Mainstream

DO ENDS JUSTIFY MEANS?

Howard Selsam

ohn Berger THE PROBLEMS OF THE PAINTER

hillip Bonosky MARGIN FOR MANEUVER

Iartin Carter THREE POEMS

Reviews of Arnold Toynbee, Tennessee Williams, John Hall Wheelock, John Somerville, Randolph Bourne and Henry Myers.

Iovember, 1956 35 cents

VOL. 9, No. 10

Mainstream

NOVEMBER, 1956

MAINSTREAM is published monthly by Masses & Mainstream, Inc., 832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y. Subscription rate $4 a year; foreign and Canada, $4.75 a year. Single copies 35¢; outside the U.S.A. 50¢. Re-entered as second class matter February 25, 1948, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. under the Act of March 3, 1879.

DO ENDS JUSTIFY MEANS?

HOWARD SELSAM

IN ALL history, those who worked for social change have been branded immoral by the defenders of the existing order. Although this is an old practice it has come in recent times to take a new form. It is expressed in the accusation, hurled by the proponents of the *status quo,* that their opponents believe "the end justifies the means." Often it is put as the question: "Do you believe that the end justifies the means?" It is true that the question is frequently asked with malice aforethought, with the implication that those asked would sacrifice all moral principles in pursuing their goal—that they are without principle, unscrupulous and "Machiavellian." (It is also implied, at the same time, that their goals are not what they say they are and would not stand close scrutiny.)

Nevertheless this is a serious question and a serious charge. If one professes to believe that the end justifies the means then it is assumed that he will stop at nothing to achieve his goal. No crime would supposedly be too monstrous. Lies, betrayal of pledges, blackmail, frame-up, murder, torture, mass annihilation—all these would be taken in stride as mere incidents in the pursuit of the end. That there have been such fanatics in many historical movements no one can deny. On the other hand, that Roman slavery and European feudalism accepted no restraints in their desperate efforts to save themselves is a recognized fact of history. One need only remember the methods used by Rome for the suppression of slave revolts and those of the Inquisition to save feudalism. Has not all war been carried on by the principle "the end justifies the means," or "everything for victory"? To be sure, poison gas was not used by agreement in World War II, but then atomic bombs were. Is there anyone in the world who believes that war has become less horrible today because of the moral progress of mankind, because nations would sacrifice victory to morality?

But this is not the real context in which the question of means and ends arises in our time, and never before has it been so urgent. It was brought into prominence in the course of the Russian Revolution by the withdrawal of the Soviets from the war and the suppression of the counter-revolution. Not since the "Reign of Terror" of the French Revolution had so many thinking people been so jolted by such events.

THE question whether Marxists and Communists believe the end justifies the means had its ups and downs during the ensuing years. Marxists themselves tended to dismiss it as a bourgeois diversion, as exhibiting liberal illusions, as simply the to-be-expected attack of the class enemy. But, beginning especially with the "purge" trials of the later 1930's, many liberals, progressives and serious-minded conservatives—writers, artists, scientists, intellectuals generally—were seriously disturbed by what seemed to be continually increasing encroachments on the most fundamental moral principles. Ruthless suppression of all opposition and of even merely theoretical dissent, mass purges and executions of "Old Bolsheviks" on evidence not beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt, dictation by political leaders in the arts and interference by the Party and state in questions that can be resolved by science alone, raised the most serious doubts and misgivings of a basically ethical nature in the minds of innumerable people throughout the world. It is useless here to challenge the "sincerity" of these questioners and dissenters, or to argue that many of them would not have liked socialism under any form. Many of them did believe in socialism and in a great many cases had been ardent supporters of the Soviet Union, even if like John Dewey they admittedly preferred to see this great "experiment" taking place in Russia rather than at home.

Then suddenly came the revelations of the Twentieth Party Congress of the Soviet Union—revelations which, amidst enormous socialist progress, confirmed many of the worst charges of its enemies and misgivings of its friends. For two decades basic principles of morality and human rights had been ruthlessly violated by a personal dictator. Terrible crimes had been perpetrated against individuals and whole peoples. Could one possibly say that such crimes were defensible on the grounds that "the end justifies the means?"

A serious examination of this question is therefore in order and it is imperative that Marxists not only engage in it but encourage others to do so. But although the Khrushchev report on Stalin's rule has brought this question to the forefront, one must remember that it does not begin or end there. It must always be examined in the context of social historical

movements and, concretely, in the vast struggle of our time between the world forces of imperialism and anti-imperialism.

The leaders of imperialism accuse the Soviet Union of guiding itself in all its foreign relations by the principle that the end justifies the means. They accuse the Egyptians of doing the same in unilaterally abrogating the Suez Canal Conventions. The Cyprus terrorists are condemned as believing that any means is justified by the end they seek, as are the Kenya Mau-Maus, and of course all Communists everywhere. They would, contrariwise, have us believe that they, the ruling circles of United States, Britain and France, for example, not only do not believe that the end justifies the means but that they would sacrifice anything and everything for the sake of moral principles—which, of course, they are prepared to back up by force whenever necessary.

BUT DOES the end justify the means? The simplest answer is that the question is unanswerable in this form. Everybody believes that some ends justify some means. Nobody believes that any end justifies any means. And all have to agree that nothing but an end can justify a means. As we shall see, each is defined only by its relation to the other.

There are many acts regarded as abhorrent by mankind generally, but there is scarcely one of these that some people somewhere, or all people everywhere do not believe to be justified under some circumstances for some good end. We do not believe it right to take another's life, but our laws justify killing in self-defense; we use the electric chair and gas chamber to punish various crimes; and we still honor as heroes those who kill the greatest number of the enemy in battle. War is increasingly recognized as a terrible evil, but there is scarcely a people or a government on earth that would not resort to arms under some determinate circumstances for some end regarded as justifying the horrors of war.

Official social doctrine holds it wrong to resist civil authority, but the clergyman Jonathan Mayhew preached a sermon in Boston in 1750 commemorating the beheading of Charles I, saying that for a nation to rise and resist their prince when he tyrannizes over them "is making use of the means, and the only means, which God has put into their power for mutual and self-defense." And another American, Henry David Thoreau, defended civil disobedience in an essay that influenced Tolstoy in Russia, Gandhi in India, and the leaders of the Negro community in Alabama today.

Noteworthy in respect to the question under discussion is the fact that no people or nation has ever abrogated its right to use every means in its power to achieve its liberation and that there is no society which

forbids itself the means necessary for its maintenance or perpetuation.

The question: "Does the end justify the means?" is too abstract to be answered. As Corliss Lamont has well noted, asking it is like asking whether the object is worth the price. No one would dream of answering such a question. He would rather ask what objects were being talked about and what price was being asked for them. The very posing of the question in such universal and abstract form puts it in the class of such questions as "Is life worth living?" This was once answered in a popular American magazine with the quip: "Not if that's the way you feel about it." The real question, of course, concerns the kind of life that is worth living and under what circumstances. As Hegel once wrote: "Life has a value only when it has something valuable as its object." Asking the question in its generalized form already suggests insoluble problems. The same is true of the subject under discussion. Means are good only when they have good as their end. But this just brings us to the threshold of the problem.

WHAT is meant by 'means' and 'ends'? Both terms must be recognized as relative—as relative as up and down, right and left, inner and outer. 'Means' are means to an end, ways of achieving something desired. As observed by Joseph Dietzgen a century ago, we eat to live, but inasmuch as one of the necessities and pleasures of living is eating, we live to eat too. 'Means' can be defined only in relation to 'ends' and vice versa. We domesticate animals for our food. Cows are raised to be slaughtered, not as an end in themselves. Yet for many Hindus cows are sacred and must not be killed for human use. But how they live is not considered important and Prime Minister Nehru has often told his countrymen that Indian cows lead a much more miserable existence than those in countries where they are not so much revered.

Our ordinary understanding of the term 'means' is of something not good in itself but necessary to achieve something else that is good in itself. But what is good in itself, good as an end only? This is the central question that the classic moralists and philosophers have sought to answer for ages. Is it Plato's eternal and absolute 'justice' (which comes close to everyone keeping in his place)? Or is it pleasure, or the greatest total amount of happiness? Or is Kant's 'good will' the only thing in the world that can be truly called good? For idealists it has always been conformity to some eternal principle far removed from the realities of actual life. For pre-Marxist materialists it was only too often the mere pleasure of the moment or a state of mind, from the tranquility of Epicurus to the universal love of Feuerbach. For Marxists it can be nothing more nor

less than people living well, living ever better materially and culturally, and ever freer to develop their own capacities or potentialities in harmony with the development of those of all other people.

The classic German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, had taught that men should be treated as ends only, never as means. This would have been a revolutionary principle if applied to capitalist society, for as Marx pointed out in his *Theories of Surplus Value,* the central distinction between the capitalist and socialist conceptions of the relation of the worker to production is that in the first the worker appears as what he really is in capitalist production, "a mere means of production; not as an end in himself and the goal of production." But Kant never thought of applying his general principle so concretely. On the contrary, he inconsistently proceeded to sacrifice human life on the altar of his abstract moral law, rather than have morality serve to improve and enrich human life. This is the inevitable result of holding to any "good in itself" outside of the actual context of human life under specific conditions of its existence.

FOR ANY dynamic point of view, as opposed to the static positions of most classic philosophy and traditional religion, the only "good in itself" is movement in a defined direction. It is not something you have reached and forever after enjoy but rather the striving after ever greater fulfillment of existent possibilities. Now if the only "good in itself" is such movement in a determinate direction it follows that in real life means and ends are dialectically interrelated. Every good is not a final resting place but a state or stage in mankind's never ceasing struggle. As such it is a precondition, a starting point or a means towards a further good or end. John Dewey and American pragmatists generally have taken the same dialectical approach to means and ends. They had this dynamic conception of direction but strikingly failed to define it. As a result any movement and process became good as movement *per se* rather than as movement towards a definite and rationally defined goal. Thus they glorified movement without direction or goal as opposed to traditional idealism which was satisfied with goal without movement.

But progress, as movement in a good (that is, desired) direction must be defined. Once we have done so we can say that while we are engaged in a great historical progressive struggle we live to win that struggle for the sake of further better living which is at once good in itself and a stage from which further progress can be made.

It is in such light that we must conceive and evaluate some of the great achievements of the early modern bourgeois world from its extraordinary development of the forces of production to the achievement

of political democracy and its legal counterpart. The parliamentary system, free and universal suffrage, the secret ballot, are ends for which immense historical struggles were waged. In the same category are such legal safeguards as *habeas corpus,* trial by jury, the right of non-self-incrimination, the independence of the judiciary, and many others. It is not at issue here whether these always work as they are supposed to, or how they are used in perverted forms to uphold the capitalist system. The point is that they are things for which people fought, and as protections of individual rights against arbitrary misuse of power they are good in themselves. But their essential virtue consists not simply in protecting the liberties of given individuals, as good as that is. They are good primarily, as means by which people can safely and freely work for further goods by processes of democratic social change. They are good, in short, for the point to which they have brought us and are good again as means to a still better life.

EVERY progressive social movement reveals the dialectical inseparability of means and ends. In order to achieve their independence the American people had to assert themselves. They had to *exercise* their independence in order to fight for it. They had to organize *Committees of Correspondence, The Sons of Liberty,* and so on. These organizing activities were means to the end they sought, but inasmuch as they were themselves expressions of the people's growing unity and strength they were themselves an integral part of the end itself.

In the same way, the taking over by Egypt of the Suez Canal may be a means to the strengthening of the Egyptian economy and might become of assistance in building the Aswan Dam. With an even greater certainty it is an end in itself with respect to the struggles of the colonial and semi-colonial world against imperialism, giving them new confidence, new solidarity, new allies. Means and ends are thus always inter-connected, each passing over into the other as phases of the historic process.

This interrelation of means and ends in no way implies that any end justifies any means. It implies rather that means and ends are so inextricably connected that the question cannot be answered by any simple 'yes' or 'no.' The common opinion of mankind supports this. Just as it believes that some actions are justified by the results they bring about, it equally insists that there are some things that should not and must not be done for no matter what end. But this is precisely where the real difficulty arises. What is it that must not be done no matter how good the end? What is so bad in itself that it cannot be done for any cause, however noble, and under whatever conditions it must be pursued?

What are the criteria for determining what means are justified by what ends?

THIS IS the real question before us, rather than the abstract one: "Does the end justify the means?" Its answer, furthermore, requires an analysis of the standards for judging the goodness or justification of means and of ends *equally*. Clearly there is no way by which we can ascertain whether a given end justifies a given means other than by standards or principles by which both means and ends can be weighed. Means *A* may be unacceptable for end *X* but justifiable for end *Y* and so on around the alphabet. The beginning of the answer to the question of the relation of the two lies in the propositions that while nothing can justify a means but an end, it in no wise follows that any end justifies *any* means.

The only concrete form of the question, therefore, is: *given agreed upon and accepted ends how can we determine what means are "justified" by them?*

This can be put in simpler terms. Suppose we all agree on a broad social goal as good. This means, of course, as Spinoza insisted, that we really want it. This qualification immediately eliminates any fraudulent mouthing of phrases about how good something would be if only we didn't have to make sacrifices to achieve it. The goal may be anything from desegregation to national independence, or from the elimination of illiteracy to socialism. Then it will be possible for us to discuss quite clearly and objectively the best way to reach it. We could, of course, differ at great length on this, but still not make accusations of moral nihilism against each other in the process. On the other hand, we could conceivably agree on what are proper ways of going anywhere but be unable to come to any agreement as to where or to what it is good to go. Each could then say rightfully that the other has no moral objective.

Now suppose we should all agree that a given end was supremely good for mankind, but disagreed hopelessly on whether it was attainable without violating fundamental standards concerning means?

We would then be in a most serious dilemma from which we would have to escape either by (1) re-evaluating the end as the highest good; (2) changing our standards of acceptable means; or (3) finding new means by which the agreed upon end can be achieved. Such is the position of many socialists in the world today, shocked as they are at means employed in the Soviet Union, especially over the last twenty years. Clearly we cannot rest on the horns of this dilemma [alternatives (1) and (2)] but must find means both appropriate to the end and in accordance with the deep-seated democratic moral principles of the widest

masses of people. Otherwise, we are left in one case with means without ends, and in the other with ends without means. Here we can paraphrase Kant's famous dictum on percepts and concepts, and say that means without ends are blind, and ends without means are empty.

TO ACHIEVE any great and long-range historical goals, such as the bourgeois democratic societies of England, France and the United States, the ending of slavery in the United States, the military defeat of the fascist effort to conquer the world by means of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis—a planned and comprehensive program of action is indispensable and inevitable. Such a program itself reveals the unity of means and ends inasmuch as it must, at one and the same time, present the goal sought and the measures required to reach it. Not all is blueprinted at any one time, and anyone may well question the wisdom or the morality of any particular tactic.

With regard to the relation of means and ends we must ask two major questions of any such long-range program and the measures involved in the effort to achieve it:

(1) Are the means adequate to the given end and such as to achieve it most effectively? This, of course, can never be known completely. But we can and must demand that they be means which give the highest possible guarantee of adequacy in reaching the goal. Such adequacy and effectiveness, too, cannot be judged in the abstract but only in terms of the concrete circumstances of a given situation. They must be evaluated in terms of the range of possibilities allowed by existing conditions.

NO MORALLY sensitive nor politically mature person would support terrorist methods when democratic processes allow for mass organization and struggle. How is it, then, that the people's movements in Kenya and Cyprus today are such as to win the support of many who would otherwise oppose the means used? Such struggles for freedom and self-government, for land or nation, cannot be judged by fixed and immutable standards borrowed from other places and times under different circumstances and with different levels of the development of moral concepts and attitudes. Neither can they be judged apart from the methods of the oppressors. We must remember that while terrorism violates all normal codes of moral behavior it was supported by the most morally sensitive people when used against the Nazis by resistance forces in occupied countries.

But here again, returning to the question of the effectiveness or the adequacy of the means employed, the criteria of these is more complex

than first appears. John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry was *of itself* an ineffective means towards the liberation of the slaves. Yet its impact on the moral conscience of millions on the slave issue made it play an historical role in the movement which ultimately destroyed the slave power.

ONE GENERAL rule concerning the effectiveness of any proposed means or program of action is that it must accord with the moral convictions of the great masses of people. The ballot box, the strike and the boycott, civil disobedience and passive resistance, are all forms of mass action, possible and appropriate to given places and times. But if they are outlawed by the existing organs of power, who is to say that other methods are in no way allowable as the only effective means of struggle available?

The second question to be asked of any proposed program is: are its means such as not to corrupt or destroy the end desired? This is inseparable from the first, because if the means used are such as to destroy or pervert the very end sought then they are not effective or adequate means of reaching it, for the simple reason that they cannot reach it. This has been the special accusation against Marxists and, in fact, against the whole Marxist revolutionary program, namely, that the means it proposes to achieve socialism are such as not to bring genuine socialism but state capitalism with its attendant bureaucracy and entrenched vested interests.

It seems clear, now, that Marxists have ignored this argument or tended to dismiss it much too lightly. The principle involved is a sound one, inasmuch as it is certainly theoretically possible to defeat the very thing one is striving for in the very process of striving for it. Every psychologist and psychiatrist knows that people use methods to win the sympathy or love of others which are doomed by their nature to defeat themselves and to alienate those whose affection is sought. Early Christianity was certainly changed into something most different from its original character by some of the means employed to win converts and most of the means used to build the church. Certain trade unions have been built by means which did not bring the desired benefits for the workers but have become organizations manipulated by a few "leaders" for their personal power and fortune. The active participation of the rank and file in the affairs of their union is the only guarantee of the satisfaction of their interests. Liberals and even thinking conservatives increasingly understand that democracy in the United States cannot be saved by measures and acts which violate such basic principles of our Constitution as the First and Fifth Amendments. And this may lead them to see that: these

measures were taken not to preserve democracy, but to destroy it.

Such, too, was the great danger inherent in the Stalin rule with its violation of socialist legality and disregard for civil rights during the past twenty years in the Soviet Union. Fortunately, Socialism proved too vigorous to be destroyed by these aberrant means, used purportedly for defending and consolidating it. But the danger was there, fostered by means in contradiction to the end sought, that could have made possible the seizure of power by enemies of socialism for the purpose of betrayal to imperialism without. This is what Khrushchev called "the tragedy of Stalin," that his sincerity for the cause of Socialism, his passion and devotion to its defense and development became so intermixed with his love of power and adulation so that this confusion of motives lead him to employ means that threatened the very goal he thought he was trying to achieve.

THE MOST significant point revealed by the 20th Communist Party Congress of the Soviet Union is that Marxist-Leninist theory under the particular historical conditions of development in that country did not provide a sufficient guarantee against such abuses. Marxists throughout the world had believed that the theory itself, coupled with the release of mass energy and increase of democracy for working people, did provide built-in guarantees against tyranny and one-man dictatorship in the building of Socialism. Their shortcoming lay not in the belief that the end justified the means but rather in a too ready pragmatic acceptance of whatever went on so long as it appeared to "work."

These questions of the relations of means and ends are found everywhere in all religious, national or class struggles. The problems, as said earlier, are inherent in any effort to move from one state of things to another. Those who seek no change have no such problems. *They* do whatever they do to maintain things as they are. Their means, too, are subject to the same examination as has just been made. But they never trouble to make such an examination because it wouldn't affect their actions one iota. They can use effective or ineffective means to preserve, let us say, feudalism or capitalism. They themselves lose no sleep over such a theoretical question as whether "the end justifies the means." Three current cases in point are the violation of the agreement to hold elections in Viet Nam, the refusal to admit the Chinese People's Republic to the United Nations, and the readiness to use armed forces to regain control of the Suez Canal. Our contemporary apologists for imperialism simply say they must prevent the triumph of socialism as a world system at all costs, even if all human life be destroyed in the process.

Both of the questions raised concerning the relations of means and ends are found everywhere in labor and trade union struggles. It was not workers who accused the Luddite machine wreckers of moral perversity in their sabotage. The Luddites' means were simply unsuited to their end of maintaining their jobs and living standards against the encroachments of machines. So-called feather-bedding and similar practices, found especially among the older craft unions, are not and cannot be criticized by workers and those who accept their point of view on abstract moral grounds. What could workers possibly take from their employers which has not first been taken out of their labor?

The real question is whether this effort to fight new technological developments by a very limited section of the labor movement, through securing special dispensations for a tiny portion without strengthening labor's power as a whole, is helpful in solving the historic tasks that confront labor. There are other trade union practices, again limited almost entirely to the craft unions, that demoralize workers and blind them to the real issues that face them rather than advance their cause. Some of the practices of the theatrical unions and the musicians are often condemned by anti-labor elements of being morally wrong, that is, "unfair" to actual or potential employers. But from the working class standpoint these practices can be criticized as hindrances to the growth of popular culture (through amateur or off-Broadway theatres, concerts, and the like), as antagonizing potential allies whose support labor must win, and as demoralizing the workers themselves and creating divisive forces in the labor movement.

In given struggles similar analysis could be made of the use of force and violence by labor when confronted with violence from the employers. Was the workers' physical resistance an effective means of combatting employer organized violence? If so, would not its justification be judged principally along class lines? Or did it serve only to allow the state to intervene, antagonize important potential allies, and thus defeat its end?

PEOPLE ASK, of course, but isn't there a right and a wrong to this? Suppose some goons did beat up pickets and the police arrested the pickets and not the goons—does that justify the strikers in attacking employees who are not members of the union and who were only exercising their "legitimate" right to work? Such discussions often end with the pious ejaculation: "two wrongs don't make a right." This observation, which may serve a significant purpose in the squabbles of children playing together, is hardly adequate in solving such deep-seated historically important social issues as those involved in trade union

organization. Seen in such a light, the question becomes that of the "right to work" of given individuals, including the right to break strikes, against the necessity for the working class to build and maintain its organizations for the protection and advancement of the interests of all workers. Here, again, the argument is less over the means used than over the ends desired, and can be resolved only through an historical and economic analysis of the relations of capital and labor—an analysis in which the two contenders are scarcely likely to be in agreement.

The second principle is similarly exhibited in labor struggles. A certain tough kind of undemocratic unionism may allow for an extraordinary solidity and stability which can win the workers genuine improvements, but by its very nature it tends towards arbitrary power in the hands of a few and lends itself easily to gangsterism and racketeering and the betrayal of the workers to the bosses. Or it can lead to extreme bureaucracy, the turning of the union into a Big Business firm itself, destroying the initiative of the workers as well as their class consciousness. Only the fullest democracy can ensure the winning of the immediate needs of the workers and at the same time advance their genuine economic and political interests. Anything short of this tends to destroy the very aim of working class organization.

Both of these principles, distinguished only for the sake of convenience, come down ultimately to the same thing—assuming good ends, for the sake of analysis, there are still effective and ineffective methods of working for them. There are means which ensure their goal and means which, while temporarily expedient, endanger the goal. There can be faster and slower ways of moving—always a potent source of disagreement. Methods can be so slow, the tempo so cautious, as to quell all enthusiasm and create apathy on one side and strengthen the position of the enemy on the other. Then, of course, there is the possibility of the opposite—a too hasty, inadequately prepared means to an end. It may whip up quick enthusiasm but unless the groundwork is well laid and there is strong organization behind it, the movement easily peters out and is but a flash in the pan, setting back rather than advancing the real struggle.

What is wrong with overcautiousness, as with inadequate preparation, is the maladjustment of means to ends, their ineffectiveness and inadequacy. We may regard the former as representing moral cowardice and the latter as a form of moral bravado. The struggle for Negro rights in the United States, the world-wide anti-colonial struggle, and the movement for Socialism in many countries all involve these tactical problems of tempo.

THUS FAR nothing or little has been said that is distinctively Marxist. These general principles have been believed in and shared by broad strata of people as well as by leading thinkers from the rise of civilization to the present.

All allegations and accusations notwithstanding, Marxists have no special position on this question of means and ends. More than most others, perhaps, Marxists recognize their dialectical interrelation, a recognition which arises both from the conscious use of the dialectical method and from a consistently historical approach to all social phenomena. Further, as materialists, Marxists are more "down to earth" than are other schools of thought and seek to analyze all social movements and forces in terms of their concrete material bases. They do not make the mistake of accepting on their face value the alleged motives or goals of any social group or class. Marx and Engels expressed this succinctly with regard to traditional historians:

> Whilst in ordinary life every shopkeeper is very well able to distinguish between what somebody professes to be and what he really is, our historians have not yet won even this trivial insight. They take every epoch at its word and believe that everything it says and imagines about itself is true. (*German Ideology,* Pt. I)

Similarly, Marxists do not accept on face value the claims of the ideologists of imperialism that they are for world freedom, that they seek to help the under-developed countries to achieve industrialization, or that they are enemies of colonialism. But no more than anyone else do Marxists believe and teach that "the end justifies the means." No less than anyone else, they believe that it is right and proper and necessary to do certain things to protect and further certain fundamental human goods.

Marxists are more keenly aware than others of the conflict of forces in social movement and the resultant fact that what are good ends for some are bad for others. This was already implied in Frederick Douglass' classic statement: "Without struggle there is no progress," for there is no struggle unless there are opposed sides with different and opposed ends. Abraham Lincoln, too, expressed this beautifully when he said in Baltimore in 1864:

> The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as his liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act, as the destroyer of liberty. . . . Hence we behold the process by which thousands are daily passing from under the yoke of bondage hailed by some as the advance of liberty and bewailed by others as the destruction of all liberty.

THERE IS no theoretical difference between such a position and that of Marxists except that Marxism has made new applications of these ideas of progress through struggle and of the conflict in ethical judgments of opposed sides or classes. With regard to the transition from capitalism to socialism, Marxism makes two positive moral affirmations, based upon its whole analysis of political economy and human history:

(1) That the goal of socialism is a most worthy and noble goal, freeing mankind for the first time in recorded history of the evils of exploitation of man by man, and thereby establishing the basis for true human brotherhood and equality, universal peace, and opening up vast new vistas of human progress.

(2) That the means by which socialism can be achieved are determined not only by the nature of socialism as the end but also by the nature of capitalist state power, the degree of democratic development, the relative strength of the opposing forces, specific situations, and so on.

This latter is the point at which all the arguments on the subject of means and ends arise today and around which they focus. If the means of achieving socialism were to be entirely determined by the nature of socialism, all would be easy. There would be no class struggle and no question of means and ends. But the fact is that it is also determined by the nature of capitalism with all its means of perpetuating itself—from its control of the whole apparatus of the state and the media of mass propaganda, repressive legislation such as the Smith and McCarran acts, to the threat of fascism and war.

Capitalism can buy off its opponents, individually and temporarily, but they cannot buy it off. The capitalist class will not be *persuaded* by reason or example that it is a hindrance to social progress and should therefore resign its prerogatives. It can only be superseded by a class which wants not only to supplant the existent capitalist class, but to eliminate the whole capitalist system.

Capitalism cannot be defeated on its own grounds by means determined entirely by its nature and structure. By such means power can shift only from one group of capitalists to another. In the semi-colonial world this change occurs through "putsches" and "palace revolutions." Such can never bring a new system of society. They can never bring more than a change in the rulers, not in the social-economic order.

A GREAT historic illustration of this principle is found in the American anti-slavery movement. If the methods of the slaves, the free Negroes, and their white Abolitionist supporters had been entirely determined by, and taken over from, the nature of slave society, the method

of struggle would have been one of unmitigated terror and the goal could not have been other than the physical annihilation of all slave owners or their enslavement. But historically this has never been the accepted aim of an oppressed people, any more than the means they employed were merely derived from existing conditions. Otherwise slaves, ancient or modern, would have sought only to be slave owners, serfs only to be feudal lords, and workers only to be capitalists with their present employers as their workers.

On the contrary, all such struggles are movements towards another form of social organization involving the broadening of the base of power and greater freedom for a greater number. They must therefore employ methods which already represent essential features of the new order and involving this broadening of participation in various forms of political and economic life. Yet the means of achieving a new form of society are inevitably determined in part by the existing social structure, by the institutions that already stand condemned. This is the defense Henry David Thoreau made when he answered the attacks made on the methods of the Abolitionists by declaring that if the remedy was worse than the evil it was the fault of the government that supported slavery. "It makes it worse," he said. Similarly, it is not only the nature of socialism that determines the means required to achieve it, but also the nature of capitalism.

Such is the two-fold problem of the movement towards socialism as Marxists on a world scale are increasingly beginning to see it. It has to be fought for and consolidated with means appropriate to its nature —the fullest development of democratic processes, majority participation in the determination of all the conditions of life, the release of heretofore suppressed individual initiative and energy on a mass scale. In a word, it requires more and not less democracy and protection of the people's democratic rights. Therefore, with qualifications to be mentioned later, the struggle for political power by the people, under the leadership of the working class, and the processes by which socialism is established and consolidated require the reaffirmation, reinforcement and extension of all previous democratic gains.

On the other hand, it has to be recognized that this movement towards Socialism takes place in a society ruled by a minority that is rapacious, ruthless and desperate in its efforts to maintain its economic, political and social domination. As Professor C. Wright Mills has said, the "Power Elite" rules by "the higher immorality." Yet it is in just such an immoral world that the moral goals of socialism have to be achieved, and which in part determines the means that have to be employed.

In moving from the present to the future the course must necessarily be determined both by where we are going and where we are now.

THE failure to recognize this interrelationship can lead only to two opposite false courses. To ignore the end which is desired and the future which is aimed at in the determination of means is to accept the standards of the existing order as one's own. This is the tragedy of Machiavelli who failed to see the impossibility of achieving the kind of strong, prosperous and united Italy he so ardently desired by means of the political methods of the reigning city-state princes. It would be as if socialists were to seek to establish a party of socialism in the United States by outdoing the city political machines in rackets, graft, vice protection and the other forms of corruption which provide the foundation of the power of the two great political machines. Socialists cannot compete with capitalist political parties on their own terms. The end would be totally corrupted in the very process which was originally meant to achieve it. No more could the Chinese Communists have come to power by the methods of the war-lords, the vice over-lords and the opium rings which sustained the tottering regime of Chiang Kai-shek. The same analysis can be applied to other types of society with the same result. The general conclusion is that progress can be achieved only by the development of new means appropriate thereto, and that distinctively new progressive ends cannot be achieved by the means used by reaction to maintain itself.

It is easy to say that bad means cannot lead to good ends, but simply to say so leaves us precisely where we started. We first have to find agreed upon criteria of good and bad in relation to both means and ends. And here no simple formulae and no abstractions are possible. Nothing justifies a means except an end, but the phrase "the end justifies the means" is, as Hegel pointed out, in itself and on its face "trivial and pointless." To which Hegel added, with the French Revolution in mind: "The phrase, 'If the end is right, so is the means' is a tautology, since the means is precisely that which is nothing in itself but is for the sake of something else, and therein, *i.e.,* in the end, has its purpose and worth—provided of course it be truly a means." In other words, Hegel is saying that it is pointless and abstract to say either that the end does or does not justify the means—as pointless as saying "a planet is a planet." Both terms must be analyzed concretely and objectively in terms of the specific social-historical context.

The accusation that no one believes the end justifies the means is an especially potent instrument for maintaining the *status quo.* By its very

nature it operates to defend the existing order which always has a monopoly on the "means" and has no end but its own continuation.

THE CHARGE that Marxism teaches "the end justifies the means" expresses an extreme form of hypocrisy as it is used in the press and all the instruments of bourgeois propaganda. It is a smokescreen used by those entrenched in power to conceal or confuse the goals and ends of those who challenge them. Having no end but the perpetuation of their own wealth and power, they seek to turn attention away from the aims of their opponents by hypocritically expressing abhorrence at their alleged means. It is always the other side, the unpopular side, that is supposed to believe the end justifies the means.

But the charge comes with ill grace from those who continually threaten the world with hydrogen bomb warfare, massive retaliation, etc., to charge their opponents with immorality. Some people justify Truman's decision to drop atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and then accuse President Nasser of believing that the end justifies the means when he nationalizes the Suez Canal Company. The overthrow by force and violence of the legally constituted and popular government of Guatemala was called appropriate resistance against a "Communist beachhead" in the Western Hemisphere, but the methods by which the Communists won all of China against the Chiang Kai-shek government with all its billions worth of American arms represented the belief that the end justifies the means.

It is a false accusation from the first. *It would never be made were there not serious disagreement over either of the particular ends sought.*

And when such disagreement is basic and profound it can be analyzed only in terms of progressive or reactionary forces and directions. This was true of all great historical movements and is equally true of the working class, national liberation and anti-imperialist struggles of our time. All the great labor struggles over the past 75 years in the United States were met by the employers not only with force and violence but also with the charge of immorality, the charge that the workers or the union leaders would stop at nothing to attain their objectives. The Negro people, similarly, in their quest for equality are met constantly with violence on one hand and the charge that they are overstepping the bounds of proper methods on the other. Even though it may be conceded right and proper for workers or national minorities or colonial peoples to seek better conditions, they are supposed to do so only in accordance with the rules their very oppressors make.

The *New York Times,* in an editorial on the Stalin revelations en-

titled, "The Culprit is Communism," says that communism, even when called "socialism" rests on a theory of community ownership of all means of production, etc., which requires "the constant prevention and suppression of all opposition to this system, whether due to man's innate desire for freedom or to a possessive instinct on his part that would interfere with state operations."

The assumptions and implications of this criticism of communism or socialism are as clear as they are unsavory. We cannot have socialism, the *Times* is saying, because some people, no matter how small a minority, might want to manifest their "innate desire for freedom" (undefined) or might have "a possessive instinct." Either of these things might lead them to insist on owning factories and employing workers for their profit, buying up land for speculation, or building houses not for people to live in but to make money. As long as some few people might prefer production for profit instead of production for use we cannot have Socialism, because that would require interference by society with such persons in the exercise of their innate desires and instincts. The *Times* is here declaring that it is more concerned with the possessive instincts of the few, that is, private profit, than with the material and cultural standards of the overwhelming majority of society.

Clearly, here, the difference is not over means at all but over ends, regardless how important proper means are. On both sides of any struggle the question of means is secondary to that of the ends sought. What ends justify what means is ultimately a question of class and status and is necessarily seen differently by the opposing sides, as Lincoln showed.

MARXISTS are looking towards liberty or freedom as man's ever greater collective mastery of all the conditions of his life and the fullest, freest development of each single person on earth. Marxists believe, too, that history, which Hegel called "the world's court of judgment that sits on the actions of peoples and nations," will agree that everything that truly helps mankind to move towards such freedom is good, and everything that hinders that movement is bad.

This is no more and no less than what Lenin meant, in his oft-quoted and usually misrepresented statement on ethics in his address to the Young Communist League in 1920. There he said: "We repudiate all morality derived from non-human and non-class concepts. . . . We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality is derived from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat." We must remember first of all the context in which this statement was made. It was in the midst of a

terrible civil war by which the enemies within had taken up arms, aided by the imperialists from without, to destroy the world's first socialist state. It is in no way a repudiation of ethics or morality, nor is it a denial of the great historically evolved and socially accepted ethical principles. It represents, rather, Lenin's recognition that ethics is good only as anything else is good, for what it can accomplish, for the direction in which it takes men. He is raising ethics from the sphere of individual morality in order to place it at the service of mankind. In a subsequent sentence Lenin expresses this by saying: "Morality serves to help human society rise to a higher level and get rid of the exploitation of labor." This requires, Lenin makes clear, the highest degree of social consciousness, of class solidarity, of devotion to principle, love and respect for the great masses of people, and willingness to make any personal sacrifice. It requires putting the interests of the future of mankind above the satisfactions of the present. It demands loyalty and devotion to principle. Then, as Lenin wrote in *State and Revolution,* when a non-exploitative and thereby truly democratic society is achieved, "people will gradually *become* accustomed to the observance of the elementary rules of social life that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all school books; . . ." Then, too, will these important historically-evolved moral rules of behavior be observed "without force, without compulsion, without subordination, without the *special apparatus* for compulsion which is called the state."

Finally, it must always be borne in mind that great social movements involving the actions of masses of people, such as the Cromwellian and French Revolutions, the Russian Revolution of 1917, or the vast Asian-African anti-imperialist struggles of the present day, do not follow blueprints and do not occur in terms of the wishes of any single person or group. There is, in such upsurges of mass energy and action, something almost cataclysmic. Powerful forces are released which do not conform to abstract rules or principles. The degree to which they do depends on circumstances of place and time, the goal aimed at, the existent structure or institutions of society they are opposing, the nature and quality of the leadership, and so on. In the long run such movements can be judged only in the way Mark Twain judged the French Revolution when he wrote:

> There were two "Reigns of Terror," if we would but remember it and consider it; the one wrought murder in hot passion, the other in heartless cold blood; the one lasted mere months, the other had lasted a thousand years; the one inflicted death upon ten thousand persons, the other upon a

> hundred millions; but our shudders are all for the "horrors" of the minor Terror, the momentary Terror, so to speak. . . . A city cemetery could contain the coffins filled by that brief Terror which we all have been taught to shiver at and mourn over; but all France could hardly contain the coffins filled by that older and real Terror—that unspeakably bitter and awful Terror which none of us has been taught to see in its vastness or pity as it deserves. (*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*)

It is fervently to be hoped that the days when age-old evils can be righted only by such means as the Terror Mark Twain is speaking of are coming to an end. That depends upon the degree to which the channels of peaceful democratic change are opened up and kept open. Progressives generally and Marxists in particular have learned many lessons in the recent period and have many yet to learn about the relation of means and ends. One thing, however, is clear. The means to social progress must be adapted to their end and be harmonious with it. This requires of Marxists some things they have often lacked, and sometimes even questioned on grounds of principle: fullest adherence to the ideals of democracy and civil rights, strictest integrity in all relationships, and refusal ever to use other people or movements as mere stepping-stones towards their own goals. It requires the broadening of democracy, scrupulous respect for the genuine moral convictions of the most advanced sections of mankind, and constant vigilance against the tendency towards pragmatic success-mongering with its "victory for our side at all costs." Such is the policy of the imperialists and it dooms them to defeat. It is the progressive world that carries and must carry mankind's highest moral ideals.

THREE POEMS

MARTIN CARTER

Letter

After twenty days and twenty nights in prison
You wake and you search for birds and sunlight
You wait for rain and thunder
And you think of home with pain inside your heart
And your laugh has scorn more bitter than a curse.

You think of green mornings
Naked children playing in the rain
And even fishes swimming in a pool—
A shop in a street and women passing by
Walking from home to market in the morning—
A blind old man now tapping with his stick
Seeing no one, no light, no golden flower
But wandering through that night wrapped on his face.

O my darling!
O my dear wife whose voice I cannot hear
Tell me, the young one, is he creeping now
And is he well and mischievous as ever?
Or is the cloud so heavy on the land
Too deep for him to see the wonderful sky?
I send a kiss to tell you everything
About today the twentieth in the distance.

And you comrade, you know
I cannot come to the city in myself
Where a garden should be green in the light.

They have planted sharp vines of barbed wire
And every footstep is a soldier's bootstep
Marching me down the corridors of silence.

O comrade, if I should try to come now to the struggle,
Perhaps their iron garden then will bloom!
The scarlet flower bleeding on the vine
Will be my corpse and you will never see me.

But let our red banner fly in the city, comrade
Let the wild wind strike it ringing like a bell
And sing a song for me comrade let the sun be made to echo
Will I not hear no matter where I be?

Weroon Weroon

I came to a benab
sharpening my arrow of stone
knitting my hammock of air
tying my feathers all around my head.

Then I drank from the calabash of my ancestors
and danced my dance of fire
Weroon Weroon—
Land of the waters flowing over me
Weroon Weroon.

And I prayed to the blue ocean of heaven
dreaming of the voyage of death
and my corial of paradise paddling forever.

Now I climb toward the hole of heaven
and my hands are stretched to the altar of god
O wonder of all the stars departed
Weroon Weroon Weroon . . .

Death of a Slave

Above green cane arrow
is blue sky—
Beneath green arrow
is brown earth—
Dark is the shroud of slavery
over the river
over the forest
over the field.

Aie! black is the skin!
Aie! red is heart!
as round it looks
over the world
over the forest
over the sun.

In the dark earth
in cold dark earth
time plants the seeds of anger.

This is another world
but above is the same blue sky
the same sun
Below is the same deep heart of agony.

The cane field is green, dark green
green with a life of its own.
The heart of a slave is red deep red
red with a life of its own.

Day passes like a long whip
over the back of a slave.
Day is a burning whip
Biting the neck of a slave.

But the sun falls down like an old man
beyond the dim line of the river.
And white birds
come flying, flying flapping at the wind
white birds like dreams come settling down,

Night comes from down river
Like a thief—
Night comes from deep forest
in a boat of silence—
Dark is the shroud
the shroud of night
over the river
over the forest.

The slave staggers and falls
his face is on the earth
his drum is silent
silent like night
hollow like boat
between the tides of sorrow.
In the dark floor
time plants the seeds of anger.

Martin Carter is an executive member of the People's Progressive Party of British Guiana and secretary of that country's Peace Committee. His work has appeared twice before in *Masses and Mainstream* and we are planning to publish a large group of his poems within a short time.

THE PROBLEMS OF THE PAINTER

JOHN BERGER

I SHOULD like to emphasize straight away that this article is being written as a contribution to discussion, not as a definitive summing up of new or old conclusions. I shall limit myself to the problems of the painter—as opposed to the writer or the musician—because I think that one of the mistakes we have made in the past has often been to think in terms of the *artist,* meaning the creator in any medium, and thus to ignore the specific developments in each art. For example, nearly every person in this country has probably at some time or another read a novel, but many people have never looked at an oil painting, let alone a mural painting. Possibly a few of the remarks I shall make in relation to the visual arts could apply to literature or architecture or music, but before they are applied even in discussion they should be examined carefully to discover to what extent they should first be adapted.

The problems of the socialist painter in Britain today are, to a very large extent, the same as those of other painters who are not socialists. Because the socialist artist has particular problems as a socialist, it is a great mistake to think that he does not also face the daily and grueling problems of any artist who stands before an easel with a palette in his hand. His socialist understanding and faith may help him to solve these problems, but they still have to be solved, and still require a great deal of time and energy. Many of these problems indeed lead to this question of time. Capitalism has reduced the vocation of art to a luxury trade on the one hand, and a personal hobby for the artist on the other. Thus, every painter, not reduced to a mere manipulator in the luxury trade, has to fight for a few hours a day or a week in which he can "work": that is to say draw or paint, having gained the bare means of livelihood by doing some other job. The result of this weekly struggle for a few

open hours in which to work is more damaging for the painter than for any other directly creative artist. Painting is, to a considerable extent, a manual skill and thus ideally a painter needs practice almost as much as a concert pianist. The writer can work out his ideas or imagine himself into his characters on the top of a bus or whilst washing-up. But the problem of, say, drawing a hand is not solved by thinking about it: it is solved by hours and hours of scrutinizing hands and finding out how two-dimensional marks on a piece of paper can conjure up their basic, three-dimensional reality. Many of the shortcomings of contemporary painting are the result of nothing more complicated than the artist trying to make a virtue out of what seems to him the necessity of his incompetence, due to lack of time and study.

And so for the socialist painter I would plead for two things: one long-term and the other short-term. The long-term one is employment. Until the working class movement can employ painters as full-time painters, we shall not have the socialist masters of painting that socialism deserves. Mastery in painting requires a life-time of dedicated, undeviating work. The short-term plea is simply for time now. Do not let us make *unnecessary* demands on the time of our painter comrades. Their active participation in the political movement is in many cases necessary for the growth and confidence and understanding of their human vision. But they should not, if possible, be called upon for organizational or other work. Their job is to paint. If we agree that a socialist art is vitally necessary to our movement, let us ask them to attend with their canvases and portfolios—not empty-handed in order to be able to arrange chairs for a meeting or sell pamphlets at the door. And if this sounds like special pleading, I would reply that the artist is a special person—not in the sense that he requires special privileges, but in the sense that he (and we) require his specialization.

YET THE socialist painter, besides facing the economic and technical problems of simply being a painter at all in our society, also faces the problem of how to create *socialist* art. His work must be truthful to the point of being prophetic. This, when one considers all the temptations to impatience, superficial bitterness and orthodoxy of one sort or another, is in itself a formidable enough task. But here again the painter is in a worse position than artists in other media, for he has far fewer examples to guide him and he has to create not only his images but his audience as well.

There is no longer in this country any popular tradition of participa-

tion in the visual arts. (And to cite the banners at the Party Congress does not, unfortunately, alter the truth of this.) There is a strong radical tradition in English literature. Music, being the most abstract of the arts, is in some ways the easiest to enjoy—the most "mobile." An heroic theme in music, for example, can fairly easily be applied to the emotions aroused by any heroic situation. An heroic theme in painting depends far more for its effectiveness upon what heroes have been depicted doing what.

Painting, in other words, has to depend more than the other arts on an established "mythology." Because its images are static, it has to rely upon a tradition of accepted, dynamic symbols. Such a tradition, related to socialism, has never existed in Britain. (The tradition of popular graphic work is a different matter and, although an aid to establishing a tradition of painting and sculpture, it does not amount to the same thing. It is incidentally interesting to notice here that the most prolific and generally successful of the conscious Marxist artists in this country is Paul Hogarth, who has never attempted to go beyond this graphic tradition.)

I do not believe that there is any ready-made, theoretical way out of this difficult situation in which the socialist painter finds himself. There are only certain constructive comments one can make. One can point out that the Soviet example of establishing such a tradition is (in terms of pictures) less relevant to our painters than the recent Italian example of artists like Guttuso, Zigainia, Trecanni. The reason for this is that these Italian artists have fully accepted the discoveries of the modern masters such as Cézanne, Van Gogh, Léger and Picasso and that these discoveries are an undeniable, essential contribution to the development of the Western European tradition, which is now in the hands of Socialists to continue and make their own. One can point out, as has already been done, that the direct large-scale employment of painters by the working class movement, and particularly by the trade unions, would be an enormous step towards the establishment of a tradition of socialist art. And, most importantly, one can point out that the final nature and style of this tradition is unknown to all of us and that therefore there should be the maximum tolerance towards individual experiments. It is perfectly true that the present so-called "art world" is extremely limited and almost entirely bourgeois in spirit; but it is equally true that on the whole the working class has not yet broken through the commercial culture imposed upon it, to discover its own needs and desires in the visual arts. This inevitably leaves the question open to the artist's own prophetic imagination. We do not know, except in the most general terms, what

British Socialist art will be like two generations after socialism has been established here. We do not even know—which is the easiest and most superficial thing to guess at—what its predominant subjects will be.

Now if various comrades suspect idealism here, and protest that, by emphasizing the uncertainty of the future of socialist art, I am robbing the movement of a weapon in its present struggle, I would argue that I am doing the exact opposite. If we made a more precise distinction between effective but probably ephemeral propaganda, and the artist's right in our present uncertainty to conduct his own experiments in what he believes to be his more permanent works, we should have many more and far better propagandists when we needed them than we have now. The vast majority of the most talented British artists would be prepared to produce posters protesting against the H-bomb. Many would probably be prepared to protest against British policy in Cyprus. A considerable number would be prepared to produce posters or banners to celebrate May Day. In these works they would make their "message" as clear as possible and would be open to persuasion and reasoning about how to make them even more effective. But none of them is prepared to listen to dogmatic lecturing about how and what they should paint for the rest of the year. In the past, their reasonable fear of this has lost us their co-operation—anyway as painters—on the occasions when we have badly needed it. I admit that this argument leaves out of account the fear of "red association" which might prevent certain artists working with us at all. But on the whole artists are independent-minded and on the whole they are, by temperament, progressive.

I AM not suggesting that in our present state of uncertainty all thinking should stop. On the contrary, it is uncertainty (which need have nothing to do with the negative aspects of doubt) that creatively stimulates thought. And, although we should realize that in the arts one practical example is worth volumes of theory, we can at least give a lead to the socialist painter in his difficult position today by re-examining not so much our previous fundamental principles (these are sound enough) but their application. It is in the hope of stimulating this process that I put forward the following re-definitions and re-distinctions.

Content and Subject-Matter.—These are frequently confused and the confusion leads to a misunderstanding of what we mean by "socialist in content." An artist's subject-matter is what he chooses to paint or sculpt —a woman, a battle, a flower. More often than not the subject can be summed up in the title of the work. *Content is what the artist discovers and emphasizes in his subject-matter.*

The number of directly socialist subjects is highly limited and the attempt to *make* subjects socialist only leads to arbitrary impositions. If an artist is painting a chair, he does not automatically make it a socialist painting by placing a copy of the *Daily Worker* upon it. On the other hand, socialist *content* can be as wide as the artist's reaction to life. If his politics are truly integrated with his imagination, he will see everything in terms of his philosophy *intuitively*. This is what Marx meant when he said, "The more the author's [political] views are concealed the better for the work of art." There are of course occasions when the artist wishes to paint plainly socialist subjects, but in general the superficial substitution of a socialist *subject* for socialist *content* is the result of the artist's socialism inserting itself exactly at the place where there is most danger of any artist's personality breaking in two—between his intellectual principles and his free emotions.

Man's struggle against nature is an infinitely inspiring theme. But how many canvases have we seen which suggest something like a painter going out into the country, settling down in front of a river, becoming truly interested in the clouds and pollarded trees and then, suddenly remembering "Struggle against Nature!"—painting in a dredger! And this is so unnecessary because the very act of painting a good landscape (i.e. of selecting, constructing and organizing from it) in itself reflects man's struggle with nature.

And if you here challenge me to put into words the socialist content of a painting of a willow tree, I reply that this is to demand a poem. It cannot be put into words like a military order. There are certain seascapes by Guttuso which I am convinced are profoundly socialist pictures; they remind me of how one might look out to sea on the morning after a just revolution. Too subjective, that? Well, it is connected with Guttuso's attitude to energy and conflict—in this case between the rocks and the waves. But that does not get us much further because we *cannot* get any further by definite analysis. The distinction of being a socialist artist today is that one can afford, on account of one's objective confidence, to be open to all nuances of evidence and experience. It is not the distinction of harping on six or sixty familiar points.

Formalization and Formalism.—It is axiomatic that all art is a formalization. And it is equally obvious that much modern Western art has been reduced to meaningless and effete obscurity as the result of an exclusive concern with form at the expense of content. The crucial test is whether the formalization (which in some cases only consists of a simplification and, in others, a clear distortion of appearances) em-

phasizes an aspect of the truth, or is simply made to improve the formal effect of the picture. No one objects to poetry differing from everyday speech, but one does object to a poet using words purely for the sake of their sound and rhythmic pattern.

EVEN WHEN this distinction has been made, however, the problem of criticism is not over. If an artist formalizes in order to emphasize an aspect of the truth, one must inquire whether that aspect of the truth is sufficiently important and significant to justify the neglect or distortion of other aspects. In *Guernica* Picasso's extreme distortions were justified by the intensity of the protest and warning he made about the horrors of total war. Equally violent distortions made only to emphasize, say, the energy with which a man may wield a pick-axe, would probably be unjustified, because they would destroy too many other aspects of the truth, highly relevant to why he is wielding the pick-axe in the way he is. Thus, one arrives at an extremely important conclusion: *a style can never be criticized as such;* it can only be criticized in relation to what the artist is intending to communicate. If we had remembered this more consistently we would not have got ourselves into the embarrassing muddle we did over Picasso.

Status and Success.—The tragedy of art, and indeed of many other skills and trades, under the later stages of capitalism is that the status of the calling has been totally destroyed, and the standards of superficial success, either in terms of temporary reputation or money, have been put in its place. This has had a far-reaching effect on the artist.

An artist's status in society, when it has been established, is something which he feels behind him, supporting him, encouraging him —like the hand of a friend on his shoulder. (And perhaps it is worth pointing out here that every profound artist even under the best conditions of socialism will suffer periods of miserable doubt and loneliness.)

Success, with the meaning it has now acquired under capitalism, is something which may or may not happen quite arbitrarily to one or several of his finished works, considered merely as commodities. Thus, whether he seeks or despises success, whether his aim is to please or startle, the bourgeois artist's conscious or half-conscious concern with success takes the form of his having to foresee, *whilst he is still working,* the likely effect of the finished work according to quite arbitrary criteria —arbitrary because in no way connected with the truth he may well be trying to communicate. The Bitch-Goddess prowls between him and his canvas, between intention and execution, inhibiting him, making him

caricature himself or prompting unnecessary caution or unnecessary excess.

One could sum this up by saying that every sincere bourgeois artist in our society constantly faces *the possibility of being misunderstood;* and this is destructive of the imagination. Gorky wrote:

> True art arises when complete confidence is established between writer and reader . . . if he (the writer) speaks from his soul as if he were speaking to his best friend, he will be understood by the reader and accepted as a friend.

When one is talking to one's best friend the possibility of being misunderstood does not arise.

THE STRENGTH of socialist artists working under capitalism should partly derive from the fact that their comrades can to some extent grant them their status as artists. Yet I think that in the past we have often judged artists only by the standards of *success*: not of course by the standards of bourgeois success, but by what we imagine to be those of proletarian success. I am not suggesting that we should not criticize our artists. The distinction is more subtle than that. A work of art must be judged as a separate entity for what it is. But then, when that judgment has been made, it should be related to the artist's intentions, difficulties, sincerity and even to the fact of his existence as an artist at all. Exactly how the judgment of the work should be related to these considerations cannot, I think, be laid down; obviously good intentions don't by themselves make art; obviously it is an insult to any artist to "make allowances" in our judgment of his work for the conditions of his personal life; but, at the same time, if we are judging by the standards of *status* and not *success,* we must always acknowledge the value of the *attempt.* And to be able to do this we must break down on all sides suspicion of "the intellectual." This suspicion viciously breeds its own justification, because the artist who knows he *may* be misunderstood, finally *makes* himself misunderstood.

Morality and Puritanism.—This is a huge subject which I can only touch upon. The history of the progressive movements in Northern Europe has often been linked with that of puritan morality. But today I believe that we should be on our guard against the negative aspects of puritanism. Painting and sculpture are the most directly sensuous of the arts and we should not deny this. The revolutionary nature of true sensuousness (which should always be distinguished from sensationalism) is suggested by the following passage from Marx:

> Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is *ours* only if we have it, that is, exists as capital for us or is *used* by us: immediately possessed, eaten, drunk, worn on our body or lived in. Although private property looks on all these immediate embodiments of possession only as *means of sustenance,* the life which they serve is the life of private property, work and capital. Hence, there has been a simple alienation of *all* these senses; and the sense of having has taken the place of *all* physical and spiritual senses.

The Hero and the Idol.—The hero in art is not of course just a man who is portrayed behaving bravely—or who ends up by marrying the heroine. The function of the hero in art is to inspire the reader or spectator to continue in the same spirit from where he, the hero, leaves off. He must release the spectator's potentiality, for potentiality is the historical force behind nobility. And to do this the hero must be typical of the characters and class who at that time only need to be made aware of their heroic potentiality in order to be able to make their society juster and nobler.

BOURGEOIS CULTURE is no longer capable of producing heroes. On the highbrow level it only produces characters who are embodied consolations for defeat, and on the lowbrow level it produces idols—stars, TV "personalities," pin-ups. The function of the idol is the exact opposite to that of the hero. The idol is self-sufficient: the hero never is. The idol is so superficially desirable, spectacular, witty, happy, that he or she merely supplies a context for fantasy and therefore, instead of inspiring, lulls. The idol is based on the *appearance* of perfection; but never on the striving towards it. In fact the idol does more than lull, because the spectator, identifying himself with the idol, and feeling that he shares or possesses its qualities, becomes complacent and self-satisfied.

All this is obvious enough. The question is: Have we always produced socialist heroes or have we sometimes produced socialist idols?

Extremism.—It has often been pointed out that extremism is one of the characteristics of the modern movements in art—post-impressionism, cubism, expressionism. And critics have then followed up this observation by connecting extremism with a sense of desperation. This is surely generally true, but it seems to me that the nature of this desperation has changed fundamentally during the last eighty years.

The early "modern masters"—Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Picasso,

Juan Gris, Braque, Matisse and others—were all, in their various ways, aware of the feebleness and corruption of bourgeois art and values and they all sensed that the twentieth century would produce a new type of man whom they wished to welcome even though they did not necessarily understand him. They knew that they lived on the eve of a revolution, and they considered themselves revolutionaries. But *because they did not then understand the social and political nature of this revolution, they put all their revolutionary fervor into their art considered as art. Because they did not see how to make a revolution in the streets, they made one on their canvases.* (It is also interesting to note here that Léger who understood the true nature of the revolution taking place far better than any of his contemporaries, was the least extreme in spirit —the most calm.) The extremism of the early modern masters, in other words, was *affirmative*—and even though their work did little to help directly an actual social revolution, their fervor, desperate as it sometimes was, did lead them to make extremely important technical and aesthetic discoveries.

THE EXTREMISM of the so-called *avant-garde* now is of a quite different sort. Behind it is the desperation of despair. The "action" painters who dribble paint from tins on to their canvases and then smack it with anything handy, the sculptors who produce grey heaps of rubble or objects that look like iron man-traps but are less well made, the poets who bewail the loss of their language, are so terrified of what the world is becoming that they try to reduce it to the dimensions of their own unconscious, whilst boasting that these are the dimensions of the cosmos itself.

Again, this is, I suppose, a fairly obvious distinction, but it should make us wary of the way we use such words as "formalist," "decadent," "over-subjective," "defeatist," etc.

Militancy and Sectarianism.—This distinction is the most important and most difficult one. And again it is probably more difficult for the British than for many others. The British Marxist's general understanding of world history and of the future is so very much further advanced than the actual present political situation in this country, that the temptation to impose a stock solution upon the problems arising from his subjects is considerable.

For the painter I think that the distinction is made according to how he resolves the other problems raised in this article: the problems of subject and content, formalism, status (his and our attitude to his calling), heroism, and his view of the history of modern art.

If I had to sum up, I would say that the socialist artist must constantly ask and have the answer—in his mind and heart—to the question of *why* he is painting. His reasons for painting should be militant. But if his militancy dictates to him in advance *what* he should paint and —even worse—*how* he should paint it, he will become academic and sectarian. Art is a means of communication, but it is essentially an imaginative means; and imagination in art consists of the ability to discover and disclose that which exists. If a man believes that he already fully understands that which exists, he is not an artist.

John Berger is a prominent British Marxist art critic. Among the publications to which he is a contributor are the *New Statesman and Nation* and the *Marxist Quarterly*. He has appeared here in the *Nation*.

OUR CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

We have received a number of inquiries from readers about the changes in our board of contributing editors. They were concerned to know whether the reduction of this list by several names implied differences over principle. We want to reassure them, and at the same time to apologize for not having explained the circumstances which made the change necessary.

In the past, our contributing editors were in the main distinguished from other of our writers by the fact that they wrote more consistently for us, or functioned in an advisory capacity from time to time. The staff editors were always conscious of their interest in and devotion to the welfare of the magazine.

Recently, however, we have found it expedient to enlist somewhat more concerted help in soliciting manuscripts, approaching new writers, and in general planning for the future. We therefore wrote to all members of the board to ask them whether they were free to attend regular meetings or otherwise find the time needed for this more demanding assignment. We also assured them that those who were too committed at the moment to other work to accept would be welcome at any time they wished to rejoin the board.

Our present list of contributors comprises those members of the old board who were able to participate immediately as well as three new names: Walter Lowenfels, Thomas McGrath, and Annette Rubinstein. We welcome them, and thank all the rest for their support and courage in the difficult times through which our publication has passed.—The Editors.

MARGIN FOR MANEUVER

PHILLIP BONOSKY

AM I seeing this? Am I writing it, or seeing it? These men walking up and down in a shallow circle before the great Mill gates—are they ive, or are they only imagined, and the words about them only read?

For between the book I *am* writing and the walking men there seems o be no real division, and my thought passes easily from one to the ther. For months I'd been thinking about them, seeing them in my ind, "dreaming" their actions, their faces, the words they'd say; and ey've been caught in that strange twilight between reality and art where ey are still "real"—and yet already are not. It is easy to understand is quality if I am speaking of romantic subjects; but steel mills, ickets? And yet they too have to dissolve into something else before ey can return as real as life. These gates of steel, the walls of rock, e men in their working clothes already begin to live in another way, d I pass from them into imagination, like a busy ant, dropping here and ere a grain for "rebuilding" later.

I feel rich: I look at these towns, these hills jealously; and think: *All ine!* There it is, the stuff of art, spread out before me, and all I have do is browse among it, in it, let myself disappear and dissolve, and me back, if I do, weighted down with glory. . . .

So I travel here, eyes going over everything; testing, tasting, finger- g, letting the coal-soaked air roll over my tongue the way others ll wine!

So I come back to my home as though I am travelling still in my ought of it. . . .

THE town is wrapped in soft haze. It lies crouched against the hill like something that has been long chased, and now simply waits.

But that's not all of it: it has become fiction now, this reality, and has acquired the quality of imagination, the baffling reality of art. I pass into it, and I pass out of it: and where the reality of the newspaperman ends and mine begins I cannot exactly say.

I feel as I walk and breathe in the sweetish smog-stained air, and feel the sulphur-colored sunlight warm my wrists, as I walk up the stoney street, and go on past the red-brick library . . . that I am promenading, in a curious way, not only among real people and real things, but as they also exist in my dream of them.

Things happen as they do happen in art. The wooden porch is covered with grape vines, planted by the man lying in his grave up on the smoke-stained hill; and the grapes are now only tiny green berries. Their leaves throw ancient shadows on the porch floor. The floor is sun-baked, and the cat lies sprawled on its back, with its hind parts overhanging the ledge. Its thread-like pink mouth is slightly open, and the pup comes quietly over and delicately kisses it on the lips. The great ailanthus tree has grown bigger. The dead man and I had tramped one afternoon—a moment preserved only by me now—and dug it up out of the woods, then planted it here, and it keeps on growing and so does his death keep on growing. . . .

The sun's still here. The exact rock I step on now has been stepped on a million times at least by bare feet, roasted by summer, and dipped into dust, like a boot, up to the knees: and it sticks up from the clay, lifting us out of the city into the hills. This rock lives here in reality—and in my memory of it; and it is almost ready for art. *This* rock—not any rock; and when it is met again in a story, if it is, the reader will know this rock actually existed, and will believe what took place there.

The plantain and sweet clover, and the yellow dust of the playground which we scattered with our feet, whose big toes were always tied with a dirty bandage: there we sat in the dust and watched free movies, by courtesy of the steel company—our ribs aching as the Negro actors turned flour-white meeting ghosts, skeletons, black cats or witches. We sat on the reverse side of the screen and watched all the action backward: and the printed dialogue was also backward; but who cared? We threw bags of dust into the air, bursting them like bombs: and we fled into the night afterwards before the Mill whistle blew and the old man would be home through fields of burdock, over blackberry thorns, through paths of milk-weed.

THERE, in the playground, as I lean over the same iron rail, I look back on myself-and-us down there, as through some reversed time-

achine; but there's not much change, and life seems to move like mild ind over water, motion that leaves things unchanged beneath. There e still are—those boys playing baseball are still us ten-year-olds. And eir coach is a lame man who was also coach when I was that old; and hen the team comes to bench after an inning of errors, he says to their ang-dog heads: "You call yourself baseball players! I'm wasting my me!"

But then he's been wasting his time like that for a good twenty years ow. And nothing's changed—except that as the boys run out on the eld again to do or die, you see on the backs of their uniforms the letters: *I.O.*

And *their* fathers—some of them—twenty years ago when *they* were nly ten or twelve, sang:

Heigh-ho, heigh-ho,
We joined the CIO.
We paid our dues
To the dirty Jews,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho, heigh-ho!

But even then, as we furiously played ball, we would cry: "Don't ab on me!"—taking that word right out of the air, not knowing, in a wn where a union was completely illegal, that it had come out of ion struggles.

The mills are down. The smoke has stopped coming out of the acks. The fathers of these boys are on strike—CIO men, all of them.

You see it from this strange angle, with this quality of both past and esent, of time involved in it, and it seems almost weird to live and perience both things this way. Do you think I can stand there as casually the fact itself looking back at a familiar scene, with all it brings to e surface—remembering what it meant to build a union where it cost ur life: and men died, Communists among them; and seeing those ters worn so normally and legally on the backs of boys who existed en only potentially in the depression-starved loins of their fathers, only ys themselves then? Not all got born. But you see them from this ecial angle, and how can you master such an experience except through e cool reassurance of art?

When we (my wife and I) slip into the church I went to as a child, sit in the same pews and stare at the altar, the stained-glass windows, which I had stared, on knees that ached long after the Mass had dis-peared into the images that come to a cross and tired eye. As if time

is entirely capricious, I am privileged to witness myself re-enact the ritual of worship. A thirteen-year-old boy falls on his knees, clasps his hands, presses them to his lips, and leaves teethmarks on his knuckles. The Eye of God watches him, as it watched me too: but now both of us watch him. Years; but that goes on. The same Christ I watched with belief hangs bleeding from the very same cross where it's bled for over thirty years: but the blood's only paint now, the body is plaster, and the boy's reality is my dream. What to do with all this upsetting stuff? What's the use of it all? You see, it goes away, it dissolves, changed, and returns more real now than reality. A story.

AT NIGHT, sharp with smoke and full of tugging hints, I pace in and out of the house, to the porch whose grape-vines I glimpse a watchful ironic moon—the same moon I had seen from the same spot on so many occasions: *I* had changed and it was still cool and distant as if to say: "And here you are in spite of everything!"

I am alone in this house where I lived all my youth. I listen with every sense strained to hear the volume of sound that comes involved with the past, and when the Mill whistle pours out, shuddering the air, it shudders up in me a cloud of memory. Suddenly I am overwhelmed at the sound of the working night, as men hurry down the alley to the Mill; and I recall myself then before I'd become clever, and shared that life and the fate of my family and friends with no escape clause in it. And I knew how it felt to be a human being whose life and death literally hung on whether the smoke issued forth from those high black stacks, or did not.

The surfaces change a bit in the sense that we wear better clothes, and there's more glitter and polish but beyond that job in the mill or the mine, and what you do for it, still stands the same grim reality as it always stood. It remains sunk deep into the consciousness of workers and lies there beneath the come and go of surface events. Nobody has abolished rent, and men are still hired and fired, and if they are crippled, or hurt in mind or soul, the joke of what they are comes right out, plain and grinning. For every solitary worker, except perhaps the youngest, the rawest, knows deep in his bowels that he is *used*—that he is nothing beside the higher urgency of making a profit; that he goes into that furnace as surely as does the scrap, the dolomite, the pig iron, and comes out of it a money-product for someone else.

Anyone who saw them pour by the thousands past gunmen and racketeers into the little unions that made the CIO will never believe again in the docility of these men. And anyone who witnessed how they

esponded to Communists *at last*—after apparently turning them a deaf ear for a long period before, letting them get jailed, be abused, beaten up nd slandered—will never let himself say: There is no hope.

TAKE that old river, those coal-stippled hills, that amusement park that overlooks the point where Washington crossed the Monongahela with General Braddock on his way to death at Fort Duquesne in 1755. If we stop for a moment by the road, it's to watch the hot metal ars overturning and sending down those whirling balls of fire I described n *Burning Valley*. It's all here: the point is, am I merely seeing it, or is his already written?

Or come and go down again the long wooden stairs which led once nto "burning valley," that Hollow where people lived once upon a ime, but which now lies under tons of hardened slag. And did no lash flood ever rush here and drown them, nor did I ever run here in ny bare feet home to my mother, head cascading blood from an "English" oy's rock, and later to hear my mother cry for justice for me but be aughed at for her poor broken illegal English? And justice unfound. . . Only half the stairs remain, and even so as I walk down them I xperience the strange sensation that I am actually descending into the ast—into the living past: in a moment I'll see Father Dahr! Or—just as trange—that this boy coming up the stairs, holding on to the wooden ailing, will turn into—*me.*

Only half the stairs remain, and they break off abruptly into silence, nto a vast buried field on which no green thing grows. And yet I feel ny moment there will be some answer, some sign. Town is just a stone's hrow—an actual stone actually thrown—away: and the valley's filled; ut there are hills here which nobody bothers, nobody climbs, and they've een standing undisturbed for decades like that, their long grass overgrown ike uncut hair. But I climb one, the same one I climbed as a boy ounger than my son who is climbing it with me—when suddenly out f that secret grass a pheasant rushes up into the air and climbs clumsily nto the sky. I stare at it, amazed, and confounded: for it seems for a noment that time is here hopelessly tangled up, or some other fantastic ning has happened, and that bird has actually come out of that old dark ime. It had been passed by, the town had grown around it, the grass it ides in is the descendant of that other grass, but it's been here, hiding.

Such a bird enters fiction and art.

With my son we walk through woods that are tangy with crushed rab-apples, and underneath the haw trees lie scarlet skirts of haws where ney've neatly fallen. We drink from exactly the same spring gushing

out of the clay bank that I drank from then, and I watch my son supping up the cool water in his hands, and my brain hesitates a moment before its meaning.

All is so peaceful. Memory is like the haze that has fallen over these hills and steeped this town in dreaming.

And suddenly I see the barrel of an anti-aircraft gun.

IT WAS summer. It was a very lazy summer, and the notes of the bugle were lonely and sad. I stood on the sidewalk, watching the horses draw a flag-draped coffin, set on a caisson. Men in khaki, wearing shallow helmets, and walking with putteed legs, followed slowly this square-cornered flag. A soldier boy is dead. He died somewhere "over there": and they've brought him back to bury him here. For the first time I hear those faraway words: Chateau Thierry, the Argonne, the Meuse. . . . Somebody got himself killed, and here he was under this beautiful flag, and these men marching, and this bugle playing, and finally the crack of rifles leaving behind a tart blue smoke twisting in the still air.

How remote it was on a sunny day, and for a little boy watching the parade the meaning came half-poetry, half-superstition. How sad it was, how nice it was! How sad and nice to be lying under the red, white and blue because you had been killed in such a romantic place like the Argonne, and now drawn by horses, and bugles were playing: and then lying deep underground with that helmet stuck on a rod, and flowers placed there every Memorial Day. To have died in the Argonne—that was different from dying by the bullets of the Coal-and-Iron police right here in a dirty smoky town, and being buried almost secretly, almost in disgrace. Nobody draped *those* dead in flags; and the priests barely accepted them provisionally in purgatory. And on their grave stones were not carved St. Mihiel, the Aisne-Marne . . . but Homestead, McKeesport, Braddock—and Duquesne.

That fragment of a far reality which came innocently and unexplained to a sunny day did not dwindle and disappear. It grew. And when Lindbergh's plane came bounding across our sky, the same year they finally executed Sacco and Vanzetti, through the smoke, and chasing the bewildered pigeons who only flew there before, something ominous and threatening entered life permanently, and the direction of Fear extended up.

The guns are pointing *up*: and down in the valley before the Mill gates steel workers who don't stare at the sky for their destruction or their fear: they stare at the Mill.

I DROP into the Local Union Hall, Local 1256, which was once *my* union hall when I worked in these same mills, and I inquire, as midnight approaches: "Any settlement?" There are four men, three of them Negroes, at the back of the hall. To my question they shake their heads. All evening cars drive up, and men get out, and they come here for word: would that great Mill be shut down or not? Here they were, the real movers and shakers of history; they were about to show *who* ran the mills, and produced the huge profits; and in Homestead they raise the roar: "Shut her down!"

In that bar is not the taste for unemployment—but the taste of power. Not the power of "great men" but of many ordinary unknown and uncalculated working men. It gives me a thrill to see these men, only yesterday hiding in dark and secret places to found a union, roar from a thousand throats: "Shut her down!"

Outside, however, is the kind of night I mean: every element of it makes signs to me, gives me hints wherever I go: tries to say something. I find myself hushing my own thoughts and the sound of my feet, irritated at myself and my noises. The people I meet are deeply implicated in this, and I know them, if not always by name by their eyes: my body aches with suddenly too-much. . . .

Those guns pointing to the sky! Those guns on the hips of police watching the picket-line!

But there's laughter and horse-play and sounds of "Hi, Joe," and "Hello, Mike," and the Company officials bring out coffee. . . .

But the guns have come to stay.

STILL, I've come back here not just to savor again this quality which I've tried to describe. I'm writing another book, and I need some help to write it. A man I worked with back in '38 in the 30-inch Mill spends an entire evening with me and we retrace the past. He's a scarfer, and is glad to know that somebody is interested in the life of scarfers, and I sense in his feeling that whole area of pain and regret existing among workers everywhere whose lives are passed by in the river of art as if what they spend their lives doing isn't worth words to waste on it! Their pain, hopes—their dreams—are left out of today's literature. Writers pass them by, and if they are passed by in turn, why should they complain?

He gives me the facts I want conscientiously. But I'm no fieldworker, gathering data for a synthetic novel. I remember that I went to school with him, running to beat the last bell, pulling up those long stockings we used to wear, and scratching our running noses with the but-

tons of our coat sleeves! If I've escaped his "fate," it's sheer accident—and who knows who is really better off?

Later, a machine will take his job away.

We drop into the house of a man who had been one of the founders of the local union here, organized it, fought for it, and was often an officer overwhelmingly elected by the workers, who knew him as a Communist and respected him for it. He has a curious status now. The cold war struck bitterly at him, and enemies who could not touch him at any other time, moved to isolate him from the workers. Today he is a member who may pay dues but cannot speak!

He's at work however, but his wife welcomes us in. We flinch before the hospitality that surely comes, and it does come—accompanied by whiskey dropped into a glass of beer: boilermakers that leave us hanging between life and death. My wife is in a panic, and I drink hers on the sly, and never do recall how we got home. But K—— laughs, and plies us, her red cheeks hanging over our dim sight. I recall with her that during the war she forced the Mill to give her a job, in spite of her husband's "views"; and she became a bricklayer's helper—she remembered with a gush of laughter, her rosy cheeks blooming, how she heaved those bricks up to the bricklayer! Then she became a craneman (those jobs have only one sex), and made more money than her husband. The good old days!

"K——," I say to her as we stumble out, "I'm going to put you in a book! You're wonderful!"

She laughs and then adds (giving me a neat lesson in realism): "Oh—but I'm *mean,* too!"

And I promise to myself I'll not idealize her—though she *is* mean; but not meaner than the Company, nor those union officers who grow fat in these fat days of easy victories and who prove their patriotism by driving good working men out of their jobs!

We visit another man who was a member of the Bonus Marchers back in the days when both Eisenhower and MacArthur had their reputations still to make, and made much of it that year. You remember Anacostia Flats. He was carrying the American flag when the troopers opened fire, and the men on both sides of him went down. He leans over to deliver the moral of this tale, and points a long finger at me: "If you want to keep from getting shot," he says, "always carry the flag!"

I promise him solemnly I'll remember to do that.

Then he (who is said to have been fathered by a priest) launches into another chapter in the old and endless discussion of the nature of love in monasteries, whether the Love of God is sufficient love, or is love

something else? He has his opinions, which he interrupts only to feed what must be a dozen cats some canned salmon.

TO SEE once again, and encounter once again on another level, from another point of view, which consciously searches for the meaning of things, those facts that once dominated life absolutely—to surprise them, as it were, before the present drapes them over and distorts them with the urgency of the present—is a unique and subtle task. The context is everything. That old pear tree, which must be a good fifty years old by now, and has borne hard pears for several generations of us, stands in a yard leaning slightly down wind. It stood there presiding over the whole yard. Then the mechanical age arrived, and yards were sliced in half to make room for garages, and the tree was visible only over the garage roof.

But around it are gathered invisible memories, which are exquisite to recall but painful to separate from the past, where they are lodged. For the tree itself stands like some grotesque accident, surviving out of that context when horses reached over the fence and nibbled at the low branches, into *this* context when it means nothing to me as it is. But I'm glad it survived, for I have this thing, half-real, half-imagined and remembered, against which to watch impressions and measure change —not obvious change but the "change" of the inward landscape, where you go to find that tree, that particular tree for your story, your poem, or I suppose, your music. This old tree wouldn't stop a soul today, as it stands. But let me replace it in depth, and give it the whole context of its growth within my growth, and it becomes a tree of magic, a living pear-tree.

It must appear together with a life. To recover faces is everything. F—— was a girl as young as I who, much earlier than she should, impatiently picked at the lock of love, and got it open. She also helped steal those cold hard pears that dangled on a branch in the moonlight and fell with a thud to the ground. She was wild, as wild as her brother was meek, as daring as her brother was timid. The juice of the hard pears filled her mouth with bruised innocence, and she thrilled and her black eyes snapped because those pears were *stolen.* It was an introduction into the illicit except that then it only looked like the dazzling but room of pleasure and life.

Then years later, here is her brother (whom I held in my arms too in an alley fight), and the shock of recognition opens up a vein into the past. "How," I ask him, "is your sister, F——?"

Coldly he answers: "I don't have any sister," and turns away.

In this town, the saloon is the other place to go. The images that appear on the strip of mirror behind the rows of bottles return half a look. They tell me she sits and watches to see what face will show up beside hers and what will happen in that long mirror, for that one night. *Ladies Invited,* the sign says. The laughter of running with cold pears underneath our shirts chilling our bare bodies, the snap of black eyes . . . are dull now.

AND whatever happened to? And is it true that? And remember the day old man so-and-so, a policeman, who rouged his face and dyed his hair—though he was well in his sixties—was too fond of little girls —whatever happened to him after he went beserk and shot down and killed five people? Finally fried for it, did he?

Well, *that* made the headlines from coast to coast!

There's a kind of local pride in that.

I used to see him, for his granddaughter lived next door to us, but how can you tell, as you pass a respectable-looking man in the street, that he's on his way, his fist on his gun, to kill everybody who ever cast a reproach at him and his "need"? When you came to add it up, the State had one fried old man's corpse—but *he* took five with him.

I knew some of those he shot.

There's not a foot in this town or around it that doesn't have its stories, and the artist comes among them, like a gardener, nervous at his riches, and shaky that he'll ruin them, that they'll pass out of reach, or he'll die before he's learned how to harvest them. I don't mean the obvious stories, which make the newspapers, like the High School strike, or the day the CIO organizer was elected mayor.

I mean those events that have become steeped and matured in time, strained through the memory (incidentally, Chekhov could write in no other way), and suffering a sea-change which turns them now mysteriously into the stuff from which art may come. The stages and the process by which this takes place are too subtle, too elusive ever to catch; but the subjective—the artist's own life, his witnessing—must be and is one of the absolute ingredients. Nobody else knows the peculiar secret of that pear tree as I know it, and nobody else will save it from the fate that awaits it, broken by lightning or storm, or cut down finally and hauled away in broken chunks.

The process resists science, and the prying of all criticism, or that philosophic net which spreads wide but comes up only with dead fish. The sea escapes.

SO THESE steel workers, turned into newspaper types, or propaganda puppets for the Voice of America, are much more than that to me and of course to themselves. They are not solely this picture of them, of men trying to get more money, some "fringe" benefits, which—by the way—are, in time, snatched back again by kicked-up prices, speed-up, automation, returning by a devious but certain path back to the Mellon financial oligarchy that controls life here. Then again the fever rises, the struggle mounts to a pitch, and the battle breaks out.

If you limit your vision of the steel-workers' struggles to the rather shallow face of Dave MacDonald, and the memory of his waltzes through the various mills arm in arm with Benjamin Fairless, then president of U.S. Steel, you misunderstand a basic truth. If the workers suffer such leaders as long as they do, it's not from love of them. They are a necessary evil, and as long as they carry out their "contract" with the men, and bring back concessions from the Company as often as they do, they are suffered.

Even the declaration that there are no "battles" between Labor and Capital but simply misunderstandings over bookkeeping (in an area rich with the dead of such battles) becomes a part of the comical TV charade, though there is a speck of truth in it. That speck of truth lies in this fact: the steelworkers do not feel hopelessly penned in by class lines, and resent such descriptions of themselves; and optimism that a man can change and escape, if so he chooses, still persists, and is real. And even deeper than that—though few say so—is the ultimate reservation that every man is as good and equal as every other, including the titans of finance. No one is sacrosanct and holy; nor is the System which produces them. For, it must be understood that these workers will not stand around on one foot or the other, queuing up for made work, or spoiled surplus food, as their homes are knocked down to the banks, and their children go shoeless to school, and so starve out or wait out another depression in the name of anything whatsoever.

The history they learn as boys and girls in school is not the history they live. But real history goes back, and it lives in their bones; and if children, like us, used to yell fiercely: "Don't scab on me!"—and understood that this was an ultimate curse, it was not because we knew where it came from. It came right out of the air—in spite of the fact that in our town strikes and unions were *verboten,* and a union organizer took his life and liberty in his hands when he showed up in town.

But the main things of life find their way into life, and for us a scab whom we never met in the flesh remained lower than dirt, and stool-

pigeons and strikebreakers were part of that company, in spite of the official blessing the scab then had as the true American hero.

BUT ALL that was in the past when things were cruder, and has been abolished by the Voice of America. And yet why is it when I come home and browse among things and people, and gather with the men before the union hall as midnight approaches and the roar breaks forth from a thousand throats: "Shut her down!"—that nevertheless I feel breathless from a race I am not aware of running?

These men crowded in Homestead, McKeesport, Duquesne, Pittsburgh and roaring; and that huge Mill extending miles up and down the three rivers—tell me, how long can such a confrontation go on? Forever? Will the children of these men's children stand here too and face the great Mill and yell, and shut her down, and get benefits, which are then taken away, and once again come roaring out in the battle that stretches endlessly and futilely down the long corridors of time?

I can't believe it.

One day there will be no margin for maneuver.

Meanwhile there are guns pointing up to the sky. There are guns swinging from the hips of police and of troopers.

Meanwhile, little boys who don't know where they come from, or what it means, wear three little letters on their baseball suits, *CIO*.

Their fathers lean on the railing and watch them play.

Then they go off and picket.

RiGhT FaCe

Overdoing It

Mark Catlin, speaker of the Wisconsin Assembly, and one of Wisconsin's leading Republicans, has been charged by the state Board of Commissioners with inducing persons to pay him excessive fees for political influence in pardon and parole cases.—United Press.

The Typical

Actually, Johnny Dio is no ordinary hoodlum. He doesn't look like a gorilla at all. He wears good clothing with the air of a successful business man, which he fancies himself to be. In many respects, he has the manners and morals of the type.—New York *Times.*

Cult of the Bard

Once Sir Winston described a storm so vividly that it left Lord Brabazon practically seasick, the autobiography says.—New York *Times.*

Puzzled

"I don't know why people assume I am a millionaire simply because I bought the lakes of Killarney," Mr. J. Stuart Robertson of Boca Raton, Florida said.—New York *Times.*

Criminology

British prison officials today enthusiastically endorsed plastic tableware before the Plastic Federation Conference. "When wardens are struck by recalcitrant prisoners with washing-up bowls, the damage to the warden is somewhat less if the bowl is made of polythene (plastic) and not metal," a speaker told the conference.—New York *Times.*

books in review

Theology as History

AN HISTORIAN'S APPROACH TO RELIGION, by Arnold Toynbee. Oxford University Press. $5.00.

PROPHETS make poor historians because more than most men they suffer the defect of their chief virtue: in consequence of the very intensity of their vision of history they are doctrinally disposed to be careless—indeed, disdainful—of history. They are intent not merely upon the long range (that, after all, is the historian's proper dispensation) but upon the longest range: it is the End that matters. In a view of History in which the Beginning is shrouded in mystery and the Middle is nothing but a disastrous interim, an infinite waiting, the prophet's passionate concern for the End which is in truth the splendid Beginning is plainly consistent with his vocation. But eschatology is not the proper business of the historian and, because he confuses his calling with theirs, Arnold Toynbee's new book is, in the final analysis (even his critic is led, transfixed, into the language of last things), nothing more than a statement—however moving at times—of personal piety.

Mr. Toynbee is at pains to disclaim that as his intention. The book, he writes, "is an attempt to describe, no the personal religion of the author, bu the glimpse of the Universe that hi fellow-historians and he are able t catch . . . through following the his torian's professional path." Thi "glimpse" reveals to him not only tha religion is at the dead center of histo but also that history is an overwheln ingly conclusive demonstration of h thesis that "Man's true end is to glorif God and to enjoy Him for ever." Nov this may be; but it is the kind of stat ment which cannot be derived from hi tory and is beyond the verification history. It is rather a leap of faith which the historian surrenders his ev dence to the language of dogmati and apologetics. Toynbee has set out reveal by the evidence of history a bea tude which is outside history.

If this seems strange history a dubious theology, reason is further co founded by Toynbee's curious meth of marshalling his evidence to supp his meta-historical thesis. The demo stration is a negative one: history not so much an orderly progression ward a final revelation as it is, by a ki of reverse teleology, a series of orde regressions away from that final revo tion—a revelation of truth, that is, continuous error. Mankind, Toyn argues, didn't know what it was doi And since his view of history is un

lentingly sacramental, it follows that all history is sacred history, that all history acquires meaning only with reference to religion. This kind of argument is familiar enough: it is the kind that holds, for example, that atheism is a form of theism, since to deny God is in some way to acknowledge Him. Such an argument is strange only logically; its impulse is perfectly apparent once one sees that its source lies in a fixed idea, the fixed idea that asserts itself in his *a priori* insistence upon a thesis which he purports to have set out to discover.

What must result is the entrapment of the author in a futile enterprise, since there is no way to reconcile the matter of history with an assertion that is outside history.

BUT observing Toynbee has its own rewards, for he brings to the enterprise a formidable erudition and a really impressive synoptic imagination. He is content with nothing less than the whole sweep of history, or, more precisely, those aspects of history which seem to him most hospitable to his purposes. Thus, mankind's irremediable Original Sin, which to Toynbee is "self-centredness," manifests itself throughout history as forms of false worship, the besetting sin which attaches itself to undeserving objects in successive stages of historical development: pre-Hellenic worship of nature; worship in the Hellenic age of the "parochial" city-state; of the "oecumenical" empire during the period of the Roman Empire; of religious institutions, attendant upon the triumph of Christianity; of technology and science, following the decay of the Church's hegemony, and so on. According to the terms of the argument these manifestations, which in ordinary discourse we would call allegiances or some such secular term, are forms of false worship; and, because as such they are not worship of a transcendent God, or Absolute Reality (a term Toynbee usually prefers), they are errors of necessity and by definition, expressions of the Original Sin which obstructs man from fulfilling his true destiny.

Schematization lives by exclusion alone and Toynbee is scrupulous in the suppression of whatever evidence an unencumbered quest for historical illumination might yield. His sins are not only those of omission. So intent is he in pursuit of his already-achieved conclusion that the most improbable material is made, screaming in protest, to yield to his potter's hand. Only in this way can he wrench the most complex phenomena of history to his single will: nationalism, for example becomes another form of religious error, that is, worship of the "parochial" state; 17th century scepticism and rationalism are simply reactions against religious fanaticism and are themselves forms of false worship.

That is the trouble with being a prophet. For the prophet-historian history—which for the benighted is a thing of paradox and contradiction—assumes a shape that has been willed for him, becomes in fact a drama of redemption to which the author is called to act as Chorus—lamenting, pitying and warning. The analogy is not remote, for, like Hellenic tragedy, Mr. Toynbee has given us a kind of sacred history; and his essential method, like that of drama, is selective and illustrative—in this instance of a received evangelical theme, the nature of which makes the work of the historian irrelevant and superfluous.

WILKES STERNE

Gifted Aimlessness

BABY DOLL, by Tennessee Williams. New Directions. $3.00.

FROM a publisher's note prefacing *Baby Doll* we learn that: "For some years Elia Kazan, the director of several of Tennessee Williams' plays on Broadway as well as films, had been urging Mr. Williams to weld into an original film story two of his early one-act plays which, by and large, were concerned with the same character and situation. Mr. Williams wrote a proposed script which with some changes was filmed in the winter of 1955-56 by Elia Kazan. Although he had himself adapted several of his Broadway successes for films, this was Mr. Williams' first original screen play. Many who came to read it, including his publishers, felt that although few "shooting" scripts have ever been published, this one was publishable as it stood. To add further interest to the volume, it was decided to include the two one-act plays from which *Baby Doll* sprang—27 *Wagons Full of Cotton and The Long Stay Cut Short* or *The Unsatisfactory Supper.*

The book therefore offers us an interesting insight into the creative method of Tennessee Williams. In itself (whatever magic Mr. Kazan may work on it) the script tells a story almost too silly to repeat. Baby Doll, a voluptuous teen-age girl who sleeps in a crib and sucks her thumb, is married to an older man in name only until the day she will be twenty. Her husband, the owner of a failing cotton-gin, two days before the day of fulfillment, desperately sets fire to a rival plant in a move which he hopes will secure him economic success and Baby Doll. Instead it brings Vacarro, the handsome yout Italian manager of the gin Archie L has burned down. Intent on reveng Vacarro destroys Archie Lee, wins Bal Doll and offers refuge to the aged au who "does" for them. In the fin scene, Archie Lee, drunk and rampa ing with a shotgun is seized by t police while Baby Doll and Vacar hiding from Archie nestle in each othe arms in a tree. Baby Doll says: feel sorry for poor old Aunt Ro Comfort. She doesn't know where go or what to do. . . ." Vacar (gently): "Does anyone know whe to go, or what to do?"

This last, if anything, would a pear to be Mr. Williams' point of vie in *Baby Doll.* The poverty of this pie of philosophy hardly demands commer But it is this concept (or lack of co cept) which lies more and more at t heart of Mr. Williams' failure to expr the full stature of his artistry. It is t result of his fear of placing his cha acters within the frame-work of t author's judgments.

The earlier one-act plays on whi *Baby Doll* is based are much bet than their off-spring for just this r son. 27 *Wagons Full of Cotton* te the straight story of economic riva from which *Baby Doll* draws its mea est substance. In the brutal misuse of t woman by both men, he has bath his social scene in a skillful mixture disgust and pity which is just the rig touch. *The Long Stay Cut Short The Unsatisfactory Supper* is a poigna story of the unwanted old-maid relati Aunt Rose Comfort is rendered w all the delicate, heart-breaking nua which Mr. Williams can do so w This is his special poetry—the angu of those too gentle, too sensitive to s vive our harsh society. At best, h

ever, there is a most tenuous grasp of these frail ideas and in the effort to piece these two well made strips of cloth to the broader garment of the film all has been lost in banality. Even the poetry is gone. The cadence of southern speech remains and such ordinary lines as "Archie Lee, honey, you all aren't going to lose your furniture, are you?" substitute as a kind of poetry. Naturally, drama demands more —even for the film.

What has happened to *Baby Doll* in the process of turning it into a "shooting" script? The social scene is the rural South. A vital theme is introduced in the desperate hopelessness of the decaying small business man set against the powerful syndicate. At the same time this power is represented in the form of Vacarro, an Italian, disliked and himself discriminated against. Instead of working this material into the complex drama it suggests, Mr. Williams has let it all slip away into the cheapness of the Vaccaro-Baby Doll-Archie Lee relationship, in which all is resolved through sex. The delicate tragedy of Aunt Rose Comfort is dissipated in a characterization so loose as to lose audience sympathy. In the scene in which she visits a friend in a coma at the country hospital to eat her sick friend's chocolates, we are ready to abandon her to senile idiocy. Baby Doll herself is a variation on the theme of the Great American Bitch, with which our literature is saturated. (Baby Doll is the pitiful little girl version.) In the end we are quite willing—even eager—to abandon them all to their aimless solutions.

The pity is that Mr. Williams, with all his remarkable gifts, should abandon himself to aimless artistic solutions. He has better ones up his sleeve, we know.

HELEN DAVIS

Fiction of Legality

THE COMMUNIST TRIAL AND THE AMERICAN TRADITION, by John Somerville, Ph.D. Cameron Associates. $3.50.

IN EVERY Smith Act trial the government is required to prove, in substance, that the Communist Party teaches or advocates the overthrow of our government by force and violence. This is normally done through an expert witness who, by means of appropriate references to the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Foster, et al., seeks to convince the jury that such is the "official line" of the Party.

It is then incumbent upon the defense to offer proof to the contrary. This is done through an expert witness who, by means of appropriate reference to the writings of the same persons, seeks to convince the jury that such is not the "official line" of the Communist Party. Dr. Somerville is one of the persons who has performed this function for the defense; in the volume under review, he sets forth in some detail his experience at the trials.

Dr. Somerville's book has two functions: first, to establish that the Communist Party does not advocate the use of force and violence, and, incidentally, to describe the difficulties which an expert witness, confronted with the technical rules of courtroom procedure, must face in seeking to put across to the jury a complex socio-economic doctrine. Both functions are performed well. The volume is well written and makes forcefully the points the author seeks to make.

TO THIS reviewer, however, the entire volume is premised on a

false assumption, namely, that the presentation of evidence to a jury on this issue, in this era, has some meaning, and that the jury, after hearing the testimony, comes to a conclusion which, while perhaps erroneous, at least bears some relationship to the evidence that has been introduced. But every realistic observer of the present scene knows that this is a fiction. All jurors, like all governmental administrative agencies, and almost all judges, consider it axiomatic that the Communist Party does advocate force and violence. One could no more prove to an American jury that the Communist Party does not advocate force and violence, than it was possible to prove to Pope Urban VIII that the earth revolved around the sun. The presentation of evidence on this matter is as irrelevant to the jury as the presentation of evidence by Galileo to the Inquisition.

This is not to say that the presentation of elaborate evidence and counter-evidence is altogether meaningless. A record must be made, and maybe, some day, somewhere, an appellate court may consider the matter on its merits, as did the Supreme Court in the *Schneiderman* case twelve years ago. But it is most naive to assume (as Dr. Somerville seems to) that anyone on a trial jury is the slightest bit concerned about the objective facts.

There is a second and not unrelated criticism which, it seems to me, can be made of Dr. Somerville's book. Lenin was one of the most prolific writers of our century. His writings range from learned theoretical works to agitational pamphlets and speeches. He wrote in a variety of circumstances and for many different purposes. The same is true to a considerable extent of Marx, Engels and the other "classical" Marxists.

To seek to determine what the Com munist Party of the United States no advocates, by reference to isolated par graphs written by Lenin in Russia 1917 seems thoroughly inappropriat

This is not to criticize defense cou sel for their presentations of eviden at the trial. Since the prosecution a ways seeks to prove its case by quot tions from Marxist theoretical works, th defense may not be able to meet this any way except by reference to oth excerpts which prove the prosecutio to be wrong. But this procedure, nece sitated by the requirements of a trial he under our Anglo-American system law, is not a very satisfactory metho of arriving at the truth with respe to political doctrine. That system jurisprudence was never intended try issues of the beliefs of men, an it doesn't work very well in that are

Insofar as Dr. Somerville describ his testimony, his treatise is interestin and instructive, as an illustration of ho the legal system fails to meet the prob lems posed by a trial of books. Bu insofar as he seeks to prove, by quot tion from Lenin, Stalin, et al., that th Communist Party does *not* advoca force and violence, he is playing u der the enemy's rules and is not a cle winner. I think that most objecti readers will find a good deal of an biguity in the various passages quote both by the prosecution and the defens especially when read in the conte of the United States of 1956, howev appropriate and clear the same passag may have been to a reader in Centr Europe of 1848, in Paris of 1870, or Russia of 1917.

IF THERE is any principle of Mar ism which is fundamental it is th

rinciple of dialectics, which, as Dr. omerville points out,

". . . teaches that all things change, including social and political conditions, problems, and policies. Hence there is no one social or economic condition that endures eternally, and there is no one political policy that is eternally correct."

The Communist Party, like any other arty, will advocate such tactics as eem most likely to achieve the aims f the Party. The appropriate tactics nust vary, as circumstances change. Unil the circumstances are known, discussion of tactics is futile.

Insofar as it demonstrates the nonense that goes on in a courtroom durng a Smith Act trial, the book is exellent. It is not so clear that it makes real contribution to an understanding f any substantive problems.

VICTOR RABINOWITZ

Mr. Rabinowitz is the noted civil liberties attorney who led the legal fight which resulted in the reversal of the Pennsylvania sedition conviction of Steve Nelson.

Randolph Bourne

HE HISTORY OF A LITERARY RADICAL and Other Papers, by Randolph Bourne. S. A. Russell. $3.75.

SINCE the trenchant essays of Randolph Bourne have long been unailable except in libraries (not many that), it's a treat to have this edion. It includes a rich selection of maial, most of which appeared originally periodicals like *The New Republic, Seven Arts, Masses,* and in two collections issued not long after Bourne's death in 1918, *Untimely Papers* and *The History of a Literary Radical.* The editors have wisely chosen to reprint the still fresh introduction written in 1919 by Bourne's friend and editorial colleague, Van Wyck Brooks.

In the official textbooks Bourne is usually buried in a footnote, if he is mentioned at all, but the country has not had many sounder critics. Bourne combined aesthetic sensitivity with social depth. The "new criticism" which he hoped to see in America was neither to subordinate life to art nor to use art as merely a convenient text or pretext, for partisan preachment. As Mike Gold wrote in the Twenties, "Randolph Bourne might have grown into the critic we need." And still need.

Bourne had a truly independent mind —which is of course very different from a mind unconcerned with humanity. Deploring "the terrible patronage of bourgeois society," he never piped the tune of a paymaster—and suffered for holding out against the hysteria of World War I and the attendant witchhunt. He died at 32, penniless, lonely, hounded by federal police agents. And his fate points up the problem, which has obviously swelled since 1918, of the independent-minded intellectual. As Brooks notes, "he was obsessed, during the last two years of his life, with a sense of the precariousness of free thought and free speech in this country; if they were cut off, he foresaw, the whole enterprise, both of the social revolution and of the new American culture, would perish of inanition; he felt himself at bay."

But he bravely persisted in finding an answer, or at least the way to an

answer, which has no little urgency today. Bourne summoned American writers to "rescue Thoreau and Whitman and Mark Twain and try to tap through them a certain eternal human tradition of abounding vitality and moral freedom, and so build out the future." His concern over the American future was deepened by what he saw of academic timidity, the retreat from responsibility, the criminal haste with which, when things got rough, so many intellectuals identified themselves with the least democratic forces in American life: "They have," said Bourne in *War and the Intellectuals*, "assumed the leadership for war of those very classes whom the American democracy has been immemorially fighting. Only in a world where irony was dead could an intellectual class enter war at the head of such illiberal cohorts in the avowed cause of world-liberalism and world-democracy."

Every one of his firmly phrased essays is a challenge to the conscience of intellectuals living in a society where whatever else may prosper, the human spirit seldom does. The question he asks for all of us is: "How can we all together serve America by really enhancing her life?" Not, he answers by universal miiltary service ("A Moral Equivalent for Universal Military Service"), not by rubbing out the culture of minority groups ("Trans-National America"), not by removing education from life ("Medievalism in Our Colleges"). In Bourne's rebellions there was nothing footloose. Always he proceeded from a positive and warm attachment to human beings and their needs. His radicalism consciously reached for socialist values. There is nothing in common between his earnest questionings of American life and the scornful "Prejudices" of his contemporary, Mencke

Some of Bourne's best writing ma be found in those brief book reviev which at the end of his life remaine about the only form of expression ope to him. His warm appreciations Gorky, Nexo, Dreiser, are classics criticism in miniature. Reading thes with their wonderful feeling for re life, one wishes to apply to Bourne th words he uses for Gorky: "This is th power and wonder of his writing, th it tastes not of escape from reality at of recoil, but of grappling and absor tion." He combined, as Brooks note an analytical gift with an adoratic for workmanship.

For the aridity of so much curre criticism, I can think of no better an dote than these bright, eager essa of Randolph Bourne which reveal, he wrote, that one incorrigible drea that clutches us—"high philosoph thought infused with sensuous love

RICHARD JO

Wheelock and Others

POEMS OLD AND NEW, by Jo Hall Wheelock. Scribner's. $3.50.

POETS OF TODAY, III ed. John H Wheelock. Scribner's. $3.95.

MOST lyric poets die young, ev when they live to great old a They have, perhaps, managed to wr two or three books of poems by t time they are thirty or so—and th the well runs dry. Novelists at the sa age are likely just beginning their se ous work. No one knows the reas for this sad inequality of things. now and then a poet arrives to c

found the rule, as Yeats lived three poetical lifetimes and did his best work toward the end of them. John Hall Wheelock seems to be another of this tribe of lean old men.

Wheelock has been publishing poems since 1905, and the present book is a collection ranging from that time to the present. The poems are generally so conventionally conventional that it is a shock to come to those of the last few years and to find in them a toughness of mind that the earlier work does not seem to point toward. The earlier poems have, it is true, many genuine felicities of form; but they often suffer from what I would call "approximate language"—so that the motive or center of the poem, instead of being shown to us, is wrapped up in a "poetical" cocoon. This is the neighbor devil of traditionalism.

But tradition has also its virtue and power, and they appear in Wheelock's more recent poems. Where the earlier works were simple and moved in a straight line and had a certain monotony of tone, the later ones have complexity, wit and humor without any loss—in fact with a gain—in directness. What was sometimes self-consciousness has become a deep and unsentimental consciousness of self; and the earlier romantic pathos of youth versus time, etc., has been replaced by the moving and tragic theme of passionate age confronted by death. It is this confrontation which is central to Yeats' later poems, the source of their power and their terror. It is probably the source of power of all good "late" poetry, and Wheelock has managed to up it in many of his later things.

These poems are pretty much all-of-a-piece and don't lend themselves to the removal of quotable parts, so I won't detach anything except a couple of lines that might be taken as a theme for Wheelock's later work:

I live in an old house on a dark star
In the wilderness of heaven. . . .

This will be a surprise book to those who have thought they had Wheelock pegged as "conventional"; it has real solidity to it as compared to the ephemerae of the times.

Poets of Today III is the third in a

series of Scribner's publications, each containing the work of three (usually young) contemporary poets.

Critics and even reviewers, like rockhounds, go about in search of what is "permanent," supposing that they will recognize it when they find it; but it seems to me more sensible to listen to contemporary poetry as if one were at a jam session: not everyone is Louie but the general effect is pleasing. So here are three new ones sitting in.

Lee Anderson appears to be the most ambitious of the three; his theme in the title poem and others, is nothing less than the search for value, for a way to live. Not a novel subject, but Anderson comes to it in a fresh way. Wheelock, in the introduction, speaks of the poem as "a counteraction, in method and substance," to "The Waste Land." (This seems to be a year for it: so far there are several anti-wastelands; fashion! O la!). But I prefer to see the poem as a relative to Aiken's "Senlin"—it has some of that excessive subjectivity, like a serial of alternating states of mind. Its language is nothing like that of Aiken; it has a lot more wit in it, a good deal less grace, many puns, buried allusions, etc. But it is as if the author, in shooting at a distant target, had forgotten to correct for windage. There *is* a lot of shooting and some of it is brilliant, but most of it seems to me shy of the mark.

Spencer Brown is the most "realist" of the three poets, his poems are about smaller and more immediate things than are the poems of Anderson, and his method is more direct—the poems have usually a logical or quasi-logical structure. He is concerned that the poems make sense, and they do. They have wit and ease within conventional forms. They are rationalist, there are no great leaps or surprises in them, they hav very little of *song*.

All this is by way of descriptio not evaluation. These poems general attempt to take an old or famili thing and to see it differently, or in new way, but not in an arbitrary wa "In the Woods at Night" begins:

> That all things may again not be
> but seem,
> Lead kindly flashlight, amid the
> encircling bump.

Terrible, you think; those ridiculo allusions, etc. Then:

> I press the button: the electrons
> jump
> To do my bidding in a brilliant
> stream.

Well, it takes a cool man to start with *bump* (and in a line like tha as the second rime word in a sonn The poem gets better as it goes alon *uses* the highly unlikely beginnin and ends a solid success. This kind success is repeated over and over Brown's book. It is a limited succe but the clarity and precision in t handling of familiar, even rather be out subjects, make these poems fun read. I think it's the best first book the last couple of years.

At first glance Joseph Langlan poems seem to be another additi to the prevailing Bland School. Ma of them written in rather elabor forms, they are "nature" poems, poe about *things* (birds, etc.), poems abo "literature" (Matisse, Breughel, etc Sometimes the subject is explored terms of something bigger, or leads comment or judgment on bigger thin —half of Langland is an allegorist. T

language is pure, fresh, usually apt, sometimes a little too pure, sometimes over-nice—as if Langland were not as much interested in showing as in hiding something. Some of the elaborate poems, in fact, seem to turn around rather small and easy subjects. They are packaged like Christmas presents of nitroglycerin, but they won't blow your hat off. I think the simpler things come off the best, and, if the poems are a progression, that seems to be the way Langland is going.

"Rocky Mountain Snowstorm" seems to me about midway between the most direct and the most elaborate. Here is a sample:

> Dry chill whips
> This world's good-morrow.
> Love is a raging cat
> At natural zero.

Langland can write of "The cold che and dull blue sound of the sea" (A Sea-Change) and of "one relaxed uly" when "I met an august lady in ecline"; and he can write "When ero noon drives shadow underground," nd (last lines of "Fall of Icarus: reughel").

> Lulled in the loose furl and hum
> of infamous folly,
> Darkly, how silently, the cold sea
> suckles him.

Perhaps the last quotation has suggestion of both the strength and weakness in *The Green Town,* but the rength is more than the weakness, and is a very pleasant book. Perhaps 's just that it's too *damned* pleasant, ut the prevailing convention nowadays ould have it thus. But Langland seems have the energy to get out of that rral.

THOMAS MCGRATH

A Novel About Singing

THE SIGNORINA, by Henry Myers. Crown. $3.95.

THE SIGNORINA is a novel based on the life of Maria Garcia Malibran, a famous singer who died in 1836 at the age of twenty-eight. What is known of her lends itself easily to dramatic elaboration. She was a linguist, a talented painter, a fine swimmer, fencer and horsewoman. Her father, Manuel Garcia, who taught her singing, was himself the illustrious tenor for whom Rossini wrote the part of Almaviva in the *Barber of Seville.* Her younger sister, known as Pauline Viardot, was also a pupil of the father and became in her turn one of the outstanding singers of the day. Her brother became a celebrated singing teacher whose long career lasted into the twentieth century. As for Maria Malibran, she began her singing studies at fifteen with a supposedly faulty, inflexible voice. Her father's teaching

was severe and tyrannical; nevertheless, she sang in public at seventeen and was a renowned success at eighteen. When her great contemporary, Henriette Sontag, retired, Malibran at twenty-two had no rival on the stage. Judging from contemporary accounts, she was not without vocal faults; her singing, which tended to be uneven and irregular, was eclipsed by Sontag's. But she was unmatched as a dramatic singer with unusual stage temperament.

Henry Myers, who has a reputation as a novelist, comes to this material with added advantages. He has been a professional accompanist of singers, and what is more important, he is a devotee of the singing art. *The Signorina* is a provocative novel about singing in which Malibran, who is represented as "the greatest singer that ever lived," symbolizes the ideal performing artist. The plot permits serious probing into such matters as the nature of the impulse behind the performer's art at its highest level and the effect of singing. A preoccupation with *bel canto*, the traditional theory and art of fine singing, is knit in with the material, and a recurring motif is that the practice is lost.

The novel is shaped by the high points in Malibran's career, while a background of historical scene and character is tactfully filled in. The view of New York City in 1823 is quite charming. There are well-turned vignettes of Velluti, one of the last *castrati* on the nineteenth century stage. Da Ponte, who was Mozart's librettist, De Beriot, the violinist, Bellini, the composer, and the Marquis de Lafayette. The intrinsic plot deals largely with the relationship between father and daughter and applies to it a great deal of modern psychological interpretation. Manuel Garcia is pictured as cruel, vain ar egotistical, and sometimes plays th role of the villain. Malibran not on hates her father but loves him; sh even identifies herself with him ar wants to surpass him. When fath and daughter are cast together in th *Barber of Seville,* Garcia requires Ma bran to sing her part in the mezz soprano range instead of the high s prano range. This is supposed to due to Garcia's jealousy. Yet, he wan to make his daughter "the greate singer in the world."

Like many a dedicated lover of th singing art, Myers skates on thin i when he presumes to explain the pr duction of voice. As in the referen above, Myers identifies voice types the extent of their range and by the "coloring," rather than by their *tes tura*, or area of range most comfortab for normal singing. As a matter of fa a contralto may often have as large range as a soprano, but her *tessitu* is contralto. It is not far-fetched suppose that Malibran was a contral with a large range. But Myers creat a phenomenon. Malibran had tw voices, he says, a soprano and a mezz soprano, and she had to "recolor" go from one to the other. "Coloring however, is an expedient achieved distorting clear vowels into indetermi ate sounds by means of throat constr tion. As for Manuel Garcia, Mye has him singing an A above high Assuming that this is possible, the to would be a piercing falsetto, since t normal male voice disappears just abo D and the sheer production of sou above that pitch would require ext ordinary energy. At the same tin Garcia's voice is supposed to be "sl ping down to baritone," this rep senting "loss of voice." In spite of th

Garcia is able to sing the A in altissimo "ever so lightly," an unthinkable feat, since the very pianissimo of that pitch would be ear-splitting.

However, the novel has a fascination beyond its subject matter and formal narrative. Its vivid, emotional language gives the impression of speech rather than the written word, and it insinuates itself in the ear like the omnipresent voice on the movie screen. This oral quality, which gives an odd sense of immediacy to the novel, derives partly from the fact that the author tells the story of *The Signorina* through a narrator. The narrator is outside the plot but he is no mere contrivance. In a bizarre way, he is the main character mingling with the personages of the book, voluble and passionate, scornful and gallant, aggressive and theatrical. He is sophisticated, presumptive and ingenious, always on hand with an axe to grind. He is an *aficionado* above all and in the long run, the book is his testament.

MAX MARCH

Contemporary Anthropology

MAN, CULTURE AND SOCIETY edited by Harry L. Shapiro, Oxford University Press. $5.50.

THIS is a textbook in anthropology. As texts go, it is a good one. It is not simply a rehash of the field by one or two authors who are trying to cover *everything*. It is, rather, a series of articles dealing with the principal areas of anthropological inquiry, each written by a specialist in his particular field. Therefore, for the person who wants to know something of the materials, methods, and approaches of anthropology, it is more readable than the standard type of text.

The outline of the book follows the

traditional pattern. It opens with a chapter by Shapiro on the physical evolution of man. This is followed by a series of papers on the archaeological record of cultural evolution from the Ice Age through the metal-using civilizations of the Ancient World, and a paper on the history and culture of the American Indian. The remainder and major part of the book is taken up with chapters on different aspects of "culture," the word anthropologists use to denote the materials, practices, and beliefs that make up the total life-way of a human group. There are chapters on language, religion, the family, social organization, primitive economics, and the nature of culture and cultural change as anthropologists see it. Contributors include such people as Robert Redfield of Chicago University, George Peter Murdock of Yale, and the late Ruth Benedict, on the nature of culture; the British anthropologists, V. Gordon Childe and Daryll Fords, on early agricultural society (the Neolithic Age) and primitive economics respectively and the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss on the family.

For the person who wants to kn something of contemporary anthrop ogy, the book is informative and enj able. However, for the reader who pects to find direct answers to pr lems concerning culture growth change, arising from a critical analy of his own culture, the book will b disappointment. It will seem rem indeed from the questions he may f should be pressing toward soluti through the study of man's total hist and the variety of ways in which has lived, stemming back a milli years, and reaching to the farthest e of the earth. In dealing with th questions, *Man, Culture and Society* unfortunately less adequate than is w ranted by the work of many anthropo gists. For instance, even the contri tion of the Marxist anthropologist, Gordon Childe, to the book itself minimal, embodying as it does a sim description of Neolithic society and p senting the reader with little Childe's theoretical approach.

LUCY HAU

Books Received

BEING AND NOTHINGNESS. An Essay on Phenomenonological Ontology, by Jean-Paul Sartre. Philosophical Library. $10. Sartre's major philosophical work, available for the first time in English.

THE GENESIS OF PLATO'S THOUGHT, by Alban Dewes Winspear. S. A. Russell. $5. An enlarged edition of a most penetrating critical re-examination of Plato's Republic.

OXFORD COMPANION TO AMERICAN LITERATURE. New Revised Edition, by James D. Hart. Oxford University Press. $10. Third edition of this popular and standard refere work with extensive revisions si its last publication eight years a

WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD D TIONARY OF THE AMERIC LANGUAGE. Concise Edition, by David B. Guralnik. The Wo Publishing Co. $3.00 plain, $3 with thumb index. The publish note says: "The best way to rev a dictionary is to use it."

RELIGION IN ACTION, by Jer Davis. Philosophical Library. $4 A religious plea for co-existence enlightened thinking on social q tions.

LETTERS

Editors, *Mainstream*:

No one in this country would want to see a man spend five years in the penitentiary on perjured evidence.

But unless the Supreme Court, in its first consideration of such a case, reverses the conviction of Clinton Jencks this is what will happen. Because Jencks, a former organizer for the International Union of Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers, was found guilty of falsifying his Taft-Hartley non-Communist affidavit on the testimony of Harvey Matusow.

Following the trial, held in Texas in 1954, the government prosecutor wrote Matusow, congratulating him for "fine cooperation . . . your testimony was absolutely essential to a successful prosecution."

However, since that prosecution, three important developments have occurred. Matusow has admitted that his evidence regarding Jencks was wholesale perjury; the Ninth Circuit Court in San Francisco last winter reversed the T-H conviction of another union leader, sentenced after professionals had informed against him; and in the spring, the Supreme Court refused to consider the recanted testimony of Matusow, embodied in a Subversive Activities Control Board brief against the Communist Party. In returning the case to the SACB, the court ruled that its findings of possible subversion must be made without the testimony of Matusow and other such informants.

These are notable victories in the stable, well-paid professional witnesses effort to rid our courts of notorious, un- But how successful Clint Jencks will be in his appearance before the top court depends in part on how widely these facts are known. That is why we ask you to inform others that this case faces a final hearing. We feel sure that those

familiar with the facts will agree that a Supreme Court reversal for Jencks, holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross, and a man respected by thousands of us for his years of work in this area—that such a reversal is right and necessary and in the best tradition of American legal justice.

JUAN CHACON, President
Local 890, IUMM&SW
Bayard, New Mexico

Editors, *Mainstream*:

I've just picked up the August M&M and read Mr. Bothwell's reply to my criticism of his review of *The Quiet American*. I will not touch on Mr. Montagu's comments but it seems to me two points are rather obvious. First, Mr. Bothwell asks where is the "very definite stand" (against American imperialism) taken by the main character in the book, and then he very neatly answers himself by quoting Mr. Montagu who claims the American agent was killed because of the hero's "sexual vanity" and not for any "reasons of moral compunction." Unless I'm mistaken there is a long scene in which a number of people, including babies are killed as a result of the American agent's use of a bomb resembling a cycle pump, and the Englishman is terribly angry at this mass murder, in fact he fears at first his bed companion is among the victims. I'd hardly call all this merely "sexual vanity," although that is a minor reason why he dislikes the American agent.

Mr. Bothwell complains that, "An heroic fight for national liberation is seen in this novel only in the form of a terrorist act." Of course it would have been a *better* novel if it was written with more understanding and on a bigger scale, but *as is* it's still a good anti-imperialist book. Also let it be pointed out that the war over the was often a series of terrorist acts although I don't think that's the rig phrase.

Mr. Bothwell is right about M Greene's past, but it seems to me t purpose of a review is to urge peo to read or not read the book in qu tion; and no matter whether Gree was vicious before (or will be in t future) *this* book deserves a wide au ence.

PADDY

Editors, *Mainstream*:

If only another novel (Graha Greene's) and an arch, callow revi (Mr. Bothwell's) were involved should have continued to desist fr the Bothwell Controversy. But t violence of the reaction which the l ter incinerated among some of yo readers clearly suggests that a good d

more is involved. The review itself was inconsiderable: it is hard to take seriously a critical assertion which does not bother to suggest that we must make *some* distinction, say, between Herman Wouk (that diligent hack) and John O'Hara; which ascribes the popularity of Wouk and Irwin Shaw to the "critics" rather than to the *reviewers* of the popular press—the last place in the world to expect to find the practice of the critical enterprise. If we were perhaps not quite so ready to damn the seed, breed and generation of the little magazines, we might discover that there (where the "new critics"—those satyrs—lurk) they are able to detect a fraud, too. But Bothwell's review, by a happy inadvertence had the virtue of placing before us—by default, by an abrogation of the critical function—the matter of the nature of literary criticism, in this case its humblest form: the review. Because this matter is of transcending importance to a magazine such as *Mainstream*, I take it as my justification for burdening you with this letter.

Abruptly, I turn to Bothwell's defender, Mr. Chic. (Since many of us are compelled to use fabricated names must this become the occasion for jokes?) For an urban-type character like Chic I find that he relies too much on his country senses. In Bothwell's celebrated annihilation of Greene and all his work Chic sees only an incorporeal velvet glove, neglecting, strangely the mailed fist beneath it. But for all his famous insouciance I was struck most by the implacable politicalness of Bothwell's otherwise perfunctory treatment of the novel: after pointing out that Greene is not one of the Great Masters of the Modern Novel, Bothwell triumphantly reassures the critics of the "opposition": Do not suppose that Greene has betrayed you; he is still yours—and you can have him.

Nobody, either in the City of Man or in the City of God, has suggested for a long time (save on the grounds perhaps of faith and morals) that Greene *is* a Great Master; and if once some impetuous secular priests did so argue, the estimate (really the Judgment) has long since been revised. Must we bury to revise? Yes, in that Golden Arcadia where we are surfeited with great writers.

But instead we live in Rat's Alley; and since we're all there together, it won't do to say as Mr. Chic chicly says (standing beside and slightly behind Bothwell) that Greene is a "bad writer"

when it can only legitimately be said that he is not a great one. Greene is, in fact, a fictionist of considerable achievement (a cautious and provisional adjective, to be sure, but for me the necessary and sufficient ground for according his work relevant and serious attention.) Moreover, he is a man of letters, as anyone who has read his criticism and appreciations knows. And he is an important representative, in his criticism as in his fiction, of Catholic literary aesthetics. I can no more dismiss him on these grounds than I can M. Maritain. (I do not mean, of course, to suggest any equivalence of achievement between the two.) I may dispute his metaphysics but I cannot mer decline the obligation to treat h seriously.

I feel more comfortable, I conf with the *boulevardier's* "bad" than w the ponderously polemical, outrageou final "incorrect," but choosing freel deplore them both: they are equ mindless. And although one is s wryly, with a flicker that is almost times a smile, and the other is claimed gutturally, with the disdain t is more than a threat, I have the f ing that when you look at them clo enough they seem to come together finally to merge.

FREDERICK NOR