings of those who fought for liberty. Strangely, it is not often held by those who bore the most. The strong, for whom struggle and life are one, see failure and success as identical imperatives. Nevertheless, it was narrow of us to be contemptuous of the tragic view which, even if it lacked an ultimate perspective, paid tribute to the travail of mankind.

BUT THE most disturbing paradox of freedom is that no amount of socially-wrested freedom has so far guaranteed men against the flagrant infringement of personal liberty. The slave, the serf, the men

of the Third Estate, the worker had no inherent right to higher rank; their new positions were stormed once the material conditions and social circumstances made victory feasible. Even then the matter was not settled. The foothold had not only to be extended; it had to be preserved. Every setback—the most minor as well as the most terrible—might throw the individual, or thousands and millions, back to a state of being much worse than that prevalent in the earliest stages of mankind. It was not Stone Age man who thought up Buchenwald, and the torture and self-implication of prisoners. If now, standing as we do so close to the threshold of a truly human existence, we can still be confronted with the essence of inhumanity, despair is, indeed, our business, though it is not our business to despair. In Yeats' poem, *The Second Coming,* there are the lines:

> *The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere*
> *The ceremony of innocence is drowned;*
> *The best lack all conviction, while the worst*
> *Are full of passionate intensity.*

We can, if we wish, read them as a hostile prophecy. It would be wiser to hear them as an urgent warning. Does this mean that we renounce our revolutionary heritage for the sake of some nebulous timeless values? On the contrary, we want to insure the continuity and basic content of the struggle for freedom throughout its varied and even contradictory aspects. That is, I believe, what Timon has in mind when he says that only individual Communists can answer the questions proposed by Simone de Beauvoir and himself. For only with the advent of socialism does the universal freedom he desires become realizable at all. Or, as he might phrase it, *if* at all.

THE RUB in Timon's argument is that one must construe his liberty as so unconditional that it is literally "out of this world." First, he tells us, "there may be two systems but there is only one humanity." It is also true, and since the class struggle has not yet been left behind, perhaps more useful to keep in mind that there may be one humanity but there are certainly two systems and at least two classes. As a matter of fact, it is only through the successful waging of the class struggle that a concept of humanity was arrived at which meant what it said: all human beings.

Timon suspects the struggle. Is there not the danger that, pursuing it, the individual may have to renounce what he most desires? In the context of his thesis, one can only interpret his quoting of the inscription at Thermopylae as satiric:

Traveller, take this word to the men of Lakadaimon:
We who lie buried did what they told us to do.

The Spartans would not have appreciated the ambiguity, nor would they have been able to philosophize that, though there might be Greeks and Persians, Leonidas and Xerxes, there was, after all, only one humanity.

Timon abhors the passage in Luke where Jesus tells the crowd that no one can be his disciple unless he hates his own father and mother, etc., and even his own life. He asks, is it true that Communists live by this principle? Setting aside the question for the moment, let us consider the passage. One cannot altogether accept Kautsky's speculation in *Foundations of Christianity* that it expresses primitive Christian hatred for the family and a desire to substitute for the old family ties a new communal family based on a community of consumption. Would not the phrase, "his own life," be superfluous here? The implication seems rather to be a revolutionary one, as borne out by an earlier passage (*Luke xii,* 51-53), and one even stronger in Matthew which begins "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword."

We may presume that the first Christians did not necessarily hate their fathers and mothers, etc., but more than likely the Jewish resistance to Rome caused many adherents to break with their families and to sacrifice domestic calm to the demands of their cause. It also made them risk crucifixion and being thrown to the lions. This fate, though inflicted upon them, was no less voluntarily assumed as a condition of their conflict than was the distress of a rupture with those they loved. What would they have thought of the quite reasonable proposition that there might be Jews (or Christians) and Romans, pro-consuls and prophets, but there was just one humanity? Could the men of the peasant wars, the Puritans, the American or French revolutionists, the abolitionists, the anti-fascists take this abjuration seriously? And yet they, most of them, would not have had to defer to us in the degree of their humanity.

To use an aggravated example: was it right for John Brown, along with millions of others, to want to see the slaves free? Yes. Was it natural for their owners to try to keep them in bondage? Yes. Was it inescapable that blood be shed over the difference? The question must make Timon unhappy for he would like to say: it did not have to be. And he must deplore Brown's apocalyptic humor. He is like the old rationalists for whom the story of mankind (here, of freedom) is a movie of cruel and idiot sequences. Why can we not approach freedom cautiously and quietly? Well, we could if we saw history as a branch of geology and had the patience of rocks. Then, where is liberty?

We cannot eat our cake
Nobody bothered to bake.

TIMON speaks of the phenomenon of intellectual ferment, "brutalized by politics." One might as soon say, brutalized by living. A writer's wits are sharpened by whatever is available to him in his experience. This area is, of course, immense; we know from Shakespeare, if no other, how huge it can be. His choice of central personages and key conflicts is another matter. These are determined by social—and political—factors which may not be "universal" but which are of profound concern in his milieu and to the writer. Their aesthetic value consists in their being, not the subject matter, necessarily, but part of the implicit content of his work. They may also determine what is absent, what he cannot say, due to immediate tactical causes, or decides against, consciously or unconsciously, for the same reasons that color his view of life and social order, and his dramatic or narrative hierarchy. Why should one not call this choice and limitation a result of brutalization? They are surely far from being quite "free" acts. As a matter of fact, they were often conditioned by a political atmosphere in which the most severe restraints were placed upon liberty. Shakespeare, for example,

> ". . . belonged to a generation of Englishmen who lived contentedly under the jurisdiction of Star Chamber and the Queen's commissioners. The agents of the Privy Council were ubiquitous and their authority unquestioned. Her Majesty's Government determined at discretion with whom her subjects were in a state of war or peace, what they should read or hear, how they should worship God, how and with whom they should trade. The man who in a Yorkshire tavern or from a pulpit in Devon uttered lewd words—which was the Privy Council's official description of any criticism of the established order—did so at his own risk and peril. . . . Each was content to abide by Her Majesty's pleasure to the loss of his goods, dignities, liberties or even his head. And if you should be condemned to a traitor's death, you thanked God and blessed the sovereign." (John Palmer's *Political Characters of Shakespeare.*)

Obviously, it was something other than callousness that kept Shakespeare from creating a great issue of these evils and making the victims or rebels against them his protagonists. The people of London argue their case fairly often in his plays, and what Lear learns about the world of window'd raggedness is essential to his self-realization. Shakespeare

had no illusions about the personalities of nobles and kings. If anyone knew there was one humanity, it was Shakespeare. Then why is he not the champion of simple, unconditional liberty? Because he, too, had been "brutalized by politics." He shared the determination of most of the people of his time that a relative stability under sanctified monarchs was preferable to the thrills of the Wars of the Roses. If certain liberties, no matter how precious, had to be sacrificed for the sake of rescue from the bondage of feudal chaos, then he accepted the deprivation for the sake of the release.

Milton, on the other hand, was "brutalized" by the very issue which Shakespeare would not grasp. As soon as the monarchy, which could not sufficiently shake off its feudal inheritance, incurred the enmity of the bourgeois revolutionary forces which had supported it, it resorted to repression, religious and political. Immediately the divine right of kings found itself impressively countered by the sanctity of private property. And now "sweet Liberty," hardly a lost cause, could become the theme of partisan poetry and the argument of pamphlets timeless enough to be read today.

Brutalization by politics, if characteristic of our time, is then certainly not unique to it. (One could speak of Blake, Shelley, Byron, Courbet, Daumier, etc., but why labor the point?) What is unique, as it is related in *The Mandarins,* is the subject of the discussion: the nature of the revolution toward which some intellectuals looked with hope and love and others with fear and even hate. (And still others with hope and fear.)

THE OCTOBER Revolution was a working class undertaking and the political form established by it was primarily a working class state in which the workers, in alliance with the poorer peasantry, were to play a dominant role. The ultimate objective of that rule was its own eventual elimination, and the coming into being of a classless society whereby the administration of things would replace the control of persons. Not only would all exploitation have ceased, but no one would, within common sense reason, be restrained in thought, word or action. This latter aspect was, of course, most attractive to the great number of intellectuals who resented any domination of man by man and whose social vision might be loosely described as philosophical anarchist.

There were, however, some hitches to the support of generally sympathetic intellectuals. One was related to their petit-bourgeois orientation. (I use the phrase in a purely descriptive sense.) Understandably ill at ease with workers, whose experience was alien to them, they were poorly

equipped to come to grips with their lives and thinking. And now these people were suddenly revealed to them as the inheritors of the world's culture! It is no wonder that many were tempted to accept the theory that the working class, in its deprived state and given its lack of cultural opportunity, is incapable of creating a profound art. (There is also considerable opinion in fastidious circles that progressive and class conscious writers are perhaps less perceptive of the subtler shades of life than their bourgeois colleagues, having bought their ideology and devotion at the expense of their sensitivity.) Perhaps when the working class has itself been negated in a fully developed communist society its inheritors will attain a *weltanschauung* adequate to the demands of great art. But such an art will inevitably transcend its present aim, which is to record the working class condition.

One need not here dispute the unfounded premise of this theory: the arbitrary assumption that the consciousness of those who labor in field or factory is more limited, if not less interesting, than the awareness of other classes. The mention of a few names alone might call it into question. Have not Gorky, Lu Hsun, Nexo, Barbusse, O'Casey, Dreiser, Chaplin, Aragon, Laxness, Sholokhov and Amado mirrored just this consciousness? Yet the undesired awkwardness persisted, and can see why the intellectuals who in their anxiety upheld such a thesis would hope for the speediest transition from socialism to communism. They feared for art as much as for freedom.

A further source of tension between the worker and the average intellectual stems from the difficulty the latter has in understanding the nature of working class ethics. His milieu is most often middle or lower middle class. The problems of this class, like those of other classes, arise out of its specific relation to concrete material conditions; but these are frequently hidden from it, either because of its half-way, compromising position in society, or through its habits of evasion and rationalization. Therefore, it experiences such problems as subjective conflicts: family quarrels, incompatibilities, pangs of conscience, unexpected and frightful disillusionments. No matter how involved in turmoil and crisis, the middle class does not suffer, as a matter of course and constantly, the blunt facts of life as the very meat and drink of its existence. For it, the kingdom of necessity is ruled from a throne behind a curtain. And so the choices made by individuals seem to it not to be determined objectively in the main, as are matters of life and death, but rather to bear witness to a victory of conscience over the evil side of man, or vice versa. This holds true for most progressive writers as well. Devoted to the working class, supporting unreservedly its struggle against economic

and social oppression, they will still see that struggle, insofar as it affects the individual worker, primarily in terms of the moral choices that confront him. Whether to scab because one's children are hungry, or to stay on the picket line until victory or conclusive defeat; whether to betray one's comrades to avoid torture, or to suffer death hiding their identity; whether to uphold one's dignity as a Negro in individual clashes with racists, or to subordinate personal hopes and ambitions to the fight for the liberation of one's people—such have commonly been the central conflicts represented by the progressive novelist.

MOVING as these themes are, they do not seem typical nor do they quite accurately represent the condition and ethic of the working class. I would say, for example, that the salient significance of novels as diverse as Bonosky's *Burning Valley* and Lawrence's *The Seed* lies in their recognition that such moral crises, for all their depth and intensity, are still only reflections of a struggle even more ruthless, where individual honor must be, and generally is, taken for granted and where spiritual choices are inexorably subject to practical decisions. (This might account for the fact that the revelations of the XXth Congress, by which the Soviet Union and the Communist Parties of the world were thought to be hopelessly compromised, did not destroy the confidence of millions of workers or colonial peoples in Socialism. The parties most shaken, like the British and American, are those which are not only small but least integrated with the working class.)

The foregoing (two paragraphs) constitutes a generalization to which there are exceptions in both camps, and should not be used dogmatically. Furthermore, it does not call for any quick assumptions of a position, "moral" or "realist," on either side. We ought to have learned enough by now to look for contradictions even where they seem a priori unthinkable. Yet I believe the distinction is valid in the main, and helps to explain the intellectuals' suspicion of an ethic which insists that an action, to be judged, must be seen in the historical and social contexts which give it meaning, for good or bad.

The irony is that if they were wrong philosophically, their instincts were amply justified. The defect of an abstract morality lies in its absolute nature, its denial of its mundane origins, and its refusal to admit the qualifications that necessity forces upon human conduct and political life. But even such a morality, like a self-contained arithmetical system, is attached ultimately to the everyday world of deeds and motives. On the other hand, as we have seen, a more concrete, realistic morality is not invulnerable to corruption, particularly if it should be encased in a

tyrannical and bureaucratic framework. Then all acts, even the most heinous, are justified by being placed in a context which they do not fit, such as national security, proletarian discipline, and the like. All crimes, no matter how disgusting, are provided some brazen rationalization by hypocrites who believe that what is good for them is good for party and country. Most insidious is the way in which this degeneration acquires rigidity. High policy is brought to bear on the most minute foibles of the individual: his sex life, his taste in clothes, his excessive smoking, all are examined with a righteous lack of sympathy. It seems as though we had come full circle to a code even more inconsiderate than the one we had criticized for its lack of realism.

State power is, of course, the means by which such evils are consolidated, and the citizens of a socialist state must be constantly vigilant for signs of ossification, just because economic and political control is so centralized. The intellectual is especially concerned with the dangers of socialist bureaucracy. He feels he may not be able to get around it, if for no other reason than that his means of living and his outlets for expression—publishing houses, theatres, walls for murals, orchestras, etc. —are completely in control of those who administer the instruments of production in the name of the people. Whereas, in a bourgeois democracy, even one suffering such encroachments upon civil liberties as the United States, he feels he can still take advantage of rivalries and contradictory currents among the ruling groups, as well as the old system of checks and balances instituted because of the need to compromise the differences of opposing classes. It is significant that the intellectuals of Poland and Hungary played leading roles in insisting upon a radical extension of personal and intellectual freedom there. One may expect to see similar demands raised with relatively equal success in other socialist countries and in communist parties throughout the world. Timon's article is authentically symptomatic.

BUT TIMON clouds the issue, it seems to me, when he projects the vulgarest version of the Marxist concept of freedom and then calls socialist morality into question. "Freedom, it is said, is the recognition of necessity, and the necessity of the party line (equated with history) in which the Communist finds full expression of his daily life, *is his freedom.*" (Timon's emphasis.) Now, no matter what is said by no matter how many opportunists, neither Marx nor Engels, nor Hegel before them, would have countenanced the sly conversion of a description of man's relation to nature and society into an excuse for parodying the principle of men's conduct toward one another. Battles over a quotation

are generally forlorn, but it is unfair to make a theory responsible for its distortion. In the present context, necessity cannot be made to mean expediency. Natural necessity is no more nor less than causality; man is free to the degree that he understands the causal interrelations of nature, expressed in the laws of physics, chemistry, biology, and the like. Since these laws are not arbitrary constructs or metaphors, they are *necessary* recognitions or reflections of external reality. Freedom is the knowledge of reality.

The same holds for social necessity, or the systems of causes that obtain in every sphere of human relations, from political economy to psychology. Men are free to the degree that they can profit from a shared consciousness of the laws that govern economic relations, political forms and human behavior. The common awareness of these laws has obviously been retarded by the active intervention of those whose class interests made them hostile to the dissemination of knowledge, and also because certain laws of social development are not constant. The economic and social realities, and therefore the laws of slave society are different from those of feudalism; the laws of capitalist society are hardly those of socialism, nor the latter those of communist society. And it is only in this last stage that men will be able to apply freely what they know. The discovery of such laws is surely a science; but Timon claims that the recognition of necessity as practiced by Marxists has not earned such a status because its practitioners are so often wrong. But every science is a record of trials and errors, negations and negations of negations. And medicine is a science even if most doctors and druggists are far from scientists.

Actually, Timon's protest is directed against necessity itself. He wants nothing to do with that monster whose other name is reality. Yet, if the virtues "painfully acquired" during the German occupation of France are abandoned, and peace "opens up the old wounds," is this merely a personal disaster multiplied, a psychological phenomenon of a lonely multitude; or is it that the war of national liberation has given way to the resumption of the class struggle which no amount of good will can halt? If it is true that "everything sensitive and delicious in life" is crushed in the name of such abstractions as the state, is that because the state is really an abstraction? For thousands of years men have known upon their backs that it was nothing of the sort; and now, under socialism, the state is still the means by which power is exercised, though this time on the whole against the diminishing class of exploiters. And it is still the only way a class divided society has for achieving the freedom which Timon calls for.

Timon may assert that all power corrupts, socialist power as well. I would agree that we have not yet determined how the power of persons can be adequately coped with even under socialism, though this has become a great question for the communist parties of all countries. But whether power corrupts or not (and I see no reason to accept the warning as a dogma), it is fantasy to expect that any socialist nation will, *or should,* raze the defenses that insure its existence, whether in remorse or noble resolution. And if, in the future, a people does accomplish its peaceful transition to socialism, it will only succeed because others have come by it harder.

Slaveowner, baron, or capitalist, the oppressor was never fastidious. Those who cry war do not shed tears for us. But they want us to weep for them. They want us to be the hearts of their heartless world. Shall we listen to them, or to Brecht?

Think—
When you speak of our weaknesses,
Also of the dark time
That brought them forth. . . .

Even anger against injustice
Makes the voice grow harsh. Alas, we
Who wished to lay the foundations of kindness
Could not ourselves be kind.

But you, when at last it comes to pass
That man can help his fellow man,
Do not judge us
Too harshly.

Is that unprincipled shrewdness, or is it recognition?

"If the present crisis among Marxists should end merely in a shakeup which perpetuates the mentality and fears of inflexible men who have created the situation, then Socialism may indeed come to this world as other societies have come, bringing enough happiness and enough pain, but not the promise and the intellectual spirit which was its challenge to every political economy before it." How freshly welcome this sounds after the naive, if not complacent, assumptions of the not too distant past. Then we were sure that the mental ruins of the dying world could never clutter the heads of those who gave it the fatal stroke. We

thought we saw men made angels by inhabiting the paradise they had still to build. We imagined leaders ruling reluctantly, shy of the power thrust upon them. We dreamt we had found a practical way to banish Old Scratch. More sober now, we listen twice to Timon's appeal, which we would once have discarded as the voice of malice.

And yet, how remote what he says must seem to so many millions! Even I, living as I do in a country whose matter-of-course comforts would seem distant as stars to the masses of Africa or Latin America, cannot help thinking of Gregers Werle in *The Wild Duck*. Gregers is preparing to "tell all" to the friend who he has just discovered is not the father of the child he believed to be his. The "cynical" Dr. Relling, foreseeing the tragedy, begs him to reconsider his inflexible resolve.

Relling (to Gregers): Is it rude to ask what you really want in this house?

Gregers: To lay the foundations of a true marriage.

Relling: So you don't think Ekdal's marriage is good enough as it is?

Gregers: No doubt it is as good as most marriages, worse luck. But a true marriage it has yet to become.

True socialism it has yet to become. Then a friend reminds me that the majority of mankind could not now read what Timon or I have written, *in any language,* while the Soviet Union has eliminated illiteracy in one generation. He also calls to my attention an article which appeared this year in the *India Quarterly,* a periodical published by the Oxford University Press for the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi. The article is by a non-communist visitor to the Soviet Union, S. V. Krishnamoorthy Rao, Deputy Chairman of the Upper House of the Indian Parliament. He went to Tadzhikistan where, before the Revolution, "there were no industries; the peasants were poverty stricken; there was no medical aid and witches were the only doctors; only half of one percent of the population were literate and none of them were women, and there were no cultural establishments." Now the Republic produces "in one week what they produced in the year 1930." There is total literacy of men and women. There are 2,700 schools, 33 technical schools and 10 colleges. The Firdausi Library contains a million and a half volumes. There are "400 cinemas and 700 medical institutions, 170 hospitals and 500 polytechnics, 11 sanatoria, 15,000 physicians and more than 35,000 nurses. . . . Trachoma, smallpox, malaria, and plague have been completely eradicated. Women are completely emancipated."

One must have lived in a colonial or semi-colonial country to know what this means in human terms, what a sea of grief has been dried up. Or in a world in which there are many regions where the average life

span is 28 years, one must surely realize, again in human terms, what it means for the Soviet Union to have already achieved a lower death rate than in the United States: 8.6 against 9.2 per thousand. Meanwhile, the sovereign nation of Peru, whose own civilization was revolutionized by conquest more than 400 years ago, is said to have a smaller population and an average lower standard of living than when it first tasted the benefits of a feudal-capitalist way of life. And in the capital of another sovereign Latin American nation, 80 per cent of whose economy is in the hands of U.S. monopolies, a doctor writes five successive columns in a leading newspaper to describe how he treated a little girl who, driven by hunger and desperation, had begun to eat her own fingers.

I HOPE Timon will forgive me these statistics and instances. They were not meant to imply an idealistic bias on his part, or even a lack of proportion in his demand for an immediate housecleaning on the Left, even in this and other countries where the creation or revival of a socialist tradition is as pressing as the correction of distortions which have overtaken it. (Not to speak of the evident necessity for changes in personnel, apparatus and ways of working and thinking in most of the socialist countries.) Particularly in places where the Communist Party is small and lacks an adequate mass base, more than its integrity, its very existence is at stake. For such a party to see its problems as primarily organizational, requiring most of all the translation of unity into unanimity, is to become an island off the dear but unattainable shore of one's native land.

Yet Timon's exhortation—I do not say, intention—is ambiguous enough to provide a rationale for friends who are anxious to defer present tasks until the future is guaranteed them. The cry of one child brings a lump to their throats. The daily life of millions is a different colored horse. Though they are not indifferent to it, that calls for meetings, reports, papers, offices and positions, authority, and some discipline. Who will swear that character defects will not topple the whole damned structure of good will? Such friends want an insurance policy against all acts of god and man. Can anyone underwrite it? In any case, insurance policies presuppose a highly developed economy. We have first to create the resources to back them up.

The truth is that *nothing* can be deferred, neither the re-examination of political practices, the halting of official crimes and abuses of authority, the cure of national vanity and prejudice, the insistence on intellectual probity, *nor* the uprooting of a society in which human need stands so enormous that finer moral questions seem dwarfed before it, and one

is almost ashamed at first, not to raise them, but to press them too hard. I cannot help feeling—wrong as it would be to give in to the implied reproach—that even this discussion is a kind of living off the surplus value created by the labor and suffering of countless others whom we will never see. F. O. Matthiessen, who called himself a Christian and a Socialist (though not a Christian Socialist), felt that the October Revolution was justified, not on absolute ideal or religious grounds, but because the Russians "have not deflected from the right of all to share in the common wealth." It is only fair to note that this was written in 1948, two years before his death, but the ground remains and I think he would hold it now, too, in spite of everything we have learnt since.

NEVERTHELESS, the moral quandary of authority is a very grave one. In the Soviet Union its intricacies were neglected, at first due to the exigencies of revolution, war, and internal security, and later because power comes to fit the possessor like a well worn glove—or a well used cane. In the beginning, the need for the state seemed so obvious that no attention was given to the means by which its withering away might be hastened. Afterward, the "forced march" and "sharpened struggle" theories tended to push still further into the background the diminution of state and party rule. Neither individual nor collective attention was exerted on so academic a subject. Finally, the whole matter dropped into the web of bureaucratic interest and the spiders took over.

One need not here detail the methods which Lenin, following Marx and Engels, who based their thinking on the experience of the Paris Commune felt were essential to the transition from Capitalism to Communism and to the breakup of the bureaucratic apparatus. It will suffice to mention as pertinent among them the abolition of official privileges, the reduction of the salaries of *all* servants of the state to workers' wages, and the election and subjection of all officials to recall at any time. These changes were not to take place in a balloon; they were to have an economic base, but they were intended to be carried out. On the recent measures in the Soviet Union decreeing an extensive decentralization of economic management, the general secretary of the Italian Communist Party, Togliatti, comments:

> "Whether there should be more or less centralization—and hence direction from above—is dictated by the totality of objective conditions; but it determines a greater or lesser degree of peripheral democratic life, the activity and initiative of the masses, and for us the activity of the masses, their effective participation, their

criticism, their control and management of the economic and social organism, are the true signs of democracy."

(Another safeguard against bureaucratic assumption of control might be the training of citizens or members of organizations for administrative functions, with the understanding that they are to be rotated and supplanted by others at given intervals. Also imperative is the implementing of legal rights for the individual, many of which were the fruits of bourgeois democracy.)

It is understood that these and other proposals are subject to modifications of time, place and circumstance, but it is also important to remember that their ultimate goal is less and not greater use of authority, toward the abolition of the state and not its glorification, in short, toward communism, and yes, finally toward anarchy. The word, democracy, then loses its technical sense as a form of bourgeois rule, however liberal, and acquires its popular meaning as the practice of the people's will.

Such considerations are more than blueprint day dreaming. In this country they should be guides to the character of contacts between all revolutionary and progressive minded people, and of these with all other Americans. No more arrogance (or if arrogance is unavoidable, let it be hot, not icy). Political rectitude needs the leavening of human experience, the taste of kindness (as well as the compassionate understanding of how hard it sometimes is to come by), the quality of common joy, the sense of a solidarity that is difficult but not unattainable. One should at least try, from time to time, to resemble the future one claims to be committed to.

SO HERE WE are back to Timon's question: *is intellectual freedom compatible with social commitment?* I've tried to mull over it throughout my remarks, but now I think it is necessary to affirm what Timon leaves in doubt when he equates the Un-American Activities Committee's asking Arthur Miller whether he thought artists had special privileges with the Communist Party leadership's putting the same question. It is not the same question, if for no other reason than that the Committee does not mean what it says. The Committee pretends to ask whether the artist considers that he should be absolved of civic responsibility. If he says no—as I believe he should—the Committee demands what it really wanted to know: give us the names of. . . . But the imperative hardly follows from the question. It is no special privilege of artists to refuse to be informers; it is no right peculiar to artists to refuse to identify democracy with monopoly capitalism. Such defiance is the privilege,

the right, and the civic duty of everyone, even if the Committee wants him jailed for fulfilling them. The Committee is the criminal for violating them.

The Communist Party's question is distinguished from that of the Committee by its sincerity; mistrust is not the source of Timon's quarrel with it. Why then does he hesitate to answer *no?* Does he feel that an uncommitted artist is absolved of civic responsibility? I don't think so; but that is not his point, for he is concerned with the fate of the creative individual who is politically committed, whether by membership or sympathy. Yet, while I appreciate his anxiety, I do not incline toward the conclusion to which he is tempted: the renunciation of commitment in the higher interest of "freedom." I put the word in quotes because I believe that Timon's freedom isn't what it's blown up to be. And I think his argument is weakened because he does not discriminate between genuine and fruitful commitment and the manner in which many Communist Parties have mishandled their committed intellectuals. Everyone is fallible, but in this area the Parties' fallibility has been excessive, destructive, and avoidable.

Is THE ANSWER, then, to live at every moment "beyond" necessity? I am not sure what this means, and I wish that Timon had made clearer to what degree he accepts or rejects certain existentialist premises. Simone de Beauvoir seems less sanguine than he about such unqualified living. (Her title, *The Mandarins,* is tantalizing, for it hints at less sympathy for the persons of her intellectual milieu than for their dilemma: whether or not to expose the unpalatable features of the Soviet scene when the facts have been given them, for obvious reasons, mainly by enemies of Socialism.) She has, herself—how intentionally, one cannot be sure—provided a suggestive analogy for the public existence of her characters. This is how Timon describes the private life of two of them: "Their relation is based on utmost freedom and mutual respect, a kind of godly father and understanding daughter compact in which each practices adultery on an unrefreshing and random basis. It is proof of their personal liberty and mutual reasonableness." Well, with apologies to fastidious readers, so far so fair. But then comes the disconcerting reservation: "It is also, no doubt, a cause of their daughter's total unhappiness." Now, unless one is an ethical solipsist, one would find it difficult to justify such freedom on principle. That is, unless one claims what is so obvious as to have neither philosophical, social, nor human importance, namely, that an unmarried man or woman is freer than a wedded one, and a childless couple more carefree than people with a baby. Or, that

true freedom is the absence, when not the woe, of others. Or, conversely, that hell is others.

Anne's major love affair is a failure because, in Timon's words, she "finds it impossible to be possessed or to possess and be independent at the same time . . . for true freedom is the freedom found in the facing of death, and the liberation that comes from its recognition." (It is not clear whose viewpoint this is. Perhaps it merely describes Anne's state of mind, though I do not think so. How, though, does it conflict with the thesis that freedom is the recognition of necessity, even if the necessity (or reality) here is only that of death?) Timon concludes: "Total freedom in love as in politics, the author seems to say, like total commitment dies of inanition." I would concur that this is true of that free-floating liberty, outside the realm of cause and effect, which Timon calls living beyond necessity.

To go back to the other term of the analogy: does one resolve the complex problems that come with social commitment by renouncing it, any more than one overcomes the stresses of a sinful life by putting on a hair shirt and leaving for the desert? (Or, more sensibly if less earnestly, returning to the forests and prehistoric virtues with the help of a plane.)

The reader may feel that I have hit below the belt in making a reductio ad absurdum of Timon's argument. He can point out that partisanship has been the ruin of a multitude of manuscripts, canvases, and scores. Perhaps. The element of gift is also a factor. There is a fashion of feeling that because we have escaped a major depression since the Thirties, pure art has gotten a breathing spell; side-taking is out; protest is passé; an Augustan Age is in the bud. Why then so many cries about the ineffectuality of American literature from even those who do not understand the reason for it and who mock the art of the Thirties, which they admit was effectual, even if they are so prejudiced as to find nothing else good in it?

THE NUMBER of very great men, past and present, whose partisanship has been a visible component of their thought should make it apparent that commitment is not in itself alien to art or science. What matters is how commitment is viewed by the artist and by the leadership of the movement to which he is loyal. Unfortunately, there are few Left artists who could say that, in the past, their intellectual range was not curtailed, their curiosity not inhibited, their integrity never suspected, and that they felt completely at ease in the atmosphere which it was their very life to breathe. How many, as they sat at their typewriters or stood

before their easels, felt that someone started over their shoulders and, fancying himself the people's tribune, pursed his lips at the word "downhearted" or at the bilaterally symmetrical composition of mountain, plain and trees. Self- or office-appointed arbiters of form and content bullied them with the assumption that their audience could not understand what they, the judges, were too lazy to read twice. Poets were censured for the obscurity of their images, until it was disclosed that these were derived from such recondite activities as baseball and poker. Editors rejected stories because the readers might, only might, misinterpret them. (The truth is that the editors had at first misunderstood them, and were afraid that others might follow their example.) Critical reviews were turned down because the author under scrutiny was reported to be "coming our way" and might, again only might, have his sensibilities ravaged by a piece of honesty he could have respected. Assessment by rumor replaced judgment by study.

On the other hand, elder statesmen of culture who were extravagantly uncritical of Marx and Engels' perceptive comments on the contradiction between Balzac's political sympathies and his realistic appraisal of his social milieu, elevating them to the height of a timeless aesthetic principle (as has more recently been done with the phrase, "cult of the individual"), were strangely cool to the qualities of any writer whose position on civil liberties, or even the candidacy of William O'Dwyer, was not as correct as ours. Champions of dialectics, we demanded absolute consistency from the slippery Bohemia of the imagination. Caution to the limits of distrust became S.O.P. in this area, and we were to be guided through it like tourists gaping at the harmless perils of some spicy part of town.

No wonder that, for all the rhetoric lavished upon the creative heroes of the past, contemporary adherents in the arts were often looked upon as unhappily inevitable nuisances who managed, through some perversity peculiar to their fantastic natures, to detract from, deter, deflect and distort intentions already agreed upon by wiser heads. Anticipating emergencies in this field, a theoretical dictatorship was set up and obstinately persisted in, despite the fact that its subjects melted away in the glare of its justice.

THE EFFECT of these bossy habits on the unswerving writer, painter, or composer, was frequently as lamentable as the defection of his faithless colleagues. Some were driven to such a pitch of irritation that their conduct provided an opportunity for discounting them as "unstable elements." Yet they at least would not compromise, and honest time will reward

them, sooner I hope than it usually does. Some trimmed sail, anchored for the squall to blow over, or ran before the wind or out of the storm. Of these, a number survived with their faculties and wit unscratched; but others find themselves becalmed on a TV sea, charmed by the sun but no breeze in their canvas.

Most tragic, however, were the navigators who thought, not so much to tack against the prevailing wind, as to adjust face-about or with little, imperceptible tugs. Now they are left beached in novels with crews who wear live masks but are dead as doornails; with plays that flutter like a covey of pamphlets; laureate skeletons and corpse-colored hymns to joys they did not feel. (Just as elsewhere, under greater pressure, their fellows concocted Boy Scout film versions of the time of Nicholas I, and a cinema sequence in which a peasant hero of the war of national liberation was made to stick his finger in his mouth and stand pigeon-toed so that a group of straw-filled actors representing various high military and governmental personages would graciously put him at his ease.) It would be far wrong, and miss the warning, if we saw the fate of these talented artists as the fruit of personal timidity. They had, rather, the courage of their faith in men who did not, or refused to, comprehend the purpose of art; who did not try to follow the process of creation; and who had not earned, by sympathy or interest, the right to constitute themselves a court of last appeal on a subject more perplexing even than political science.

The strained or submissive relation of artist to authority put the committed critic in a position he should have been quick to refuse: that of Hermes, bearer of "lines." The critic who accepts this role must continually adapt his sensibility to the axioms assigned to him as a graduate theoretician, or let out his suit of theory a half inch every time a novel or picture he cannot ignore bursts the seams. This process starts to engross and excite him more than the individual art work. To that incidental object he applies the full weight of Marxist science, like a fifty-ton press cracking a peanut. If the artist is flattened, so eventually is the critic's perceptivity. After a few years of such intervention, we found ourselves unable to distinguish not only bad from good but best from worst. At last, our pretensions way out of proportion to our critical talent, and our scholarship, with a few reputable exceptions, quite inadequate to the tasks we set ourselves, we were left with poor proof of our propositions and with a lack of modest efforts to "get inside" and react with simple pleasure to just one writer or just one book.

THERE WERE awkward times when the critics did not adjust their theories to fit a particular writer who violated them. Nor did they find fault with him. That was generally when they knew or believed him to be "one of ours." To put it gently, their expressed judgment did not correspond to their feelings. This injured them because those hostile to them could not help recognizing their hypocrisy for what it was. It harmed the writer still more because, on the one hand, he was not given the benefit of anyone's critical faculty, and on the other, his audience, reared on the theory, say of socialist realism, made unreasonable demands of him when he used a genre that disappointed their expectation. If, for example, the writer might use a kind of contemporary parable, his audience, inured to their mentor's dogma, would complain that he had not given them "fully rounded human beings," forgetting the Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress,* and other works of some magnitude that do not fit that requirement. Of course the fault was not in the readers, but in the critics. It was not a failure of taste but of frankness.

It goes without saying that the defect extended to our estimates of many artists of integrity outside our ranks. This was particularly true of our discussion of decadence, which we made a term of abuse rather than description, thereby nullifying any attempt to define its significance or to convince others of our legitimate differences with that tradition.

We know that similar situations existed in the field of science, though not universally. Fortunately, in the Soviet Union, they did not prove fatal to the cause of socialism nor to world peace. I refer to the temporary retardation of basic work in theoretical physics. Yet harm enough was done, as in agriculture and historical research. Persuaded that bourgeois objectivity in scholarship was in the main a farce, a number of Soviet scientists apparently abandoned their own. Historians allowed themselves to be told what to look for, and biologists what they should expect to find; though they must have known that science cannot tolerate the slightest manipulation of facts by the wishful observation or evaluation of them. Occasionally, scientific discussions were given an ugly twist, such as when a difference over Mayan hieroglyphics was weighted with groundless political insinuations against the American authority.

The harm done to scholarship on the American Left was more one of emphasis than of distortion; that is, historical economic or sociological phenomena which helped to prove a point were often studied more intently than those which tended to modify it. Aptheker's work in American history represents an important effort to reverse such practices. It is also pleasant to observe that American Marxists are discarding journalism as a kind of science of sciences. Such controversial subjects as the uni-

fied field theory, the nature of the gene, or Freudian therapy have not recently been debated by philosophers of the typewriter, and it is expected that hypotheses will not be voted in by directed acclamation. It is one thing to study the historical perspectives opened by scientific research or the implications for science of political stagnation or metamorphosis. It is quite another to attempt to establish a political biology, a political chemistry, a political psychotherapy. The first venture may be open to error, like any other human endeavor (though to acknowledge the possibility of error is not to invite it as some zealots have claimed). The latter path can only end in falsehood, chicanery, and the intelligent terrorization of the intellect.

THIS HOLDS, too, for creative activity in the arts. There are times when art has proved to be a tremendous tactical weapon, and novelists and dramatists have used didactic forms, reasoned or symbolic crystallizations of experience, to stir others to specific action. Brecht is our best contemporary example. But such forms require deliberate construction and artifice, and with all respect to Brecht's genius, there is something sterile in the prospect of a school of "epic theatre." To decree that art should make universal goals of such self-imposed limits as agitation and propaganda is to set the engineers of the soul to repairing the tracks of organization so that the passengers may ride more smoothly with—the blinds down. Art is usually weakened when it adds the duty of solving problems explicitly to the task of presenting them suggestively. The discipline it must obey is no longer its own law of integrity. That is replaced by a regimen of tacit agreements and concessions outside its own proper study of nature and mankind. The artist is continually assigned targets, but strangely, the oftener he scores hits the less able is he to see what is right under his eyes: the complex human heart beating away.

Furthermore, it may turn out that there were secret clauses in his contract, of which he is made aware only when he has violated them. Not to be "difficult," not to be enamored of formal qualities, not to balk at overestimating the good intentions of bad craft, not to be a cosmopolitan, had he really promised all that and more? As the bill of negatives is shown him, and his alleged sins stand up as witnesses, while the laws of evidence suddenly turn into strips of confetti, how can he help feeling like Alice at her trial? It is no wonder that a former deponent at such a hearing could say recently, on reading the Khrushchev report: "I might have been the accused, but I could surely have been the prosecutor." If the image is grotesque so were the customs.

(A small caution. Let the close watcher of our errors remember that they are far from exclusive to us. The threat to artists and scientists is not a dwindling twister on the Left, but a swamp and a year-round soaking drizzle over the whole country. The censorship and debasement of art, the misuse and repression of scientific work, are common as sand in the United States. The facts are little known or quickly forgotten by the masses of Americans, including the intellectuals, despite awakeners like the Cogley report on blacklisting and the paper of the Genetics Committee of the National Academy of Science on the biological effects of atomic radiation. But that is only because, though lying darkens the sky like smog, one inhales the available air. Much as they may cough, people rarely criticize what they must breathe. So, while we respect what is free in the "free world," romance can wait.)

WE—TIMON and I—have talked in the main about political commitment and ethics as they affect the artist and scientist. We have left implicit the assumption that a political leader, organizer, or office holder's attitude toward culture reflects his political morality or development in general. This is not the place to examine the latter subject, but it is well to keep it in mind as an absolutely basic one, and it should be clear that concealing or withholding facts is not a proper way to carry out one's commitment. We have also put aside for the moment various aesthetic problems, to the consideration of which the present discussion is a mere preliminary. Among these are: What is the function of the typical in art? What are the merits and defects of the reflection theory? What is the relation of the basic to the superstructural aspects of art? What in art transcends the period in which it is created and enjoyed? When is an artist "obscure"? When has he the right to be difficult? In what does the responsibility of the reader or spectator consist? What is wrong with "cosmopolitanism," and do we know what we mean by it? Is socialist realism an authentic descriptive term, or is it the ideal art category of the present time? Does its acceptance as a genuine form preclude appreciation of forms that in no way resemble it? What is subject matter, content, and form, and shall or shall not they be given equal weight in our evaluation? Are Marx and Engels' observations on Balzac unconditionally applicable today? How can we love the works of men whose social outlook is alien to us, almost to the point of incomprehensibility? How can an artist's preoccupation with observer reaction decrease his own powers of observation? May an artist possess great human traits and have them show hardly at all in his painting? What in Orozco excites us while some juster view of the immediate situation

leaves us lukewarm? Could we conclude too much from that? Is art a weapon, and if so, how? The list of questions is random and much shorter than it might be.

Moreover, no one is going to rattle off answers—else the editors would not have to scramble for articles. And this should warn us against the one last pseudo-Marxist practice which I want to mention here. That is the fetichism of consistency, the positing of an inevitable progress from A^1 through R^1 to Z^1. One is supposed never to arrive at Z^2 or simply Z, or stop at R^1 not to speak of R or R^2. In political life, this resulted in comrades' being condemned for the potential threat their theories were believed to present and disciplined as though they had already carried out the acts for which they might have been reproved. It could not, perhaps, occur to anyone that that way madness lay, but we know now that a kind of hieratic paranoia was engendered in many ruling circles.

The habit of pursuing every adverse possibility, no matter how remote, to its mythical lair, and slaying it there, also shattered many a well-gained confidence. It resulted in our telling perhaps- and perhaps-not mistaken allies what they really meant, blowing up our differences with them, rarely taking the tide of friendship at the flood, but waiting until the chance was lost, in order then to bewail our terror and roundly to condemn some others who might be on the brink of imitating it.

TO RETURN to art, for a moment. Quite apart from politics and history, we shall have to review our conception of it, its nature and purpose. We, like most people, have usually thought of it as a mechanical or technical extension of the brain and body, much as a tool is an adjunct of the hand. According to this estimate the function of art is to convey a reflection of the external world with all the resources of imaginative skill. It is presupposed that the organization of the objective world has already taken place, either by ideological means—interpreted, that is—or because the honest artist depicts everything as it really is, while only the faker distorts it. (How this coincides with the notion that the instrument, art, should be shaped to the specific service of morality or the cleaning up of the social scene is left up in the air.) Such a view is adequate only to the surface phenomenon. It ignores the fact that art is itself a way of knowing the world outside and the world within the artist, and expresses the always shifting relations between these two poles of experience. It is because the subjective element is so vital that the picture of art as knowledge is more baffling to people than that of science as knowledge. There are no a priori rules for how the imagination shall conduct itself. (One cannot, either, discount the role of imagi-

nation in scientific discovery. It is amusing, though, to see how readers who are outraged when a poet confronts them with images that astonish them accept quite calmly hypotheses and concepts of the universe that, certainly at first, defy their fantasy.)

Then there comes a breathless silence in the process which has gone on between reality and the artist, and between his flaring consciousness and the molten elements beneath. Movement is frozen and a rare thing appears: the work of art washed of its bloody signs of birth. But this too, is only appearance. The process is still incomplete. Now it must pass over into the eye, the ear, the muscles, into all the senses and the mind of the beholder, and become part of his history and the world he must create for himself and then with others. The lasting qualities of art depend on the continuity of human experience. And because men cannot live without learning, in that sense art, like science, is a weapon. So we say of great men: they are armed with the truth.

I SUPPOSE one could measure my dispute with Timon in pages and that way find it greater than my agreement. That would be silly. In some cases, I have simply elaborated his thought, and often where we seem most at odds, I may have just reworded it. Reworded it because, whether our difference was real or not, I could not accept his terms which, it seemed to me, confused the issue (or perhaps me alone). Sometimes, even, a perverse humor crept into my reading of him. For instance, on seeing his reference to nature "with its fresh and various circumstance," I thought: he forgets that the forest has bears along with honey, and is full of gnats that do not have the wit to be kind.

For all that, the fact that he wrote what he did is more important than my reservations about it. If we are at odds over the nature of freedom, at least we treasure it, and believe that a man is not alive unless he is committed at least to championing it, for himself and others.

The truth is that men have never been greatly free, that is, more or less fully in command of the road to knowledge of nature and themselves. Under communism their human history will only begin, unshackled at last of the encumbrance of the daily and the class struggle. Then why do we strain so after something not we nor our generation are likely to attain? Because we like the taste of life, and the small grains of freedom give it savor.

EVENING OUT

RUSSELL DAVIS

SHE WAS a small, compactly formed woman of forty-something with gray fluffy hair, large gray eyes and even, controlled features. As she forced her way up the subway steps alone against the down-pressing crowd she began to look for him.

He materialized in the November dusk. She saw his brown, worried blur of a mustache, then felt it sharp against her cheek.

"Harry!" she exclaimed.

"You're late. I've come here looking for you twice."

"The sitter was late," she said.

"Come on," he said.

He seized her elbow and propelled her down the narrow street against the financial district foot traffic that overflowed the curbs. She tried to speak to him to ask him to go more slowly, and a taxi honking its way through the crowd cancelled out her voice as the light changed. He turned sharply to cross and she was free. As she caught up with him, he swung his head around. "See them?"

"What?" she said.

"Cops. They plant them all over the area now." He grinned a brave wolfish grin not at her but for her to see. Two weeks before he had run into one of the scabs by accident in the crowd fifty yards away from the picket line. The scab had called Harry a Jew bastard and Harry had hit him. . . . Harry was going to be sentenced tomorrow in the Chief Magistrate's Court.

"How long will it take?" she asked nervously. They had stopped now. They stood on the high curb of the avenue directly across from the picket line. She stared across at the undulating oblongs of cardboard that shuttled jerkily up and down. She was shocked at the sight. They looked so cheap, they cheapened human existence by exposing it, laying it out raw in front of such a well-dressed building. The imperfections, the individual differences in the faces, the weakness of people seemed exposed in a way that should never be exposed. They looked weak and cold and pale and pathetic, these bespectacled white-collared conservative

creatures as though thrust into some charade that was utterly senseless. She had never seen the men he worked with before and it seemed impossible that any of these could be the ones of whom he talked so enthusiastically.

At first she had welcomed his interest in organizing a union, very much as she had welcomed and encouraged the first signs of aggressiveness in their son. It had seemed to her that Harry had needed something like this, an interest, a drive, a fresh point of view to pull him out of the rut of years' working in drafting rooms. But she was no longer happy about it. He had gone too far. Always tired, always hoarse from the shouting on this picket line, his eyes staring. "I haven't time!" he had cried when she had insisted that he get a haircut. "Yes, that's what I said. I haven't time!" If only they hadn't had to go out on strike.

Above the odd ritual on the sidewalk rose the massive office building in which he had worked, honeycombed with lighted windows. He glanced up at the windows and searched them for something.

"Only a minute now. They'll be coming out," he told her.

"Harry. Be careful."

"Okay," he said reaching for her elbow.

They crossed the avenue and fed themselves in between two bulky cops. It was not as easy as it looked she quickly discovered. You had to keep such close pace with the others and there wasn't enough room. You had to scrape by the cops' bellies. She tried to make herself smaller, afraid her woolen coat might catch on one of the brass buttons. The pivot man with a practised and somehow lewd twist of his body whipped an inverted picket sign on its stick out from between his firmly planted legs and thrust it right side up at Harry in front of her, and he waved it immediately aloft. She couldn't see how he had managed to lift it without knocking a policeman's hat off or digging somebody with the end of the stick. As she found herself suddenly confronted by the confident pivot man she shook her head firmly and compressed her lips, refusing the proferred sign.

"Come on," growled a cop, "squeeze it up closer."

It was so easy to get in trouble here. She didn't see how Harry could manage his curious wide swaggering stride and still remain inside the gauntlet of uniforms. She didn't see why he didn't get in trouble with them every day, instead of just the one time, which had not been his fault. After all, if someone called you a—. She felt her forehead wrinkle with the effort of trying to understand him. She watched her husband. Unlike most of the others in the line he kept jiggling his sign and twirling it every time he rounded one of the sharp turns around the

pivot, balancing the end of the stick for a second on his open palm, then boosting it and catching it in midair.

"Scab!" he cried sharply.

She noticed the faces of the others detach from their stony forward gaze and glance separately across toward the building entrance. Finally one man said, "I don't see anybody."

"Just warming up," called Harry.

She felt a surge of embarrassment, although the chuckles of one or two in the line reduced the feeling.

"Here they come!" called another voice from the picket line and she saw heads turn again, more of them this time, eyes roll toward where the revolving door slowly turned. Through its glass in the yellow incandescence of the lobby inside she saw some men coming from the elevators. As the first, a tall individual in a homburg hat and black topcoat, emerged with averted eyes and slightly parted lips, a frighteningly simultaneous roar of "Scab!" came from the throat of every man in the picket line. Now the others, hurrying behind the first man out, pushed through the door and emerged. "Rat! Scab! Scum!" shouted the line at them, the tempo of their forward march slackening as they poured their strength into their cries, while the policemen took solider positions with their feet just a little closer, their bellies stiffer. White faces of passers-by turned startled. "Rat-pack, rat-pack!" It became a chant taken up by everyone in the line as the scabs slid out of the revolving door like stampings out of a machine, slinking evenly away close to the store fronts as though running down an invisible trough. It was over. They were gone, swallowed up in the quick pushing crowd and the shadows.

"How many?" inquired a calm voice from behind which she somehow recognized as the same that hardly a split second before had been bellowing "Scum, scum, scum!" with an intensity of sound that had jarred and disturbed her.

"I don't know, fifteen, sixteen," came the almost bored answer.

She caught Harry's flick of a backward glance to see whether she were still there and all right. She counted the number in the picket line. Fourteen. If there were only fourteen on strike, including her, really only thirteen, and fifteen or sixteen inside, what hope——?

"Here they come!" shouted someone and she turned her head and saw another installment, a little knot of men approaching the revolving door from the inside, saw them peel off into it and then emerge into a fusillade of outraged shouts. One she could not help noticing, was small, thin, narrow uphunched shoulders, with a wrinkled forehead, porkpie hat clamped on the back of his head defiantly, yellow darting eyes that seemed not to want to, but to be unable to keep from, looking at the

line, and for an unpleasant moment her eyes met his. She saw that he was distracted, frightened and yet somehow exhilarated, feverish, and she compared his appearance with that of her husband and was reassured. Harry was proud and angry and sure of himself, so very sure of himself. She heard the elderly and seemingly very dignified man opposite her in the line say, "Give it to them, give it to them!" in a shaken voice and then cry "Scab! Scab! Rat!" bitterly. A moment later Harry was at her side pulling her out into the gutter.

"Okay," he said, "it's over."

Everyone was turning away, even the cops were reaching up under their tunics fastening their billies back in place.

"But there are more scabs than there are strikers," she said staring up into his face.

He stopped, confused, harassed. "There are plenty of strikers," he answered. "They don't all show up to walk the picket line. Besides, those guys you just saw coming out—they're no good, they can't do the work. They're not getting out the work."

"Why not?"

"They're no good" he insisted.

"They're not?"

"Anyone who would scab is no good," he stated.

"Harry," she said, "is it lost?"

He didn't answer. Instead he pulled her rapidly away from the scene, across the avenue, along it, past a tomblike bank front and in a doorway of a store that had closed already. The glass around them was full of reflections of winking lights and the dim faces of the people who flowed past without looking to one side or the other. Then he turned to her. "Were you trying to demoralize them?" he demanded.

She shook her head. "Harry, what's the use of it?"

"Don't talk like that!" he exclaimed. He was agitated and, she saw, distraught. Her arm hurt where he had pulled her. She rubbed it. "What do you want me to do?" he shouted into her face. "Give up? Be a scab too?" He was shaking, glaring down at her, his shoulders hunched forward.

She shook her head again. "No" she replied. "Of course not."

"It's not too late," he said. "I can run away. Pick up and take a train for California and try to find another job there and when I do, send for you and the kid. That's what two guys did already. Is that what you want?"

He was tired, she saw. He hardly knew what he was saying or whether he meant any of it. He wasn't even angry at her really, but just asking her something, but not the thing he was saying, something else.

If she said yes, she knew he would be shocked, he would recoil and afterward he would be miserable, he would be beaten. No matter that they did, she would have deserted him. The gray dead look would come back up from his jowls and cover his whole face and he would shrug when she asked him what was new when he came home. Nothing would be new. But she could see him in jail too, throwing himself at the bars, crashing against the bars, picking himself up slowly and then launching himself again, his eyes unwinking and sullen like an animal. Although she knew he wouldn't. You didn't do that in jail. Perhaps it would be better if you did, but you didn't, or if you did, they came and beat you, didn't they? She spoke in the small querulous voice that she hated in herself, the voice that was complaining and too dry for tears. "Harry, I don't understand what's happening. At first I was glad you had found an interest in something, something that seemed real, that wasn't just a hobby. But now I'm sorry. I can't help it, I'm sorry." As she spoke her eyes strayed again to the passing crowd. How the people walk by us and not one notices or seems to know we're here, she thought.

"I wish I'd killed him," said Harry. "Do you know that? He came to work today. He's in again, walking in and out again, and there isn't a mark left on him. That patch he had on his eye in court there—I think that was a fake. I wish I'd killed him."

"Where are we going?" she asked.

He gave her a vacant look. It might be their last night together, yet he hadn't planned, hadn't thought. His shoulders sagged. "I don't know," he said.

"Bosco's?" she said gently. They always seemed to go to Bosco's on the few occasions they met and ate downtown. They walked crosstown now and had a speedily served, standardized Bosco dinner starting with the Bosco breadsticks that burst into crumbs when you broke them and ending with the inevitable nesselrode pie that they could not afford and shouldn't eat anyway, and then they went to their movie.

Harry hissed when Fox Movietone thrust Herbert Hoover at him, and when she turned to him in weary exasperation—her feet were beginning to swell and feel hot—he muttered, "Hoover is on the other side."

"Must everything be a war?"

"It's not us that makes the war" he answered,

She could hear his breathing beside her become slower as Movietone went off. Sometime after Judy Garland began to sparkle from the screen she felt a difference in his hand which lay in hers and looked sharply at him.

He was asleep.

COZY, POESY VARIATIONS ON A CAMPAIGN MANAGER'S DREAM

CURTIS ZAHN

I got something hot for you this time John J.
You're really going to like this A. L.
It's the news you've been waiting for Ollie
It's a first hand report from you guess who
A communication
A message
Most fascinating story a guy ever heard
Every damn word is about you

How you looked that night
What they said after you'd gone
The way the bottom seemed to drop out of everything once you walked out that door
We really missed you
You should of been there
Everybody's still talking
You must of really had it that night

I don't want to sound sentimental
You don't go for soft soap
I'm not the kind of guy wears heart on sleeve
You got practical U.S. horse-sense
Both of us know you're a simple-minded, all-out jerk

Yet, every S.O.B. in town's talking about you Mister
St. Louis was wild about you Sister
Pocatello's prostrate
Boston's weakening
and Los Angeles is leaning over backwards

Them Rotarians from South Bend were jumping up and down on their hats
U.S. Steel's got its tongue hanging out
Pepsi-Cola's raising prices as of September first
The boys from the press have gone stark raving mad
World's in a state of suspension
Mars was off its course two degrees
Astrologists speak of unusual sun-spots
Brother, you're a pretty big guy

Oceanside, California, is a favored city tonight
Heroes are not born every day
The Lord doesn't turn out men like you on the assembly line
Nature has been preposterously generous this year
The little old world's turned out pretty lucky after all
Universe is in store for a mammoth surprise

I could go on
You'd be the last man in the world to stop me
I could say that this war scare pivots around a certain little episode that took place in a certain plain old room on a certain night
Might tell you how people are going around buttonholing each other
Suggest that whole world's gone mad
Agree that there's no logic in it
Point out it's a mystery to me too
Admit it'd be more understandable if they'd nominated the trash collector

Letters coming in from all over the planet
There's even one from New York
Fellow named Szysky
Says his money's on you
Detroit had some trouble with the cops
They turned off the lights in Atlantic City
Lady in Albuquerque sent ten bucks
Boy scout from Brooklyn mailed in his merit badge

It's the story you been waiting to hear Ma S.
Big miracle in a tiny thimble, Sister J.
Minor earthquake that rocked the universe, Bryant M.
Australia's waiting for you to give the signal
Pygmies pause with their weapons handy

England huddles over its radio sets
Election epic
Success saga

Not a confidential warning tip
Not, "George is a bastard once you know him."
"Joe's a phoney disguised as an NYU student."
"Mike forgets his friends once he's up there."
No, not that, No, No
But, "God, you were wonderful last night."
Towering over everyone as the mouse dominates the ant
Midget telling the giants where to get off
Dinosaur looking down his nose at trembling elephants
That's you, Mister Lucky Winner

But wait
You'd rather I told your faults
That bulging modest chin staring out at the world of fact
    meeting its gaze, not giving an inch, waiting with
    measured stride
It wants to hear what the enemy's saying
How the Legion is going to vote
Is a little in doubt about the movie colony
And the Yacht Club Boys; what do they talk about down in
    the locker rooms?
Don't worry about the Yacht Club Boys
They're still talking about the Commodore's wife in a bathingsuit
And the sports editors: same thing, no worries there
I don't think we'll have to watch out for Orphan Annie
Our big headache is Dr. George Gallup
Public opinion is a crazy thing
Personally, I'm against it, but you got to take things like
    that into consideration

No, William F.
I don't know why in God's name they think they want you
Big, loveable, corny little jerk
Lady whose dog doesn't come up to strangers said he whined when
    you strode out that door
Prominent movie actress wants your autograph
Magazine editor hollering for your life story
Male population'll go along

You're really stacked
substantially backed
Public landslide Number One

Like I said
You should of been there after you'd gone
Been nice if you'd come before you came
Or, at least, left a long time after you left
But I told 'em you were swamped with the nation's business
Didn't have time for politics and speeches
Man's got only one lifetime to give his country
There's more important things than personal gain

Examine the record!
Predicted World War III before Number One sta
Whittled four billions off the national prosperity
Predicted Truman when Roosevelt died

Leader since the day he was born!
Bubble-gum champion, Orange County, 1924
Fisk Bicycle Club President, '25-'26
Football captain
Army captain
Navy captain

Drum major
Coal miner
Man of the people
Born to be raised
Raised to be born
Prince of the paupers
Master of millionaires
Stuff of heroes
Presidential celotex
God's right hand man
Devil's left hand man
Authorized spokesman of eternity's jerks
Figures don't lie
Met Betty Grable at the airport
A man of action!
Slept in a pup-tent while touring Thailand with Congress

Had swallows' nests removed from all federal buildings
Steadfastly in favor of all minorities
All majorities
Capital and labor
Everybody's friend
Nobody's enemy
Worried, hurried, godlike and noble
Spearhead of democracy, anchor for the state
Size six Eastland, ally of frauds
Wickeder than Himmler by any odds

Man of the hour
All-Conference jerk
Oceanside's first citizen
People's only choice
The world's enigma
universe's blight
My bread and butter ticket

Right Face

Forging Ahead

"Deposed state auditor, Orville E. Hodge of Illinois, admitted embezzling a half-million dollars so he could live like a mid-Western Rajah and finance his ambition to become Republican governor of the state."—United Press.

Red Terror in Iran

"The resourceful General Bakhtian, recognizing a serious threat to his power, has responded with a campaign to revivify the terrors of communism. But apparently running short of live Communists, the military governor's henchmen have fallen back on exhuming the bones of long-dead Tudeh (Communist) party members and displaying them to bored newspapermen."—The *New York Times.*

Cut Off That Nose

"Rejection of the West's plan might be far from advantageous for Egypt, because it is likely that, for one reason or another, Egypt will prove unable to keep the canal running. In that case the West would simply have to find other ways of carrying on its commerce, including shipping around the Cape of Good Hope."—The *New York Times.*

Down With Fancy Talk

"The economic facts of life 'just do not allow the luxury of catchwords like "oil or honor,"' one government official said."—A British statesman reported in the *New York Times.*

Two Cheers for Culture

G.O.P. OPENS
EGGHEAD DRIVE
Seeks Eisenhower Backing
in Arts and Sciences—Headline in the *New York Times*

LIFEITSELFMANSHIP*

DECCA TREUHAFT

THE English-speaking world has just been treated to a glimpse into the mysteries of English upper-class usage by the publication of *Noblesse Oblige* (by Nancy Mitford and others). Because of its immense snob appeal, this book is fair on the way to becoming a best seller. The author points out that "it is solely by its language that the upper class is clearly marked off from the others." Theme of the book is a discussion by the various contributors of what they call "U-usage." U means Upper-class; non-U (obviously) means non-Upper-class. A few examples should suffice:

Non-U	*U equivalent*
Pleased to meet you	How do you do
Lounge	Hall (or dining room)
Wealthy	Rich
Serviette	Napkin
Dentures	False teeth

Anyway, you get the idea.

Since it's unlikely that many left-wingers will either read the book, or, if they do, find much in it of practical value, we felt that it would be profitable to offer a short course in current L (or leftwing) terminology. A spot-check survey has convinced us that the need for such a course,

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* LIFEITSELFMANSHIP was issued recently in a small edition in booklet form on the West Coast. We are reprinting it, with the consent of the author and artist, as a public service and a private help to Left Wing writers and editors. Being strapped for space, we have had to omit a number of Pele's illustrations. Readers wishing to purchase this memorable work in a more durable form are urged to communicate with Decca Treuhaft, 574 61st Street, Oakland, California, and to send her 50c plus 10c for postage.—The Editors.

both for beginners and for more advanced students, has long been felt by many.

CREDITS

The author wishes to extend recognition to the many friends who have encouraged and helped her in the task of preparing this short manual; to her husband, who researched much of the material; and above all, to the editors and contributors of *Political Affairs,* the *Daily Peoples World,* and *Masses & Mainstream,* without whose invaluable inspiration this book would never have been written.

This is by no means offered as an exhaustive study of the subject; it is merely a beginning. We sincerely hope and believe that more qualified scholars will take up where this paper leaves off. As a start, we will give a few easy translations:

Non-L	*L equivalent*
Time will tell whether that plan was O.K.	The *correctness* of that *policy* will be *tested in life itself.* (Alternative: in the *crucible of struggle.*)
At the present time we need to find out what's wrong with some of the most important unions.	In this *period* there is a need for *clarity* on the *weaknesses* of *certain key sections* of the labor movement.
Suggesting a bum plan.	*Projecting* an *incorrect perspective.*

Non-L woman (to husband): I'm having tea with Mrs. Snodgrass this afternoon. Some of the nursery school mothers will be there; we're going to talk about expanding the school.

L-woman (to L-husband): I'm going to spend the afternoon doing *mass work.* (Alt.: At a meeting of my *mass org.*) We are *projecting* some *expanded goals* on the *Woman Question.*

An L-man does not speak up at a meeting; he *contributes* to the *discussion.*

THE following short examination is intended to rate yourself on your own mastery of L-usage. Please use the honor system; cover the answers (on the right) with a piece of paper before attempting to tackle the exam. Do not be discouraged if you make a low grade. There is worse to follow.

Questions

1. Mo-what-oly what-italism is based on super profits?

2. He-what-ony of the what-letariat?

3. List various types of tasks.

4. List as many words as you can think of ending in -ize.

5. List various moods to be avoided. (Hint: moods usually seem to go in pairs).

6. What is Wall Street drunk with?

7. What must we do soberly?

8. List various kinds of struggle.

9. What-illating petit bourgeoisie?

10. How would you describe labor leaders with whom you are in disagreement?

11. What does one do with cadres?

12. List as many words ending with ism as you can think of. Warning: obvious ones, like fasc, social, imperial, etc., don't count.

Answers

1. Nop; cap.

2. Gem; pro.

3. Historic; immediate; before us; concrete (see Building Trades below); varied, etc. etc.

4. Mobil; concret; final; political; character; crystall; polemic; etc.

5. Pessimism and despair; fatalism and complacency; confusionism and obscurantism; recklessness and adventurism; complacency and passivity; etc.

6. Temporary but illusory success (correct answer); Old Granddad (incorrect answer).

7. Evaluate, estimate, assess, anticipate (correct answers); go down to the nearest bar (incorrect answer).

8. All out, political, class, cultural, principled, many-sided, one-sided, inner Party.

9. Vac.

10. a) The Reuthers, Hutchinson, Meanys, Wolls, & Co.
b) Mis-leaders of labor
c) The Greens, Hillquits, Thomases, & Co. (obs.)
d) Lackeys of the bourgeoisie.

11. One develops them, trains them and boldly promotes them, poor things.

12. Chauvin; diversion; narrow-sectional; exceptional; liquidation; adventur; revision; sch (got you there); opportun; confusion; Browder; tail or Khvost (obs,); Keynes.

13. What is happening to the contradictions in the situation?

13. They are sharpening and deepening. Also unfolding. (Sometimes they even gather momentum with locomotive speed.)

14. What must we establish with the toiling masses and their allies?

14. a) closer ties
b) firmer links
c) durable alliances
d) unshakable ideological ties/links/alliances.

15. How do contradictions get started?

15. They either *stem from* or *flow out* of situations. Sometimes *roots* of *problems stem* from *contradictions,* a botanical anomaly.

16. List various kinds of fronts.

16. Popular; broad; united (if typing, try to avoid a common typographical error, untied front (see Cheesecake Section below); cultural; water.

17. What sort of alliance generally exists between a) the McCarthyites and Dixiecrats, and b) between the police dept. and *Oakland Tribune?*

17. Unholy. (Friends have suggested the omission of b) because it might lead to a trend of western exceptionalism.)

18. Name some Questions.

18. National, Farm, Woman, Youth; decisive (confronting the American people).

19. List various sizes that farmers come in.

19. Small; middle-sized; family-sized; Associated.

HAVING completed the exam, you are no doubt anxious to dig in further and learn more about the *correct approach* to L-usage. For the convenience of students, we have attempted to organize this part of the course under self-explanatory section headings:

RETAIL SELLING OR MONGERING SECTION:

War mongers; phrase mongers; hate mongers; fear mongers.

WHOLESALE SECTION:

Doing *bidding* of monopolists
Wholesale slashing of living standards
Wholesale wage freezes

Wholesale price increases (By the way, this latter always really means retail price increases. The authors do not feel equipped at this time to go into the reason for this.)
The *bulk* of the American people

AQUATIC, OR WATER SPORTS SECTION:

In the main
Mainstream (of American life—we must find our way into it).
Launching (campaigns, programs, of action, etc.)
Broad current (usually, of political thought)
Baby and bathwater (not to be thrown out together)
Fishing (in the muddied waters of popular discontent)
Herring (red—dragged across path)
Ships: relation (of forces), unholy partner, etc.
Liquidationism
Flowing from

BUILDING TRADES SECTION:

Architect (of cold war—Dulles & Co.)
Should start with balanced (or rounded) estimate
Laying the foundation (for more advanced political thinking)
Building toward (a firmer foundation)
Cementing (ties, unity, etc.)
Forging (links, ties, unity, etc.)
Welding (ties, unity, etc.)
Undermining (ties, unity, etc.)
Levels (of understanding, militancy)
Concrete (situation, leadership, estimate, appraisal) (v.t. concretize)
Hammering (out the line)

LOCKSMITHSHIP SUB-SECTION:

Key (issue, question, link in chain, concentration)

CANINE AND EQUESTRIAN SECTION:

Dead horse (beating a)
Stable base
Captains of industry, riding rough shod
Stalking horse of reaction
Running dogs of imperialism (must be curbed)
Mad war dogs of fascism (mustn't be unleashed)

Galloping to its own destruction (imperialism, or sometimes Wall Street)
War chariots (of Wall Street, etc.)
Dogmatism (for an end to!)
Tailism (or Khvostism, obs.) (See Exam Question No. 12, above)

OUTDOOR (OR CAMPING) SECTION:

Areas of agreement
Camps are too numerous to list. Among them are:
Camp of peace
Camp of National independence
Camp of Democracy (usually, enormously strengthened)
Camp of World Imperialism (usually, shaken to its very foundation)

SUB-SECTION (SCOUTING):

Tying together key issues confronting broad strata of American people.

ELECTRONIC SECTION:

Negative and Positive (approaches, viewpoints, programs, etc.)
Elements (democratic, peace-loving, corrupt, disruptive, vacillating, wavering, honest, rotten, dishonest, petit bourgeois, etc.) We do not advise being an element as you run the danger of being isolated from the mainstream (see Water Sports, above).
Charges (things some elements are sometimes brought up on).

NEEDLE TRADES SECTION:

Pinning (down responsibilities)
Hemming (the Labor Movement in with contradictions)
Cloaking (with demagogic phrases, or with left-sounding slogans)
Vested (interests)

CHEESECAKE SECTION:

Popular Front
Broad Front
United Front (see Exam Question No. 15)
Well Rounded Points (made in discussion)
Broadly Based
Affairs (in non-L usage, means an illicit love relationship; in L usage, fund raising gatherings. This has been known to create moods of confusionism and obscurantism in discussions, e.g. saying to non-L people: "Why don't you have an affair and raise some money?")

Well Developed Cadres
Fresh Approaches

GRAMMATICAL SECTION:

What does Wall Street's Policy spell? (World Disaster)
What does it *not* spell? (Prosperity for the bulk of the American people. See Wholesale Section, above)
What does complacency spell? (The road to defeat)

GASTRO-INTESTINAL SECTION:

Assimilate (working-class theory)
Bloated (Capitalists, obs., except in cartoons)
Purging (of disruptive elements. See Electronics Section)
The Movement (also mass movements and narrow movements)
Only through struggle will anything come to pass.

TRAFFIC CONTROL SECTION:

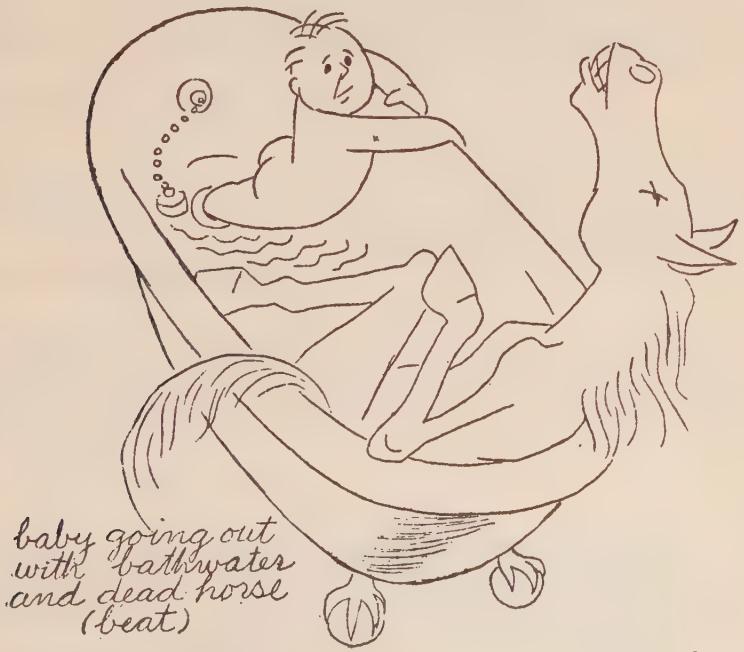
Crossroads at the (imperialism, America, etc.)
Approaches (correct, right, left, broad, narrow, fundamental, multiple)
It's no accident that
Avoid right and/or left errors
We cannot adopt a middle of the road policy
Driver's seat (e.g. "Dulles is temporarily in the")
Roads (to socialism, fascism)
Turns (we must learn to make)
Drives (P.W., etc., known in non-L language as campaigns or crusades)
Utilizing all paths

GARDENING SECTION:

Rooting (out petit bourgeois influences; oneself in the neighborhood)
Growing (political maturity, also various moods)
Digging (deeper into a host of questions)
Deeply rooted in theory
Flowering (of creativeness, political maturity, etc.)
Fertile fields (for political activity)
Withering (away of the state, obs.)

HAVING completed this short course, we believe that the average L-man will find himself better equipped to go out and start boring—from within?

Non-L Poem	*L Translation*
Tell me not in mournful numbers	Do not project to me in moods of pessimism and despair
Life is but an empty dream	The perspective that no positive conclusions can be drawn from the present relationship of forces
And the soul is dead that slumbers For things are not what they seem.	For we must focus attention on the key issues.
Let us then be up and doing	Let us therefore mobilize the broad masses
With a heart for any fate	To a realization of their historic task within the political climate
Still achieving, still pursuing	We shall continue to win victories in the crucible of struggle
Learn to labor and to wait.	As we develop correct tactics adapted to the concrete situation.



Drawing by Pele

APPENDIX

Some authentic examples of recent L-writing:

"In striving to liquidate the cold war, the greatest weakness of the peace forces in the United States is the ultra-reactionary character of the Meany group of mis-leaders now dominating the A. F. of L. and soon to have their influence spread further, through the current merger of the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O."

—*Political Affairs,* Oct. 1955

* * *

"Our Party must counteract daily and hourly the political, ideological and cultural influences of the war camp, expose and isolate the reactionary Social-Democratic and labor-reformist ideologists of Big Business, who strive to demoralize the working class and tie it to Wall Street's war program."

—*Political Affairs,* Feb. 1951

* * *

"Our ideological struggle has to be conducted as a concrete struggle arising from the unfolding events. It should be carried on in a language and in forms that the workers can understand and in terms of their own experience."

—same article, *Political Affairs,* Feb. 1951

* * *

"Yet note should be taken of the fact that in the 1954 Program the previous position of the Party on self-determination in the Black Belt has been modified—in fact, dropped."

Political Affairs, June 1956

* * *

"Therefore one main conclusion that the working class and all popular forces must draw is that it is necessary at every juncture to prevent and defeat the stubborn efforts of the economic royalists to thwart the popular will."

—*Political Affairs,* June 1956

* * *

"At this juncture we should particularly stress the next immediate stage of progress for the people of our country—which is inseparably bound up with, and requires the crystallization of a broad democratic front coalition, under progressive labor leadership."

—*Political Affairs,* June 1956

"We will likewise focus attention on the main tasks of the movement and the period ahead, especially the forging of a labor-democratic coalition whose potential for effectively curbing the power of the trusts will grow ever more mighty."

—*Political Affairs,* June 1956

We are quite sure that many readers will now wish to criticize the author. For the convenience of readers, a check-list of appropriate criticisms is given below; however, of course, readers are not limited to the check list.

- ☐ Anti-leadership
- ☐ Anti-theoretical
- ☐ Rotten Liberalism
- ☐ Fails to chart a perspective
- ☐ Right-Opportunism
- ☐ Left-Sectarianism
- ☐ Philistinism
- ☐ Petty Bourgeois Cynicism

DESCENT FROM EDEN

FRED COGSWELL

That year the rich banana harvest failed,
When infants tore their mother's milkless dugs
And tasted blood and whined, the wisest apes
Forsook the shelter of the friendly trees,
Leaving their virtue on the leafy limbs.

Stark hunger snapped the tree-forged gentleness
That shuddered at the acrid smell of blood;
The clammy horror of the crawling caves
Fished back the feral lust to feed on flesh
From cold, ancestral seas that knew no sun
Until, sharking in schools again their prey
Through tangled bottoms of a greener sea,
They grew the scourge and terror of the earth.

But still the tree-shaped hands of infants clung
About their mothers' necks, prolonging thus,
Like cords umbilical, the natal ties;
And sometimes when the birds of morning sang
A tree would grow inside an apish head
With fruit and innocence among its boughs,
And there the ape would from his fellows climb
To drink the golden waters of the sun
Before returning to his night of blood.

MIRACLE MILE

ROBERT FINDLEY

So then we have this
Miracle Mile and spotlights hidden in the palms
to see by night
what doesn't exist by day.

And we have this hunger
for something that will be remembered
like a flying red neon horse across the sky
or something that will scar
the moon with words
and leave you separated
from your money
and others who, hungry too,
remember only the defiance of
the climbing vine, a waitress' cry
of "Make it two!"
and a warm and shaken hand.

And somehow we must fracture this
outer space of organized and orchestrated
loneliness, and its manufactured yearning
for a mink, a Jag, for something that
will be remembered.

Oh, we must! For this shy smile,
this blackman's dignity, and this girl's love
came from somewhere here, without
one box-top, free,
to you and me.

books in review

Praise of Liberty

THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY, by Zechariah Chafee, Jr. Lippincott. Philadelphia. $5.00.

ZECHARIAH CHAFEE, Harvard's genial philosopher of the democratic freedoms, offers us his thoughts after two generations of struggle for civil liberties. And useful they are for Americans of all political persuasions. One need not agree with everything Professor Chafee says to admire this old-fashioned Yankee whose American traditionalism refuses to countenance a McCarthyism stultifying our political life.

No stranger to the wars, Chafee sees a big job ahead. He cites the evils plainly: the Smith Act, the McCarran Act, the congressional inquisitions, the demoralization of the scientific community, the informer system, the attempted purges of lawyers, and many others. He singles out "excesses" like the case of the Pentagon bootblack who underwent 70 FBI interviews because his mother gave the Scottsboro defense ten dollars before he was born. But, withal, he drives sharply at the underlying evils of the witch-hunt and demands a return to the Bill of Rights for all.

For liberals guilty of self-delusion he has a few words. The McCarran Act, he warns, "goes far beyond the Communists" and "gravely impairs some of the most precious of those institutions, freedom of speech and press and assembly, which our ancestors put at the head of the Bill of Rights." He sees far better than the Brownells of our day the international scandalizing of America's good name by the McCarran Act, now in the courts as the Communist Party battles the infamous registration order. Says Chafee:

> "If we really start inflicting the damaging consequences of registration under this law and prosecuting individuals for failure to register, our professions of love for open discussion will ring hollow in the ears of our natural friends in the free world. When the newspapers are full of stories of skilled workmen thrown out of their jobs, passports denied to many travelers, mail opened, lists gone through with a fine-tooth comb, law-abiding citizens imprisoned for long terms, and all the rest of it, we cannot defend ourselves against the sneers of our opponents and still less against the distrust of our friends. Frenchmen, Belgians, Dutchmen, Norwegians, Danes have had years of experience with that sort of thing under totalitarian occupations and it leaves a stench in their nostrils."

He does not squarely attack the hoax of a "Communist conspiracy" but argues essentially that the party is too small to constitute a clear and present danger. He prefers the Communist Party to be legal and defeated in the marketplace. "Aren't we barking up the wrong tree,"

e asks, "when we worry so much about ıblicly known Communist organizations ıd their meetings?" He opposes registra-ɔn laws and outlawing because they e futile and because they hit far be-ɔnd the confines of the Communist ırty.

Chafee is not only addicted to free eech at home; he wants it in the United ations, too, where he served as an merican expert in the Sub-Commission the Freedom of Information and the ess. A supporter of the concept of co-istence, he makes some shrewd observa-ɔns on American-Soviet relations as seen rough the eyes of a UN delegate. He s no use for endless charges and counter-arges. "The Russians spent an hour ch day pointing out the sensationalism our press and what they described as nsorship' by millionaire owners," afee writes. "We retorted at length out the uniformity of ideas in the So-et press and its censorship by govern-ent officials. Each side kept repeating own position—what the Geneva news-pers called playing over worn phono-ıph records." And so Chafee concludes ɣly, "the cold war becomes the scold r."

But the good professor is optimistic er the outcome. "My guess," he says, that the process will not be a one-y street running solely in our direction. ey will learn from us, but we shall also rn from them."

The one major inadequacy of *The Bless-s of Liberty* is its failure to discuss largest single unresolved problem in ıerican life, the struggle for Negro ıts. The issue described (*N. Y. Times,* gust 20, 1956) by Cyrus L. Sulzber-in an extraordinary burst of eloquence "this fundamental heartache, which . has remained at the core of Ameri-politics for a century"—this question unaccountably neglected in Professor Chafee's essays. One would gather from Prof. Chafee's energetic support of the UN's Declaration of Human Rights and his total stand on civil liberties the tenor of his views on Negro rights. But in failing to develop them he missed a rare opportunity to demonstrate the inseparable relationship between civil rights for the Negro people and civil liberties for all Americans.

Notwithstanding this dereliction, most democratic-minded Americans will find themselves in agreement with Professor Chafee. They will hail his rejection of automatic solutions and his re-affirmation of the necessity to *struggle* to maintain the Bill of Rights.

PONDERING the wisdom of Chafee, some new questions arise in the mind of this reviewer. Is it enough for advanced people—and I am thinking primarily of Socialist-minded workers and professional people—simply to give support to the democratic standard unfurled by a Chafee? Is there not some deeper thinking for us to do on the heritage of human freedom, the roots of American democracy and the nature of power and democracy under all social systems? We who have been the targets of slander that we are "totalitarians"—precisely when we have been the chief victims of reaction, too!—do we not have some new thinking to do on these questions? Do we not have much in common with a Chafee? Does our thinking on socialism and democracy merge with that of a Chafee?

It is without question absolutely indispensable that socialist-minded Americans remain the firmest and most consistent defenders of what is known in our jargon as "bourgeois democracy," those ancient liberties won—*won,* I say, not granted—through generations of popular struggles. We understand that

we must fight like tigers in this great democratic movement, this renaissance that stands squarely on the American Constitution and the Bill of Rights. *For these rights are good and great in and of themselves. They are more than means to an end; they are ends in themselves. They have a fighting validity in a capitalist America; they are indispensable in a socialist America.* A defense of these individual freedoms requires the perception that these freedoms are embedded in the great human heritage. Wrested by the rising bourgeoisie from feudalism and the working people and their allies from a reluctant owning class under capitalism, they must be cherished and expanded. They will reach their fruition in a free individual in a society free of the dominance of capital.

But such an outlook requires, in our judgment, that here and now socialist-minded Americans must have a deeper appreciation of the ancient liberties extolled by Chafee. It is not enough to make the sharpest and most penetrating critiques of the empty, formal and frequently perverted character these rights take on under capitalism. It is necessary to see these rights in their origin, growth and development. At no time can the Constitution be relinquished to the Men of the Right. We must see—as do the Negro people from Montgomery to Harlem—the inherent expansibility of the United States Constitution. William Lloyd Garrison, the old Abolitionist, regarded the Constitution as "a covenant with the devil" because of its concessions to chattel slavery. More far-sighted Abolitionists like Frederick Douglass refused to concede that the Constitution was co-equal with slavery. They saw in the Constitution, expanded by the irresistible pressure of popular struggle, a flexible instrument under which chattel slavery could be abolished.

So Socialist-minded Americans must see the American Constitution today. The Constitution and capitalism are not synonymous. An organized American working class, with its solid allies among the Negro people, the farmers, small business and professional people, can also exercise an irresistible pressure, within the framework of an expanding Constitution, to move steadily towards Socialism in the United States.

But is this yet enough? Do we not have a deeper responsibility for some new thinking on questions of power and individual rights under both capitalism and socialism? It is one of history's lesser ironies that we on the American Left, whose right to dissent from Wall Street and Washington has been so brutally curtailed, must do some re-thinking on the right to dissent. But do it we must. If nothing else, recent Soviet history has posed the question anew with a force that admits of no evasion. We cannot prove our basic affinity with the democratic forces of our land, our understanding of the historic process and our moral worth without such new thinking. In this reviewer's judgment, we will never be able to remove the stigma of "totalitarianism," mendacious though it be without such new thinking.

True, it will take the experience of the masses of the people in daily contact with the Left to smash the myths about us. But that alone will not accomplish the process. There must be new and creative thought that demonstrates the answer to the question: *Is socialism compatible with personal liberty?* There must be restored to current socialist thought that neglected aspect which has existed since the foundation of scientific socialism—the unbreakable concept that socialism develops in and through democracy and that socialism can and must develop with all the checks and balances

necessary to have both social control of production and distribution and the widest personal freedoms.

INEVITABLY one's thoughts shift to Nikita Khrushchev's revelations about Stalin and the crimes against Socialist legality and the rights of the Soviet Man. The outcry from Marxist parties for a deep explanation was answered in part by that famous resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It began to give some insights into the objective factors that facilitated the development of destruction of Socialist democracy and legality. History's first attempt to build a Socialist system in a predominantly peasant land of backward industry in a "beleaguered fortress" situation clearly carried its own perils.

Few objective people will fail to recognize the process under which Stalin could grasp so much tyrannical power. The disposition not to press disagreement under semi-civil war conditions is understandable. Questions of titanic theoretical and practical significance had to be fought out: Could socialism be built in one country? Could the USSR build up a powerful industry and feed the cities unaided by foreign capital or outside assistance from a successful proletarian revolution in an advanced industrial country? These questions were answered affirmatively by Stalin and the majority of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the 'twenties and the superhuman task of telescoping centuries into decades was undertaken. No one with the slightest knowledge of the building of American capital and the achievements of industrialization of our last century will minimize the enormity of the tasks set and the progress made.

But if this was the course of events in the creation of a great and indispensable capital formation by a giant Operation Bootstrap, it caries its own severe lesson to Socialist-minded people of the whole world. For while it was undoubtedly necessary to impose severe disciplines, the negation of Socialist legality attached its own penalties. The descent into despotism weakened the individual creative power of socialist man. It is clear today that new depths of creativity could have been tapped by a heightening rather than a lessening of democracy.

At what point the Soviet state moved over, perhaps imperceptibly at first, from stern civil war necessities to the untrammeled tyranny of the latter Stalin days, is something that cannot be determined from afar—and, indeed, would be presumptuous to speculate upon. The corrective flood of discussion unleashed by the Khrushchev revelations will probably develop those points. For us it is more important to draw the principal conclusion from the debate: *that individual freedoms are an integral element of Socialism and that the despotism of a latter-day Stalin is not an inevitable feature of a collective society but a cancer that must be guarded against vigilantly by the people of any society.* Clearly, any complex of power—yes, even a Socialist complex —carries with it the danger of abuse of power, as the Soviet lesson amply demonstrated, an abuse harmful morally and materially.

The founders of scientific socialism never regarded a discussion of the rights of the individual as sacrilegious. Quite the contrary is the case. Frederick Engels, writing in 1891, *spoke precisely of the necessity of the workingclass to "safeguard itself" not only from its class enemy but even from its own deputies and of-*

ficials by the vigorous use of the power of recall.

Quoted approvingly by Lenin in his State and Revolution (p. 64), Engels' "blasphemy," as developed in his preface to the third edition of Karl Marx's *Civil War in France,* was put thus:

> ". . . this working class must, on the one hand, set aside all the old repressive machinery previously used against itself, and on the other, *safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials* by declaring them all, without any exception, subject to recall at any moment. . . ."

ENGELS, with his usual prescience, saw the evolving problems of a new society even in the laboratory of the Paris Commune of 1861. Today, with vastly greater social materials available, the point can be put much more bluntly: A socialist *society* and a socialist *state* are not coterminous concepts. Individuals require protection of their inalienable rights even against the state in a socialist society, in deed as well as word. These rights are well established: free speech, press, assembly, the rights of counsel, bail, trial, habeas corpus and freedom from arbitrary arrest, as well as those rights which capitalist societies do not grant as a matter of basic law—the right to a job, to security, education, leisure, etc., the very rights which give complete content to the individual freedoms which Chafee extolls.

But the question may well be asked—and is being asked insistently: Do not such rights require more than formal guarantees? Don't they require structural changes in a Socialist society, changes which may be incompatible with the present development of Soviet socialist society, for example?

These are large questions which only the evolving historic process can fully answer. But one thing is clear in the history of both American capitalist democracy and in Soviet socialist democracy: *formal rights are no guarantee of actual rights.* Too many Socialist-minded people have ignored this point in the past. We have not explored sufficiently the problems consequent upon and inherent in power in itself. Except for a few long-sighted remarks of Engels, Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg the literature of Marxism is almost barren of discussion on this question.

Two sorts of mistakes in this regard have been made. Firstly, in emphasizing the formal character of popular rights in capitalist democracy, we have stressed the negative aspects almost completely. The fact that these are real rights, won over centuries of struggle, with deep meaning in and of themselves, has been blurred. On the other hand, we have accepted uncritically the existence of formal rights in a socialist state, without examining closely as to their actuality.

Today, with a great re-examination of fundamental values and with a generation of social experience behind them, Socialist-minded Americans are acquiring new insights. The struggle for democracy in the United States takes on a new character. It partakes not only of the demand to retain the old, fine and traditional; it not only demands these for themselves; it sees in these rights the indispensable condition for advance upon the road to social progress.

The road to socialist democracy in the Soviet Union is something else again and one about which an American can only write diffidently. But one observation is pertinent. Athwart our path to democratic progress stand the great monopolies, the Federal and State governments with their vast machinery of coercion, most of which is committed to blocking the democratic way for working people, Ne-

groes and non-conformist intellectuals. In the USSR—under the vastly different conditions of an economic base operated for public use rather than private profit —the development of individual rights takes on a wholly different character. Today it can be said that, however unevenly, this process of democratization takes place with the support of the Soviet government. Whether this development can be thoroughgoing without structural changes in Soviet political forms is still open to question. Certain signs of structural change are already evident. Changes in the legal system to strengthen the individual against arbitrary trial and arrest are reported. The possibility of local opposition candidacies in elections are widely discussed. Certainly, in the atmosphere of the new thaw much that would have been inconceivable earlier is today being thought about and debated.

For Socialist-minded Americans, deeply conscious of our own historical development, the problems are considerably different. Most of us accept the concept of an American road to Socialism by the struggles of the American people through constitutional and democratic channels open to them. But this is clearly more than simply a theory of peaceful transition and the use of the legal powers of government, once gained by the people, to move towards social ownership of the means and machinery of production. For us not only the transition but an American Socialist commonwealth will be vastly different than anything hitherto constructed. For Americans there will be no problems of creating a vast new capital formation, no problem of creating new democratic traditions and practices. These will be at hand. They have been created under capitalism. Given the material conditions and historical traditions of the United States, particularly the underlay of generations of popular struggle, we can say with confidence that the essentially inalienable rights of the individual will be maintained and expanded infinitely in a socialist America. But these *objective* factors alone, crucial though they be, are not be enough. There must be built up the mass *consciousness* that personal freedoms are not expendable in *any* society and that socialist society, above all, requires built-in guarantees of individual liberty to flourish continuously; and that far from weakening the social fabric, the concept of personal freedom strengthens its basic unity and tensile quality.

From that long-term outlook, as well as our respect for his fighting observations of today, arises our appreciation of a great non-Marxist democrat like Prof. Chafee. The blessings of liberty on you and all of us, professor!

SIMON W. GERSON

China-Closet Bull

THE CROWNING PRIVILEGE, by Robert Graves; Doubleday, N. Y.; $5.00.

There was once a time, before the development of Literary Engineering, when criticism was not the grim and solemn thing it has become in our degenerate age. The New Criticism had its uses and they were real; but the second generation New Critic gives birth almost hourly to some nonsensical piece of Quantitative Analysis. Tate and Gordon once wrote of Joyce's story "The Dead" that "The snow is the story." The critical snow has never

stopped falling, but perhaps this book may help to change the weather.

"I was never one to stroll down the street with a catapult and break windows just for the fun of hearing the tinkle of glass and seeing furious faces peering out as I scuttle away. But to break windows *from the inside* amounts, at times, to a civic duty. One smells gas, bursts open the kitchen door, turns off the oven-tap, wraps a towel around one's fist and breaks every pane in the kitchen window. . . ." This is Robert Graves' notion of his own usefulness to criticism at the present time. It makes for a book which will horrify some, and exasperate others; but Graves's style, wit and learning are such as to give delight even when we disagree.

This kind of literary window breaking demands a good deal of skill, and Graves is nicely suited to the work. He is, people have begun to say, "the finest poet writing in English"; he has a great deal of traditional learning and a lot of very odd and out-of-the-way information; he has a powerful love of literature, and he has no fear of attacking sacred cows. Even where the book is, perhaps, not sound, it does the service of letting light and air into the stuffy closets of contemporary criticism.

At the center of the work is Graves' attempt to create a literary counter-revolution.

It used to be held, say at about the beginning of the century, that the Elizabethan period and the Romantic Movement were the great peaks of English literature. Milton was "a late Elizabethan" and, after Shakespeare, the greatest poet. Shelley was the greatest of the Romantics; the Victorians (already being devaluated) were more or less legitimate heirs of the Romantic tradition; 18th century Neo-Classicism, at least in its poetry, was an aberration, though Pope was worthy; the Metaphysical poets were nowhere. This, roughly, was the academic view of things.

The first displacement of this order came with the anathematizing of Victorianism, and it seemed for a time that a newer, broader, more "realistic" kind of romanticism would arise. Later a new point of view began to take shape, especially in the work of some of what came to be called "the New Critics." This is best seen, perhaps in the work of one of the best of these critics, Cleanth Brooks, in a book like *Modern Poetry and the Tradition.* The tradition he refers to is that of "wit"—or, as he later came to call it, "paradox"; it is most manifest among the Metaphysical school, and now John Donne (saving, always, Shakespeare) becomes the Archpoet. Romanticism goes down; Shelley begins to seem a dunce and an hysterical one at that; Neo-classical stock goes up a few points, and in general the idea is that, following the division of sensibility which Eliot saw as having taken place around the middle 17th century, poetry has been on the wrong track for yea many long years. And now Eliot and the contemporary neo-Metaphysical school of poets has come to set all right again.

In time the critics who took this line furnished out their quarters better. Various poets were variously "rehabilitated" and admitted to the house of poetry: even Tennyson was discovered to have trafficked in paradox! Finally a new canon of poetry appeared; and a new Pantheon of poets, a contemporary Academy. . . . And just as the dust is settling, here comes Mr. Graves with his ax!

Hell among the yearlings, shouts of anguish and outrage . . . it is one thing to break windows, but it is something else to do it by flinging the poets through them and out into the street: even the sainted bones of Eliot himself. And it is just this that Graves sets out to do in the essay "These Be Your Gods, O

srael!" The poets who get this roust are Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Auden and Dylan Thomas.

Of Yeats: ". . . a poem strewn with eferences to which not one reader in ten illion has the key, is regarded as impu-ence by Dame Ocupacyon."

Of Pound: "The case becomes worse hen the poet misquotes. . . ." (In one ssay, "Dr. Syntax and Mr. Pound" there a wicked and witty attack on Pound's earning, which Graves sees as fakery. ut his harshest words are against Pound s a Fascist and anti-Semite.)

Of Eliot: "Does he require our com-iseration because his shabby equipment always deteriorating and because he asted twenty years in publishing the ooks of others instead of writing his wn?"

Of Auden: "He is as synthetic as Milton . . . Auden's is now the pres-ibed period style of the 'fifties, com-ounded of all the personal styles avail-ble. . . ."

Of Dylan Thomas: "He kept musical ontrol of the reader without troubling out the sense."

All these characterizations (and their nplifications in the essay) contain some a great deal of truth. They will not, Graves knows and says, change the inions of the academic critics nor, in ost cases, of the general reader. But ey do cast a harsh and often revealing ght on some of the weaknesses of con-mporary idols. They have force even hen we may feel that they are wrong-eaded, because they are the dissenting ice of one of the great Outlaws of the ne, and because they proceed from the ea that "professionally-minded English ets . . . insist that every poem must ake prose sense as well as poetic sense one or more levels." This may not be all the news about the making of poems, but it is a perfectly possible point of view.

This attack on "the age of acceptance" is only a part of Graves' "counterrevolution." He is not interested in re-establishing the old academic order, but it is interesting that his thought moves in that direction. Thus he is cool toward Donne, and he attacks Pope on what might seem the least likely of all grounds: that he is not a good technician. Of Dryden: "He earned the doubtful glory of having found English poetry brick and left it marble—native brick, imported marble." His dislike of Milton is well known; his liking for Skelton perhaps less so. Again and again what Graves finds to praise or blame in a poet comes back to the poet's attitude toward the Goddess, the Muse. No one, Graves says over and over, can be a poet without love, without being a whole and decent man; to lack this is to lack everything: no amount of cleverness can long avail in its stead. This may seem out of date, but it has a solid sound to it, and it is said with the greatest wit and elan.

The other essays in the book range far and wide. The most interesting ones, I think, are "Harp, Anvil, Oar (on meter); the brilliant reconstruction of the ballad *Tom o' Bedlam's Song;* and "How Poets See"—an examination of the visual imagery of Keats, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Milton and Donne.

This is a book of great riches and a joy to read, though it will not be loved by the Faculty of Critical Engineering. Or as Spenser has it: "To some I know this method will seem displeasant, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts or sermoned at large. . . ."

THOMAS MCGRATH

Venture in Theory

THE ENEMY FORGOTTEN, by Gilbert Green, International Publishers. $2.50.

I am tempted to say that this is the best book written by a Communist Party leader during its 37-year history. Furthermore, it is incisive in style, well documented and remarkably free of cliches.

The major theme is clear; it unifies the book; it is persuasively argued: that for a decade the people were saddled with a reactionary policy, a witchhunt and war jitters because liberals and labor in our country forgot that Big Business has been the traditional foe of progress. They assumed that Communism was the enemy and this had unfortunate consequences for the liberals and the labor movement and for the political health of our country.

(One might add that Communist attacks on Socialists and liberals have often in the past also helped deflect attention from the real foe—Big Business. And this too had very bad results.)

Picking the wrong enemy was the reason why a sober analyst and fighting liberal like Elmer Davis could have written a book in 1955 entitled *Two Minutes Till Midnight* which assumed that we were on the eve of a world hydrogen bomb war. While Davis hoped such a war would not come, and opposed the preventive war talk in high places, nevertheless he could not see how such a war could be avoided.

It is a great virtue of Green's book that he puts the perils and dangers of the past decade in the setting of a world moving toward an easing of world tensions. We are approaching a great watershed of history, the turning point where mankind departs from inevitable and recurring wars and enters an era of lasting peace. Green shows that America, its people, especially the laboring folk, have been traditionally on the side of progress and peace. Therefore they played an important part in this world-wide change that is opening such bright new prospects for humanity.

Many of us have spoken about the importance of basing ourselves on the American tradition. We have often criticized Marxists for dealing with the world in general while ignoring our own country, its history, its culture and its exceptional features. Green doesn't say what should be done, in this respect; he proceeds to do it. His book is steeped in the history of our land and in the men and women who have created the great tradition of the people's fight against Big Business reaction.

But if this is a splendid book it is also a tragic one. On the one hand it reflects the honorable achievements of American Communists. On the other it unwittingly reveals the shortcomings and failures of the American Communist movement. Had this book, written well before the 20th Congress, appeared before that event, it could have been hailed as a bold and independent book. But in the light of the re-evaluation that has taken place since it was written, the book becomes outdated in many ways.

Gil Green pioneered within the Communist Party on questions of peaceful transition to socialism, on the prospects of peaceful coexistence opened up by the victory over Hitlerism and on other necessary changes of Marxist doctrine. But while Green discusses these questions briefly in this book others, like the Ital-

ian Communist leader Palmiro Togliatti, have subsequently gone much further in bringing Marxist theory up to date and in line with the real world of today.

Green's book is tragic from still another viewpoint. It was written under the then prevailing idea that a book by a Communist is not so much his own work as the work of the Party as a whole. Green therefore becomes a victim of the exaggerated discipline that existed in the C. P. For example, Green had for many years opposed the approach to the Negro people as a "nation" and to the slogan of self-determination. But as a disciplined Communist he still uses these descriptions in his book, although it must be said he correctly stresses the fight of the Negro people for integration as representing their real and historic aspirations.

Green has pioneered in a Marxist analysis of the American two-party tradition and the consequent difficulties of organizing a third party. He describes the manner in which progressive labor and liberal forces have striven to utilize the existing political arena. He shows how sterile is the approach of those who counsel standing aside from the struggle because they don't like the political arena within which labor fights for its aims.

One of the most valuable sections of this book is the searching analysis of the political realignment now going on in the country. His conclusion that "the cleavage inside the Democratic Party is basic and cannot be patched up indefinitely," seems eminently sound. But when he writes that the ADA and other liberal groups within the Democratic Party are basically wrong when they seek to transform the Democratic party into a true people's party, he seems to contradict his own recognition that the struggle for realignment "could lead also to another two-party arrangement in which one party was composed of anti-monopoly forces and the other remained monopoly dominated."

Green has cogent criticism of those liberals who succumbed to the virus of the red-hunt when they forgot who the real enemy was. But it seems to this reviewer that his tone would have been somewhat less sharp if he had indicated the responsibility of the Communists in often making enemies chiefly among those circles where they should have made friends. We think if he had written this in the light of more recent revelations his tone toward such liberals might be slightly different.

We live at a time when Marxists are re-studying all questions from the beginning. Green was one of the first American Marxists to begin such a review long before there was a 20th Congress. It is a tribute to his foresight that despite the nature of subsequent events his book is still so useful. But it is also a warning to American Marxists how much different must be our approach to organization, to discipline, to a "monolithic" type of thinking. Above all it underlines the need for a creative development of socialism on new, democratic and American foundations. For this program America needs Gil Green. His book is a powerful brief for ending the madness that keeps him and other Smith Act victims behind bars.

JOSEPH CLARK

Vito Marcantonio

I VOTE MY CONSCIENCE, Debates, Speeches and Writings of Vito Marcantonio, 1935-1950. Selected and edited by Annette T. Rubinstein and Associates. The Vito Marcantonio Memorial. $5.00.

IT WAS in February or March of 1937 that I first met Honorable Vito Marcantonio, affectionately known as "Marc."

I had gone to New York to speak at a meeting of the Fur & Leather Workers at Manhattan Center. The meeting was chaired by Ben Gold. After the meeting I went to 231 E. 116th Street in Harlem, where Marc was born, raised and lived all his life among his people, "The People," whom he loved so deeply, and fought so fiercely for.

That was the beginning of a friendship that lived as long as Marc did, that will live and be an inspiration to me forever. I have a letter from Marc. It's typewritten. At the bottom he wrote in long hand—"Al mio fratello Giovanni"—To my brother John.—"I want you to know that your friendship is one of my most prized possessions" Marc.

His friendship and his memory, is one of *my* most prized possessions!

On August 9, 1954, Marc was taken away from us.

What a book!—It's hard to do justice to this monumental work. Through it, Marc breathes, lives, fights again. In reading it, I somehow felt that Marc was with me. Many a time, while Marc was in Congress, I would be seated next to him. As a former Congressman, I could go to the floor of the House, and occupy any empty seat. He never had any trouble in finding two seats together.

I was then able to watch Marc closely at work. What a fighter! He possessed to a very high degree the attributes of a sterling leader of the People—keen intellect, sharp wit, thorough knowledge of parliamentary rules of the House, unchallenged honesty and ability, tremendous courage, and above all, boundless love for, and faith in the People. I so well remember when the McCarran act passed the House. I was sitting by Marc. He fought so hard against it. As usual, he put his all in it. Marc stood alone, and could not hold back the stampede caused by lack of understanding and fear.

After it was all over, Marc said, "Let's go to my office John." When we came to the top of the main Capitol stairway, we stopped and out of our throats came a song of defiance to the forces of evil. It was spontaneous.

I am firmly convinced that Marc was by far the most effective fighter for the People's rights that Congress has seen in our day.

I Vote My Conscience proves my contention.

Marc never hesitated to jump into the fray when the People's rights were being attacked, neither did he permit to go unchallenged attacks against minority groups, or causes that were unpopular to the Lords of Wall Street.

To Senator Bilbo who had addressed Josephine Piccolo as "My Dear Dago"—Marc wrote: "If you have any shred of decency left in you, you would apologize."

When Congressman Rankin referred to Congressman Celler of N. Y. as "a Jewish Gentleman"—Marc exposed such remarks as FASCISM, in a scathing and

lverizing attack ending with, "I would ve been remiss in my duty to my coun- had I remained silent."

When the lackeys of reaction were ing to hide their acts, their betrayal of nerica behind the smokescreen of Com- nism, Marc retorted with: "The real nger to our cherished institutions comes m the organized reactionaries in Amer- who are ready, even with violence overthrow our government and estab- h a dictatorship of reaction in this ntry."

On April 22, 1947 in opposing the uest for a resolution approving the ntempt citations of Attorney Leon sephson and the Secretary of the Com- nist Party, Eugene Dennis, Marc, rely- on historic facts, keen insight and derstanding, in a thrilling address to colleagues, reminded them that "If people of Germany, if the Reichstag Germany, if the people as a whole had ended the Constitutional Rights of Communists in Germany, there would ve been no Hitler to make war on the nocracy of the world."

Unfortunately as it so often happened, Marc was alone. He alone in Congress had the vision and courage to warn America against the real enemy from within.

What a giant among pygmies!

Labor, racial, religious and political minorities, in short, America had in Marc its clearest, most vibrant, most potent and effective voice in the defense of their rights, and the promotion of their well being.

Marc — "I Vote My Conscience" brought you back to us. I shall with pride and deep emotion listen to you again and again.

My heartfelt thanks to you and your associates, Annette Rubinstein. By bringing Marc back to his beloved country and its people, you have served America well. I salute you.

Fraternally,
JOHN T. BERNARD

John T. Bernard was a member of the 75th Congress of the United States, having been elected thereto on November 31, 1936, on the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party ticket.

northodox Reality

IGAIL, By E. Louise Mally, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc. $3.75.

GAINST a traditional background of ante-bellum Southern plantation , of belles and dances, and hot-blooded ns of decaying families, E. Louise lly sets an unexpected and surprising y. It's as if she had deliberately sen the honeysuckle and roses back- p the better to high-light the unor- dox reality of her tale.

Abigail is the daughter of a Northern ker. She is sent south to visit relatives whose plantation is heavily in debt to her father. Ostensibly she's gone just to visit relatives, but there is the possibility that marriage will come out of it. But before her journey south into the land of slavery. Abigail had already found herself involved with the Abolitionists, and in fact she is the bearer of money to an agent in the area she is to visit. The agent turns out to be a Negro seamstress.

Abigail reacts to the plantation with mixed feelings. On the one hand she's charmed by the gracious quality of life

among the plantation gentry; she's flattered by the attention her cousin Randolph pays her, finds herself in love with him, and finally marries him.

At the same time, she is aware of the ferment among the slaves. The Negro seamstress whom she brings money to from the Abolitionists up North turns out also to be an organizer of the Underground Railroad for escaping slaves. Her nephew leads an ill-starred revolt, timed with John Brown's sortie at Harper's Ferry. Abigail helps him escape, even in defiance of her own husband; and it is the breaking of the Southern code that brings her own life into danger.

The final section of the book is an exciting tale of escape and pursuit—and, irony of ironies, Abigail escapes from her husband and the South by the Underground Railroad route intended for Negro slaves.

This aspect of the book is what changes its character from the oft-told tale of Southern charming decay to the surprisingly authentic account of not only slave resistance but also of the economic basis of plantation and southern aristocratic life which made slavery a necessity.

Miss Mally is very familiar with the financial side of slave life, and this alone makes it a drama of more than usual interest. She is also acutely aware of the real conflict between southern slavery and northern industrial power: and ho if one has to expand the other had to b defeated. One of her southern gentleme points out coldly that the difference b tween life for a southern slave and li for a northern *wage* slave need not refle badly on the slave's life.

Fascinating as these details are, sti the book suffers from a shallowness c characterization, and its narrative styl is thin and without the density that make it seem really lived. This is a story 'in vented' and related on the basis of theor and research—which is nothing again it, except that the process shows to plainly. Her story needed a lot mo "cooking" before serving.

And yet there's a "but." I think rea ers will find aspects of Abigail's li which are unusual and unexpected. Th plain-speaking young lady who risks h life to free the slaves almost shakes he self free of the pages and comes alive it's a pity the author didn't muse ov her longer than seems to have been th case.

Still, it's a good thing to be reminde once in a while, that the true patri breaks a bad law to keep a good consc ence, and history more likely than n vindicates him. I only wish Miss Mal had fought her material until it surre dered the whole depth of what existe in it.

KENNETH DUNBA

Psychology Invented

THE RAPE OF THE MIND. The Psychology of Thought Control, Menticide, and Brainwashing, by Joost A. M. Meerloo, M.D., The World Publishing Co. $4.00.

THE AUTHOR who was a Dutch psychiatrist draws upon his personal experiences in the Netherlands in the underground during part of the Na occupation and his later experiences governmental official stationed in En land interviewing internees, prisoners a traitors. He later came to the Unit States and served as a witness in t trial of a Marine captured by the Chine in the Korean war, who was said to ha been brainwashed.

Dr. Meerloo seeks to utilize his war post-war experience about brainwash- to convey his abhorrence of totalita- ism and to promote his conviction the importance of freedom and matur- He seems to want to say that every son has his breaking point; that the ere methods of cracking a man which e used in Nazi concentration camps, the cold war, are also found in mild ree in much of our own society. re are the unobtrusive coercions within society, as in parent-child relation- s, the educational system, the rela- ships in technological practice, ad- ising and propaganda, and bureau- ic practices in government and in- ry. He asserts, for instance, "Asking ple for a loyalty oath—asking them perform that magical ritual through ch they forswear all past and future —may have a paradoxical effect. ely taking an oath does not make an loyal, although it may later enable dge to prosecute him for perjury." (p.).

he meat of his book may be sum- ized as follows. "Today a man is longer punished only for the crimes as in fact committed. Now he may be pelled to confess to crimes that have conjured up by his judges, who use confession for political purposes" 19). Dr. Meerloo discusses the uses torture, drugs, hypnosis and ques- ng to get confessions. He points out now, even as in the days of witch- , the scapegoat finally confesses icly to horrid deeds and even comes elieve his own stories, invented to orm to the demands of his accusers; the victim may yearn for his own as punishment for his guilt and re- from pressures. Then and now was a peculiar interplay, Meerloo s out, between the victim and the of the community. The trials, con- fession and punishment for the victim was also torture for the bystanders who in many ways identify with the victim. Thus terror becomes widespread.

How is the victim broken down? He is isolated except for his probing enemies. He cannot always reproduce the same answer to repeated questions. Like every- one else he has his own hidden guilt feelings and self doubts which urge him to confession. His norms and values are undermined as he no longer has any objective standards except the indoctrinat- ing logic and insistent phrases of the enemy. Confronted by his own incon- sistency he becomes convinced of the impossibility of his own logical conse- cutive thinking. He may be given drugs to hasten his confusion, and stimulants to revive him from physical collapse. So reduced, he is docile enough to be taught to repeat the phrases thrown at him by the inquisitors. Thus he learns the essen- tials of his confession, and enriches it with remembered details of his own life and accepts his own imposed guilt, duti- fully bearing false witness against himself and others.

WHAT is the nature of the im- posing power? "The fact that I have made an analogy between the totalitarian frame of mind and the disease of mental withdrawal known as schizo- phrenia indicates that I consider the totalitarian ideology delusional and the totalitarian frame of mind a pathological distortion that may occur in anyone. . . . A delusion is the loss of an independent, verifiable reality, with a consequent relapse into a more primitive state of awareness. . . . Totalitarianism itself can be considered delusional" (p. 201).

Unfortunately a major delusion ob- sesses Dr. Meerloo which destroys his log- ic and defeats the purpose of warning us about the totalitarian trends within the

United States: his overriding anti-Soviet bias. His every attack upon totalitarianism ends up with a spear thrust at the Soviets.

His first illustration of brainwashing relates to Colonel Schwable, a marine taken prisoner by the Chinese during the Korean police action, who confessed to participating in germ warfare, but repudiated this statement after returning to the country and facing a court martial. Dr. Meerloo accepts the colonel's repudiation of his earlier statement without question. Later he elaborates the story of Cardinal Mindszenty as described by the apologist Swift as though it were an authenticated factual document.

Here is a shining example of what prejudice can do to the logic of an intelligent and learned man: "That (the Nazis) were not uniformly successful can be explained by two factors. The first is that most of the members of the underground were inwardly prepared for the brutality with which they were treated. The second is that, clever as the Nazi techniques were, they were not as irresistible as the methodical tricks of the Communist brainwashers are." (p. 82).

Dr. Meerloo devotes a whole chapter, and more, to "Pavlov's Students as Circus Tamers." He says:

> "The totalitarians . . . have applied some of the Pavlovian findings, in a subtle and complicated way and sometimes in a grotesque way, to try to produce the reflex mental and political conditioning and of submission in the human guinea pigs under their control. Even though the Nazis employed these methods before the Second World War, they can be said to have reached their full flower in Soviet Russia. Through a continued repetition of indoctrination, bell ringing and feeding, the Soviet man is expected to becon a conditioned reflex matching, reacti according to a prearranged pattern, did the laboratory dogs. . . . The institutions, part of the Academy Science, are dedicated to the politic application of the Pavlovian Theor They are under orders to emphasi the purely mechanical aspects of Pa lov's findings. Such a theoretical vie can reduce all human emotions to simple mechanistic system of huma reflexes . . . man can be theoretical conditioned and trained as anima are" (p. 38-9). "In the totalitari countries, where belief in Pavlovi strategy has assumed grotesque propo tions, the self-thinking, subjective m has disappeared. There is utter reje tion of any attempt at persuasion discussion. Individual self-expressio is taboo. Private affection is tabo (p. 51).

Dr. Meerloo knows, as every ps chologist does, that the promotion of t idea of mechanical conditioning thriv primarily as J. B. Watson's Behavioris —a perversion of the old associationis and Pavlov's terminology, and that widest expression is still in the high paid work of Madison Ave. advertise and promotion men. Dr. Meerloo's re erences to a Pavlovian training of m as animals or guinea pigs is a gratuito slander, the calculated slur of a pros cuting attorney attempting to arouse t emotional prejudices of the jury. He w knows that though the behavior of t nervous system of animals, like th metabolism, or their reactions to gravi are not so different from that of huma There is nothing in Pavlov that pla down the human in human conscio ness.

RALPH DOYST

LETTERS

Editors, *Mainstream*:

I do not have, unlike Mr. B., money to contribute to your magazine other than its newstand price, and I am not signing a name to this letter that like Ivor Montagu's your editors can recognize (with great relief, no doubt) as real. Still I want to join the exchange on Mr. Bothwell's review of Mr. Greene's latest novel and thereby risk saddling you with as wearying a correspondence as the recent one between a bad poet and a fact-minded historian.

Not that I've read *The Quiet American*. I abandoned Mr. Greene on the Gold Coast after having been with him through Mexico, Brighton and the Balkans (or was it Vienna?). Nor do I want to examine the contradictions of Mr. Montagu's and Mr. D's statements: Mr. Bothwell has rather nicely knocked their heads together. I do think, though, that Mr. Bothwell's snobbishness calls for some support in your pages.

A literate critic who takes taste and penetration for granted with your readers deserves some welcome. They have, it seems to me, been assaulted for so long now by reviewers who expound with very notice their version of Marxist literary principles that many, I am certain, must have read Mr. Bothwell's piece swimmingly. How heady to take for granted after these many years that Mr. Greene is no serious writer, not to weigh in the balance the immediate political significance of the subject of his book!—but, instead, to join in the witty commentary on the effect of the novel on the literary scene, albeit a very passing scene we hope it is.

Do not think your Mr. Bothwell a frivolous man. (Incidentally, I am signing this letter Mr. Chic.) He asks his readers in a most responsible fashion to raise their sights higher than a target such as Greene. By example he shows how futile it is to examine again another Greene novel or any novel by a bad writer, refusing unlike most of your reviewers to be a virgin who is deflowered by every book that comes along.

Raising the literary level, as Mr. Mao might put it, involves to some extent absorbing into the body of established facts that Mr. Greene is a bad writer and that, given his social prejudices, his inability to see any situation in depth will make of The Quiet American what Mr. Bothwell says it is. This is a simple deduction, but it could, of course, lead to no review at all. The ironies that Mr. Bothwell squeezes from the unfavorable reviews given Mr. Greene by his admirers are altogether delicious and instructive, however, and the only proper concern of any notice on The Quiet American.

MR. CHIC

Editors, *Mainstream*:

Simone de Beauvoir in her novel, *The Mandarins,* and "Timon" in his review of it, both contain within their eloquent protests, the very quality which they would assail.

Nowhere in her book does the novelist suggest that the curtailment of freedoms by the Communist Party—which creates the dilemma for both her leading characters—is the result of the limitations of the members, and not of Marxism itself. And "Timon" asks: is it true . . . that man's oldest and dearly bought humanities are alien to socialism?

How can such a question be asked seriously by anyone familiar with the history of Marxism? Humanism, in the sense of Timon's question, was the very

basis of Marx's search for the means to create it in the modern world, for a method, a guide to action, that would make freedom in the modern world possible.

The freedom of necessity that Engels defines, includes the personal morality, intellectual freedom, scientific truth, artistic integrity that these writers would seem to consider impossible of fulfillment within the movement.

That there are no absolutes either within or without the movement should be obvious to anyone considering the problem. The struggle now taking place *within* is an inevitable process of growth, no matter how costly the process. To take the errors, the excesses as the whole is to fall victim to the absolutes they would protest. And to withdraw is to aid in the defeat of the struggle. The solution lies in an adherence to the truths of communism—in a life and death struggle against dogma, absolutes that destroy, negate, these truths. Long ago Lenin defined Marxism as not a dogma but a guide to action. The movement is strong enough today to see that its continuance depends upon the inclusion of those freedoms which Engels defined as necessity. The errors, tragic and criminal as they have been (and are) must be seen in the true perspective of the world situation and of the particular party within it; they are errors of leadership which has fallen victim to fear—and fear is rationalized into the rigidities of dogma—but they cannot touch the essential truth that lies within the method of dialectical materialism upon which the world movement of communism progresses.

V. S.

Editors, *Mainstream*:

I don't get Howard Fast's answer to Eugene Lyons at all. He sounds like a Baptist parson answering an Episcopalian who's asked him to join a more respectable church. I believe in politeness in discussion—we've all had precious little of it for a long time, God knows. But don't fall to your knees just because any old McCarthyite barfly asks you to recant and pray with him. It's fine to take the right tone in an argument but don't decide on the tone without considering the record of the saint who'd like to slit your throat.

Let's have courtesy, by all means, but keep your spine straight, Howard Fast. You've got a lot stronger one than Deacon Lyons.

HARRIET PAGE