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THE NOBLE MONEY-MAKERS

BARBARA GILES

'ARM-LOCKED lovers, wandering along the dark streets, would look up in awe at the square pinpoints of light that burned into the arkness of the Tower. 'Sure, honey, that's old Bullard himself up there ight now. They say he never goes home. Some nights he works right hrough. You know what? The other day I saw him getting out of his ar. I swear to God I was so close to him I coulda reached out and touched im.'"

Would you care to guess the identity of the man whose nocturnal ibors inspire lovers to such quaint passages of lyricism? A scientist, erhaps, lingering in his lonely laboratory to coax a reluctant miracle rom the test tubes? A great newspaper editor with a crusading passion or his work? The chief of a mighty labor union? . . .

No, innocent reader, this is the new hero of American fiction, the orporation president—in this case a manufacturer of fine furniture sold verywhere in stores patronized by people of discriminating tastes. No, e is *not* a George F. Babbitt or a robber baron. He is the tender creation f Cameron Hawley, a writer whose *Executive Suite,* published in 1952, narked the first notable response to a call from *Fortune* for novels that ight serve as pedestals for the restored statues of America's "industrial atesmen" which had been rather nastily scribbled upon by Dreiser, Frank Norris, Sinclair Lewis, and fellow-vandals.

One can only guess at the private reactions to Mr. Hawley's effort on ne part of certain pedestal-builders in the non-fiction field—the publicity xperts of big business, for example, who might have felt with consider- ble justification that the smallest "human interest" story from their ffices contained more of the flavor of *belles-lettres* than the whole of Hawley's earnest creation. However, the latter was well received by the ook reviewers, who are supposed to know about such things, and the

author followed it three years later with *Cash McCall,* the story of a dash ing young man who buys, sells, and merges factories, flies his own con verted B-26, and brilliantly convinces his dazzled fiancee that she coul not love her Cash so much loved he not cash still more.

Also in 1955 there appeared *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit,* b Sloan Wilson, whose ostensible hero, a simple $10,000-a-year man, i brought into eye-opening contact with a multi-millionaire boss dedicate to doing "the big jobs of the world" in grim and lonely selflessness, a well as John O'Hara's *Ten North Frederick,* which seems designe to prove beyond reasonable doubt that wealthy lawyers to the industria great are born, grow up, marry, have children, and die, all in the sam unstruggling dullness as did their fathers before them.

A somewhat different view of the world depicted in the foregoin is furnished by John P. Marquand in *Sincerely, Willis Wayde* (1954) a gently derisive portrait of a successful, modern-type Babbitt, whose pe sonality and life story would have made Lewis' lusty protagonist yawn— a reaction that some readers may feel inclined to share. Finally, there *The Durable Fire* by Howard Swiggett, published this year, wherei "gentlemen" fight it out with the cads and the less fine-grained in th highest reaches of a great corporation.

Altogether there's been quite an unlocking of office doors and confe ence room by American novelists, who on the whole haven't been prev ously inclined to pry into a character's actual income, much less h means of acquiring it. "Literature-wise," as the Willis Waydes say, th bedroom has been far less sacred.

Yet in addition to the books already mentioned, we have had withi the past three years two fictional treatises on the big business world radio and TV—*The Great Man* by Al Morgan and *The Last Angry Ma* by Gerald Green, both in the nature of exposé—besides a novel, Edwi O'Conner's *The Last Hurrah,* dealing with the moneyed shenanigans big-time politics in an American city. Of course neither Madison Aven nor Hollywood is a new continent to novelists; the fictional explorati of these cultural regions constitutes a subject for a whole, separate discu sion. For the present we shall examine only the first six novels liste above, all appearing in this decade and all but one providing a "fre view" of the corporation lion in his native daytime habitat. While *T Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* technically belongs among the cultura media treatises, since its great man is a radio-network president, t medium hardly comes into the book and he is shown working at oth projects. *Ten North Frederick* has an attorney for hero, but he is inseparable part of the industrial and financial elite of his city; this nov

however, does differ from the other five under discussion in that it focuses on wealth and position in the lives of its characters, but rarely penetrates the actual walls of the executive suite as the others do.

True, none of these writers has opened forbidden cupboards or peeked into files that *Fortune* would not be happy to publish. Still a certain realism, however perverted, has been introduced in the very recognition that the struggles which engage a man for most of his waking hours are not unrelated to his character and private life or to the life of the world around him.

OF COURSE, when the struggles are a worker's, described from a worker's viewpoint, such novels are usually called propaganda. When the subject is big business, described from that viewpoint, they are usually called novels. (Propaganda for big business, in non-fictional form, is usually called "public relations.") By keeping such distinctions in mind we may avoid any upsetting suspicion that leaders of industry and finance are trying to seize the slogan "Art is a weapon"—an attempt that would, in any case, require some redefinition of the word art, to judge by the results offered thus far. It is an interesting fact, by the way—we draw no conclusions from it—that the most plausible effects in these novels are achieved when the story is carried through an employee, though a highly expensive one, while Cameron Hawley's works, featuring integrated millionaires, have the artistic persuasiveness of a billboard ad.

Not that Mr. Hawley's efforts can be dismissed in a sentence. Aside from the fact that one has been made into a movie and another is a Literary Guild selection, they provide a harrowing but instructive example of the problems of a writer who, furnished with a Message, a milieu, and a set of characters, cannot fit the three together into any natural pattern and must resort to the sort of carpentry and gilding possible only to those who have progressed far, far beyond the do-it-yourself kits. Whatever else happened, the Message had to be kept intact. This was accomplished by attaching it securely to the company president and, for good measure, nailing a duplicate onto a young vice-president. So placed, the Message stands out quite clearly: America's builders and saviors are the creative geniuses at the head of big business. But there still had to be a plot, there had to be suspense, conflict, bad men as well as heroes. So the author fashioned five additional vice-presidents and then posed a question —who among these five, plus the young Messenger, will become head of this fine furniture company, since its grand old man, the president, has died in the first chapter?

Now *please* don't say, "The young Messenger, of course." You would

be right but it wouldn't be fair to the author. The failure of suspense is not such an important fault here, and it is far from the most important. Mr. Hawley's real problem was how to set up a good rousing ethical-moral conflict among these characters, who live for the sales chart, the production schedule, and the dividend, and who seem as ambitious, narrow-minded, and crafty a lot as can be found in any legalized branch of piracy. They are not villains, however. As their creator views them, they merely lack a larger vision to convert them too into builders and saviors; and when this vision is finally unfolded to them by the young hero, who has inherited it from the dead president, lo, they cast out pettiness and greed, and rise to the Message. The slogan, "Raise the dividend," is out. From now on it is build, build, *build.* If they will but try, the hero challenges them, their company can get fifteen per cent of the whole furniture business: "Fifteen percent and the Tredway Corporation will be five times as big as it is today!" Could any vision be more exalted?

We won't expose you to the details of Mr. Hawley's attempt to wring tears and heartbreak, as well as excitement and triumphs, from such a situation and such characters. Even when it comes to the qualities that made the old man great, a subject in which the author obviously feels safest, he often has to fall back upon a type of rhetoric familiar enough in the flower-strewn fields of sentimental fiction but usually applied to rather different objects. ("There was no sword edge in his voice now, but it had lost none of its exciting quality. It was the voice of strength and power, of integrity and purpose, of fearless imagination that leaped skyward with the same magic that the rising sun streaked the sky over Lake Michigan, setting even the water aflame.") As for the young hero, there *is* no way of describing him adequately since no matter what one says there remains the *je ne sais quoi* beyond words—"as a Beethoven Symphony is beyond explaining with the rules of harmony, or a Cezanne painting with a recital of the theories of composition."

In manufacturing, of course, these Beethovens and Cezannes must employ men and women in rather large numbers to turn out the compositions for them, though that is not exactly the way Mr. Hawley puts it. The workers in *Executive Suite,* who get small mention of any kind, are the unappreciative but contented beneficiaries of the great man's genius and sense of *noblesse oblige,* which has provided them with jobs ("and pay checks," the author notes) through good times and bad.

But it is not to be supposed that there are no outright villains in the big-money world of *Executive Suite.* There is one. This is the man—not a vice-president, a financier—who, upon seeing the president drop dead, rushes to phone his stockbroker to sell the company short before the

news hits the market. According to Mr. Hawley's account, every other businessman who hears of this maneuver is seized with revulsion and horror and the scoundrel is actually knocked flat on his back by the righteous fist of a gentleman! I am told that this was too much even for Hollywood, which revised the incident along with some other too palpable absurdities.

IS IT possible—the question may have occurred to you too—that secretly the author harbors a delicious sense of parody that couldn't resist the opportunity suggested by *Fortune's* concept of a novel about business? We are afraid not. Children often effect a *reductio ad absurdum* of their parents' directions by over-literal and over-extensive application, sometimes innocently and sometimes with intent. An unmistakable note of earnestness in Mr. Hawley's guff indicates that he is innocent. And if there remains any suspicion of kidding in *Executive Suite,* there should be none concerning *Cash McCall,* which adds to earnestness a jungle-plot of financial dealings and counter-dealings requiring from the author an amount of study and labor that no man would torture himself with for the sake of a joke. In addition Mr. Hawley, flushed with the success of his first book, has taken on some problems of human emotion that were skirted in *Executive Suite,* with such results as: ". . . she forced her mind to accept the flesh-bite of her tightened brassiere as the iron-banded curbing of apprehension." Surely there are less painful ways of fashioning a hoax.

The hero of *Cash McCall* is a bold advance over the grand-old-man type. Where the latter deprecated money as "just a way of keeping score," Cash says engagingly, "Making money . . . that's my business. And I get a wallop out of it." A handsome, reckless fellow, whose profile has appeared in the illustrations of a children's book titled *The Knight of the Hawk,* Cash can make two millions in one day and lose a million the next without pausing in his monologue on the identity of the profit system with free enterprise with "the very foundation of our way of life." In his buying, selling and merging, he has accumulated so many corporations of his own that a mere factory has become a "trinket," and when he bestows his affections upon the daughter of a man from whom he has purchased such a bauble for a bagatelle of two millions she is divided between ecstasy at his condenscension and terror that she will never learn to imitate his table manners in the matter of proscuitto ham and melon.

Naturally such a man has his enemies. There are ministers who just won't realize (or won't say) that "Our whole Western civilization is

based on the profit motive," and continue to preach against the pursuit of riches; there are even Colleges of Business Administration whose deans regard industrialists as heartless and try to "evangelize students into government bureaus." And there are the "operators" in business itself. These last, the truly deadly foes, are the "chiselers and gougers" of Cash's world, "the sharpies and tax-money boys," who stalk a faltering company in order to pounce upon it and finagle around with the tax base to their own profit and the company's death. While the author holds that the anti-industrialist deans and the operators are equally low ("both *destroyers*"), his description of the latter's methods is infinitely more detailed and convincing. We wonder, in fact, whether he realizes just how convincing he has been concerning this particular area of business in which—just for example—"consultants" and "advisers" provide their clients with dossiers on the confidential dealings and even the tape-recorded private conversations of rival executives, and dog-eat-dog is less a cliche than a fact of life.

Mr. Hawley draws his own implication from this, that we should all the more appreciate men like McCall who operates in a high-minded way, loving to dispense little treats of happiness and justice before pocketing the gold. At one point the crooks nearly close in on our hero and, while he routs them, the experience stirs up an unsuspected bit of Hamlet in his soul, causing him to ask what is the *point* of his activities, what does it all matter. . . . ? At this fateful moment his girl finds her voice, which has been wandering around in a maze of "It's all so wonderful," and "Don't ask me, just tell me," and lo, it is *she* who unfolds the vision: "It does matter! . . . There are so many people dependent on you —so many hundreds of them—all the men out at the plant . . . so many of them and so few of you—and they need you so much! . . ." Thus the knight of the hawk is brought back from the cloudland of introspection, not to be returned to the kiddies' books but to go forth again in his golden armor, knowing his kind to be the hope of the workers as well as the pride of Wall Street. The workers themselves haven't been consulted, but employees in Mr. Hawley's books aren't paid to think and in any case they couldn't understand a man like Cash. Even his fiancee, when asked how she knows what he's been thinking, can only reply, "Because I love you." On that basis, no worker will be able to read Cash's mind in a hundred years.

WITH SOME relief we turn to *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, a relatively well-written and unspectacular narrative of a man's life in the public-relations department of big business. Tom Rath earns

$10,000 a year—a sum that wouldn't pay for a Hawley hero's laundry—by burnishing the good name of a broadcasting-network president whose yearly salary alone is $200,000. For most of the novel the latter's character is a mystery. The focus is on Tom and his wife, Betsey, and Mr. Wilson has done quite a job on the peculiar problems of middle-class Americans who, possessed of an income denied to 95 percent of this nation's families, live in the fear, tension, and frustration of "the money problem." The mortgage on the new home outlasts the plaster, the home becomes inadequate for growing children, the kids are too much work and expense to be enjoyed, and the communal awareness of work and expense pervades social gatherings like the presence of a corpse in the house.

When Tom inherits from his grandmother a really large home in the country and starts on his new job, things get worse. The larger house brings larger problems, and the job is a daily horror, consisting of an endless writing and rewriting of a single speech for the radio president to deliver to a convention of physicians who, it is hoped, will then call upon him to head a National Health Committee. Each time Tom revises, his immediate superior in the publicity agency says it's awful and for God's sake do it again—until the president himself takes a hand, after which there are still more revisions. The final result, which wins over the doctors, is too truly awful to quote, although Mr. Wilson evidently thinks otherwise.

As a picture of the idiocies that go on inside a public-relations office (we are already acquainted with those inflicted upon the public), this is the most realistic portion of the novel and for a brief while we thought perhaps the author was going to do a full exposé along these lines. For a longer while it seemed as though he might cut under the surface of the Raths' baffled pondering on their disappointment with life. Why, for example, when they were young had they "always expected to be rich some day"? From where do such promises come? And why, having found them to be fake, do the Raths, like others on their suburban street, become trapped in the very disillusionment that should stir them into questioning something besides their own seeming inadequacies?

But then, why ask questions? The author has the answer to his characters' problems, and he pulls it from his sleeve just when all seems lost. And the answer—lo, again!—is once more the Great Man, in this case the radio president. All Tom had to do was speak honestly to him, and Mr. Hopkins speaks honestly right back. It then develops that Hopkins, an "authentic business genius," really *wants* to do something about other people's mental health, he's not kidding around for pub-

licity; and once Tom's mind is cleansed of cynical misgiving, life turns into a cornucopia. He becomes Hopkins' personal assistant and loves working for such an "awfully good guy," a man who "drives people and makes them like it." Fortified by the success of honesty, Tom then comes clean with Betsey about an illegitimate son he fathered in Italy during the war and, after one tantrum, she consents to his supporting the child so his conscience is happy. And, just by way of lagniappe, a threat to break his grandmother's will is finally disposed of.

However, when Hopkins proposes to train him into a big executive like himself, Tom has another problem. Does he want to take on that crucifying dedication, which may cost a man his family, his friends, and his health? Unlike Hopkins he was not afflicted in early childhood with a work-compulsion that a psychoanalyst spent five years vainly trying to cure. After considerable thought he confesses with boyish candor that he'd love the money that goes with such a position but he doesn't want to sacrifice himself to death for it. The great man then lets loose with a little speech that reveals more about the big-business mentality than everything that's been written before: *"Somebody has to do the big jobs.* This world was built by men like me! To really do a job, you have to live it, body and soul! You people who just give half your mind to your work are riding on our backs!"

One would expect a little more modesty from a person in addressing a man who has to write his speeches for him—especially when that man's "body and soul" were used for four years in fighting for a world that he never suspected was built by the Hopkinses, whose biggest "big job" has been to control a mass medium dedicated to convincing the public that the best cultural brain-washing is done with brand-name soaps. The question of who's riding on whose backs in America today could also take a little discussing. But if the reader looks for anything like that from Mr. Wilson he will be disappointed. The hero's response to the tirade above is "I know it," and nothing is disturbed in Hopkins' lovely new arrangement for Tom to take a less pretentious executive job that will even solve his commuting problem. With a boss whose heart is read aright, a little honesty goes a long way. You can make $10,000 a year and still be happy.

IN *Sincerely, Willis Wayde* the attempt is made to show how a corporation great man gets that way. Not born to high positions, Willis climbs on the rungs of single-mindedness, opportunism, conformity, and imitation. At the age of fifteen he chooses for his model his father's boss, president of the Harcourt belting mill, who helps him through Harvard

Business College and gives him his first job. Industrious and competent, he rarely has to commit himself beyond "Yes, sir," and "No, sir." Later in life, changing jobs for better ones, acquiring stocks and executive positions, he learns to tell the "right joke" at business conventions, to "bring family into" certain financial discussions and a "mention of death" into others; to express jocularity by saying "a tetch of" and "severial"; to win clients by seeing the same musical comedy eight times if necessary; and never, never to neglect a "good contact" even if it means sacrificing the first evening of his honeymoon. His success is a triumph of mediocrity where the mediocre is most appreciated.

Ironically, the triumph brings with it Willis' greatest defeat, that of his lifelong ambition to "be like the Harcourts." Early in the book his father, an invaluable mechanic in the Harcourt mill, warns him: "You watch it, Willis. You keep on trying to be something you aren't and you'll end up a son of a bitch. . . ." This prediction is presumably fulfilled when Willis acquires the mill as part of his own industrial empire and then reneges on his promise to the Harcourt family to keep it going, no matter what, for the sake of the workers. Old man Harcourt, Marquand makes clear, would never have done that: he was a gentleman, an old-time paternalistic employer with a sense of *noblesse oblige* that is beyond the comprehension of climbers like Willis, who probably couldn't fit it into the modern great-corporation setup in any case.

Within this irony is another, apparently not intended by the author: that the only time Willis appears to any advantage is in contrast with the Harcourts, whose snobbish complacency makes his blundering attempts to copy their etiquette and manner of dress seem more touching than absurd—rather like his efforts to absorb culture through fifteen-minute daily sessions with Dr. Eliot's Five Foot Shelf. When Bess Harcourt, the most arrogant of the family, gives him his come-uppance at the end of the book, puncturing his own complacency, we are almost inclined to sympathize with Willis, whose crime is not, as it is implied, that he has aspired to something beyond his birthright and betrayed his betters. He has learned from them only too well the basic attitude that status rests upon the amount of power a man can achieve over his fellowmen.

There are amusing as well as enlightening touches in the story of Willis' rise, which is told with the professional smoothness one usually gets from Marquand. But smoothness can be dull too, when the story runs long and slow while the author burdens the current with naturalistic detail (who cares that Willis met his girl on "the southwest corner of 55th Street and Fifth Avenue"?) and the small thoughts of "big men."

At times Mr. Marquand seems to forget that it is Willis, not he, who is supposed to be a bore.

Ten North Frederick has professional smoothness too, but when Mr. O'Hara sets out to describe a bore he doesn't bother to report any words or thoughts. He simply states that this character is a bore, repeats the fact in the two following sentences, adds that she has led a life of normal activities—listing them in a longish paragraph—and concludes in three more sentences that she has nothing to say and is a bore. The character, having been held limply in view for a half-page with the author proclaiming her label, then vanishes from the book. True, she's a very minor character; but so many of the characters seem minor, not excepting the central one. Concerning him, the author says on the last page: "There is here, in the biography of Joe Chapin, nothing that could not have been seen or heard by the people whose lives were touched by Joe Chapin's life. Whatever he thought, whatever he felt, has always been expressed to or through someone else, and the reader can judge for himself the truth of what the man told or did not tell."

Joe Chapin does not tell very much. Son of a wealthy man, with social status and high professional standing, he leads a "good life" morally and materially, establishing a successful law practice, marrying a girl of his class, and becoming prominent enough to aspire, though somewhat naively, to a Presidential nomination. Yet before he is sixty he quietly drinks himself to death. He has never had the things he wanted most: his political party, after accepting his five-figure "contribution," denies him even a nomination for lieutenant-governor; his two children turn out to be near-delinquents; and finally he sacrifices a love-affair on the altar of fidelity only to discover that his wife has had her own affair. Whether or not he realizes the full corruption of her character or the extent of her domination over him is one of those things that O'Hara leaves for "the reader to judge for himself."

It may be unfair to the author but one can't help thinking of what Scott Fitzgerald would have done with this same material. At the least he would have given it motion and feeling—elements of tenderness, detestation, moral insight, and the color of personality and character. *Ten North Frederick* is a dogged chronicle, much of it reading like a catalogue—of "types," daily activities, and inanimate objects—with an occasional gaudy page illustrating the sexual items. Often it is difficult to tell whether O'Hara is simply attempting to portray the dullness of life among the local power elite or whether he is so fascinated by its material richness that sheer enumeration of its details seems to him

sufficient. Even the documentary value is slight, since little is turned up in the realm of ideas and behavior that isn't exhausted, except for Mrs. Joe Chapin's lesbian past and nymphomaniac tendencies. By virtue of being the most complicated character in the book she is the most interesting. As for Joe, the novel opens with his funeral, slowly recreating him in ensuing chapters, and rarely have we seen a better application of the old reviewing cliche that a character "fails to come alive."

With *The Durable Fire* by Howard Swiggett we return to the environs of *Executive Suite,* but there has been a distinct change in heroes, as a bit of dialogue between Swiggett's vice-president, formerly of the Foreign Service, and his wife will illustrate:

"Why is Franco smiling so in this [photograph]? Has he just shot a nesting ortolan at three paces?"

"As it happens, he was admiring the famous General Motors two and a half ton, six by six. It was just before I told him I drove one for the Loyalists."

How did *this* man get into a big-business novel? How, for that matter, did he ever get into the Foreign Service, from which he goes to Continental Industries, a firm that sells heavy machinery and construction to the world in annual dollar totals of "several thousand times . . . seventy-five thousand"? But premature anti-fascism is only one of Stephen Lowry's oddities. He is writing a book on the sly titled, heaven help us, "The Principal Errors of Judgment of Rulers and Peoples since the Reformation," a project encouraged by his foreign-born (Estonian) wife, who has a record in the Norwegian Resistance and prefers reading to playing contract bridge. And at the age of forty, without a penny besides his savings, he informs his prospective boss during the interview for his job with Continental Industries that he thinks business should be "fun."

We should love to go on with this list, but there isn't any more. When these two eccentrics of the vice-presidential world settle down in their Long Island mansion they settle like concrete. In private they continue to be a little catty about the stuffed shirts and wives of same among their new acquaintances, but one feels that the heart has gone out of it. At Continental Industries, life is real, life is earnest, and to what end does a man survive fascist bombs, or his wife a fate worse than death from Red Army invaders, if not to learn that the important people don't live at Gramercy Park anymore and that it's better for one's business reputation not to go swimming naked no matter how dark the night?

Still harsher problems test the Lowrys: what to do upon discovering

that one's best friend and fellow-vice-president has embezzled $50,000 of good old Continental's funds; how to get rid of a new president who is "not a gentleman but pretends to be one," a character who nearly wrecks the company. The tests are passed—superbly—but it isn't fun, it's hell. And what does Stephen get for all his sweat and anguish? Well, by damn, *he* gets a vision and it's as pretty as any dreamt up by Cameron Hawley: a vision of "the unbounded future of industrial America," of "a great company besides himself who, having been born men, were unwilling to die as grocers," men with "the relentless purpose still to seek and find wisdom and beauty in spite of the din of the market place. *Ardent the struggle, splendid the prize!*" (Author's italics.)

A more piquant idea is provided near the end, when Stephen confides the secret of his splendid character to the company head. The "great builder of character," he says, ". . . is a happy marriage." That's just modesty, however, since the author has already made it clear that character first built the happy marriage, the Lowry's being possessed of that boundless wholesomeness about love that makes a marital relationship like peaches and cream over cornflakes. It is harder to classify their dialogue—the range of tone is as wide as the range of popular literature—though affectionate banter rather predominates. When he says he needs a book that she had planned to give away, she answers: "Then my little bookworm shall have it and his mummy will cut the pages for him, as soon as he gets her a drink and gives her a big kiss." We don't see why this lady keeps brooding at odd moments over what the Red Army has done to her. She's lucky that nobody has bashed in her pretty head.

ASIDE from *Sincerely, Willis Wayde*, which sketches in some idea of growing merger-and-monopoly, along with a picture of the newer and slicker ways of self-promotion in business today, these novels do not reveal anything of big business in its relation to the rest of America or of the world. It is given no role in politics and it can't be fitted into any broad framework of the economy since no framework is provided. The people who buy its products and the people who make them are equally absent. When a labor union is mentioned, it's to show that the management is up-to-date as well as benign.

So what's left on the canvas? Pictures of the inner sanctum, of "character conflicts" in administration, an archaic melodrama of good men versus bad played in the streamlined suites of modern executive offices. Perhaps we can find some significance in the authors' concept of good and bad? Yes, we can: we find it significant that the concept follows so closely upon the thesis propounded by Prof. Allan Nevins, chief restorer

of "industrial statesmen" to pedestals in history, that the robber baron was far outnumbered by the great and good. We also think it interesting, at least, that these great and good are either so well-born or so educated in the ways of gentlemen that when a corn-fed Babbitt appears among them, as in *The Durable Fire,* or a man with a "night-school diploma" (*Executive Suite*), he must be put in his place. We don't know just how much significance to attach to the repeated implication that if it weren't for so much impeccable character in leadership, industry could easily become a shambles and a scandal. Personally, we feel it's a pretty dangerous idea to spread around—you never know how many people have learned something about that area of character from sources outside the storybooks.

EYE OF THE FURNACE

PHILLIP BONOSKY

This is a chapter from a work in progress.—The Editors.

JOE JOMAITIS saw them enter the Yard together. There were three of them: Superintendent Eakkins he recognized; it was the other two at whom he cast a cold look. They were in their middle twenties—white young faces, shirts that were as white as their faces, and they were wearing suits with no vests. The pockets of their coats gleamed with the ends of brass-tipped pencils and pens. But what brought the gall into his mouth, and the first surge of panic into his stomach was the tablet each carried clipped to a board—and the stop-watch cuddled in the curved palm of their left hands.

Joe felt a burning shiver spiral down his leg—not a quick shiver, a slow, seeking one that slid like a deliberate snake searching out every part of his body, and settling finally in his legs around the ulcers that burned there and slowly began to freeze the whole leg.

The man next to him jerked his head and spat a juice that hit the new-made iron molds and sizzled: "Bulova Bulldogs!" he said, with contempt.

The two boys must have still been sitting in class-rooms at Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh, or at their own college in Tuboise, Turpin College, three months ago. Now they followed Mr. Eakkins into the yard, listening with attentive smiles as he emphasized a point, his head nodding, his finger chopping the air quickly until finally it stayed down on a last chop, and the three all laughed together.

They were waiting for the next cast. Eakkins had introduced oxygen directly into the super-heated air of the blast furnace, raising the temperature even higher than before. The night-turn had just begun, the yard was quiet, men stood with twenty-foot iron poles in their gloved hands,

waiting; the first and second helpers were ready to throw the switch that would bring the "gun" to bore through the clay-clogged vent; the melder brought his eye close to the peep-hole and peered through his blue glass at the inferno inside the great brick pots. He was nervous—even more than the others. He knew his furnace like his wife; this was the first time that the heat would be cast a half hour earlier. This meant that in this single eight-hour shift, if nothing went wrong, a completely extra cast could be made. And everything would step up—everything would go faster.

Mr. Eakkins came up behind him and peered through his own glass over the melder's shoulder, and stepping back, George Shaming, the melder, bumped into him. He turned with a curse, but seeing Eakkins barely apologized: "Didn't see you."

"That's all right, George," Eakkins said. "How's it coming?"

"It's coming," Shaming said, with a frown.

Eakkins laughed and hit him reassuringly on the shoulder: "Don't worry! Everything was taken into consideration. It takes $10 million more to replace—" He leaned his head back so that the two who followed him could also hear—"a stove like that! We can't afford to do that and we can't afford to let it produce at the old rate." He spread his hands. "So," and he tapped his forehead, "we throw the old gray stuff in!"

He handed his glass to the taller of the two, who stepped forward alertly, squinted conscientiously into the furnace, where he saw a tremendous glow—a yellow molten fire, with pennants of flame: a caged sun.

Mr. Eakkins said to the other one: "Bob, we've got a worry-wart here," he indicated Shaming who was nervously trooping around the other peepholes. Bob looked at him and smiled.

"Would you say it was ready to cast, sir?" the first boy said, stepping away from the hole and handing his glass to Bob, who then also looked.

"Yes, I certainly would," he answered.

"Well, then—"

"Why don't I order the cast?" Eakkins laughed. "I have to let Shaming do that—he's responsible, you know. He'd run me out of here if I overstepped my authority," he said with a broad smile. "It's no secret—" he added, winking and lowering his voice exaggeratedly, that he's agin it—been agin it; more work of course for him. It's not even the bonus he gets—'" He laughed, and straightened up. "Now you two just go ahead. Get it all down. The union's going to howl when news gets to it that we're getting an extra heat out of these old stoves—" He kicked the side of the one he was standing by as though it stood in his own kitchen.

He cast a glance at Joe passing by, and waited until he had gone out of earshot before adding, "So we've got to be there fustest with the bestest figures!" He prodded the second man, whom he now called, "Dale —your figures: they'll be asking for a bonus, for wage adjustments or whatnot. We want the figures—but we want them *accurate!*"

"Yes, sir," Dale said.

"Take a look at your man, Bob," Mr. Eakkins said, bending his mouth down to Bob's ear. "There he is over there—that oldish fellow. See him?" Bob nodded. "He's got quite a history here. One of the original radicals of the plant; helped set up the union—"

"How come he's still working, sir?"

Eakkins studied Bob for a minute, and then said ironically: "Is it possible that we've gone so far from the days when the Wagner Act, President Roosevelt, NLRB, the LaFollette Committee—" he laughed.

"I'm quite informed on that, sir," Bob said.

"You are?" Eakkins was surprised.

Dale added quietly: "Lectures, sir."

Eakkins studied them again and asked: "What did you major in?"

"Industrial engineering," said Bob, and "Industrial psychology," said the other.

Eakkins was silent for a long moment, and then he gave Bob a pat on the shoulder, turned, and on his way out stopped to exchange a few words with Shaming.

The two engineers hesitated for a moment before stepping alone into the arena. Then, with a laugh and a shrug, Bob nodded and advanced with quick, efficient steps toward Joe.

Joe saw him coming, and turned his head.

"My name," he heard the clipped voice declare, "is Bob Bacon." Joe turned his head back. A young man was holding out a clean white hand, and there was a smile of fellowship on his face. Joe ignored the hand and said: "You get goggles—get safety hat, you get hurt!"

Surprised, almost as though he had not expected language from him, Bob said: "What?"

Joe tapped his head. "Get hat—you get hurt!"

Bob smiled with relief. "Thanks for briefing me, old timer!" He stepped back a little. "I'll just keep my distance and put little marks down on this sheet of paper." He smiled again. "Just work at your normal pace," he said. "Forget I'm here."

Joe grunted. There was a sudden flurry of activity at the furnace spout, and pushing past Bob so that he almost stumbled, Joe rushed toward the furnace, pulling his goggles down over his eyes.

He grasped hold of a large iron rod and with another man holding it about three feet behind him, began to poke at the spout near the base of the furnace. It had been sealed with clay by the gun, electrically operated now. The two jabbed quickly, and Bob recovering, came up behind them; he whipped out his stop-watch and entered a figure on his sheet. Suddenly the clay broke, and a tremendous geyser of sparks shot out. The two men dragged the rod, dropped it, and ran out of the way. The sparks rose in a cascade that showered the yard. Bob stepped back, his mouth suddenly opening. But he recovered instantly, turned to locate his man, saw at the same instant that Dale was attached to his man, and glanced at his stop-watch.

Now the molten steel began to flow.

It had a canal-system worked out in advance to receive it. Gutters lined with clay carried the steel, first down a wide trough, then divided into two which brought the bubbling fire to the edge of the yard; then it suddenly leaped over the edge and fell into the waiting wide-mouthed bell-shaped cars beneath.

Men were gathered on the edges of the troughs; for here and there the steel cooled, formed a crust, or something in it blocked its passage and it threatened to overflow and spread across the yard. Bringing steel paddles, hoes, and large rods, the men prodded the obstructions and knocked them free. Joe carried his long stoking rod to the boiling soup and tapped it like a cook dipping a spoon into the pot. He could stay only a few seconds at a time at that point; the heat was so intense it blotted up the air from his mouth and left nothing to breathe. It baked his skin, which had been already baked a dull copper, and sizzled the sweat that came breaking out, and the skin turned raw and red before lapsing back into copper again. Bob felt it prickle him, and stepped far back and watched from a cool distance.

Joe dropped his rod and staggered past him, his face thin and haggard, his mouth open, his tongue licking the empty air. His eyes were rolled up into his head with agony. He fell across a bench and the vein in his temple throbbed like a caught fish. Unseen was the throbbing in his leg; the ulcers seemed to be on fire.

Bob noted how long he lay there—it was exactly a minute and a half. Then Joe dragged himself up again, bit at the air, picked up his rod and trotted back to the boiling fire..

Again and again he repeated this. His face turned red; bits of molten steel broke free, flew up into the air and hit his cheek, leaving a black burn behind, then a tiny blister. He seemed not to notice. His work was so intense that he seemed in another world, lost to himself and to every-

thing but the hissing fire, the heavy rod, the tongue which slipped ou between hot teeth, only to be burned by the burning air.

"I guess they get used to it," Bob said to himself.

When the flow slowed down, and finally stopped, and Joe came pa him to throw himself on the bench and close his eyes, while his che rose and fell like bellows, Bob came over to him, dropping his pad, an said: "Rest up, old-timer, I'll knock a minute off!"

He did exactly that. But when the minute passed, and Joe remaine slumped on the bench with his eyes still closed, Bob began to get uneas Time was passing. Time was what he was there for. He noted a numb down. Joe opened his eyes, and the look he gave seemed like the look a blind man, as though his eyes had been dried out by the heat; then h got up, slowly, as though he could place the weight of his body on h legs, and began to pull himself toward the urinal at the far end of th yard.

Bob was embarrassed. What should he do? Mark down the time Nobody had told him. He stood sheepishly outside, pretending to wat the activity in the yard, particularly the work of a molder who had ru some of the iron flow into a sand bed prepared for it in advance. Th steel was cooling now, and Bob could see that several slabs with hol in them would come out of this. It was, he thought, interesting.

His man was a long time in the urinal. Finally, he turned with gesture of impatience and put a figure down in his book.

When Joe came out again, he passed by Bob as though he didn exist. He was limping. Inside the urinal, he had rolled up his leg to loo at the bandage over his ulcers. The bandage was red.

He shrugged, rolled his pants leg down again and issued forth.

Now, with the runnels steaming, he hurried back to work. Oth laborers came wheeling full loads of clay into the yard, and dump them at the side. But before the runnels could be clayed again, the ste that had stuck to the bottom, or remained congealed in them for o reason or another, had to be removed. With a shorter bar in his han slipping his feet into wooden-soled sandals, Joe jumped into the runn and began to prick and prod at the stuck steel. It steamed there; stea slipped up through his leg and baked it, turning the bandage lim and wet, so that it loosened and hung from his calf. He could feel slipping, and yet, with the eyes of his boy on him, dared not pull it u Was it bleeding? He couldn't tell whether the hot liquid was sweat blood.

He had to jump out, however, and wait until his sandals stopp smoking. They were charred; they looked like burnt boards. He motion

for the crane to come over, and when its cable slid down, he fastened it around a steel hunk whose end he had loosened, and then signaled for it to rise again. It took some jerking and pulling before the crane got the steel loose; but it came free suddenly and swung across the yard to the scrap heap.

Several officials had now gathered in the yard. The hoist on the outside had been shuttling up and down the skip faster than usual and the clatter of coke and ore and lime stone seemed louder than ever before. The stoves were pumping through gas at a higher temperature into the furnaces—and the oxygen pumped into it raised the heat higher than ever before. The coke and stone and ore melted as if by magic.

Shaming ran around the furnace, a frown like a wound on his face. He tapped the tuyeres, looked through the peeps, worried and worried. The bricks seemed hotter than ever, the bronze belts around the stomachs of the stoves seemed to bulge, the cooling system threw out water that was too hot.

He ran to Mr. Eakkins and his jaw worked furiously, and Mr. Eakkins standing and watching the men clear up the debris, listened patiently, and then without uttering a single word turned away.

Hurry—suddenly they all felt it—*Hurry!*

They had less time than ever to do more than before! Joe stood in the runnels until the skin of his leg began to crinkle. Suddenly, his head seemed to burst, give way inside, and he stood all alone in a vast silence, in a deep and solitary darkness, waiting to see if his senses would come back again. Light broke through as though a match had been lit; he shook his head nad resumed his labor. It was if death had come to test him and had slipped back out of him into the Unknown again. Joe had waited even with curiosity to see what would happen.

Shaming was at the bleeder. From there he ran to the coolers. From there he ran to the peeps. His face was rumpled and soaked through and through with sweat.

Bob had it down to a system now. He knew how much a man could stand, exactly how much time he needed to get his strength back before he could return to the heat. A suspicion began to crawl across his mind that this man of his was goldbricking. He knew that old-timers were past masters at faking, appearing to work when they were only going through the motions, and he kept his eyes glued on Joe. He isolated every motion, as though a camera were slowing it up, and he was able to break down the action into tiny spaces, each matched with a moment of time.

Another heat was cast, and the whole procedure was repeated. This

time it was all too visible that not only Joe but the others as well were slowing up. Mr. Eakkins had a heated consultation with both Shaming and the furnace foreman, Ed Dugin, who came over to them and said to each one: "You got to keep at it; you got to make this heat in half an hour less time!"

The old man wasn't fooling Bob! Bob had his eyes on him; his pencil dropped more and more often on his chart, and fatal figures appeared there. He was convinced that Joe was faking; taking advantage of his youth and university experience. Bob smiled grimly to himself.

After the second heat was finished, the men fell on the benches and some reached for paper bags of food. Suddenly Joe felt that he could not pry open the lid of his zinc bucket. He saw the red apple at the bottom, which he would leave for his grandson, and suddenly Tommy seemed like a child one had left behind on a voyage, in a different world; an anguish of parting came over him and he allowed his eyes to moisten, not because he wanted to weep, but because he wanted heart's ease.

Bob too had brought a lunch. He opened it to two neat thin white bread sandwiches of egg, bacon and tomato, and began to eat. Nobody looked at him. He sat with Dale at the far side of the yard, and both munched their sterile sandwiches with their gleaming teeth.

Joe knew that he would never be able to finish out the shift. It was as though he had been sucked dry; as though some huge pulling and greedy mouth had fastened itself onto his body and had sucked from his pores, his eyes, his mouth, the very marrow of his soul. He felt a hollow inside; an emptiness as huge as a huge bell with its tongue gone.

The others looked at him with his own eyes, he knew: rimmed with black, colorless, dry as though the liquid had been baked; their arms and legs flung down first, like sticks, and then their bodies flung on top of them.

The leg ached a toneless measured ache. Everything alive seemed to have settled there, knocking like a heavy clock against his flesh; the bone was rapped by pain, the skin was wet, the leg lay before him like some offending brother—and he stared at it, and wished he could get up and leave it lying there as a gift to the Turpin Works.

Time, bought and paid for by Turpin, was like a rock on his back; weighing down heavily, bending the bones in pleading arches. When the day was done there was nothing left of him to take home. . . .

His food rested in his mouth like an obstacle. He could barely summon his tongue to turn it over, his teeth to sink through it; the heat had taken the moisture out of his mouth and he worked his lips, and his tongue flapped inside like an exhausted fish. He took the bite of bread

and meat out of his mouth, and laid it on the bench. It sat there, unharmed, dry, as though it had been stamped out, not bitten.

His leg had never ceased throbbing; now it felt wrapped in glue. But the worst torment was that he had to suppress his pain, and even outrage it by grinning. The second half of the night lay ahead of him, in his mind, like a journey to the Pole—over dark ice, invisible, endless stretches of black water. He looked into his body, as though he were sitting outside it and it was a pot into whose depths he could peer: how much strength was left in there? He shook his heavy sad head. He saw Shaming who had not rested, running like a blur across his eyes, and his head swept up with an oath. *Perkunas!* What fools they were! A group of men straggled through the yard, gawking at the furnace, at the workers, at the ominous throb of energy hidden from view but penned behind the brick walls, held in by bands of iron and bronze. Joe looked at them with bitter eyes. The new workers! They were led like sheep, embarrassed and stumble-footed, and stood by while a sub-foreman, talking from the corner of his mouth, like a race-track tipster, and pointing, explained what was going on.

Shaming was yelling now, and Joe pulled himself to his feet. He passed his hand over his eyes to wipe away the haze, and then he limped over to the furnace again. Bob too had arisen, striding along like a tennis player, with his pad hanging down beside his leg.

Shaming was more than nervous; he was violent. He shrieked and cursed, and kept peeping into the holes more and more often, while Mr. Eakkins stood on the side smiling officially at him. The boy came in from the chemical lab with his little testing dipper, and stuck it into the white eye of the furnace and brought a sample of the soup out again. He bore it off to the laboratory for analysis.

The word was given, and again the spout was knocked open and again the molten metal burst forth, flowed, and they jabbed desperately at it, holding their breaths, standing in the glow of the fire until their bodies began to dry. Bob had learned by this time how far off to stand: he kept his eyes on Joe who was leaning toward the fire as though it drew him irresistibly to its lapping tongue.

Again, when the flow was going evenly at last, he threw himself on the bench, his eyes too weary to close, staring out into space like a dead man's, his leg loud in its noisy pain like a bawling child one had to drag along. Bob turned his back on him, and stood, slightly bored, watching the other men wet down the slag which had been scooped off from the boiling steel through the "monkey" the way a bartender slices foam from a glass of beer. He pitied himself now, and wondered why

he had let himself in for work among these men who did not interest him, and whose coldness toward him was unnerving.

The next heat was beginning. The runnels had cooled enough to get to them, and Joe, with a heroism that angered him, the way a man who wants the solace of death is angered that he can still live, pulled himself from his bench once more, and once more made his way to the steaming beds.

Hardly had be got into his grave, with its steaming souls rising under his feet and going past his eyes, than Shaming came running over yelling. The men dropped their tools and raced back with him. The furnace had some 12-14 tuyeres, which were bronze coolers stuck into it at certain intervals, through which water coursed to cool the bricks holding in the terrible heat. Six of them had already burned out, and more seemed ready to go. Flames were pushing curious and daring noses out into the yard. Everybody came to help, including the crane boy.

They pulled the burned cooler out, then dragged forth the pipe, which, redhot, clattered to the floor. Then, a good six of them taking turns, they threw big balls of clay into the burning hole to stop it up; then they had to get the pipe in and screw in the cooler. It was hard to get into position among the pipes of the furnace, with the hot water falling from above.

Everybody helped—including Mr. Eakkins.

Bob and Dale came over and stood on one side, watching, immaculate and full of untapped strength, their pens in their hands, their stop-watches attached to a nail on their boards.

Seeing them, Shaming yelled: "Get the hell over here and *help!*"

They looked at him without moving. Then to their shock, Eakkins roared over: "Get in and *help*—Goddamn you!"

Suddenly Joe felt somebody's body beside him. The face was a creamy pink adorned with rosaries of neat little sweat balls. The blond lashes curled back, exhibiting outraged blue eyes; and the red lips were parted showing a pool of moisture in which his tongue lay, like a blond shrimp, and through which his teeth glistened. Joe's mouth was dry. An ache like a hot stone, filled it.

They were lifting the heavy pipe among them. Two in front, two behind, using a bar ladle, which had a dip in the middle on which the pipe rested. Pushing through the hissing steam and hot falling water they tried to send it into the hole from which heat rained on them mercilessly. A sudden panic leaped into the boy's eyes, and unexpected muscles jumped to the surface of his smooth face. His mouth opened and his tongue rolled out like a surprise, and then stiffened and trembled

Suddenly the moisture in his mouth disappeared, and his teeth dried up, and felt dusty. He felt a tremendous demanding thirst in his body that consumed tears, sweat, blood in the search for moisture. Bulging shapes, hitherto hidden, disfigured his nose, his lips, his jaws. His hat fell off, and the hot water dropped like pellets unerringly on his skull. He tried to twist his head away, but could not; the burden of the pipe held him. Now they strained every muscle to lift it into the gaping hole, already studded with sharp flames, and suddenly with a shrill cry, of pain and protest, he dropped his side of the bar, and throwing his hands up to his face, which was burning with hot water, he ran screaming away across the yard.

The pipe fell, and the men jumped away. Joe's leg burst into flame as he jumped. Without a word, Shaming himself stepped into the abandoned spot and again they hoisted the pipe. With a heave, they threw it into place, and followed it immediately with the tuyeres. Their shirts were wet, their eyes ached, and their hearts were beating like fists against their ribs.

But they didn't stop.

From this one, they ran to the next one, and put in a new tuyere. Then to the next. And still one more. And then everything was in place, and Shaming yelled: "Hurry, get over to the yard—the heat's coming fast!"

They trotted back to the runnels, untended till then—behind time. It was time that could be recovered only with blood and bone—only by reaching forward and chopping off a portion of life, taking it and throwing it into the furnace! Death would be one hour sooner.

They could hear the roar of the bleeder, the gigantic gasp of the heated gas as it burst into the furnace. They worked like madmen, standing until the board sandals began to smoke, jabbing and cleaning until their muscles gave up. And finally the runnels were cleared; and just as they were cleared, the furnace broke loose with its boiled ore, and again they were at it poking with long bars, the heat dragging at their skin as though to peel it off.

And when they were through, Joe came slowly toward the bench on which to throw himself, and there found the two young men, lying flat on their backs, their faces pale, their cheeks sunken, their eyebrows singed, and their eyes lifted up weakly to the sky.

Joe wanted badly to spit. He lifted his mouth muscles, pursed his lips, and could not. Instead he sat down.

He looked around the yard to the others, all of whom were scat-

tered about in positions of exhaustion, and pulled out an old rattling watch from his pocket. It said 5 A.M. Any other night, this spelled the last heat: but tonight there was one more to go.

He stood up, walked over to the men, one by one, spoke a word to them, and one by one again they rose and followed him as he went limping toward the exit. They followed slowly and deliberately, and Shaming watched them go, his eyes full of despair, and Mr. Eakkins stood beside him with a pale face, but made no attempt to stop them. The two engineers only knew they were dying.

The strike had begun for the furnace workers.

THE BANG AND THE THING

JACK BEECHING

KEEP A balance between politics and art wrote Charles Humboldt when I inquired what would interest you most in a post-vacation London Letter. But surely, Charles, the last war made art political—a specialized branch of diplomacy. When in our nonage we argued for a politically committed art, few of us guessed how one day we'd be living in a world of State Encouragement and Cultural Exchanges.

Of course, giving the artist some money with no strings is the easiest way of encouraging him—but that's too simple and there's no political percentage. So over here quite a little superstructure has grown up—BBC, Arts Council, British Council, Council for Industrial Design—with the key jobs held by the sort of artistic demi-vierge who knows only too well how to manage matters in committee. And it all helps to make artists careful what they say and do—even if their livelihood isn't at present involved, their vanity might be some day.

In the politically hectic past eighteen months we've had several glimpses of the strings linking art with diplomacy. Cultural exchanges with the Russians, for example, have been turned on and off like a tap. The ballet company was going—or was it? Sir Somebody had left to conduct the Moscow Conservatoire—or had he? And as for that novel, it's either being rewritten or pirated, I'm not sure which. At the time of writing the precise state of Anglo-Soviet relations may be defined as follows: it's considered OK for us to see the Moscow Circus.

You are shrewd therefore to mistrust any semi-official picture of a foreign literature or art. Dig into the library for the books you have a hunch might be there. One objective in the officialization of art is to brand the mavericks—so there shall be no new recruits to that invisible international of representative talent which from Sacco and Vanzetti to the Rosenbergs acted in concert as the real conscience of the civilized

world. If you don't think there's political point in obfuscating reputations, take poetry. It's a harmless artform, yes? But our Arts Council will no more inform you that the finest symbolist poet in English is named Edgell Rickword than will your State Department go out of its way to tell us that the most important American poet under fifty is called Thomas McGrath. If that doesn't send you scurrying to the library to read your Rickword it should and I hope it does—for when last reported, his *Collected Poems* had sold a mere couple of hundred copies in ten years. The demivierges of the official committees not only try hard to muddy the wells—they succeed, too.

Since it got risky to be Left we, like you have had an exuberant (or is that too energetic a word) crop of university poets. If one cut up their poems with scissors and stirred the heap well, one might reasonably suppose they were all written by the same man. Let's call him Richard Clever. He is different, civilized, an' accomplished versifier, foreswears big emotions, satirizes people and institutions whose enmity can never do his career any harm, is more than a bit sorry for himself, and prefers a wry eroticism to anything as embarrassing as passion.

If he doesn't teach in a provincial university Richard works—yes, you've got it—for the BBC or the Arts Council. Of late he's been landing some of the key reviewing jobs. And of course, these days a book of verse weighs as much as a dull boring PhD in the scales of academic advancement; England, thank God, is still the country of the cultivated amateur, as France of the petit maitre and America I suppose of the 'literary technician.'

The Angry Young men (a headline tag that has stuck) are younger, nicer and more talented. They wear rather jolly beards and thick sweaters, and go round with beautiful unkempt girls who actually come from little brick villas in the outer suburbs. They listen to skiffle (this year's rage) buy gramaphone records the way we used to buy books, and last autumn marched against the mounted police in the anti-Suez demonstration, playing guitars. Somehow they are less afraid than their immediate predecessors of messing up their careers by blotting their copybooks. It's even getting fashionable among a minority to be Marxist and buy one of the several student "Marxist journals" that have recently sprung into being—sometimes actually with new names among the contributors, too. If the first night of *Hernani* were due in Picadilly next week, instead of in Paris a hundred and twenty years back, they'd all wear red waistcoats and riot for what Hugo and Gautier thought of as Romanticism. The Angry Young Men haven't pinned their own word to it yet—but it has to do with integrity and not being nobbled by the state. No signs either

of a poetry strong enough to glow through the diplomatic one-way glass. But that too may come.

The playwright John Osborne, regarded by these young men as their very own, is obviously more than a flash in the pan. He has followed up his first success, *Look Back in Anger,* with an even more impassioned new play, *The Entertainer,* which the suburbs flocked to see because it was a starring vehicle for Sir Larry Olivier. One of the acting feats of the century, it must have made the average petty-bourgeois theatre goer feel like Caliban seeing his own face in a mirror.

Are you reading war books over there? Here the bookshops are full of them; in fact, their manufacture is a thriving trade. As always, demand stimulates supply—last week I met an old friend from Fleet Air Arm days. After the fourth drink he revealed he'd just finished composing, for argument's sake, the memoirs of a Nazi pilot entitled, let us say, *I Bombed London.*

This war-book boom started sooner than anyone thought, and has gone on since the last shot was fired without a falter. One can make an educated guess at the reasons.

In the first war, your chances of reaching the firing line were high. But in the last (last I hope meaning last) only a fraction of the vast tail of a modern army saw active service. Meanwhile the man in uniform waited, speculated, tried not to have bad dreams.

AND FOR us since 1945 it's not been so very different. At eighteen, into uniform. A percentage of those sad young men end up in Malaya or Korea or Kenya or Cyprus; the rest wait, speculate and try not to have bad dreams. War books are bad dreams you can close up and put back on the shelf when you've had enough.

There are three sorts: the books about the romantic pockets of actual antifascist warfare which Hemingway predicated in fiction; the books about escape—birth trauma stuff mostly, about getting out of prison camps down tunnels, or out of shipwrecks in small boats; and the somewhat nasty books that give a moral gloss to sadistic thrills by recounting the actual horrors of nazism in details accents of outraged righteousness.

The serious novelist, by contrast with the poet and playwright, is a slow developer here. There are some accomplished younger men, but sitting down at this moment staring hard at the typewriter it's impossible to recall which name wrote what book—that in itself is a literary criticism. London of course is the publishing centre for what it isn't fashionable any more to refer to as the British Empire.

If you want to know more precisely what "publishing centre" means,

one is driven to explain in an embarrassed mumble that by dumping (partly at the author's expense) low-price "colonial" editions we stifle most Australian or New Zealand publishing at birth.

In case you've mistaken Harold Macmillan for an aristocrat on account of his blue-blooded wife and beautiful manners, it's as well to recall he was a singularly hard-headed book publisher.

I wonder if ever in his Downing Street bedroom he has the British publisher's most agonizing nightmare—that some day the currency set-up will change, and by overprinting and exporting your classics and back lists you will stifle British publishing in turn? Economically it would be so easy—as easy as buying yourself into British industry with blocked sterling, which is a favorite American financial game (they tell me) just at present.

There's a good side to all this. Novelists of talent from English-speaking countries oversea gravitate to London to make a name and a living. So the big grey damp city always seems a bit more alive and progressive than it really is. Our one distinctive and wonderfully talented woman novelist under forty, Doris Lessing, is for instance a Rhodesian. She has just been blocked from going back home, because the on-the-spot picture of central African imperialism given in her recent travel book was too scathing to shrug off. The West Indians over here write like they play cricket—with an attack and vivacity that seem slightly improper in the pallid environment of literary London. George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin* is an instance—and both he and Doris Lessing have in different years been given the Maugham Award, the only literary prize that anyone over here takes seriously. Eric Lambert, whose war book *Forty Thousand Thieves* was a runaway best seller, is now one of the numerous radical Australian writers who hit town and make the pubs of Fleet Street sound for a while like the grog-shops of Sydney, New South Wales.

Yet there is at present no novelist, welcome guest or native son, occupying the place as public figure once held in apostolical succession from Fielding through Dickens to Meredith and H. G. Wells. Priestley had many of the obligatory qualities, but he made two errors of judgment. He broadcast in support of Labor at an election when the great army of book-borrowing suburb dwellers were getting neurotic about State control, and accordingly turning out to vote Tory. Then he wrote an article for that notorious cold-war *Colliers* which publicly speculated on what the Yanks would do with Moscow after they had atom-bombed it. If the Left in Britain has a fault it's a readiness to forgive everybody everything, but it will be a little longer yet before Priestley is forgiven that.

Our next panjandrum might conceivably be Sir Charles Snow, a recently knighted Civil Service Commissioner better known under the balder, more puritanical initials of C.P. A former Cambridge don who made a big career both in business and government, he has succeeded too as an "influential literary man," with a courgeously liberal bias. There are those, particularly in the managerial classes, who regard his fine novel on atom scientists called *The New Men* as an important work of art. The rest of us think the trouble lies not with Snow's talents, which in all respects are considerable, but in the fast break-up of our traditional middleclass culture, which means a novelist necessarily writes for a minority while only the TV personality becomes—and for such a tiny while—the National Figure.

WHEN the McCarthyites wouldn't let British seamen ashore in the U.S. unless they swore they wern't communist, a wit over here proposed retaliation. No American seaman allowed ashore unless he'd swear he wasn't Republican.

But judging by the hard work American visitors put in to get casual glimpses of minor royalty, something has softened the small-r republicanism out of you. Maybe it's because of the mass-media treatment they've given our royalty family in the past two decades. Once their faces appeared principally on postage stamps. Now they figure prominently and regularly on the front pages of tabloids. The ballyhoo and romantic speculation you diffuse among several dozen film stars we concentrate on one fairly ordinary, fairly pleasant upper class family of German extraction. An American friend was quite incredulous when I told how now we all sat stolidly through God Save the King, when I was a boy; now everyone stands rigidly in attention. That of course was before the Tories whooped it up for royalty as a stunt to help win an election back in 1935. A minor Cabinet minister invented the quite unprecedented idea of a Royal Silver Jubilee, and similar high jinks have been repeated at tactical intervals ever since. The mass media are mobilized. The cameras whirr, the sick-making headlines are dreamed up. An anthropologist finding a savage tribe who treated their gods as we treat our Princesses would rightfully regard them as wallowing in superstition.

But royalty has its comic side. There is for instance the problem of scouring the lower deck of the Royal Navy for enough ratings with the right accents, but not yet commissioned, to man the Royal Yacht. For of course royalty must maintain the minor details of its own fantasy world, just as its very existence helps us to maintain the details of ours.

I daresay if our unwritten constitution were put down in black and white it would look as if Britain were potentially as authoritarian as Portugal, with every civil liberty neutralized by its appropriate legal or institutional back answer. Indeed on paper the rulers of Britain could without much innovation start running the country overnight in the way they run, say, Cyprus. Then why don't they? Because neither laws nor institutions apply here with their full force. The countervailing pressure is that of the people themselves, particularly in the expression given their needs and sentiments by the trade union movement. Britain without her trade union movement would in modern times have no civil liberties worth possessing.

The pressure ebbs and flows, as if the few thousand "men who run the country"—the militarists, upper civil servants, financiers, industrialists, newspaper owners and politicians—were permanently locked like wrestlers with the eight million who formally call each other "brother." At present, as for some years past, the two sides are so evenly matched that only some convulsive lurch—a change of government, or a big strike, or a sudden political upsurge as over Suez—exposes the political reality. Meanwhile thanks to this deadlock we enjoy human freedoms that have become somewhat uncommon elsewhere in the "free world." Even during the Cold War—a golden opportunity for reactionaries everywhere to make a meal of civil liberties—they didn't get away here with as much as they purposed.

Take telephone tapping. In a country as ingrowing and reserved as this it strikes the average nonpolitical man as a particularly odious practice; our laws against eavesdropper and Peeping Tom go right back to the Middle Ages. In one sense the biggest political party here is composed of Philosophical Anarchists—for the Labor voter is instinctively agin the Government, and a great many rank-and-file Tory voters have an attitude towards state power of which Thomas Jefferson would have approved. So all realize how given a Post Office monopoly of telephones, tapping the wires can creep up on one slowly and insidiously.

And this year the faceless neurotics who only feel safe with Old Uncle State Power to back them up went much too far. Listening in on radicals, burglars or others who might affect the property status quo might conceivably be condoned in some quarters. But reporting conversations between barrister and client to the Bar Association was excessive by everybody's standards. The outburst sent the government scurrying for a face-saving formula. Concurrently there was an outcry from university teachers at having to give "security officers" (the current euphemism for spies) confidential information about their pupils'

political views; and this came on the heels of a sequence of cases about wrongfully incarcerating sane people in mental hospitals, which almost certainly will lead a new law. In short, Leviathan is (temporarily) on the defensive, and quite customary bits of spying and tyrannizing may no longer be taken for granted.

THE 1945 Labor Government went to wreck, as much as anything, because of Ernie Bevin. He was nobbled by the group of clever men (it's largely a Roman Catholic enclave) who run our Foreign Office. They played on his prejudices so skilfully that before we quite realized it, our brand new Government was sending refugee Jews back from Israel to undenazified Germany (remember?) while Ernie used his marvellous demogogic skill to defend in "socialist" terms a classically reactionary policy that started civil wars in countries as distant as Greece is from Mayala. It was a foregone conclusion that the money needed for socialist reconstruction would go thereafter into bigger and more blackguardly bombs.

I have a hunch that next time it may be different. Nye Bevan, earmarked for Foreign Secretary in what people are already beginning to refer to as "the next" Labor Government, is far from being the emotional bull-moose your papers make him out. Indeed, those who know him and have studied the terms in which he's been thinking aloud recently are wondering if when Labor gets gack he may join with Jawarhalal Nehru in reconciling the two big contenders for world supremacy. Nye's thoughtful and persistent groping for practical ways to reduce international tension is of course a typically Welsh mixture of idealism and political shrewdness. A man or a government that honestly works for the peace of the world will not easily be shaken from power. But because Bevan so dominates his colleagues in ability as well as in popularity, he's big enough to create one of those rare occasions when an accident of personality helps to decide the future of the world.

Public Relations are still fumbling the job of making us like "them Yanks"—the boys who practice flying atom bombers from our nearby airfields. On my local airfield they decided recently to have an open day—and let the kids actually wiggle a lever or two on an atom bomber. Since country people are naturally curious about their neighbors, we all went to see if the Yanks actually live in the high style they are reputed to (Momma, what your boy has most to fear over here is indigestion—and let's hope it stays that way).

But in two respects the visit fell short of being all hearts and flowers. First there was The Bang. It's comforting to know your aircraft

can break the sound barrier—but alas, they break windows and greenhouses too, and even bring down plaster from the vicarage ceiling. And then there was The Thing.

You've observed smoke trails in the sky? Well, this particular one was chalked up while an audience including the usual gaggle of teen-age camp-followers that your compatriots take for the flower of English womanhood were watching an aerobatic display.

The more mealy mouthed among us have since spoken of The Thing in discreet educated voices as a Phallic Symbol. It must have been half a mile long. And locally it has become the acid test of politics as well as of character.

Was it really what we thought?

The lewd, the Left-wing, the candid handful among our neighbors the Yanks—they're all quite sure that massive symbol of power was meant to be the shape we saw.

The parson, notwithstanding the plaster on the floor of his study, is not utterly convinced. And the PR boys? They're busy learning to lay smokescreens, I suppose.

TWO POEMS

MAURICE CARPENTER

Maurice Carpenter is a British poet whose work has appeared in the United States in the *California Quarterly*.—The Editors.

POEM BEFORE BIRTH

Two month tenant of the shaping
Cave, oh my impatient love!
Curl and turn, a world half-darkened
Hangs on your stem.
Lie cool my love and dream no harm.

Turning turning in my dream
A world half-darkened, calm my love
Nor rock the germinating scream,
Curl and turn
And feel the solar engines burn.

Green pearl uneasy in the galaxy
Circling a slim and youthful sun
Here on the edge of accident
Your parahelion has begun,
Lie cool my love and dream no harm,
All the galactic seas are calm.

My new world unique my planet
Brave the green sea cave of fission,
Two month womb-child, trembling plant
Grown from a moment's lunar fusion

Upon the stem of our survival
Bless us with your long-wished arrival.
As the sun grows fat and red
Guzzling up the stellar gases,
Cool my love, we'll be abed
Before the solar system passes;
Cool my love and dream no harm
Beneath our hand the futures form;
A world half-darkened hangs upon your stem.

SPACE TRAVEL

I lay asleep on a clear bright night;
The moon filled my room with a flood of light;
I dreamed I was sailing the seas of space
And my ship bore the badge of the human race:

I was the first man to land on Mercury,
Hot as a cinder, dry as a quarry,
But I planted my flag and did my duty
Entered my ship and left in a hurry.

We are the pilots of sunlit space,
The new pioneers of the human race;
There are nine new planets for us to win
E'er the edge of darkness closes in.

I was the first on dusty Venus
To stand and gaze in those hot arenas
As the hills shifted and metals boiled
And fetid smoke around me coiled.

We are the pilots of sunlit space
And the darkness wears a human face
With umpteen planets for us to win
Before the nightmare closes in.

I was the first on frozen Mars
In this last act of the human farce

To gaze on a place where the seas are dry
And motorbike moons chug round the sky.

We are the pilots of sunlit heaven
Running away from our one green haven
To find in those forbidding wastes
The consolation we have lost.

I was the first on giant Jupiter
To know the human race grow stupider;
Gravity made me dull as lead;
I choked on a methane and ammonia bed.

We are the pilots of the black and blazing
Spaces that keep our minds amazing
At the empty distances we travel
And never the mystery unravel.

I was the first on the ring of Saturn
To see the Earth an attractive slattern
We'd raped and wronged and left to die;
I never dared look her in the eye.

We are the pilots of the brimming ether
Running away. We thought we were clever
And never saw that the Earth our mother
Had a face as mild as soft green clover.

I was the first on far Uranus
To know no golden age could save us,
No Titan come to break our chains
And save us from our lives' sweet pains.

We are the pilots of our shining dreams
Riding the solar system's seams
Never to find, though space bend and twist
An inn we could call "Space Travellers Rest."

I stood on Neptune's enormous belly
Coughing clouds, knee deep in jelly

And thought of Adam and his fall,
The aberration that foxed us all.

We are the pilots of the outer rim
Knowing the dark through which we climb,
Our solar system a mote in space,
The desolation of our race.

I stood on Pluto's absolute zero
Knowing at last I was no hero,
Uttermost darkness closing in,
No more planets for me to win.

We are the pilots of space returned
Sun-drenched to the earth we spurned;
There are no planets to be won;
Content to love the one we're on.

THE ARTIST AND HIS WORLD

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN

The following is a reply to a statement on Left art critcism by a group of California artists, which appeared in the August issue of *Mainstream*. Readers are invited to comment on this exchange.—The Editors.

THE AUTHORS of the article criticizing my book *Realism in Art,* begin by describing themselves as "a group of progressive painters." I take this to mean that they are interested in the conflict in real life between progress and reaction, between peace and war. Yet throughout the article, I can find nothing which indicates any notion that painters should concern themselves with these matters. It may be that painting has no role whatsoever to play in this conflict; that to take up such problems only does harm to the art itself. The writers of the article seem to think so. I gather that from their statement that through the "lenses" of critics like myself, the artist "beholds a world of worthy themes and wonders why his brushes cannot do justice to these highly recommended subjects." If such "worthy themes" do harm instead of good to painting, we should know it, for it is never of any use to live and work under illusions or false theories. As painters, the authors of the article have every right to paint exactly as they please. But since they talk of "the artist," then we are faced with a question of the theory of art.

The book *Realist in Art* was not offered primarily as a "program" for progressive-minded American painters, nor on the other hand did it pretend to be a history of art. It tried to present, for discussion, a general theory of pictorial art, including what makes it "art," what makes it "beautiful" and what are, so to speak, its laws of growth. It also tried to show how these laws operated, in terms of major episodes of art history, up to the present time. Only out of this did it try to indicate some

perspectives for American painters, and to offer an opinion on the conflicting views of art prevalent today.

One of the central questions was the relation between "form" and "content." The book tried to show that both of these rose primarily out of the artist's relation to the objective, real world outside of him, including its social make-up and conflicts. In affirming this, it tried to criticize and oppose two other points of view which it considered unsatisfactory as explanations, and confusing rather than enlightening. One was the "pure form," and its counterpart the "expressionist" approach to art. The other was the "sociological" approach.

The "pure form" approach, in my opinion, tends to substitute techniques and tools in place of the essential qualities of art form. Art thus becomes a skilled craft, more complicated of course than that of a bricklayer, but in the same category. The "sociological" approach confuses content with subject-matter. Thus with Medieval or Renaissance Catholic artists, it may describe the religious symbols they use. With artists such as the 17th century Dutch, it may point out such facts as that the subject matter is taken from middle-class Dutch life. It shows also how the manners and customs of the time appear in works of art, and even influence their style.

Both approaches, although they seem to be opposite to one another, end up in a dilemma which they can only escape in a vague and mystical way; that is, outside of time, place and history. Thus the "pure form" theorists cannot accept the fact that art is something like a bricklayer's or shoemaker's craft. This is manifestly absurd. If it were so, why should people dedicate their lives to it with such intensity? There must be something more. And so they move into "expressionism." They find an answer in the seeming mysterious powers latent in line, color and space, which embrace the secret depths of the human soul; which touch on the "unconscious," or else on "universal truths." They look for the answer anywhere but in the relations of the human being to society, and in the real-life struggles of humanity. I think the writers of the article follow this school of thought. Thus they start to describe form in art in terms of tools and techniques. "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, the golden mean (section?), which may be applied most creatively in the complicated craft of picture making." Then what, to them, is the "content" of art? They answer, "The artist's role as a prober of life in its universal aspects." Or again, they speak of "an artist like Munch, dealing with the universal enough themes of human fear

and struggle, sickness, sex and death." According to this view there is no history, no change, no development, no progress of art, that has any importance. On the one hand there is the world of social life, and on the other, there is the world of "art," which deals with the same "universal" problems, like fear, sickness, sex and death, that have presumably plagued human beings from the dawn of history.

The sociologist also comes up against problems he cannot solve. He discovers artists with all kinds of noble and enlightened theories of society, but who produce bad art. He discovers in the above-mentioned period, that of 17th century Holland, that both a giant like Rembrandt and a tenth-rate artist, will take up the same subjects, such as the manners and customs of the Dutch middle-class. But one is great and the other is tenth-rate. Then what is it that raises the great artist above his lesser contemporaries? The only answer he can arrive at is that the great artist adds some mysterious, inspired element known as "form," or "beauty," or "aesthetic quality"; in other words, something which also lies outside of society, and the real life struggles of people. At heart, the sociologist and formalist speak the same theory. They differ only in interests. The sociologist busies himself with the interesting ways in which art provides illustrations of history, and doesn't bother his mind with problems of greatness. The formalist admits that art has had this illustrative power, but it is only a superficial aspect of art, of no real importance to what makes it true art.

NEITHER the formalist nor the sociologist comes to grips with the problem of realism. The sociologist's realm is naturalism. In other words, to him, the artist is realistic when he devotes his pictures to the way things look in real life. Thus a portrait, or a still life, or an interior of a house with people, or a landscape, is realism, if it looks like what it is supposed to represent. A magazine illustration is also realism. A photograph is similarly realism.

The "pure form" approach, or else the "abstract-expressionist" approach (namely "pure form" plus the unconscious"), makes quite similar assumptions, although it uses a different language. Like the sociologist, it lumps together all artists whose paintings resemble what we see in real life, Rembrandts and tenth-rate academicians, great American artists like Eakins and shallow ones like Norman Rockwell. All are addicted to "naturalism." It invents contemptuous terms for their practices. A favorite one is "copyists of nature." Another one is "imitators of nature." Still another favorite is "illusionism" or "illusionistic." (This latter happens to be the one used by the writers of the article.) Behind all

these terms, is the assumption that the real world, as seen by the human eyes and brain, is so commonplace and ordinary a thing that the only way to be creative is to ignore it. It has already been seen. Everybody knows it. Painters have painted it. Why bother to repeat? Accordingly the writers of the article say, "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." Nobody wants to buy from a second-hand counter, of course.

The writers of the article agree with the sociologist, that whatever in art corresponds to the way things appear, is "naturalism." What then, is realism? It seems to me a favorite term with them, but they use it in a way that robs it of all significance of enlightenment. To them, it apparently means anything and everything. Thus they write, in reference to primitive art, "The art 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." What is meant by "fantastic reality"? Again, they describe El Greco as a painter "whose vision is that of a religious fantastic reality." What is a "religious fantastic reality"? The only conclusion I can draw is that to the writers of the article, anything an artist believes, becomes his own reality. However it fails to conform to the real world that he shares with millions of his fellow human beings, or however it stands the real world on tis head, it remains "realism." Thus the writers say of the artist in general, "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 scientists, he returns to the social world with new conceptions and thereby works to change the society which helped nurture him." In other words, whatever the artist believes to be so, is so. It does not occur to the writers that some "new conceptions" may be true and others untrue. Yet that is one of the crucial differences between realism and non-realism. There are some "new conceptions" which give people a true, valid insight into the make-up of the world. Thus their possession makes people able to change the world. There are "new conceptions" which are not valid or true, and people who live by them only come up against inexplicable obstacles, or else arrive at disaster. The real world is what it is, regardless of what people, or artists, think it is. It does not work according to Pirandello's "right you are if you think you are."

REALISM has validity and meaning only if it is opposed to non-realism; in other words, if it seeks and prizes truthful views of the

real world, and exposes untruthful, false views. This does not mean, of course, that we can now know, or ever will know, everything that there is to know about the real world. But the history of all society is one in which a host of false, illusory views have been discarded, and an increasing body of knowledge has been gained as to the real make-up of the world of nature and human society. Thus human society has the power today, through its discoveries such as atomic energy and automation, to make nature fit its needs to a far greater extent than ever before. It has the power, through its discoveries of economic laws, to eliminate poverty, unemployment, crises and wars. By saying that realism involves a struggle between truth and untruth, I do not mean that some people, politicians, professors, or critics, should have the power to sit over art and dictate to it what is true and untrue. The condition for the discovery of truth is the free interchange and argument of ideas, and the battleground is society itself. Only society itself can test new ideas, put them to work, and so decide whether they bring illumination and growth or confusion and backwardness.

But there is a difference between the artist who tries to know what society has made it possible to know and the artist who decides that his only interest lies in "the science of space and color relations" and in the state of his own psyche. There is a difference between the artist who regards himself as a public figure, who shares the life of and learns from the experiences of his fellow human beings, and the artist who lives an anti-social, self-centered life. A realistic artist is an enlightened one, in terms of knowledge of the fullness of life, not of art alone; and a social mind, in terms of his relation to his fellow men, and his willingness to distinguish in real life between the forces making for progress and those making for reaction.

Realism embraces the two opposing sides of real life. There is on the one hand, the objective or "outer world" of nature and human society. There is on the other hand the subjective or "inner world," of the human mind, with its hopes, fears, growth, and frustrations. The two are organically and dialectically united. Neither the sociologist nor the "pure form" (or "expressionist" or "abstract-expressionist") theorist sees this. The sociologist observes mainly the "outer world." He records its statistics and manners, but he generally does not look deeper into its forces for change, and the conflicts behind these forces. He does not see the profound changes thees forces bring out in human psychology, and how searchingly these are disclosed in art.

The formalist (or "expressionist") sees only the "inner world." He does not recognize the fact that human beings live socially, that they

are linked unbreakably to one another, and that therefore what happens "inside the mind" is engendered by the real life of the individual outside. He does not see that the "inner" conflicts, yearnings, sense of growth, and frustrations, are very much like those of his fellow human beings; that they are engendered by the possibilities, frustrations and conflicts in the outer world. Thus what happens in the mind seems to him to be a product of mysterious, vague, unknown "eternal" forces. Since he is not interested in the make-up of the real world, its impact upon the mind appears only as "the forces of the unconscious."

Viewed as a combination of "inner" and "outer," realism becomes a most difficult and complex task. As I see it, the artist, in choosing subject matter from social life, must create a psychology that matches in depth the breadth of his social views. For it is only through this subjective aspect that his work can move other people; that it seems to them to be not merely a curiosity, but something that touches on their own deepest feelings. A Norman Rockwell, the illustrator whom the writers of the article cite to deride the concept of realism, is not a realist. We recognize, in his paintings, figures that are apparently human beings. But as we look at them, these figures become shallow, and increasingly alien to us. We recognize grimaces and gestures, but no real kinship to ourselves or to other people close to us. We get nothing out of the picture which indicates that the artist is also talking about ourselves. If on the other hand we look upon a painting by Thomas Eakins, we not only recognize a human figure. We recognize part of ourselves as well, and other people we know. From it, we learn something about people that we did not know before; we see them more deeply and understandingly, and we ourselves become changed.

It is an obscurantism of modern art discussion—one that I think the writers of the article share—that it confuses "generalizations" with "abstraction." An Eakins portrait, or on a greater level, a Rembrandt portrait, is a generalization of life, not an abstraction. A "portrait" which turns the human face into a blank, lemon-colored oval, is an abstraction, but not a generalization. We learn nothing about human beings from it. Rather, human beings, with their deep psychology, are turned by such art simply into decoration.

IT IS, I believe, only when an artist achieves a balanced, organic relationschip between "inner" and "outer" worlds that he can attain a truly strong and monumental art form; a form that seems to grow out of his subject-matter, not to be imposed upon it, and yet is "art," not a shallow transcript of life. A work of art is created through the

human operation of the artist upon his materials. It is this human operation, embodying innumerable skills, and sensitivities, of hand, mind and eye, which gives "plastic" quality to the work, so that when it is finished, when the artist has separated himself from it, it still bears within itself the impress of the human life that created it.

But at the same time it is the richness of the artist's social experience, the lessons he has learned from it, the generalizations he draws from it, that guide his creative work. Of the sensuous material before him, they determine what he will choose to preserve, and what he will leave out. At the same time, they help him look for and discover sensuous material that others would not have noticed; as Rembrandt, for instance, discovered the humanity of the Amsterdam poor. It is the discoveries that give richness to the form, and it is the generalization that gives unity to the form. To create such a form, it is helpful and necessary to have the requisite technical skills, that can be passed down from teacher to pupil, such as matters of "color and space relations," of "perspective, planear division," and so on. But these by themselves are stepping stones to form. They cannot constitute art form. Similarly, in order to achieve profound generalizations about real life, I believe it is necessary to take subject matter from real life. But this by itself does not guarantee realism.

Realism is always relative, never absolute. The writers of the article have gotten the notion—where from I can't imagine, since it is not in the book—that I have a mental picture of some "perfect realism," and use it as a kind of teacher's touchstone with which to give every artist in history, a "passing" or "failing" grade. They also accuse me of the belief —not justified by anything in the book—that each age creates greater artists than previous ones. "Finkelstein, however, taxes all cultures by the standards of his ideal realism. He becomes a kind of Darwin of art, seeing it 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?" Since they themselves, in my belief, lean towards formalism, they see realism as a kind of counter-formalism, a formula of anatomy and flesh tones advancing in combat against a formula of color and space relations.

I don't believe that as generations pass, artists become greater and greater. It is quite true, in my opinion, that an anonymous sculptor in ancient Egypt, or an ancient Chinese painter, was fully as gifted and great an artist as Michelangelo or El Greco, or whomever else one may

name. But there nevertheless is such a thing as progress. This progress first of all takes place in real life. To put it very briefly, we know more than previous generations, just as future generations will know more than we do. We know more not only about the world of nature, but also about the make-up, richness and powers of human beings. Thanks to past generations, including their great artists, we ourselves have become more sensitive and better equipped people. And the problem of the artist is to rise up to the demands of his own age with the same boldness, humanity, social mind and intelligence that the great artists of the past showed in meeting the demands of their own age. We cannot imagine Titian's characters living in ancient Greece, or Goya's characters living in Renaissance Venice. And since the artists of each age (to use a familiar image) are sitting on the shoulders of their predecessors, they can see a little further and deeper. There can never be a "formula" for realism because the people of each age are different, in appearance and psychology, from those of a past age.

IN ORDER to learn what the past achievements have to teach us, we cannot take them over lock, stock and barrel. We have to view them critically. And here is where the writers of the article and myself seem to be at complete loggerheads. To them, every artist of the past (and present) is a complete law to himself. We must accept his views, and criticise, if necessary, only his own failure to live up to them. "Our specimen should be the visual symbol seen in its own time, not evaluated in terms of the struggle in ours." Again, "A critic should be able to evaluate the weakness of Ryder within the painter's own frame of reference." Discussing my remarks on distortion, as seen in El Greco and in modern expressionist painters, they ask, "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?"

Let us take El Greco, for instance. Within his paintings, with their religious-mystical themes, and their deliberate distortions of human anatomy, I find portrayals of young men and women of his time, of cardinals and archbishops, of monks, ascetics and Spanish grandees, that move me deeply with their life beauty, and their psychological insight. I prize these realistic elements in his work. They also indicate to me that he was a man of fine and searching perceptions in the real life of Spain in his time. This does not mean that we can separate, physically or ideologically, the realistic elements from the religious and mystical

views. His work is an organic whole. But to say that it is a "whole" does not eliminate the fact that it is made up of contradictory forces, which we must also understand; real-life sympathies, and a heaven-directed ideology. Two artists in the same period may be expressing the same religious faith. Yet one will disclose through his images a world of real living and suffering human beings. The other will disclose, through his images, no interest whatsoever in his fellow human beings. To me, these are two different artists, regardless of their superficially similar theology. In primitive life, just as the scientist discovers, within the magic practices, real discoveries of nature, so it is important to me to discover that regardless of the magical beliefs which inspired the paintings, here and there the artist showed a discovery of a real animal and the ability to capture its living quality in paint. An Egyptian sculptor may have believed that his portrait-stature was intended to ensure the after-life of the god-king, but it is important to me to know that he also looked at a real human being.

To view the past critically in this way, does not "tear down" the giants of previous times, as the writers of the article seem to think. Rather, it seems to me to be a process of discovering their true and great stature. And more important, it is the only way, in my opinion, of extracting the lessons that they have to teach us. For the beliefs of one age are often the superstitions of the next. But the tools which the artists of the past place in our hand for the ever sharper penetration of life are always precious.

As for the distortions of the human body in El Greco, I made no intimation that these were "errors," or the product of anatomical ignorance. They were probably created for the obviously powerful emotional impact that such distortions always make upon the onlooker. To El Greco, they probably were part of the vision his paintings tried to create of a world far different from the real one about his; that of heaven, or of the religious spirit. As always, in art, such a deeply felt visionary world is really a subjective world. The clue it gives us is to the torments, anguish, yearnings, seemingly insoluble problems, that afflict the artist. Feeling life in this way, he has no other recourse than to paint in this way, and we must respect him for it. But what is wrong with also putting his work into the context of the real social life of his time, and trying to discover just what were the forces at work which aroused these deep miseries?

For this reason, I see nothing wrong in comparing an El Greco, to the more modern expressionists such as Ensor, Munch and Ko-

koschka. I find in these artists' symbols and distortions a similar deep and haunting subjectivism, even though they no longer think it valid to express this in El Greco's theological terms. It appears that the writers of the article feel deeply kin to these modern expressionist painters, and I think they characterize these artists correctly as "protesting the fate of the individual in contemporary society." But just what is "the fate of the individual in contemporary society?" Is the individual doomed to eternal fear, anguish, impotence and frustration?

I can agree with the writers of the article when they intimate that a powerful, subjective artist of this kind can have far more artistic truth and stature than a shallow or superficial would-be realist. And it is true that in the past fifty or seventy-five years, some of the most tremendously gifted artists were those who could see only this anguish of the individual in a society apparently dying, beset by conflicts which it could not resolve. We must respect them. It would be barbarism to do otherwise. Furthermore, if the writers of the article feel that I was not sufficiently critical, or critical at all, of the many shallow attempts in our time to create an art with more realistic views, I agree with them.

Furthermore, it is true that many artists who have faith in the future of humanity, nevertheless may feel most deeply the subjectivity and anguish engendered by the destructive forces of our time. If so, they must paint this way. And not to respect them would again be barbarism. But I think it is also the task of a social-minded critic to point out the work of those who are moving in a more hopeful direction; whose art is beginning to express the brotherhood and kinship of peoples which is also so much a part of the present, and a step to the future. Let us not overpraise them. But also, let us not describe an individual's impotence and loneliness as the realism of our time.

Diagnosis

Thus France's economy is healthy and her exports in 1956 were at almost a record level. The trouble was her healthy industry consumed more imported raw materials, and the French people consumed more imported goods, than they could pay for. Hence her healthy economy co-exists with an unhealthy financial situation and a shaky currency.—The *New York Times.*

Innocent Bystander

Some Hungarian refugees and others who were in Budapest last October and November charged that the privately financed United States propaganda agency assured the Freedom Fighters that Western military aid would come. Radio Free Europe officials assert that the station was the victim partly of mistaken identity and party of overly bold statements made by some Western leaders, which Radio Free Europe relayed to Hungarian listeners.—The *New York Times.*

Tough

Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson said today that the Government would shift its emphasis to marketing of surplus farm commodities rather than controlling them.

"We've got to learn to live with abundance," he declared—The *New York Times.*

Project Midas

Dr. Wilbur Cohen, visiting professor at UCLA's School of Social Welfare, said that poverty in the U.S. will be abolished within the next decade. He added, however, that it will take an organized program leaning heavily on universities to do the research and turn out trained personnel to help end the poverty.—The *New York Post.*

EXCHANGE ON SOVIET LAW

Editors, *Mainstream*:

Mr. Josephson has better reasons than most Americans for being aware of the gap between juridical theory and state practice. Yet the basic sources for his study of individual rights in the USSR are a series of quotations from the Soviet Criminal Code. One could as easily cite the 14th and 15th amendments to our Constitution and conclude that Negroes in Georgia are perfectly free to vote. The elaborate safeguards he describes can most of them be paralleled by citations from American law; one may agree that they *ought* to make frameups and third-degrees impossible, while noting that in this country they don't. I'm afraid that it will take more than Mr. Josephson's bland assurance that "Soviet judges do equity because equitableness in inherent in socialist relationships" to convince me that such things never—or even hardly ever—happen in the USSR.

Even as a theoretical study, Mr. Josephson's article contains important gaps. For example, what of the provision in the Soviet code providing for punishment of *relatives* of certain classes of criminals? How does this square with his elegant theories of socialist juridical philosophy? What of the provision, broader even than "our own" Smith Act, penalizing any act "directed toward the overthrow, undermining *or weakening* . . . of the USSR" (my italics)?

Mr. Josephson will perhaps say that these are political crimes to which his remarks admittedly do not apply. The point is that here we are not dealing with the "illegal" (or extra-legal) actions of Beria or anyone else, but with provisions *written into Soviet law;* indeed the Administrative Boards which Mr. Josephson charges with the entire burden of "socialist illegality" were, as he himself admits, authorized by law. . . .

But let us assume that in the sphere of "ordinary" crime Soviet law works precisely as it should—that Soviet officials are never corrupt, subservient or brutal. There remains the exception (which perhaps proves the rule):—in Professor Laski's words, "the sphere of political offenses." (*Not,* as Mr. Josephson later puts it, "some" political offenses.)

Just how big an exception is this? The Soviet government has given no official figures on the casualties of Stalin's police rule. The most conservative unofficial estimates I have seen declare that *several thousand* were wrongly executed, with *scores of even hundreds of thousands* imprisoned. Look at it from another point of view: a recent dispatch in the New York Times quotes a leading Soviet legal authority as stating that 70% of the prison population has been released since Stalin's death and two-thirds of the labor camps have been closed down. Without pinning too much on these sparse figures, it certainly seems possible that *up to two-thirds of the prison popula-*

tion was wrongly convicted (presumably for political offenses). And the "rehabilitations" are still going on. . . .

"Except" for political crime, Soviet justice works fine! So does justice in our Southern states—"except" for Negroes!

It would be beyond the scope of this letter to discuss at length Mr. Josephson's interpretation of the reasons behind the Stalin Era, except to note that here too he omits important facts. He claims, for example, that political terror abated "even in the last year of Stalin's life." William Mandel has recently pointed out in Mainstream's own pages that this last year saw the notorious "Doctor's Plot," renewed demans for "vigilance," etc. Krushchev himself has said that had Stalin lived a few months longer Molotov and Voroshilov would have gone to join the rest of the Old Bolsheviks. If this is an "abatement" of terror, what must it have been like before 1952!

Much more could be written about Mr. Josephson's piece—notably his use of the double nonsequitur in claiming that since capitalism is inferior to socialism, American society must be inferior to Soviet society and therefore American law inferior to Soviet law. But the same logic it would appear that American productivity is obviously inferior to Soviet ditto!

As a political "criminal" in the USSR, Mr. Josephson would probably have been shot. May I be forgiven for expressing a certain pride that in my country he is free to write articles criticising American law, and that, despite our inferior grade of American freedom, publications such as Mainstream, critical of the basic assumptions of our society, do manage to exist—as they certainly do not in the USSR.

Let there be no misunderstanding: so far as I am concerned socialism, even the distorted and bureaucratized Soviet variety, is *in the long run* superior to capitalism. Even today we Americans have a great deal to learn from the accomplishments of the Soviet people, (and the Chinese, and the Poles!) By the same token, the Soviet people could profitably study come of *our* accomplishments, limited and distorted though they may be. In particular: the theory and practice of *limiting the state's power over the individual* and tolerating "flowers of all kinds" in the same garden.

Fraternally,
ROBERT CLAIBORNE

Editors, *Mainstream*:

The trouble with Mr. Claiborne is that he deals with such concepts as "freedom," "law" and the "rights of the individual" in general, in the abstract. Freedom like law is concrete. Law cannot be defined by some catalog or code of "natural and inalienable rights," by the idealization of certain abstract declarations divorced from their historic context, but only in connection with the social order which law protects and the social relationships it regulates.

If there is any field of study wherein things take on an abstract form, it is the law. Decisions dealing with concrete facts involving definite social-economic conflicts are stated in terms of "principles of law" in the abstract. "The connection with economic facts, said Engels, "becomes entirely lost. Since in each particular case the economic facts must take on the form of

juristic reasons in order to be sanctioned in the form of laws, the result is that the juristic form must be everything and the economic content nothing."

The difference between Mr. Claiborne and myself lies in our different understanding of the class nature of the state, of the real nature and role of law in general, of the origin, development ad essence of those equalities and private rights proclaimed in our law and the *factual* inequalities which the law veils.

From a tendency to regard the S.U. as a model of international socialism, some of its former and now disillusioned friends have adopted the method of the enemies of the Soviet Union—the method of using any real or supposed shortcomings of the S.U. as an argument against socialism in general. These same people who have now set out on the reformist road to socialism by adopting the tactics of attacking mere particulars of the existing state of things, attack the framework of the S.U. as a whole—that is, they are still revolutionary as against the S.U.

The people who now have "discovered" that there are peculiar national historical conditions which lead to different roads to socialism are the very same people who refuse to take into consideration "the peculiar historical conditions" of the first socialist state. The Soviet state was built by forced marches under conditions of capitalist encirclement, the rise of Hitlerism, the fear of imminent war and the threat of atomic annihilation.

The process of transition to Communism is a continual process of reintegration, or mistakes made and lessons learned, of a continual development of man until he is completely free of all the limitations of bourgeois man. In his speech to the League of Communists, 1850, Marx said, "You will have before you 15, 20, or 50 years of civil was and mass struggles not only to change circumstances, but also in order to fit yourselves for the assumption of power." And again Marx said, "Crimes, abuses, selfishness, superstition, all this residue of the historical past, all this mud of capitalism will cling for 50 to 100 years before the working class is fit to rule." Those who never understood this, who made the mistake of identifying Socialism with Communism made ideological demands on the S.U. which it cannot satisfy. And now these disappointed left-wingers blame the S.U. because of their own theoretical failures.

And now to answer Mr. Claiborne's charges.

1. He states that having learned the difference "between juridical experience and state practice" what an ingrate and unreconstructed character I must be not to realize that "as a political criminal in the USSR Mr. Josephson would probably have been shot." But, he adds, "in *my* country he is free to write articles criticizing American law."

The American who sympathizes with the idea which inspires the Russian Revolution hopes for the success of that socialist state, not because he is not a loyal citizen of his country, but because the success of that state proves the practicability of ideas the realization of which is in the interest of his own people. When I challenged the Un-American Committee I had no illusions about either the class character of the state and law, about either "legal theory or state practice," but did so in the interest of all the American people.

There is no crime of contempt in Soviet law. I cannot conceive of committing a crime against the public order of the S.U. because I believe the Soviet state, having abolished capitalist rule, is in the interest of the broad mass of the people. A socialist state being organized in the interests of the people, a crime against such a state is a crime against the people. Contrariwise, political activity against a capitalist state in order to change class control is in the interest of the great majority of the people.

If I attempted to undermine or overthrow the Soviet state, I would deserve the merited fate of all enemies of the people. If I was wrongly accused I would defend myself and hope to have the understanding and strength of character of an Anna Louise Strong. Mr. Claiborne makes the mistake of comparing action against one form of state and another in the abstract. Political activity against an exploiter state in the interest of the vast majority of the people is both democratic and moral; action against a socialist state representing the interests of the vast majority of the people is anti-democratic and immoral.

2. Mr. Claiborne points to the fact that *Mainstream* is published in the U.S. and "manages to exist" (and how?) as evidence of our really superior "grade of freedom." He again makes the mistake of accepting formal equality as real equality. *Mainstream* has the right to compete with *Life, Look,* etc., to engage in costly promotion campaigns, etc. The *Daily Worker* has the right to open a chain of newspaper like the Hearst press. Of course, their readers are free to read these publications if they are prepared to be marked "disloyal" and accept dismissal from thier employment as teachers, in defense plants, in the governmental service, trade unions, or face deportation if he is a non-citizen.

3. Because our codes of law "do not prevent frame-up and third-degrees," because "our 14th and 15th Amendments are not enforced," Mr. Claiborne presumes that Soviet laws are similarly mere idle decrees. And he decries my "bland assurance that Soviet judges do equity because equitableness is inherent is socialist relationships."

Prof. Harold J. Berman in his article *The Challenge of Soviet Law* (62 Harvard Law Review, p. 263) says, "The Soviet judge does equity. He has not merely the interest of the state, but also the interests of the litigant at heart."

The context in which law operates is the all determining factor and again Mr. Claiborne forgets it. The Mooney, Sacco-Vanzetti, Rosenberg cases grew out of certain definite situations in the American scene. There will be other such cases as and when class struggles sharpen. The denial of the rights guaranteed to the American Negro has an economic foundation. With the abolition of the exploitation of man by man this *all determining factor* is absent in the S.U. And therein lies the reason for the big difference between our law and their law. In a class divided society, the abstract principles of law stated in the constitution and codes may be and are perverted in the interests of the economically dominant class, which is also the politically preeminent one by reason of its economic superiority. This is the class force which makes for the denial of real

justice, and this class force has been eliminated in the S.U.

4. Mr. Claiborne raises the point that the Soviet code provides "for punishment of relatives of certain classes of criminals." While he may not read the Soviet codes, he does evidently read the American newspapers. The only reference to this in Soviet law is Sec. 58 (1) of the criminal code which states "if a man in the military service *takes flight abroad* in peace or war time, the adult members of his family who had knowledge of his plans are subject to imprisonment and those who did not know are subject to exile." So Mr. Claiborne's statement of "classes of criminals" is reduced to one instance of desertion with "flight abroad."

The idea of exile which is so alien to us, was taken over from former Russian practice. It is an example of how former cultures and practices influence the new. Probably, the reason for this law, (and it is only my guess) was to eliminate the possible contact with the deserter who has the opportunity to make contact with a foreign government. I deplore this kind of law as much as any man even though the provisions of the law are rarely used. I am happy that it has been eliminated from the new draft of the criminal code. It does violence to the general theory of Soviet criminal law that guilt is personal.

5. Prof. Laski's statement about the superiority of Soviet criminal law is ignored by Mr. Claiborne. Prof. Laski said, "Political affenses apart, equality before the law is more substantially realized (in the S.U.) than in any other country." I consciously and deliberately qualified Prof. Laski's statement to "some political cases" because to assume that all political offenders were innocent is to assume that there were no spies or traitors in the S.U. The war revealed numerous collaborators with the Nazis. There are the organizations of White Russians, and of course, the C.I.A. and the spy services of the various countries of the world.

6. Mr. Claiborne wants to know "just how big an exception is this?" He states that "conservative estimates declare scores or even hundreds of thousands imprisoned." Obviously, the conservative estimates were obtained from the conservative newspapers.

Prof. Harold J. Berman, who visited the S.U. last year writes in the June 30, 1956 issue of the *Nation* as follows:

> "A few weeks after Stalin's death on March 27, 1953 an amnesty decree was issued which not only provided release of a large proportion of the people who had been convicted of non-political crimes, but also reviewed and freed 7,469 persons convicted of political crimes."

7. Mr. Claiborne questions my statement that with the military stalemate due to the Soviets' development of the atomic and hydrogen bombs and the Chinese revolution, the fear of war abated and with it the acts of terror abated in the last years of Stalin's life. He cites as his authority to the contrary Mr. William Mandel. My statement is an exact quote taken from an article written by Prof. G. D. H. Cole which was published in the July 1953 issue of *Soviet Studies*, the most authoritative Journal on the S.U. in the English language.

8. Mr. Claiborne charges me with the use of a non-sequitur. The non-

sequitur is his and not mine. If he had any understanding of Marxism he would not have made this error. Productive relationships and productive forces are two entirely different things. When a socialist revolution takes place and the privileged classes are expropriated, the social relationships change immediately—and for the better. But the productive forces, however, remain the same. They may even become worse as a result of the disorganization of the economy. After the revolution the productive forces are developed under conditions of better socialist relationships.

9. Finally, Mr. Claiborne makes his plea for "tolerating flowers of all kinds in the same garden." Marxists never believed that the day of the revolution was the day of creation and the achievements of the past were scrap. The new society adopts all that was good in the arts, sciences, literature and philosophies of the past. To place all ideas in the socialist garden regardless of their merit, or the counter-revolutionary forces the ideas represent, is to place the most irrational idea on a level with the most rational. This is the height of irrationality.

The demand for "justice" in the S.U. by our press and radio, by the Voice of America, is nothing more than the demand for such legal conditions as will permit the organization of counter-revolution against the socialist states. Engels summed this up when he said,

> "Fiat justitia, pereat mundus. Justice must prevail though the whole world perish. And the world would perish in this counter-revoluiton if it were at all possible to carry it out."

LEON JOSEPHSON

books in review

Hungary

THE TRUTH ABOUT HUNGARY, by Herbert Aptheker. Mainstream Publishers. Cloth, $3.00. Paper, $2.00.

LAST FALL'S explosion in Hungary, beginning with the large popular demonstrations in October and culminating in military action by the Soviet Army in the streets of Budapest, startled the working class movements of the world. Here was a country with a socialist-oriented economy, with Communists in the leadership of the nation; yet the spectacle of an angry and embittered population was unmistakeable; and the collapse of the leadership and of governmental authority, culminating in the final tragic shedding of blood by the Soviet forces, was a phenomenon which cried out for analysis and understanding.

That the governments of the Western capitalist states would deluge the world with propaganda proving the "imperialist" nature of the Soviet Union was inevitable, especially since appearances were all in their favor. The big Western Powers, their hands soaked in the blood of the colonial peoples of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, once more struck the pose of defenders of human freedom. But no thoughtful person, certainly no class-conscious Socialist, could permit himself to be deceived by tirades from those who had not only been whipping, enslaving and murdering millions of Asians for more than a century, but who were fresh from overthrowing Guatemalan democracy, bombing Cairo, and slaughtering Algerian villagers. Yet the complex events in Hungary had to be explained by the Left for the sake of its own conscience and integrity.

Dr. Aptheker's book is directed toward throwing light on these complicated events. He has succeeded in many, though not all, respects. There are still numbers of vital questions unsettled, many thorny lessons to be discussed and argued, much that at this distance we cannot know for sure. But the accumulation of facts in the book, including not only the fearful mistakes and crimes of the Rakosi leadership of the Hungarian United Workers Party and the responsibility of the Sovite Union, but also the too little known activities of reaction and counterrevolution—all this documentation is a "must" for the progressive movement.

Aptheker provides the necessary framework for understanding Hungary and does it with evidence largely from non-Communist sources. In this consists the great merit of the first section of the book; and no one—no thinking liberal or unionist—can read what he has to say here without at least questioning the assumptions on which the American State Department bases

its case in the press and in the United Nations.

WE HAVE, in the first place, a brief survey of the continuity and strength of the feudal tradition in Hungary, a carefully documented description of the repressive character of the pre-war Horthy regime, which crushed the democratic movement after World War I, and of the land relationships in what was predominantly an agricultural country. (Hungary had about 1,900,000 landholding units before World War II. About one-tenth of one percent of these accounted for 56% of the land, while 99% of the farming population shared the remaining 44% of the soil. The Roman Catholic Church was the biggest landowner of all, with some 1,200,000 acres, or 6% of the total.)

Against this background, the revolutionary changes that took place after World War II are all the more startling. These too are documented largely from non-Communist sources. They include the land reform program which for the first time in Hungary's history gave the land to the peasants; the nationalization of the banking system, the socialization and development of industry; the nationalizing of foreign-owned enterprises; the secularizing and tremendous broadening of education.

Compared with the record of the previous reactionary governments, the achievement of the post-war Hungarian regime was remarkable, and for the first time provided a social system within which the people could move forward. Aptheker relates how these profound changes gave rise to concentrated counter-measures by the State Department, and paid agents of foreign governments and of the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States. He documents these efforts in a way which cannot be lightly dismissed by anyone and which exposes an important ingredient of the events of last October and November.

On the other hand there is given a most detailed story of how the Rakosi-Gero leadership of the Hungarian Workers Party pursued a policy which could not but open a wide gap between it and the Hungarian people. He describes how this group, in the name of defense against the real dangers arising from the Cold War, began to destroy inner-party democracy, impose economic goals which could not be fulfilled except at the expense of mass suffering, and show itself callous to the national feelings of the Hungarian people. It pursued a course of wholesale political and on-the-job regimenation, ending in terrorism and common frame-ups which, together with the errors of the Soviet leadership, created an intolerable situation pointing toward a crisis.

Aptheker also describes the forces within the country and the United Workers Party which were pressing for a rectification of these errors and wrongs, and the general bureaucratic oppression. The death of Stalin and the easing of tension resulting from the Geneva Conference gave heart to these forces. Economic reforms were instituted and many of the injustices leading to imprisonment and execution were brought to light. Yet even here the Rakosi bureaucracy—with the support, doubtless, of similar elements in the Soviet Union—gave ground only slowly and sought to hold back the democratization which alone, if anything, could have averted the violence which soon followed.

THE UPRISING was therefore something quite different from the official view cultivated by Washington: namely, that this was a classical revolt against an imperialist power and its henchmen. The uprising had two aspects —one, a movement for a democratic socailism, for national sovereignty, and a relation of equality with the Soviet Union; the other, a reactionary initiative on the part of those seeking to restore the old society. These counter-revolutionaries took inspiration and support largely from our State Department, the CIA and the Voices of America and Free Europe.

Many persons on the Left including myself, underestimated the reactionary element in the first few days of the uprising. Some still underestimate it, and most people in the United States ignore it altogether. Here, too, Dr. Aptheker's documented account would prove very useful. He describes the activities of anti-Semites, the brutalities of organized gangs, and especially the role of the sinister Cardinal Mindszenty in rallying all reactionary forces for a capitalist and feudal restoration. Because of the failure of the Communist leadership to draw the masses to it, this threat of restoration became an important factor in the situation.

Nevertheless, I find Aptheker's presentation of the uprising the least satisfactory part of the book. This is because of what I consider as faulty analysis, which I shall discuss below. Also there are some eyewitness accounts I have read and which present evidence which I find pertinent to an estimate of the Hungarian question. These include the writings of such reporters as Peter Fyrer, former Budapest correspondent of the London Daily Worker and Basil Davidson in the New Statesmen. Aptheker does cite Fryer's book as coming to conclusions different from his own, but does not sift sufficiently, I think, those on-the-spot observations which, while not necessarily leading to Fryer's final estimate, with which I disagree, nevertheless require closer examination to get a total picture.

The reader is left with fluctuating impressions as to the degree of popular participation in the revolt. Aptheker's opinion is that the reactionary components of the event defined its essential character virtually from the beginning. His view is that the Hungarian people "developed a certain degree of popular participation in an effort that really aimed at ultra-reaction, though the motivation of the popular elements was not against Socialism, but for its refreshment."

Aptheker's theory is the one held currently by the Soviet leaders and, although not at first, by the Kadar government. It tends to separate the uprising itself from the peaceful demonstration of the students on October 23 and from the discontent of the masses with the admittedly unspeakable repressive practices of the Rakosi-Gero regime. To support this view Aptheker quotes from Kadar's November 1 speech—made nine days after the start of the uprising and three days before the second Soviet intervention—to the effect that "the uprising has come to a crossroads," and that "we did not fight in order that the mines and factories might be snatched from the hands of the workingclass and the land from the peasantry."

Yet, more could well be quoted from the same speech. Kadar spoke of the events as "the heroic uprising of our people [which] has freed the people and the country of Rakosi's regime. . . .

We take pride in the fact that you have made a sound stand in the armed uprising and shown in that uprising a true patriotism and fidelity to socialism." As late as three weeks after the second Soviet intervention—on November 25—Kadar stated- ". . . on October 23 there began an armed uprising. Looking at the participants in the uprising, I am bound to say that this uprising did not have as its aim the overthrow of the system of the people's republic, but rectification of the mistakes of the leadership."

But by February 25 of this year, Kadar had a new theory which he expressed in these words: ". . . On October 23, 1956, the same as in August 2, 1919, in Hungary there had begun a counterrevolution." One can say that Kadar was wrong in his first analysis. One can even say that he did not really believe what he said at the time, that he was only asserting it for tactical reasons. But Aptheker's omission of discussion of this disparity of views tends to minimize Kadar's earlier estimates which the book itself cites. And it is these estimates which still convince me that the uprising was primarily popular to begin with and that the reactionary elements only gradually asserted themselves and developed into a genuine threat.

My view is that the change in appraisal about the origin of the uprising stems from the unreadiness of the Soviet leaders to face up to various questions that rise about the first Soviet intervention, as well as about possible measures which they might have taken, but did not, in order to make sure that a popular uprising would not be switched onto a reactionary track. I am convinced that some future reexamination of this period will analyze the mistakes of last fall as thoroughly as the Soviet Congress of February, 1956 went into the errors of previous years.

It is regrettable that Aptheker makes no mention of the kidnap-arrest of Nagy and certain members of his government after their departure from the Yugoslav embassy where they had sought refuge. Whatever conclusions history may finally arrive at with respect to Nagy, it is hard to accept the present Soviet and Hungarian estimate of him as a "counterrevolutionary," since the troubling question remains as to why such a "counterrevolutionary" should seek and be granted refuge in the Yugoslav embassy.

It is also unfortunate that the horrible Rajk frameup, the disclosure of which must have been an enormous blow to the prestige of the Hungarian Communist leadership, is given but a few sentences, with no reference to its connection with the Cominform's assault on Tito.

Aptheker quotes Tito on the "grim necessity" for the second Soviet intervention. But he ignores Tito's condemnation of the first intervention as a "fatal mistake" resulting in a "spontaneous uprising." Aptheker refers to the Gero-Kadar visit to Tito on October 15-22, but he does not mention Tito's warning to them at that time that they must learn the lesson of Poland and realize that the Hungarian Party was sitting on a powder keg. I mention this because Tito's warning on that occasion tends to call into question Aptheker's view of the uprising, namely, that the popular movement for "purification" of Hungarian socialism was so near its goal that the reactionaries felt compelled to strike from sheer desperation, because, in Aptheker's words, it was "now or

never." "This moment of elation, of change, of mass outpouring," he writes of the October 23 demonstration, was reaction's "last chance to provoke an armed attempt at that for which they had been planning and dreaming and organizing ever since 1945—the crushing of socialism in Hungary and the restoration there of a hotbed of reaction, chauvinism and clerico-fascism." But if the mood of the masses was one of elation, how could they suddenly, in a matter of hours, be swept, as the author claims they were, onto a counterrevolutionary course?

Aptheker touches on the increasingly important problem of democracy and forms of popular self-government under socialism. He correctly emphasizes the right of a minority to dissent. But what about the still more basic right of the majority to direct self-government? This is still unresolved in Hungary, and not only in Hungary. There the problem remains especially difficult because its socialist-oriented government did not originally come into being through mass revolutionary efforts as in the Soviet Union, China and Yugoslavia.

Aptheker does not probe sufficiently the origins of the Kadar regime. He gives it a too ready acceptance and does not examine it in the broader context of the crisis which developed over the years in the Communist-led countries. This crisis resulted from the contradictions which grew up between the socialist economic relations on one hand, and the restricting and tyrannical forms of political and economic administration on the other. That these latter had their background not only in special conditions and enormous problems but in far-reaching errors as well, only makes their study more urgent today.

THE PROBLEM of the Soviet Union's second intervention is given much discussion in the book, and Aptheker, who feels it was inevitable tries to win the reader to his view on the basis of his reading of the events. Yet there can be differences here among friends of Hungarian democracy and socialism. That there was a reactionary threat is plain. But that this was best and inevitably met by Soviet armed intervention is the moot point. Certainly, the Soviet authorities considered at the time that this was the only possible course (to mention but one factor in their calculations, the rightward drift of the Nagy government, and its denunciation of the Warsaw Pact which had been set up in answer to NATO). In my opinion, the Hungarian leaders should never have called on the Soviet forces to intervene in the demonstration of October 23. Nor should the Soviet authorities have accepted such a call. The forces of the working class should have been called on to defeat any threat of reaction or fascism. If the "necessity" of the final intervention was due not only to the actions of counter-revolutionaries but also to immediate and long-standing blunders by the Hungarian Communist leaders and the Soviet authorities, then it would appear that what may have become finally "necessary" was by no means inevitable.

IT IS regrettable that Aptheker does not discuss the procedure of 1948-49 whereby the Communist Party was arbitrarily made the ruling party and all other parties were, for all practical purposes, put out of business. Whether or not the action was required, the fact remains this was not accompanied by providing avenues for

popular expression. These events were particularly crucial for the future developments in Hungary. The government's base, instead of being broadened, was forcibly contracted, with the result that when the crisis came, the ruling party disintegrated in a matter of hours.

Dr. Aptheker holds the view that "the fundamental sources of the upheaval were the machinations and pressures of imperialism, but decisive to the actual outburst of that upheaval were the errors on the part of those charged with building and safegurding socialism." One of the merits of Aptheker's book is indeed his description of the appalling perversions of socialism prevailing in Hungary for many years, and it is also no doubt true that imperialism's pressures made themselves seriously felt. But if Aptheker's view is correct about the fundamental source of the upheaval then the Chinese Communists could never have drawn such profound conclusions as they have from the Hungarian events concerning socialist democracy and vigilance on this question. The failures of those charged with the building and defending of socialism in Hungary opened up opportuntiies to reaction. I think we must distinguish between the external pressures and the mistakes in attempting to meet them; otherwise what lessons are to be learned? That reaction conspires ceaselessly against socialism? But this is not what is new in the lesson which Hungary has taught the Marxian movement of the world. In their drive for democratic socialism, the Hungarian people found themselves in armed conflict with the Socialist Soviet Union, and unwittingly on the side of reaciton, or neutral toward it. But meanwhile, the Soviet leaders were evidently not prepared to face the consequences of a democratization which their own Twentieth Congress had set into motion in Hungary and elsewhere. The differences between the mass of Hungarian people on the one hand and the Communist Party and Soviet Union on the other were real enough (over such matters as rates of industrialization, forms of government, party democracy, national equality, etc.); but they were essentially "non-antagonistic" to use a term from Mao Tse Tung, and as such were susceptible of peaceful resolution. The forces of reaction were physically defeated, but the "non-antagonistic" contradictions between the people and Hungarian Communist and Soviet authorities were an entirely different matter. The use of force by either side here, regardless of the responsibility, could not resolve these particular contradictions. It could only make them sharper. Herein lies the essence of the tragedy of Hungary.

The optimistic note on which Aptheker concludes his book—he ends with March 1957—leaves the reader insufficiently prepared for some of the actions of the Kadar government which have since caused such Marxists as Louis Aragon and Picasso in France, John Berger, Doris Lessing and Hyman Levy in Britain, to inform Kadar of their misgivings. (These were notably in connection with the death sentence, later commuted, for two writers, and in the case of the British communication, the suppression of publications and discussions.)

My disagreements with Aptheker do not contradict my estimate of the importance of the book and are the normal differences that must inevitably

arise among fellow-Marxists when faced with a highly complicated situation. A large number of liberals have attempted to write off the Soviet Union and Communist movements everywhere as a result of the Hungarian situation. There are facts and analyses in Aptheker's book which simply cannot be ignored and which these liberals will find a challenge. Once people are ready to discuss Hungary, instead of blindly following State Department slogans, that can be the beginning of wisdom. That is, if Marxists know how to discuss too. ALAN MAX

Close to Parody

THE TOWN, by William Faulkner. Random House. $3.95.

THE HAMLET, a book Faulkner published in 1940, was a powerful and ugly work which somehow managed to be entertaining and at times compassionate as well as frightening. Its picture of the Snopeses—a not quite human, utterly amoral, rootless, traditionless, propertyless and rapacious clan of entrepreneurs—gained immeasurably in impact by the painful reality of its setting. Its protagonists were drawn against the realistic background of Frenchman's Bend, a poverty stricken rural Southern community dominated commercially by the owner of the single general store, rather than against the background of the half mythical decaying plantation life which had preceded Will Varner's reign.

Will is greedy, altogether unscrupulous, and almost completely ruthless. But it would be the sheerest sentimentality to speak in such terms of Flem Snopes. One can no more so describe him than one can evaluate a spider or a boa constrictor ethically.

By the end of *The Hamlet* the Snopeses have, like a thriving cancer, absorbed the meager nourishment afforded by Frenchman's Bend and are spreading to the still unaffected social tissue beyond.

Flem Snopes, himself sexually impotent, has married Will Varner's daughter Eula, has bested Will over her dowry, and on the last page he is moving his wagonload of possessions to Jefferson, the county seat.

The general outline of the book, and a publisher's note, indicated that The *Hamlet* had been planned as the first volume of a trilogy. The author may well have felt, however, as did many readers, that that work had made its point so absolutely there was little room left for development and no strength to be gained by repetition. At any rate, seventeen years and seven unrelated books have intervened before the appearance of a by now unexpected second volume, *The Town*. This purports to give a picture of Flem Snopes' conquest of Jefferson. The jacket announces a forthcoming concluding volume, *The Mansion* which will show how the Snopeses "outmaneuvered and overpowered a society and a culture that had little defense against their invincible rapacity."

I say "purports to give" because actually, despite the author's careful recapitulation of plot material and interweaving of details, this ostensible continuation is related to its successor only as Thackeray's burlesque sequel concludes *The Merchant of Venice* or Fielding's *Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews* relates to Richardson's *Pamela*. It is impossible to believe that Faulkner is here deliberately paro-

dying his own work, and yet the metamorphosis of every major character is otherwise incomprehensible.

In some figures—notably that of Flem himself—the change might simply be explained as a failure of power and conviction. For he who in the earlier book was a truly appalling embodiment of limitless avarice and mechanical, impersonal malignity with no fictional counterpart (though there may have been a faint relationship with Balzac's *Cousin Bette*) is here a villain on the obvious practical level of O'Henry's gentle grafters. Where the first book was filled with a confused but penetrating sense of almost mythical evil emanating from the Snopeses, we are here confronted only by the complicated but unimpressive trickery of bank swindlers and peddlers of pornography.

This in itself would, of course, be enough to destroy the power of the sequel, but it does not at all account for the way in which *The Town* travesties not only the first volume, but much of Faulkner's other work as well. For here he not only presents a weakened and distorted version of Ratliff, the raisonneur of *The Hamlet,* now degenerated from a philosopher gravely observant of and concerned with men's lives to an absurdly curious gossipmongering busybody. He also introduces into the story the liberal lawyer, Gavin Stevens, who has been his alter ego and spokesmen in many other works, including *Intruder in the Dust,* to effect a similar transformation in him.

The strangest re-creation of character, however, takes place on another level and betrays, not the integrity of its possessor, but rather that of the author himself.

Eula Varner (later Eula Varner Snopes) is presented to us early in *The Hamlet* as the epitome of sheer female flesh—a personification of lush sexual attraction which, from childhood on, draws male interest and desire as casually and irresistibly, if not quite as unconsciously, as a bitch in heat attracts all dogs within a certain radius. She is drawn, with no implication of beauty, intelligence or even emotion, in the same impossible but convincing detail often lavished by anonymous artists in some cultures on their grotesque and imposing fertility symbols. In her own way she is almost as far from real humanity as the Snopses, but she adds an important element to the nightmare vitality of the world Faulkner builds in *The Hamlet.*

In *The Town* suddenly, unaccountably and altogether unconvincingly she is transformed into the conventional involuntary *femme fatale,* a loving self-sacrificing mother, a passionately devoted mistress, and a mysteriously beautiful Helen for whom not only Paris but wily Ulysses himself, in the person of Gavin, would find the world well lost.

There seems little sense in dwelling further on other similar changes; grotesqueries like Byron Snopes' children, here added to spice a tired story rather than, like an earlier idot Snopes' love for his cow, woven into the very stuff of its horror. The flames are now all painted and their heat cannot scorch the most sensitive of us. It is hard to imagine what Faulkner would say of the sentimentalist who might venture so to sterilize his work. It is impossible to imagine what possessed him to do it.

ANNETTE T. RUBINSTEIN

Technique as Challenge

AUTOMATION AND SOCIAL PROGRESS, by Samuel Lilley. International Publishers. $3.75.

THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF AUTOMATION, by Paul Einzig. W. W. Norton & Co. $3.95.

"THERE IS no ultimate escape from the fact that capitalism, well though it worked in its time, is not a suitable economic structure for making beneficial use of the advanced techniques of today and the even more advanced techniques of tomorrow."

This conclusion of Dr. Lilley's stems from his analysis of automation in contemporary society. His concise but extremely effective book develops his theme from an analysis of automation and its effects in a number of capitalist countries as well as in the socialist Soviet Union.

From a social (one might add, psychological) point of view, one of the most curious phenomena of recent times has been the incessant harangue on the part of capitalist spokesmen that automation will be a boon to us all. The plethora of books, articles, reports and studies takes on the aspect of a compulsive pleading against an inner doubt.

The reason is unmistakable. Automation represents, as Lilley makes clear, not simply "another step" in the growth of productive forces, but a seven-league hop, beyond which lie a longer skip and an incalculable jump. What a commentary it is, that the prospect should give capitalism a simultaneous appetite and a bellyache!

Each capitalist, especially each monopoly capitalist, feels under duress to decrease the number of workers employed and at the same time to find greater market for products. Automation is the goad.

A particular value of Lilley's book is that he documents the visible social results of this contradiction, not from the general history of capitalism alone, but from the specific effects of automation.

Prior to this analysis, Lilley spends considerable time in discussion of the nature of automation itself. He adds great strength to the efforts of other responsible scientists who have been trying to rescue automation from the category of the "miraculous" while not permitting it to fall into the class of the ordinary. The social passivity which would be consequent on either of the above views makes the fight against them more than an abstract matter.

The general order of the book, therefore takes the form of: the nature of automation, and examples of it; the effects of automation on employment, productivity and production costs, on skills and working conditions; the contradictions affecting automation under capitalism; automation and socialism, the experience of the USSR; what can be done today, the trade unions and their program.

Written in a form that is polemical without being bumptious or overbearing, the book will afford the general reader an excellent survey of the field. As for the more specialized student of automation, Lilley also provides materials of special interest (like detailed figures on automation costs). The strength and coherence of the argument of the book will interest all.

Like every pioneering work (this book does pioneer in socialist examination of automation), it makes room for

more, and invites occupation. The scope of the work could not allow for a much-needed attempt to relate the effects of automation to the inner operation of the laws of monopoly capitalist economy. For example, what are some of the results of the change towards a much larger proportion of constant capital as against variable capital? What effects on speed-up, length of the work-day, shifts, working conditions, etc.?

The work which Marx did for the early period of capitalism, notably in his chapter on "Machinery and Modern Industry" in Volume I of *Capital,* goes unmentioned by Lilley, though it no doubt formed part of his thinking and preparation. The prevision of Marx provides invaluable insights and guides to methodology. Who stands on his shoulders can see far.

For those desirous of making an examination of the capitalist viewpoint on automation, Dr. Paul Einzig's book is in order. Lilley refers his readers to it in his bibliography as an able expression of the antithesis to his own views.

It is not Dr. Einzig's fault if his discursive analysis of the effect of automation on capitalist economy seems to point up a kind of economic schizophrenia. The fault is in the system, whose internal maladjustment is such that the net sum of Dr. Einzig's conclusion is that the advent of automation requires the strictest "self-denial" on the part of all classes, and especially the working class.

His frequently stated concern over the inflationary dangers of "excessive" wage demands, does not prevent Dr. Einzig from observing elsewhere (p. 172) that unless the purchasing power of the masses is high enough, automation may lead to overproduction!

Though he tackles with admirable boldness the most varied economic phenomena to determine what the effects of automation will be, Dr. Einzig moves always within the limits of capitalism and its contradictions, and perforce comes up with such contradictory answers.

In the end, his strictures against labor become so sharp, his kudos to higher profits so pronounced, that even his conservative reviewer in the *N. Y. Times* was moved to slight protest.

Let the reader, however, judge for himself. The availability of two such recent books on automation by able and opposed exponents of capitalism and socialism offers a rewarding opportunity for every thinking person. If this reviewer more particularly urges the reading of Dr. Lilley's book, it is not from any intent of averting an examination of "both sides"; it is because Lilley's ideas have to fight so hard to reach the American public eye and ear, whereas Dr. Einzig's have no such problem, but do indeed reach the public in manifold daily ways.

Lilley's book will help us grapple with the problems of automation; many thousands ought to be gotten to read it. If this reviewer has said hardly enough about what is *in* the book, it is from a settled conviction that the purpose of a review ought to be to get people to read a good book, not to read the book to them.

JACOB SAMUELSON

Little Encyclopedia

LABOR FACT BOOK 13, prepared by Labor Research Association. International Publishers. $2.00.

SOME people get good use from the old farmer's almanacs with their variety of snake-bite cures, weather forecasts, popular science, facts and superstitions. More people keep handy a *World Almanac* with the modern types of random information, and a few use the *Statistical Abstract.*

But for him who wishes to be a doer and not merely an observer, a partisan and not merely a well-informed conversationalist, it is essential to get a new *Labor Fact Book* every two years. The latest of these compendiums prepared by the Labor Research Association is just off the press.

You can use it at all levels, from the trade union local to the letters to the editor, from the Parent-Teachers Association to the halls of Congress. The volume of facts packed into this small volume on economic trends, labor and social conditions, agriculture, the Negro people, trade unions, civil liberties, and political trends, exceeds what one will find in a multi-volumed encyclopedia, and is much more up to date.

L. R. A. and its indefatigable staff, Robert Dunn, Grace Hutchins and innumerable anonymous helpers, accumulate these facts daily, use them continuously, and are thus able to put together all of the really important developments of the past two years. For this reader, who has been using the Fact Books for a long time, the latest issue shows a further improvement in the balance of events selected and in the style of presentation.

We learn from this book the still shocking facts about the seamy side of life in the world's wealthiest country. And we get examples of what can be done about it from the long list of victories won by unions, civil liberties defenders, and Negro people's organizations.

An excellent innovation in *Fact Book* 13 is the grouping of all the material on the Negro people in a separate chapter. The length of this chapter, 28 pages, is an accurate reflection of the swelling power of the Negro people's movement, and the emergence of the fight against segregation as at least one of the two most vital domestic issues of the time. The other, civil liberties, is given the customary rounded treatment by L. R. A.

I regret the omission of a chapter on the Fight for Peace. This was included in the 1950-51 Fact Book (No. 10), but not since. While not taking dramatic forms, and poorly organized, peace sentiments and actions in the United States have grown markedly during the past two years, and have exercised significant restraints on Dulles and his fellow Brinksmen. With the long fight of the world's peoples against the Hell Bombs approaching its first major victories, we need the full story of what Americans are doing and thinking about it. I hope L. R. A. will give increasing publicity to events in this area, which I am confident will become more dramatic, and involve more people here, than ever before.

VICTOR PERLO