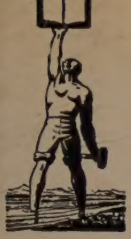



# Mainstream

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# AINTERS AND THE LEFT

The following discussion of the qualities and defects of Left art criticism in the United States comes from a group of California artists. Since it deals for the most part with Sidney Finkelstein's book, *Realism in Art,* we have asked him to comment on their differences with him. His comment will appear in our next issue.—The Editors

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AS A group of progressive painters, we have been concerned for some time with the manner in which the American Left has approached e problem of criteria in criticism. The characteristic trait of that criti-sm—and, we believe, the cause of its shortcomings—has been the placement of aesthetic by political judgments and preconceptions. In-ead of accepting poems and paintings of the past for what they are: nscriptions of the artists' experience in his time, the critic forces the t work into the mold of *his* present-day outlook to see whether it asses" or is found wanting. Usually the latter, for how shall an art ared in the context of a pre-scientific, not to speak of pre-Marxist, orld view not mirror the defects of that intellectual limitation?

In his relation to contemporary art, the critic is equally demanding. aving worked out a version of realism which is usually some variant of turalism subjected to social interpretation, he evaluates the art work cording to its approximation of this ideal, and he then expects the ist to obey a purely ideological imperative. This can only serve to in-pit the artist so that he either paints what he does not see, or worse , looks obediently through the critic's lenses. Through them he be-lds a world of worthy themes and wonders why his brushes cannot do tice to these highly recommended subjects. Why, indeed. They e not his themes, even if they are in no sense a priori excluded from e range of his experience and are even now within the orbit of his derstanding. Unhappily, they are not of his but the critic's choosing d his heart is not in the job of transforming them, of giving them lastic integration," to use the painter's jargon.

Sidney Finkelstein's *Realism in Art,* published in 1954 by Interna-

tional Publishers, remains both in quality and by default, the latest significant example of the Marxist theory of realism in the visual arts. We should therefore like to re-examine some of its principles and method in order to clarify our position with respect to them.

Finkelstein writes in his introduction:

> Realistic art is not simply art that portrays recognizable people and objects from nature. It reveals both the individuality of human beings and their similarity to masses of other human beings who, for all their widely different appearance and background, lead similar lives and face the same problems.

Here, realism and naturalism are differentiated, and the critic proposes to investigate the aesthetic significance of the tie between the individual and the multitude of his dissimilar fellows. But the body of the book does not bear out this promise. Instead, Finkelstein devises a kind of touchstone by which works of art in all societies and cultures are to be tested.

Describing primitive magic paintings of animals, he writes: "The artistic quality of these works lies in their realism, a realism limited, of course, by how much could be known of the real world" (p. 17).

Discussing the development of Egyptian sculpture, he remarks: ". . . even the most powerful realistic works of each age are dated, to a later age." (p. 27.) Again, "These portrayals of scribes, of women making bread, or of officials . . . have a remarkable realism, far above that of the kings. And for that reason they have a remarkable power and beauty." (p. 30.)

Of Greek art we are told that: "It was a limited realism, of course, the realism possible to the times, not showing for example the exploitation of slaves and the revolt of the slaves." (p. 41.)

A quite arbitrary notion of realism is made to pass for an aesthetic principle by which works of art are to be judged. Value is placed on the murals and sculptures to the degree of their correspondence with Finkelstein's preconception.

Would it not have been more fruitful to begin with the art product, the thing itself, to see what factual, formal, conceptual and subjective riches it yields to us, and to feel what emotions it stirs in us even now? Then one can proceed to the historical and ideological evidence. Our specimen should be the visual symbol seen in its own time not evaluated in terms of the struggle in ours. The art object was then created to incarnate the reality (or fantastic reality, the world of magic

or religion) which confronted men or which they believed they faced. It was not made to satisfy us and we cannot judge it as a more or less successful effort to do so.

Finkelstein, however, taxes all cultures with the standards of his ideal realism. He becomes a kind of Darwin of art, seeing its progress as a steady advance onward and upward, from ape to man and from primitive to realist vision, with occasional happy leaps in the right direction. But once we have attained that goal, what is to prevent the standardization of visual reproduction, the emergence of a quite satisfactory formula for expression? Finkelstein's critical approach is based upon an analogy between biological and aesthetic development which we believe does not hold up under investigation, just as any parallel between historical or socio-economic levels and artistic excellence will not bear scrutiny. Particularly when the concept of realism is so closely related to the goal of correspondence.

FINKELSTEIN is, of course, aware of the problem. In his treatment of the artists of the "High Renaissance," he warns that their power should not be estimated narrowly, as skillful representation: "The achievement is not so much toward an 'illusion' to the eye of absolute naturalness, as the consummation of mastery of the human subject in its sensuous realization and power to move the spectator." (p. 73.)

But such assurance is too generalized and does not help the spectator to come to grips with images, concepts and forms that may astonish him until he extends himself to meet the artist's vision half way. And suppose that vision avoids, for reasons of its own, "Human figures . . . recreated with a complete sense of depth and volume. . . ."? Are the expressions of that vision ipso facto diminished in value?

What can one gather from this characterization of Courbet's "Burial at Ornans": "This is Courbet at his greatest, and is genuine realism, embodying profound thinking about society"? Or from this description of Donatello's equestrian statue in Padua: "The general is seen clearly and realistically, unglorified, not especially as evil but a forceful, commanding man of action, and capable also, as the portrait reveals, of great cruelty"? Will the reader understand why this statue is important or why Finkelstein thinks Donatello the "greatest of 15th century sculptors"? The book abounds in such "reading into" and editorializing comment.

Finkelstein is continually looking for work that will fit his conception of realism, at the risk of contradicting himself. On page 62, we are told of Giotto: "Each single figure is fully molded, complete, rounded and expressive in itself." Only to find on the next page: . . . Giotto's

figures, even with their weakness of anatomy. . . ." But this is a minor matter. What is more to the point is that Giotto was in transition midway between Byzantine flat pattern and space (stemming from spiritualized, hieratic conceptions) and humanist-oriented illusionistic painting. His figures were not "fully molded" but rather a mixture of geometric and natural form. Nor did he think in terms of "single figures," but always subordinated the individual subject to the total composition. (Finkelstein continually speaks of "single figures" as though the painting were conceived as a mosaic of units rather than a whole.)

In the remark on Giotto's deficient anatomy one detects once again the assumption that proper anatomical structure is a sine qua non of realist painting. What then of the "un-natural" anatomy of Rubens, Michelangelo, Tintoretto, or any of the mannerist painters? Shall we disapprove of these, or do such considerations really help us estimate their position within their own milieu? Why should we not then bestow the crown of realist art on Norman Rockwell and surrender to the academicians and the Sanity in Art crowd? Finkelstein would logically be forced to assert that the chief trouble with Rockwell was that his gift of natural vision was not sufficiently imbued with "progressive human content."

IN HIS polemic against the abstractionists, Finkelstein minimizes the complexity of the painter's problems. Writing of Giotto, he says: "But there is no such thing in art as an abstract 'science of space' or method of 'special division'," and "His mastery of 'space' is really his mastery of the human subjects and of social relations between people." (p. 62.) In the discussion of Michelangelo, we are told: ". . . . there is no such thing in art as the abstract 'human body,' the 'nude,' the 'torso.' There are people." (p. 78.) That is like saying that because the different parts of the body interact upon one another, there can be no separate study of neurology or endocrinology. If there were no science of space and color relations, the painter would work only by trial and error, a pragmatist of art. Fortunately, there are theories of perspective, planear division, axis projection, and of the golden section, which may be applied most creatively in the complicated craft of picture making. Finkelstein's naturalistic bias crops up throughout his effort to provide us with examples of realism. In a passage on Breughel's later painting, we are informed that his art "seems so natural and convincing . . . because everything he shows has been so well thought out, in terms of what nature and people really are, and never fails to conform to our experience." As a matter of fact, Breughel was a master of abstraction. He rarely painted specific human beings nor concerned him-

self overmuch with facial and anatomical structure. He relied more upon gesture embodied in broad, simplified shapes, depending upon details of costume for the illusion of everyday reality. His people are treated generically and rarely satisfy the conventional requirements of visual accuracy. Reality is there aplenty, but it is not Finkelstein's surface of nature.

Finkelstein's critical methodology also deserves some comment. Three of the seven chapters in the book begin with a quotation from either Marx or Engels. The validity of the quotes per se is not in question, but the common habit of initiating aesthetic discussion with politico-economic insights is a matter of concern to us. Out of the 189 references, 24 are from Marx and Engels. Relatively few of the general sources referred to are primary. The tendency is to move from principles to specific phenomena, from the outer periphery of the art work to the work itself. Such a method seems to us to violate the very materialist principles to which Finkelstein adheres. What ensues is a kind of historical a priorism, in which the painter has taken second place to the scholar who explains him.

In his later chapters Finkelstein does considerable injustice to contemporary and to American art. Throughout his book he assumes a tactical approach according to which the art work is limited in its scope to a one-to-one relationship with the historical moment. The artist's role as a prober of life in its universal aspects is neglected. For example, Finkelstein's sympathetic treatment of an important artist like Winslow Homer is weakened by its scanty account of him *as a painter.* Instead we are given fragments of biographical information about him which any encyclopedia would yield. Political significance is attributed to Homer's genre painting of Negroes ("answering the chauvinism and racism of reaction"); but no evidence is adduced to prove that the critic's understanding of the Negro liberation struggle can be justifiably inserted into Homer's mind. If there is such evidence, it should be given. We should then be in a position to judge whether Homer's painting was succesful, and to what degree, in expressing his social consciousness. But this would involve a discussion of his paintings, not simply a recapitulation of their subject matter.

Conversely, a romantic like Ryder is passed off as "escapist" because "human beings had little place in his art" or because his paintings "indicated a deep emotional anguish, a subjectivism, a mind haunted by fears. . . ." An artist of Ryder's stature deserves more profound criticism or even characterization than this, and a critic should be able to evaluate the weaknesses of Ryder within the painter's own frame

of reference. But Finkelstein sees little value in an artist whose outlook does not come close to the real world as seen and interpreted by him.

IF FINKELSTEIN were more sensitive to milieu, he would perhaps have accorded more understanding treatment to the group of early 20th century European painters known as expressionists: the Germans Beckmann and Nolde, the Austrian Kokoshka, the Norwegian Munch, and the Belgian Ensor among others. He makes little mention of this group, but when he does it is to compare them unfavorably with El Greco: "But El Greco's art, by comparison, has the strength of having been born directly out of the realistic tradition of the Renaissance. It has a greater realistic base." (p. 95.)

How can one judge modern painting by measuring it against some Renaissance ideal? How, in this case, can one compare the content and form of an El Greco, whose vision is that of a religious fantastic reality, with the expression of utterly secular-minded artists protesting the fate of the individual in contemporary society? Blinded by Finkelstein's bias, a spectator would encounter little art of consequence since the Renaissance until he arrived at the Mexican mural movement. The reason such other art escapes Finkelstein is that he is looking not for great artists as they are molded by their social environment, but for figures who transcend every era to meet his expectations of realism.

And what are these expectations, which an artist like Munch, dealing with the universal enough themes of human fear and struggle, sickness, sex and death, apparently does not fulfill as well as do William Glackens, George Bellows, Everett Shinn, Rockwell Kent, Grant Wood and Charles White, to whom Finkelstein gives somewhat more than reserved approval? Does Munch not surpass these in imaginative and formal power? But correspondence with natural vision seems to be a basic requirement of Finkelstein's, and he finds further kinship with the Americans we have mentioned because their thematic material suits him more. He is continually looking for work that "seems so natural and convincing" that it "never fails to conform to our experience."

But the business of art is not just to conform to our experience, to sell us back our own emotions and ideas over a second-hand counter. Among his other activities, the true artist must penetrate his milieu to uncover things not perceived in the course of ordinary and obvious social relations, new to our consciousness and wrought with passion. To do so he must, in Christopher's Caudwell's words, operate "with one foot in the social world and the other in the asocial world." He does not simply allow experience to determine his images; he comes in

the end to dominate the experience with his images. Like the creative thinker, the scientist, he returns to the social world with new conceptions and thereby works to change the society which helped nurture him.

TO REITERATE, Finkelstein's book is typical of the tactical approach which has plagued Left criticism for many years, setting up mutually detrimental attitudes in the audience (intellectuals included) and the artists, especially the younger ones. We propose a re-examination of this approach, so prone to the vulgarization of its demands, in favor of what might be called a strategic view of the complexity of human experience, desire and thought. If the artist must conclude something from this complexity, so must the spectator; but art is long as the saying goes, and its lessons will not be hurried no matter how pressing the need.

# CHAIN GANG DOCUMENT

*JOSEPH BROCK*

Joseph Brock, Mississippi-born Negro, was arrested in Los Angeles in December, 1948 for extradition to the South. His union local, 26 of the ILWU, and many others, including the Civil Rights Congress, came to his aid. In February, 1949, Brock lost his fight against going back to the southern jails from which he had escaped. This year, he finished his term. The story of his life is given below in his own words.—The Editors.

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I WAS born in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Jefferson Davis was born in nearby Natchez—about a hundred years before me—but his spirit was still alive. Education, jobs, medical care, housing for Negroes were primitive. By the time I was eight, my mother, only 27 years old, was dead because we never had the money to pay for the medical care she needed. My brother, 3 and I, were taken in by my Aunt Lizize, who brought us up.

My aunt sent us both to Catholic School. She was "working out," doing housework, to pay for school. When she took sick, there was no more money, and she had to go on relief.

I tried to help by working at whatever I could get—cleaning up, mowing lawns. It wasn't enough to feed us. When I was 15, she suggested that I join the Civilian Conservation Corps. Maybe there, she thought, I could learn a little something that would help me get along. And the CCC paid $30 a month. So I put my age up to 18—the lowest they would take—and joined.

It was an all-colored camp. They taught us a little about agriculture and forestry. The athletic program included boxing and wrestling. I stand six feet, with broad shoulders, and was pretty good at athletics. The way things worked out later, it was a good thing I had the training.

Altogether, because it was so tough to get a job on the outside, I stayed in the camp about two and a half years. When I left, I found a

job doing construtcion work. It lasted about two years and then things began to change around.

I took the little money I'd managed to save up and bought a small truc kto haul wood and coal. I had a little wood and coal yard and bought stuff for resale from a couple of boys. They brought me all kinds of things. I didn't know it was stolen merchandise. The police caught me with the stuff and I was sentenced to four years in prison, to run concurrently.

After I got to prison, they had me booked eight years running consecutively. I knew the judge gave me four years, and I wasn't intending to make it eight. So I ran away to another aunt in Mobile, Alabama. I hoped she would be able to lend me a little money so I could get out of the South and get to California. But she had lots of children and no money, so after a month, I began to ride the freights to get away.

I was on the Alabama-Florida state line when a sheriff picked me up on suspicion. He took me to a justice of the peace, in an old house. The justice was an old man. He asked,

"Boy, what you doing here? What they bring you here for?"

"They just picked me up in the yard," I explained.

"If you've got $50, I'll let you go."

I answered, "If I had $50, I wouldn't be riding on the freights."

The justice looked me over, saw that I was big and husky. "If you've got $25, I'll let you go," he said.

I gave him the same reply and was told, "Then I'll have to send you to the county jail in Pensacola."

He bound me over to the county seat in Pensacola, where they put me in jail without charge. I was there for two months. The deputy sheriff (white) always cussed out the prisoners and hollered at them like we were all dogs. A couple of the guys decided to do something about it, and asked me if I'd be with them. I knew I was already wanted in Mississippi and had nothing to lose in breaking out, so I decided to go with them.

We plotted to take the key away from the deputy sheriff when he came in. He suspected that something was up and began to back out of the door, hollering for help. They grabbed him and put something around his mouth, but he kept hollering.

I knew we had to shut him up, so I hit him in the jaw—just once—and knocked him out. His keys flew all over the floor. I tried to find the one that would let us out, but before I could get the right key, the police and forest police came running. We fought for our freedom for

half an hour before they conquered us and carried us downstairs to the sheriff's office for questioning.

They questioned us one at a time to find out who was the leader. Because I was the biggest and the one who slugged the sheriff, the whole blame was laid at my door.

The sheriff told me, "I should throw you off in the bay and get rid of you!" But the other prisoners lived there, so I guess he figured they would get somebody to protest if he did throw me in the bay. He ended by telling the deputy sheriff to take me back upstairs and give me a good whipping.

He had one of those big old straps, about eight feet long and about nine inches wide. Every time he raised it to use it on me, I would grab it. They got hot with me for that and three or four of them jumped me. While we were tussling, one of them used a little penknife and got me around the right eye. The blood began to pour out and they stopped. Somebody said, "You better lock this guy up before you kill him!"

They locked me in solitary confinement, took out the mattress, blankets and stuff and turned the hose on me. I stayed in there—a cell about twelve by eight feet—for eighteen days, on bread and water. When I took sick, they took me out and brought me to see the judge.

The judge set my trial date, along with the two guys who tried to break out with me. The judge gave one two years, one three years and me five.

After four or five days in the county jail, they carried me to the state penitentiary in Raiford, Florida. The medical examiners said I was fit for the road gang, so I was sent to work throwing dirt on the shoulders of the road. After two months, I saw my chance and broke away. They caught me fast, carried me back and put me in solitary for fifteen days. When I got out, they put chains around my legs.

After about 18 months, the white driver on the road gang told me he'd take the chains off if I'd promise not to run. I wouldn't make any such promise, but he took the chains off.

I RAN again. They put the dogs behind me, with a colored convict to run them. I tried every trick I knew—turning over logs, running in streams of water, pepper in my shoes, all the methods I had learned —to get rid of the dogs. But they finally caught up with me.

I got behind a tree to get away from the "big boy." We ran each other and I knew I had to jump him to keep him from catching me. He was a pretty big fellow, almost as big as I, and I knew I'd have to hurt him in order to get away. So I jumped him and pinned him to

the ground. Holding him down, I said,

"I could break your neck if I want to, but I don't believe in that kind of life. I believe in live and let live. We're both colored. Let me go on my way and don't turn me in, and I'll let you go."

He could see it my way, so I let him go. He went back with the dogs, and I don't believe he told them anything about it. I kept going —and this time the white guards came after me with the bloodhounds. They were harder to get away from. I swam the river and they lost me.

Traveling day and night, swimming, riding the freights, I found myself back in Alabama and stopped again in Mobile to rest at my aunt's home.

My uncle gave me a few dollars—all he could space—to help me get away. I was being very careful, because now I was on the run from two states. A young man about my own age offered to sell me a bike. I thought the bike would help me get to where I could catch a train for California, and paid him $10 for it. A sheriff stopped me, said the bike was stolen, and put me in jail on a charge of stealing. A colored family was brought to the jail, where they identified the bike. I told them how I came to buy it, and what I had paid for it, and they said that since they had their property back, they didn't want anything done to me.

No charges were pressed—but the judge sentenced me to ten years.

When he asked me if I had any statement to make, I said I wasn't guilty—that I had never stolen anything. But he replied, "Well, regardless of that, I have it here in black and white that you signed a confession. I'm going to give you ten years in the state penitentiary, and if you want, you can give it back to me."

"Judge, I'm going to do my best," I said.

"Take him out!" said the judge.

In another week I was in another road camp, with ten years there ahead of me. But I knew I hadn't signed a confession. I knew I was innocent. So I did what I told that judge I would do. I ran away again —and this time the freights got me to California and freedom.

I had an aunt and uncle living in Los Angeles and went straight to them, believing that at last I was free of the land of prison and jim crow. I changed my name, found a job, joined the ILWU, Local 26—and thought that now I could make the kind of life for myself that I'd always wanted.

For five years it looked as though I would be successful. All the nationalities were among the workers in my shop, and they voted me in for chief steward. Not many of the shop workers were in the union at first—only about fifty percent. I felt that the union could help us

and we needed the union, so I went to the workers who were not in it and tried to get them to understand. After a while, it was 97 per cent of the shop in the union. I missed two or three of them. I wanted to get them all in, but I guess I didn't try hard enough.

I'd been in Los Angeles for about three and a half years when I met a young, pretty girl and married her. We found a little apartment and fixed it up nice, and for a year and a half we were happy.

THEN one day, the Los Angeles police stopped me. They had pictures of me from the south, and said I was wanted by three southern states.

There I was, back in jail again. The news came as a blow to my wife. She was only 23, and I had never told her about my past. When she came to see me in jail the first time, I told her why I was there, and that it was true I was wanted. She was so shocked, she fainted.

The next day she went to the union and told them my story—and the union went to the Civil Rights Congress. The firm I worked for told my wife I was a good worker and they thought I was honest. They turned my case over to their company lawyer and gave my wife a hundred dollars toward my defense. The lawyer got me out on bond, and the CRC put up my bail.

Marguerite Robinson, a very active little Negro woman, was head of the CRC. She took my wife and me around to parties and meetings to tell people about my case so they'd help me fight against extradition. Margie told me that before it was over, she'd fight my case to the Supreme Court.

I never saw folks like those before. They were all nationalities—and they wrote thousands of letters to the government. They came to meet me at San Francisco and a lot of them went to the governor with me to ask him not to extradite me to the South.

The only one who got in to see the governor was my lawyer. But I felt that all these people were on my side and were trying to help me in every way they could.

I did get a stay for two months. The CRC carried my case to the Circuit Court of California, and when they turned it down, Mrs. Robinson brought it to the California District of the Supreme Court.

The District Attorney walked into that courtroom carrying a stack of books. My attorney told the Court that if I were sent back to the South, it would mean sure death for me after the way I'd been treated before.

The District Justice leaned down from the bench and told my law-

yer that he mustn't talk that way or the Court would fine him. I knew then, I didn't stand a chance.

I walked out of the Court with Los Angeles detectives who turned me over to the waiting officer from Alabama. "You better take this guy back to Alabama right away because if you don't, they'll have something else cooked up around here to keep him out," they told the officer.

That day, I kissed my crying wife good-bye and went back to Alabama. As soon as the train crossed the Mason-Dixon line, I could feel that I was in the South again. The officer who had me in charge made that clear.

I was sent right to solitary confinement. They didn't have a cell for solitary, but they put me in the "condemned cell" where men wait to be electrocuted. I spent six months in that cell.

During that time, I had my first heart attack. When I could write, I managed to get a letter smuggled out to Margie Robinson. The CRC sent me a wire asking whether I was getting proper medical care. The prison authorities held it for two days, finally brought it to me so crumpled up, I could see they didn't want to give it to me.

After the got the prison fixed up, they transferred me to a solitary cell called "little Alcatraz." I was allowed no books except a Bible, and given only one meal a day. I was kept there three months, and during that time, I read the Bible all the way through.

Then the director came to see me. He said I was getting a lot of mail from different places—New York, Los Angeles and others—and it looked like I was getting a lot of publicity. So he was going to keep me in solitary until he got ready to turn me out. I knew I'd have to take some step to get myself out of solitary, and wrote to Margie Robinson about what was happening.

But before my letter got to Margie, the warden had me turned out of solitary. Not long afterward a white woman from CRC came to Montgomery, got a colored woman lawyer, and together they came to visit me. When I was allowed to talk with them, I told them about my nine months in solitary. They demanded an explanation from the warden, who just brushed them off. But when he told them I had to make good to get out on parole, I knew my friends' support was helping me.

I specially understood the value of my friends now, because from my cell in solitary, I could see many men walk their last mile to the electric chair for crimes that did not deserve the death penalty.

For myself, I had one real disappointment. The thought that I faced 23 years in prison was too much for my wife. While all the others were helping me, she had stopped writing to me after the first month.

I had ten years to serve in the Alabama Prison—but they released me on parole at the end of three years and seven months. Part of that, I think was due to the pressure of my friends on the outside and part to my good behavior.

I tried to put my time to good use. At first, I had worked in the warehouse, but the cotton lint was hard on my health and I asked for another job. They transferred me to a job in the library. There, I got a chance to read and study for myself, and to teach the other prisoners to read and write.

When I was released on parole, I knew I was headed for Mississippi, which would be, if anything, worse. I asked a white prisoner to write a recommendation for me, and the warden, the chaplain and the deputy-warden all signed it. I took that recommendation with me to the prison at Parchman, Mississippi, and gave it to the superintendent there.

For the first two or three months it wasn't too bad, in spite of the fact that I worked at the road camp. But I was writing to my friends in Los Angeles, and they were sending me books, letters and packages of canned food. The sergeant didn't like that and started to make it tough for me. I only got one of all the books they sent, and then he told me to write and "tell those people not to send any more packages."

The sergeant assigned a white driver to keep after me. We were hoeing cotton and corn—and the driver said everything I did was wrong. I could see that he wasn't picking on any of the others the way he did on me, and asked him why he was picking on me. He told me the truth: the sergeant had told him to drive me.

THE day came when I was caught between the sergeant's orders and the driver's. No matter what I did was wrong. So I wrote to my friends in Los Angeles and they sent a lawyer.

I was not allowed to talk to the lawyer without the sergeant listening to every word, so I played it cool and didn't say too much. The lawyer didn't seem to understand. When he left, the sergeant called me in and said,

"Remember that cow we buried out in back? I could kill you and put you down beside that cow and they wouldn't know nothin' about it." He added he had "something set up for me" for sending for the lawyer.

The "something" was a whipping. When they whip prisoners, the sergeant, director, chaplan and educational director come down and have a feast as if it was a ceremony. Then, one by one, they order the prisoners to strip and stretch out on the concrete floor. They use a strap about

nine feet long and what seemed like more than a foot wide. The "recommendation" for each prisoner tells how many lashes to give him.

They saved me for the last of five, and I had to stand by and watch the other prisoners whipped and listen to them holler and beg. I made up my mind they weren't going to do that to me.

When I refused to strip, they came at me. I hit at the trusties, beat up a couple of them, and the sergeant said, "If you can't get him down, I'll shoot him down."

They all came in at me and we wrestled for about an hour. The sergeant used the whip, but he was catching more of the trusties than me with it. In the end, I was ordered back to the cells.

The sergeant told me I was trying to be hard-boiled because I had a lot of friends back in California, but he "had something cooked up for me." That was solitary—again, a place called "Alcatraz."

But I wasn't sent there because I had made friends with one of the other prisoners who was a "houseboy" in the sergeant's house. The sergeant's wife read my mail and discussed me with this "houseboy," who told her that I was a good guy who was only trying to be free again. She must have talked to her husband about me—and he evidently went along with her, because after that it was easier.

While he let up on me, he turned to making it harder for the other colored prisoners. Saturday was supposed to be the day of slacking off a little, taking it a little easier. Instead, he drove them harder than ever on Saturday, so they never got any rest.

At the end of two years and eight months, the sergeant gave me a choice of surrendering myself to Florida or fighting my Florida case. I knew my lawyer had been fighting my Florida case all along—and my friends in Los Angeles wrote that they had paid the lawyer $500 to fight it. So the sergeant's offer sounded like a trick. I signed the paper to go to Florida, hoping that I'd get there to find myself free.

But the lawyer had only succeeded in getting my state "good time" back. I had a year and nine months ahead of me in the prison at Raiford. During that time, they did everything imaginable to keep me there.

Because the doctor had said I had a weak heart, they sent me to a farm camp instead of a road camp. When the backwater from the river runs up on the cornfields, the snakes come with it. We'd be out there pulling corn in the midst of the rattlesnakes. I refused to work there, with the rattlesnakes and sandy spurs—little brown stickers that grow neckhigh and jab into a man's flesh and can't be pulled out.

To punish me for refusing, they put me in "the box." This is an iron and cement cell about five by three feet, constructed so that the

prisoner can't sit up or stand upright. Food in this cell is two biscuits and some water for the day.

I was kept in "the box" nine days, but I still wouldn't give in and agree to work among the snakes. So they put me on the construction gang building a hospital.

Things were going along bearably until about a month before I was supposed to get out. Then I caught a heavy cold. I asked the assistant captain to let me see the doctor, and was told the doctor only came on Monday and Friday. This was Thursday. The next day, as the issistant captain had told me to do, I stayed in my cell to see the doctor.

When I didn't report for work, the assistant captain called me out and said it was a lie—that he had never told me to wait for the doctor. He was going to send me to "the box" instead.

We had a little row and he went for his gun. Some of the trusties advised me that I didn't have much more time to go and it was better to go to "the box" quietly than get shot down.

It was February and freezing cold. They put me in that iron and cement box without a blanket. The cold came in the crack at the door and the opening at the top until I thought I would freeze to death. And I still had that heavy cold.

Finally they gave me half a blanket. Between the intense cold, the two-biscuits-and-water diet, plus my own cold, I didn't know if I'd get out of there alive.

They had me in there for ten days. On the last day, I knew the doctor was coming by, and if I moved fast to get a little warmer, it would start my heart pumping real fast. I jumped up and down just before the doctor got there, and when he examined me, he could hear that pumping in his stethescope. I told him I didn't think I could make it—and he ordered them to let me out.

I was due to go free—but they had to find one more dirty trick to hold me. Because I had resisted the box—they added another week to my time!

Finally, they turned me over to my lawyer. In order to get me out of that Florida prison, he had to tell them that he was taking me back to the prison in Birmingham, Alabama.

We did go to Birmingham. There, he wired my friends in Los Angeles—and put me on a plane.

The people who had stood by me and fought for me all those years were waiting to greet me. And thanks to my union, I'm back in my old job, too.

Now I want to start life all over again.

# THE SKEPTIC IN SOVIET FICTION

*RALPH PARKER*

*Moscow*

WHEN Andrei Arefeyev, the young hero of Alexander Chakovsky's novel *A Year of Life,* arrived at a construction site in the Soviet Arctic on his first assignment after graduating at a Moscow mining college he took a certain satisfaction in the fact that he was about to tackle a difficult job. Though he hesitated to use the word he admitted to himself that there was something "romantic" in the appeal of work in the arduous remote conditions of the Far North. As a schoolboy his favorite reading had been about "strong-willed, experienced people who knew how to conquer people's hearts"—people like Furmanov's commissar Klichkov in *Revolt,* of Korchagin, the hero of Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered,* or the officer heroes of war books who found the words which established their authority over people and made people love them. This tendency of hero worship was mingled with a suspicion that life in the Soviet Union today does not offer the same opportunities for romantic heroism as earlier stages in the country's history. The revolution, the civil war, the first five-year plan, the Great Patriotic War—"and all without me" he would reflect ruefully.

It was natural that in this state of mind the young tunnel builder should have been immediately dazzled by the personality of Kramov, a middle-aged, hard-bitten engineer with a brilliant war record, now

working on the opposite side of the mountain. Especially as Kramov generously shared his experience with him, was always at hand to help him out of his initial difficulties and lectured him paternally about the best way of handling his workmen—a motley collection of old pioneers, sons of ex-kulaks who had formerly been exiled to those parts, and tough young men who had gone North in search of high wages after the war.

"The figure of Kramov stood before me at its full stature," Andrei wrote after that first meeting with his opposite number, "I imagined him in uniform. . . . I saw him among soldiers, saw the way they listened to his orders, saw how he led them into battle, into the attack. . . . I did not know for what feat he had been decorated but I knew it must have been something brave, something heroic. . . ."

" 'That's what a friend, an older comrade, a teacher ought to be,' I said to myself. 'That's the sort one wants to copy, someone you'd do anything for'."

Andrei has not been working long on his sector before he has his first clash with the management. Pending the arrival of machines the men had been put on to futile, arduous, morale-lowering jobs. "I consider your attitude disgraceful," Andrei protests to a representative of the management. "You're a man without any feelings. For you people aren't people at all, they're just working hands, you want to kill their respect for work, to make them hate the tunnel from the start."

And as Andrei gained confidence and the tunnel was driven deeper into the mountain he took up the question of his workers' welfare with increasing energy. His struggle to provide them with decent housing brings him into conflict with local Soviet and Party organizations. There he finds a cold indifference to the most elementary needs of his men. He is told that the plan does not allow for such "luxuries"—and that the plan is sacrosanct.

"There's no need to mope," the regional Party Secretary consoles him. "A Communist must fight if he considers himself in the right."

"I felt really angry," Andrei tells us. "I felt like shouting at the Secretary: 'Just come and sit in our barrack.' But I contained myself. I said: 'Fight, you say. Fight for what? So that people should live like human beings. Can't even that be decided without fighting? Surely one doesn't need to expend so much effort over a thing like that? Surely the need to help these people is obvious. People are living in impermissible conditions. What is your plan compared with that?' "

It was after this bitter experience that Andrei caught his first glimpse into Kramov's true nature. The older man describes Andrei's concern

for his workers' welfare as sheer demagogy. One should realize that there are only two ways of dealing with the "special" sort of workers to be found in the North—by threatening those with murky pasts and by cajoling those who are out only for big money. Besides, there is the question of vigilance.

"Stop that!" cried Andrei. "You're debasing the value of a great revolutionary word when you talk that way about vigilance. Be vigilant, but drop your big stick. Haven't you read our government's decision on the amnesty? Even former criminals are being pardoned. You say these people are the children of kulaks. Who gave you the right to use the big stick over them, to blackmail them with the sins of their fathers?"

To this Kramov replies with a phrase that opens Andrei's eyes once and for all. "Our life is a struggle," he says, "and the way of reaching our great and very humane ends cannot always be a humane one."

As the story develops much comes to light that reveals Kramov as an adventurer, a careerist, cynical in his attitude towards his subordinates, a man who takes criminal risks to attain success in production.

The author, Chakovsky, has expanded his ideas on this "negative character" in a discussion: "I wanted to show that at a certain stage of its development Soviet society produced negative characters who were an organic part of that society. I do not regard Kramov the careerist, the manager divorced from the people, the man who merely pretends to have the welfare of his workers at heart but is in fact exploiting them for his own advantage—I do not regard him as a 'remnant of the past.' Our society passed through a stage when the state could not meet the most elementary demands of the people. There was good reason for this —we had to have the A- and the H-bomb, we had to build up an air force to defend ourselves. Our leaders were fully justified in imposing austerity on our people during that period. But how could they explain that to the people? What people, if given a free democratic choice, would choose the H-bomb and jet aircraft instead of housing and clothes?

"But though the nation's leaders acted with the best intentions there were others who speculated on the austerity policy, men who talked of the sanctity of the plan, of the production before everything else, for their own personal interests, bureaucrats and heartless managers who build their own careers on the neglect of the people. Yes, they were an organic part of our life in those days now past."

Andrei Arefeyev's awakening to the hard truth is a bitter experience. Addressing an old Communist worker at his sector, he says: "Tell me, as an old Communist, a worker, a representative of the ruling class, how

could you and your comrades permit bureaucracy and complacency to strike such deep roots? Why didn't you stop the flood of high-flown phrases that deafened us? I have read the Central Committee decisions about agriculture and seen how we were deceived in the past by newspapers, novels, poems—how they stunned us with their percentages, their acreages and weights at a time when the real situation was quite different, worse, ten times worse. Concern for human happiness is the law of socialism but Kramov and that Party Secretary and the rest of them—they're not concerned with human happiness. Yet they're the ones in power, they rule us. . . . How could you let all that happen?"

The old worker replies thoughtfully: "You ask what we were doing all those years? Well, I'll tell you. We were working. Working so that you could grow up and study."

"I know all that," Andrei replies roughly. "Everyone worked. But where did it get you?"

These words sting the old worker to anger. "You puppy," he cries. "Are you asking me to account for my life to you? We swept away the tsar, we smashed the old world, we built factories and collective farms. We bled to death in the war to preserve all that for you. And just because you've seen a few live bureaucrats you're letting them blot all that out of your sight."

The conflict between Andrei Arefeyev and Kramov reaches its climax at a Party meeting. Not without difficulty Kramov is exposed and Andrei's attitude approved, and the end of this interesting and thought-provoking novel sees the young hero with many of the illusions he had brought with him to the North shattered. No longer does he measure himself against the heroes of literature; the paternal figures of a previous stage of Soviet development have lost their glamor; life is a seamier business than he had ever dreamed possible at college ("Maybe there had been something untrue in those newspapers . . . here, in real life, everything's quite different"). But among those plain people who had kept quiet in the past ("We were working"), but who have now become voluble in their criticism of careerists and cold-hearted bureaucrats, Andrei has found new friends, new allies in his struggle to build a truly socialist society, a society in which the needs of the people come first, where the plan exists for man, not man for the plan, and where to quote the author of this novel, "the leaders of our state can take their people into their confidence."

As a hero of his times Andrei Arefeyev cuts a less dashing figure than some of his predecessors. But he has the advantage of being convincing to the questing but suspicious youth of contemporary Russia.

# HOW WE KNOW

*BARROWS DUNHAM*

EVERY system of sentences which claims to be a science assumes a theory of knowledge. The system appears as logically sound, and the sentences as demonstrably true. Consequently, a rule is assumed, or a set of rules, by which the system is kept free of inconsistency and is enabled to contain true sentences and only true sentences. In addition, there will be methods for applying the rules. The description of all these rules and methods is a theory of knowledge.

We are to discuss in these pages the theory of knowledge which Marx and Engels developed along with their account of past history and present society. The total labor was so shared that Engels did most of the formal philosophizing and Marx treated the subject in a series of *obiter dicta,* like the *Theses on Feuerbach.*

After Marxism entered the area of high politics, where all attempts to dislodge it have only implanted it deeper, there developed a tradition of having the great leaders comment upon philosophy in a series of set pieces, somewhat in the way British statesmen of the nineteenth century interspersed their political labors with treatises on religion or literature.

## *SCIENCE AND AFFAIRS*

THE first of these works was Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* written during the enforced leisure of a bitterly oppressed time. One favor the police confer when they are interrupting political activity is that they give everyone a chance to study, to understand, and to resolve. Lenin, thus turning to philosophy in 1908, was able to show, polemically rather than academically, that theories of knowledge, bland as they may seem, have nevertheless political effects, and that one

such theory in particular, British empiricism, had very reactionary political effects.

Since that time, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung have given summary accounts of Marxist philosophy, both during the late 1930's. Stalin's appears as Chapter IV of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union;* Mao's is a series of lectures entitled, *On Contradiction.* It may well be the case that other Marxist leaders have made similar contributions; but my knowledge of the field is by no means complete, and such works, if they exist, are not known to me.

The tradition of applying Marxist philosophy to natural science issued from Engels himself—for example, in his brilliant guess, *circa* 1860, that matter and energy are identical. In our day the tradition continues in the work of Haldane and Bernal in England and Prenant in France (if we confine ourselves to the "West"). There is plenty of scientific evidence in America for the same philosophical principles; but all such inferences, being incompatible with employment, are slow to be made.

It is hopeful, nevertheless, and even exciting that there should be a philosophy which mixes so well with science and with affairs. The ancient dream revives that government may grow rational and science humane. Moreover, there are riches in this philosophy still unexplored despite the various applications, and capable of a *magna instauratio scientiarum* as brilliant as Bacon's sought to be.

For example, contemporary logic in Europe and America (the logic that descends from Whitehead and Russell's *Principia Mathematica,* 1910-1913) is well known to be hemmed round with paradoxes, though, within, it is wonderfully economical and clear. Suppose it turns out to be the case that dialectics, which is (as one may say) the very logic of paradox, explains how these particular paradoxes came to be. Then all the sentences in *Principia* or in derivative works would be seen to be theorems in a new system, to which dialectics supplies the postulates. Logic of the socialist epoch would then encompass and refine logic of the bourgeois epoch, even as this had in its time done with the medieval.

Such discussions await men who have greater acquaintance and acumen than I. Instead, I turn to the present task of stating and explaining the theory itself—with, however, one caution. Beyond the question of what the theory asserts, there is the further and more important question whether the assertions of the theory are true. I must, therefore, say at once that their truth does not in the least depend upon a connection with any party or other organized group, or upon any authority whatever, with or without police power. Their truth depends solely upon their ability to explicate the puzzles of scientific method, to describe and shape

successful social action for the world's multitudes, and to display, as a crowning merit, the Cartesian charm of needing only to be seen to be believed.

He who would write of Marxism, in any of its themes, must write not as mere partisan (for his fidelity is to truth) nor yet as mere non-partisan( for he must hope to rectify the world). He belongs, even when protesting, to an historical movement which even enemies cannot resist; and his duty will have been done, his glory achieved, if he helps it reach its end with fewer sins and errors than otherwise it might. For the theory has this peculiarity, that, although even in skilled hands it sometimes falters and does harm, nevertheless, without it, not even the kindest humanitarian can succeed.

## *HUMAN POWER AND THE OTHERNESS OF THINGS*

THE function of a theory of knowledge is to tell us when we know and when we don't know. So great are the risks of lack-knowledge that the second of these insights is as important as the first. There can be, for example, no correcting of social abuses, if their nature and causes are in fact unknown although thought to be known. There is no correcting of inward and personal ills, if we remain ignorant of our motives while supposing them perfectly understood. The knowledge of ignorance is the beginning of wisdom.

Knowledge, the act of knowing, occurs when truth and belief unite. That is to say, if I believe a certain sentence to be true, and that sentence is in fact true, then I do really have knowledge. However, the truth of the sentence does not in the least issue from my belief that it is true. I can believe a sentence to be true when it is in fact false, and I can believe it false when it is in fact true. I can believe that there is money in my pocket when in fact no money is there, and I can believe that there is no money in my pocket at a moment when in fact there *is* some there. That is what we call being mistaken.

Evidently the conditions which make a sentence true or false are significantly different from those which make a sentence believed or disbelieved. The reason seems plain. Belief is a poise of the body; it is action latent or about to be begun. If I believe there is money in my pocket, I may reach in to take it out, or I may without any overt action "contemplate" it as an agreeable assurance of purchasing power.

This psychology, indeed the sheer physiology, of belief will appear if we take a peculiarly baffling sort of sentence, much discussed in recent theory: "The present emperor of China is sick." The sentence seems

wholly intelligible; yet its subject, the present emperor of China, does not exist. When sense can it make to say that a non-existent person is sick?

Nevertheless, there is surely some kind of meaning in the sentence. The words and their structural arrangement go right on signalling though the subject isn't there, just as warning lights along a railway might signal though in fact no danger lay ahead. The signals evoke their established responses, the usual bodily poise. If the poise were to pass over into action, I might go exploring the old imperial palace in Peking, only to find it now a public park without an emperor.

Belief, then, is a poise of the body. It seems clear, however, that a poise of the body cannot of itself make a sentence true. If it could, it would have to be a poise capable of producing all the phenomena which sentences, in their grand infinity, describe. There is no such poise of a human body, certainly—nor, I should imagine, of a divine. The event is too incredible even to be miraculous.

What belief does do is to prepare the body for acting in a certain expected state of affairs. If I believe the money to be in my pocket, I am ready to put my hand in and take the money out. But if the money is *not* in my pocket, the action is defeated, and my body, finding the world not quite as expected, recoils into a different posture. It has learned, for the thousandth time, that it cannot make a sentence true simply by believing it to be so, and that, accordingly, practice refutes pragmatism.

What, then, does make a sentence true? Well, to use an old word much criticized but difficult to improve upon, "correspondence" between the sentence and the fact.

Let us try to sharpen this a little. A sentence is a group of symbols, usually but not necessarily words, which among the users of a language, directs attention and expectancy towards a certain state of affairs. If the state of affairs is what the sentence asserts it to be, then the sentence *is* true; if the state of affairs is not what the sentence asserts it to be, then the sentence is false. To revive our example: if there *is* money in my pocket, then the sentence "there is money in my pocket," is true; if there is *no* money in my pocket, then the sentence is false. In the one case it corresponds, in the other it doesn't.

Now, ordinarily a sentence refers to (that is, directs attention to) something other than itself, just as the sentence we have been discussing is not the money or the pocket or the money's being in the pocket.* The

* There are, of course, sentences which refer to themselves, *e.g.*, "The sentence you are now reading is printed in black type." These are a fertile source of paradox; but although they constitute exceptions to what we say here, they do not require alteration in it.

sentence and the fact are independent of each other and can exist without each other. The earth didn't have to wait for Galileo's famous announcement in order to rotate on its axis, and it rotated there before, during, and after his recantation of the view.

Events, whether they are states of affairs or the sentences which describe them, have their own nature, and derivation. They must be accepted as they are, and they cannot by an act of fancy be made something else. The tiger in your path is a tiger. You may wish he were not a tiger; you may wish he were a mere house cat, and roseate imagination may depict him so. But you will suffer cruelly if you treat him so.

This is all the more foolish, since, by taking him for what he is, you may escape harm. The behavioral differences between tigers and house cats will determine what you will do on behalf of safety. You survive by accepting the fact in order to change it. "Nature to be commanded must be obeyed," said Francis Bacon in his aphoristic way, "and that which in contemplation is as the cause is in operation as the rule."

As nature in general, so human nature in particular. It is idle to say that one "ought not" to have the feelings which, in the given context of personal history, one inevitably has. If the feelings are harmful, they can be removed by a study of their origins; but no mere imperative can erase them.

Again: it is idle to attempt, in a given historical moment, a programme which the relation of social forces is such as to defeat; and it is likewise idle to attempt defeat of a programme which the relation of social forces powerfully supports. For example, the present epoch favors the rise of once colonial peoples to nationhood and self-dependence. Consequently, efforts to maintain colonialism are in the nature more of sick desire than of successful policy.

Things are what they are, then; and they are what they are because they have the history they have. Upon accomplished history knowledge can make no alteration. The act of knowing, performed by the human body, affects the thing known in just two ways: it adds to it the further fact of being known, and it prepares it, so to say, for action which the knower may undertake. The object in my hand, being known to be a pen, is thereupon used to convey upon paper the sentences I wish to write. Or, to take a far grander illustration, the nature of our time, being known (by some statesmen, anyway) to be what it is, is seized to the advantage of national liberation.

The world, known or unknown, is largely independent of any knower just because there are so many respects in which it has influenced him and so few respects in which he has influenced it. He has made some tools and products, begotten various children, worn tracks hither and thither across the earth's surface; he has, as we academically say, altered his environment. But what had he to do with the origin of heavens, with the fireballs of uttermost space, with the buried petrifications of earth's ancient crust, with the vast calamitous reptilia of the mesozoic age, or with the parental egg and sperm which, by the proliferation of cells into a brain, made him able to know at all?

The knower made none of these things, but, on the contrary with infinite subtlety and an aloof cosmic love, they made him. Their majesty, their remoteness in space and time, their slipping from reach on time's irreversible flow—such attributes give us, if we pause to be poets, the feeling of awe, and if we stay to be scientists, a wholesome respect for the otherness of things.

Yet, with this, there is to be a respect no less wholesome for ourselves and for human powers. We have done, and can do, wonders—of which, I suppose, the making all men secure and happy would be the most remarkable. Within these last few months American scientists have reported the transmuting of elements (of carbon, specifically, into helium) and the reproduction (within a test-tube, to be sure) of such events as primordially filled the firmament with stars. The otherness of things yields to our shaping, while at the same time it sets the conditions under which shaping can occur.

All this is what I understand Marxists to mean, or to imply, when they say, a little lamely perhaps, that "nature is primary and consciousness secondary." This I understand them to mean by the word "materialism," a term which, in its ethical signification, becomes an epithet of abuse. My old teacher, Warner Fite, who liked to help disreputable persons and disreputable ideas, once said that most people think a materialist is a man who keeps a mistress and gets drunk on Saturday nights. Alas, mere philosophical materialism has much less the air of holiday: it is, rather, the sober view, somewhat dry and somewhat terrifying, that space and time delimit the only universe there is, and that science is the describer of it.

In this view, cognition is an act by which a human body knows other bodies and their relations. The human *body* can do it; there doesn't need to be a human "mind." Indeed, the survival of the term is one of the atavistic burdens a writer still must carry. It is atavistic because it looks back towards an old supernatural entity, the "soul." It is a burden, because it has made cognition almost unexplainable.

For example, on the materialist view, the explanation of vision will be found in optics and physiology. There is nothing intrinsically obscure in the fact of light rays from an object stimulating a human eye, and nothing is irremediably there to interrupt the process. But if this event is given a traditional reading, which I believe to be figurative and not factual, then the knower will be a mental or spiritual entity who has states of consciousness, and into these states comes colors, sounds, tastes, odors, and textures *apparently* from a source "outside" the consciousness, the mind, the spirit, the self.

One's first impression is that consciousness is a receiver, or perhaps just a receptacle; things, at any rate, come into it. But, next moment, one realizes that the knower himself is inside the receptacle, and never has contact with an outside. The sides of his bowl, the walls of his well, prevent his knowing whether there is an outside, or, if there is, whether anything is in it. He becomes at least a sceptic, and perhaps, a pessimist, on the grand metaphysical question whether "anything is there."

And if I may, in the profusion of metaphor which this view permits, adopt a favorite image of western publicists, I should say that consciousness is a painted curtain concealing not only a world beyond, but concealing also the evidence of such a world. The pulling down of curtains being now approved and advocated, I recommend this curtain likewise to the vigor of such advocates. When the painted curtain is down, we shall be back in the world again, body to body, where matter is energy we can usefully release, and energy is matter we can cheerfully congeal. Then, though I hope we'll have a pleasanter name for it, we shall be materialists, and make our salvation together.

## *THE PREVALENCE OF DOUBT*

SUCH is the materialist part of dialectical materialism; the assertion, namely, that the world which gets known is prior to, and largely independent of, the men who know it; that the world, to be controlled technologically, must be taken as it historically is, and that its composition is adequately defined by the concepts of matter and energy, with no need for such other concepts as spirit or soul.

These clauses indicate in part the relation of the knower to the known, and suggest what will probably he the primitive terms (i.e.,

matter and energy) in a scientific account of the world. But they leave us far short of the assurance we most want. They do not, that is to say, tell the knower how he knows his knowledge and why he knows it.

No fact of human experience can be more familiar than our being (as we say) sometimes right and sometimes wrong in our assertions. I walk down a street and see in the distance a dim recognizable figure. "Hello, Richard," I call. But it is not Richard, nor anyone else I know, as I perceive on looking closer. Just seeing wasn't enough; evidently there is some sort of rule (by which, incidentally, we detect mirages) that *near* observation is a powerfully confirming act.

Again, Warner Fite (I have already shown that he lives in me still, though my views would sadden him) used to tell of his wife that she was laggard about making trains. "The train will be late," she said on one occasion when his anxiety was particularly keen. The train *was* late, and she made it. "I knew it would be late," she called from the open window, "I knew it. Goodbye."

Did she know it? Her assertion was, "The train will be late." The train was late, and consequently the assertion was true. But I think we all see that, without information direct from the railroad (which in fact she did not have), she did not and could not know that the train would be late. But her boast, which coincidence made victorious, probably outlasts the husband's soberer scepticism.

It seems, then, that we can be pretty sure of two things anyway: (1) that we are sometimes right and sometimes wrong, and (2) that we are sometimes right without knowing we are right and sometimes wrong without knowing we are wrong. The case would be different if we were in possession of some explicit rule of inference which would tell us what sentences are true and what false. *Then* we would know when we were right and when we were wrong, and, not being epistemologically perverse, we would assert solely the true ones. Evidently there is such a rule, since there is such a difference. But equally evidently, we still don't know the rule in such a way as to state it unequivocally.

This sad condition is one of history's little jokes on us. We deserve the joke, because in our development as social animals, we have allowed so many absurd relations to exist among us. One of these absurd relations was chattel slavery, the characteristic social structure of ancient times. The men who owned the slaves had at their direction just so many human machines, and they paid little attention to developing other mechanical devices. They were content, for example, to propel ships by borrowing the energy of winds or by massing the collective energy of oarsmen, and they left the steamship to the inventors of a far later age.

The slave system, that is to say, put no special value on technological knowledge—the knowledge which enables us to make machines and get a lot of our work done by them. *This* sort of knowledge is got by closely watching how things happen, and perhaps especially by manipulating the world in those various ways we call experiments. Now, as we painfully know, all observations are at least a little inaccurate, and some observations are grossly so. Experiments are always slightly vitiated by having predetermined their results, and in any event they may get misinterpreted. Nevertheless, we do make physical nature behave in some of the ways we want it to. We can't have done that out of entire ignorance.

The fact of our being knowledgeable whilst all of our methods are faulty has set the chief philosophical puzzle for the last three hundred years. Before so splendid a display of human knowledge as is contained in nuclear physics, any radical scepticism must vanish. But it returns enlivened so soon as we regard, with appropriate sobriety, the imperfection of all the methods by which nuclear physics came to be.

Apparently, in our scientific work we have been proceeding according to a rule which we have never stated and cannot now state. This is distressing enough, but it is still more distressing to perceive that this august rule, which nobody has stated, is within the use and practice of a child*—for no child, no "normal" child at any rate, will touch a hot stove the second time. It may even be that the rule is available to insects, since, as I am told, grasshoppers, once they come to know you, will not "spit tobacco," which they commonly do in fear.

Everybody gets his knowledge from experience, and nobody can tell us definitely how that knowledge is got. Yet there are some things in the conduct of the intellect which we know with such a nearness to certainty that the denial of them would seem to overturn reason. We know (on pain of madness else) that whatever is affirmed or denied of all of the members of a class is affirmed or denied of every member of it,** so that, all men being mortal and Socrates being a man, Socrates can be inferred to be mortal. Again: we know that if a sentence $p$ implies another sentence $q$, and if $q$ implies another sentence $r$, then $p$ implies $r$.

These examples of general procedure belong to what is traditionally

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* See the wonderful concluding paragraph of Section IV of Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, in which the assertion essentially is that, if there really is a rule of experimental inference, how happens it that adults cannot state what an infant obviously knows? Hume thinks there is no such rule, and he says, with final irony, "If I be wrong, I must acknowledge myself to be a very backward scholar; since I cannot now discover an argument which, it seems, was perfectly familiar to me long before I was out of my cradle."

** The *dictum de omni et nullo*.

called deductive logic. Now, deductive logic was a contribution of the ancient Greeks, and it suits very well with a society in which there was much systematizing of theory, but, given slave labor, not much testing of it by appeal to fact. Hence, to say that we know almost certainly the way to construct formal systems is to say that we have at last made the Greeks understand what they meant.

One can only guess how many millenia of awakening consciousness lie behind Aristotle's first formulation of the *dictum de omni et nullo,* but there were surely millenia. Accordingly, I don't think we need to despair if, after a mere three centuries, we are not able to state the rule of *in*ductive logic. It takes time to do these things—time, I rather suspect, freer of distractions than our age would seem, to a logician, to be.

During fifty years, the exquisitely calculated labors of the best middle-class logicians have succeeded in making Aristotle lucid—a logician whom the early bourgeoisie loved to denounce.* Those same labors, exquisitely calculated, have likewise revealed the frailty of newer conjectures about how we know. They make it plain that we know that we don't know how we know. Consequently, I believe, according to a principle already set forth in these pages, that we are near to being very wise indeed.

Now, if anyone could state and thus give to mankind the plain rule which indubitably governs our inferences from experience, he would be the greatest philosopher of the age, and the contribution would be more important than relativity theory. Mankind would then have in its hands the ultimate means of knowing, and would not have to issue occasional edicts announcing itself, or some part of itself, infallible. But no one, alas, seems likely very soon to produce the rule. Indeed, most current works on philosophy are given over to showing, not the content of the rule, but the failure of competitors to state it.

What has escaped the penetration of genius the modest searcher may hardly hope to find. But it is better to stumble down the probable path than to sit lamenting darkness and disease. And one may stumble *on* something. The story of the apple's striking the Newtonian skull is doubtless myth, but it accurately describes the way in which great items of knowledge make themselves known.

Let's grope forward, then, and see what we find.

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* Locke's was one of the pleasanter jests: "God has not been so sparing to men to make them barely two-legged creatures, and left it to Aristotle to make them rational." (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* Book IV, Chapter XVIII, paragraph 4.)

## *THE RULE*

RULES are directions for behavior. They can be stated in the form, "Do *this,* and you will effect *that.*" Cooking recipes are a familiar sort: "Perform the stated operations upon the stated ingredients, and you will produce the intended pastry."

We, however, are looking for a rule in the form, "Do this, and you will know whether the given sentence is true or false." The problem is to supply an equivalent for the "this." By way of beginning, let us, paradoxically but not perversely, say what the problem is *not.*

(1) It is not the problem how to infer sentences from other sentences. It *is* the problem how to recognize when a sentence signifies an actually existing state of affairs. The rule, therefore, is for a human person in direct sensory contact with events.

(2) It is not the problem how to make symbols and their structure clear; rather, it assumes that clarity has already been achieved. For, obviously, no sentence can be tested for truth unless its meaning is entirely manifest. You cannot know, for example, the truth or falsity of "This is a very little child's chair," until you know whether the meaning is "a chair for a very little child" or "a very little chair for a child."

We'll assume, then, that we have a man in direct sensory contact with his environment, and that he has a perfectly unambiguous sentence to verify. What is he to do?

The quieter empiricists would tell him that the thing to do is, look. And look he might, for example, out the window to see whether there is rain, and so to decide whether the sentence, "It is raining now," is true.

But one glance might not be very persuasive, particularly if it were brief and at a distance from the window. Our man might want to step outside, where sound and touch, perhaps even taste and smell, would corroborate sight. He would be surer, though wetter, if he did so. Evidently there is more to knowing than just looking. Evidently, cogency increases with the amount of data, with the frequency and regularity of their occurrence, with "the number and variety of the instances," as Mill used to say.

The livelier empiricists, pragmatists they would be, would urge our man to act on the sentence, to try it, as they say, out. In this procedure he would take the sentence as basis, construct a plan of action upon it, and act at last upon the plan. If the action were in no way frustrated, the plan would be shown feasible, and the sentence true. So, at any rate, say the pragmatists.

There's many a slip, however, in this style of reasoning. Bertrand

Russell mentions a custom in the older China of ringing bells and striking gongs whenever there was an eclipse of the moon. The noise was to drive away the dragon which had swallowed the moon. Every time the bells were thus rung and the gongs struck, the moon in due course returned and was visible once more. The ringers and strikers must have been pragmatically convinced—must they not?—that their theory of the moon and the dragon and the dragon's sensitivity to noise was fully verified.

There were other noisemakers during the great plague in London in 1664. It was discovered that you could protect a household against the plague if you walked around the house making a great poise and thus frightening off all evil spirits. Now, it happened that the "evil spirits" were in fact rats, infected carriers of the bubonic plague—just as the "dragon" of the eclipse was in fact the earth's shadow. The rats really were frightened, really did run away, and so the household survived unbitten and uninfected. *Here,* we may observe, human behavior did influence the result; but, as for restoring the moon, it of course accomplished nothing.

Apparently, then, the pragmatic procedure can make you think you are doing something when in fact you are doing nothing. Also, it can make you think that what you are doing is something quite other than it is. A good practical rule, this; but, like good business practice, often misleading.

In order for pragmatic procedure to work even moderately well, study and analysis must already have removed from the data fictitious entities like dragons and evil spirits, and have exposed enough of the causal network within events for us to know what effects are possible to our actions and what are not: for example, that there is and can be no connection between man-made noises and the moon's movement out of eclipse.

Accordingly, it appears that observation and practice, though sanctified by the zeal of empirical philosophers, aren't really tests at all —for, if they are tests, how comes it that they have to be corrected? They are, rather, two of the ways in which the knower keeps in contact with events; they are what we assumed the would-be knower to be doing when verification starts. The test part of it, the part that is the rule, is something else. What?

Well, there were quite a few hints dropped, in our critique of empirical procedures. Phrases like "number and variety of the instances," "frequency and regularity," and "causal network" suggest that there is some relation between comprehensiveness of study and our know-

ing whether or not a given sentence is true. This comprehensiveness, the surveying of all the relevant data, is what corrects the errors of mere looking and mere doing.

As it happens, indeed, we put the case too simply when we said (or seemed to say) that verification is the comparing of a single sentence with fact. Actually it isn't just one sentence, but rather it is that sentence along with several others which are involved with it. Among these are sentences which define the terms of the original sentence or state the import of the sentence structure. Thus, with the sentence, "Socrates is dead," there are bound up other sentences identifying Socrates, defining the term "dead," and explaining just what relation is indicated by the word "is." We think in clusters, and we speak in volumes.

This involvement of many sentences in any one sentence is paralleled (I would imagine, necessitated) on the cosmos' side by the involvement of many events in any one event. The fact indicated by the sentence, "I am my father's son," plainly involves many other facts, some of which I do not know and some of which I prefer not to guess. I suppose the case is as Spinoza believed it to be, that the entire universe is involved in the existence of any single thing. We ignore this, for practical purposes; but, also for practical purposes, we can say that any fact needs a context in order to be known.

Thus the verification of sentences can't be achieved by pointing to mere snips and snatches of the cosmos. We have to look at all of it, or at least a great deal of it; and our rational conviction increases with the breadth of our view. Conversely, it is a favorite device of propaganda to omit from survey just those parts of the whole which give it the character that propaganda does not want. The omission is hard to trace, being lost beneath a seeming deference to other rules; but, subtly, it brings the intended error.

Thus I have an idea that comprehensiveness is an essential part of the rule which enables us to verify assertions. The concept has had a long, distinguished history, and in recent times a distinguished, bourgeois history, being the last of Descartes' four rules of method. He knew what it was, all right: "In every case to make enumerations so complete, and reviews so general, that I might be assured that nothing was omitted."* This assurance means, of course, that nothing relevant has been left outside the range of study, and that, within the range of study nothing has escaped scrutiny.

The rule of comprehensiveness, then, seems to tell us that whatever

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* *Discourse on Method,* Part II.

we know we know in connection with something else. How is this to be expressed? If, in an effort to say the thing with entire simplicity, I adopt a speech which is willfully naive, then it seems to me that totalities get expressed in English by such phrases as

> My father and every other person,
> This house and every other building,
> This essay and every other printed article.

The binding part of the phrase would seem to be "This . . . and every other. . . ."

Now, "this" and "every" are quantifiers, indicating respectively one unit and a sum of units. The most pregnant words, however, are "and" and "other," particularly in the close (indeed, the indiscerptible) relation they have here. For "and" expresses conjunction, and "other" expresses disjunction; and the suggestion is that it takes these two opposites to make a world.

Remarkable to say, moreover, the bond between conjunction and disjunction is valid for itself as for everything else in the universe. All connection is separation: to join is to sever, and to be related is to be made self-distinct. In short, conjunction, like everything else in the world, is involved with its opposite (disjunction), while nevertheless remaining its own additive self. And disjunction involves conjunction—while remaining its shy, separative self.

I cannot forbear a further remark. The paradoxes which, as we said, surround contemporary logic in the West result from the fact that the basic principles of that logic cannot be made to apply to themselves.* Our present argument, however, seems to have produced a principle which, though paradoxical in content, is not paradoxical in usage: that is to say, it can and does apply to itself. Therefore it offers surcease from fundamental perplexity, whilst in its employment it proceeds to explicate the world.

It is difficult not to feel that, with this principle, we have got somewhere near the bottom of things. Let us call it the principle of articulation: the notion, namely, that the various happenings in the universe are related by a system of joints, as bones are in an animal skeleton. It is the nature of a joint to connect and separate simultaneously—

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* *e.g.* Russell's paradox, now named for him, about "the class of all classes which are not members of themselves." Is *this* class a member of itself? Well, if it is, then it isn't (because it then belongs to the class of all classes that are not members of themselves). And if it isn't, then it is (because, not being a member of itself, it belongs to the class of all classes that are not members of themselves.)

which is what your elbow does to the bone of your forearm and the bone of your upper arm.

Apparently, then we cannot know any fact, however, large in scope or small, unless we examine it in relation to a total context, an environment, within which it is, however, differentiated. This is what comprehensiveness requires and the principle of articulation (or, if you like, of dialectics) asserts. This is, as philosophers would say, a necessary condition for knowledge. But the rule we have been seeking must give us a condition not alone necessary for knowledge, but sufficient to yield it. It must be not only *a* condition, but *the* condition. That is to say, the rule states a *condition* such that, without it, you can't have knowledge, and, with it, you must have knowledge.

Now, the rule, we said is in the form, "Do this, and you will know whether or not the sentence is true." Let us substitute for this the principle of articulation, and see what we have: "Examine any alleged state of affairs as related to and differentiated from a total environment, and you will know whether or not the sentence which asserts that state of affairs is true."

If scholasticism of language can persuade, this ought to do it. What lies beneath the language is fairly persuasive too. Nevertheless, I should want to think twice before granting that this version of the rule has sufficiency as well as necessity. It seems to hold for class-membership sentences like "Whales are mammals," or attributive sentences like "Daffodils are yellow," or sentences expressing chronology. But I am not sure how well it holds for sentences expressing existence, or for negative sentences generally.

Take, for example, a sentence which Americans are fond of phrasing in a bitterly ungrammatical way: "There ain't no Santa Claus." By our rule we could establish Santa Claus in a series of minor universes: legend, the plastic arts, Christmas commercialism. But by this rule alone, we would, I think, never quite eliminate him from the universe of contemporary historical personages; and, therefore, in this sense, we never could assert with perfect knowledge, "There is no Santa Claus."

I think the rule does have necessity: there can be no knowledge without it. I'm afraid, however, that in its present form it lacks sufficiency: it does not quite enable us to be sure when we know. But if there has been merit in the general argument, then it is fair to say that the dialectical pattern is fundamental to human knowledge. The ingenuity of future minds may be able to express the necessary in such a way as to make it also the sufficient.

This task may conceivably be done in the West and in the late

bourgeois epoch. Decay is always so far mingled with growth that you never can tell where this or that flower will bloom. But the solution, if still delayed, will be a triumph indeed for the first hundred years, say, of socialism. We are so given to regarding dialectical materialism as a cure that we neglect its power as a means of discovery. With this salutary remembrance, we shall not think it sad that, after the labors of so many splendid minds, the best human work still lingers to be done.

## *THE REFRESHMENT OF CHANGE*

IT IS possible to arrange sentences according to the rules of logic because, when thus arranged, they really do describe the occurrence and connection of events. For if the various logical schemata were mere devices of the mind, whilst the universe behaved in a radically different and contrary way, we human beings would, in the wild resultant frustration, be even madder than some of us now admittedly are.

The story is that Alfred North Whitehead, when he first heard of the new and audacious "three-valued" logic, shook his head sadly and murmured, "One God, one country, one logic!" The universe has got just the basic pattern it has, and it takes just one logic to reproduce that. Since change is a primordial fact, the basic patterns are relations spread out in time. It seems possible to say, accordingly, that dialectics, which is the logic of change, stands to the traditional logic as calculus, which is the mathematics of change, stands to plane and solid geometry.

Let us consider what happens if we apply the principle of articulation, of conjunction-disjunction, to some of the larger philosophical concepts:

(1) Change which is patterned and not merely chaotic can be designated by the word "process." The universe itself is in this sense a process, and is composed of smaller processes. Now, a process has parts, which we may call stages. The question arises, how are the stages in a process related? They must be distinct from one another, or the process ceases to be a process and becomes "the night in which all cows are black." Yet the stages must be in some manner joined, or the process will collapse into discrete fragments.

To the extent that the stages are distinct, there is discontinuity in the process. To the extent that they are joined, there is continuity. Hence we require the opposite notions of continuity and discontinuity in order to explain the nature of any process. This is conjunction-disjunction spread out in time.

(2) Things—or, if you prefer, events—exist in various relations.

Now, a relation is a system having members. If the members are not distinctly individual, the system relates no parts; and if the parts are merely individual, they permit no relation. Hence we require the opposite notions of individuality and community in order to describe the nature of any relation. In times of social crisis this principle gets fought out as well as thought out.

(3) "Absolute" and "relative": these terms are truly bugbears in the professional lives of Western intellectuals and, no doubt, of intellectuals elsewhere as well. For example, the plainer the programme which liberty requires, the more surely do hacks arise to say that all knowledge is merely relative, and that, accordingly, we canot tell what liberty requires after all.

Let us look a little more closely. Every sentence which is free of ambiguity and of variables* is either true or false, just as it stands: for example, the one that Lenin mentions, "Napoleon died on 5 May, 1821."** This sentence is either true or false, because Napoleon either died on that date or did not die on that date.

The same is the case with all other sentences which are clear and free of variables: the situations they refer to either exist or do not exist. These alternatives are absolute in the sense that they hold for all such sentences, and admit of no exception.

Furthermore, it is the case that every sentence of this sort stays fixed in its truth or its falsity. If it is true at all, it is always true. If it is false, it is always false. It is true, and always true, that Napoleon died on 5 May 1821 AD; and if, contrary to all expectation, future research should show that he died, instead, on 1 June 1821 AD, then the sentence would be false, would always have been false, and would always be false.

Similarly, the sentence, "Abraham Lincoln was a son of Queen Victoria," is false and always will be false. But is, again, subversively, future research should show that Abraham Lincoln really was a son of Queen Victoria, then the sentence would be true, would always have been true, and would always be true.

Nothing can happen which will alter the truth of a true sentence or the falsity of a false one, and in this sense truth is absolute. These are the grounds, I should suppose, that Marxists stand on when they

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* A sentence containing variables is one like "$x$ plus $y$ equals 5," in which $x$ and $y$ may have any of various values, and which will be true or false depending on what the values are.

** *Empirio-Criticism*, II, 5. It is, of course, understood that the 1821 referred to is 1821 A.D. by the Gregorian Calendar.

say (as surely they must) that the nature of capitalism and the pattern of historical development are what Marx asserted them to be, and that consequently the sentences expressing his description are "eternally" true.

Truth doesn't change, is not epheremal; it will support you when you have it. What changes is our awareness, our recognition, of the sentences which are true. We believe one thing for a time, its opposite for another; and these fluctuations may have for a basis extremely sober and scientific proof. I think that fluctuations are less wild and spectacular when science sustains them than when politics or personal anxiety does so. Nevertheless they occur.

Perhaps it is fair to say that there is absoluteness in truth and relativity in our apprehension of it. We "know in part," as Saint Paul says: that is, we believe with varying degrees of probability, not certainty, so that the shrewd scientist or statesman always keeps an eye open for the single possible chance which will modify or upset his generalization.

It would seem that we know, without seriously risking errors, that Napoleon died on 5 May 1821 AD and that Abraham Lincoln was not a son of Queen Victoria. I suppose there would be much dispute whether we know the truth of Marx's description with the same degree of probability; nevertheless, it is as open as the others to the techniques of verification.

We may say, then, that doubt is always natural and often useful but that it need not paralyze. Middle-class sceptics, even when fairly spinning with uncertainty, seem never to be in doubt where their class-interest lies. Thus they demonstrate, a little vulgarly, what in theory we already knew, that relativity is possible just because there are absolutes, and that we know in part just because there is a whole universe to be known.

(4) One of the absolutes, I will wager—being human and thus condemned to bet—is time's forward flow. We're not getting any younger," Americans of middle life often say to one another with a wry tolerance of change. We are not, indeed: there is just the one direction of movement, and the current is irreversible. It is the most general and most nearly unquestionable of all metaphysical facts. How are we to explain it?

Evidently there is something about each stage of the process which thrusts the previous stages irrevocably behind. No such thrusting would occur if every stage were exactly like every other stage. What makes the thrusting possible is the arrival of something new, something which

did not exist before and which, on coming to exist, eliminates its predecessors. So youth negates childhood by being new, and manhood youth, and (regrettably) old age the once vigorous man.

So the great process refreshes itself and us also with novelty, drawn, in opposition to the old, out of those opposites which constitute the old. Thus, in the crabbèd Hegelian language, thought moves (because the world moves) from thesis to antithesis to synthesis. The present, aging, struggles and dies; and it leaves a new thing, its scion, to triumph and to be.

Strange to say when you consider man's customary gloom about mortality, the dialectical pattern suggests refreshment rather than decay, and, instead of an invincible corruption, the works rather of justice and mercy. Perhaps it is a badge and token of maturity that we can take it so. But surely, if we are to prosper, we need a new world to prosper in; and if we fail to prosper, we need a new chance to try again. The seasons, as they roll over us, may perpetuate evils or bear them; but they also heal wounds, lighten miseries, strengthen sinews, and sustain the memory of just men—the very ones, it may be, whom those same seasons have impartially brought low. Novelty is not always good but, without novelty, goodness could neither linger nor be born.

## *THE MORALITY OF KNOWING*

THUS we come at last to ethics, our best discipline, not from a love of homiletical discourse (or, at any rate, not from that alone) but because the subject seems to require it. The problem of knowledge, it seems at this late date absurdly unnecessary to say, is a practical problem. It is the problem of choosing and believing just those sentences which describe the world as the world is, for then only do we have that poise of the body which can control—one might almost say, administer—the course of events.

All questions of choice are moral questions, and this one is bound up with the value which men would find in becoming (in the great Cartesian phrase) "lords and possessors of nature." It has also to do with the values of candor and honesty and the genuine love of knowledge. An observer who should be morally neutral, devoid of principles or values, would be unable to prefer the true to the false, the valid to the invalid, and so could not employ the rules and methods which, to minds not thus diseased, yield generous glimpses of the real.

Moreover, belief is always subject to seduction. The most odious people, causes, notions pass daily before it, parading like whores their

scandalous allure. And resistance is difficult. Even personal security, which, more than any other motive, might seem to be interested in accurately knowing the world, sometimes bends belief towards false assertions. It does seem, therefore, that a theory of knowledge would be incomplete which gave no account of the morality of knowing. On this subject Marxism has a good deal that is enlightening to say, particularly about the social influences which dispose us to believe one thing rather than another.

Let us come at this by expounding, as a sort of text, the eighth of Marx's theses on Feuerbach:

> Social life is essentially *practical.** All mysteries which mislead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in practice and in the comprehension of this practice.

I take the first sentence to mean that the day-by-day life of any society is concerned primarily with the production and distribution of goods and services: food, clothing, shelter, medical care, so that the individual members may survive; education in knowledge and techniques, so that the group may survive. The production and distribution of goods and services prospers just to the extent that physical nature and human society are understood. Consequently, the daily labors of men in satisfaction of their daily needs guide them toward science and always from myth.

The scale of such change is sometimes gigantic. Marx describes, in a famous passage in the *Manifesto,* capitalism's crushing effect upon the ideology of feudal times:

> The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors,' and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment.' It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egostistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom —Free Trade" (K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works,* Vol. I, p. 36).

Nevertheless myths survive and infect even economics itself, whence

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* Italics in the original.

you would expect that with hard-headed zeal they would steadily be expelled. How can this be? Well, partly the myths are uncleared rubbish left by centuries of self-deception: despite the "icy waters" Marx alludes to, a lot of feudal nonsense still remains in otherwise "advanced" countries, and the mentality at least of chattel slavery still lingers in the American South.

These dismal ideas survive because the bourgeoisie deliberately slowed down the development of human knowledge in social questions, and because it came to terms with institutions like the medieval church, which, using the older ideology, could supply a mass of contented proletarians. Also, old ideas don't die; they just fade away, and take a devilish long time doing it.

In addition to myths surviving, there are myths manufactured. They issue daily, hourly, from those organs of class rule which have to do (it is their euphemism) with "public information." A considerable chorus of broadcasters, preachers, publicists, and professors showers praise upon its own system and rulers, showers blame upon other systems and rulers, as these, in the shifting truculence of events, come into opposition. By their own description, they are minds wonderfully free. But they are not free; they are merely at large.

And then there are the private, personal fantasies which the "nationally advertised" ones influence and guide. Everybody needs and seeks some harmony with environment, and everybody invents fictitious means of adaptation when real ones fail. The generalization of these fantasies as shaped by the propaganda of class rule is a sizable part (pathetic, I think, rather than odious) of the history of philosophy.

So great a survival and proliferation of myths cannot be handled on less than a very large social scale and in a very large tract of time. It is by extensive and repeated practice that society corrects the "mysteries which mislead theory to mysticism." The "comprehension of this practice" would be a socially grounded theory of knowledge; and, if Marx is right, this is one of many wonders for the proletariat to perform. For, whatever a man may be able to do in his own personal life to join knowledge and action, the grand union of theory and practice can occur only on a social, indeed a world-wide, scale.

Now, we have said that the act of knowing occurs whenever it is simultaneously the case that: (1) a given sentence is believed to be true, and (2) this very same sentence is true. The second of these conditions is iron: if the sentence is true, nothing can make it other than true. But the first conditon admits much tampering.

For example, it is very possible for a sentence to be believed, not at

all because it corresponds with fact or is inferrible from other sentences, but because it has been made hot with zeal, hard with threats, or musical with the charm of simple conformity. I can imagine that if the drinking of water ever came under social taboo (probably because of a merchant class which wanted to sell us some other beverage), the entire subject of water would be immediately hemmed round with guilt and transcendentalism. There would be protests against the materialistic explanation of water as $H_2O$, whereas it "really" was the liquid confluence of evil spirits, and, after the clergy had thundered, the police would move in. Merchants *hors la loi* would conduct a thriving trade in surreptitious waters, which oral-dependent personalities (as the Freudians call them) would consume with massive and increasing guilt. Moralists would comment bitterly on a cosmos which combined so much temptation with so much oportunity, and men of letters in France would be found asserting that a state of nothingness is preferable to a keen and universal itch.

Thus the relation of any man to his fellows is as uneasy in the matter of belief as it is in other concerns. I have lived all my life among intellectuals, and I cannot now say whether it is more painful to differ with them or to agree with them. For in the first case they accuse you of arrogance, and in the second of conformity. Intellectuals are, so to say, siblings, who compete for such favors as authority may dispense. No one of them is likely to say or do much which will escape condemnation by the others.

Thus bribery, coercion, and mere general competitiveness are always at work corrupting the psychological conditions of belief. Everyone of us has at some time or other been lured or harried into conviction in ways that fall quite outside logic or science. If, for stubbornness, one of the conditions of knowing is a thing resembling iron, the other is a thing resembling wax. No doubt it seems very odd for iron and wax to dwell thus side by side and to organize, between them, man's conquest of environment. Nevertheless, desirable effects do sometimes have unexpected sources.

In *this* conjunction, which is one of the happiest, the wax cannot shape the iron, though the iron is quite able to shape the wax. For the truth of a sentence is, as we know, not at all affected by the mode or intensity of its being believed. You may hope the sentence is true, you may yearn to have it true, you may live in terror lest it be false. It is all one: the sentence is either true or not true, and your feelings are irrelevant.

This may seem like a disaster: life would be so much easier if you could make a sentence true simply by wanting it to be so. If wishes were

horses, beggars would ride. But this sort of ease would in fact be far more disastrous. It would make truth the slave of power: it would surrender truth into the hands of governments and commit it, all helpless, to the vicissitudes of social struggle. Yet the actual case is, surely, that governments cannot make up truth as they make up propaganda, and that social struggles have hard, inexorable circumstances in which they occur.

To this fact we owe the chance to be honest and faithful and knowledgeable, thus to cure the various ills of persons and societies. It is the iron in the act of knowledge, the rational ground of belief, which strengthens us alike against social myth and neurotic fantasy. Just to recognize the assaults of error is to be armed against them.

In the end, then, content of belief settles everything. If a sentence is true, your fervor of belief in it may make you a Socrates; if it is false, your fervor may make you a Hitler. Again, if a sentence is true, mankind profits when large numbers of people believe it simultaneously; and the world will be equally distressed if, amid a similar unanimity of belief, a sentence is false.

But, beyond all this, those who bear most watching are the cool, opportunistic believers. From the old disgraced Meletus, who accused Socrates, to the latest servile rouge who defames his betters, these people regard a smooth political machines as the ideal of social organization, and political power, especially in their own hands, as the highest of goods. They like you to be cool toward their adversaries' beliefs but fervent towards their own. And this is all they mean, or can mean, when as they often do, they praise or blame any manner of belief.

To which, for the obliteration of all such vices, the answer must be that science and philosophy, from now on, are to base themselves, not parochially upon small groups and petty interests, but upon "*human* society or socialized humanity."* That will supply the true morality of knowing and, in it, the educator will at last be educated, and philosophers will help to change the world.

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* *Theses on Feuerbach*, No. 10. Italics Marx's.

# THE CHINESE WRITER TODAY

*MIN TSEH*

*Peking*

NEARLY a year ago the Chinese Communist Party announced the policy embodied in the phrase "let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools contend." This has led to striking changes in our literary life, and the year will probably be looked back on as a turning point in Chinese literature.

It is common sense that you cannot reckon literary achievement in terms of a single year. You need at least ten years for that. Nevertheless there have been, in the twelve months since the new policy was announced, signs of a new diversity and freshness.

Somebody has described the prevailing atmosphere in China today as one of "timely showers and spring breezes." In this clime many new literary magazines have made their appearance. There are, for instance, *Shih Kan* (Poetry) and *Wenhsueh Yenchiu* (Studies in Literature), published in Peking, *Hsing Hsing* (Stars) in Szechuan, *Tung Hai* (East Sea) in Chekiang, *Pen Liu* (The Running Stream) in Honan, and *Mifeng* (Bees) in Hopei.

This crop of new magazines is no accident; they reflect the flourishing literary scene, the spate of writing by authors old and new.

The new policy soon had established authors embarking on new work, and quite a few of them have announced their plans. Mao Tun, famous for his novel *Midnight*, a pungent picture of bourgeois life in old China, is now writing a long novel about how our capitalists have changed their outlook, begun to see things with new eyes and settle down in the new China of today. Pa Chin, whose novels *Home*, *Spring*

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The author is an editor of *Wen Yi Pao* (Art and Literature).

and *Autumn* together form the trilogy *The Turbulent Stream,* depicting the decline and fall of an old-fashioned feudal family, is now at work on a sequel to be called *The Masses*—fulfilling a promise he made to his readers over twenty years ago.

More young writers have come to the fore than in any previous year. Some veterans who had written nothing for years again set to work. Chung Ching-wen, a professor at Peking Normal University and an authority on folk literatrue, recently wrote an article entitled "The Coming Spring in Our Literature" for *Wen Yi Pao* (Art and Literature). In it he says, "Last May I heard Lu Ting-yi's speech 'Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom, a Hundred Schools Contend.' Later on I made a tour of north-west China, and I found my creative desire, so long dormant, awakening. I felt I should and must do something in our garden of literature, even though I grew only one tiny nameless flower."

There always have been, and always will be writers who strive to paint life in all its changing strands. Since China liberated herself we have had authors politically enthusiastic, keen to extol new things and new people against the background of a new society. Many fine books were the result. There is, for instance, *Dragon-Beard Ditch,* the play by Lao Sheh, who wrote *Rickshaw Boy.* That was a striking picture of the life of the poor in Peking before and after liberation. Then there was *Sanliwan,* Chao Shu-li's long novel about the life of young folks in the liberated countryside, written in that characteristic style which delighted readers of *The Rhymes of Li Yu-tsai* and *Changes in Li Village.* There was *Defense of Yenan,* the novel about the War of Liberation by the young writer Tu Peng-cheng. And these are but three books of many.

Nevertheless, it has to be admitted that our writers have, by and large, tailed along well in the rear of real life, and all too many books have been mediocre. The life about us is immensely rich, and literature, which is supposed to mirror life, ought to be rich too. Mao Tse-tung, in his *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Art and Literature,* published in 1942, said that while art and literature should be such that working people could enjoy and make use of it, and while it was a good thing for writers to put them, their joys and sorrows, into their books, writers and artists ought to "observe, learn, study and analyze all men, all classes, all kinds of people, all the vivid patterns of life and struggle." But some doctrinaires took one half of his advice and ignored the other. Their line was that only books which actually *described* working people could be said to *serve* them. That view was a real wet blanket for some of our writers. They simply lost the urge to write; and this was par-

ticularly true of some of the older writers, who had never had the opportunity of getting to know much about working people at first hand.

When the Communist Party gave the all-clear for the blooming of flowers in their hundreds it was tantamount to striking off the shackles of hide-bound theory and letting authors open their eyes and see life around them in all its splendor. It told authors both old and new that they should go ahead boldly and write about the things they really knew about. As Lao Sheh put it, "I understand my elder brother very well, but I do not quite understand my children. Well, let me write about my elder brother and let the young writers write about my children. Again, we should write about our working people. But is that any reason why we should not also mirror the lives of intellectuals and capitalists? Every writer should write about what he likes and what he can handle —people, life and themes. A writer should have perfect freedom to choose what he wants to write about."

During the past year, as taboos, thou shalts and thou shalt nots, have been sent packing, writers have started tackling a far wider sweep of life than ever before. They take different aspects of life and approach it from different angles. They deal with home life, with love, with work, with the building of socialism and the hundred and one activities in which people engage. Now that they feel that they have a wider field from which to choose their subject-matter and more alternatives in the way they treat it, there is not nearly so much narrow, dull, mediocre writing. Writers make use of their different talents to the full.

IN MARCH, at a conference called by the Union of Chinese Writers, over a hundred writers spoke of their plans, and it was plain that nobody is going to be able to say that their forthcoming books will be all the same. They proposed to deal not only with things like industrialization, the changeover to socialist farming and the way New China has carried out socialist transformation in private industry and commerce, but also with the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the 1911 Revolution, the Long March, the resistance to Japanese aggression, the War of Liberation, the campaign to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea, the life of intellectuals, and much else.

Besides a greater richness of subject-matter we also see a greater diversity of literary forms. Besides novels, plays and poems we have had travel notes, sketches and essays both formal and random. Perhaps the most striking thing in literature over the past year has been the crop of hard-hitting random essays.

The random or miscellaneous essay, as distinct from the formal

classical essay, was frequently employed by the great revolutionary writer Lu Hsun, who found it a sharp and apt weapon with which to attack abuses in the old society. After the liberation people regarded the random essay as a form suitable only for polemics against the enemy, not for attacking unreasonable things among the people themselves. So it fell into disuse, and only last year did it once more become a popular form. Now you find one or two such essays in any literary paper or magazine, pungently criticizing mistakes, puncturing conceit and harassing bureaucracy whenever they show themselves in our new society.

The year has also seen good work in the realm of literary criticism and research. The study and discussion of many problems in our older classics put us in a better position to assess China's literary heritage. There was, for instance, some useful research on the *Book of Odes,* the earliest collection of Chinese poetry. There has been much discussion on realism in our classical literature, on the great Tang dynasty poets, Li Po and Tu Fu, on the *tzu* (irregular stanzas) of Li Yu, last ruler of the Southern Tang kingdom, and on the famous classical drama, *The Tale of a Lute,* besides much talk on such general problems as aesthetics, socialist realism, the typical in literature, and so on.

All this is to the good, all very healthy and vital. But there are one or two questionable aspects.

It is only seven years since China liberated herself. In that seven years we have, for all practical purposes, got rid of class antagonisms. But bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas still persist—plenty of them. And since they are still with us, naturally they find their way into literary theory and practice. When we try to "let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools contend," when we try to set our faces against doctrinaire thinking and methods, some people immediately start voicing rightist ideas. For instance, we have had people denying that any of our art and literature in the recent past is any good at all. People have eased up on or lost interest in their study of Marxism. Others, quite rightly saying that writing with any pretensions to literary value must stand on its own feet, have gone on to pooh-pooh the importance of the ideas behind the writing. Some, again, throw doubts on the principle of "serving the working people" or deny that Marxism can be of any help to a writer.

Another sign of this throwing over the traces is the appearance of books which seem coarse, decadent, even verging on the pornographic. There is the young novelist Chen Teng-ko, for example. His *Mrs. Tu* and *Living Hell* were an honest, faithful record of peasant life and struggles. Recently, however, he published two short stories, *Love* and

*First Love,* the bad taste of which offended many readers. A different type of decadence can be noted in *Grass and Trees,* a sequence of poems by a young man named Liu Sha-ho, in which he seems to glory in displaying all the worst petty-bourgeois enthusiasms, an egoism, a self-indulgence, a damn-the-people-and-all-their-doings attitude.

Some people have gone to extremes in the field of literary theory. We have had articles boiling everything down to human nature in the abstract and jettisoning any analysis from the class viewpoint. Others have advanced the view that there are no absolutes, that "everything depends," that there is no way of distinguishing between right and wrong or good and evil. Some articles, asserting that the basic theme of literature is "unchanging human nature," have gone on to interpret that human nature as simply a matter of food and sex! Others view human beings and the classes in society from a "biological" point of view, affirming that you cannot characterize human perception as true or false or as right or wrong.

Yes, there are still plenty of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas about, whether we like it or not, and there is nothing strange in the fact that they are expressing themselves. But if we dislike them, we do not try to batter them down in a head-on collision. As in all other spheres where we encounter conflicting ideas among the people, we try to distinguish between right and wrong, truth and falsehood by assuming that most people in China have a large measure of agreement on basic political issues, entering into contention with an expressed desire for unity and trying to gradually reach a greater unity through free discussion. In point of fact, the moment these dubious writings and ideas came out they set our intellectuals by the ears, disturbing them and putting them on their guard. A great deal of reasoned criticism and discussion followed which did much to help those who had gone astray mend their ways and helped most of us see the issues involved more clearly, gave us a better understanding of our common cause.

NOT all our leftist doctrinaires, though, realized what it was all about. On January 7 the *Jenmin Jihpao* (People's Daily) published an article headed "Our Views on Contemporary Art and Literature" by Chen Chi-tung, author of the play, *The Long March,* Chen Ya-ting, Ma Han-ping and Lu Leh. It was in effect a jeremiad about most of what is happening in our art and literature today. They harp on the negative side of what has happened and are blind to the main aspect—all the changes for the better which have taken place since the "flowers bloom" policy was announced. Take this, for instance:

> A spate of stories devoted to family life, love-making and adventure has taken the place of novels, plays and poems dealing with tremendous social reforms, world-shaking struggles for emancipation or heroic figures who win people's respect and inspire them to follow their example. Things like this take all the fight out of art and literature. They blur the face and muffle the voice of our age, and the glory of our socialist construction glimmers but feebly in the mirror of art and literature.

In their article they posed variety in subject-matter as something which stopped art and literature "serving the working people." They say we have thrown this principle overboard for the sake of greater variety. They seem to overlook the fact that working people do not live in an insulated world. The principle that art should serve the working people and literature mirror their lives does not and cannot mean that they cannot deal with anything outside the immediate ken of the working people. Provided you are not *against* the working people, anything you write is capable of serving them and helping them politically and aesthetically.

These writers also fail to see the good that has come of breaking through the taboos and commandments about subject-matter, and judge the worth of any given piece of writing by its subject-matter, by what aspect of life it presents. It seems to them that anything which reflects the life of the working people, no matter how well or how badly, is good and that anything which deals with what they call "family life and love-making" is worthless.

"Some people," the article goes on, "think that as our country has entered a new stage of socialism, we need only stress the policy of letting a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools contend, that there is no longer any need to stress the policy of serving the working people. Others contend that since socialist realism is not the only method in creative writing, socialist realism can be dispensed with; or they may even go so far as to cast doubts on socialist realism as a creative method at all."

All this is patently contrary to fact. What these writers do not understand is that we stress the flowers bloom policy simply and solely to permit art and literature to give better service to the working people in a new set of circumstances. To discuss socialist realism is not tantamount to denying it. We say that socialist realism is not the only creative method, but as Marxists we consider it the best. We admit there are other creative methods, and to permit them to compete will permit a greater flowering of literature in which socialist realism will shine

more gloriously. The fact is that many writers have seriously discussed socialist realism to gain a better understanding of it and to learn how to handle it better.

It is because their estimate of contemporary art and literature is so one-sided and therefore mistaken that the writers of this article are disappointed and pessimistic rather than inspired by the policy of letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools contend, why they attempt to overcome wrong-headed, rightist ideas by cut-and-dried directives.

Chen Chi-tung and the other three writers are influential men of letters in New China and their article was published in the *Jenmin Jih-pao,* organ of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, so as soon as it appeared the intellectuals sat up and took notice. Writers all over the country discussed the article and hosts of people started writing in to the papers and magazines. Some agreed, but far more disagreed with these views that so sharply mirrored doctrinaire and sectarian sentiments, opposed the new trends and were leading to no little confusion as regards the policy. Finally, on April 10, the *Jenmin Jihpao* added its weighty voice with an editorial article that searchingly analyzed and criticized the article. It was headed "Keep On With the Policy—Carry It Out to the Full!"

This policy of letting a "hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools contend" is our long-term policy for the growth and development of our socialist culture. It marks the dawn of a new era in our literature.

# RiGhT FaCe

## *Infantile Delinquency*

A population research unit warned that the time had come to re-examine the idea that "more babies means more business."—*New York Times.*

## *The Joke's on Them*

Twenty-four hundred women teach in Peking's colleges and universities; twelve per cent of the deputies in the National Peoples Congress are women; one in seven in the judicial personnel is a woman; and every farm cooperative must include at least one woman on the management board. The Ministers of Health, Justice, Overseas Chinese Affairs, the Textile Industry and the head of the press section of the Foreign Ministry are all women. One of the nation's six vice-presidents is a woman, Madame Chiang Kai-shek's sister, Madame Soong Ching-ling. Other achievements include the right to vote (as it is amusingly called), equal pay for the current army of three million wage-earners and retirement at 50 with a pension 50 to 70 per cent of former wages; escape from the social abominations of the old system such as forced marriages, the degradation of child street-walkers in "gay" Shanghai, and the unspeakable slave-labor conditions of the old mills and factories. . . . The tragic criticism is that these advances appear to have been achieved by the sacrifices of all *feminine* standards and values and by deprivation of all human freedoms and individual impulses.—*New York Times* report from Hong Kong.

## *A Wise Brahmin*

THE NATURE OF PASSION
By R. Prawer Jhabvala

Lalaji, New Delhi businessman guides his children unobtrusively to cure them of western ways and incidentally to help him in money matters. He humanizes his son, diverts the other from art, and marries his daughter properly and happily. Is appearing in the Ladies Home Journal. —Book note in the *Retail Bookseller.*

# books in review

## A Light in the Waste

A LONG DAY IN A SHORT LIFE, by Albert Maltz. International Publishers. $3.75.

THROUGH NOVELS, if they are worthy of the name, men *feel as if* they had lived experiences far more varied and intense than actual life can offer; in a subjective sense they do experience them. Thus their understanding, sympathy and moral values are modified, broadened to include many more kinds of human relationships than they are likely to encounter in reality; and, generalizing from these manifold subjective experiences, they attain a more profound recognition of, and participation in, the whole of the human brotherhood. They return to dealing with reality fortified against insensitivity or inadequacy in the face of real life—wiser, more civilized in the basic sense.

So when a reader says of a work of fiction, "I feel as if I'd lived that segment of life, as if I'd known those people and their story inside and out; I understand them better now, both the 'good' ones and the 'bad,' and how they got that way," . . . and if at the same time that reader has experienced pleasure in the reading—in the artist's sense of beauty and drama, his eloquence, humor, insights, imagery, etc.—then the book has satisfied the major requirements of a work of art, no matter what minor defects of form or ideology may be spied out in it by the critical Sherlocks.

In this dialectical sense Albert Maltz's first novel in eight years, a portrait of humanity behind bars, achieves the full stature of a work of art. It is not only the best of his work; it is one of today's most important novels. It seems almost incredible that eighteen American publishers refused it. Already it is published or in preparation in a dozen foreign languages. The fact that it has been brought out here by International stresses once more the indispensability of that independent publishing house in keeping progressive American culture alive.

*A Long Day in a Short Life* dramatizes a typical day among the inmates of the Washington, D. C. jail, which Maltz, as one of the Hollywood Ten, has known at first hand. In these sixteen densely packed hours, lives are fundamentally changed.

The basic form of the book may be described as an X—two stories of two characters in moral transit, one on the way up, the other in a tailspin.

Floyd Varney, neglected child of a prostitute, has been on his own since the age of ten; he has pulled himself up by his bootstraps, has learned a trade, earns a good living, but has never

outgrown his craving to enter and mingle with the élite. His cheap ambition gets him entangled with a rich and spoiled adulteress. Caught in the act by the woman's husband, Varney defends himself and accidentally kills the intruder. The woman lies to "save her name" and claims she was the victim of rape. The jury compromises, brings in a verdict of second degree murder. The "long day" is the day on which Varney is to be sentenced.

His is a typical Hearst-newspaper "sex-slaying" story. Thanks to the headline notoriety of the case, Varney draws a whopping sentence that knocks the props out from under him. His demoralization accelerates, culminating after pages of unbearable suspense, in a scene of sheer horror.

AS VARNEY'S star sets, that of Huey Wilson, eighteen-year-old Negro student, is ascendant.

His too is a typical story of America, 1957. Huey, after a demonstration for desegregation in the schools, arrives in jail on a framed-up charge of assault with dangerous weapons—a predicament from which only the testimony of a white man can extricate him. The white man, McPeak, born a Georgia cracker, now a Detroit auto worker, is arrested along with Huey. He is a bundle of contradictions and unpredictabilities.

Persuading McPeak to rise above self-interest and the dregs of prejudice, is a ticklish problem for a lad of eighteen to handle, and Huey does not by any means handle it "correctly." His young, fervent, but almost mechanical aggressiveness keeps tripping and throwing him. In the end, however, we are persuaded that he is going to make out and go places according to his plans.

Although these two lives dominate the book, they alone do not account for its stature and authority. Maltz gives us at least a dozen other moving portraits, "minor" only in the sense that they occupy less space: Johnny Lauter, fighting to recapture respectability but hounded by the police because of his past prison record; Eddie Quinn, the alcoholic groping for a solution of the weakness that has ruined his life; Art Ballou, the anti-Negro, anti-social hoodlum; Alfrice Tilman, too complex to characterize in a phrase: Isaac Reeves, the level-headed, fatherly stone-mason and deacon; Varney's sympathetic but ineffectual lawyer, Combs; Lauter's wife, Huey Wilson's mother, Varney's sweetheart—three poignant sketches in a book of men deprived of women. The overall picture is that of a pitiless bureaucratic institution dedicated to saving taxpayers' money ("You hafta eat everything on your plate") and wasting human lives; a steel-and-concrete hive of potentially productive workers striving by every resource simply to "kill time," in obedience to the mediaeval objectives of a punitive system of "correction" correcting nothing.

Inevitably, the jail is seen as a microcosm of the United States in the post-war years, reflecting its problems, class—and race tensions, prejudices and contradictions, ambitions and despairs. In a masterly chapter called "The Wisdom of the Street and the Field," all sorts and conditions of men from all corners of the land shoot the breeze about work, politics, tattooed ladies, mules, and particularly about courts and judges and southern chain gangs

they have known. This has the utter credibility of a candid tape-recording combined with the poetry of deep feeling, and it contributes powerfully to the reader's sense that he has lived through a real experience. For example:

You know what I think of when I wake up every morning?" Doty asked the assemblage. "I think to myself, 'There's some poor guy doin his first day on the Nashville gang—God help him, God pity him, if there's a God in Heaven let Him look down!' " . . .

A deep bass voice in the assemblage cried out: "Brother, he's talkin true! I did ninety days on a Georgia gang. I seen things go on in that swamp that God Himself would turn His face from."

The critical detectives who pick-lock their way through this fictional jail will be delighted to find that, like all good books, this one has flaws. There is a creakiness about some of the dialogue that is surprising, since most of it rings so true. There is a touch of artificiality in the way the indecision of the white man, McPeak, is dramatized, the suspense prolonged. Some readers may object that the image of a black man giving his blood to a white man is no longer fresh. But even the most diligent sleuth would feel a fool to dwell on these and fail to savor the inspired truthfulness of the communication as a whole.

THE HIGH points of the book are many. Consider the accuracy of the scene in which Huey struggles, with all the awkwardness and fumbling of eager inexperience, to pin the wavering McPeak to a single clear intention. Or the poignancy of that in which Varney's lawyer, Combs, tries to put a good face on the future, only to come flat up against Varney's demoralized wail: "I can't pull that much time. It's too much." Or the excruciating suspense while Varney doggedly works at the instrument of his self-destruction. Or the moment when Alfrice Tillman allows himself to feel pity for a white man. Or the final page of the book, when Maltz introduces one of the most affecting and effective symbols in fiction—that of the firefly freely weaving in and out of the barred and darkened cells in which men lie awake craving light and freedom.

In this beautiful image the main theme of the novel is summed up—the unique preciousness of freedom, as thrown into relief by its deprivation. What more worthy theme can be found to express our time: a time of struggle against inquisition and unfreedom? *A Long Day in a Short Life* foreshadows, we hope, the convalescence of realistic American literature after an almost mortal ilness.

PHILIP STEVENSON

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## Appraisal of Injustice

IN THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION, by Alger Hiss. Alfred Knopf. $5.00.

THE PERIOD of the Cold War has been characterized by three great state trials in the United States —those of Alger Hiss, of the Communist Party leaders, and of the Rosenbergs. Of these the Hiss trial was the first to be concluded and, in a sense, it laid the basis for the others. For the verdict that Hiss was guilty put an of-

ficial stamp of approval on the two great lies of the past ten years—that the New Deal was Communist inspired and directed, and that the Communist Party was a conspiracy to commit espionage against the United States. These premises lie behind much of what has happened since.

It rarely happens that the victim of a such a state trial is able to write the story of his ordeal. Some, like Sacco and Vanzetti and the Rosenbergs, do not survive; others, like Mooney and Billings, are sentenced to long prison terms, where the writing of thoughtful books is difficult; still others, like Dreyfus, lack the understanding necessary to tell a significant story. But Mr. Hiss is still young and at liberty; he is unusually intelligent and exceptionally articulate; he is skilled at marshalling and presenting a complex factual picture. And he has written a convincing book which should help bring some sober re-appraisals in circles taken in by the hue and cry of the early '50's.

It is the burden of Hiss's book that he was innocent and he sustains his burden well and in detail. His story makes good reading, especially for those who enjoy accounts of courtroom trials. Starting with the first appearances before the House Committee on Un-American Activities and continuing through the proceedings before the Grand Jury, the first trial (in which the jury disagreed), the second trial, which resulted in a conviction, and the successive appeals, the proceedings are treated objectively, but there is drama inherent in the situation which cannot be concealed. Hiss argues that he was treated with gross unfairness by the House Committee and, especially, by Congressman Nixon, and that he was indicted primarily because the Committee and the prosecuting authorities exerted improper pressure on the Grand Jury. When he came to trial, his case had, in effect, been predetermined by the publicity he had received, so that it was impossible to find an impartial jury. He contends that the judge, at least in the second trial, seemed to favor the prosecution, and that the United States Attorney was unscrupulous in his appeals to the jury. Although the primary issue in his trials was that of his credibility, as against Chambers', and although it was obvious that Chambers was a self-admitted fantasist, Hiss was, nevertheless, convicted by the second jury, influenced as it was by a hostile press and the improper appeals of the prosecuting attorney. Finally, he says, when he presented almost conclusive evidence of Chambers' perfidy through a motion for a new trial, the court, unfriendly from the very beginning, denied his application.

About a third of the book is devoted to the proceedings before the Committee and an exceptionally vivid picture of its operations is presented. The fundamental unfairness of trial by inquisition, the helplessness of even the most intelligent witness in the face of hostile questioning by politically minded Congressmen, the difficulty in securing fair press coverage—all of this is most effectively told. The closing section of the book, which discusses the "forgery by typewriter," is well written and, like many other parts of the book, is quite exciting. That much of the evidence against Hiss was made of whole cloth seems clear; it is something which the American public, so widely deceived, should know.

With all of the interest which the

book carries, this reviewer nevertheless felt a sense of dissatisfaction. The story told by Hiss is surely only a part of the story and not the most important part. It is probably unfair to complain that the author wrote the wrong book but it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Hiss had an opportunity to make an important contribution to our understanding of the political climate of the years 1947-1950 and that he missed that opportunity. It is surely monstrous that an innocent man should have been convicted, not because of error or ignorance or carelessness, but through the design of important Government officials and for political reasons. How could this have happened in our country under our system of law? Hiss not only fails to answer this question; it is not even clear that he recognizes its existence.

From the very beginning, Hiss showed a degree of naivete difficult to understand in a man who presumably read the daily papers. He was sure that if the could get the chance to present all of the facts of the Committee, he would refute Chambers' fantastic story. When he belatedly realized that this was not true, he started a libel suit, again in the belief that in a court of law, the true facts would come out. Although a lawyer, his experience had been exclusively in the field of public law. He had never seen a jury trial; he was shocked when the first jury failed to acquit and the second jury actually convicted, in the face of clear evidence that he was telling the truth and that Chambers was lying. His astonishment continued through the appeals and the motion for a new trial.

To this reviewer, the most surprising thing about the Hiss case was that there were four men in the first trial who voted for acquittal. The trials took place at the very height of the Cold War. The first appearance before the Committee was more than a year after the passage of the Taft-Hartley Law; it was several weeks after the indictment of the Communist Party leaders in the first Smith Act case. The setting was just right for a monumental frame-up and that is exactly what happened. An analysis of why it happened and how it could be brought off in the United States (which is presumably democratic), governed by Anglo-American law (which presumably gives due process), and in full view of the press (which is presumably free), will have to wait.

That Hiss shoud have appealed from the courts of law to the court of public opinion is evidence of growing political maturity. Such a thought probably could not have occurred to him in 1948. His courageous defense of the principles of the New Deal. to which he devoted his public life, is further indication of his strong belief in a democratic America. Perhaps he will still come forward with a more searching work on the politics of the Cold War as it affected him and justice in this country.

VICTOR RABINOWITZ

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## A Brief for Top "Pop"

PANORAMA OF AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC, by David Ewen. Prentice-Hall, Inc. $5.95.

THE variegated, multi-colored phenomenon known as "American

Popular Music" reflects the diverse national roots and unique circumstances which have shaped all aspects of American culture. In terms of national background, there are two main influences:

First is the music of the British Isles. The songs of England and Scotland provided the main base for American music up to 1820 or thereabouts. Subsequently, this was gloriously enriched by a tuneful, rhythmic, uninhibited Irish tradition which played a most significant role. The second great influence is from a variety of African sources filtered through the experience of Negro slavery.

But if Africa and the British Isles constitute the most direct parentage, American popular music also owes its shape and form and idiom, in a lesser degree, to the music of France, Italy, Germany, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, Spain and, in more recent years, South America and the Caribbean.

As a result, our popular music includes such varied forms as traditional folk ballads, the Negro spiritual, minstrel songs and war songs, blues and jazz, swing, boogie-woogie, Calypso, rock and roll, union songs and singing commercias, the June-Moon-Croon ballads of Tin Pan Alley, the imitation folksongs emanating from Nashville, Tennessee and the songs of Hollywood and the Broadway musical stage.

While some studies have been made of folk song, jazz, and other important currents, too little has been written about the top "pop" in popular music; that is, the songs of Tin Pan Alley, the Broadway and Hollywood musical, and that extravagant fiction known as *The Hit Parade.* It is still this important aspect of our popular music which receives the greatest attention in David Ewen's *Panorama of American Popular Music.*

It has become fashionable in recent years to dismiss disdainfully the products of our "commercial" song-writers as weary cliches of tune and lyric. And at its worst our pop songs have been that and more. Jingoism, artificial sentimentality, racism, sexual suggestiveness and inanity have all too frequently been the revered earmarks of much of our commercial, popular music.

But to judge this music solely by its cheapest and drabbest output would be like judging American poetry by Edgar Guest or summing up an estimate of Hollywood by *The Bowery Boys Meet Frankenstein.* For at its *best,* our popular music has a captivating melodic quality, startling rhythms, inventiveness and an essentially American idiom which springs directly from the experience and history of our people. When it reaches the level of *Rhapsody In Blue, Night And Day, Star Dust, Old Man River* and productions like *Oklahoma, On The Town, Guys and Dolls* and *My Fair Lady,* it has indeed become popular art at its finest. The thinking person ignores or dismisses the work of George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Irving Berlin and dozens of other only at the peril of not understanding his country and his people.

In this sense, David Ewen's book provides the materials for beginning a more balanced estimate than heretofore of America's popular music. And while volumes can be written on those aspects which Ewen leaves virtually untouched—such as the tremendous influence of folk song on the present-day "pop" market; or the illuminating history of Negro popular music

of the twenties and thirties whose permanence was enshrined in the "race records" of Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, Big Bill Broonzy, and countless others —still, he serves to remind us that the tunesmiths and word-jugglers of Tin Pan Alley and Broadway have made a lasting contribution to popular art.

It is a book rich in both detail and anecdote, and its very recounting of song titles is bound to produce waves of nostalgia in readers past the age of twenty-one. For here are the stories and sketches of the songs and songwriters of half a century, from *After The Ball* and *Sidewalks of New York* through *Stormy Weather* and *It's Only A Paper Moon* to *The Last Time I Saw Paris* and *Standing On The Corner.*

Only on rare occasions, unfortunately, does Mr. Ewen rise above his mass of data. The growing monopoly domination of popular music outlets, revealed so dramatically a few weeks ago in the ASCAP charges against the publishers and broadcasting companies, is only lightly touched upon and hastily passed over in a few inadequate paragraphs. And yet, a thoughtful search into the known facts of growing centralization and outside control of the music publishing and record set-ups would go a long way toward enriching our understanding of how our popular songs become popular, and the causes for the recent marked deterioration of this significant cultural expression.

IRWIN SILBER

## Logical Empiricist

PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE: THE LINK BETWEEN SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, by Philipp Frank. Prentice-Hall. $8.00.

IN 1907 a young physicist-philosopher who had just received his PhD at the University of Vienna published an article entitled *Kausalgesetz und Erfahrung* ("Law of Causality and Experience").

This article attracted the attention of two men who were to achieve eminence in very different fields. Albert Einstein, from Switzerland, sent the author some comments and criticisms. A little later Lenin, writing *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* cited the article to illustrate the idealist character of the then new positivist philosophy of science of Mach and Poincaré.

Thus began the scholarly career of Philipp Frank, now climaxed a full half-century later in the volume at hand. From 1912 until he came to this country in 1938 he served as professor of theoretical physics at the University of Prague. After a lectureship in physics and mathematics at Harvard, he is today a visiting Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Professor Frank is a leading representative of that trend in philosophy known as logical empiricism, and is president of the Institute for the Unity of Science. He has written numerous articles and books, among them a full-length biography of Einstein.

His new book, *Philosophy of Science,* is the culmination of a life-time of academic labor. As a physicist-philosopher he brings exceptional training to a field so often preempted by physicists who know little philosophy and philosophers who know less physics.

The introductory chapters define science and philosophy and discuss their early unity and later divergence. Confining himself to the mathematical and physical sciences, Prof. Frank devotes

the bulk of his book to a comprehensive analysis of Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometry, Newtonian, relativistic and quantum physics, and their supposed philosophical implications. The concluding chapters examine causality, scientific method and the nature of scientific theory.

The treatment is rich in learning and illustration. It is relatively non-technical, although the subject-matter itself inevitably makes heavy demands upon the general reader.

Particularly valuable and interesting are the sections in which the author disposes of some current metaphysical misinterpretations of modern physics. A brief notice cannot even begin to do justice to the practiced skill and incisiveness with which he rescues relativity theory and quantum physics from the garden variety of idealist philosopher and scientist.

But this is only part of the story. Professor Frank in his introduction assigns a very ambitious task to his specialty. It is his view that the philosophy of science is the "missing link" required to repair "the deep rift between our advances in science and our failure in the understanding of human problems."

No one in the atomic age can doubt the seriousness of the rift. Nor need we belabor the obvious point that fundamental factors other than philosophy—such as the working class and people's struggle for peace and an end to atomic weapons—are required to heal it.

Marxists will agree, however, that a sound philosophy of science based on dialectical materialism can contribute significantly. But Philipp Frank's logical empiricism leads him to conclusions that can only impede such a contribution.

It is not only that his philosophic premises result in an even-handed rejection as "metaphysical" of both materialism and idealism. There is little, if any, evidence in the present volume of that common ground with dialectical materialism which he found in his paper on "Logical Empiricism and the Philosophy of the Soviet Union" at the 1935 Paris International Congress of Scientific Philosophy.

What is of more immediate concern is that today his premises lead him virtually to equate Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in their treatment of science. (See his article in *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* April, 1957.) Nor can it be other than bias which causes him to refer to the "fight against Einstein's Theory of Relativity in Soviet Russia" (*Philosophy of Science,* p. 355) without troubling to tell the readers, as he does do in the *Bulletin,* that in 1955 Soviet philosophers and scientists publicly rejected the earlier rigid and hostile attitude toward Einstein's contributions to physics.

The political climate of the past year may well have played some role in generating this bias. Not even philosophers are immune. But this apart, as a scholar living in a day of great change and re-examination, Professor Frank may want to put to himself certain basic philosophic questions which his new book suggests:

Has his concept of logical empiricism failed perhaps to keep pace with changes in thinking reflected in some of his colleagues—changes which indicate a rejection of earlier phenomenalist and mechanistic views?

Have these changes raised anew for logical empiricists the need to debate

the relative merits of logical empiricism and dialectical materialism as the basis for a sound philosophy of science?

Has the movement against dogmatism among Marxists made more possible a fruitful discussion between Marxist and non-Marxist philosophers of science?

ALBERT E. BLUMBERG

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## Henry Adams' Mind

THE MIND AND ART OF HENRY ADAMS, by J. C. Levenson, Houghton, Mifflin Co.. $6.00.

FOR MANY of us who came of school age when the most snobbish sections of the autobiographical *Education of Henry Adams* were standard anthology material Adams has always remained a bloodless, timorous and spoiled Boston Brahmin—the querulous and unworthy son of presidents and statesmen. It was with a frankly malicious pleasure that we endorsed the conclusion of the delightful quatrain:

> Hendy Adams long debated
> Whether he was educated.
> It took five hundred pages to give
> An answer in the negative.

But, like many of our other adolescent conclusions, this one too proves somewhat over-simple.

*The Mind and Art of Henry Adams* does not transform the superior and exasperating bore of my youth into a militant democrat or a congenial companion, but it does paint a convincing picture of the development of a rich, flexible and powerful, if still rather cold and irresponsible, mind.

In tracing the course of this development J. C. Levenson gives us a highly literate and illuminating summary of each of Adams' varied works. That involves much valuable background discussion, particularly in the two long chapters on "History" and "Modern Man in a Multiverse." The comparatively brief forty-four page chapter on "Interpretive Scholarship" is however of the greatest general interest in its stimulating analysis of the relations between specific factual discoveries, the sociological or other theories built upon them, and the underlying value systems of the scholars who do the building. Here also, as to some degree throughout the entire book, there are a number of fruitful by-the-way comments on the relation of verbal form to meaning in writing that belongs to the field of scholarship rather than to that of conscious art.

There are for the student of American life and letters many other items of special interest, like the generously quoted correspondence with Henry and William James, or the intimate glimpses of public figures from John Hay to Theodore Roosevelt.

Although the book's four hundred closely written pages naturally take for granted the merit and importance of their subject they are reasonably objective in tone, commendably candid in their full presentation of the facts about his often inconsistent or deplorable thoughts and actions, and no more sparing in criticism than any biographee has the right to expect of his biographer. In fact, the author's treatment of such distasteful topics as Adams' anti-Dreyfusard position or his enthusiasm for the Spanish-American war reminds one of Thoreau's dictum: "If you want to

now a man's faults don't go to his nemies. Go to those who love him. hey may not tell you, but they know." evenson not only knows but, with hatever decent under-emphasis or ctful mitigation he can provide, he oes tell us of Adams' less admirable well as of his more admirable attudes.

ANNETTE T. RUBINSTEIN

## Undismayed Exile

THE FRIGHTENED GIANT, by Cedric Belfrage. Secker and Warburg. $3.95.

WHEN THE late patriot and defender of the faith from Wisconn and his then aide-de-camp, Roy ohn, were breathing sulphurous fire all directions and laying waste hate'er they touched; when the plague as on the land and no man was safe his bed, among the victims who were en struck down by the awful majesty the law was a quiet man who is a issenter by temperament, a hellraiser y conviction, and a radical journalist y profession.

These may seem like terms of praise you, but to the Scourges they must ave seemed like the running sores of me particularly offensive disease. nd since this disease is also a virutently contagious one, its carrier had—the interest of the public health if ot the general welfare—to be exorcised om our midst. From the moment of at decision the melancholy story is miliar enough. Having already reused access to his private life against e demands of the New York Immigration Service and the House un-American Committee, Cedric Belfrage declined with his habitual insolence to provide faggots for McCarthy's auto da fé. Before the morning papers could convey the news, the Immigration people, acting with an almost intuitive suddenness, had prepared his deportation orders: it seems that not only did Belfrage run an opposition newspaper, but he wasn't even an American.

At this juncture in his life Belfrage begins his narrative, employing an interesting method to fine effect. Alternating chapters so that the illusion of flashback is created, so that the past and present merge, he moves between the present of his stay in the West Street jail (while his case was in the legal mill) to the events of the past which brought him there: his proud defiance of the late Senator, his "hearing" before the Immigration officer, his own history as an American journalist and his connection with *The National Guardian* as co-founder and editor, the great work of that paper in bringing the Rosenberg case to the world's horrified attention; and so on.

What we get is a bitter indictment of the subversion by the Washington primitives of the American tradition, an indictment that is at the same time a moving declaration of love for that tradition against whose betrayal he fought with all the strength and talent of his heart and mind—at the cost of imprisonment and exile.

Though it tells a grim, and sometimes tragic, story, *The Frightened Giant* is a lighthearted book, especially in the brilliant, compassionate, and often extremely funny sketches of life in a American prison and of the men who populate it, as seen from the

eagle's-eye view of the political prisoner, the ideological jailbird. It is a lighthearted book in the best sense, joyous in an unexpected way, for its author can be serious without solemnity-can see light in the darkness, is perceptive where there is the strongest temptation merely to recoil and withdraw; and everywhere there is the saving grace of humor, the sharp thrust of reason, the clarity of wit. If you've got to be in jail these are good qualities to have; and they are qualities which the benighted cannot extinguish with all their bars and cells. Though it was not the impulse which led him to write it, with this book Belfrage gets his own back.

WILKES STERNE

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## The Threat of Learning

THE CHALLENGE OF SOVIET EDUCATION, by George S. Counts. McGraw-Hill. $6.00.

PRESUMABLY this book is Dr. Counts' contribution to the present concern about the high level of Soviet education. The author of a number of books on the Soviet Union, Dr. Counts since his earlier studies has grown increasingly antagonistic to the aims and purposes of socialism.

This latest book appears to be in great part made up of materials collected many years ago as most of it is about Soviet education in the first decade or so after the Revolution. The material is, however, so inadequately organized and, like the rest of the book, so hedged about with the author's unsupported generaliations, that no very clear picture of this important period emerges.

Indeed so constantly is the reader directed to the sinister meaning of policies and programs throughout the book that at no point can he feel confident that he is being presented with accurate or really useful information. The whole tone of the book is that all too familiar one of outraged moralizing so universally common in books with an anti-Soviet bias. Facts, figures, care in the presentation of chronology, precision in the placing of event within their exact context (Dr. Counts, for instance, never bothers to relate changes in educational policy to the necessities of the war years), are replaced by sweeping statements, insistent denunciations, hypnotic repetition of certain words and phrases—the most frequent word is, of course, "totalitarian," that blessed word of the professional anti-Soviet author.

In Dr. Counts' book, as in all other books by similarly biased writers, the reader, suffocated by moralizing and denunciation, comes at last to ask in bewilderment for whom these books are intended. If there are enthusiastic readers for these books, they must be individuals with an infinite capacity for moral indignation. One can only think of the followers of some melodramatic revivalist whose appetites for the maniacal repetition of sin and doom are unassuagable.

When Dr. Counts does get down to cases he goes on at great length to prove that in a socialist society-shockingly enough!—people are indoctrinated with the principles of socialism. With more fervor than clarity Dr. Counts demonstrates that the teaching of socialist values is confined not only to

students in the educational system, but is also one of the chief preocupations of Red Army training, and that it is also a constant feature of newspapers, poems, novels, plays, etc. Dr. Counts gets very much worked up over the fact that all intellectuals in the Soviet Union are expected to reflect these values in all phases of their work.

In the general introduction to his book Dr. Counts has the following to say: "From the moment the Bolsheviks consolidated their rule over the Russian Empire they have employed the full force of education not to maintain the status quo, but to change the course of history and the nature of man. Here is one of the ineluctable facts of the contemporary world."

This "ineluctable" facts seems so to have bewildered Dr. Counts that the rest of the book is little more than a long-winded and muddled demonstration of how the Soviet government has attempted to realize this goal.

The reader who does not share Dr. Counts taste for denunciation may long have put down the book before he gets to the final section in which the author surprisingly expresses considerable admiration for the impressive scale of Soviet educational achievement.

Dr. Counts is, after all, an educator and an outstanding authority on education. The extraordinary record of the wiping out of illiteracy in the Soviet Union, the rapid development of highly trained personnel in an always increasing volume, the application of a universal education system which will by 1960 provide a ten-year schooling for everybody in the country calls forth his awed and unwilling praise.

This wholly unexpected conclusion in which Dr. Counts recognizes the magnificent achievement of Soviet education recalls such earlier books of his as *The Soviet Challenge to America,* published in 1931. In this book he offered the then achievements of the Soviet government as both a challenge and an inspiration to an America floundering in the depths of depression.

In 1957 Dr. Counts, still deeply impressed by the massive achievement of Soviet education, chooses to see this landmark in man's struggle for consciousness as merely a threat. But to substantiate this claim a quite different book would have to be written in which indignation, moralizing and dark prophesy would have to be replaced by fact and history. From the uneasy final pages of his book the reader gathers that even Dr. Counts is dimly aware of this.

MURRAY YOUNG

# Letters

Editors, *Mainstream*:

There is growing talk in influential circles of modifying the embargo on trade with China. As far as Chinese-USA relations go, commerce seems to be catching up with poetry. For this commodity—verse—has been shipped back and forth with growing volume since the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

When my own *Sonnets of Love and Liberty* was published in China, I was asked to recommend other poets for publication there.

I now have a note in hand from the editor of *I-Wen* (Foreign Literature) which informs me that the April issue has poems by five poets I recommended —Alfred Kreymborg, Thomas McGrath, Eve Merriam, Martha Millet, Kenneth Rexroth. Other poets. whose work I suggested, ranging from Aaron Kramer to William Carlos Williams are under consideration.

The editor, Mr. Chen Ping-Yi adds that *I-Wen* is deeply thankful for the contributions poets are making toward furthering cultural relations between China and the United States.

Any poet interested in reaching a potential audience of one out of every four inhabitants of the globe might get in touch directly with *I-Wen,* P.O. Box 40, Peking, China.

Or, if preferred, write me in care of this publication. I am not a "foreign agent." I just believe that poetry can go where politicians fear to. Poems can help people understand each other, I believe. And that helps create moods of peace rather than war.

WALTTER LOWENFELS